

# **Developing the use of content marketing for a B2B organization**

**Case: Laatukeskus**

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| <p>This master's thesis examines developing the use of content marketing for a B2B organization, Laatukeskus. The thesis provides knowledge of the members' opinions and needs for valuable content, as well as concrete ideas how content marketing can be utilized to support the Laatukeskus strategy and brand renewal.</p> <p>The aim is to develop the marketing communication for members and other stakeholders by content marketing guidelines. The content marketing guidelines will help Laatukeskus to engage with its stakeholder groups more effectively and form long-lasting customer relationships that are based on the needs of the members as key stakeholders.</p> <p>The literature review introduces the key concepts related to branding, corporate communication, marketing communication and content marketing. Stakeholder communication and the aspect of B2B branding are also described.</p> <p>The research method was qualitative approach. The empirical part included two parts: brand interviews for Laatukeskus stakeholders conducted by Miltton Group for the Laatukeskus brand renewal, and member interviews conducted by the author for this research. The brand interviews were conducted at the beginning of 2016, and the member interviews were implemented in December 2016 and January 2017.</p> <p>The main findings of the research show that members and other stakeholders do not view the Laatukeskus brand as strong as it should be. New kind of content and member communication is needed to strengthen the new brand and develop the image of Laatukeskus as a forerunner in Finnish quality development. The research indicates that blog posts, articles, Laatukeskus member newsletter, international aspects, networking and event information, and the presence of Laatukeskus employees are regarded as valuable content by the members.</p> <p>Based on the research results, the content marketing guidelines and several development ideas for future communication and content marketing of Laatukeskus have been provided.</p> |   |
| <b>Key words</b><br>content marketing, brand, communication, stakeholders, B2B organizations   |   |

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# 1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the topic and the case organization, Laatukeskus. It also clarifies the aims and objectives of the research, the key terminology and concepts, the scope and limitations, and the structure of thesis.

The organization studied in this thesis, Laatukeskus (also known as the Finnish Quality Association) is a B2B organization and member association that provides products and services in quality and business development. In 2016, Laatukeskus introduced a new strategy. The new strategy of Laatukeskus is the fulfillment of the mission by strongly growing the number of members. Through the strategy work, Laatukeskus aims for economic stability and profitable growth, increasing recognizability and visibility, and leading with customer understanding. Laatukeskus aims to be the number one choice for help for organizations and individuals who want to develop their competitiveness.

As a part of the new strategy work, Laatukeskus started a brand renewal to raise awareness and build a new brand. Before the new strategy and brand renewal Laatukeskus had not defined its brand strategy or brand attributes. Branding and communication must combine themes that are interesting for the stakeholders of Laatukeskus, and bring valuable aspects to the operations of the company. The brand renewal is designed to strengthen all the areas of interest of Laatukeskus, and all marketing and communication of Laatukeskus must support the new brand. This thesis strives to clarify what kind of content is valued by the key stakeholders and how it supports the strategy work of Laatukeskus.

To strengthen the new brand, Laatukeskus must create and share the right content for its stakeholders. One effective way to do that is content marketing. A strong recognizable brand is one of the key elements in content marketing, and Laatukeskus aims to strengthen the brand by creating valuable content for its stakeholders. The stakeholder groups of Laatukeskus are the top management of organizations, quality and business development professionals, political decision makers, officials, media and opinion influencers. The brand renewal is targeted for all the stakeholder groups but as Laatukeskus is a member organization, members are the key stakeholder group. To be able to develop the use of content marketing, the organization needs information about the interests and needs of the members, and this thesis aims to clarify what is the content valued by members as key stakeholders.

Brands are undeniably relevant for B2B customers for several reasons such as the presence of competition, increased complexities in buying decision, limited time, information overload and pressures on prices. Although the importance of brands for B2B marketers is recognized, many still find it challenging to create brand-driven B2B businesses. (Sarin 2014, 92, 98.) In a B2B context companies often form long-term relationships with their customers, increasingly engaging in the co-creation of mutual value for their brand and their stakeholders. It has been suggested that customers are now expecting brands to invest in their relationship with them before they consider a purchase scenario at all. Therefore, organizations must aim to provide the customers with relevant and engaging content. (Holliman & Rowley 2014, 270, 272.)

Marketing today is about delivering useful content at the precise moment and place, to correspond to the needs of the targeted audience. The web has opened endless opportunities to reach niche audiences directly with targeted information that gives them the value they are expecting. Marketing is more than advertising, and marketers have had to shift their thinking from mainstream marketing to the masses to a strategy of reaching different targeted audiences via the web. People want authenticity and participation, not one-way interruptions. Companies today are defined by what they publish. (Scott 2015, 19–20, 37.) This is where content marketing comes into play. With great content companies engage their target audiences in countless ways and build stronger relationships with them.

Content marketing means the process of creating and sharing relevant brand information to engage current customers and attract new ones. It can also be referred to as branded content, describing the act of creating and sharing valuable information. Sharing specialized content leads to a better-informed customer, and a better informed customer advances better results for an organization. (Cramer 2016, 5.) Brand value is about perceptions and building a good brand value has a remarkable power to influence perceptions (Percy, Pervan & Rosenbaum-Elliott, 2007). When the shared content is in line with the desired brand of an organization, it strengthens the brand. The study strives to clarify the connection between the Laatukskus strategy and brand, content marketing and valuable content for the stakeholders.

## 1.1 Aims and objectives of the research

This chapter introduces the aims and objectives of the research and clarifies why they are important for the case organization. The research aims to develop the marketing communication for the members and other stakeholders by content marketing guidelines that will help Laatukeskus to engage with the stakeholders more effectively and form long-lasting relationships that are based on the needs of the customers. The content marketing guidelines are based on the results of the study. The thesis report also includes material that is not included in the guidelines but will be utilized in the future when designing the content marketing plan of Laatukeskus.

The need for the brand renewal had originated from the strategy of raising awareness and from the need for a modern and forerunning brand image as an organization that enables developing competitiveness of Finnish organizations. To achieve this goal Laatukeskus must be able to come up to the expectations of its members and other stakeholder groups by giving them the kind of content they need and are interested in. Members are the key stakeholder group of Laatukeskus but through them, Laatukeskus aims to affect in strengthening the brand more extensively, and raise the awareness.

The need for developing the use of content marketing in Laatukeskus emerged in the beginning of the brand renewal process. The new brand has been foreknown to have an impact on all marketing and communication of the organization. The old operating models of creating and sharing information to the members and other stakeholder groups have been recognized as outdated and inoperative for the new brand. New kind of marketing communication is needed to support the brand, and content marketing will help Laatukeskus in developing new ways of communication with the stakeholders.

Based on the objectives of the research, the main research question of this study is:

*How to create valuable content to support the new Laatukeskus strategy?*

The research question can be divided into three sub-questions:

RQ1: What kind of content do the members as key stakeholders find valuable?

RQ2: How and where should the content be shared?

RQ3: What is the members' view of the Laatukeskus brand?

## **1.2 Key terminology**

This thesis includes key terminology that is related to the case organization, Laatukeskus. *Members* in this study refers to the members of Laatukeskus, both organizations and individuals. The members are organizations operating in Finland, the top management of these organizations, and quality and business development professionals. The members and membership types are introduced in the chapter 2.3: Members as key stakeholders.

*Customers* in this thesis refers to all customers of Laatukeskus, both members and other customers. Customers, both organizations and individuals, have purchased products and services provided by Laatukeskus, and may or may not have the Laatukeskus membership.

*Stakeholders* in this study refers to the stakeholders of Laatukeskus. These stakeholders are the members and other quality and business development professionals, political decision makers and officials, media, and opinion influencers. The research focuses on the key stakeholder group, members. The stakeholder groups of Laatukeskus are introduced in the chapter 2.3: Members as key stakeholders of Laatukeskus.

## **1.3 Scope and limitations**

The main outcome of this study are the content marketing guidelines of Laatukeskus. The guidelines clarify how the right kind of content should be created and where it should be published. Content marketing guidelines support the new brand and all communication by Laatukeskus. Members as key stakeholders of Laatukeskus are in the focus of the study but as it was stated in chapter 1.1: Aims and objectives of the research, Laatukeskus also aims to raise its overall awareness. By utilizing content marketing and the Laatukeskus content marketing guidelines, valuable content can be created and shared for all the stakeholder groups.

The content marketing guidelines will help Laatukeskus in creating and sharing the kind of content that strengthens the new strategy and brand. The theoretical part of the study includes parts that are not discussed in the final product of the study, content marketing guidelines, but will be utilized in the future when creating the content marketing plan of Laatukeskus. The guidelines are conducted in Finnish, as they are for the use of Laatukeskus employees. The guidelines are the first step in developing the use of content marketing for Laatukeskus. Therefore, this study does not aim to create a content



marketing plan or a content marketing strategy but provides a basis for the development of a content marketing plan or strategy in the future.

#### **1.4 Structure of thesis**

The master's thesis consists of six main chapters. The background chapter introduces the case organization, Laatukeskus. It also clarifies the strategy and brand renewal of Laatukeskus, and describes the stakeholders. Literature review examines the theory that has been used for the study.

The chapter of conducting the research and data collection describes the constructive research approach and the data collection methods used for the study. It also describes the process of interpreting and analyzing of the data. The reliability and validity of the study will also be reviewed.

Findings introduce the results received from the data, and the discussion chapter explains the conclusions and provides development ideas. Discussion also includes the assessment of the thesis process and personal learning.

## **2 Background**

In this chapter, the background of the study is clarified. The case organization Laatuakeskus, and its strategy and stakeholders are described. The brand renewal and the brand attributes are also explained, as they are an important basis for the study.

### **2.1 Laatuakeskus**

The Finnish Quality Association (Laatuakeskus) was established in 1966. The mission of Laatuakeskus is to promote management excellence, and the vision is to foster Finland's economic growth through quality excellence. Through its activities and services, Laatuakeskus helps to enhance the standard of quality in operations and management in Finnish organizations. Laatuakeskus aims to improve Finland's competitiveness continuously. The ideology of the company is that a successful Finland bases its success largely on nurturing a growing pool of organizations that pursue long-term development of both their management and their operations. Such organizations are better equipped than others to react to the demands imposed by changes in their operating environment. (Laatuakeskus 2017 a.)

Laatuakeskus exists to generate more success stories across Finland. It believes that in a globalized world, Finnish organizations cannot compete on price but they can compete on quality. The objective of Laatuakeskus is a thriving Finland whose competitiveness rests on solid foundations. To achieve this, the standard of quality in operations and management is important to improve continually. Quality today is more than only efficiency and productivity – it also means forward-looking risk management, corporate responsibility, transparency and agility. These themes cut across the entire organization. (Laatuakeskus 2017 c.)

In the heart of Laatuakeskus is a nonprofit organization that has promoted quality thinking in Finland for half a century – the Finnish Quality Association. The association network brings together almost 500 affiliated organizations and thousands of quality professionals and decision makers from different lines of businesses throughout Finland. Laatuakeskus aims to provide them information, new perspectives and tangible tools for developing quality and competitiveness. The association is in close cooperation with international quality organizations, which helps Finnish companies to have access to best practices and ensures that Finland gets international recognition for enhancing quality. (Laatuakeskus 2017 c.)

The Finnish Quality Association owns 100% of a private company, Laatukeskus Excellence Finland Ltd. Members own the Finnish Quality Association. The division between Laatukeskus Excellence Finland and the Finnish Quality Association is due to accounting and legalities. In practice, the two operate as a single organization, and the brand name of this organization is Laatukeskus. (Laatukeskus 2017 b.)

Laatukeskus currently has 14 employees, including CEO, and approximately 20 network consultants that are independent contractors. All employees report directly to the CEO, Tani Järvinen. The management team has four members. Laatukeskus operates as a process organization. Laatukeskus is based in Espoo, southern Finland. In addition to the office, it has 15 regional subdivisions across Finland that are maintained by association volunteers.

## **2.2 Laatukeskus strategy**

The strategy of Laatukeskus for 2017 and onwards is the fulfillment of mission by strongly growing the number of members. Increasing recognizability and visibility, and leading with customer understanding is a part of the new strategy. Developing the new brand strengthens recognizability and visibility, and creating valuable content for the stakeholders helps to develop customer understanding. The new strategy emphasizes applicable communication that is based on the right messages to the stakeholder groups. This requires successfully implementing the brand work and putting the results to use. (Laatukeskus 2017 d.)

Laatukeskus already has a strong position as a forerunner among the quality associations of Europe, and convincing performances with their customers. The recognized work for quality development and the appreciated networking possibilities are a solid basis for the new strategy and brand. Laatukeskus is one of the few organizers of professional trainings in quality development and the network of 500 member organizations and thousands of quality professionals. Laatukeskus is still mostly known only among the members and other customers, and has had difficulties in raising the recognizability and visibility among all Finnish organizations and leaders. The strategy aims to generate the brand and membership of Laatukeskus as more attractive to a larger number of organizations.

A comprehensive and effective communication guarantees that the expertise and services of Laatukeskus are known and recognized by the potential members and customers. Raising the number of members requires raising awareness. (Heinonen, Mursu & Wolff 2015.)



Image 1. Strategy of Laatukeskus. (Laatukeskus 2017 d.)

### 2.3 Members as key stakeholders of Laatukeskus

Laatukeskus has identified its stakeholder groups and defined the members as key stakeholders in the beginning of 2017, as a part of the new strategy. The stakeholders of Laatukeskus are divided into three groups:

- Members: top management of organizations, and quality and business development professionals
- Political decision makers and officials
- Media and opinion influencers

The first stakeholder group is the members: the top management of organizations, and quality and business development professionals. The second stakeholder group is the political decision makers and officials. The objective of Laatukeskus is a thriving and competitive Finland, and to improve the standard of quality in operations and management continually, the organization needs the support of politicians and officials. The more influential people recognize the importance of quality work and authorities, the better Finnish organizations become aware of the need to invest in quality. Laatukeskus aims to have an impact on what kind of decisions Finnish politicians make regarding competitiveness of Finnish organizations. (Laatukeskus 2017 c.)

The third stakeholder group consists of media and opinion influencers. By being in contact with media, Laatukeskus aims to raise the awareness of quality and competitiveness. Media must become convinced of the importance of quality development to write articles and interview business leaders regarding it. Co-operation with journalists helps to raise the cause, and this leads to raising the awareness of Laatukeskus and its message. Not only media but also individual opinion influencers are important for Laatukeskus. These influencers can be leaders, professionals in quality or anyone who writes or speaks about topics related to quality in business, leadership and competitiveness. These people are not necessarily customers of Laatukeskus but they must be recognized as important influencers in raising the awareness of the topic.

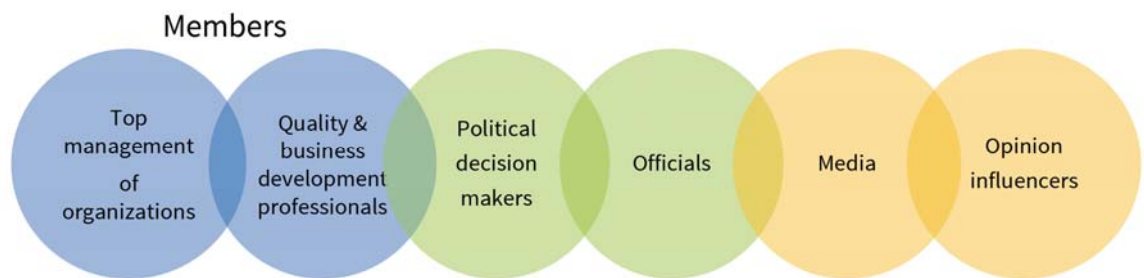


Image 2. Stakeholder groups of Laatukeskus.

As it was stated, Laatukeskus has defined members as its key stakeholders as a part of the new strategy. Key stakeholder can be defined as a stakeholder that has a fundamental impact on organization's performance, has a clearly identified role in organization's aims and involves relationships that are necessary for the organization. The organization cannot exist without this stakeholder group which makes the key position this

stakeholder has. (Graham 2014.) All these statements apply to members as the key stakeholders of Laatukeskus. The member organization, Finnish Quality Association, is the basis for the organization. This means that Laatukeskus would not exist without its members. The member network is an extensive network of organizations and individuals that utilize the Laatukeskus membership for their quality and business development. Members can be both, organizations and individuals. They are top managers or professionals who have an interest in quality and business development.

Laatukeskus has three types of memberships: key corporate membership, supporting corporate membership and individual membership. With its membership ideology Laatukeskus emphasizes that quality and the continuous development of processes, products and services are the most important building blocks for competitiveness and productivity. By becoming a member of Laatukeskus, organizations and individuals are placing quality as a priority in their business. (Laatukeskus 2017 e.)

Key corporate membership is intended for all private and public-sector organizations and it has the most extensive member benefits of the three membership types. Key corporate membership covers all units and sub companies of the organization. (Laatukeskus 2017 e.)

Supporting corporate membership is for small and medium-sized enterprises, start-ups and small business owners that aim to use the membership services for a certain operational unit of their organization (Laatukeskus 2017 e).

Individual membership suits for small business owners, students, senior citizens or other individuals interested in quality development. This membership is always personal and cannot be transferred to or used by another person. (Laatukeskus 2017 e.)

## 2.4 Laatukeskus brand

As a part of the new strategy work, Laatukeskus started to renew its brand in the end of 2015, before starting this thesis.



Image 3. Brand renewal timeline.

The brand renewal work started by arranging a brand workshop for the Laatukeskus employees in the beginning of 2016. The brand renewal concerns the whole personnel and therefore all employees were present in the workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to clarify why the new brand is needed and what kind of image Laatukeskus aims to have in the future. Answers for the following questions were aimed to be found: why does Laatukeskus exist, what Laatukeskus aims to achieve, and how this aim will be reached.

In the workshop, the following summaries were made:

Why does Laatukeskus exist?

- To create more success stories across Finland
- In a globalized world, Finnish organizations cannot compete on price but they can compete on quality
- Successful Finland creates well-being
- A quality organization creates jobs
- No one can afford to do business without quality

What Laatukeskus aims to achieve?

- Competent organizations

- Competitive companies
- Well-being Finland

How Laatukeskus will achieve the aims?

- By continually improving the standard of quality in operations and management
- By looking forward
- By being an active societal conversationalist
- By risk management, corporate responsibility, transparency and agility
- By raising understanding: competitiveness is not a question of cost
- By self-irony: quality can be fun

(Laatukeskus 2016 c.)

The brand renewal was needed because it was concluded that Laatukeskus needs a strong brand to support the new strategy and strengthen the stakeholder relationships. Before the brand renewal Laatukeskus had not defined its brand and brand attributes, and therefore it was not successfully communicating its mission to the stakeholders. The brand image and reputation of Laatukeskus were not corresponding to the desired image of Laatukeskus. It was concluded that the know-how and services of Laatukeskus are high quality but they must be enclosed and communicated in a more interesting way to develop the brand and raise the awareness. (Heinonen, Mursu & Wolff, 2015.) Laatukeskus needs a strong brand to strengthen its relationships with the key stakeholders, members, and support the new strategy.

Laatukeskus aims to be the most reliable provider and partner of evaluating and developing competitiveness in Finland, a societal influencer and a strong member network. The organization has a wide product portfolio for evaluating and developing competitiveness: events, trainings, evaluations, consulting services, benchmarking, networking and competitions. The new brand aims to strengthen the image of Laatukeskus as the best and the most reliable provider and partner of evaluating and developing competitiveness. (Laatukeskus 2016 b.)



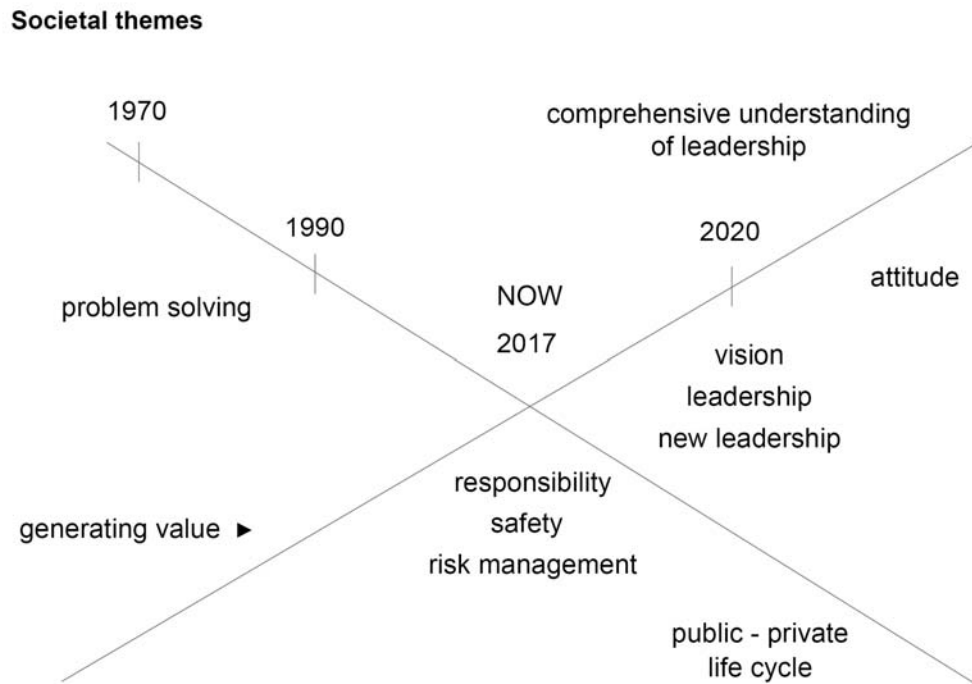


Image 4. Societal themes of LaatuKeskus.

Addressing a larger target group of organizations and individuals requires more explicit communication points: what are the central matters that LaatuKeskus wants to be profiled at? For LaatuKeskus it's especially important to guarantee that the employees of the organization can communicate the brand. (Heinonen, Mursu & Wolff 2015.) By clarifying what kind of content is valuable for members as key stakeholders, LaatuKeskus aims to utilize content marketing in addressing more organizations and individuals. The content marketing guidelines aim to provide practical advice on how LaatuKeskus can create and share content.

As a part of the brand renewal, LaatuKeskus brand attributes were defined. The brand attributes are also included in the content marketing guidelines, as they are an important part of the content marketing of LaatuKeskus. They will be described in the next chapter, 2.5: LaatuKeskus brand attributes.

As the background information of the study, the author also included the email interviews that were conducted for an article in Laatu-lehti, an e-magazine published by LaatuKeskus, in the end of 2016. These interviews are not used as a source of data for the study but they are included in this chapter to provide more background information of

the Laatukeskus brand and why Laatukeskus membership is regarded as valuable. For the article, 20 contact persons of recently joined member organizations were interviewed by email in December 2016, and they were asked the reasons for joining the membership (see table 1).

Table 1. Reasons for joining the membership of Laatukeskus. (Laatukeskus 2016 d.)

| Reason for joining the membership   | Times mentioned |
|---|-----------------|
| Networking and benchmarking possibilities                                   | 6               |
| Support for the long-term quality development                               | 6               |
| The necessity of quality control for the organization                       | 5               |
| Developing competitiveness of the organization                              | 3               |
| Continuous development of operations  | 3               |
| Will to help forward Finland's competitiveness                              | 3               |
| Receiving information about the newest trends in quality                    | 3               |
| Versatile consulting services   | 2               |
| Best tools and operating models   | 2               |
| Will to be among the forerunners in quality                                 | 1               |
| Useful trainings  | 1               |
| Benefits concerning the whole personnel, and quality thinking at all levels | 1               |
| Developing the economic life at the business and organizational level       | 1               |
| Additional assets in Lean and Six Sigma knowledge                           | 1               |
| Recommendation by another organization                                      | 1               |

## 2.5 Laatukeskus brand attributes

The renewed brand is based on brand attributes that have been created as a part of the brand renewal. The brand attributes were defined in the beginning of 2017. Brand attributes as such were not defined before the brand renewal. Therefore, no comparison between the old and the new can be made.

The brand attributes are qualities that should be connected with Laatukeskus, and that Laatukeskus should take over. The attributes should be reflected in the content, style and interaction of the communication. The attributes are not meant to be used word for word, as they are planned to help the content creators support the brand. They will also be utilized in the content marketing guidelines.

The new brand attributes of Laatukeskus are:

- Expert of quality and operation development:  
Laatukeskus is known for its expertise and success stories among its stakeholders.
- Enabler of success and new leadership:  
Laatukeskus provides its members and customers the networks, know-how and tools to achieve the vision of a successful Finland.
- Attractive partner with a supporting network:  
Laatukeskus provides the largest network of quality professionals, where sense of community is experienced, know-how is shared and successes are rejoiced.
- Brave social influencer:  
Laatukeskus actively participates in public conversations and convincingly reveals its views.

The content marketing guidelines aims to support these brand attributes and therefore strengthen the brand of Laatukeskus. By including the key messages of the brand attributions in marketing communication, Laatukeskus communicates coherently and creates content that supports the brand. (Laatukeskus 2016 a.)

### **3 Literature review**

In this chapter, the theory and literature used for the research are reviewed. The structure of the literature review is:

- Brand
- Corporate communication
- Stakeholder communication
- Marketing communication
- Content marketing

These are the main theoretical concepts for the study. As the new brand is a part of Laatukeskus strategy, branding theory is the basis of the literature review. The research of this study is also based on the brand renewal, and therefore brands as a theoretical concept is needed to strengthen the Laatukeskus brand. The chapter 3.1: Brand includes theory on communicating the brand and branding in a B2B organization.

The second chapter of the literature review, Communication, explains the definition of communication, stakeholder communication and stakeholder relationships. As the introduction and background of the thesis described, Laatukeskus has defined stakeholder groups and a key stakeholder group, members. Members as key stakeholders have a significant role in research and therefore stakeholder relationships are included in the theoretical part as well.

The third chapter, Marketing communication, explains the theory of marketing communication and content marketing as a part of it. Content marketing is the largest part of the literature review, as the study aims to clarify how valuable content can be created for the stakeholders and how it supports the Laatukeskus strategy. The chapter 3.5: Content marketing explains the definition of content marketing, how content can be created and shared, and what is the role of content marketing guidelines for this study. Content marketing theory is the basis for the guidelines that are the final product of the study.

In this chapter, connecting the theory with the practical observations that have been made before conducting the research, are taken into account.

### 3.1 Brand

The American Marketing Association (AMA) has defined a brand as a 'name, term, sign, symbol, design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and differentiate them from those of competitors. This definition is the reason for a brand. A brand is there to enable a person to identify the provided alternative from another one provided by a competitor. A brand must also be a label that can be attached to a product or service to give information about it. (Percy, Pervan & Rosenbaum-Elliott 2011, 110.) As Laatukeskus had not defined its brand as a part of strategy before the brand renewal, the need for the organization to differentiate itself by branding emerged. The brand renewal aims to make the Laatukeskus brand more recognizable and visible, and it had not been identified by its stakeholders clearly enough. When starting the brand renewal, brand interviews for the Laatukeskus stakeholders were carried out. The brand interviews are a part of the research data and they are described in the chapter 4.2.2: Brand interviews by Miltton Group.

Another definition of a brand is a label, owned by a company or an organization, which is experienced, evaluated, created emotional connections with and perceived value of. Management of brands is management of perceptions, since brands exist in the minds of those that the brand is created for – the customers. Understanding of how perceptions are organized, how they influence behavior and how a brand can influence people's minds, is needed to manage brands strategically. (Percy, Pervan & Rosenbaum-Elliott 2011, 4.) A brand is connected to thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, experiences, beliefs and attitudes, which makes it a set of considerations that can be called a brand image. This way brand is the personality of something. Jonathan MacDonald has described the idea of brand democracy, stating that brand is not what the owner of it says it is but rather the sum of what everyone else says it is. The term touchpoint refers to an experience that an individual has with a brand. Even though a touchpoint is often indicated as an engagement or experience arisen from some of the brand owners' activity, such different marketing channels, it can also go beyond the brand-controlled experiences to word of mouth, social media touchpoints and more. (Rowles 2014, 7–8, 11.)

Brand image consists of the thoughts and feelings the customer or potential customer has towards the brand. Brand image can also be defined as perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand association in one's memory. It is the overall mental image of a brand and its uniqueness, compared to competitor brands. The Laatukeskus brand renewal strives to change and strengthen the perceptions stakeholders have towards the brand. A good brand image can have a positive influence on customer behavior towards

the brand – it can increase loyalty, generate positive word-of-mouth and help to achieve the price premium. Consequently, it can be stated that favorable brand images lead to greater customer loyalty. This is critical because attracting a new customer is always more expensive than retaining an old one. As a part of the new strategy, Laatukskus aims to strengthen its stakeholder relationships and utilizes brand communicating for building stronger connections with the stakeholder groups. Brand association can provide a reason for a purchase by creating positive feelings toward the brand, and this is an important benefit for the brand work of Laatukskus. A positive brand image is created by marketing measures that link unique and powerful associations to one's memory of the brand. Companies are able to improve the existing image of its brand by acquiring a better brand. (Lee, H-M, Lee, C-C & Wu 2011, 1093–1095.)

Brands provide important functions to their target groups as they identify the source of a product or service. People learn about brands because of past experiences with the service and the ways it has been marketed over time. They learn which brands respond to their needs and which ones do not, and this is how brands provide means of simplification for their decisions between different product and service providers. When the brand is recognized and a person has some knowledge about it, engaging in a lot of information processing is not needed to make a product or service decision. The relationship between a brand and the customer is important because it can lead to customers offering their trust and loyalty for the brand that they expect to behave in certain ways. This requires that the organization behind the brand provides the customer with consistent service performance and marketing. (Keller, Aaker & Garol 2012, 8–9.) Laatukskus intends to do this by utilizing content marketing as a part of the brand renewal to provide the stakeholders the content and service they need.

People have emotional associations about brands that they hold in their memory. That influences how they process information about the brand and how their emotions are linked to the processed information. Profiling these emotions and how they are linked to the brand will help to develop more effective marketing communication to strengthen the brand. (Percy, Pervan & Rosenbaum-Elliott 2011, 38.) Branding aims to create mental structures and help people organize their thoughts and knowledge about the provided services in a way that their decision-making is made easier. This provides value to the brand owner, as the key of branding is that people perceive differences between brands in a certain category. Brands can play an important role whenever people are deciding between options, which makes branding useful for the brand owner whenever a person is making a choice. (Keller, Aaker & Garol 2012, 16.) When people recognize the

Laatukeskus brand and associate it with positive feelings, they are also more likely to choose its services over another service provider.

### **3.1.1 Brand communication**

The boundaries between marketing, promotion and editorial content are blurring. Organizations today use the power of editorial content to achieve the objectives they have set for brand management. They are more and more devoted to strategizing their brand management in the media. Laatukeskus intends to use content marketing in strategic brand work. It believes that by creating and sharing content that is based on the customer needs, it will communicate a strong brand. "The brand" has now become recognized as the most valuable marketing asset to an organization. Brand management strategies are designed to shape brand image in the public domain, aiming to create shared emotions and attitudes. Brands are provided to potential customers as "cultural resources". (Dyson 2007, 634.)

Brands play a significant role in the current environment of a plethora of images. Depending on the categories of age, gender, social grouping and social hierarchy, brands play a role in the ways in which people communicate to each other. The meaning of brands creates added value to those affected by them. (Percy, Pervan & Rosenbaum-Elliott 2011, 67.) Added value for the stakeholders is the main objective of content marketing for Laatukeskus. Before the brand renewal Laatukeskus did not have a clear focus on stakeholders when creating content. The brand was not strategically communicated and therefore, there was a mismatch between the created content and the need for a stronger brand.

Brand awareness is the basis for the brand development – to prefer a certain brand people must be aware of it. Strong brand awareness can be a significant competitive advantage for an organization, and the power of it is in the sense of familiarity it brings. With the new strategy, Laatukeskus aims to raise awareness for the brand and make it as a competitive advantage. Presence, commitment and substance of the brand are also connected to strong brand awareness, and these are important factors especially in regards of high-priced purchases such business-to-business purchases. (Percy, Pervan & Rosenbaum-Elliott 2011, 93–94.) To create a strong positive brand equity effective marketing communication is needed. Brands are established and maintained with marketing communication, and without some form of it there would be no brand. As marketing communication raises awareness for a brand, it gives it a meaning, too. (Percy,

Pervan & Rosenbaum-Elliott 2011, 109–110.) For Laatukskus, content marketing will be a significant part of marketing communication that will build, develop and strengthen the brand. Brand attributes that were created as a part of the brand renewal, help to create content that supports the Laatukskus brand.

Brand can be seen as an open-ended object – it cannot be completely controlled by the marketer but it must be kept within the boundaries of the identity that has been planned for it. For an organization it has become crucial to strengthen the brand through multiple forms of media. (Dyson 2007, 640.) Marketing communication is required to build and maintain brand salience, which means occupying a salient position in the minds and consideration set of the target audience. Marketing communication must be planned in a way that the target audience immediately understands that the communication is for them and it is something they benefit from. (Percy, Pervan & Rosenbaum-Elliott 2011, 112.)

Brand positioning can be described to refer to how a brand is seen compared to its competitors, the benefits associated with a brand, and the 'distinct and valued place' in the target consumer's mind. It can also be thought as a comprehensive communication that tells the target group what the brand is, who it is for and why it is worth considering. There are two types of brand positioning: central and differentiated positioning. A centrally positioned brand consists of all the most essential benefits that are usually associated with the product or service in question. Therefore, a centrally positioned brand may represent the best product or service in its own category, being the category leader – as long as people believe it is. A differential positioning should be adopted by all the other brands, since it emphasizes an important benefit that is believed by the target group to be offered, and does this more effectively than other brands. (Percy, Pervan & Rosenbaum-Elliott 2011, 112.) Laatukskus aims to be the leader in quality and business development in Finland and differentiate itself with a strong brand.

Digital media has changed branding profoundly, leading to two-way communications between brands and consumers, allowing direct conversations online around the clock. It must be noted that some of the communication may not even involve the brand itself anymore, since potential customers can have a conversation about the brand with each other without having a contact with the owner of the brand. (Rowles 2014, 3.) Laatukskus builds the brand by developing the two-way communication with the stakeholders.

In a digital environment creating potential value is not enough to develop and maintain a brand. To get the potential customer to engage with the brand online, providing value is only one of the steps to take into consideration. Online visitors need a reason to engage



and to create dialogue by leaving feedback about the products and services and get themselves more involved. (Rowles 2014, 13.) Value proposition is a promise of value that must be appealing to the target audience, and digital branding allows the company to communicate this value proposition in a way that the target audience believes the value to be delivered (Rowles 2014, 15).

### **3.1.2 B2B branding**

If there is no brand, there is no marketing. With increasing competition, this statement applies to B2B as well as it does to B2C. Until 1990, majority of the B2B marketers did not understand the power of a brand-driven business. A limited customer base, rational buying behavior and very low communication spends are some reasons organizations used for rationalizing their lack of brands in B2B marketing. This has noticeably changed since then, although exceptions can still be seen. For the B2B customers brands have always been relevant, whether the companies have operated accordingly or not. Today brands have become more and more important for B2B customers because of the presence of hyper competition, information overload and increasing buying decision complexities in limited time, to mention a few. It is now acknowledged that strong brands influence the buying decisions in several buying situations, and therefore get a larger share of a business. Quality is the most important ingredient for all strong brands, since customers can rarely be misinformed any longer. Even though the relevance and suggestions to create a strong brand are recognized, many B2B marketers are still unable to create brand-driven businesses. (Sharad 2014, 91–92, 94, 98–99.) For Laatukskus the need for a stronger brand emerged along the strategy that aims to raise the awareness and make Laatukskus more visible. It was acknowledged that without brand renewal this could not be done.

In business to business decisions subjectivity is an equally important factor as it is in business to consumer world, and recommendations as a word-of-mouth strengthen the brand. (Wise & Zednickova 2009, 8.) A customer choosing between too otherwise equal options, is likely to prefer the stronger brand. In B2B services context this might be more complex since there is more emphasis on the ongoing relationship between the customer and the service provider. In order to build a strong brand B2B service organizations must focus on delivering high level service quality. Brand attitudes can also be seen as the most important determinant of contract renewal. Building a strong brand is the best strategy for achieving customer retention, and hence grow a business in a profitable way. (Roberts & Merrilees 2007, 410, 415.)

Companies have the principal responsibility for brand building, brand communication and controlling the brand image. This company-centered approach to B2B branding reviews a brand as a critical resource to a company's performance and its capacity to sustain competitive advantage. Strong brands are a source of competitive advantage that can facilitate long-term relationships between multiple stakeholders within and outside the company. Therefore, B2B companies might need to place more focus on developing quality relationships with their stakeholder groups. Various groups of stakeholders can potentially enhance brand value through their activities driven by existing brand perceptions. Different actions by stakeholders can affect a B2B brand value positively or negatively. (Tarnovskaya & Biedenbach 2016, 287–290.) By focusing on the needs of the stakeholders, Laatukeskus strives to provide the kind of content that is appealing for the stakeholders and strengthens their perceptions on the organization.

Business to business organizations are now rethinking how they are viewed by different stakeholders ranging from customers to employees and all the potential stakeholder groups in between. This requires practicing many of the elements of B2B branding, such as identifying the key audiences and planning the branding approaches to align with the business strategies. Employees of an organization have a significant role in the brand as they are the points of contact between an organization and customers. These customer touchpoints matter the most to the customers, and branding is a lot about how the organization behaves daily with the stakeholders. (Wise & Zednickova 2009, 5.) According to the literature on B2B branding brand strategies should be developed by observing the key components of brand value, and these aspects of brand value should be communicated to multiple stakeholders. (Tarnovskaya & Biedenbach 2016, 288.)

Brand equity is a set of assets and liabilities, and that can be seen to consist of five brand equity assets – brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand association and other proprietary brand assets that are fundamental for value creation. When customers are familiar with the brand and hold strong, favorable brand associations, a customer-based brand equity occurs. (Lee, H-M, Lee, C-C & Wu 2011, 1092.)

The lack of clarity on customer expectations, not using the right channels to reach the customers and the ignorance of relationship management are some of the reasons for the potential failure of B2B branding. (Sarin 2014, 92, 98.)

### **3.2 Corporate communication**

Corporate communication is a management function that oversees and coordinates the work of communication practitioners. The corporate communication function today is a range of specialized disciplines – corporate design and advertising, media relations, public affairs, investor relations, issues and crisis management, internal communication and change communication. This function focuses on how the organization presents itself as an entirety to all its internal and external stakeholders. Joep Cornelissen defines corporate communication as follows:

*“Corporate communication is a management function that offers a framework for the effective coordination of all internal and external communication with the overall purpose of establishing and maintaining favorable reputations with stakeholder groups upon which the organization is dependent.”*

Corporate communication requires an integrated approach to managing communication – transcending the specialties of different communication practices, crossing the boundaries to the strategic interests of the organization at large. This is based on the idea that the sustainability and success of a company depends on how it is viewed by stakeholders. Communication can build, maintain and protect this reputation. (Cornelissen 2017, 4–5.)

Corporate identity is the basic profile that an organization aims to be known of by its stakeholder groups. The objective is that different stakeholders have a favorable and broadly consistent image of the organization. This image must be in line with the corporate identity that is built by integrated communications including everything from advertising campaigns to websites, tones, themes and visuals. (Cornelissen 2017, 8.) This is also linked to building the brand, as strong brands are based on coherent communication that helps the stakeholder groups to form a consistent image of the organization.

### **3.3 Stakeholder communication**

A stakeholder, defined by Edward Freeman, is: “Any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s purpose and objectives.” Stakeholders hold a stake, which can be defined as an interest or a share in an organization. Stakes are held by different persons and groups that have specific interests in an

organization. Stakes are thus varied and an organization must be able to consider all their stakeholders' different interests. (Cornelissen 2014, 44.)

Edward Freeman has defined three types of stakes that different groups hold in the organization: equity stakes, economic or market stakes, and influencer stakes. Equity stakeholders have a direct ownership of the organization – they can be for example shareholders or members of the board. Economic or market stakeholders have an economic interest in the organization but they do not hold an ownership of it. Customers, suppliers, employees and competitors are examples of this group. Influencer stakeholders are interested in the organization as consumer advocates, environmental groups, trade organizations or government agencies but they do not have an ownership or economic interest in the organization or its' actions. To assess whether the interest of a group in the organization is economic or moral in nature, is the standard way of looking at stakes. Stakes can also be considered through formal agreements – to define whether a stakeholder has some kind of contract or agreement with the organization, is a second way of viewing stakes. (Cornelissen 2014, 44–45.)

As it was stated in chapter 2.3: Members as stakeholders of Laatukeskus, Laatukeskus has defined three stakeholder groups. They can be divided based on the three types of stakes by Edward Freeman. Members hold both, equity, and economic stakes of Laatukeskus, as the Finnish Quality Association is owned by the members but members are also customers of Laatukeskus. Two other stakeholder groups, political decision makers and officials, and media and opinion influencers, are influencer stakeholders. It should be noted that these influencer stakeholder groups can also be economic or market stakeholders, as some of them are customers of Laatukeskus. The stakeholder groups of Laatukeskus show that the division between different stakeholders is not always so definite.

To develop and protect their reputation organizations must communicate with their stakeholders. Many corporate organizations have realized that now more than ever listening to and communicating with different stakeholder groups is needed to build and maintain their reputation. Stakeholder management is a fundamental part of corporate communication, and it suggests that managers must think strategically about how they can effectively communicate with their stakeholders. Stakeholders include customers, investors, employees and members of the communities that the organization is involved with. (Cornelissen 2014, 41–42.)

The stakeholder model of strategic management suggests that all persons or groups who have an interest in an organization, aim to obtain benefits. There is no priority for one interest or benefit over another and organizations are in a two-way communication with their stakeholders. All the stakeholder groups have a competent stake in the organization, and the stakeholder management model recognizes the dependencies between organizations and various stakeholder groups. Stakeholders can affect the operations and performance of the organization but they are also affected by the operations of the organization themselves. All the groups with the legitimate interests in the organization must be considered and communicated with. This applies to both 'market' and 'non-market' stakeholder groups, stretching the means of the stakeholder management beyond financial accountability to include social and environmental meanings as well. This means that organizations engage with stakeholders for different reasons that can be instrumental or normative. Instrumental reasons indicate the connection between stakeholder management and corporate performance leading to increasing in revenues and reductions in costs. Normative reasons mean another perspective in which stakeholders are persons or groups that have interests in corporate activity of an organization, regardless of the corporation having any economic interest in them or not. (Cornelissen 2014, 43–44.)

The need for an increased focus on initiating and maintaining mutually beneficial dialogues between an organization and the stakeholders is now widely recognized. This is the idea of 'stakeholder enabling' stating that different stakeholders must be addressed in relation to the stakes they hold. Through their roles in relation to the organization, stakeholders have their own dialogue positions and in which they engage with the organization. (Johansen & Nielsen 2011, 206, 210.) In relation to Laatukskus, members are the key stakeholders and a continuing dialogue with them is fundamental for the activities of the organization. The communication between Laatukskus and its members enables the organization to develop dialogues with other stakeholder groups too, as the relationships with the key stakeholders are the basis for all strategical communication by Laatukskus. Stakeholder communication is a significant part of this study, as it examines what kind of content is valuable for the members as key stakeholders and how it can support the overall strategy of Laatukskus.

### **3.4 Marketing communication**

By marketing communication, organizations attempt to inform, persuade and remind customers about the products and services they market. Marketing communication helps the organization to build relationships with customers and it is the 'voice' of the company

and its brand. This way companies are able to link their brands to other people, places, experiences, feelings and things. (Kotler & Keller 2012, 776.)

In the communications environment of today, marketing communication consists of multiple components that form a marketing communications mix. It is a mix of eight major modes of communication: advertising, sales promotion, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, direct marketing, interactive marketing, word-of-mouth marketing and personal selling. Marketing communications has a direct link to brand equity that consists of brand awareness, brand image, brand responses and brand relationships. By getting informed about the brand by the means of communications, people form their opinions about the brand and possibly form a connection with the brand. (Kotler & Keller 2012, 777–779.) Therefore, marketing communication is more extensively linked to branding than corporate communication, even though they must be in line, as they both should support the strategy of the organization. Marketing communication aims to have an impact on stakeholders' actions, and a strong brand helps the organization earn certain behavior by the stakeholders. Along the brand renewal Laatukskus is now more focused on marketing communication, and creating and sharing valuable content by content marketing aims to support the new brand.

The environment for marketing communications is increasingly challenging, as technology and other factors have changed the ways of processing information. The matter of choice is also more powerful than ever – people have more choices on whether to process certain information at all. This means there are more options for marketers as well. They have a wide selection of media to use but in order to make the right choices they must know which channels, when and how their customers use the channels. (Kotler & Keller 2012, 777.) The matter of choice has become evident for Laatukskus as well, and by developing content marketing, Laatukskus aims to learn more about the content, channels and the right timing of communicating with the stakeholders.

### **3.5 Content marketing**

Content marketing is a part of marketing communication. Typically, content marketing has strong linkage to all customers and stakeholders, as they are influenced by the content marketing actions. Laatukskus will plan and implement content marketing as an important part of its marketing communication that supports the brand. Content marketing is formally defined as “the marketing and business process for creating and distributing valuable and compelling content to attract, acquire, and engage a defined and understood

target audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action” (Pulizzi 2014, 5). It is about creating content that is informative, valuable and compelling, thus positively affecting the lives of the targeted prospects and customers, making an impact on the business (Lieb 2012, XVI).

The different roles of editorial content is now transforming as organizations focus on creating and sharing media content as significant aspect of their marketing work. As media production and consumption have transformed, there is an inevitable blurring of boundaries between marketing, promotion and editorial content.

### **3.5.1 Creating content**

Content marketing focuses on the creation of a valuable experience and sharing the pieces of content that enrich the community and position the business on the top of the field (Pulizzi 2014, 5). Laatukeskus aims to create and share content that its stakeholders find valuable and that enriches the community of quality professionals and other stakeholders. This kind of content must be engaging, shareable and helping customers discover on their own the need for the product or service that is being provided. This marketing process is created to attract and retain customers by consistently refining content in order to effect on a consumer behavior. (Pulizzi 2014, 5–6.)

In the heart of defining content marketing is the idea of providing interesting information the customers are passionate about and this way making them pay attention to the company. This applies to all stakeholder groups, and Laatukeskus aims to create content for all customers and stakeholders. Instead of pitching the products or services, content marketing delivers information about them without direct selling. Behind the strategy is the belief that if organizations deliver consistent, ongoing valuable information to customers and potential customers, they ultimately reward the business with their loyalty. (Pulizzi 2014, 5–6.) As it has been stated, by content marketing Laatukeskus aims to build stronger relationships with the stakeholders and improve their loyalty with the organization.

Successful content marketing makes the customers more intelligent and creates an emotional connection between them and the business. Content marketing is different from simple content because it does something for the business with the objective of driving profitable customer action (Pulizzi 2014, 6 & 10). For Laatukeskus this means that the content it creates has objectives in terms of stakeholder actions. The content must be

valuable for the stakeholders, not only because of the objective of strengthening the relationships but to do that in a way that leads to certain actions among the stakeholders. Laatu keskus wants the stakeholders to get interested in having more information and help by using the services provided. Joe Pulizzi has defined the 'six principles of epic content marketing'. They rely on a thought that organizations need stories that engage the customers and move them to take action. The customer must be moved in some way – be positively affected, engaged – and the marketers must do what they can to stay involved in their conversations and lives. The content must fill a need – answer some unmet need of for the customer, and be useful in a way that the provided product or service can help. Being consistent is equally important. The content must always be delivered on time and as-expected. (Pulizzi 2014, 77–79.)

Content is nothing more than content, unless it drives behavior change in your customers and prospects. If this happens, it becomes content marketing. This kind of marketing must be anticipated and wanted, or it is not enough. Compelling content informs, engages or amuses. The created content must attract and retain customers in some way in order to accomplish the business goals of the company. By offering relevant content organizations can deliver tangible benefits to prospects and customers, and help produce solutions to the problems their audiences are facing. Delivering vital and relevant content to the target market gives the organization an opportunity to take an important role in its' customers' lives. This applies to all communication of the organization – online, print and in-person communications. Organizations today are faced with the fact that their customers are exposed to over 5 000 marketing messages per day. People have therefore become highly selective, and it is a challenge for organizations to differentiate themselves from others. (Pulizzi 2014, 10–11, 20.)

Content marketing efforts should not be built as campaigns but as ongoing initiatives that can build audiences. Some of the other challenges that marketers face are a lack of focus on building an audience over time, attempting to build value too quickly and not telling stories that differentiate. (Pophal 2016, 16–17.)

The objective of content marketing is to build an audience on the company's own channels. Two things should guide the decision of what the platform for the content must look like: how the stories will be told (the format) and where the stories will be told (the distribution channels). To reach the right audience the right tools are also required. (Spoon Agency, 2016.)



Well planned marketing is about knowing how to fit individual platforms together in order to build content that is much greater than the sum of its parts. Creating and generating content with a strategic purpose is more important than only continually creating it, without a strategic point of view. (Pophal 2016, 17.)

### **3.5.2 Benefits of content marketing**

Consistent storytelling is at the center of the brand publishers' actions. Helpful, valuable and compelling stories position brands as trusted experts in their fields. Good content can convert casual readers that are only passing by, into loyal ones that eventually may be converted into loyal customers. Using content to continually engage audiences throughout the entire customer life cycle can create passionate subscribers to the brand. Attracting and keeping an audience is the key of content marketing that leads to the long-term return – a loyal and engaged audience. Content marketing enables the interaction between the brand and the customers but only if the target audience's needs are always considered first. (Pulizzi 2014, 27, 42.)

The advantages of getting the customers and prospects coming to your organization, and not the other way around, are significant. They are interested and receptive because they have chosen the moment to be where the brand and the content are. Content marketing aims to gain brand recognition, authority, trust and loyalty. To succeed in that the content must be credible and authentic. (Lieb 2012, 2.)

The advantages of great content marketing can be accomplished on several levels: for the organization represented, for the products and services, and for the employees who represent the business (Lieb 2012, 2). The final product of this study, content marketing guidelines, are planned for the use of Laatukeskus employees. The guidelines aim to be of use for the employees to connect more extensively with the stakeholders. Therefore, the content marketing of Laatukeskus aims to bring positive outcomes for both, the stakeholders and Laatukeskus employees.

There are many reasons why content marketing has become so useful for organizations. The fact that there are no longer technology barriers is the main reason for the shift. Today anyone can publish content for free online, and it only takes five minutes or much less. In the past, the publishing process and content management were complex and expensive. What is notable is also that talent is more available than before. Journalists are

now more interested in working for non-media companies too, having made the move from the traditional media side. Content acceptance is also widespread – consumers decide on the spot as to what is credible and what is not. It is not only the traditionally acknowledged publications anymore that are accepted as qualified content. The use of social media has also affected on the popularity of content marketing. Most brands must deliver valuable and consistent information in social media in order to communicate effectively with the customers. Search engines have a significant role in content marketing too. Without a solid plan, the organization can't be found in Google or other search engines. According to Google, the key to be found in search is content shared from credible sources. (Pulizzi 2014, 22–23.) Laatukeskus will utilize search engine optimization as a part of content marketing. Search engine optimization is described in chapter 3.5.5.

There are 27 million pieces of content shared daily, and that is the main challenge for the marketers. Creating and distributing content that will differentiate and resonate with the audience is not enough – it should also generate the desired actions. (Pophal 2016, 16.) Laatukeskus must create content that is differentiated from the ones of competitors and is appealing to the stakeholder groups.

### **3.5.3 Content marketing channels**

Content marketing can be defined as “the creation and distribution of educational and/or compelling content in multiple formats to attract and/or retain customers”. It is an inbound marketing technique that is used through a web page or social media. It is value-add content that can be used to achieve and sustain a trusted and positive brand status, as well as any content marketing. In order to create valuable content for B2B audiences, companies must develop an understanding of their audience's information needs and interests, as well as their purchase consideration cycle. Digital content includes both the static content of web pages and dynamic rich media content such as videos and podcasts. In the recent years, there has been increasing interest in user-generated content and its role in influencing brands. This has happened with the advent of social media, as the development of brand communities and the co-creation of the brand have had new dimensions in the discussion about valuable content. Many suggest the core purpose of content marketing to be telling the story of the brand, not only broadcasting product or service based messages to the audiences. The most important point of developing a B2B brand story is to differentiate it from its competitors. (Holliman & Rowley 2014, 269–270, 272.)

In the web organizations pull customers to their brand websites through e-mail marketing, social media and search engine optimization. This makes the web a pull marketing environment, meaning that companies are seeking to capture the interest of customers who are already seeking certain information, a product or a service. Pull marketing environment encourages brands to use a customer-centered perspective to achieve loyalty from the customers and prospects they are seeking out. (Holliman & Rowley 2014, 269.)

B2B customers value the prepared and ready availability of rich information throughout the purchase process. This has advanced the rise of content marketing and its associated digital marketing techniques to become among the key priorities for both B2C and B2B marketers. (Holliman & Rowley 2014, 270.)

Digital content marketing in B2B context is not as clearly defined as in the context of B2C marketing. Content can be defined as anything created and uploaded to a website, or as anything the user comes to see, read or experience to the website. It can also be seen as the key component of telling the story of the brand and the product or service of the brand, in order to leave a positive brand image into the minds of the customers and prospects. Since content marketing is so widely used today, some simply refer to it as “the only marketing left”. (Holliman & Rowley 2014, 272.)

### **3.5.4 Marketing automation**

Measuring and analyzing the effectiveness of marketing and communication is necessary in content marketing. Marketing automation can be used in content marketing to learn what the customers find valuable and how to utilize this information the best possible way. Marketing automation helps in targeting the content accurately so that the stakeholder groups are always provided with the content that interests them. (Koodiviidakko 2017.) Laatukskus has not utilized marketing automation yet but is planning to put it to use to strengthen the effectiveness of content marketing in the future. The content marketing guidelines of Laatukskus do not discuss the use of marketing automation but the theory is included in this study to point out that automated marketing should be taken as a part of Laatukskus content marketing in the future.

The marketing automation system is mostly known as a tool for automated messages and message threads but most importantly, it can serve as the data bank for the entire

marketing of an organization. It collects data of all contacts online and creates suitable segments and reports out of the data. This is how the automation tool can be used for analyzing the marketing actions. In content marketing, this is especially important because of the different types of content created and the affects they have on the target groups. Without knowing the right kind of content and the right timing and channels for it, content marketing cannot do what it is designed for in the organization. (Koodiviidakko 2017.)

Comprehensive marketing automation tells the channels where the contacts have found the content, and if they will eventually be buying customers. Creating own segments for the people from different channels and finding integrative factors for them helps in recognizing the user groups of different channels. When the people become interested enough in the content, they can be provided with a possibility to get identified for example by extra content or a contest. This gives even more opportunities for the following marketing. (Koodiviidakko 2017.) For Laatukeskus this is useful in defining what kind of channels are favored by certain stakeholder groups and how this information can be used to improve the effectiveness of the shared content.

Marketing automation accentuates the main idea of content marketing: the content that genuinely is of use to the customer, is the easiest way to approach. The automation tool gives ways to both, sending or sharing the content, and examining the subscribers more closely. As well as in content marketing, the final aims and objectives must be kept in mind when using marketing automation. The aim can be a new customer, strengthening an old customer relationship, pursuing visibility, or something else – but examining the event history of the marketing path is needed. (Koodiviidakko 2017.)

### **3.5.5 Search engine optimization**

Search engine optimization (SEO) is also an important part of content marketing. Taking search engine optimization into account when planning content marketing, helps in targeting the content on all channels. The SEO basics are included in the content marketing guidelines of this study, as they must be taken into account in all content marketing of Laatukeskus.

There are two ways to get traffic to the website: by earning it and buying it. The traffic can be earned by search engine optimization, public relations and viral. Earning is harder today because of the large number of websites competing of the visits. Buying the traffic is

more and more important today, and it can be done in different ways: Google Adwords, social media advertising, native advertising and retargeting. (Rouhiainen 2017.)

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the term for the methods that can be used to ensure the visibility of a website on search engine results pages. SEO is based on building a strong website architecture and this way providing clear navigation that will help search engines index the site. A site that is optimized for search engines provide visitors with a good user experience and encourages repeated visits. (Ratcliff 2016.)

SEO aims to improve rankings, drive traffic and increase awareness in search engines. It encompasses the technical and creative elements required to achieve the best results. Google, Bing and Yahoo! are the major commercial search engines that the majority of traffic on the web is driven by. For most internet users search engines are the primary method of navigation, and this applies to all kinds of websites. Search engines provide targeted traffic and help people find what they are looking for – by leading them to the sites that provide what they are looking for. Search engine traffic can make or break an organization's success because it can provide publicity, revenue and exposure like no other channel of marketing. (Fishkin 2017.)

Search engine optimization is divided to on and off page optimization. *On page SEO* is everything that is done on the website: relevant terms, user experience, freshness and quality of content, mobile optimization and site speed. *Off page SEO* is everything outside the website: backlinks and social signals. These all are SEO ranking factors – the factors that help websites rank higher than others on the search engine results. The first factor is *relevant terms* that is based on using the right keywords on the site and in social media. *User experience* is increasingly important today, as Google knows everything people are doing on the websites – especially how much time they spend on the site, whether they are scrolling down the site. *Backlinks* are the links that link to the website from another site. *Freshness and quality of content* is in a significant role because of the importance of right timing. When targeted and quality content is published at the right time, more people will find the content. *Social signals* means the links from different social media sites to the website. *Site speed* is a factor that may not be the obvious one but must be remembered that speed is always important in digital marketing. The faster the website opens the better, and this especially applies to mobile use. *Mobile optimization* is undeniably necessary today – everything that is published should be mobile responsive. (Rouhiainen 2017.) All of these factors must be considered when planning and creating the content of Laatukeskus.

### 3.5.6 Content marketing planning and guidelines

The aim of the study is to create content marketing guidelines. A guideline is *“information intended to advise people on how something should be done or what something should be”*. (Cambridge University Press 2017.) It is also *“recommended practice that allows some discretion or leeway in its interpretation, implementation, or use”*. (WebFinance Inc. 2017.)

Content marketing guidelines was chosen as the production of the study because of the practicality and advice it provides to the content marketing of the organization. The employees of Laatukeskus have the professionalism and expertise of the services Laatukeskus provides but they are lacking knowledge and guidance about how to create and share valuable content for the members and other customers. Content marketing guidelines will help in producing and distributing the right kind of content in the right channels. Not everyone in the organization must be a specialist in content marketing but most must know what kind of information the members and other stakeholders find valuable and how this information can be created and shared in a way that it reaches them. Practical guidance and examples will provide the needed help. The content marketing guidelines will guide the content production of Laatukeskus in accordance with the new strategy and brand. It will give the employees instructions and tools, and support the communication of Laatukeskus that strengthens the brand.

This study does not aim to develop a content marketing plan but it is still needed to understand the concept of it. Sprout Social, Inc. has assembled tips for creating a successful content marketing plan. The first step is to identify the purpose – determine the reason that is driving the need for content. Deciding what must be prioritized in the plan is equally important. Does the company want to tell their brand story or understand its audience better? In 2016 the Content Marketing Institute stated that creating more engaging content is the main priority for B2B marketers to develop a content marketing plan. The content marketing plan helps the company to achieve its organizational goals, and to do so, the company must define what it wants to achieve. Knowing and defining the audience is needed to reach the right people at the right places. Only after this, the content types that show uniqueness can be chosen. Identifying challenges, optimizing the content for search, crafting a distribution plan and committing to a schedule are all parts of a successful content marketing plan. (Sprout Social 2016.)

This research provides a basis for future creation and development of a content marketing strategy. A good content marketing strategy results in four times more effective content marketing than without the strategy. A content marketing strategy is a company's long-term plan for achieving overall goals of content marketing. Planning the strategy starts with understanding the problem that is to be solved. Carrying out careful research and considering the challenges and circumstances help in developing the strategy. Organizations must clarify to themselves what makes their content so unique and attractive that the audience is likely to have an interest in it. What kind of problems does the provided content solve and how does this content support overall business? (Spoon Agency 2016, 6.)

Defining a good strategy is not always easy, and clarifying the differences between a good and bad strategy may help. A bad strategy fails to recognize the problem, documenting incoherent goals that contradict each other. A good strategy is a response on how to solve a business challenge, involving focus and choice. A good strategy is based on three steps: a clear understanding of the challenge, a guiding policy and a set of coherent actions. Understanding of the challenge involves an analysis of the situation, generating insights about the weaknesses and obstacles. Without recognizing them, they cannot be overcome. A guiding policy describes how to concentrate the resources and proceed in a specific direction. A set of coherent actions aims to help solving the challenge by concrete action steps. At this stage, leveraging the company's strengths and resources will benefit in overcoming the defined obstacles. (Spoon Agency 2017.)

### **3.6 Summarising the literature**

Branding has a strong linkage to the strategy of the organization. To build a strong brand that is based on the strategy, all communication must support the brand. For effective communication, deep customer understanding is needed. By knowing the customers and stakeholders, the organization can create content that corresponds to the needs and helps the organization strengthen its brand. By utilizing diverse marketing communication tools, and methods such as content marketing, right kind of content can be created and shared for the stakeholders.

Without knowing the needs of the stakeholder groups, brands cannot be developed. When Laatukskus has recognized the stakeholders' needs, it can create content that answers those needs. Content marketing aims to achieve the strategical aims of Laatukskus by

supporting the brand and thus creating and sharing content that strengthens the stakeholder relationships.



## **4 Conducting the research: methodology and data**

In this chapter the research methodology, data collection methods, and interpreting and analyzing of the data are explained. This study is a constructive research, and the definition of constructive research approach is described. The data was collected from two different main sources using qualitative methods, which are explained. The reliability and validity of the study are also reviewed.

### **4.1 Constructive research approach**

A constructive research aims to create a concrete output such as a plan or a model. The basis of a constructive research is practical problem solving that creates a new kind of composition. Existing theoretical information is needed to create the new structure, with the help of empirical practice based knowledge. This process means building a new kind of reality that is based on the research information. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2015, 65.)

Constructive research approach resembles both, service design and producing new innovations. However, this approach is suitable for many other kinds of productions as well – a new book, plan or guidelines are examples of structures that have come from a practical need, as a result of comprehensive development. A new and theoretically rationalized solution is the final objective of constructive research, as it brings new knowledge for the community. The benefit of the approach is a practical solution that relates to the theory. Constructive research approach also emphasizes the interaction and communication between the utilizer and the executor of the research. The solution for the problem must be functional for the target organization, and possibly for some other relations as well. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2015, 65.) The outcome of this thesis are the content marketing guidelines that will be utilized by the employees of Laatukeskus in creating content for the customers and stakeholders. As stated earlier, not all theoretical viewpoints of the study will be considered in the content marketing guidelines but they will be utilized in the future development of Laatukeskus content marketing.

A constructive research process requires theoretical reasoning. The used theories must show especially in composing the solution. Documenting the different phases of the research is important, and a well-documented research can provide long-term benefits for the target organization. The development project and its aims and objectives are required

to be documented, and in the end of the research the final solution must be clearly reasoned. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2009, 67.)

Constructive research is the right approach when the aim is to create a concrete output (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2015, 65). The content marketing guidelines of Laatukskus are a practical and concrete output that brings benefits for the case organization and its personnel. The guidelines aim to develop content marketing as a part of Laatukskus brand, and interaction between the organization and the author is crucial to conduct the research. This corresponds to the principles of constructive research, as the study aims to change and improve the operations and practices of the organization. Theoretical knowledge is also needed to implement the study.

## **4.2 Data collection**

In this chapter, the data collection methods and data sources of the study are described. Data for this study was collected using qualitative methods. There were two main sources of data for the research: the brand interviews conducted by Milton Group before the thesis work, and the member interviews conducted by the author at the beginning of the research. Member interviews were the primary source, and brand interviews were the secondary data source.

### **4.2.1 Qualitative research methods used in the study**

Qualitative research strives to comprehend a phenomenon. It is the key to understand a phenomenon and thus to theorize it. Describing certain things is only possible through qualitative means, and the reactions and approaches of people are among them, since they are best described as a text. Qualitative research suits best the following situation: the phenomenon is not well known (there is no information, theory or research concerning it), and the aim is to get a deep understanding and description of the phenomenon. (Kananen 2015, 70–71.) The subject of this study, clarifying how valuable content can be created to support the Laatukskus strategy, is a phenomenon that is not well known, and the case organization needs deeper understanding of it. Therefore, qualitative methods were chosen as the research methods of this study.

Qualitative research generates words and sentences that are used by the examinee to describe the phenomenon and the occurrences of it, as well as the interactions it includes. (Kananen 2015, 82). Interviews and observation were used as the qualitative methods in

the research. Interview is a highly flexible method to collect data, and therefore suitable for many different kinds of research purposes. An interview enables a direct linguistic interaction with the examinee, and it creates a possibility to direct the collecting of data in the actual situation. This also enables finding motives behind the received answers. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2015, 34.)

In an interview the person in the research situation is given the opportunity to freely disclose the matters that concern oneself. The interviewee creates meanings and is an active side. There is an area that has not been researched yet, and it is hard for the researcher to predict the directions of the answers. An interview aims to place the answers of the interviewee to a larger entirety, and it is known beforehand that the research subject will cause answers that point at many directions. It is a mission of the interviewer to forward the thoughts, perceptions and experiences of the interviewee. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2015, 35, 41.)

The interviews conducted in this research by the author are semi structured theme interviews. The interview framework is in the appendix 1 of the thesis. In a theme interview profound information about the research phenomenon is gathered through certain themes. The researcher aimed to have profound discussions with the interviewees, and by using semi structured theme interviews the discussions were not too formulated, and the interviewees were able to use the time they needed for answering.

The interviews of this study were not entirely unstructured because the questions and the preliminary order of them were formed in advance. The semi structured method enabled that the procession of the interviews was not strictly ordered beforehand but the themes and questions regarding them were still planned in advance. The researcher formulated the interview questions based on the research questions of the study.

Theme interview is counted as an unstructured interview that has flexible forms regarding the content and order of the questions. In a theme interview the course of the discussion is uncontrolled but by planning the themes in advance, the researcher guarantees the topic entireties that are being discussed. Theme interview aims to find matters regarding the research questions to raise the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon. (Kananen 2015, 144–145, 148.)

#### **4.2.2 Brand interviews by Miltton Group**

Brand interviews by Miltton Group were the secondary source of data for the study. They were planned to be conducted as part of the new strategy, for starting the brand renewal. Miltton Group is the marketing agency partner of the Laatukeskus brand renewal.

Laatukeskus needed background information for the brand renewal and asked Miltton to carry out brand interviews to collect data from the stakeholders of Laatukeskus. The brand interviews were carried at the beginning of 2016, before this research was started. The brand interviews were utilized in the study due to their relevant context regarding the brand renewal and the perceptions of the stakeholders.

The need for the brand interviews emerged at the beginning of the brand renewal. Laatukeskus ordered the brand interviews from Miltton to get a diverse view of how different kinds of stakeholder groups perceive the Laatukeskus brand. For this purpose, Laatukeskus provided Miltton with the contact information of different kinds of member organizations and other co-operation partners such as associations and ministries. Miltton contacted them directly. The brand interviews were implemented anonymously and Laatukeskus was not informed which companies, partners and people were eventually interviewed. Miltton implemented altogether 8 interviews that were all carried out on the phone. The interviews lasted for 20 to 45 minutes. The interview frame included questions about the actions, visibility and brand of Laatukeskus. The precise questions were not told to Laatukeskus, or the author of this research. The outcome of the brand interviews was an executive summary that was provided to Laatukeskus as a presentation.

The author utilized the executive summary for this research. The brand interviews were useful for this study because they gave significant background information about the brand image of Laatukeskus, and what the brand is missing according to the stakeholders. As this study aims to support the strategy and brand of Laatukeskus, the background information was a valuable basis for the study. Even though the brand interviews were originally carried out for the brand renewal, the data received from them also supported the basis for collecting the primary data of the study, the member interviews.

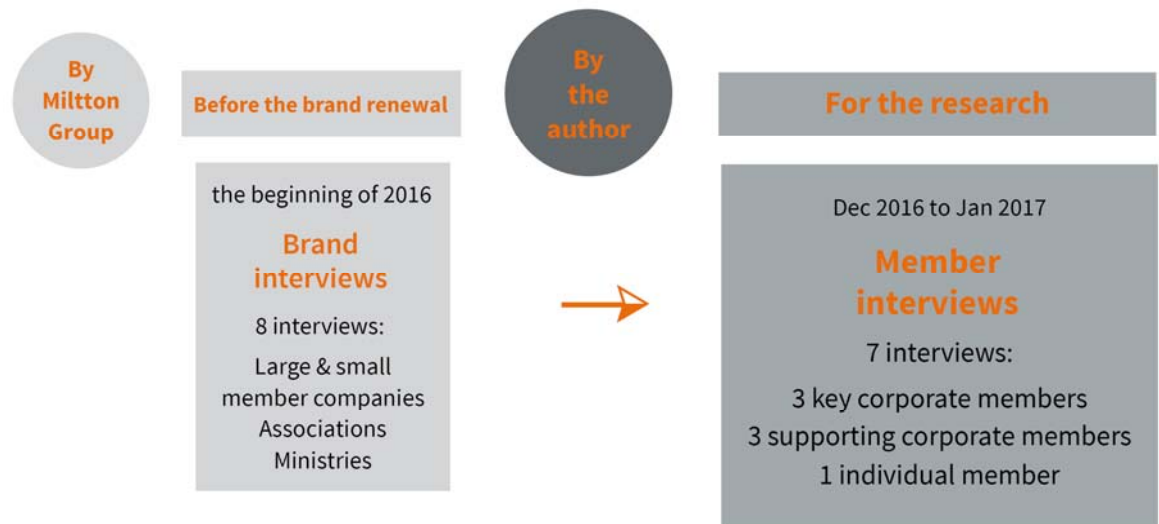


Image 5. Data collection process of the study.

#### 4.2.3 Member interviews by the author

Member interviews are the primary source of data for the study. As members are the most important stakeholder group of Laatukeskus, it was necessary for the research to collect data from them. The aim of the study is to clarify how to create valuable content to support the new Laatukeskus strategy. The brand interviews by Miltton Group were a good basis for the data collection but more information about the perceptions and needs of the members as key stakeholders was needed.

The member interviews aimed to find answers for the research questions:

- What kind of content do the members as key stakeholders find valuable?
- How and where should the content be shared?
- What is the members' view of the Laatukeskus brand?

Semi-structured theme interviews were conducted to collect primary data from the members of Laatukeskus. As it was mentioned in chapter 4.2.1, semi-structured theme interviews was the best method to collect data from the members. In the member interview data collection, all membership types were included. Each interviewee represents one of the following membership categories: key corporate members, supporting corporate members or individual members.

From the organization members, which are divided into key corporate members and

supporting corporate members, the contact persons of the organizations were chosen as the target group of the interviews. The role of the contact person is to act as the main contact between Laatukeskus and the member organization. Most commonly the contact person works in the business development or quality development of the organization, and therefore has a strong personal interest in themes regarding quality and development. Their main mission as a membership contact person is to forward information and knowledge received through the membership to their own organization, hence they are a highly significant target group for Laatukeskus.

In most member organizations, the contact person is participating in the decision-making processes of acquiring consulting services and training for the quality and business development professionals of the organization, including themselves. The content provided by Laatukeskus is highly important for them due to the role they have in the organization. They have the key role in increasing quality knowledge in their organization but to do that, they need valuable information worth paying attention to. Therefore, to clarify what kind of content the members as key stakeholders find valuable, it was needed to interview the contact persons of member organizations, or individual members.

As it was described in chapter 2.3: Members as key stakeholders of Laatukeskus, individual members have an interest in quality development but they do not have a reason to have a corporate membership due to their personal situation. As members they still hold a key stake of Laatukeskus, and were an equally good target for member interviews as the contact person of corporate members.

The first step of conducting the member interviews was to collect a list of potential interviewees. The author discussed with two consultants of Laatukeskus to clarify their opinions on which contact persons and organizations should be included in the member interviews. A list of 19 names was then collected together – consisting of 11 key corporate members, 4 supporting corporate members and 4 individual members. Choosing these people was based on the diversity they represented among the members, and their activity. The aim was to interview persons who have been active with Laatukeskus on some level – members who had just recently joined or who had not shown any activity in their membership for many years were not included.

All the persons on the list were sent an email introducing the research and the aim, and kindly requesting for a permission to interview the recipient anonymously (see appendix 2). The emails were written in Finnish as all the recipients speak Finnish. 12 interviewees replied to the email, four of them telling they were not able to participate in the research.

Altogether 8 recipients told they were interested in getting interviewed. With each of them, a time and place for the interview was scheduled. One of the interviewees had to cancel the appointment and a new one could not be scheduled. This resulted in 7 actualized interviews.

The seven interviewees include three contact persons of key corporate members, three contact persons of supporting corporate members and one individual member. All the interviews were conducted in Finnish. Six interviews were carried out face to face, in the business premises of the interviewees. One of the interviews was carried out by phone. The shortest interview took 20 minutes and the longest one hour. All the interviews were recorded by a mobile phone recorder, and notes were made during each interview, for the analyzing of data. The interviewee information is described in table 1, and in more detail in appendix 3.

| <b>Title</b>                 | <b>Role in the organization</b>                           | <b>Field of Business</b>                   | <b>Membership type</b>      | <b>Member since</b> | <b>Date of the interview</b> | <b>Interview length</b> |
|------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Head of Global Quality       | Quality development, project management etc.              | Software design and production             | Supporting corporate member | 6.8.2010            | 5.12.2016                    | 0:15:46                 |
| Quality Director             | Quality work coordinating and self assessment             | Vocational education                       | Supporting corporate member | 30.3.2010           | 8.12.2016                    | 00:53:06                |
| Business Development Manager | Quality development and coordinating management           | Telecommunication, ICT and online services | Key corporate member        | 1.11.1995           | 30.12.2016                   | 00:58:16                |
| Quality Manager              | Quality development                                       | Producer of bioproducts and bioenergy      | Key corporate member        | 10.4.2002           | 2.1.2017                     | 00:28:45                |
| Director of Development      | Quality management  | Vocational education                       | Supporting corporate member | 1.1.1994            | 11.1.2017                    | 0:32:46                 |
| Quality Manager              | Quality management  | Safety authority                           | Key corporate member        | 16.3.2010           | 13.1.2017                    | 0:39:33                 |
| Project Manager              | Quality in product development, sales, marketing, revenue | Passenger traffic on the sea               | Individual member           | 11.2.2016           | 18.1.2017                    | 00:42:11                |

Table 1. Member interviewees.

### **4.3 Interpreting and analyzing the data**

In this chapter the interpreting and analyzing of the data is described. Both main sources of data, the brand interviews and the member interviews, are included. The author did not take part in the brand interviews, as they were carried out by Miltton Group before the research, for the background of the brand renewal. Therefore, the author also did not see the original brand interview material. The results of the brand interviews were analyzed by Miltton Group and as stated earlier, Laatukeskus was provided with the executive summary of brand interviews. The author utilized the executive summary from Miltton by reading the material and using the received information for the research. The main content of the executive summary is included in the findings of this thesis.

The member interviews were carried out by the author in December 2016 and January 2017, and they were interpreted and analyzed at the beginning of 2017, when all interviews had been conducted. All member interviews were recorded, and notes during the interviews were also made. After each interview, the author listened the recording through, read the written notes and wrote the answers in Finnish. The interviews were not transcribed but most of their content was written out to analyze the answers. Transcribing means the transcribing of recorded material (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2015, 110). Transcriptions were not needed, as the interview situations also included conversation that were not related to the interview questions or the research. A precise transcription is needed when all the words used during the interviews are meaningful for the research. If only the content of the answers is significant, transcription is not required. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2015, 107.) The author recognized the relevant content of the interviews and wrote those parts to analyze the answers. Interpreting and analyzing of the data was started by reading through the written interview material and translating it in English. After this, the author highlighted the key words and sentences that were relevant for the questions, and marked all identical answers. This helped the author to form a comprehensive picture of the interview findings.

The findings of the member interviews were first grouped in the order of the interview structure but for the findings and discussion of the thesis they were divided into three parts according to the subject: the preferred content by members, the channels preferred by members and the Laatukeskus brand (attributes). This division was clearer from the research questions' point of view, as each part answers to one of the research questions.



The division of the findings and discussion per research question is:

Content:

Answers for RQ1: What kind of content do the members as key stakeholders find valuable?

Channels:

Answers for RQ2: How and where should the content be shared?

Brand:

Answers for RQ3: What is the members' view of the Laatukeskus brand?

#### **4.4 Reliability and validity of the study**

Reliability means the trustworthiness of the measurement, and validity means the accuracy of the measurement (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2015, 105). This study is reliable because the choice of the target group for interviews supports the purpose of the study. The research is valid due to the answers received from the data collection, as they correspond to the research questions. The findings of both main sources of data, the brand interviews and the member interviews, support each other.

Brand interviews by Miltton Group are the secondary source of data for the research. They were carried out for the brand renewal work, before the thesis, and the conductor of them, Miltton, did not explain the research process of the interviews. Therefore, it is hard to evaluate the reliability and validity of the brand interviews. The brand interview data of the executive summary received from Miltton was valuable for the research and the author considered it to be important to be included in the study.

Member interviews are the primary data source for the research. Validity of the research was improved with member interview questions that were relevant to the defined research questions. The member interview frame was carefully planned, so that the interviews would include the right questions. When planning the interview frame, its semi-structured template was considered, and it was not intended to control the course of questions and answers too strictly during the interviews. The interview questions were edited twice to define them correctly. However, testing the interview questions was not regarded as needed. Both, the thesis supervisor, and the case organization approved the final interview frame before putting it to use.

Seven member interviews were carried out. The original objective was eight interviews but seven was a sufficient amount for the success of the research. According to the original plan, the interviewees represented all three membership types and different kinds of organizations. The validity of the questions was good, as it was easy to find continual answers among the answers, and the findings answered to the research questions.

## 5 Findings

This chapter discusses the findings of the research. First will be presented the findings from the brand interviews conducted by Miltton Group, and after that those from the member interviews conducted by the author. The brand interview data has been the basis for the member interviews.

Findings explain the results of the brand interviews and member interviews, describing the main content of the answers. In the findings, the connected answers have been aimed to be stated, and quotations are also included.

### 5.1 Brand interview data

The brand interviews were conducted by Miltton Group in the beginning of 2016, at the start of the brand renewal. They were implemented to clarify the brand image of Laatukskus, before the brand renewal. As it was stated in chapter 4.2.2: Brand interviews by Miltton Group, Miltton did not share information about which stakeholders were interviewed and what the exact interview frame was. Laatukskus and the author received an executive summary from Miltton and the content of the summary is explained in this brand interview data. 8 background interviews for different stakeholder representatives were conducted. The interviews included questions regarding the actions, visibility and brand of Laatukskus. To get a diverse view, interviewees from both large and small companies, and associations and ministries, were chosen. (Miltton Group 2016, 3.)

The interviewees saw that the work for quality and competitiveness by Laatukskus is very important. However, from their point of view Laatukskus was still not profiled as a societal conversationalist even though possibilities for that exist. In their opinion Laatukskus could adduce their societal agenda more strongly and utilize the large group of its stakeholder organizations to be profiled as an influencer. Some of the interviewees were very concerned about the state of Finnish quality and competitiveness, and saw that Laatukskus could have a significant role in developing these issues. (Miltton Group 2016, 4.)

The following statements are typical quotes from the brand interviews:

*“Quality is the enabler of sustainable development. Now there would be a good chance to participate in the current societal discussion.”*

*“The societal goal of Laatukeskus is unclear. I don’t want to be too critical but what is the mission of Laatukeskus?”*

(Miltton Group 2016, 5.)

The image of Laatukeskus is seen as either unclear or very neutral. It emerged that the interviewees see the actions of Laatukeskus as high-class, believable and trustworthy but this does not appear outwards. The image of Laatukeskus had brightened for them only during the co-operation but before that the brand had been either unknown or very neutral for them. They also mentioned that the story of Laatukeskus was not very clear and that the bigger sights and accomplishments should be highlighted more. On a scale from 1 to 5 the interviewees graded the brand of Laatukeskus as 2 or 3. (Miltton Group 2016, 6.)

Some quotes by the brand interviewees are included in the findings but not all of them are presented in this study. The following are typical quotes concerning the brand image:

*“In a way, the brand is premium but a little bit hidden. What is being done is premium but how it is adduced remains a bit incomplete.”*

*“The professionalism (of Laatukeskus) was personified by a specialist who was known beforehand and whom we wanted to be a part of the project. Without this person, I wouldn’t have known that I should call Laatukeskus.”*

(Miltton Group 2016, 7.)

*“Strong brands remain, and it (the brand of Laatukeskus) could be stronger too. It is not about the logo or statement but about the profound question of what is the meaning of leadership in the quality of Finnish organizations.”*

(Miltton Group 2016, 9.)

The main conclusion was that the image must be developed in a way that it corresponds to the excellent work by Laatukeskus. The biggest challenges are invisibility in the public conversation and a visual brand that does not stay in mind, thus being unknown for potential members and customers. Laatukeskus should emphasize the accomplishments, people behind the work and the networking possibilities. (Miltton Group 2016, 14.)

After examining the brand interview data by Miltton Group, the author conducted a SWOT analysis for the thesis (see Table 2). The SWOT is based on the brand interview data, and it analyses the brand image of Laatukeskus as it was at the time of starting the brand renewal in the beginning of 2016, before this research was started. The SWOT includes data from the brand interviews but also the author's own perceptions regarding the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Laatukeskus brand in the beginning of the brand renewal. By doing the SWOT, the author aimed to clarify why strengthening the brand by creating valuable content for the stakeholders is needed.

Table 2. The brand of Laatukeskus – SWOT.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work for quality and competitiveness as an important factor for Finnish companies</li> <li>• A strong position as a forerunner among the Quality Associations of Europe</li> <li>• Convincing performances in the personal discussions with the customers</li> <li>• An image that Laatukeskus has a good purpose</li> <li>• Networking possibilities</li> <li>• An organizer of quality trainings</li> <li>• A “good drive” for doing things</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The qualified operating of Laatukeskus doesn’t show outwards</li> <li>• The brand is either unknown or very neutral</li> <li>• The story of Laatukeskus is not clear</li> <li>• The bigger sight and accomplishments are not adduced enough</li> <li>• Not profiled as a societal conversationalist</li> <li>• Lack of modernity such as webinars, distant studying, videos and active presence on social media</li> </ul> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility to be a societal avant-guard in the discussion of Finnish quality and competitiveness</li> <li>• Utilization of the large scale of organizations as stakeholders</li> <li>• Adducing accomplishments through case examples that tell how the work of Laatukeskus has concretely effected</li> <li>• Potential to profile as a discussion leader in developing competitiveness</li> </ul>   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laatukeskus is a relatively small actor</li> <li>• The challenge of differentiating in the field of operations development</li> <li>• How to convince the media and the opinion influencers</li> <li>• The amount of time it will take to renew the brand and start to see the concrete effects</li> </ul>  |

## 5.2 Member interview data

The member interviews are the primary source of data for the study. They were conducted for this thesis in December 2016 and January 2017, a year after the brand renewal had started. The brand interviews conducted by Miltton Group for the brand renewal provided good basis knowledge for the research but information about the perceptions of members as key stakeholders was needed to clarify what kind of content is valuable and supports the Laatukeskus strategy.

The member interview questions are based on the research questions:

RQ1: What kind of content do the members as key stakeholders find valuable?

RQ2: How and where should the content be shared?

RQ3: What is the members' view of the Laatukeskus brand?

The semi-structured theme interview questions provide answers on what kind of content the members as key stakeholders of Laatukeskus find valuable, how and where this content can be shared, and what is the members' view of the Laatukeskus brand. The member interview questions included questions that were categorized into three themes:

- Relationship with the current content published by Laatukeskus
- Searching for information and the most important themes in work
- Image of Laatukeskus as an operator and the meaning of quality

The findings of the interviews are divided into three main themes that will help in concluding the content marketing guidelines: content, channels and brand. This division does not follow the structure of the theme interview questions. In the findings, each theme – content, channels and brand – includes sections regarding the theme.

The findings are explained in the following order:

### **Content**

- Content themes
- Laatukeskus member newsletter
- International content

### **Channels**

- Primary sources of information for the members
- The website
- Social media channels
- Personalized notifications

### **Brand**

- The value of membership for the members
- Brand image
- The meaning of quality for the members

### 5.2.1 Content

This theme explains the findings for valuable and needed content. To examine what kind of content the members of Laatukeskus find valuable, different aspects of the current and needed content were included in the interview questions. This aims to answer the first research question: what kind of content do the members as key stakeholders find valuable?

#### Content themes

The most important and interesting themes in members' work were inquired to identify what kind of topics the members are more specifically interested in. This helps in planning and developing content that is based on the needs of the members.

The following themes were mentioned:

- Project management related themes
- Change and leading change
- Leadership
- Lean
- Increasing the efficiency
- Process models
- Continuous improvement
- Trends, in Finland and globally
- International benchmarks
- The EFQM Excellence Model
- Initialization of the ISO 9000 2015
- Measuring and evaluating customer experience
- Defining the customer promise
- Audit training

It was also notified by the members that for them a wide range of quality related themes are equally interesting because some of the interviewees work for a large organization.

The members were also asked what kind of communication targeted exclusively for members they would like to receive more.

It was mentioned that more communication about the seminars of Laatukeskus *afterwards*



would be appreciated. Summaries of the keynotes and other presentations were pointed out, reminding that the effectiveness of many things is based on repetition. It was also reminded that getting information of the best events around the world would be a beneficial help to find out the ones worth knowing. It was noted that the events of Laatukskus are lacking publicity value, and marketing should be done more regularly to others than only members as well.

The need to receive more information about the membership advantages was also underlined. It was stated that some of the products and services need more consistency in how they are presented, as continually changing the names of certain products has been confusing. More reportage about the award winners and information about trainings were mentioned as well.

Book and publication recommendations were accentuated as something that would help the members to find new literature. An interest in relevant blog posts was also highlighted. One interviewee had read blog posts by another service provider, Quality Knowhow Karjalainen, and found them helpful. In his opinion, blog posts that are related to the events by Laatukskus, would make him more interested in joining the events. Twitter feed was also noted as a very good tool for following what is happening in quality. It was indicated that Twitter topics are easy to see at the front page of the website even if the site visitor doesn't have his own Twitter account.

According to the interviewees, a member newsletter in general is very needed. They noted that Laatukskus needs more "personal touch" in communication. More information about the people working at Laatukskus, and the expertise they can provide, is needed. The partners Laatukskus cooperates with was also mentioned as a compelling factor.

### **Laatukskus member newsletter**

Member newsletters are sent to both corporate and individual members. Until recently the frequency has been quite irregular, approximately 3 times per year. The most interesting themes of member newsletters were examined to define the main topics of interest to be included.

Only two out of seven interviewees remembered having read the member newsletter. They told it depends on the situation what kind of topics they are interested in. In case they notice the newsletter, they still always have a glance at it to see if there are some acute topics. The rest of the interviewees told they could not make a difference between

the newsletter and other emails they have received from Laatukeskus. The events, courses and trainings were the main topics of interest for three interviewees. One of them pointed out that as the contact person for his organization it is his role to know what is happening and inform others accordingly. Two interviewees mentioned the magazine, Laatu-lehti, as an engaging publication they have discovered through member newsletters. One of them added that all articles and headlines are worth seeing.

The data shows that most of the interviewed members are not familiar with the member newsletter, and they have not been able to differentiate it from other emails from Laatukeskus. The main topics of interest are quality related articles, events and trainings.

### **International content**

The interviewees were asked whether they prefer receiving domestic or international news regarding quality and business development. International reportage was emphasized more in the responses. Three interviewees represent global organizations, and as they are responsible for the global quality management, international information is necessary for them. One interviewee explained that his organization wants to benchmark all big operators in their field globally, and the geographical location does not really matter. Benchmarking other countries turned out to be relevant for many other interviewees as well. The need for cases from service business arise, as one interviewee specified:

“There is still so much more literature and knowledge about quality issues in manufacturing business, so would be great to get some more cases and information concerning service business as well. I think that often many of the principles that work in manufacturing industry work in service business as well.”

It was mentioned that in online content the global news is a priority. A suggestion for the newsletter to include an international section also arise.

Three interviewees told the domestic reportage to be more important for their work. One of them, working in the public sector, said that domestics matters must be in order before it's worth it to jump into the international ones. She highlighted the importance of domestic cases and benchmarking as follows:

“Cases and benchmarking are always interesting. I have always found the company visits very valuable. We want to know how companies operate and

manage quality, so that we are not a 'weirdo' in the bunch. A company-like way of acting is important for us even though we are in the public sector."

One interviewee told the domestic side to be more important because their main interlocutors are Inspecta Certification (primarily) and Laatukeskus (secondarily), which is why there is a practical emphasis. Another interviewee said that domestic reportage has been more significant in her work but she would like to be more active in gathering international information as well. Both of them notified that in LinkedIn internationality is important for them, despite the domestic emphasis of their work.

### **5.2.2 Channels**

To clarify how and where the content should be shared with the stakeholders, questions regarding the channels and ways of communication were included. This sub-chapter aims to find answers to the second research question: how and where should the content be shared?

#### **Primary sources of information for the members**

To identify the main channels and networks used by the members, a question of primary sources for searching for information was included in the interview.

The following channels and networks were mentioned:

- Google (4 mentions)
- LinkedIn and the quality development groups of LinkedIn (3 mentions)
- "Human contacts" whenever possible (2 mentions)
- Literature and scientific publications (2 mentions)

One interviewee explained:

"I find books a more trustworthy source than only Internet sources. Some other scientific publications such as Harvard Business Review are good too."

- The websites of Laatukeskus, Inspecta and the EFQM (1 mention)
- The websites of different training organizers (1 mention)
- The newsletters / email communication (1 mention)

- A targeted newsfeed provided by Meltwater (1 mention)
- The alumni group of the quality manager training by Laatukeskus (1 mention)

## **The website**

Findings related to the website can also be used for the future development of Laatukeskus website. As a part of the brand renewal, Laatukeskus website will be renewed in 2018, and these findings will be utilized for the website renewal as well.

Four of the member interviewees said they do not visit the website often, or they only visit it very randomly. One of them mentioned she only ends up on the site through some of the emails she receives from Laatukeskus, and another interviewee even noted he has not been looking for anything on the site for a while. The interviewee 7 mentioned she has linked the Laatukeskus website on her own project page.

The most popular topic searched from the website are the trainings and events. Most of the interviewees visit the site to check the available trainings. They also want to see the upcoming events and look for additional information about them. The award winners and assessment services were also mentioned as topics of interest on the site. One interviewee mentioned he looks for presentation materials of past seminars on the site but has not always been able to find them.

The role of Laatukeskus website as a strong support for the familiarity was also pointed out. The interviewees told they appreciate that all consultants of Laatukeskus are introduced clearly with their names, photos and contact information.

## **Social media channels**

The social media channels used and preferred by members needed to be identified to include the right channels in the content marketing.

The interviewed members use the following social media channels in their work:

- LinkedIn, used actively (4 mentions)
- LinkedIn, not very actively (2 mentions)
- Twitter, not very actively (3 mentions)

The interviewees who mentioned Twitter, also said they could use it more. One of them told:

“In Twitter I learn about customer service experiences on some companies’ Twitter sites where people share their experiences about the company.”

- Yammer and SharePoint in internal use (2 mentions)

Two of the interviewees told that social media is not a primary channel for them to find reliable information. One interviewee said that social media suits their free time purposes better than work related purposes.

### **Personalized notifications**

The members were asked whether they would be interested in receiving personalized notifications from Laatu when certain kind of content is published. Two interviewees answered this would not be a bad idea in their opinion. One of them added:

“I rather receive trustworthy information from a reliable source such as Laatu than from some less credible source.”

Four interviewees said they would not really be interested in receiving any notifications. One of them explained:

“I don’t see a difference between a text message and an e-mail, and I notice the e-mails that are interesting to me without any specific notification. For example, in many blogs there is a possibility to order a notification via email and that is enough.”

Another interviewee added that being able to subscribe to different kinds of emails and choosing the interesting topics would work, even though notifications would not be needed.

Interest in quality related blogs and articles arise in these replies as well. One interviewee said:

“The content of Laatu magazine has been quite useful. It could be published three times a year.”

### **5.2.3 Brand**

This sub-chapter aims to find answers to the third research question: what is the members' view of the Laatukeskus brand? By answering this question, Laatukeskus can create content that is both, interesting to the members, and supports the brand objectives of Laatukeskus. By including the brand attributes in this theme and clarifying the members' view of them, this study aims to define how members view the Laatukeskus brand. The brand perspective is considered in the end product of the thesis, content marketing guidelines, to help Laatukeskus employees to produce content that supports the brand.

By using content marketing, Laatukeskus aims to support its strategy and brand. To examine how this can be done, the members were asked about the importance of the membership and cooperation with Laatukeskus, and the views of Laatukeskus brand attributes. A question regarding the meaning of quality was also included to clarify how Laatukeskus could utilize this in creating content.

#### **The value of membership for the members**

To clarify why members find the cooperation with Laatukeskus valuable, the most important matters of membership was included in the interview questions.

The following matters were pointed out:

- Finding the help and answers easily (3 mentions)
- The support persons and knowing whom to contact (2 mentions)

The interviewee 2, who has been in cooperation with Laatukeskus for ten years, accentuated:

“Laatukeskus has been able to retain “the face” of the company by letting us know the people behind the services.”

The interviewee 4 emphasized:

“We have obtained individuality of the service from the membership. The tailored cooperation has always responded to our needs.”

- Trainings (2 mentions)
- The (free) member events (2 mentions)
- The long co-operation history (2 mentions)
- Valuable information for work (2 mentions)

The interviewee 5 asserted that for them Laatukeskus is like a reference organization they turn to in order to ensure things. He told that the conversation connection has existed mainly through different events, organized by others than Laatukeskus as well.

The interviewee 6, a relatively new membership contact person in her organization, mentioned that the discounts are the most worthwhile matter for them. Her organization had reviewed if the membership of Laatukeskus is a reasonable solution for them, and they had discovered the financial benefit of being a member to be apparent.

The interviewees were asked if they would recommend the membership of Laatukeskus for other organizations. All interviewees estimated they would recommend the membership, although the reasons varied. Four of them stated they would recommend it because the membership has been useful for them. One interviewee told he would recommend the membership but it is based on the image he has of Laatukeskus, rather than on active use of member services which he is lacking. Another interviewee told she would recommend it to large organizations, although depending on the level of quality development in the organization in question. She mentioned there are competitors to Laatukeskus as well. The interviewee 7, an individual member, said their organization should have a membership as well but it has been a matter of cost for them.

The events were mentioned as the main reason to recommend the membership by two interviewees. The other one notified that Laatukeskus is a forerunning organization in quality consulting in Finland, and therefore it would be strange for him to be an outsider from the network. He also mentioned that process development is such an essential for their organization that they cannot opt themselves out.

One of the mentioned reasons for recommending the membership was knowing the people of Laatukeskus, and therefore considering Laatukeskus as a reliable and credible partner. Not having to waste time when looking for help, and the targeted services, were pointed out as well.

## **Brand image**

This interview theme aimed to identify how the new brand attributes correspond to the current image of Laatukeskus, as well as the expectations to the role of Laatukeskus. To help clarifying how Laatukeskus should present the importance of quality, the interviewees were also asked how they see the meaning of quality for organizations.

The attributes and the interviewee's thoughts of how they correspond to the current image of Laatukeskus and to the expectations they have to the role of Laatukeskus are as follows:

### ***Specialist in quality and operation development***

All the interviewees agreed that this a necessary quality for Laatukeskus. Four interviewees said this state has been achieved already, although one of them pointed out:

“Basically, when I think about this sentence, Laatukeskus already comes into mind at first but the current state is still not obvious. There are things to improve. Internationality needs more highlighting.”

One interviewee told that it is hard for him to define the level of the current state without any more experience.

### ***Enabler of success and new leadership***

Four interviewees agreed enabling success and new leadership is expected from Laatukeskus. One of them told that the new leadership thinking was significantly apparent in the quality and development training she attended. A divergent opinion was that new leadership should be highlighted more, and it is very much needed.

One of the interviewees explained why leadership is so important in quality:

“Quality is often experienced as something that just “has to be done” but the top management is not always fully aware of why it is so important. With this one Laatukeskus could lend a helping hand. Keep it simple – telling the leaders the relevant facts, summarized, is the key.”



Three interviewees said they would not expect Laatukeskus to be an enabler of new leadership. One of them stated:

“This doesn’t sound like Laatukeskus. I’m not sure, this one may remotely pass the role of Laatukeskus.”

### ***An attractive partner and a supporting network***

Four interviewees agreed this attribute corresponds to the current image. Providing networking possibilities was mentioned as a valuable factor by all of them. One of them told:

“Yes, Laatukeskus is (an attractive partner and a supporting network), and it must be. Personal contacts are important. You have provided good opportunities for networking and I have met people from companies that I wouldn’t have if there wasn’t for Laatukeskus.”

One interviewee explained the role of Laatukeskus as a supporting network:

“It’s good that every once in a while, someone from Laatukeskus is asking me how things are going in our organization, and if I need help in anything.”

Four interviewees still said Laatukeskus could improve in being an attractive partner and a supporting network. One of them stated:

“Could be improved. The word attractive is strong in this one, Laatukeskus could be stronger and more active in the attractiveness.”

Improving the quality network was also mentioned:

“Laatukeskus could be an even better network of quality as you have good partners that you could highlight more.”

“The members are a reference manifest that is worth advertising. This could be done much more, as now there is really not much information about the members.”

### ***Brave social influencer***

Four interviewees agreed Laatukeskus should be a brave social influencer but there is a lot to be improved. It was stated that Laatukeskus has not been in public as much as it could and that more courage is needed. One interviewee clarified:

“Yes, I think you must be an influencer. As we know the current state of Finnish organizations, I believe that influencing is needed. Laatukeskus could improve in this.”

Another opinion about the importance of social influence was:

“Considering this widely, this surely applies to the operating environment of Laatukeskus. It is still challenging to be such influencer.”

Two interviewees mentioned the *Laatu ratkaisee* articles as good examples of being “louder”.

Three interviewees told they would not expect Laatukeskus to take on this role. One of them explained:

“Is not now, and shouldn’t be either. Passes the role of Laatukeskus a bit, it’s smarter to focus on the strong areas and not trying to stretch the lines too much. Trying to do too many things is a mistake many companies make.”

Another one notified:

“I can’t think of any similar operators that would also be brave influencers, so this is not something I would automatically expect.”

### **The meaning of quality for the members**

To identify why the members of Laatukeskus see quality as an important factor today, opinions about the meaning of quality for organizations was asked. There were many identical point of views among the interviewees regarding this. The following perspectives were mentioned:

- Quality is vital for the business and the follow-up business.

- The reputation of an organization depends on the level of quality.
- Regardless of the business, things must be high quality, no matter the organization in question.
- Quality is competitiveness. It makes an organization differentiate from competitors, and this should be acknowledged in more companies.
- Quality management is needed everywhere, both in public sector and private sector organizations.
- An organization needs an outsider view to its quality development.

The following statements were pointed out by one interviewee:

“Finland could benefit so much if we all used our resources more effectively. Quality thinking should be seen at all levels of the organization but it must start from the top level.”

“Quality is difficult as a topic, so many people use excuses to avoid thinking about these things. There is some fear behind all this, maybe people are afraid of how changes affect their job. Breaking the wall is hard and I bump into this subject almost daily. Quality is so often seen as something that doesn’t concern oneself.”

The importance of customer experience was also mentioned:

“The goal of quality management is always a satisfied customer. Do we know the customer’s needs and can we fulfill those needs? The customer experience is what counts.”

One interviewee, an individual member, stated:

“For me quality is leadership and a way of thinking. It is so much more than ISO certificates and audits, would be old fashioned to think otherwise. Quality is thinking and leading, and the quality and development manager training was excellent to proceed this thinking.”

## **6 Discussion**

This chapter discusses the conclusions of the research. The conclusions drawn from the findings of the collected data will be utilized in the content marketing guidelines and future development of the Laatukeskus brand. The assessment of the thesis process and personal learning will also be discussed.

There is a need to develop the use of content marketing for a B2B organization, Laatukeskus. The purpose of the research is to examine how to create valuable content to support the new Laatukeskus strategy. As the research focuses on members as key stakeholders of Laatukeskus, the member interviews were the primary source of data collection. Therefore, the discussion of the study is mainly based on the member interviews. The secondary source, brand interview data, was collected for the purposes of the brand renewal. The brand interview results have been used for this study to provide background information for the member interviews and they are partly considered in the discussion as well.

The content marketing guidelines (see appendix 4) utilize the findings and discussion of the study. Even though all theoretical aspects of the study are not included in the guidelines, all material of the study will be used by the case organization. Laatukeskus will use this thesis in future development of the brand and the content marketing.

The suggestions for actions are discussed per the themes introduced in the findings:

### **Content**

- Content themes
- Laatukeskus member newsletter
- International content

### **Channels**

- Primary sources of information for the members
- The website
- Social media channels
- Personalized notifications

### **Brand**

- Communicating the value of membership
- Developing the image of Laatukeskus as an operator

- The meaning of quality

The conclusions and development ideas answer the research questions:

RQ1: What kind of content do the members as key stakeholders find valuable?

RQ2: How and where should the content be shared?

RQ3: What is the members' view of the Laatukeskus brand?

## **6.1 Content**

This sub-chapter discusses the answer to the RQ1: What kind of content do the members as key stakeholders find valuable?

The discussion of this section is divided in the following themes:

- Content themes
- Laatukeskus member newsletter
- International content

### **Content themes**

In content marketing, it is necessary to know what the stakeholders are passionate about. Knowing what kind of themes the stakeholders are most interested in and what motivates them, clarifies the kind of content they should be provided with.

Based on the member interviews, the members are interested in similar kinds of themes in their work but it became apparent that there are several important themes. It is obvious that for a specialist in quality and operations development certain themes will always be important: continuous improvement, efficiency, project management, process and excellence models and standards. However, the results show that the trends of today's economic and business environment require something else too, and this is where Laatukeskus can differentiate itself. Being aware of the themes of the moment and predicting the future trends is needed in today's world. To lead a successful business today it is important to know what helps to maintain that success tomorrow as well. The member interview results adduced the following focus areas in business development: new leadership, change and leading change, Lean, international benchmarks, defining the customer promise, and measuring and evaluating customer experience.

Laatukeskus must provide information on these topics in the right relation. Both, the themes that are always “in fashion”, and the new trends, must be included in the shared content. Laatukeskus wants to be seen as a credible operator that provides fresh views and insights, and not only forward information people could receive from somewhere else too. This supports the aim to be a forerunner in Finnish quality development. By providing content that corresponds to the needs of members, Laatukeskus aims to have a societal influence that reaches a larger number of organizations and professionals than before the brand renewal.

Content marketing supports the idea of key messages that appear in different forms on different channels but are still able to maintain a mutual consensus. Especially the themes regarding customer experience provide new possibilities for Laatukeskus, as the members need help in defining their customer promise and measuring customer experience. Taking a quality development perspective for this would be highly useful for the members.

The members must be positively affected – in other words moved in a good way. Content marketing provides great benefits for building connecting bridges with the members and Laatukeskus but without continuous and genuine communication, this cannot happen. Good member communication requires openness and genuineness, and personal touch in member communication is needed. Members want to know the employees of Laatukeskus, as no organization exists without the people who work there.

The data also shows that members want to hear more about the member advantages. This is the corner stone of all member communication – reminding why membership matters, why members are important to Laatukeskus and what kind of things Laatukeskus can do to help members more. This can be done in multiple ways but the key message must remain the same: members are in the heart of Laatukeskus. This supports the idea of content marketing, as the focus is on the customer, and not the organization. The meaning of member communication for Laatukeskus is to build stronger relationships with the members. The aim is to convince them that Laatukeskus is there for the members and not the other way around – only this way members are willing to engage with the association and other members. Member communication must emphasize the advantages that make the membership worthwhile. It works in two ways: makes the member more informed and creates an emotional connection between the member and Laatukeskus.

Book and publication recommendations are also wanted by the members. Laatukeskus sells some of the best-selling quality related books but there are many more publications

that are not available from Laatukskus. Members still see literature as an important source of information and they find information about new books and publications valuable. The recommendations could be on the Laatukskus website in sections that are related to a certain area of interest. This way Laatukskus would link the recommendations to the services, without leading the traffic away from the site.

### **Laatukskus member newsletter**

The interviewed members regard the newsletter as an important part of the member communication. Laatukskus must differentiate the newsletter from other emails, as now members do not necessarily remember having received it. In content marketing consistency is the key – people become familiar with the kind of content they can expect. The newsletter must be sent regularly to familiarize the recipients with it. Based on the findings the newsletter should be sent to the members every other month. Considering that July is a very quiet month in Finnish business to business, five would be an appropriate amount of member newsletters yearly.

The member newsletter must be something that members want to read every time, and possibly something they can go back to. It should be informative and entertaining. This way it appeals to both, emotions and needs, and can retain a reader's interest. The content of the newsletter is as any content created in means of content marketing – it must be engaging, shareable and helpful. Keeping this in mind, it is useful for the reader that the newsletter is divided in different sections. A right kind of structure and articles are very important to the newsletter. The recipient should be able to understand the outline of the newsletter at a first glance, by seeing the different sections, headlines and well-placed photos. A considered layout and structured text parts help the reader see the entirety and easily decide what to read first. The reader will quickly notice what interests him the most, what can be left for later and what is possibly not interesting that time around.

Valuable content can be created in different formats. Both, the content produced by Laatukskus, and the content produced by co-operating partners can be used on the channels utilized by Laatukskus. Often the same material can be shared on the website and on the preferred social media channels.

The content of the member newsletter must be on the same line with the content of the website. As the newsletter includes multiple links to the site, the newsletter must be written in a way that helps the reader easily continue reading on the site. The writing style and the structure of the text should be similar on both platforms. This helps the reader

connect the content on both channels. Well planned content marketing can fit different platforms together and thus build better content – a newsletter and website content are an excellent example of this. With the help of an email analytics tool it can be tracked how people end up reading the content – via the member newsletter or directly via the website.

The “Currently” section would consist of latest news and topics, such as new members and partnerships of Laatukeskus, and news in the world of quality. The news would be both, domestic and international. The most important articles and blog posts published on the website during the past two months would be linked in this section as well. The second section would be about the events, courses and trainings. They all are highly interesting for the members, and the parts regarding these themes should be engaging to the point where the reader wants to participate in an event or training. “Events” would list the upcoming seminars and member events, and “Courses and trainings” would list the current trainings available. These sections would link to the website where more information regarding them would be found. The last part of the newsletter would be mostly entertaining, linking to the photos and videos from recent events.

### **International content**

Being a forerunner in Finnish quality development requires both, domestic and international aspects to be considered in creating the content. Laatukeskus has valuable connections with quality associations around the world, and in today’s global environment this aspect should be emphasized.

As the member organizations are from many different fields of business, Laatukeskus must be able to fill the need for both, domestic and international content. Some of the members represent global organizations and some are organizations that have an interest in Finland only. These organizations may still have mutual interests when it comes to news related to quality. Benchmarking other companies often applies to benchmarking companies from other countries as well. Seeing how quality is developed somewhere else gives perspective and inspiration for the work. This kind of inspiration is needed for good content marketing – content that inspires and motivates is easy to relate to, and appeals to emotions. People who are passionate about their work want to feel both, inspired and motivated.

Laatukeskus receives news from all over the world through the partners and other quality associations. This is an advantage that should be utilized for the benefit of the members. Providing them current content from Europe and beyond differentiates Laatukeskus from



the general consulting companies. A news section in the member newsletter is an important part of this, and as this section links to the website, there must be a continuous flow of news available for those interested. Social media works as a good platform for providing the news. When sharing news in LinkedIn or Twitter, the posts are automatically updated to the front page of the website where they are easily seen. By sharing news on social media channels, Laatukeskus also inspires the members to share the content to their own channels via social media.

In international news, the members and customers appreciate especially the research results by other associations in Europe, Asia and America. Laatukeskus can visualize the research results in a way that makes them easy to perceive. Using the visuals of the brand helps the reader to connect the content with the visual identity of Laatukeskus. Having the CEO's thoughts and comments on the side of the results would also be interesting for the readers. What does the management of Laatukeskus think of the results and how do they reflect to Finnish organizations? Once again, this could be an inspiring learning experience for quality professionals and leaders.

It is also interesting how quality professionals see different fields of businesses and how they can learn from them. The comment by one of the member interviewees noted that there are plenty of case examples from manufacturing business, and that more case studies and information from service business is needed. This is a good point for Laatukeskus – applying experiences from manufacturing business to service business gives different kinds of operators a lot of useful knowledge they would not get from anywhere else. This would be one of the “wow factors” in the content marketing of Laatukeskus: providing unique knowledge.

## **6.2 Channels**

This sub-chapter discusses the answers to the RQ2: How and where should the content be shared?

The discussion of this section is divided in the following themes:

- Primary sources of information for the members
- The website
- Social media channels
- Personalized notifications

## **Primary sources of information for the members**

The member interview data shows that there are four primary sources of information for the members: Google, LinkedIn, the networks and literature. This shows diversity, as not all of them are online sources. This also gives an idea of how the right channels for Laatukeskus must be acknowledged in more broad-minded ways than only using the most obvious channels such as the website and social media channels.

When utilizing Google, search engine optimization (SEO) is highly important. As it was stated in the literature review, using the right keywords on the website content is needed to get ranked higher on Google. This is how people find the content when searching for information on certain topics. Creating quality content and publishing it online is not enough – it is necessary to know Google and how search engine optimization can be utilized to lead the subscribers to the website.

LinkedIn appeared several times among the member interviewees' answers. The popularity of LinkedIn among the members is a positive factor for Laatukeskus, as it is an excellent channel for influencing and visibility. LinkedIn is about networking and participating, and it provides good opportunities for the specialists of Laatukeskus to be seen and heard. The possibilities of LinkedIn will be discussed in more detail in chapter Social media channels.

One of the best member advantages Laatukeskus provides is the networking possibility. The members also acknowledge this, as they find the member- and other events useful and inspiring. In these occasions, members can meet people they could possibly not meet without the help of Laatukeskus. Sharing ideas and opinions is valuable for them, as there are representatives from organizations of different kinds and sizes who have the interest in quality development in common. The significance of networking must be visible in the created content as well. In the events this content is especially needed. By sharing social media posts and videos about who have attended a certain event, and what happened there, Laatukeskus communicates the value of its network. Networking is one of the main reasons why members find the events and seminars of Laatukeskus so valuable, and therefore content related to the events and seminars is needed in the content marketing. The participants of the events are also encouraged to use social media during the events, by providing them hashtags to use. This way Laatukeskus continuously receives information about what the members and other stakeholders say.

Literature and scientific publications are still a relevant source of information for the members, and this should not be forgotten. Even though the web book store is not one of the priorities of Laatukeskus anymore, the literature information should remain among the content provided.

### **The website**

As stated earlier, Laatukeskus will renew its website in 2018 as a part of the brand renewal. The findings and discussion of this thesis will be utilized in the website renewal, as well as in the content marketing guidelines.

By clarifying how the members currently utilize the Laatukeskus website, it was studied what kind of content Laatukeskus already provides that the members appreciate. More than half of the interviewees told they do not visit the website often, and this can be changed with the help of content marketing. The website should be an important source of information for all the members – a place where they want to spend time.

The basic principles of content marketing encourage approachable ways of communicating, also when the people having created the content, are in question. Laatukeskus aims to forward an image of a company that wants to know its members but to do so it must let the members know the people of Laatukeskus as well. The data shows that it is very important for the members and other stakeholders to be familiar with the employees of Laatukeskus. Professionals want to know the organization they are doing business with, and this can only happen when they know and trust the people they co-operate with. Laatukeskus can tell more about the people behind the services and this way create more character for the company. A good photo, personalized text and possibly a video for each employee brings personal touch to the website and communicates that Laatukeskus is easily approachable and compelling.

As visuality of a website is a significant factor in its attractiveness, excellent photography and videos are an essential part of a visually appealing website. Laatukeskus has great opportunities to utilize videos, as there are many trainings, events and seminars where these could be implemented. Currently Laatukeskus does not have the skills to shoot and edit the videos, and more training is needed.

Descriptive and inspiring information about events and trainings can be provided continuously. Members would like to know more about the upcoming events, and this can be done in a creative way. Teaser videos with the speakers and performers can be shared

on the event site beforehand to attract attention and encourage registering for the event. Informing about events afterwards is needed as well – in the feedback questionnaire email something extra can be shared. A link to the event photos and videos on the site reminds the participant of the event experience. Presentation materials can also be shared for the participants in a closed section on the website.

Articles and blog posts are regarded as an interesting and informative way of communicating by the members. Not all writers must be from Laatukeskus – the company has several excellent co-operation partners who have the skills and the passion to write a blog, and for the content marketing it would be especially useful. Two or three bloggers from different areas of quality and operations development would be enough. The blog posts and articles would serve as both, informative and entertaining, addressing the current topics of quality and operations development but in an easily readable and practical way. Blogs are defined as a channel where personal opinions and new intakes on things are accentuated, and for Laatukeskus and its partners a blog provides an approachable way of communicating their own views. A blog is an excellent way to bring up the relevant themes and provide fresh views regarding them. Therefore, also the other themes that members find important can be included: for example, quality in leadership and customer experience are excellent topics for blog posts. The content of the blogs can be shared via member newsletters, social media and the co-operating writer's channels.

As it has been described, search engine optimization is a highly significant factor for Laatukeskus. By utilizing SEO, the organization can have an impact on how easily its content can be found and how good the user experience is. By measuring and analyzing how the content is found and what kind of content is interesting, the effectiveness of the website and member newsletter can be developed. Monitoring tools such as the email newsletter tool are required for this.

### **Social media channels**

The use of social media supports content marketing. Social media is used for delivering valuable information and communicating with the stakeholders. Laatukeskus also has the aim of raising awareness and visibility, and for this social media is highly valuable. By utilizing social media channels, Laatukeskus will strengthen the brand as a part of the new strategy and reach new people and organizations. Social media also gives a voice for the Laatukeskus members, as they are encouraged to actively participate in the discussions on different channels, such as Twitter and LinkedIn. By this Laatukeskus aims to

communicate the value of networking as well, and by “listening” to the members and other stakeholders on social media, Laatukskus is always aware of what the stakeholders say.

The content of the website is favorable to be in close connection with the social media channels, as everything shared on the site can be shared in social media as well. Depending on the content, obviously not everything is supposed to be shared in every channel, as the customer should not get frustrated with the amount of information received via multiple channels. In content marketing, it is all about using the right channels for the right things.

As expected, the findings show that LinkedIn and Twitter are the most used social media channels for professional purposes by the members. Both are highly professional and influential channels, which means they are not the right channels for the content that suits better the spare time purposes. They also require active participation from their users, especially from companies. If an organization has a social media account, it should also be effectively used.

These channels are not for obvious marketing purposes, unless sponsored content is utilized. In Twitter, posts can be shared daily, reacting to the existing tweets, or sharing new ones: interesting points, quotes from keynote speakers, leaders or other opinion influencers, and contentions on current topics.

LinkedIn is a professionally significant channel for many members, and Laatukskus has recognized its possibilities. As a consultant organization, active discussion and following the trends and influencers is significant for Laatukskus. The personnel is encouraged to be active in LinkedIn and as part of the brand renewal, networking and participating the discussions must be accentuated even more. LinkedIn enables getting the voice of Laatukskus heard, and everything starts from the employees as the representatives of Laatukskus (and themselves).

### **Personalized notifications**

The member interview data shows that personalized notifications such as text messages when certain kind of content is published, is not desired by the members. Subscribing to certain kind of email content is more applicable, as the members often have specific areas of interest they need information about. Spamming and being pushy in offering are things to be avoided, and this must be paid attention to in all content marketing as well.

### **6.3 Brand**

This sub-chapter discusses the answer to the RQ3: What is the members' view of the Laatukeskus brand?

The discussion of this section is divided in the following themes:

- Communicating the value of membership
- Developing the image of Laatukeskus as an operator
- The meaning of quality

For Laatukeskus, the purpose of using content marketing is to support the strategy and the new brand. The connection between the brand and the right content is a significant strategic support. Content marketing is a part of building and strengthening the brand, and to do so, it must be planned to support the brand renewal of Laatukeskus. The question of how members view the Laatukeskus brand is important to create and share the right kind of content. This will also help Laatukeskus in defining how the brand should be strengthened to reach new organizations and professionals.

The brand interview data for the brand renewal shows that the stakeholders regard the work of Laatukeskus as very important for the quality and competitiveness of Finland. However, the stakeholders do not see Laatukeskus profiled as a societal conversationalist and a strong influencer. Strategically planned content marketing can strengthen the brand image of Laatukeskus and make it the kind of influencer it has the possibilities for. The interviewed stakeholders noted that Laatukeskus has great opportunities to participate in the public discussions by strongly expressing its views. They also know that the brand of Laatukeskus is not only about a logo or a statement, but about the profound meaning of the organization and how it leads the way in quality leadership for Finnish organizations. Good content marketing can help overcome the biggest challenges of Laatukeskus; being unknown for potential members and customers, and not providing enough valuable insights with the content.

#### **Communicating the value of membership**

The member interview data reveals that content related to the events and trainings, as well as the tailored services, is most valuable for them. Being able to retain the personality of Laatukeskus by telling about the people behind the services is highly appreciated. This relates to the basic concept of content marketing: providing content that is planned to

correspond to the needs of a certain group of people, and showing the “heart and soul” of the company.

By communicating the value of membership for both, the current and potential members, Laatukeskus supports the objective of being a societal influencer and forerunner in quality development. More people become aware of the Laatukeskus brand and the membership network the organization provides for Finnish organizations.

### *Networking and events*

Events and trainings are the most common themes on the Laatukeskus website that the members search for, and finding this content must be made easy for them. Providing additional information about the events and trainings that is easily accessible for the members, is needed.

Informing about member events is needed for many reasons but probably the most important one is that networking with other members is highly valuable for most corporate and individual members. Therefore, member events require communication that emphasizes the meaning of members for Laatukeskus, and encourages them to network more. Before the event, the invitation emails could include something extra – greetings from the CEO, teaser videos from the speakers or adding some of the positive things members have mentioned about previous member events. This creates a story for the event and makes it something more than “just another seminar”. Who are the speakers and why are they interesting? What can the participants learn by coming to the event? What kind of networking possibilities are provided in the event? These questions should be considered every time before marketing the event. Content marketing is about giving something unexpected as well. A surprising element earns the attention and generates emotions. The recipient is pleased to be invited to the event because it brings extra value and does not only settle to do the least that is required.

### *Recommending the membership*

Recommending the membership of Laatukeskus is strongly linked to the question of the most valuable things about the co-operation with Laatukeskus. The answers relate to the previously made findings: the quality of services and events are the main reason for Laatukeskus being a valuable partner for its members. The likeliness to recommend the membership is highly depending on the level of the connection with Laatukeskus. All member interviewees told they would recommend the membership, which means they find

it useful and valuable. It is the service and content of the membership that makes it valuable, and without being able to maintain and upgrade the level of these elements, membership will not be found useful. The right content helps communicating the advantages of being a member, and this should never be dismissed.

An interesting point was how one interviewee pointed out that his recommendation would be based on the image he has of Laatukeskus, as he did not have a lot of experience of the member services. This proves the importance of brand image – it is the perception about the brand. When unique and positively powerful associations are linked to the membership, it results in a positive brand image. A member that sees the brand in a positive light, is naturally more likely to recommend the membership. The content shared by Laatukeskus must heavily connect the members with the brand. The brand of Laatukeskus does not exist without the members, as they are the cornerstone of the organization.

Another comment from the interviews pointed out that the membership could be recommended to large organizations, depending on the level of quality development in those organizations. This means there is a need for Laatukeskus to clarify why a membership would be important for all kinds of organizations and not only the large ones. Content marketing enables the communication about all kinds of case organizations and the ways to utilize the membership. The best way to communicate the membership advantages is the references. They are comments from the people who have successfully utilized the membership of Laatukeskus in their organizations. All kinds of member organizations, as well as individual members, should be included. It may be a common assumption among potential new members that the membership is only for large organizations. Laatukeskus should avoid communicating this message and strongly focus on content that supports the idea of the membership being suitable for most organizations in Finland. Creative ways in presenting the membership advantages can be used: short video references from representatives of all membership types, inspiring case articles and visually appealing infographics.

The events are one of the reasons to recommend the membership of Laatukeskus. It does not come as a surprise, as they were highlighted in all parts of the member interviews. When communicating about the events it is important to keep the memorability of the events in mind. Great content marketing is about creating and sharing unique experiences – not only information. The events by Laatukeskus are about excellent program,



networking and professionals who have a passion for quality development in common. Good photography and experimental videos are examples of sharing the key content of the past and future events.

### *Employer branding*

The findings show that the credibility of Laatukeskus comes from the employees of the organization. Knowing the consultants is needed for the members to find Laatukeskus as a reliable and credible partner. In addition to the people's introductions on the website, they can be presented on other channels as well. LinkedIn is a highly useful channel for personal branding, and Laatukeskus should utilize this. In LinkedIn, people can represent both, themselves and the companies they work for. The consultants should look and sound like themselves in LinkedIn, and this applies to other content about them as well. People are interested in personal brands today, and the way employees are present in social media, tells about the company too. In LinkedIn professionals have conversations they are interested in, from their own point of view. At the same time, it is easy for them to represent Laatukeskus. The employees must be encouraged to be active in LinkedIn – connect, discuss and participate. Interesting posts and conversations spread fast there, and that often brings visibility to both, the person himself and the organization they work for.

The quote by Tom Laine is very useful to describe the main principle that Laatukeskus can apply to the use of social media, including LinkedIn:

*“Employer branding is not about putting words in employees’ mouth, it’s about letting employees to speak freely in their own channels in their own time and in their own words about the work they do and the company they work for.”*

(Tom Laine 2017.)

The members appreciate knowing the persons they can ask for help. Therefore, the content created by the specialists of Laatukeskus is important. A blog, articles, newsletters and social media posts by the people of Laatukeskus are needed for the personal value they hold. This content also communicates that Laatukeskus wants to provide individual services by continuously considering what the members need and what kind of tailored cooperation responds to their needs.

## **Developing the image of Laatukeskus as an operator**

Laatukeskus aims to create content that communicates the brand attributes and corresponds to the desired brand image. The brand attributes are relevant in developing Laatukeskus as a societal conversationalist, as they aim to present the organization in a way that has positive effects on strengthening the brand. In this part, the ideas to strengthen the brand attributes are discussed.

Laatukeskus brand attributes:

- Expert of quality and operation development:  
Laatukeskus is known for its expertise and success stories among its stakeholders.
- Enabler of success and new leadership:  
Laatukeskus provides its members and customers the networks, know-how and tools to achieve the vision of a successful Finland.
- Attractive partner with a supporting network:  
Laatukeskus provides the largest network of quality professionals, where sense of community is experienced, know-how is shared and successes are rejoiced.
- Brave social influencer:  
Laatukeskus actively participates in public conversations and convincingly reveals its views.

### ***Specialist in quality and operation development***

According to the interviewees, being a specialist in quality and operation development is undeniably the most important attribute of Laatukeskus. The essential question is, how Laatukeskus proves its credibility in this. For this attribute, two factors must be highlighted: international aspect and the role of the contact persons.

Internationality brings more reliability and attractiveness for being a number one quality specialist in Finland. Without benchmarking organizations from other countries and interacting with the other quality organizations around the world, Laatukeskus cannot be a credible specialist. The same applies to the partnerships and co-operation projects. Laatukeskus works with excellent organizations and associations, and has great

possibilities to share stories and experiences related to them. Especially the CEO of Laatu keskus visits different kinds of events and conferences around the world, and sharing stories from them would be interesting for the members. This kind of information would be inspiring and motivating.

The other aspect that needs more highlighting is the contact person. One of the interviewed contact persons pointed out that he does not have experience about how Laatu keskus currently shows its specialism in quality and operation development. This means that the contact persons have not received enough attention in regards of what Laatu keskus does for them. A regularly published, short and simple newsletter would be informative and inspiring for contact persons. It would not have to be published often – twice a year could be a sufficient amount as they would also receive the member newsletter every other month. The contact person's newsletter could include tips and infographics on how to communicate quality matters in their organizations – for their teams, top management and other possible people and departments. Infographics would make the newsletter visually appealing and easy to read, and add personalized content that the member newsletter does not include.

### ***Enabler of success and new leadership***

Most of the interviewees agreed that enabling success and new leadership is a role which Laatu keskus should take. One of them told that this already shows in the quality and development manager training she had attended. This is a good sign for Laatu keskus – there has been good progress already and strengthening this attribute is a smart move. Success and new leadership should show in the created content as well, and more courage is needed. Blogs and articles are ways to speak out and bring new point of views to quality related conversations.

The need for helping in communicating about quality also appeared in the results for this attribute. The factor mentioned in the previous attribute, "a specialist in quality and operation development", applies to enabling success and new leadership as well. The management wants the most relevant information for them – summarized facts are the key in telling why quality management is important. As mentioned earlier, the tips are needed. For example, listing "10 ways to talk quality" would be simple, practical and easy to read. This kind of content does not take much of the recipients' time but gives them a lot of value instead.

### ***An attractive partner and a supporting network***

Also the role of Laatukeskus as an attractive partner and supporting network is essential in developing the brand. Laatukeskus provides unique networking possibilities that are a great benefit in content marketing. The largest quality network in Finland is worth highlighting, and according to the interview data, members agree. There are good references that can be used for the content marketing – being an attractive partner mostly arises from networking opportunities that are valuable for the members and provide them connections they would not have without the help of Laatukeskus. References and cases are the best way to share the stories other members have experienced through networking. A listing such as “5 reasons to belong to a largest quality network in Finland” would serve two purposes: reminding old members why it is worth it to network through Laatukeskus, and telling new potential members what kind of network they would join by the joining the membership.

The most important thing about member communication is that members want to be taken into consideration and remembered. This sounds like an obvious thing but marketers in associations forget this surprisingly often. The members of Laatukeskus appreciate being thought of – simple things such as occasionally asking if they need help, make a difference. The personalized email for the contact persons is suitable for this purpose as well. An encouragement to contact certain people from Laatukeskus in the end of the email works as a reminder, and in addition to that, a simple question can be included. Following the member data is important in this, as Laatukeskus should personally contact those who have not been active for a while (have not attended any events or trainings, or used any other services).

In the attribute “an attractive partner and a supporting network” the word attractive is important. Great content evokes emotions and makes the recipient want to participate in some way – discuss, think, ask questions, share, contact or even buy a product or service. The same way a brand image is the perceptions someone has about the brand, attractiveness is something on the minds of those that are the target of getting attracted. Therefore, knowing the members and their needs is crucial in creating appealing content.

### ***Brave social influencer***

The brand interview data and member interview data both show that people believe in the possibility of Laatukeskus being a brave social influencer. There is a need for leading the way in Finnish competitiveness but it takes courage. Visibility and attractiveness are

highly important in this, as without being seen and heard nothing happens. Laatukeskus aims to be heard more, and on multiple channels. By participating the public conversations more actively and publishing content that makes a statement and evokes emotions, Laatukeskus raises the awareness and visibility. This requires continually identifying the places and channels where the organization wants to be seen or heard, whether they are events, journals, other websites or social media channels.

The idea is not to always please everyone – if no one ever disagrees with you, you are not being very interesting. Articles and blog posts that are shared and discussed are likely to get seen by many people, and most importantly, by those who do not know Laatukeskus, as well. It is challenging to be a social influencer but aiming for that is what Laatukeskus needs.

Laatukeskus has been publishing an article series called *Laatu ratkaisee* (“Quality Counts”) for a few years now, and it has been very liked among the members. In this series member- and other organizations are interviewed regarding how quality management shows in their organizations and what kind of results it has brought. These kinds of articles are needed for Laatukeskus because they tell stories about quality work and the work Laatukeskus does for its members. Sharing these articles on the website and in social media helps in raising awareness and awakening interest.

### **The meaning of quality**

The member interview data shows many meaningful views on what quality means for organizations. The following aspects are based on these views, and should be considered when planning and creating valuable content:

- The role of quality for the business and follow-up business
- Reputation management as a part of quality development
- Quality is a must, regardless of the field of business
- Quality as a differentiating factor
- The need for an outsider view in quality
- Quality thinking through the entire organization
- Communicating quality as a topic on all levels
- Customer-centric thinking in quality: a happy customer as a goal
- Quality as leadership and a way of thinking

These topics can be included in multiple forms: articles, blog posts, newsletters, social media discussions and other pieces of content. The meaning of quality is an essential part of the Laatukeskus brand, and the better Laatukeskus can communicate the meaning of quality, the stronger the brand is. For Laatukeskus, it is important to note that there are still many organizations in Finland that are not aware of the influence Laatukeskus has in Finnish quality development. By providing content that emphasizes the meaning of quality for organizations, Laatukeskus strengthens its own role in developing Finnish competitiveness.

#### **6.4 Discussion summary**

Before this research, Laatukeskus had not clarified what kind of content supports its strategy. Along the new strategy, the importance of the brand renewal was noted and to start the renewal, the brand interviews by Miltton Group had been conducted. It was acknowledged that by utilizing content marketing, Laatukeskus would strengthen the new brand and raise the awareness and visibility as a part of the new strategy.

By implementing this research and conducting the member interviews, the author has provided Laatukeskus with information about what kind of content is valued by members as key stakeholders, how and where the content should be shared and what is the members' view of the Laatukeskus brand.

The content marketing guidelines as the final product of the study are created for the use of Laatukeskus employees and can be utilized in creating and sharing valuable content. The guidelines can be used by anyone in the organization, as they are planned to be a practical help for anyone interested in creating and sharing content for Laatukeskus. This means that the employee utilizing the guidelines does not necessarily need a deeper knowledge about content marketing and the theoretical aspects it involves. The guidelines provide a practical approach to the matter but they can also be used by the communications team of Laatukeskus.

This research provides more development ideas for the content marketing than only the guidelines. As stated, all material of the study will be used by Laatukeskus to develop content marketing as a part of the new brand, in the future as well. The study provides a useful basis for the future development of content marketing and the Laatukeskus brand.

## **6.5 Assessment of the thesis process and personal learning**

In this sub-chapter, the assessment of the thesis process and personal learning are reviewed. When Laatukskus started the brand renewal in the end of 2015, it quickly emerged that new kind of communication was needed. This research was started in May 2016, and by then it had appeared that Laatukskus aimed to utilize content marketing as a part of the brand renewal. As the communication planner of Laatukskus, the author participated in the brand renewal since the beginning, and it was a reasonable solution that the research would focus on content marketing. This was also very motivating for the author, as the research would develop the whole marketing communication of the organization as a part of the new strategy and brand.

The thesis process started by examining the theory of branding and content marketing. In fall 2016, the case organization and the author decided that member interviews were needed to clarify how valuable content can be created to support the Laatukskus strategy. Before conducting the member interviews, the author also got acquainted with the brand interviews by Miltton Group and decided to use them as the secondary data source of the study, as they provide information about the stakeholders' views of the Laatukskus brand before the brand renewal.

The member interview framework was planned according to the research questions and the structure of the interview was also meant to be included in the findings and discussion of the thesis. Only after interpreting and analyzing of the data it was noted that the research findings would be best presented in a simpler way. The research questions of the study were also modified along the process and in the end, the author decided to divide the findings and conclusions according to the research questions. The division of the content, channels and brand clarifies the findings and discussion of the thesis and answers the final research questions accordingly. If the member interviews had been planned according to the final research questions, the analyzing and understanding the outline of the findings would have been easier for the researcher. With the member interview structure, the author had more work in processing the findings but the thesis is still what the author aimed for. The research questions are answered and the structure of the thesis is clear for the case organization.

The literature review of the thesis also includes commercial sources, as they were needed to find relevant and updated information related to the definitions of a content marketing plan and content marketing strategy. This information was required to describe how

Laatukeskus can develop its content marketing after starting to utilize the content marketing guidelines.

The most challenging aspects of the thesis process were the delay of the brand renewal project, the author's full-time job and having to divide the concentration to several projects at the same time. Therefore, the whole thesis process took for almost lasted from May 2016 to November 2017. During the time of writing the discussion of the thesis, the author concentrated on one part of the thesis at a time, without viewing the entirety enough in between. When the whole thesis was reviewed again, it was easier to understand the outline of the research and write it as it happened.

The first and third research questions have been answered well in the research:

RQ1: What kind of content do the members as key stakeholders find valuable?

RQ3: What is the members' view of the Laatukeskus brand?

The second research question, how and where should the content be shared, still requires further research. The study partly answers the question but a quantitative research is possibly the best method to define the tools and channels to share the content created by Laatukeskus.

Even though the thesis process was challenging without having longer periods of time in a row for writing, the research is still successful as the research questions were mainly answered and the study is useful for the case organization. The timing of the research was very good, as the new Laatukeskus strategy was introduced in the early stage of the thesis process. The brand renewal was processed at the same time with the thesis which made it easier for the author to combine work and writing the thesis report. This also supports the purpose of the research, as it is strongly linked to the strategy and brand renewal. The thesis will be useful for the future development of Laatukeskus brand and communications, and the new website. The content marketing guidelines can be utilized by anyone in the organization, and it is a basis for developing a content marketing plan. In addition to the communication of Laatukeskus, this thesis can also be utilized for developing the overall customer understanding of Laatukeskus.



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## Appendix

### Appendix 1. The member interview framework.

#### Teemahaastattelurunko

##### Taustakysymykset

- Jäsentausta (jäsenyyden kesto, jäsenyyppi)
- Titteli / rooli organisaatiossa
- Miten kauan on työskennellyt laadun parissa

#### Suhde Laatukeskuksen tämänhetkisiin sisältöihin

1. Miten hyödynnät Laatukeskuksen verkkosivuja työssäsi tällä hetkellä?
2. Mikä yhteistyössä Laatukeskuksen kanssa on sinulle (henkilöjäsenet) / **yrityksellenne (organisaatiojäsenet) tärkeintä?**
3. Suositteletko Laatukeskuksen jäsenyyttä muille henkilöille tai yrityksille? Miksi?
4. Mitkä aiheet jäsenuutiskirjeissämme ovat kiinnostaneet sinua eniten?
5. Kuinka usein haluaisit vastaanottaa jäsenuutiskirjeitä (harvemmin, nykyinen tahti on sopiva, useammin)?
6. Millaista jäsenviestintää kaipaisit meiltä lisää, tai onko jotakin mikä siitä puuttuu mielestäsi kokonaan?

#### Tiedonhaku ja olennaiset teemat työssä

1. Mitkä teemat ovat sinulle nyt tärkeimpiä ja kiinnostavimpia työssäsi? Miksi?
2. Mistä ensisijaisesti etsit tietoa, joka on tärkeää työssäsi (kanavat ja verkostot)?
3. Mitkä sosiaalisen median kanavat ovat sinulle ammatillisesti tärkeitä? Miksi?
4. Oletko ensisijaisesti kiinnostunut kotimaisesta vai kansainvälisestä tiedosta ja uutisoinnista laatuun liittyvien teemojen osalta?
5. Mikäli olisi mahdollisuus, niin haluaisitko kohdennettua viestintää (esimerkiksi vastaanottaa ilmoituksia esim. tekstiviestitse, kun julkaisemme juuri sinua kiinnostavaa sisältöä)?

## Laatukeskus toimijana ja laadun merkitys

1. Brändiuudistuksen myötä Laatukeskuksen roolia ja toimintaa kuvataan seuraavasti. Miten ne vastaavat omia odotuksiasi Laatukeskuksen toiminnasta ja roolista yhteiskunnassa?

- *Laadun ja toiminnan kehittämisen erityisosaaja*
- *Menestyksen ja uuden johtajuuden mahdollistaja*
- *Vetovoimainen kumppani ja tukiverkosto*
- *Rohkea yhteiskunnallinen vaikuttaja*

2. Mitä laatu mielestäsi merkitsee organisaatioille ja miksi?

## Appendix 2. The email for the potential member interviewees.

Hei,

Olen Laatukeskuksen viestintäsuunnittelija, laatukeskuslainen neljättä vuotta. Tällä hetkellä olen myös aikuisopiskelijana Haaga-Helian ylemmässä ammattikorkeakoulussa viestinnän linjalla. Teen opinnäytetyötä meille siitä, millaista sisältöä ja tietoa jäsenemme meiltä haluavat ja tarvitsevat. Opinnäytetyöni tavoitteena on selkiyttää, millaista sisältöä meidän tulee julkaista, jotta vastaamme parhaiten jäsentemme tarpeisiin. **Haluaisitko olla mukana edistämässä Laatukeskuksen jäsenviestintää?** Olisi ilo haastatella juuri sinua. Vastaamalla lyhyesti viestiini kyllä / ei, voit ilmoittaa kiinnostuksesi, ja olen sinuun yhteydessä tämän jälkeen.

Toteutan opinnäytetyöni tutkimuksen haastattelemalla jäsenorganisaatioiden yhteyshenkilöitä ja henkilöjäseniä valmiiksi luotujen kysymysten pohjalta. Haastattelut ovat täysin luottamuksellisia: haastateltavien nimet tai henkilötiedot eivät tule esille raportissa. Haastatteluun osallistuminen on sinulle täysin vapaaehtoista. Hyödynnän haastattelussa keskustellut asiat ainoastaan opinnäytetyön aineistona, enkä luovuta materiaalia kolmansille osapuolille. **Haastatteluista saamani aineiston pohjalta luomme kehitysideoita sisällön tuottamisesta jäsenillemme.**

Haastattelut voidaan toteuttaa esimerkiksi oman yrityksesi tiloissa tai puhelimitse. Keskustelu vie noin 30-60 minuuttia. Haastattelu nauhoitetaan ja sen aikana teen mahdollisesti muistiinpanoja myöhempää analysointia varten. Haastattelu tulisi toteuttaa 1.12.2016-13.1.2017 välisenä aikana.

Ilmoitathan minulle kiinnostuksesi vastaamalla tähän viestiin? Vastaan mielelläni mahdollisiin kysymyksiin, kiitos jo etukäteen!

Ystävällisin terveisin,  
Satu

Satu Karjalainen  
Viestintäsuunnittelija  
Puh. 044 588 7172  
LAATUKESKUS EXCELLENCE FINLAND  
Keilaranta 16, 02150 ESPOO, vaihde 0207 791 470  
[www.laatukeskus.fi](http://www.laatukeskus.fi)

### **Appendix 3. The member interviewees.**



## MEMBER INTERVIEWEES

|   | <b>Title</b>            | <b>Role in the organization</b>                 | <b>Field of Business</b>          | <b>Size of the organization</b> | <b>Membership type</b> | <b>Member since</b> | <b>Duration of the relationship with</b> | <b>Date of the interview</b> | <b>Interview length</b> |
|---|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Head of Global          | Quality development, project management etc.    | Software design and production    | Large (100 - 250 employees)     | Supporting corporate   | 6.8.2010            | 6 years. Head of Quality since 2012      | 5.12.2016                    | 0:15:46                 |
| 2 | Quality Director        | Quality work coordinating and self assessment   | Vocational education              | Large                           | Supporting corporate   | 30.3.2010           | 7 years (worked full time in quality)    | 8.12.2016                    | 00:53:06                |
| 3 | Business Development    | Quality development and coordinating management | Telecommunication, ICT and online | Large (500 - 1000 employees)    | Key corporate member   | 1.11.1995           | About 4 years                            | 30.12.2016                   | 00:58:16                |
| 4 | Quality Manager         | Quality development                             | Producer of bioproducts and       | Large (500 - 1000 employees)    | Key corporate member   | 10.4.2002           | 1,5 years                                | 2.1.2017                     | 00:28:45                |
| 5 | Director of Development | Quality management                              | Vocational education              | Large (250 - 499 employees)     | Supporting corporate   | 1.1.1994            | 8 years                                  | 11.1.2017                    | 0:32:46                 |
| 6 | Quality Manager         | Quality management                              | Safety authority                  | Large                           | Key corporate member   | 16.3.2010           | 1 year                                   | 13.1.2017                    | 0:39:33                 |
| 7 | Project Manager         | Product development, sales, marketing, revenue  | Passenger traffic on the sea      | Large (1000 employees)          | Individual member      | 11.2.2016           | 1 year                                   | 18.1.2017                    | 00:42:11                |

#### **Appendix 4. The content marketing guidelines.**

The content marketing guidelines are for the use of all Laatukeskus employees. They provide practical guidelines on how to create and share content for the members and other stakeholders of Laatukeskus. The guidelines are conducted in Finnish.



# **LAATUKESKUKSEN SISÄLTÖMARKKINOINTIOPAS**

**Satu Karjalainen**



# Oppaan sisältö

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# Laatukeskuksen sisältömarkkinoinnin tausta

- Laatukeskuksen tunnettuuden ja näkyvyyden lisääminen osana strategiaa
- Brändiuudistus aloitettu 2015/2016 vaihteessa
- Miltton Groupin toteuttamat brändihaastattelut 2016 alussa: sidosryhmät kokevat, että vahva brändi puuttuu.
- Tarve sisältömarkkinoinnille osana uutta brändiä ja strategian tukemista
- Päätettiin toteuttaa sisältömarkkinointitutkimus, jonka tavoite on selvittää, miten luoda arvokasta sisältöä, joka tukee Laatukeskuksen uutta brändiä.
- Toteutettu 7 jäsenhaastattelua, joissa erilaisilta jäseniltä kysyttiin heidän suosimistaan sisällöistä, kanavista ja Laatukeskuksen brändistä.
- Tutkimuksella saatiin vastauksia siihen, millaista sisältöä Laatukeskuksen kannattaa luoda, missä se kannattaa jakaa ja miten sisällöt tukevat brändiä.
- Tämä sisältömarkkinointiopas tarjoaa käytännön apua oikeanlaisten sisältöjen tuottamiseen! 😊



# Mitä olikaan sisältömarkkinointi?

- Hyödyllisen ja lisäarvoa tuottavan sisällön tuottamista ja jakamista oikeaan aikaan oikeassa paikassa.
- Jaetaan tietoa, jota:
  - nykyiset asiakkaat haluavat ja tarvitsevat
  - ja joka:
    - herättää potentiaalisten asiakkaiden mielenkiinnon
- Miksi? Räätälöidyn sisällön jakaminen johtaa paremmin informoituun asiakkaaseen -> paremmin informoitu asiakas tuottaa yritykselle parempia tuloksia

# Mitä tämä tarkoittaa Laatukeskukselle?

- Hyödynnetään omaa ja yhteistyökumppaneiden osaamista tasokkaiden sisältöjen tuottamiseen.
- **Tunnetaan jäsenemme.** Kerätään jatkuvasti tietoa siitä, mitä palveluja jäsenet suosivat ja mitä he meiltä toivovat.
- Lisätään tehokkuutta sisältöjen tuotantoon:  
ennakoidaan, suunnitellaan, tuotetaan ja pysytään aikataulussa.
- **MIKSI tehdään kuten tehdään** – tekemisellä on oltava tavoite.
- **Opitaan matkan varrella:** kokeillaan erilaisia tapoja tuottaa ja jakaa – vain näin saamme tietää, mikä toimii.
- Mietitään omat kiinnostuksen kohteemme:  
Mitä haluaisin osaltani tehdä, jotta asiakkaamme saavat kiinnostavia sisältöjä?  
Miten voin hyödyntää omaa osaamistani sisällöntuotannossa ja missä haluaisin kehittyä?





# **Laatukeskuksen sisältömarkkinointimatriisi**

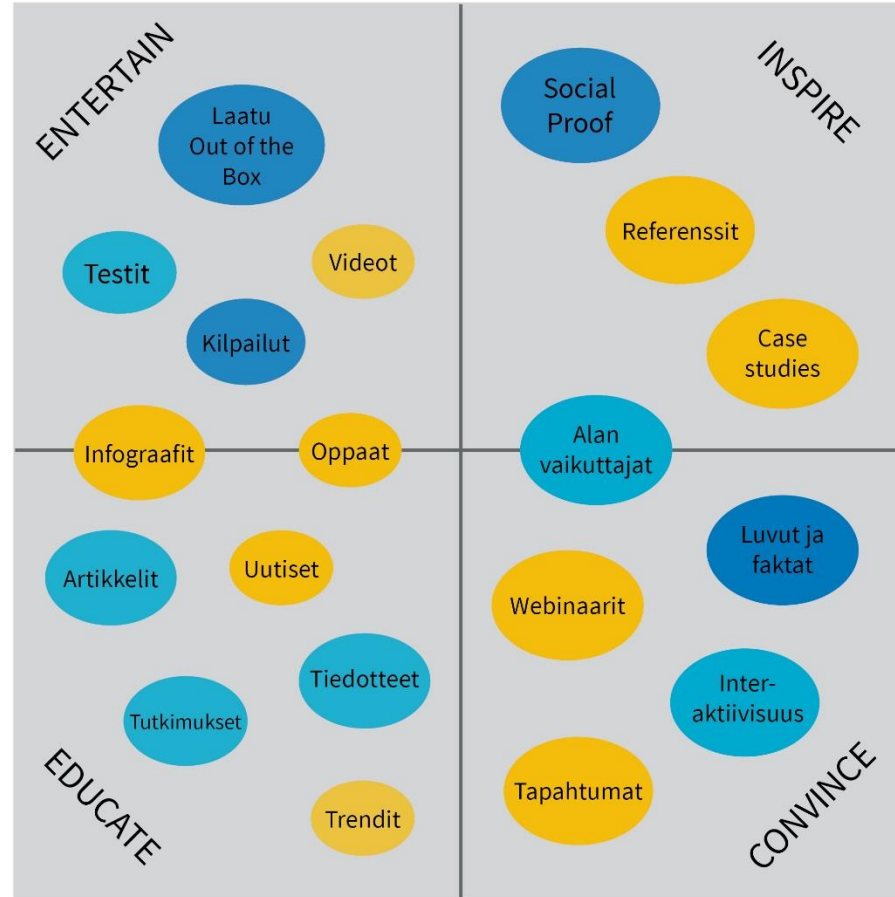


Awareness

Purchase

Emotional

Rational





# Kanavat ja formaatit

## Kanavat:

- Kotisivut
- Jäsenuutiskirje
- Sähköpostimarkkinointi
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- ja muu some
- Sponsorointi

## Formaatit:

- Videot
- Blogipostaukset
- Artikkelit
- Infograafit
- Tiedotteet
- Referenssit
- Tapahtumat
- Esitteet



# 10 vinkkiä toimivammille sisällöille

1. **Aseta tavoite.** Miksi ja kenelle sisältö on? Onko se lisätietoa asiakkaalle, uusien jäsenten houkuttelu tai vaikka Laatukeskuksen brändimielikuvan vahvistaminen?
2. **Selkeä näkökulma.** Pysy rajatussa aiheessa.
3. **Kerro perusfaktat.** Kuka, mitä, milloin, missä ja miksi.
4. **Luo rakenne.** Onko sisältö tarinallistettu, kysymys & vastaus -muotoinen, luettelo vai jotakin muuta?
5. **Herätä kiinnostus.** Yllätä tunteilla, väitteillä, tilanteella tai kysymyksellä heti alkuun.

# 10 vinkkiä toimivammille sisällöille

6. Puhu asiaa – olennaisuus, luotettavuus ja hyödyllisyys.  
Kommelluksia ja epäonnistumisiakin voi kertoa, jos niistä on hyötyä.
7. Rytmitä oikein. Mene nopeasti asiaan ja pidä kiinnostavuus yllä loppuun asti. Karsi & editoi.
8. Näytä, mistä puhut. Henkilön saavutukset eivät ole niin kiinnostavia kuin se, miten hän on niihin päässyt.
9. Käytä sopivaa kieltä ja tee se hyvin. Jutusta riippuen tämä voi olla virallisempaa tai rennompaa kieltä, mutta kirjoita lajityypissään oikein.
10. Ole aito ja rehellinen. Rakentaa luottamusta ja toimii pidempään!



# Hakukoneoptimointi

# Hakukoneoptimointi sisällön tuotannossa

- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) = hakukoneoptimointi.
- Takaa sivun näkymisen hakukonesivuilla
- Auttaa kohdentamaan sisältöä kaikissa kanavissa
- Parantaa sijoitusta hakukoneissa, ohjaa liikennettä sivulle ja lisää näkyvyyttä
- Johdatetaan kohderyhmät sivuillemme
- Hakukoneliikenne ja Laatukeskuksen uudet sivut: make it or break it! 😊





## ON PAGE SEO

- Kaikki mitä tehdään sivulla: olennaiset termit, käyttäjäkokemus, sisällön tuoreus ja laatu, mobiilioptimointi ja sivun nopeus.
- Tarkoitus on saada vierailija viipymään sivulla pidempään – sisältömarkkinoinnissa tehdään sisältöä, millä tämä taataan.
- Oikeat avainsanat sisällössä ja sivujen säännöllinen päivittäminen parantavat käyttäjäkokemusta.

## OFF PAGE SEO

- Kaikki mitä tapahtuu sivun ulkopuolella: backlinks ja sosiaaliset signaalit
- Backlinks = linkit, jotka linkittävät sivulle toiselta sivulta
- Sosiaaliset signaalit = linkitykset sivulle eri sosiaalisen median kanavista
- On page SEO parantaa myös Off page SEO:ta, koska hyvin optimoitu sisältö houkuttelee linkittämään ja jakamaan



# Sisältö Kanavat Brändi







# SISÄLTÖ

# Sisältöteemat

## Toivottua:

- Uusi johtajuus
- Muutos ja muutoksen johtaminen
- Lean
- Kansainvälinen benchmarking
- Asiakaslupauksen määrittely
- Asiakaskokemuksen mittaaminen ja arviointi

## Aina muodissa:

- Jatkuva parantaminen
- Tehokkuus
- Projektinhallinta
- Prosessimallit ja -työkalut
- Standardit

# Toivottua jäsenviestintää

- **Avoimuus ja aitous:** Laatukeskuksen Tone of Voice ja persoona saa näkyä jäsenviestinnässä.
- **Jäsenedut:** muistutetaan hyödynnettävistä eduista ja annetaan jäsenyydelle lisäarvoa.
- **Julkaisut ja suositukset:** kerrotaan uusista laadun ammattilaisille hyödyllisistä kirjoista ja julkaisuista (vaikka emme niitä itse myisikään).

# Jäsenuutiskirje

- **Toistuvuus:** lähetetään jäsenistölle säännöllisesti, joka toinen kuukausi. Tehdään tunnistettava rakenne ja pysytään siinä. Säilytetään yhteneväisyys uutiskirjeen ja kotisivujen välillä.
- **Kerrotaan ja viihdytetään:** sopivassa suhteessa tiedottamista ja yllättävyyttä. Mitä jäsenet haluaisivat tietää heti, sekä mihin aiheeseen he voisivat palata vielä myöhemminkin?
- **Juuri nyt:** viimeisimmät uutiset ja ilmiöt. Uudet jäsenet ja yhteistyökumppanit, kotimaiset ja kansainväliset uutiset laadun maailmasta.
- **Tapahtumat:** tulevat jäsentilaisuudet ja seminaarit.
- **Koulutukset:** tulevat kurssi ja valmennukset.
- **Viihdeosuus:** kuvia ja videoita viimeisimmistä tapahtumista ja muuta ajankohtaista ”extraa”!

# Kansainvälinen sisältö

- **Huomioidaan jäsenorganisaatioiden erilaisuus:** mukana on sekä kansainvälisiä että vain Suomessa toimivia organisaatioita.
- **Benchmarking:** kerrotaan enemmän siitä, miten organisaatiot muissa maissa kehittävät laatuaan ja kilpailukykyään.
- **Uutisointi maailmalta:** tärpit kansainvälisistä tilaisuuksista, joihin Laatukeskus osallistuu. Tutkimukset ja niiden kommentointi.
- **Enemmän oppeja palvelualoille:** kansainvälisen benchmarking-tiedon hyödyntäminen palvelualoilla (ei pelkästään tuotantoaloilla).



# KANAVAT



# Mistä jäsenet hakevat tietoa?

- **Google.** SEO ja oikean sisällön tuottaminen edistävät näkyvyyttä Googlessa.
- **LinkedIn.** Verkostoituminen ja osallistuminen!
- **Verkostot.** Jäsenet tapaavat toisiaan sekä kontakteja, joita he eivät välttämättä tapaisi ilman Laatukeskuksen apua.
- **Kirjallisuus.** Tarjotaan vinkkejä ja tietoa hyödyllisestä kirjallisuudesta, vaikka oma kirjakauppamme keskittyisikin vain tiettyihin kirjoihin.



# Kotisivut

- **Laatukeskus ja sen asiantuntijat:** kerrotaan itsestämme ja siitä mitä tehdään. Tavoitteena helposti lähestyttävyyys ja kiinnostavuus.
- **Tapahtumat ja koulutukset:** houkutellaan osallistumaan antamalla inspiraatiota. Teaser-videot tilaisuuksista ja koulutuksista antavat motivaatiota. Ei unohdeta jälkimarkkinointia!
- **Artikkelit ja blogi:** informatiivisuus ja viihdyttävyyys samassa paketissa. Laadun ja kilpailukyvyn ajankohtaiset ilmiöt mielenkiintoisesti ja käytännönläheisesti kirjoitettuna.



# Sosiaalisen median kanavat

- Osallistutaan keskusteluihin, verkostoidutaan, jaetaan tietoa ja inspiraatiota.
- Annetaan ääni jäsenille: kannustetaan olemaan aktiivisia sosiaalisessa mediassa eri tapahtumien yhteydessä, sekä itse kanavissa.
- Pääkanavat: Twitter ja LinkedIn.
- LinkedIn: loistava kanava yrityksen äänen kuuluviin saamiseksi työntekijöiden avulla  
-> olemalla aktiivisia saamme uusia mielenkiintoisia kontakteja ja laajennamme myös omia henkilökohtaisia verkostojamme. Win-win!
- Twitter: hyödyllinen etenkin meidän ja muiden tilaisuuksissa
- Kotisivujen ja SOMEn yhteys: linkitetään sisältöjä  
Mietitään, miten sisältöjä voidaan hyödyntää laajemmin.



# BRÄNDI



# Jäsenyyden merkitys

- Verkostoituminen ja tapahtumat

Korostetaan verkostoitumismahdollisuuksia tapahtumien markkinoinnin yhteydessä. Mitä tilaisuuteen osallistumalla oppii ja keitä siellä tapaa? Millainen yllättävyys tapahtumasta puhuttaessa varastaa huomion?

- Jäsenyyden suosittelu

Palvelujen laatu ja tapahtumat ovat pääsyyt siihen, miksi jäsenyys koetaan arvokkaaksi. Tehdään sisältöjä, jotka kertovat jäsenyyden hyödyistä – tästä hyötyvät sekä nykyiset että potentiaaliset jäsenet! Erilaiset referenssit kaikenlaisilta organisaatioilta ovat hyödyksi.

- Työntekijälähettiläisyys

Työntekijöiden aktiivinen läsnäolo sosiaalisessa mediassa on tärkeää. Ihmiset ovat kiinnostuneita ihmisen ihmiselle -viestinnästä, ja Laatukeskuksen asiantuntijoilla on tähän kaikki edellytykset. Verkostoidutaan ja keskustellaan!



# Brändiattribuutit sisältöjen tukena

- **Laadun ja toiminnan kehittämisen erityisosaaja**

Kansainvälisyys, benchmarking ja LaatuKeskuksen väki ovat nyt avainasemassa. Kerrotaan avoimesti yhteistyöprojekteista ja kuulumisista. Avataan verhoa myös kulissien taakse! Yhteyshenkilön uutiskirje kahdesti vuodessa olisi motivoivaa sisältöä yhteyshenkilöille ”laatusanoman” eteenpäin viemiseksi.

- **Menestyksen ja uuden johtajuuden mahdollistaja**

Rohkeutta peliin! Blogi ja artikkelit mahdollistavat laadusta, kilpailukyvystä ja johtajuudesta keskustelemisen kanta-aottavasti. Laadun ammattilaiset kaipaavat tukea laadusta puhumiseen johtamisen näkökulmasta – ns. vinkkilistat, kuten ”10 tapaa puhua laadusta” ovat helppoa, mutta inspiroivaa luettavaa.

# Brändiattribuutit sisältöjen tukena

- **Vetovoimainen kumppani ja innostava tukiverkosto**

Referenssien voima: esimerkit verkoston hyödyntämisestä. Listataan syyt: ”5 syytä kuulua Suomen laajimpaan laatuverkostoon”.

Ei unohdeta nykyisiä jäseniä! Pidetään säännöllisesti yhteyttä yhteyshenkilöihin esim. heille tarkoitetun uutiskirjeen avulla (personoidumpi versio jäsenuutiskirjeestä). Seurataan yhteyshenkilöiden ja henkilöjäsenten aktiivisuutta datan avulla ja viestitään heidän tilanteensa mukaan.

- **Rohkea yhteiskunnallinen vaikuttaja**

Läsnäolo ja keskusteluihin osallistuminen vaikuttamisen lähtökohtana. Kantaa ottavat ja uusia näkökulmia eri aloilta esille tuovat artikkelit ja niiden julkaiseminen sosiaalisessa mediassa. LinkedIn avainasemassa – verkostoidutaan, avataan keskusteluja ja osallistutaan!