

Raising Brand Awareness of Helsinki Salsa Academy Through Viral Video Marketing on Facebook

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<p>This bachelor's degree thesis examines the role of viral video marketing in the growth of brand awareness. The overall purpose of the study is to determine the impact of viral video marketing through Facebook on the brand awareness of Helsinki Salsa Academy, a salsa dance school of Helsinki, Finland.</p> <p>The thesis consists of an introduction, a theory section, an implementation section, an analysis section and final conclusions. The introduction section gives an overall idea of the study, the background information of the case company and the goals of this thesis. The theoretical part discusses the key elements of the production process, the practices of the competitors of the company and the potential success factors of viral videos. The implementation section describes the process of creation and development of the viral video for the company. The analysis part deals with the evaluation of the viral video outcomes. The conclusions section describes the findings, future recommendations and overall project flow.</p> <p>The attempted viral video marketing campaign showed that it is difficult to predict the success of any viral video. The success factors that are drawn from the literature and previous practices of the company's competitors do not guarantee immediate growth and an increase in brand awareness. Moreover, the viral phenomenon is a highly unpredictable matter which can be influenced by other factors, such as luck.</p> <p>Although the literature suggests that there are certain factors that can help a video go viral, the study showed that it is rather challenging to achieve that goal with the given methods. The viral video for Helsinki Salsa Academy was a beneficial addition to its marketing activities; however, it created little effect on brand awareness. During the span of the project, it became apparent that the success of the viral video depends on a greater number of factors than the anticipated ones. Nevertheless, the information collected from this study is beneficial for the future practices of Helsinki Salsa Academy.</p> <p>In order to achieve potential success in viral video marketing through Facebook, the company can utilize the already existing and tested methods as well as develop its operations even further. The success factors found in this study were tested on one company and one video. Thus, they should not be taken as indicative of any general trend of viral videos.</p>	
Keywords Viral video, video production, viral marketing, content marketing, brand awareness	

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1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on an overview of why the specific topic has been chosen with a clear explanation of the background of this study. The project objective is defined with each project task (PT) broken down into specific steps and planned outcomes. The definition of the project scope narrows down the topics that are outlined to be defined and that are left out of this project due to the complexity of the subject. The international aspect is briefly described through the company's experience in working with foreign coaches, as well as the comparison of the international competitor's practices. Needless to say, in any research or project the anticipated benefits have to be outlined to see whether the topic is worth researching and whether it brings value to the future readers, the author and the case company. In order to grasp a clearer understanding of the project, the key concepts have to be specified and defined. In this chapter, the main five terms related to video production and viral videos are briefly described. When the picture of the project is clear, the potential risks and their management are explained through the risk management matrix (see table 2). At the end of this chapter, the case company is introduced giving a brief description of its services, history and operations.

1.1 Background

In the era of the Internet dominance and viral video marketing, focusing on the creation of TV advertisements means losing the essential part of the viral video marketing phenomenon – making the viewers share the content and not only grab their attention (Voltz & Grobe 2013, 1–2). Nowadays, we all see advertisements wherever we go; our phones and laptops are like loud marketers in our pockets that never stop shouting about the product that you have to try right now. We have learned to ignore annoying advertisements and the companies took the note on that. Now it is the time to create the barely noticeable advertisements, which will make us want to share them with our friends and family – viral videos.

Viral videos are something more than just a beautiful picture with beautiful acting, something that make the viewers respond and get them furious or extremely emotional. Regardless of the feelings, the video reaches its main goal, sometimes even unintentionally, making the people become involved in the marketing of the product without even realizing it.

The concept of viral videos has been growing rather rapidly in the past few years due to the development of technology and the advancement of social media in our everyday lives. Today there is potentially not a single person who has not heard of Facebook, In-

stagram or Twitter. These three genius social media platforms have overtaken all the aspects of the classical marketing, television and printed picture albums. The companies, which were ahead of their time, developed a strong social media presence through various methods. Viral video marketing is one of them.

Viral videos are essentially videos that are spread rapidly through the social media platforms. They tend to be very relatable, funny, educational and sometimes heart-breaking; thus, even a simple mobile phone video, depending on its context, can go viral. Companies have been using this method to increase interest in their brand, generate more leads and boost website's traffic. For media agencies, creative managers and mostly all marketing specialists, creating and producing a viral video has become a major goal to reach. (Meerman 2015, 100-101.)

Sometimes, a brand goes viral on accident because it offers a trendy or innovative product, has an excellent or, on the contrary, a dreadful customer service or is mentioned by a celebrity. In this case, the company might not even be ready for a sudden extensive wave of customers and have to come up with rapid expansion strategies.

Speaking of the case company, Helsinki Salsa Academy, the importance of creating and running a successful viral video lies in the core of the potential future growth of the brand. At the moment, the business has already been recognized by international dancers, part-time international coaches and students. A viral video that portrays more of what the company stands for and how it feels to be a student of the academy is extremely important for the expansion of the business. Today, people do not "swallow" advertisement as easily as they did twenty years ago; thus, storytelling and the creation of a relative message through a viral video can potentially help Helsinki Salsa Academy gain more customers in the nearest future.

It is quite fascinating to be an active social media user, to understand how it impacts human brains and purchasing decisions. The research of the topic of viral videos lies at the core of the development of my professional skills as a marketing specialist. I am driven by the desire to create and assess the weight of creation on modern businesses and to combine the two in the case of viral videos.

Finally, succeeding in the production of a viral video means succeeding in drawing the attention of millions of people to one single product. This seems to be an exceptional skill to attain as a marketing specialist.

1.2 Project Objective

This thesis aims to develop a deeper understanding of how viral videos can impact a brand's awareness on Facebook.

The project objective (PO) can be worded as “Raising the impact of viral video marketing on Facebook on Helsinki Salsa Academy’s brand awareness”. PO is divided into project tasks (PT) as follows:

PT 1. To establish a theoretical framework

PT 2. To research one successful competitor

PT 3. To create success factors based on PT1 & PT2

PT 4. To produce a viral video

PT4.1. Preproduction

PT4.2. Production

PT4.3. Postproduction

PT 5. To assess the project management and outcomes

Each project task is followed by a theoretical framework, project management methods, and final outcomes (see table 1).

Table 1. Overlay matrix

Project Task	Theoretical Framework*	Project Management Methods	Outcomes
PT1. To establish a theoretical framework	Viral videos, video production	Documentary research	Theoretical framework
PT2. To research one successful competitor	Viral Videos	Competitors benchmarking	Success factors
PT3. To create success factors based on PT1 and PT2	Viral Videos	Success factors research	Success factors of viral videos
PT4. To produce a viral video PT4.1. Preproduction PT4.2. Production PT4.3. Postproduction	Video production theory	Planning, design, execution	Viral video
PT5. Assess the project management and outcomes	Task outcomes of PT1, PT2, PT3, PT4	Review the process of the whole project	Analysis of success or failure

1.3 Project Scope

In this thesis, the main focus is to find the relation between the impact of a viral video and the overall Facebook page growth before and after the launch. A product, viral video, will be created and launched in order to test and measure the possibility of implementation of the viral video marketing framework for further practices (see figure 1).

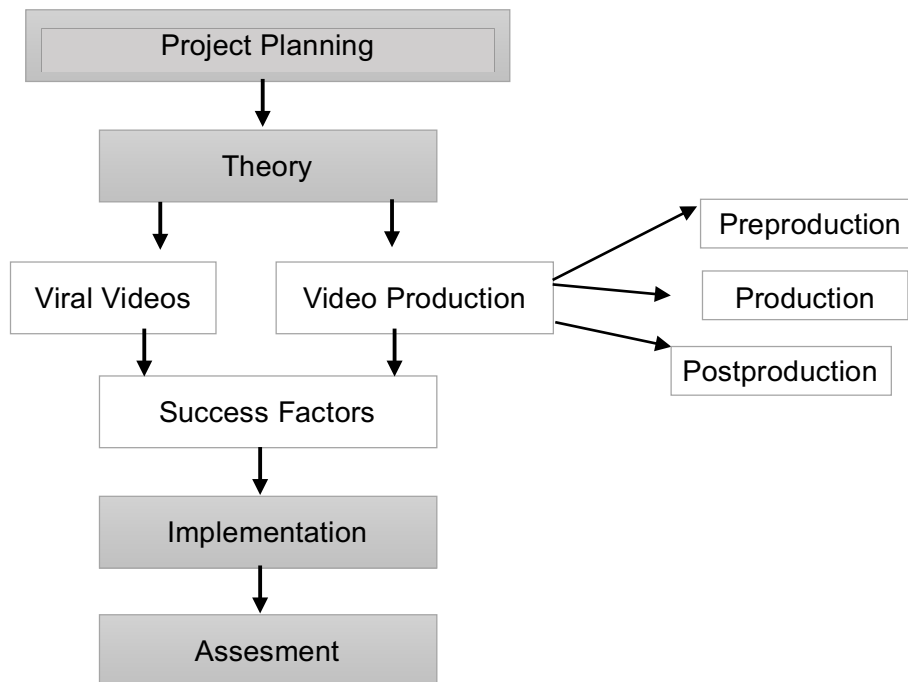


Figure 1. Project scope

The collected results will be analyzed and concluded in a statement which will clarify whether the researched steps to create viral videos are applicable or not. It is important to attempt to run a viral video and see what it takes to go viral. The company will benefit from the final research outcome regardless of its success or failure. It will present new insights that can be taken into consideration while creating a marketing strategy for the company. The theoretical and the practical knowledge gained through this project will serve as a valuable asset of the company. At this stage, the budgeting will not be calculated or taken into consideration since it is not the essential goal of the research.

1.4 International Aspect

The given topic fulfils the international scope matter because the company cooperates with international instructors and participates in the events abroad as well as. Moreover, this research includes the analysis of a competitor company that has similar practices

abroad. The analysis will include their current techniques, past experiences and general overview.

1.5 Anticipated Benefits

The company will benefit from this research for the following reasons:

- a) potential brand awareness growth within a short period of time;
- b) new and innovative ways of the development of their marketing strategy for the upcoming seasons;
- c) potential new guidelines in order to run viral videos in the future.

The field of studies is directly related to the research subject since it is based on the viral video marketing. Future researchers in this field can benefit from the thesis paper by getting more ideas about viral marketing, expanding the social media impact on the brand and seeing innovative ways of development of viral video marketing.

Speaking about my career and the potential impact of this thesis, I believe that it will be a great asset in addition to the skillset that I already have. The impact of social media keeps increasing every day; thus, the relevance of the subject will potentially grow in demand. Moreover, having researched this matter I will come closer to the understanding of the target audience's behavior and their interests, which will also be of a great benefit in my future as a marketing specialist.

1.6 Key Concepts

In order to understand this thesis and the terminology used in it, it is crucial to define the main concepts of the subject.

Video production is the entire process of creating a video. Depending on the type of the video, whether it is a short film, business marketing video or music video, the entire process may vary. However, the main structure remains rather similar. It normally consists of three stages: preproduction, production and postproduction. (Shyles 2007, 6.)

Viral video is any film, clip or animation, which is spread promptly through online sharing. In viral videos, the main goal is not to keep the viewers' attention but to create the content, which people would genuinely love to share with their friends and acquaintances through social media platforms. The viral videos that make the viewers' laugh or on the contrary make them mad are the ones to reach the highest shared rate since they awaken a strong emotional response, which people want to share with others. (Voltz & Grobe 2013, 2.)

Viral marketing is a term that has been first introduced by Juvetson and Draper in 1997 (Cruz & Fill 2008, 745). It is a marketing technique, which is designed to share information about a new product or service at a very rapid speed by having the viewers share it with each other most commonly through the Internet (Merriam-Webster 2017).

Brand awareness is the first step of brand building (Kapferer 2012, 188). It is the degree to which the customers are able to recognize certain goods and services through the qualities or the image of a particular brand (Oxford University Press 2017).

Content marketing is a marketing technique that focuses on creating and distributing valuable material, which is also valuable and consistent with the brand. The content is usually targeted for a defined audience with the purpose of creating more profit in the future. In simple words, content marketing is the way of communicating with the potential customers without directly selling it to them. (Pulizzi 2013, 6.)

1.7 Risks and Risk Management

At the start of the risk assessment and management, it is important to emphasize the probability of risks to occur during a project-based research. Projects are inevitably risky since they all share a few common factors: uniqueness, complexity, assumptions and constraints, people, stakeholders, and change – all of them are built in the core of the project and cannot be removed since the project will lose its initial value and importance. (Hillson 2009, 13–14.)

1.7.1 Risk Identification

The potential risks and their impact have been identified and listed below with the most challenging risks at the top and the least challenging ones at the bottom:

1. The failure of making a viral video.
2. Lack of time for the project implementation.
3. The difficulty of defining whether the video went viral.
4. The irrelevance of the topic to the case company.

1.7.2 Risk Management

The likelihood, consequences and the risk prevention should be clearly identified in order to ensure the smooth flow of the project and prompt solutions of any unexpected events. Likelihood – the probability of the risk to occur, which is classified as high, medium and low. Consequences – the immediate and long-term effect on the project and the final re-

sults. Prevention – steps that should be taken in order to prevent the failures to occur (see table 2).

Table 2. Risk management matrix

Risk	Likelihood	Consequences	Prevention
The failure of making a viral video	high	The failure of the entire project	Time management and in-depth research on the topic as well as a clear marketing plan for the published video
Lack of time for the project implementation	medium	Delayed submission of the thesis	Strict schedule with personal deadlines
The difficulty of defining whether the video went viral	low	Poor analysis of the achieved results	Theoretical research of the field and the creation of the success factors of viral videos
The irrelevance of the topic to the case company	low	Little to no feedback from the company	Regular meetings and updates on the project status

Based on the risk management matrix (see table 2), it is clear that the highest risk of this project is the failure to create a viral video, which lays in the essence of the project itself. The remaining risks are rather plausible to prevent by following the schedule and doing the relevant research on the subject.

Regardless of the success or failure of running a viral video, the project will still be of value for researchers, case company and the author. Both outcomes can contribute to a better understanding of the future growth of the brand and the actions, which are better to be taken or avoided.

1.8 Case Company

The company that will be studied in the course of this research is Helsinki Salsa Academy. It was founded in 2010 by Mikko Kemppe, a holder of master's degree in psychology, a professional dancer, and a former highly competitive basketball player. The interest in the dancing field grew in him when he was in the United States of America, where he studied and lived for approximately 10 years. He is credited to be the founder of two salsa communities in Louisiana, which have grown into competitive environments in this field. Having decided to dedicate more of his time to salsa dancing, Mikko moved to San Francisco to learn from one of the best salsa instructors at that time. After developing himself even better to the level of one of the top dancers of San Francisco Bay Area, he came back to Finland to set up Helsinki Salsa Academy.

At the moment, Helsinki Salsa Academy offers novice, beginner, intermediate and advanced classes of salsa and bachata, each of them has its specifications and techniques.

The classes are taught mainly by Mikko Kemppe and Hanna Still, who has become an instructor after the school started to expand in several locations. Helsinki Salsa Academy has a wide variety of courses in two different locations, which are Etelä-Haaga and Lauttasaari. The schedule of courses is quite flexible; thus, the school is able to sustain hundreds of students every year.

Over the past few years, there has been a visible growth and development of the school. In the past months, it has introduced a new concept of drop-in classes, which had not been yet available before. Also, there has been an expansion of the teaching team and the staff, which lead to a belief that the company is constantly seeking new ways of improvement and is steadily developing. (Helsinki Salsa Academy 2018.)

2 From Production to Going Viral

The purpose of this chapter is to elaborate on the theoretical knowledge and theories that are relevant to the topic of viral video marketing and video production. To start with, a few key concepts, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs., should be outlined.

The key phenomenon of this study is a viral video, which is any film or animation that is spread promptly throughout online sharing. The term “viral” itself means anything that is spread at a very fast pace.

Viral marketing is another concept which is defined as a marketing technique in which an advertisement of a product or a service is spread by the users to other websites and social media platforms. Speaking of all of the above-mentioned, it is safe to say that all of the concepts are tightly related to content marketing, which is a technique that focuses on creation and distribution of marketing material that is consistent with the brand. The content is usually targeted for a defined audience with the purpose of creating more profit in the future. By creating a strong social media presence, especially through viral video marketing, the company has a greater chance to increase its brand awareness, which is the possibility that the consumers will recognize the availability and the presence of a firm’s product or service.

2.1 Viral Video Marketing

Humans have always strived to make their living more comfortable. From the Stone Age till nowadays, we have developed in every aspect of life, starting with the way we get our food and ending with the way we entertain ourselves. Years ago, a device that can show you what is happening on the other side of the world seemed like an insane thought, while today about 46% of the world’s population has Internet access (The World Bank 2016). This led to a large amount of information available to individuals striving for further growth and advancement.

The newspapers and traditional television programs are slowly being replaced by the online blogs, videos and broadcasting networks like Netflix and HBO. Radio is no longer the main source of information – more of a background noise (Liff & Posey 2004, 25–26). People prefer to have the freedom of choice. They can now choose the programs that they want to watch instead of being fed with a spoon full of advertisement by big corporations. We learned to ignore advertisement so well that we almost do not notice it on our timelines on Facebook. Needless to say, how easily we keep ourselves away from the television ads, simply by watching less TV and more of online broadcasting websites (Teixeira 2012). The question that immediately comes up is how companies can market

their products to the viewers, if they fall into the risk of being fully avoided. The tasks of marketing managers became extremely hard since now they have to make sure that their potential customers at least watch the first few seconds of their advertisement and only then try to actually sell something. The difference between marketing 10 years ago and marketing now is seen through the importance of bringing value to the potential customers. The higher the value, the higher the possibility of purchasing. (Jefferson & Tanton 2012, 40.)

In one of the articles, Vaynerchuk (2015) argues that everyone's most important asset is time. Centuries ago, people were happy to read long articles and books, while nowadays they are most likely to choose a quick video. The reason for this is fairly straightforward – people do not want to waste their time and do everything possible to save it. Gary Vaynerchuk's website serves as a perfect example of viewer's timesaving, where each article states the exact number of minutes needed for reading his blog post. This excellent way of providing value and making sure the potential customers understand that his company cares about their time and wants to provide with the best information within that given time.

The development and the evolution of the business environment led to the changes in the marketing strategies and techniques that companies use nowadays. Visual marketing stepped into the game and is now universally accepted as a tool that allows businesses promote their goods and services (Wedel & Pieters 2008, 1). Nowadays, people are expecting loud noise, bright colors and other special effects that will help grab our attention (Liff & Posey 2004, 32). One of the most viral advertisements of all time belongs to Pepsi, where Beyoncé, Britney Spears and Pink came together to sing the "We Will Rock You" song. It was supposed to be a gladiator fight, but instead they rebelled and started singing. This angered the emperor and resulted in him pushing a container full of Pepsi. The women then picked up the fallen cans and enjoyed their drinks. The advertisement is quite noticeable, but the viewers lose their guard after a spectacular performance earlier. The advertisement was released in 2004, and since then it has collected almost 47 million views. (Learmonth 2010.)

Corporations no longer put one-minute advertisements in the middle of the show to portray their merchandise. They have to think of smarter ways of capturing the viewer's attention and one of them is through video marketing. Through emotional stimulation, videos reveal a story, which cannot be told the same way by any other marketing tools.

A considerable amount of companies creates videos to show their expertise and bring value to their viewers; others focus on storytelling without displaying the corporation's employees or logos in order to keep it very authentic and honest. (Meerman 2015, 99-101.) B2B companies often use video marketing for various reasons: closing a deal, giving better insights on their product or service and simply building stronger customer relationships. Some services can be comparatively difficult to describe to potential customers due to the complexity or inability to show physical proof of the impact of the service. This is when the video marketing comes in hand as it gives the viewer the possibility to see and perhaps relate to the issue portrayed in the video.

The development of the Internet led to a growth of yet another powerful video marketing tool – a viral video. It can be utilized as a free promotion based on the idea of its rapid sharing, which can result in immediate exposure to thousands of people within a few hours for no extra cost (Meerman 2015, 112). Still being a rather new trend and getting low coverage when it comes to researching the outcomes, one point can be unequivocally proven true – they play an extensive role in raising brand awareness (Ferguson 2008, 179). They tend to be started unintentionally, with one user sharing a hilarious or touching video to his friends, who share it forward until the speed of sharing turns it viral (Meerman 2015, 112–113). YouTube, a video sharing platform, is one of the most utilized platforms to express feelings, communicate business messages and create connections among its users (Khan & Vong 2014, 629–647). The questions that arise after hearing all the benefits of video marketing and the viral video phenomenon: How to overcome the challenge of going viral in reality? Does the polished look matter? Is there any specific emotion that causes a certain reaction? Should it be published at a certain time of the day?

Meerman (2015, 112–114) states that it is nearly impossible to create a guaranteed viral video. He also argues that an extensive amount of luck and timing are among the key points that can assist a campaign with reaching the goal. The success of a viral video is not necessarily followed by the exact same number of steps to be taken in order to become viral, one framework cannot simply fit a thousand businesses; otherwise, everyone would be using this technique of free advertising.

Voltz & Grobe (2013, 2) state that viral videos are rather different from the standard television advertisement as they are made to be shared and not only grab the viewer's attention. The fact that an individual decides to share a video forward to the community can mean that it lies in line with the image or beliefs that are desired to be shown. The need for inclusion and affection are among the two main reasons for viewers to share a video

online; this is why companies that try to go viral should consider targeting a certain emotion. (Dafonte-Gómez 2014, 200-201.)

Joy and happiness are among the two essential emotions that keep the viewer watching for at least a short period of time. Sometimes, videos take the viewers on a whole emotional roller-coaster, during which the emotions sway from positive to negative and back to positive. In this case, the person gets hooked to the storyline and watches the video without losing interest. Budweiser's advertisement "Don't Drink and Drive" is a perfect example of this technique. The main goal of it is to encourage people to drink responsibly and, in particular, not to drive after having a few bottles of beer. The advertisement starts with a young man getting a puppy, which grows into his best friend as the years go by. The emotional roller-coaster begins when the owner goes out with a few beers, leaving his pet friend alone. The next scene portrays the dog laying sadly and waiting for his owner to come back from a party. The viewers are made to believe that the man is never coming back. However, after a few important messages about driving while drinking, the mood of the video changes once again, and the owner comes back to his dog. Budweiser has not only managed to achieve the goal of catching the viewers' attention but also build an image of a caring and trustworthy company – all in one minute. (Stampler 2014.)

The crucial point in the given case is whether the viewer decides to share the video or leaves it on private. The Budweiser's case proves that kind and loving messages have a high possibility of being shared. Shocking and even taboo subjects, might work only as a mean of increasing the number of views but not the sharing rate. As mentioned above, individuals tend to share posts that they would like to be related to or at least thought of as a good person; thus, touching delicate issues might be an unsafe path to follow in the pursuit of going viral. (Teixeira 2012.)

The duration of the video is another crucial factor, which can potentially determine whether the video advertisement goes viral. Studies have shown that on average viral videos last from thirty seconds to two minutes, which is already a challenging task to accomplish due to the short span of attention of people in today's society. The presence of a celebrity can also increase the chances of a video to be rapidly shared through social media since it goes in line with the surprise effect. (Dafonte-Gómez 2014, 203-204.)

To conclude this chapter, the matrix of the key components of the viral videos has been created (see table 3). It describes the key feature, which can potentially increase chances of going viral as well as the reasoning behind choosing these particular features.

Table 3. Viral video matrix

Feature	Reasoning
Bringing value	To increase the chances of selling a product or service.
Saving time	To respect and understand that time is a valuable asset that can be provided to the viewers/potential clients.
Emotional connection	To keep the interest and increase chances of being shared.
Surprise factor	To bring the viewers on an emotional roller-coaster.

The success cannot be solely based on the above-mentioned features; however, they can lead to a better overall performance.

2.2 Video Production

Needless to say, in order to create and produce a viral video, one must follow a clear theoretical framework which is tied to the entire process. Each member of the team plays a significant role in the entire process by putting the pieces of an immense puzzle together. The producer, however, is the main figure that guides the rest through the process and creates the vision of the video, short film or movie. The crew then brings everything to life through a set of production stages that have to be taken in order to produce the final product. (Compesi & Gomez 2017). Shyles (2012,6 –7) explains that the video production process can be broken down into three main stages: preproduction, production and post-production (see figure 2).

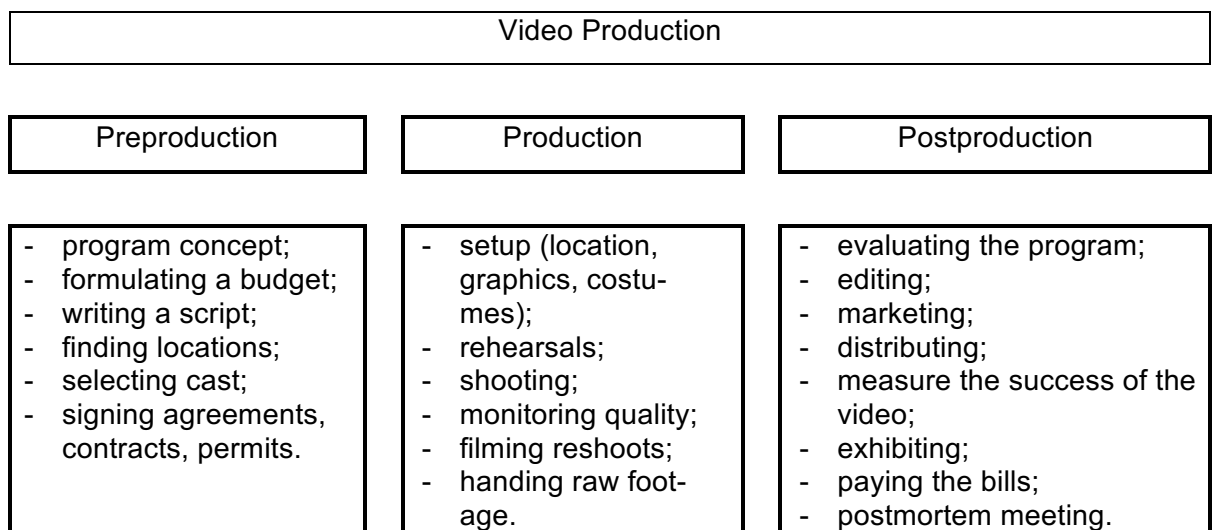


Figure 2. Video production

The teamwork and well-developed communication of all the parties involved in the process are among the key factors of success. Planning and establishing the program before even starting the production process must be in the development stage. The producer reserves the right to the story and gets all the required permissions, whether it is based on

an already existing piece, real life or invented by the producer himself. When everything is approved and the script is written, it is time for the preproduction. (Compesi & Gomez 2017.)

2.2.1 Preproduction

Preproduction is the period during which the essential issues of the whole project are taken care of. The production crew is formed before the start of the actual production process (Compesi & Gomez 2017). The financial issues have to be sorted out at this stage, along with the logistics and supply of all the required equipment and selection of the filming location. The decisions regarding the cast are made in the preproduction stage as well. (Shyles 2007, 6.) Approximately ninety percent of the production is covered during the preproduction stage; thus, it should not be neglected or treated with less consideration. The important step of the entire video production process is writing and finalizing the script since it serves as a mainstay of the whole production process. (Owens 2017.) In the field of advertisement, storyboards are used as a complementary visual plan to the written script, and sometimes they are so detailed that the drafted script is no longer required. A storyboard itself is a set of images that visually represent each shot and give a very clear picture of what is planned to happen in each scene.

The scheduling takes place later on. All the meetings and tentative filming days are set accordingly. (Compesi & Gomez 2017.) All the members of the team, the actors and videographers are expected to be present during the meetings in order to solve any misunderstandings, become familiar with all the parts of the script and be ready to carry on with the production stage. (Shyles 2007, 453-454.) Communicating on the budget and creating certain boundaries within the project is crucial to the financial success of the video production process (Compesi & Gomez 2017). All the costs related to transportation, crew, actors, equipment, postproduction, location, food and other expenses must be taken into consideration when planning the total cost of the project (Owens 2017). There is a number of various options, which are used when creating a budget, but one of the most common ones is dividing the total cost by each production stage such as preproduction, production, postproduction and distribution; however, the last two can be combined into one (Compesi & Gomez 2017). This gives a clear view of which direction the most spending is planned to occur and which areas are at risk of becoming more expensive due to the unexpected and variable costs.

Having the set expectations of the budget, the casting of the actors and the crew behind the camera begins. Depending on the complexity of the project, several castings can be held in order to find the best actors for the roles. Another crucial element of the entire vid-

eo production process is finding the right location. It should fit the artistic requirements created in the planning stage of the scenes, the legal permission to enter the premises and the technical conditions. Good lighting, power access and audio – all of these make a noticeable impact on the final outcome. Last, but not least important step that is covered in the preproduction stage is the legal matters. The necessary contracts that tie the crew to the video production must be signed with their roles and obligations clearly outlined. The required copyright issues must also be solved and the releases by the actors signed and secured. (Compesi & Gomez 2017.)

2.2.2 Production

The production starts once all the matters have been solved in the preproduction stage. This is the stage in which the director's role becomes more important, based on the complexity of the project. The smallest details, such as appropriate clothing and equipment check are all done by the director. (Foust, Fink & Gross 2017.) It is the time when the production begins (Compesi & Gomez 2017). Rehearsals are done prior the filming process in order to detect any potential changes that have to be done or simply to make sure that the actors and the crew know exactly what to do on set (Shyles 2007, 6–7). Depending on the complexity of the program, a certain set up of the location is required before the start of the filming process. The basics of the location set up for any kind of video shooting are proper lighting, especially when filming with little to no natural light, and good-quality audio. (Musburger 2005, 106-124.) During the production of movies or long videos, the slating technique is used to differentiate the shots later in the postproduction phase where the editing takes place. A cardboard sign is held in front of the camera, which states the number of the scene, the take number, the director's name and the general description of what is about to happen. The slated shots are then much easier to be identified while editing, which decreases the time spent during the postproduction process. (Foust, Fink & Gross 2017.) During the production process, the reshoots are a rather common thing to happen. It's important to stay calm, flexible and efficient, even though most of the failures are predictable, there are still chances of falling into an erratic situation. (Shyles 2007, 7.)

2.2.3 Postproduction

The postproduction phase is when all the editing takes place. Depending on the complexity of the project, this process can take anywhere from a few hours to weeks and months. (Compesi & Gomez 2017.) At the dawn of the video production, all the editing was done in a linear way, which meant that the scenes were placed in a pre-decided sequence, and the videotape itself was used as a source of footage and a recording medium. After the mid-1990s, however, the process evolved into the non-linear editing technique because of

the development of technology, which made it possible to edit clips that were filmed in a non-chronological order. (Foust, Fink & Gross 2017.) Once the video is put together by the editor, the final product is reviewed to see whether all the parts fit together and are placed in the correct order. When the concluding review has been done, it is time to start the marketing and the distribution of the video. (Shyles 2007, 7.)

Creating a catchy and visually attractive video or advertisement, in theory, does not guarantee a linked success and popularity among the potential customers (Wedel & Pieters 2008, 2). The goal of all the marketing activities and distribution is to reach the target audience and to effect it. The reason why viral videos are created in the first place can be seen from the perspective of the REAN model (Jackson 2009, 24–27).

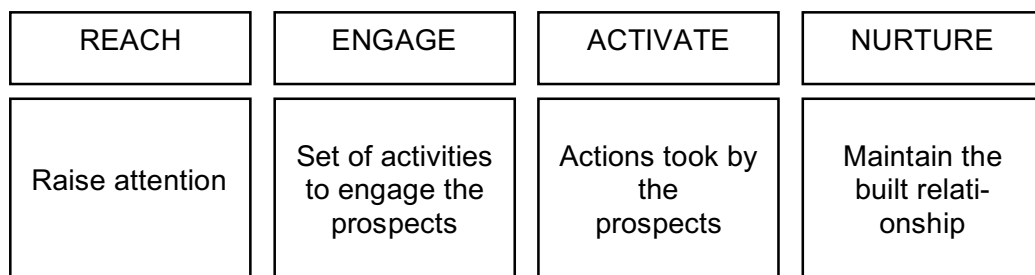


Figure 3. REAN model

REAN stands for Reach, Engage, Activate and Nurture, each step taking the brand from the stage of raising the attention to the brand itself and ending with the maintenance of the built relationships with the potential customers (see figure 3). The first step of this model is the classification of the activities that are needed to take place in order to raise the prospects' attention to the brand. The second step is gradual and often circular actions, which will lead to prospects' engagement with the interested brand. Later, come the activities that have to be taken by the prospects, which are essentially the steps the company would want them to take. Last, but not least important, comes the nurturing step during which the company aims to maintain the relationship established with the prospect. The viral video marketing process, as part of the distribution process, clearly depicts each step of the REAN model.

2.3 Competitor's Practices

Identifying the main competitors is an extremely important step to take when planning the marketing strategy. Based on the earlier studies, there have been established two approaches to competitor analysis: the supply-based approach and the demand-based approach. The first one helps to identify the similarities of two firms in regard to their product, technical advancement and employees, while the second one focuses on the customer attitudes and their behaviors (Clark & Montgomery 1999, 67).

In this project, the competitor's practices will be reviewed according to the supply-based approach. This will give a better perspective on what the both firms are doing and what success factors could be potentially extracted from that. In order to distinguish a firm that has similar operations around the world, it is important to outline the main criteria, which will lie in the core of the competitor identification. Before moving any further, the first principle to take into consideration is the size of the firm. Two companies, one is small and another one is big, are a challenge to see as competitors since what can be applied to the first, cannot be applied to the second. (Chen & Hambrick 1995, 453). The second criterion of the competitor identification is the success of the firm. The link between the size and the success can be rather relative; however, it can be assumed that the bigger size of the firm is related to the success that has happened in the past. The last factor that has to be taken into consideration when defining competitors is the threatening behavior towards the company. (Clark & Montgomery 1999, 70.)

2.3.1 Competitor Introduction

In order to find the best possible success factors of the viral videos, the level, size and success of a competitor will be taken from a different level since the popularity of dance videos is considerably different based on the number of views on Facebook and YouTube around the world. The analyzed competitor in this research is the Millennium Dance Complex – one of the top dance schools in the United States. The company is successfully producing videos that have reached millions of views across different social media platforms. It is considered a competitor by the case company, even though they do not compete in the same field of dancing; they still have the same product – dance classes. The complex offers a wide range of dance classes with the top coaches of the country coming to teach their masterclasses. The Millennium Dance Complex has earned its name through outstanding performance as well as the love from the world-famous celebrities like Justin Timberlake, Diddy, Britney Spears, Pink, Usher and Robin Antin. (Millennium Dance Complex 2017.) Helsinki Salsa Academy, on the other hand, is still in a developing phase of its brand with approximately six thousand likes on their Facebook page, video

views up to a few thousands and a viral video that has reached a hundred thousand views and almost five hundred shares. The difference in styles, size, popularity and other factors between Helsinki Salsa Academy and Millennium Dance Complex is clear; however, this gives the perfect outlook to what can potentially be done in order to increase the brand awareness of Helsinki Salsa Academy.

Taking a closer look at the Millennium Dance Complex, the first issue that has to be underlined is the fact that the Facebook page of the complex is fully dedicated to the updates on the schedule, masterclasses and other dance-related matters. Only some videos collecting a few thousand views are added to their gallery on this platform. This means that the essential purpose of the Facebook page is to merely keep the existing and potential students aware of any changes and announcements.

The second important fact that has to be mentioned before moving further into the analysis is the immense popularity of the dance videos on the YouTube platform. By typing in “unity in diversity”, thousands of videos with millions of views appear in the results section. The most popular video of the dance school on YouTube posted around 2 years ago amounts to 56 million views, the rest of the video views vary depending on the search word: “millennium dance complex”, “millennium dance studio” or “unity in diversity dance studio” (see table 4). However, there is a noticeable pattern of the increase of the views in the past half a year, which means that there has been a potential rise in the demand for the school’s dance videos or in dance videos in general.

Table 4. Keyword to number of views relation

Keyword	First Place Number of Views	Second Place Number of Views	Third Place Number of Views
“millennium dance complex”	56 million	17 million	16 million
“millennium dance studio”	56 million	17 million	16 million
“unity in diversity dance studio”	56 million	6.3 million	1 million

The popularity of the videos can be linked to the accounts that post them – well-known dancers that teach masterclasses all over the world (Nahon & Hemsley 2013, 78). The original YouTube channel of the Millennium Dance Complex has a comparatively good performance with around 173,300 subscribers; however, it does not reach the number of views that are generated through the trainers reposts (see table 5).

Table 5. Difference in popularity

Name of the Video	Company's Post	Instructor's post
"Rhythm of Love" by Brian Friedman	1.8M views	1M views
"You and I" by Phil Wright	172K views	9.3M views
"7/11" by Yanis Marshall	1.4M views	17M views

The difference in views is very distinct, which implies that one factor that can potentially lead to a video going viral is who shares it. In the dance world, the notion of world-famous coaches giving workshops at various dance school is rather common. Dancers travel all over the world in order to take a few classes with their dream coach. Millennium Dance Complex serves as a link between dancers who want to improve their skills and meet their idols and the instructors who search for a place to share their skills at. This balance serves as a building block to the success of the school and its popularity online. (Millennium Dance Complex, 2017.)

2.3.2 Viral Videos Analysis

Millennium Dance Complex has created a number of videos that capture the attention of not only dancers but also people who simply enjoy seeing the beauty of this art. They bring joy, happiness and excitement – all the emotions that can potentially trigger the viewers to share the video with their friends (Dafonte-Gómez 2014, 200-201). One of the dance videos even ended with a surprise proposal resulting in an abundance of reactions and mass sharing on various platforms like Instagram and YouTube. This underlines the first major key factor that contributes to the videos going viral – the positive emotion, which people want to share with their followers and want to be associated with (Teixeira 2012).

The second factor that can potentially contribute to the viral effect is the use of popular and well-known music in their dance routines. Being already professional in the dance field, the overall performance is greatly enhanced by the music choice, which helps to capture the attention of people with different backgrounds. The music can also contribute to the increase of popularity due to the frequent searches of the song the video was made to. (Nahon & Hemsley 2013, 98.)

The surprise factor of Millennium Dance Complex is greatly enhanced by the presence of a celebrity, which is considered a major element contributing to the capture of the viewer's attention (Dafonte-Gómez 2014, 203-204). As mentioned earlier, the American celebrities tend to refer to the dance school regularly as one of the best places and even call it their second home. The presence of famous individuals in their final practice can give a notice-

able boost to the views of the video since it grants the project a level of credibility from an opinion leader. Human nature works in a way that if something has been seen or done by thousands of people, then it must be worth checking out. The same idea can be applied to viewing and sharing information online: if everyone did it, why should I be different and not do it. (Nahon & Hemsley 2013, 78.)

The success of the videos produced by Millennium Dance Complex can be tied to something deeper than the ability to capture the viewer's attention and showing beautiful visuals. The value that is provided to all the customers in the field cannot be left unnoticed in the analysis of the success factors (Ravald & Grönroos 1996, 19-30). The dancers and dance coaches can potentially get inspired by the videos, making them carry on developing themselves in the professional dance field.

The editing of all the video is done in a professional, yet a simple way that does not distract the viewers from the choreography. The quality of filming, however, is not guarantee that the video will go viral. The polished look and perfect angles are on the less important side of impacting the sharing decisions of the viewers. There is an abundance of cases of viral videos that have been filmed on a phone with a very low resolution and got spread all over the social media channels. (Nahon & Hemsley 2013, 66.)

2.4 Success Factors Based on Competitor's Practices and Theory

As previously mentioned, there is no pattern for viral videos that works the same way since each of them relies on various factors and even luck can be the reason for success. Nevertheless, the most common success factors have been outlined and described (see table 6).

Table 6. Success factors

Success Factor	Impact	Practice	Theory
Emotional Trigger	High engagement and sharing among viewers	+	+
Popular Music	Easily recognizable and higher chances to be found	+	
Surprise Factor	Captures viewers' attention	+	+
Relatively Short	Higher chances to be viewed until the end		+

The first success factor that has been found after conducting the theoretical research and the competitor's analysis is the emotional trigger. The way viewers react to a video can increase or decrease the chances of it going viral. Positive emotions can trigger the desire to share a post with other individuals because people like to be associated with something good. Sad or provocative videos have the potential of being viewed rather often; however, it does not mean that they will be shared at the same frequency. An emotional roller-coaster is what makes some videos so intriguing and interesting to watch that people even forget or do not notice that it is an advertisement.

The importance of popular music has become clear after the analysis of the competitor's practices. The popular songs tend to boost the viewings, and viewers might come across a video by looking for a particular song. It is especially important since the case company of the project is a dance school, where music is one of the key components of the entire business.

The surprise factor, which grabs the viewers' attention and makes them keep watching the video, is among the major key factors of success of a viral video. Celebrities and unexpected events tend to raise the interest in a video and even make it more trustworthy, in a case where a famous figure supports a certain brand. The emotional roller-coaster, by which the viewers are taken on, keeps them curious and wanting to see more without switching the channels.

The last researched factor of the success of viral videos can potentially be the length of the video. Nowadays, people value their time so much that the slightest possibility of it being wasted is going to be eliminated. Due to the abundance of content and advertisement, our society has learned to ignore the unwanted information and focus only on the useful material. Creating short and catchy videos can help advertisers and corporations escape the path of being ignored and actually get to their target audience.

2.5 Summary

The research of relevant literature and the practices of one of the company's competitors helped draw the clear steps of the viral video project (see figure 4).

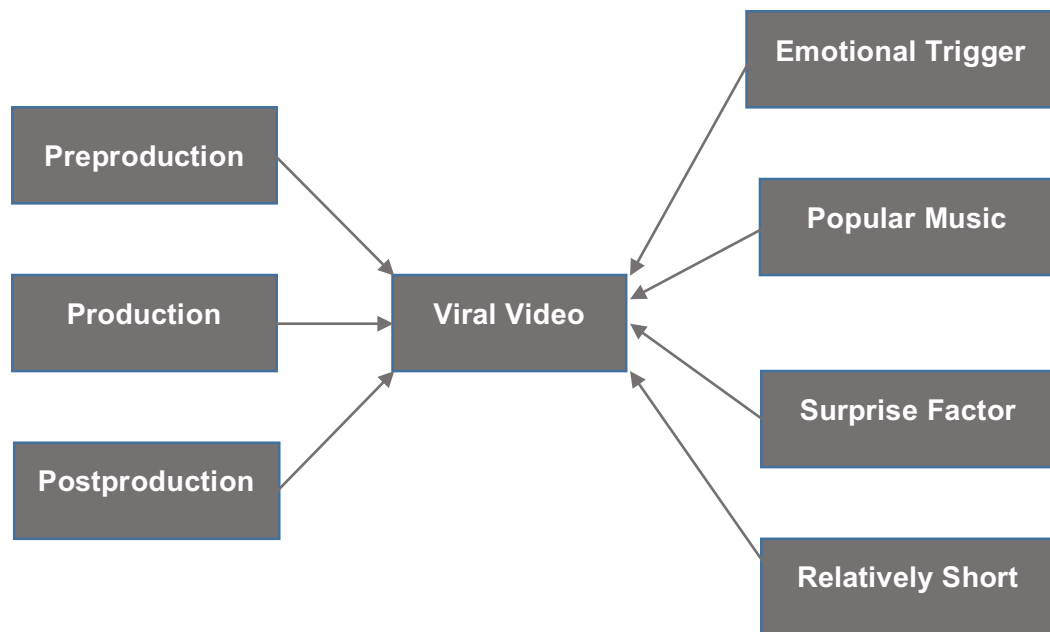


Figure 4. Mind map

The preproduction, production and the postproduction are all the essential parts of a video creation process. Each step will be carefully followed during the span of the project in order to reach the best possible results. Additionally, the attempted viral video will be enhanced by some of the found success factors. During the preproduction phase, all the important decisions in regard to the concept of the video will be made. Later on, the project will move into the production phase, in the course of which all the audio and visual content will be put together to create the video. The final product, the video, will then be posted on the Facebook Page of Helsinki Salsa Academy and promoted in accordance with the postproduction plan.

3 Viral Video Production

This chapter describes the process of creation and development of the viral video for Helsinki Salsa Academy as well as the analysis of the outcomes and final thoughts on the project flow.

3.1 Preproduction

The preproduction stage was the first and the most important stage of the entire process of video production. All the risks and potential downfalls were analyzed in order to create a smooth and productive workflow. The qualitative data has been collected through an interview with Mikko Kemppe, the founder of the Helsinki Salsa Academy (see Appendix 3). It gave better insights on the video creation and the direction that has to be followed during this project.

3.1.1 Program Concept

The analysis of the existing practices, as well as the research of the theoretical background, led to the conclusion that the program concept is one of the key elements that have to be outlined in the preproduction process. A clear idea has to be established in order to have a better understanding of why the video is created, whom it targets and what results it is expected to achieve.

The product created for Helsinki Salsa Academy was planned to increase the brand's awareness through a viral video on Facebook. The concept of the video was to show the challenges of learning a new dance routine and the way one is viewed while doing it. The mood of the video was planned to be rather playful and funny, which granted it a higher chance to be shared. The emotional trigger and the surprise success factors were added as recommended by the literature and through the experiences of the company's competitors.

3.1.2 Mood Board

The mood board was an essential part of the development of the video production process. It helped find inspiration and create a visual representation of what the final product should look like (see image 1).

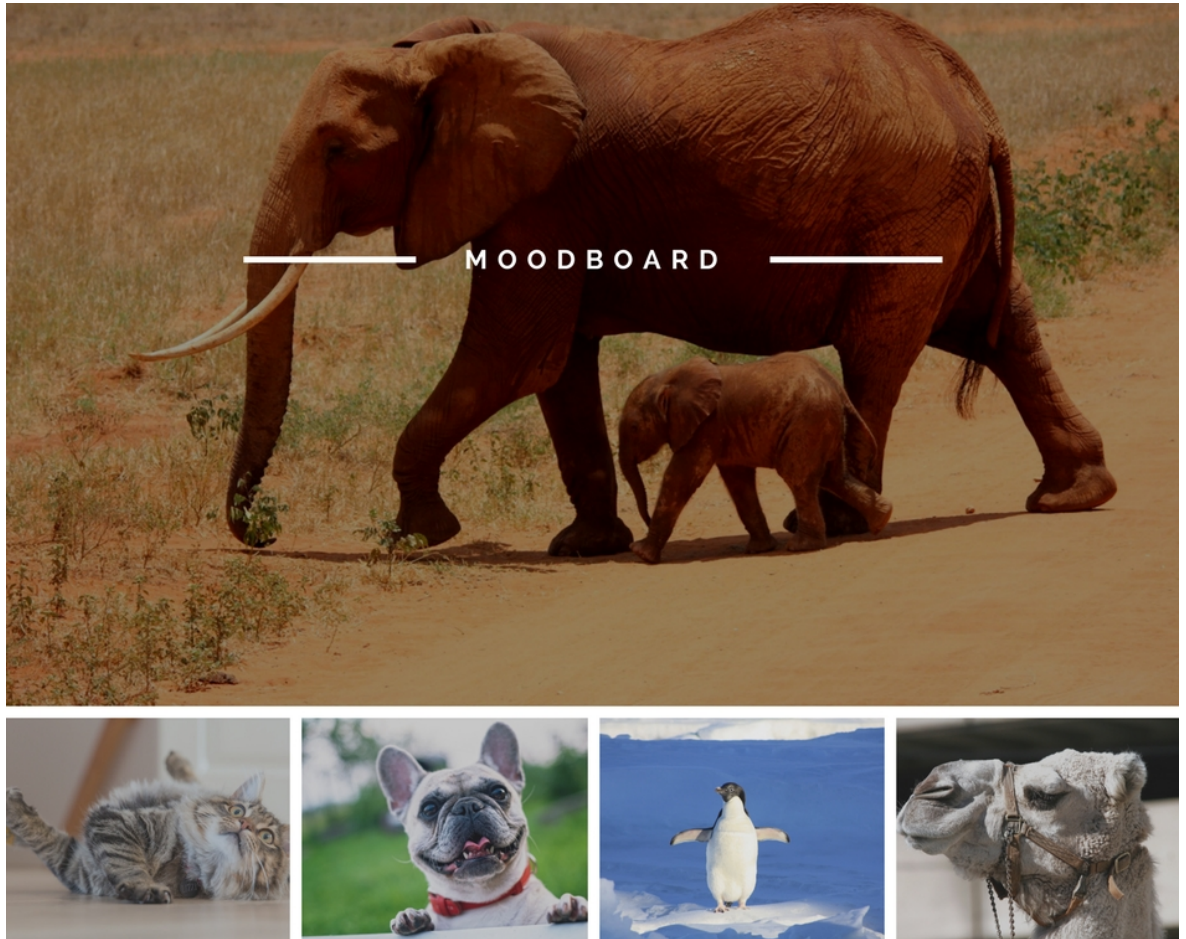


Image 1. Mood board (Pexels 2018)

This mood board depicts entertaining images of different animals in funny situations. The reason behind choosing animals for this video project is because they tend to trigger positive reactions from people, especially when presented with a funny story or idea.

3.1.3 Location

Compesi & Gomez (2017) state that finding the right location, which fits all the necessary requirements can be a rather challenging task to accomplish. It must be in accordance with all the sound and light requirements and the legal permission to film on the premises. According to the program concept, there was only one shot that requires filming. It is the part where the two professional dancers perform at the Palladium Nights dance event. This video was pre-recorded and stored in Helsinki Salsa Academy's media files. The other clips that were necessary for this video were acquired through stock footage websites that will be described in detail in this chapter.

3.1.4 Actors

The right choice of cast is a crucial decision that can influence the entire project (Compesi & Gomez 2017). For bigger scale video campaigns, castings and rehearsals are an essential part of the preproduction and production processes. The case of Helsinki Salsa Academy was planned to be of a comparatively narrow scope during which the selection of actors had been eliminated. The reasoning behind this is due to the fact that part of the used shots consisted of stock footage of animals as well as some ready material from various dance competitions and performances.

3.1.5 Budget

The budget is among the key elements that have to be discussed and agreed on during the early stages of the program development. Everything, from the smallest parts of the equipment to the actors' salaries, has to be carefully thought through and decided upon (Owens 2017).

In the process of development of the concept of the video, it has been made clear that the budgeting is left out of focus in this given project. The premises and the equipment used during the filming process already belongs to Helsinki Salsa Academy, thus, were free to be utilized during the production phase. The absence of the budget can potentially limit the project in a creative way, meaning that some of the desired outcomes remain unreachable due to the lack of funds. However, according to theory, going viral, does not necessarily mean having a perfectly polished look and the absolutely best actors. On the contrary, shaky and blurry videos have reached millions of people thanks to the content; thus, all the focus and effort will be put into creating valuable content.

The budget was, however, be established for the promotional purposes of the postproduction process. The set limit of a lifetime budget, which was the sum spent in the span of the chosen timeframe of one week, was 10€.

3.2 Production

The production process begins once all the details and arrangements have been done during the preproduction phase. It is important that everything runs smoothly and according to the plan in order to achieve the best and most efficient results.

3.2.1 Set-up

It has been clearly outlined during the planning process that the video will be partly filmed and partly created from the stock footage. The main reason for doing this is the inability to film all the required shots efficiently and within the given boundaries of time and the budget. The shots that did require filming were taken from the archived materials of Helsinki Salsa Academy.

3.2.2 Filming Process

The filming process was the last step before the postproduction phase. This project included two distinct parts that have been part of the filming process: the filming (using the archived materials) and the search of stock footage. The last one was necessary for the inclusion of the animal shots, which in the current situation was impossible to film. The website that was used for this purpose is VideoBlocks, which is an online platform that allows users download unlimited stock footage for a monthly or yearly one-time payment fee (VideoBlocks 2018). Helsinki Salsa Academy has already used the website for business purposes; thus, this specific project did not require additional stock footage budget.

The selection of the clips that were used in the video has been done in three phases (see figure 5).

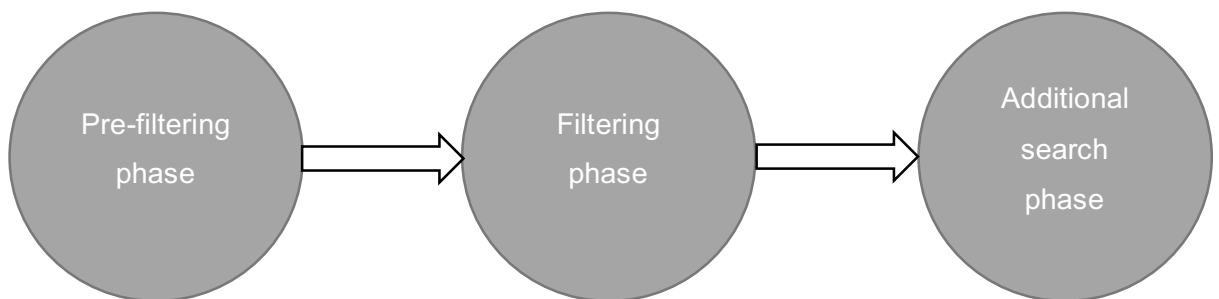


Figure 5. Stock footage selection model

The pre-filtering phase focused on finding the material that would fit the general concept of this video project. As specified in the earlier stages, the target of the post was to make people laugh and trigger positive relatable emotions. For this reason, different funny shots of animals and people were used for further analysis. The filtering and the additional search phrases were later on carried out during the editing process of the postproduction.

The scenes that required filming of the Helsinki Salsa Academy's premises or events related to it have been taken from the already existing files from the previous years. In particular, one of the used videos was taken during the Palladium Nights festival in 2016. It portrays world-famous dancers performing a complicated dance trick during their performance. This short clip was chosen on the basis of fulfilling the success factor requirements such as the surprise effect, the presence of a respected person and the emotional trigger. Additionally, this dance couple had already been part of the viral video campaign of Helsinki Salsa Academy and was able to reach 168K views through organic and paid reach (see image 2). These factors gave the video project a great potential of reaching a large number of people all over the world.

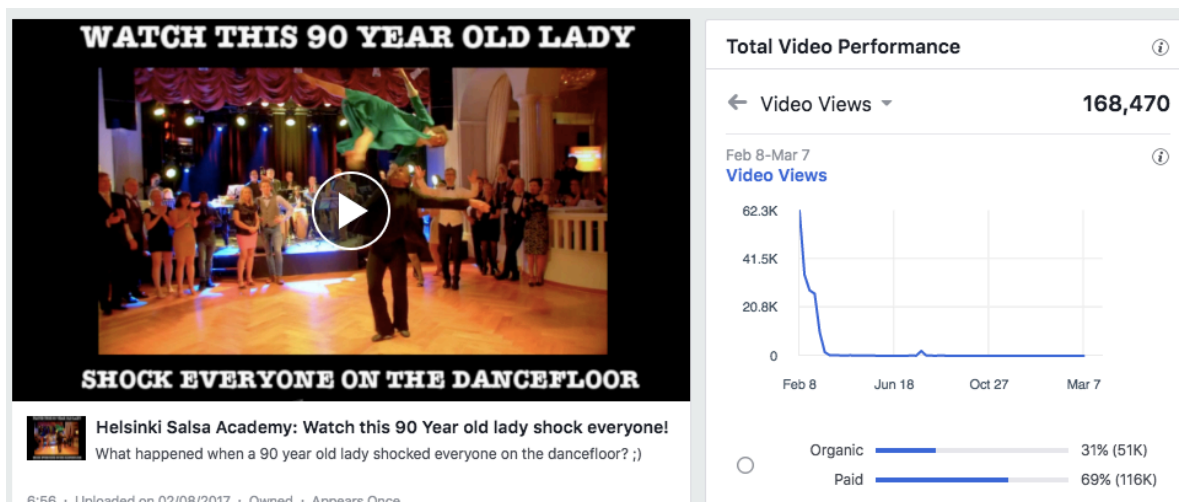


Image 2. Viral video of Helsinki Salsa Academy insights (Helsinki Salsa Academy Facebook Page, 2018)

The fact that no additional filming has been required for this project made this step especially short and smooth.

3.3 Postproduction

Postproduction is the final stage of the production process. In the span of this project, the main activities carried out during this process are the editing and the marketing of the completed product.

3.3.1 Editing

Selection Process

The editing phase of this project was divided into 5 different steps. The specifications and the editing stages were strongly personalized to match the needs of Helsinki Salsa Acad-

emy. The pre-selection of the stock footage during the filming process gave the editing phase material to work with following the Stock Footage Selection Model. According to the Model, the second step required a particular selection of the clips that were later on added to the editing software. The selection was done by evaluating each clip in accordance with the four factors (see figure 6).

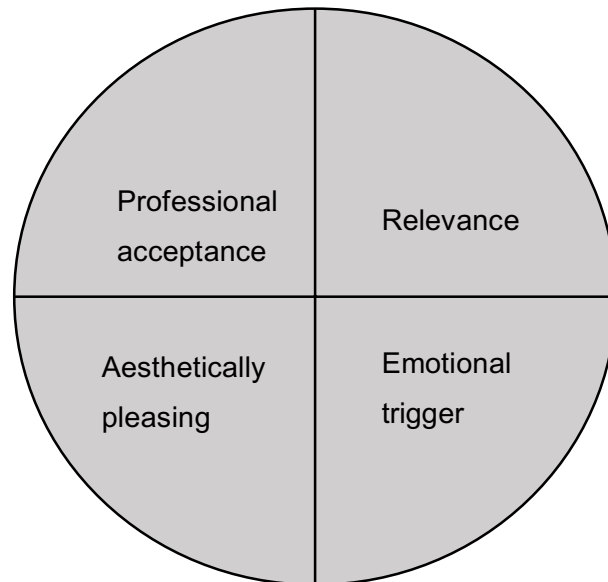


Figure 6. Selection factors

The emotional trigger was the first aspect that each video was analyzed against. Clips that were funny, kind and, in general, positive made it to the next round of selection – relevance. The relevance factor helped keep the focus on the material that was not only funny but also consistent with the text, the main concept and the message that the company was trying to send. Videos clips that fulfilled the first factor but failed the second one were eliminated from the further selection process. The professional acceptance helped decide which shots were the right fit for the Helsinki Salsa Academy's brand image. The last part of the video selection process was the overall assessment of each clip, the quality of the shots and general aesthetics. The selected clips were then ready to be used in the next steps of the editing process.

Editing Software

The editing software was selected based on the preference and accessibility of Helsinki Salsa Academy. The complexity of the project did not require advanced techniques and programs to be used. IMovie, a simple editing software, that is built in the iOS and macOS

operating systems of the Apple Inc products, was a perfect fit for this editing process (Apple, 2018).

All the selected clips were first put in a timeline, which allowed seeing whether any additional modifications had to be done. A few shots were eliminated during the adjustment process, which left the final timeline of clips ready for further development.

Visual Effects

The project of this viral video campaign was partly based on the previous experiences that Helsinki Salsa Academy had already had in the past. This led to the need for certain visual adjustments in the editing process. The text describing each shot was added on top of the video, which gave the viewers the possibility to watch the entire clip without having to put the sound on.

These visual edits were done in another creative editing software called GIMP. This is a simple program, which lets its users do quick modifications to their images and gives the possibility to create new ones as well. The text explaining each situation was edited in a way that helps the viewers understand the concept even without sound (see figure 7). Based on personal observations and experiences it is a common practice to watch videos posted on Facebook muted, mostly because there is a descriptive text or subtitles.



Figure 7. Descriptive text (Author)

The overlaying images with descriptive text were developed in GIMP. The layout of the text was taken from the previous viral video of Helsinki Salsa Academy based on Mikko Kemppe's recommendations. The ready images were then added to the editing timeline with each text corresponding to the shot.

Audio Effects

Once all the necessary visual edits were finalized, the audio selection began. There were two main categories of the audio files: the leading song and the special effects. The leading song was playing through the entire video and was not aimed to make a significant impact on the overall atmosphere. Its goal was to keep the viewers entertained with some background noise in case of listening with the sound on. The special sound effects, on the contrary, were selected with the sole purpose to make people laugh. Each animal shot was then paired with a matching sound that enhanced the emotional reaction of the viewers.

Finalization

The finalization process started after all the creative steps of the editing process had been accomplished. The audio files, the descriptive images and the accordingly timed clips were all put together in the timeline. All the necessary adjustments were made. The final video was then reviewed several times and sent to Mikko Kemppe for his assessment. The screenshots of each scene from the video can be found at the end of this thesis (see Appendix 4).

3.3.2 Marketing Activities

The essential reason behind the creation of a viral video and all the elements involved in it is to increase the brand's awareness. Following the REAN, the first step that the viral video was targeted to achieve is to raise the attention of the potential clients. The Helsinki Salsa Academy's video encouraged them to tag their friends, share it and like it if they can relate to what they have just seen. Further on in the future the company can try to maintain the relationship, possibly offer some special discounts and draw the attention back to the brand in order to turn the potential clients into actual ones.

According to the analysis of the Facebook insights page of the time period from 4.2. – 10.2.2018, the most efficient times for posting are around 9 PM local time (see image 3). The impact of the day when the post is made does not seem to affect the Helsinki Salsa Academy's reach; however, based on the closer research of the page's posts, the general performance of the posts is somewhat higher in the mornings on Monday through Thursday. On Friday to Saturday, the reach tends to drop and begins to be rather active starting only at 8 AM. This brought to the conclusion and decision to post the video on Thursday afternoon.

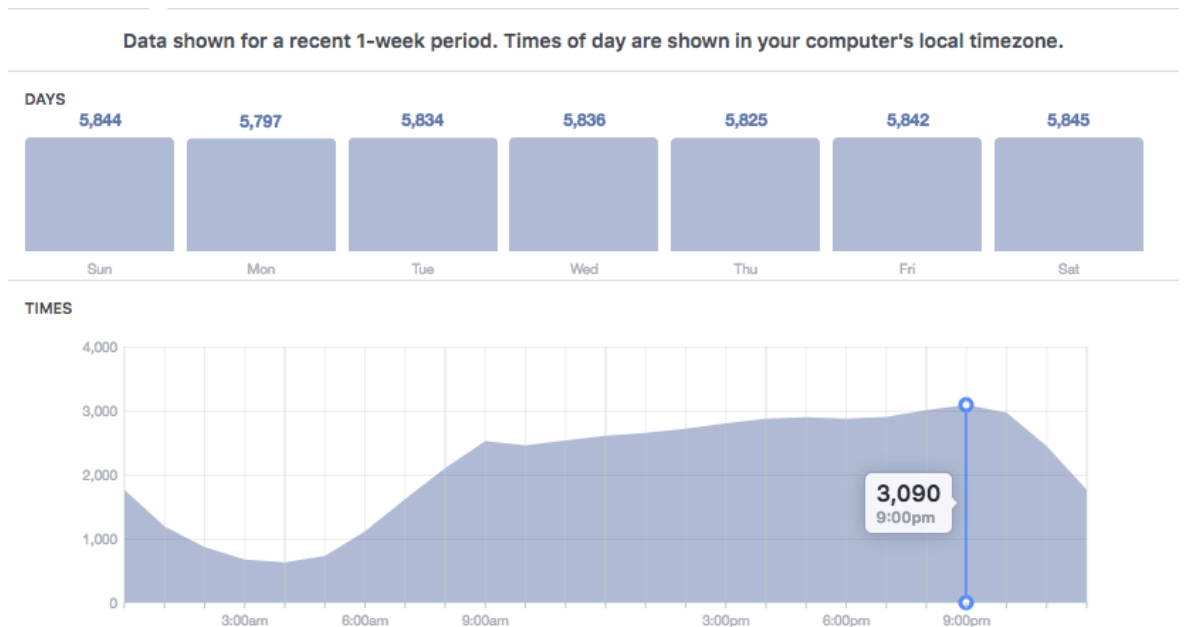


Image 3. Facebook insights (Helsinki Salsa Academy, Facebook Insights 2018)

Another essential part of the marketing activities is the paid promotion of the video. Hence, there was a meeting with the founder of Helsinki Salsa Academy, at which the decision to create a paid promotion of the video was made (see Appendix 3). This step potentially helped increase the number of people that see the video and share it on their timeline.

In order to create an advertisement on Facebook, the business manager account of Helsinki Salsa Academy was used. This account has been in use for the past few years; thus, no additional set-up is required to be done for this stage of project.

3.3.3 Video Success Measurement

The essential focus of this project was to grow brand awareness through viral video marketing on Facebook. The question that immediately arises from this statement is what the measurements that make a video qualified as viral are.

The success of this project was measured by a number of methods, which focused on the comparison of the results before, during and after the video had been posted. The growth of the video's popularity was daily tracked by following a trajectory model. The post was planned to reach the viewers organically for the first three days, then to be promoted for another three days for a lifetime budget of 10 Euros and finally to be left to get the final result for the last day (see figure 8.) The chart below includes the vertical representation of the number of views that the video has and a horizontal timeframe, where the organic

and the promoted views are referred to accordingly as O and P. The measurements were taken every day at the same time in order to keep the data as accurate as possible.

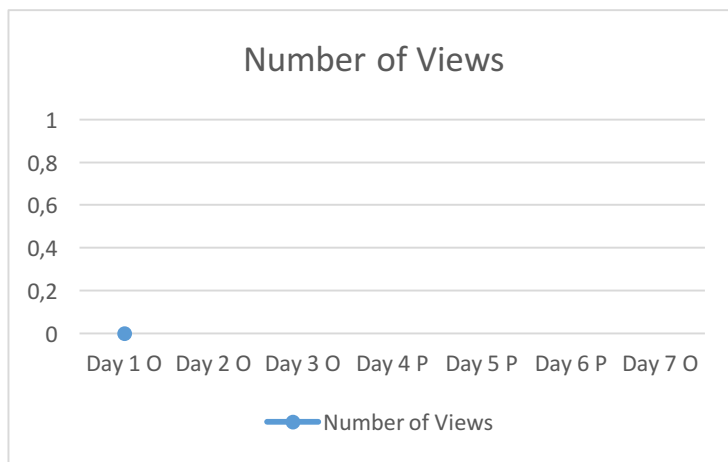


Figure 8. Post reach model

Apart from analyzing the development of the reach of the post over a span of one week, the impact of the video on the Facebook page of Helsinki Salsa Academy was evaluated. Before the launch of the video, the latest data from the Facebook page was collected. The three key figures, which were analyzed after the video project launch, were likes, follows and post reach of Helsinki Salsa Academy. It was expected that all the figures would drastically increase as a result of the boost of the traffic to the page. In particular, the page was targeted to reach 7000 likes with approximately 6900 follows within the testing period of one week. The post reach was expected, at least, to double in size since it normally does not require any actions from the people that see the post while liking and following the page does. This means that a greater number of people would reach the post by accident, thus, building up to a drastically higher figure.

Finally, the video was compared to the already existing viral video of Helsinki Salsa Academy. The key elements of the comparison were the likes, the follows, the reach and the number of views. This case-specific analysis was planned to provide the company with better information on how its current techniques could be improved.

4 Assessment of the Project Outcomes

The success and failure of this project were from the start assessed to be equally possible due to the high level of uncertainty. This is explained by the factors of success of viral videos; they focus on human emotions and personal reactions which are highly unpredictable. Certain patterns and reactions are possible to foresee; however, it is challenging to give an unshakable answer to the question: “Will it go viral?”

4.1 Outcomes

The final goal of this project was to make the video go viral by triggering thousands of people to share, like and interact with the post of Helsinki Salsa Academy. During the span of the project, it became clear that the task of making something go viral on purpose is rather challenging due to the number of unpredictable and uncontrollable factors like luck, good timing and even the mood of people seeing it.

The performance of the Helsinki Salsa Academy’s Facebook page was on a fairly high level during the second and third week of March (see figure 9.)

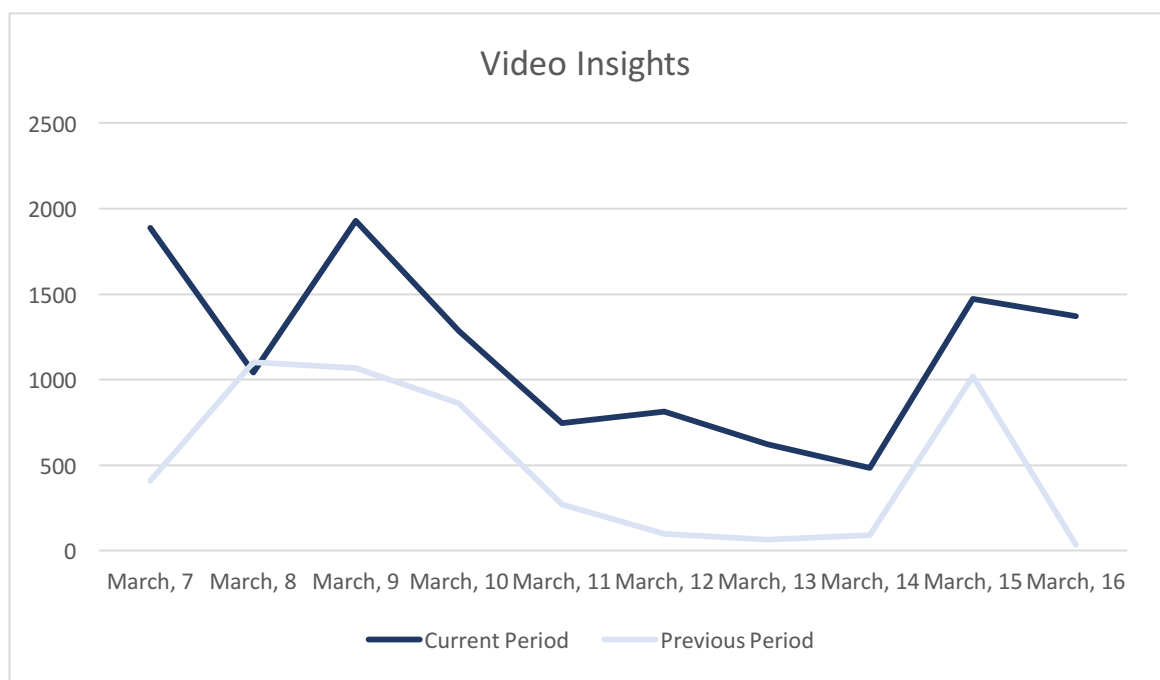


Figure 9. Video insights

The left column of the chart represents the number of minutes that the videos have been viewed in the given period of time. The number of video views in the timeframe of 7-16 March was up to 20K views, which is 275% higher than in the previous ten days. These

are the measurements of all the videos that have been posted including the viral video project post.

These measurements are relevant for the analysis of the impact of the attempted viral video because the page has had an unusually increased reach in the observed timeframe. This was caused by the posts that had featured the famous dancers during the World Dance Sport Federation Finnish Open 2018 Championship, which the Helsinki Salsa Academy's media team attended.

4.2 Timeframe of Growth

The video "Struggles of Learning a New Dance Routine" was posted on 15 March 2018, when the reach amounted to 4910, the page likes – 6395 and the number of followers – 6320.

During the span of a week, the results were measured combining the organic, the paid reach, number of views and the overall performance of the video (see figure 10).

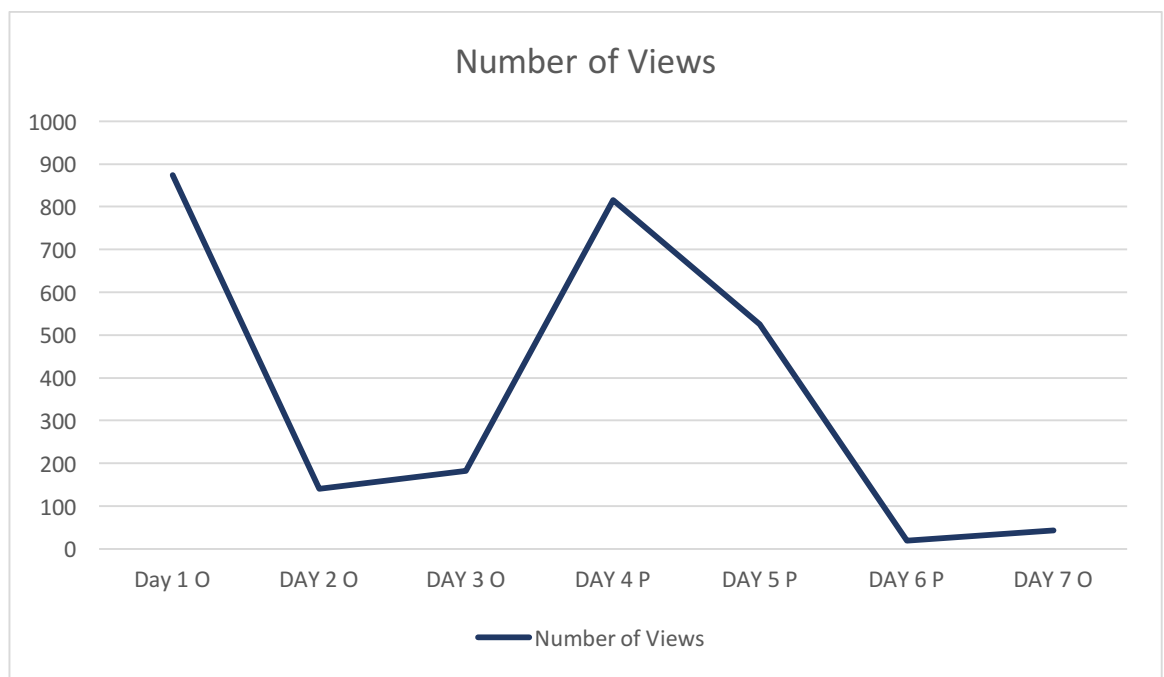


Figure 10. Video views

The number of the views has noticeably fluctuated within this period. The first day was the most popular one with a high rate of 874 views. Later on, there was some decline in the video's performance until the start of the paid promotion. The chart shows how the cam-

paign was impacted by the additional boost on the fourth day of the experiment. It reached a high rate of 816 views.

4.3 Paid Vs. Unpaid

The viral video marketing campaign of this project included both organic and paid reach. This method helped to decide whether it is worth investing even a small amount of money in this type of promotion.

Based on the comparison of the video views, the paid promotion did make a strong impact on the performance of the video during the span of one week. Despite the fact that the budget for the promotion was considerably limited, it still proved that the promotion is worth investing.

According to the Facebook Insights page of Helsinki Salsa Academy, the reach of the video was almost equally organic and paid (see figure 11). An approximate of 45% of the entire reach was accomplished because of the paid promotion, while the organic reach still comprised another 55% of it.

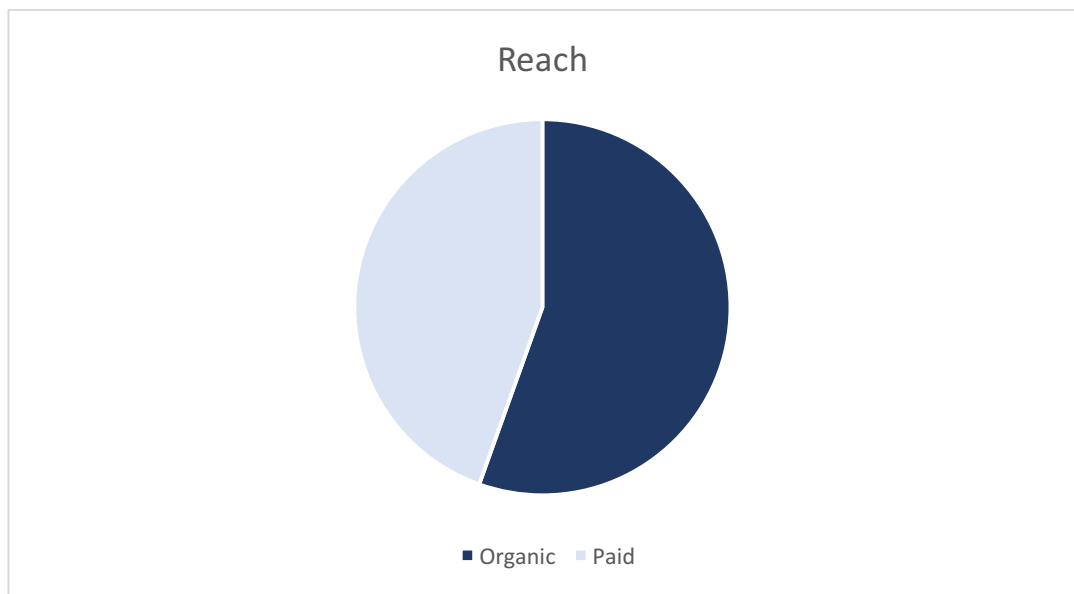


Figure 11. Organic Vs. paid reach

According to these results, it is safe to say that Helsinki Salsa Academy can benefit from investment in paid promotions of similar viral videos. Despite the fact that the numbers of this particular video were not as high as desired, they would have been considerably lower without the paid promotion.

4.4 Impact of the Video on the Facebook Page

The essential goal of the entire project was to test and see how a viral video campaign can impact the brand awareness through Facebook. At the beginning of the experiment, the Helsinki Salsa Academy's page had 6395 likes, which were expected to increase up to at least 7000 by the end of it.

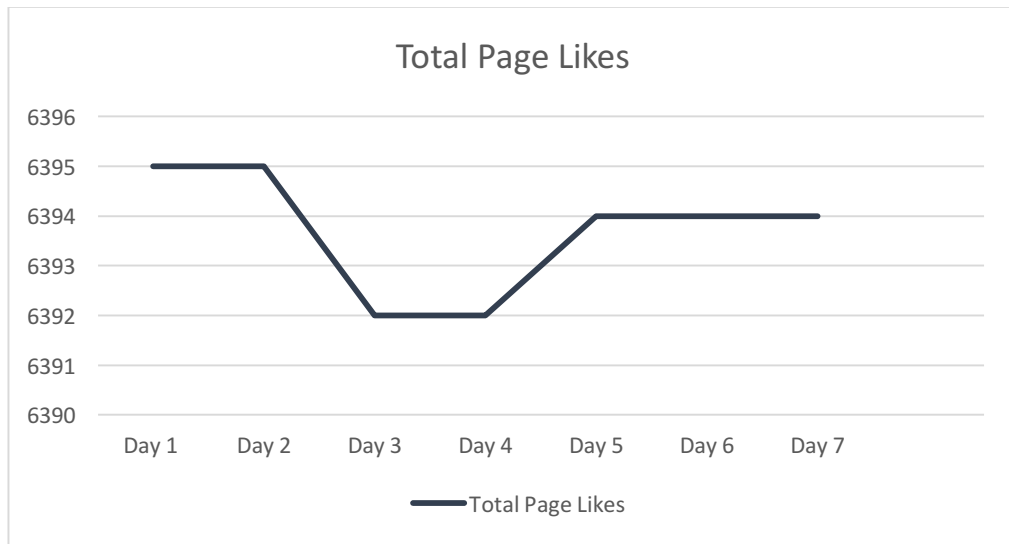


Figure 12. Total page likes

The study showed that it was impossible to drive that amount of people to like and follow the Facebook page. During the span of the testing week, the number of likes fluctuated a few figures up and down, resulting in a decrease of Facebook likes of the page by 1. These results show that the brand awareness has not been increased with the help of this video (see figure 12).

5 Discussion

The development of the project started after the collection of all the theoretical data related to the subject. The experiences of the company's competitors were evaluated and success factors of viral videos had then been drawn from the collected results. This helped to outline the main focus of the video and the steps that have to be taken to achieve it.

The concept and the idea of the video were to trigger positive emotions and interactions among the viewers. Through the success factors and the close communication with the company's founder, the clear steps and strategy were outlined. The video production process began shortly after that. The preproduction, production and the postproduction were all part of the development and implementation of the viral video campaign. Once all the components of the production process had been accomplished, it was time to see the results and analyze whether the video did go viral.

According to the findings, the video was not able to reach the target and did not help increase the awareness of the Helsinki Salsa Academy's brand through Facebook. It performed in a relatively similar fashion as most of the material posted on the company's Facebook page.

There are several reasons that have potentially contributed to the poor performance of the project's video. One important factor that became apparent during the process of this campaign is the inability to guarantee that something can go viral on purpose regardless of how well-thought and prepared it is. The viral phenomenon is unpredictable despite all the literature concepts and practical knowledge. The researched success factors are a good example of what can be added to the marketing strategy as a whole; however, they cannot be expected to immediately boost the performance of a video campaign. Another reason for the inability to go viral is the constant change in the trends. It is challenging to find relevant literature since the algorithm and preferences change so frequently that by the time it gets documented as a trusted source it may no longer be effective. During the span of the research, it has also been found that a number of viral videos tend to have mind-blowing stories that had not been portrayed before. Helsinki Salsa Academy even had one of its own, in which a professional dancer, changed to look like a 92-year-old lady, was doing spins and tricks on the dancefloor. This video reached an impressive 168K views on Facebook and over 1.6M on YouTube. The main goal of the viral video this time was to trigger positive emotions to make people laugh when they see very relatable situations that happen to almost every dancer. The story portrayed through the video was not

surprising or shocking, which could be among one of the reasons why people have not shared it. The challenges that became apparent in the span of the projects were closely tied to the potential reasons for failure.

The final results could have been improved if a number of changes had been done. One of them was the development of the success factors based on a wider range of successful viral videos that are up to date. The literature did give reasonable grounds as to what direction to take when planning the first viral video; however, it was rather limited on a bigger scale. Some insights could have been researched from the perspective of a few companies, focusing on the creation of viral videos, rather than taking a competitor in the same field of operation and trying to find their viral video success factors. Another solution to the issues that arose during the process lays in the research of the absolutely latest trends in viral video marketing. As mentioned earlier, by the time a book on viral video marketing comes out, quite a few of the tips mentioned in it can be not as effective as when the book was initially started. This brings to the conclusion that for the subject of the viral phenomenon it is potentially better to get the required literature from the latest professional case studies and trusted publications.

The video has not reached its goal of going viral; however, it has been a valuable lesson for the company and researchers. Despite the fact that it has been called a failure earlier in the chapter, it should not be framed as such. The research has given a number of insights that the company can utilize and implement in their further practices. Moreover, future researchers can avoid the mistakes made during this project by following some of the listed recommendations. Any learning process is always a valuable asset that a company or an individual gain for future business practices. It may seem that videos go viral by following only a certain framework; however, the truth is that it is all part of the continuous and uncontrollable process, where companies and individuals test various methods which sometimes work and sometimes do not. The key lesson of this study is to continue practicing and trying out different techniques to figure out viral videos' actual underlying strings that will help a business grow profitable and well-known.

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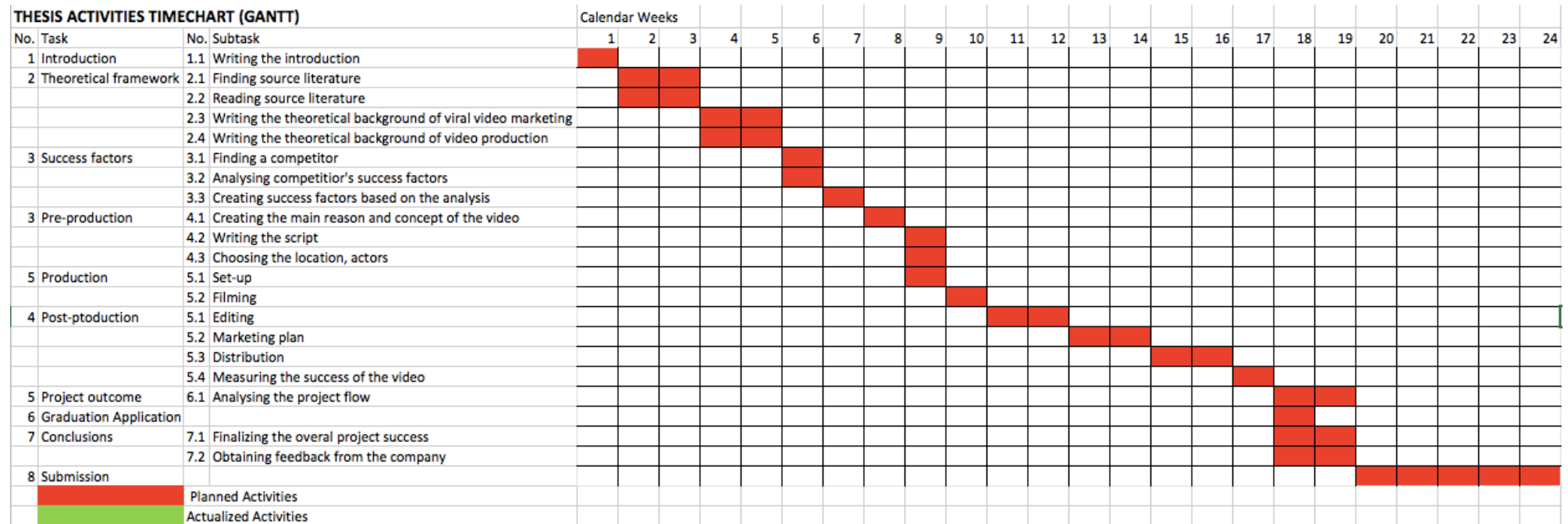
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Appendix 2. Thesis activities timeline as a Gantt chart



Appendix 3. Interview with the founder of Helsinki Salsa Academy

Mikko Kemppe is the founder and current owner of the Helsinki Salsa Academy. He is closely involved in the process of development of the viral video that is being created during this research and; thus, is among the main interviewees for this project.

What is the main goal of this video marketing campaign?

The main goal of it would be to raise awareness of our brand and attract more people to start dancing salsa. Finland is a fascinating market for this type of activity and would be quite interesting to see it grow into something bigger.

Have you done anything similar in your previous practices?

We have been trying various techniques in order to boost our sales and following since the start of our operations. At the beginning, of course, it was quite hard to find the right approach, especially since salsa was rather new in the Finnish market. However, after a few years, I have personally discovered that the main idea is to make salsa fun, to make Helsinki Salsa Academy more of a community rather than just a place where people come to practice once a week. This is where the idea with the Palladium Nights, one of the projects that Helsinki Salsa Academy has been part of, the promotional video came around. We made almost everyone attending the gala believe that a 92-year-old lady was capable of dancing like a world champion. The video went viral, reaching a bit more than half a million views and over a million reach on Facebook.

Wow, that's impressive! Do you have anything specific in mind for this project or would you like to hear some ideas first?

Would love to hear your ideas!

After doing some theoretical and practical research, the idea of focusing on positive emotions has become very important for this project. As you have mentioned before, creating a positive image around the brand is the key factor of getting people interested in salsa. Here comes the concept of filming a short love-story that involves Helsinki Salsa Academy. Two people reunite after a long time apart and all thanks to the dance school. Another option is to film one of the advanced teams and show the professional and aesthetically pleasing image that can get shared forward. Of course, we should also consider an option that would simply make people laugh and tag their friends. What are your thoughts on this so far?

I like the direction that you are going to, especially the last one. Let's try to develop a really fun and relatable video with which people have a high chance interacting. Years back, I created this hilarious image, which we could try changing into a video. The main idea is to portray the way people usually view salsa and salsa dancers.

Would it be something like an Expectations Vs. Reality idea?

Yes, exactly. We create something that all our students can relate too. In a way of how they see themselves dancing salsa, what their coach thinks of it and so on.

That sounds good. We can use some funny animal clips to make it even better. Also, I thought of adding some text above and below the video for people watching it without sound. That seems to be something that is included in all these viral videos from my personal observation. Do you agree?

Definitely! I like the approach you are taking here. I think you're on the right track.

Thank you! Lastly, the plan is to track and see whether the Organic Vs. Non-Organic reach makes a difference. This means that the first few days after posting the video will have no paid promotion and then we can boost it in order to reach more people.

Yes, boosting it could definitely lead to more views, just like we have done it before.

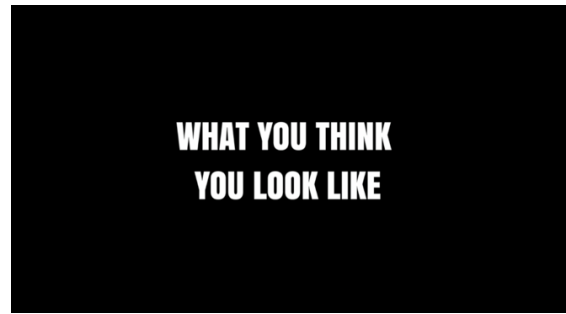
Great, then I will get started with the process. Thank you for your time!

No problem and good luck!

Appendix 4. Screenshots of each scene



Scene 1



Scene 2



Scene 3



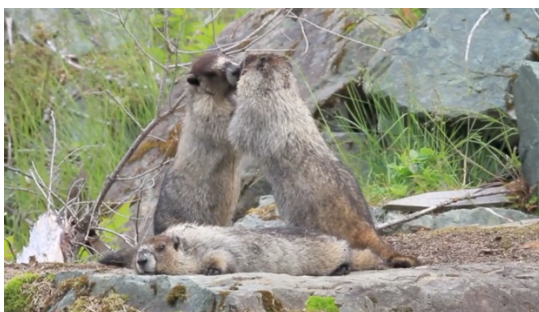
Scene 4



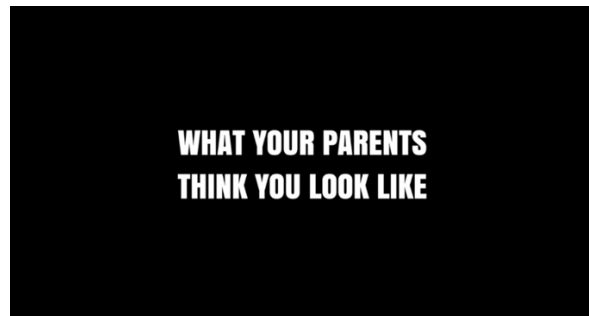
Scene 5



Scene 6



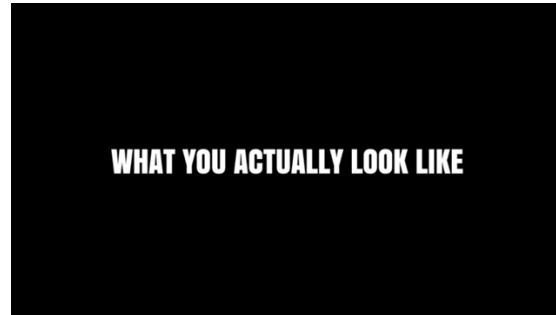
Scene 7



Scene 8



Scene 9



Scene 10



Scene 11



Scene 12