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IMPROVING SOCIAL MEDIA PRACTICES FOR B-TO-B MARKET

Case company: Kekkilä Professional

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Abstract

B2B social networks are today at the heart of all discussions, whether at the professional or personal level. Indeed, there are more and more controversies around these tools of communication. However, in many cases, social networks are a real advertising boost. Today, social networks in B2B are a real factor of influence and they are an integral part of a digital marketing strategy.

An inductive research approach was applied in this thesis and a qualitative research method was used for collecting the data. The qualitative research was conducted through four interviews, three of them with three different distributors for Kekkilä Professional and one interview with the marketing manager. The data was collected data from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected from the interviews and the secondary method included data collected from the author's own experience, books and electric sources.

In the theoretical part, the author explains the meaning of digital marketing, social media marketing, which are the social media channels, and which social networks will be the most important for Kekkilä Professional to focus on when the company will develop its social media practices for the B2B market in the future. The author continues with theories about particularities for the B2B market. A SWOT analysis was created for the case company and a development plan for Kekkilä Professional is presented.

In conclusion, Kekkilä Professional should focus on social media channels (LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter) in the future for the B2B market because using social media is essential in the digital communication era. However, it is important to take the time to design a complete social media strategy to use them wisely and to achieve the goals that Kekkilä Professional has set.

Social media has earned its acclaim in the B2B market and these channels became essential to explore, to generate traffic and to create leads.

Keywords

Digital Marketing, Social Media Marketing, B-to-B (B2B), Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION 1
1.1 Research background 1
1.2 Thesis objectives, research questions and limitations 2
1.3 Theoretical framework 3
1.4 Research methodology and data collection 3
1.5 Thesis structure 5
2 DIGITAL MARKETING 7
3 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING (SMM) AND THREE IMPORTANT SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR B2B MARKET 10
3.1 Twitter 12
3.2 Facebook 13
3.3 LinkedIn 15
4 PARTICULARITIES FOR B-TO-B MARKET 17
4.1 Stages in the B2B promotion process 19
4.2 Description of the main promotions on the B2B market 19
5 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYSIS 21
5.1 Design and formulation of the empirical research 21
5.2 Data collection 22
5.3 Data analysis 23
5.3.1 Interview with distributors 23
5.3.2 Interview with marketing manager 26
6 DEVELOPMENT PLAN 28
6.1 SWOT analysis 28
6.2 Suggestions for the case company 31
7 CONCLUSION 34
7.1 Answers to the research questions 34
7.2 Validity and reliability 36
7.3 Suggestions for further research 36
8 SUMMARY 38
REFERENCES 40
APPENDICES 43

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

Compared to business-to-consumer relationships, business-to-business customers have different behaviors, they are motivated by different things, and they buy in a different way. Business-to-business (B2B) exchange differs from business-to-consumer (B2C) because organizational buyers do not spend money on their own, so they are held accountable by the organization for the outcome of the purchase. Because of this, organizational buyers are very reluctant to take the risk of an unknown product or service. Regarding the content of the B2B service versus the B2C service, it seems that advertisements that appeal to the rational side are used more frequently in B2B. Quality and price are quite powerful influences in buying B2B and they will therefore play an important role in promotion. The three top attributes that most likely influence a B2B exchange are trust, competence and responsiveness. (Linton 2019.)

Social media is a territory with considerable potential, but it remains a dynamic environment, sometimes difficult to exploit. The decision-making process is slowed down by bureaucratic aspects, and the approval of decisions may take months. Instead, social media evolve very rapidly, with potential clients becoming more demanding and harder to convince. (Agrawal 2016.)

As a good remark for this thesis, Facebook has almost 700 million users worldwide, with an average of 700,000 new users each day. Most of the companies have created accounts on this platform and interact more or less with their customers. From a statistical point of view, Facebook offers a tens of times higher visibility of the ad than the classic media, a doubling of the message's awareness, and a 4-fold increase in purchasing intent. (Smith 2019.)

The reason for writing this thesis was the fact that over the last two three years, the author has seen a social media explosion, both globally and nationally. The big companies have noticed this trend and they have begun to promote themselves in social media just as they did before the online environment through the classic system used in internet marketing. The companies later realized that social media differs from classical online promotion. In this environment, people accept less or do not accept business to consumer messages, so companies have to change their strategy by trying to promote their image in a colloquial manner. The first ways to communicate with users were blogs and forums. Many businesses had two types of blog, one official and one informal, and the forums were

careful not to be affected by the image. However, after a certain period of time, this was not enough, blogs and forums have more and more drawbacks. (Agrawal 2016.)

The author has chosen the theme ‘’improving social media practices for b-to-b market’’ to be addressed in this thesis because the case company of this thesis, Kekkilä Professional, focuses on the B2B market. The company's focus is on promoting constantly the products worldwide, increasing the production area and increasing the number of consumers. The aim of this thesis is to study how Kekkilä Professional can improve their social media practices for B2B marketing in the future.

1.2 Thesis objectives, research questions and limitations

The author has chosen to address the theme of improving social media practices for B2B market in this research because social media is increasing in the important areas of daily activity both from the perspective of business and consumers. Almost all the companies have become aware of the benefits of the internet in front of other marketing channels, some running online for development. Consumers spend more and more time connected to the digital environment.

Marketing practices in B2B and B2C differ greatly in the field of promotion, even if bases seem the same. In order to understand these differences, it is important to get to know the factors involved in promoting corporate marketing. The objectives of marketing at the basic level are determining the target segment, identifying potential clients and their knowledge. B2C does this in demographic terms, taking into account the consumer profile (lifestyle, home environment). B2B is based on areas of business environment and professional roles. (Bersadschi 2014.)

Research questions were created to find the answers through the research. These include the main research question and the sub-questions that will help to answer the main question. They should be as specific as possible. In some cases, several research questions can be formulated to cover complex topics. (Cox 2012.)

The aim of this research is to find out how Kekkilä Professional can improve their social media for b-to-b market in the future. The main research question is:

- **How should the case company improve their social media marketing in order to reach more b-to-b customers?**

The author has chosen the following sub-questions for this research:

- How can Digital Marketing, Social Media and Social Media Marketing be defined and what are the most used social media channels?
- How can B-to-B market be improved by social media?
- How does Kekkilä Professional utilize social media marketing at the moment?
- Which professional social networks should be chosen for B2B market?

In this case, the limitation is the author's own study, based on social media marketing and B2B side. These studies concentrate on digital marketing and social media marketing. This research provides information for the case company and the aim is to develop the case company's social media for B2B.

1.3 Theoretical framework

Since the selected topic is to improve social media practices for B-to-B market, the theoretical part will be focusing on digital marketing, social media marketing and the characteristics in the B2B sector for Kekkilä Professional.

In the beginning, the author will deal with the theoretical aspects of digital marketing and continue with theory on social media marketing and social media channels, the ones that could be the most advantageous for the B2B side. The author concentrates on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter because these three channels are the best ones nowadays for B2B when social media is needed. After that, the author will dedicate to the promotion and particularities theory for B to B market.

The last chapter focuses on improving the social media in B-2-B in the future and considering the case company, Kekkilä Professional, the strategies for social media promotion, including an overview of today's actions. The author will propose some ideas for better visibility in this space and how the company can develop their social media practices for B to B market.

1.4 Research methodology and data collection

The qualitative method was chosen for the exploration since it centers around interviews and accumulate information with the content based on, for example, diary articles, content reports, and so forth. The author will use the qualitative method with an inductive approach. The following figure represent the research methodology and data collection.

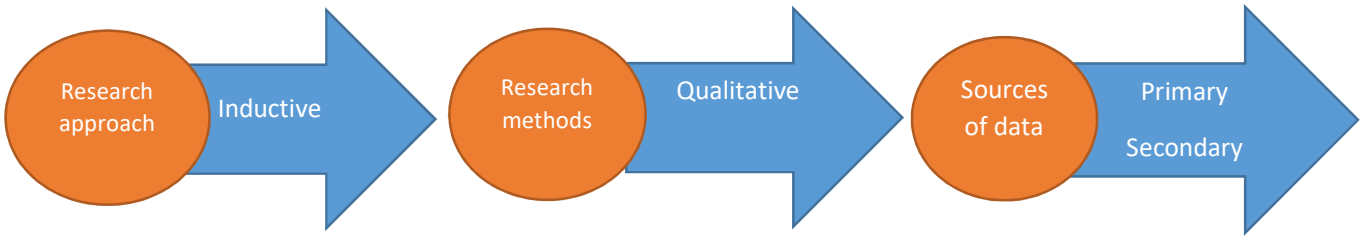

Figure 1 Research methodology and data collection

Qualitative research aims to understand certain ideas, attitudes, desires and needs in relation to the underlying issue of research. The goal is achieved by obtaining free answers, which can be interpreted in a number of ways, without focusing on statistics but only on the significance of the data collected, offering the possibility that this information can be analyzed in a way in which the main role is played by the words and phrases. Qualitative research ends, not by demonstrating a theory, but by enunciating one. A qualitative research method is a research strategy that uses various techniques of collecting and qualitative analysis to explain comprehensively a human or social phenomenon. Among the most important qualitative research methods and techniques are interviews, focus groups, and qualitative content analysis. (Hall 2018.)

Qualitative research depends on a verbal story like oral or composed information, whereas quantitative research utilizes sensible or measurable perceptions to make determinations. The research inquiries of quantitative research are what number, how much and how frequently and the fundamental inquiries for subjective research are why and how. (Orau 2018.)

Quantitative research is considered as a strategy that produces numerical information and hard actualities, by applying factual, consistent and scientific strategies. It is utilized to measure the states of mind, feelings, practices, and other characterized factors. (McLeod 2017.)

While the qualitative method involves only textual documents in the research process, the quantitative method uses the numerical information to serve the generate evaluations. Therefore, the quantitative method contains statistical information in data analysis. In contrast, the qualitative method uses non-statistical data. (Creswell 2013, 15-17.)

Quantitative data is data related to quantities, valuables or numbers, which can make them quantifiable (Anastasia 2017). In comparison, qualitative data is data related to quality or description, which cannot make them quantifiable. For example, quantitative data is the number of candidates, course grades, exam scores, the hours dedicated to studying, total work hours, the age of employees, salary, weight, height, et cetera. Examples of qualitative data are behavior, factors, evaluation, anticipation, experience, ideas, opinions, cultures, relationships, feed-back, et cetera. (Bryman 2012, 631-635.)

The methodology was chosen because the examination will build a plan for improving social media in B-2-B for a company that is using social media mostly for B-2-C, which means it will create another hypothesis dependent on perception, design and conditional speculation.

The research involves both primary and secondary data collection methods. The primary data collection includes skype interviews with three distributors, an interview with the marketing manager, the author's own observations and experience. The secondary data collection includes books and electric sources.

1.5 Thesis structure

This thesis will have eight sections: introduction, three theoretical parts, empirical research and data analysis, development plan, conclusion and summary. Chapter 1 of this study will present to the reader the subject of this thesis and introduce the main research question and three sub-questions, which will be answered along with this thesis.

Chapter 2 refers to the digital marketing, the theoretical aspects of social media focused on Social Media Marketing, theoretical aspects of social media, LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter channels, which are the most important social networks for B2B market. Chapter 3 focuses on the particularities for B-2-B market.

Chapter 4 shows the collection of detailed information of the case, the narrative about the studied subject, the central idea of the case on which the study is focused. Finally, the results will be analyzed. Chapter 5 will present the recommendations for the case company. Chapter 6 will draw conclusions from the first eight chapters and putting forward proposals in the light of the conclusions. The presentation of other useful elements in the thesis are the new ways and trends of continuation of the study carried out, scientific polemics with various points of view by answering to the research questions. The author will be able to persuade the readers, through a coherent and quite concise presentation, that he has succeeded in achieving the objective of the whole diploma thesis within the chosen theme, but also that his work has a character of unitary type. The author points out in ~~the~~

Chapter 7 how he has been able to capitalize on all the information he has learned from various bibliographic sources, including publications and the online environment. In the last chapter, the author summarizes the entire study and provides the reader with an overview of the items that were discussed in the thesis. From the figure below, the research structure can be understood much more clearly.

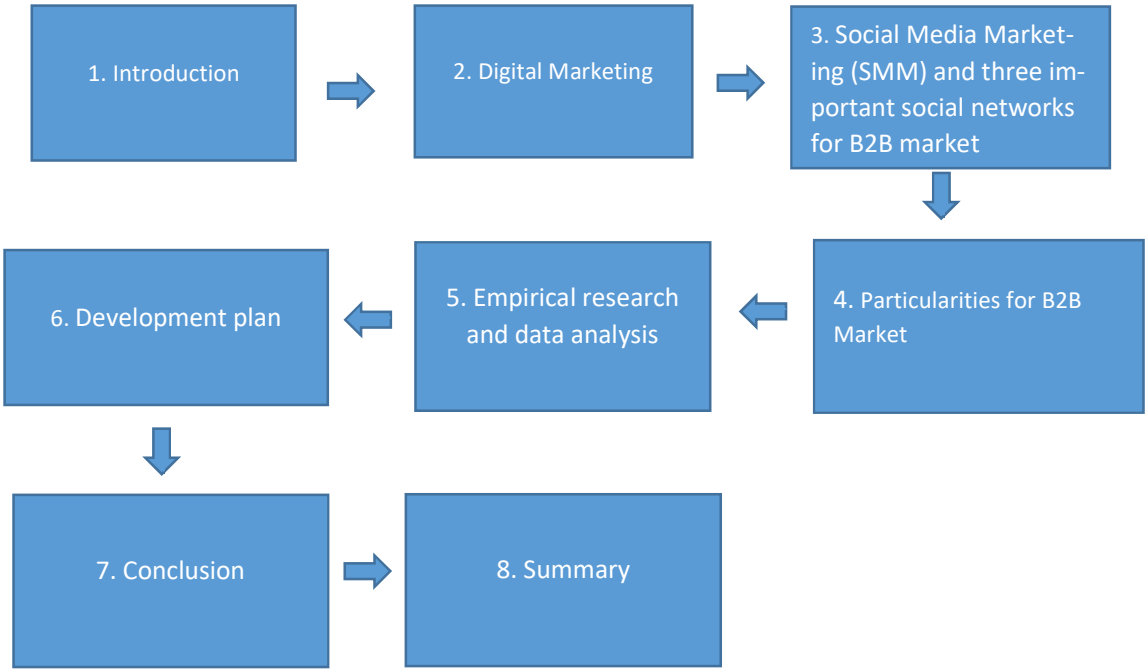

Figure 2 Thesis structure

2 DIGITAL MARKETING

The traditional marketing approach has proven to be a very successful business case so far, but with the transition from the industrial to the informational economy, it is becoming more and more common to apply conventional marketing practices to the new strategies used. New communication technologies offer a number of opportunities but also difficulties. Marketing activities are affected by a number of changes, such as tight competition, increased consumer power, more well-informed consumers, consumer price and price / price ratio, brand similarity and lower loyalty to a decrease in the effectiveness of mass advertising, an increase in the role of direct marketing and public relations. Thus, many of the marketing strategies used prove to be obsolete. The emergence of the World Wide Web has opened a new era of marketing. In this age of information technology, consumers exchange roles with the company, and they are the ones who target the company. Companies need to rethink how they identify, realize and provide value to consumers. The web is not like any other distribution channel that has existed in the past. It has some special features that the market agent must take into account in order to maximize the benefit. (Chaffey & Smith 2013.)

One of the most important assets of the web is its global network. By making information about a particular organization on the Internet, customers around the world have these, regardless of day or hour. Customers from anywhere can access the promotional material at a convenient time for them without having to make a lot of effort to find people responsible for sales. Promotional literature can make use of the full capabilities of the Internet, including color and graphics, sounds, animations, and even video, at a fraction of the cost of producing brochures, for example. These multimedia brochures can be updated quickly and often (as needed), which gives great potential for promotion to recent offers and a high level of flexibility. (Armstrong 2011.)

An electronic version of a promotional brochure is not enough. The content and form must be adapted to take advantage of the power of the Internet, and navigational "tools" must be included to avoid wandering users among the data. The content of a site must be relevant to the visitors' needs, easy to use, attractive design, and include logical links for the areas of primary interest. A simple visit to a site is not enough. It needs to be changed regularly and must be captivating to induce users to come back on another occasion. Unlike traditional marketing techniques, in the case of online marketing, the client is the one that addresses the organization and not the other way around. On the Internet, the customer is the one who is actively seeking information. The organization has access to people already interested in what it has to offer. Even when traditional advertising principles

are used, it is desirable for the target audience to have expressed a prior interest in the product, service, etc. Internet promotion is unaffected by the size or capacity of costs or space allocated. The cost of a web page is relatively low, which is why it is possible to include a comprehensive piece of information in the virtual space at an advantageous price. Through hyperlinks, the marketer can create a very comprehensive, personalized multimedia brochure that is instantly available to potential customers around the world. This allows users to analyze products and services based on individual needs and interests rather than on a standardized sales message. Thus, different information can be hosted easily and economically instead of having a single message for all customers, several different messages can be sent to multiple categories of customers at a small margin cost. (Armstrong 2011.)

Another advantage of the Internet is its ability to ensure good communication between the organization and customers. Bidirectional communication is an important marketing tool, especially useful for winning customer loyalty. They can effortlessly communicate with organizations to find out all the necessary information, ask questions, negotiate prices, etc. Equally easy, organizations can contact customers to clarify their needs or to inform them about new products, services, etc. (Shah 2019.) Digital marketing is divided into five components.

1. Process

Like traditional marketing, the online marketing program involves a process. This online marketing program consists of seven steps: setting the corporate strategy, capturing the market opportunity, formulating the marketing strategy, estimating the client's experience, formulating the marketing program, developing the consumer interface and evaluating the results of the marketing program. (Chaffey & Smith 2013.)

2. Building and maintaining customer relationships

It is important to emphasize that the goal of online marketing is not only to develop relationships (online) with customers but also to maintain such relationships both online and offline when the consumer does not use the Internet (Chaffey & Smith 2013).

3. Online

By definition, online marketing deals with Internet users. However, the success of an online marketing program can stay offline, outside of the Internet. An example of this is Monster.com, which offers the opportunity to find a job through an online search. (Chaffey & Smith 2013.)

4. Exchange

At the heart of both marketing concepts, there is exchange. The effect of an online marketing program must be evaluated in line with the overall impact it will have, but not just on the online plan. For example, online sales can affect sales in traditional stores. (Chaffey & Smith 2013.)

5. Satisfy the objectives of both parties involved

As with traditional marketing, online marketing aims to gain profit through consumer satisfaction (Chaffey & Smith 2013).

3 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING (SMM) AND THREE IMPORTANT SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR B2B MARKET

Social networks are an effective tool used by most businesses for both communication and marketing and sales. A social media marketing campaign aims to generate traffic for the site, increase brand visibility and increase customer numbers. In order to be able to transform the work undertaken on social media platforms into concrete results, it takes time and experience. Marketing and communication strategies in social media can help meet the goals of a business. Social networks help the process of selling objects or services by identifying the most relevant sales opportunities. (Barnhart 2019.)

As a result of the development of social networks, new horizons have been opened for promotion. Due to social networks, people spend more time checking their streaming data and updating their own profiles. Social media marketing involves the use of social networks, online communities, blogs, or any other online collaboration environment for marketing, sales, public relations, and customer service. (Barnhart 2019.)

Social networking has the most cost-benefit ratio or "Return of Investment" offering the ability to deliver ads directly to the audiences interested. Promoting in social networks, along with lead generation (pages to the products or services we want to sell) strengthens brand image, brand being the most important asset of the company (Barnhart 2019).

A brand is a name, sign or symbol used to identify the products or services of a manufacturer and used to differentiate the competition. A brand is a promise. Services and products once identified provide a guarantee of quality. A brand is the way a product, service or company is seen in the minds of consumers. Social networking means bidirectional communication (from the organization to the public and from the public to the organization), a symmetric communication with the two participants on an equal footing. Social media marketing is the safest route to customer loyalty, with 20% of customers generating 80% of revenue. Social Media Marketing creates and drives strong social media campaigns that smartly generate explosive traffic, promotes the brand by giving it market stability and importance and also boosts notoriety and sales. Social Media Marketing is based on the Internet, selling online products and services in markets and communities and enabling people to actively participate in marketing. This is used to convince people to buy products and services that are valuable to customers at the minimum cost, combining technology with social interaction. (Barnhart 2019.)

The benefits of Social Media Marketing for companies are that social media marketing helps companies build relationships with their customers, to build their brand, to manage

negative advertising, brings to light the latest promotions of the company, and helps the companies become more aware of their competitors. (Newberry 2018.)

First, social media helps companies build relationships with their customers. Social media is an on-line acronym for mouth-to-mouth communication that creates a purchase and retention cycle. Social media marketing offers a "voice" and a way to communicate with colleagues, customers or potential consumers. Thus, we can say that a "band" is formed that helps spread the message in a relaxed and conversational manner. It offers great benefits for small businesses to access potential customers without investing a lot of money in advertising. Nowadays, companies take advantage of being part of certain social networks because they can freely promote their products and services. In order to have an efficient social network marketing, a company needs to analyze and determine which market will act and what data are available to identify the factors by which the firm can achieve its established goals. (Newberry 2018.)

Secondly, social media marketing helps companies build their brand. Blogging is a very effective tool for the company because it allows the exchange of information between the company and consumers, about its mission and vision, about the history, values and goals of the company. A consumer who wants to get information from the company just needs to visit the company's website and read the posts posted on the blog, thus being able to get the information he needs. At the same time, social media marketing helps companies manage negative advertising. In the past, companies were not very interested in customer complaints. Currently, companies are aware that each complaint must be handled because that person can always post online and can reach all viral channels. With the help of social media marketing, companies can easily ease the frustrated customer and respond to his complaints. Through social networking, companies can make the customers aware of new products or new promotions within the company. Many companies offer products and discounts to loyal customers. With social networks, companies can easily spread the news to their customers. (Jones 2018.)

Brand recognition

In the social media context, it is not enough for a user to have a low knowledge of a brand and its products. Brand recognition is based on exactly two main reasons. First of all, too much information runs the risk of revealing negative or harmful data, which will bring a bad reputation on the company. Secondly, failure to provide sufficient information and being excessively selective on the subjects. Jones 2018.)

Social media refers to activities, practices and behaviors between the communities of people who meet online to exchange information, knowledge and opinions using the

conversational media. Conversational media is an online application that makes it possible to create and transmit content in the form of words, pictures, video and audio. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site, but they are generally designed to develop independently. Social media constituted a radical transformation of the paradigm in which the Internet was conceived. (Ahmad 2019.) The challenge is not to create quality content for the user, but to create a user-friendly environment while attracting other users. Even more challenging would be to use this tool in such a way that it can get the profit. It is impossible to develop a successful strategy, the environment changing so quickly that it is impossible to figure out what will work and what will not. Social media has become an indispensable tool in any campaign to promote a product or service, more than just brands that invest more in online advertising than in traditional ones. To determine what kind of online leverage Kekkilä Professional will use the most in the future, it is important to know a few essential things about that channel: the number of users, the number of active users, the usage habit (which day and hour is your most active target audience), the type of content with the greatest impact. (Ahmad 2019.)

The author will introduce the most used social networks in B2B nowadays.

3.1 Twitter

Twitter is one of the best known and most used social media platforms. Twitter is primarily used to distribute information, advertisements and other ideas in the form of a tweet, which is a message that contains up to 140 characters. Twitter is used with maximum efficiency by businesses for marketing or SEO. Moreover, if the company does not have a social media specialist, the platform will provide you with a complete guide to using the site to learn how to do social marketing. Through Twitter, you can promote your business and increase your visibility. (Ahmad 2019.)

Twitter is a global social network that is used by individuals, businesses, institutions and associations alike. Its mode of operation is simple: short messages and maximum interactivity, the publications being found on the individual profiles or on the threads dedicated to a given "#" subject (Symons 2018).

With more than half a billion users, as known to be visible in front of the company’s competitors and the flow of information being published every second, the companies will need several tweets per day, at regular intervals, to furnish. Still, it is necessary to be able to write interesting things without falling into the spam or the troll. It takes a lot of tact to know how to bounce with accuracy on the news, because it is obvious that Twitter should not be used only to make the direct and wild self-promotion, otherwise the net users would

never answer and would not consult anymore the messages of the company. (Symons 2018.)

3.2 Facebook

With over one billion users, Facebook is the number one social media platform in the world. Despite the fact that it was originally conceived to serve communication, over time, many functions have been added to influence businesses to move towards promotion. The services and tools available to these members include Facebook marketing, Facebook business, Facebook advertising as well as Facebook studio or Facebook Studio edge. (Ahmad 2019.)

Facebook is a necessary and effective marketing tool for any business. The best results are obtained when marketing is done by marketing specialists who have experience in social media. Results monitoring is done through both quantitative indicators such as likes and through quality indicators such as click posts, reach, likes, shares. It is not enough for a Facebook page to have thousands of likes, but to interact with them through the content it distributes. Facebook is a highly competitive and fast-moving channel. Each piece of post content must be quickly digestible and easily recognizable in a busy newsfeed. Facebook offers a variety of tools and platforms to reach the users. Each of these tools also contains an analysis system called Insights that easily reports to activity levels and demographics. To begin with, any company needs to build a "Facebook page'' dedicated to the product or service. Facebook knows very well that businesses also require an online presence, so everyone can make a Facebook portal. The company can be promoted on the Facebook page by posting articles that refer to its acuity. The best option for the case company is to promote in the evenings and in the weekend, because then the public is bigger. There are two places where you can promote the company's Facebook page: in News Feed, that is, among posts in the middle column of users, or in the upper-right column of the page. (Vaynerchuk 2019.)

Once the free Facebook page has been made, the company has to pay for this page to appear in the News Feed or the right column of potential fans as a suggested post. They just have to click on the blue "Promote" or "Promote Page" button. Also, they can segment customers on certain criteria, such as age, gender, location and interests. To begin with, it is useful and advisable to use Facebook paid campaigns to build a good audience for the Facebook page. The cost of such a page differs depending on a number of factors, such as business, competition, location, company relevance and promotional announcement that influences the clickthrough rate. (Vaynerchuk 2019.)

Social media is a way to communicate, socialize and relate to people, so after the audience is built, the company must avoid posting information about it or the products or services it wants to sell on the page Facebook. The main purpose of social media is to bring a human face to the business, and once this task is done, it can be an excellent way to support sales. Companies can use Facebook to find out more about current customers and potential customers, how they can help them get answers to product questions or the services they offer. They can also help educate their clients. (Carlson 2010.)

An effective content strategy for Facebook posts consists of the following: using reports with the results of the activity of the pages, tracking the audience success stories, thus creating and providing more stations of interest to the fans, analyzing the competition positions, tracking the evolution of the statistics use and Facebook content and to update Facebook changes. Nowadays videos are the new Facebook trend, and the pictures have less visibility than links or text posts. This data is very important for building a content strategy for Facebook posts. A strategy used to attract fans and increase awareness in the online environment is to conduct Facebook contests. Although it is a controversial method due to the existence of many "contest hunters" who are particularly interested in prizes and less interested in the company, its advantage is to generate a very large number of fans in a very short time. Contests are excellent tools to increase the number of likes per page. Contests also help increase loyalty to the brand. In addition, the increasing number of people interacting with the brand, a contest offers a means to deepen the relationship with customers. (Carlson 2010.)

Contests are a rich source of data because many people are willing to subscribe with personal data, provide feedback on past purchases, even if the prize is not very valuable. Thus, companies have the opportunity to learn a little more about their consumers. It is also a good way to encourage users to advertise the companies. Companies use the Facebook page as a marketing tool, promoting their products and / or services directly, and they do so by posting balancing messages between promotion and communication. However, each of these companies alternates promotion posts with other industry-specific posts, with questions to encourage communication and other interesting posts, not necessarily directly related to the business, posts designed to generate interactions. (Carlson 2010.)

Design elements are the main contact that a user has with a company, so it is essential to use a customized design. By including the logo, slogan, representative colors and other distinctive elements for identifying the company, the page differs from other competitors,

and the target audience can easily recognize a brand that they may even know from offline. Using a representative profile image and including a customized poster will help the target audience get familiar with that brand and easily identify it when it meets it both online and offline. Profile is a digital representation of a user, an extension of their personality, the way people share things with their large group. For marketing, the profile is just the beginning. A Facebook profile is how individual users are represented on the site. It usually contains information about the user's interests, hobbies, school and work affiliations, and photos. He is also connected to any favorite Facebook pages, from a favorite football team to a favorite brand, as well as all other Facebook users he identifies as friends. (Carlson 2010.)

3.3 LinkedIn

LinkedIn is more than just a social media platform. It is a professional network that allows for a global exposure and a professional framework that takes advantage of great brands. On LinkedIn people connect exclusively on professional criteria, they meet people working in related fields so that the platform can be used successfully for business marketing. Social Media Marketing has the role of creating close links between brand and people and conveying essential business information. Not all social platforms are matched to a brand, so it is important to choose the most relevant, depending on the goals you have. Knowing the target audience is very important and can determine the social media networks that are right for your business. One aspect is very important: the image on social networks is a personification of the brand, so the activity and the content must be consistent with the reputation and messages transmitted by the brand. Moreover, social platforms provide valuable information that can help evaluate the marketing strategy and develop new, highly profitable ideas. Social Media Marketing has many techniques to turn a simple visitor into a business client. Done properly, it can lead to numerous conversions, with an increasingly important role for companies. (Ahmad 2019.)

First, two portals, which seem to be the best professional social networks in the context the author is interested in, are presented: LinkedIn and Facebook for B2B market. Forty-four percent of the B2B companies having gained customers because of LinkedIn, the platform is at the top of the list and ahead is Facebook with 39% and Twitter with 30% (Egan 2019).

Companies can be involved in social media, even if they have made the decision not to be there. In different ways, they become available through customers, employees, and other stakeholders who write and talk about social networking companies. Within the corporate

world, there has been talk of how to address social media as this environment is constantly changing and it is hard to predict how it will develop in the future. Some arguments argue that it is easy for a company to start a social media presence and create adherence, but it takes time to be active on these networks and it is therefore not a free practice. Companies have raised the question of whether they should enter this environment with a long-term strategy or tactical boundary by experiment. So far, it is mostly supported by the idea that societies need an integrated social media strategy. (Davis 2018.)

LinkedIn is one of the first B2B social networks, both in terms of the age and number of users. At the end of September 2017, there were 133 million registered users worldwide, with 500 million seen in April. The numbers are much lower than the results of Facebook but hide an elitist vocation: we are dealing with professionals coming to consult the profile of other professionals. On LinkedIn, there are both individual accounts and corporate pages, some not excluding the others - quite the contrary, it is necessary to know how to create a scholarly alchemy between the official signboard / showcase and the action of its employees. (Nations 2019.) On the network side, one has to add the clients, but also the suppliers and related professions to the working relationship, which can be very useful for companies: journalists, communication agencies, recruitment or consulting firms, etc. If some people work in start-ups or companies with a solid economic reputation, people should not hesitate to connect them even if they evolve in a completely different sector of activity: with their help, the company will reach an ever-wider network. This is the principle of the network. (Egan 2019).

The international character of the brand is highlighted by a machine translation service working in forty languages. Companies can also make themselves known by asking questions or launching discussion topics for the other members of the network: it is the "LinkedIn Answers" feature. An excellent categorization makes it possible to follow the news concerning its sector, the day before being facilitated and the bulk of the information sorted upstream. (Nations 2019.)

Since 2013, LinkedIn has had an additional asset through its automated offer of social selling (or "social sale"), in order to better target advertisements. Social selling is a key concept in B2B marketing: it is about using social networks to find and follow leads, create leads, and to consolidate customer relationships. Two points are to work in particular. The first one is to build bridges to be founded by potential customers by going to meet their needs and the second one to inspire the necessary confidence to push them to go further. (Nations 2019.)

4 PARTICULARITIES FOR B-TO-B MARKET

Compared to business-to-consumer relationships, business-to-business customers have different behaviors, are motivated by different things and buy in a different way. Business-to-business exchange differs from business-to-consumer because organizational buyers do not spend their own money and are therefore held accountable by the organization for the outcome of the purchase. Because of this, organizational buyers are very reluctant to take the risk of an unknown product or service. (Garber & Dodson 2002, 1-17.)

As regards the content of the B2B service versus the B2C service, it seems that advertising that uses the rational side is more commonly used in B2B. Quality and price are quite powerful influences on buying B2B and will therefore play an important role in promotion. The three top attributes that most likely influence a business-to-business exchange are trust, competence and responsiveness. In general, business to business promotion is achieved through price reductions (or similar sales promotion practices) that reduce profits and erode brand value, for the sake of an increase in short-term sales. (Garber & Dodson 2002, 1-17.)

Promoting is that part of the company's communication process by which it, using a set of specific methods and techniques (embodied in promotional activities), attempts to influence the behavior of its current and potential clients in order to achieve the best results (profits) on over a longer period of time. The main promotional activities are publicity, sales promotion, public relations and sales force. (Anghel 2004, 173.)

The main stages of the promotional policy process are as follows: to define promotional policy goals and identify the target audience, to determine the promotional budget, to choose and make a promotional message, to select communication media and to evaluate the effectiveness of promotional activities (Robinson 2017).

The specificities of B2B promotion policy are as follows: more emphasis is put on sales and public relations forces, sales forces, in terms of their relationship with customers, are consultants and are engaged in solving technical problems. It is a characteristic of the productive goods market that it is the use of a liaison agent inside the company who contacts customers by telephone and concludes contracts with them. Sales forces have sound technical knowledge because they need to know their own products very well to convince a customer to buy from their company. Public relations improve the "image" of the enterprise in the market where it operates. Advertising has the role of facilitating the work of sales forces and, in particular, of the sales agent inside the firm that informs potential customers about the company's existence and offer, then contacting the latter and ending the

contracts. Advertising is based more on facts and technical data and is less emotional. The main advertising media are specialized publications and direct mail. The main sales promotion activities are the use of catalogs and participation in fairs and exhibitions. (Robinson 2017).

Table 1 Differences between promotional policy factors on B2B and B2C markets (Lake 2019)

Factor	B2C	B2B
The importance of marketing policy in the marketing mix	Very important; the task of advertising policy to communicate with a large number of consumers and households emphasizes advertising and sales promotion.	Very important; the task of the promotional policy to communicate with some professional buyers, focusing on personal sales.
Emphasize certain items in the promotional mix	The emphasis is on advertising, then promoting sales and personal sales. The task of advertising is to attract customers through the entire process of adaptation.	The focus is on personal sales, then on sales promotion and then on advertising. The role of advertising and sales promotion is to create the right environment for personal sales.
Advertising environment	The most important media channels used: television, radio, newspapers, magazines.	The most important media channels used: commercial publications, direct mail.
Sales promotion environment	The most used media channels: POPs, contests, brochures, inserts, demonstrations, samples and specialized advertising.	The most widely used media channels: catalogs, exhibitions, distributor materials, and specialized advertising.
The subject of advertising and sales promotion	The focus is on emotional factors.	The focus is on rational factors.

The subject of advertising and sales promotion	Very important.	A less important role.
Budgets for promotion	Great, focusing on advertising and sales promotion; budgets for advertising often exceed 5% of turnover.	Great, focusing on sales; budgets for advertising are usually equivalent to 1-2% of turnover.

4.1 Stages in the B2B promotion process

An advertiser who sells a business to another business, that is, sells a company's offer to another company rather than a client the real difference is the complexity of the communication task. The individual promotion techniques remain relatively the same, because in fact the objective is the same as to change people's perceptions and attitudes to persuade them to adopt a certain line of action in the short and long term. First of all, the audience should be defined. Time for market definition is much higher on the B2B market simply because there is much less relevant data and information on the B2B market than on consumer markets. The objectives of marketing at basic level are determining the target segment, identifying potential clients and their knowledge. B2C does this in demographic terms, taking into account the consumer profile (lifestyle, home environment), B2B is based on areas of business environment and professional roles. On the business market, each member of the decision-making group can bring various arguments to accept or simply refuse an offer. This aspect is often seen as the area of greatest difficulty. (Leek & Christodoulides 2011, 830-847).

Responsibility for the management of various promotional tools can be shared within departments. Advertising strategies, sales promotion, direct marketing and public relations are usually separated from personal sales. Today, the integration of marketing communication paths is vital for organizations. Information technology makes it much easier to expose materials from various sources to the customer so the chances for the target audience to meet inconsistent messages are greatly increased. (Brennan 2007, 173.)

4.2 Description of the main promotions on the B2B market

Advertising

In addition to selling costs, advertising is important from the perspective of the promotional budget. Various goals can be achieved through advertising. Its advantage is that it manages to convey the message to a much larger audience at a much lower price compared

to personal sales. The stages of an advertising campaign on the B2B market are similar to the ones on the B2C market. Prior to setting up the campaign objectives, you should answer the questions "What does the company want to do with this campaign?" and "Who the company wants to attract through this campaign?" The difference lies in the fact that the main purpose of advertising on the B2B market is to attract people from an organization that occupies the key positions in the acquisition business. Once the goals have been set, the marketing plan will also be established. The advertising message will have to be rational and not to appeal to the consumer's emotions. At a strategic level, a brand can be present on a market using a rational approach but may also include an emotional approach. The next step is to select the media channels where the message will be broadcast. TV advertising is less used on the B2B market than B2C. It can be used to position an organization or for branding. Websites are instead more widely used on the B2B advertising market. It is more likely that an organization is looking for online suppliers for more details and the content and appearance of the website counts a lot. Interaction with information is much faster in this case, compared to the rest of the media channels. Specialty publications that have already formed a target audience to whom they want the organization to send their message are also considered. (Rodriguez, Peterson & Krishnan 2012, 365-378)

Sales promotion

In terms of sales activity, promotional materials are usually used to attract consumers as well as to better present their products. These materials included brochures, catalogs and presentation kits designed to provide a concrete explanation of the benefits of the products. (Rodriguez et al. 365-378, 2012.)

Public Relations

Public relations are used to manage the image of an organization in front of stakeholders. Compared with the rest of the communications departments, public relations have a higher applicability, although their use can improve a company's marketing activity. Public relations are used for attracting and retaining good employees, the management of problems and the clarification of misunderstandings about the organization, creating a good relationship with local communities, suppliers, distributors and consumers, preserving the reputation and prestige of the organization. The promotion of products PR activities includes the use of donations for charity, press releases, company advertising, seminars, and publications. All these activities are important for organizing B2B activities but organizing seminars as well as appearing in specialized publications can be valuable in establishing the reputation of an organization and its products. (Rodriguez et al 2012, 365-378.)

5 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYSIS

This part includes the empirical part of the study. This chapter contains three main parts, which are research design and formulation, data collection and data analysis. In the first chapter, the author will highlight how the study was designed. In the second chapter, the author will present the research methodologies and in the last chapter, the third one, the author will analyze the collected data and will show the results from the interviews.

5.1 Design and formulation of the empirical research

In the first chapter of the thesis, it was mentioned that the author will only concentrate on the qualitative method. Qualitative research is based on the theoretical principles of Phenomenology, Hermeneutics and Social Interactionism. It uses data collection and analysis methods that are non-quantitative. The purpose is to explore social relations and to demonstrate the reality by what the respondents have experienced. Qualitative research methods are employed in different areas such as social sciences, sociology, psychology, education, history and cultural studies. (Creswell 2013, 13-14.)

There were three different applied methods for the author to gain the information: skype interview with three distributors, an interview with the marketing manager and data collection from Kekkilä Professional website. The figure below shows the design and formulation of the empirical research of the thesis.

Figure 3 Design and formulation of the empirical research

In the beginning, the author has collected data from the case company and their social media platform. The reason why the author used the case company as a source was to get a better understanding of how Kekkilä Professional utilizes social media marketing at the moment.

In the second part of the empirical research, the author interviewed three distributors. The interviews took place during January 2019. The distributors shared useful information. The language used in two of the interviews was English and for the third interview, the author and the distributor used Romanian and after that, the author has translated the questions into English. All the questions can be found in the appendices of the thesis.

In the third part of the research, the author had an interview with the marketing manager of Kekkilä Professional, which took place during February 2019. The interview was very useful for the author to understand how deeply Kekkilä Professional uses social media marketing at the moment and what kind of improvements can be done for the future in the B2B side. The questions asked can be found in the appendices of the thesis.

5.2 Data collection

This chapter shows the data collection stage of this study. The data collection period started in April 2018 and was finished at the end of March 2019. The figure below shows the phases of data collection.

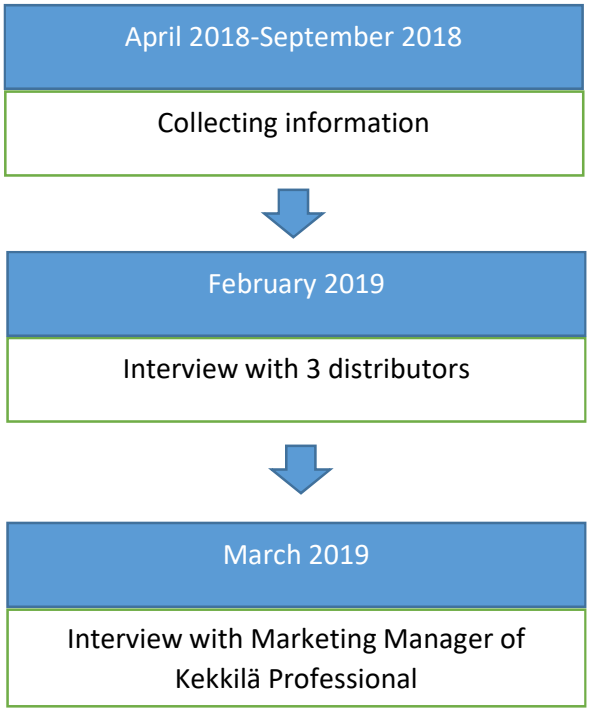

Figure 4 The stages of data collection

The author started to write the thesis in January 2019. At first, the author asked for permission from the company to write the thesis, and the next step was to think about the

right topic and what should be the research question and the sub-questions. During the work, the author collected information that will be of use to him in the time that he will write the thesis.

On February 4, 2019, the author contacted the Romanian distributor to have an interview about Kekkilä Professional's situation regarding social media in B2B and the author addressed the main research question of the thesis to each distributor. The Romanian distributor offered useful information and the author considered this interview to be useful, both for the case of the company and for the thesis.

On February 7, the author had an interview with the distributor from Hungary and the author also received useful information from this distributor. On February 11, 2019, the author shared the same question with the Australian distribution, where the answer was much more complex, and the information became more useful for completing the thesis process. On March 1, 2019, the author had the interview with the marketing manager where they discussed the same topic that the author had previously discussed with the distributors.

5.3 Data analysis

In this part, the author will display the information received from the interviews, from the distributors and the marketing manager and the author will present the data analyzed. In the first part, the author will present the information from the three interviews and in the second part, the author will present the information from the interview with the marketing manager.

Kekkillä Professional is part of Kekkilä – BVB, which is the leading European manufacturer of substrates. The company produces the best growing solutions for global modern horticulture (Kekkilä Professional). At the moment, Kekkilä Professional doesn't focus on social media channels. They do have a LinkedIn page, but it is quite rarely used. The company focuses on the main website which proves all the needed information for the customers. The company is not so familiar with social media for B2B market and the author will help the case company by improving their social media for B2B market in the future.

5.3.1 Interview with distributors

The author and the first distributor concluded that they don't have any doubt about the importance of social media in B2C marketing. On the other hand, one wonders (yet) whether

the social media marketing is to be used in B2B. Skeptics link social networks to the user's personal experience and consider that people go on social networks to entertain and / or interact with friends. It is obvious that it is not easy to integrate the social media marketing in its B2B digital strategy, but it is not impossible either. A carefully planned strategy combined with high quality content is the key to success. (Interview 1 2019.)

The author used the following question for the distributors ‘’Why to use Social Media Marketing in its B2B strategy?’’ The discussion brought two answers which came to mind without going too far into the subject: firstly, because the company´s business is already on social networks without it being aware of it. Both the author and the distributor think that now is a good time to take control of the brand because the competition is already there, and for Kekkilä Professional may be too late. (Interview 1 2019.) The author and the second distributor decided to review the benefits of B2B social media marketing (Interview 2 2019).

1. Generation of new leads

The discussion brought to the conclusion that the social networks are essential tools for generating leads. A Feedback System study shows that 62% of marketers who use social media in their e-marketing strategy reported an increase in sales. Social Media Marketing allows the company to find, target and deliver its content to decision makers in a more personal way than traditional marketing. (Interview 2 2019.)

2. Accurate audience analysis

The discussion brought to the conclusion that social media in a B2B version, boosted for the business, provides to Kekkilä Professional with the tools and the means necessary to create lists, find the decision-makers, set up the lead scoring and make hyper targeting. The trend in B2B is moving towards predictive analytics, which could use the data to predict the buying intentions of its prospects. (Interview 2 2019.)

3. Create and manage communities grouped around a common interest

As part of the B2B Social Media Marketing, the case company will create a healthy social ecosystem, add value, and deliver relevant content to attract the experts who are directly interested in their business. They are called social communities and can be created on Facebook (Groups), LinkedIn (Groups), Google +, Twitter or even blogs and niche forums. This point is directly related to the fourth one, as these communities will be managed and run by experts who speak on the behalf of the company and who position themselves as leaders in the field.

These experts will have to interact with customers, prospects and partners and help them, without putting too much emphasis on the company's products. In this stage of the sales funnel, the goal is not to sell, but to position oneself as an expert in his field to win the trust of his prospects. (Interview 2 2019.)

4. Create "expert personas"

The author and the distributor agreed that creating experts to target communities through relevant content that adds value (thought leadership) is one of the strategies to consider when trying to integrate Social Media Marketing into the case company B2B marketing. By positioning itself as an expert in a specific field, the company can participate in exchanges by providing qualitative and relevant answers. This personal expert will be linked to the company and will borrow its expertise from the company. (Interview 2 2019.)

The author and the third distributor decided to create and increase brand awareness (Interview 3 2019).

After the discussion, the author concludes the fact that the social networks are very well referenced by the search engines. Since 2009, Google and Bing have begun to integrate in their search results messages present on some media and social networks. Also, if the brand announces its news on social networks, it will have more visibility on search engines as well. Audiences on social networks will be aware of the latest offers that will appear in their news feed, once become fans or followers of the brand. (Interview 3 2019.)

Both the author and the distributor wanted to talk about how to interact with customers / prospects / partners and help them in the same time. Knowing how to ask the right questions, how to provide the right answers or suggestions, solve a problem which is how the B2B social media marketing can bring value to the customer. Another benefit of this interaction with customers is in the presence of suggestions for new offers or new products or services that arise from customer needs. (Interview 3 2019.)

The conclusion is that by doing B2B Social Media Marketing, the brand can find and interact with experts and influencers in its field, either to suggest partnerships or to make promotional campaigns (Interview 3 2019). The author and the distributor brought to the case company other six benefits that the Social Media Marketing for B2B can bring: real-time support for existing customers via social media, bringing traffic to the blog and product pages, to know and follow your competition, to keep up-to-date in your field, networking to link relationships in your field, and increased sales as a supreme goal. (Interview 3 2019.)

5.3.2 Interview with marketing manager

Both the author and the marketing manager came up with good ideas for the case company. They agreed that social media will improve the company's SEO. After the discussion about SEO and its disadvantages, the marketing manager might be interested to know that social media really helps the company's presence on search engines. (Interview 4 2019.)

After that, they agreed to build a social network and strong personal relationships. The art of blogging and setting up inbound links will allow Kekkilä Professional to build good relationships, but social media will allow the company to build hundreds of thousands of them. Maintaining an active presence on these social media will allow the case company to carry on long conversations, over months and years, friendly conversations with its followers. In addition, while they will do it, the company increases their social reach. When they talk to one-to-one on these social media, they provide the same personalized service that other marketing channels are struggling to implement. (Interview 4 2019.)

The author and the marketing manager agreed that the content of social networks can be reused. If they are investing in social media, it is easy to grow their share of mailing, as long as they are on multiple networks. All the intelligence is to post according to the network. A tweet cannot be written and read in the same way as a Facebook post or a blog post. (Interview 4 2019.)

They both agreed that CSR means more customers. Social media gives to the case company the opportunity to be specific about target audiences, as long as they are careful to understand and anticipate what is right for their business. For example, LinkedIn is an amazing tool for B2B organizations. Compare that with Twitter, from which only 40% of organizations have acquired B2B customers, and Facebook, with only 43% who have acquired a customer, so they can better define their priorities. Know how to divide the own time between each of their investments on social networks and their target strategy. On the other hand, Facebook is driving more conversions for B2C organizations, where 77% of companies have acquired a customer. Twitter follows, with 55% of B2C organizations having acquired a client, and followed by LinkedIn, with 51% having acquired a client. As a result, 65% of organizations acquired a B2B client on LinkedIn and Facebook. (Miller 2019; Interview 4 2019.)

In the end of the interview, the author and the marketing manager concluded the fact that social media provides user-generated content they will need to boost their sales. Social

media is powered by user-generated content, and if they did not already know it, that content is vital to their customer relationship, and therefore their sales. (Interview 4 2019.)

6 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Now when the author has studied about digital marketing, social media marketing and the most important channels for B2B market, is the right time to conduct a development plan for the case company. The development plan is done after the empirical research is divided into different sub-chapters. The author created a SWOT for showing the internal and external analysis of the case company’s social media marketing. The information gathered for the SWOT analysis helps the author to conduct the final development plan for the case company. After that, the author presents the action plan including the suggestions how the company could improve their social media in B2B market in the future.

6.1 SWOT analysis

The S.W.O.T analysis implies the conclusion of the external and internal environment analysis of the enterprise. With this analysis, from the multitude of information gathered during the marketing audit, the data that is really important for the enterprise's evolution on the market are separated. The main purpose of the SWOT analysis is to identify the opportunities and threats of the external environment and the strengths and weaknesses of the enterprise. Starting from the identification of the weaknesses and strengths of current marketing operations, it is necessary to be able to plan the improvements needed to correct the weaknesses as well as to capitalize the strengths so that the enterprise is able to take advantage of the opportunities of the environment and avoid threats. Based on the results of the SWOT analysis, the marketing objectives of the company's future development and marketing strategies are established. (White 2018.)

The strengths are represented by certain factors that give the company more competition than its direct or indirect competitors do. These elements vary from one organization to another, but generally refer to the resources and capabilities available to the firm. These factors are not necessarily physical, but may also be intellectuals, and can be managed by the company's management and embedded in a strategic plan. (White 2018.)

Weaknesses are the areas of vulnerability of the firm, the faults or non-existence of certain factors that prevent it from fully achieving its intended purpose. These weaknesses can be identified by an internal analysis of the firm's activity and then compared to other firms in its field of activity. Weak points can be broken down into points that destroy organizational values and points that are underdeveloped to create competitiveness. (White 2018.)

Opportunities are the current or future external situations that may be favorable to the company and can develop if they are managed correctly. Opportunities exist in every company or sales outlet but must be identified and analyzed to select the most advantageous of them. There is also the risk that potential opportunities are not properly managed, become weak, being taken over by competitors. (White 2018.)

Threats mean negative values and external conditionality outside the range of managerial action. There are negative aspects that may arise from the overexploitation of the company's assets, or due to external constraints that may lead to a reduction of profits or even bankruptcy if these threats are not tackled in time. (White 2018.)

The following SWOT analysis is showing the information about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related with the social media marketing in the case company. The analysis is based on the theoretical and empirical research done for this thesis. The following SWOT analysis figure below proves a more detailed explanation.

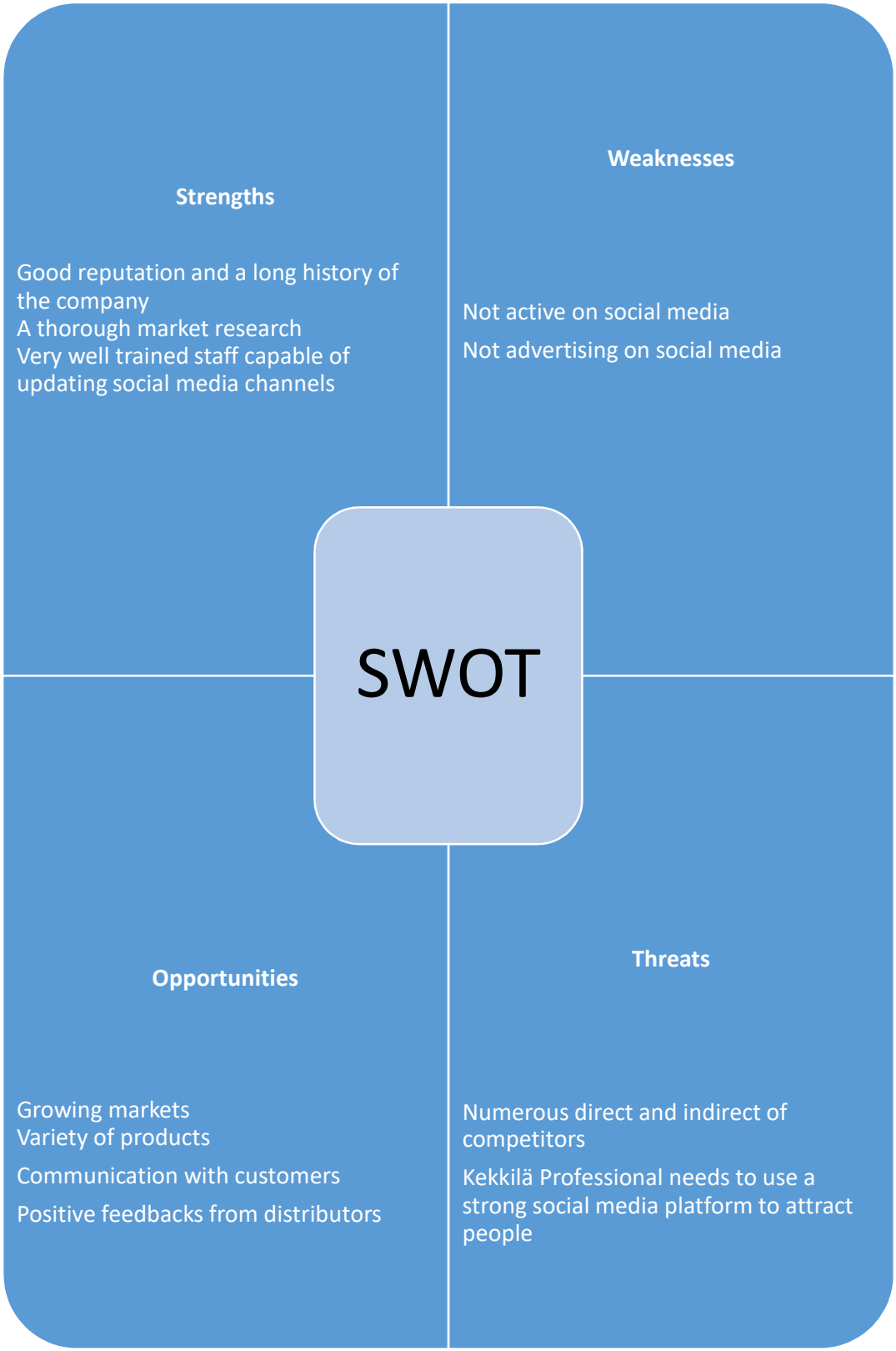

Figure 5 SWOT Analysis of case company's social media marketing

6.2 Suggestions for the case company

From the authors point of view, promoting is an organization's preoccupation to deliver persuasive messages that act in the form of impulses to either push the product, service or organization to the consumer or to target the target audience to a product, service, or organization. The author recommends to Kekkilä Professional to focus on social media to achieve the following goals for B2B market.

1.Customer loyalty (any visitor is a potential customer who will use brand new products)

2.News distribution (any fan can easily find out what's going on in a company and what products appear)

3.Organization of competitions

4.Online promotion and visibility (the more a company's page is visible in the online environment, the stronger it is in reality)

In conclusion, social media are vital for Kekkilä Professional for the B2B side for the following reasons:

1. All the clients and their prospects participate in social media websites.

2. Competitors are already there, or they will be soon.

3. The balance of interruption – marketing, in a permanent decline. New ways to reach customers are marketing permission, conversational marketing and social marketing. Without participating in social media, Kekkilä Professional can simply not master the new contact skills with the customer.

4. More important than selling in the social media world is to listen to the customer and communicate the brand directly and personally. The promise of social media for business is to allow the company to connect more strongly to their best customers and spread the good word about the company through a web that is stronger interconnected than ever before. It is cost-effective, the cheapest and most direct form of advertising, and strengthens the relationship with customers, which can be one of the most important aspects of Kekkilä Professional.

The three most used social networks in B2B Social Media Marketing are Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn and they are the best examples for answering to the main research question of this thesis.

Social networks have become indispensable communication channels for companies, whatever their sector. However, their use in B2B has not yet fully spread, and many companies are wondering what they may have to say on social networks, or what the return on investment of Twitter and LinkedIn.

1. Interact with your audiences

On social media, the exchanges go both ways. It is essential for the company to interact with their subscribers. For that, make sure to reply to all comments and messages you receive, whether positive or negative, to monitor posted posts about the products / services you offer to identify opportunities to engage in discussion.

2. Comment management

It is quite possible that a customer of a company can use social media to damage your reputation with bad reviews. To face it, there are three possible strategies to know: to give a constructed answer to all these comments, to answer in a polite and professional tone, to recognize the client's dissatisfaction and to find a solution.

3. Customer relationship and social networks

Social networks can be used to manage the customer relationship, and many brands use them. The benefits are many, such as the responsiveness that can be on this channel, and the technical constraints that are lower. It is therefore crucial to answer all the requests of the company’s customers. The company will also have to listen to the networks and monitor the various conversations that may be related to their brand. By monitoring a few search terms or hashtags, they will better understand how to respond to consumers, and it is thus easier to process queries.

4. Grow their audience

Very quickly, the company will want to grow their audience, pass the level of 100 subscribers, 500, or 1000. To do this, the company should identify the influencers in their sector, those who have managed to create a community on the same themes that they are addressing. Among their subscribers, the company locates those who enter their target, and follow them. Kekkilä Professional can do the same with the competitors' subscribers. The company must be careful not to lock themselves into a "follow-unfollow" strategy, i.e. to follow people and unsubscribe the next day because they did not follow you back. This way, the company will look more like spam.

5. Find business opportunities

How to find leads on social networks is a recurring issue, to which there is no simple answer. It is not enough to tweet a few times to start raining leads. It will take time, the time that the company establishes themselves as a leader of opinions in their market, that they have proven their expertise and their added value on these networks, and that have sufficiently interacted with their communities.

7 CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the thesis and the author presents the information collected during the research. The reliability and validity of the thesis are analyzed, and the author will make suggestions for further research at the end of the chapter.

7.1 Answers to the research questions

The research focused on social media marketing and digital marketing; how does the case company can develop the social media in B2B side for the future. The main question was:

How should the case company improve their social media marketing in order to reach more b-to-b customers?

There are sub-questions which are answered first, and the main question will be answered later. The sub-questions are presented and answered below.

How can Digital Marketing and Social Media Marketing be defined and what are the most used social media channels in B2B markets?

Digital marketing refers to all efforts to promote a brand and to manage customer relationships or potential clients through all online and social media channels (Jolly 2019).

Social Media Marketing is a process that aims to raise brand awareness through social media platforms. The best way to understand Social Media is to break down the term. To begin, let us look at each word individually. The "social" part refers to interacting with others by sharing information with them and receiving information. The "media" part refers to a communication instrument, such as the Internet (television, radio and newspapers are examples of more traditional forms of media). The most used social media channels are Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, YouTube, and LinkedIn. (Jolly 2019.)

How can the B-to-B market be improved by social media?

Digital marketing between companies is no longer just an innovative way of boosting sales: it is essential to the survival of your organization in a highly competitive B2B market. Indeed, 92% of the B2B marketers use social media as a method of content marketing to boost turnover (Dominique 2018).

Social media is often seen as the ideal channel for B2C marketing, that is, end-user marketing, because of its rather informal nature. However, since companies are beginning to establish their presence on these media, the difference in approach between B2B and

B2C is decreasing. In both cases, the main benefit of social media is to build relationships with current and potential customers. In addition, some techniques, such as social media content calendars that allow for digital channel communication planning, are useful for both B2B and B2C marketing managers. (Dominique 2018).

Highlighting the company's content on social media brings another benefit, the opportunity to increase their visibility to other sites such as industry associations, industry advocates and other news sites. Popular third-party content enhances the credibility of a business, enabling them to build their customer base. It is therefore in the interest of the B2B marketers to create content that will interest these sources of information. (Dominique 2018).

Social media is a great way to multiply the reach of a new partnership or unique collaboration, highlighting the merits of the company's partners and the opportunities that could be presented for their customers. However, there is no need to be actively involved in a project with the partners to show them the company's appreciation on social media. Social media offers many ways to show your support: to share posts on Facebook, to retweet or bookmark Tweets, to identify profiles or to share your partners' accomplishments on LinkedIn. By initiating the conversation with the company's partners on social media, Kekkilä Professional guarantees the maintenance of their association in a professional setting without being too intrusive.

How does Kekkilä Professional utilize social media marketing at the moment?

Kekkilä Professional uses only LinkedIn and their main website at the moment. Through the LinkedIn page, they share posts from events, and they promote the latest products or events but there is no daily activity on it. The website is the only platform where Kekkilä Professional spends most of their time.

Which professional social networks should be chosen for B2B market?

LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter have the most important role for B2B market in promoting nowadays because they all increase the reputation and visibility of the company, federate a community, retain customers and communicate, know the company's customers, are prospect by attracting new users, enjoy an ergonomic and intuitive graphical interface, launch targeted and attractive advertising campaigns, encourage customers to take action, generate traffic to their website and deploy a local strategy. (Barker 2018).

Now, as the author has brought answers to all the sub-questions, it is the right time to answer to the main research question of the thesis, which was the following:

How should the case company improve their social media marketing in order to reach more b-to-b customers?

1. Choosing the right social networks

2. Engage in B2B social media

The first thing to do is obviously to choose on which social networks to be present. The golden rule is to find the balance between being present effectively on several networks, without scattering unnecessarily and being overtaken. If LinkedIn is the most popular network among B2B marketers, it is not necessarily the only one to use. Twitter and Facebook are also very used and allow a better proximity with his public. YouTube requires more investment and video skills but can be very effective. The companies are on average present on 4 to 5 different networks. To identify relevant social networks, Kekkilä Professional can learn from their competitors, which are currently using good social media for the B2B side. Being on the same sector as them, what works for them can work for Kekkilä Professional as well.

3. Create your profiles

The profile of a company must reflect its brand on all social networks and must be recognizable. This involves the use of the same profile image, preferably the logo, and a consistent editorial line. It is about showing on social networks the most human side of the company's business.

4. Think about the Kekkilä's audience

When creating the profile, keep the target audience in mind. At this point, Kekkilä Professional should have defined its values, mission and the type of clients it wants to attract.

7.2 Validity and reliability

The purpose of this thesis was to find answers to the research questions made by the author and to get an idea of how Kekkilä Professioanal can unwind the social media side in the future in terms of the B2B side. The information for this thesis was collected from three sources, such as information extracted from the company, interviews with distributors and interview with the marketing manager. The study is valid and reliable as well.

7.3 Suggestions for further research

As the author stated at the beginning of the thesis, the subject focused on social media marketing and the B2B side. The main idea of this thesis was how Kekkilä Professional

could develop the social media side in the future in terms of B2B. The author has been able to bring remarkable and powerful arguments that the company will be able to implement this useful information in the future.

The suggestions for Kekkilä Professional is to define the B2B content strategy on social networks which is the keystone of a successful strategy. The first thing to do is to create quality content, interesting for the company's target audience. The company does not really go to an entire company, but to a specific person with specific needs: save time, save money, be more productive or make your office a better place for your employees. Kekkilä Professional should keep in mind that the content must meet these needs. Here are some content ideas for Kekkilä Professional to publish on social media: articles from their blog, if they have some, their reports and market studies, curation articles on their sector, infographics that address the issues of their audience, video clips and live quotes from their events, quotes from their customers about their brand, their important news (partnerships, acquisitions, new releases), behind the scenes of their business: photos of their employees, the life from the office.

8 SUMMARY

The purpose of this thesis was to achieve a deep understanding of how Kekkilä Professional can develop their social media for the B2B market in the future. In the beginning, the author explained what the meaning of digital marketing is, social media marketing and which are the most important online channels through which Kekkilä Professional could develop themselves in the B2B market.

The author wanted to highlight why promotion through social media on the B2B market is important and the following conclusions have emerged: Kekkilä Professional will Increase the visibility of their business, they will get measurable results, they can adjust the investment, they will communicate directly with their target audience and distributors, they will have relatively low costs, the engagement will increase, they will find potential customers in the most efficient way, they can compete or they can even overcome, they will increase the credibility of their business, they will influence the buying process and they will quickly promote their products or services without geographical boundaries.

After this, the author has provided countless reasons for Kekkilä Professional to focus on the three social media channels, LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter as they are the most avant-garde nowadays and they have the largest number of global users. The author used four ways to collect the data including three interviews with three distributors of Kekkilä Professional and an interview with the marketing manager.

The author used as a way of collecting data, the working experience and collecting information from various online sources and different books. Secondly, the author had four interviews, of which three interviews were with three distributors of the company and the last interview was with the marketing manager. From these interviews, the author has been able to provide very useful information for answering the main research question of the thesis, which was **how the case company should improve their social media marketing in order to reach more b-to-b customers.**

The last part of the thesis brought to the light a development plan for the case company. The author wished and tried to bring beneficial results to the company, so Kekkilä Professional could be successful in the future, if it implements what the author has mentioned in his research.

In conclusion, it has been shown that the author has brought for this research a lot of important information about digital marketing and social media, which are the major social media channels for B2B market. Therefore, useful information has been proved for

Kekkilä Professional and the company is able to improve social media practices for b-to-b market in the future based on this research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Interview with three Distributors

1. What are the benefits of using Social Media Marketing in B2B?
2. What are the benefits of using social media in B2B and how can the company be developed in terms of these circumstances?

Appendix 2 Interview with the Marketing Manager

1. What will social media firstly develop in the company?
2. How is social media used within B2B?
3. What are the benefits of using social media and which are the advantages for us of focusing on social media for the B2B side?
4. What do you think about CSR?
5. How will the sales will be stimulated?