

Newsletter and guide implementation for a lodging company

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<p>Digital development in recent years has played a major role in the travel and tourism industries. Nowadays, all travel-related processes can be done online. People are used to searching for travel inspiration and information through various online channels. New rising trends and changing customer demands are shaping companies' marketing processes. In order to stay competitive, companies need to know how to use different online marketing channels and keep up with trends.</p> <p>The commissioning company of this thesis is Company X, a small aparthotel based in Helsinki. The purpose of this thesis was to help company X implement its first newsletters. The goal was to enhance its marketing processes while offering the customers something valuable. Through these newsletters, the company X team wanted to promote the company's brand in a new way, maintain existing customer relationships and potentially make them want to visit Helsinki again and use their services. As an outcome, after implementing the newsletters, a guide was created. The guide acts as a source of information for company X to create newsletters. The purpose of this guide is to state what newsletters are and how to make them effective.</p> <p>The theoretical framework of this thesis consists of the definitions of different digital marketing forms and introduces how they are utilized in the travel and tourism industries. The theory presents the recent trends that are emerging in the industries. Moreover, an important part of the thesis is also the concept of a newsletter. Therefore, issues related to newsletters are discussed thoroughly.</p> <p>The actual thesis products, the newsletters, were created using the knowledge from the theoretical work and the findings done online. The empirical chapter discusses the implementation process of the newsletters as well as the created guide. As a result, two newsletters were sent, an English version and a Finnish version. The English newsletter was sent out to 252 subscribers and the Finnish newsletter to 86 subscribers.</p>	
Keywords Travel and tourism marketing, newsletters, marketing trends	

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1 Introduction

It is clear that the development of digitalization has had a huge impact on the travel and tourism industries. Planning and booking a holiday in the past was very different when compared to today's world. Nowadays this function revolves around online technology. Evermore people are searching for information online and booking their own journeys. Decisions are influenced by reviews and publications from fellow travelers on various digital channels. It is extremely important that companies have a digital presence as users are online around the clock. Above all, companies need to know how to utilize different channels in an efficient way.

Customer demand and constantly changing trends are transforming the way companies market their products and services. It is important that companies have an online strategy and keep up with industry trends in order to reach their targeted market. Travelers are looking for experiences and hoping for more personalized marketing. They are becoming more aware of what they want. Thus, companies need to come up with the right ways to maintain good customer relationships and stay competitive in the industry.

1.1 Thesis background

The commissioning company of this thesis is company X. Company X is an aparthotel located in the city center of Helsinki, Finland. They offer affordable but quality holiday apartments for solo-travelers to families as well as business travelers. They have over 40 different apartments that are located in different districts around Helsinki. The apartments vary. Some are small studios, and some are spacious one-bedroom holiday homes. Customers are able to rent an apartment from one night to several months according to need. In addition to the apartments, they also have a hostel service which is in Lahti, Finland. The hostel is quite unusual as it is located in historical soldier barracks.

On top of that, company X markets Helsinki as a travel destination. They post various articles on their website about Helsinki. They also do marketing through different social media channels like Instagram, Facebook and Pinterest. They have different sales channels such as an online booking system, online chat and phone service.

The company's personnel is minimal. There are only a few full-time employees and, if needed, rental workers or students who have internships to complete, are hired. The company includes the founders, marketing manager, operational manager and reception service, where the apartment keys are picked up from or dropped off.

In recent months, company X experienced some setbacks which then led to the closure of its operations. Due to this, the author lacks some specific information concerning the company.

1.2 Thesis objective

This is a product-oriented thesis. The purpose of this thesis was to help company X implement its first newsletters. The goal was to enhance its marketing processes while offering the customers something valuable. Through these newsletters, the company X team wanted to promote the company's brand in a new way, maintain existing customer relationships and potentially make them want to visit Helsinki again and use their services. The aim was to gather as much information as possible about newsletters and how they are supposed to work, in order to make successful newsletters and to achieve the results that company X wanted.

As a result, after implementing the newsletters, a guide was created. The guide serves as a source of information for company X to create newsletters. The purpose of this guide is to state what newsletters are and how to make them effective.

1.3 Thesis structure

This thesis consists of 5 main chapters: 1. Introduction, 2. Online travel and tourism marketing, 3. Newsletters, 4. Empirical part and 5. Discussion. All chapters have more than two different sub-headings that are connected to the main topic.

The thesis starts with an introduction to the topic followed by the background of the thesis where the commissioning company is introduced. The first chapter is concluded by the thesis structure. The theoretical framework of this thesis discusses online travel and tourism marketing where digital marketing plays a key role. The most popular digital marketing channels, social media, website and email, are introduced in this chapter, discussing them also from the viewpoint of the travel and tourism industries. This chapter continues with the marketing trends in travel and tourism, introducing the rising trends of the industry which are mobile marketing, more personalization, influencer marketing and video marketing. The theoretical framework continues in chapter 3, newsletters, where the concept, structure, planning and content are discussed.

In chapter 4, the Empirical part, the products of this thesis are introduced. This thesis has 3 products all together. Two newsletters, an English version and a Finnish version, and one guide that was created as the thesis process progressed. In chapter 4 the implementation process of the newsletters is introduced. This is followed by the creation of the guide.

The last chapter, discussion, is the chapter where the author evaluates the results of the newsletters. The two newsletters are compared to each other at the end of this section. Afterward comes the suggestions for developments for the future newsletters of company X. This is followed by the conclusion of the thesis and the chapter is finished by the evaluation of the whole thesis process and the author's own learning outcomes.

2 Online travel and tourism marketing

This chapter covers travel and tourism marketing where digital marketing plays a key role. Definitions of different digital marketing forms are thoroughly explained and their use and benefits in travel and tourism marketing are discussed.

Travel and tourism marketing are business practices that aim to attract potential visitors into certain locations. These particular locations may be establishments providing accommodation, a city or any spot that has the slightest chance of attracting a traveler. The process of marketing tourism requires several marketing strategies in order to increase the industry in the destination. (Bhasin 2019.)

2.1 Key concepts

Mailchimp is an email and automation marketing platform for businesses. Mailchimp helps businesses for example with branding and different campaigns as well as offers tutorials and guides. (Mailchimp d.)

Canva is an online design tool for businesses and for personal use as well. It can be used for presentations, doing layouts and implementing different social media graphics. (Canva.)

Ip-address as in internet protocol address allows any device connected to the internet to be distinguished from other devices. It provides a specific identification to it. (Fisher 2019.)

Metadata is a summary of information on specific internet content. For example, the data of a file or website and more. Metadata can contain information of an author, size of the file, keywords and date of document creation. (Chapple 2019.)

Coding of a campaign or also known as campaign code is the highly specific code that will define a campaign. It is important to note that each campaign has its own code and that no campaign can have more than one. (IBM 2019.)

2.2 Digital marketing

Digital marketing covers all of the marketing processes that are done through an electronic device or on the internet. Businesses using digital marketing utilize several online

channels such as social media, websites and email in order to connect with current customers as well as to reach out to a newer audience. (Alexander 23 September 2019.)

The significant development of the internet has had a major impact on the travel and tourism sector making online marketing one of the most important tools for businesses. Although digitalization has made marketing considerably more affordable and approachable likewise it enables fast and easy user-created content such as leaving comments and reviews about their experiences, from good to bad ones. This user trend plays an important role in the tourism industry since the amount of people joining digital channels is increasing daily and information retrieval online is everyday life. (Karatzias 22 May 2019.)

The internet is present every step of the way when it comes to the customer journey of a holiday. The consumers search for information from destinations, accommodation to restaurants and activities online. During the holiday itself, consumers continue the process of information retrieval due to the easy internet access of mobile devices nowadays. After a holiday, consumers will most likely leave comments and reviews about places they experienced on websites and social media channels. (Karatzias 22 May 2019.)

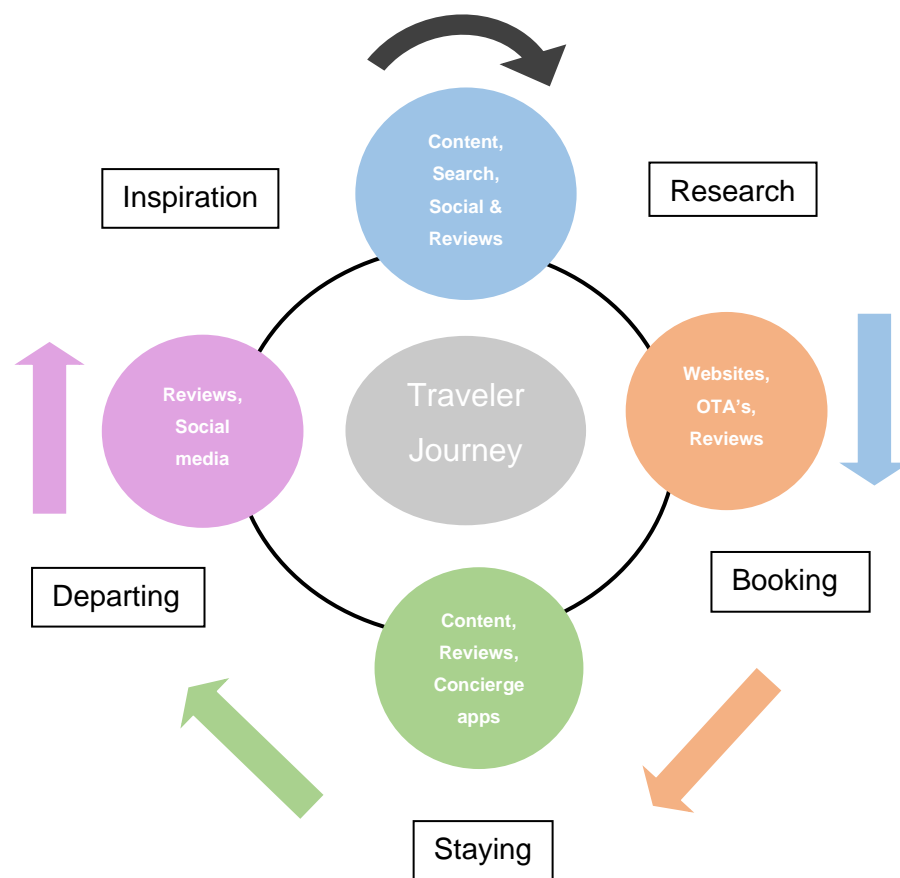


Figure 1. The traveler journey online (adapted from CEO Africa 2018)

The figure above explains a traveler's holiday journey in a digital sense; What different stages there are when it comes to planning a holiday and what online platforms are used in these different stages. It starts off by gaining inspiration from online sources, reading reviews and scrolling through social media posts. The next phase is research. This is quite like the inspiration phase as information is searched online, different travel websites are visited, and reviews are read. Booking is done through a company's website, and other travelers reviews may have affected the decision-making. While travelers are staying at the destination, they, for example, search for different things to do from online channels and phone applications. Once it's time to leave, they may be the ones to post pictures and reviews of their journey.

2.2.1 Social media marketing

With the rise of the internet, new technologies and communication mediums have appeared, and with them, new strategic and competitive advantages for companies and industries. (Porter 2001.) As the author mentions, without a proper strategy, the usefulness of the internet is lost and should be seen as a complement rather than a "whole". Thus, brings us to analyze the following: What are social medias? What is social media marketing? What is its place in the travel and tourism industry's development in the last decade and today?

To begin with, let's define the extremely widespread term of "Social Media". Social Medias are online web platforms which have for aim to make users exchange, communicate and share ideas and content. (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010.) The authors argue that it can only be beneficial for companies to be part of these networks as it is an opportunity to engage and maintain relationships with present and new markets through significantly reduced costs and with a potential ROI (Return on Investment) if you create and follow specific guidelines. (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010.) Moreover, a major part of social medias' strength relies on the need of an individual willing to be part of a community. (Curran, Fenton & Freedman 2012, 127.) The authors emphasize on the fact that social medias might seem, for the first time, as primarily information-sharing platform, but where they take their core strength could be the need of connecting by humanity. Thus, with the record number of users over the years, it is possible to take strong commercial advantage of it. The worldwide social network user amount currently stands at 2.8 billion (Statista 2019d). It has drastically increased within recent years and the growth will continue in the future. When talking about different social media channels, Facebook is at the top of the list with 2.3 billion users, followed by YouTube with 2 billion. Instagram, on the other hand, has 1

billion users. Other social media channels such as Twitter and Pinterest are below a billion users (Statista 2019a).

This leads us to ask the following question: What is social media marketing? Based on previous research above, it can be defined as a specific type of marketing, within the ones existing, where products and services will be advertised online, more specifically on social medias. As seen, through the creation of specific content, it will generate a response from potential target markets through its spread online on the various social networks existing, and eventually lead to the consumption or purchase of it. (Jashi 2013.)

Within this framework, we are now able to ask ourselves: What is the role of social medias in the development of the tourism and travel industry? One word: Important, according to Jashi (2013). Social medias have radically transformed the vision and approach of customers to traveling, tourism and destinations. Not only social medias will provide companies with strong and detailed information about the potential market available online, but they will also be able to exploit this information to transform it into profit. (Christou, Sigala & Gretzel 2016.) One of the biggest changes social media has brought to this particular field is the acquisition of knowledge. The vast majority, at least of the present generation, search for their travel information online. Images, videos, and reviews uploaded by other people on different social media channels have shaped the opinions of those seeking information and are thus, an essential part of travel decision making. As photo sharing has become a big part of the journey, many travel and tourism companies have taken advantage of it. In a way, user-generated content is free marketing for a business or travel destination. People want to post pictures of their trip and recommend a specific activity or destination to friends and other social media users. Businesses can take advantage of this phenomenon by organizing various contests, for example, where customers post pictures of their services or products by using a hashtag and thus win something for themselves and the company itself would receive free marketing. (Carnoy 2018.) The use of mobile technology is an essential part of the traveler's journey and the presence of companies in social medias is an important part of good customer service. Through online presence, the company is able to access valuable information concerning its service and a customer's experience or journey. In special cases, it can even enhance the experience of the customer. Therefore, social medias are not only a marketing tool anymore but can also be used as a customer service platform in order for companies to be in close touch around the clock with its customers. This enables creating a stronger brand image, strengthening values in the eyes of consumers and maximizing their marketing efforts online. (Carnoy 2018.)

2.2.2 Website marketing

It is essential that companies have their own website, and in fact, it is a critical feature for successful businesses nowadays. Websites work as the foundation of a company's online existence and all other online marketing should lead there. Website marketing is promoting a company's products and services. An equally important role is played by the presentation of the company's brand. If customers want to know more about the purpose of the company and find out more detailed information, the website will do the job. (Standberry 4 October 2019.)

For a website to truly succeed and for customers to find a particular company website, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) plays an extremely important role. SEO is a way for companies to ensure that customers can easily find them on different search engines like Google. This is done with the help of certain phrases and keywords related to their business. Companies utilize SEO to get free and organic traffic to their websites. Content and website design must be good and relevant in order to be positively considered by search engines. (Standberry 9 July 2019.)

One common and effective feature of websites in the travel and tourism industries is blogs. Many travel companies favor blogs because they have been found to be very useful especially in this specific industry. Blogs that are part of the websites ensure the continuous production of content for customers. Old publications are easy to find but new ones are easy to produce. Utilizing SEO in the travel industry is important. The continuous production of content on blogs ensures fresh and relevant posts that may succeed when it comes to search engines. (Rowett 18 July 2014.)

2.2.3 Email marketing

Email marketing is the act of promoting a company's services and products through email. In addition, it is also a way to maintain and create potential relationships with customers online. (Ward 2019.) In many ways, email marketing benefits companies, whether it's a small or large company. There are over 3,9 billion email users currently (The Radicati group 2019). This means that over half of the world population have email accounts. This number exceeds the number of users of some of the biggest social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Thus, using email marketing enables reaching a large audience. (Campaign Monitor c.) The figure below presents how the number of email users has evolved over the years and how it is predicted to evolve in the future.

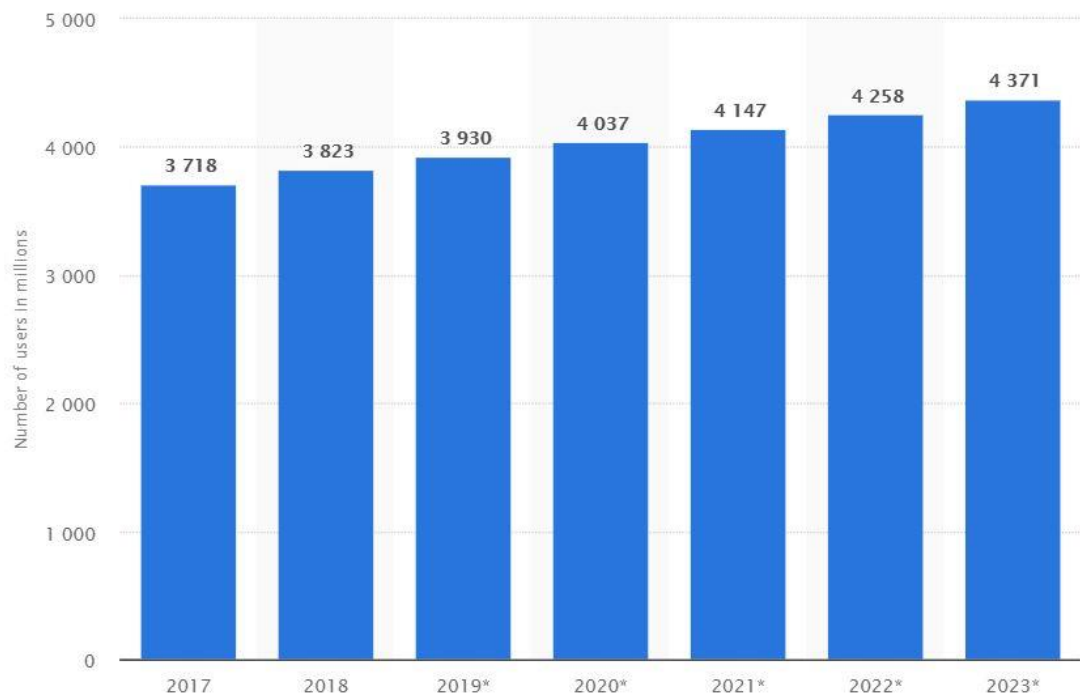


Figure 2. Worldwide email users (Statista 2019b)

Moreover, email marketing includes a high variety of other benefits according to Fariborzi and Zahedifard (2012). They list them as the following: "... Measurability...", Simplicity to use, Automation potential, Efficiency and Speed. Email marketing accounts measurability as one of its advantages because of the software used behind it that allows receiving extremely detailed data about the audience targeted. For instance, you are now able to see how many emails were opened, how many went to spam, country data, and much more that will allow creating proper market segmentation and targeting in your future campaigns. The authors, Fariborzi and Zahedifard (2012), continue by specifying that one of the major advantages of email marketing is simplicity. They argue that if anyone is able to write an email to another party, then anyone can create an email marketing campaign. Now, this factor is true until a certain point. One must observe that the source remains relevant even though it dates back to 2012, but email marketing and its importance drastically increased with the development of internet and social medias, meaning its complexity too. (Qudosi 2015.)

However, at the core, the process of writing an email remains a simple task. With the development of technology, its assistance and help in daily life have drastically increased and it applies to email marketing. It is nowadays possible to implement automated tools in your email marketing campaigns that will improve their success such as automatic response (Fariborzi & Zahedifard 2012.), list creators (market segmentation), tracking and

monitoring tools etc. (Santora 8 November 2019). One other advantage stated by the authors, Fariborzi and Zahedifard (2012), is the efficiency and speed of email marketing. Indeed, this marketing medium, if done properly, brings the target market to a “call to action”. Following a well-done email marketing campaign, engagement and sales can be observed to drastically increase in some cases. (Fariborzi & Zahedifard 2012.)

Although email marketing can reach a large number of people, spam filters are an obstacle when it comes to this. These filters are made to control spam emails and Mailchimp describes spam as “- unsolicited, irrelevant email, sent in bulk to a list of people” (Mailchimp e). A great amount of matters needs to be considered before sending emails and avoiding these may prevent them from reaching customers. In order to avoid being flagged as spam the following factors should be focused on; IP address, metadata, coding of the campaign and content and formatting. Future campaigns may be easily marked as spam if previous emails from the same IP address have been seen as undesirable content. Many email service providers work on delivering the right kind of content, demanding users to follow specific guidelines and terms of use. This act has enabled high-quality content for the receivers. Sending an email to an irrelevant address activates spam filters. To avoid the spam filters with this matter, make sure you are acquainted with the email receiver. As an example, you may ask them to add you to their address book. Thus, it is known your content is wanted. In order for your email to get into the recipient's inbox smoothly, the coding must be careful and clear. Again, some email service providers have tools such as readymade templates to use in these situations to make the process easier. Campaign content should be tested before sending the email. Having content that matches the company brand and website and checking the functionality of links is recommended, in order to pass spam filters. (Mailchimp c.)

When it comes to the travel and tourism industry, email plays a major role especially in personalized marketing and retaining customer relationships. There are numerous ways in which email marketing is an effective part of a company's marketing strategy in this specific industry. Marketing with email is a great way to spread travel inspiration to the receivers. Travelers should be given an idea of what is to come by sending pre-arrival emails relating to their bookings and the destination. Follow-up emails also play an important role. They allow you to ask for feedback and thus, make improvements, remind the customer of your brand and this way, stand out from competitors. (Brunelle 16 November 2018.) Another useful way of using email marketing is the ability to offer something unique to the customers. Travelers are constantly looking for an experience. Hereby, campaigns should emphasize the whole journey, not just the destination. (Dent 21 June 2017.) According to a travel study conducted by Google, the majority of both

business and leisure travelers tend to choose and book from a brand for their prices and deals (Google 2014, 16). By adding a limited-time deal in your email campaigns, a mutual benefit can be achieved at best. The goal is to create visions for the customers about the destination or service. The purpose is to make them imagine being in the advertised destination. For this reason, images are an essential part of email marketing in the travel and tourism industry. Moreover, it is clear that reviews are memorable and can even be a major factor in decision making. Adding other travelers' comments to your campaign may lead customers to the "call to action", whether it's to read an article or to purchase something. (Dent 21 June 2017.)

2.3 Travel and tourism marketing trends

The travel and tourism industries are ever-changing and developing sectors. New trends are constantly emerging and need to be focused on in order to keep up with the leading companies of the industry. On top of that, another continuously changing field is marketing. New ways of marketing a company's products and services are constantly appearing. Exploiting new marketing trends will allow you to stand out and advance your company in the field. A significant factor in the development of new marketing trends is the improvement of technology and social media qualities. (Carter 2019.)

This chapter discusses a few of the current trends that can be seen in the travel and tourism industries. Some of these trends have been on top for a while but have evolved and formed new features.

2.3.1 Mobile marketing

The presence of mobiles and other smart devices is nowadays a critical part of everyday life including travel journeys. More and more people are searching for information through their smartphones. Moreover, they are increasingly used in the travel industry as research shows that many check-ins, reservations and other travel-related activities are done via smartphones nowadays. (Campaign Monitor 21 June 2019.)

Numerous travel businesses have already developed their own apps in order to make the processes mobile-friendly. Although mobiles have been relevant for a long time, making travel-related issues on these devices has only become more popular in recent years and is continuously developing for future marketing processes. (Campaign Monitor 21 June 2019.)

2.3.2 More personalization

As the tourism and marketing industries are evolving, customer demand changes along with them. The proven desire for more personalized marketing is on the rise. Customers want to experience something special and are drawn to ever more tailored experiences. (Campaign Monitor a).

Moreover, customers expect to receive marketing based on their interests. As the technology is changing and the software's behind different marketing channels are developing, it is easier to respond to needs and wants. The best way to accomplish this is to track the customer data and this applies throughout the customer's entire holiday journey and after. (Campaign Monitor a).

2.3.3 Influencer marketing

Over the past years, with the increase of social medias, a new type of marketing has appeared: Influencer marketing. We can qualify its appearance and growth as skyrocketing. With its constant increase, more and more businesses started to adopt it as one of their major practice to promote their products and services. As the name states it, this marketing practice relies on influencers. These are individuals that have a majorly sized "follower" base on social medias such as Instagram, YouTube, Twitter etc. That number of followers counts up to thousands of people if not millions. From travel photographers to superstars, the type of influencers can vary. What matters the most to companies, is how he or she will advertise their products and services as well as the size of the audience. This specific type of marketing also needs a clear strategy in order to be effective. Forbes (2017) lists three factors that are necessary for influencer marketing; Reach, contextual credibility and salesmanship. (Dada 2017.)

Influencers must be capable of delivering the message to their large audience. It is essential that they have a sufficient number of followers so that the message will pass to as many people as possible. The person must have knowledge and connection to the product or service being advertised. Without credibility, the marketing is ineffective and may be overlooked. Another important feature is, being able to capture the interest of the targeted audience. The influencer is marketing a certain product or service because they truly think it is good and it has to be acknowledged by the viewers. Good influencer marketing includes all three key factors. The core of influencer marketing is maintaining a good relationship between the company and social influencer as well as the audience. (Dada 2017.)

Micro-influencers are the latest trend in influencer marketing. Micro-influencers are labeled as “normal people” with approximately 1000 to 10 000 followers on their social media channels. The fact that companies are relying more on micro-influencers is because they tend to be more aware of their own followers and are more interactive than influencers with a higher number of followers. Their followers are genuinely interested in their posts and trust their words. (Patel 2018.)

For travel and tourism, any kind of influencer is able to spread non-stop inspiration for traveling and promote a destination or activity one might overlook in some other situation. With the help of influencers, the travel and tourism industry is able to stay relevant and increases its demand. The main purpose of travel influencers is to share authentic experiences with their followers about the whole journey. (Influency 7 November 2018.)

2.3.4 Video marketing

The popularity of videos online has been remarkable in recent years. More and more companies are adopting video marketing to their strategies. Like many other things, video marketing is constantly evolving, and it is important for companies to stay on top of trends in order to remain competitive. (Hall 2019.) Videos are great sources of information and inspiration, especially in the travel and tourism industries. YouTube data has been used to understand user behavior and it shows that more and more people are watching travel-related videos. Viewers want to hear authentic stories from content creators. Therefore, vlogs (video blogs) are extremely popular in the travel industry because they allow authors to share real-life stories with the viewers. According to a study conducted by Google (2014), travel-related vlogs receive 4 times more attention and engagement on YouTube than other travel-related content. (Crowel, Gribben & Loo 2014.)

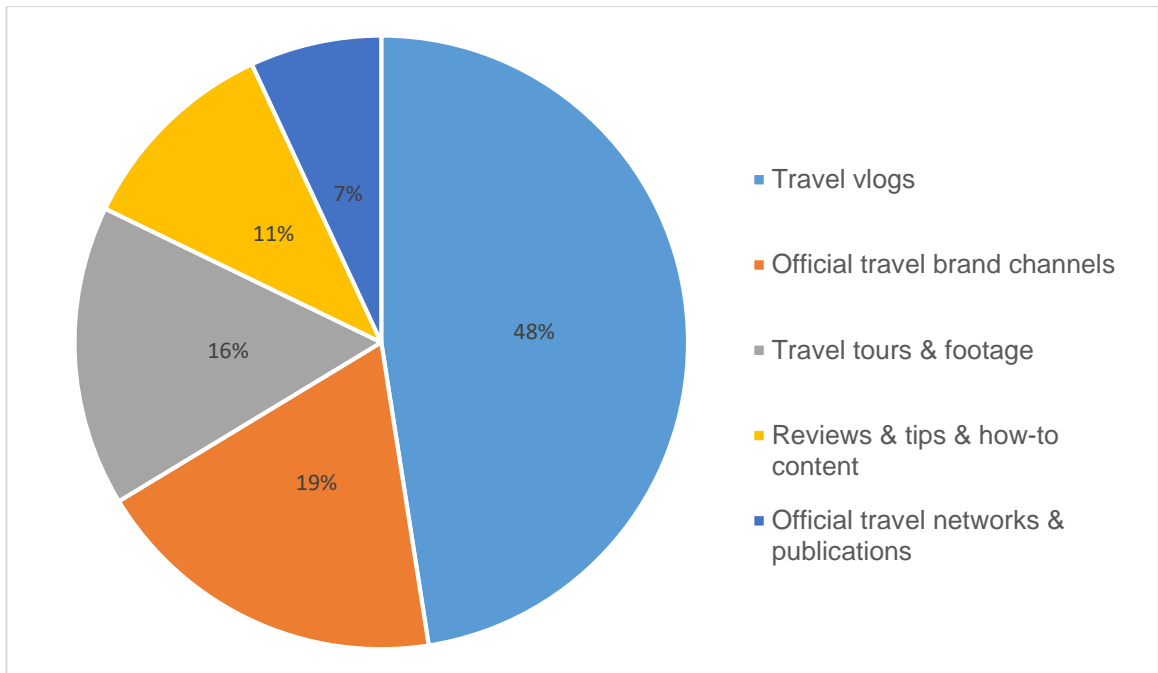


Figure 3. YouTube data on travel-related material (adapted from Crowel, Gribben & Loo 2014)

The figure above represents the percentage of subscriptions to specific travel-related material on YouTube in 2014. It is safe to say that travel vlogs have gained nearly half of the subscriptions and thus, prove the demand and popularity of them in the industry.

Marketers need to know how to use videos the right way in order to attract the interest of consumers. There are a few trends that are found to change video marketing today. One of these is 360-degree videos. As their name suggests, these videos provide a 360-degree view of the surroundings. They give the viewer a real feeling as if being on the spot. These 360-degree videos work particularly well in travel-related video marketing. (Balkhi 2018.)

The use of virtual reality has become a major part of travel and tourism marketing. As travelers are after an experience, adapting VR to marketing processes is a useful idea. They give customers a taste of what a travel destination, hotel, or activity really is. With this trending marketing tool, customers may get the information they need in order to make a decision and moreover, can imagine themselves on-the-spot with the help of a digital environment. (Revfine 2019.)

Live videos have gained popularity in recent years as many social media channels like Facebook, Instagram and YouTube have embraced this feature. Many companies, as well as their customers, find this way of marketing effective because live videos allow you to

build a strong customer connection and transmit a genuine feeling for viewers. Live videos work especially well when you want to demonstrate how a new product or service works, for example, or if you want to create a conversation between the company and customers. It is estimated that this tool will be adapted to the marketing strategy of a growing number of companies in the near future. (Balkhi 2018.) Another feature that has been developed for social media channels is stories. Stories, especially on Instagram, are proven to be a great marketing tool. Using this feature, a company can provide authentic material that consumers are looking for. Stories help you bring your brand to life in a simple way and it has been found that they get more attention than regular posts. (Etourism Consulting 9 September 2018.)

3 Newsletters

In this chapter, the concept of a newsletter is presented. The definition is described thoroughly, presenting the actual difference of newsletter and email marketing. The pros and cons of having a newsletter as a part of a company's marketing processes are introduced. Matters such as the structure, planning and content are gone through in separate paragraphs. In addition, examples are presented in order to clarify what is stated. Furthermore, the definition of GDPR and why it is important is noted at the end of this chapter.

3.1 Definition

A newsletter is a bulletin or an advertisement a company sends out to its customer base through an email. Newsletters are linked to the company's products and services, usually communicating the latest news, updates and tips directly to the consumers' email. (Campaign monitor b.)

Although newsletters can be a way of doing email marketing, the most notable difference between these two issues is that a newsletter should provide free information with very few or no sales promotion at all. The goal is to provide useful information for the customer and to maintain a good relationship. Email marketing is all about being commercial. The content is made to drive sales of the company. The content in email marketing certainly has to be valuable just as in newsletters, but the goal is to make sales. (Kennedy 9 September 2015.)

As with almost everything, newsletters also have both the pros and cons to it. Applying newsletters to the marketing processes of a company drives more traffic to the website of the company as well as the social media channels. It is also an inexpensive way to do marketing for example in contrast to the traditional way of posting in order to reach a customer. Although newsletters may reach a broader audience, the fact that it is done online allows companies to evaluate the results of the newsletter, since most newsletter platforms offer this option. Thus, companies are able to take notes and improve future newsletters. (Hamzavi Solutions 20 February 2018.)

On the contrary, a company may face negative impacts when doing newsletter marketing. It is important to note that there are over 3.9 billion email users (noted in chapter 2.2.3) and according to statistics there are 293.6 billion emails sent and received daily in 2019 (Statista 2019c). This fact leads to your newsletter being easily overlooked or in the worse case it may be marked as spam (Hamzavi Solutions 20 February 2018). This is something

to avoid, since it may quickly lead to losing customers. It should be noted that maintaining newsletters require work and effort. It's important to know what the customer base wants and needs. The wrong kind of content may also lead to unsubscription. (Teodoro 14 April 2017.)

3.2 Structure

The subject line of a newsletter has to be relevant and informative. It is the very first impression the receiver will get. Through subject lines, the receiver will make a decision whether to open it or leave it unopened. It must reflect on the actual content of the newsletter. If the subject line is misleading, it may result in losing the trust of a customer (Davis 14 December 2017.) An easy way to test whether a subject line is good and interests' customers, is to try an A/B test, also known as a split test. The purpose of a split test is to try out two different options and see which one shows better results. In a newsletter, it may be trying out two different subject lines and see which one is more effective, as in which newsletter has a better open rate. (Mailchimp a.)

Visual structure is a crucial aspect of a newsletter. It should stand for the company sending the newsletters. This means that using the brand colors and the overall subject material should match the company image and website in a way it can be identified. Being consistent in newsletters is important. The logo, contact information and social media links are recommended to be located in the same place in every newsletter that is sent. This way the receivers are able to find them easily. (Davis 14 December 2017.)

Although adding images to a newsletter is highly recommended, it is important to note that not all images may open. In this case, it is crucial to add an alternative text (Alt text) which appears next to the image if no image is displayed when the newsletter is delivered to the receiver's inbox. This way the receivers are still able to recognize what the picture was meant to present. (Mineo 30 October 2019b.)

Break a newsletter into different sections. This way it is easier to process and it is visually more appealing. Having sections makes it easier to communicate a point to the receiver. By setting each section a catchy and compact headline, the receivers are more likely to be interested. This way they are also able to pick out the most intriguing subjects for themselves without going through the newsletter word by word. (Campaign Monitor 30 May 2019.)

The two most common newsletter formats are HTML and plain text. Although the visual structure of a newsletter is pointed out often and images are recommended to create visions for the receiver, a plain text format is not always the wrong option. It mostly depends on the audience and purpose of the newsletter. A plain text format is a simple totality without any additions to it. The biggest difference to an HTML format is that no links, images or colors can be attached to it. Simply, the text is all there is to it. A plain text format works well for the purpose of sending an update or a one-on-one email. (Campaign Monitor 5 March 2019.)

An HTML, format on the other hand, is usually used by retail brands or when doing a campaign. HTML stands for HyperText Markup Language. It is the contrary of plain text formats. Companies using the HTML newsletter format are able to add images, different fonts and links. They can make it a visual experience for the receiver. However, an HTML format requires more skills and the right platform. Not all email readers are able to open an HTML format. It is good to note that images must be set to the right size for them to open. (Campaign Monitor 5 March 2019.)

3.3 Planning and content

There are certain matters that need to be taken into account when creating a newsletter. The very first step is to determine whether the company needs a newsletter in its marketing processes or not. Matters such as resources, time, budget and material need to be considered. It is important to pay attention to the industry to see if there is demand and opportunities for a successful newsletter. (Mineo 30 October 2019b.)

Setting a goal is crucial. It plays an important role since most matters are based on it. Some companies may want to drive traffic to their website by using newsletters while some want to increase sales directly. Once the goal is clear, creating the right content is more convenient. (Mineo 30 October 2019a.)

A newsletter schedule is good to have. There is no right or wrong when it comes to this. To find out a suitable sending schedule is to do testing. Newsletter results enable finding out the right frequency that fits a specific company's audience and industry. (Srinivasan 2015.)

It is worth considering the way the company wants to present itself through a newsletter. The tone of writing, using emoticons, how the text layout is done, what pictures to use and all related matters which may create a brand image for the customer. There are many

newsletter service providers that differ in their features. All the above can determine which service provider could work best for implementing the wanted newsletter. (Urban 12 October 2018.)

In order for the customer to find the newsletter useful, it must provide valuable information. The best kind of information is relevant and educational. (Sharma 2019.) All newsletters should contain links to the social media channels of the company, a link to open the newsletter in a separate browser, and by law, the company details and an unsubscribe link. In order to drive traffic to the company website, the content added to the newsletter should direct the customers back to the website. The number of images should be kept reasonable to prevent the newsletter labeled as spam mail. (Kilens 1 February 2017.)

For the newsletter to benefit the company itself, a call to action is an essential part of a functioning newsletter. When done properly, it may lead the receiver to do some action, whether it's opening a link to a website or some other activity. It is good that the call to action button is clearly marked in the newsletter so that it is easily noticed among other content. (Mineo 30 October 2019b.)

Nowadays newsletters are not only accessed through a computer. Although the newsletter looks good on a computer browser, it is important to check what it looks like through the screen of a smartphone. Smartphones enable easy access to emails and other online channels and in order to engage mobile users to want to read the newsletter, the design and functionality have to work on several devices. (Mineo 30 October 2019b.)

Once everything is set and done, to make sure the newsletter works as a whole, the links work and the layout looks fine, it is recommended to test the newsletter. Sending a copy to workers within the company before to the list of subscribers will ensure the operability of the newsletter. (Kilens 1 February 2017.)

3.4 GDPR

Perhaps one of the most important matters to keep in mind when starting a newsletter is who you are allowed to send it to. As of the 25th of May 2018, there was a new regulation set up concerning the protection of personal data. GDPR shortened for general data protection regulation is aimed at those companies and businesses who are operating in the EU. This means even if the business is based somewhere else but has operation around the EU area, they must apply to the new regulation. (European Commission.)

Newsletters cannot be sent without an email. And email is personal data, and in order for a newsletter to be legally sent to a specific email address, it must be officially authorized by the recipient. The webpage of Terms Feed has listed seven aspects that have to be acknowledged when a company wants to collect data from any EU citizen. The list has the following things:

- A positive opt-in
- Clear and specific statements of consent
- Granular consent – separate for different things: cookies, Privacy Policy, etc.
- Separate consent requests from other Terms and Conditions
- Refreshed consent upon changes to Terms
- Avoiding consent as a precondition to service
- Opportunities to withdraw consent
(TermsFeed 2019.)

To conclude, following the regulation will create trust between the company and the customer. Make it clear for the customers on what they are signing up for and enable an easy way out if it is needed. (TermsFeed 26 September 2019.)

4 Empirical part

In this chapter, the two products of the thesis are presented. The purpose of this thesis was to help company X implement its first newsletters. The goal was to enhance its marketing processes while offering the customers something valuable. Through these newsletters, the company X team wanted to promote the company's brand in a new way, maintain existing customer relationships and potentially make them want to visit Helsinki again and use their services. As an outcome, after implementing the newsletters, a guide was created. The guide acts as a source of information for Company X to create newsletters. The purpose of this guide is to state what newsletters are and how to make them effective.

4.1 The newsletter

First, the author starts with the newsletter. The author explains where the newsletter idea came from and how it was planned. The next section will present the newsletter design and production process. This leads to the point where the outcome of the newsletter is gone through.

4.1.1 Newsletter planning

The idea of implementing a newsletter as a part of company X's marketing processes first appeared during meetings where the discussion of better and personalized marketing was a major topic. Company X did not previously have the time or material to implement newsletters and as a new marketing trainee, the possibility of getting familiarized with a whole new marketing area was intriguing.

Company X had been doing marketing through different channels such as social media (Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest) and their webpage. A certain question came up constantly within discussions and this question was how to raise the interest of the customer base. Company X wanted to offer something that could benefit the company as well as promote Helsinki as a destination.

4.1.2 Newsletter implementation

Once it was decided that newsletters would be adapted to the marketing processes of the company, started the thorough research and data collection. Plenty of topic-related research and material exists on the internet which enabled smooth information retrieval. Information was collected from a variety of sources including blog posts, articles and posts from the industry professionals.

In order to gain more knowledge and inspiration, the author subscribed to a few newsletters of companies within the same industry. Surprisingly the biggest competitors, companies that offer similar products and services, did not have newsletters to subscribe to. Therefore, the author subscribed to four different hotels' newsletters. With this activity, it is easy to pick up ideas and note how newsletters are made to look personal and how they work as a whole.

After three weeks of searching for information, inspiration and the development of ideas, it was time to start the implementation of company X's first newsletter. Since it is important that a newsletter has a clear topic, it was the first thing that was decided. After that, the building of content was easier. The company had previously set up a list of subscribers who had agreed on receiving email marketing which they did through their bookings. This means that the subscribers had been to Helsinki before, therefore the content had to be made relevant for them in order to raise their interest in the newsletter. The company had split the subscriber list into two based on the booking language; English and Finnish. At first, it was discussed that one English newsletter would be sent out to all yet on later meetings the final decision was to make two separate newsletters, one Finnish and one English. The only difference in these two was language, everything else was identical.

Since one major concept of a newsletter is to get traffic on your own website, the author produced three different articles to the website which were later attached to the newsletter. The first article was aimed to create interest and amusement for the subscribers. This specific article covered interesting Finnish events that are rather unusual. The second article which was attached to the newsletter was a regular post about the basic attractions and sights in Helsinki since it cannot be assumed all the subscribers have seen them. The final article was the highlight of the newsletter. The author managed to do a small email interview with a local Helsinki citizen and the company owner of HELtours. The goal was to pass on tips and facts of Helsinki from the viewpoint of a local.

When it was time to focus on the visual aspects of the newsletter the author used the company photographers' images. As mentioned, the newsletter should visually resemble the company itself. Therefore, the two main colors of the company were used in texts and the header of the newsletter which the author made with the Canva design tool. The newsletter itself was made with Mailchimp. Firstly, the outline of the newsletter was designed. There was a possibility to use readymade templates, but the author created a new one that suited the company style better and the newsletter can be found in the appendices chapter of the thesis. Once the outline was done, the texts were included. They were kept short but descriptive in order to make the subscriber click the link to find the full article. All articles had a separate description, picture and link.

The author sent a test newsletter to the company X team and to herself to make sure the pictures open, the links work, it doesn't go to spam and that it looks good overall. The testing was done both on a computer and a smartphone.

4.1.3 Newsletter outcome

The official newsletter was sent 4/2019. The English version of the newsletter was sent out to 252 subscribers and the Finnish version was sent to 86 subscribers. It was a newsletter promoting summer in Helsinki that covered extraordinary activities to regular ones to exploring the city from a local's point of view. Hence, the product offers value and useful tips for subscribers especially.

4.2 The guide

The next paragraphs discuss the second product, the guide. The author explains the planning process of the guide. This is followed by the implementation process as well as the entire outcome of the guide.

4.2.1 Planning the guide

The author initiated the idea of a guide. Since company X did not previously have newsletters in their marketing processes, the author thought creating a guide including the most important matters relating to the topic can only be helpful. It was brought up often that the team in company X did not exactly know how to implement one and since the author was getting familiarized with the topic and creating the first newsletters, she could use what she had learned and put together a guide in the end.

4.2.2 Implementation of the guide

The guide was done simply in Word. The author decided that the best option would be to do it according to the company guidelines. Initially, the author designed a cover page for the guide. The author decided to use the company colors, pink white and grey. When this was done, the author proceeded to write the contents of the guide. There was no need to search for much information for the guide, as the author used what she had learned and summarized the information she had used to make the first newsletter.

First, the author gathered general information about newsletters so that the reader can get an overview of the subject before they access the rest of the content. Next, the author compiled information on the structure of the newsletters, as well as on the design and content of the newsletter. In order to make the guide clear and legible, the author used bullet points to state the information. To finish, the author wanted to put together a few tips relating to the first newsletter.

4.2.3 The outcome of the guide

The author wanted to keep the guide rather short but useful in content. The product came out to be a three-page educational guide that introduces relevant issues of newsletter marketing. All elements of the guide should provide the readers with an overview of the topic and what newsletters generally require. Most importantly, company X should now have a personal black on white product on newsletters. The idea was to send it via email to the company X team but also to print it out and hand it in.

5 Discussion

The discussion chapter looks into the results of the newsletters the author implemented. After analyzing the results, the author points out a few suggestions that could be done differently in future newsletters. This is followed by conclusions and the evaluation of the whole thesis process and the author's own learning.

5.1 Newsletter results

This section examines the results of both newsletters. Since they were implemented in Mailchimp, which is an email marketing platform, reading the newsletter results was rather simple. The platform gives you access to the results of each newsletter as a pdf file and it automatically includes different industry averages compiled by Mailchimp. Thus, it was easy to assess how well the newsletters did. The author studied the results of the newsletters two weeks after sending them. She believed that two weeks was enough time because after that she didn't think the results would change any more.

As mentioned in chapter 4.1.3, the English version of the newsletter was sent in total to 252 different email addresses. While studying the results, the author noticed that not all newsletters had reached their destination. Only 246 newsletters had gone to their subscribers. Next, she looked at how many subscribers had finally opened the newsletter. Out of the 246 newsletters, only 96 were opened. The number of total opens was 149 since some subscribers had opened it a few times. Thus, the open rate, as in the percentage of how many delivered newsletters were opened (Mailchimp b)., stands at 39%. On the pdf file, Mailchimp classifies travel and transportation into the same industry and company X is put under this category. It is pointed out that the travel and transportation average open rate is only 14% which makes this newsletter's open rate surprisingly good. On the other hand, the newsletters click rate, as in how many delivered newsletters received a click on a link (Mailchimp b)., is only 0.8% and the industry average click rate is 1.2%.

The Finnish version of the newsletter was sent to 86 email addresses but only 85 reached their subscribers. Only 42 out of 85 newsletters were opened and the amount of total opens stands at 57. The open rate in the Finnish newsletter is 49.4% so when compared to the industry average, it is very good. The click rate for this one is 4.7% which again is significantly more than the industry average.

The results were surprising. The assumption was that the English version of the newsletter would get better results because, firstly, the topic seemed more appropriate to the subscribers and there were significantly more subscribers. On the contrary, the Finnish version of the newsletter got better results. The subscribers were more active, and it got surprisingly good results when compared to the numbers of the industry averages.

After reviewing the results, it was easy to see that both newsletters needed improvement, at least in terms of content so that subscribers would be more active. Analyzing the results clarified that company X's first newsletters did not get the best possible results and left room for improvement. It was good to see which parts, in particular, would require more attention and which parts of the newsletter were more successful.

5.2 Suggestions for development

As company X's first newsletters, they produced fine results. The results allowed the author to compile a small list of development ideas that could potentially improve the performance of future newsletters and even achieve ideal results.

First and foremost, the author believes that a subscription link would be an extremely important feature on a website. The number of subscribers was not very high in the first newsletters because they had given permission for email marketing while making their reservation. A link on a website could possibly attract more attention from visitors and the link could also have a small introduction that would indicate what kind of newsletters they would receive. By doing so, Company X would make sure subscribers are willing to read their newsletters.

In order to know what kind of newsletter succeeds and gains the attention of subscribers, an A/B split test would be a good idea. In chapter 3.2, the author mentions what the test is. It would allow you to track results and see, for example, which headline is getting more attention and engagement.

Adding a questionnaire to a future newsletter or sending it separately to the subscribers would be an effective way to get feedback on what kind of content the receivers would like to read. This way company X would make sure to deliver the right kind of content and ensure good results on newsletters as well as potentially making sales. Another idea when it comes to content would be to include more relevant news. Something that is upcoming or benefits the subscriber. Overall, creating a decent newsletter strategy will help make your newsletters more effective in the future.

The first newsletters were sent as such to all subscribers. As the thesis process progressed, the author got a development idea that could be of interest to both company X and subscribers. More personalization could take you to the next level. For example, the Finnish version of the newsletter could have been made differently because the content was more aimed at foreign customers. Segmentation could work well here. Based on age, the purpose of travel and even a country would make it easier to produce appropriate content, although it would be more time-consuming.

5.3 Conclusion

The theoretical framework of this thesis is focused on digital marketing. Because the concept is so broad, it had to be delimited. The delimitation had to be considered from the point of view of the travel and tourism industries, that is, which digital marketing tools and channels are the most common in these industries. This led to social media marketing, website marketing and email marketing. It is obvious that online marketing is a crucial aspect of today's world and these chapters explain what the various marketing terms mean. They make it clear how technology is present at every stage of the journey and how different marketing channels are used in the travel industry. As digital marketing evolves with technology and demand, the author decided to write about trends that are reflected in digital marketing for the travel industry. Following trends, companies are able to stay relevant and competitive amongst competitors. The final chapter in the theoretical framework is newsletters. Newsletters, therefore, play a major role as they are also the product of this thesis. In addition to newsletters, a guide is another product of this work. Numerous online sources were used to obtain information for the theoretical framework and support the statements the author wished to express.

The main products of the thesis itself, the newsletters, were made with the knowledge of the theoretical framework. The author subscribed to some newsletters of companies in the same field and thus received information and inspiration for the production of the products. Newsletters enable companies to maintain customer relationships and improve their marketing to become more personalized and that was precisely the goal for company X. There is a variety of matters to consider and remember when creating newsletters in order for them to succeed. The results of the newsletters point out that there indeed is space for improvement in order to make the newsletters more successful. The unfortunate situation of company X prevented the author from knowing if newsletters would have served the company goals in the long run, but at the time, the marketing processes for company X were at least more efficient, more personalized and maintained the existing customer rela-

tionships. The newsletter guide was born along the way and acts as a so-called supplement to company X. Its purpose is to act as a source of information and help the company. This product has also been put together from the theoretical framework data.

5.4 Evaluation of the thesis process and one's own learning

Overall, the whole thesis process was long but rather educational. It all began already in the spring of 2019 when the author completed an internship at Company X. Overall, the thesis process took 8 months. There were quite a few ups and downs in between, which of course influenced the author's work. The miserable situation of Company X temporarily halted the author's thesis process and in the meantime, another topic was already considered. However, the author had to consider for a long time whether she wished to continue with the original subject since work had already been done on it and she did not want to waste it. After reflection, the author decided to continue with the original topic. Due to the situation of Company X, the content of the thesis was slightly modified. Certain topics were removed and replaced with new ones. After a short break, it was slightly difficult for the author to get the thesis routine and motivation back to normal.

In the end, the author is pleased that she decided to continue with the original topic as she is very interested in it. Of course, tourism was already of interest to her, since it was what she was studying, but marketing had become a new field of interest. Therefore, combining them was a natural alternative. The author gained knowledge of tourism marketing in general as well as increased what she already knew. The process of implementing a newsletter was certainly the most instructive and pleasant thing for the author. She was able to do and learn something she had no prior knowledge of. Thanks to this, the author became very familiar with new tools relating to marketing.

Writing about social media marketing proved to be surprisingly challenging for the author. Before getting into it, she thought it was going to be the easiest topic of all, as there is plenty of information on the internet and it is such a relevant topic nowadays. The opposite happened. Although there was information, it was difficult for the author to determine what she wanted to write about the topic, since social media is a broad concept and it had to be narrowed down. Moreover, the author found it surprisingly difficult to find suitable sources that were up to date.

It was also slightly disappointing to see that the results of the newsletters were not very good. The author spent a lot of time making and designing them and wished them to succeed in the eyes of the subscribers. However, she learned from this and got many new

ideas and improvements for the future. The author herself was extremely pleased with the newsletters, both in content and visually. The Company X team was also very pleased with the newsletters at the time. It is a pity that the author never had time to give the guide to Company X because it was supposed to be useful to them. Company X would have wanted to continue making newsletters and the guide was meant to help them with that.

All in all, the author is pleased with the whole process. She learned something new about tourism and marketing as well as about herself. She took matters into her own hands when the situation of Company X revealed to her and decided to finish the whole process. She believes the whole thesis process is nothing more but a benefit in the future for her.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. The English newsletter

[View this email in your browser](#)



The best, and only livable, season in Finland is just around the corner!

Does the idea of numerous events and endless summer nights intrigue you? What about enjoying a cold refreshing drink under the sun by the sea? Or are you perhaps tired of spending your holiday sightseeing historical sites, churches and ruins? Don't worry, we only have a few of those! Instead, you could experience something rather unusual, like the Wife carrying or Swamp soccer World Championships.



[Find out more](#)

However, in addition to all of this, we did still gather a little more restrained things to experience. These tips are a combination of enjoyment, history and outdoor activities and you will be able to make the most out of your Helsinki holiday!



Experience Helsinki In 3 Days

[Find out more](#)

We were able to get some great tips from a local Helsinki citizen. We talked about rainy days, unfortunately we have a few of them, where you can spot the locals hanging out, how to experience Helsinki in a unique way and HELtours, which is a cycling tour company.



Summer in Helsinki from a locals viewpoint

[Read the interview](#)

We hope to see you in Helsinki during the summer!
Book your holiday accommodation from our website

[BOOK YOUR STAY](#)



More updates on our social media channels
Make sure to follow us!

Appendix 2. The Finnish newsletter

[View this email in your browser](#)



Suomen paras, ja siedettävvin, vuodenaika on aivan nurkan takana!

Houkutteleeko ajatus lukuisista tapahtumista ja loputtomista kesäilloista? Entä virkistävästä juomasta nauttiminen auringon alla meren äärellä? Vai oletko kenties kyllästynyt viettämään lomasi historiallisia nähtävyyksiä, kirkkoja ja raunioita katsellen? Älä huoli, meillä Helsingissä on vain muutamia semmoisia! Sen sijaan voisit vaikka kokea jotain melko epätavallista, kuten eukonkannon tai suopotkupallon MM-kisat.



Lue lisää

Halusimme kuitenkin koota muutamia hieman hillitympiä asioita. Nämä vinkit täydentävät Helsingin lomasi täydellisesti.

Näissä vinkeissä yhdistyy nautinto, historia sekä ulkoilu!



[Lue lisää](#)

Kaiken lisäksi, meillä oli mahdollisuus saada vinkkejä paikalliselta helsinkiläiseltä. Puhuimme sadepäivistä, joita valitettavasti mahtuu vuoteen aika paljon, missä näkee parhaiten paikallisten kesämeiniä, kuinka kokea Helsinki ainutlaatuisella tavalla ja HELtoursista, joka on pyöräilyretkiyitys.



[Lue haastattelu](#)

Varaa kesälomasi majoitus meidän sivuilta.

Toivottavasti näemme kesällä!

[Varaa majoitus](#)



Lisää päivityksiä sosiaalisen median kanavillamme
Muista seurata meitä!

Appendix 3. The guide



Company X is adding e-newsletters in their marketing processes. The purpose was to make a brief but succinct guide including the most important matters concerning e-newsletter marketing. The guide follows the guidelines of the company.

The author implemented the very first newsletter and based on the research she did on the topic, she was able to piece together this guide. In the end of the guide, the author has gathered a few tips relating to the first newsletter.

Introduction to the topic

- An e-newsletter is a publication sent via email to your customer base. E-newsletters are used for communicating the latest news, tips and updates about your company or industry.

- Using e-newsletters is a good way to drive traffic to your company website and social media channels. It is an inexpensive way to do marketing and it can approach a large scale of audience when done right.

- Email marketing vs E-newsletters. The difference between these two issues is that newsletters should contain free but valuable information. It should have only a few or no sales promotion sales promotion at all. Offering educational and relevant information to your customers can create a strong bond. Email marketing on the other hand focuses on driving the sales of the company. It's all about being commercial.

- GDPR, general data protection regulation, applies if you operate in the EU or if you have customers who are EU citizens. In order to send newsletters to your customers you must have their full permission to do so. When customers are signing up for your newsletter, make it clear for them on what they will be receiving and what they are agreeing on. Also enable an easy way out for them, as in include a clear unsubscribe link.

How to structure a newsletter

- The very first impression is on the newsletter **subject line**. It has to be related to the actual content. Make it relevant but intriguing so that the customer wants to click and read the newsletter.
- **Visual structure** is crucial. Add images that represent your company and the content. Use your brand colors to make it visually recognizable. It is recommended that the newsletter should match the company website and the brand image.
- **Be consistent** with newsletters. Place the logo, social media links and contact information in the same place on every newsletter. This way customers are able to find them easily.
- **Use images** on your newsletters. They make a newsletter visually pleasing. Yet, remember to add an Alt text to each image. Not all images may open on some email readers. The Alt text as in alternative text will give your customer an idea of what the picture would have been.
- In order to make the structure visually appealing, **break the newsletter into separate sections**. It's easier to follow and process. Different sections should have their own headline. Customers will be able to click on the most interesting topics for themselves without going through the whole newsletter word by word.
- The two most common formats of a newsletter are **plain text** format and an **HTML** format. Although the visual structure is pointed out and praised, a simple plain text newsletter can work well in certain situations. A plain text format is as it sounds: a simple totality, no images, links, fonts or colors. The best opportunity to use it is when a company wants to send a one-on-one email/newsletter to a customer or when pointing out a simple update to their customer base. A HTML is the contrary of a plain text format. It stands for Hyper Text Markup Language and using it you can include images, different font, colors and links. HTML is usually used when retail brands want to do a campaign. Using this format requires more time and skills. Using the right newsletter service provider is beneficial in this case.

Planning and content

- Set a **goal and theme** for your newsletter. This way planning the right content is easier. Goals may be driving traffic to your website or increasing sales.
- Create a **schedule** for your newsletters. To find the right schedule, testing different sending periods is a good option. The results of the newsletters will give you a clear answer for what timespan suits the best for your company and industry.
- Make your content **relevant** and **educational**. Add your social media channel and website links to your newsletter. Make it possible for you customers to open the newsletter in a separate browser. Your newsletter must contain, by law, company details and an unsubscribe link.
- Make it **mobile-friendly**. Make sure the newsletter can be opened on different mobile devices and that it looks visually pleasing.
- Keep the number of images reasonable. Make sure the **size** of the image is convenient so that the newsletter isn't marked as spam and the image opens well.
- To make sure the newsletter works as a whole, images open and the links work, **test it**. Send a copy of it to yourself or a co-worker.

Personal tips

- I created a header for the first newsletter on Canva. It was made so that it can be used as the official header for all company X newsletters. It includes the brand colors, logo and slogan. I uploaded it to shared files.
- Company X's official newsletter service provider is MailChimp. I created a template and saved it. It can also be used for future newsletters.
- Add an opt-in, a subscribe link, to the website. Thus, you may expand your newsletter customer base.
- Send a questionnaire to the subscribers about the newsletters. This way you can get valuable feedback and improve future newsletters.