Gaining Visibility Through Social Media Marketing

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä lopputyö on tehty yritykselle nimeltään Coast Services Oy, joka halusi saada uutta tietoa sosiaalisesta mediasta ja ymmärtää digitaalisen ympäristön käyttöä markkinointitarkoituksiin. Coast Services halusi ottaa käyttöön sosiaalista mediaa markkinointitarkoituksiin tämän avulla yritys halusi saavuttaa kilpailuhyötyä. Lisäksi yritys halusi saada lisää näkyvyyttä ja mahdollisesti laajentaa asiakaskantaa, sillä he ovat muihin organisaatioihin verrattuna pienempi yritys tällä alalla.

Kirjoittajan päämääränä oli luoda markkinointisuunnitelma yhteydenpitoon sekä nykyisten että tulevien asiakkaiden kanssa sosiaalisen median kautta. Tarkoituksena oli myös lisätä ymmärrystä siitä, miten sosiaalinen media toimii ja kuinka käyttää sitä tehokkaasti ja hyödyllisesti tutkimalla eri foorumeja. Lisäksi tavoitteena oli ymmärtää eri näkökohtia, jotka vaikuttavat tuloksiin, kuten ulkoisiin ja sisäisiin tekijöihin.

Tämä opinnäytetyö sisältää kaiken, mitä markkinointitutkimukseen tarvitaan ja mitä mahdolliseen markkinointisuunnitelman luomiseen kuuluu. Ensin esitellään tutkimuksen tietopohja, menetelmät ja tavoitteet. Työ jatkuu teoriaosuudella, jotka ovat tutkimuksen kannalta olennaisia jaettuna eri kategorioihin. Tämän jälkeen, kirjoittaja on luonut haastattelun laadullisten tutkimustulosten tuottamiseksi. Viimeiseksi teksti sisältää analysointia koko prosessin tuloksista ja lopetus koostuu suosituksista, jotka on suunnattu Coast Servicelle.

Avainsanat Markkinointitutkimus, sosiaalinen media, näkyvyyden saavutus, sosiaalisen median harjoittaminen, markkinointi suunnitelma

Sivut   46 sivua, joista liitteitä 2 sivua

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ABSTRACT

This thesis was made for a commissioning company called the Coast Services Oy, who wanted to gain new insights of the social media and understand the usage of the digital environment for marketing purposes. Coast Services wanted to be able to discover new methods for marketing when using social media as a tool in it and be able to compete with the rival companies. Furthermore, the case company wanted to gain more visibility towards the brand and expand their customer base, as it is a smaller company in the market. The goal is to attract new customers and differentiate from the competition.

The authors aim is to create a marketing plan to connect and create engagement with both existing and future customers through the social media; the purpose is to understand how social media works and how to efficiently utilize it by examining the different platforms available. Moreover, the aim is to understand the various aspects which influence the outcomes, such as the external and internal factors.

The thesis includes everything needed for a marketing research and for creating a potential marketing plan. Firstly, the author has written down the background information of the topic together with the methods that are being used and the objectives that are guiding the author throughout the thesis. Secondly, there is theory of the different themes that are relevant for the research, which have been divided into different sections. The author conducted an interview for generating qualitative research outcomes. Lastly, there will be analysis of the outcomes of the whole process ending with the recommendations for the case company.

Keywords Marketing research, social media, gaining visibility, social media engagement, marketing plan

Pages 46 pages including appendices 2 pages

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In today's world, social media impacts everyone and everything, since the use of the Internet has increased together with the development of technology. Social media is only part of it, yet it still is an important part especially for the people working in marketing, advertising, publicity not to mention its importance for the consumers and the viewers. Since the Internet is available for most of the people and accessed within seconds, it is typically used daily by everyone. Additionally, social media includes many different platforms that have been around for years, such as Google and Facebook. It is even hard to avoid the use of social media, because it is used for instance, for educational purposes and for work related matters. Social media is part of the future and for this reason it should be efficiently utilized by companies to benefit from the opportunities that are available and get creative when it comes to reaching and working towards the goals. People rely on the digital environment and organizations have the possibility to reach big crowds of people through social media, if used correctly and wisely. (Mendpara, 2017); (Mourichi, 2015); (Rouse, 2019)

Social media platforms are for sharing and discovering knowledge, being in contact with people and for people to make purchases online. In addition, some social media platforms open job opportunities and several people can even work from long distances. For instance, a person could be on another continent than the actual work and still be able to work internationally and physically be far away. Due to the increased use of social media and the Internet people have increased their time that is spent online, because it saves time, it is simple and efficient. Many jobs do not even function without the presence of social media and others have just benefitted in other ways from its existence. (Mendpara, 2017); (Mourichi, 2015);

Lastly, without even noticing, advertisements are seen by people every day and social media is a big factor in this matter. According to an article about social media marketing from Quora (Keskar, 2018), Keskar states that "today, more than 3 billion people use some sort of social network or the other." Thus, this opens an opportunity for people and companies to promote their products and services. Social media marketing is a helpful method for companies to generate income, create content, connect and engage with potential customer or even future employees. Working in the social media field, people must understand what motivates people to do a certain purchase or even go online and obtain information. Since social media platforms are available for everyone, companies could promote their services and products even free of charge, since in most cases signing up for an account in a platform does not cost you anything. All in all, for this reason, the author is doing a marketing research and a potential marketing plan for Coast Services Oy, so that the commissioning company of this thesis would have an opportunity and take all the advantages of social media marketing. (Keskar, 2018)

1.2   Case company

The commissioning company for this thesis is Coast Services Oy. Coast Services is a cleaning company, which has been operating in Pirkanmaa area since 2015 with only a couple of fulltime employees. Their company headquarters is situated in Kangasala were Coast Services is also working along on the side with Rannikon Aarre Oy, which is a company that specializes in construction work, such as clearance and rebuilding. However, there were some changes that occurred in March 2019 after the author started to write the thesis. These two companies decided to officially merge as a one and moreover, Coast Services Oy is working on as an auxiliary business name as their own unit under Rannikon Aarre Oy. The author is still conducting the research for Coast Services; nevertheless, the results will affect both companies, since the two companies are working as one from now on. (Coast Services Oy, 2019); (Rannikon Aarre Oy, 2019)

The commissioning company, Coast Services offers their customers high-quality cleaning services, which are intended both for companies and private customers. Their range of services includes for instance office-, house-, moving- and renovation cleanings, thus their customer range varies depending on the work area; usually the customer base varies between 25-60-year-old people. (Coast Services Oy, 2019)

Finally, the company has previously tried to market through newspapers; however, that is a very expensive method to market, especially for a small company with not as much resources for costly marketing measures. Also, the company lacks time management skills in their marketing section; however, Coast Services is continuously trying to update their websites and being active with their customers. Still, the company has a lot to improve for them to reach their goals and perform better in the marketing field.

1.3   Purpose of thesis

Firstly, since Coast Services is a relatively new and a small company – with only a couple of employees – there is no separate departments for marketing, human resources and research and development. For this reason, the author is doing marketing research to help and guide the company in using social media as a marketing tool and for creating a potential marketing plan. The purpose of this thesis is to increase the commissioning company's visibility and reach their goals with the help of social media marketing and the research done by the author.

Secondly, the company wants to increase their social media appearance in the hopes of gaining more customers and differentiating from the competition. To do so, the author must for example research who is the competition, does the customer's bargaining power change if there are changes in prices or the services provided and what would be the best strategy to reach the objectives. What is more, the author must consider both business to business and business to customers perspective, since the company has customers, which are either private clients or customers that are getting the services as a company. These concepts will be explained by the author in the theoretical part of this thesis in the part "2.1 Marketing".

In addition, the company could increase the possibility of gaining more permanent customers and in general expand their visibility through this marketing research. Coast Services is really looking forward to creating a base for them to continue marketing after the research and the proposed marketing plan. Moreover, legal aspects are important and should not be forgotten in this marketing research, since those might influence the methods that can be used. The General Data Protection Regulation – also known as GDPR – is a regulation, which protects people's privacy and data, by regulating what can be shared and to whom and how the data can be handled. The regulation was set in 2018 and it affects everyone's privacy settings in every sector, such as healthcare and workplaces; the author will later explain the GDPR in more detail on Theoretical Framework in part "2.6 GDPR". For the sake of the case company and their reputation, the author is investigating all these different aspects and concerns to avoid any negative surprises and conflicts that could appear due to negligence. (European Commission, 2019); (GDPR, 2019)

1.4 Research questions

The research questions were conducted for discovering how social media could be used as a marketing tool. The commissioning company wanted to engage more in social media and increase their marketing and the knowledge in the field. The research questions guide the author for creating an analysis, finding solutions and generating useful insights for the case company.

The primary research question of this thesis is the following:

1) "How can social media be used as a marketing tool?" For this question the author tries to find a solution for the best way to use social media for marketing purposes. Social media is a big concept, which needs to be narrowed down to the most important aspects that might affect how to create a potential marketing plan, how to market and how to generate the wanted results. In addition, the author will tackle the matters considering the platforms, benefits and the expenses of the different social media forums.

Moreover, there is a subordinate question that supports the primary research question, which is the following:

2) "How to differentiate from the competition and attract new customers?" For this question there is a lot of analyzing of the company, their competition, the target customers and keeping in mind the legal aspects that might affect the marketing process. This question goes hand in hand with the primary question, yet it lets the author dig deeper and examine the topic on a wider scale, which could be helpful for discovering more detailed information beneficial for the research.

1.5 Research objectives

These objectives will provide guidance for the author to write the thesis. Each objective holds different perspectives to the topic and after going

through each one of them, the author will be able to analyze them and create the recommendations. These objectives are important for the thesis topic, since they determine and impact on the outcome. The following research objectives are:

1) Create an effective plan to engage with both existing and future customers through social media. The goal is to attract new customers and differentiate from the competition.

2) Understand the fundamentals of social media marketing for the case company to start using social media as a marketing tool on their own.

3) Analyze the commissioning company's internal and external factors. The goal is to understand how the company could stand out from the competition.

4) Analyze the social media platforms that are available for the case company. With this objective, the author must consider the differences of the platforms before choosing the best one for gaining effective results.

1.6   Research methods

These research methods guide the author to create a marketing plan, which the commissioning company could use in the future. By gathering and comparing the data from books and different sources, the author will be able to generate ideas for the marketing plan and utilize them when making it. The research methods can be helpful to generate different insights, which could be important for discovering the wanted data. Furthermore, these are useful for the author to remember what the methods are and how to get to the results by doing a thorough analysis of the topic and the situation of the market. Here are all the following methods used for this thesis:

1) Utilize the theory that has been read and researched for creating a marketing plan for the case company.

2) Research social media marketing methods in order to understand how everything works and in order to create the theoretical framework.

3) To understand the internal and external matters that were mentioned in the objective number three, the author will conduct an 8-SWOT-analysis.

4) Use qualitative research method and interview professionals from the marketing industry in order to gain more insights of social media marketing and the effectiveness of it.

2   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   Marketing

To begin with, marketing is a necessary process for organizations for selling their products and services. However, there is much more to marketing than just selling; it helps to understand the market that is targeted and the customers that are in the market. The Principles of Marketing book (Kotler; Armstrong, 2017) contains a compact description of marketing which goes as the following: "Marketing is engaging customers and managing profitable customer relationships".

Due to the digital development in today's world, marketing requires focusing on the customers more than before, since technology and its growth has had an impact on the customers' way of thinking and perhaps even their bargaining power. Consumer-Generated Content – also known as CGC – is a concept, which focuses on consumers creating the content, such as writing a feedback and a review, posting pictures and experiences through social media. In today's world, marketers must be consumer centric for them to make a sale. Creating relationships, engaging and interacting with the customers has become an important factor for making the customers loyal and satisfied together with giving the customers value through the goods that are provided to them. (Kotler; Armstrong, 2017); (Mourichi, 2015)

Marketing methods are different for every organization and the services and the goods which are being marketed; some methods do not work for everyone and there are certain matters that every company needs to take into consideration, which are not universal. Different methods attract different target markets; thus, it is crucial to determine the target customers and how to attract their attention and apply those defined methods, which work best for the company. With the right marketing methods, the relationship between the company and the customer can be improved, which then opens an opportunity for communication and creating a bond between them. Additionally, the organization can later gain feedback and new insights of what is needed and in demand. With this, the company can make the customer feel valued and make them value you. (Kotler; Armstrong, 2017)

To add, here are some other important marketing concepts, which the author will use in the analysing part. Firstly, marketing mix is a marketing concept that is often used to define the products and the services of a company and how everything is marketed. This theory includes four aspects, which include product, price, place, promotion. With this, the company can define these four matters, upgrade and change anything that might affect how the products and the goods are sold. Secondly, this next marketing concept business to business is a concept used in marketing, which defines the target

customers as companies. Thirdly, there is a concept called business to customers, which is the opposite of the previous concept, meaning that the target customer is a private customer, such as households.

2.1.1 Maslow's hierarchy of needs in marketing

Furthermore, to understand how the customer thinks, it is important to be aware of the psychological factors, such as buying behaviour, the customer needs and what is in demand. Marketers need to keep delivering what is demanded by the customer for them to succeed in the marketing process and for gaining content, loyal and new customers. A theory called the hierarchy of needs was created by Abraham Maslow, who was psychologist in the 20th century. Maslow's theory, the hierarchy of needs contains five steps that according to Maslow every human goes through in order for people to be happy and satisfied and feel achievement only when the lower needs are met first; after that, an individual can move on to the higher needs. The steps include physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and lastly self-actualization needs.

The hierarchy of needs helps to explain the strength of some needs, which could be a significant theory for understanding the way that the customers' mind works. This theory includes both internal and external factors, which affect the motivation and behaviour. Recognizing the psychological features could help identify what drives peoples' motivation towards purchasing something, which is what marketing is fundamentally about. This theory helps the author to fully understand customer behaviour and what drives individuals to make a purchase, which is crucial information needed to generate analysis of the potential customers. Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be reflected to marketing and social media presence; how customers become aware and how do the customers become loyal and invested. (Genc, E.; Tezcan, H.; Aydemir, S., 2017)

Moreover, it is not far off to compare the hierarchy of needs to the needs of consumers in the market and their products. In a business setting, the first step is to understand the need of the consumers and find the need in the market. In the commissioning company's case, the hierarchy of needs could be reflected on their existing social media presence and to be further developed by the help of this model. For instance, the first step would be analysing your business brand and create a social network presence for yourself; this could include giving discount codes for attracting new customers and prospects. After this, choosing the right platforms together with building connections and engaging would be an ideal step for gaining visibility online. Furthermore, the customers should start feeling trust towards the brand, if the provided information on the platforms have convinced the customer for being credible and it gives value for the customer from the activity and the engagement from the platform. The last steps could include branding and sharing your expertise on those channels before you can gain loyal customers and personal fulfilment. This is the

stage for reciprocity; the confidence towards the company and their goods makes the customers goals and desires fulfilled and this creates devotion towards the brand. (Heppard, 2015); (Seyama, 2015)

Figure 1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs reflected with marketing needs by Cheryl Heppard (Linkedin, 2015)
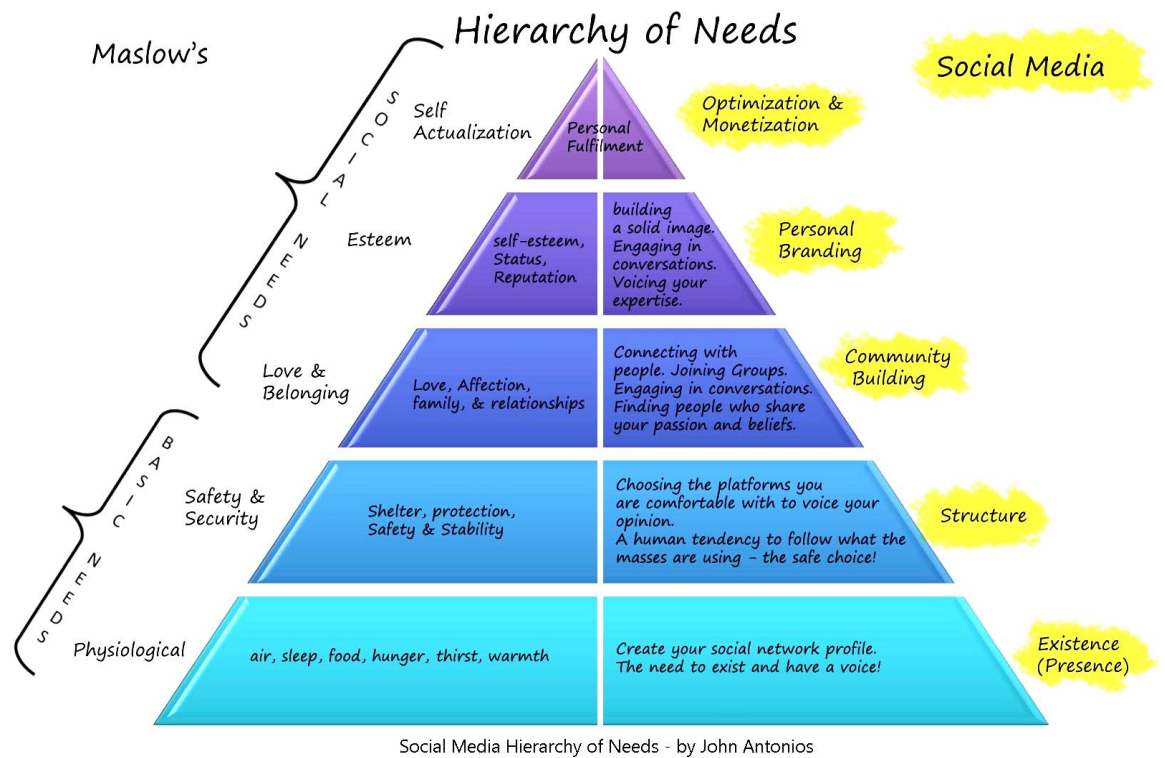

Figure 2: Social media hierarchy of needs by John Antonios (Enitiate, 2015)

2.2   Advertising

Firstly, advertising is communicating through a channel to the customers for promotional purposes – to advertise the company's products and their services. As the author mentioned in the introduction people are exposed to advertisements daily without being conscious of it. Some advertising channels are television, radio, newspapers, events, billboards, flyers and lastly the Internet and the social media. What is more, advertisements differ from each other depending on the platform that the advertisement is being put on. For instance, some advertisements are visual; therefore, platform that supports visual adverts is needed. Then again, there can be advertisements that use audio, in which case the advert needs a channel, which supports auditory adverts. In some cases, advertisements can even use both visual and auditory representation. Nevertheless, advertisements are always present, and people see or hear them everywhere. (Hackley, 2018)

Additionally, advertisements differ from each other by price. Some adverts can be done by the company itself with low or no additional costs. These types of advertising methods are simpler, and they have fewer restrictions for creating them. On the other hand, there are some advertisements that are done by advertising agencies, which can financially be more expensive. Advertising agencies are hired by organization to create adverts by professionals. With professionals' help, companies are be able to promote their products and services on bigger and more expensive channels, which might have certain criteria what can be shown or heard. The agencies convert the company's ideas into advertisements by creating the visuals or the auditory of their choice and their suggestions. These matters may include for instance creating a theme for the advertisement, the layout and the music if necessary. (Hackley, 2018)

The meaning of advertisements is to influence the audience by emotions and by the factors that motivate us. Maslow's theory about hierarchy of needs can also be used in advertising for understanding the customers' attitude, self-esteem and the relationships that might affect the customer bargaining power and what attracts their attention when purchasing something that is needed or something that is wanted.

2.3   Marketing plan

Before starting to market, organizations must make a marketing plan, which is a plan made for guiding the organization for a successful marketing process and effective results. It is a part of the organizations overall business plan. Marketing plans help the company to discover their objectives, goals, timelines and the strategy that they will desire to use. In the end, creating a marketing plan is time saving and even cost saving when having some sort of an idea of what needs to be done and at what cost. (Mcguire, 2019)

A marketing plan is a helpful guide for keeping the marketing in control and keeping it running. Without it and without the efficient preparations done for succeeding in the marketing proportion, the whole process could be done for nothing and it could not show any reliable results or even no results at all. To add, without a plan, the organization does not know how to continue or track the outcomes of their marketing. (Mcguire, 2019)

Furthermore, when creating a marketing plan, the organization has to decide on the most important factors that should be worked on, such as growing their customer base or gaining new customers. Other vital aspects that need to be taken into consideration are the purpose and the objectives of marketing the company's goods, the state which the company is in, what is the target market and how will things be measured. After this, the marketing plan is ready to be executed and later the results will be evaluated. (Mcguire, 2019)

Right before the marketing plan is ready and being carried out, the company decides on how often the plan should be reviewed and updated. The reviewing is usually set to be monthly, seasonally, or yearly. The reason for the evaluation and analysing the marketing plan is for the company to see their results and to update their procedures if something is not generating the desired results. Also, the plan gives the organization an idea of what is working with their customer base and it helps to appraise the outcomes and measure them for even better success. Additionally, some platforms that are used to market do not provide the right tools for the company to measure their results, thus, it is crucial to find a right method or a device, which can help with this issue. When being able to calculate the outcomes of the process, it saves costs, which can be used in some other matters that need more financial support. Thus, creating a marketing plan is important for saving money and finding out how well the marketing process is going and is it generating the right results. (Mcguire 2019)

2.3.1 SMART marketing goals

The SMART marketing goals are long-term objectives for the organization to follow when creating a marketing plan. The abbreviation stands for "specific," "measurable," "attainable," "realistic," and "time-bound." These five characteristics ensure the reachability of the company's goals which are set in a timed matter. The main point of these objectives is to understand certain matters and factors that affect their goal setting, which may also help the organization to understand their framework and everything as an entity. (Chi, 2019)

S – First, there is the "specific" goal where the organization can specify their goal, for instance increasing their customer engagement. Then, this could follow up with, "How much engagement are you looking for?". With this example, it should be determined how much engagement there is to begin with and what is the goal in the end for the engagement. Key performance indicators, or KPIs might be relevant in this objective, since it

guides the company to make decisions towards the right direction. KPI could be defined as the number of customers that have followed, liked or commented in a certain period, which would give the organization and idea of the amount of the customers activity during the time it has been tracked for. (Chi, 2019)

M – Second, there is "measurable" goal which helps the company to track their progress. It could be helpful for the company to ask themselves "How much customer engagement should we endeavour towards?" With this second goal, the organization should quantify their goals, meaning that a measurement should be defined and then express how much would need to be strived for success. (Chi, 2019)

A – Third, the "attainable" goal, which determines if the goals are achievable. For instance, if your engagement was increased by 3% during the past two months, it would be more attainable and reachable to increase the engagement by 6% rather than by 15%. Also, the attainable goal should be measured by the organizations own analytics rather than with ready-made analytics, since the market amongst other situational factors may give a skewed overview and it would not end up being beneficial. (Chi, 2019)

R – Fourth, the "realistic" goal, which helps you to determines your business strategy and the market and the industry the company is currently in. With this goal, it is important to understand all the factors, which might have an effect in the relevance of the goal, such as trends. With the knowledge of these different factors, the organization can easily determine what they are capable of and how to stay relevant and realistic, without forgetting the victories and the mistakes, which have happened on the way. (Chi, 2019)

T – Fifth, the "time-bound", which as the name suggests determines the scheduling and timing of the goal. Timing your goals correctly is also highly important, since it helps with time management and releases time for other important activities. Setting realistic goals is the most efficient way of reaching a goal; too light scheduling does not improve the situation, which is being altered and too tight scheduling just creates pressure and the feeling of failure if the goals are not reached. The organizations should analyse their current situation and the workers for creating a small challenge for achieving the goals, for them to be effectively reached and improved. This fifth goal keeps the organization in a consistent way of working towards their long-term goals. (Chi, 2019)

Figure 3: SMART marketing goals (Falcon.io, 2019)

2.4 Marketing research

Marketing researches purpose is to find out information about a certain topic and gaining knowledge for instance about a certain field, certain customers or about certain methods. To add, marketing research can create a wholesome idea of the topic that is being research, which is a great technique for discovering new information before taking actions. With the research a company can identify their competition, what is the target market and how to enter it and review their past, present and predict the future. Additionally, companies can research the target customers by identifying their needs, demand, behaviour and what motivates the customers to make a purchase. All in all, the main purpose of a marketing research is to find information which is relevant for the company to understand the selected topic as an entity.

Furthermore, there are two types of data that surrounds marketing research, the primary information and secondary information. Firstly, the primary information is gathered yourself or by someone you've hired. This research method for gathering information is specifically tailored for the one who asks for the research to be done. Primary research includes interviews, tests and observations that are made for some specific group of people that need to be monitored or somehow examined in order to find the information that is being sought. This method helps to seek specific information, such as consumer behaviour and gathering feedback from the customers for generating better outcomes. However, there is a disadvantage to this research method; it can be costly especially if it is done professionally. Luckily, nowadays there are tools and applications, which let the companies

to do these primary researches with less costs and have a professional look on them. (AllBusiness, 2019)

Secondly, the secondary research method is where the information is already gathered, and the studies have been performed beforehand. The information can usually be found in reports, researches and from other official sources, such as from the government agencies. The previously gathered information can be found from the Internet due to the easy access to it, on different websites that hold the secondary research results and from papers, which share the information for the worldwide. There is also a downside to this research method, which is that the research might not be as accurate as using the primary method would be; this is due to the reason that the research would not be customized to the preferences of the researcher. (AllBusiness, 2019)

Thirdly, there is a possibility for the conductor of the research to use both primary and secondary research methods. With using both methods, the researcher could fully understand the market that is being researched and be able to find new information, which could not be found by just using one of the methods. For instance, the primary research can help one to understand specifics of a certain area, when again the secondary research method could help to understand the background of the topic. Overall, both methods are useful for different reasons and the companies using them need to understand what is being searched for picking what method to use. (AllBusiness, 2019)

2.5 Social media

Social media is a combination of different websites and channels which are determined as highly interactive platforms. In a social media channel, a person can create content, share and obtain knowledge and gain new insights and ideas. Through social media, people can network either for personal purposes or for career wise. At first, social media was made for personal usage for interaction, however later social media was adopted by organizations in their usage for their businesses. This quick digital environment keeps evolving and has already millions of active users to date. The motivation to go online is done by the marketers; it is a matter of the right incentives to get the potential customer to visit a website or to write a feedback and through this communicate to others and keep the marketing ongoing. Social media tends to be more consumer centric in today's world, and not so much of publisher centric; the consumers are posting pictures and reviews and giving each other insights of their experiences. The marketers must guide the consumers and increase their motivation and willingness to be online and create their content, which can be beneficial for the company's outlook. (Mendpara, 2017); (Mourichi, 2015); (Rouse, 2019); (Dollarhide, 2019)

2.5.1 Social media marketing

Social media marketing is a way to market and advertise on an online feed, which opens an opportunity for reaching the target audience on different platforms. It is a great opportunity for companies to boost their brand awareness and use their social networks to do so. In social media marketing, it is crucial to create content, which attracts the customers which hopefully opens up a chance which would lead to the customers sharing the content; moreover, with this, companies would gain new customers, new views and succeed in their marketing plans. The marketing can be done by posting on a platform about the products and the services that are provided and update them to keep the customers in the know. (Dollarhide, 2019); (Mendpara, 2017)

Furthermore, social media can be an influential tool for business to establish a network and a relationship for communication and allow making the customers feel that they are treated right and that they are heard; this can lead to loyal customers in the end. Thinking about your customers in marketing and keeping them as one of your main objectives is called customer relationship marketing. Being available to the customers via social media can benefit the company, when getting feedback or comments from the clients, since the word spreads within seconds for everyone to see. Moreover, it is vital for the company to keep up the good outlook of the webpage's, because customers can have access to them and read how other customers have experienced, which in a worst case scenario can lead to a negative outlook and even destroy the company's reputation and the image or go out of practice. Companies need to determine their boundaries within the corporate websites for them to avoid public humiliation and legal issues, which might also affect the business. (Rouse, 2019)

2.5.2 Social media platforms

Social media is a combination of multiple networking channels which vary depending on the content that can be posted on it, the devices which it can be used on and by the outcomes the users are seeking from the feed. Some social media platforms are only visual platforms for writing and posting pictures. Then again, some channels are mainly auditory for posting videos and music. Also, there are combinations of both, and the users can choose whether to post only visual or auditory content. (Dollarhide, 2019); (Rouse, 2019)

It is essential for companies to understand their customer base and their products and the services that are provided in order to find out the best platform that is the most efficient. There are hundreds of social media platforms available in today's world. The platforms, which the author will be doing more research on for marketing purposes are Instagram and Facebook. Not every social media feed can be utilized for professional use,

thus it is crucial for companies to do their research on the platforms that are available. Also, it is important to separate the personal accounts on the social media platforms from the professional ones, since the accounts might clash and give the wrong ideas and effect business negatively. (Tarini, 2018)

Figure 4: Different social media platforms compared (Rotary Leader, 2019)

2.6 GDPR

As the author already mentioned, GDPR is an abbreviation of The EU General Data Protection Regulation which was implemented in May 2018. It is a regulation made to protect people's privacy in the European Union by controlling what private information can be shared, how and to whom. These rules and regulations which were done can help an individual or a company to control and adjust how their information can be shared and what not to share. For instance, private information such as address, and contact information can be hidden or different types of marketing methods towards individuals can be highly restricted or even not allowed. Due to these issues, the author must analyse everything from the legal aspect, in order to avoid any concerns, which may affect the way of the marketing. The GDPR sets certain rules what is legally acceptable, such as how to contact the individual without breaking the privacy regulation. Also, using information without the individuals separate permission could cause trouble for whoever is using it incorrectly. (European Commission, 2019); (GDPR, 2019)
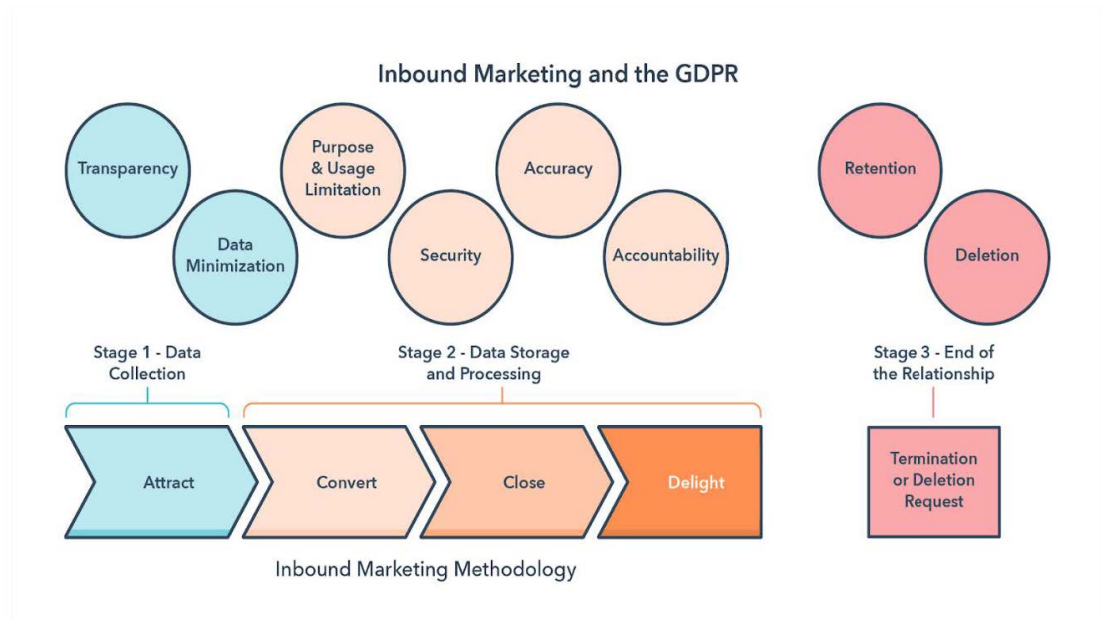
Figure 5: Inbound marketing and the GDPR (HubSpot, 2019)

2.7 8-SWOT

SWOT is an abbreviation of four words; strength, weakness, opportunity and threat. SWOT is a planning technique for creating analysis of a project, a person or of a company to understand the situation that they are in by analysing the company's internal and their external aspects, which might affect the way that the company succeeds. This technique helps to be critical and to understand every component that could drive your business further and increase the chances of surviving and growing. Moreover, it helps to minimize the risks of failing, avoiding making mistakes and it is beneficial for creating a plan and going through everything that already exists and predict and understand how things might turn out in the future. On Business News Daily website (D'angelo, 2017), there is an article about 8-SWOT analysis, which has different templates listed for small business to use; these templates could essentially be helpful for the author for conducting the analysis of the commissioning company through 8 SWOT. (D'angelo, 2017)

8-SWOT is essentially the same as the SWOT technique, yet with additional aspects. It is an even more detailed version of the original method, where the internal aspects are combined with the external ones; strengths are combined with opportunities and threats, and weaknesses are also combined with both opportunities and threats. The benefits from going through them could show how the four components could clash and affect each other. With this 8-SWOT method, people can predict even further and analyse more efficiently the possible situations that might show up. For the commissioning company, the goals are to get to know the company thoroughly and their existing and possibly the new competition which might

appear in the future, how to differentiate from the competition and how to gain visibility. It is essential to do the 8-SWOT analysis to be able to become competitive against the competition and become desirable by understand what the company has to offer and what they are up against. (D'angelo, 2017)

3   DATA COLLECTION

3.1   Introduction of the data collection

The author has selected a qualitative research method for gathering more detailed understanding of the social media marketing. The thesis topic does not require gathering quantitative data, since the commissioning company is a smaller corporation, which needs guidance from experts specializing in marketing. The best solution according to the author was an interview, which allowed the author to obtain a deeper understanding of the topic when comparing the methods of quantitative research, such as questionnaires. Also, the interview let the respondents answer freely and on a wider scale and let the author to gain more comprehensive answers.

The author held an online interview for two marketing experts operating in Finland. Since both interviewees are living in different cities than the author, it was decided that the interview would be held online. The interview contains eight questions related to marketing for a small corporation and utilizing social media effectively in today's world. Some of the questions were created in a way that the respondents could use examples as the answers, which would benefit the author when later creating the recommendations and analysis of this thesis.

3.2   Interviewees and interview questions

The first interviewee is Heidi Linkka – the head of marketing in a company called Wunder situated in Helsinki. Wunder is a corporation known for designing, creating and optimizing digital solutions. Prior to the interview, Linkka made a disclaimer in the beginning of the interview explaining that the answers given have been heavily influenced by Linkka's background in the B2B marketing sector, IT and consulting business. The second interviewee is Salla Laajavaara – a Digital Tourism Marketing Campaign Manager who works in a company called FlowHouse. Flowhouse is known for its expertise in the Tourism Industry and for using digital marketing and social media as tools to provide their services. Laajavaara's strengths include marketing, project management, communications and planning. The author will be referring the interviewees by their surnames. (FlowHouse, 2019); (Wunder, 2019). Here are the eight interview questions:

1) What is an effective way to promote services of a small company or a company with not as much of resources to use for marketing purposes?

2) What are the best platforms to use in social media for marketing purposes?

3) What are the best tools for tracking views or customer engagement if the platform itself does not provide them? Are there any?

4) How could one secure customer loyalty? What should be done and what should be avoided?

5) How important is a marketing plan and what are the most important aspects of it?

6) Does the visual outlook of the company have any effect on the customer buying behaviour? For instance, the appearance of the webpages, colours of the pages and advertisements, visible feedback, the response rate and accessibility of the company.

7) What is the best way to analyse the market and the competitors?

8) How does the GDPR affect marketing? What should be taken into consideration on B2B and on B2C? (Business to Business/Business to Customers)

3.3 Interview answers

The author decided to present the answers of the interviews in a summarised manner. The answers are now easier to overview, since the analysis has been incorporated within the answers.

Question 1) answered:
Both interviewees emphasized on the fact that the company must understand their potential customers; what is wanted and needed, how do the customers act, what are their challenges and the goals and how to reach them. Social media offers a variety of cost-effective platforms and techniques to market and thus, a small business can have equal opportunities to gain visibility than a larger business. Moreover, it is easier to plan and execute future marketing strategies and activities effectively when the target group is understood correctly. Companies need to invest time in getting to know their potential and existing customers in order to start marketing efficiently. (Linkka, 2019), (Laajavaara, 2019)

Laajavaara stated: *"A company that does not have the resources to market, should come up with alternative ways to reach out to their customers. If there are no resources to market, you cannot really expect sales."*

The respondent also commented, that marketing is an investment in the future for the company and it should be regulated with realistic goals and by setting the focus on one matter and a channel at a time. (Laajavaara, 2019)

Linkka listed cost-effective ways to market, which included active public relations work with either local or industry media and reusing existing content for instance with a new angle. The list also included of participating in third party projects which are acknowledged by the media such as Integrify, Google Ads with only key topics and finally creating a phenomenon on the media. The last three techniques mentioned are highly effective ways to market, however, understanding the market and the customer is needed and lastly, investing time to plan and test them for actual results. (Linkka, 2019)

Question 2) answered:
The respondents answered, that it depends on the products and services which the company is promoting, since marketing techniques vary a lot depending on what are you trying to market. Also, the customers play a huge role in this – knowing which channels are available for the customers and where the potential customer is going to be reached is important to acknowledge. Devoting time to researching and finding information on the social media platforms is important; companies must analyse themselves and think, in which channels should the promotion be done in and what channels would fit the best with the image. Laajavaara said, that the more variety the channel offers or wider the range of the media available, the result is always much better. (Linkka, 2019), (Laajavaara X, 2019)

"It is a good idea to keep the website of the company as the home base for all content and where the marketing is directed." (Linkka, 2019)

Question 3) answered:
The author discovered, that a small or a medium sized company, might not need a separate social media management platform for tracking engagement, unless the activity of the customers is massive and constant. Furthermore, Laajavaara mentioned, that if the social media accounts are only on couple of different platforms and in one language, investing in a tracking tool would be a waste. Linkka mentioned HubSpot being a customer relationship management – also known as CRM – and marketing automation tool, which appears to be a decent social media tool. It is a free and a great tool for a small or a medium sized company. Other useful tools Linkka listed: Buffer, Sprout Social, Falcon, Meltwater, Facelift Cloud, Social Pilot. (Linkka, 2019), (Laajavaara, 2019)

However, it is still important for any company to track customer engagement in some sort of way. Laajavaara said, *"In Social media, it can, in its simplicity, be a commentary on social media post, a contact made through the web site or even just a phone call."* If companies keep on marketing with multiple different techniques and on a variety of channels without even following the engagement, how does the company know what

is working and what is not. Especially, if the company is investing money on marketing and promoting their goods and services, it can end up being a total waste. (Laajavaara, 2019)

Moreover, Laajavaara said that different analytical tools are the best way to deal with the customer's buying path and activity. Some of these digital tools are for instance Google Analytics and Hotjar. Many social media platforms – such as Instagram and Facebook – offer business tools and other creator aspects which can be used for free for tracking views, enabling promotions amongst other things. Additionally, an indicator must be set for the customer's activity; what is the meter and what does it tell us about the engagement. (Linkka, 2019), (Laajavaara, 2019)

Question 4) answered:
The author noticed, that the respondents were explaining that the customer loyalty is very simple in theory, yet still somehow hard to accomplish. Companies need to be truthful and deliver what is promised, or otherwise the loyalty of the customers might fade. Without honesty, it can eventually result in bad reviews, declined sales and eventually in bankruptcy. (Linkka, 2019), (Laajavaara 2019)

Linkka said in general, the gap between the customer expectations and the customer experience should be kept minimum while avoiding high expectations with low experiences. Linkka stated, that the ideal situation for both the company and the customer is when the company can exceed the customer's expectations. Also, when the customer feels they are heard and taken care of, then customer loyalty can be secured. Nowadays there are numerous amounts of business', thus, if the trust is broken, the customers will not stay and keep doing business with the company, because it takes seconds to switch to the competitor's side. For this reason, marketing is important for securing the continuous purchases and loyal customers. (Linkka, 2019)

"Marketing does not save a bad product" (Laajavaara, 2019)

Question 5) answered:
The author discovered, that before starting a marketing plan, the business strategy should be taken into consideration. Linkka explained, how the marketing strategy should always be aligned with the business strategy. Essentially, a business strategy is a set of actions of how to appeal the customers. Additionally, it is important to understand what is done and why, also understanding your value propositions: to whom and why. When you understand these, you can start with the marketing strategy and plan, where the company decides how to take actions and what for. (Linkka, 2019), (Laajavaara, 2019)

Moreover, Linkka says, that content marketing strategy and plan are the most important aspects of a marketing plan. This includes by who, with what, tools and tactics. Furthermore, according to Linkka, it is also important to measure and analyse the activities you do; how much has been done and what is going to be done next. For building brand awareness in a

coherent way with all the tactical activities, companies must make sure brand identity is aligned with the business strategy and applied in everything that is going to be done. (Linkka, 2019)

Laajavaara mentioned, that the marketing plan is one of the most important tools, as it determines the direction to go, includes goals and target groups, and key performance indicators. When a plan has been made, one can also analyze the results and develop the activity. The significant aspect in marketing plan is that it tells the company how everything functions, so marketing amongst the marketing strategy and the value proposition is in control. (Laajavaara, 2019)

Question 6) answered:
Company's outlook has a huge impact on buyer behaviour. It needs to be in sync with the strategy of the business, the brand and the image the company is putting out to the world. For instance, it can be confusing to the customers if a company's websites are completely different than their other social media platforms or their logos and for this reason, a unified brand look is highly important. Also, it can shape the organizations image for the better and it is important in the inspiration phase and in the awareness of the product. (Linkka, 2019), (Laajavaara, 2019)

Additionally, the company's brand means the brand positioning, brand promise, brand archetype, tone of voice and visual identity. According to Linkka, brand also means: the tangible + the intangible, the rational + the emotional, the head + the heart, reputation + trust. These things drive the business' performance. Having a comprehensive customer experience is a rule companies should follow and try to attain. (Linkka, 2019), (Laajavaara, 2019)

Furthermore, Laajavaara says, that a company needs to offer easy, available and well-organized websites. Customers can get confused if the social media channels are hard to use or the platforms do not make sense. Moreover, companies forget how important other customers opinions are. *"Customers trust the word of other users rather than the organization's marketing message"*. (Laajavaara, 2019)

Question 7) answered:
For this question, both respondents explained, that analysing the market can be difficult and it varies a lot, depending on the market and the marketed goods and services. Linkka mentioned, that researching studies of the existing markets and the megatrends would be the best way to gain more knowledge for marketing and understanding what the future holds. The surveys and studies should be analysed and applied into the situation, that the company wants to understand better. (Linkka, 2019), (Laajavaara, 2019)

Additionally, Laajavaara said, that brand research could also help with analysing the competitors. For most of the time, it is easier to find information about ready-made studies, than doing the research yourself, especially when running a business and when time is limited. Of course, it

could be beneficial to add self-noted knowledge into the analysis, if its already there. Laajavaara also stated, that Google Trend Studies and Hootsuite Studies could be helpful for finding ready-made information. Benchmarking competitors from different angels is usually an effective way of getting to know your competition better. Analysing the competitors services and what is offered, what is the size of the company and how big the operational areas are, what is their revenue, who are their potential customers, what is their brand and lastly finding out about their marketing activities. Also, interviewing your customers and giving them a chance to explain what they are looking for and if there are any aspects, which the company should update or modify in anyway. Finally, hot prospects, meaning that the company creates an urge or an interest for the client to approach or keep the interest of the company alive. This helps the organization to gain knowledge of their customers. (Linkka, 2019), (Laajavaara, 2019)

Question 8) answered:
Both interviewees said that the GDPR protects people's personal data, which is a good thing and it affects positively on the marketing matters. Linkka said, that in practise, it means for instance, that marketers are not allowed to approach people via email if they have not given their consent to handle their personal data. There also regulations and rules on how companies should store the personal data and inform the person about that. When talking about the GDPR, organizations should also note the EU aspect. Linkka mentioned, that HubSpot and Marketing Week are great websites for understanding the GDPR better. (Linkka, 2019), (Laajavaara, 2019)

Laajavaara mentioned, that now with the GDPR setting, organizations can send out tailored messages to customers who are interested. This means, that the marketing is now being aimed towards the potential customers, which is exactly what marketeers want and need in order to succeed. After the customer has altered their choices, they are now more committed and willing to buy, rather than a customer who is not interested and not seeking any marketing messages. Laajavaara stated, that in general, reaching new customers through social media and other digital marketing channels is not highly affected by this regulation. Before the GDPR, customer registers were ruthlessly shared after fairs and events to other companies without the agreement of the signing person. Now the GDPR prevents this from happening to bring all matters into the eyes of the consumers helping to create trust and making the industry more transparent. (Laajavaara, 2019)

All in all, throughout the interview, both Laajavaara and Linkka emphasized the importance of marketing on the long run. The marketing must be explored from the customers perspective and from an un-biased point of view in order to be able to plan an effective marketing plan, which secures the customers loyalty and continuous engagement throughout the customers experience. Keeping straightforward promises for meeting the customer's expectations and demands creates credibility towards the brand; false marketing does not save the image of the company and secure sales.

4 MARKETING PLAN

4.1 Situation analysis

Situation analysis includes forecasts of the situation of the business and the market. This is the first step for developing an efficient marketing plan. For instance, "What happens when the corporation is googled or searched online?" is a great question to be researched when starting the analysis.

Nowadays, since technology has developed to a point, where people have access to the internet on their back pockets, it is important for companies to make sure that the websites are functional on people's mobile phones. If a customer is looking up the business on their phone and the websites do not function well, for example the text is not optimized for a smaller screen, such as a mobile phone, the customer could easily give up the search and move on to the next best alternative – the competition. Mobile search can lead up to more customers. "Mobile friendliness" is a fast-increasing concept, which every company should be aware of and make changes to the websites provided if needed for the customer to feel more attached and to secure the potential customers attention. (Lawson, 2017)

4.1.1 Business analysis

To begin with, the two business' – Coast Services and Rannikon Aarre – got combined during the spring of 2019. This turned out to beneficial for both companies when considering costs among other business matters. Also, since the companies have been working together before, the co-operation between the two companies will be even more coherent in the future. The marketing that goes towards one company helps both companies.

When using google to search "Coast Services" and "Rannikon Aarre" by using the companies own names, the first websites offered by google are the companies home webpages. This is a positive outlook for the companies, since it shows reliability and professionalisms, which sends a trusting message for the potential customer. If the websites would be hard to find or not available on one of the top searches, the customers would give up the search and move on to the competition. Furthermore, both Coast Services and Rannikon Aarre have webpages dedicated to the services offered, Facebook pages and e-mails which both companies can be reached on.

However, when using google to seach "cleaning in Pirkanmaa area" and "construction work, clearance and rebuilding in Pirkanmaa area", the websites of these two companies are not the first ones to be offered by google. For this reason, the author has decided to do research on this matter to get a better understanding what pages are recommended first and to see

if there is a way to boost their pages to the top of the search lists. This matter is going to be addressed in the part "4.8 Actions and control".

4.1.2 The 8-SWOT matrix

8-SWOT	S – Strengths	W – Weaknesses
8-SWOT	- Big operational areas - Diverse customer base - Loyal and permanent customers and firms - Good connections	- Not as many employees - Financially harder to market - Current visibility (low)
O – Opportunities - Cost-free marketing - Good reputation - Combined work with construction company	**S + O** - Gain new customers - Expand operational area	**W + O** - Gaining more visibility - Spreading an image of hard-working employee's
T – Threats - Not as well-known - Competition - Availability due to number of employee's	**S + T** - Might get lost in between the competition ^ Marketing through loyal customers and spreading the image	**W + T** - Marketing would not be effective/would lack visibility ^ Consistent marketing for increasing visibility

Table 1: The 8-SWOT matrix

1) Strengths – the first component is the strengths, which is an internal aspect. The company defines their strengths to understand how to compete and survive within the competition. The case company's operational areas are big, meaning that the jobs that are done and the location of these jobs vary a lot for a small company like Coast Services. Also, the jobs differ from cleaning offices to cleaning worksites, which means that there is a diverse customer base. For the scheduling, it is rather simple, because when booking a service, the company has an active response rate and additionally, openness to travel and work in new places. Moreover, the permanent jobs which are done weekly and have been running for long periods of time make it easier to schedule new appointments. The schedule stays relatively the same throughout a certain amount of time, when loyal customers are found. Furthermore, Coast Services has good connections; co-operation with firms where the cleaning services are provided and working together with another firm jointly. Lastly, the company has many loyal and permanent customers and firms working in co-operation, which keeps the case company running in the business.

2) Weaknesses – the second component is the weaknesses, which are also internal aspects, which the company analyses to understand if something is lacking so that there is a possibility to upgrade or to adjust in any type of way. Coast Services is a small company with not as many employees. With not as many employees it is harder for dividing a job; some jobs require more than one worker, which takes time away from working in two sites at the same time. Also, it reduced the time that could be targeted elsewhere, such as marketing. From a financial point of view, smaller companies may be harder to market and promote, since the profits might not be enough.

3) Opportunities – the third component it the opportunities, which are the external aspects that the company must analyse and try to reach, since opportunities can give an aid to the organization and find new ways to become more effective company. Social media marketing can be done cost free, which can open opportunities to expand customer base and create more loyal customers. Another opportunity for Coast Services is their good reputation, both within the B2B and B2C community.

4) Threats – the fourth component is the threats, which are the last external component. This component can help a company to understand how not to act or how to avoid certain matters that might negatively affect the business and their name. For this component, the commissioning company is not as well-known as some other companies available; for this reason, the visibility of the company should be increased. The competition is a threat of its own, since it could take potential new customers away from Coast Services.

5) Strengths + opportunities – combining these two characteristics may help the organization to use their internal strengths and take advantage of opportunities of the external forces. With this, the commissioning company could gain new customers, thanks to the good connections; if the marketing is done right, the already existing customers could potentially spread positive feedback and increase the engagement through the social media. Also, there is a possibility of expanding the business and disclose the reputation further and for better throughout the increased engagement.

6) Strengths + threats – with combining these two factors the company can understand how to avoid the threats which could possibly be avoided with the strengths that exists in the company. Here the commissioning company might get lost in the competition, if the threats are not avoided. To avoid the threats, the case company should analyse the competition to get a better understanding of what should be modified, if their marketing does not stand out from the competition. Loyal customers' experiences should be visible for the new potential customers – reviews and feedbacks are highly important, since the customers truly trust the other customers, rather than the company itself.

7) Weaknesses + opportunities – with this combination the company can overcome their weaknesses that are either know or unknown with the opportunities of the external environment. The outcome might be, that Coast Services does not gain enough visibility to increase their customer base and their social media presence. To decrease the weaknesses, the case company could create a bigger social media presence for gaining more visibility and increasing the sales.

8) Weaknesses + threats – with these two characteristics combined the company can minimize the risks of the weaknesses and avoid the threats of the external environment. This outcome tells the case company that if the marketing is not done effectively, the company might not become more visible and reach the other objectives and outcomes wanted. To avoid both weaknesses and threats, the commissioning company could invest time in marketing consistently; if the right methods are used, marketing can be done without extra costs and the visibility could be increased with the right amount of dedication.

4.2 Objectives

The main objectives of this marketing plan have been made towards the benefit of the commissioning company. The research objectives shaped these marketing plan objectives, which are as follows:

1) Add engagement – this goal is towards existing and future potential customers for increased activity through social media.

2) Visibility – the goal is to attract new customers and differentiate from the competition.

3) Awareness – with this goal the commissioning company's internal and external factors need to be analyzed and understood. The goal is to understand how the company could stand out from the competition.

4) Invest – this goal is for choosing the best alternatives for the marketing and committing to the whole process; time, effort, money and research should be devoted when working on a marketing plan.

4.3 Strategy

To begin with, the strategy towards the marketing plan should include analysis of the objectives for the commissioning company in order to succeed in the marketing plan and in the goals and wanted outcomes. The author has chosen the SMART goals for the strategy section, since it guides the commissioning company in a simple yet in an effective way.

4.3.1 SMART goals

S – The specific goals are to increase visibility and engagement in social media and gain new customers. For creating a better social media presence, setting up an Instagram account on the side of their Facebook and their homepages would be ideal. On the different platforms, posting deals, pictures, sentiments, relevant updates and other interesting posts are some interesting yet simple ways to keep up with the existing engagement and to attract new customers. Keeping an eye on the followers, likes and comments, phone calls and other types of ways of connecting – such as e-mail – are great ways of seeing how active the customers are.

M – In order for the case company to measure their goals, they need to be quantified. One of the easiest methods would be to use percentages when tracking the engagement. On the other hand, it is a great idea to use a business profile in the social media platforms, since most platforms offer ready-made metrics, which calculate the engagement for you. Firstly, the commissioning company should check the previous engagement results and compare them with the future ones; the goal should be to reach at least the same amount of activity which has been previously reached and hopefully begin to gain more as the time goes by. Furthermore, when analysing the prior posts, the case company should check what made a certain post get more engagement, because it tells what the customer base if after.

A – Start small; an attainable goal will result in realistic and effective goals. For instance, the case company could start measuring their engagement every two months. In the first two months the engagement could be increased by 2%. After another two months, the goal could be doubled, so

that the engagement would be increased by 4%. After testing the customer engagement by posting different content on the social media platforms, the commissioning company could then set up the goals after analysing the different posts which were made could help the goals to be more attainable.

R – Realistic goals can be set when the case company has used SWOT to analyse their business; it is relevant to understand what the company is capable of and what needs to be worked on. Also, by researching what has worked before and what has not is a crucial step. Here the case company should check their posts and analyse them; the customer engagement says a lot about their interest towards the post, the company and their services.

T – Timing everything ties the smart goals together. In this case, every smart goal could be reviewed every two months. It is a realistic time period for the commissioning company to reach their goals, analyse the outcomes and the actions that took place and review everything; after understanding the possible mistakes and success', it is easier to set a new and improved goal for the next two months.

SMART GOAL – A smart goal for the case company would be to begin with an analysis of their business and continuing to analyse prior posts and seeing what attracts the customers. Then, creating a goal of gaining 20 followers in Instagram in the first two months and continuing to keep posting couple of times a month on the Facebook pages would be realistic. This is because the case company is relevantly new to the marketing scene and by slowly integrating marketing and the usage of social media in the business schedule would be the smartest thing to do; if the company takes up too much of responsibilities in the beginning it might become overwhelming. After the two months have passed, the case company should review their goals and create new ones; learn from their actions and become better towards the next goals. Additionally, the case company could start posting more on the Instagram page and gain another 20 followers in the next two months and attract 10 new people to like their Facebook pages. When everything starts to fall into their places, the case company can take bigger steps and create even bigger goals according to the situations and incorporate marketing into the business planning routine.

4.4   Target audience

The case company's array of services includes for instance office-, house-, moving- and renovation cleanings, thus their customer range varies depending on the work area; usually the customer base varies between 25-60-year-old people. The moving- and renovation cleanings do not only target the retail clients, they also target the condominium companies. The target audience should be evaluated according to the social media channels which both segments of the target audience potentially use.

4.5   Online marketing

The author has chosen to develop a plan for Instagram since, it is one of the biggest and most efficient platforms for engaging with the customers. This platform also provides a business profile, which can automatically calculate the engagement and the following. Facebook has also a business profile, which is one of the best platforms to use for marketing purposes, however, the case company already has a business Facebook page, and for this reason the author will not go into detail about Facebook. However, the author has chosen to incorporate the usage of the Facebook channel in this marketing plan, since the commissioning company's Facebook usage could be altered for more efficient use. The author has listed multiple social media channels for marketing purposes in the part "2.5.2 Social media platforms" for the commissioning company to find information of other alternative marketing channels for expanding the online media presence and networking purposes.

4.5.1   Instagram

Instagram was launched in 2010 and by 2012 bought by Facebook. It is a social networking service used for photo and video-sharing – the platform holds above one billion users. The content in Instagram varies between photos and videos. The placement of these content posts is crucial, depending on the goals and objectives. For instance, stories are available for only 24 hours, and these are mostly used for quick announcements, using affiliate codes and or showing something interesting to the viewers, which might not be fit to be posted on the actual profile. When posting on the actual profile, the profile user can choose from one to ten photos and videos of what to post. Additionally, there is a possibility add a caption on the Instagram posts, which can be up to 2,200 characters and 30 hashtags. The video length can vary between three to 60 seconds, unless the video is posted on the IGTV – Instagram television – posting a video to this part of the platform, the video's maximum length can be up to 60 minutes. (Collins, 2019)

Moreover, Instagram provides a variety of options on where to post and what kind of posts are available. The posts can include the users own content, reposts from other users or educational posts, which is useful for the whole variety of companies using Instagram for business; this way, the companies can manage and control what posts are wanted and how the pages should look like."71% of Instagram users around the globe are under the age of 35" Todd Clarke wrote in a blog published on Hootsuite's website in March on 2019. However, scrutinizing the Figure 6, there are Instagram users above the age 35 up until +65, thus, in the commissioning company's case, online marketing would still be an effective option and creating an online presence on Instagram could increase their customer base and reach the targeted customers easier. (Clarke, 2019); (Collins, 2019)
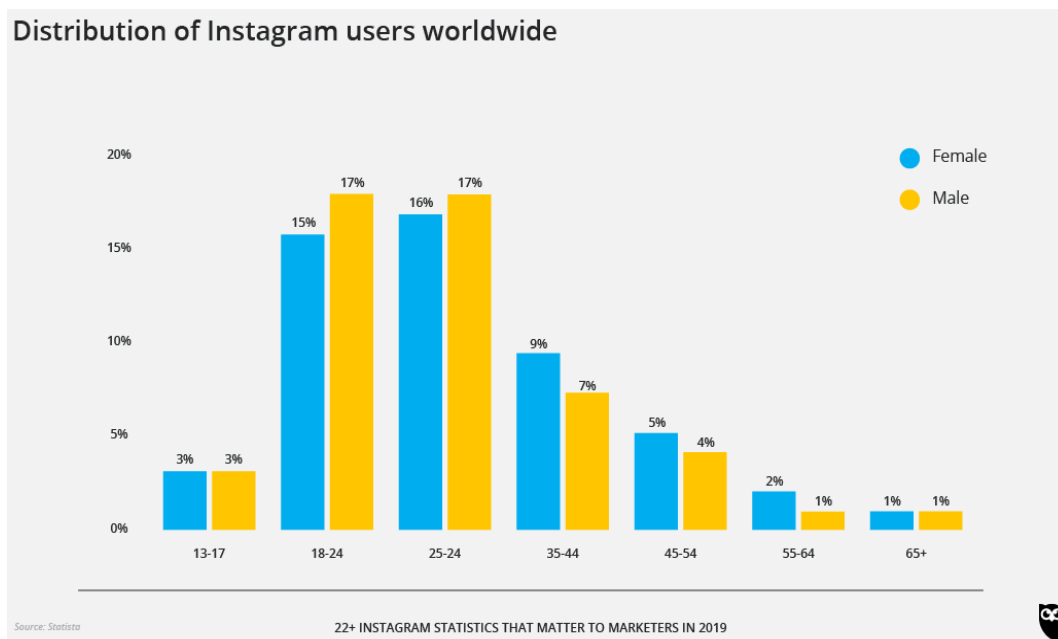
Distribution of Instagram users worldwide

Figure 6: Distribution of Instagram users worldwide (Hootsuite, 2019)

4.5.2 Instagram for business

Alicia Collins stated in a blogpost about "Instagram Marketing" (HubSpot, 2019) that 60% of the adults who use social networking platforms use Instagram. According to Collins, there are 25 million business profiles on the platform and 60% of Instagram users have found a new company through the platform. Furthermore, Collin states that "half of the users follow at least one business and visit the site daily and 35% say they check it multiple times a day." As the author already mentioned about mobile friendliness in the part "4.1 Situation analysis", it is more common for people to check your websites through the mobile phones. Collins stated, that 70% of Instagram users have done research about a company or a brand through Instagram; spreading your network and your database through the social media platforms messages credibility, interest and motivation towards both the brand and the consumers.

These facts establish, that creating an Instagram profile for your business would be beneficial, since the brand awareness of a company can increased thanks to the many active users. Instagram enables promotion in a genuine way without having to force-sell; the users who can see your promotions and find your profiles on the platform is a marketing matter, thus, it is possible to create more engagement with the right tactics and dedication.

The business profile of Instagram offers statistics and insights of the business profile for no costs. The figure 7 demonstrates how the engagement of a business profile can be tracked; this is an efficient way and a great money saving option for tracking down the engagement without having to invest money. Moreover, the following can be tracked by the gender and by the dates. The insights also gather your top posts, which is a

good feature for analysing what the demand of the following is and what drives the engagement. These factors make it easy to analyse the marketing tactics for future actions – understanding what the customers are interested in could help the commissioning company to strategically approach the upcoming marketing and grow the following by creating captivating content.
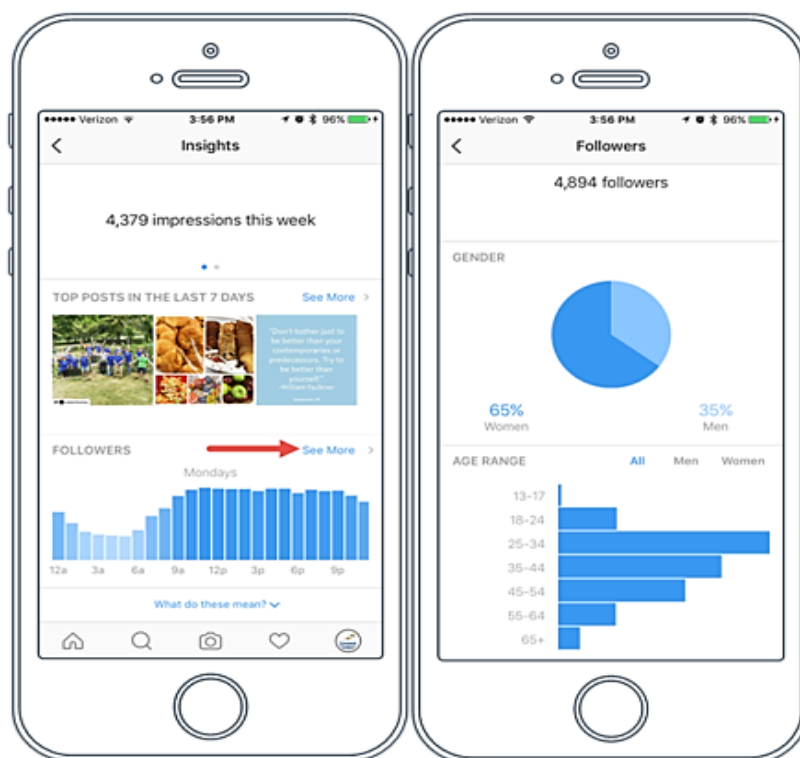

Figure 7: Instagram for business (Business 2 community, 2016)

4.6   Competitor analysis

The competitor analysis has been made towards the moving- and renovation cleanings, since the author wanted to make an example, which benefits both case companies. When the competition is compared from this perspective, both Coast Services and Rannikon Aarre can get a better analysis of their competition and work towards their common goals and become stronger together. Thus, the analysis is targeted more towards the online presence of each competitor. Furthermore, the author has decided not to include a price comparison into this competitor analysis, since the prices are not visible on every competitor's websites and the price range differs a lot according to the situation and the clients

1) The first competitor is called Cleanside Oy. This company was established in 2008 and their operational areas include Turku, Tampere and Helsinki. Cleanside has very broad websites, which include a lot of different information about the cleaning services provided, good contact information, links for the brands to the other social networking pages,

current topics and a section for a blog. Moreover, the pictures and the setup of the pages make it easy to follow and navigate and this provides a clean and a clear outlook of the company; this sends the customers a message of a credible and a professional company. Cleanside uses two other social media platforms; Linkedin and Facebook. The Facebook pages have 16 likes, which is a relatively small number of likes. Also, the author checked Cleansides homepages with a mobile phone, and it worked perfectly fine. (Cleanside Oy, 2019)

2) The second competition, which will be compared is called Tampereen Siivous. The operational area is Tampere, which the name already suggests. This company's websites are straightforward, easy to navigate, simple to read and follow. Tampereen Siivous has Facebook pages, however, there is nothing posted on it and there is no link on the homepages to the Facebook pages; the pages also did not seem to have any likes so far. Lastly, the homepages of Tampereen Siivous worked well on the mobile phone, which is great for the customers doing research on mobile phones. (Tampereen Siivous, 2019)

3) The third competitor is SiivousSissit, which was established in 2009 and who operate in the Pirkanmaa area. The company's homepages include big pictures and logos, which are eye catching and personal. SiivousSissit have listed the company's business partners on the webpages; one of the partners is a famous ice hockey team known in Tampere and the company has managed to get one of the players pictures on the website promoting their services. A local customer would recognize this, which would give a professional outlook for the company. The homepages have a section dedicated to charity work, which also gives a positive look of the brand. SiivousSissit have Facebook pages along the side of their homepages, however, the link to the Facebook pages was not as visible as it maybe should be – the author did not even see the link in the beginning of the research. The Facebook pages have 108 likes and the homepages were mobile-friendly. (SiivousSissit, 2019)

4) The fourth and the last competitor, which will be compared is called Taidox. Established in 2003. This company's webpages were easy to navigate, and it offers all the right information that the customer might need. There are mentions about environment, current topics such as the GDPR. The web pages create a feeling of credibility, since there does not seem to be any type of false advertisements and everything is well put and clear. Together with their webpages, Taidox has also created Facebook pages which holds 124 likes. The homepages worked fine on the mobile phone; however, the layout of the pages did not entirely

change accordingly, and the author had to zoom in and out when doing research. (Taidox Oy, 2019)

These competitors were found by the author through doing a google search using the keywords "renovation cleanings". The companies were either suggested by google on the top of the search list or the author had previous knowledge of these companies, since the operational areas of these four competitors are from the authors hometown, where the case companies are both operating in. All the companies mentioned above have Facebook pages together with the companies own webpages, yet, there is not a plenty of activity and engagement ongoing on the Facebook pages. To add, Cleanside was the only company to leave a link of the company's Linkedin pages. Comparing the case companies Facebook likes, Coast Services has 64 likes on the Facebook pages and Rannikon Aarre has 85 likes – both companies have a rather fine number of likes on the company's Facebook pages when comparing to the competitions' numbers of likes.

This competitor analysis is relatively concise, since all the activity on these social media accounts is low regarding all the rival companies. Both case companies, Coast Services and Rannikon Aarre have a good opportunity to begin to expand their presence online – the engagement could increase the visibility and enable the companies to gain new customers and differentiate from the competition, since not many companies have invested on social media marketing. Moreover, as it was mentioned before, the increased use of technology enables potential customers to do research online in seconds, thus, marketing in different social media platforms could guide the customers to the brand's websites easier.

4.7   Actions and control

In this part, the author will explain some matters that should be taken into consideration when planning the future marketing strategies. To begin with, here are a couple of great examples of social media posts, which are already existing on the case company's Facebook pages:

Figure 8: A screenshot of the case company's Facebook page (Coast Services, Facebook, April 2019).

This is a perfect example of a Facebook post which increased the customer engagement for the commissioning company; the post was made by a customer, who managed to get 80 likes on the post, whereas the repost on the commissioning company's page got only eight likes. The comments on the customers Facebook post were highly positive and while reading it, the post creates a credibility towards the brand, the services provided and what they stand for. For this reason, the author states, that reposting customer reviews could increase visibility for the brand, since the customers are more likely to believe other customers opinions rather than the company's own words.

Figure 9: A screenshot of the case company's Facebook page (Coast Services, Facebook, January 2019).

This is another good example of a Facebook post, which genuinely attracts the followers and the potential customers; this post includes real pictures of the cleanings done by the case company. Posting realistic content drives the customer engagement for better, since the credibility and straightforwardness of the post attracts the customers and it gives out realistic expectations.

4.7.1 Google search engine

The google search engine is a software system for searching information on the World Wide Web with characters and keywords through a grant database. In google the first options provided by the search engine when

doing a search are the most frequently used pages or paid advertisements. The pages which are not on top of the list through payments are called the organic listings.

According to Neil Patel's article about search engine optimization or SEO's, (SEO Made Simple: A Step-by-Step Guide for 2019, NeilPatel, 2019) 75% of internet searches are done through Google and the first five results provided by the Google search engine get 67% of all clicks. The search engine's use algorithms to calculate the pages relevance when the pages are used often. The most relevant pages are pushed first on the search. Additionally, the different words and characters used in the search are also filtered by the algorithm, which explains why some of the options are provided in a certain order – the keywords are used to filter the headings and the texts provided in the webpages in order for the search engine to find the webpages, which are being browsed.

As for the companies, getting more visitors on the web pages could essentially rank the page higher, since the algorithm does continuous searches and calculations on a variety of pages, which could eventually boost the pages being ranked higher and get more and new customers towards their pages. The author is convinced, that adding more detailed descriptions and more vocabulary would increase the chances and the likelihood of the pages to be found by the search engine due to the filters of the algorithms. "Search engines look at the relevancy of the site linking to you, how well known is the linking site is, how many links you have in total, and the anchor text of each link." (Patel, 2019)

4.7.2 Editorial calendar

For creating a marketing plan, the author decided to create editorial calendars for the case company to keep up with the tasks, goals and the actions which should be done throughout the marketing activities. These editorial calendar templates include four different categories: Themes and Activity, Actions, Goals and KPI's and lastly Results and Methods. The author used Figure 1 and Figure 2 showed in part "2.1.1 Maslow's hierarchy of needs in marketing" for creating the templates using the theory as a guide to reflect on social media marketing.

The author created two different templates. The first template is a figure for monthly use for a social media platform – in this example, the template was made for using Facebook throughout January till December. The second template was made for weekly use for a social media platform – in this case, the template was made for using Instagram for one month.

facebook

MONTH	THEMES/ACTIVITY	ACTIONS	GOALS/KPI's	RESULTS/METHODS
JAN	Constructions begin	Post before photos	Create awareness	Analyse results and define methods used
FEB	Constructions continue/no new updates	Share fun content, holiday wishes (e.g. valentine's day)	New website visitors	Analyse results and define methods (make changes if needed)
MAR	Constructions continue/no new updates	Share links, questions, offers etc.	Customer activity, frequency of activity	Analyse results and define methods (make changes if needed)
APR	Constructions end	Post after photos	Customers sharing experiences, feedback, advocacy	Analyse results and define methods (make changes if needed)
MAY	Introduce workers, work environments, photos of events	Create something new to post and share	Create more awareness	Analyse results and define methods used
JUN	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**
JUL	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**
AUG	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**
SEP	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**
OCT	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**
NOV	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**
DEC	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**	**Repeat the process**

Table 2: An example of an editorial calendar for using Facebook as a marketing tool for a calendar year.

WEEK	THEMES/ACTIVITY	ACTIONS	GOALS/KPI's	RESULTS/METHODS
1	Constructions begin	Post before photos	Create awareness	Analyse results and define methods used
2	Constructions continue/no new updates	Share fun content videos, photos	New website visitors	Analyse results and define methods (make changes if needed)
3	Constructions continue/no new updates	Share links, questions, offers etc.	Customer activity, frequency of activity	Analyse results and define methods (make changes if needed)
4	Constructions continue/no new updates	Share upcoming events, newsletters	Customers sharing experiences, feedback	Analyse results and define methods (make changes if needed)
5	Constructions continue/no new updates	Post holiday wishes (e.g. Halloween)	Advocacy	Analyse results and define methods (make changes if needed)

Table 3: An example of an editorial calendar for using Instagram as a marketing tool for a calendar month.

5   RECOMMENDATIONS AND ANALYSIS

5.1   Recommendations

Coast Services and Rannikon Aarre should consider adjusting their webpages, such as adding small infographic of the company on the homepages – this would make the customer feel attached to the brand and secure advocacy if the story behind the companies would be told. Adding subscription links to newsletters and more visual representations would catch the potential customers attention. The webpages could have more categories and subcategories, for example for current topics section, where announcements could be made, customers could leave a message and be up to date with the upcoming events and changes Also, using the company's own pictures instead of one's found of from the Internet would create a more personal touch to the websites. One of the most important facts is that the case company should make sure that the webpages and all the other social media platforms align together with the brand; the customers can get confused, if all the websites look different and the customer cannot make the connection between the company and the brand. For this reason, when

creating a business profile on a social media platform, it should be noted, that the name or the handle of the business profile should be the exact or nearly the same as the company's name itself to avoid confusion.

Furthermore, using SEO could be beneficial, in other words, using more specific keywords and gaining more visitors to the websites could optimize the exposure of the case company resulting in gaining new customers. When adding the same information on every platform, search engines could potentially make the search of the pages easier and make the connection between the platforms, which would then provide the customer all the information of the websites of the company in one search. Using hashtags and keeping up with the trends and updates are also great ways of staying relevant and keeping the customer engagement flowing – keeping up with the mobile friendly webpages can secure the potential customer in today's world. Focusing on CGC and giving the customers the opportunity to be a part of the company's story – interaction and involvement through the content created by the customers is highly important.

The author amongst the interviewees would recommend visiting and getting more acquainted with HubSpots and Marketing Weeks websites, since these webpages are highly informative and helpful for guiding people who are starting up with marketing and getting to know the basics. Lastly, creating a plan and sticking to it, analysing the situations, setting up goals, investing time, being consistent and researching different methods and tactics which work the best for the company itself is the most important factor when creating a marketing plan.

5.2 Conclusions

Firstly, the purpose of this thesis is to work as a guide for the commissioning company in understanding the usage of the social media and its platforms for gaining more visibility. The author has provided all the information needed for setting up a platform and creating a presence online for gaining new customers through online marketing. The goals and objectives, the methods and the research questions guided the author for discovering insights when creating this thesis. The predominant focus of the thesis slightly changed during the writing process, since the two commissioning companies merged during the spring of 2019. However, this fact did not change the wanted outcomes and the thesis itself, yet it created the author a bigger canvas to work and plan on. As it was mentioned in the beginning of this thesis, Coast Services was the original case company, thus, the examples and plans made in this thesis were more focused towards the original case company.

Finally, the author would like to disclose, that this thesis provides qualitative data gathered from a variety of sources and from conducting an interview, creating a compact, practical yet a unique information package of social media marketing. After reading this thesis, the commissioning company will be able understand how online marketing can be done efficiently and cost-effectively and utilize the gathered data for marketing purposes with strategic manner.

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Interview questions

1) What is an effective way to promote services of a small company or a company with not as much of resources to use for marketing purposes?
2) What are the best platforms to use in social media for marketing purposes?
3) What are the best tools for tracking views or customer engagement if the platform itself does not provide them? Are there any?
4) How could one secure customer loyalty? What should be done and what should be avoided?
5) How important is a marketing plan and what are the most important aspects of it?
6) Does the visual outlook of the company have any effect on the customer buying behaviour? For instance, the appearance of the webpages, colours of the pages and advertisements, visible feedback, the response rate and accessibility of the company.
7) What is the best way to analyse the market and the competitors?
8) How does the GDPR affect marketing? What should be taken into consideration on B2B and on B2C? (Business to Business/Business to Customers)

Appendix 2

Weekly editorial calendar

WEEK	THEMES/ACTIVITY	ACTIONS	GOALS/KPI's	RESULTS/METHODS
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

Monthly editorial calendar

facebook				
MONTH	**THEMES/ACTIVITY**	**ACTIONS**	**GOALS/KPI's**	**RESULTS/METHODS**
JAN				
FEB				
MAR				
APR				
MAY				
JUN				
JUL				
AUG				
SEP				
OCT				
NOV				
DEC				