Social Media Marketing On Instagram

Case study: company X

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Abstract:

This master thesis was based on a case study, a small entrepreneur and part-time photographer. Company X uses Instagram as a platform and tool, though has not yet succeeded in achieving the desired end-result from the use, which are committed followers, exposure, expanding the clientele and, sale. The use of Instagram in the marketing of photography services has become more common, but it has not made the competition in the photography industry any easier. Photography has also changed over the years and the almost globally released use of mobile data and wireless Internet connection have enabled the everyday user to broaden their skills and even without the required skills to gain success on Instagram. Instagram marketing draws the consumers' short attention span mostly to the appearance of the social media site and number of interactions, such as likes, follows and shares. However, Instagram offers a variety of paid and free services for businesses of all sizes. Regardless of the size of the company, even small entrepreneurs can utilize these services in their own marketing. Through two interviews with company X, its Instagram usage and situation was explored. The first interview was conducted in summer 2019 and the second in autumn 2019. In addition, an online survey was conducted in winter 2019. The survey provided a general overview of the opinion and behavior of the author´s followers on Instagram. The online survey showed that the online survey can be used in business marketing to identify the interests of existing and potential followers. When a business knows its target audience better, it will also be able to market better and reach the desired goal. Considering company X´s current state of Instagram usage, different ideas were provided on how to use the services provided by Instagram in its business.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This master´s thesis research the use and utilize of social media in marketing, more specifically utilising image sharing social networking service Instagram for social media marketing in marketing of photography services. The theoretical framework of social media marketing is interesting- the area itself is relatively new, extremely popular and widely and globally used, however the theoretical academic framework of the field is scarce. Majority of, for instance, photographers use social media as a marketing tool, but the focus tends to turn always more to the actual use and utilize, and not actually researching.

The use of Instagram in marketing for photography services intertwines to a challenge, which is, in today´s world the consumers do not recognise low-quality photography. It is a challenge for professional photographers as Instagram and other social media marketing disguises the actual quality of the service. Instagram marketing draws the consumers' short attention span mostly to the appearance of the social media site and number of interactions, such as likes, follows and shares. The number of interactions does not, however, determine how the photographer handles actual customer cases as when updating Instagram, the photographer reflects their own thoughts and interest, not the customers.

The case subject used for this thesis is a small entrepreneur and a part-time photographer, company X. Company X, uses Instagram as a platform and tool, though has not yet succeeded in achieving the desired end-result from the use. The desired result in this case is committed followers, exposure, expanding the clientele and, of course, sales.

Another vital question to reflect on with in this instance is, do the consumers care who is a professional. And often-heard quote in today´s world regarding photography and photographers is, *"they have a good camera"* (company X 18.10.2019). The concept of professionalism is in most cases linked to the equipment used. The actual quality and spirit of the photographs does not contribute to the art, as consumers can have only a vague idea of what are the considerations of a professional photograph. They do not draw from the camera; they draw from how the camera is used.

The almost globally released use of mobile data and wireless Internet connection, low prices of photography equipment and the increasing amount of free editing tutorials have enabled the everyday user to broaden their skills and even without the required skills to gain success. In the eyes of the consumer, is the success and professionalism measured by the number of photographs, followers and likes, or by the actual quality of the photographer's work. This is where the use of social media as a marketing tool steps in. Social media accessible to everyone, mostly for free, and has absolutely no boundaries.

1.1 Aim & research questions

The aim for the thesis is to find sustainable improvements company X when using Instagram as platform for social media marketing. The photography industry and clienteles needs and desires change with the time and trends, thus Instagram marketing should be able to keep up with the current situation. The objective of the thesis is to further investigate company X´s situation regarding Instagram marketing as it is at the moment and further find improvements and see the actual change. Thus, the research questions moulded for the thesis are:

- Is Instagram the right social media platform for a part-time photographer doing marketing?
- How can a part-time photographer utilise Instagram for marketing?
- How can a part-time photographer improve its positions on Instagram?

1.2 Methods and limitations

The subject and research problem of thesis operates in a field of business in which, both, qualitative data and quantitative statistic is vital in determining data reflecting success. Used methods were an interview with company X with open answer questions and researching and analysing the statistics from the chosen platform of marketing, Instagram. Company X has various social media platforms in use, but this thesis focuses specifically on company X´s use of Instagram, which is the most essential part of this thesis. Hence, this thesis does not take into account other company X´s social media platforms.

In addition to the interview, an online survey has been conducted. It was distributed through the author´s personal Instagram account and, since the account was private, only the followers of the author were able to see and answer the questions.

Thus, the method of research chosen for thesis was a combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The combination of the two is also known as "a mixed methods" (Flick 2018, p.2). The methodology is discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

1.3 Concept definitions

Hashtag – A word or a sentence becomes a hashtag when the sign # from the keyboard is added in front of the word. Hashtags were initially more commonly used in social media platform Twitter. When a hashtag is used, users can access a feed of similar images for instance, read news about a specific event or phenomena. For instance, by clicking a hashtag #banana, most likely the user will find a variety of images of bananas. In social media marketing, hashtags pull user social media posts into a topic-specific feed (Lee White, 2019).

Influencer – The term "influencer" is used when a person who has power to affect other people´s decisions to purchase. The power derives for instance from their authority, relationship with their audience, knowledge or public image. In social media influencers have managed to build their knowledge and know-how on a certain subject and have a vast audience and follower group (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2019).

Influencer can be seen simply as a "tool" for marketing products, like a television commercial for instance. This is why they are also an advantage or asset to the company whose products or services they are promoting. "Influencing" happens via posts or stories.

1.4 Structure

This thesis first examines the case study and the concept of photography. Followed by social media and social media marketing. The thesis continues by presenting case study statistics on social media- Instagram, and then moving to discuss the methodology and presenting the results of online survey and interviews. And lastly, discuss the findings and make suggestions for company X´s future.

2 COMPANY X

In this chapter the thesis company will be presented as well as its current social media situation. Company X is a part-time small entrepreneur and this thesis provides as much information about the company as is available. The information was obtained from company X´s website, interviews, and the figures that company X has given to this thesis. These figures are presented in section 5.2.3.

2.1 Company X in brief

As presented on the company X website (X, 2019) behind company X is X who is a self-learned photographer from Finland. X has spent most of her time behind the camera and photography started at a very young age. At that time, she developed own frames and today, she has moved to the digital camera and the modern world of photography. X has a wide range of expertise, because the subjects of photography changes from people to various events, pets to nature, and et cetera.

X decided to take her hobby a step further so she founded company X in 2016, and started to work as a professional photographer (X, 27.07.2019). According to the first interview with X (27.07.2019), she operates alone in the company, meaning managing the entire imaging process and its marketing from beginning to end.

2.1.1 The current social media situation- Instagram

There are currently (as of December 28, 2019) 1,107 followers that follow company X´s Instagram page and correspondingly the number of pages company X follows is 1,083.

Company X ´s page is open and visible to anyone on Instagram, meaning, even without following her profile, other users will be able to view images, comments and videos published by company X. In her biography on Instagram, a link to her website is displayed, allowing people to access it. The contents of the images vary, for instance, the profile contains images of people, pets, landscapes and et cetera (Instagram, 2019c).

3 PHOTOGRAPHY

3.1 A brief history

For nearly 200 years, the camera has evolved from a standard box to today´s high-tech mini-computers, which can be found on smartphones and DSLRs. Photography, as it is known to people today, began in France in the late 1830s. The first image, which did not fade quickly, was taken by Joseph Nicéphore Niépce using a portable camera blur to reveal a pewter plate coated with bitumen to light (Masoner, 2019). At that time photography was not for everyone as it is today. According to Masoner (2019) it was only for really wealthy people and professionals until in the 1880s, when George Eastman founded a company called Kodak and created a flexible roll film that did not require the user to constantly replace the hard disks. Eastman developed an independent box camera that contained 100 film exposures. It was not until the late 1940s that most consumers were able to use 35mm film, as it became cheap enough. Cameras progressed in the late 1970s and early 1980s and compact cameras were introduced. These smart cameras lowered shutter speed, aperture and focus, allowing photographers to focus on composition. And finally, in the 1980s and 1990s, various manufacturers worked on cameras that recorded images electronically and used a digital camera instead of film (Masoner, 2019).

3.2 Different forms of photographers

Ammattinetti (2019) has divided photographers into four different groups as follows: magazine photographers, commercial photographers, portrait photographers, and department photographers.

The magazine photography can be divided into different areas, such as news, reportage, person and illustration. These photographers are generally not specialized in any particular topic. In magazines, the role of a magazine photographer is usually to cover interviews, sports, and cultural events, and press briefings. These photographers often process their own images using image editing software. Shift work is very common and the majority of magazine photographers work in shifts. Work is busy and traveling is a daily routine for a magazine photographer, though most of the photographing is done in their local area. Photographers usually handle 4-10 shots per day, including image processing. Magazine photographers work for a newspaper or magazine, photo agency and publishing house. More than half of magazine photographers work as freelancers and sell their images on varying contracts. Newspapers and photo agencies may ask these freelancers to take individual photo shoot on request or ask these freelancers arrive at a specific location if needed (Ammattinetti, 2019).

The commercial photographer mainly does product photo shoot and the subjects vary. Subjects can range from technology and clothing to flowers and people. Commercial photographers are commissioned directly by commercial agencies or companies that choose a photographer based on the field of specialization. Areas of specialization may include for instance, interior design, cars or fashion. In these tasks, the photographer works either alone or with a team. The team may include, for instance, another advertising photographer, photography secretary, or assistant. A commercial photographer usually works as an entrepreneur (Ammattinetti, 2019).

The portrait photographer usually takes images of people in connection with a variety of celebrations. Customer needs vary, and people want images of different moments in their lives, such as getting married, graduating from high school, or birthdays. People also want images of their children and family, these are common. Most professional portrait photographers work in their own studios, and about half of them also run a photography shop. In other words, the duties of a portrait photographer also include, selling cameras and photographic equipment, developing or printing films, taking passport images and et cetera. Like commercial photographers, portrait photographers usually work as entrepreneurs. They also work for another person in photo agencies and studios (Ammattinetti 2019).

The department photographer´s job involves taking images for institution´s own archives, for public relations and press use, and for various publications. These photographers can work for instance, at a research center or hospital. Description assignments are determined by the needs of the facility. For instance, a department photographer working in a hospital can photograph, for instance, surgeries. Department photographers are working, for instance, in research centers, hospitals and et cetera (Ammattinetti, 2019).

3.3 Photography in Finland

According to Suomenlehtikuvaajat (2017) photography is a very popular hobby and nowadays almost anyone can call themselves a photographer if they have a smartphone with a camera. Today, many people take professional images on their smartphones. Uses different lenses and edit images with a variety of image editing applications. Nevertheless, it cannot always be called a photography hobby, because it involves many factors such as interest in the field, studying various effects and settings, reading relevant information online and the photographer should critically evaluate their own images. Generally, those who are considering photography as a profession seek to study photography at an educational institution. During the hobby phase photography can be studied at different colleges, but also at the polytechnic or university. In addition to the above, it is possible to become a photographer after completing an apprenticeship. The polytechnic studies last for from 3.5 to 4.5 years, depending on the person´s own pace, and it includes a half-year training period. Photography can be studied in Finland, for instance, at Aalto University, the University of Tampere and the Academy of Fine Arts. Plenty people look for photographers online if they do not personally know any photographers. For this reason, a price-list on a website and possible online marketing can be important aids in getting a job as a photographer (Suomenlehtikuvaajat, 2017).

Finnfoto- Suomen Valokuvajärjestöt ry (2019) claims that, if the photographer has not yet studied the field, it is likely that they are lagging behind in technical knowledge, at least among the best competitors. The photography industry is highly competitive and has been influenced, for instance, by the number of graduates from many educational institutions. The number of retirees is small, in other words, more photographers have entered

the industry than left (Finnfoto- Suomen Valokuvajärjestöt ry, 2019). According to Finnfoto- Suomen Valokuvajärjestöt ry (2019), since, entrepreneurship is almost a must for photographers, the entrepreneurial risk must be recognized before starting a business. And a professional photographer spends significantly more time in front of a computer than with a camera. In addition, the entrepreneur´s mandatory actions also take time. Because the photographer´s income is not always sufficient, many passionate and creative photographers regard photography as a hobby and gain income from another field.

Statistics Finland (2019) released statistics in June 2019, which shows that the number of people working in cultural professions and industries increased in 2018 from the year before. According to Statistics Finland (2019) a significant proportion of those working in cultural professions worked as entrepreneurs. 73 % of them were employed and 27% were self-employed, while the shares for other occupations were 87% and 13%. Strictly 60% of people working in cultural professions had a permanent job, while the corresponding proportion was 73%. The difference is due to the high proportion of entrepreneurs. 13 % of those working in cultural professions were in fixed-term employment and the remaining 27 % were self-employed.

Entrepreneurship and part-time work are very common in the cultural sector, since, jobs are often project-based, and simultaneously, these people also work somewhere else. The average weekly working hours of cultural professionals who work regularly are different from those in other occupations. Working hours are slightly shorter, as it averaged 32 hours, while in other occupations it was almost 36 hours (Statistics Finland, 2019).

According to Ammattinetti (2019) most photographers are self-employed entrepreneurs or freelance as professionals. The proportion of those who work as freelancers has increased and permanent employment relationships are rare in this industry. Some magazine photographers are permanent employed by photo agencies, newspapers and magazines. In addition, large studios may have some paid staff. Photographers are also employed, for instance, in educational institutions and in some photographic organizations. Since, the photography market is small, no more than a few photography artists earn their living in Finland simply by photo shoots.

The photography industry is a highly competitive, as there is fierce competition for jobs and jobs opportunities, and not everyone has enough work to ensure their livelihoods. Specialization and networking play an important role. Technical know-how and creativity are required but also entrepreneurial spirit, business competence, sales and marketing skills, and customer service expertise (Ammattinetti, 2019). Photographic studios are mainly small, employing no more than 1-2 people and often specialized. New entrepreneurs are constantly entering the industry and the camera shop, that are targeted to the consumers, has shifted to general stores, household appliance stores and electronics stores (Ammattinetti, 2019).

A professional photographer is able to sell images to people who already have a need and they are familiar with photography services, meaning that they have probably already purchased another photographer´s services. In simplified terms, this means that the photographer must "grab" clients from their colleagues and this only succeeds where the customer expects to get better value for money than elsewhere. Market research could be a good idea when starting a business, as it would be useful for a photographer to know own perceptions of competitors' competencies, prices, reputation and corporate image. (Finnfoto- Suomen Valokuvajärjestöt ry, 2019).

3.4 Changes in photography

Olmos has mentioned in an interview (2015-2016):

"The Internet/digital age has devalued photography and on the surface it seems like anyone can be a photographer."

Olmos (2015-2016) continues that the popularity of photography has increased and it has never been more popular and todays, photographers are respected in many ways. Although photographers receive fewer commissions, they are asked to do more workshops, teach, give talks and share their skills with others. According to Olmos (2015-2016) the expectations of today´s photographers are different they once were. Today, photographers know how to navigate the digital world better, and have versatile skills in video, editing, writing and photography.

Banerjee (2017) also mentions that about 20 years ago most photographers only had one roll of 35 mm film at once, which allowed the photographer to take only twenty-four images at once. Therefore, almost every photographer took images advisedly, as the number of images was limited. Banerjee (2017) continues, today, the numbers have multiplied. The number of images taken and shared daily has increased almost hundred-fold compared to that time. Banerjee (2017) says, however, it is hard to understand why the number of albums created has decreased, because it looks like there are less meaningful images to create albums with, and instead the litter of images on phone called "camera roll", has increased. The biggest negative impact on photography during the digital age, especially social media, is how images have impaired from the medium of art into the medium of communication itself. The ease of sharing images with just a few clicks and no expense has created a feeling for people to document every moment of their lives with images (Banerjee, 2017).

According to statistics released by GOTECH (2019) in October 2019, the overall camera sales continued to decline at a rate of 7.3 % compared to the previous year, while sales of home electronics, information technology, mobile devices, and large and small home appliances increased 3.1 % from January to September, compared with the same period in 2018. According to an article published by Tekniikka & Talous (2019), sales of digital cameras have been declining for a long time. Between April and September 2019, camera sales worldwide decreased 22 % compared to the same period last year. The drop from 2017 to 2018 was even more dramatic.

4 SOCIAL MEDIA

4.1 What is Social media?

Social media is a fairly new phenomenon, and only a handful of theoretical framework can be found on the subject. As the phenomenon is new, so are the "expert" in the field who create the theoretical framework. As for medical books, persons with a medical degree, or a relevant degree are the individuals creating the theoretical framework, for social media it is the persons' experts in that field; bloggers, influencers, vloggers and et cetera.

Persons with medical degrees document their finding in a way custom to them: medical journals, scientific articles and books, social media experts use the methods they are custom to; blogs, vlogs and videos.

Smith, Wollan & Zhou (2011 p. xi-xii) claims, however, social media is not a new phenomenon as people have shared recommendations and opinions with acquaintances and contacts through channels that allow two-way conversation. These channels have consisted of face-to-face conversations, letters, the phone and, most recently, emails. Social media allows the rapid and smooth development, creation, cycle and use of data and entertainment by businesses and individuals.

A widely- mentioned definition of social media networking sites (Albarran 2013, p.1):

Web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.

The above definition is originally by boyd & Ellison from 2008 (Albarran 2013, p.1). Although there are many definitions of social media, for the purpose of this volume, Albarran (2013, p.2) further refines that social media represents a variety of technologies or applications. People use these technologies or applications to develop and maintain their social networking sites, involving, for instance, posting of multimedia data such as text, images, audio, video and et cetera.

Clay (2017, p. 11) explain the social media as a group of online communication platforms, which is used to produce a `community` related to business and social interaction. For instance, Instagram, Facebook or Twitter are platforms with different content, but nevertheless, collectively they centralize on areas such as social networking, blogging and forums. Social media provides a unique business opportunity for people who know how to use it properly and, to succeed in an interconnected world, it is a critical (Kasian- Lew & Kasian Lew 2014, p. 1). Kasian- Lew & Kasian Lew (2014, p. 26), continues on explaining that social media is not about technology or tools. Social media is about what these

tools enable people to do, and that is building relationships. Scott (2017, p. 62) also submits that the best way to think about social media is how these technologies and tools enable people to communicate directly with buyers in the places where they gather at its best.

Scott (2017, p. 62) defines social media as follows:

"Social media provides the way people share ideas, content, thoughts, and relationships online. Social media differs from so-called mainstream media in that anyone can create, comment on, and add to social media content. Social media can take the form of text, audio, video, images and communities."

4.2 Social Media Platform – Instagram

Social media marketing is a fairly new method and tool in the business world. The subject platform for social media marketing for this thesis, Instagram, has only been operating since 2010 (Instagram, 2019a). Instagram is a platform for sharing images and videos on social media, and since 2013, it has produced money through on-platform advertisements. Social media platform, Facebook, purchased Instagram in 2012 and since then it has been owned by Facebook (Reiff, 2019).

Instagram has over one billion monthly active users and over 500 million daily story actives (Instagram, 2019b). Instagram has become a spectacular social media site and a strong marketing tool for business owners in various niches around the world (Green, 2017, p. 12).

4.2.1 Instagram related vocabulary

Instagram comment – A comment is a piece of text a user can leave into a post.

Instagram engagement – The traditional "engagement" simply put means the actions a post or story receives. This includes all the actions one can take on other accounts post, for example all the likes and comments, views, saves and shares.

Instagram feed – The feed is the main page of an Instagram account. It is not the users own profile page, but the page where they can view other people's posts.

Instagram impression – Impressions in this instance mean how many views a post or a story has, including are multiple views by the same account.

Instagram like – A like is a demonstration of liking someone´s post on Instagram. So far (10/2019), the number of likes per post are visible to everyone. This is the feature, which all businesses compete for, *who has the most likes.*

Instagram promotion – Instagram business account includes a paid function, with which the user can promote their post and stories; much like a commercial. The promoted posts and stories will appear first and more often to the other users feed.

Instagram save – Permanent posts on Instagram profile can be saved to someone else´s folder on Instagram. Commonly posts are saved when the person knows they want to return to this specific post again.

Instagram share – All public content on Instagram can be shared; a user account, a post or a story. Sharing in this context means forwarding something, for example an image, to another user.

Instagram Stories – A 24- hour post the user can add in their profile. The post will stay on the Instagram Stories section for 24 hours, and then disappear. The Stories can be archived automatically for the user to return to later.

4.2.2 A major trial on Instagram

Based on a BBC news (2019a), released in July 2019, in order ´to remove pressure´. Instagram hides likes calculate in the international test. Several countries are involved in this trial, including Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Italy, Japan and Brazil. The concern is that social media platforms can contribute to young people´s low self-esteem

and feeling of inadequacy. Currently, the user has the ability to see a running total of people who have liked a specific post and during the trial, a user name and " and others" will appear below the post. The user will still be able to see the number of likes of their own post (BBC, 2019a).

Based on BBC news (2019a), Mia Garlick, Facebook Australia and New Zealand director of policy, said in a statement:

"*We hope this test will remove the pressure of how many likes a post will receive, so you can focus on sharing the things you love*".

And according to BBC news (2019b), Facebook follows Instagram and hides the number of likes on users posts in Australia during the test. And below another statement from Mia Garlick (BBC, 2019b):

"*[It is about] taking that number out of the equation, so that people can focus on the quality of their interactions and the quality of the content rather than on the number of likes or reactions.*"

Based on BBC news (2019a), Instagram has said that business measurement tools are not affected by the test and users will still be able to see a list of people who have clicked the like button on other people´s content by clicking into it. The number of likes indicates success or popularity on Instagram and it is also a manner to adding a value to a post for the business side of Instagram (BBC, 2019a).

5   SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

5.1 Marketing

Nowadays, when people want to make a purchase decision about a product or service, they usually look for information first from the web to support their purchase decision. People make independent research on a product or service with search engines like

Google and/ or reach out to their friends and colleagues through social media and also ask their opinions and experiences (Scott, 2013 p. 14-15).

Scott (2013, p. 15) claims, that the web has changed the rules of marketing, since before the web, companies had only two options for getting consumer attention. The options were buying expensive ads or getting a third party ink from the media. Before today´s change, traditional, non-targeted advertising, which was done via newspapers, magazines, television, radio and direct mail was the only way to go. However, the aforementioned media make it very challenging to target specific buyers with personalized messages (Scott, 2013, p. 16).

Kotler & Armstrong (2010, p. 28) define marketing in a simplified way, that marketing manages profitable customer relationships and its dual goal is to attract new customers by promising superior value while maintaining and growing existing ones by delivering satisfaction. Marketing is constantly around people. It can be seen in the old traditional forms, such as in TV commercials. In recent years, there has been a major change and marketers have gathered a set of new marketing approaches, everything from imaginative websites, online chat rooms, and social networks to interactive TV and cell phones. The aim of these new approaches is to reach consumers directly and personally. Marketers want to become part of consumers´ lives and enrich their brand experience- to help consumers live their brands (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010, p. 29). As Kotler & Armstrong (2010, p. 29), continue, nowadays, marketing should be understood in the new sense of satisfying customer needs, and not in the old sense of "telling and selling". Many people still think of marketing none but as selling and advertising. Understanding customer needs; developing products that offer superior customer value; and prices, distributes, and promotes them effectively, facilitates the sale of products easily. Kotler & Armstrong (2010, p. 29), define marketing as a process through which companies create value for their customers and build powerful customer relationships to capture value from their customers in exchange.

5.2 Social media marketing

What does the concept of social media marketing mean? Barefoot & Szabo (2009, p. 13) describe social media marketing to be the use of social media channels to promote the company, its products and services. According to WordStream (2019) it is a form of Internet marketing which includes creating and sharing content on social media networks and it helps the company achieve its marketing and brand goals.

In recent years, the marketing world has changed dramatically and its changes are easily recognizable. Marketing functions are increasingly taking place in the online world, which means a decline in traditional media. The focus is now on online marketing and as a result, traditional marketing, such as TV and radio advertising, has lost its popularity. Online marketing offers a wide variety of opportunities for marketers and it can be said to be the future of marketing. Online advertising can be defined as paid search and display ads, announcements, multimedia, referrals, promotional e-mail with embedded ads and sponsorships (Tuten, 2008, p. 6-7).

"Social media marketing isn´t a gimmick - it´s hard work that can be extremely engaging when implemented in the right way" – a truthful statement by Evans (2010, p. 3). Evans (2010, p. 7-8) continues on explaining that social media marketing it is not easy, quick, or cheap. This kind of perception comes from the overnight sensations that goes viral within minutes of being fed into a social media network like Youtube. Adding content to social media networks itself is easy and free, but it takes a lot of work to create valuable content for the audience, and the challenging part is dedicating resources and time to the social media strategy. In addition, social media marketing requires strategy, research, networking, discussion, measurement, and et cetera. As Coles (2017, p. x) puts it, most social media platforms have their own built-in data analytics tools that allow companies to review the progress, success, and engagement of their advertising campaigns.

Abu- Rumman & Alhadid (2014, p. 317) have brought together five dimensions that build social media marketing:

Online Communities: Social media can be used by a company to build community around its products / business. Living communities create loyalty and encourage conversations that can impact business development and improvement.

Interaction: For instance, a Twitter account allows a user to quickly and simultaneously inform their followers about a specific topic. Nowadays, social networking sites enable more and better interaction with the online community and, this is done by sending up to date information that is relevant to consumers.

Sharing of Content: This refers to the extent to which a person exchanges, shares and receives content through social media.

Accessibility: Social media is very easy to access and has minimal or no cost to use. It is easy to use and requires no special skills or knowledge from users.

Credibility: Credibility is about communicating to people and it should be clear. As well as increasing the credibility of the speeches and actions, connecting emotionally with the target audience, motivating the buyer, and at the same time creating loyal customers. For the sake of social media platform, it provides a great opportunity for both large and small businesses to network and reach their target audiences. Businesses can connect directly with their target audience and build trust by listening to their words.

5.2.1 Photography marketing

According to Bisnes (2018) the photographer must be found on various online media and possibly on traditional media. Bisnes (2018) suggests photography marketing should consider the following:

The portfolio is the photographer´s business card. It is important to select the images that best reflect the professionalism of the photographer. For instance, a wedding photographer´s portfolio should include a large number of wedding images using different techniques and concepts.

A photographer´s website is like a shop window, so for this reason, if a photographer wants to give a professional impression of themselves, the website must usually be made by a professional. The website should clearly show the photographer´s expertise and portfolio. In addition, more detailed contact information must be easily accessible on the website. If something important is not immediately found, the customer will often switch to the next photographer.

The photographer should specialize and highlight this specialization, which means following different trends and immediately providing that service to the customer before others offer the same. For instance, photographing pets is one of the trends many people are willing to pay for. And if the pet image is shared on various social media channels and the customer has been satisfied, it can bring in large number of new clients who are interested in pet photography. The photographer should find and develop their own expertise as well as follow trends and market niches.

Networking is an important part of marketing for a photographer. Marketing means any activity that promotes the sale of a photographer´s product or service. Contacting by phone or email to different parties and managing small gigs is a marketing opportunity that can get a lot of potential customers and more gigs.

Visibility on social media. The photographer should be featured on as many social media platforms as possible in terms of marketing. The role of social media platforms is to get the attention and interest of potential customers so they end up on the photographer´s website. And finally, the purpose of a website is to get a deal, which means buying the services and products offered by a photographer. On Instagram, it is relevant to define the target audience and try to reach them. This requires the photographer to do research on the subject and find out who the target audience are and what they are interested in.

Traditional media should not be overlooked or neglected, as some potential customers are also reachable by television or newspaper. If a photographer specializes in, for instance, wedding photography, newspaper advertising is one place to advertise. Ads that are mounted on walls and bulletin boards are also functional. The last and most recent is the freelancer attitude, which is the best form of marketing.

5.2.2 The use of Social Media Marketing in photography

According to Chan (2011, p.xvii) digital photographers need social media as part of their marketing program, if the goal is to gain visibility and build credibility throughout a target niche and to maintain the desired market position in the long term. Chan (2011, p.23), presents a simple formula for defining a market position goal, where the photographer should define what kind of photography they offer. Defining the target audience, for instance, by photographing only weddings. The more the market is sliced to determine the position of the company, the smaller the potential customer pool will be but the more market share the company may have in that particular niche (Chan, 2011, p. 24). In content production for social media, a company should focus on its niche market and strengthen the existing market position, and not try to cover all forms of photography or to address everyone who might be interested in some form of photography (Chan 2011, p.68). Chan (2011, p.70) continues, selling outside the company´s niche market could bring a temporary increase in sales, but unfocused brand cannot maintain its market share in an increasingly competitive market.

In company Xs case, the business and its operations viewed are very small. Social media, such as Instagram, offer an efficient yet affordable way of promoting brand image and products for the starting professional. Besides Instagram, the Internet has a vast variety of social medias; Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest and et cetera. When compiling a plan for social media marketing for photographer, it is important to note one aspect of the said different medias – they all have a different theme. Twitter is for opinions, news and short comments. It has a limited character per post and its audience is there for text. Facebook is more for sharing one's personal life, like family images and happenings. Pinterest is for sharing ideas and instructions. Instagram is the only one, which is themed to share moments via photographs and videos. The audience uses it for the image content.

According to Socialreport (2019a) social media marketing and a small business go hand-in-hand, and it is the easiest and most cost-effective way for a company to promote any product or service. If a company invests enough time and effort into learning how to use social media, it will be able to run an effective social media marketing campaign independently.

5.2.3 Instagram as a tool for the company

Instagram offers a variety of functions designed for business and marketing use. The functions included, for instance, statistics on the account and single images. In order for the user to unlock said features, they must change their Instagram accounts type from "personal" to "business". The standard business account is free of charge, however, for instance, promoting posts is a paid service.

Screenshots used in this paragraph are from company X´s Instagram account, captured on 05.07.2019.

Figure 1 and 2 illustrates the "Insights" view of a business account. Insights include statistics on activity, content and audience. The activity view offers the user insight on how actively their profile has been visited in a weeks' time span. The view demonstrates actions taken on their account, profile visits, website clicks (given the user has set a web page address in their account feeds main page), discovery and reach (how many different other Instagram accounts have reached their account), and lastly impressions, meaning how many times their profile have been viewed. Impressions include also all multiple visits from the same user account.
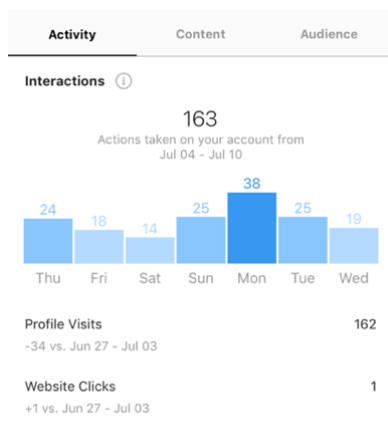
Figure 1. Accounts activity statistics, company X 03.07.2019 Figure 2. Accounts activity statistics, company X 03.07.2019
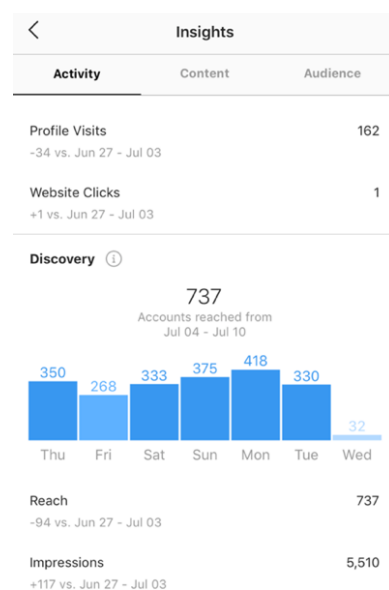
The "content" view on the insights (figure 3) shows the statistics for each particular image published after the user has set up their account as a business account. The user can pick one particular image of which they want to spectate the statistics or scroll the statistics by type of interaction. The statistics for one particular image are presented in figure 4. Figure 4 shows the specific statistics for one particular image; numbers of likes, comments, shares and saves.

Figure 4 also illustrates how many accounts the particular has reached, how many follows this image has resulted in and how many impressions the account has.
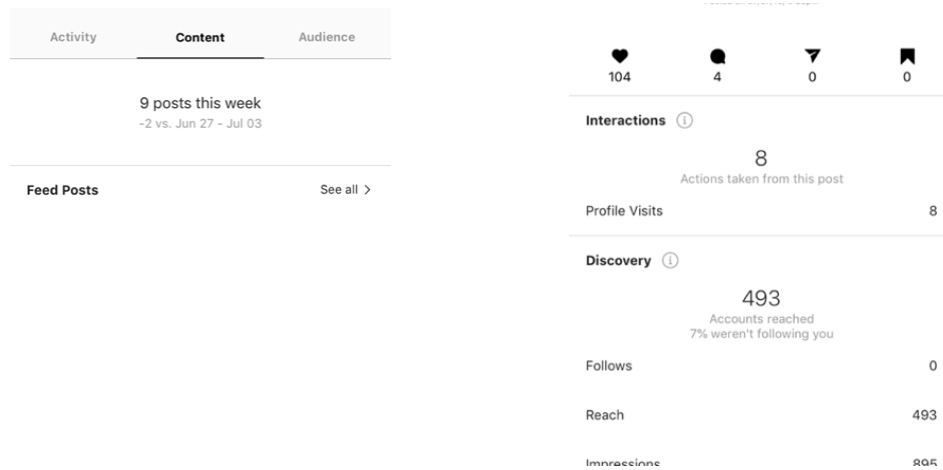
Figure 3. Accounts content statistics, company X 03.07.2019 Figure 4. Accounts statistics for one image, company X 03.07.2019

Figure 5 shows how the impressions part of the statistics show also more in-depth where the impressions have originated from; Instagram users home feed, from company X profile, from the location used in the image or from other, in other words, non-specified method. If company X has had used a paid promotion for the image exemplified in figure 5, the statistics for the promotion would appear on the bottom of the page, as in figure 5.

Figure 5. Accounts statistics for one image, company X 03.07.2019

The third part of the Insights overview, figures 6-7, shows statistics on the audience viewing the profile. The audience view shows the current number of followers, and how many new followers there have been during the past 7 days. Top locations view shows where geographically majority of the other accounts viewing the profile were during the time of their view. The audience can be seen by cities or by countries.

Figure 6. Account audience statistics company X 03.07.2019
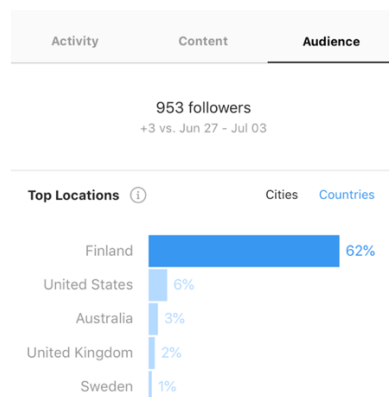
Figure 7. Account audience statistics company X 03.07.2019

26

The audience statistics can also be spectated from gender and age points of view, as illustrated in figure 8.
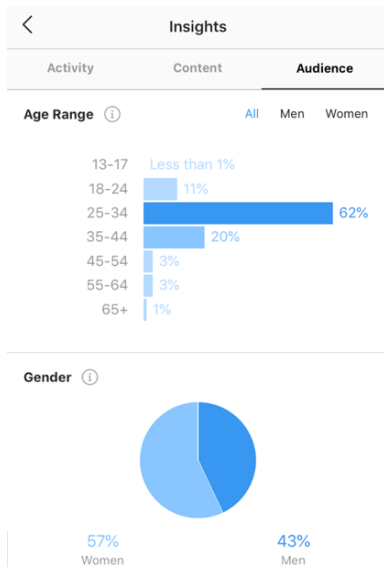
Figure 8. Account audience statistics company X 03.07.2019

Figures 9 and 10 show when the followers of company X account are active. Figure 9 shows the average time of the day the followers are active and figure 10 the days of the week the followers are the most active.
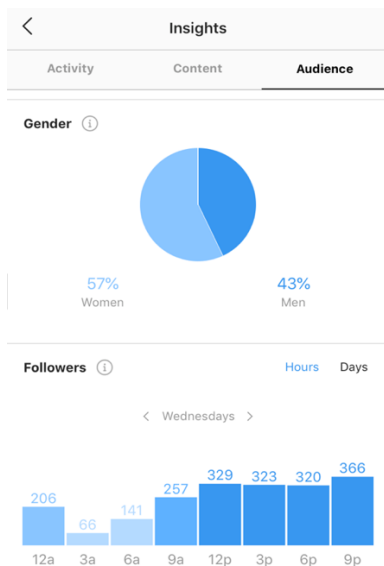
Figure 9. Account audience statistics company X 03.07.2019
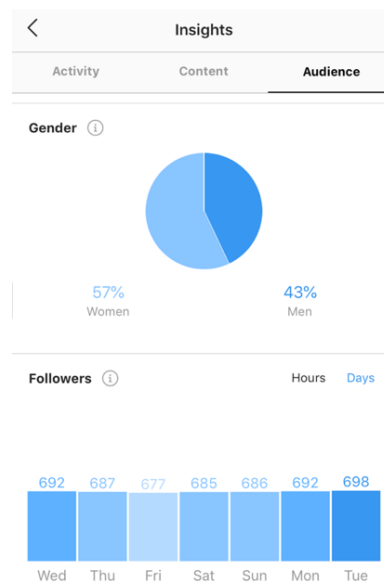
Figure 10. Account audience statistics company X 03.07.2019

5.2.4 Instagram as a tool for the marketing

Instagram Ads help a business reach the larger and more targeted audience. And it offers a lot of different Ads and lots of targeting options. Instagram Ads can be used for a variety of purposes including brand awareness, adding traffic to websites, lead the generation and increase post commitment. Over 2 million businesses are already using Instagram Ads (Bansal, 2018, p. 42).

The Ads options are divided as follows:

Stories Ads, enables business awareness, increase purchases, sales and more (Business Instagram, 2019b). With *Photo Ads,* the company can share the image in either square or landscape format (Business Instagram, 2019a). *Video Ads* have the same visual qualities as photo ads, adding visual, audio and motion power. In addition, ads can be 60 seconds long in either horizontal or square format (Business Instagram, 2019a). *Carousel Ads* can be used in campaigns that allow people to swipe to see more images or videos in a single ad (Business Instagram, 2019a). With *Collection Ads*, the company has the opportunity to visually inspire the audience and help them search, browse, and buy products. The company is able to tell an integrated story focusing on the product or lifestyle, through video, images or both (Business Instagram, 2019a). With *Ads in Explore,* a company has the ability to extend its campaign to more audiences and reach people who are looking for something new (Business Instagram, 2019c).

Benson (2018) states that Instagram has proven to be an effective marketing tool for companies whose goal is to increase their presence and the visibility of their products on social media. Depending on the size of the company, there is a chance of success and companies are able to generate revenue through Instagram. Instagram Stories make a company credible because they can make an impression through live posts and stories. The company can collaborate with influencers, work effectively with customers and follow its competitors. Hashtag enables the company to improve visibility and Instagram offers many ways to get creative. The above points are made by Benson (2018) and are the reasons why the importance of Instagram is growing, and how the company can benefit from it.

6 METHODOLOGY

This chapter will present the research, data collection, and data analysis methods used by the author in this thesis.

6.1 Qualitative and quantitative approaches

The research methodology chosen for the research was a combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

The most prominent difference between quantitative and qualitative methods is that the qualitative consists data, which cannot be necessarily measured with statistics and quantitative of numerical data. Quantitative method measures numerical data, facts such as how many, how often and in which proportion (Bailey et al., 2010, p.16). Qualitative method of research fits the thesis research, as the aim was to analyse the effect of human actions, such as attitudes and opinions and how they affect the end result. Krishnaswami & Satyaprasad (2010, p.7) define qualitative approach as a subjective assessment of the more human aspects of research, such as opinions, attitudes and behaviour and involves for example projective techniques. Qualitative research is, according to Leavy (2014 p. 18) a colourful method with various sides and perspectives. As the research subject in this thesis is a small entrepreneur, Leavys description of qualitative research resonates very well with the work. Leavy (2014, p. 87) describe how the qualitative method enables the researcher to see in their subjects' core. Qualitative research is exploratory and aids the researcher in seeing their research subject´s core and their thoughts are formatted based on their social interactions.

In a quantitative research method, statistics can be examined based on facts which are facts based on figures. Quantitative data is needed in the thesis to support the research in determining the subject´s "truth". As Balnaves and Caputi (2001, p.109) state, numbers are not neutral. The open-answer questions provide an insight about what the respondents want to say, but the quantitative data provides the answer to the simple question of what is the current state of the situation. The subject of the thesis might hear or see in Internet

publications (such as blogs, vlogs et cetera) that they are in fact popular, but the statistics tell the ominous truth.

6.1.1 The interview

The interviews with the thesis subject were conducted face to face. Social media, marketing and photography are all terms, subjects and themes, which change rapidly. As it was known that during the period of constructing the thesis, these three may and, most likely will, develop possibly many times and to different directions, a decision was made with the subject to conduct the interview twice. Interviews have been made July 27, 2019 and October 18, 2019.

The interview consisted of a set of basic information questions, such as background of the subject and the beginning of their career, and a set of more profound questions. The style of the interview was semi-structured, since it was predicted that a subject from the more artistic part of the society might also expand the scope of the interview during the matter, and by themselves give the interview more nuance and points of view.

6.1.2 Online survey

In addition to the interview, an online survey was conducted and posted on the author´s personal Instagram profile. The author´s profile is private, meaning none but the author´s followers could see and respond to the online survey. The number of followers was 203 (situation during the survey). Since the thesis was not restricted to a specific age group, gender or geographic area, respondent´s age, and place of residence were not asked in survey. These would not have added value to the research.

The purpose of the online survey was to find out the behaviour of followers and their views on certain issues at a general level. The survey could not be conducted through company X´s personal profile as it would have required the use of company X´s profile for 24 hours during the survey and more time to record the online survey results. However, this does not detract from the importance of the results in analysing and making

suggestions to company X, because the questions are generic and not specific to a partic-
ular service or product. The questions are presented in the next chapter.

Questions were published through Instagram Stories Quiz Sticker for 24 hours between
December 2 and December 3, 2019. There was a total of 19 questions and there was no
right or wrong answer, and each respondent was able to answer according to their own
opinion. Respondents are informed in advance that there is no right or wrong answer. And
the respondent could only select one answer from the list of response options. It was
possible to skip the questions if the respondent was not willing to answer a specific ques-
tion. Some of the respondents live outside Finland, so the questions are not limited to
people living in Finland. After a total of 24 hours, the survey was removed automatically.
The survey answers provide more information and insight on how some of the followers
feel about the issues presented. Since the survey was limited (the author´s account is pri-
vate), the response rate is not wide.

7 RESULTS

In this chapter the results of the interview and survey are presented. The interviewee´s
answers are presented first, followed by a survey that was answered by the author´s In-
stagram followers. Recommendations are made to company X based on the company´s
current situation and the responses given by the respondents. The interview is transcribed
and all related issues are listed in the next section.

7.1 The results of the interview

The first interview was held on July 27, 2019. The interviewee is the owner of company
X and her name will be mentioned as X in the text below.
According to X, it all started at a very young age, around the age 9-10 when she got her
first camera and then continued with SLR (single- lens reflex) cameras. Photography has
always been part of X and she enjoys capturing moments that she can return to later. She
believes that there is usually a story or a feeling behind the images. In 2016, X decided
to take her hobby a step further and founded company X, and has been a professional
photographer ever since. She works alone in the company X and manages everything

independently, meaning that she is responsible for taking, editing and marketing the images, as well as website maintenance. The advertising medium is the company´s website and social media platforms, mainly Instagram. Although she has other social media platforms, she is not as active in those others. When X first created an Instagram profile for personal use, at that time she did not think she would use it for business purposes. In the beginning, the shared images were mostly about everyday life, such as herself, friends, food et cetera. X finds it easy to use Instagram and the application has a large number of users. X has not felt the need to switch it to another social media platform, as least not yet. X says sharing images and videos is easy and fast on Instagram. And if needed, Instagram has its own filters that can be used. X feels that sharing images is easy with a large audience and there is no shortage of users, especially when she has an open profile, meaning images and videos are visible to everyone. X says that followers bring more visibility, for instance, by liking her images and sharing her images on their own profiles means more visibility for her. At the same time, she points out that it also has disadvantages. A large number of users also means that separation is difficult because the more users there are, the more options are available. X says that the number of followers is important to the company, as it may look more interesting to other followers if the number of followers is wide. Therefore, it brings more "publicity" and more followers; the more followers you have, the more interesting your business will be to other users. X finds it challenging to differentiate herself from the large crowd of Instagram users. X says users are constantly sharing images on Instagram and the number of images is really wide. She is one of those users and her images are not noticed as much as she would like. X has shared images on her profile homepage and images / videos through Instagram Stories, without any special action to stand out from the crowd on Instagram. For her, sharing images is not regular, and the number and timing of image sharing varies. According to X, there are days when she may share two images during the day and there are times when she has not been able to share any images for a few days. Activity also varies, sometimes she is more active in sharing images and videos on the Instagram Stories than on her own profile homepage. X argued that although she notices all user comments, she does not always have time to respond to those comments and some of the comments may have been only Emoji, in other words, no text. She may have responded to these comments by pressing the like button. X has both long-terms and short-term followers. The reason why some follow and stop following in a short time is unknown. X speculates that this may be

due to their behaviour or they want attention to their profile. Perhaps the image does not interest them anymore or for other reasons. X finds it easy to press a single button: "follow" and "unfollow", and can even be accidentally pressed. X says there are users who are viewing her images and videos but do not react to them in any way, for instance, by pressing a like button or do not start following the profile. She does not know the reason but she is interested in knowing the reason. X is gathering followers by sharing images and videos, and sometimes by using hashtags. Also by liking other users´ images and videos, and through this, other users have also noticed X´s profile. She has not taken any specific action. X follows her list of followers to the extent that the new follower is not a fake account who starts following her. If so, she will remove it from her follower list. X does not closely follow her list of followers to see if the user is still following her after two weeks or not. She may occasionally notice that someone has stopped following. X has wondered what factors influence it, but has not paid much attention to it. X says sometimes she shares images on her profile homepage that she is really happy with and gets less likes than she originally thought. And sometimes the other way around. The exact reason for this is unknown. In addition to the challenges mentioned above, she has also drawn attention to other challenges on Instagram. X believes there are numerous options available for users and it is easy for them to switch companies. It requires only one button press to unfollow. X mentions that followers are not so- called "committed" as before. The number of service providers is wide and it is challenging to differentiate or draw user´s attention to own services. It is challenging to maintain some followers and so-called "customer relationship" are short-lived. As a professional photographer, X pays a lot of attention to the technicalities of the image, such as light control, image layout and et cetera. According to X there are a lot images that are not as technically well taken, but receive much more attention (likes and share), than those taken by professionals. Furthermore, it seems that the work of professionals "drowns" in the mass on the Instagram.

The first section of the interview ended.

The second interview was held on October 18, 2019.
Based on another interview, X is still using Instagram. She has noticed significant changes in a short time. These changes are related to the visibility of businesses on Instagram. Businesses are highlighted on Instagram and there are more images and videos related to

business. More business names and ads can be seen on Instagram. X considers it as a good thing, because numerous people are searching for information about a company´s products and services on social media. Today, this is how it works. X claims that, however, it emphasizes the wealth of information and services available. X also sees it as a challenge in terms of how small entrepreneurs or individuals can stand out and compete with top users / companies. X ´s number of followers and likes has remained relatively the same and X still hopes to gain more visibility for her images and profile. And she hopes that this change will also affect her business. Over the summer 2019, X has used more Instagram Stories than the homepage. On Instagram Stories the image will remain for 24 hours and then disappear unless those images are saved separately. X has found this fun and easy. However, this has not increased the number of followers but more user has viewed the Stories. On Instagram Stories, X shares more of everyday life images, while on the profile´s homepage images are taken with a SLR camera, which have been carefully considered. Images shared on Instagram Stories may have been taken with smartphone without any editing. On Instagram Stories, she shares images that she likes but does not feel the need to keep them constantly visible, so they disappear after 24 hours.

With a business account, X will be able to keep track of where her followers are from (geography) and some other basic information. X has not asked her followers directly what they would like to see, but instead has taken images of topics she is interested in, such as travelling, nature and et cetera. She assumes some of her followers are following her profile because they are interested in seeing the same images as she is. X does not have a specific or only one target audience because she shares images of different topics that interest her. X is aware that since it is a business account, more attention should be paid to the interest of her followers, meaning that the opinion of followers should be given more consideration. Commenting behaviour has remained the same, and this has not changed between interviews. In the first interview, X said it was challenging to stand out from the crowd and now it is becoming more emphasized, and the competition is getting fiercer. There are many competitors in the same industry. Ideas are repetitive, more creativity and a constant presence on social media are needed. However, being present on social media 24/7 has not been possible for X and it seems to her that those who are not able to be fully present will be left behind very quickly and easily. If the company is not constantly present, someone else is offering the same services to their followers. X sees

this as probably one of the reasons why followers so easily switch from one company to another. X has used hashtags, otherwise the behaviour has remained almost the same as during the first interview. From her own experience, she says it is really challenging when trying to search for a company, product, information or service on Instagram. The reason is the wide supply of information and images. She feels that she is drowning, even as a "follower". At the same time, anyone can share an image and text on Instagram, so it is challenging to distinguish the correct image and text.

X has constantly heard people say: *"they have a good camera",* and she sometimes wonders if followers are interested in knowing if the image was taken by a professional photographer or not. And are professional photographers different from non-professional photographers anymore. X believes that it is not just about the camera, it is more about the photographer´s skills and knowledge. So far, X feels that Instagram is the right platform for her because she has long-term followers who have been following her work for a long time. At this point, she is not yet able to tell about the future and whether there will be another social media platform that could be more useful for her work. All the shared images on Instagram are part of her work portfolio and since this is a photography business she believes that followers are also interested in seeing her older images. In addition, X finds it nice to see old images in the same place. During the interviews, X did not cooperate with anyone. She is interested in cooperation, but has not received any request, nor has she proposed cooperation with anyone.

X ´s goal is to be able to stand out with her works and make as many people as possible aware of them. She works hard for them and every image has a story and a message she would like to share. The desired result is committed followers, exposure, expanding the clientele and sales.

7.2 Online survey questions and results

The first four questions in the online survey were designed to determine respondents´ activity on Instagram. Other online survey questions aimed to find out what the author´s followers are interested in, what they think about a certain thing and how they behave on

Instagram. The images on the left show the survey questions and the images on the right show the answers to those questions. The answers are in numbers, not in percentage.

First, the figure 12 shows that 134 of all followers saw the first question, and 75 of them responded. Based on the answers, 70 of the respondents use Instagram daily, 2 of the respondents use a couple of times a week, 1 of the respondents a few times a week and 2 of the respondents rarely.
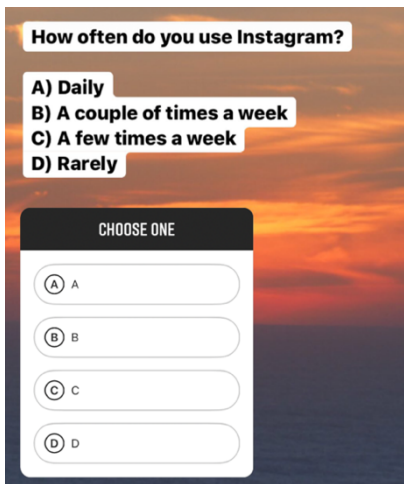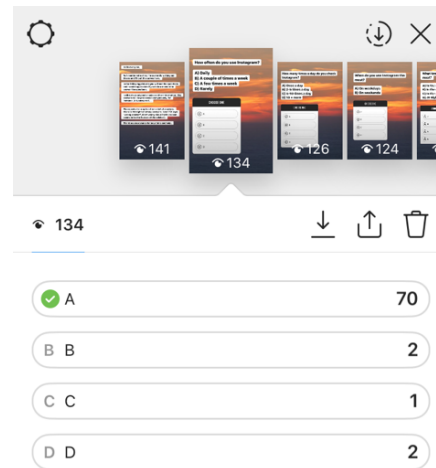

Figure 11. How often do you use Instagram?

Figure 12. How often do you use Instagram?

Secondly, the figure 14 shows the activity of respondents´ on Instagram. A total of 126 followers saw the question. And of these 6 people check their Instagram once a day. However, most of the respondents check their Instagram 2-5 times a day as 24 chose this option. The second most popular option was 5-10 times a day checked by 22 respondents. And the remaining 16 respondents check their Instagram 10 times or more.
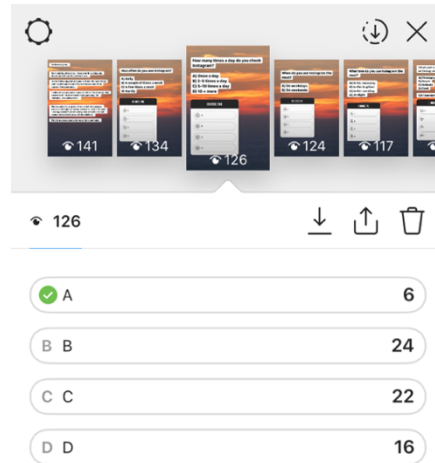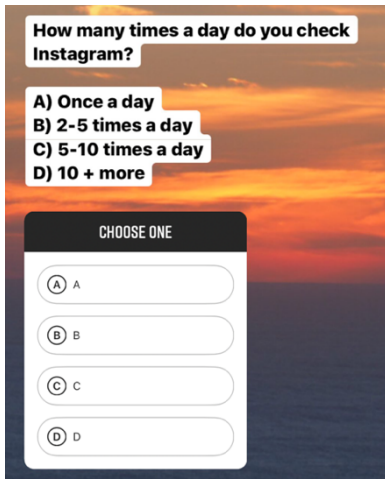
Figure 13. How many times a day do you check Instagram? Figure 14. How many times a day do you check Instagram?

Thirdly, the figure 15 shows that there were only two options to this question, but two of the respondents have accidentally pressed C and D, which has no answer and they were not an option. The figure 16 shows that a total of 124 followers saw the question, and it can be seen that most respondents use Instagram on weekdays rather than on weekends. Option A, which related to weekdays was overwhelmingly chosen, with 46 people and 22 people chose the weekend.
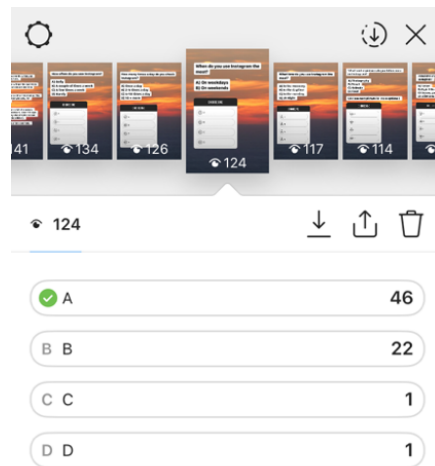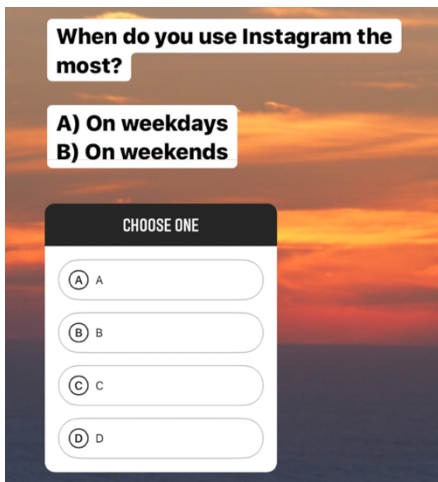
Figure 15. When do you use Instagram the most? *Figure 16. When do you use Instagram the most?*

The figure 17 is the last question about respondents' activity. Figure 18 shows respondents are most active in the evening than other times. Based on the answers, 44 people use Instagram the most in the evening, 13 people in the daytime, 7 people in the morning and only 2 people at night.
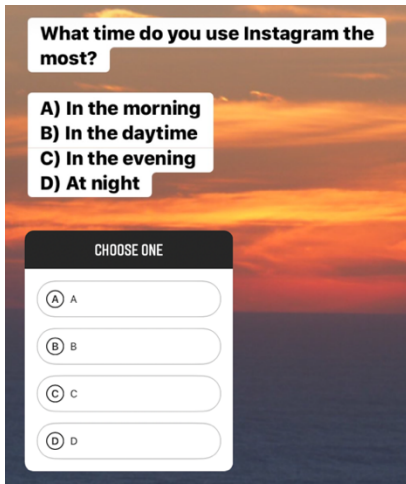
Figure 17. What time do you use Instagram the most?   *Figure 18. What time do you use Instagram the most?*
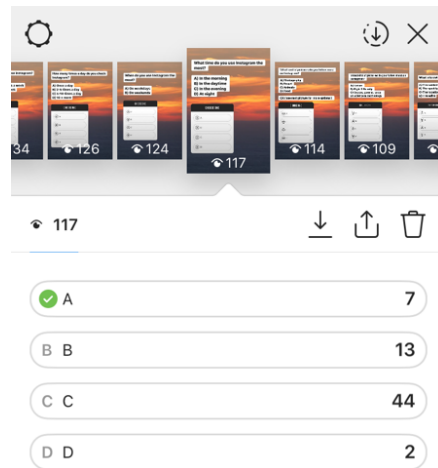
Figure 19 and figure 21 had the same questions, but with different options for the respondents to choose from. This was done because it was not possible to add A-H options in one query. As shown in figure 19, respondents were given four different categories to choose from and there were: photography, travel, animals and food. Photography and animals were equally selected, with 15 people each. 11 people follow travel images on Instagram and the remaining 5 people are most interested in following food related images.
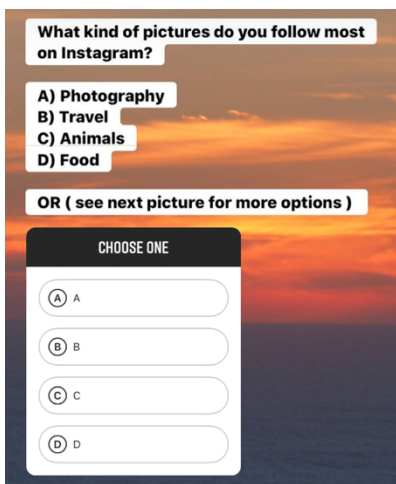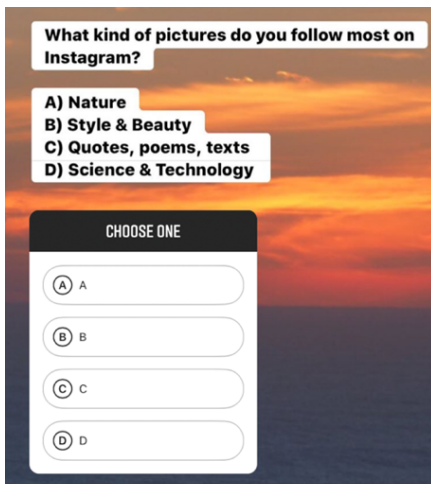

Figure 19. What kind of pictures do you follow most on Instagram? Figure 20. What kind of pictures do you follow most on Instagram?
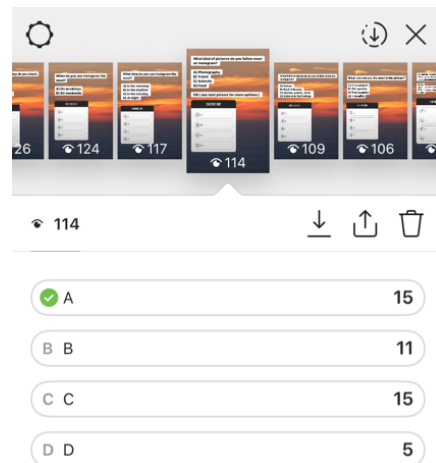
As mentioned in the previous figure, the same question continues in figure 21 but with different options. The respondents were now given the following categories to choose from; nature, style & beauty, quotes; poems; texts, science & technology. The difference between those interested in nature images and those interested in style & beauty images was really small, only 6 people. In the same manner, the difference between those interested in quotes, poems, texts and those interested in science & technology images was even smaller, only 1 person.
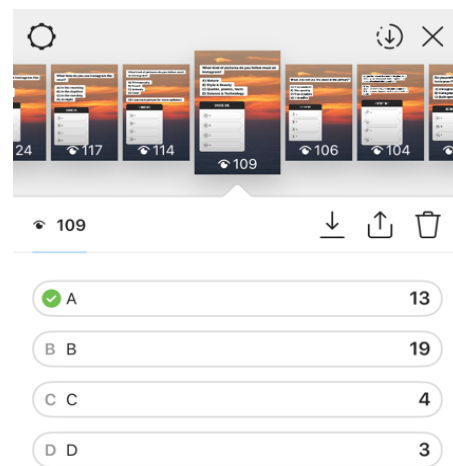
Figure 21. What kind of pictures do you follow most on Instagram? Figure 22. What kind of pictures do you follow most on Instagram?

A question in figure 23 was dedicated to find out which factor interests the respondents most in the image they see on Instagram. A total of 106 follower saw the survey and a large number, 42 people are most interested in the content of the image. 9 people are interested in the quality of the image and 9 people in the location of the image. Least interested respondents the edits of the image, only 3 people.
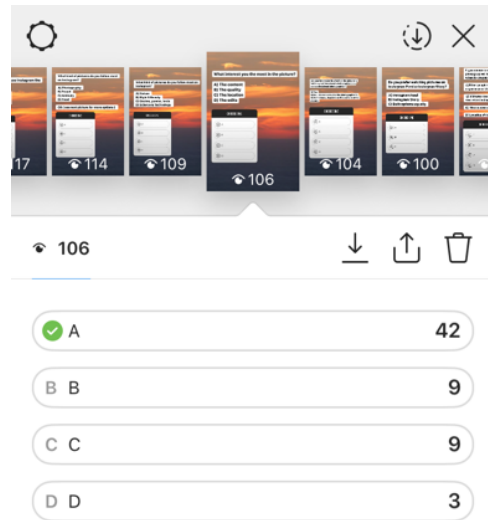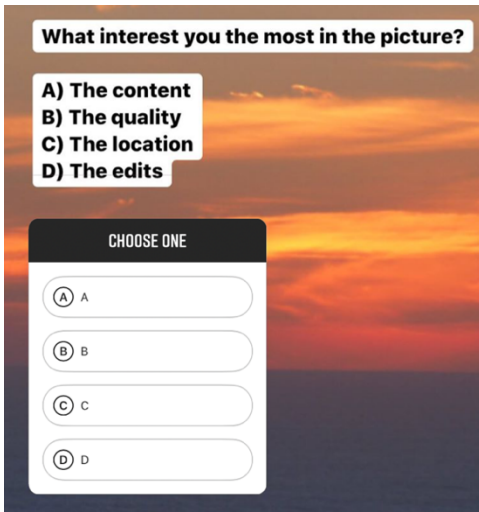
Figure 23. What interest you the most in the picture? Figure 24. What interest you the most in the picture?

In figure 25, only A-C answers were given in this question, and once again, two respondents accidentally chose option D. In figure 25, the respondents were asked if they were interested who is behind the camera, a professional photographer or a non-professional. Most of the respondents, who make 31 people, are not interested in whether the image was taken by a professional photographer or not. However, the interest of 25 people depends on the content of the image. Only 4 people were interested, regardless of the content of the image.
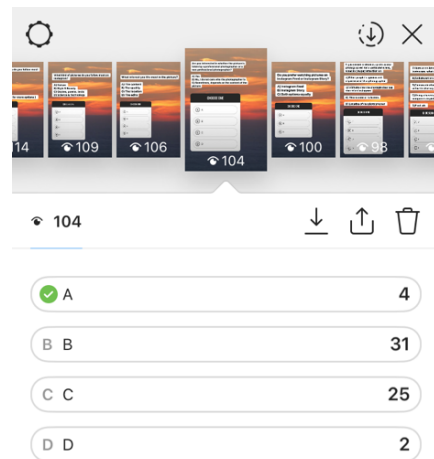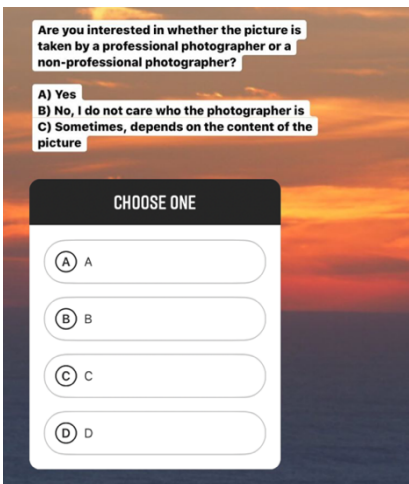
Figure 25. Are you interested in whether the picture is taken by a professional photographer or a non-professional photographer?
Figure 26. Are you interested in whether the picture is taken by a professional photographer or a non-professional photographer?

In figure 27, the respondents were asked to choose from three options, the one that suited them best related to watching images on Instagram Feed or Instagram Story. 32 people prefer to view images from Instagram Feed and Instagram Story equally. However, 20 people prefer to watch images on Instagram Feed, while 13 people prefer to watch on Instagram Story.
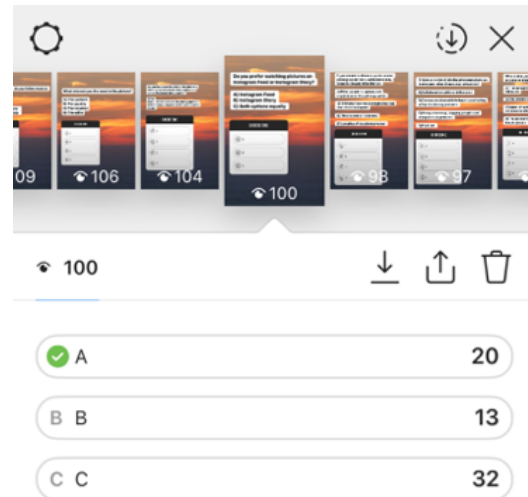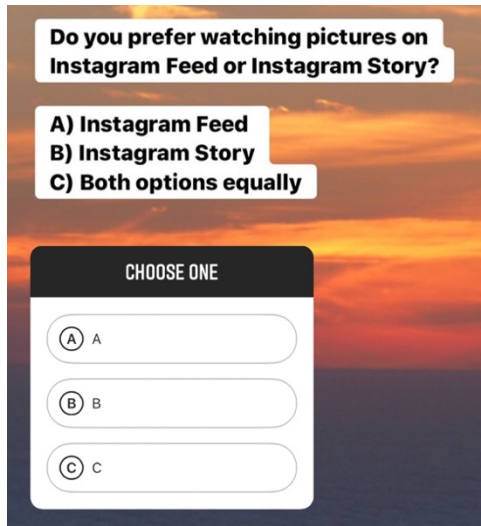

Figure 27. Do you prefer watching pictures on Instagram Feed or Instagram Story?
Figure 28. Do you prefer watching pictures on Instagram Feed or Instagram Story?

In figure 29, respondents were asked what they would pay attention to if they decided to choose a professional photographer for a particular event. Most of the respondents, who were 34 people, pay attention to the photographer´s portfolio on Instagram. Secondly, the other people´s opinion and experience of that photographer, chosen by 20 people. Only 1 person pays attention to the photographer´s location. It was interesting note that none of the respondents were interested in the number of followers of the photographer.
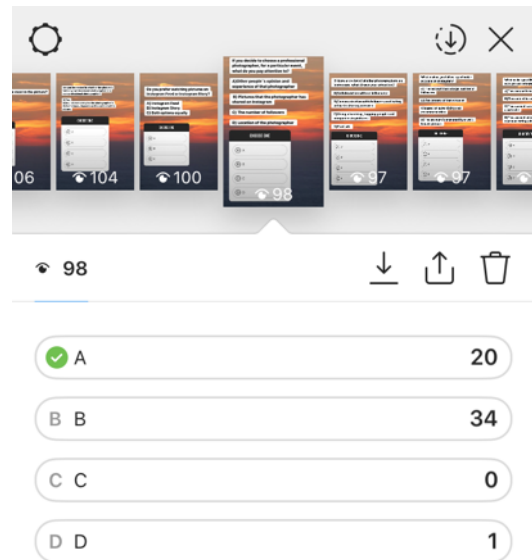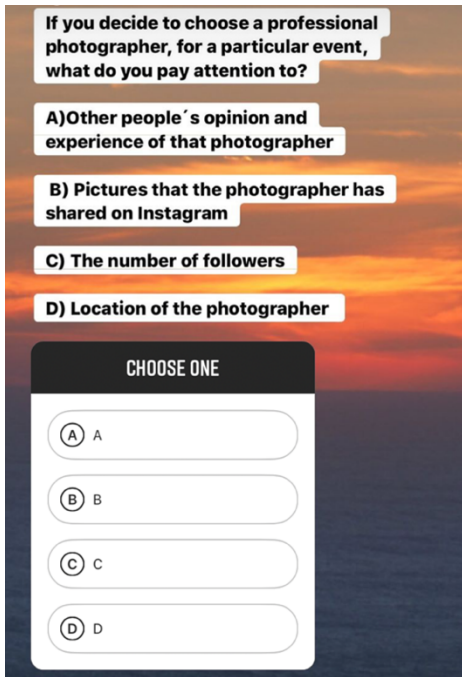
Figure 29. If you decide to choose a professional photographer, for a particular event, what do you pay attention to?
Figure 30. If you decide to choose a professional photographer, for a particular event, what do you pay attention to?

In figure 32, the answers show that communicating with followers and being active in image sharing attracts 39 people, if there are many similar photographers on Instagram. Collaboration with an influencer attracts 9 people and using a hashtag, tagging people and companies in images, 3 people. Paid ads also draw the attention of only 3 people.
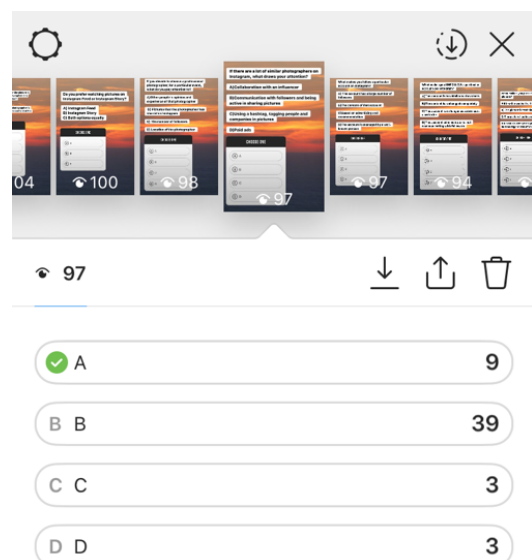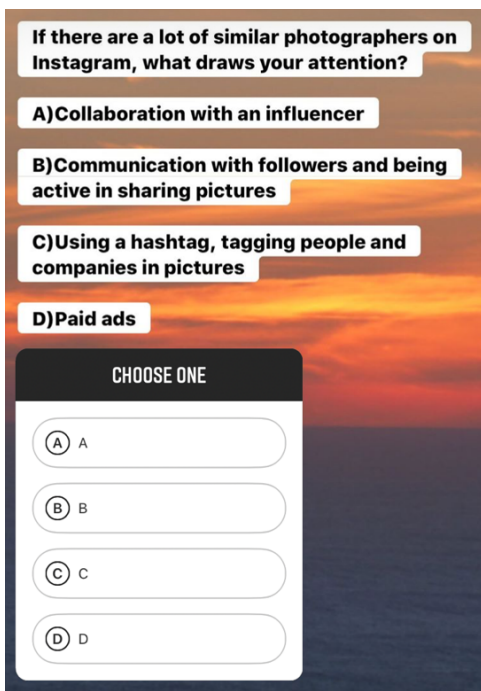
When asked what makes respondents follow a specific account on Instagram, most of them, 51 people, chose the content of the account as the deciding factor. Only 2 people would start following the account due to its a large number of followers and 2 others because of ads and recommendation. Only 1 of the respondents would start following because the account is managed by a well-known person.
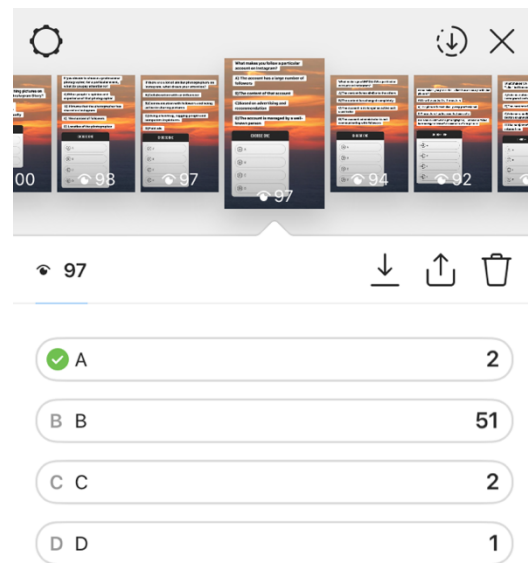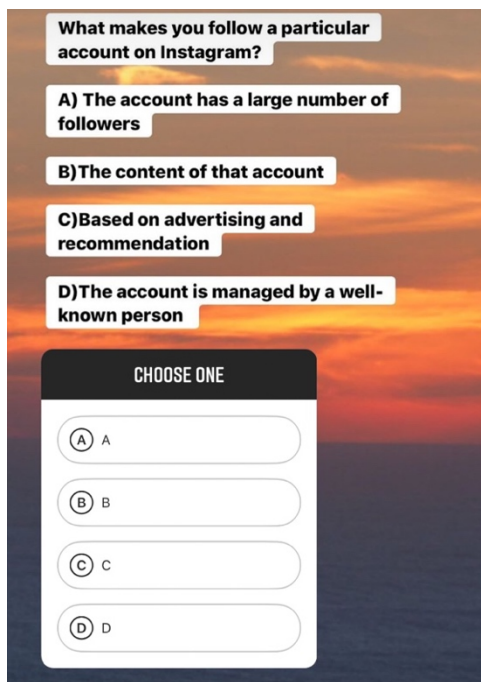

Figure 33. What makes you follow a particular account on Instagram?
Figure 34. What makes you follow a particular account on Instagram?

Next, in figure 35, respondents were asked what would then cause to unfollow the account. 27 people will unfollow if the content of the account has changed completely, 17 people if the content of the account is too similar to the other accounts and 13 people would stop following if the account is no longer as active as it once was. According to the survey, none of the respondents would stop following the account if the account administrator does not communicate with the followers.
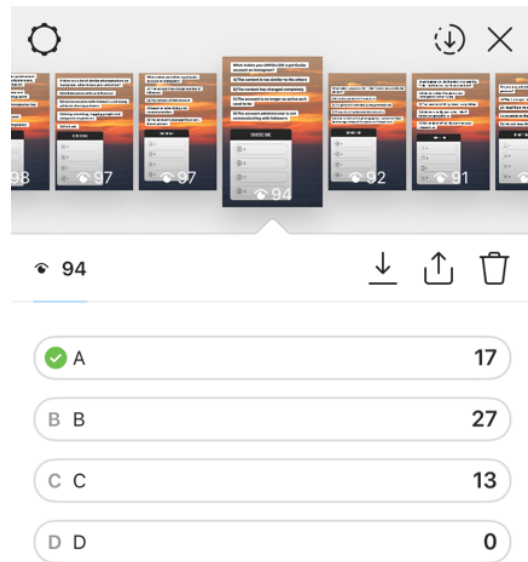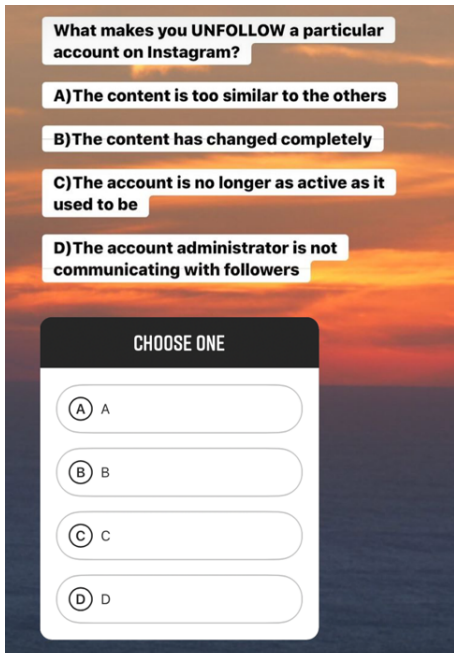
Figure 35. What makes you unfollow a particular account on Instagram?
Figure 36. What makes you unfollow a particular account on Instagram?

As shown in figure 38, the content of the image became by far the most important factor when asked what causes respondents to press the like button on a particular image. Based on this, 49 people are pressing the like button. Because of the technical features, the like button would press 3 people and 4 people because they know the photographer, so they would press the like button regardless of the content of the image. None of the respondents chose option C, so image editing was irrelevant in this case.

When asked what would prevent them from pressing the like button, 38 people replied that they were not interested in the subject of the image. 6 people will not even notice the images shared on Instagram´s Feed or Story, 6 people if the content of the image is repetitive and the remaining 6 respondents do not usually press the like button on any image.
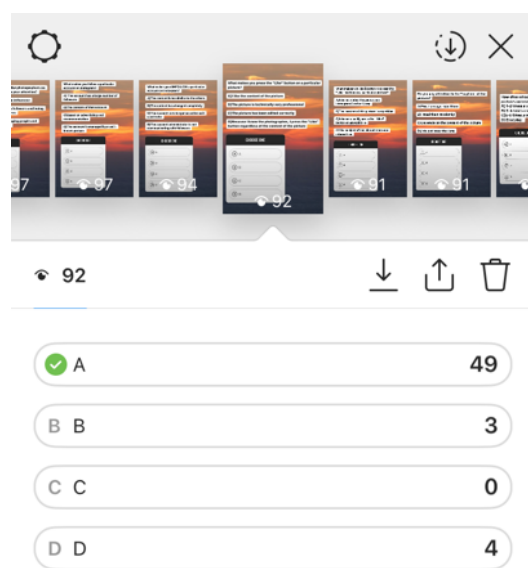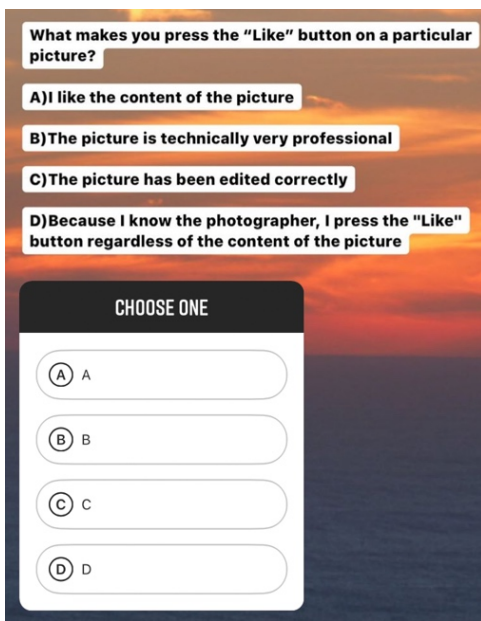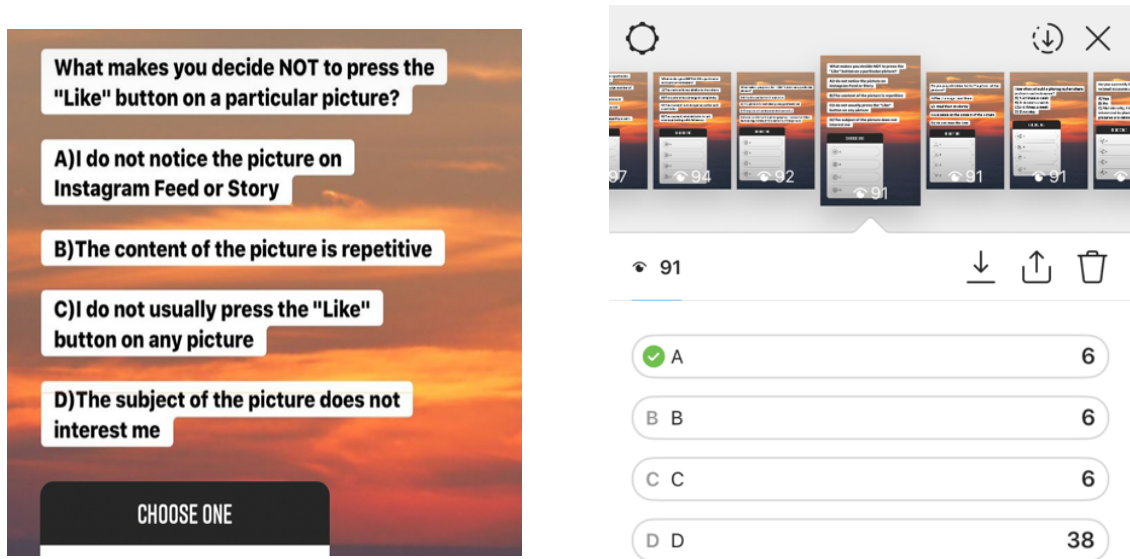
Figure 39. What makes you decide NOT to press "Like" button on a particular picture?
Figure 40. What makes you decide NOT to press "Like" button on a particular picture?

The survey released that the majority of respondents pay attention to a certain extent to the caption of the image. Of all the respondents, 20 people always read the caption while 14 people read randomly. Depending on the content of the image, 22 people will read the caption and only 1 respondent does not have time to read it.
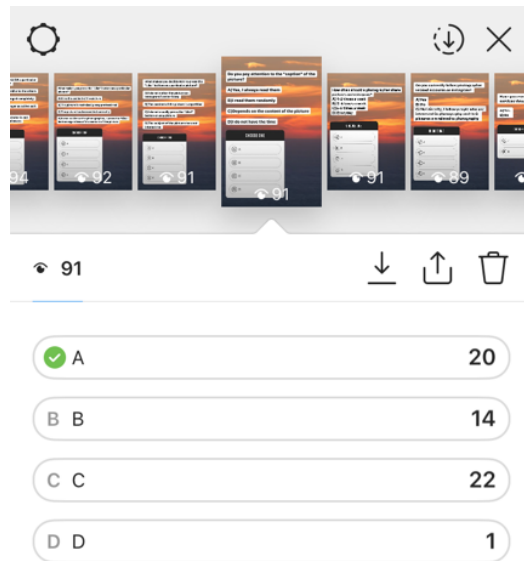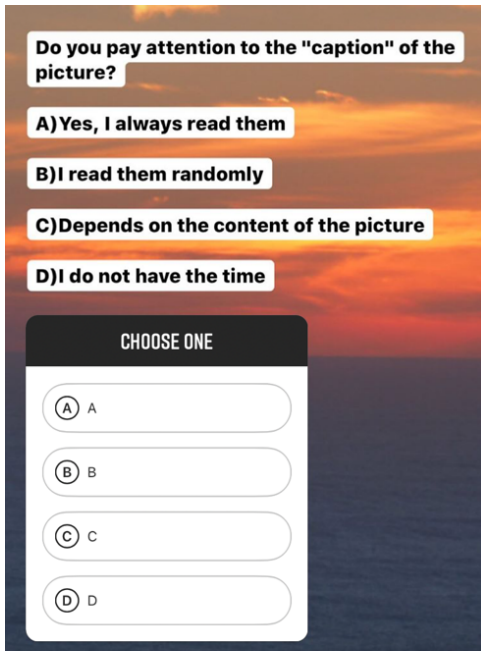
Figure 41. Do you pay attention to the "caption" of the picture? Figure 42. Do you pay attention to the "caption" of the picture?

When asked how often a photographer should share images on Instagram, 14 people responded 1-2 times a week and 32 people responded 3-4 times a week. 5 people felt that 5-6 times a week was appropriate and 7 people felt that daily.
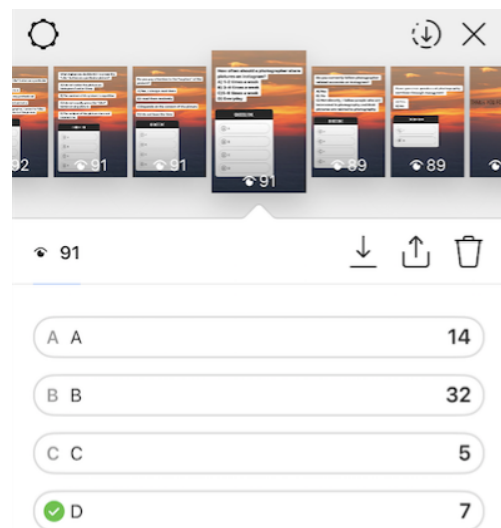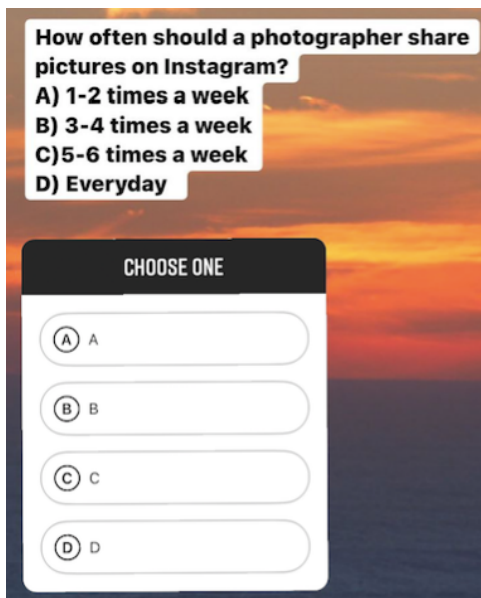
Figure 43. How often should a photographer share pictures on Instagram?
Figure 44. How often should a photographer share pictures on Instagram?

The figure 45 shows that there were only three options for this questions, but 2 of the respondents have accidentally pressed D, which has no answer and was not even an option. The figure 46 shows that 31 people are following photographer related accounts on Instagram, while 6 people do not follow at all. 18 of respondents do not directly, but they follow people who are interested in photography and their images are related to photography.
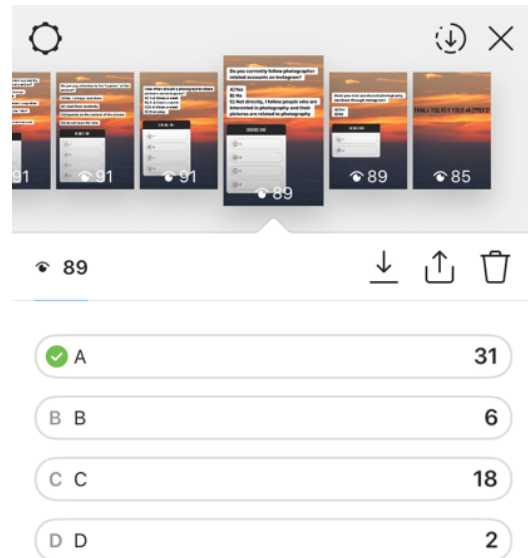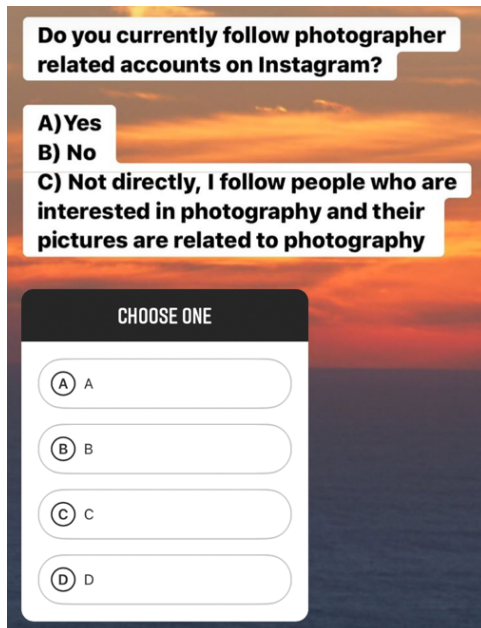
Figure 45. Do you currently follow photographer related accounts on Instagram?
Figure 46. Do you currently follow photographer related accounts on Instagram?

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked if they had ever purchased photography services through Instagram. A total of 50 people responded negatively and 7 people responded positively.
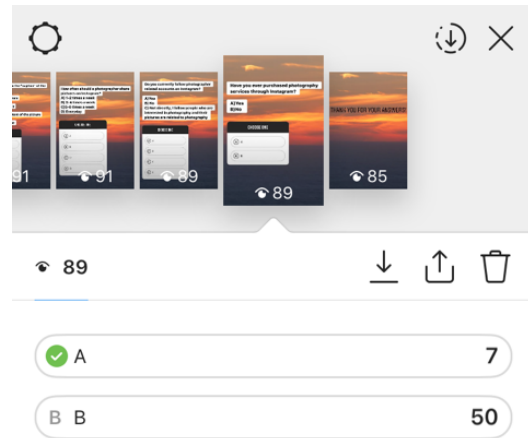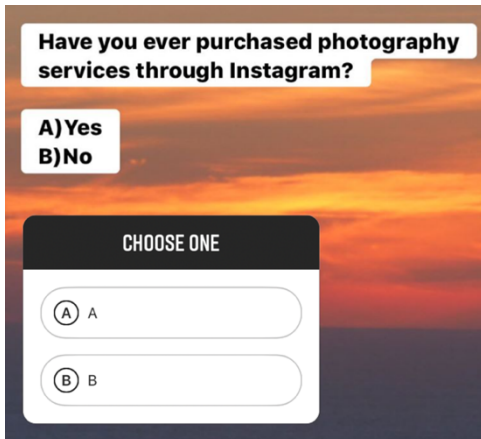
Figure 47. Have you ever purchased photography services through Instagram?
Figure 48. Have you ever purchased photography services through Instagram?

8 DISCUSSION

This chapter reviews the interview, the results of the online survey, and answer the research questions that were presented at the beginning of the thesis. In addition, this chapter analyses how survey responses can be utilised, particularly in the company X case.

Based on the results of the interview, company X started operations in 2016 and since then, has not taken any specific measures to differentiate from the mass on Instagram, nor does company X have an exact timeline or plans for when or how often share images on Instagram. Image sharing is irregular and without any specific timing. As survey answers have shown, it matters when and how often images are shared on Instagram. Because it varies depending on the time and the day when users are most online, notice the image and possibly react to it in some way. Based on the result of survey a large majority (70 people) use Instagram daily and use it more than once a day. Weekends and times also vary when Instagram is used the most. According to the survey, some of the respondents (22 people) use Instagram on weekends, but clearly, it is used a lot more on weekdays (46 people). And the time when respondents spend the most time on Instagram is in the evening (44 people) and then in the daytime (13 people). The least time spent on Instagram is in the morning and at night. This concludes that if a company, in this case company X wants more visibility for images, the images should be shared when the users are online on Instagram. If images are shared when the target group is not present and online, then it might go unnoticed. In addition to time and day, it is a valuable information to

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know what kind of content the followers are interested in. The survey divided the image categories into eight sections, and respondents were able to choose one. From the answers it can be concluded that even a small number of followers have such a wide range of interests, nor did a particular category differ significantly from other categories. The interview released that company X has not been active in communicating with followers, and for that reason the follower´s interest was not known. In company X ´s case, the survey can be used to identify different interest of followers and utilise this information to produce content for different audiences. This is highlighted in the following answer, which indicates that respondents (42 people) are most interested in the content of the image more than the quality, location or edits of the image. Thus, the importance of the image content is emphasized once again.

According to an interview with company X, there is no exact strategy for sharing images on Instagram, like which feature is used more; Instagram Stories, Instagram Feed or maybe both equally. The amount and timing of these features is occasional and not systematic. Based on the survey, the popularity of Instagram Feed (20 people) and Instagram Story (13 people) was almost the same, but clearly a majority (32 people) would prefer to watch at images of both features. Hence, both features have their own target groups and some even favour both at the same time, company X will be able to utilize this information and design its strategy based on this information.

As mentioned in section 5.2.1 the photographer should make a portfolio, since the portfolio is the photographer´s business card (Bisnes, 2018). Building a portfolio on Instagram and customer experience really play a big part in choosing a photographer. This is highlighted in respondents´ answers when asked on what basis they would choose the photographer. Respondents would make a decision based on the images on the photographer´s Instagram (34 people) and some respondents based on the experiences and opinions of other people (20 people), which emphasizes the importance of good customer service. Although, in the interview company X stated that followers matter and it makes the company more interesting to other followers, in connection with this question and among these respondents, it did not become a major factor as none of the respondents chose that option.

Company X mentioned in the interview that image sharing is not well designed and images will be shared once in a while. According to respondents (39 people), communicating with followers and being proactive in sharing images are factors that most catch their attention if there are many photographers. Based on the answers it is not decisive whether the account has a lot of followers, promoted and recommended, or even the account is managed by a well-known person when it comes to following an account. The most important factor is the content of that particular account (chosen by 51 people). Once again, the content itself can gain followers without much advertising. It is equally important to know what factors are causing people to unfollow a particular account on Instagram. In the interview, company X could not tell the exact reason why some would follow and then unfollow in a short time. The survey released that the main reason why respondents (27 people) unfollow a particular account is that the content has changed completely. The second major reason, according to the respondents (17 people), is that the content is too similar to the others and the third reason (13 people) was a decline in account activity.

Nor company X could say why some images are more popular and get more likes than others. Based on the survey, the reason for pressing the like button on a particular image is that respondents like the content of the image (49 people) more than the fact that the image is technically truly professional (3 people) or that the image was taken by someone familiar to the respondent (4 people). Image editing was also an option, but that option was not selected. And the reason why some images do not get likes is because the subject of the image does not interest the viewer (chosen by 38 people). For this reason, the viewer may skip the image without reacting to it. Only a small amount (6 people) does not press like button because they do not notice the image on Instagram Feed and/or Instagram Story, or because the content of the image is repetitive (6 people). For company X, it would be well advised to pay attention to the content of the image and what the followers are interested in. The repetition of the image does not seem to matter as much if the subject is interesting to followers. This also highlights the importance of customer segmentation and the fact that for a specific target group repeating the same themes in images is not a problem as long as the theme of the image is interesting to them. As mentioned earlier in chapter 5.2.1 it is relevant to define the target audience and try to

reach them (Bisnes, 2018). It should be noted that some respondents (6 people) do not press the like button in any case.

Almost all respondents read the caption, but the behaviour is different. Some of the respondents (20 people) always read them, some randomly (14 people) and some (22 people) depending on the content, which is positive from a photographer standpoint. A picture alone does not always convey all the messages it is intended to convey, so a caption can contribute to that message. Lufkin (2019) states that analyses has shown that images with captions or text embedded in, get more interaction than those without captions. As stated earlier, company X shares images without a specific time or scheduled amount. According to some respondents (32 people), the most suitable amount for a photographer to share image would be 3-4 times a week or 1-2 times a week (14 people). Company X would be able to combine the number and schedule of images to be shared. For instance, if the followers are best online in the mornings and evenings, and they think it would be good to share images twice a day, then it would be a good idea for company X to share one image in the morning and one in the evening. Most of the respondents (31 people) already follow photography related accounts on Instagram, so in this case to some degree the target group already exists. And the existing target audience could gain more visibility, as it is very common on Instagram for people to share other people´s images and recommend other photographers. Some of the respondents (18 people) do not follow directly, but follow people who have images related to photography. Some of these respondents may even be potential followers in the future if interest in the topic arises or increases. The last question of survey released that the purchase of photography services has been minimal, with no more than seven people purchasing photography services via Instagram and 50 people never purchasing.

8.1 Revisiting the research questions

To answer the first question, which was *"Is Instagram the right social media platform for a part-time photographer doing marketing?"*, the research has proven independent of the size of a business, Instagram offers many opportunities that a photographer can utilize in marketing and grow its own business. In addition, Instagram already has a large number of users, so there is no shortage of customers and its popularity has continued to grow.

More and more companies are advertising on Instagram and nowadays, customers are searching for information about the business on Instagram and purchase products and services even directly from Instagram. The online survey also showed that respondents use Instagram daily and even, many times during the day, so it is profitable for the entrepreneur to be where its customers are. Also, given that Instagram is a platform for image sharing and X is a photographer, there is some interrelation between the industries and is a great platform for photographers. There are already target groups interested in photography and therefore potential buyers of photography services and products.

Answer to the second question *"How can a part-time photographer utilise Instagram for marketing?"*, a business account on Instagram is free of charge and offers not only paid services but also free services that a small entrepreneur can utilise in marketing. Company X is a small entrepreneur who can take advantage of the many features that Instagram has to offer. As earlier mentioned, the photographer´s business card is its portfolio. Company X is able to create a portfolio on Instagram that is visible to the whole world and utilise this portfolio in her own work and career as a professional photographer. Collaborating with other people and contacting them may be easier and quicker in certain situations. Company X does not necessarily have to buy paid marketing services from Instagram, instead, she is able to market her own photographic work quite a lot even without paid services.

The last question, *"How can a part-time photographer improve its positions on Instagram?"*, in this case, there are many different options that company X can use in her daily work to improve her position as a professional photographer on Instagram. One really significant matter that was seen in this thesis was the online survey that was done for the author´s followers. The survey was an important example of communicating with followers, as it revealed many facts, such as when followers are online and other useful information. Company X will be able to conduct a similar survey using her own account on Instagram and find out the interest and behaviour of her own followers. The survey will give a better understanding of own followers and the potential for growth and differentiation from other photographers. Existing followers and potentials play an important role in the growth and development of the company. The following heading will provide more detailed suggestions for the future, for company X.

8.2 Future development ideas

All in all, company X has a suitable and good premises to even further evolve and improve its Instagram business account. Company X has an average of 1,107 followers (December 28, 2019) and post regularly quality images. Company X use also the stories function actively and most important; company X knows how to technically use the different functions on the platform.

The main challenge appears to be in further driving company X ´s accounts engagement and increasing number of followers. Even though the number of followers does not equal to quality content, it does, however, aid in catching the audience attention. The latter part of this chapter focuses more thoroughly in the means company X can further improve the use of company X´s Instagram business account in proceed company X ´s goals and success in company X ´s field of business.

8.2.1 Branding

A support function for using social media – or Instagram to be more exact – as a marketing tool is *branding.* Every major product family known has a strong brand. Strong brand means the consumers will trust the company. Consumers will always return to their trusted brand and also forgive easier if something goes wrong. As company X is not yet a known brand in the photographing industry, company X should consider also if actions are needed to be taken in initiating that process.

Jones (2017, p.5) defines branding to be also a tool for the audience to navigate in the vast field of products and services available. Brands help the audience to mentally file products and services into emotional labels or boxes where they can be viewed separately and in the right content (the right content for the specific person) (Jones 2017, p. 6).

Business brand must be well received for its nature and character, but also for its visual appearance, such as name and slogan, logo and et cetera. The visual appearance can be compiled with the name of the brand, letters, symbols, numbers, shapes or colour theme, for instance (Clifton, 2010, p.15). Clifton (2010, p.15) lists, that from these aspects, the

most important one, however, is the name. The name should not change, even if the other aspects do as the name provides a global reference point to the brand.

Branding is neither easy nor quick. Instagram can be used also for branding of one's business, as it offers functions with which it is effortless to steer the business public image to the desired direction. These functions are even those, which might not occur, such as who or what other accounts does the business follow and engage with.

8.2.2 Timing is everything

In the reaching correct audience and consumers, all stars with timing. By using the statistics Instagram business account offers, the activity of the target audience, followers in other words, can be easily determined. The first step is investigating what time of the day followers are most active. The second step is determining during what time of the they day other users are active. Many of the people using Instagram use it in a similar way others use newspapers for instance: with their morning coffee. This is the step where the method of posting should be taken into consideration. Should the post be a "permanent" publication for the user account or a 24- hour Stories. For company Xs audience and target market, both are viable options.

Timing for posting a permanent post can be decided by reflecting on the statistic on the day of the week followers are the most active. For instance, if Friday is the most active day, this means followers use the most time in the platform on Fridays and are more likely to see the post, as it is fresh in their Instagram feed. For posting a 24-hour Stories, the activity time of the day is important. As the Stories on Instagram stay active for only 24 hours, the user wants to make sure, their target audience will view them. For instance, if the target audience is the most active 1 pm each day and a Stories is posted 2 pm, there is a likelihood that next time the audience accesses Instagram and the Stories in their feed 23 hours after the Stories was posted, it is already lost behind the most recent Stories.

Also, if the Stories is used for marketing something, usually the consumers need more than just one glance at the Stories to really ponder on it and make the decision to, for instance, purchase. They may want to see also other sources or ask a friends' opinion. In

this instance, if the Stories is active for only one hour more when the target audience is active, it might be too little.

8.2.3 Keeping the account "fresh"

Instagram does not arrange the users feed chronologically, but more based on algorithms created based on the users' activity and the activity of the accounts they are reviewing. To make sure company Xs account remains "fresh" and that the posts appear in the other users feed, posting should be kept regular and frequent. The trick is to post interesting posts, and not just for the sake of posting. Too many un-interesting post begin to be un-interesting also for the followers and thus resulting also them in losing interest in the account.

8.2.4 Location tagging

According to Socialreport (2019b), videos and images with a tagged location are likely to get even 79 % higher engagement of their posts. Location tagging helps the users to find a specific location, or images and videos from that specific location. They may want to navigate to the location, see how the location looks or for instance what services a holiday destination has to offer.

To link company Xs account to location their audience is likely to review, location tags are a valuable asset. This way a business can make themselves noted via location, even though they might not be anywhere near the tagged location. Specific location tag can also be used in trying to catch audience or customers from a specific demographic. Location tags can be used so, that the person using the tag does not have to be anywhere in the locations proximity. For instance, if there is a photography event in Helsinki, company X can despite their location, tag their posts and Stories into the event and reach their demographic fairly easy.

8.2.5 Using hashtags

As already discussed earlier in the thesis, hashtags aids in discovering social media posts related to a specific subject. On Instagram, hashtags can be added to the user accounts

profile page, a permanent post or a 24- hour Stories. Using hashtags can be considered very challenging in some instances, thus their use must be thoroughly thought. The purpose of using hashtags is to reach the desired target audience and enable them to discover the posts. A very recent change on Instagram account profiles allows the user account to add a clickable hashtag to their bio. In this instance, the word "bio" refers to "biography", which is always the default view on Instagram user accounts page. Using a clickable hashtag in the accounts bio can be used for drawing specific type of other users towards the account. Even though multiple hashtags result in multiple post and profile views, they can even do harm, if they begin to irritate the audience. In today´s world people are inpatient and tend to focus more on images and do not desire reading anything too long. For instance, if the image contains 30 hashtags, it may result the audience to lose interest. It is vital to always keep the target audience in mind when using the tags. Hashtags should be chosen by trying to think what tags the desired audience will search for. When done successfully, this might lead to the audience to even star following the account, as they might believe to see similar new content in the account going forward.

Using popular hashtags in commonly thought to result in multiple views and high engagement. While this is true to some extent, the inflow of posts onto one popular hashtag makes it, so to say, over float. This means that if the post with the hashtag is uploaded during irrelevant timing for the desired focus group, they will never get to see the post, as even hundreds of thousands of images with the same hashtag pop up daily. This is why also using more un-popular hashtags should be considered. These more un-popular hashtags might not result in a vast number of profile visits or post views, but they can reach just the right audience.

8.2.6 Utilising influencers

West (2019) list very plausible reasons for businesses to use influencers. For instance, influencers are excellent for generating sales and are also excellent value for their money. Influencers are usually very affordable, as often their pay is visibility they get themselves. Everything an influencer touches seems to turn to gold and sale start to generate.

Influencers are also skilled content creators and brand advocates as they are very much engaged. Generally, influencers have the status "influencer" as they already have a trusted

voice, authority and influence on other people. They are very skilled in building relation-ships, communication and starting conversations. Besides all of the above, influencers are known for their appreciated skill of thinking outside of the box. An important factor to remember in this, however, is that the influencers own the content they have created. The business must have the influencers consent and approval for publishing any of their created content (West, 2019).

8.2.7 Engage followers and other Instagram users

When regarding purchasing, working or even the smallest choices in life, people always want to be involved in making the decisions, investigating the matter or simply be involved in expressing their opinions. In the world of Instagram, this is engagement. In other words, Instagram users have the desire to be engaged.

As explained in the concept definition, Instagram engagement includes all the likes, comments, and et cetera the post receives. Instagram users and followers enjoy commenting and they feel appreciated, if their opinions are asked and heard. A great way of practising this type of attention with the target audience is creating polls and asking questions on Instagram. This can be simply done by adding a short comment or question in a permanent posts capture, for instance: "What a great sunny weather to take photographs! Who else enjoys these type of days?" or "As many of you requested, here is a picture of my dog". As far as human behaviour psychology goes, this might be the simplest way of making someone feel appreciated. "I care about your day and your opinion".

Questions and polls can also be attached to a Stories. Other users can respond to the polls and reply to the questions. Figure 49 and 50 show how a poll and its results appear in the Stories and figure 51 how the question appears. For the polls and questions to reach their full affect, the user must also assure they take the answers into consideration when creating their content and interact back towards the audience. It is vital to answer any comments or questions presented and note the reflections other users might have.

The contents of images 49, 50 and 51 have been removed due to the company logo and images.
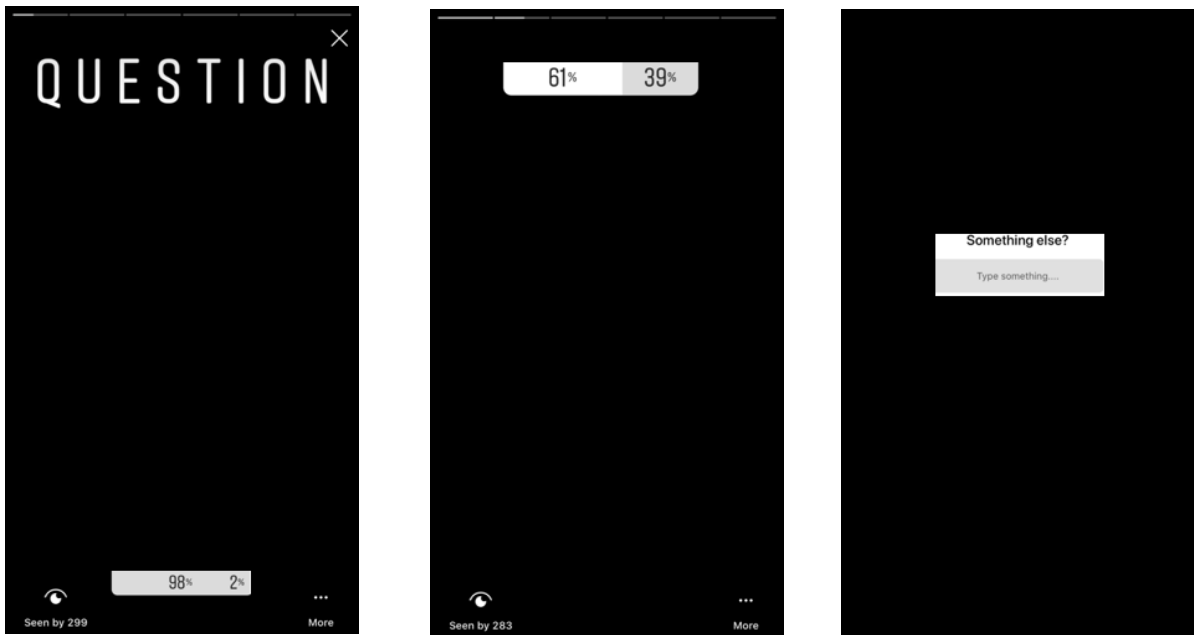
Figure 49. Story poll a), company X 17.10.2019 Figure 50. Story poll b), company X 17.10.2019   Figure 51. Story question, company X 17.10.2019

Having multiple polls or questions in post and Stories is not enough in itself. In order to increase the engagement rate on Instagram posts, the content of the account must be engaging enough initially to rise interest in the other users and followers.

In the case where the purpose of the account is to strictly be professional, high attention must be paid to details. Each post or Stories must reflect what the accounts goals are, in this case a professional photographer. The published content should be of high quality and have a theme or message, which speaks to the desired demography. This includes also finding a suitable tone for the business and continuing on using the same tone consistently. As the demography tried to reach is human beings, they will want to see a "personality" also for businesses. A suitable and simple way of reaching a "personal" touch for the account even in the beginning when there are not enough posts to mirror this, is to simply tell the businesses story to the audience. In this way they can already in the beginning of the Instagram journey form interest on the account.

8.2.8 Interact with other similar

As also discovered in the interview with company X, interacting with other similar account is also favourable for a small business to steer more views towards their Instagram profile. The network between, for instance, photographers is extremely vast on Instagram, and fairly effortless to access. By interacting, liking and sharing other photographers content, company X is more likely to be shared by other photographers too. This is how the network is created. It could be argued that the "law of attraction" apples quite accurately in this instance. Tewart (2008, p. 64) defines the law of attraction as "like attracts like", which is exactly what Instagram networking is all about. Tewart (2008, p. 64) brings up an intriguing point on how individuals thoughts and actions attract the corresponding type of thoughts and actions, positive and negative.

Most often when pursuing a goal, it will not realise, come to reality in other words, as one is trying too hard on pursuing it, rather than naturally trying to attract it (Tewart 2008, p.64). When talking about the general public, which is company Xs demography, the statement is a very liveable one. The general public can and will detect when a business appears to be "fake" or too eager in their pursuits.

9 CONCLUSION

A survey conducted as part of this master´s thesis research, allowed to determine the author´s follower´s views on the topic and their use of Instagram. Each individual behaves differently on social media and everyone has an individual interest but because of the limited number of social media services, they can be categorized and asked questions and opinions, based on them. The answers from the survey are suitable for a start-up, a small entrepreneur, or even a large company.

Social media is relatively new but people have embraced it really well, and it is almost a part of every person´s everyday life, even if it is not used personally. People are becoming more aware of their own use of social media and its benefits or potential disadvantages. And as the survey showed, people are becoming more aware of the factors that influence a particular behaviour. Hence, people today have a lot of power over how companies

shape their operations based on customer needs and desires. And since, social media has no "opening hours", meaning that all information and service is available 24 hours, companies should consider the desires and opinions of their target audience carefully. Today, changing a service or product provider is done with just one touch of a button, without any other further action. For this reason, small and part-time entrepreneurs should pay particular attention to existing clients and potentially ones. There is fierce competition on social media and coping with it, requires much more than just opening an account and being on social media. As the survey showed, followers value and pay attention to activity and to the content of the image, among other matters. The number of followers, comments and likes are topics that are usually featured on social media, but as the survey shows, people are more interested in quality than quantity. Therefore, a high number of followers alone does not guarantee long-term and committed followers. Rather, companies should invest more in quality (the content) and thereby attract engaged followers who may then be interested in the services and products the company provides.

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