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Developing a Social Media Marketing Strategy for Company X

B2B company in corporation gifts and promotional products industry

Thesis
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The aim of this thesis was to generate social media marketing strategy for Company X in order to help them increase brand awareness and gain new business opportunities.

The thesis can be divided into four different parts: introduction, theoretical part, empirical part and the implementation part. In the theoretical part, the SOSTAC framework will be introduced and the framework will be used as a base for Company X's social media strategy. Empirical part consists of six interviews and the goal of the interviews is to support the implementation of the SOSTAC for Company X. However, the thesis will not implement the strategy itself, but it will generate the whole plan for starting and managing Company X's social media marketing.

The thesis guides Company X to succeed in their social media marketing from the very beginning. By following the plan, Company X can reach easier their goal of increasing brand awareness and get wider customer base.

SEINÄJOEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU

Opinnäytetyön tiivistelmä

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Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli luoda Yritys X:lle sosiaalisen median markkinointistrategia auttaakseen yritystä lisäämään bränditietoisuutta ja saamaan uusia liiketoimintamahdollisuuksia.

Opinnäytetyö voidaan jakaa neljään osaan: johdanto, teoreettinen osa, empiirinen osa ja toteutusosa. Teoreettisessa osassa esitellään SOSTAC-viitekehys ja sitä käytetään Yrityksen X sosiaalisen median strategian perustana. Empiirinen osa koostuu kuudesta haastattelusta ja haastattelujen tavoitteena on tukea SOSTAC-viitekehyksen käyttöönottoa yritykselle X. Opinnäytetyö ei kuitenkaan toteuta strategiaa, mutta se muodostaa Yritys X:lle suunnitelman sosiaalisen median markkinoinnin aloittamiseen ja ylläpitämiseen.

Opinnäyte opastaa Yritystä X menestymään heidän sosiaalisen median markkinoinnissa alusta saakka. Noudattamalla suunnitelmaa, Yritys X voi saavuttaa helpommin bränditietoisuuden tavoitteensa ja saada laajemman asiakaskunnan.

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Tables, Figures and Pictures

Terms and Abbreviations

ABH	Always be helping
AI	Artificial Intelligence
B2B	Business-to-business
B2C	Business-to-consumer
CBO	Campaign Budget Optimization
CPA	Cost per Acquisition
CTR	Click Through Rate
E.G.	For example
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
I.E.	In other words
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
ML	Machine Learning
OVP	Online Value Proposition
PPC	Pay per Click
ROI	Return of Investment
SEO	Search Engine Optimization
SME	Small and Medium sized enterprises
SMM	Social Media Marketing
SMO	Social Media Optimization

Special Symbols

€   Euro, currency

$ The United States dollar, currency

1 INTRODUCTION

Evolution of social media started from the favored websites e.g. chats and blogs and in the early 2000s LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter were founded. Companies started to use social media to brand themselves by creating accounts to different channels one by one and building their own way of marketing depended on what worked for them. Regardless of the marketing style, marketing through social media became daily activity with real purposes. (Green, 2016)

In the beginning, social media in business to business (B2B) marketing was about connecting between people but also reaching new customers became an important factor of social media when advertising possibilities were published in the social media sites. Social media transformed later on into a major part of marketing strategy and not just a channel of delivering simple ads and messages. (Green, 2016)

However, internet has been used for B2B activities already before, social media has brought a new platform for B2B which supports the general marketing strategy and offers new possibilities to reach people, deepen the customer relationships and for example increase the brand awareness. Nowadays social media needs to be a part of each B2B companies' marketing strategy and in this thesis, this important part of the marketing strategy will be designed for the case company, Company X.

1.1 Company X

Around 20 years ago the Finnish company was starting to work in the field of promotional products and over time it expanded their activities into workwear business. Besides offering a webstore, the company had a main focus in few brick and mortar stores in Finland. (Laine, 2020)

According to Laine (2020), due to partial business acquisition in June 2019, the company decided to continue by focusing only on the remaining business, promotional products and business gifts. Business transaction also offered a chance to build a totally new brand and business, Company X.

Change from brick and mortar stores to web and showroom-based operation requires now completely new channels and online visibility. Company X has now a webstore and a showroom in the Metropolitan area of Finland and currently it is seeking a way to increase awareness and to get new business opportunities through active utilization of social media and digital marketing. (Laine, 2020)

In order to make it easier for Company X to succeed in their goals of brand awareness and widen their customer base, the thesis will generate the plan for social media marketing to reach the goals.

1.2 Thesis goals and limitations

The main goal of this research is to design an efficient social media strategy for Company X in order to support the growth and social awareness. The research question for this thesis is defined as following: "How Company X can most effectively increase online visibility and grow the business by systematic use of social media?"

The secondary research questions have been set to reach the core goal:

- Where the company X is at the moment?

- Where the company X want to be?

- How does the company X get there where they want to be?

- Which tactical tools Company X should use to implement strategy?

- Which action plans Company X should use to implement strategy?

- How Company X should manage the strategy?

By answering these minor research questions will help to design a social media strategy for Company X. As a base of the strategy SOSTAC framework by Paul Russell Smith will be used.

In the thesis it is also important to go through possible limitations which in this case regard to the implementation of the strategy. Thesis will plan the social media strategy, but it does not implement the actual marketing or entering into social media channels. Company X can use the suggestions and use this thesis as their guide for their social media marketing. The plan will include all the things from the preferable social media channels to recommendable way to start marketing in social media but the marketing itself belongs to Company X. Initially the goal was already to start marketing and measure its results but due to the exceptional COVID-19 pandemic situation what prevails in Finland and around the world, the social media marketing has not been able to start as planned so the social media marketing nor the measuring of the result of this strategy could not be included in the thesis like it was planned.

Company X benefits from this thesis by receiving a guide to manage their social media effectively. Company will get the ready-made plan which has been already started in its theoretical aspects and they can just continue by implementing it. This thesis is very important for the Company X also since the huge need of help in social media marketing. For other B2B businesses this thesis might be beneficial due to its informative theory section.

In order to solve the research question, different ways of researching were used. Information was gained from several books, articles, videos, seminars as well as interviews. Various frameworks and analyses were utilized for the research such as SWOT, PESTEL, RACE and TOPPP SITE in order to make a systematic research and strategic plan.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

As mentioned, this thesis is about business to business social media marketing. In the beginning, the basic information will be provided about the topic and after that the thesis will represent the base of the strategy, SOSTAC framework. All the steps of this framework will be explained in detail based on the theory. After all the theory

is provided, the thesis will introduce the implementation of the SOSTAC for Company X. The thesis also includes an empirical part which is implemented through six qualitative interviews.
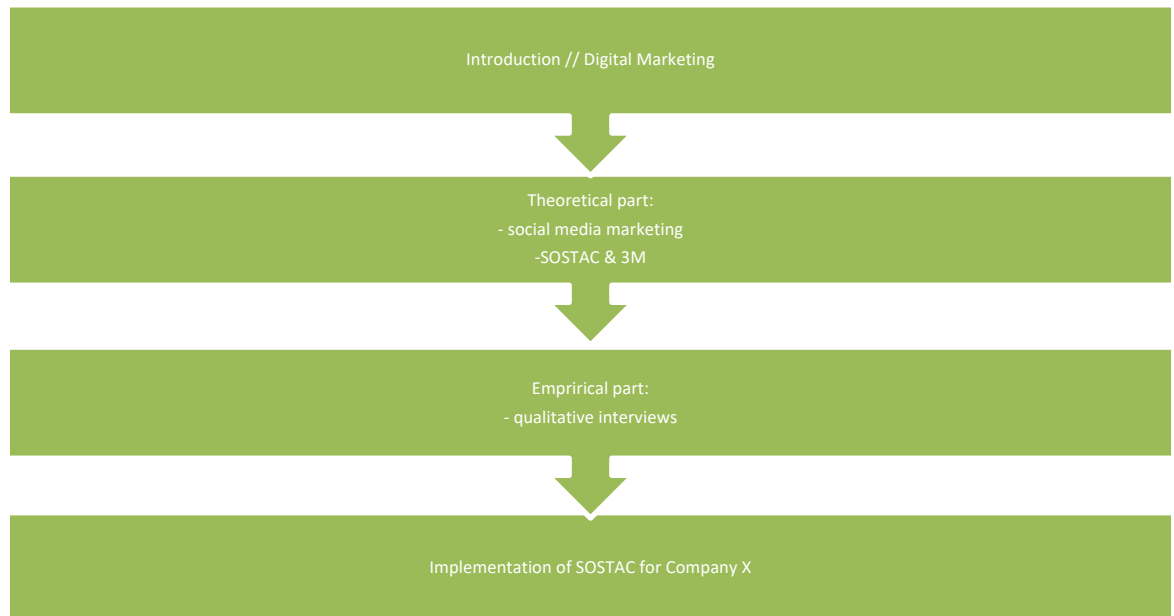
Figure 1. Structure of the thesis

The structure of the thesis is visualized in the Figure 1. The parts of the thesis can be roughly divided to these four steps. The division have been done in order to help the reader to perceive thesis structure more easily.

2 BUSINESS TO BUSINESS MARKETING

2.1 Business to Business Marketing

"*Business to business marketing or B2B marketing, involves the sale of one company's product or service to another company*" (Das, 2016). B2B marketing is similar to consumer marketing, but the executing differs little bit. Even though the social media has been more like a channel for B2C players, in today's B2B marketing world it has become also an exciting topic. Different social media channels have opened up two-way conversations and connections between businesses in a new way and social media has also brought a new platform for B2B marketing.

As a result of fast digitalization and technological improvements that have changed B2B business dramatically, B2B buyers today are behaving in a different way comparing to past decade. According to Deksnyte (2020), decision makers in the companies are way younger as more than 70% of millennials are involved in business to business buying situations. Having millennials as a part of the decision process makes a great influence for the situation as they are already used to manage their buying process through social media in their private life, so they are also ready to utilize social media for B2B acts.

In B2B marketing also the sold product effects on the marketing process. Company X is selling products from distributed promotional products to more valuable products so the products can be segmented into two different segments; promotional products and corporate gifts. Promotional products segment has faster progress in the purchase compared to corporate gifts since the price levels are totally different. Also, other companies consider corporate gifts more important segment while others think that promotional products are better investment for their company. This kind of differences makes the marketing process different for both segments so it is preferable to shape two different target markets so the marketing can be personalized for both segments.

In B2B companies, customer relationships can be built in different ways but in social media the customers usually do not even know their needs. Through active participation in social media, B2B companies can reach new customers and also offer some benefits and make the customer feel more comfortable of the buying than before. Social media's main goal is not just to sell but to offer benefit and show customers that the company is trustworthy. When the customer is ready to buy, the company can approach the customer with a solution and real buying process can be started outside the social media.

2.2 Digital Marketing in Business to Business

According to Suojanen (2018), digital marketing is an important resource in the core of marketing which will help companies to keep way of marketing clearly towards the goal.

Digital marketing includes "*managing different forms of online company presence and presences such as company websites, mobile apps, and social media company pages. This is in conjunction with online communications techniques including the likes of search engine marketing, social media marketing, online advertising, e-mail marketing and partnership arrangements with other websites.*" (Chaffey, 2019).

Email marketing, chatbots, personalization and investing on social media strategies are some of the trends in 2020. 72% of customers expect personalized and tailored communications from B2B companies. E.g. "*email marketing personalization by not only offering different content to different segments but also waiting until the exact moment of open to gather other appropriate data points to regulate the content served*". (Deksnyte, 2020)

Blogs in social media can be good ways to connect with the target market but in 2020, it is more important to focus on something new and special such as videos, augmented reality, interactive content etc. Also, the use of chatbots in company's website is growing fast and the future opportunities are presented by custom-made chatbots. (Deksnyte, 2020)

Also, social selling has been increased during last years. Social selling is not only sales opportunities what social media offers; it is more like a reaction of the seller how customer's behavior to buy has been changed with social media.

Social selling is about building relationships in different networks. Pääkkönen (2017, 49) emphasizes that focus is nowadays in always be helping (ABH). Altruistic helping builds a trust between people and actually the best social selling professionals helps the community and share their knowledge and knowhow on a regular basis. It is very important to realize in a B2B business that behind every tweet or post there are people. According to Pääkkönen (2017, 56) and Forrester (2013) over 70% of adults trusts more other persons testimonial than messages straight from brands. That's why it is important to use resources in building the personal brand because people are more interesting than brands. Pääkkönen (2017, 87) also emphasizes that individuals have on average ten times more followers than company profiles which means that more people will be reached via personal profiles.

Also, when seeking a way to move from unilateral communication to interaction, it is important to engage also a customer into a conversation. Besides the customers, also competitors' inclusion could be beneficial in order to show people how the marketer is behaving in different situations, how the marketer is performing as a professional of the field and the most important, is the marketer really trustworthy. Pääkkönen (2017,57)

Sometimes B2B companies overlook social media marketing due to complex sales cycles. However, some channels can help the companies, but the companies need to take strategic approach and a detailed social media strategy must be built.

2.2.1 Social Media Marketing

Social media is a digital media which involve audience participation and encourage sharing and interaction. Social media marketing (SMM) on the other hand is the utilization of social media channels, technologies and actions to communicate, create, deliver and exchange offerings and encourage positive engagement with the

company creating value for an organization's stakeholders and leading to commercial value. (Tuten & Salomon, 2015)

Social media is about the content. There are two ways to find enough content to share: content creation and content curation. Content creation means that the marketers generates the content by themselves by writing blog posts, taking pictures or making videos. Content curation on the other hand is about sharing other people's posts and content. (Kawasaki 2014, 16-17) It is also important to test if people will share your posts. This test should be passed every time. (*op. cit.* 20-21)

In social media, it is also important to design professional profile and publish interesting content in order to succeed. According to Kawasaki (2014, 1-12) people make their judgement about the profiles and posts in seconds, so in order to succeed in social media, the profile should be well designed, people need to be able to find you easily and the impression transmitted from the profile should be pleasant as well as trustworthy. In order to let the people to find a profile, the same profile picture should be used in each channel in order to avoid misunderstandings.

In order to grow the number of followers, there is no fast lane. The followers should not definitely be bought, and the people should start follow without asking. Also sharing and posting interesting content is the best way to arouse the interest of others. (Kawasaki 2014, 100)

According to Leväinen (2020) expected changes in 2020 social media marketing involve social media campaigns' budget management, interest-based targeting, new meters for diagnosing the relevance of advertisements and to the number of active advertisements.

Machine learning (ML) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are strongly present in social media marketing nowadays. Also understanding of it and therefore effective utilization is the daily routine of every modern marketer. So, one of the biggest topics among social media marketers in 2020 will be CBO, campaign budget optimization. (Leväinen, 2020)

Muhonen (2019) emphasizes that Campaign Budget Optimization means that marketing campaigns' budgets are determined in the campaign level and Facebook will

decide with AI and ML what advertisements will be shown. However, budget can be controlled in ad set level when minimum and maximum budget is settled.

CBO is the most sophisticated achievement of machine learning, with artificial intelligence controlling virtually all campaign optimization. CBO is finally becoming mandatory, with Facebook and Instagram campaigns moving to campaign budget optimization, where the media budget is decided at the campaign level rather than the ad group level. Initially, the reform was to enter into force in September 2019, but for some reason the reform was postponed. (Leväinen, 2020)
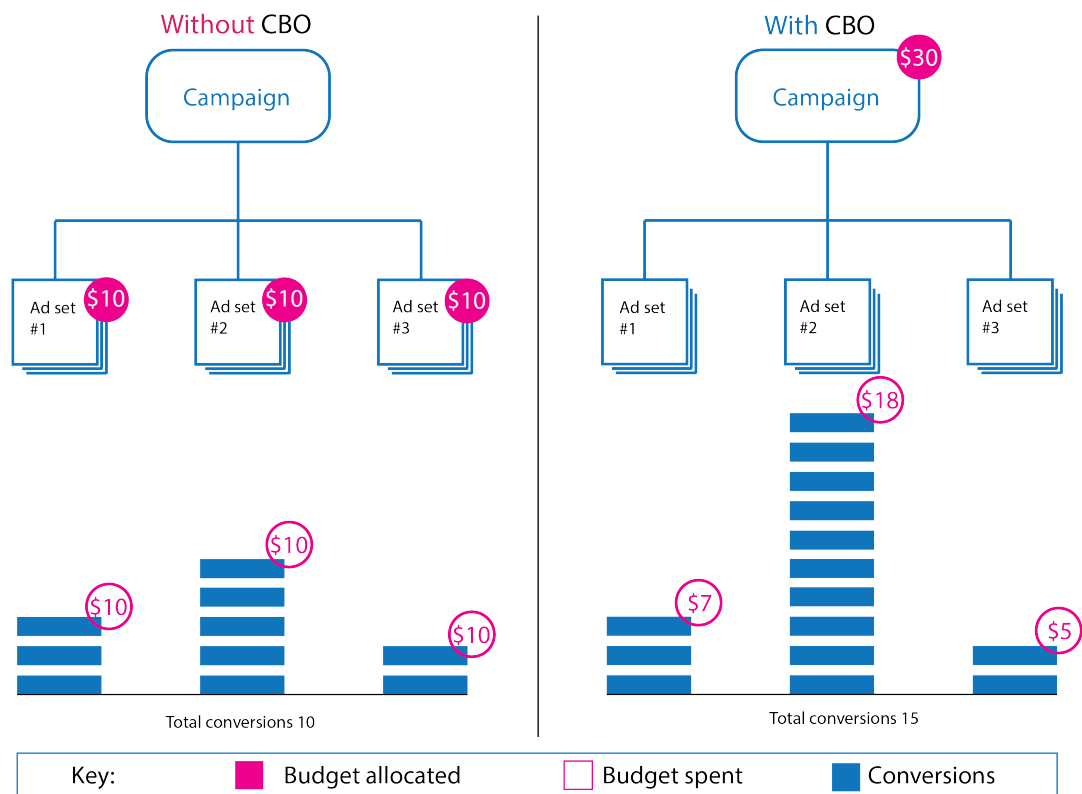
Figure 2. Campaign Budget Optimization

In order to succeed, every modern social media marketer should collect and interpret data. In 2019, Facebook introduced metrics for measuring ad relevance; Quality Score, Engagement Rate and Conversion Rate. These metrics replaced the old ad relevance score which was only one number. These new metrics are not numerical values, but they are written evaluations. These metrics are important in order to

diagnosing why some of the ads are less effective than others. It is better to look at these figures together rather than separately. (Leväinen, 2020)

2.2.2 Social media marketing platforms

Social media's purpose for B2B marketing is to reach the customers and awareness, offer benefit for the customer and wake up the interest and lead them later on to purchase decision. However, in order to reach these goals, it is important to know what kind of platforms there are.

Together with the search engines, social media platforms are one of the most famous sites on the internet. According to Chaffey and Smith (2017, 225-227) social media platforms can be divided into ten different sections listed under:

1. Social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter)

2. Social publishing and news: newspapers, communities

3. Social commenting in blogs: company blogs

4. Social niche communities: (TripAdvisor)

5. Social customer service: (Get Satisfaction)

6. Social knowledge: (Quora, Wikipedia)

7. Social streaming: (YouTube, Instagram)

8. Social search: (Google+)

9. Social commerce: retail sector reviews, ratings, deals

The most popular social media platforms in B2B business are LinkedIn and Facebook which includes in social networks. 86% of B2B marketers prefer LinkedIn due to its effectiveness in networking and B2B lead generating. Facebook on the other hand is ranked as the second most popular social media platform among B2B marketers at a rate of 73%. (Digital Marketing Community, 2018)

The blend of several platforms can be beneficial due to the fact that different platforms may pursue to reach different things. So besides just picking one platform, it is beneficial to become active in several platforms.

2.2.3 Managing social media

"Social media management is the process of creating, scheduling, analyzing, and engaging with content posted on social media platforms" (Cawley, 2018). If the social media would not be managed, the good results of the advertising in social media could not be guaranteed and the whole social media as a part of the marketing strategy would not be very stable in B2B companies.

Social media management involves social media optimization (SMO) as well as social listening. SMO's goal is to increase the engagement and sharing in the social media which supports the emerge of positive brand image and brand awareness. It also involves testing of different content and messages in order to increase the amount of leads and sales. (Chaffey & Smith, 2017, 288)

Amaresan (2020) explains that social listening is about observing social media platforms for different reasons such as direct mentions, feedback from customers and competitors. This observing is followed by a report of the received data which again create further information and opportunities to act in these insights. For B2B companies it is essential to choose a social listening channel and really examine the data gathered from social listening in order to follow the reach, keep up with the risk management and online reputation as well as possible to really know how the customers are behaving in social media.

3 THEORY: SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGY

In social media the most important advice according to several sources is to listen the target market and customers. According to Lahtinen (Undated), in order to do that most effectively it is recommendable to build a social media strategy. Carefully designed strategy is the sum of objectives and action which together will guide the company towards the goal. The goal in social media marketing could be for example to grow email lists, control the traffic to own webpage, to foster own brand as a professional marketer and person or let's say to map target market's needs. (Kadziolka, 2016)

In the next chapter, 3.1, the SOSTAC framework which will be the base of the social media strategy. Social media strategy will be defined, and all of its steps will be explained. In the Chapter 3.2. additional 3M (men and women, money and minutes) factors will be explained.

3.1 SOSTAC

SOSTAC by PR Smith is one of the leading models for the planning of digital marketing and it is used by huge number of professionals. It stands for Situation analysis, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Actions and Control. (Chaffey & Smith, 2017) In this thesis social media strategy will be built utilising the SOSTAC framework.

3.1.1 Situation Analysis

Situation Analysis, the first step of social media marketing plan, analyses present situation "Where are we at the moment?". The more precise the analysis, the easier the decisions. Things to be analysed are the customers, "Who, Why and How". Who are the competitors, what they do and where? Can partners help with the marketing? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the company? Is there any kind of strategy, what about tools or publicity? What about the performance and results? (Chaffey & Smith, 2017)

According to Smith (2014) the models of marketing involve careful listening of consumers and customers online and offline. Fast replies to customers' needs, questions and for example to new trends is mandatory and a vital part of the marketing process. Due to this, an important part of situation analysis also includes the questions; What is the stage of marketing at the moment and what seems working and what seems not to? What are the marketing trends and what is changing in the web world? In this phase, half of the plans needs to be dedicated as it will help to make better decisions later on and to build a strong foundation for the plan.

As a part of the situation analysis, Soames (2014) recommend that SWOT and PESTEL analysis should be completed and besides them it is desirable to utilize SEO, search engine optimization data, as well as social data in order to understand the scale of opportunity.

3.1.2 Objectives

Objectives is the second part of the SOSTAC framework. Chaffey and Smith (2017, 574) emphasizes that while the situation analysis explains what is happening at the moment, objectives explains what the goals are and where the company wants to be. Possible questions in this phase could be e.g. *"Why go online? What are the benefits, and the purpose? Where we want to be?"* (Chaffey & Smith, 2017).

Without having objectives, businesses will go horribly wrong, so it is very important to know what the objectives are before making any kind of digital marketing. There is a model, 5S – Sell, Serve, Speak, Save and Sizzle, where the main objectives are dealt with. Sell is about growing sales through wider promotion, sales and distribution while Serve is about adding the value by extra benefits. Speak on the other hand pursue to get closer to customers by tracking them and talking to them and Save is regarding to saving costs of promotions, service etc. and increase profits on transactions. The last objective is Sizzle which seek a way to extend the brand online by protecting it and achieving trust. (Chaffey & Smith, 2017, 23)

Besides the 5Ss objectives, there is an approach to objectives called RACE (Reach, Act, Convert and Engage). It is a way to look at the goals based on customer's steps

through the customer lifecycle from the very first contact to long-term loyalty. The first RACE objective, Reach, is about building traffic by increasing awareness of a brand and its products. Act is for shorter interact, its aim is to generate leads and persuade site visitors by encouraging initial interactions. Convert is conversion to sales and leads and Engage on the other hand means engagement which is designed to build lifetime loyalty after sales and ongoing communications. (Chaffey & Smith, 2017, 232, 579)

According to Suojanen (2018) in the RACE objectives, it should be desirable to use SMART approach while setting the objectives. So, the objective should be Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant and Time-related. Suojanen (2018) suggest as an example of SMART objective the following; increasing number of downloads of SEO guide by 50% in the next six months by 2,00 € per download CPA (cost per acquisition) goal by using Facebook while the number of working hours will stay within the sales funnel.

In order to follow the fruition of objectives or make assumptions of the objectives, the key performance indicator (KPI) pyramid in a Figure 3. can be used as a help.
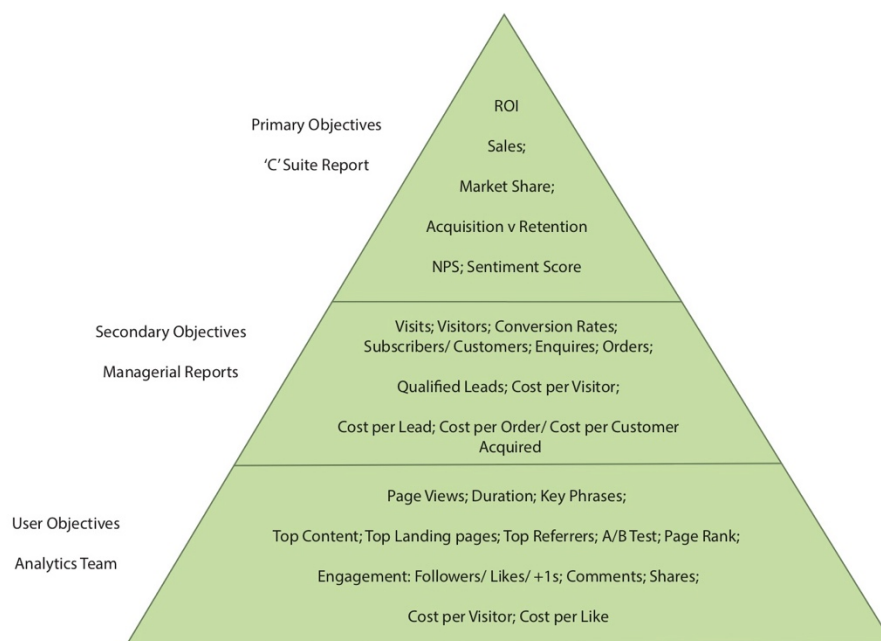
Figure 3. KPI Pyramid (Chaffey & Smith, 2017)

By turning the KPI pyramid upside down, the pyramid turns out to be a sales funnel (see Figure 4.). By adding percentage conversion rates for each part of the sales funnel it offers a chance to know about the objectives. As an example, if the company knows that the average of 10% of the visitors have the right kind of profile and the company gets 1500 visitors in a month, it can be assumed that the company will have 150 prospects per month.

Site Visits
Unique Visitors

(*referral/traffic source)

Bounce Rate
Duration
Page Views (+top pages)
Downloads
Likes/ Favourites
Shares
Comments/ Prints
Registrations

Sentiment + NPS
Email Inquiries
RFP Requests
Sales
ROI
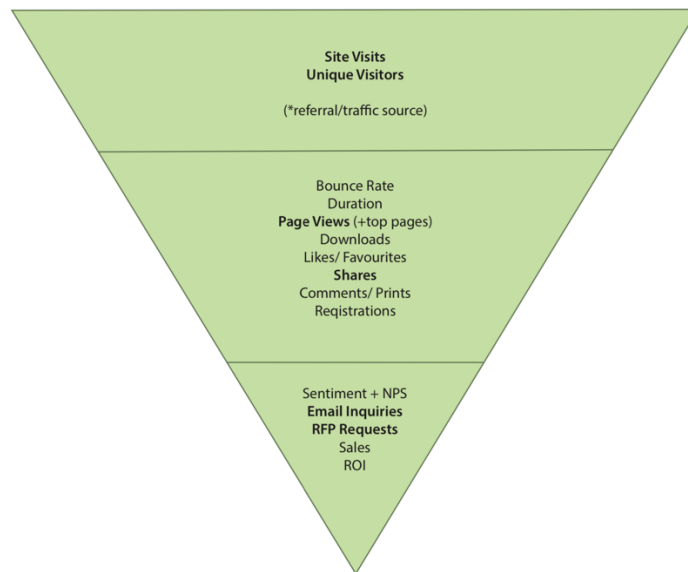
Figure 4. The KPI Pyramid changes into a sales funnel (Chaffey & Smith, 2017)

3.1.3 Strategy

Suojanen (2018) emphasizes that the marketing strategy is always the most complicated part in the planning process of marketing and the advisable approach should be iterative. Strategy summarizes 'How do we reach the objectives?'. According to Chaffey & Smith (2017) it should also utilize distinctive competitive advantage.

PR Smith also created an acronym, 'TOPPP SITE' which should be considered when building the social media marketing strategy. It consists of the key components of strategy. The strategy does not need to be exactly in the same order as TOPPP SITE nor the use of all components is mandatory. (Chaffey & Smith, 2017)

These nine components are Target Markets, Objectives, Positioning, Processes, Partnership, Sequence, Integration, Tactical tools and Engagement. However, the essential and the most important components are target markets as well as positioning. Nonetheless, all nine components should be at least considered. (Chaffey & Smith, 2017)

Chaffey and Smith (2017) also mention that the target markets' right kind of definition is very important part. It is mandatory to figure out to whom product or service will be promoted and nowadays there are many variables to help marketers in the identifying process of targets. Nevertheless, diligent analysing and discussing about the ideal target markets takes time, it is time well spent.

Positioning, on the other hand, is about how people relate on the company and how the company differentiate from others. According to Suojanen (2018) there are many different positions, but the aim is to find a position where there is an actual need and little competition.

3.1.4 Tactics

Conforming to Sun Tzu "*Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat*". In the strategy, tactics are the details and they define the used channels and tools for creating the marketing strategy. In digital marketing the tactics could be for example search engine optimization or social media. (Suojanen, 2018)

Because in this thesis, the main focus is in the social media, the following research will be focusing only on it. According to Suojanen (2018) social media tactic is about recognising the essential buyer personas and creating suitable content for buyers which will be offered for the buyers via social media.

One of the most basic business rules is knowing the customer. To reach this goal, it is important to build buyer personas. Buyer personas should be the whole basis of social media marketing strategy since the personas determine widely the results of social media marketing. Buyer personas are archetypes of real buyers which will guide marketers to build up marketing strategies to promote their offering. (Revella, 2015, 5)

Both Revella (2015, xix) and Meerman Scott (2015, xv) explains that the core of building buyer personas is listening to customers and they key to succeed is to learn about buyers' needs, goals, concerns, expectations as well as objections. According to Revella (2015, xx) not only knowing what customer wants but actually discovering the motivation and mindset that leads to purchase is important. Revella (2015, xxi) also mentions that when buyer personas include real stories from the actual customers it can be really and truly said that the marketer can see the situation from customer's point of view and also to consider buying decisions from the buyer's shoes. Besides these marketers are able to see buyers as a real person and create a sense of human connection with the persona.

The best way to develop buyer personas is to conduct interviews and conversations with the buyers who have before considered options, rejected offers or made a wanted decision. (Revella 2015, 8) In order to gain information rich facts about the buyer it is also important to understand the reasons behind the buying decision. If person's buying decision is impulsive or low-considerate, the *"decision usually reside in the realm of the unconscious"* as Revella (2015, 14) says. Conversely, if the buying decision is considered as high-consideration decision, it will involve "*considerable conscious thought that can be expressed, evaluated and analysed*." (Revella 2015, 14)

When knowing what triggers buyer's decision, the first five *Buying Insights* have been discovered. With these insights, it is easier to understand what happens and who is included when the buyer passes from the status quo to buying the solution. First of these five insights is *Priority Initiative*, and it explains the most coercive reason why buyer make a decision to invest in a certain solution. Second insight is about *Success Factors*. This insight summarizes buyer persona's expectations about the personal or operational results from a purchasing a solution. *Perceived*

Barriers, on the other hand, describes what things prevents buyer to even count the performed solution. This insight also reveals why the competitors have a better approach in buyers' opinion. There might be internal barriers, or the resistance might reflect to negative image of the products or company or there might be even too similar solutions. These barriers should be dealt right away when knowing the barrier and the cause of it. Insight number four is *Buyer's Journey* which reveals the storyboard of buyer's steps when trying to reach the final choice. It tells what buyer do to eliminate challengers or to evaluate different options. Besides this, the different influencers which affect to final decisions will be revealed. The last insight, *Decision Criteria,* will tell the certain features of the product which the buyer analyses when comparing different solutions. (Revella 2015, 25-27)

When the buyer personas are ready and enough information has been collected, it is essential to know the social media channels by which the suitable content can be shared. When choosing the channel, it is desirable to focus on the channels where the target market is located. It is not recommendable to rush into all channels at the same time in order to get the most out of it. Also, when focusing only on one or few channels it is possible to learn how to measure results precisely and it allows marketer to realise which marketing activities are actually working. When knowing well one channel, it is easier to widen the knowledge into other channels. However, as an exception, when using Facebook or Instagram, it is preferable to create an account for both of them, because Instagram and Facebook are classified as a same channel due to the fact that the marketing is being done by only one tool. (Digimarkkinointi)

When the channels have been chosen, the next step is to build the sales funnel. According to Digimarkkinointi, the client will go through over 60% in the purchasing path without contacting the seller. This means that the content in social media will be determined along this path. As an example, Digimarkkinointi suggests that webstores' dynamic Facebook advertisements will bring great results almost without exception, but the results might slow down if the sales funnel is poorly designed.

Conforming to Soames (2014) in this section of the SOSTAC, the following things should be covered to run tactics properly: use case for social outposts should be designed, content calendar should be created, social listening tools configured, and

paid media settled up. According to Chaffey and Smith (2017, 44-45) If tactics are wanted to keep focused on customer-centric content marketing, it should be desirable to use The RACE planning framework works also here to reach and engage with customers.

3.1.5 Actions

In this part of the framework, the aim is to figure out how to bring the plan to life. Basically, this part of the SOSTAC covers what needs to be attained for each tactic. Swan (2019)

Without this Action part, unwanted results will be received e.g. apps with poor reviews or websites which are not working. To ensure the execution which include none of the just mentioned defects, the previously decided tactics needs to be broke down into actions and to build up a project action plan for each tactic. By designing the steps in detail, making sure that the processes are clear, and the internal communication is well thought the action part can be fully executed. Roles and responsibilities need to be understood clearly and the processes of how things should be done need to be decided. (Chaffey & Smith, 2017, 597-600)

3.1.6 Control

While actions include project planning as well as implementation, Control pursue to assess the results (Chaffey & Smith, 2017). Without the control, the whole marketing process depends on luck.

In order to keep up with the success of the objectives and produce real insights which can help company's performance, it is mandatory to realize how different channels are working. Acquisition, conversion as well as activity on social media channels and reach should be monitored and steady reports about the results and also diagnosis of social media performance produced. (Soames, 2014)

According to Chaffey and Smith (2017, 601) in this part of the process, it should be also tested that the objectives really are SMART objectives like they should be as

mentioned before. For controlling, there are many different programs e.g. Facebook Insights or Google Analytics where different actions can be followed.

3.2. 3M

After gone through all the previous steps, it is important not to forget the 3Ms, the three key resources which are Men and women which refers to human resources, Money and Minutes. (Chaffey & Smith, 2017, 561)

Human resource allocation needs to be done and it can also be critical. The company need to find out how many people are needed; can it be automated, or should the company probably consider outsourcing. Outsourcing is becoming more and more popular in the strategic aspects of digital marketing and also the management skills in outsourcing are becoming necessary. (Chaffey & Smith, 2017, 611)

Once having calculated the expenses and requirements for people, it is desirable to decide the budget to pay for these skills. Marketing is expensive and also digital marketing costs money. The digital marketing plan need to include accurate budget covering the costs and clear benefit statement must be written. It is important to be realistic when setting the budget but besides that it is beneficial to realize that with digital marketing, it is possible to even generate income, or the company could utilize free actions. (Chaffey & Smith, 2017, 612)

Time is usually one of the most limiting resource and even though the digital marketing world is used to shorter timescales, it might take surprising amount of time to build e.g. a website. The timing needs to be balanced in a way that people can think, plan and react quickly but it is also necessary to have enough time for regular beta, pilot- and constant split testing. (Chaffey & Smith, 2017, 612-613)

4 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Before implementing the SOSTAC framework for Company X, empirical research was conducted in order to collect remaining needed data for implementing the SOSTAC fully.

This empirical part of thesis regard mainly to buyer personas. Research will be done in a form of qualitative interview. Interviews will provide the needed information in order to help to build buyer personas for Company X and build an effective social media marketing plan. The customized social media strategy will be created in the Chapter 5 by using the created buyer personas.

4.1 Design and formulation of the research

The empirical research consists of six interviews. Interviewed persons included CEO of Company X and Company X's current customers as well as potential customers. The interview with the CEO of Company X was done face to face and the basic things of the Company X was gathered. Used interview questions can be seen in Appendix 1. The current situation of the social media marketing in Company X was found out which will be detailly explained in the situation analysis of Company X in the Chapter 5.1.

Other five interviews were conducted with current and possible customers as a theme interviews via phone and email. The idea of these interviews was to understand customers' needs, behavior and preferences in social media and business in order to build as customer-oriented social media strategy as possible. Findings of the interviews were also used for creating two buyer personas for Company X. The interviews were conducted systematically using the interview guide with 15 open-ended questions which can be found in the Appendix 2. The questions relate directly to the building process of buyer personas and the implementation part of the strategy. In each of these interviews, the questions were identical.

4.2 Data analyses of the interviews with current and potential customers

Interview results were analyzed using qualitative method and the findings of the interviews were used as a help of creating two buyer personas as well as for the implementation of the SOSTAC for Company X. The main findings from the interviews are summarized in the created buyer personas in Appendix 5 and 6. Buyer personas reflect on the earlier explained segments. The first buyer persona illustrates the target market for corporate gifts and the second buyer persona illustrates the promotional products segment.

The steps of the analysis of the interviews:

1. Organizing the data gained from the interviews

2. Review and explore the data

3. Find out the similar information

4. Combine the results as a form of buyer persona

Ability to collect very detailed information was the main advantage of qualitative method. In order to reveal customers thoughts, the quantitative method would have not work as well as qualitative. Qualitative interviews also offered interviewees to explain more freely about their thoughts. Disadvantages of the qualitative method was that it was quite hard to gather people who have time to be interviewed. However, enough interviews were collected.

Also, the answers for secondary research questions were partially received from the conducted interviews. The interview with Company X's CEO revealed the current situation and the goal where Company X wants to be in the future. Interviews with current and potential customers on the other hand provide some answers for what Company X should do in order to reach their future goals. Interviews also provided a lot of information which affects to the selection of tactical tools and action plans e.g. what kind of tactics Company X should use can be chose out of the interview results.

4.3 Research results

Results of the empirical research can be divided into two different audience; internal and external. Internal audience include the results gained from the interview with Company X's CEO and the external audience includes the current and potential customers of Company X. In the next chapters 4.3.1 and 4.3.2, the research results of these audiences will be explained.

4.3.1 Internal audience

As explained, the internal audience in this research means the CEO of Company X. Research of internal audience was conducted as a conversational interview and the questions were very open in order to keep the interview as adaptable as possible. The questions in Appendix 1 were used as a help to proceed with the interview.

The first question "tell freely about the company" revealed many important things regarding to Company X current situation and business model. Based on this questions' answers, the introduction of the company was able to be done. Also, information gained from this question revealed things like company's strengths in domestic products. During the interview also the main competitors were defined: "*Our competitors are the operators who are in the same field with us and offer similar products and services. Of course, there are supermarkets who are selling same products as us, but I do not see them as competitors since B2B customers rarely buy things from stores aimed at consumers and besides this, those supermarkets do not offer products' logo marking service."* (Laine, 2020)

The second question "where is the company at the moment" support one of the secondary research question very well. With the results of this question also the needed information for situation analysis were gained. Together with the CEO, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were gone through. As an example, Company X's CEO said during the interview that *"We have potential, but we need to react on customers' needs rapidly and the main thing is to increase our brand awareness as effectively as possible"* (Laine, 2020). It was also mentioned that Company X try to deliver value only for B2B not for private customers.

By the questions "what is lacking in company's business" and "what are the goals" the most important facts were gained. It was very important to really hear what Company X thinks is lacking in order to stick into all these things while doing the social media strategy plan. One very important finding was that CEO of Company X said that they have never been active on social media and they find it hard to really find time for social media. Also, the 5S objectives were gone through during the interview and together with the CEO, the objectives in the Chapter 5.2. were decided.

4.3.2 External audience

External audience's research interviews were semi-structured. The themes in the interviews were personal information, business, buying process, decision making, information sources and objections.

The first theme, personal background, revealed basic information needed in order to build believable buyer personas for Company X. Interviewees were 20 to 40 years old and their companies were located in Southern Finland.

The second theme was about interviewees business background, the asked questions were about education and occupation at work. These things were needed to ask in order to reveal their position in the organization and find out in which position they are in order to create a plan who to target in social media. For example, in the Facebook marketing this information could be used for targeting. The interviewees were mainly working in the marketing department as a marketing and communication managers, visual planners and marketing managers. Education background was economical for all interviewees.

The third theme was about the buying process of promotional products and corporate gifts. Three of the interviewees thought that both promotional products and corporate gifts are important while according to one of the interviewees explained that *"for our company, promotional products have been the main thing while the corporate gifts have been more like a side thing, however I think that there could be some potential in corporate gifts"* The last interviewed person explained that they are interested only on promotional products and they do not think that corporate gifts are

important for them. In this theme also question about the current problems what interviewees might have and they need a solution for were explored. Three of the five interviewees thought that they have all what they need at the moment and they do not have any problems regarding to promotional products or corporate gifts. However, two of the interviewees who were Company X's potential customers had some problems. One of the interviewees said that "*we are really lacking innovation and imagination with our current partner in this field*" while another interviewee emphasized that "*the reclamations should be arranged well, and the cooperation needs to be easy*".

The fourth theme was decision making. This part included four different research questions;

1. Who is involved in the buying process for products or services like Company X is offering?

2. What influences your company's purchasing decision the most?

3. When choosing the company where you will buy the products, how was the decision process?

4. In which way you prefer to make the order?

The first question received many different answers. According to interviews the people involved in buying decision varied by organizations. Decision making units included directors, managers, CEOs, assistants and people in the marketing department. This information will guide Company X to target also these people while marketing in social media since they are part of the buying decision.

According to all of the five interviewees, prices of the products, quality of the products and easy cooperation affected most on their buying decisions. One of the interviewees also mentioned that "*in my opinion the seller needs to be professional and really know what she/he is talking about*" This supports the fact that also in social media the marketing needs to be professional and create the feeling of trust and expertise.

According to three interviewees, the decision process was often quite fast, but they had explored many options. Two of the interviewees had used much more time when making the buying decision. Within this theme also the preferred way of making the orders after choosing the company varied. Three of the interviewees preferred to make the order straight from the website, while one thought that the email is the best when making the order. One of the interviewees also explained that *"It really depends on the product. I would prefer to order it online but if it is complicated to do from the website, I would rather just contact the seller personally."*

The fifth theme, information sources, gained information regarding to social media itself. The main thing was to find out which channels interviewees are using in order to pick right channels for Company X. The three main channels according to the interviews were LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. The preferred content of the posts in social media were also asked and it revealed different things. All of the interviewees wanted to receive information and images of good products. Two of the interviewees also mentioned that they would be interested in the history of the products in order to gain deeper knowledge and understand the products better. Also, four of the interviewees mentioned that they would like to get beneficial tips and knowledge about corporate gifts and promotional products. For example, one of the interviewees explained that *"it would be amazing, if I could receive some information about the corporate gifts and what is the recommend budget and is there some restrictions etc."*

The last theme, objections, was about the things that Company X could do even better. Overall interviewees had been very pleased in Company X's operation. However, one of the interviewees wished that Company X could clarify the different factors better e.g. Company X could divide trade fair products, products for certain field and products for certain topic into different sectors.

5 IMPLEMENTATIONS OF SOSTAC FOR COMPANY X

In this chapter the SOSTAC framework will be implemented for Company X in order to build the social media strategy fully. All of the steps will be gone through and utilized for Company X.

5.1 Situation Analysis for Company X

"Where are we at the moment?

Since Company X is a new brand, awareness of it is very low, however the company has a long history which might be beneficial. Company X does not have social media channels at all so also the channels need to be published and the social media marketing will start from the very beginning.

First of all, the things to be analysed involve customers. Company X's customer group can be roughly centralized to all companies' chiefs of admissions and marketing managers who are seeking promotional products or corporate gifts and whom values are similar to the ones of Company X; domestic, environmentally friendly, ecological, personal customer experience and high-quality. This group has been defined by the need of different companies; however, the more detailed customer analysis will be conducted in the section, Tactics.

According to internal interview, key competitors include the operators who offer similar products and services such as other promotional products and business gift enterprises. Also, some welfare service providers can be seen as competitors since nowadays concrete matter as a business gift is not as popular as it used to be, people appreciate more and more intangible accolades due to minimalist and ecological scheme of things. Also, some of the trademarks what Company X is offering might include some competitors since the trademarks itself may sold their products as a business gifts to other companies, however this kind of competitors do not have a great influence in Company X's business.

Company X has also some partners which are able to help with the marketing by offering ready-made material to offer to Company X's customers. Partners also support in social media marketing by offering some material.

At the moment, the stage of marketing of this certain business field is in its first steps, so it is not possible to analyse in detail what seems working and what seems not to.

A SWOT analysis was conducted as a part of situation analysis. SWOT stands for company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The primary goal of the analysis is to create a full knowledge of the topics that affects decision making actions. (Schooley, 2019)

Company X's strengths include the strong history and experience for entrepreneurship and the title of domestic company. Company X also offers wide range of products in different price levels which allows collaboration with different sized enterprises. One of the strengths which also differentiates the Company X from its competitors is that the range includes many well-known Finnish brands such as Fiskars and Finlayson. Also, Company X's website offers more functions than some of the competitors' websites. Company X also has a good reputation among its old customers.

Weak brand recognition as a result of name change due to business acquisition is the major weakness of the company. Marketing is also in its first steps which does not support the growing of the brand awareness. Besides the recognition topic, company has a prohibition of competition for a certain time period in clothing also caused by the business acquisition which may complicate Company X's operation.

However, besides the weaknesses there are many opportunities which makes Company X's business very promising. The lacking brand awareness can be fixed by effective social media marketing and the competitors' lower presence online offers a way for Company X, to overcome competitors due to the fact that Company X is focusing effectively on online presence. Customers demand is also shifted from random gifts and products to ecological and timeless ones which support Company X's portfolio of high-quality domestic products. Also, the number of events is increasing which grow the need of promotional products like candies or distributive goods.

There are also some threats which need to be taken into account. The obvious fact is that there is and will be competition from bigger companies from the same industry but besides that also wellness service providers' solutions have an increasing demand as a business gifts. The other thing that need to prepare for is the rapid change in customer's needs and behaviour.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
- Strong history and experience for entrepreneurship - A domestic company - A wide range of products - Many well-known brands in the dealership - Good repuation among old customers - High-quality products in many price ranges - Website offer more functions than competitors websites	- Weak brand recognition due to business transaction - Marketing still on its first steps in this certain field - Prohibition of competition in clothing for certain time period (due to business transaction)
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
- Increase in the number of different events e.g trade-fairs - Demand shifted from random items to ecological and timeless products and gifts - Room for innovation and new products - Awareness and recognition gained from social media - Competitors have more offline presence so there is an opportunity to become best online - Own production	- Competition from other bigger businesses - Rapid changes in customers' needs and behavior - Wellness service providers

Figure 5. SWOT analysis

Another conducted analysis is PESTEL. According to Jurevicius (2013), PESTEL is a framework which involves the macro-environmental factors that affect to company's activities. As it can be seen in a Figure 4, all of these sections were able to be recognized. The first section, Political, included things like tax policy and health

and safety acts. Besides those general topics, foreign trade regulations have an impact in Company X's business due to importation activities. Also, prohibition of competition in consequence of business acquisition can be seen as a political effect.

First of all, the Economic section includes the industrial change. At the moment the industry is changing to more ecological, timeless and minimalist and this of course affects to Company X's business. Also, interest rates, exchange rates, economic trends and economic growth have their own effects for Company X. Besides these things, different enterprises usually have some budget which can be used for corporate gifts and promotional products. There are also different price level's gifts for different purposes, e.g. bigger achievements will be rewarded by more expensive gifts and then the budget is higher, however if all personnel will be given a gift, the budget decreases lot. Possible recession also affects to Company X's business as generally expected.

Social section includes factors affecting to social and cultural things. Different norms, traditions and behaviour have huge effect to Company X; as an example, Danielsson (2020) emphasizes that people's world view is becoming more and more relevant, real and open-minded so the customers are not seeking just a new product but the products which has something relevant on them. Also, some norms for giving the corporate gifts exists. Structure of age population also have its own effects. For example, nowadays the age structure those in decision-making process is changing to younger generation and this also affects to their opinion about the business gifts. Internet usage habits leads Company X's presence more online related.

Technology section explains what kind of technology is related to Company X's business. Cloud services is one of the biggest factors in this section. Company X's actions, website management, maintenance of the stock etc. are all taken care with different cloud services and platforms. Website is naturally including many technological actions such as chatbots and the social media objectives will be examined through technological tools. Company X also uses external partner for logo marking technologies e.g. for laser engraving or embroidery.

Economic analysis brought out the topics such as environmentally friendly way of packaging the products and general attitudes towards sustainability. Since environmentally friendliness is one of the values of the Company X, it is important to act also by supporting this value. That is why the Company X should ensure that the harmful effects for environment caused by logistics or sold products' manufacturing is minimized. Also, in 2020, the spread of COVID-19 virus has affected to Company X's business by slowing down Company X's operations as well as weakened the economic situation generally. The reason for that is this kind of exceptional time which affects on this kind of risky field due to the fact that if something abnormal happens, promotional products and corporate gifts are the first things where companies are saving.

Law section of PESTEL includes different legislations affecting Company X. Taxation laws and labour laws are of course included in this section but besides them data and copyright laws has also big effect for Company X's business due to effective online presence. For example, the tightened GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) applies to Company X's operation. There are also laws regarding to products and packaging.

P	E	S	T	E	L

- regulation of competition

- tax policy

- health and safety

- foreign trade regulations

- economic growth

- industrial change

- economic trends

- possible recession

- interest rates

- companies' limited budget for gifts or promotional products

- exchange rates

- internet usage habits

- norms, traditions, behaviour

- changing demographics

- changing public opinions

- population age structure

- outsourcing logo marking

- automation in a form of chatbots in website

- contract customers' access to personalized website

- data analysis through technological systems

- website and social media

- cloud services

- risk for operating due to pandemic e.g. COVID-19

- attitudes towards sustainability

- the environmental impact of the sold products should be minimized

- environmentally friendly way of packing products

- logistics

- taxation laws

- labor laws

- data and copyright laws

- GDPR

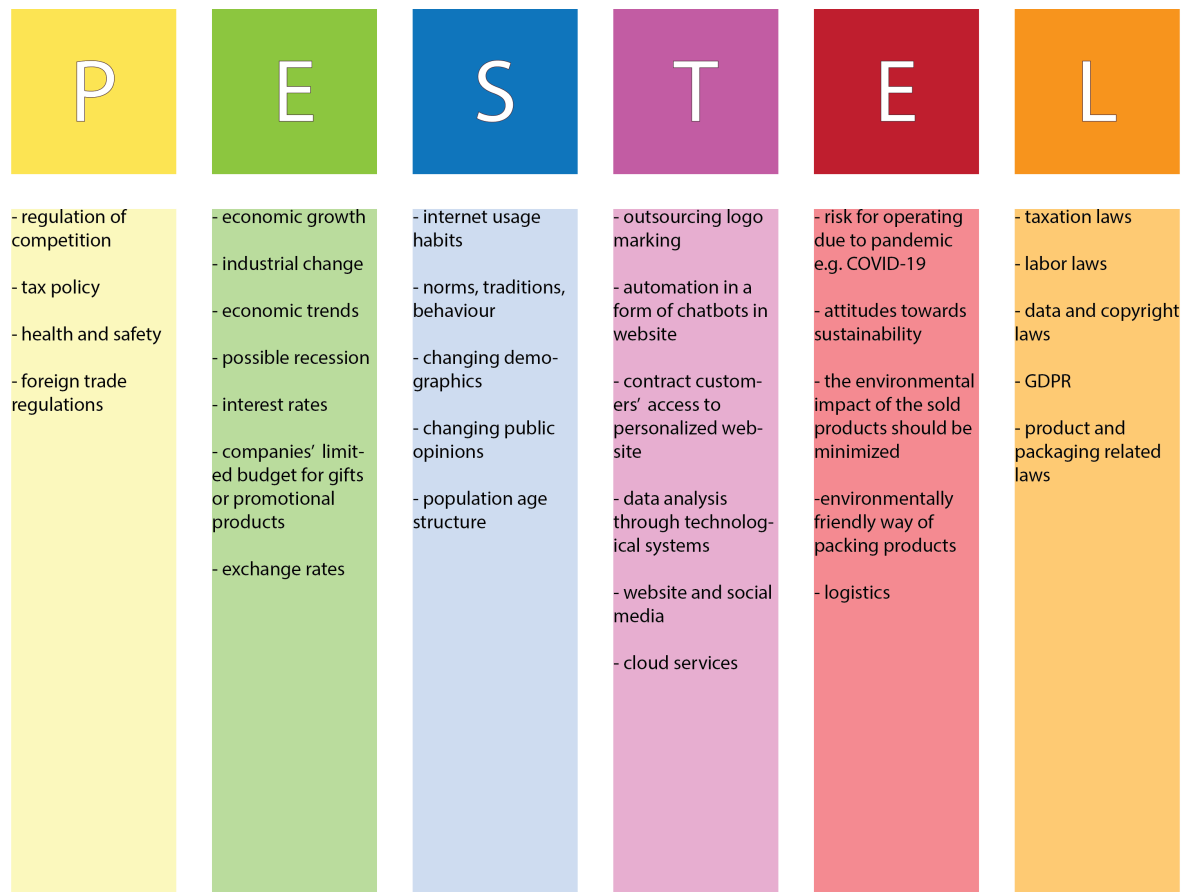- product and packaging related laws

Figure 6. PESTEL analysis

The last analysed thing is online value proposition (OVP). In order to stand out from other sites in internet, the Company X needs a unique proposition to the visitors, an OVP. It is important that the visitors why they are visiting in the site and why they should revisit. Company X has quite well-defined OVP. The visitor in a site can see the different benefits that are aimed just at them. Company X's OVP is the customized ordering channel feature which allows contract customers to get the personalized ordering channel. Company X also wants to provide its customers the whole experience from the product designing to storage of the products.

5.2 Objectives

When the situation analysis is completed it is important to know where Company X wants to be? In order to find the answer for that question realistic and measurable objectives needs to be set. The main task is to find out what Company X wants to reach by entering to social media and implementing the social media marketing

strategy. The main reasons for Company X to utilize a social media marketing strategy can be defined by earlier mentioned 5S approach (speak, serve, sizzle, save and sell). Together with Company X the following 5S objectives were selected.

Company X's 5S:

1. Speak= online awareness, social participation, sharing content, user-generated content

2. Serve= help, responses, advice, service

3. Sizzle= extended brand experience, social customer service, growing follower base

4. Save= cost-efficiency and savings

5. Sell= input to online sales generated by leads

RACE model is another model to set the objectives, but it is used more for short-term strategic objectives. Together with RACE and 5S models, the key strategic objectives will be set.

Key strategic objectives for Company X are the following:

1. Objective 1. Building brand awareness

2. Objective 2. Initiate brand interaction (extra benefits)

3. Objective 3. Gather conversion to followers/ website visitors

4. Objective 4. Reach loyal follower base and initiate brand engagement

5. Objective 5. Maintain brand engagement and achieved trust

6. Objective 6. Satisfy the buyers who are ready to purchase
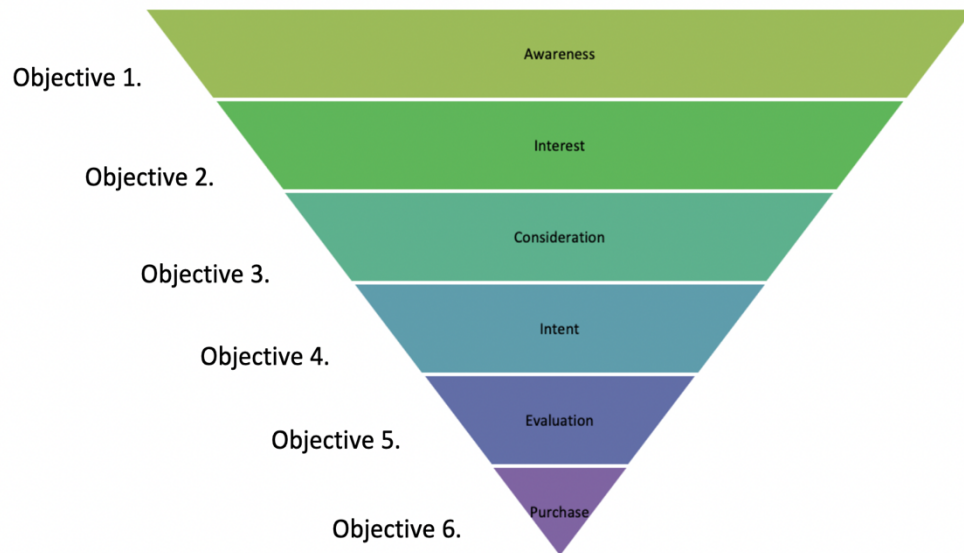
Figure 7. Sales funnel for Company X

5.3 Social Media strategy for Company X

The purpose of the strategy is to define 'How do we reach the objectives?'. According to Chaffey & Smith (2017) it should also utilize distinctive competitive advantage.

Key strategic objectives for Company X and the strategies to reach objectives:

1. Objective 1. Building brand awareness – Content placement strategy

2. Objective 2. Initiate brand interaction (extra benefits) – Connection strategy

3. Objective 3. Gather conversion to followers/ website visitors – Conversion strategy

4. Objective 4. Reach loyal follower base and initiate brand engagement – Engagement strategy

5. Objective 5. Maintain brand engagement and protect achieved trust – Nurturing strategy

6. Objective 6. Satisfy the buyers who are ready to purchase – Advertisement strategy

5.3.1 Content placement strategy

Company X's social media marketing strategy's first step is a content placement strategy. This sub-strategy supports Company X's online value proposition and the purpose of this sub-strategy is to create digital contact with Company X and its brand. Company X aims to grow the brand awareness and reach people by introducing an innovative and high-quality product for marketing managers. Due to this, the content needs to be specific and focused on target market (Chaffey & Smith, 2017, 253). Company X try to deliver value only for B2B not for private customers. A clear segmentation and target buyer personas need to be used in content placement strategy in order to fulfill the needs.

Social networks are the major element of Company X's content placement strategy. This strategy is customer focused and its aim is to get visitors into webpage and interest towards the brand. According to Groom (2013) the content needs to be short and relevant and the messages will be related to the brand, company and solutions since the target is to grow the awareness of the brand. Also, the brand voice needs to be aligned to brand personality and the tone should be appropriate for the used platform but still effective in order to achieve the attention from the audience. Company X's brand personality is relaxed, professional, special and friendly so the communication in social media needs to follow this style.

5.3.2 Connection strategy

Connection strategy for Company X is about listening and talking with the customers. This strategy is enabled by interaction and its goal is to establish conversations with the target audience.

Interaction in social media with the target audience allows to achieve more trust with people by revealing the people behind the brand by using personal profiles in social media marketing. This allows the conversations happen between actual persons, not by company profiles. It is important to remember that in social media Company X should provide rapid responses and reactions. Therefore, Company X needs to show its willingness to listen the customers and be available for them rather than just dropping the content into social media and never be available there. If the companies do not have commitment to active participation, there is no point even starting them.

Social listening is also important part of connection strategy because it allows to monitor conversations and gain customer insights etc. so using it can be beneficial for this step.

5.3.3 Conversion strategy

Conversion strategy is linked to the connection strategy and it is the third sub-strategy. Through active participation in communication on social media, Company X increases the trust and interest towards its brand. In order to achieve meaningful communications and continuing trust, Company X needs to reach the right prospects that are truly interested in the brand and the company. The conversations with these key prospects need to help the prospects and offer some benefit for them and showing them value. In social media the posts need to have exact purpose and they need to pursue to start educating and value rich conversations. In this step the most important thing is to deliver the promise to prospects and excite them to make the next move. The goal is to establish conversions e.g. website visits and follow Company X's social media platforms with the help of the conversion tactics which are presented in Chapter 5.4.3.

5.3.4 Engagement strategy

In order to reach brand engagement, Company X needs an engagement strategy. Engagement cannot be measured in a number of followers or website visitors. It is active and continuous caretaking and maintaining of the relationships. Communications need to be interactive and involve both parties in order to maintain the attention and interest. Company X needs to change their followers into real fans and prolonged followers. These fans and prolonged followers want to engage because they are assuming to receive value because of the promise they received from the brand. This again means that the followers have expectations towards the company and brand and in order to maintain the relationships with the followers, the needs and expectations needs to be fulfilled. Also, some additional benefit for those truly engaged followers needs to be provided. Besides all this, it is important to remember that the customer service in social media is a part of the engagement strategy, by providing accurate and fast responses, the engagement rate increases.

5.3.5 Nurturing strategy

This part of the strategy involves the maintaining of the reached brand engagement. In order to retain the followers and prevent followers change into passive followers, Company X need to have a strategy to maintain the engagement by nurturing them. Nurturing means that the approach needs to be personalized and followers need to make feel valuable. The fans and followers need to be nurtured until becoming ready to purchase and until get them as customers. By successful nurturing, the followers will turn into advocates who will share their interest and commitment towards the company and brand to other people around them (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 227).

5.3.6 Advertisement strategy

Advertisement strategy is the last sub-strategy and its goal is to satisfy the buyers who are ready to purchase without first need to build the trust with them. These buyers could have already been aware of different options and they have decided what they need. However according to Räisänen (2020), only 3 % of people in social

media platforms knows what they really need and want so the main focus of course is to build the trust with the people and forget the selling and offer real benefits like went through in the previous sub-strategies. Still there is that 3% who has the acute need. Also, people might become aware of the Company X and its brand through the advertising if they have not reached the social medias organically before. Also, for this reason, the advertisement strategy needs to be designed. Company X needs to show to their audience that they are offering the solution which fulfill the customers need. The advertising strategy also support the other sub-strategies especially the first sub-strategy, content placement strategy.

5.4 Tactics

In this chapter the strategy presented in the previous chapters will be implemented with the tactics. The chapter includes the tactics that Company X should use when posting the content on social media.

5.4.1 Content placement tactics

Social media content placement is about reaching the target market with the correct content in the right type of platform. However, the first thing that Company X needs to do before entering to social media is to build up buyer personas. With the buyer personas the content strategy can be done for social media. Without the buyer personas, the marketing in social media is not systematic, effective nor beneficial. (Räisänen, 2020)

Two different buyer personas were built by using the information received from the conducted interviews and by researching social media behaviour of potential customers. Also, the website answerthepublic.com was used in order to find out what kind of things people are searching about promotional products and corporate gifts as can be seen in the appendices 3 and 4. The created buyer personas can be seen in the Appendix 5 and 6.

It is also important to really define the social media channels that will be used. One of the chosen social media channels for Company X is LinkedIn due to its' strong benefit possibilities for B2B business. LinkedIn was also the most used channel for business purposes according to the conducted interviews. Facebook was another channel that stand out from the crowd in the interviews and the reachability of it is also wide. According to HubSpot (2020), over 2.38 billion active users are on Facebook and 74% of people claim using Facebook for professional purposes. Instagram is not that popular within our buyer persona and target market but it still increases the awareness of the brand so it will be the third channel that will be used.

The content that will be placed in Company X's social media channel needs to catch the attention of the audience and reach people and of course encourage them to get to know the brand more. The posts can include different things which contribute to the goal of increase the awareness. However, it is important maintain the brand personality while posting. Also, the domesticity and ecological thinking needs to be in a big role in social media posts. It is very important to really show how Company X is taking care of the environment and domestic production and products. According to Chaffey and Smith (2017) to ensure content depth and breadth Company X should offer variety and use different kind of content, not just only e.g. images.

According to Laine (2019) LinkedIn's algorithm is changing still all the time however Laine accentuates that content marketing and goal-oriented behaviour in LinkedIn are the trends in 2020. For content marketing, Laine (2019) encourages to use native content such as native videos instead of e.g. YouTube links, the content needs to be in the platform itself. Besides these native videos, posts can include texts, images and interesting and beneficial information.

The other chosen channel is Facebook. With the Facebook, also Instagram will be created since the same marketing tool is working for both of them as mentioned earlier in the thesis. Content placement in Instagram and Facebook are quite similar. Both of them includes texts, videos, advertisements. However, the Instagram also includes the use of Instagram stories as it can be seen in the Table 1.

The more detailed content placement plan had been generated by using the paid base plan provided by Jerry Hietaniemi from Somekoulu. It is a content calendar for

365 days that includes all the upcoming topics and needed information in order to publish posts on social media regularly and effectively. However, this plan will be not showed in this thesis since it is private information.

Target audience	Tool	Platform	Content type	Style and tone
B2B / Buyer personas	social networking	Facebook	Texts, images, videos, links to website, advertisements	interesting, conversational, informative
		LinkedIn	Texts, images, native videos, questions, infromation "packages"	professional, interesting, unique, neutral, converational
	social sharing	Instagram	Images, videos, hashtags, texts, mentions, instagram stories, advertisements	friendly, easy to approach

Table 1. Content placement tactics

According to the buyer personas of Company X the content that is most important includes the information and the images about the products Company X is offering. Content should involve different formats and various content. For example, Company X could tell interesting stories about their history, share product catalogs, make videos or share tips. The content could be also targeted only for some smaller groups e.g. golf players, car dealers, gyms or let's say universities. By segmenting the target audience into smaller groups, it could be easier for Company X to really enter deep into the segment and offer innovative ideas. This kind of marketing also supports one of the empirical research interviewee's wishes for segmenting the products better. The segmenting could be done e.g. by creating own catalogs for each segment and share them in social media. Also, the collection of new leads could be done by making the catalogs only available by downloading them and leaving email addresses.

Also, an important thing to realize from the first buyer persona, Matti Heikkilä, is that it is valuable to reach also the people that Heikkilä trusts. These people are co-workers, assistants and directors. That is why the other buyer persona, Sofia Saarinen is an assistant because, assistants will be a part of the decision and sometimes managers are asking them to help in the decision or to find companies who are offering solutions what are needed.

5.4.2 Connection tactics

Connection tactics' goal is to encourage conversations and interaction between Company X and the target audience. In order to make conversations easy to start, the topics of the discussions needs to be relevant and beneficial for the target audience. Especially the social networking platform, LinkedIn provides an amazing place for discussions between the company's representatives i.e. personal brand profiles and the target audience. However, the approach needs to be friendly and easy and the topics of discussions needs to be useful for the audience and interesting enough to receive attention.

According to the interviews and created buyer personas the correct conversational topics could be e.g. interesting information about the corporate gift etiquette, and history about the sold products and real-life stories. Of course, the topic can be randomly selected hot topic about which everyone is talking and telling their opinions. Effective starters for conversations are tips and hints or straight interesting questions. Also, the design of the posts receives attention easily.

It is also important to remain the tone appropriate and publish various content from interviews to feedbacks and brand related topics and of course sharing other people's posts and commenting them is an effective way to widen the network and start conversations.

However, the communication is not just speaking, it involves also listening of the audience. It is beneficial to show ability to listen and respond accurately audience questions in real-time. Communication needs to be continuous and it need time commitment as well as tools such as social listening tools.

Pääkkönen (2017, 127) suggest Buffer or Hootsuite as a social listening tool. Both Buffer and Hootsuite offers similar pricing structure and the free versions of each allows adding three social media accounts and schedule a limited number of posts; Buffer 10 scheduled posts and Hootsuite 30 (Genest, 2019). Both of them supports LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram. However, Hootsuite offers wider range of social media channels and some more functions but in this case the Buffer is offering

enough functions for Company X's needs so Buffer will be picked as the social listening tool.

5.4.3 Conversion tactics

The communication in social media channels drives meaningful discussions with quality audience to increase the trust and interest towards the brand and company. By sharing the knowledge freely, creates valuable assets for Company X. Company X should not be too afraid to give away their "secrets". By adding and sharing beneficial information in social media for the audience can provide conversions such as lead the audience into websites or follow the channel. For example, by providing a guide to corporate gift etiquette can help the audience and it may affect persons to follow the social media channel for upcoming beneficial information. So as explained, offering valuable benefits and delivering the promise for customers via social media encourages the audience to follow the channel or visit the website and of course achieve trust.

5.4.4 Engagement tactics

Increasing the active participation of followers and fans in content creation through shares, feedback and comments is the aim of engagement tactics. In order to get audience to engage and discuss with Company X, the content needs to add special value and benefits for those trusted and active followers e.g. information for followers only etc. Conversations with followers need to monitor and listen in order to get all the insights and truly support the fans and prolonged followers. Also, through the posts and links in social media, the followers will be guided to Company X's website landing pages. According to Räisänen (2020) these landing pages should not be product pages, or they should not aim to sell things, but the goal of the landing page is to offer even more benefits for the customer.

5.4.5 Nurturing tactics

With the nurturing tactics, Company X focuses on those prolonged followers and fans who had chosen to commit with the brand and maintain their interest and are interested in purchasing. Company X should make the prolonged followers to feel special and in order to reach that goal, the segmentation of the prolonged followers needs to be done to be able to offer as personalized experience as possible. This segmentation can be done with the buyer persona. By taking the important information such as age, interests, gender etc. offers Company X to produce highly personalized content addressed specially for the fans and prolonged followers. The content also needs to differ from competitors' content, and it needs to be unique.

According to Chaffey and Smith (2017, 482), personalization can be divided into three groups; customization, individualization and group characterization. Customization is easiest to see in action since it gives visitor a chance to choose their specific preferences. Individualization on the other hand deliver certain content according to login or password choices. In Company X's case individualization could be done in the contract customers' ordering channel in the website. Group characterization works in a way that visitor will receive a recommendation based on other similar people's preferences. Approaches are based on case-based reasoning and collaborative filtering. However, it is important to realize that over-personalization leads to overfamiliarity (*op. cit.* 483).

Company X's buyer personas needs both little bit different personalized content. Matti Heikkilä, the first buyer persona search more innovative ideas and different style of marketing and selling while the second buyer persona, Sofia Saarinen is seeking trustworthiness and encouragement to stick with the company who is providing the solution. In the Table 2. the suggested content for both buyer personas is presented.

Social media posts' content		
	Matti Heikkilä	Sofia Saarinen
Content examples	Innovative and new gift ideas, information about the importantness of the corporate gifts, personalized offers e.g. regarding to their industry	Presenting well-known brands and products, introducing the customer journey, showing reliability, offer helpful solutions or information
Tone	Professional, open, clear, innovative	Reliable, professional, supportive, helpful
Motivations	Products' prices, innovation, creativity, personalisation, quality of products	Products' prices, quality, innovation, trustworthiness, effectiveness, rapidity

Table 2. Social media posts' content for both buyer personas

Besides making the quality audience feel special, it is important to maintain the good relationships with them by also liking and sharing their posts in social media as well as staring conversations with them.

List of the example acts for making the quality audience feel special:

1. Personalized messages

2. Discounts, offers and deals

3. Thanking the followers or congratulating them

Loyal followers and customers are very important to nurture and maintain since they affect to the brand image and reputation. Especially the positive image in social media is mandatory benefit in order to become positively known in social media channels.

5.4.6 Advertisement tactics

The goal of advertisement tactics is to lead the buyers to choose Company X as the provider of promotional products or corporate gifts. In order to reach the goal, some advertisements acts need to be done in social media.

Paid advertising should happen especially through Google ads. Also, the advertisement campaigns through Facebook or Instagram could work, however the main focus is in Google ads.

People are searching different things from Google when they have a need. That is why the advertisements in Google works so efficiently for those buyers who knows already what they want. Besides the basic Google ads, Google is offering the Shopping advertisements. All suppliers can use Google Shopping for promoting the products with the Shopping campaigns and advertisements and these advertisements will be located in the following places in Google:

- Shopping tab in Google Search

- Google Search next to search results (separate from text ads) and Google Image Search

- On Google search partner websites (if you've included search partners in the campaign)

- On the Google Display Network, namely YouTube, Gmail, and Google Discover (Support.google.com, 2020)
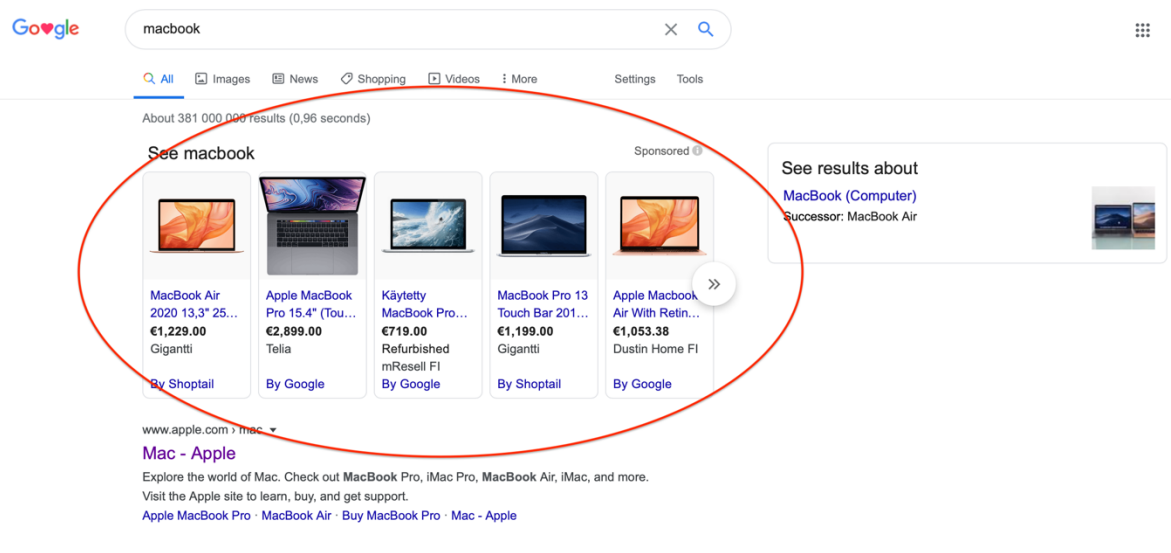

Picture 1. Google Shopping in Google search (Google Search, 2020)

Besides Google's offerings, LinkedIn offers additional paid service called Sales Navigator which allows people to use LinkedIn even better for business purposes. Advertising targeting criteria, Interests, is a tool which Laine (2019) recommend using. These new targeting criteria has brought amazing results, for example the pay per click (PPC) prices have been able to lower to 0,15€ which is equivalent to Facebook's prices and also the click through rates (CTR) has increased. Besides this InMail campaigns in LinkedIn will be even more important nowadays. (Laine, 2019)

Also, the advertising through Facebook is recommended. According to Leväinen (2020) spam words should be avoided in Facebook marketing due to the fact that Facebook might interpret them as a bad experience for the user. If the audience is hiding the advertisements, it also lowers the quality score which again makes the advertisement worse. Also, the text, images and landing pages need to be carefully designed since those are related to advertisement experience. By Facebook marketing, also comments, shares and reactions should be collected through advertisements. (Leväinen, 2020)

Facebook feed advertising is also a good choice and it is little bit similar to Google Shopping ads. Facebook offers for example the carousel ad format which is also available for Instagram (see Picture 2.). According to Facebook (2020) this format allows to showcase even 10 different pictures or videos within a single advertisement. All these images or videos includes own links e.g. to product pages. Besides the carousel format, many other advertisement formats with different functions are available as it can be seen in Table 3.
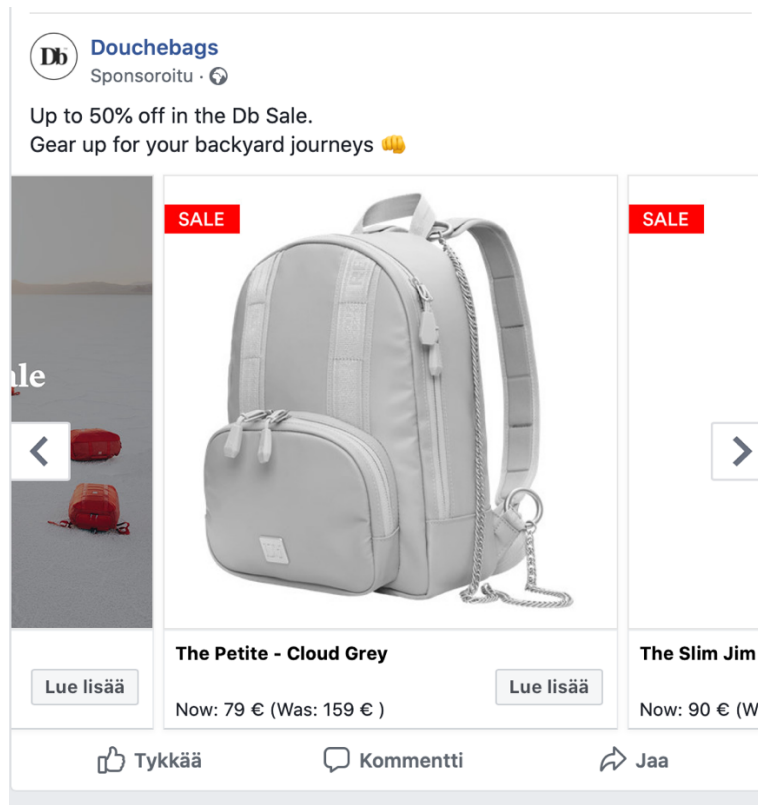
Picture 2. Facebook carousel feed advertisement (Facebook feed, 2020)

	Image ads	Video ads	Facebook Stories ads	Carousel ads	Slideshow ads	Collection ads	Instant Experience ads	Messenger Inbox ads
Headline	25 characters	25 characters		25 characters	25 characters	25 characters		n/a
Link description	30 characters	30 characters		20 characters	30 characters	n/a		n/a
Body text	125 characters	125 characters	No set character count. Aim to leave 250 pixels text-free at the top and bottom of the ad.	125 characters	125 characters	90 characters	Blocks of text up to 500 words each.	125 characters
Campaign objectives	All except video views	All except catalog sales	Engagement, messages, catalog sales, store traffic	All except engagement and video views	All	Traffic, conversions, catalog sales, store traffic	All except lead generation, catalog sales, and messages	Traffic, app installs, conversions, catalog sales, messages

Table 3. Facebook advertisement formats

By using the advertisement tools in Google, Facebook and LinkedIn, the advertisement strategy can be done. The advertisement tactics will be supporting the content placement tactics a lot since the advertisements main goal is to reach people and increase the brand awareness. Advertising should and will be used in Company X marketing strategy.

5.5 Action

In this part project action plan for each tactic will be presented. Now when doing a social media strategy, the action plan that really needs to be done is how the actual marketing in social media will start. For determining this plan, REAN framework will be used as help. REAN stands for Reach, Engage, Activate and Nurture.

Figure 8. REAN framework

5.5.1 General action plan

The plan will be divided into three parts according to the sub-strategies. The first thing is to build awareness and interaction. This first part will approximately take three months that enough awareness can be gathered. Second step takes around three to six months and it is about to deepen the engagement with the followers and develop the relationships. Third part will be about nurturing and maintaining the gained relationships and trust. Time reserved for this part is three months. After that the social media marketing should be continue as often as it was started and the new followers can be enticed to follow and engage, but of course the nurturing of loyal followers is mandatory all the time.
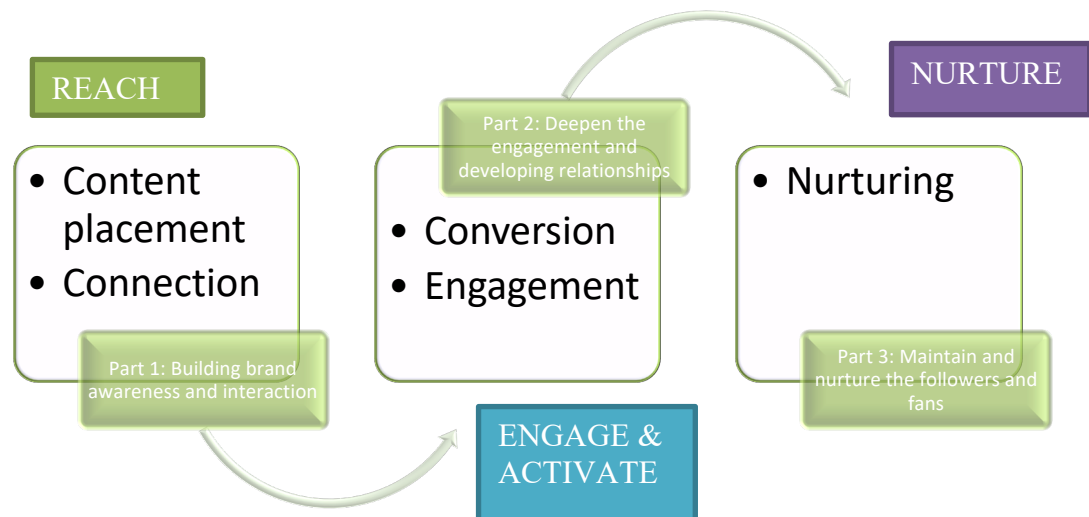
Figure 9. General action plan for Company X

In the first part of the general action plan the content needs to be specific and focused on Company X's buyer personas. First goal is to get the brand and Company X known. In order to do that, the company needs to be presented in social media by creating the social media accounts and start posting. In order to gain interest and make connections, the posts need to be interesting for the hot audience. As already went through in connection tactics buyer personas are interested to gain information about the products and find out ideas and images of the available products so the content should be like that. The posting on social media will be following the plan in Table 4. However, even though the buyer personas are different the same action plan will be used for both targets, however the posted content needs to fulfill both of the personas need as pictured earlier in this thesis in the Table 2. The posts should be scheduled in a way that first post is intended to older buyer persona, Matti Heikkilä, on second day, the post could fulfill both buyer personas' needs and then the third post would be intended to younger buyer persona, Sofia Saarinen. Such scheduling should be used on an ongoing basis.

In order to get more awareness also some advertising tactics needs to be put in action. However, the advertisements cannot be about selling, they should offer some benefit for the audience. Advertisements' goal is to present Company X and guide the audience into Company X's website and at the same time offer something for the audience.

In the part two of the action plan the gained relationships will be maintained and engagement deepened. In this part Company X needs to offer benefit for their followers and increase the active participation by commenting and sharing. Also, the loyal followers should be nurture with some special offers. It is still important to remember that the goal is not yet to sell, so the special offers cannot be the main focus. For this part, LinkedIn will be the go-to channel.

In the third part the focus is in nurturing the loyal and prolonged followers by making them feel special. This means that Company X needs to focus on personalized advertising as well as personalized messages.

These three parts of the general action plan also needs some kind of timetable in order to know how often these things should be posted. According to Myers (2020), huge number of studies agrees that the one post per day is the optimal amount of posts in Facebook and the maximum per day is two. If the amount of posts increases above the two posts per day, 50% of drop in engagement can be assumed when the Facebook page has under 10,000 followers (Kolowich, 2017). Company X should start their marketing in Facebook by posting one post every day. If this is not possible the minimum is three times per week. In Instagram, Company X should use similar posting style as in Facebook since they are syncing together.

LinkedIn is an important channel since it brings traffic into companies' websites more than any other social media channel. Econsultany's (2018) study revealed that LinkedIn accounted for 64% of social traffic to corporate pages. Facebook (17%) and Twitter (14%) came far behind. Corliss (2020), on the other hand, looked at the conversion rate of visitors, which was three times that of visitors from LinkedIn compared to Facebook and Twitter. In LinkedIn the preferable amount of posts is also one post every day. However, weekends are not effective nor recommended days to post so Company X should schedule the posts for weekdays.

Action plan: social media channels commissioning			
Social media channels & posts	Facebook	LinkedIn	Instagram
Updates	1 post per day	1 post per day	1 post per day
Focus	Social networking	Social networking	Social sharing
Goals	Traffic to website, brand awareness, followers, fans, online visibility, service, networking	Interaction, conversations, communication, speaking and listening	Traffic to website, brand awareness, followers, fans, online visibility
Comments		Use personal account for posting	

Table 4. Action plan for Company X: social media channels commissioning

## 5.5.2 Paid advertising action plan

Because Company X's one of the main objectives is to gain brand awareness, the paid advertising action plan will be focused brand awareness. The detailed action plan for paid brand awareness campaign is presented in Table 5. Company X should follow the plan in order to increase the brand awareness. The budget and project ROI have been left to the discretion of the company. However, according to Chaffey and Smith (2017,519), it is important to notice that all marketing budget should not be used in the advertisement campaigns but also for SEO, email advertising etc.

Brand awareness campaign in social media	
Purpose & SMART goal	Increase brand awareness / SMART= Create brand awareness to Company X's target market within the three months by gaining 500 website visitors with effective inbound marketing
campaign duration	around 3 months
Test-period	4-7 days
Budget	*Decided by Company X*
Project ROI	*Decided by Company X*
Audience	Target audience defined by using the buyer persona of Company X: 20 to 45 years old marketing managers, marketing assistants, visual planners etc.
Channel	E.g. Google Ads, Facebook
Content	Offer some benefit for the audience and lead them to the effective landing page in Company X's website
Resources	Responsible person(s) of social media will create the campaign
KPI's	website traffic, social media reach, brand mentions, conversion rate, ctr

Table 5. Social media brand awareness campaign for Company X

As it can be seen in the brand awareness campaign plan (Table 5.) purpose and the SMART goals needs to be first defined, also the duration of campaign, audience, channel, content, resources, KPIs and the test-period have been settled.

According to Vahl (2018), the testing of the advertisements should be revealing results that are detailed and significant to make decision if the advertisement is working or not. A/B testing (also referred as split testing) can reveal important information about the functionality of the advertisements as it can be seen in the Picture 3.
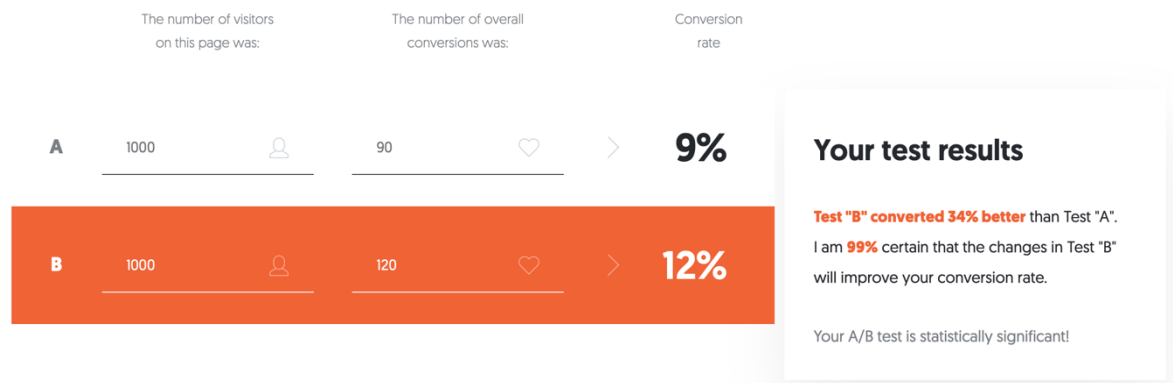
Picture 3. A/B testing example (Neilpatel, 2020)

Since the goal of the advertisement campaign is to gain 500 website visitors the advertisement should be active until the desired results are fulfilled and the campaign have been three to four days outside of those desired results. Then the campaign can be discontinued or refreshed. (Vahl, 2018)

5.6 Control

Control is the part which guides Company X to measure the right metrics while implementing this social media marketing plan. In this section Company X will know if the made acts are really working or not. In order to control all the needed metrics effectively the plan in Table 6. will guide company through the controlling phase. The controlling will be done by the person who is responsible of social media marketing. Different metrics listed in the Table 6. can be measured in Google Analytics and Buffer which were chose for Company X social media marketing tools.

KPI OBJECTIVES			
Marketing objectives		How often?	Explanations
ROI	Referrals	monthly/weekly	how people are landing to website (Chen, 2020)
	Conversions		purchases from the website / social conversion = visits via social media which at the same time ended up to purchase (Chen, 2020)
Sales	Revenue	monthly	
	Units		
Churn rates	Lost contacts	quarterly	e.g. unsubscribe to email or newsletter
Traffic	Website visitors	bi-weekly	
	Time spent		
Rates	Click through rate	monthly	how often the audience see the advertisement and click it (Google Support)
	Bounce rate		% of visitors who enter the site and do nothing and then leave rather than checking the other pages of the site (van den Berg, 2017)
MarComm objectives		How often?	Explanations
Awareness	Reach	weekly	number of unique and important people who saw the post (Sherman, 2019)
	Impressions		how often a certain post appears in someone's timeline (Chen, 2020)
Engagement	Likes	weekly	
	Shares		
	Comments		
	Mentions		
	Followers' amount		
Customer care	Response rate		
	Response time		
Loyalty levels	Net promoter score	quarterly	willingness of customers to recommend Company X's products (Medallia.com)

Table 6. Control metrics for Company X

In the Table 6. some recommend metrics have been listed. The table includes both marketing objectives as well as marketing communication (MarComm) objectives. Also, some of the metrics have been explained better in the section *Explanations* in the certain table.

This table also helps Company X to recognize the time needed for social media since it was one of the things Company X finds hard according to internal interview. It also helps to understand the important main KPI objectives to follow since Company X have not been active on social media never before.

5.7 3M for Company X

Besides implementing SOSTAC for company X, also additional 3M needs to be defined. As explained the 3M refers to Men & women, Money and Minutes.

About the Men & women also known as human resources. In order to get good results out of the implementation of the strategy, Company X needs to have enough people. There needs to be a person or a team that takes care of the social media marketing and executing of the strategy. Company X will not outsource the marketing.

Money that will be used need to be budgeted in order to keep marketing meaningful. In the Company X's case the budget will consists of the wage of the person responsible for social media marketing as well as the expenses which the marketing in social media requires. The clear budget allocation and objectives for the advertisement campaigns should be done before starting paid advertising in order to assume if the advertising is beneficial or can it even bring some income.

Social media marketing is time consuming. In order to remain interesting in social media, Company X needs to be on social media on a regular basis. Posts should be published every day and the networking and commenting should be rapid. It is important that the person who is responsible of the social media marketing have enough time to commit the needed uploads and posts every day.

6 MANAGING SOCIAL MEDIA: COMPANY X

When social media marketing is up and running, SMO and risk management are the next steps to improve and manage it. In this chapter, all the most important things have been summarized in order to help Company X be sure that they have really thought about everything to succeed in social media.

6.1 Social Media Optimization

It is important to manage social media continuously after starting it and test it and of course learn from the test findings and refine the social media acts. This kind of managing can be also referred as social media optimization (SMO). First of all, Company X should make sure the objectives and goals are clearly on mind. Also, the targeted group needs to be defined well and if the made buyer personas does not match the real target group insights gained from social media marketing, buyer personas should be modified, and also new personas can be created if needed.

Company X should think if their shared content is sharable. In SMO Company X should determine the content that the audience wants to share. Sharing increases traffic in social media platforms which again increases Company X's brand awareness. In order to make the content sharable, tagging and sharing should be as easy as possible and encourage people for interaction.

It is recommendable to test how valuable social media content and messages are compared to competitors. However, if the competitors would offer more value, Company X should not change their approach too similar as competitors' approach, but it should be modified in a unique way to offer more value. Company X should also make sure that social messages in social media add value and benefit also to audience.

It is also very important to test if the social media profiles are easy to find. If people cannot find the profiles, the traffic is minimal. In order to make sure that the profiles are findable, profiles should use same name or as similar name as possible in each platform. However, when using personal profile e.g. in LinkedIn, the name will be of

course person's own name, but his/her profile should follow Company X's visual style and of course it would be recommendable to promote Company's website and other channels in personal profile. Social media profiles should be also promoted in Company X's website, other social media platforms and in offline communications.

Interaction in social media is also an important part of SMO. Company X should encourage people to interact for example by simply through Facebook. Also, in Company X's website could include the share buttons in each product. Now if someone has been pleased with the purchase, they can share it e.g. in LinkedIn and promote Company X's website effectively. Also, the visitor could ask opinions about the products in social media by sharing it which again offers the audience a way to build trust and interact. According to Chaffey and Smith (2020), also rewarding an engagement is a way to increase the interaction. For example, "liking" in Facebook could offer some promotional offer etc.

And the last but not least, the used channels should be correct. Company X needs to make sure that used channels are the most effective ones and also the posts amount in each channel should be optimal.

In the checklist below, Company X can make sure easily and rapidly how the managing of social media should be carried out once the social media marketing is in place and running.

Checklist for Company X to catch up the important features

1. Make sure the objectives and goals are clearly on your mind.

2. Do you know whom are you targeting in social media?

3. Is the social media content shareable?

4. Make sure that social messages in social media add value to audience.

5. Are the social profiles easy to find?

6. Do your messages offer value compared to competitors?

7. Are you interacting with people on social media?

8. Are you sharing enough content? Or do you upload too many posts?

9. Are you using the right tools and channels?

6.2 Risk management and online reputation

Risk management is one of the things that many companies forget to think about while marketing digitally. There are many different risks such as social media account getting hacked or server going down etc. In order to manage these risks, it is important to have some plan of the possible actions what the Company X can do if something unusual happens. Company X should brainstorm things that could go wrong, create some contingency plans, figure out how they can interact with the public and so on. Company X should also make sure that the basic online security is up to date e.g. passwords are not too weak. (The Social Media Monthly, 2019)

According to Reputation Defender website, online reputation's goal is to make sure that people will find the right kind of materials of when looking for Company X. There are two cycles of online reputation; vicious and virtuous. If Company X is just ignoring their reputation online, people might find out rumors or information that is not correct, this is referred as a vicious cycle of online reputation management. On the other hand, if company is really taking care of the reputation, the positive things will reflect Company X, this is a virtuous cycle. Company X should follow the virtuous cycle. According to SocialPilot for example, if someone writes something negative about Company X, Company X should not remove or ignore the negative comment but respond to that as soon as possible like to all comments. The response needs to be polite, apologize if needed and take the negative comment out of the spotlight. It is also important to learn from the mistakes.

7 CONCLUSIONS

In my opinion, the thesis succeeded in its purpose very well. By using the created social media marketing strategy plan, Company X can reach their goal to increase brand awareness and gain new customers. The strategy plan is also really customized for Company X needs in order to reach the best results. The thesis might be also beneficial for other small companies who are lacking information of social media strategies due to thesis' informative theory part.

In the view of validity and reliability, thesis succeeded well. The used sources were reliable and also from reliable sources. Many different sources were used in order to gather correct data. Even though quite many blog posts were used as a source of the information, the blog publishers seemed very reliable due to their professional backgrounds. Also, a lot of information were gained through the books and articles. When choosing the sources, it was really important to favor as new information as possible and if the information source was not very new, it was necessary to research if the information was still valid.

In order to support the social media strategy process, Company X should really follow the recommendations and start social media marketing with the strategy, not just by posting things in social media randomly. Social media marketing needs to be regular and Company X should not give up if the goals are not reached immediately, sometimes it takes quite a long time to earn the followers' and potential customers' trust. In the future Company X could invest more money for the marketing when the Company X have found out what works and what does not. It is also important to remember to update the social media strategy on a regular basis in order to keep it effective and beneficial. All in all, Company X should listen their customers and keep their acts as customer oriented as possible and utilize their social media strategy to achieve the goals and to gain customers' trust.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. Interview with CEO of Company X

APPENDIX 2. Theme interview with current and potential customers

APPENDIX 3. Promotional products search questions

APPENDIX 4. Corporate gifts search questions

APPENDIX 5. Buyer persona for Company X – corporate gifts

APPENDIX 6. Buyer persona for Company X – promotional products

APPENDIX 1. Interview with CEO of Company X

INTERVIEW WITH CEO OF COMPANY X

1. Tell freely about the company?

2. Where is the company at the moment?

3. What is lacking in company's business?

4. What are the goals?

APPENDIX 2. Theme interview with current and potential customers

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

- Age?

- Location

BUSINESS

- What is your occupation at work?

- Education background?

GENERAL THINGS ABOUT THE BUYING PROCESS

- Are business gifts or promotional items important to your business, or are they just "nice to have"?

- What kind of products your company is interested?

- Do you have problems with product purchases or services that you would like a solution or help from your supplier?

DECISION MAKING

- Who is involved in the buying process for products or services like Company X is offering?

- What influences your company's purchasing decision the most?

- When choosing the company where you will buy the products, how was the decision process?

- In which way you prefer to make the order?

INFORMATION SOURCES

- What publications, blogs or social media networks do you pay attention to?

- What social media channels are you using for business?

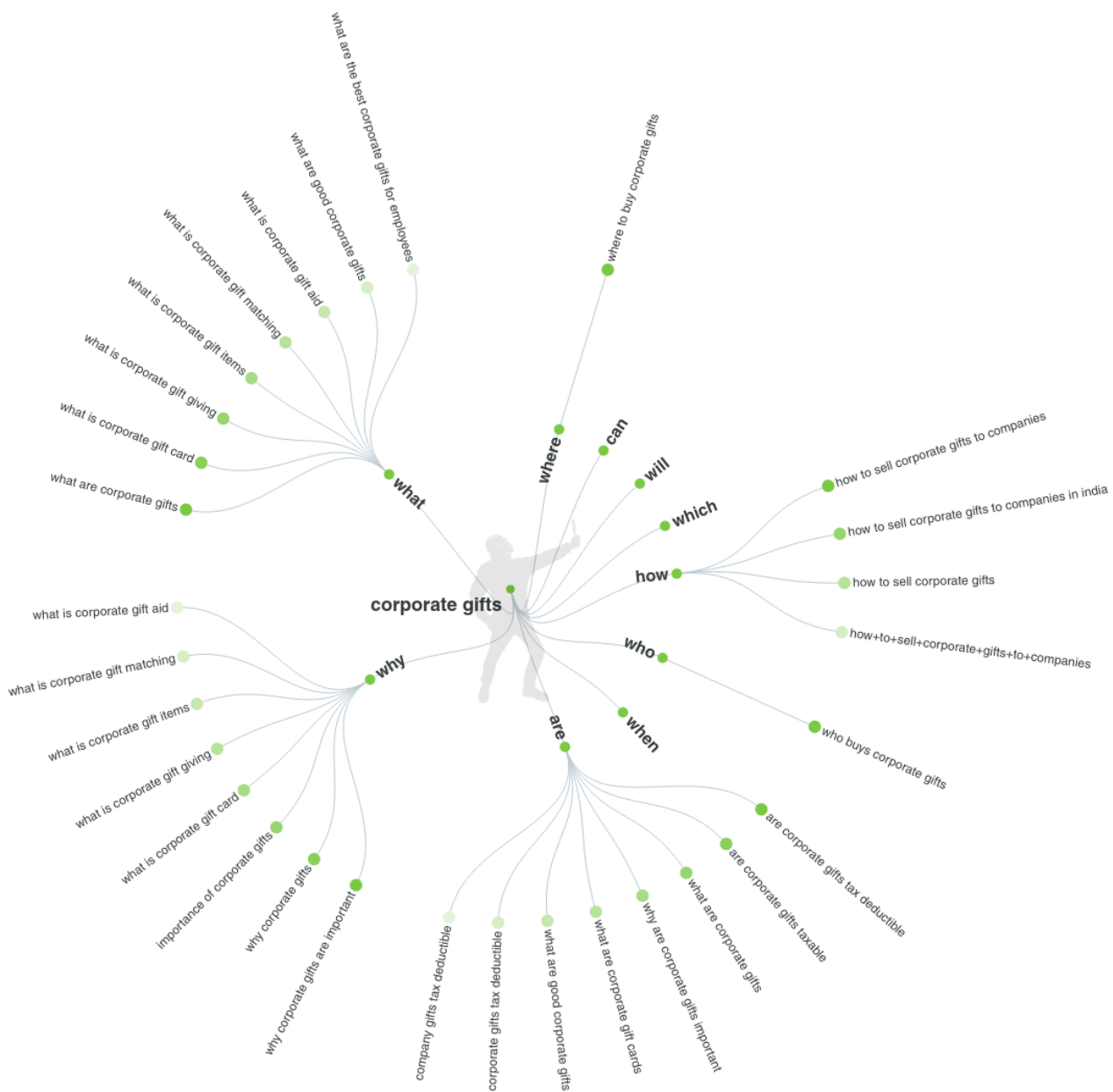- What kind of service or content you expect from Company X in social media?

OBJECTIONS

- What could make Company X even better? Whether it be in the buying process you went through or afterwards?

APPENDIX 3. Promotional products search questions
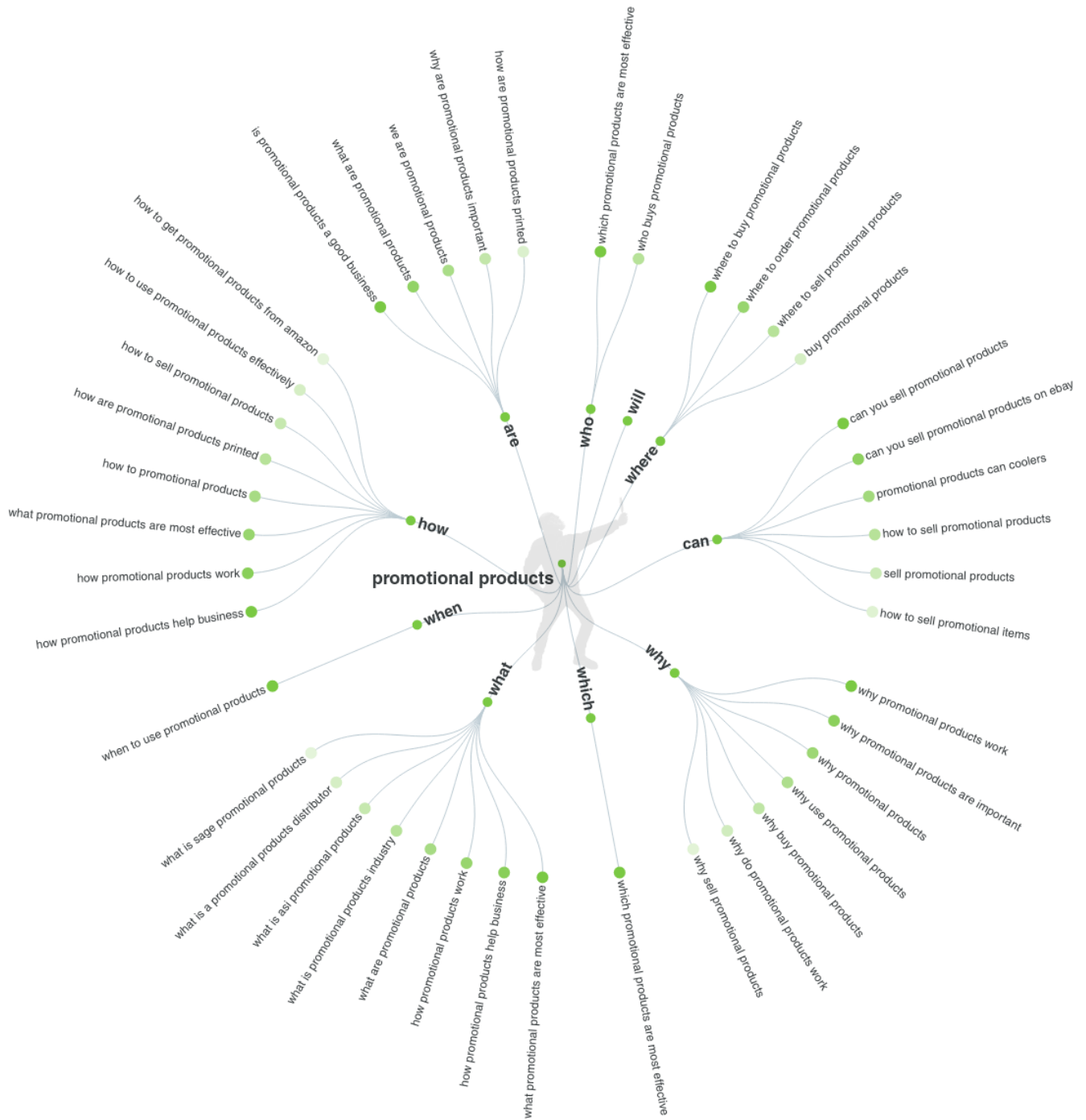
APPENDIX 4. Corporate gifts search questions

APPENDIX 5. Buyer persona for Company X – corporate gifts

HEIKKILÄ, MATTI

MARKETING MANAGER /
MARKETING & COMMUNICATION

Quite extrovert

Prudent

PROFILE

Age: 40
Education: MBA
Country: Finland
Status: Married, family

Hobbies & Interests:
Marketing, coworking, spending time with family and friends

RESOURCES I TRUST

- **Directors**
- **Assistants**
- **Co-workers**
- **Marketing department**

GOALS

Our goal is to find a company who could offer us high-quality products and personalized services.

"It is important that the company is innovative and development ideas are shared without asking."

CHALLENGES

Product transport services outside Europe has been a challenge for our company

The unimaginativeness of the previous supplier.

OBJECTIONS

We already have a supplier for these kinds of products.

NEEDS

- customer-specific online channel for orders
- storage services
- product design
- information about the products

Mobile devices, desktop

LinkedIn

Facebook

Orders via email or straight from website

MOTIVATIONS

- **Price**
- **Easy of cooperation**
- **Creativity and innovation**
- **Quality**
- **Personalized service**

APPENDIX 6. Buyer persona for Company X – promotional products

SAARINEN, SOFIA

MARKETING ASSISTANT / MARKETING & COMMUNICATION

Extrovert **Innovative**

PROFILE

Age: 25
Education: BBA
Country: Finland
Status: Cohabitation

Hobbies & Interests: Education, sports, spending time with friends

RESOURCES I TRUST

- **Directors**
- **Co-workers**
- **Marketing department**
- **Managers**
- **Partners**

Mobile devices, desktop

LinkedIn Facebook

Orders straight from website

GOALS

Our goal is to find promotional products with the company logo for a competitive price. However, the quality of products is also important.

CHALLENGES

It would be optimal to get designing of the products from the company from whom we are purchasing products. We want something different than other companies have.

OBJECTIONS

I do not know Company X so well.

Can I trust Company X since I do not know it?

I am beginning of my career; I want to stick with known companies to minimize risks.

NEEDS

- product design
- information about the products
- trust
- effective and rapid cooperation

MOTIVATIONS

- **Price**
- **Easy of cooperation**
- **Creativity and innovation**
- **Quality**
- **Personalized service**