Tampere University of Applied Sciences

Digital Marketing Plan for the Summer School of Hochschule München University of Applied Sciences

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is the creation of a digital marketing plan for the commissioner, the Summer School program of Hochschule München University of Applied Sciences. This thesis focusses on social media marketing and current digital trends aiming the commissioner's purpose of attracting more international students.

In order to create the digital marketing plan, the author of this thesis researched multiple concepts and theories like Marketing Plan, Digital Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Communications Planning Framework – PASTAM, and AIDA Framework. The thesis involved a quantitative research in the form of an online questionnaire that was answered by the target group, in which necessary information was gathered to build content marketing and improve search engine optimization, as well as understanding the importance of social media for the target group and the relevant social media channels.

Primary and secondary data made it possible for the author to create the digital marketing plan. Recommendations have been included throughout this thesis. The author believes that the digital marketing plan will benefit the commissioner's marketing and business strategy.

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Key words: digital marketing plan, social media marketing, summer school

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

HM	Hochschule München University of Applied Sciences
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
RWTH	Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule
SEO	Search Engine Optimization
TAMK	Tampere University of Applied Sciences
TU	Technische Universität Berlin

1   INTRODUCTION

HM Hochschule München University of Applied Sciences is the largest university of its kind in Bavaria and the second largest in Germany. With around 18,000 students and a location in a leading European business centre, HM can offer its students amazing opportunities and responsibility in economic, industrial and social contexts. In total there are 85 bachelor's and master's degree programs in 14 departments, 500 professors, 675 staff members and researchers and 750 part-time lecturers. HM offers two summer school programs in the fields of business and engineering. The summer school began in 2006 and it has been offered every year since – except for the year of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The author of this thesis will create a digital marketing plan with a focus on social media marketing for HM summer school. Due to the commissioner lack of presence on social media, the author decided to focus on this subject to help build a relationship between the summer school and the customers and communicate with them on the right platforms to reach the commissioner's objective of attracting more international students for their summer schools. The author will make a research in order to find the best practices and at the end several recommendations will be developed considering the primary and secondary data collected from the research.

2 THESIS PLAN

The following chapter is a description of the thesis plan. The first section explains the thesis topic and the reason why the author chose this. The second section describes the thesis objectives and the research questions that will lead the way throughout the text. The third section is a description of the concepts used in this thesis that will contribute to the theoretical framework explained in the following section. Continuing there is an explanation of the methodology and data used and to finalize this chapter a description of the thesis structure.

2.1 Thesis Topic

The thesis topic is a digital marketing plan directed to social media marketing. HM Hochschule München University of Applied Sciences' Summer School wants to attract more international students and outstand from the competition, but the year is 2020 and they are not present on social media. When your target group are bachelor and master's students – those being millennials and generation Z – that grew up with the influence of internet and later, social media, it is crucial to communicate with them on the right platforms. In the digital age, a business needs to have a proper online presence.

A digital presence will help build a relationship between the summer school and the students, better serving their needs by communicating relevant information. If the business is present in the same platforms as its customers, it is more efficient, faster and easier to reach them. Social media is something that it cannot be ignored if the goal is to stay close to the customers and in sync with the latest developments in marketing. For this reason, the author of this thesis chose this topic, to make a digital marketing plan finding out the importance of a social media presence and where and how the target group search for information on summer school. The results of this thesis will be important to the commissioner for supporting their marketing strategy, understanding where to reach their customers and how to communicate with them.

2.2   Thesis Objectives and Research Questions

The thesis objective is to research social media marketing activities which could improve the commissioner's digital presence and attract more students for their summer programs. The objective is to develop a digital marketing plan which will gain more traffic to the summer school website and social media channels, and ultimately create brand recognition.

To achieve the objectives, the main research question is: *How to develop a digital marketing plan for HM summer school?* The sub-questions are: *How to improve traffic to HM website? How to attract new students with the social media platforms?* and *How to identify the relevant social media channels?*

The research questions will guide the thesis to build a comprehensible and practical text. The author expects to create a cohesive digital marketing plan for the commissioner in which they can work on and improve their marketing activities and modify whenever necessary to fit the summer school needs in the future.

2.3   Concepts

This section will describe the concepts used in this thesis. The concepts were written from the most general to specific ones, with the purpose to give the reader an extensive context of the thesis and then finishing with a distinct idea. The concepts described are: Marketing, Marketing Plan, Digital Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Content Marketing and Search Engine Optimization. These concepts are important for this thesis as they contribute to the theoretical framework.

2.3.1   Marketing

Marketing is constantly present in our lives. Take a walk through the city streets, a Google search, turn on the television or radio, open a newspaper, scroll on your social media and you will be impacted by some marketing action.

According to the book Principles of Marketing, written by Kotler, Armstrong, Wong and Saunders (2008, 6), marketing is managing profitable customer relationships. The authors define marketing as "the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customers relationships in order to capture value from customers in return" (2008, 7). For the American Marketing Association (2013), AMA, "marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large." The author understands that marketing is the part of the business that has the function of handling the clients, such as attracting more customers, retaining the current ones, communicating the right contents on the right platforms, promising better values and advantages than the competitors, and providing satisfaction. It has the function of making the sale easier.

2.3.2 Marketing Plan

Marketing plan is a document that describes the strategic objectives of an organization and explains how to use marketing tactics and actions to achieve these objectives having the customer as the center of everything (Kotler et al. 2008, 6.). According to Marian Wood (2014), in Marketing Plan Handbook, "the purpose of marketing planning is to provide a disciplined yet flexible framework for guiding the company toward its value and relationship objectives". Wood explains that marketing plan is a document that summarizes the understanding of the marketplace, what are the objectives and how they will be accomplished using marketing practices. (Wood 2014, 4.) Considering both definitions, the author understands marketing plan as a document that will guide the marketer to build the company's strategic objectives, defining its values, the market and target group, and the communication that will be used to build customers relationships.

According to Wood (2014) the Marketing Planning Process has six phases: (1) Research and analysis of the current situation (2) Understand of markets and customers (3) Plan segmentation, target group and position-

ing (4) Plan the objectives, directions and marketing support (5) Develop marketing strategies and programmes (6) Plan metrics and implementation control. This process is important when developing a marketing plan and will be used by the author of this thesis to create the Digital Marketing Plan.

2.3.3 Digital Marketing

The easiest and most common way to define digital marketing is understanding that is about managing the online presence of a company. This means much more than just managing an organization website, it is about managing distinct forms of digital marketing, such as social media, content marketing, and search engine marketing. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 9.). Through digital marketing, companies can connect with customers in a place where they are always present, since internet usage keeps going around the globe with more than a billion users (Chaffey & Smith 2013, 4-5). The author can conclude that if marketing is all about connect with the audience in the right place at the right time, digital marketing is indispensable for a company in today's world. It is a requisite to survive the market.

2.3.4 Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing makes it possible for companies to reach enormous audiences in a cost-efficient way simply by connecting with customers on the platforms that they are daily using, such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. Social media marketing is a very important tool of digital marketing, because it grants companies to get closer to their customers, understanding their behaviours and preferences and communicating with them on the right ways. (Solomon & Tuten 2018, 445-449)

According to HubSpot (2020), "social media marketing is the action of creating content to promote your business on various social media platforms". This content should be unique and made specifically for the platform being used, so that

it can help the company to boost conversions, generate leads, increase brand awareness, and cultivate relationships with customers (HubSpot 2020).

2.3.5 Content Marketing

Content marketing is important for digital marketing because it creates the charming content that is needed to engage with the audience. The purpose on creating captivating content is to increase brand visibility, engage with customers and increase sales. Content marketing includes web pages, photos, videos, podcasts, blogs, quizzes, and much more. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 36, 375.)

Content Marketing Institute (2019) highlight the importance of making a content marketing strategy beforehand. Social media activities, like anything else, can be more beneficial when a plan has been developed, meaning that the content marketing strategy should be built before the content plan. Having a content marketing plan in place allows your business to stand out, or differentiate, from the competition. (Content Marketing Institute 2019).

2.3.6 Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Search engine marketing (SEM) is a growing and competitive area of marketing, since the whole world is looking for information on search engines, such as Google, YouTube, or Bing. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 400). An important part of SEM is search engine optimization (SEO), which means gaining traffic from organic search engine results (Search Engine Land 2019). The biggest advantages of SEO are to create more traffic to the website and targeted results. Some of the disadvantages are the difficulty of learning SEO, the uncertainty of it and the time spent for testing. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 406.)

HubSpost (2020) explains that SEO focus on increasing the company's visibility in the organic search results, helping the businesses to rank higher in SERPs (Search Engine Results Page) which will make the site have more visitors and increase chances for more conversations. There are many ways to increase the

SEO of a website, such as keywords, title tags, image tags, internal link structure, and inbound links, because those are the elements that the search engines are looking for. (HubSpot 2020)

2.4   Theories and Framework

This section consists of a description of the theories and frameworks that will be used in this thesis to shape the digital marketing plan.

2.4.1   Communications Planning Framework - PASTAM

The PASTA model was developed by Theo Zweers (2015) and is a framework for marketing communications planning. Unlike the SOSTAC, which is a strategic model, the PASTA model is a more practical planning model. It is used to develop an operational planning instead of a strategic planning (Zweers 2015, 2). There are five phases involved on the PASTA model: Problem Definition, Analysis, Strategy, Tactics and Action, forming the acronym PASTA. The author of this thesis uses this model to focus on its main objective which is to develop a smart digital marketing plan. Due to the focus on social media, the author decided to include a phase that was missing, in other to make a better plan. When it comes to social media, it is crucial to measure the effectiveness of the plan. According to Tuten and Solomon (2018), specific metrics measured, maintained, and assessed will include reach, engagement in the form of likes and shares, share of voice across social channels, return on earned media, and return on investment (Tuten & Solomon 2018, 413). For this reason, the author decided to include a new phase, the Measurement factor. Explaining the customized acronym as PASTAM: Problem Definition, Analysis, Strategy, Tactics, Action and Measurement.

Zweers (2015) describes three questions to make it clear the definition of the problem. "(1) Which goal does the company wants to achieve? (2) What issues are involved? (3) What strategic objectives underline the development of the

plan?" Zweers (2015) underline that before this phase, it is important to understand the organization, product or service and customers. Analysis phase is divided by internal and external analysis. The purpose of internal analysis is to recognize the present state of the organization and the external analysis is to gather knowledge about the competitors and the market. The third phase is Strategy, which holds four important segments: Target Group, Objectives, Positioning, and Proposition. The fourth and fifth phases, Tactics and Action, are closely connected. The Tactics phase decides the devices, tools and techniques that will be used. Once the resources are defined the planning will be developed to implement the message. (Zweers 2015, 6.) The sixth stage Measurement is intent to identify and decide the metrics that will be used to measure the objectives of the plan.

2.4.2 PEO Model (paid, earned and owned media)

The PEO model is important to digital marketing strategy, working as a guide to understand and manage online activities. Owned media focuses on digital properties such as social media channels and websites. Earned media works as a word of mouth and it includes reviews online, reposts, and shares. Paid media covers paid promotion and advertising. Using all three elements together a company can develop a more effective digital marketing strategy. (Titan Growth 2019)

2.4.3 AIDA Model Framework

The AIDA model represents the four stages a consumer experience previous to the purchasing decision. The stages are Attention, Interest, Desire and Action (AIDA). Throughout these four stages, the content should attract attention to the brand, create interest in the product or service, encourage a desire for it, and induce action to try or buy it. (HubSpot 2020)

Smart Insights (2020) defines the AIDA Model as the identification of cognitive stages that the individual experience during the buying process for a product or

service. It is a purchasing funnel in which buyers go from a stage to another stage, that reinforce their decision on the final purchase. It is not solely a relationship between the buyer and the company since the creation of social media, because a lot of information is added by other customers through social networks and communities, achieving different goals of AIDA. (Smart Insights 2020)

2.5 Methodology and Data

The methodology and data collection were gathered through primary and secondary data by the author of this thesis. Primary data was gathered over quantitative research, by using a questionnaire with 13 questions. The questionnaire has both multiple choice and open questions and measurable questions. The author collected data from potential customers, international students, to find out which social media channels they use the most, the relevance of social media for a summer school and to find out where and how they would search for a summer school, in order to discover the best marketing channels for the commissioner and how to improve their content marketing. Secondary data are the concepts, theories, and models that will be used to guide and base this thesis, and to shape the data collected by the author.

A quantitative approach is assigned for expand knowledge, thinking of cause and impact utilizing certain variables, theories and questions, utilizing measurement and observation, and testing theories to collect plentiful statistical data. (Creswell. 2003)

2.6 Thesis Structure

This section is a description of the thesis structure, with a brief explanation of each chapter, to offer the reader a bigger perspective of the process that the author went through when writing this thesis. Chapter one is the introduction, describing the relevant information about the commissioner and the thesis. Chapter two, which ends here, is the thesis plan and it is very important because it de-

scribes the thesis topic, objectives and research questions. As well as the concepts and theories that back up the knowledge and information used by the author, and the methodology and data used in the research to make a good analysis. Chapter three is a better description of the commissioner and an understanding of the industry that they operate on. Chapter four is about the data collected through desk research and a quantitative research made by the author to explain the thesis objectives and an analysis of this data, including the results from the questionnaire. Chapter five is the most important because it is the creation of the digital marketing plan for the commissioner, designed based on the PASTAM framework and the display of the research results from the previous chapter, in this chapter there are also recommendations from the author. Chapter six is the conclusion and few more recommendations for the commissioner. To finalize there are the References used by the author and the Appendices which includes the online questionnaire.

3 CASE COMPANY AND INDUSTRY

This section incorporates a deeper description of the commissioner, the summer school of Hochschule München University of Applied Sciences, with an explanation of their present situation. It includes a background information of the organization and more specifically a description of their summer school programs – which is the subject of this thesis. To a better understand of the purpose and history of summer schools, the author will also describe the summer school industry.

3.1 Case Company: Hochschule München University of Applied Sciences

HM Hochschule München University of Applied Sciences was founded in 1971. Today is the largest university of its kind in Bavaria and the second largest in Germany. With around 18,000 students and a location in a leading European business centre, HM can afford fantastic opportunities and a responsibility in industrial, economic and social contexts.

The university offers degree courses and active academic collaboration in the MINT subjects (mathematics, computer science, natural sciences and engineering), business, the social sciences and public health as well as in architecture and design. Hochschule München ensures excellent applied and research-based teaching in four areas: Bachelor's degrees; Master's degrees and doctoral qualifications; Continuing education and life-long learning in all fields; and Applied research. In total there are 85 bachelor's and master's degree programs in 14 departments, 500 professors, 675 staff members and researchers and 750 part-time lecturers.

Hochschule München Summer School began in 2006 with the *Engineering for Sustainability* program, which has been offered every year since – except for the year of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The other program available at HM Summer School is in the business field, named *The Journey to Industry 4.0*, which has been offered since 2012 – except for the year of 2019 and 2020. There

are other small programs from time to time, offered by a certain faculty, but they are only open for a certain group of students coming from a certain partner university – so called tailor-made summer schools.

The *Engineering for Sustainability* is a five-week program held between July and August. The program is intended for advanced undergraduate students in Mechanical Engineering, Automotive Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Industrial Engineering from Germany and abroad. International students participate in an intensive German Language and Culture course in the first week and continue these studies part-time throughout the program. Students select two credit subject courses, which are thought in English by multi-national teams of two renowned lecturers from Hochschule München University of Applied Sciences, California Polytechnic State University (USA) and the Strascheg Center for Entrepreneurship (Munich). The courses focus on practical application using state-of-the-art technology and teaching methods. Each subject course covers a minimum of 40 teaching contact hours, including laboratory experiments and simulations. The academic program also includes several relevant field trips. Between 50 and 60 students participate in this program every year, most of them coming from the United States but also from some European countries like Finland and Denmark as well as Hong Kong and other Asian countries.

The Journey to Industry 4.0 is a two-week program held in July, designed for advanced undergraduate and postgraduate students who want to experience Supply Chain and Operational Management not only in theory but also in practice at world class companies. All courses are thought in English by a team of two renowned lecturers from Hochschule München University of Applied Sciences. In the first week of the summer school companies located in Munich area will be visited. In the second week a four-day bus tour will take the students to leading companies in their business sector in different parts of southern Germany. During the company visits the participants will have the opportunity to see selected levers for Operational Excellence at work and will discuss company-specific topics with the managers in charge. With an average of 20 participants, having students from different countries every year, the business summer school is more international.

Both summer schools offer a broad and attractive cultural program, making the students stay an unforgettable experience. The cultural program includes company visits, a guided tour of Munich, a visit to a typical beer garden as well as day trips to other cities which may differ from the programs. The summer school fee covers tuition for all courses, company visits, the official cultural and social program, free internet access at the university and a welcome package. Accommodation is not included but can be arranged by an extra fee. It is guaranteed professional assistance by the program coordinator and bilingual German buddies. The buddies help the students to settle in smoothly and accompany them on the field trips, company visits and receptions.

3.2   Summer School Industry

According to Torenbeek and van Rest (2014), the summer school concept began in the United States, where paid education has been customary since the 19th century. For Europe, on the other hand, education is a responsibility of the government, fundamental for the development of their future leaders and executives of industry. And that responsibility included paying the costs. While American students would face serious extra costs if they did not graduate as faster as possible, European students were empowered to seek greater breadth and depth of knowledge. For this reason, the Americans had to find a solution and that is when they created the 'third semester'. This kind of summer studies was introduced by Harvard in 1823. Only on the 20th century, some decades later, that the summer school concept arrived in Europe. (Torenbeek and van Rest 2014, 4).

In the former decade, the European summer school has appreciated phenomenal growth. Nowadays, most of the universities offer some kind of summer program, from a specific course topic to a complete program with an extended curriculum. This makes the summer school an exceptional aspect of higher education. (Torenbeek and van Rest 2014, 5).

Torenbeek and van Rest (2014), discuss the advantages, for the institution, of having a summer school. First, a successful summer school may increase the organization's image and reputation; they can gain revenue, or at least offset

losses, by renting the university's accommodation, that would be empty during the summer break; any income from the summer school might be inverted into university funds. The summer program can also booster relationships with other organizations in the city and region, as well as helping the hospitality industries and local retail. Furthermore, the summer school might be useful as a recruitment and selection instrument for future students of master's and PhD degrees. (Torenbeek and van Rest 2014, 20).

4 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter is a detailed description of the research process developed for this thesis. The first part explains in details the research objectives. The second part describes the process of designing and conducting the quantitative research. The third part presents the results of the research with an analysis of the charts. The last part explains the limitation and validity factors of the research.

4.1 Research Objectives

The research objectives will direct the author to describe designing and conducting process. Analyzing the interest of students on participating in summer schools, observe where and how they search for a summer school, if and why social media is important for it and what social media channels they use daily, will give the author a better understanding of the future practices that could be executed by the commissioner. This will grant the author a comprehensive view of customer's interests to develop better recommendations for the commissioner.

The first objective is to detect whether the target group, international students, are interested in participating in a summer school and where they would prefer to join, if in their home country or abroad. The second objective is to find out where they would search for a summer school – analysing what kind of marketing tools are used here – and if social media is relevant when searching. The third objective is to identify what exactly the students type when they are searching. The fourth objective is to understand if the target group thinks it is important for the summer school to be present on social media and why they think it is important, what kind of content they are looking for it. The fifth and final objective is to find out which social media channels these students mostly use. Taking into consideration the demographics of the respondents, such as age, gender, nationality, level of study and field of studies. The research objective is to understand international students' interests and for this reason, the author chose a quantitative approach, to better collect their opinions.

4.2 Designing and Conducting the Research

To achieve the research objectives the author decided to collect information from international students. The best way to collect this data would be through a quantitative research, an online questionnaire, so it would be possible for students from different cities, countries, and field of studies to participate and give the author a greater diversity on the students' opinions and interests.

Before making a research, it is important to plan carefully, understand the techniques, discipline data-gathering and have skills to analyze and interpret the data. There are four stages of research: (1) The planning stage, (2) The data collection stage, (3) The data analysis stage, (4) The write-up stage. The data analysis needs to be thought from the beginning for the appropriate planning of the research. The researcher must be sure that the data gathered is suitable to the key variables. The key variables could be gender, age, education level, social class, and so on. The purpose of the interview is established by the researcher. (Davies, M. 2007, 51, 82-88)

To collect the information on the customers' interests the author chose international students as participants of the research. To achieve the objective, the author designed specific questions for the students, based on the AIDA model. It started with a nice summer picture – taken by the author – to attract their **attention**, followed by a brief explanation of a summer school to generate **interest**. Asking the participants if they would like to join the summer school, stimulate a **desire** for it, and asking what they would type when searching is the **action** needed. Those are the four stages of the AIDA model used in the questionnaire. The author created the questionnaire considering the PASTA framework made by Zweers (2015) to collect information on the middle phases of the framework; (3) Strategy and (4) Tactics.

To conduct the research the author agreed with the commissioner to forward the survey to its partner universities so they could send to their students. The author also had the help of TAMK's social counsellor who forwarded to TAMK students. The author of this thesis published the survey on international Facebook groups

and private Instagram account and forwarded to the author's friends and friends of friends.

The online questionnaire was planned and corrected in September-October 2020 and it was conducted – collecting the data – between 30 October 2020 and 18 November 2020. The questionnaire was made through Google Forms. There were 13 questions on the questionnaire, which are presented in the appendix number 1. The researcher analyzed the data from Google Forms, used some of their charts and transferred some of the data of the questionnaires into the Excel program to make the numeric and graphical data more visible.

4.3   Research Results

The author was able to gather 254 answers from the questionnaire. To start the analysis, the demographics will be shown first. The participants are from 33 different nationalities, achieving a good number for the target group which are international students. The majority comes from Brazil, 101 participants. The others 153 participants come from - and their respective number of participants - Finland (19), Romania (17), Spain (16), Mexico (13), Germany (11), United States of America (8), Vietnam (7), France (6), Belgium (6), China (5), Pakistan (5), the Netherlands (5), Russia (5), Italy (4), Peru (4), Ireland (3), Hungary (2), Lithuania (2), Norway (2), and the following countries with only 1 participant: Argentina, United Kingdom, Canada, Colombia, Czech Republic, India, Indonesia, Lesotho, Malaysia, Nepal, Portugal, Slovenia and Tunisia.

Regarding the gender of the 254 participants, 164 are female (64,6%), 87 are male (34,3%) and 3 chose not to specify (1,2%).

Gender
254 respostas

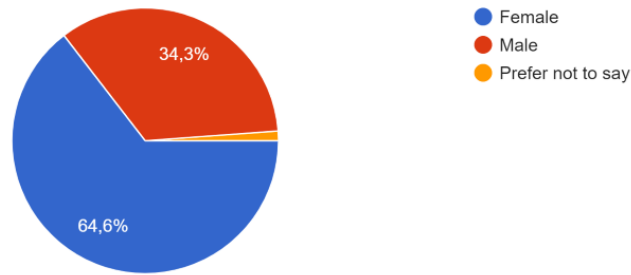- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

34,3%

64,6%

FIGURE 1. What is your gender?

When it comes to age, the author decided to break up into divisions that makes sense for the research, in this case, university students. Naturally, is not that simple nowadays since you have people from very different ages studying together. Nevertheless, the author divided into five different groups: **under 18**, with 2 participants (0,8%); **18–24** being the biggest group with 133 respondents (52,4%); **25–29**, the second largest group with 95 participants (37,4%); **30–39** with 23 participants (9,1%); followed by **40+** with 1 respondent (0,4%).

Age group
254 respostas

- Under 18
- 18-24
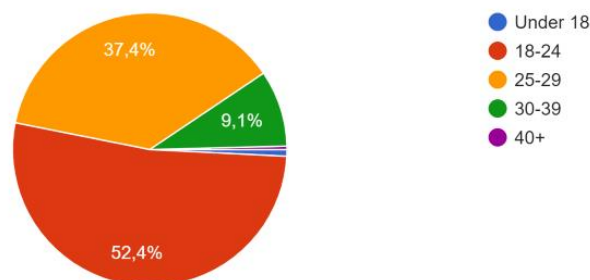- 25-29
- 30-39
- 40+

37,4%

9,1%

52,4%

FIGURE 2. In which age group do you belong?

Concerning their level of study, bachelor, master and PhD students are the groups that most interests the commissioner since the summer school is made for undergraduate and postgraduate students. But is important to keep in mind that recently graduate students might still go back to university to do a master or doctoral program, making them a possible customer. From the 254 participants, 148 are bachelor's students (58,27%), 43 are master's students (16,93%), 6 are

doctoral/PhD students (2,36%), 52 are recently graduated (20,47%), 3 graduated (1,18%), and 2 are still in high school (0,79%).
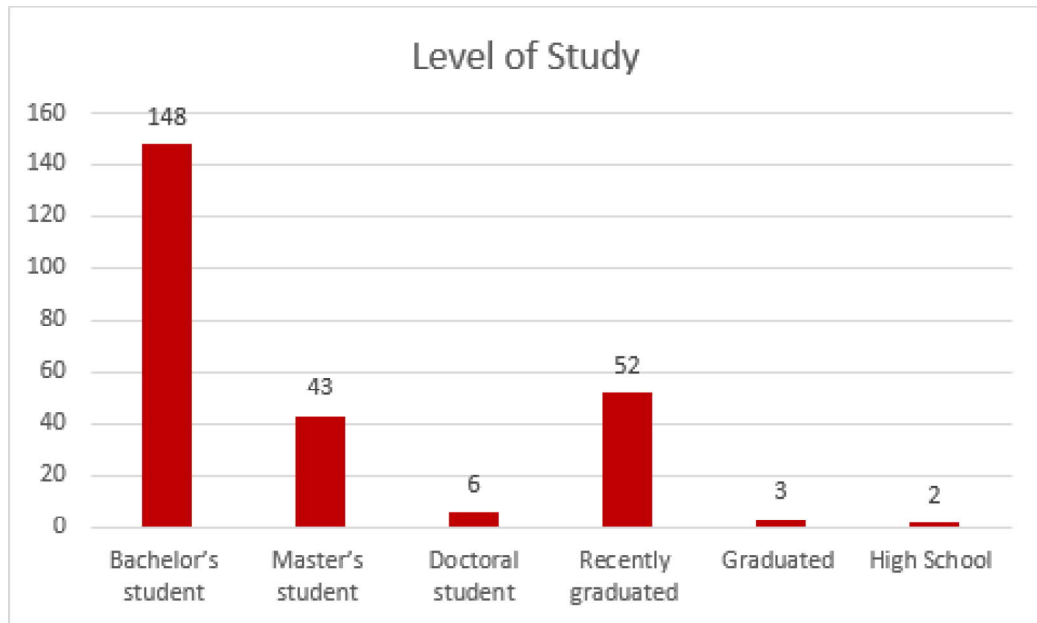

FIGURE 3. What is your level of study?

When it comes to field of studies, the author decided to specify the business and engineering fields since those two are the fields from HM summer schools. Out of the 254 participants, 121 are in the business/administration field (47,64%) and 55 in the engineering field (21,65%). The third option, with 78 answers (30,71%), was "other field" which asked the participants to specify.
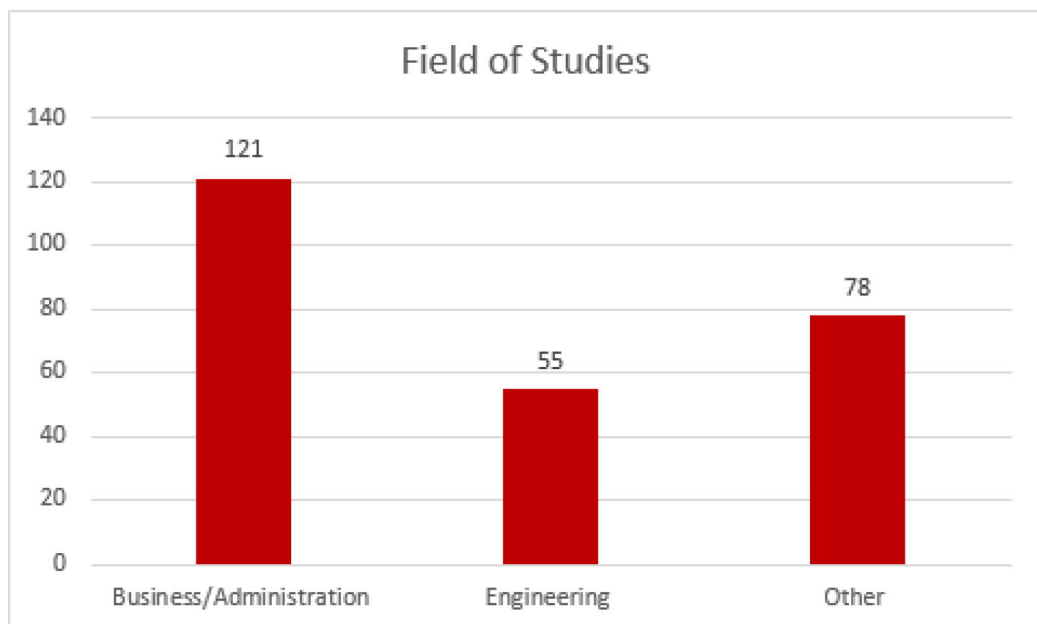

FIGURE 4. What is your field of studies?

When specified the other fields of study, the most common was Law with 14 participants. The different fields and number of participants can be seeing in the chart below. This is something HM summer school could consider when planning a new summer program.
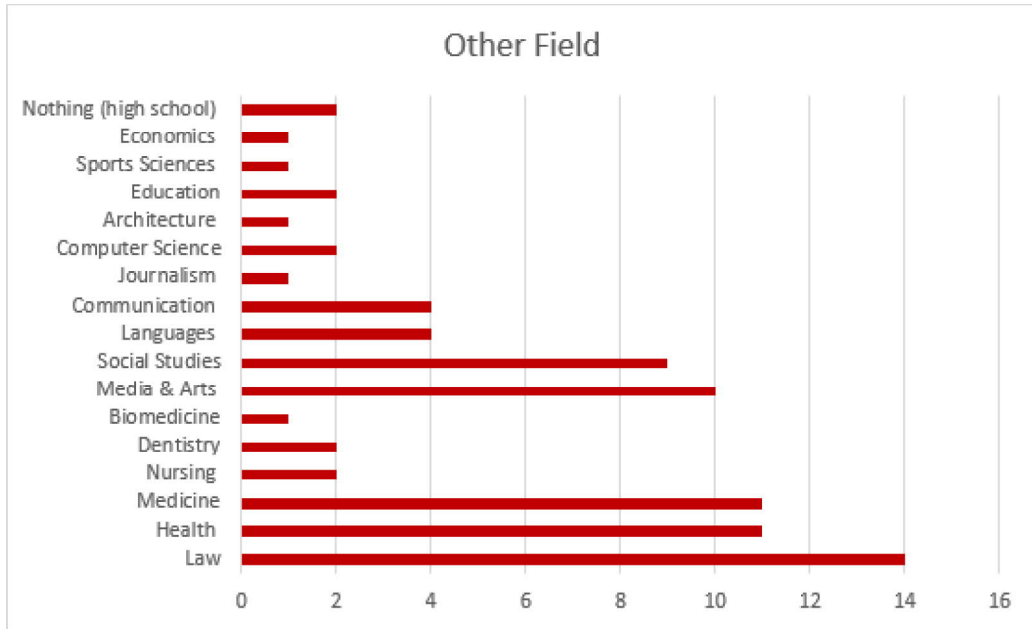

FIGURE 5. Another field, what?

Diving deeper into the matter of the research, after a brief description of what is a summer school, the participants were asked whether they would be interested to participate or not. 232 respondents answered *Yes* (91,3%) while 22 replied *No* (8,7%).
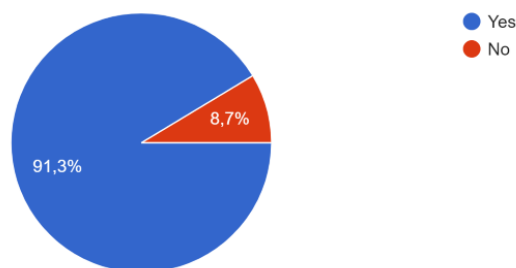

FIGURE 6. Would you be interested to participate in a summer school?

The following question was if they preferred to participate in a summer school in their home country or abroad. 222 participants would prefer to do a summer school abroad (87,4%).

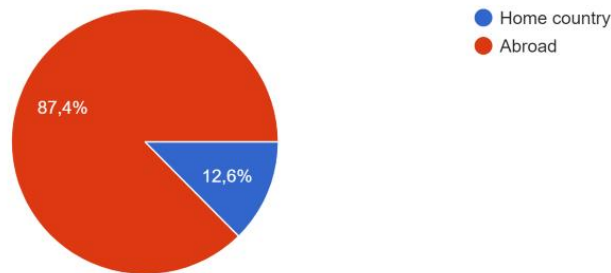Where would you prefer to do a summer school?
254 respostas

FIGURE 7. Where would you prefer to do a summer school?

The next question is of most importance for this research, finding out where students search for a summer school. *Google search* was the winner with 74,4% of the votes, showing the importance of SEO and content marketing. *Social media* came in fourth place with 34,3% corresponding to 87 respondents, which is a high considerable number.

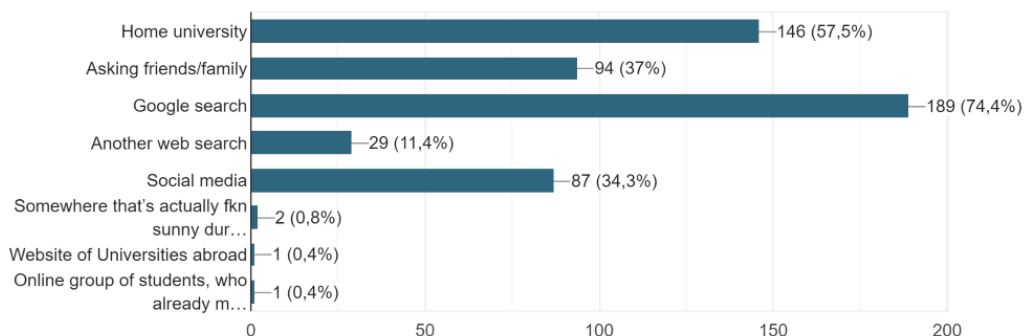Where would you search for a summer school?
254 respostas

FIGURE 8. Where would you search for a summer school?

The following question, *"What would you type when searching for the summer school?"* was important for SEO and content marketing purposes. There were

multiple answers and variations of the answers in different styles. The most re-peated answer was the basic *"Summer school"* written by 50 participants, plus some variations like *"summer courses"* and *"summer studies"*. *"Summer schools abroad"* was repeated 20 times and *"university summer schools"* 14 times, some of the variations and the times they were repeated were: *"summer university abroad"* (3), *"studying abroad in summer"* (4) and *"summer exchange program"* (5). *"Summer schools in Europe"* was written by 7 participants. The second most repeated answer was *"summer school + desired country"* by 36 participants. *"Summer school + field of study"* showed up 18 times, and some participants were more specific, according to their field of studies, for example: *"business summer school"* (9), *"law summer school"* (2), *"sustainability summer school"*, and so on. Nine participants wrote the above two options together, *"summer school + field of study + desired country"* and another five wrote *"the best summer school"*. Some students were interested in *"summer school scholarships"* (2) and *"best summer school review"* (3).

There were also more specific answers like: *international experience; learning abroad; cultural summer school; new culture; growing knowledge; foreign summer experience; languages; climate; benefits offered by the program; exciting summer school program; low-cost summer school; syllabus and review; studying and gaining more credits during free time*. These answers are important for the digital marketing plan. Other interesting and important answers were the ones related to social media. Two participants specifically wrote about Instagram *"Instagram summer school"* and three participants wrote about LinkedIn, *"I would look up universities that I was interested and see if they have a LinkedIn group associated with study abroad programs"*.

When asked in which social media they would search for the summer school, Instagram was way ahead than other channels, with 58,5% of the votes. The second social media platform was Facebook with 34,3%.

If you chose social media, in which one would you search?
207 respostas

Youtube ──67 (32,4%)
Instagram ──121 (58,5%)
Facebook ──71 (34,3%)
LinkedIn ──68 (32,9%)
Snapchat, ──2 (1%)
WhatsApp ──2 (1%)
Google ──2 (1%)
University website ──1 (0,5%)
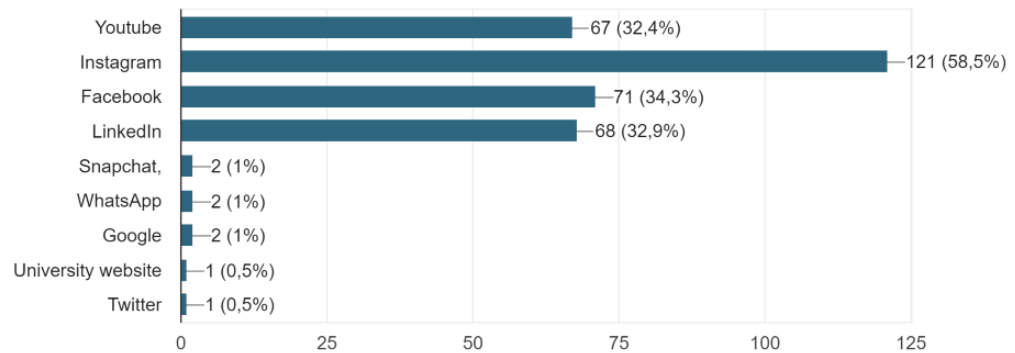Twitter ──1 (0,5%)

FIGURE 9. In which social media would you search?

The author also wanted to find out which social media platforms students are using daily for purposes of engagement and promotion. Instagram was again the most voted with 86,2%. WhatsApp was the second one, followed by YouTube and Facebook.

Which social media platform do you mostly use daily?
254 respostas

Instagram ──219 (86,2%)
Facebook ──88 (34,6%)
Snapchat ──30 (11,8%)
TikTok ──22 (8,7%)
Twitter ──50 (19,7%)
Youtube ──99 (39%)
LinkedIn ──48 (18,9%)
Reddit ──15 (5,9%)
Pinterest ──13 (5,1%)
WhatsApp ──184 (72,4%)
Facebook Messenger ──31 (12,2%)
Telegram ──1 (0,4%)
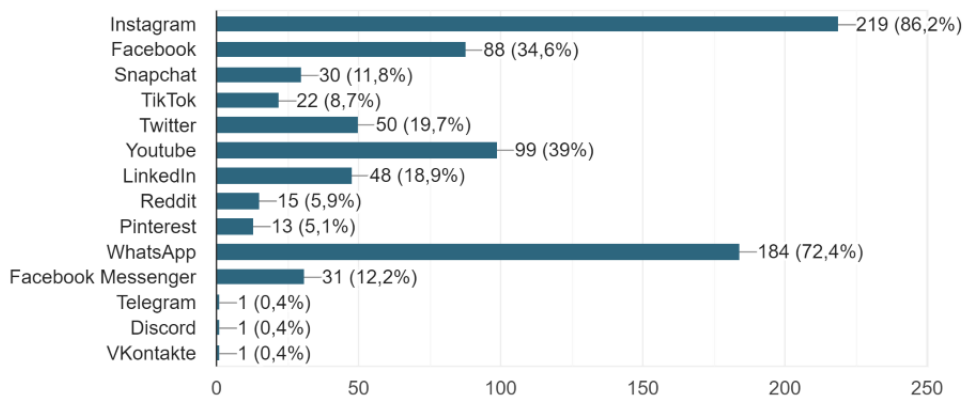Discord ──1 (0,4%)
VKontakte ──1 (0,4%)

FIGURE 10. Which social media platform do you mostly use daily?

When asked about the importance of a social media presence for the summer school, most of the students answered that is highly important.

On a scale from 1 to 10, how important do you think it is for the summer school to be present on social media?
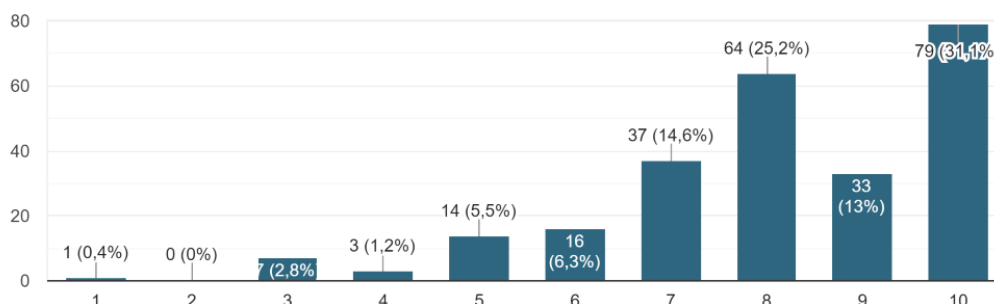
254 respostas

FIGURE 11. How important do you think it is for the summer school to be present on social media?

On the following question *"Why do you think it is important for the summer school to be present on social media?"* the majority of the participants (67,3%) replied that "it is easier to find information and get it contact". The second (50%) and third (49,6%) most voted answers were: "it is nice to see what previous students have done" and "it is better to understand the summer program". Followed by 47,2% of the students who said "I like to see photos and videos", 42,5% said "it is better to check if the program fits my needs", and 26,8% who said "I like to see students' statements". Only 3,9% of participants voted "I do not think it is important". From those answers it is easy to conclude the importance of social media for the summer school in the eyes of the customers.
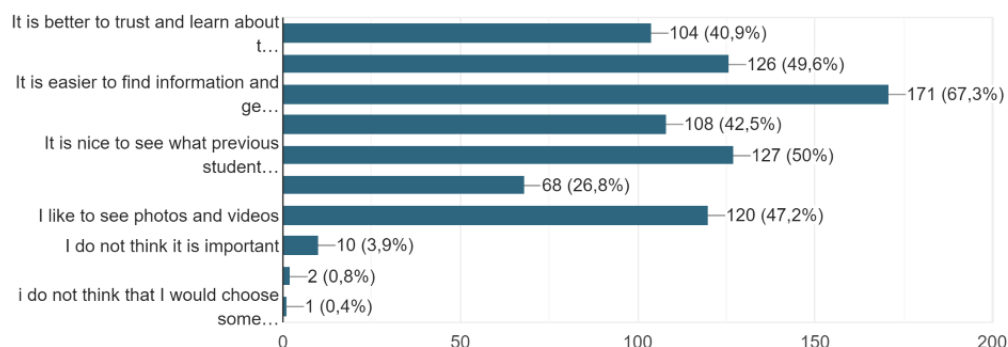
Why do you think it is important?

254 respostas

FIGURE 12. Why do you think it is important?

4.4   Limitations and Validity

As previous mentioned, the questionnaire was made through Google forms and conducted online due to distance, since the objective was to reach international students from different nationalities and backgrounds. The questionnaire was shared through email and social media platforms. This led to some limitations since many people tend to ignore a questionnaire, especially if there is no award involved from answering it. But even with limitations, the author was able to gather a considerably high number of responses.

According to Dr. Roberta Heale (2015), validity is defined as "the extent to which a concept is accurately measured in a quantitative study. For example, a survey designed to explore depression, but which measures anxiety would not be considered valid". Regarding this research, the author made sure to obtain the desired data. The objective was to find out the students' interest on summer school, where and how they search for it, the importance of social media and the platforms that they mostly use, and all this information can be found in the research results, making it a valid research.

5 DIGITAL MARKETING PLAN

The Digital Marketing Plan is based on the PASTAM framework created by Zweers (2015). The framework is divided in six parts: Problem Definition, Analysis, Strategy, Tactics, Actions and Measurement. This framework was used to have a comprehensible structure of the plan that will lead the author and reader from defining the problem to finding the solution.

5.1 Problem Definition

According to Zweers (2015, 3), problem definition is where you define the client's goals and the issues involved into achieving its goals. In this case, the commissioner goal is to attract more international students for their summer schools. The main issue involved is their poor digital presence and lack of social media. If the goal is to reach international students, it is important to communicate with them on the right channels.

Hochschule München University of Applied Sciences is present on social media, it has a Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Instagram account. However, HM' summer school – the commissioner – does not have any account of its own. It does have a Facebook and a LinkedIn group, but that is for the students that are currenting participating on the summer school, it is not a page for information and promotion, therefore it cannot be taken into consideration. And even though HM university is present on social media, all their content is in German, making it difficult and frustrating for international students that are searching for information on these platforms. Hence, the importance of creating the summer school its own social media accounts.

5.2 Analysis

According to Zweers (2015, 3), the analysis is the step made to analyze and understand the market and the environment in which the organization operates. In

this section, both internal and external analysis will be made. The author of this thesis did a lot of desk research to make a better analysis of the market.

5.2.1 Internal Analysis

The main objectives of the internal analysis are to understand the organization, what problems they have, the roles on the teams, their customers, the organization's strengths and their value proposition (Zweers 2015).

The summer school is a program from Hochschule München University of Applied Sciences. It started in 2006 with the *Engineering for Sustainability* program, and in 2012 they included a new program called *The Journey to Industry 4.0*. All the marketing activities related to any program or area from the university is managed by the university's marketing team. The summer school team is composed by the coordinator and every year a new intern joins the team for half of the year, in the busiest months, from March to August. The summer school customers are both German students – some from HM University itself – and international students coming from all parts of the world. The requirements are to be over 18 years old, undergraduate or postgraduate students and to have a good level of English since this is the language used in the program. Some courses have more specifics requirements.

The organization's strengths are the up-to-date academic program, the international and renowned professors, the opportunity to participate in the German language and culture course, unlike German competitors that do not provide a German course, the unique cultural program, the excursions to multinational companies, the beautiful nature, safety, comfort and rich cultural atmosphere that is the city of Munich. Their weaknesses are the lack of autonomy using marketing channels, since it is managed by the university marketing team, the weak website and the lack of social media presence.

5.2.2 External Analysis

In the external analysis, according to Zweers (2015), it is important to understand how is the market and what is the market size in which the organization operates, who the customers and competitors are, how the competitors act online and what are the important search engines.

In the former decade, the European summer school has appreciated phenomenal growth. Nowadays, most of the universities offer some kind of summer program. Courses are available at every level, from Bachelor degrees to specialized PhD courses (Torenbeek and van Rest 2014, 5). The most recent studied found from the author of this thesis about the summer school market was from Torenbeek and van Rest in 2014 using data from 2009 to 2013 of two websites, Study Portals and Summer Schools in Europe, which shows an increasing in the number of courses, that can be seen in Figure 1. In 2013, Germany was the third country with the greatest number of courses (154), behind the Netherlands (346) and United Kingdom (286).
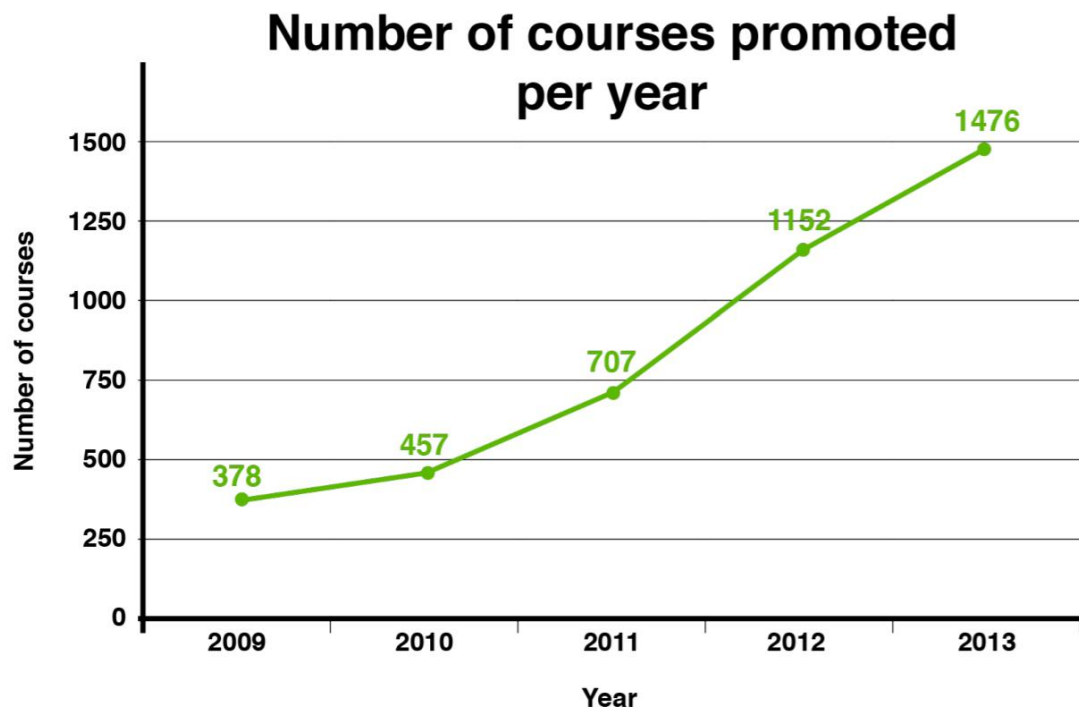

FIGURE 1. Torenbeek and van Rest 2014.

The author concludes that in 2020 is a much higher number. Since almost every university now offers some kind of summer program, there are many competitors in the market. Regarding German competitors, numerous summer schools have

a strong online presence. There are four different websites in which you can look for summer programs within Europe and the whole world, those being: Academic Courses, Study Portals, Education, and Summer Schools in Europe, showing lots of German programs including some in the city of Munich. HM summer schools are listed in just one of the websites mentioned above, Summer Schools in Europe. When it comes to social media presence, the numbers are lower in Germany compared to other European countries. There are only four summer schools present on Instagram for example, in which only two are direct competitors from the commissioner – since they also offer programs in the fields of engineering and business – those being in RWTH Aachen, and in TU Berlin. Regarding European competitors, the numbers of programs with an online presence are way higher and countries like the Netherlands and England have a stronger social media presence. The customers, already mentioned in this thesis, are international students coming from European, North and South America, and Asian countries. Concerning the size of the target group, based on the estimate of 2300 courses offered in 2013, total attendance is therefore in the order of 40 000 students (Torenbeek and van Rest 2014, 12).

An opportunity for HM summer school is that there are few direct competitors on social media inside Germany, highlighting the importance to coverage the programs in these channels to get well known. Another opportunity, taking into consideration the questionnaire results, would be to invest in the Brazilian market. If HM already has partnerships with Brazilian universities in terms of student exchange, the summer school could take advantage of this to promote themselves in those universities. When it comes to threats, there are the European competitors with a stronger presence and promotion on social media. Below there is a graph made by the author with a SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats – analysis (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2. Representation of SWOT analysis.

5.3 Strategy

According to Zweers (2015), the name strategy should be considered in the context of an operational plan, which consists of four interdependent modules: target group, objectives, positioning, and proposition. The author will use the questionnaire results in this section to build a better strategy.

5.3.1 Target Group

Considering the commissioner previous customers and the results from the questionnaire, the target group can be defined as: international students looking for summer schools abroad. The needs of the target group are a summer school that offers courses related to their field of studies and fits their interests as well as an international experience that goes beyond study credits. That can be noticed from the research results when students wrote some of the advantages that they are looking for regarding the summer school, like: *exciting program, new culture, growing knowledge, learning abroad, benefits offered by the program* and so on. It can be concluded that it is important to focus on selling the experience more than the academic courses itself.

The target group is normally informed through the brochures, posters and flyers, inside the university and those sent to the partner universities, as well as in the university website, DAAD website – which is the German Academic Exchange Service – and the Summer Schools in Europe website. In this thesis research, the author asked the target group which social media they mostly use daily, and the top results were Instagram (86,2%), WhatsApp (72,4%), YouTube (39%), Facebook (34,6%), Twitter (19,7%) and LinkedIn (18,9%). When asked in which social media they would search for the summer school, 121 of the respondents said they would search on Instagram (58,5%) followed by Facebook (34,3%), LinkedIn (32,9%) and YouTube (32,4%). This shows the communication tools and channels that the target group is looking at.

5.3.2 Objectives

According to Zweers (2015), the objectives are defined by the campaign achievements. It can be split into three parts: "Reach" goals, "Process" goals and "Effectiveness" goals. The reach goal is defined as reaching the target groups in an effective and efficient way. The process goal is the conditions that should be established before reaching the target group, like the main steps that should be processed to be possible to extend the message. The effectiveness goal is a behavior goal, is the actions that must occur – like buy, download, register – to possibly enter in a long-term relationship. (Zweers 2015.)

In this thesis, the reach goal is defining the channels and the content that the author will use to communicate to the target group, such as choosing the right websites and the social media platforms that better communicate with the students. From the questionnaire and desk research it is clear which websites and media to use effectively. For the process goal, social media need to be created and the channels updated with the new content and key messages, to be able to effectively reach the target group. Effectiveness goal will happen when customers start to follow HM summer school on social media and like, comment, share and save their posts. Also, when they click the register button on the website and start their application process.

5.3.3 Positioning

Positioning is the construction of a unique position of the service in the eyes of the consumer in relation to the competitors (Zweers, 2015). Based on the primary and secondary data it can be concluded that the target group is looking for an experience, and not just a good course or program. The best way to increase lead generation is to show the students what experiences HM summer school can offer that no other program can, strengthening the things that make Hochschule München University and the city of Munich unique.

Munich is a great and beautiful city, hence the importance to highlight the artistic and multicultural nature of the city and its cultural activities. From the Isar river, swimming, making a barbecue, drinking with friends, to the Englischer Garten, one of the largest urban parks in the world, to Olympia Park or to a famous Beer Garden, there are many ways that the summer school can market the program as a once in a lifetime academic and cultural experience. Partnering with local festivals like Tollwood Summer Festival – which is a sustainable festival that every year highlight a global climate issue, and offers live music, hand-made crafts, street food, pop up bars and concert acts – or the Sommer Fest – an event with over 100 stands with carnival rides, games and street food held at Olympia Park – it is also a great way to put on extra incentives for students and get a booster on enrollment for the summer school. HM summer school also has an advantage over the German competitors because it offers a German language and culture course. It is good to highlight the importance of learning the local culture and basics of the language and most important, show the perks of this course, that is the excursions to important historical sites. The key is as much visibility as possible on the website.

The research showed the importance of statements from past students for the target group. This is an important way to convince the future students of the quality and the perks of the summer course. According to a survey made by Bright-Local, nine out of ten millennials trust an online review as much as a personal recommendation so, the students' testimonials should be shared on the website and social media with great enthusiasm. Another aspect this research showed is

that the target group thinks it is easier to find information and get in contact with the university summer school through social media, as well as seeing photos and videos. Those are important to attract their attention and desire for the program.

5.3.4 Proposition

The proposition is the last part of the strategy. When the target group is known, the objectives that need to be achieved are clear and the positioning is defined, then is the moment to define the central message and values (Proposition). The value Proposition is arranged by the visible and invisible advantages to the customer. (Zweers 2015, 5). The proposition should be an easy-to-understand reason why the students should choose HM summer school over its competitors. It should be communicated directly to students through all the marketing materials, the brochures, websites and social media. It should be convincing and help turn a prospect into a customer. Using the messages from positioning, the proposition can be defined.

5.4 Tactics

According to Zweers (2015), tactics is the phase in which the devices, tools and techniques to be used are determined. The devices are the traditional channels such as print, expended to digital devices. The tools are the traditional instruments such as advertising, reinforced by internet tools such as website and mobile marketing. The techniques are distinct and exclusive to the internet, such as search engine marketing. (Zweers 2015, 5). For this chapter, the author will create a mixture of channels and content to reach the target group, selecting traditional and digital channels. The traditional media are the ones already used by the commissioner, posters and flyers. For the digital channels, besides the existing website, there is the creation of social media.

As the research results demonstrated, a Google search is the main thing that the target group would do when looking for a summer school, and to increase the visibility for relevant searches it is important to improve the website. Here is where

SEO and content marketing come together. SEO demands content and keywords, while content marketing is content using keywords. The research question *"what would you type when searching for a summer school?"* had the purpose to help using the right keywords in the content marketing to improve SEO. The author recommends using the questionnaire answers together with the perks and experiences of the summer program described in the positioning section to create the content that the students are looking for, increasing the visibility of the website in the search results. Because the better visibility, the more likely the summer school will attract attention and prospect new customers. Another recommendation is to always update the content, specially the visual content, like photos, videos and students' testimonials. It is also important to have the links of the social media channels on the website page. Besides the university website, HM should include their programs in the different websites where students search for summer schools. They are already present on summerschoolsineurope.eu, but there are three other major ones: academiccourses.com, shortcoursesportal.com, and educations.com.

Considering the same research question, *"what would you type when searching for a summer school?",* that 34,3% of the respondents chose social media, and the market research done by the author, the solution is to create social media accounts for the summer school of its own, linked but separated from the main accounts of the Hochschule München University. When comparing the results from two research questions *"in which social media would you search for the summer school?"* and *"which social media do you mostly use daily?"*, the conclusion is that the best social media channels for the summer school are Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn. According to Influencer Marketing Hub (2020), in 2010 there were less than a billion people using social media, while in 2019 the number was around 2.77 billion people. Facebook is currently the largest social media site in the world, with 2.6 billion monthly active users. Instagram is one of the fastest-growing social networking platforms, with over 1 billion monthly active users. LinkedIn is more popular among a B2B audience, but it can be interesting for the summer school since it is in the education field, it currently has 690 million members. YouTube is the second most popular search engine in the world today, right behind its parent company, Google, with over 2 billion monthly active users. (Influencer Marketing Hub 2020).

According to Tuten and Solomon (2018), social media tactics will guide the brand's activities in the zones of social media marketing in a way that fits with the objectives. For example, if the strategic objective is to create brand awareness, the tactics are to develop brand profiles in the selected social media channels, to post daily in each network, and to respond to comments and questions daily. If the strategy is to build brand image and reputation, the tactics are to create, produce, distribute and post content following the content calendar, and include interactive elements in all content as well as links to owned media content and share tools. (Tuten and Solomon 2018, 145).

5.5 Actions

According to Zweers (2015), this is the step where the content for the tools will be created to implement the messages that have been defined in the previous sections. "It is about creating a schedule, determining a budget and designating people" (Zweers 2015, 6). The author will divide this section in two phases. The first phase is about updating the content of the website, while the second phase is about the creation of social media channels and the channel plan.

5.5.1 Updating the Website

It is easy to find the summer school on HM University website, which is great. Just press "English version" and a summer school bar will appear on the page. Once you press it, this is the page view (PICTURE 1).
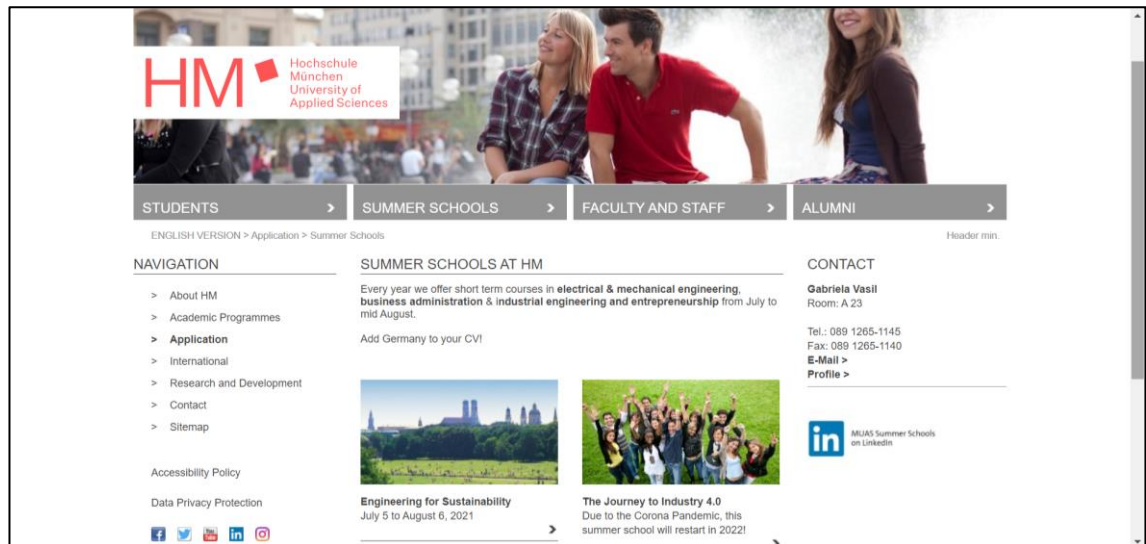
PICTURE 1. HM summer school website.

In the author's perception, it is not a modern style and a lot of valuable content is missing. Also, there are unnecessary side spaces, making the real information too small and not attractive. There are social media links on the left corner but those are from the university itself and not the summer school. On the right corner there is the LinkedIn link, but as mentioned before, it is a private group page. What could be a good solution for HM summer school, is to load a new page once the summer school tab is pressed, having a whole page for the summer school and the possibility to make it more attractive. Many other summer schools act like this, for example ESME Sudria summer school in France, Helsinki summer school in Finland, IE summer school in Spain, RWTH Aachen summer school and TU Berlin summer school in Germany. In the picture below (PICTURE 2) is the example of TU Berlin summer school web page.
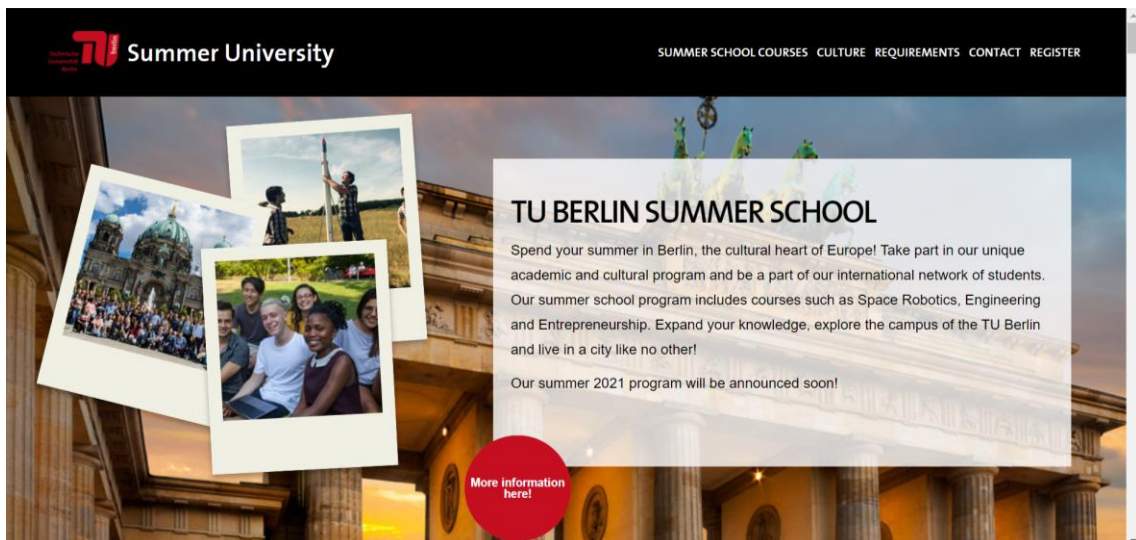
PICTURE 2. TU Berlin summer school website.

Notice the modern style and how much more attractive that could be for a student who is looking, not only for a good academic course, but also for a great experience. The author's recommendations for HM summer school website are to upload more photos and videos; to update the content, elaborating a more attractive text considering the keywords; and to divide the page into sections like *courses*, *cultural/social program*, *summer in Munich*, *prices and accommodation*, *requirements*, *testimonials* which could be a mix of content, meaning a student photo followed by a text as well as short videos, *contact* with the current information plus the links of all social media channels, and *apply/register*. Another important recommendation is to have a main short video, professionally made, like a "trailer" of what is it like to experience HM summer school.

## 5.5.2 Creating and Managing Social Media

As previous mentioned in the tactics section, the social media channels recommended by the author for HM summer school are Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube. After creating social media, it is important to always update the channels with current and relevant information. The type of content might differ between channels – some more professional, some more relaxed – but it is important to reflect the same key message. In order to make more visible and clearer, the author created a table with the channel plan, adapted from Tuten and Solomon (2018), explaining the tactics, benefits, content type, and the ideal velocity of posting for each social media channel (TABLE 1). Besides the channel plan it is important to make a content calendar, that captures which content is schedule and prioritized for an organization, generally with an annual, quarterly, monthly, and sometimes weekly view (Tuten and Solomon 2018, 161). It could be made on Excel or Google Sheets, for example. Take into consideration that to make the channel plan and content calendar possible, managing all social media accounts as well as the content in the website, it is needed a designated person. The author recommends adding a person to the summer school team, like a social media specialist, to work with the coordinator during the whole year.

Channel Plan				
Channel	**Tactic**	**Benefit**	**When/Ideal Velocity**	**Content Type**
Facebook	Establish brand presence, build relationships, lead generation, promote upcoming events	Entertain, inform, promote and support	Post every 3-4 days. During application and course period, post at least once a day	Posts, visual content (photos and videos) related to the program and city, research data about university, students, partners
Instagram	Increase brand awareness, engage with customers, develop fans, showcase marketing events, link back to website	Entertain, increase user base, inform, increase summer school knowledge, promote	Post every 3-4 days. During application and course period, post at least once a day and multiple stories	Pictures, short videos and reels, about the program, culture, university, students, trips, the city, staff
LinkedIn	Increase brand awareness and engagement, lead generation, promote upcoming events	Inform, increase knowledge, share mix of relevant links, blog posts and engaging content	Post every 4-5 days. During application and course period, post every 2-3 days	News and articles about the program, university, city, country
YouTube	Increase brand awareness and engagement, showcase company culture, viral sharing	Entertain, inform, promote	Post every 2-3 weeks. The ideal would be to have essential videos about the courses and experience ready by the application period	Videos about the experience, the courses, students' testimonials, cultural events, trips, the city

TABLE 1. Channel Plan for HM summer school.

The author recommends focusing on Instagram since it was the most voted channel from the research results, both in mostly use daily platform as in the one they

would search for the summer school. Instagram is a visual platform, so it is important to start by defining the look and feel of the profile and then planning the content. For the summer school it would be interest to see photos of the campus, labs, company excursions, students, cultural activities and the city. HM already has an amazing cultural program in their summer school and there's no better place to promote that other than social media. Hence the importance to focus on the experience and show the students having fun in the beer garden, in the city tour, museum visits and day trips. And photos are not the limit. It is also important to have short videos, of all those things mentioned above as well as student's statements. Besides this two, there are other features that can be used on Instagram stories, which is the perfect place to engage with the students. It is possible to ask them questions, make a quiz, a poll, a countdown as well as a live video. Another idea is to make students as "Instagram ambassadors", where they would have access to the summer school Instagram account and make it their own for a day or so. Showing how is their daily life as a summer school student at HM, all the learning and fun experiences, also sharing in their private accounts because it is a way to freely promote the summer school to potential customers. Below there are two examples of summer school's Instagram account, PICTURE 3 from RWTH Aachen and PICTURE 4 from VU Amsterdam.
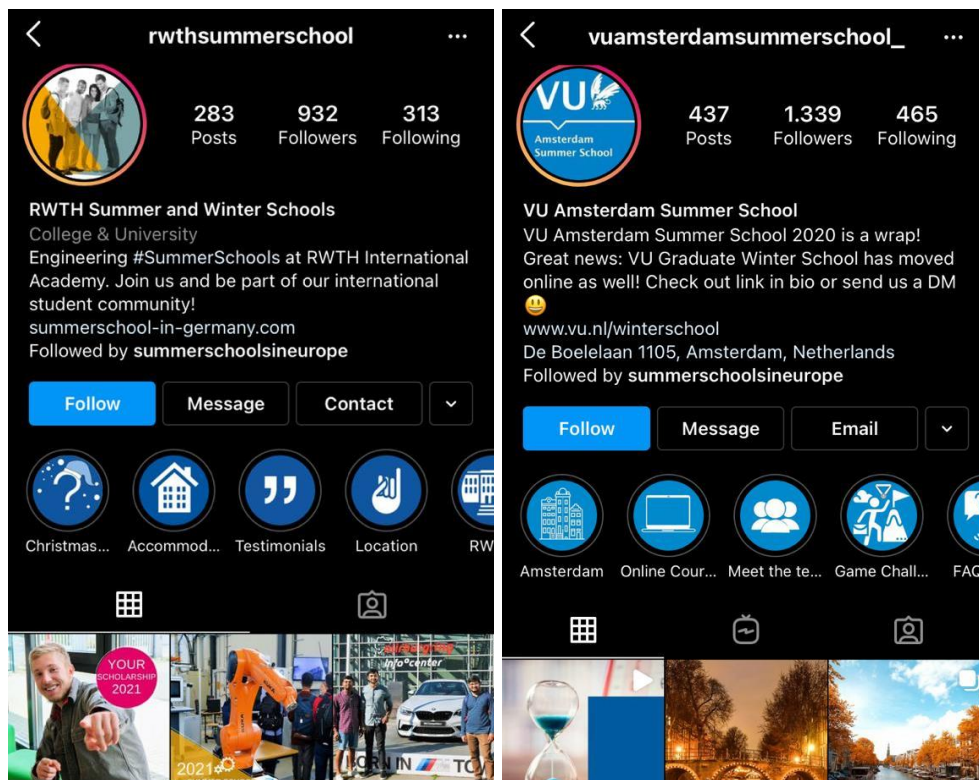
PICTURE 3. RWTH Aachen. PICTURE 4. VU Amsterdam.

Notice how these two accounts use the story highlight – a feature from Instagram – to easily show important information about the city, accommodation, testimonials, FAQ, etc. There are photos from the city, the students, the course, a post informing about a possible scholarship, and many more when scrolling down. The author recommends analysing the competitors' social media when planning the creation of HM summer school social media accounts.

Another major aspect of social media is advertising. Paid ads in social networks can be target using geographic and demographic segmentation, psychographics, and behavioural targeting. A good option are native ads, the ones that look just like a regular post on your feed, like sponsored posts on Instagram and Facebook or featured videos on YouTube. The Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) defines native advertising as "paid ads that are so cohesive with the page content, assimilated into the design, and consistent with the platform behaviour that the viewer simply feels that thy belong." Paid media is a valuable communication method to ensure that target audiences are exposed to brand messages. Paid and earned media support each other and drive traffic to owned media. (Tuten and Solomon 2018, 196-202). PICTURE 5 explains PEO model (paid, earned and owned media) by Titan Growth 2020.
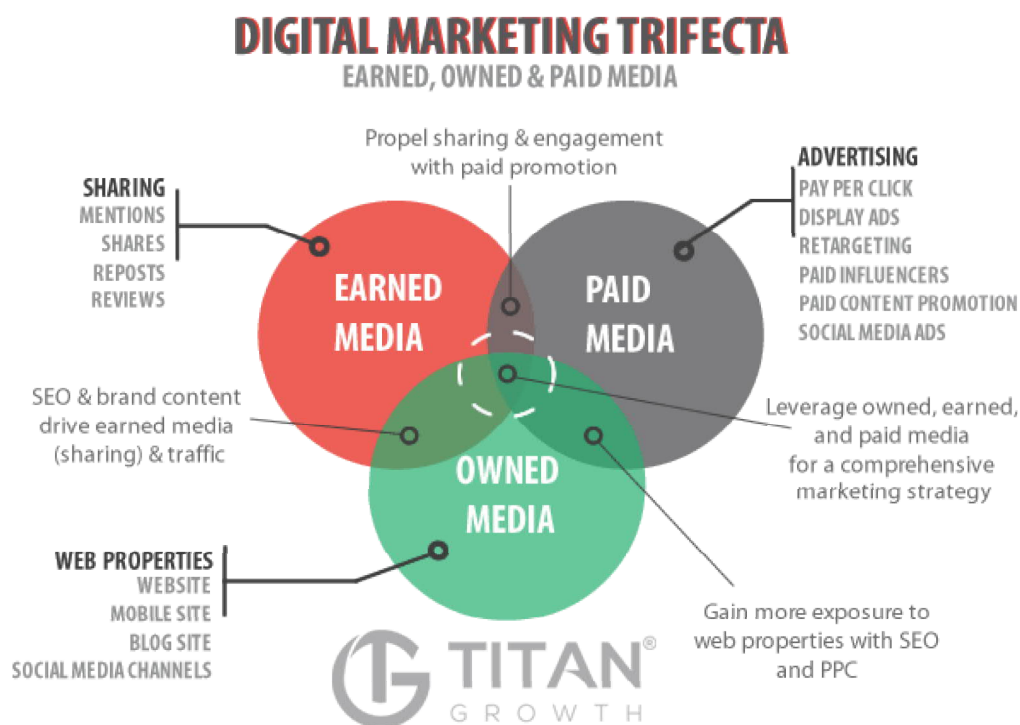

PICTURE 5. Titan Growth: Paid, Earned, and Owned Media.

For the commissioner, owned media is their website and future social media channels. Paid media would be advertising through social media or websites such as Keystone Academic Solutions. Earned media would be customers engagement on social media, like sharing or saving posts, or any mention of HM summer school in blogs and other websites. For example, the website newengineer.com made a blog post on August 2020 about "The Top Engineering Summer Schools in Europe" with a list of 7 programs. HM summer school was not listed there. In this same page, on the right side, there are paid ads of TU Berlin summer school and other universities. This shows that HM competitors are doing a good job. Due to the author constant research on summer schools, lots of ads on Facebook and Instagram (stories, specially) has shown up on the author's private accounts. Proving the power and importance of social media marketing.

5.6 Measurement

Throughout this thesis the author has been showing the benefits for a company or brand when participating in the social media space. The company can engage with customers, enhance brand reputation and image, and improve organic search rankings. But the social media marketing campaign will only be done when the objectives are defined, and effectiveness has been assessed. Now the challenge is to recognize the proper measures to use. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are the metrics that are attached to the company's objectives. For the KPIs to be valuable, the objectives that will be measured has to be well defined. The PICTURE 6 shows the relationship between the marketing sales funnel and the stages in the customer journey, identifying the KPIs that are relevant for each stage. (Tuten and Solomon 2018, 343-346).

Figure 11.2 Mapping KPIs to the Marketing Funnel and Customer Journey
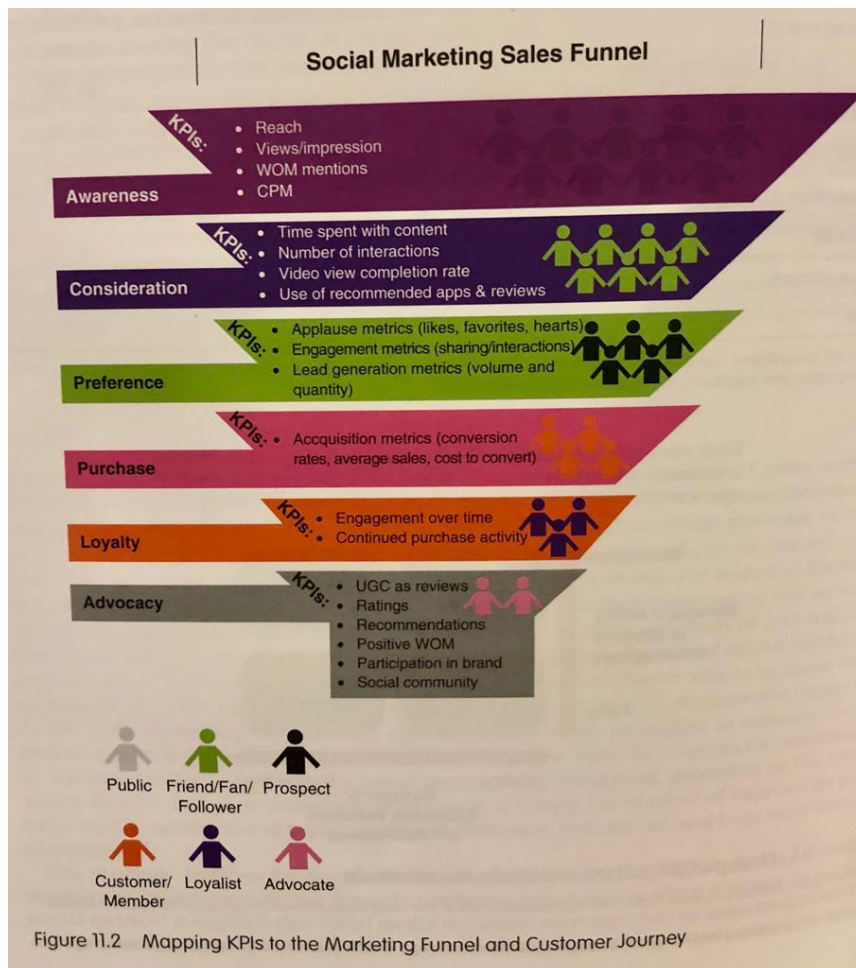
PICTURE 6. Picture taken from Social Media Marketing book by Tuten and Solomon (2018).

Social media metrics are important to measure the success, performance and impact of the business. In the case of HM summer school for example, if the objective is to attract new students through the Instagram account, it is important to measure the engagement between the students and the social media, such as number of followers, number of likes, shares and saved posts and the lead generation, which is the number of people that visit the website from the Instagram account. Furthermore, analyze which social media channel generated the most leads. Each one of the social media platforms has its own analytics. For a start, someone from the team could investigate these native analytics resources individually. But the author recommends investing on social media analytics tools, to minimize the time investment gathering metrics from all the sources. Some examples of tools to monitor the social media activity are Google Analytics, HootSuite and Sprout Social.

6   CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis was to develop a digital marketing plan for the commissioner to enhance their current marketing activities. The objectives were to analyze these activities and research social media marketing channels that would improve their digital presence to achieve their goal of attracting more students. To properly develop this plan, the author researched and studied concepts and theories that would reinforce the theoretical knowledge and help on conducting and analyzing the quantitative research to achieve the purpose and objectives of this thesis.

The main research question *How to develop a digital marketing plan for HM summer school?* is answered on Chapter 5, in which the creation of the plan is conducted based on the PASTAM framework. The sub-question from this thesis *How to identify the relevant social media channels?* was answered by the commissioner's target group on the quantitative research made by the author, identifying Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube as the most relevant channels. The other two sub-questions *How to improve traffic to HM's website?* and *How to attract new students with the social media platforms?* are also answered and described on Chapter 5 after analysing the research results, analysing the summer school market and making a profound research on social media trends and activities as well as an understanding on search engine optimization and content marketing.

The author can conclude that for HM summer school to achieve the desired success, it is necessary for them to enter the digital world, keep it updated and follow the new trends. For this reason, the author highlights the importance on the creation of its own social media channels for HM summer school, to be able to communicate and engage with the students, generate leads and attract new customers. And to make the good and expected use of these social media platforms, the author also recommends including a new employee on the summer school team, a person that will be responsible for updating the website and social media accounts, as well as analysing the metrics. Regarding the metrics, one more recommendation is to utilize an analytics tool.

The author have confidence that all the information from concepts and theories, to conducting and analysing the research, to the creation of a complete digital marketing plan, can and will help the commissioner on their marketing activities and business strategy to achieve their future goals. The author would like to express one's gratitude to the HM summer school coordinator and the supervisor from Tampere University of Applied Sciences for the whole support during this thesis process. It can be said that a lot of things has be learnt.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Research Questionnaire for International Students.

Connecting with social media

×   ⋮

Social media is any digital tool that allows users to quickly create and share content with the public.

Where would you search for a summer school? *

☐ Home university

☐ Asking friends/family

☐ Google search

☐ Another web search

☐ Social media

☐ Outros…

If you chose social media, in which one would you search?

☐ Youtube

☐ Instagram

☐ Facebook

☐ LinkedIn

☐ Outros…

What would you type when searching for such program? *

Texto de resposta longa

Which social media platform do you mostly use daily? *

- [ ] Instagram
- [ ] Facebook
- [ ] Snapchat
- [ ] TikTok
- [ ] Twitter
- [ ] Youtube
- [ ] LinkedIn
- [ ] Reddit
- [ ] Pinterest
- [ ] WhatsApp
- [ ] Facebook Messenger
- [ ] Outros…

On a scale from 1 to 10, how important do you think it is for the summer school to be present on *
social media?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
not important	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	important

Why do you think it is important? *

☐ It is better to trust and learn about the university

☐ It is better to understand the summer program

☐ It is easier to find information and get in contact

☐ It is better to check if the program fits my needs

☐ It is nice to see what previous students have done

☐ I like to see students' statements

☐ I like to see photos and videos

☐ I do not think it is important

☐ Outros…

Seção 3 de 3

A little bit about you

Descrição (opcional)

Age group *

◯ Under 18

◯ 18-24

◯ 25-29

◯ 30-39

◯ 40+

Gender *

◯ Female

◯ Male

◯ Prefer not to say

◯ Outros...

Nationality *

Texto de resposta curta

What is your level of study? *

◯ Bachelor's student

◯ Master's student

◯ Recently graduated

◯ Outros...

What is your field of studies? *

◯ Business/Administration

◯ Engineering

◯ Outros...