

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING FOR LOGISTIC SERVICE PROVIDER OPERATING IN THE B- TO-B SEGMENT

**WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS SHOULD BE USED TO
REACH DECISION-MAKERS OF CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERS**

Abstract

Author(s) Rekola, Janne	Publication type Thesis, UAS	Completion year 2021
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<p>Abstract</p> <p>Business-to-Business marketing has also entered into the phase of digital and social media marketing due to the new evolved possibilities of personalization and more effective ways for measuring the conversion rate of marketing activities. The thesis's primary objectivity is to research if business-to-business professionals use social media as part of their work-life. If so, what the preferred social media channels.</p> <p>The researcher used a deductive approach to conduct the thesis. The research made to collect the primary data applies both qualitative and quantitative methods, including an online survey and e-email interview for critical employees of the case company X. The researcher has gathered the secondary data for the thesis from various reliable sources, including both the internet and literature.</p> <p>The thesis theory concepts include marketing basics, the concept of social media, and business-to-business digital and social media marketing basics. To make suggestions of digital and social media marketing, the researcher has also used an external service provider to conduct a quick SEO audit of the case company X and then uses the Smart Insights RACE-planning model as the platform for suggestions based on the research and theory.</p>		
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

For many people, the first idea of marketing still is only selling and advertising. They falsely view it as a simple act of "telling and selling" because each of us is targeted daily with numerous e-mails, TV commercials, and possibly sales calls. However, perception should be more on satisfying customer needs. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 28.)

When the marketer fully understands the customer's needs, they can produce such a product or service, which will offer superior customer value. Creating such a product or service must be combined with correct pricing, distribution, and effective pro-motion, leading into a situation where the product or service sells quickly. Management guru Peter Drucker has stated: "The aim of marketing is to make selling unnecessary." (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 28.)

"The future ain't what it used to be," said Yogi Berra, a former New York Yankees catcher and manager, a statement that captures today's world in near perfection with a single sentence. The statement means that the service or product providers must change to maintain their existence in the marketplace. Five major obstacles are forcing towards constant change; uncertain economic environment, digital age, rapid globalization, the demand for more ethics and social responsibility, and the up-rise of not-for-profit marketing. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 46-47.)

Due to the nature of the object of this study, the focus is directed mostly for the digital age and online and social media marketing. Generally, due to economic uncertainty, value has become one of the driving forces for customers and market providers. Both parties are looking for the best value for their money spent. This phenomenon can be seen within every industry regardless of operating B-TO-C OR B-TO-B markets. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 47.)

At the moment, the best option for the best value from a marketer's standpoint are the tools of the digital age and especially tools of online marketing. The rapid growth within computer communications, mobile communications, information, and other digital technologies offers significant opportunities for companies to create value for their customers. The most significant benefits for companies are the new opportunities to engage with their customers and gather information about them, creating more value for them based on their individual needs and desires. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 47.)

The market has already moved into Web 3.0 from Web 1.0, where people were connected with information, and Web 2.0, where people could communicate through blogs, social networks, and video sharing platforms. In Web 3.0, we became able to combine the above with customizable

internet applications accessed via mobile devices, giving us the ability to have our favorite music, pictures, and videos with us everywhere together with instant access to news, for example, with never-ending updates (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 50-51.)

The concept of online marketing includes websites, e-mail, display ads, search ads, and social media marketing, to name a few. Various tools for effective communication enables companies to trigger interest in their pool of potential customers, and information or messages can be correctly directed. (Kotler & Keller 2016, 638.)

Social media marketing is one of the most popular forms of online marketing. In December 2015 Forbes reported that Facebook had over 50 million businesses using Facebook as part of their marketing portfolio. (Chaykowski, K. 2015.) In 2020 the number of businesses using Facebook is already over 140 million and more than 60 million Facebook pages are listed as business page. (Brandastic, 2020.)

Social media marketing can reach millions of people more straightforward than our previous marketing models, and it is possible to execute with outstanding cost-efficiency. Social media marketing is chosen as a topic for this research because of the significant role in the modern world.

After a more profound understanding of social media marketing, the objective is to offer the case company tools to develop its social media marketing. The case company is a logistics service provider focusing on international road freight, mainly operating in the business-to-business market. The case company is based in Denmark, and it is privately owned, with operations in Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Poland, and Sweden. The case company has a limited marketing portfolio with a low level of activities targeted at existing customers.

The aim is to assist the case company in building its customer base, increasing the number of partners, and improving interaction with them via improved social media marketing tools. The leading target group of potential new customers is high volume fast-moving consumer goods suppliers, waste recycling operators, and construction product providers operating in the same market areas as the case company. The second target is potential new partners and service providers related to the case company's core business.

Therefore the main objective is to determine which social media channels are the best ones for reaching decision-makers of the target group customers, partners, and service suppliers and then building an action plan on how to utilize those social media channels.

1.2 Thesis Objective And Research Questions And Limitations

The research made for the thesis aspires to define which social media channels are the most useful ones in the business-to-business environment and what kind of benefits the respondents have gained. The thesis aims to offer justified tools and proven methods to the case company to improve its digital and social media marketing results. The primary focus is on presenting the most popular social media channels based on the research and the suggested tools to get the best results for the case company.

Determining a research question is a crucial part when building guidelines for research. Well thought out research question has two duties, firstly it answers what the research is regarding, and secondly, which challenges the research aims to explain. On the research made for this thesis, the question is: What social media channels are the most popular ones for business-to-business purposes?

The sub-questions providing assistance for the main research question is: Is it possible to reach decision-makers of potential customers or partners in social media?

Is social media part of the decision-making process in the B-to-B operation when searching for new service providers?

The limitation of this research is that it is only focusing on the B-to-B customers in international trade. The B-to-B segment for the case company is medium to large-sized companies in need of international road freight services, which means that the results and suggestions based on the research are not likely suitable for all logistic service providers. The study also doesn't necessarily provide answers for companies operating within other B-to-B or B-to-C fields than logistic service providers. The purpose of the research is to provide critical ingredients for the case company to build its own effective social media marketing combination. The study made for the thesis focuses on determining the most popular social media channels, but it will not seek to determine opinions regarding the content within these channels.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The thesis strives to supply means for the case company to utilize social media more productively as part of their marketing and reach more potential customers or partners. Marketing basics are showcased in the thesis to ensure that reader becomes familiar with marketing as a concept.

The third chapter of the thesis consists of social media theory and introduces the primary social media channels. The fourth chapter will dive into business-to-business digital and social media marketing, illustrating the basics of SEO, PPC, and social media for business-to-business.

The fifth chapter is dedicated to analyzing the survey results, and the sixth chapter offers tools to utilize the gained theory and findings from the survey. The focus will stay on the most popular social media channels based on research results, and besides, the tools to benefit from SEO are offered for the case company.

1.4 Research Methodology And Data Collection

At the beginning of the research, the researcher must decide whether to apply deductive reasoning or inductive reasoning method. Approach starting with a general hypothesis or premise of the topic at hand and reaches into specific conclusion is called deductive reasoning, also described as being top-down thinking or as moving from general to specific. For example, in the case company, the marketing department could identify the customers with a high emphasis on the green values and then target them with green logistic solutions marketing. (Doyle, A. 2020.) The opposite method for deductive research is Inductive research, which is often referred to as bottom-up logic as specific observation is widened into broad generalizations. For example, in the case company, the marketing department could be based on inductive reasoning make a generalized conclusion that if one customer is highly interested in green logistics solutions, then all customers are equally interested. (MasterClass, 2020.)

The next phase of building up the research is to decide the best method to obtain the needed data and the suitable methodology. It is essential to select a methodology that will sufficiently serve the research and the research objectives. (Quinlan 2011, 108-110.) Out of the several research methodologies, qualitative and quantitative research methods are presented for the reader as the researcher used both methods in the thesis's research.

Qualitative research is based on language, covering words, meanings, and understanding underlying concepts. It is used when needed to define the reason behind the people's feelings, what motives them to act in a certain way, and what their opinions are. With qualitative research, it is possible to gain an in-depth understanding and context to the research questions. However, the results are more demanding to analyze than quantitative research results, and duplicating the research is more complicated. (Qualtrics, 2021a.) The qualitative method does not necessarily include large samples as it can be concentrated on some well-defined sample group. Qualitative and quantitative

methodologies are often mixed within the research to answer a research question since they complement each other. (Keegan 2009, 11-14.)

Quantitative research is based on gathering information that can be counted, measured, or rated numerically. In short, it is all about numbers. Analyzing quantitative research results on a fundamental level is a much more simplified process than qualitative research results. The results are showcased in the form of graphs, tables, or dashboards. (Qualtrics, 2021b.) Quantitative research usually includes a large sample group for the study with possible sub-groups, for example, created based on race or gender. Quantitative research is used to measure, for example, creating election polls and trying to predict certain areas. With the quantitative method, the research questions often start with "how many?" or "how often?". (Keegan 2009, 11-12.)

With the combined method of qualitative and quantitative research, the qualitative research questions are used to obtain insights and to propose a theory, which is then followed by quantitative research testing it. A survey can include multiple-choice, open-text, and closed questions. For example, the case company's marketing department for the thesis could conduct interview research with focus groups and find that the number of existing customers has a strong desire for greener logistics solutions. With targeted quantitative market research, it could be revealed that service providers of green logistic solutions receive higher customer satisfaction and thus a rise in profits. (Qualtrics, 2021c.)

The primary data was collected via an online survey shared in LinkedIn and one logistic group on Facebook, and an open-ended e-mail interview. The objectivity of the research conducted for the thesis was to determine whether the sample group respondents are using social media for work-life purposes and using it, which channels they prefer, and what kind of results they have received. The survey was built as a combination of qualitative and quantitative questions. Besides, to gain more qualitative insight, a short open text e-mail interview was conducted with the case company's significant employees. Secondary data for the thesis is gathered from books, reports, and internet publications.

In summary, the researcher used a deductive method to create the research for the thesis and collect the primary data; qualitative and quantitative research methods were used. Secondary sources are used to bind together the findings from the primary data to complete the thesis.

1.5 Thesis Structure

The researcher introduced the reader to the thesis's general idea within the first chapter and its purpose. Also, research goals and methods used to collect data, and the thesis framework is

presented. In the second chapter, the focus shifts into principles of marketing theories, and B-to-B marketing's unique requirements are presented to give a more profound understanding of marketing for the reader.

The third and fourth chapters are dedicated to the concept of social media and the marketing possibilities offered by social media for business-to-business purposes. In the fifth chapter, empirical research, the survey design, and the results are displayed and analyzed.

The sixth chapter holds the researcher's suggestions for social media and digital marketing for the case company based on the theory and empirical parts presented in the earlier chapters. The seventh chapter of the thesis holds suggestions for further research, and summarizes the thesis.

2 THE CONCEPT OF MARKETING

2.1 Evolution And Definition Of Marketing

Marketing has been around for ages, and marketers have always evolved together with the world. Soon after Johannes Gutenberg started to mass-produce the Holy Bible in 1450, marketers of that era began to use the press to create printed ads to be displayed on billboards, leading to the first anti-spam ruling: "Post no bills". Afterward came telegraph by Samuel Morse in 1837, then Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876, 1899 Guglielmo Marconi came up with radio followed by television in 1927 by Philo Farnsworth. Next was the Internet in 1972 by Tim Byrnes and Vint Cerf, the platform for the new marketing era. In 1999 E-commerce was established; the next year, e-mail became mainstream, and in 2004 social media started to spread, changing the marketing game. The real difference in marketing before modern Internet 1994 and afterward is that before we had the Internet, marketing was one-way communication, push-messaging from marketer to customer. (Safko 2013, 16-17.)

Marketing in its different forms is around us all at all times. We are receiving marketing information via television, magazines we read, and e-mail. In recent years, marketers have started to use more personal approaches via online social networks and mobile phone phones. Marketing's basic idea is to build stronger relationships with customers by offering value for them to receive more value back from the customers. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 28-29.) The real shift into today's two-way communication started in 2000-2001, with e-mail being the arrowhead since it gave us mass marketing with the possibility of dialog to evolve. Between the years 2005-2008, social media started to boom. We had Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and MySpace; Facebook grew from one million to 90 million users during those three years. (Safko 2013, 16-17.) Nowadays, Facebook reports having 2,74 billion monthly active users on average in December 2020 and 1,82 billion daily users. (Facebook Investor Relations 2020.)

Effective marketing requires an organization to evaluate itself and focus on; what purpose they are serving, how they address this purpose, who the customers are, and how they execute their actions. To build a successful marketing model, an organization should regularly complete this cycle of four steps, complete market research, decide their marketing segment, create a marketing mix combination, and thorough market evaluation. (Koontz & Mon 2014, 66-67.)

2.1.1 Marketing Research

Market research is done since marketers should be fully aware of their own organization's pros and cons and know as much as possible about the market as a whole and the existing and potential new customers. (Koontz & Mon 2014, 67-68.)

Marketing research is a product of seven characteristics. The first is that it is executed using scientific methods principles, offering well-thought-out observations, predictions, and testing. Secondly, creativity is a plus to reach customers. The third important aspect is to use multiple methods, which offers more credibility to the results. Fourth is the independence of meaning models and data, meaning that the data is affected by how it's gathered. The fifth is the correlation between the value of the findings and the cost of producing the results. The latter is always easy to spot, but the actual value has many variables such as reliability of findings, acceptance of conclusions, and willingness to act based on the results. The sixth one is the reasonable skepticism towards the market's assumptions and how the market allegedly operates. The seventh step is the ethicality of the research underlying customer respect, which easily can be annoyed if they feel a breach of privacy, causing the research to work against the marketer. (Kotler & Keller 2016, 137.)

2.1.2 Market Segmentation

Market segmentation determines who the customer is that marketers should aim to reach and divide them into more manageable pools in which they share everyday needs and characteristics. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 69.) When conducting marketing segmentation for business markets, there are many similarities with consumer marketing segmentation, such as geographical, demographical, and benefit-based segmentation. In business marketing, the most critical segmentation variables are demographical, operating variables, and personal characterizes. (Kotler & Keller 2016, 283.)

Demographic segmentation compounds; on which industries supplier should serve, what is the size of the customer companies, and where these customers should locate. Operating variables are the following, technology, the user status, and capability of customers. With technology, the supplier must decide which customer technologies they should focus on. Deciding user status is a dialog between heavy users, medium users, light users, and non-users as each of them has their independent needs and demands. Customer capabilities aim to guide decisions between whether to serve customers with multiple needs or single needs. Operating characteristics are similarity between buyer and seller, risk resistance of customer, and customer loyalty towards the supplier. (Kotler & Keller 2016, 284.)

2.1.3 Marketing Mix

Marketing Mix is one of the basic concepts of marketing, where the details are decided after the marketing strategy, in general, is planned. Marketing Mix's objective is to create a combination of 4P's that will offer superior value to the customer and then generate the desired response in the target market. The variables of 4P's are product, price, place, and promotion.

To be more precise, social media marketing and B-to-B social media marketing is the focal point for the thesis, which means that the most vital aspect of 4P's is promotion, yet to be remembered that the marketing mix's actual effectiveness comes from the harmony of the 4P's. The objective of promotion is to tell the world what the organization is and what is the core of its existence. (Koontz & Mon 2014, 69-70.)

2.1.4 Marketing Evaluation

Nevertheless, marketing evaluation is the last phase of the four-step cycle of building a marketing plan. It is something that needs to be done in the background during other stages as well. The most important aspect of marketing evaluation is the ongoing measuring of results. (Koontz & Mon 2014, 70.)

When evaluating market segments, there are two main factors to notice: the segment's overall attractiveness and the company's objectives and resources. A simplified way to think of the market evaluation is to think about the correlation between the input to the marketing segment versus the actual and possible outcome from the given segment. (Kotler & Keller 2016, 286.)

2.2 Differences Between Business-To-Business And Customer Marketing

Likely one of the biggest differentiators between business-to-business and business-to-consumer marketing is that consumers generally buy based on “want”, and businesses buy based on “need”. Meaning that consumer buying decisions are more emotion-based than business buying decisions which are more rational. Therefore marketing activities for business-to-business must be focused on bringing out the benefits of the provided solution rather than the actual product or service. Another significant difference is that business marketers aim to sell their products or services to a much smaller number of potential customers than consumer marketers, which means that the sold product or service must be customized for the needs of the buyer. (Brauner, R. 2016a.)

Therefore relationship development in the business-to-business market should be focused on long-lasting personal relationships, which will be highlighted during buying cycle of the business-to-business customers. One of the top priorities should be in leads generation, enabling the repeat business model to create a referable business. While low customer reviews can be devastating in the business-to-consumer market, this is not necessarily the case in a business-to-business market. Negative reviews can be seen as a possibility to have a more in-depth insight into a product or service, but only when development or solution resolving the earlier noticed issue can be shown. (Kim.)

Within the business-to-business market, not only is the buying decision more need-based. The decision-making usually includes the participation of several professionals with a high level of knowledge on the needed service of product- — further causing more protracted decision-making than in business to the consumer market. Because of this reason, the sales department and marketing department of the supplier side has to co-operate to identify when their customer pool is available for actual sales actions and when only for marketing actions nurturing into the possibility of sales to take place. (Brauner, R. 2016b)

3 THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

3.1 Definition Of Social Media

A combination of different Internet-based media zones where all users can communicate on topics relevant to them is called social media. Most people of the 21st century, at least in the Western part of the world, are used to have a free ability for such interaction with others. These content-based interactions of endless feed sharing videos, pictures, status updates, and other material create social media. (Hudson, M. 2020a)

Since social media is created by its user's involvement in it is highly valuable for marketers because it gives them access to the lives of the social media users, making it possible to build subtle integration between customers and marketed products, services, and brands. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 2-3.)

The best possible outcome for marketers is that individual social media users become brand ambassadors. The worst-case for marketers is that, based on studies, unhappy customers share their experience with 15-17 people while happy ones share it with only 5-7 people. With social media,, these numbers can explode. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 2-3; Safko 2013, 19.)

3.2 Zones Of Social Media

Since social media overlaps with mass and personal media, it enables social media users to communicate with one counterpart or even to millions at once with the possibility of two-way communication. To be able to compare social media, it needs to be divided into different zones, especially since new social media channels and vehicles continuously appear online. (Tuten & Solomon 2018, 11-12.)

Within each of the zones, marketers are using different channels and possibly also various vehicles to send their messages over to the receiver. Communication is shared through medium or channel, which can occur by anything from word-of-mouth to television and the internet. (Tuten & Solomon 2018, 11-12.)

After a channel is chosen, it is time to select a vehicle inside of the channel. For example, within the social entertainment zone, the marketer can choose to use television as their channel and any of the

current hit shows of their area as the vehicles to carry their message onwards to the desired receiver. (Tuten & Solomon 2018, 11-12.)



FIGURE 1. The Zones of Social Media. (Tuten & Solomon 2018, 12.)

Social media is divided into these four zones:

- Social Community
- Social Publishing
- Social Entertainment
- Social Commerce

More detailed information with examples of each social media zone is highlighted within the four sub-chapters.

3.2.1 Social Community

Social communities are social media channels focusing on relationships of people with similar points of interest and on the shared activities of these people. Social communities are built around sharing

experiences or resources with different communication methods, which is the foundation of building relationships between the users of social community channels and the existent of social communities. (Hudson, M. 2020b)

The presence of social community giants like Instagram and Facebook can lead one to overlook the hundreds of other small social networks as all Wikis and forums as well are vehicles of social communities. Forums, in fact, are the original version of social media since they are based on the interaction between the members of a given forum, sharing their unique ideas, experiences, and questions forming threaded conversation. (Tuten & Solomon 2018, 13-14)

Over time, for example, Facebook has elevated the experience of forums with added features such as extensive profile modification possibilities that enable users to build their own social identity. With the help of multiple apps included in Facebook, the user can control their social presence and interact with their group of connections, for example, via instant messaging or profile and status updates. (Tuten & Solomon 2018, 13-14)

3.2.2 Social Publishing

The main differentiator between social publishing and social communities is that social communities exist to build a network, and social publishing exists to share knowledge with a wider audience, breaking individual social communities' barriers. Social publishing contains vehicles such as blogs, for example, WordPress, micro-sharing sites, for example, Twitter, and media sharing sites, for example, YouTube. (Tuten & Solomon 2018, 14-15; Lieberman, M, 2016.)

Blogs such as WordPress can be held by individuals, professionals, or even organizations. The idea is to regularly share online content in the form of text, videos, or presentations, and due to the huge number of bloggers, the amount of topics is endless. What makes blogs social is the possibility of interaction between the publisher and consumer of a given blog. It is the opportunity to share or comment, which at best will lead to a conversation between the publisher and multiple consumers of the blog. (Tuten & Solomon 2018, 14-15)

Twitter is the best know micro-sharing platform; what differentiates it from blogs is the limitation of the length of the content as Twitter has a cap of 140 characters on one tweet, hence the term micro-sharing. One tweet can be as simple as one sentence or part sentence, a brief video clip, or a link to a different site with more detailed content. Twitter, for example, is also partially a social community as users often connected to each other and gather following. However, it is leaning more into social publishing rather than social community. (Tuten & Solomon 2018, 14-15)

A media sharing site is a site with a mixture of different content types, but it focuses on videos, photos, music, or presentations rather than plain text format. This format is overlapping with social community sites. Still, the difference is that, for example, in YouTube, the videos of some famous content producers are searchable and available for everyone using YouTube, which is not the case with the social communities. (Tuten & Solomon 2018, 14-15)

3.2.3 Social Entertainment

Compared with social communities or social publishing, the differentiator with social entertainment is that the main focus is on entertainment. The target is to share entertainment in the form of music, social games, videos, or social television. The social media channels included within this zone are, for example, Spotify and YouTube. However, the most developed social entertainment segment is social games such as Candy Crush and Mafia Wars. (Tuten & Solomon 2018, 15)

Within these games, the players build their network under the umbrella of the game, where they can then interact with other players and post their accomplishments into their online profiles, which is called statuscasting. (Tuten & Solomon 2018, 15)

3.2.4 Social Commerce

Social commerce is the fourth zone with the focus on social media in online shopping. Still, the social aspect expands the concept further from buying and selling by including additional participators to actively participate in the shopping experience of products or services in online marketplaces. (Tuten & Solomon 2018, 15-16.)

Typical influence on the consumer's decision-making is recommendations and shared experiences via social media, which is called social shopping. Different online sites have their own approach to how to affect decision-making. An extensive amount of customer experiences can be found from Yelp and TripAdvisor sites, for example. (Market Business News 2020)

There are also sites designated to boost sales more directly, such as GroupOn and LivingSocial. The benefit of social commerce is aligned while customers are sharing their experiences and reviews. Businesses can collect valuable data on their consumers and the whole market. (Tuten & Solomon 2018, 15-16; Laing, J 2021.)

3.3 Social Media Channels

Standard rules of marketing apply with social media marketing as well, and the target group must be carefully defined. After the target group is identified, the next phase is to choose the proper social media zone from the different possibilities presented in chapter 3.2 and then select the most appropriate channels within the chosen social media zone to reach the target group with the desired message. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 42-43.)

Since the case company operates in the B-to-B market, they must reach customers via social media via the channels used by individuals working in the B-to-B market. The survey's result decided the social media channels worthy of closer look for the thesis.

3.3.1 Facebook

The most known social media channel at the moment, Facebook, was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and Edward Saverin at Harvard University. The number of users exploded in 2006 when Facebook welcomed everyone past 13-year-old to join and quickly surpassed MySpace in social network popularity. (Nations, D. 2020a.) Facebook gathered the first million active users already within the first year of operation (Facebook Company Info 2020.)

Currently, Facebook has on average 1.82 billion daily active users and 2.74 billion monthly active users. The mission of Facebook is to provide an opportunity for people to share information, create communities and thereby bring the world closer to each user. To achieve their goal, Facebook has created and acquired several apps and technologies that people are using to connect with other users, thus creating communities and making it possible for users to grow their businesses while growing Facebook simultaneously. (Facebook Investor Relations 2020.)

The popularity of Facebook is based on its user-friendliness, meaning that close to anyone, regardless of the IT-skills, can create an account and start using Facebook, and generally, it is free to use. Due to the enormous user amounts, Facebook has gained prominent status among businesses seeking a tool for accurate marketing. (Nations, D. 2020b.) On the other hand, the popularity has its downside, and Facebook reports of using up to five billion dollars yearly to moderate to content circulating among its users. (Gaus, A. 2019.)

3.3.2 Instagram

Already 2012, Facebook purchased Instagram, which only within two years proved to be an application used worldwide for sharing photos, videos, Instagram Stories, and Instagram Live for the live video feed. The application allows users to publish their images, videos, Instagram stories, or live video feed and to follow other engaging users. One can like, share and comment on content published by others or take part in a live feed with live reactions. Currently, Instagram has over 1 billion active monthly users with 90% of users following business accounts as well, and a daily number of users using Instagram stories is over 500 million. (Instagram 2020)

Instagram is regarded as the best image-sharing app. One widely used tool is a filter, which can be added to photos and videos as well. For example, when sharing a photo on Instagram, users can choose filters from multiple options. With the help of editing tools, the image can be shifted into old-fashioned, sepia, brighter, black, and white, among many other options. These individual creations can then easily be shared with user's personal networks via Facebook and Twitter in addition to Instagram if wished so. Instagram does not directly offer the option to repost the content created by other users like Twitter, yet many apps are available for that purpose. For business use, especially valuable is adding a link to the company website into the profile bio and the postings to create inbound traffic into the company website. (Coles 2018, 95)

Hashtags rules on Instagram as most users use hashtags as the description for their content, which is an accepted method in Instagram that has set a limit for hashtags up to 30 per one photo. For example, hashtags are actively used by clothing companies in B-to-C Instagram marketing. Companies aim to active customers to become their brand ambassadors by using company hashtags when sharing photos of them wearing their products. (Coles 2018, 95-96)

For companies, Instagram holds tremendous possibilities since it is free to use and reaching millions of people at once can be obtained by publishing one photo. Publishing content aims to bring customers closer and give them the feeling of being part of the company. This can be obtained by feeding customer interest with relevant content paired with appealing text. Companies can provide hints on upcoming adventures to build a following or held Instagram competitions where followers are asked to comment, share and tag friends into the posting, which will then expand the initial posting's exposure. (Scholl 2015, 35-37)

3.3.3 LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a social platform equivalent to Facebook for the business world smaller in numbers, but the benefit is that it is focused on the business world. LinkedIn has more than 740 million members from 200 countries. LinkedIn was launched in 2003 to serve the mission of connecting the world's professionals, helping them be more productive and successful. In 2016 Microsoft purchased the platform to combine their cloud services for professionals with the vast network of professionals already using their services. (LinkedIn 2021.)

As said, LinkedIn is a social network focusing on networking professionals and enhancing their career development. With LinkedIn, one can have his / her resume displayed for millions of professionals worldwide, search for jobs and build up professional status via interaction with other users either by conversation or posting content. It is free to use, yet there is paid version as well called LinkedIn Premium, where the user, in return for a subscription fee, will obtain access to various online courses and seminars provided by LinkedIn. Besides, with LinkedIn Premium, the user will get an insight into who is searching and viewing their profile. (Johnson, D. 2019.)

For businesses, the functions are similar to they are for private users. When creating a LinkedIn profile, companies can choose their business type from small business, medium to large business, educational institute, or showcase case page associated with the existing profile. A company profile includes all of the company's basics details, such as a name, address, contact details, description of services or products, industry, and size of the company. (Kuligowski, K. 2020a.)

As private users can seek jobs on LinkedIn, companies can create specified career pages to showcase their story, culture, and key personnel, for example, while seeking the best possible talents to meet the company's needs.

Companies can also join groups inside LinkedIn just like private users, and the basic principles of growing presence by sharing content, interacting, and sparking conversation are alike for both. (Kuligowski, K. 2020b.)

Career pages beneficiary to be used by companies as LinkedIn indicates that job seekers are 1,8 times more likely to apply for a job when they are familiar with the company. LinkedIn also enables company profiles to create differentiated career pages for different business aspects, for example, IT and Marketing. (LinkedIn Talent Solutions, 2021.)

3.3.4 Twitter

"What's happening?" is the base for this social media channel born in 2006. Like Facebook, Twitter was initially created for college students to keep in touch with each other by sending "tweets" of a maximum of 140 characters. The use of Twitter quickly spread as the general public saw the benefits from a simple interface enabling interaction with people worldwide. At first, businesses saw Twitter as a new tool to promote their products or service, but quickly understood the value of Twitter as a listening tool while it became more and more popular. Since Twitter is an open field for conversation for anyone to see and take part in, companies are forced to take quick actions to keep any issues leading into bad press under their control and openly sort them out. When companies are actively tuned into Twitter, it enables them closely listen to their customer's views of their brand and possibly thank them for praises. (Coles 2018, 71-72)

Twitter has 340 million active monthly users in the world 262 million of the users are from outside of United States. Around 186 million daily users are generating over 500 million "tweets" daily. Twitter is the most preferred social network for news consumption backing up the base idea behind Twitter "what's happening?". Statics of Twitter users in the United States indicate that Twitter is popular with high earners as 77% of people with an income of 75,000\$ per year are using Twitter, and 32% of users have a higher college degree. 38% of U.S users are from 18 to 29 years old, and in the age group of 30 to 49 years old, 26% are using Twitter. 80% of the users access Twitter with a mobile device, promoting the ideology of instant dialogue between users. (Omnicores 2020a.)

3.3.5 YouTube

Already 2006, Google purchased one-year-old YouTube for 1.65 billion US dollars. Today it has over two billion active monthly users, which is almost one-third of all internet users. Currently, YouTube has been localized into over 100 countries and 80 languages, and combined hours daily viewed from YouTube is over one billion hours each day. In the United States, within the age group of 18 to 34 years old, YouTube reaches a higher audience than any TV network, and that is only by YouTube mobile usage. (YouTube 2020.)

YouTube has become the second most visited site globally, and 37% of all mobile internet is used to access YouTube, which is explained by the fact that 70% of viewing time for YouTube comes from mobile devices. YouTube is very popular through gender and age groups, statistics of usage in the United States show that 51% of the user visit the site daily, 77% from the age groups of 15 to 25-year-olds and 26 to 35-year-olds are using YouTube, even from the age group of 75-year-old and

over 51% are watching videos from YouTube. No surprise that YouTube nowadays is the second largest search engine in the world. (Omnicores 2020b.)

4 BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

4.1 Company Website And Content Based Search Engine Optimization

Nowadays company websites are nothing new, but in fact, they are given must-have for any company. As the business environment is continually changing, the company website must evolve along with its market.

A functional website should be treated as a living entity that is continuously nurtured to meet its purposes to showcase the company's expertise and solutions to potential customers. At best, the company website will act as an industry resource, which is interactive with customers while providing valuable information in an entertaining manner. All possible information must be readily available for customers. Simultaneously, the company website should provide tools for the business itself to obtain data of visitors leading into sales leads. (Digital Marketing Institute, 2019a.)

Digital Marketing Institute has in 2019 listed that business-to-business website must include the following elements:

- Be suited to the target audience
- Be mobile responsive
- Have calls-to-action to get pricing, schedule a demo, request a white paper, and so on
- Showcase up-to-date testimonials
- Feature all company social media pages
- Have usable industry information
- Be assessed and updated regularly

In business-to-business interactions, the research phase often is a prolonged process guided by the actual business needs company website must be able to highlight the benefits of offered solutions easily. (Digital Marketing Institute, 2019b.)

Importance of search engine optimization is a crucial part of bringing new customers into the company. Without customers acknowledging the company's existence, business growth is slowed down dramatically, if not impossible. SEO aims to enable search engines like Google to find the company and lift it to a higher level. Due to the high complicity of SEO, for most companies, it is advisable to

hire professional help to reach the full benefits from correct and useful keyword phrases. (Digital Marketing Institute, 2019c.)

From an SEO point of view, blogs on the company website are nearly a must-have due to two main reasons: firstly, it improves SEO results, meaning more hits into our website. Secondly, a blog can build up the presence of being a thought leader in the industry. At best, the blog will create a cycle of spreading company expertise to the industry and lure in new clients. One should also look into opportunities for guest articles that can be used to link readers back into the company blog or to the company website. In addition to blogs, videos offer various possibilities to engage customers, if not even educate them. Video usually receives positive reactions as it gives face for company brands. Other valuable contents worth consideration are case studies, e-books, white papers, and infographics, to name a few. (Digital Marketing Institute, 2019d.)

4.2 Social Media For Business to Business

Even with the disadvantage of being labor-intensive and the need to plan the created content that captures the target group's attention, social media is not going anywhere. It should be by default, be part of the digital marketing strategy of any company. When social companies use media to direct customers into useful content found, for example, from a company blog, it serves two purposes: it is advocating company solutions to customers and secondly assisting SEO activities. (Digital Marketing Institute, 2019e.)

The time of posting should be aligned with the expected online hours of the target group, and optimal time can be defined by analyzing the users' engagement. After the best times to reach the maximum amount of attention via social media posting are defined, it is wise to schedule postings during the optimal time. Another valuable insight with social media is to look to build up a fan base. For example, when sharing news posting, the company could ask the reader to follow them on LinkedIn or Twitter with the possibility to decline. Whether the reader chooses to follow or not, they should be allowed to continue reading the article with one click, and with the help of cookies, it is possible to define that invitation is only shown once. When sharing articles on a company website newsfeed, companies usually offer a possibility for quick sharing into social media channels. Still, it is wise to limit the option to the main three channels preferred by the readers and the company itself. (Quicksprout, 2019)

Social media should be built to capture target customers' attention with such info as industry tips and news, solutions for the customers' usual obstacles, reference customer stories, updates of the services or products, and video testimonials or links into instructional company made videos. The number one thing to avoid with social media is using it as a tool for direct sales pitches. Instead, the

purpose is to engage, inform and build interest, leading customers to you. (Digital Marketing Institute, 2019f.)

4.3 Pay Per Click Campaigns

Likely one of the best sides of content marketing via social media and SEO is relatively inexpensive compared to potential results and possibly even utterly free given the company can do it in-house. If the actions are not resulting as desired, then pay-per-per-click campaigns can become a useful tool to boost digital marketing. (Quicksprout, 2018.)

Pay-per-click or, in short, PPC is an internet marketing method where the advertiser is paying for each click leading into their desired landing page, meaning that the visits to the advertiser's site are bought instead of earned organically. Advertising via search engines is one of the most used ways to benefit from PPC. The reason for it is the excellent result possibilities via search engine sponsored link ad placement, which means that when searches are made using the advertiser's keyword, their site could be on top of the rankings. For example, in the case of the case company for the thesis, the bid could be on the keyword "FMCG logistics", which could lead to the case company being in the first place of Google search. (Barnes, L, 2020a)

When the ad sending a visitor to the advertiser page is clicked, the advertiser must pay a fee to the search engine, which varies based on the popularity of the used keyword. When the PPC campaign is adjusted correctly, the cost of it will be justified by the results. As an example advertiser can pay 25€ for a click, yet the click in case the business-to-business operator can eventually lead to sales of 100,000€. (Kim.)

The building of a successful PPC campaign begins with the market segment's research and selection of correct keywords, which then must be organized into functioning campaigns within selected ad groups. For optimized conversion rate from the PPC campaign, the landing pages must be adjusted together with the PPC campaign to meet the demands of the search engines, as they are rewarding those advertisers with lower charges per ad clicks, which then leads to better cost-efficiency. (Barnes, L, 2020b)

4.4 Integration And Redefining Targets

To reach optimal cost-effectiveness from both online and offline, marketing must be backed by seamless and exceptional customer service. Behind online marketing, companies still must have people within reach, ready to serve their customers' needs. With the help of digital marketing, the opportunities to reach customers have improved exponentially. It must be noted that the incredible precision of segmentation means that campaign investments are by far more effective than the prior digital era. Another benefit of the digital age is the campaigns made for search engine searches can be jointed together with numerous social media platforms, and even refining targets during campaigns is usually possible. (Digital Marketing Institute, 2019g.)

Google Analytics, which also provides free tools that help advertisers understand how effective their marketing efforts are and how they align with selected targets. Continues fine-tuning can be reached with easily accessed results-based analytics tools, therefore achieving the best level of results with the lowest level of investment into failed initiatives. (Digital Marketing Institute, 2019h.)

5 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Design And Formulation Of The Empirical Research

The short email interview for employees of the case company was the first part of the empirical research. The researcher selected the respondents for the interview from the case company including, a sales manager, two operative directors, and head of communications. The interview had eight questions focusing on their personal views on social media and use of it as one tool for them personally and how they see the case company performing with social media. The answers of the interview is not used for further analyse, however it can be noted that, as expected, social media is already in use by the employees as a research and marketing tool by sharing company accomplishments. The e-mail interview questions were aligned with the online survey made for the thesis by the researcher. The interview questions can be found at the end of the thesis under the appendix.

The second part of the empirical research is the primary source of data, and the collection method used was an online survey. The purpose of the survey was to determine which social media channels professionals prefer to use to support their work-life, which channels their employers are using and what kind of result they have gained via social media usage. This research was not aimed to find out preferred contents within different social media channels, but instead solely the preferred channels.

Since the case company's target customer is a large international company in need of logistics services to fulfill their B-to-B operation. The link to the survey was shared at the researcher's LinkedIn profile and in the Facebook group called Logistic Network Finland. On LinkedIn, 918 people saw the survey's invitation, and the Logistic Network Finland group on Facebook has 1820 members. The survey received answers from 26 individuals between December 9th and December 21st of 2020. The survey was made in English.

The survey included twenty-two multiple-choice questions and two additional questions, one being if the respondent wanted to take part in the lottery of the price reserved for the respondents and the second being if the respondents wanted to add the researcher as their LinkedIn connection. The complete survey form can be found in the appendix.

5.2 Data Collection

The kickoff of the thesis took place in November 2020. After receiving acceptance from the thesis supervisor for the topic, gathering up theoretical information started following by quickly preparing

an interview for the company's employees and the online survey for the primary data collection. Reaching employees for the email interview was relatively easy since the researcher works for the case company. The email interview questions were sent out to respondents on December 7th, 2020.

The online survey was prepared to begin December on Webropol, and the survey link was shared on the researcher's personal LinkedIn profile. In one Facebook group called Logistics Network Finland, the survey was open for answering from December 9th until December 21st. The survey received the answers from 26 professionals, and in the next chapter, the primary data collected via survey is presented with analyses.

5.3 Data Analysis

The data collected in the empirical research phase is analyzed within this chapter. The reader is introduced to the case company's social media activities as the researcher provides the reader with analytics on the case company's social media usage, therefore offering a detailed picture of the current situation.

Insights are collected by benchmarking the case company's social media activities in different channels and this information can be found from section 6.1 RACE model As The Applied Development Method. Survey results and analysis of the findings are shown in the second part of the data analysis chapter.

5.4 Data Analysis Of The Survey

The survey started with four demographics questions of the respondent, gender, age, industry, and seniority level. Out of the 26 respondents, 12 were a woman as in 46%, and 14 were men as in 54%.

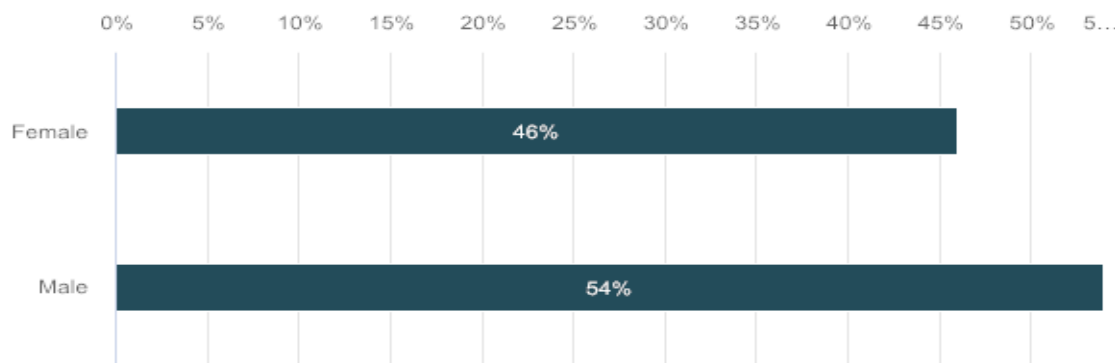


TABLE 1. Distribution of genders, n=26.

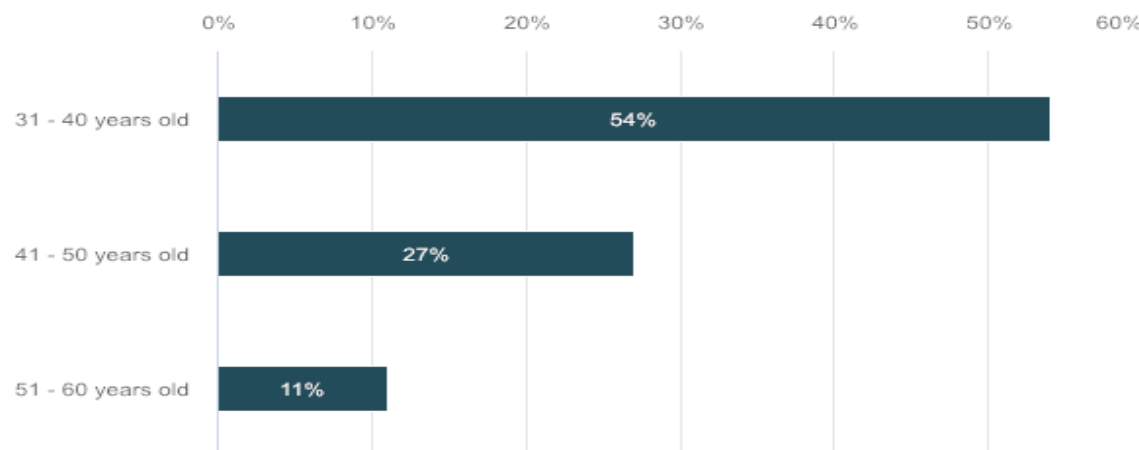


TABLE 2. Age distribution of respondents, n=26.

The most common age groups were 31 to 40 years old with 14 respondents as in 54%, the second one was 41 to 50 years old with seven respondents as in 27%, and the third one was 51 to 60 years old with three respondents as in 11%. Since both females and males took part in the survey also with a representation of different major age groups of work-life, the result of the survey can be seen

as accurate, and both genders are equally included within the respondents. Also, the different age groups represented within the respondents are usually in the working force's decision-making levels.

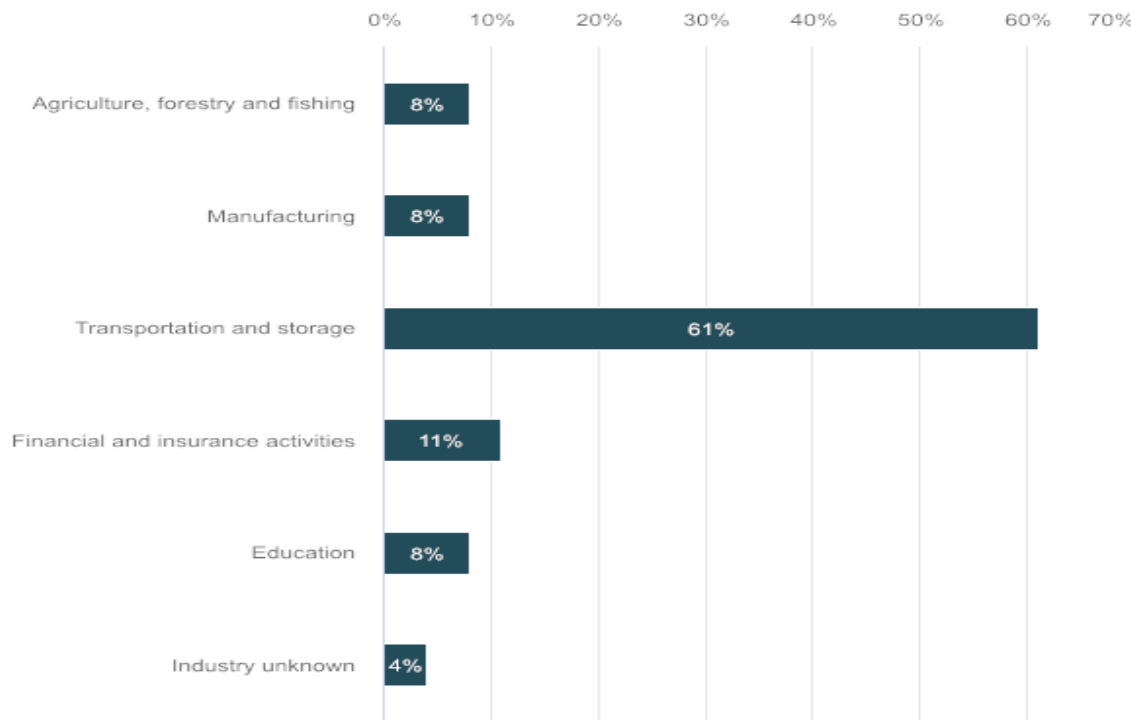


TABLE 3. Distribution of industry among respondents, n=26.

The third and fourth questions were about the industry of the respondents and their level of seniority. Within the industry options, “Transportation and Storage” drew the highest representation number with 16. The second-highest group of respondents was representatives from “Financial and insurance activities” with three and then shared third place with two representatives from each the groups “Agriculture, forestry and fishing”, “Manufacturing” and “Education”.

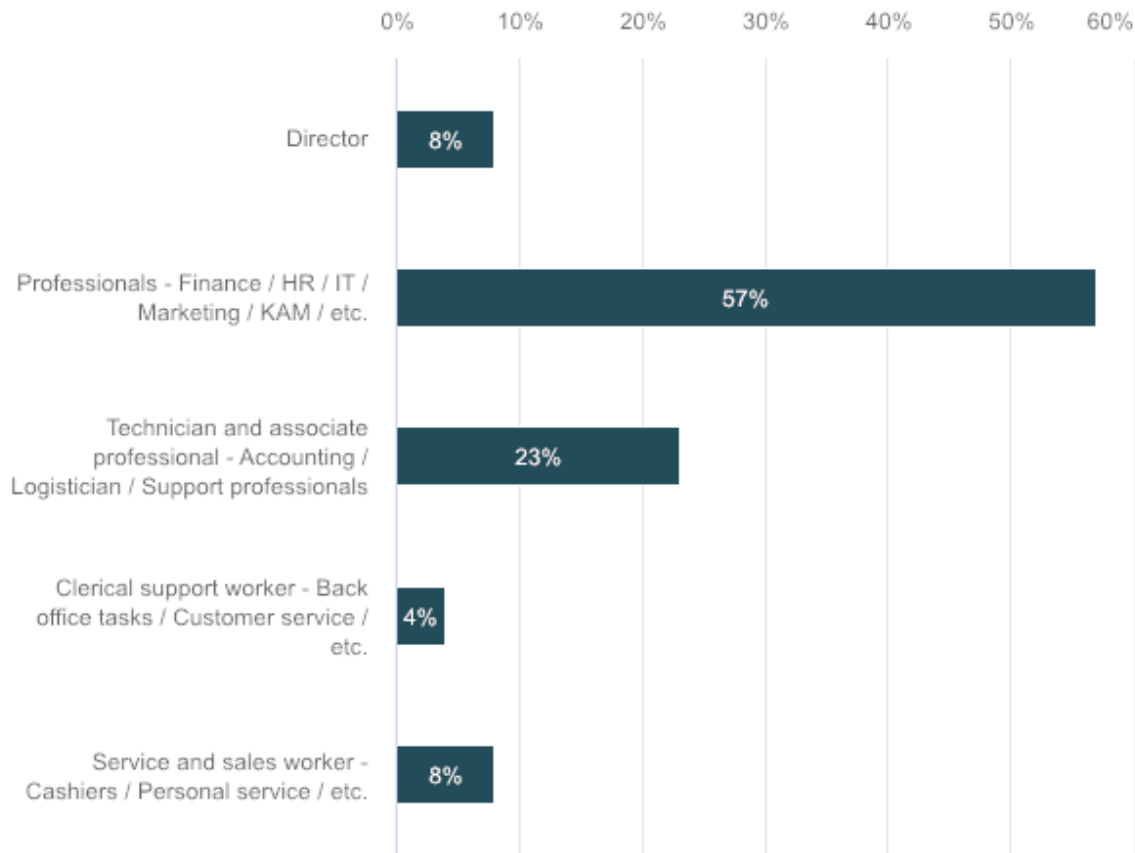


TABLE 4. Distribution of seniority among respondents, n=26.

Within the level of seniority, the largest group was “Professional – Finance / HR / IT / Marketing / KAM /etc. With 15 as in 57% the second most common group was “Technician and associate professionals – Accounting / Logistician / Support professional” with six as in 23% and the third place was shared with two respondents representing each of these groups “Director” and “ Service and sales worker – Cashiers, personal service / etc.”, both have 8% share.

From an industry standpoint, 61% of the respondent were from the industry group of “Transportation and Storage” , and 58% of the respondents were from the seniority level of “Professional – Finance / HR / IT / Marketing / KAM /etc. it can be assumed that the survey has reached the main target group as the usual decision-makers in the b-to-b operations are within “Professional” seniority level.

The fifth question was if the respondent uses social media platforms where 25 answered “yes” and one answered “no”, by answering “no” the respondent was moved directly into the fourth section of

the survey, which had company-related questions. 96% of responders using social media is simply said exclamation point of the importance of social media presence for companies as well.

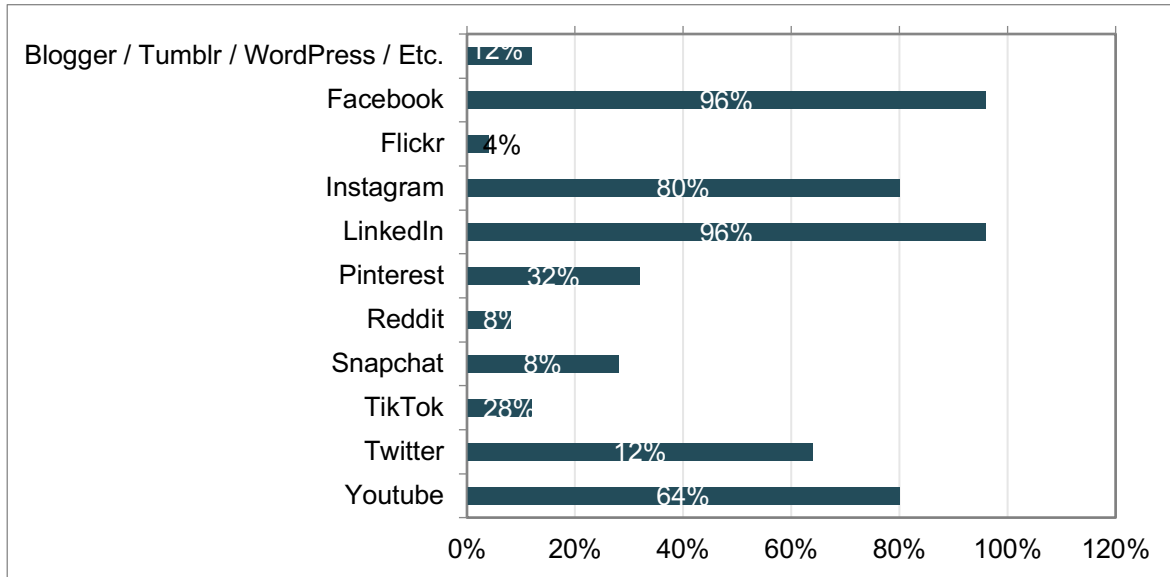


TABLE 5. The social media channels overall used by respondents, n=25.

The second phase of the survey had three additional background questions focusing on the respondent's general social media usage. The sixth question of the survey asked, which social media platforms are you currently using? Respondents were allowed to choose multiple options out of the 13 offered options. The most popular social media platforms among the respondents were LinkedIn and Facebook, with 24 users out of the 25 respondents for this survey using social media as in 96%. The second-place also was tie shared by YouTube and Instagram with 20 users as in 80%. After the top four social media platforms, there were a bit more differences. Twitter had 16 users, as in 64%, followed by Pinterest with eight users as 32%. Followed by Snapchat with seven users as in 28% and then again tied usage rate of three respondents for TikTok and different types blogs such as Blogger, Tumblr, and WordPress. Responses indicate that the case company is already on the right track as they have accounts in all top five social media platforms, and going forward, it just matters how to get the most out of those channels.

The seventh question was if the respondents feel that their private life social media usage brings benefit for their work-life, and 19 gave a positive answer. Four did not see benefits, and two could not define if they received benefits or not. The second phase's last question was if the respondents

have clear distinctions between private life and work-life social media usage. Sixteen responded that they do have a clear difference, seven answered the opposite, and two could not define. From these answers, we can see the importance of social media in today's work-life since 76% felt that their private life social media usage brings benefits for their work-life. A clear indicator that people are always absorbing beneficiary information from social media.

The third phase of the survey, with a maximum total amount of eight questions depending on each respondent's answers, was about the social media platforms used on a personal level for work-life purposes. This phase had 25 respondents as one of the respondents is not using social media personally.

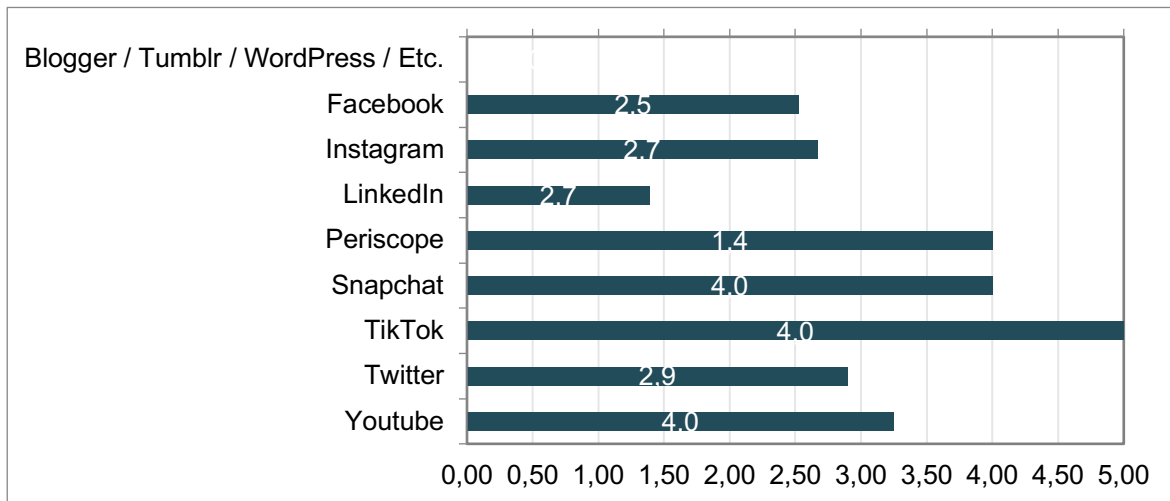


TABLE 6. Which social media channels the respondents view to be the best ones for work-life, n=25.

The ninth question asked which social media platform is best suited for the respondent's work-life purposes. They could choose up to five different platforms, and they were asked the rank them from the most useful one starting from one being the most beneficial. LinkedIn reached first place with an average score of 1,4, and the second place went to Facebook with an average score of 2,5, the third place went to Instagram with an average score of 2,7, the fourth place to Twitter with an average score of 2,9 and the fifth place belongs to YouTube with an average rate of 3,3. LinkedIn was a clear winner as it was chosen the best 87% of the time, Facebook was selected as the best one by 11%, and Instagram was chosen as the best one by 7% of the respondents.

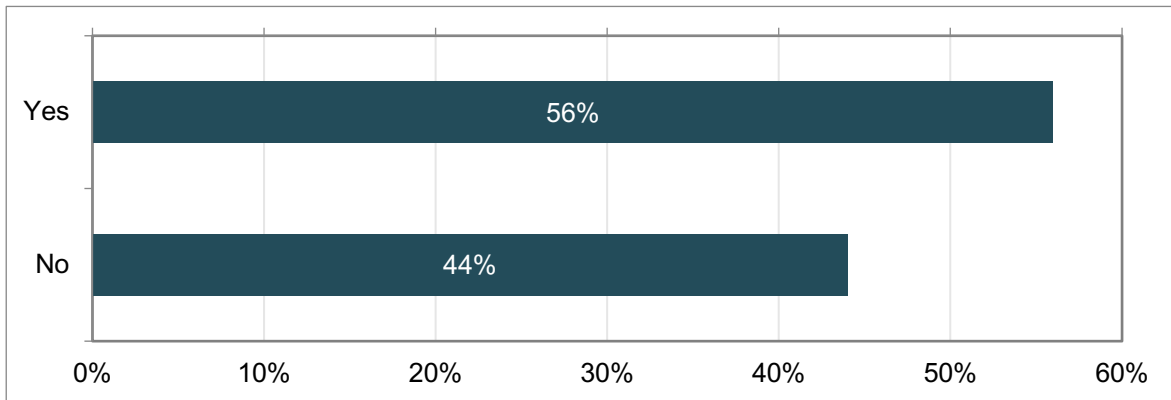


TABLE 7. Whether respondents are following customer on social media, n=25.

The tenth and eleventh questions are combined as with the tenth question. Respondents were asked if they are using social media to follow their current or potential customers with a follow-up question of which social media channels are the best ones for this purpose.

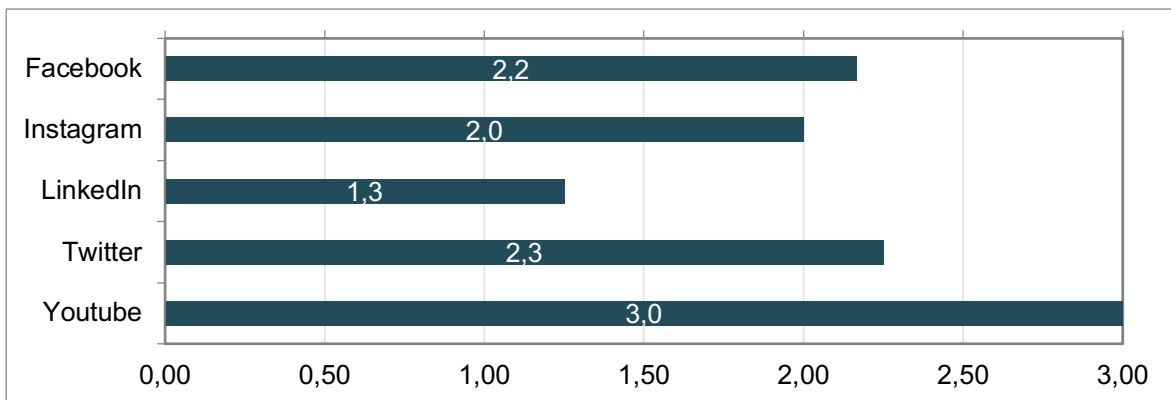


TABLE 8. On which social media channel respondents prefer to follow their customers, n=14.

On the eleventh question, respondents were asked to rank the social media channels into the top three, starting from the most useful one.

Firstly 56% responded that they actively follow current or potential customers, and 44% do not follow their customers on social media. The 56% following their customers answered that the best channels for this purpose are LinkedIn with an average score of 1,3, and the second was Instagram with an average score of 2,0. The third one was Facebook with an average score of 2,2, and the fourth one

was Twitter with an average score of 2,3, and the fifth one clearly behind the others YouTube with an average score of 3.

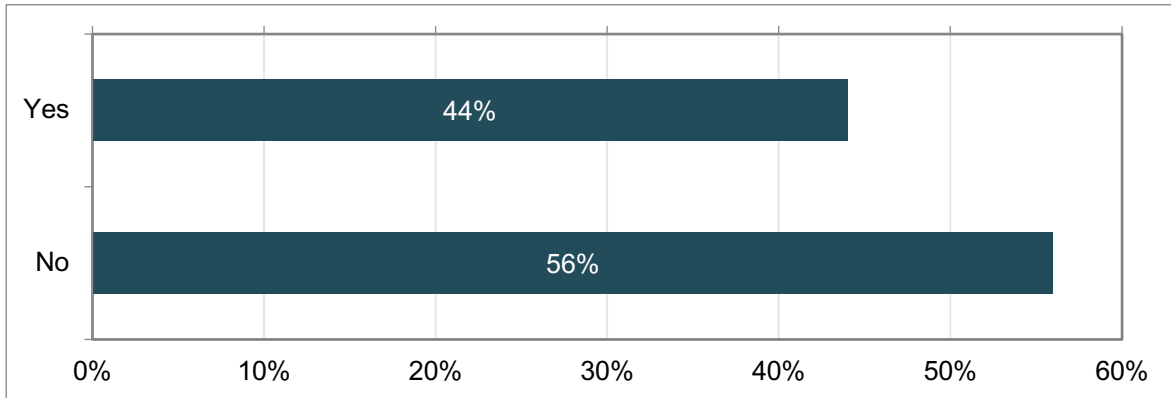


TABLE 9. Do the respondents use social media to follow their service providers, n=25.

As questions 12 and 13, the second question combo was related to a current or potential service provider with the same method as the previous combo. The respondents were asked if they do so or not and which channels they see to be the best fit. On question number 12, 44% responded that they do follow their service providers, and 56% are not following.

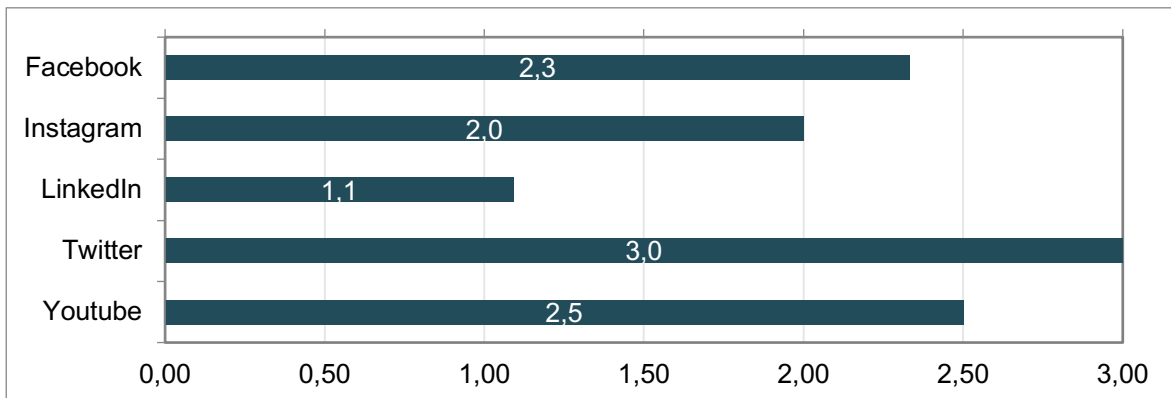


TABLE 10. On which social media channel respondents prefer to follow their service providers, n=11.

On question number 13, from the 44% following their current or potential service providers, they prefer to do so in the foremost in LinkedIn with an average score of 1,1. Secondly in Instagram with

an average score of 2,0, and thirdly in Facebook with an average score of 2,3. Fourthly in YouTube with an average score of 2,5, and in Twitter with an average score of 3.

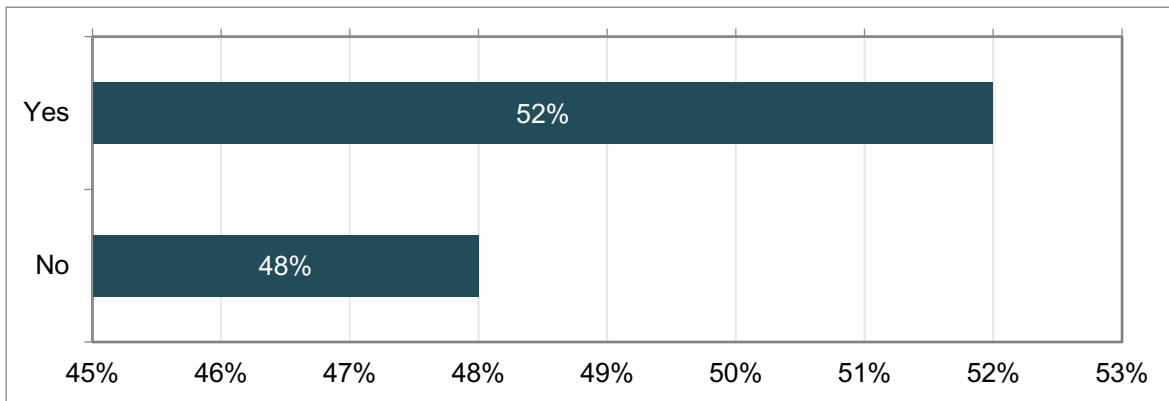


TABLE 11. If the respondents themselves are actively creating content into social media, n=25.

Third question combo as questions 14 and 15 was whether the respondents themselves create work-related content into social media and, if so, which channels are their chosen top three. 52% of the respondent answered that they are actively creating content into social media, and the remaining 48% are not creating content into any of the social media channels.

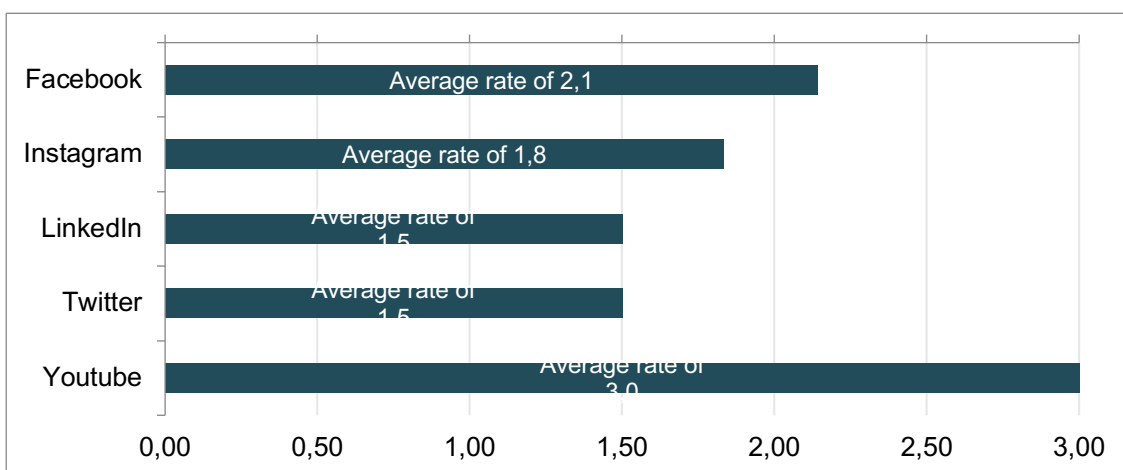


TABLE 12. Into which social media channel the respondents prefer to create content, n=13.

The 52% of respondents creating work-related social media content prefer to use Twitter or LinkedIn, with both having an average score of 1,5. Followed by Instagram with an average score of 1,8, third place goes for Facebook with an average score of 2,1, and on the last slot is YouTube with an average score of 3. Surprisingly Twitter sours to top as a favorite social media channel for creating work-related content, yet being in the other end of the spectrum for following customers or service providers. Even with small sample group popularity of Twitter is impressive. One could say that ease of use and the savvy business image of Twitter makes it an appealing platform for creating content. Also, Twitter might be more easily seen as a channel for discussion than a just platform for posting information.

The last two questions for this phase was question number 16, what kind of benefits respondents has received via use of social and question 17, as simple yes or no question whether the employer of the respondent is using social media.

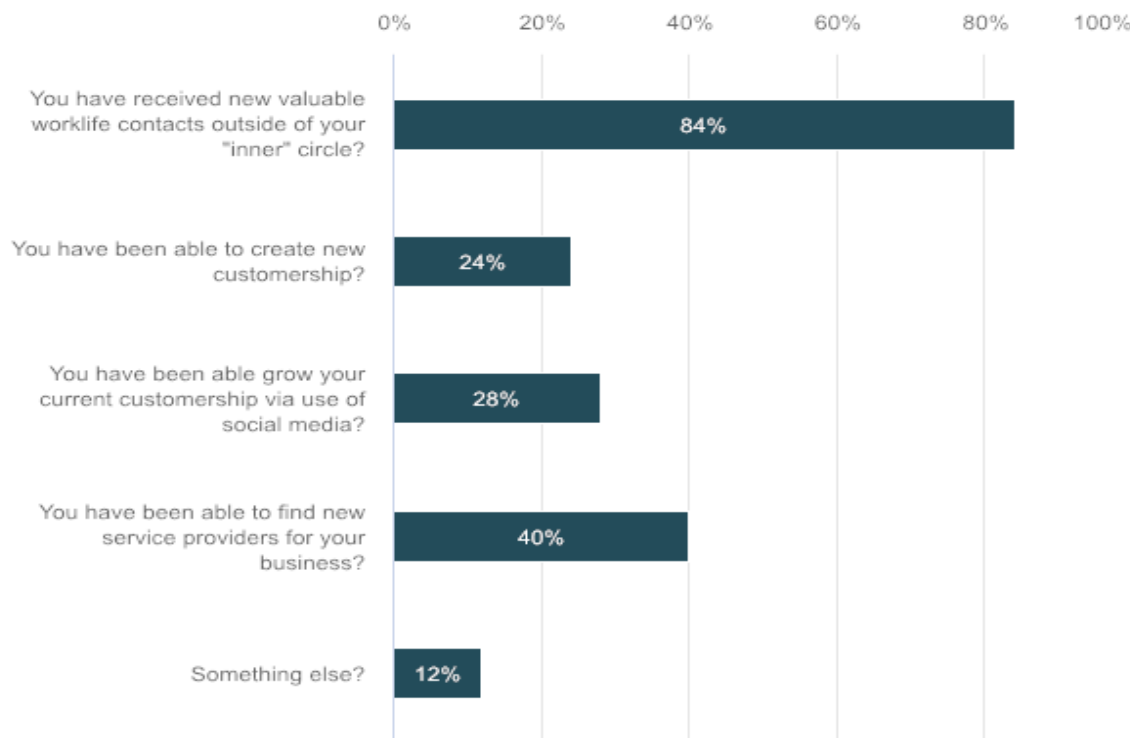


TABLE 13. Benefits from using social media, n=25.

Here 84% have received valuable work-life contacts for themselves via social media activities, which is definitely a high enough percentage justifying social media usage for professional benefits

personally. 24% have created entirely new customership via social media, and even 28% have been able to build up current customership via their social media presence. Both percentages definitely encourage one to be active in social media, especially if one has any sales responsibilities. Even though on earlier stage 56% of the survey respondents stated they do not follow current or potential service providers, yet 40% of the whole respondent group said that they have found new service providers via social media, which definitely gives reasons for the case company to be active with their social media channels as 61% of respondents for this survey were from transportation and storage sector.

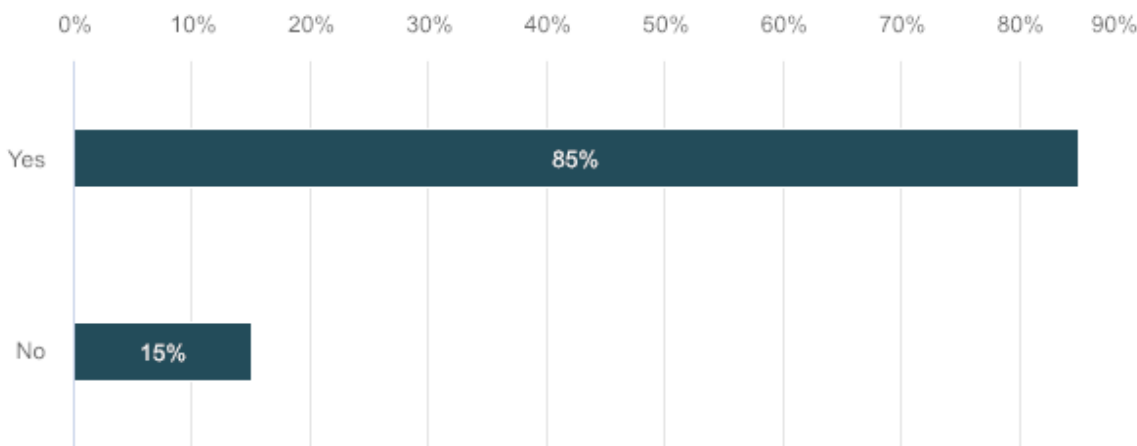


TABLE 14. Whether the employer of respondent is actively using social media, n=26.

Here 22 responded that their employer is actively using social media on a company level, which means that the last phase of the survey has an answer from 22 respondents indicating the use of social media being popular for companies..

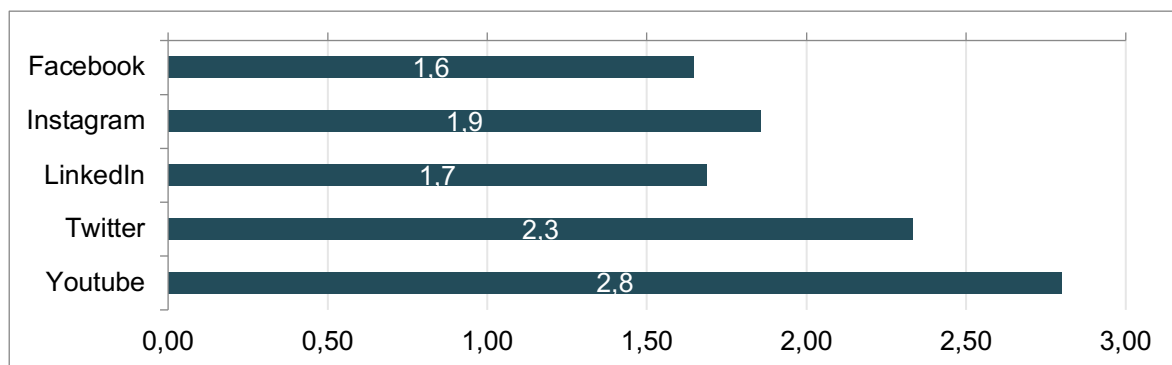


TABLE 15. Which social media channels are best suited for the companies, n=22.

With question number 18, the respondents were asked which of the social media channels they see as the best channels for their employer or company. Slight surprise with the results here as in previous phases, LinkedIn has topped quite clearly as the most popular social media channel for following customers or service providers. Yet, respondents now gave the highest rating for Facebook, yet the top three remained unchanged from the previous phases. This finding is exciting and perhaps could be explained by the image of Facebook being the cheapest option due to the broad reach of social media marketing. In contrast, LinkedIn is generally thought to be a much more expensive channel with a smaller audience. Still, it should be remembered that the respondents of this survey are the target group for the case company. As seen from the results, respondents prefer to follow their customers or service providers in LinkedIn, which indicates that cost and result efficiency would likely be better with LinkedIn than with Facebook.

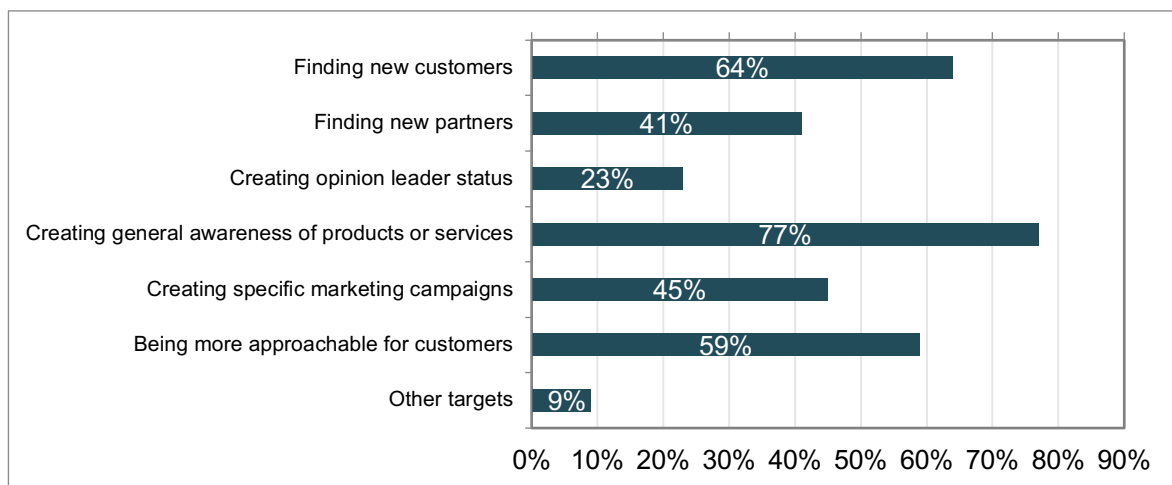


TABLE 16. The main targets of the respondent employer with social media, n=22.

Question 19 of the survey asked the primary targets for using social media for the respondents' employer, and multiple options could be selected without ranking them. The most selected target with 77% was creating general awareness of products or services followed by finding new customers with 64% and then being more approachable for customers with 59%. Creating specific marketing campaigns was chosen by 45% and finding new partners by 41% of the respondents as their employers' social media targets. From these results, it can be speculated that firstly companies are sharing general information about themselves just to remind the market that they exist. Secondly,

companies based on the respondents use social media as a searching tool for new potential customers and only thirdly being more approachable for customers.

The 23% with the option of creating opinion leader status is perhaps due to wording issues with the option. If the word opinion had been replaced by product or service, it could have received more selections as in personal levels opinion leader status is usually highly appreciated in social media. Also, from the results, it can be questioned why companies are not foremost looking to be more approachable for their customer rather than sharing general newsletters. When evaluating the social media activities of the case company, the results of the survey are partly align with their real-life actions as most shared content can be seen to serve the purpose of creating general awareness, social media is used as a search tool, and it likely has an idea of being more approachable, but it lacks real interactivity in social media.

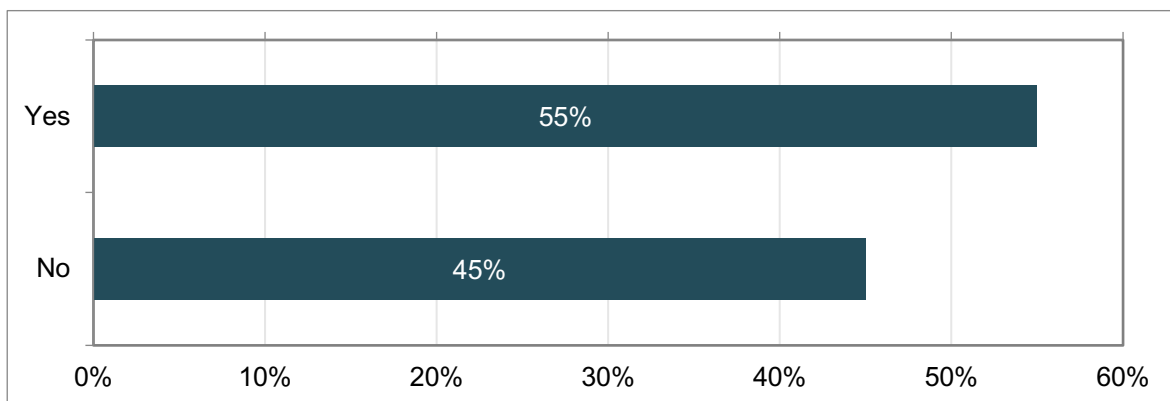


TABLE 17. Has the employers of the respondents received new customers via social media, n=22.

On question number 20, 55% believed that their employer had received new customers via social media activities during the past year, which is again a positive reason for companies' social media usage. Even with 45% of companies not being able to create actual sales during the past year, they most likely have been able to develop other positive outcomes, including some of the options highlighted in question 18.

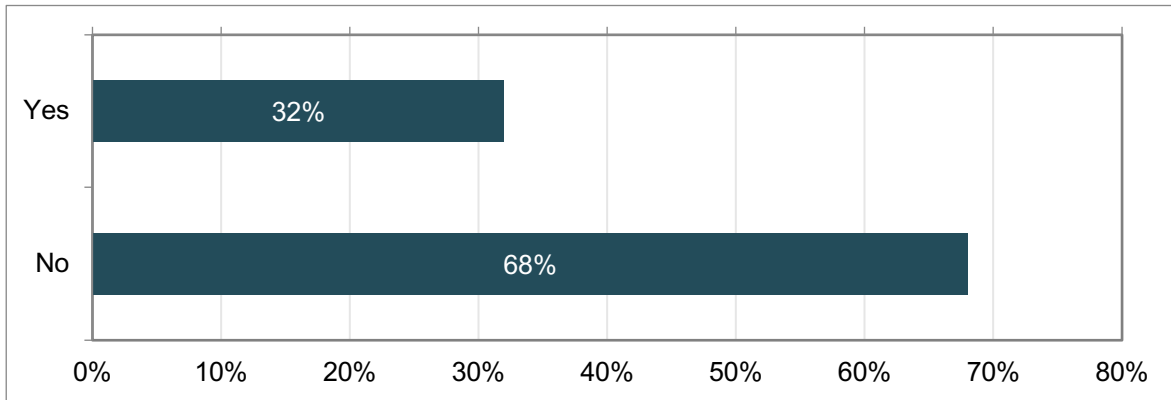


TABLE 18. Has the employers of the respondents received new partners via social media, n=22.

With question number 21, respondents were asked if their employer had been able to find new service providers via social media. Only 32% identified new providers to be found by social media, and 68% answered no. The reason for this result could be that companies are more focusing on finding new customers via social media rather than service providers, which is also what service providers are looking to do. Perhaps the buyer side is unaware of how the providers have chosen to offer their services to the buyer. Based on this data, as the case company is a service provider, they must be very active to obtain new customers rather than wait for the target customer to find them.

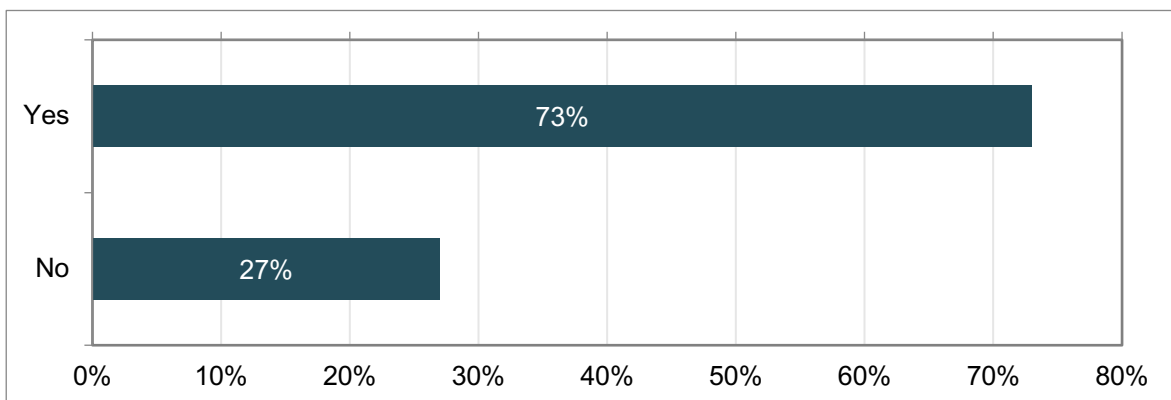


TABLE 19. Are the respondents satisfied on their employer social media activities, n=22.

Question number 22 asked whether the respondents are satisfied with their employer's social media activities with a yes or no method. An optional open field was also offered for short reasoning on

their chosen answer. The vast majority of the respondents are satisfied with their employer's social media, as 73% answered yes and 27% answered no. Valuable guidelines can be created for some of the significant issues of companies' social media activities, especially from the open field reasoning's of the 27%, as the respondents had written down the following reasons for answering "no".

"Our company is over-posting, and thus not getting attention to the posting", "The use should be more structural and well planned (more "content valuable" posts, news and updates)" and "Unprofessional and not well planned. We should have a social media pro."

The reasoning of respondents behind answering "no" highlights why some companies receive social media benefits and some do not. Companies with low results often overlook the value of the structure, planning, content, and consistency with their social media actions at best, leading to mediocre results. On the other on reasoning's for the 73% of satisfied respondents included such statements as:

"Active content producing on different platforms", "It's the best way to share the news and development stories to various contacts very easily" and "Social media is a good and easy way to find new customers and partners."

These reasons, on the other hand, highlight why some companies do receive great result with the help of active use of different social media channels.

5.5 Recap Of The Data Analysis Findings

The respondents' total number was 26, and the number of respondents varies between segments and questions depending on the answers. The gender ratio between respondents nearly equal as 12 were females and 14 were males, the biggest age group was 31-40 year old with slightly over 50% share. Industry-wise, Transportation and warehousing was the most common industry among respondents with just over 60% and from a seniority point of view "Professional – Finance / HR / IT / Marketing / KAM /etc." was the most common level of seniority with over 50% of respondents belonging into this group. On this survey, 25 respondents answered using social media channels in their private life, and the most common channels based on the survey were Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube.

Thus one respondent answered that he or she does not use social media. The second part of the survey had a maximum of 25 respondents on each question. A positive sign within the answer was that 19 out of 25 respondents replied that their private life social media usage has positive effects on their work-life, indicating that potential customers or partners can be reached indirectly via social

activities. Another positive sign from the answers on this survey was that 16 replied that they clearly distinguish between work-life social media usage and private life social media usage. The number of respondents with no apparent difference between work-life social media usage and personal life social media usage was the significantly lower portion of respondents as only seven replied that they do not have such boundaries.

The third part of the survey focused on seeking information on which social media channels the respondents feel to be the best suited to serve their work-life needs. Based on the answers, the respondents felt that the best channels to follow their current or potential customers or service providers were LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram. Slightly over half of the respondents use social media channels to track their current or potential customers. Almost half of the respondents use social media channels to follow their current or potential service providers. Slightly over half of the respondents answered that they are actively creating work-life content into social media. When asked which channels they prefer to use, Twitter surprisingly received the highest rating alongside LinkedIn, while following customers or service Twitter ranked into the bottom end of options. As the last question of social media usage for work-life purposes, the respondents were asked about social media benefits. The expansion of contacts was the number one outcome, followed by finding new service providers. Third, respondents have been able to grow their current customership via social media.

The fourth and last part of the survey focused on the social media activities on the employers of the respondents where the same social media channels LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram ruled as the most useful ones. Based on respondents' answers, the top three targets for their employer's social media activities are to create a general awareness of their products or services, find new customers, and, thirdly, become more approachable for their customers. Over half of the respondents replied that their employer had obtained new customers via social media in the past year. In contrast, only one-third believed that their employer had been able to get new service providers via social media.

Nearly three out of four respondents replied being satisfied with their employer's social media activities, which means that roughly one-third are dissatisfied. For this "yes" and "no" question, the respondents were allowed to provide a short explanation behind his / hers answer, which provides some valuable information. Some of the respondents with the answer "no" left these comments as a reason for their response.

"Our company is over-posting, and thus not getting attention to the posting", "The use should be more structural and well planned (more "content valuable" posts, news and updates)" and "Unprofessional and not well planned. We should have a social media pro".

Some of the respondents with the answer "yes" left these comments as a reason for their response.

"Active content producing on different platforms", "It's the best way to share the news and development stories to various contacts very easily" and "Social media is a good and easy way to find new customers and partners."

Overall, based on the findings from this survey, social media has its place in marketing and information search tool in the business-to-business world as most people are using social media within their private life and their work-life. Generally, the respondents reported positive outcomes on a personal level and on an employer level as well, with an expansion of contacts, new customers, and new partners via social media.

6 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

6.1 RACE model As The Applied Development Method

As the building block for digital and social media marketing plan for the case company the researcher has chosen to use the Reach-Act-Convert-Engage planning model, known as RACE-model. Smart Insight has developed RACE-model and it aims increase sales throughout the RACE funnel. (Chaffey & Hanlon 2019 2019, 52a.)

The thesis development part mainly focuses on introducing the RACE planning for the reader and clarifying its benefits to the case company when applying their digital marketing planning according to the RACE model, while including the social media research made for the thesis. The thesis does not aim to make full RACE planning for the case company.

RACE is built on four phases aiming at businesses to engage with the customers. Each of the phases mirrors the customer path from the awareness stage, leading into engagement via act and conversion stage in the middle. (Eriksen-Coats, F.a) However, before applying the RACE model, the marketer must plan their general strategy for social and digital marketing. The planning should consist of clear objectivities, the creation of overall strategy, and deciding evaluation metrics to keep track of results. (Chaffey & Hanlon 2019, 52b.)

REACH. Building awareness of the company brand and guiding inbound traffic to the company portals amongst the target group is the primary target with the first phase. (Eriksen-Coats, F.b)

ACT. The creators of the RACE model treat act as shorting of interaction, which primary objectivity of the second stage. The aim is to encourage the potential customer to reach towards the marketer or, on the other hand, identify the possibility to act on and reach into the customer who has landed into company social media or website. The act, within business-to-business world can be request more details of customer needs in order to build unique proposal. The act, can be even more straightforward such as potential customer signing in for company news letter or clicking on “follow” in social media. This stage can be seen as the ice-breaker stage possibly leading into convert. (Eriksen-Coats, F.c)



FIGURE 2. The RACE funnel (Chaffey, D. 2020, 5.)

CONVERT. Converting stage is the RACE model phase where the first two phases culminate into success and the potential customer is converted into an actual customer. The conversion phase is defining the success rate of online actions with the conversion percentage. (Eriksen-Coats, F.d)

ENGAGE. The last stage is reserved for developing the relationship's longevity with the customers, including the first-timers and older customers. Within the engagement phase, the aim to build personified and repeated model of the previous reach, act, and convert stages leading to repeated conversions. (Eriksen-Coats, F.e)

The Smart Insights has defined six pillars for effectiveness designed to ease the path when using their RACE planning model. The six pillars must be checked at the end of each stage, and the pillars have unique questions within each pillar for each stage. The pillars' primary goal is to guide the user

of the RACE model to take into consideration all critical components of successful digital marketing planning increasing the effectiveness of the actions. (Chaffey, D. 2020, 4a.) Below is the table of the six pillars illustrating the topics within each of the pillars.

Planning and Governance	Goals and Measurement	Media	Content	Experience	Conversational Messaging
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic initiatives • Marketing integration • Digital transformation • Business and revenue models • Budgets and ROI • Systems, structures and processes • Resources and skills • Marketing technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forecasts • Digital KPIs • Digital dashboards • Customer profiles • Attribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid media • Owned media • Earned media • Offline/online integration • Always-on and campaign investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content marketing strategy • Top-of-funnel (TOFU) • Middle-of-funnel (MOFU) • Bottom-of-funnel (BOFU) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website customer journeys • Landing pages • Multichannel path to purchase • Conversion Rate Optimization • Personalization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email marketing • Mobile messaging • Human-assisted chat • Automation and CRM

TABLE 20. The six of pillars of digital marketing. (Chaffey, D. 2020, 4b.)

6.2 Planning Phase Of Digital And Social Media

First act of planning is to define the current situation including identification of the possible disadvantages, secondly market understandings in addition knowledge of the competition is needed. The primary goal of the first two tasks is the enable the company to set clearer targets to be reached with ways to measure the result of regarding those targets. The success factors according to Dr. Chaffey in his Digital Marketing Strategy Planning Template made in 2020 are:

- *Quantified opportunities based on benchmarking competitor activity*
- *Clearly defined goals and objectives*
- *A data-driven process through customized analytics and KPI dashboards*
- *A defined strategy with prioritized investments in digital marketing*
- *Defined customer personas and online value propositions (Chaffey, D. 2020, 6a.)*

To define the current status of the case company, the researcher conducted benchmarking of the case company's social media usage and discovered that the case company is already using or at least has a company account in Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube.

The case company is offering full logistics service solutions for their target companies operating in FMCG-field, recycling, or in the field of construction. Target customers are large companies with international operations needing logistics services for a high volume of goods. The essential services can include warehousing, co-pack, and transportations bundled into one service or separate parts of the three. The main target segment for the digital and social media activities for the case company are the top level logistics decision makers of big international FMCG, recycling, constructions and fuel logistics customers. Secondly targets are the top-level decision makers of potential logistics service partners and also the personnel taking care of the daily operative tasks.

The case company has indicated that they want to increase their marketing activities and build up brand recognition among their target customers and potential new partners, especially now that company is looking to expand their operations further out from the home market. The case company has acknowledged that one of the better and most cost-effective means of reaching these goals is improved digital and social media activities.

In Facebook, the case company has had a company page since 2015, and it has over 8600 followers and over 8500 likes for the company profile. The page consists of basic company info in Danish with address, phone number, and the possibility to contact the company by email. The case company shares business news, job postings, personnel anniversaries, and employee profiles on its Facebook page. The case company is using pictures, texts, and videos in their shared content. The postings usually gather up around 50 to 150 likes and from zero to fifteen shares. A considerable portion of the likes and followers are either current or ex-employees of the case company.

Instagram is being used by the case company and the company currently in February 2021 has around 410 followers on their Instagram account. The case company profile description is written in Danish and includes a link to the company website. So far the case company has made 26 posts on Instagram where the number of likes varies between four to sixty. Part of the company posts are short video clips that have gathered views from 130 to 512. The case company is also using Instagram stories where they mainly share pictures for example taken by the case company drivers around the Nordic regions. The postings made by the case company do not create any conversation, which could be leveraged into sales or to new partnerships.

The case company uses LinkedIn, and it has almost 5600 followers in LinkedIn where the company profile description is in Danish as in Facebook. The company posts are in Danish or in English. The

shared content in LinkedIn is a mixture of company news, press releases, employee profiles, and open vacancies, yet available vacancies cannot be applied directly via LinkedIn. The content often includes pictures or videos and links into a more extended version or full version at the company website. The company posts on LinkedIn usually gather around 50 to 200 likes and few comments. Unfortunately, there is no real conversation in the comments field, and the company has not answered direct questions made by the public related to their posts.

Twitter account was activated in 2010 for the case company. The company has basically zero Twitter activity as they are following zero individual or companies, has 22 followers of their own, and has made zero tweets during the ten years in Twitter. The case company profile states in Danish that the company's account shares news and has a link to the company website.

YouTube account has been active since November 10th of 2016, the case company has slightly over 100 subscribers, and they have shared 41 videos since opening the YouTube account. The range of views for the shared videos is quite significant as the one with the lowest number of views has ten views, and the most viewed one, promoting student jobs opportunities at the case company, has been watched roughly 43,000 times. The total number of views for the 41 videos shared by the case company before January 8th of 2021 is 78191 views, giving an average of 1907 views per shared video. Yet, the average is very misleading since one video alone has roughly 55% of the views. None of the videos has any comments, and therefore there is no conversation building up around the videos. The videos on YouTube are showcasing company accomplishments with their customers, employee profiles of different types of tasks within the case company, and company profile of the case company. The description in YouTube is in English and direct links to the company website, company Facebook profile, and company LinkedIn profile.

The researcher also conducted an SEO audit of the case company via SEO service provider Semrush.

Semrush is a company launched in 2008 to make online competition transparent and measurable. Within nine years of operation, Semrush has gained the trust of the world's leading companies such as Amazon, Disney, and Hewlett Packard, to name a few of their reference customers. Semrush enables companies, for example, to improve SEO results, keep track of website performance, follow brand reputation, improve keyword ranking results, and many more valuable aspects of digital marketing. (Ahmed, R. 2017.)

The case company website received an SEO score of 79% out of 100%. Compared to a few of the biggest companies in logistics, such as DHL, DSV, and DB Schenker, the score of the case company falls behind. The scores via Semrush check-up for DHL was 86%, DSV 81 %, and Schenker's score

was 80% when 100 pages on each site were crawled on 13th February 2021. With the same company website audit, it was identified that the case company the site performance fall behind the biggest logistics companies due to slow load speed of company website. As average was 2.55 sec while the fastest average load speed was 0,4 sec DHL website. The audit also has to be noted that the case company website had 862 warnings of medium severity. Six hundred seventy-five warnings are due to images without alt attributes, 80 pages had a low text-html ratio, and the thirdly 78 issues with un-minified JavaScript and CSS files.

In addition, in the case will accept to use the RACE planning model they should conduct SWOT and or TOWS analyses regarding digital and social media marketing. Lastly, within the planning phase the case company must define their own SMART-goals and objectives. (Chaffey, D. 2020, 6b.)

SWOT-analyse model is used to define Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. The first two aspects of the SWOT-analyse are internal, therefore controllable within the company itself. The latter two aspects are externals and therefore not so easily controllable for the company itself. However, acknowledging them means that they give themselves the possibility to benefit from the Opportunities and, also, the possibility to prepare for the Threats. In essence, the primary idea is to list the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats into logical listing most commonly presented in a two-by-two grid. (Parsons, N, 2021.)

TOWS-analyse is an extension of SWOT-analyse, where the objectivity is to define Threats, Opportunities, Weaknesses, and Strengths. However, within the TOWS-analyse model, each topic is examined from the strength and weakness point of view. The TOWS-analyse primary target is to define a specific strategy to gain from Strength-Opportunities and, on the other hand, how to defeat the Weakness-Opportunities. Naturally, it is needed to repeat the same methodology to create a unique strategy to reach the best possible result from the Strength-Threats and Weakness-Threats aspects. (Woodruff, J. 2019.)

SMART is shortening of the words: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and time-bound. The SMART model aims to ensure that the desired targets are realistic, possible to reach with defined ways to measure the received results within a variable period. (Boogaard, K. 2020.)

6.3 Reaching Phase Of Digital Marketing And Social Media Marketing

The recommended social media channels to be used by the case company in the first place are selected based on the results from the research made for the thesis. Therefore, the selected channels are LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook, which are the most used based on the research

answers. Also, due to the Semrush audit result, the researcher suggests development points on the case company website, including the use of SEO accordingly.

Firstly, the researcher advises the case company to switch their company description language from Danish to English on all currently used social media platforms. The company has outgrown from being a local Danish company into an international company. More so, all of the potential primary customers or partners are non-Danish. Secondly, the case company must be available and interacting with their followers in all used social media channels.

For example, on Instagram, the smallest influencers tiers are nano with 1000 to 10,000 followers and micro tier is from 10,000 to 50,000 followers, and on YouTube, the same tier requirements are 1000 to 10,000 for nano and micro 10,000 to 25,000 followers. (Chaffey, D. 2021, 14.) As seen from the researcher's benchmarking, the case company does not even reach the nano tier within Instagram (410 followers) or YouTube (100 followers). The case company should make a clear target for the next 12 month period to reach the nano tier. In the next 24 month period, the target should be to reach the higher ends of the micro tier among all of the main social media channels for the case company, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

The approach must be aligned according to the social platform used to increase the number of followers in social media channels. However, the general principle within all social media channels is alike. For example, when using LinkedIn, the posting title has increased value due to the userbase being mostly professional who are likely even more selective on the topics to click for reading. In LinkedIn, a great title approach is the "why" or "how" angle with numeric value preposition as the arrowhead, for example, with the case company, an excellent title for the LinkedIn article could be "How to reduce the carbon footprint of cross-border transportations by 25%". (Alp, P. 2020a.)

Within LinkedIn or any other social media channels, the basics of gaining more followers remain to be same:

1. The created content must be original and aligned with the company story, values, and vision, therefore expressing the company's unique voice.
2. The content must be understandable as the goal is to build a bridge for communication. Therefore the content must be logical and clear.
3. Create content following the first rules regular basis and take advantage of the analytic tools to follow what kind of content reaches the target group and convert them into landing pages.

4. Embrace the company's employees and encourage them to share company content and social media channels to create a greater spread. (Alp, P. 2020b.)

Due to the SEO result of the Semrush audit, the researcher recommends the case company take a closer look at the company website and how to improve it for better results from the Act stage.

Term alt attribute is a text version of an image displayed on the website given the image is unavailable, or the visitor prefers the text version instead of the image. Common terminological misuse is to mix alt attribute with alt text. The difference is that the alt text is the actual within alt attribute. Below an example of an alt attribute in HTML for an imaginary glass of red wine on a table where alt text specified within the alt attribute:

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Alt attributes are beneficial for three main purposes; firstly alt attributes will enable visually impaired visitors to better understand the website. Secondly, they help search engines identify the website's content quicker and more easily, and the third main purpose is marketing. Google image search gets over billion page views daily, and optimized alt attributes will uplift images into a higher level of image searches, which means expanding brand awareness. (RavenTools, 2021.)

The second central pain point with the case company website was that 80 pages out of 100 had a low text HTML ratio, which means that those pages have more embedded scripts, styles, and code than actual content for visitors to consume. The Semrush audit is triggered when the text to HTML is 10% or less.

The optimal text HTML ratio is debatable, but as guideline ratio from 25% to 70% of visible text versus code is seen as ideal. The rate itself is not an SEO ranking signal, yet several determinants behind it are. A higher text ratio often will improve search engine results by giving more keywords for the search, and a lesser amount of code will improve the loading speed of the page, which is a direct ranking factor. Quicker page load speed will then improve user experience, a ranking factor for search engines like Google. (van Haasteren, 2021.)

The arrowhead for company website optimizing must always be an improvement of user experience. In case of a low text to HTML ratio, one of the best ways to improve it is placing straightforward text content into the website. Additionally, remove all unnecessary elements and all non-visible text except alt attributes, reducing the page's size altogether to keep each page under 300 kilobyte. The website is then built for people making it more understandable and more easily readable, making it more valuable in search engines' eyes. (Demaria, B. 2020.)

The third significant warning that rose up from SEO auditing the case company website was 78 issues with un-minified JavaScript and CSS files. This is an issue that directly links with increased page load time, leading to a lower user experience level, which leads to inadequate search engine results. The difference with the average page load speed with the case company 2,55 sec versus 0,04 sec with the DHL website is unbearable.

Minimizing code and script files inserted into web pages is one of the main ways to decrease bandwidth usage and virtually load times, increasing user experience. Developers usually create HTML, CSS, and JavaScript files to be easily readable for themselves and others who might at a later point alter the data. This means that the code will include internal comments, extra spacing, and variable solutions. All of the extras are needed in the website development, but those elements hinder the website's usability in a live situation. Therefore all non-essential spaces and commentary must be deleted from the code to minimize file sizes. The properly minified file will provide the same functionality while increasing load speed and decreasing bandwidth usage. At best, file sizes can be reduced up to 60% of the original version. (Imperva, 2020.) Below the six pillars of effective digital marketing to be check for the reach stage.


REACH 		
6 Pillars of Digital Success	Audit of current capabilities <i>Check the box for the activities you have in place.</i>	Strategic initiatives and actions <i>For the boxes that are unchecked, write your planned action in the space below</i>
1. Planning and governance	<input type="checkbox"/> Have you created an acquisition budget and plan? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you defined your key brand messages, focussing on growing audience awareness, familiarity and purchase intent? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you performed keyword research to find areas of strength and opportunity - both paid and organic?	
2. Goals and measurement	<input type="checkbox"/> Do you have a conversion-based forecast model for media ROI? * <input type="checkbox"/> Has a keyphrase gap analysis been created? * <input type="checkbox"/> Have you created segments and goals in Google Analytics?	
3. Media	<input type="checkbox"/> Is your organic and paid search strategy (inc Ads display network) defined? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you reviewed your paid media prospecting options (e.g. paid social and programmatic)? <input type="checkbox"/> Has the partner and influencer marketing potential been explored?	
4. Content	<input type="checkbox"/> Is your TOFU content optimized and attracting visits through organic search social media? <input type="checkbox"/> Does your content address your audience's needs better than the competition?	
5. Experience	<input type="checkbox"/> Is your technical SEO and organic social sharing integrated into the site to effectively attract inbound visits? <input type="checkbox"/> Has your website been speed benchmarked to be effective on mobile?	
6. Conversational messaging	<input type="checkbox"/> Has investment been made in permission-based publisher/event organizer email campaigns? <input type="checkbox"/> Are you co-marketing with complementary list owners using email marketing? <input type="checkbox"/> Are you using social selling, outreach and account-based marketing for ABM? *	
* Most needed in larger businesses		

TABLE 21. The RACE planning checklist for the reach phase. (Chaffey, D. 2020, 9.)

6.4 Act Phase of Digital And Social Media Marketing

The RACE model's Act is a synonym for interact, which is the driving force behind this stage following the reaching stage. The Key Performance Indicators for the Act stage are conversion to leads, the longevity of website visits, and the volume of content shares, likes, and comments. The Act stage's critical aspect is to build some form of interaction with the target group that can be tracked, evaluated, and later on used for converting the customer from potential into an existing customer or from existing one into repeatable. (Luenendonk, M. 2019)

To get the best possible result from the Act stage, the marketer must within the planning and reach stages ensure that all website enhancement needs are fulfilled therefore increasing the level of user experience. Also, optimizing landing pages must be handled and a transparent ranking model created to define the leads' value during the Act stage. Since, within the Act stage, the primary focus is on building interest, all of the actions used should be guided by the target of inspiring conversation rather than direct conversion (Chaffey, D. 2020, 10.)

On the page 24 of an article,¹⁰ Business-to-business marketing mistakes, the author Jill Quick shares her interview of Dana DiTomaso, who states the following:


“A lot of social media is an old medium slapped onto a new product, it is a digital billboard.”

Ms. DiTomaso also makes note that no one waking up into new day says

“I can’t wait to engage with my favourite brand on Facebook!”

Something to be identified and to remembered with digital and social media marketing and to use digital and social media for what it is created for, interacting with each other.

Below the six pillars of effective digital marketing to be check for the act stage.

ACT 

6 Pillars of Digital Success	Audit of current capabilities <i>Check the box for the activities you have in place.</i>	Strategic initiatives and actions <i>For the boxes that are unchecked, write your planned action in the space below</i>
1. Planning and governance	<input type="checkbox"/> Do you have a defined content marketing strategy? <input type="checkbox"/> Have your interactions with customers been mapped across the entire path-to-purchase?	
2. Goals and measurement	<input type="checkbox"/> Do you have a method of measuring the conversion rate for different types of leads or subscribers? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have a method of assessing the quality of visitors to your website (e.g. lead profiling and grading)?	
3. Media	<input type="checkbox"/> Have you reviewed the percentage of interaction across desktop and mobile devices and the customer journey effectiveness? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have ad retargeting in place to generate leads (B2B and high-value)?	
4. Content	<input type="checkbox"/> Is your MOFU content optimized and generating leads based on preferences? <input type="checkbox"/> Is your content perceived as credible and trustworthy? <input type="checkbox"/> Does your content put your audience's needs first?	
5. Experience	<input type="checkbox"/> Are your landing pages optimized for generating leads (CRO)? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you profile for relevant nurturing (e.g. lead scoring and grading for B2B)? *	
6. Conversational messaging	<input type="checkbox"/> Are your targeted, branded welcome email sequences sent to new leads? <input type="checkbox"/> Is your chat or community used to encourage prospect interaction? <input type="checkbox"/> Is your chatbot system effective in meeting the needs of your audience?	
* Most needed in larger businesses		

TABLE 22. The RACE planning checklist for the act phase. (Chaffey, D. 2020, 11.)

6.5 Convert Phase of Digital And Social Media Marketing

It is finally time to capitalize on the planning, reach, and act stages of the RACE planning model within this stage. The Key Performance Indicators are sales, obtained revenue, and average sales value. To reach conversion success, the case company must have personalization in place, multi-channel marketing in use, enabling multiple options for communication with the customer, and thorough optimization of critical webpages via AB testing. (Chaffey, D. 2020, 12.)

Below the six pillars of effective digital marketing to be check for the convert stage.


<div> <div>CONVERT</div>  </div>		
6 Pillars of Digital Success	Audit of current capabilities <i>Check the box for the activities you have in place.</i>	Strategic initiatives and actions <i>For the boxes that are unchecked, write your planned action in the space below</i>
1. Planning and governance	<input type="checkbox"/> Do you have a structured testing plan in place? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you defined your CRO or personalization plan? * <input type="checkbox"/> Is your testing regular? <input type="checkbox"/> Does your current digital marketing activity support offline conversions by the sales team?	
2. Goals and measurement	<input type="checkbox"/> Is Google Analytics e-commerce tracking relevant for your business? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you use attribution to review digital channel performance? * <input type="checkbox"/> Is the influence of digital channels for prompting offline sales understood?	
3. Media	<input type="checkbox"/> Are you investing sufficiently in Google Ads and paid social retargeting? <input type="checkbox"/> Can you attribute conversions to individual media types?	
4. Content	<input type="checkbox"/> Is your BOFU content optimized and developed to match preferences that nurture on the path-to-purchase? <input type="checkbox"/> Does your structured testing programme for CRO support growth?	
5. Experience	<input type="checkbox"/> Are your basket and checkout processes effective and efficient (E-commerce businesses)? <input type="checkbox"/> Is multichannel selling used to support conversion (Non e-commerce)? <input type="checkbox"/> Is your personalization effective for return visitors and customers? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have a seamless conversion journey?	
6. Conversational messaging	<input type="checkbox"/> Do you have an automated email nurture sequence? <input type="checkbox"/> Is site personalization in place and optimized, possibly including artificial intelligence? <input type="checkbox"/> Are you using digital sales assist (e.g. online demonstrations, sales calls and webinars)?	
* Most needed in larger businesses		

TABLE 23. The RACE planning checklist the convert phase. (Chaffey, D. 2020, 13.)

6.6 Engage Phase Of Digital And Social Media Marketing

The primary aim of the engage stage is the build on the relationship with the existing customer and to ensure repeated conversions the help of all three previous stages. The engage stage must be used to obtain deeper understanding of the customer and then align the marketing accordingly so it will reach the customer, intrigue customer to act on it and finally converting new sales. To successful with the engagement the case company must build effective welcome phase for new customers, position and plan digital marketing to support customer engagement building loyalty. Lastly take full advantage customer knowledge for the benefit of, for example, creating e-mail campaigns improve constant interaction and use social media to humanize the business-to-business relationship. Key performance indicator of the engage is number of repeated sales, customer satisfaction and loyalty, and advocacy. (Chaffey, D. 2020, 14.)

Below the six pillars of effective digital marketing to be check for the engage stage.


ENGAGE 		
6 Pillars of Digital Success	Audit of current capabilities <i>Check the box for the activities you have in place.</i>	Strategic initiatives and actions <i>For the boxes that are unchecked, write your planned action in the space below</i>
1. Planning and governance	<input type="checkbox"/> Have you conducted customer research focusing on digital channel effectiveness? * <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have a 90-day planning process for implementing your email contact strategy including 'always-on' and campaign activity?	
2. Goals and measurement	<input type="checkbox"/> Are the custom dimensions set in Google Analytics used to track returning customers? * <input type="checkbox"/> Is customer or email subscriber engagement tracked? <input type="checkbox"/> Are your customers profiled for characteristics, value and preferences? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you assess customer satisfaction with digital channels and loyalty drivers?	
3. Media	<input type="checkbox"/> Has your use of customer lists in Google Ads and paid social been reviewed? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you reviewed and optimized your Google Ads brand campaigns? <input type="checkbox"/> Is your organic social media amplification effective for acquisition?	
4. Content	<input type="checkbox"/> Is your ROFU content optimized and have a retention focus for existing customers? <input type="checkbox"/> Is your personalization effective for return visitors and customers? <input type="checkbox"/> Is your customer support and care content effective (e.g. FAQs and knowledge-bases)?	
5. Experience	<input type="checkbox"/> Is your on-boarding process effective for new customers? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the customer journey for returning visitors and customers effective? <input type="checkbox"/> Have loyalty drivers been researched to identify barriers to repeat purchase?	
6. Conversational messaging	<input type="checkbox"/> Have you reviewed the email and website or mobile app you use for customer on-boarding for effectiveness? <input type="checkbox"/> Are your customer newsletters targeted and optimized? <input type="checkbox"/> Are you using targeted customer email communications? <input type="checkbox"/> Are you using a customer communications preference centre and privacy options? * <input type="checkbox"/> Are you effectively using social media to develop customer communities? *	
* Most needed in larger businesses		

TABLE 24. The RACE planning checklist the engage phase. (Chaffey, D. 2020, 15.)

6.7 Summary of the Development Of The Digital And Social Media Marketing

Firstly the researcher suggests the case company to switch their company descriptions into English from Danish with all of the social media channels being used. Furthermore, as a service provider mainly for big international companies, the default communication should then be English.

Secondly, the researcher suggests using the Smart Insights RACE model to create their own unique digital and social media marketing plan. Also, to take full benefit of the already made research on social media usage among business-to-business professionals by the researcher and the SEO audit conducted via Semrush, which exposed a significant amount of issues to be tackled with the company website. To receive full benefits from the RACE planning model, the case company should conduct thorough SWOT and TOWS analyses to define their own SMART goals. After first making their planning and evaluation, the researcher strongly suggests the case company start using external service providers such as Semrush or similar to keep track of the applied actions regarding digital and social media.

The researcher also suggests the case company either consider hiring an external digital marketing partner to ease reaching into a higher level of digital and social marketing success or then hire a specialized professional to lead digital marketing within the case company.

As a final note, the researcher reminds the case company to remember that digital and social media marketing aims to create interaction, meaning two-way communication. The unique story and employees behind the company's success must be included in the marketing activities to create personal, captivating, and unique digital and social media marketing.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Answers For Research Questions

The thesis focused on digital and social media marketing, and the case company wanted to know which social media channels are the most preferred ones by potential customers and partners. The primary research question was: What social media channels are the most popular ones for business-to-business purposes? Based on the respondents' answers for business-to-business, the most preferred social media channels are LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram for following purposes and for creating content LinkedIn and Twitter were selected as the best ones.

The sub-questions providing assistance for the main research question was: **Is it possible to reach decision-makers of potential customers or partners in social media?** Based on respondents' answers, it is possible to reach decision-makers as over half of the respondents reported that their employer had attracted new customers within the past year. Also, over one-third of the respondents answered that their employer has been able to find new service providers via social media. Furthermore, most of the respondents are using social media actively, and respondents feel that social media is a beneficial tool for their work-life.

Is social media part of the decision-making process in the B-to-B operation when searching for new service providers? Based on the research results, it is safe to conclude that nowadays, social media has its place in the business-to-business world's decision-making process. Social media channels are being successfully used to inform customers of the provided solutions and as a search tool to gain market share.

7.2 Validity And Reliability

The quality of the research is defined by evaluating the concepts of reliability and validity. The difference between the two is that reliability measures consistency, and validity measures accuracy. It is possible to conduct research that is reliable yet not valid, on the other hand, it is nearly impossible to conduct valid research, which is not reliable. A simple real-life example of reliable yet not valid examination is that a broken scale can be reliable and consistently show equally incorrect weight. Thus such examination would be reliable yet not valid. (Middleton, F, 2020a.)

The validity of research can be obtained by selecting correct measurement methods and ensuring that the research is targeted to measure the research's object, which is applied with the research conducted for this thesis. Reliability of the research can be obtained by consistent application of the used methods and ensuring that the research conditions are standardized for all participants. (Middleton, F, 2020b.)

Finding answers to all research questions is another crucial factor of research being successful. In this thesis, the questions were answered along with meeting the objectives of the thesis. The thesis is based on both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was for the research is a combination of short email interviews made for few employees of the case company and from a survey, where the aim was to find out which social media channels are preferred by the target group for business purposes.

The number of respondents to the survey was 26, which can be used for making conclusions with caution. However, since respondents had gender distribution and sufficient age distribution evenly, the research can be viewed reliably. Secondary information for the research study is a combination of literature, official books, online books, and official internet sources. The researcher sees that the research is valid and reliable, based on the previously presented facts.

7.3 Thesis Summary And Suggestions For Further Research

The thesis aimed to recognize the best social media channels via an online survey and theoretical research and then offer justified digital and social media marketing tools to be used by the case company. By adapting the suggested solutions, the case company is expected to understand better how to obtain more customers and partners from their specific target market via digital and social media marketing.

With the first part of the thesis, the basic concepts of marketing and social media were opened for the reader, leading to business-to-business digital and social marketing theory.

The researcher conducted an empirical survey on the case company's target group to determine which social media channels are the best fit for business life to reach new customers or new partners via social media use. The survey revealed are the most preferred social media channels and that social media is actively used in the business-to-business world.

The suggested digital and social media marketing actions for the case company were the final part of the thesis. The researcher offers suggestions on how the case company should improve social

media activities and on which channels to focus on to reach more customers and partners. The researcher based suggestions on combining theoretical data found from literature or internet sources and empirical data collected from the survey.

The made research indicates social media activities made correctly within the correct channels can serve a crucial role when trying to reach more customers or partners in the business-to-business world.

As mentioned at the beginning of the thesis, the research focused only on defining if social media is actively used in the business-to-business world. If so, which social media channels are the most preferred ones by the individuals operating in the business-to-business field. For more comprehensive results, further research on the content details is suggested. The focus would be on what kind of content should be shared and on which channels to maximize the outcome of social media efforts by the case company.

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Appendix 1. Online Survey

General background questions

1. Gender? *

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe

2. Age? *

- ☐ 18 - 30 years old
- ☐ 31 - 40 years old
- ☐ 41 - 50 years old
- ☐ 51 - 60 years old
- ☐ Over 60 years old

3. Industry? *

4. Occupation? *

5. Do you use any social media platforms? If you answer "no" you will move automatically into question 17. *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Three background questions on personal social media usage

6. Which of these social media platforms you are currently using? You may choose as many as you are using. *

- ☐ Blogger / Tumblr / WordPress / Etc.
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Flickr
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Pinterest
- ☐ Periscope
- ☐ Reddit
- ☐ Snapchat
- ☐ TikTok
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Youtube
- ☐ Other

7. Do you feel that your private life social media usage brings benefits for your worklife? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Can't define

8. Do you have clear distinction between your private life and worklife social media usage? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Can't define

9. Which of these social media platforms are best serving your worklife purposes? Please choose one and max five social media channels ranking them starting from the most useful one for you being nr.1. *

Blogger / Tumblr / WordPress / Etc.	Select ▼
Facebook	Select ▼
Flickr	Select ▼
Instagram	Select ▼
LinkedIn	Select ▼
Pinterest	Select ▼
Periscope	Select ▼
Reddit	Select ▼
Snapchat	Select ▼
TikTok	Select ▼
Twitter	Select ▼
Youtube	Select ▼

10. Do you actively follow due to your job some your current or potential customers in social media? If you answer "no" you will move into question 12. *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

13. Which social media channels you use to follow your current or potential service providers? Please choose one and you may choose max three social media channels starting from the most useful one for you being nr.1. *

Blogger / Tumblr / WordPress / Etc.	Select ▼
Facebook	Select ▼
Flickr	Select ▼
Instagram	Select ▼
LinkedIn	Select ▼
Pinterest	Select ▼
Periscope	Select ▼
Reddit	Select ▼
Snapchat	Select ▼
TikTok	Select ▼
Twitter	Select ▼
Youtube	Select ▼

14. Do you actively create work related content into social media channels? If you answer "no" you will move into question 16. *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**15. On which social media channels you prefer to create work related content?
Please choose one and you may choose max three social media channels starting
from the most useful one for you being nr.1. ***

Blogger / Tumblr / WordPress / Etc.	Select ▼
Facebook	Select ▼
Flickr	Select ▼
Instagram	Select ▼
LinkedIn	Select ▼
Pinterest	Select ▼
Periscope	Select ▼
Reddit	Select ▼
Snapchat	Select ▼
TikTok	Select ▼
Twitter	Select ▼
Youtube	Select ▼

**16. What kind of benefits you have gained for your worklife via use of social media?
You may choose multiple options. ***

- ☐ You have received new valuable worklife contacts outside of your "inner" circle?
- ☐ You have been able to create new customership?
- ☐ You have been able grow your current customership via use of social media?
- ☐ You have been able to find new service providers for your business?
- ☐ Something else?

17. Does your employer actively use social media channels? If your answer is "no" it will conclude this survey. *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

18. Which of these social media channels you feel to be the most beneficiary for your employer / company? Please choose one and you may choose max three social media channels starting from the most useful one being nr.1. *

Blogger / Tumblr / WordPress / Etc.	Select ▼
Facebook	Select ▼
Flickr	Select ▼
Instagram	Select ▼
LinkedIn	Select ▼
Pinterest	Select ▼
Periscope	Select ▼
Reddit	Select ▼
Snapchat	Select ▼
TikTok	Select ▼
Twitter	Select ▼
Youtube	Select ▼

19. Which of the options you think to be the main targets to your employer / company on company level for the use of social media? You may choose multiple options. *

- ☐ Finding new customers
- ☐ Finding new partners
- ☐ Creating opinion leader status
- ☐ Creating general awareness of products or services
- ☐ Creating specific marketing campaigns
- ☐ Being more approachable for customers
- ☐ Other targets

20. Do you know if your employer / company has been able attract new customers with the help of social media channels during the past year? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If you answered, "yes" then if possible, please estimate how many new customers your employer has obtained during the past year.

21. Do you know if your employer / company has been able to locate new service providers / partners with the help of social media channels during the past year? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If you answered, "yes" then if possible, please estimate how many new service providers / partners your employer has obtained during the past year.

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23. If you wish to participate into lottery of delicious "Fazer Novelty Box Winter 2021" please leave contact details below.

Name	<input type="text"/>
Email address:	<input type="text"/>
Phone:	<input type="text"/>

The winner of the "Fazer Novelty Box Winter 2021" lottery will be published at my LinkedIn page on Wednesday 23.12 and contacted privately for delivery address. Fazer is not in any way part of the survey or the lottery.

24. If you wish to add me as your connection in LinkedIn choose "Connect" and press submit

☐ Connect

If you chose to connect with me in LinkedIn you will be redirected into my LinkedIn profile automatically in couple of seconds after pressing submit.

Appendix 2. Email interview for the case company personnel.

1. Title and main responsibilities of your occupation at the case company?
2. Do you use social media channels as part of your job and if you do which ones? For example Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and etc. If you don't use any social media channels within your work-life I kindly ask you to elaborate why you do not see it as suitable tool? * If you answer for the first question is "no", please move into question number 8.
3. Within the channels that you're using within the work-life, what are the main targets of using them and which channel you're using for which purpose? For example marketing, sales, search of information, networking etc.
4. With your chosen social media channels what are your main activities in them to reach your personal targets? Are you just exploring for information, contacts, are you creating content and if so what kind of content, do you take part of online discussions?
5. Is your usage of social media in your role systematic and do you somehow measure the impacts at the moment? If not, has it been systematic / have you earlier measured or planned to do so at some point?
6. How much time per day you would estimate to use with work-life related social media activities? Do you limit work-life social media usage into office hours or is it something that takes place at any time /day. Do you have clear distinctions for work-life social media and personal life social media?
7. Within the last year have you reached positive outcomes with the help of social media for your work-life? For example found new potential customers, partners, potential upselling opportunities for existing customers or some other valuable information?
8. Do you think that the company you're representing has clear targets for social media channels and how are the social media actions inline with those targets? What do you think should be increased, what should be decreased? Is use of social media encouraged by the employer?