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# BUILDING AN INSTAGRAM BRAND

– Case: Atriumpiha

BACHELOR'S THESIS | ABSTRACT

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## BUILDING AN INSTAGRAM BRAND

- Case: Atriumpiha

The aim of the thesis was to strengthen the brand of the atriumpiha account on Instagram. Atriumpiha is a building-themed Instagram account that focuses on the stages and plans of building author's future home.

The theoretical basis were collected from several different sources. Initially, the brand as a whole was examined, as well as its most essential components, brand identity, brand image, and visual identity.

The data collection method used was a survey, the benchmarking study and own observations. The online survey targeted social media influencers. In addition to the background questions, factors related to content production, collaboration and key channel indicators were investigated from the influencers. The benchmarking study compared five different Instagram user accounts in the home and interior design related topic and formed an understanding of the ways in which content can be created on Instagram. In this context, efficient ways of content production were also studied and analysed.

The main findings in this study gave the case company a solid base of brand growth and clear benefits of content marketing. Planning is the basis of everything and the influencer must spend time on the thorough implementation of the plan, after which the work can be systematically started to grow towards a more significant target audience. In principle, followers always follow accounts from which they can see a direct benefit for themselves.

The work and research results are intended for influencers and those interested in doing commercial collaboration in Instagram.

### KEYWORDS:

Instagram, Social media, Content marketing, Influencer marketing, Personal Branding

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Instagram is a free image sharing service and social network launched in 2010. (Instagram, 2020) The service allows users to share images and videos, as well as comment and like content shared by each other. Images and videos can be edited with various filters. This image sharing service has grown into a huge social media channel where individuals, personal brands and companies of all sizes publish commercial advertisements as well as moments from everyday life and celebrations. Recent years Instagram has grown into a large community of communities, where companies market their products as marketing collaborators with influencers.

The number of consumers on Instagram is dizzying. Creating an account is easy, but how does Instagram account stand out from everyone else and create content that engages interest?

My intention is to grow my current @atriumpiha Instagram account into a collaboration channel that is useful and content directed not only for my followers but collaboration partners as well. The intention is to emphasize the content for the current year in construction and the related topic area.

My followers are builders or someone who wants to become one. I create content that interests those follower segment and others who feel they will benefit from. In the feed, the posts are more topic-focused, while in the story, you can glimpse a little more lifelike content that adds identity and gives a face to the account. However, the main emphasis in the posts is on construction and tips.

The goal is to grow the follower base and get it grown so that the content is engaging, which is reflected in the number of comments and likes as well as engagement rate. Responsibility, transparency and domesticity are the important values of the account. I want to be an influencer that the public can identify with and produce communities that the public can benefit in one way or another. With responsibility, I want to emphasize improving the visibility of responsible companies. I do my background work to ensure that the company operates ethically and responsibly.

I closely monitor data and track it using reporting tools. I have background data that I can use to my advantage as "selling point" for collaborative purposes.

I have my own background data, which I have followed for a year in following areas. I report the following data on a weekly basis:

- Number of followers (decrease and increase) I also recorded for myself what measures certain decreases / increases may have caused
- Coverage
- Impressions of the posts
- Profile visits
- Site clicks
- Engagement rate
- Collaborations and the value gained from those

Most of the above are direct follower information provided by Instagram that any Instagram business / influencer account may benefit from.

Creating engaging content is extremely important to reaching a committed follower. I need to create interesting and honest content that interests followers. Collaborations and possible additional products (e.g. giveaways) can increase followers and engage existing followers.

The long-term goal for the Atriumpiha account is to continue updating the account as an home interior and lifestyle focused account at the end of construction.

The aim of this thesis was to create and strengthen a brand image for an Instagram account @atriumpiha. The goal was to strengthen the brand for more unified, diverse and effective content creation. This project focuses on creating an Instagram guide and a possible marketing plan from a branding perspective. Paid advertising on Instagram is at least initially ruled out and focuses only on brand reinforcement through free content production. Paid advertising would be interesting to include in the content of the work for research purposes.

### 1.1. Research objectives and questions

The main goal of the work is to create a brand identity and to clarify the brand image Atriumpiha is a building-themed Instagram account that focuses on the stages and plans of building our future home. The project is significant for me, because we were building

a house for ourselves and considerable time and money was spent on planning,. Atriumpiha account that was originally created for friends and family as an account to which the account owner can publish content along the project. Soon, the popularity of the account grew and the purpose of the content changed for branding and content creation. The account could benefit the project commercially for commercial collaborations. At the same stage, I realized the potential and opportunity to explore the subject further in the form of my thesis. The purpose of the account was to produce content for followers who are interested in the stages of construction and design. Content was designed those who dream of building or planning a project.

As I began to write, my main research questions for the thesis were:

- How to strengthen Atriumpiha brand on Instagram
- How to effectively increase followers for case company?
- What are the key variables as the content creator need to focus on?

As I was writing my thesis from the practical point of view, I decided to benchmark some of the best practices and real life experiences in the field with this practical method. I studied what kind of content other influencers around the same topic (home building and interior) produce on social media and the impact on, among other things, the number of followers, collaborative posts, etc. The goal was to develop own performance by leveraging what I can learn with this study method, by learning from others and how may I benefit or utilize the lessons learnt from other accounts.

Four different types of Instagram user accounts were selected for the study, both smaller and larger accounts. The purpose is to find each account's own strengths and analyze them in the final conclusion. All accounts deal with house interior or building house from different perspectives.

## 1.1 Case ATRIUMPIHA

The Atriumpiha Instagram account was established in July 2019, it represents the construction journey of family's house project from start to finish. The target group includes men and women of all ages dreaming of or planning a building, but the main audience or target group, based on background information are mostly women aged 25-

34. The Atriumpiha Instagram account aims to post content specifically targeted at (future) builders, from which the followers would also benefit in their own project.

Atriumpiha account initially attracted interest from house builders and ones planning to build one. House design differs slightly from mainstream, because of the different architectural design. The designed atrium courtyard provides a peaceful and secluded setting. Since the number of followers has drastically increased in the early stage, I decided to change the account to Instagram for business account as a marketing channel for future possible collaborations.

In particular, the posting series “construction tips” and “construction budget” are precisely the bold content that the audience wants to hear and that helps to outline the progress of the construction project in concrete steps. The main purpose of the account is to share information, be informative and produce content from which the reader feels that he or she will also get the most out of himself or herself. With this principle in mind, the account has grown in a very short time with a large number of followers.

## 1.2 The current status of the Instagram account

Atriumpiha Instagram account has 2797 followers and 80 publications at the time of writing this thesis (September 2020). The pace of publication is on average three posts per week, in addition of minimum four days of shorter Instagram Stories publications. Instagram is updated when there is content, such as regular progress of building or interior design decisions/ plans etc. The latest posts received about 170 likes per release. The images in the publications also varied: images are all taken mostly with iPhone camera or Canon SLR camera.

Instagram is currently used mainly for documentation purposes: for collecting images and videos of the progress of the construction, including design plans and inspirational images that refer to future plans.

Currently, thesis author Jenna Lahtovaara is responsible for Instagram content creation. Sometimes Jenna's husband is responsible for the ideation of content.

Although no actual frameworks have been set for Instagram posts, the author ensures that the topics provide relevant information for the target group. It is important that the post topics are diverse and address the audience. Special attention is also paid to the

quality of the images. Images should be of the highest possible quality and also visually appealing.

Brand collaborations on Instagram can be seen as an effective way to grow and promote brand online. Several companies also provide certain instructions and values that they want to bring out in their commercial collaborations. Commercial collaboration will be discussed in later section of the thesis. It is also appropriate to use the right kind of hastags for builders, such as e.g. #atriumpiha #rakentajat2020 #raksa2020 #raksaprojekti #raksakodit #omakotitaloprojekti

### 1.3 Significance of the project

The project aims to strengthen the atriumpiha - brand on Instagram and help build a more cohesive, diverse and consistent content for Instagram account. One of the goals is also to make posting easier and time management smoother and time wise more efficient. The aim of the project is also to increase knowledge and skills of Instagram activities, which the author may benefit in the future, especially in the field of marketing. The possibilities of Instagram are so diverse, so opening up these possibilities and mapping information creates new innovative ways to produce more diverse content that is interesting to followers as well.

Instagram is a vital work and marketing channel for many businesses. It is used by many businesses and individuals on a daily basis as their marketing tool. Instagram has been reported as the highest engaged social media platform regarding audience percentage delivering 7X the engagement of Twitter or Facebook. There is observed more user engagement with content on their feeds on Instagram than there is on Facebook feeds making Instagram better for your brand. (Mcgrath, 2017)

This acquired knowledge can be utilized by the author in her future work tasks, as marketing is a strong field that the author preffers to focus on after graduation.

The first chapter of the dissertation introduces the Instagram account and the starting points of the dissertation in more detail.

The theoretical part of the thesis deals with branding on Instagram. The first is to define the term brand and delve into its key areas: brand identity, brand image and brand capital. In addition, the section deals with the visual side of the brand, as Instagram is a very visual social media platform.

## 2 BRAND

### 2.1 Brand definition

The word brand is certainly familiar to all of us. We know very quickly how to name the most famous brands globally, such as Apple, Google or Coca Cola. A brand is an image associated with a company that is created as the sum of its image and reputation. A brand is about creating images and evoking emotions, but most of the time, its most important tasks are to increase sales and increase customer loyalty. The brand communicates your company's values both internally to the company's employees and externally to current and potential customers. (Holma, 2018)

A good brand is paid more and the purchase decision is made more easily. And you still can not buy it anywhere - a brand needs to be created and built.

Sounio (2010, p. 24) explains a brand can be a person, a product, a service, a party, a country, a village or a city. It is never just a surface. Soul means that the best brands have a heart involved; the best brand exceeds the expectations of the other party. Branding should aim to develop wanted branding image. Goal branding image refers to a description of things that are important to the company. They allow a company to stand out in a way that is relevant to its own target groups. (Mäkinen 2016). As a concept, a brand is very broad and difficult to describe unambiguously. A brand is an aggregate understanding of all the things a person has experienced in one way or another about a company or person. A logo is not the same thing as a brand, but it is a symbol of a brand. The brand influences emotions. (Ruokolainen, 2020, p. 16)

According to Sounio (2010, p.50) brand consists of two parts. First, on externally visible parts, such as packaging or appearance. Second, the soul, that is, the person, background, history, and behavior of the person and the product. In a global market, competition is constant and unlimited. How to get attention, support and influence? The brand image can be easily explored by asking what you think about this type or product. The fastest brand research is to ask what kind of person a particular product or company resembles. Often a company sees its own image differently than customers. If the image doesn't match your goals, it's time to build a brand. (Sounio, 2010, p. 27)

A personal brand is made up of a person's strengths and weaknesses together. A strong personality brand has human shortcomings. The brand is neither a surface nor a paper. You pay for the brand. Decisions are made based on preferences: a purchase is never made on the basis of need alone. If the brand has value, you can charge a higher price. If a handbag or golf club costs 20 times more than the other, it is good for the consumer to consider where the price difference has been spent, for an advertising campaign or to improve the quality of the product. (Sounio, 2010, p. 27)

## 2.2 Personal branding

"Your brand is what other people say about you when you're not in the room." (Gregory, 2020)

A personal brand is much more than a flashy logo or a color palette. A personal brand goes far beyond having a nice-looking business card. It's about who you are and what you do. Your personal brand is how you present yourself, both online and offline, to your ideal audience. (Ziogas, 2019) Personal branding isn't just for someone who owns a business. Personal branding is also essential for any influencer, thought leader, or person who wants to share their story with the world. (Henderson, 2019). Consistency is one of the components in building trust with someone. This should also be reflected in the making and building brand in Instagram.

When it comes to doing business with someone online, studies show that 70-80% of people research an influencer or brand before doing business with them. People like to feel like they know you, especially before they spend money or do business with you. (Henderson, 2019). That's one of the reasons why personal branding is so important and influencers should pay more attention in the early stages of building their own account. In my own attention and learning, when one is consciously using the brand image from the beginning, this brightens the followers image of the account. This gives the follower a better and more relatable image of what the account entails and what kind of content the company produces.

"Personal branding is the practice of marketing people and their careers as brands. It is an ongoing process of developing and maintaining a reputation and impression of an individual, group, or organization. Whereas some self-help practices focus on self-

improvement, personal branding defines success as a form of self-packaging." (Henderson, 2019). One needs to create an original personal brand—and that is to be genuine and authentic, not copying someone else's act.

## 3 SOCIAL MEDIA

### 3.1 INSTAGRAM

The core of social media is interaction. It is not a one-way data leak like 1990s websites, it's communication and co-creation. For this reason, social media texts must also be interactive. (Kortesuo, 2018) Instagram is one of the best-known social media channels that works as a mobile app (i.e. only on a phone or tablet). The main focus is on images and short video clips.

Instagram is a free photo and video sharing app that can be used on Apple iOS, Android, and Windows Phone devices. Users can upload photos and videos to our service and share them with their followers or a group of their choice. They can also view, comment on, and like posts shared by their friends on Instagram. (Instagram, 2020)

Instagram is a photo sharing and community service. Users can take photos directly from the Instagram app, add visual effects to them, and then publish them on their Instagram profile. By default, images and videos posted by a user are visible to everyone, but users can also make their profile private if they want, so only other users who have been approved as followers can see the added images and videos. (Instagram, 2020)

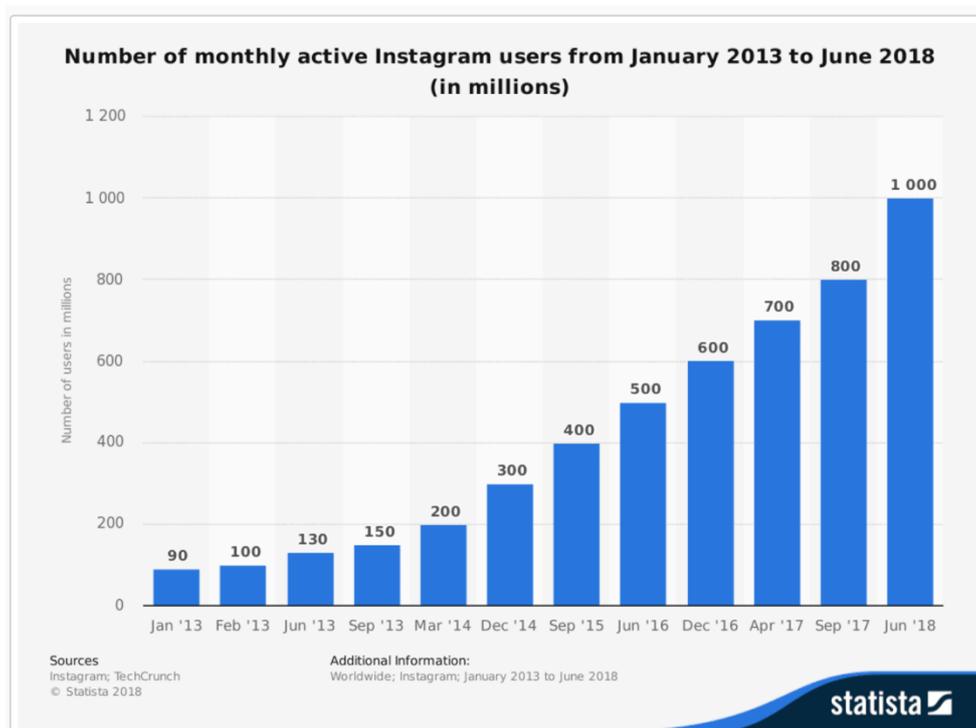
In addition to image features, Instagram is a social service that provides tracking relationships between users, commenting on images, and liking. In addition, users can send each other instant messages, depending on the nature of the service, are photos, videos, or free text. An instant message can be sent to either a single user or multiple users at once. (Instagram, 2020)

Instagram was founded in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger. By the end of the same year, one million users had registered for the service. Instagram continued to grow very fast. In April 2012, co-founders Systrom and Krieger agreed to Mark Zuckerberg's \$ 1 billion offer, and Instagram was taken over by Facebook. Systrom and Krieger continued to lead the company. All the data collected by Instagram from its users was transferred to Facebook. Despite the new owner, Instagram remained unique from the users' perspective. (Blystone, 2020)

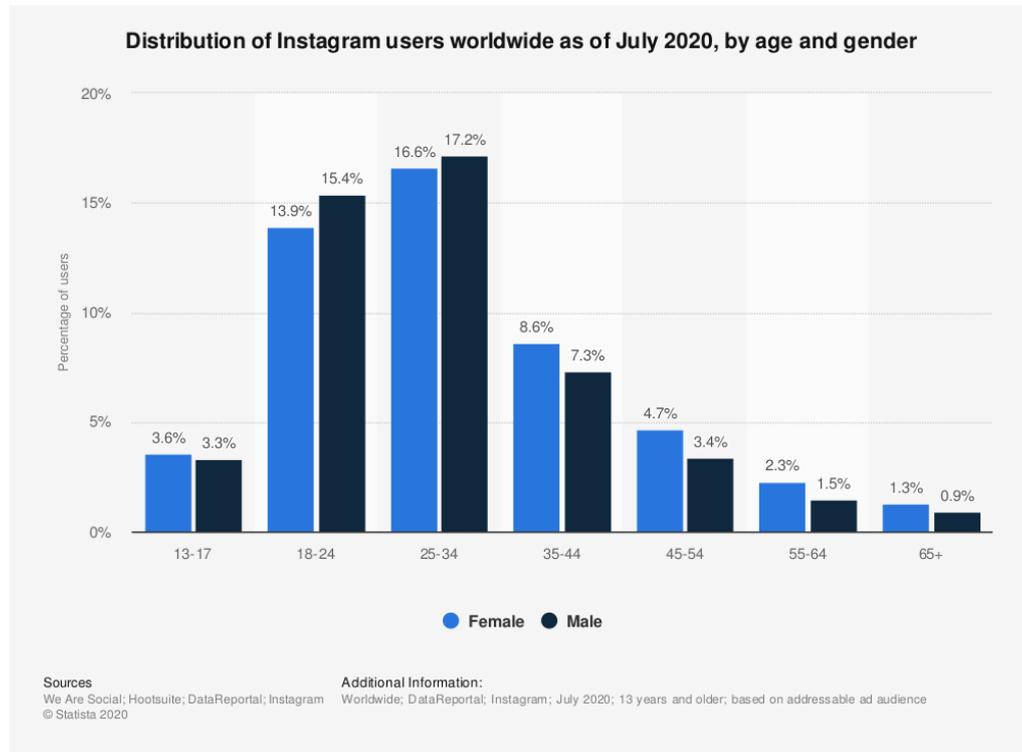
### 3.2 Instagram part of Social Media

Social media has revolutionized the way we connect with others and for many it has become an integral part of daily life. Social media allows you to keep in touch with family and friends. Social media has a positive effect on maintaining a diverse social life, and the large number of users is a indication to this; it is estimated that by 2020, about three billion people around the world will use some sort of social media. (Gotter, 2020)

Market leader Facebook was the first social network to surpass 1 billion registered accounts and currently sits at more than 2.6 billion monthly active users. The company currently also owns four of the biggest social media platforms, all with over 1 billion monthly active users each: Facebook (core platform), WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and Instagram. In the second quarter of 2020, Facebook reported over 3.1 billion monthly core Family product users 947869 (Tankovska, 2021)



Picture 1 Active Instagram users (Tankovska, 2021)



Picture 2 Instagram Users (Tankovska, 2021)

Instagram is made easy to use. The user publishes the desired visual content, image or video, and it appears on his or hers profile as well as in the news feed.

Instagram is typically used on a smartphone. However, it also works as a browser version, at: [www.instagram.com](http://www.instagram.com). However, the browser version is a stripped down version of the application: It is not possible to share stories. At the bottom of the page, Instagram prompts you to download the app to your phone to “get the best Instagram experience”. (Instagram, 2020) On Instagram, a user can choose to put multiple images or videos in a single publication, allowing other users to swipe right to see one content at a time. This is called a picture carousel. (Instagram, 2020)

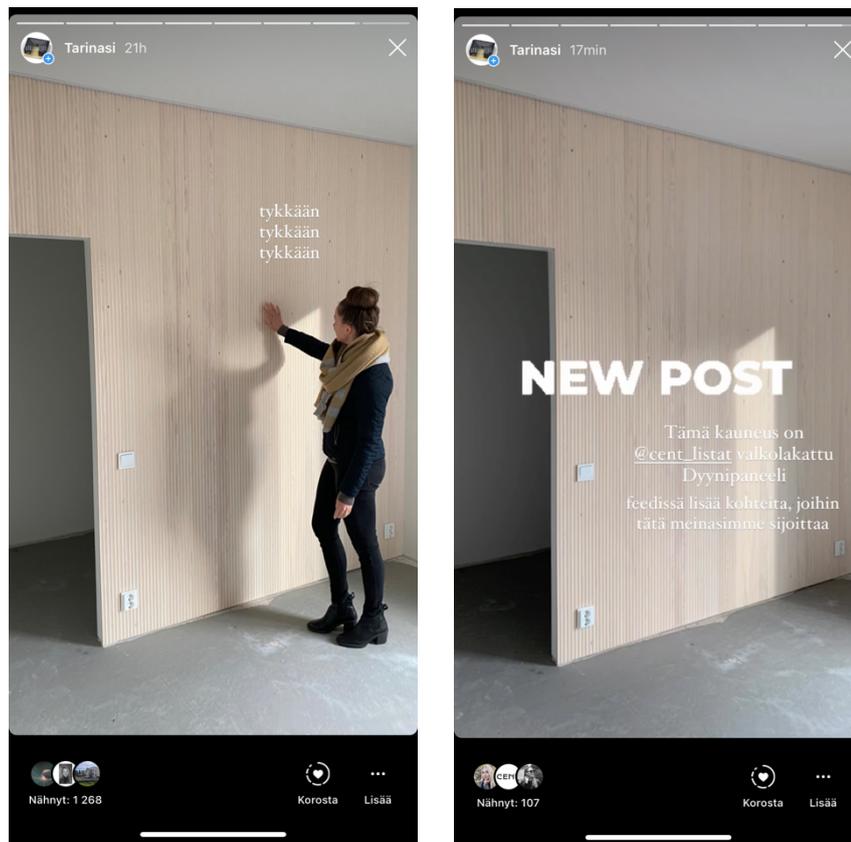
One of the well-known features of Instagram is its versatile editing tools, especially filters. Filters are superimposable entities that allow you to easily modify the mood of an image. In addition to filters, it is possible to add several different effects to images on Instagram, as well as crop or tilt the image according to your own taste. (Instagram, 2020)



Picture 3 Screenshot of atriumpiha filter options 2020

Other features of Instagram include hashtags and geotags. Hashtags (marked with a twig fence: #) are subject tags that are used to gather images of the same subject in one place. For example, if you use the hastag #rakentajat2020 image in a house building image, the image will appear on the page where you will find all the other images that used that hastag. Geotags are placemarks, it work in the same style as hashtags, but they have their own "location" point at the time of writing the description. (Instagram, 2020)

Instagram's most popular features is stories, or Instagram Stories. Stories are a way to share content with a user's followers. The difference between a story and a regular image or video is that it disappears from the feed and profile after 24 hours, just like Snapchat's MyStories. The stories of the users they follow can be viewed in the Stories bar above the news feed. (Instagram, 2020)



Picture 4 Screenshot of atriumpiha Stories (25.10.2020)

In addition, you can post live videos on Instagram. Live videos are real-time videos that appear to a user's followers in the Stories bar. Live videos can also be commented on in real time. A popular feature on Instagram is also the IGTV feature, which allows the user to publish and watch videos longer than a minute on a special platform designed for it. Usually, videos up to a minute long have been published on Instagram. (Instagram, 2020)

Latest update is Instagram Reels (launched August 2020), which allows users to create and discover short, entertaining videos on Instagram. Reels allows users to create fun videos to share with friends or anyone on Instagram, same way as videos published similar app called Tiktok. By recording and editing 15-second multi-clip videos with audio, effects, and new creative tools, user can share reels with followers on Feed and with a public account, make them available to the wider Instagram community through a new space in Explore. (Instagram, 2020) Through Reels your videos are more likely get wider audience.

### 3.3 Content marketing

Content marketing is the process of planning, creating, distributing, sharing, and publishing content to reach your target audience. It can boost factors like brand awareness, sales, reach, interactions, and loyalty (Baker, 2021). Content marketing produces and distributes content that is relevant, interesting and useful to the target group. Content does not infuse a product or service, but offers something more in the eyes of the target group (Smith, 2020).

The most popular social networks worldwide (ranked by number of active users) are Facebook, Youtube, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and Instagram (Tankovska, 2021) where content production is business-friendly and easy, but above all visual, inspiring, and easily approachable. Facebook and Twitter also act as good distribution channels for sharing video produced on Youtube. Content marketing is a marketing technology created by the Internet and social media, in which the target group of a product or service is provided with valuable, continuous and consistent marketing communications and other media content in the channels that best reach it. The difference between content marketing and traditional marketing lies in the usefulness of the content (Webwire, 2016).

Content marketing is at the heart of most successful digital marketing campaigns. Behind every great brand is a wealth of valuable and relevant content that really connects with the company's audience (Smith, 2020).

Main focus of content marketing is not necessarily just to increase sales, but it can also be to grow and develop the brand. While content marketing is not advertising, it is part of targeted marketing communications. When a company helps a potential customer solve a problem, the company's awareness grows and positive images become stronger. High-quality content marketing guides the buying behavior of the target group.

Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience — and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action (Institute, 2020).

Content marketing is an effective way to market an organization on Instagram.

When producing content for Instagram, one should therefore pay special attention to the customer base and research what kind of content they are interested in. It is important

to create an in-depth understanding of potential customers and followers. The more effortless and helpful the content is, the more consumers want to consume it. At the early stage of creating the brand, I started to pay special attention on the core of the followers. Who are they and what are they interested of following? I also put myself into the shoes of a dream follower. What kind of content would I be interested to read more about and what products would I want to hear more about? Customer / follower segment is the core and the foundation in every step of the way.

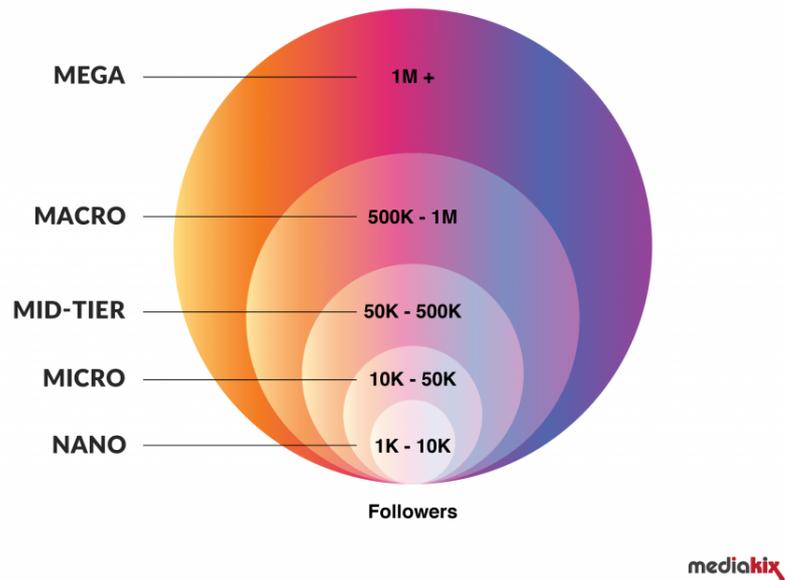
Great content can help you build trust with your leads and customers. When consumers read your content, they start to develop an opinion of your brand. If the content that they find is engaging, educational, and valuable, then they will start to think the same things about you our your business. The more value you can provide with your content, the easier it will be to build trust with your target audience. (Smith, 2020)

### 3.4 Influencer

An industry-wide Standard Terminology in Influencer Marketing (also known as STIM). STIM breaks down influencers into five main influencer tiers by the number of Instagram followers:

- Nano-influencers: 1,000-10,000 followers
- Micro-influencers: 10,000-50,000 followers
- Mid-tier influencers: 50,000-500,000 followers
- Macro-influencers: 500,000-1 million followers
- Mega-Influencers: 1 million+ followers

## Instagram Influencer Tiers



Picture 5 2020 Instagram Influencer Tiers (Mediakix, 2020)

### 3.5 Branding in Instagram

Instagram is one tool that is great for building a brand. Instagram branding is based on other brand aspects that are important in branding. PR News Social Media MVP Award 2014 winner Erica Campbell Byrum presents five ways in which an organization's visual identity can be strengthened on Instagram. She addresses that all publications should embody the brand and the chosen "visual theme". (Maerowitz, 2018) Byrum recommends that an organization choose a three or four colors that should appear in all of the Instagram posts. In addition, he encourages the organization to decide the style in which it will crop its images and videos. These can be simple traditional squares, vertical lines or more complex, a mosaic "puzzle" or a checkerboard of tiles alternating quotes and images.

In addition to the traditional square cropping, the style can be simple, such as images with white stripes either vertically or horizontally, or the style can be slightly more complex, such as accounts where individual images form a single puzzle in the profile or accounts where publication images vary between citations and photographs. (Maerowitz, 2018)

When making an Instagram plan, one should consider how the company sticks to its own style. Byrum (Maerowitz, 2018) advises keeping regular Instagram posts as carefully selected and polished photos. In Instagram Stories and Reels instead, you can have more fun and try out new and playful functions.

Highlight feature could be added to your own cover image for each highlight. Cover images showing the brand's signature colors as well as typography help tie the Stories to the brand's visual identity. (Maerowitz, 2018)

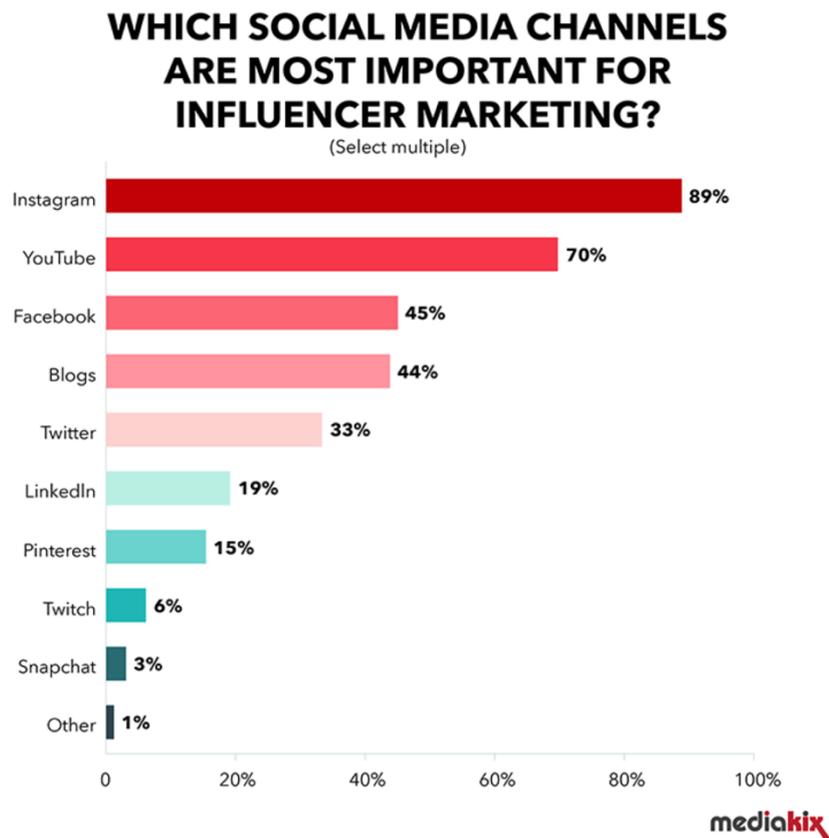
I decided to save some of the most viewed and commented stories into the highlights section. These highlights contain mostly the journey of the building process as well as some most asked tips from the followers.

Byrum advises reusing material from old posts. It is good to plan your own Instagram content in the long run for the future posts. Images of the same photos can be collected as if you have your own stock. Those photos can be reused, especially if it is reposted months later. (Maerowitz, 2018)

### 3.6 Influencer marketing

Influencer marketing is one of the ways to implement content marketing. Influencer marketing is an effective way to present a company's product or service to the consumer through a brand-appropriate, credible and approachable influencer. Influencer marketing therefore means cooperation between a company and an individual working on social media, ie an influencer, the aim of which is to bring visibility to both parties to the cooperation and to provide interesting and well-targeted content to the consumer (Kilpailu - ja kuluttajavirasto, 2019)

The goal of influencer marketing is to develop and strengthen the brand and corporate image and increase sales.



Picture 6 Social Media (Barnhart, 2020)

Influencer marketing must be identifiable as an advertisement, regardless of its presentation and means of publication, as the consumer has the right to know when an attempt is made to influence him commercially. The requirement for the recognisability of advertising applies to all channels and forms, including social media. Care should be taken with the correct labeling of campaign posts, as this can lead to legal problems if it is perceived as surreptitious marketing. The post, image, or video produced must clearly state that it is an ad and the name of the buyer of the influencer campaign. (Kilpailu - ja kuluttajavirasto, 2019)

#### 4.6 Use of hastags

The company should have its own hastag; it can be, for example, #companyname or #slogan. The hastag should be kept short and back. When selecting a hastag, check that it is not already commonly used in other uses. Once a hastag is selected, bring it up in your advertising and even in your store so customers and stakeholders can use it.

It is worth noting that on Instagram it is also worthwhile to vary the hashtags from time to time, otherwise the account may be shadowbanned. This means that Instagram will prevent images from being found by hashtag if the same hashtag is used in every image. (Virtanen, 2020) It is a good idea for a company to have an influencer account on Instagram, which makes it easier to monitor the functionality of publications. A business account is also required for paid marketing. Anyone can easily convert a regular account to either an influencer or company account from Instagram account settings.

Private messages received as a content publisher account's inbox can be split under two tabs, either as primary and general messages. On both tabs, you can flag, unread, or move messages to another folder, and filter the view based on unread or tagged messages. It is also possible to filter message requests based on either transmission time or importance. This makes it easier to manage messages and notifications when you can organize messages from friends, businesses, and fans more efficiently. (Leppänen, 2019)

### 3.6.1 Content creation

When writing a post, there should be only one thing in substance, that your audience manages to stay interested when you don't cram many things together. Plus, you get what you want to publish for many days when you talk about a particular theme one thing or perspective at a time. Tell the followers the main points of the publication, but be sure to keep the publication short enough. A good rule of thumb is that once a publication is published, imagine you are an occasional passer-by who knows nothing about the subject yet. Do you understand and get all the information you need? Posts are always seen by occasional passers-by, even if they are aimed at a specific group that knows your organization. (Virtanen, 2020, p. 44)

One should consciously try to cause reactions. The best posts cause reactions in followers. At its smallest, the reaction is a push of a like button, but it can also be a comment, further sharing a post, discussing the issue outside of social media, signing an initiative, attending an event, joining an organization, or buying a product. These are all desired reactions to some release. Reactions in social media increase the visibility of your publication and cause more reactions, and reactions outside social media are often the main goal of marketing. (Virtanen, 2020, p. 53)

In my own learning I have definitely noticed, how I started to gain followers and likes, when I posted bold topics, such as posting about our house building budget with actual euros spent on building. Followers are interested of the actual information they can benefit from. Followers want to follow content that they find they may benefit from it one way or another.

Pictures and videos are an important part of the social media community channels such as Instagram and Facebook. For example, Facebook's algorithms bring out images and videos more than just text updates. With images, videos, and other visual looks, you build a memory footprint of your business, so it's worth taking the time to build your own visuals. (Virtanen, 2020, p. 60)

We are constantly monitored and evaluated by algorithms. What links do you open? Which videos will you watch to the end? How fast do you move from one issue to another? Where are you right then? What were you doing a moment before you decided to buy or not buy something? Or when you decided to vote or not to vote? (Lanier, 2018) All such and many other measurement results are compared to the behavior of other, secretly monitored people. Algorithms compare your actions to the actions and choices of many other people. Today, everyone involved in social media is constantly fed with individualized stimuli whenever and wherever they use a smartphone.

What would once have been called advertising today can only be called continuous and on a huge scale to modify behavior of social media users. (Lanier, 2018) Addiction largely explains why so many are subject to the spying and manipulation of information by information technology. Digital networks bring more efficiency and convenience to life. (Lanier, 2018)

With purpose-built guidelines in place, it's easier to create posts: you don't have to rethink everything every time, and your publications are consistent. Consistency of look makes people who see your publications associate them with your organization faster and creates clear memories.

If your main channel in social is photo-emphasized, it is important to maintain coherence in the style of the images. One way is to create cohesion is to often use the same filters. The organization's brand is visible on Instagram through images and videos as well as

text. Every publication, hashtag and comment can build a brand in just the right direction. (Virtanen, 2020, p. 60)

### 3.6.2 Content Discussion

Once you have posted something that gains comments, be sure to continue the discussion. Comment back on everyone, ask for more and keep in touch. Social media is a social, not a one-sided, channel of information or advertising. Discuss even outside of the comment fields of your own publications, in social media, people discuss your organization and its products, and you can't control everything people say. If you do not participate in the conversation, you will not be able to make your own voice heard. Participating in discussions can build a desired image of the organization. (Virtanen, 2020, p. 55)

### 3.7 Monitoring success

When social media channel takes off, a closer review and tracking should not be left behind. There are considerable benefits of tracking your own success. Account tracking means you keep track of your channel statistics for which posts have received most visibility and reactions, and which have performed worse. This will allow you to think about the future posts that are more likely to get more reactions. The sheer number of likes or followers are not a viable measure of success. More important than a huge audience is a engaged audience, one that shares your publications, participates and even buys the product. (Needle, 2020)

In my own attention and learning, commercial collaborations can also be facilitated by knowing your own numbers. The more you know about your followers and engagement statistics, the easier it will be for the account owner to market the account for companies regarding the collaboration between the account and company.

### 3.8 Instagram Engagement Rate

Instagram engagement rate is a quantitative measure of how users interact with the content on your profile. It takes into account your number of followers, likes, comments,

and shares. Engagement rates are typically calculated by dividing an account's likes and comments by follower count. (Needle, 2020) There is debate among marketers on the best way to calculate your Instagram engagement rate, as different industries define success in different ways.

Since sponsors often recruit influencers on Instagram based on their likes and follower count, their engagement rates incorporate these two factors. Since this metric does not require any personal data, it's possible to compare your engagement rates to competitors. (Needle, 2020) Tracking your progress is extremely important, and it should be something one focuses on. Trial and error is expected, and it should be used to inform your current and future strategies. Use your preferred CRM to find your most effective posts or pieces of content, and use the strategy employed in those for your next content posts.

After you've calculated your engagement rate for the first time, you should devise a timeline in which you'll recalculate it again. Maybe you'll set a goal of raising your score by .10% in a year, so you may plan to re-calculate the numbers every three months. This can also help you understand what isn't working — if your numbers haven't budged, something needs to change. (Needle, 2020)

All in all, Instagram engagement rate is a measure of how your audience interacts with your content. If your content is good and your followers are engaging, your engagement rate will demonstrate that. When you spend time working on your engagement rate, you collect valuable data to inform your entire Instagram marketing strategy which is relevant info for the future growth of the account.

Your rate is an indication of your Instagram profiles' social authority, relevancy, and audience interest. You should see your engagement rate as a benchmark for customer loyalty and satisfaction. (Needle, 2020)

### 3.9 Increasing Instagram engagement rate

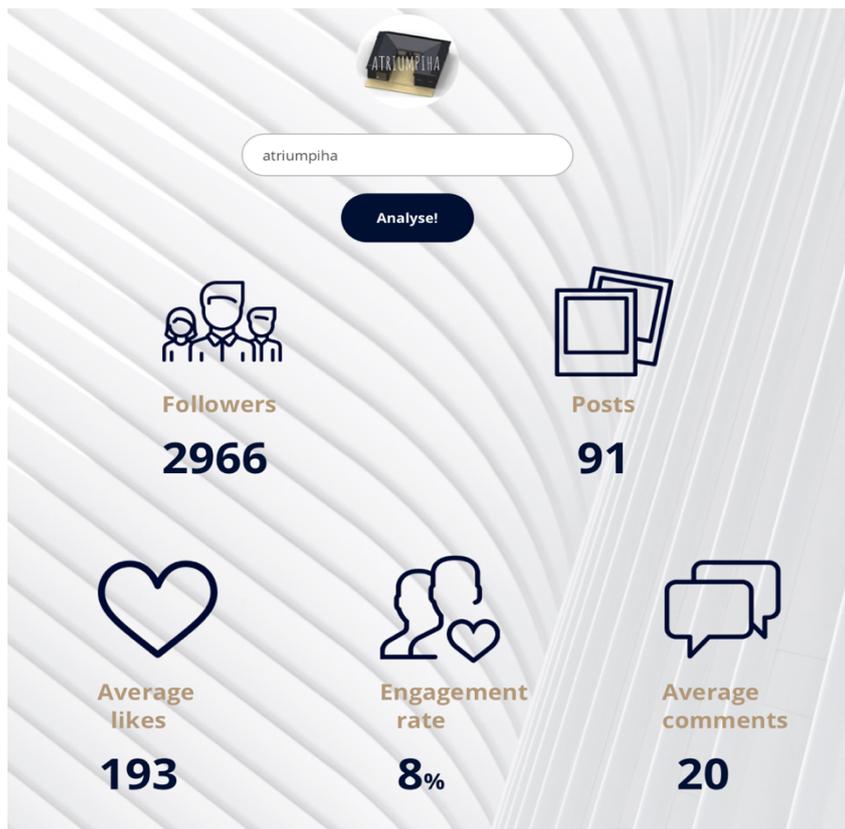
Needle has compiled a comprehensive list of how your account engagement rate can be increased and create consistent content into account content. This full list can be found attached in Appendix.

Consistency should go through the account in all content, this applies not only to the consistency of the images, but also to the specific format used in the text of the posts.

One of the most important criteria is also knowing the audience and producing content for that particular audience. It is important that the audience experiences the content meaningful, because in principle it can always be assumed that the follower is not following you because of you, but because he is getting something for himself from your content. People seek different aspects e.g. inspiration, ideas or humor. Knowing your audience is also important because you know what times followers visit or respond to your account content.

Also, think about what is the guiding idea in your account and stick with it. Think about what your posting pace is. It would be good to produce content for the site often enough to keep the follower interested and as if already waiting for more content. Do you write long or short posts, find out how much response you get with a short vs longer post? Also remember the hastags, the number is good to limit to 30 per post.

Reply to comments received and connect with your followers. Followers appreciate the influencer's time and discussions. This creates trust and mutual interaction. It can also be a good idea to share your followers' content on stories at times. One important aspect is also the interaction with other accounts on the same subject. This not only increases the visibility of the comments on the site, but also the comments back to your account. It is helpful to visit to comment diligently as it is good practice to include commenting back. Make rich content. Instagram can produce a wide variety of content that interests followers and makes your content appealing. In addition to posting pictures, make stories as well as reels. Track your stats. Instagram gives you a huge amount of data for free, so take advantage of it. Statistics are especially useful when you sell your account to communities with different companies, for example. Partners are interested in this data not only for planning, but also for going through the campaign afterwards.



Picture 7 Atriumpiha Instagram Engagement rate (Needle, 2020)

## 4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

I decided to complete the empirical part of this research using benchmarking techniques and quantitative method. Benchmarking is a process of measuring the performance of a company's products, services, or processes against those of another business considered to be the best in the industry, aka "best in class." (Shopify, 2020)

In this thesis, benchmarking, quantitative methods were used not only as a research methods, but data collection as well. Currently there is very limited research information on social media that has been published. Large channels, such as Instagram, are constantly changing, evolving and bringing new features to their platform. Thus, up-to-date and targeted information is easier to generate with such a methods like these.

In quantitative research, the researcher gather empirical observational data for the benefit of the data collection. By looking at the observational data, the researcher seeks to understand some social phenomenon and seek to make generalizations about the observational data he or she has collected. (Warren, 2020) Quantitative research is respected as being objective and viable. This is useful for supporting or enforcing public opinion.

The quality of a research is commonly assessed by evaluating the reliability and validity of the sources used within the data collection.

Benchmarking method includes comparison and interest. To how others do and act. The goal is to develop own performance by leveraging what we learn from others. (Hämäläinen M., 2002)

Benchmarking assessment can be comparative performance, examine the level of one's own activities by comparing it to general standards, adopting best practices: identifying and applying high-quality practices of others competitive: seeking a market advantage or an advantage independent: does not establish contacts with a partner, but seeks comparative information from common sources (Hämäläinen M., 2002)

Benchmarking is a qualitative research method that compares and is interested in how others do and work. These so-called performances are compared to the best, lessons are learned from them, analyzed and applied what is learned, to develop and improve one's own activities.

I benchmarked Instagram accounts that are (or have been) house building - related accounts to get full understanding around the same topic area as the content in my account.

For increasing the validity, the concepts from the theoretical part were used during the collection of the data as well as when analyzing the final results. A challenging element in the data analysis is the fact that on Instagram sometimes it is not clear which actions actually affected which results. Therefore, the conclusions need to be drawn with caution without interpreting connections that are not valid and reliable. Therefore the work is based on the timeliness at the time of writing, as information and Instagram usage features and algorithms are constantly updated.

#### 4.1 Instagram account benchmarking

Four different types of Instagram user accounts were selected for the study, both smaller and large accounts. The purpose is to find each account's strengths and analyze them in the final conclusion. All accounts deal with house interior or building house from different perspectives.

Aim was to investigate following categories from these four accounts:

- Collaborative posts compared to normal posts
- Use of hashtags
- Number of followers
- Use of stories and for what purposes. More off the topic or everyday content related to the topic of the account
- Release pace of posts and stories
- The overall look of the feed and logo and Story highlights

The following is a brief introduction to the research review accounts:

@marjawickman with 34,9K followers

Writes a popular blog called Musta Ovi (means Black Door). The blog is all about a house building, Scandinavian design and a loft style. In the early years, the blog followed the

story of their home building step by step. The Blog Awards Finland has awarded the Musta Ovi - blog as the best in its category in 2016 and 2017.

@modernistikodikas 22,4K followers

The Instagram account is written by Kerttu Pylvänäinen, a lifestyle blogger, whose interior design and lifestyle blog was founded in 2017. The home is decorated in a modern and Scandinavian style, with a broad line of classic and time-lasting solutions.

@designwash 29,5K followers

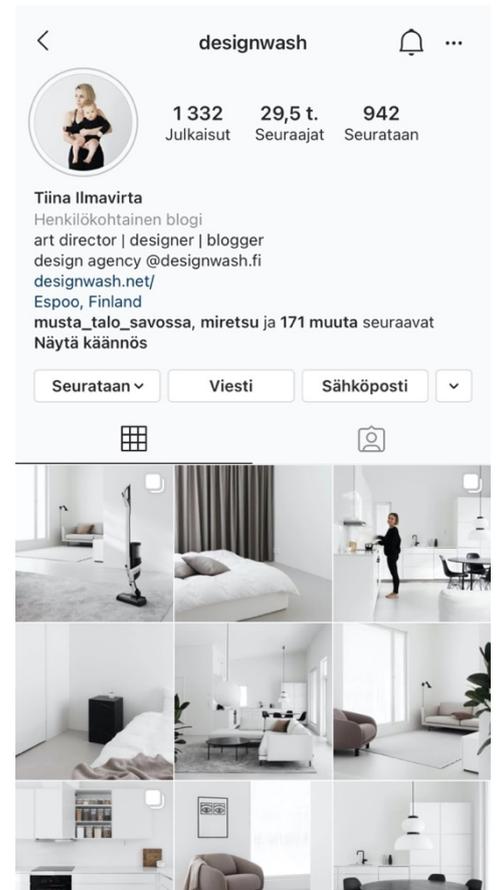
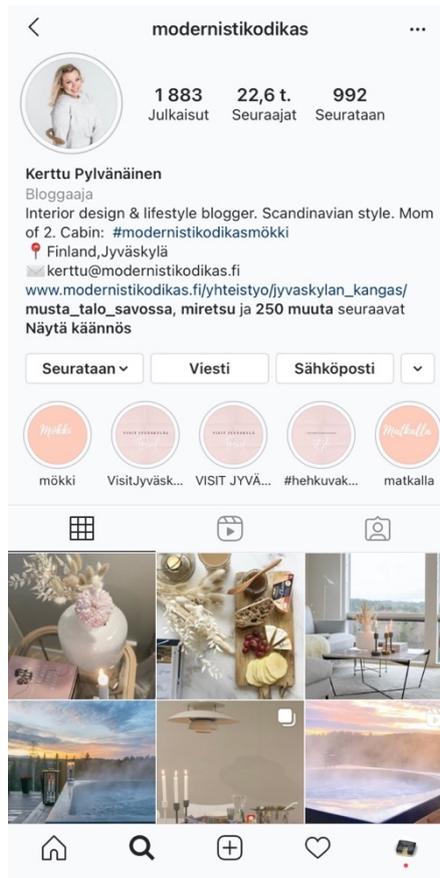
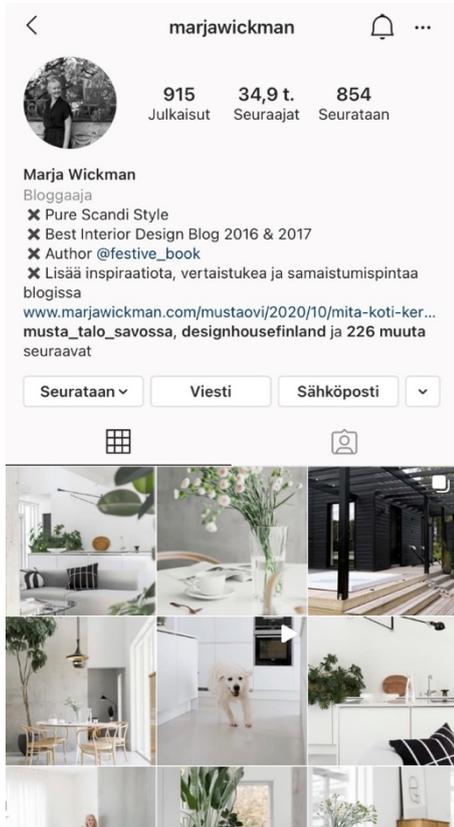
The Instagram account is managed by Tiina Ilmavirta. The founder and graphic designer of the Design Wash blog / company, who is interested in Scandinavian design, interior design and architecture.

@mialehikoinen 7904 followers

@mialehikoinen account is managed by Mia Lehtikoinen. She updates phases of interior designing of their newly built home. Mia writes also blog Villa Lehtikko, where she writes more in details.

@casalautaaajabetonia 2579 followers

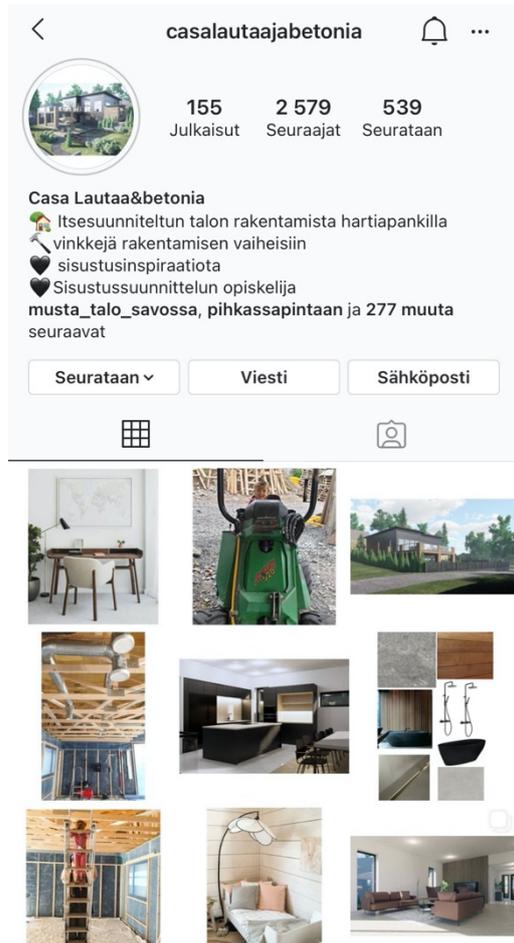
This account is managed by Dima, interior design student who's family is building house for themselves. The house is self designed and self built from the scratch and she updates the not only the phases of the building project, but also hands out tips of which others may benefit as well.



Picture 8 Screenshot of @marjawickman Instagram account

Picture 9 Screenshot of @modernistikodikas Instagram account

Picture 10 Screenshot of @designwash Instagram account



Picture 11 Screenshot of @casalautaaajabetonia Instagram account

Picture 12 Screenshot of @mialehikoinen Instagram account

## 4.2 Analysis and findings

Account marjawickman has the most followers of all the review accounts, followed by designwash in Tiina's account. All other statistics have a clear correlation with the number of followers: For example, when comparing my own account to the corresponding account of mialehtikoinen, for example, Mia has not only a larger number of followers but also more posts.

All the accounts in the test group have their own faces in their profile picture, except for the casalautajabetonia. The profile picture of casalautajabetonia is a model of their future home.

All review accounts are more or less personalized accounts, so a face image is a natural profile image for an account. The studio photo face image works as a profile image, as the individual brand crystallizes in face appearance, so the minimalist face image acts as a profile image as a reflector of the brand as well as the company logo.

Biography (description) of the account. Most of the accounts in the test team used as many characters as possible to write the description, allowing the text to fit just a short description and key contact information. The description text of Designwash is very minimalistic. Complete sentences have not been used on any of the accounts. In all others, emojis have been used in the description. Colorful emojis attract attention and create a playful, youthful atmosphere. Admittedly, the two accounts used by marjawickman and mialehtikoinen emojis used are very simple, black crosses.

It is possible to include only one link in the Instagram description. In these cases, the link led to the account blog. Most of the posts which is often advertised in Instagram posts. The blog is mentioned in several posts in the style: "I wrote more on the blog. Link in

bio.”



Picture 13 Post of @marjawickman posted 25.10. mention of the blog

Most benchmark accounts do not have a consistent quality or layout in their news feed images. The consistency of the news feed is likely to correlate with how much resources are available to manage the account. As a whole, the test group’s Instagram accounts had many different types of publications: photos, videos, Stories and Reels videos. Images were the most common type in each account.

The pace of release was quite variable, both between and within accounts. Several accounts often published every couple of days, but there could occasionally be a break of several days. Of the accounts in the study, only mialehikoinen posted content to Instagram every day. It was also regularly published by the modernistikodikas, who made posts every couple of days.

Posts are often pictures or videos of home and lifestyle related subjects. In particular, the publications of the accounts were often related to the progress of construction and those accounts that have been updated for a longer period of time, the focus was on the home decor and tips for example in terms of cleanliness. It would seem that, in a way, Instagram accounts act as a documentation tool in the same way as my own account, a so-called diary of construction progress or diary of the event and well-being of the days.

The accounts also had some advertising and commercial partnerships with organizations and companies of various sizes. Clearly, ads from larger companies show a certain kind of meaningful and graphic guidelines that are followed. The thought out layout of the collaborations fits well among the normal feed images and also it is a good reflection of the nature of the accounts. Commercial cooperation is marked at the beginning of the publication according to the instructions of the website: "Commercial cooperation with @xx company". Collaborations often states how the advertised product is meaningful for the influencer and the post describe one's own experiences and the benefits of the product.

The collaborations have been thought out and implemented with the follower segment in mind, and the products fit the subject area of the account. I found no collaborations from neither of the benchmarked influencers where the product would have not been a fit for the content of the account. These kind of collaborations can be seen sometimes in some influencers.

The length of the post varies, both between accounts and between posts. The most typical description, according to the study, would be a couple of sentences long, descriptive text.

Account descriptions are similar to small articles. The style of the description text reflects the brand: Short, introductory text draws the user's attention to the image. In particular, with collaborations, call-to-action, an expression of what the user is expected to do, had been used. For example, at the end of the posts, the questions posed to readers "what

kind of thoughts does the topic evoke in you?" This creates a low threshold for the follower to participate in the conversation, which again increases the engagement rate of the account.

The stories are used in these accounts somewhat, but in very different ways. They are specifically used to publish "behind-the-scenes" content. For example, instead of images, Stories are often in video format and take advantage of many different features, such as Boomerang. All of the accounts compiled its stories in the Highlights section. These highlights are a great advantage to save liked content, instead of letting them disappear after 24 hours.

Also, the number of hashtags varied within the same account. For most accounts, the number ranged from a few to ten. Sometimes very few hashtags were used, only a handful, or there could be as many as thirty, as in the case of the modern cozy. All accounts had some sort of custom hashtag that was used in almost all publications, such as the #modernistkodikas #villalehikko. In addition, a hashtag related to decorating or building an image, such as #rakentajat2020 or #modernijaskandinaavinensisustus, was often used. Surprisingly, the study found that no account had a specific formula for hashtags, but a random number of them were written to the description.

### Survey research results

The Survey was administered with the main point was the valuation of content creation for influencer marketing in 2021. The survey was targeted to Instagram influencers. It was possible to provide answers anonymously so that there was a lower threshold for answering not only truthful thoughts, but one's real life experiences as well. The study was conducted during the research project and there were total amount of 14 respondents with follower numbers ranging from 1,000 followers to 9,000 followers.

I administered the survey in my own Instagram account 23.2.2021 as series of four story posts, where I asked followers for help with answering to external Google Forms survey. With the help of my followers, I thought I would reach the most optimal number of influencers of all sizes. The survey questions consisted mostly with experiences of being influencer. The survey reached 1,525 viewers, but unfortunately I only got 14 responses to the survey. Although the number of participants was slightly lower than expected, there

was a relative representation of respondents at different levels of influencers. The percentages shown in the results are rounded to the nearest whole number.

The age distribution of the study participants was as follows:

- 18–25 years, 1 respondent
- 25–30 years, 5 respondents
- 31–35 years, 7 respondents
- 46–50-years, 1 respondent

93% said that they do influencer marketing as a hobby, one of the respondents as work part-time. Unfortunately, I did not reach professional influencers in the survey. However I got a lot of active influencers, updating Instagram regularly.

Ten of respondents (71%) said they publish content to the feed once or twice a week and. Stories they update more often, most of the respondents (57%) said they update their stories 3-5 days per week.

I asked the number of commercial collaborations of influencers and how often, on average, influential collaborations are implemented in the accounts. The highest response rates (33%) were a few times a year and every few months. Two of the respondents also responded that they make collaborations once a month or less. Since my respondents are hobby based influencers, most 44% have only been co-operating for a year or less with the collaboration companies.

There is a lot of differentiation in the selection criteria for commercial collaborations. The choice is clearly influenced by many factors, such as the size of the company, domesticity, the influencer's own values, the partner's values, remuneration, feeling and information about the interests of the followers. However, the majority of respondents identified the encounter of values as the most important criterion.

The second most common criterion was the knowledge that the partner's products and services are certainly of interest to followers. A few respondents also mentioned the reward as a criterion, e.g in cases where the company only offers a discount of its own products. Based on the results, the quality of the content and credibility achieved through the collaboration are seen as the most important factors. However amateur and hobby

based influencers mostly conduct the collaborations with product compensations, rather than actual salary compensation.

Five of the respondents (56%) have also registered on the influencer marketing site (e.g. Boksi app, Somessa.com etc)., where the influencer has the opportunity to find collaboration opportunities

The survey also asked about challenges, especially in relation to commercial collaborations. Among the challenges experienced were the fact that collaborations often do not have attractive content for followers and can even cause annoyance among the followers. Negotiation with companies and pressure on the success of the posting were also perceived as challenges.

The survey asked about the general feelings, both positive and negative ones of being influencer. The comments described many of the challenges that being influential poses. The positive aspects, on the other hand, described the good aspects very unambiguously and one of the respondents even answered money compensation as one of the positive sides of being influencer and also the possibility of growing this into side business.

The open responses described the challenges as follows:

*It takes a lot of time and the systematic nature of the postings has to continue all the time.*

*The time it takes*

*Spends a lot of time, heavy use of the phone is harmful to the neck (head bent forward)*

*Time. You can spend too much time on Instagram at times. And on the other hand, time is not always enough to get all the stuff done as you would like / be as active as I would like.*

*People with nothing but negative to say*

*Condemning and presenting others.*

*I have to invent something new all the time*

*Pressure to make publications many times a week*

*Pressures on what kind of images and texts to publish*

*My goal in the account follower volumes, commitment and joint work are getting pretty high and I am often anxious when I do not have time to produce enough high-quality and interesting content on the pace as I would like. Growing an account is challenging but rewarding. Communality brings me a lot of added value in doing this. I have a wonderful and supportive followers, of which I am truly grateful.*

On the other hand, there were lots of positive sides, when it comes to influencing. Most of the respondents answered sharing inspiration and interacting with others. Here are some to mention:

*Sharing inspiration with others*

*New ideas, peer support, financial compensation*

*Conversation with other like-minded people*

*Interacting with others, helping others, stays on trend*

*Interact with others! Definitely an interaction.*

*Spreading inspiration and positive energy*

*Commenting and sharing experiences with others, either in your own account or in someone else's account*

*Interact with followers, best feedback when someone has gotten a content boost for the day or help with something*

Surprisingly, the number of followers is not considered important, but at the same time it is not satisfied. There are no explanations for the importance of the results. The dissatisfaction of the number of followers is assumed to be linked to reachability and thus to the effectiveness of one's own account and the number of associations.

The survey also asked about certain areas that were asked to be ranked in order of priority. These areas were as follows: the number of followers, satisfied followers,

interaction with followers, number of commercial communities, reporting and tracking of own figures, visual appearance of content production. The main and highly appreciated criterion for influencers were satisfied followers and interaction with followers. These were raised as the most important factor from 64% of the respondents. Somewhat surprisingly, the number of followers was not perceived as such an important aspect. Only two respondents said it was very important and as many as 35% of respondents said that this aspect is not important at all or only very little important. The visual look is also perceived as a very important aspect, with 85% of respondents saying that a consistent and visual look on the account is quite or very important.

The engagement of followers is one important aspect. When asked about account engagement percentage. I added a percentage counter to the question to avoid getting "don't know" answers. The results were fairly evenly distributed. 36% responded with a commitment percentage of 6-10% and the same amount of 36% responded with a percentage of 11-20%. This is very typical of microinfluencers binding percentages. The larger the number of followers, the lower the percentage usually decreases.

## 5 CONCLUSION

Nowadays social media behaves as if the newspapers and magazines some decades ago, social media lets the consumer to break away from everyday life and seek inspiration when scrolling down the never ending content. Providing inspiration and visual stimuli is one of the most important features of content marketing - Especially for the social media used in marketing, as consumers seek inspiration from social media users for their own daily lives. Social media also acts as a kind of window into the lives of people or influencers who interest the consumer himself.

- How to strengthen Atriumpiha brand on Instagram

My goal was to grow my own Instagram account follower and influencer wise and learn more about the industry.

There are lots of interior and house design accounts are on Instagram, and follower numbers varies a lot. It is quite popular to follow construction related content in Instagram. Audience are interested in following the construction of large house projects since these followers are seeking inspiration to design their own home or house project.

Based on the benchmark study, I studied the growth of accounts into influencer accounts over a longer period of time. All the accounts have been built from the same perspective as mine, from building the house to growing into an interior design account. The personal brand has strengthened along the way and it's been developed throughout the growth journey of the account.

Based on the study and my own observation many influencers are still working without planning it too much, but for branding purposes and strenghtening the brand image, it would be relevant to plan ahead and especially to brighten the idea around planning and the follower segment. Clarifying the target audience and answering questions "what and to whom?" play a key role.

For Atriumpiha followers, the steps involved in building and sharing relevant tips generate the most likes and responses.

The public is interested in the costs associated with construction and an honest talk about the various stages of construction, which they feel will be of clear benefit to their own project. In order the account to succeed and gain new engaged followers, the content needs to be clearly designed and include topics relevant to followers.

- How to effectively increase followers for case company?

When writing the thesis, I noticed how effective and versatile marketing is influential marketing. The main benefit is the well targeted masses, that influencer has and that can be seen as a huge advantage for companies when naturally the company wants to target the product as precise audience as possible.

Content marketing aims to increase customer confidence in the company, as expert, instructive and creative content convinces potential buyers. In content marketing, the idea is to start with the benefits that the target audience gets from the content. The benefit must be offered to the customer first and only then can the company mutually benefit in some way. If you don't think about the benefit to the customer, there is really no point in doing content marketing.

From influencer perspective, working on social media is challenging and fame cannot be taken as granted. However starting is easy and cost-free. The only requirement is to spend huge deal of time on it. Different channels need to produce regular content with different tools and programs. Scheduling work and scheduling posts are possible, but it still takes time and consistency to manage the audience and engage followers to keep following week after week and year after year. Influencers are somewhat always achievable, since social media is never closed.

Most influencers need to think carefully about what kind of companies, products and services they should promote to their followers. This creates an overall image of the influencer for the audience. This will affect the image either positively or negatively, in other words, losing followers or gain engagement through the followers.

- What are the key variables as the content creator need to focus on?

After following the development of influencer marketing and developing one by myself, I have got to say that one is not able to be born an influencer overnight. It requires regular use of social media as well as a lot of work and activity. One aspect is that social media never sleeps and there you are always available.

The influencer should focus on relevance, engagement, authenticity and frequency. These variables improve an account's discoverability and reaction rates. The account must be genuine and as it's best, stand out from the crowd. One can make content that everyone else does, but creating authentic content that is different from everyone else is what makes a follower return time after time. The more often one is posting content, the better the reach. Instagram algorithms prefer frequently produced content.

In social media content creation, interaction should not be forgotten: Active and reciprocal communication can be seen as an attractive behaviour of a content creator. Social activities on Instagram can be divided into following, liking, commenting and sharing. By following other users on Instagram, the user can draw their attention.

It is always beneficial for an influencer to think about the starting point around the core of their own brand. Doing collaborations, it is necessary to think about how the company or product fits to the created brand and whether it is a real benefit for the followers. The follower segment must be clear and crystallized core of the content production. Advertising a single product or service in every message, or post, negatively affects reach and engagement. No one can tolerate full-time advertising, even if the source is a best friend.

My work experience around this topic, social media skills and digital marketing studies eventually gave me a good ability to carry out this research and thesis. This work taught me a lot of new knowledge about social media use as well as personal branding on social media.

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## INCREASING ENGAGEMENT RATE

### 1. Maintain consistent branding

Maintaining consistency with your content is extremely important. Username should be similar or the same to your other social media usernames. Content should visually be consistent as well, and you should have a format that you use for all of your posts. When you have a similar look, your profile becomes aesthetically pleasing and users can recognize your photos as a consistent brand.

### 2. Understand your audience.

Developing Instagram personas is a helpful tool for increasing your engagement rate. If you know who your followers are, creating content that they want makes them more likely to engage with you. You can use Instagram Insights to get a demographic understanding of your followers.

### 3. Post regularly.

Once you know your target audience, post content they'll enjoy and do it regularly. Average brand posts 1.5 times per day. Again, this metric is an average, and it may not work for everyone. It's also important to know the best times to post for your followers. Do keep in mind that quantity doesn't equal quality, which brings us to the next engagement raising strategy.

### 4. Create better captions.

Use the brand voice you've developed to sound consistent and keep your intended audience in mind. You can create short captions that are serious or light-hearted.

Since engagement metrics factor in the length of time users spend on your posts, consider alternating shorter and longer captions.

Captions can hold up to 30 hashtags per post, but there must be a balance. Your hashtags should be a mix of popular and specific, long-tailed keywords.

### 5. Engage with your followers.

Reply to comments that your followers make. Your followers will be excited that you interact with them, as engagement may signify a personal relationship with your brand.

Engaging with your followers also entails sharing their content on your site, known as user-generated content (UGC). Surfing through your brand-specific hashtags can help you find users that are posting about you. You can screenshot their content to share on your story, and even post on your feed.

6. Engage with similar accounts.

Using the platform to engage with accounts similar to yours is extremely important. Commenting on industry-standard accounts can give you exposure to users in that same comment section, and they may click your profile and become new followers.

7. Create mixed content.

There are five types of content posts supported on Instagram: photos, videos, Instagram TV (IGTV), Instagram Reels and Instagram Stories. It's no longer enough to just post photos; you need to do all of it.

8. Use calls-to-action (CTAs).

A CTA is an image, line of text, hashtag, or swipe-up-link that is meant to entice your audience to take action – hence the call-to-action.

While links to other sites don't directly impact your Instagram engagement rate, they still require users to spend more time on your profile, and you can convert them into leads on other platforms.

9. Track your statistics.

Tracking your progress is extremely important, and it should be something you focus on. Trial and error is expected, and it should be used to inform your current and future strategies. Use your preferred CRM to find your most effective posts or pieces of content and use the strategy employed in those for your next content posts. (Needle, 2020)

## INSTAGRAM SURVEY

I currently write thesis of content - and influencer marketing on Instagram, and I am very grateful, if you have a moment to answer the following questions.

I study influencer marketing and personal branding from a content marketing perspective.

All the answers are very valuable for my work, and I appreciate your time to participate in the survey.

Try to answer the survey as truthfully as possible. The following questions will be used to map your experiences or opinions about the marketing factors of influencers. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions.

You can always send me a message directly on Instagram @atriumpiha or email [atriumpiha@gmail.com](mailto:atriumpiha@gmail.com) If you wish, I can also share the results of the survey with you.

1. 1. Name or IG account (you can stay anonymous as well)

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2. 2. Gender

*Mark only one oval.*

- Female  
 Male  
 I rather not answer

3. 3. Age? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Under 18  
 18-25  
 25-30  
 31-35  
 36-40  
 41-45  
 46-50  
 50-60  
 61+

4. Choose one category that describes your content production and / or under which you act as an influencer?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Fashion / beauty
- Lifestyle
- Travel
- Food / baking
- Family / kids
- Home / interior
- Handicraft
- Exercise and well-being

5. On average, how many days a week do you post content to your feed?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Less than once a week
- 1-2 per week
- 3-5 per week
- 6-10 per week

6. Kuinka monena päivänä viikossa luot sisältöä Instagram Storiesiin?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Less than once a week
- 1-2 per week
- 3-5 per week
- 5-6 per week
- Every day

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7. Is influencing to you?

*Mark only one oval.*

- A hobby
- Part-time job
- Full day job

8. How many followers do you have?

*Mark only one oval.*

- under 500
- 500-1000
- 1000-2000
- 3000-5000
- 6000-9000
- 10K - 15K
- 16K - 25K
- over 26 K

9. What is your engagement rate? If you don't know, you can check it, for example, from this site: <https://www.tanke.fr/en/instagram-engagement-rate-calculator-2/>

*Mark only one oval.*

- 1-3 %
- 4-5 %
- 6-10%
- 11-20%
- 21-30%
- yli 30%
- I don't know

10. On average, how many people does one post in your feed reach?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Under 500
- 500 - 1000
- 1001-5000
- 5001-10 000
- 10 001 -50 000
- 50 001 - 100 000
- 100 001 - 200 000
- 200 001 - 500 000
- Over 500 000
- I dont know

11. On average, how many viewers does your Instagram Stories have?

*Mark only one oval.*

- 100-500
- 501-1000
- 1001-3000
- 3001-7000
- 7001-10 000
- 10 001 - 30 000
- 30 001 - 50 000
- 50 001 - 100 000
- Over 100 000
- I dont know

## 12. How important is it to you as an influencer? \*

Mark only one oval per row.

	Not important at all	Very little important	I don't know	Fairly important	Very important
Number of followers	<input type="radio"/>				
Satisfied followers	<input type="radio"/>				
Interaction with followers	<input type="radio"/>				
Number of commercial collaborations	<input type="radio"/>				
Reporting and monitoring of own stats	<input type="radio"/>				
The visual look of content production	<input type="radio"/>				

## 13. Do you make commercial collaborations? If not, you can skip the question: 22

Mark only one oval.

- No  
 Yes

## 14. How long have you been making or producing commercial content?

Mark only one oval.

- Less than a year  
 1-3 years  
 4-6 years  
 7-10 years  
 yli 10 years

15. 15. On average, how often do you make commercial content on Instagram? (which describes the pace closest)

*Mark only one oval.*

- 1-2 per week
- 3-5 per week
- 2 times per month
- 3-5 per month
- Once in a month or less
- Every few months
- Few times in a year

16. 16. How does commercial cooperation usually start?

*Check all that apply.*

- I approach the company
- The company approaches to me
- Through influencer marketing agency
- Something else

17. 17. If you answered otherwise, would you tell me how? You can also open different situations in details?

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18. Have you registered in to the website of the influencer marketing agency to search for or get opportunities for collaborations? (E.g Boksi.app / Somessa.com)

*Mark only one oval.*

- En ole
- Olen

19. Do you use professional help for content production? What kind?

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20. When and why would you refuse to cooperate?

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21. What do you think is the most challenging or problematic in commercial collaborations?

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22. What are the best things of being an influencer?

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23. What are the disadvantages of being an influencer?

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24. If you want, tell me more thoughts or anything you like about the topic? If you wish, you can also leave me your e-mail address if you want to discuss more about the topic.

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