



Social Media Marketing Plan for a non-profit organization

Case company: Erasmus Student Network

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Abstract

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<p>The Internet is vital in people's lives as well as business nowadays. In fact, social media marketing is considered one of the most effective ways of advertising and an essential tool to build up a reputation online.</p> <p>This product-based thesis was commissioned by ESN Helga, a non-profit student organization in Helsinki, Finland. The need for this thesis stems from the fact that the organization's current marketing activities are unplanned and spontaneous. The main objective of the thesis was to create a social media marketing plan.</p> <p>The knowledge base of the thesis covers the concept of social media marketing, its benefits for businesses, the most popular platforms and current trends as social media marketing is rapidly changing. The social media marketing frameworks were studied and the most suitable for the case company was chosen and described.</p> <p>By analyzing the current online performance of the case company, combining it with the gained knowledge and adapting practices from other organizations, the social media marketing plan was created. It includes social media audit, practical recommendations and improvements, tactics and different tools that will help to improve the performance.</p>
Keywords Social media marketing, marketing plan, content, social media platforms

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1 Introduction

This is a plan for a product-based bachelor's thesis for the degree program in International Sales and Marketing taught at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. This chapter briefly introduces the topic of the thesis, background and the case company. After that, the project objective is defined and tasks to achieve it are described. The expected results and limitations are discussed to give the reader a clearer view of the thesis structure. Key concepts are explained later to ensure the understanding of basic concepts used in the thesis.

1.1 Background of the thesis

Social media has not only become the central platform for social networking but also the most influential virtual space to promote brands and products. With the power of social media, a more significant number of engagements and reach among your target audience can be achieved. (Henderson 2020.)

This thesis is related to my work in Erasmus Student Network, where I worked for one year and six months in total. I started as an Event Coordinator and, in November 2020, was elected as a new Communication Manager, where online presence has become my responsibility. Erasmus Student Network is one of the biggest student associations in Europe. ESN Helga, the commissioner, is the local representative at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki, Finland. The organization supports and develops the student exchange from different levels and provides an intercultural experience. The most visible part of the work is events and trips. ESN is a non-profit organization, and the work is voluntary. All the profits are re-invested into developing new events and supporting the needs of the employees.

Before the world pandemic started in 2020, all of the events were offline, and ESN Helga participated actively in the life of exchange students and their visibility was on a high level. From March 2020, part of the events were moved online, but in January 2021, with the new semester started ESN Helga did not have a chance to meet new exchange students face-to-face and the communication turned fully online. As social media have not been used before as the main channel for communication, there was no strategy created earlier and without face-to-face promotion, the online events were not successful. After that, the company began deploying social media to increase brand awareness.

As the case company of this thesis does not have an actual plan for its actions on social media, a social media marketing plan was chosen to be the topic of this thesis. The topic is relevant because the company currently has low visibility on social media and ESN Helga wants to improve its actions in this area in order to provide better service to more students. Finally, the topic was chosen because currently, the role and effectiveness of social media and the opportunities that social media offers cannot be ignored in the times when face-to-face communications are limited due to the pandemic and restrictions. Narrowing down the needs and possibilities makes it easier to build a real plan for its social media efforts.

1.2 Project Objective

This project aims to improve social media marketing activities by having a well-structured social media marketing plan. Hence, the project objective of this thesis is to **create a social media marketing plan for ESN Helga.**

ESN is one of the biggest student organizations and the primary support for students in their exchange destination means that by activating its presence in social media, ESN Helga can unlock many potentials to provide a better service. Well-planned social media activities and thoughtful usage of its marketing possibilities can attract more customers and increase brand visibility. A comprehensive social media marketing plan is also a strategically planned tool to organize the work of future employees that can be used as a guideline.

1.3 Development Methods

After establishing the main objective, it is beneficial to think about and create tasks that will help to reduce the broader focus of the main objective by dividing it into smaller tasks.

In order to achieve the objective, there are five project tasks that need to be done.

Task 1. Establishing the knowledge base for the social media marketing plan

In order to create a plan, it is crucial to gain critical understandings of the topic from reliable sources. The knowledge base includes the definition and benefits of social media usage for brands as well as current trends. The solid base of the topic with the relevant information will be later used as a reference when creating the plan.

Task 2. Find a suitable social media marketing plan framework for the case company

There are many ways to create a social media marketing plan. It is important to find, analyze, and utilize the framework to suit the commissioning company and cover their needs.

Task 3. Analyzing the current social media presence of the company

Understanding and establishing current problems and pain points of the company is fundamental in order to create a social media marketing plan. For a deeper understanding, the company's online presence will be analyzed from two points of view.

The first one is the company's point of view that will be gained by interviewing the vice president of the company Emilia Oksanen and my personal observations during my work in ESN Helga. The interview aims to understand the needs and pain points that the company sees itself and how they want to be presented to students.

The next is the customer's point of view and it will be collected by creating an online survey among the target group. The questionnaire consists of two parts. One focuses on their personal experience and how they perceived ESN Helga and their activities in social networks when the second part will investigate what they are willing to see and what attracts them when using social media.

A combination of those insights will help make a SWOT analysis to establish the strategy for the social media marketing plan.

Task 4. Creating a social media marketing plan

Based on the information gained in the theoretical part and insights, the social media marketing plan will be created following the chosen framework. It will include social media analysis and benchmarking from the other non-profit organizations, step by step developing the plan. In the end the major guidelines and suggestions will be added.

Task 5. Designing the handbook for the commissioner

The purpose of this task is to adapt the gained information from the social media marketing plan and design a handbook to present to the organization as the final product. The manual will be short, clear, straightforward and can be used to educate the employees.

1.4 Project Scope

The project's scope is decided after discussing it with the president of the case company Julia Holmberg. First, this thesis focuses mainly on developing current social media platforms and communication channels and excludes aspects related to other types of marketing. Second, the target group is already defined and concerns only people coming on student exchange and international students in Haaga-Helia University. However, this does not mean that the study only focuses on current students. The opinions and experiences of international students and other ESN sections will be taken into consideration to combine the insights. Third, the obtained number of answers to the survey is planned to be at least 100 respondents, but it might not be as big as planned due to the world pandemic, remote studies and no possibility to reach students face-to-face. But as the respondents will be particular and only from the target group, even smaller result is highly valuable. Fourth, due to the cancellation of the events and trips this semester and time restraints, the actual implementation of the plan is excluded. The project will result in the creation of a social media marketing plan handbook.

1.5 Thesis structure

The thesis has five parts. The thesis starts with introducing the background of the thesis and the case company. The introductory section presents the background of the thesis, objective and discloses tasks. That is followed by an explanation of the development methods, project scope and key concepts.

The second chapter focuses on research on the theory about social media marketing and what is critical in creating a social media plan. It overviews the current trends in SMM and establishing what are the focus areas in social media marketing for the case company.

The third chapter introduces the company and the analysis of the current situation in relation to social media. It includes insights from Emilia Oksanen, vice president of ESN Helga and presents the results of a web survey taken among exchange students.

The fourth chapter includes the developed social media marketing plan for ESN Helga and the implementation tactics.

The last chapter summarizes the outcome of the thesis as well as the commissioner's feedback and my own reflection.

1.6 Key Concepts

The key concepts for this thesis are social media, social media marketing plan.

Social Media – "The type of World Wide Web (WWW) application, such as blogs, microblogs, social networking sites or video-, image- and filesharing platforms or wikis" (Fuchs 2021, 26).

Social Media Marketing plan – "Any type of marketing that takes place on social media platforms" (Ward 2020).

2 Concept of Social Media Marketing

SMM (Social Media Marketing) is the process of increasing traffic and attracting attention to a brand by promoting it on social media. The interest in Social Media Marketing is confirmed by the awareness of marketing, advertising and public relations specialists. In recent years there was a lot of literature, articles and academic papers on the subject. The websites related to marketing are filled with sections explaining the concept and how to use this tool for promotion properly. In addition, the relevance of the topic is confirmed by the growing demand for SMM specialists in the market. (Hayes 2018.)

The reason for my personal interest in the topic is that I had observed not successful usage of Social Media Marketing while working in the case company. I wanted to study the theoretical basis of social media promotion and the practical experience of the market leaders to understand what had been overlooked and create a social media plan that will help the company in the future.

2.1 Benefits of Social Media Marketing

Social Media Marketing has accelerated over the last decade and so as its' possibilities for businesses. Some of the main objectives of social media for marketers are brand awareness and brand building, customer acquisition and sales promotion as it is shown in Figure 1. (Moorman 2019).

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PRIORITIES	% COMPANIES USING
Brand awareness and brand building	88.2
New product introduction	64.7
New customer acquisition	60.1
Brand promotions (e.g., sales promotions, contests)	59.2
Customer retention	55.5
Customer service	40.8
Employee engagement	35.3
Market research	33.6
Targeting new markets	25.6
Identifying new product opportunities	17.2

Figure 1. Top priorities for businesses using social media (Moorman 2019)

Compared to traditional marketing, when the focus is on mass-marketing and the approach is less personalized, social media marketing focuses on the connection and interaction with customers, making it more personalized (Nations 2017).

According to the Social Media Marketing Report from 2018 significant number of marketers highlighted that the main benefits of Social Media Marketing had increased exposure and traffic, generated leads, developed loyal fans, improved sales and grew business partnerships (Stelzner 2018).

Social media promotion is not suitable for every purpose or every product or service. It is ideal for brand promotion and dialogue with customers. However, when consumers are looking for a particular product, they are more likely to turn to a search engine.

For non-profit organizations, social media marketing is essential. Social networks give companies opportunities to reach their audience, communicate and promote their activities using free tools.

2.2 Main Social Media platforms

There are many various social media platforms nowadays. Tracy L. Tuten (2021) defines four zones of Social Media: Community, Publishing, Commerce and Entertainment. In the figure 2, the main channels for each zone are shown. The case company is related to the Community zone as it is focused on relationships and common activities so that the main social media channels will be from this group.



Figure 2. Social Media Zones and Exemplar Vehicles, (Tuten, 2021)

According to the recent study by Statista, the leading platforms for B2C marketers in 2021 are Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter. These social networks will be described in the following chapters.

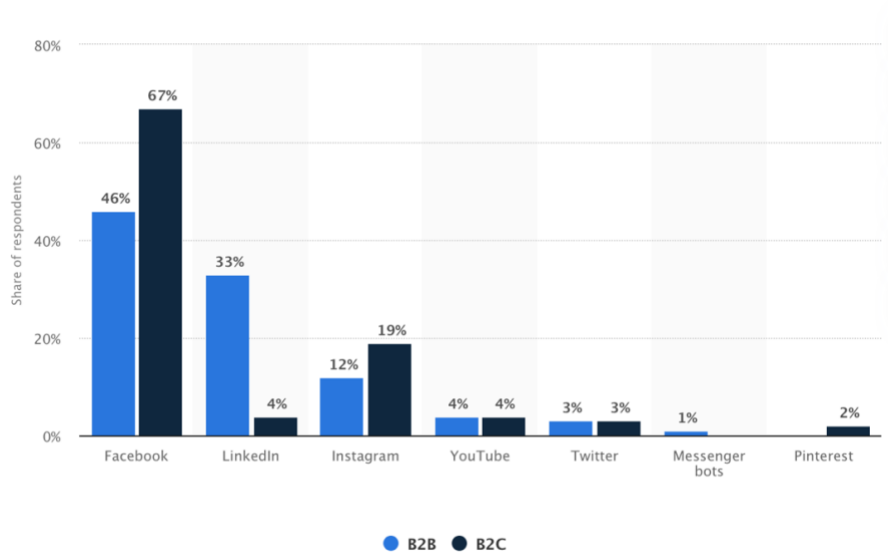


Figure 3. Most important social media platforms for B2B and B2C marketers worldwide (Statista 2021)

2.2.1 Facebook

Facebook is the most popular social network across the world, with more than 2.8 billion monthly active users and 1.8 billion users that are visiting the site daily. According to eMarketer, 59% of social media users are registered on Facebook. (Moshin 2021).

There are several ways to use this platform, as Facebook works well with many types of content. Facebook business account that can be upgraded for free gives access to in-depth analytics and powerful advertisement tools. It is crucial for businesses to include a call to action in their posts. This means an invitation to participate, such as "click to learn more", "like if you agree", etc. (Kuligowski, 2021.)

Facebook is beneficial when it comes to organizing events. The platform has many functions starting from making an event page, easy process of inviting participants and finishing with the latest feature, "online events," which is perfect for online streaming and webinars. (Facebook for Business 2021.)

2.2.2 LinkedIn

Often cited as "the world's largest professional network on the Internet," LinkedIn is currently one of the fastest-growing social media platforms (Social Media Examiner 2020). The social network now has nearly 740 million members and over 55 million registered companies, 40% of the users access the site daily (Osman 2021).

Pew Research Center (2021) study found out that LinkedIn is actively used by college students compared to the people of same age without education. This gives excellent opportunities for the case company to reach the target audience, however the specific nature of this social network should be considered.

2.2.3 Instagram

Instagram is a platform with visual content such as videos and photos. It also has different features like "stories" – content that disappears after 24 hours or later can be saved in folders, live streams, IGTV – videos longer than one minute, Reels – 15 seconds entertaining videos as well as in-app editing tools. It is highly recommended to have a specific theme when making a profile on Instagram, put the effort in the visual side, pay attention to quality, use hashtags, and engage with the audience (Coles 2017,122.)

2.2.4 Twitter

Twitter is a platform for microblogging that allows users to create posts maximum of 140 characters long. Currently, it has over 353 million monthly active users. It is commonly used for quick sharing, conversations, and a listening tool about the newest happenings in the chosen interest area. (Coles 2017, 84.)

According to Pew Research Center, 80% of tweets are created by 10% of the users and the largest age group is 30 to 49 (Hughes 2019). Twitter is a great platform to discuss events and breaking news. Still, due to low popularity among the younger audience and specific types of publications, it will not be a profitable option for the case company.

2.2.5 YouTube

YouTube is a video hosting platform with almost 5 billion videos watched on it daily. Videos that are catching attention and getting viral can give great exposure to the company. Nowadays, social networks are full of different kinds of content and it is a big challenge to get people's attention. (Coles 2017, 107.)

YouTube is great for larger companies that can invest in high-quality content and have a need and possibility to share videos that will trigger the viewers. Creating a video takes a lot of time and knowledge and can easily be a failure if it will not attract people. (Coles 2017, 108.)

2.2.6 TikTok

TikTok is the fastest-growing application today launched in 2016 to create and share short videos up to one minute long and has over 689 million monthly active users. In comparison, TikTok gained the same number of users in three years as it took Instagram in six years and Facebook in more than four years. In Q1 2019 it was ranked as the top most downloaded application in iOS App Store and 62% of TikTok users are aged between 10 and 29 years. (Moshin 2021.)

With easy in-app editing, no necessity for high-quality videos and great algorithms, it makes TikTok a powerful advertisement tool among the younger audience.

2.3 Current Social Media Trends

Social media is rapidly changing, and it is important to follow new updates and trends for businesses and constantly review their strategies and evolve accordingly.

According to an annual internet report by Cisco (2020), a networking software developer, by 2022, 82% of all the content in social networks will be in a video format. That shows that companies should focus on video content and invest in its' quality.

One of the good examples of video format currently trending is Instagram Stories, with over 500 million users interacting with this feature daily. Although it is still essential to take a more organized approach and plan Stories on the same level as regular posts, stay unique and persistent. 51% of brands already actively using this feature for promotion and this number will continue growing in the future. (Zote 2021.)

Augmented reality is another feature that attracts people nowadays due to social distancing and remote lifetime. This current technological trend provides customers with meaningful interactions. AR does not require additional hardware besides a regular smartphone what makes it easy to engage with. One of the examples of applying AR

technologies to social media strategy is creating promotional filters in social networks. (Zote 2021.)

Personalization and human approach are global consumer trends for the last few years, and they will continue the same way. It includes user-generated content as it is free and considered more authentic than branded content. It cannot be denied that inclusivity is important nowadays. (Influencer Marketing Hub 2021.) Accenture (2019) found that 29% of all customers tend to prefer brands that are committed to inclusivity and diversity.

Overall, brands are going to be more authentic and transparent. The more open conversation they are having with their audience, the more they listen to the feedback and needs of their clients, the higher the trust level will be approached. (Zote 2021.)

2.4 Social Media Marketing plan structure

A solid social media marketing plan is the most crucial action to improve a company's performance online. There are eight core steps described as Social Media Marketing Cycle and it is important to follow those steps to avoid poor planning and failure in future implementation. (Barker, Barker, Bormann & Z., R. 2017, 317.)



Figure 4. Social Media Marketing Planning Cycle (Barker & al. 2017)

2.4.1 Social Media presence observation

The first step in the cycle is analyzing the current situation to determine strong and weak spots along with relevant opportunities and threats that can be done by SWOT analysis. This can be done by answering the questions listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Profiling an Organization's Social Media Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Strengths (Barker & al. 2017)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has the organization a proven track record on social media platforms? - Is the staff enthusiastic about working with social media platforms? - Are all the company's efforts monitored? - Does the company have a variety of social media properties? - Does the company have unique products or services? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the organization have a weak brand presence online? - Is the track record on social media spotty? - Does the organization lack sufficient expertise? - Is the staff apathetic about working with platforms? - Does the company lack distinctive products?
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which social media platforms have the greatest concentration of the target audience? - What does the target market do on these sites? - Do they have unfulfilled needs on these platforms? - What do customers value about the company? - What social media technologies provide opportunities for the company? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the company behind in adopting new technologies? - What do the customers dislike about the company? - Who are the company's direct competitors on the major social media platforms? - What social media strategies and tactics that competitors pursue on these platforms?

After profiling all the factors, it is possible to determine a strategy in the SWOT matrix. In the book "Social Media Marketing: A Strategic Approach" by Barker & al. identify four SWOT options:

- S-O strategy – following opportunities of the company that matches strengths in their social media

- W-O strategy – overcoming weaknesses in their performance to follow the opportunities
- S-T strategy – finding the way to adapt the strengths of the company to reduce its vulnerability to external threats
- W-T strategy – reducing the weaknesses by protecting from external threats

2.4.2 Setting Goals

After major analysis, it is important to set main goals and objectives. With goals it is, possible to measure success and ROI. One of the best frameworks for determining goals is "S.M.A.R.T.", standing for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound. (Newberry & LePage 2020.)

The goal should focus on specific problems and its effectiveness should be measurable. It can be monitored in a variety of ways, such as quantitative or qualitative methods. If the result is achieved, it should improve the effectiveness of the work. The marketing team should be responsible for the issues and specific deadlines should be set for achieving the goal. (Swan 2020.)

2.4.3 Identifying audience

Although the target group could be already pre-determined, the audience's behavior and interests can differ online from offline. It is essential to understand the demographics, interests, needs, tastes, behavior and habits. (Barker & al 2017, 329.)

This can be done by creating a buyer persona, a detailed description of someone who represents the target group. As the target audience can be very diverse and have different needs, several buyer personas could be created. This allows tracking down the wants and needs of the customers and approaches the audience in a specific manner suitable for each segment. (Newberry 2020.)

2.4.4 Social Media Audit

If the company already has social media, it is crucial to analyze previous work. The social media audit gives a clear picture of the purposes of each social media the company is already using and utilize them if the purpose is not clear. During the audit process it is important to understand what is working and what is not, who is engaging with the content,

which social networks are mostly used by the target group and who are competitors. (Newberry & LePage 2020.)

Adjusting the social media channels makes a significant influence on overall communication with the audience. By conducting the audit, it will be possible to measure audience presence and their usage of the company's platforms. (Newberry & LePage 2020.)

2.4.5 Setting up accounts

After completing the social media audit, it is necessary to decide which social media networks would work the best for determined needs. Hootsuite, a social media management platform, recommends creating a specific mission for each chosen network and formulate it in one sentence to focus on individual goals. If it is impossible to develop a factual statement, it is better to reconsider usage of these networks to avoid stretching the possibilities thin trying to maintain a presence on every network. (Newberry & LePage 2020.)

2.4.6 Inspiration

Benchmarking is a great tool to draw inspiration from successful companies but still stay unique. It could be competitors or companies from an absolutely different field; the main idea is to combine the findings and create an exceptional mix. When searching for examples, it is important to notice if the accounts have a consistent voice, tone and style. Understanding what to expect from the account is the core of the decision-making process for the customers. (Newberry & LePage 2020.)

2.4.7 Content Calendar

Besides the quality and relevance of the content, persistence is equally important. Creating a content calendar ensures that the content will be published at the right place and time and gives an overview of what the feed would look like overall. It is essential to leave some space for spontaneous activities as well. (Newberry & LePage 2020.)

In addition, it is also crucial to determine the right content mix and should reflect the mission statement of each social network. There are two basic types of content mix to start with, one is the "80-20" rule, where 80% is educational, informative and entertaining content and 20% directly promotes the company. The other option is "the social media rule

of thirds", where content purposes are divided equally. In this method, one-third promotes business, one-third of content shares professional opinion and one-third is interacting with the audience directly. (Newberry & LePage 2020.)

2.4.8 Evaluation and adjustment

After implementing the plan, it is recommended to track the strategy's effectiveness and make notes on the areas that are not working correctly or otherwise working better than expected. Collecting this data on a regular basis leads to a constant re-evaluation of the strategy. By testing out various kinds of content and collecting feedback, it is possible to identify what works and what does not. Surveys are another helpful tool for managing data directly from the audience. (Newberry & LePage 2020.)

Social media is a very changing environment; new networks emerge, others go through demographic shifts. So do the businesses and social media plan should be a living document adjusted to new upcoming changes. (Newberry & LePage 2020.)

3 Case Company Erasmus Student Network Helga

This chapter will introduce the case company Erasmus Student Network Helga and specifications that apply to it. The information about the company was gathered from my personal observation while working there, survey that was taken among exchange students and insights from the vice president of ESN Helga Emilia Oksanen, who was interviewed for this thesis.

The commissioning company is a local representative of Erasmus Student Network in Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. It was established in 2002 and since then provides services for incoming exchange students. The company is non-profit, the employees work as volunteers and do not receive any material rewards. The board members are chosen among current students of Haaga-Helia University on the annual election every year and each member have a specific role. The company currently has seven board members, the number of employees varies every year. (ESN Helga 2021.)

ESN Helga operates under Helga, the student union of Haaga-Helia and receives budget from it as well as the profits from sales and sponsorships. This money is later invested in maintaining the company, event organization and other needs. ESN provides services only for Haaga-Helia students, sometimes organizes joint events in collaboration with ESN Helsinki (five sections from leading universities in Helsinki Region). Besides its own events, ESN Helga promotes trips organized by travel agency Timetravels that provides several annual trips for students each semester. All advertisement is organized through internal channels: own social media channels, Helga and other Haaga-Helia student unions, other ESN sections, sponsors.

3.1 Company Insights

Emilia Oksanen, the company's vice president, highlighted that before COVID-19 online presence was not as important as it is now for ESN. Nowadays, it has definitely become the number one way the section communicates with exchange students due to the inability to meet in real life. (Oksanen 9 April 2021.)

"Before COVID-19 in offline, we had this image of us being the partygoers, very fun and very communicative. We were very much known to have great parties because that was our number one way of us interacting with the students. Everyone had this very bubbly and lively image of us." – that is how Emilia Oksanen (2021) describes the brand image of ESN Helga before the pandemic.

Due to the inability to host offline events, the vice president said that the company's brand image could be described as a reliable source of information, which is very opposite to the previous image. "Obviously, because of actual governmental reasons, we are not allowed to host parties, but I do feel like the fun part which has been very well known of ESN Helga is really missing". The company mentioned that before the pandemic goes down and they will not have this constant need to share restrictions updates and the actual events will become a norm again, it is imperative for ESN to harmonize the responsible and fun part of their online presence and embrace the idea that ESNers are also students and going through the same problems. (Oksanen 9 April 2021.)

ESN Helga highlighted that they want to be seen in communication with exchange students as broadminded, so having a very broad spectrum of different cultures and how they perceive communication, how they communicate with each other. Having an open and transparent dialogue between the section itself and with the exchange students. And clear communication, so as simple sentences and understandable communication as possible. (Oksanen 9 April 2021.)

When it comes to communication, during Coronavirus since it is such a huge thing that has affected the company, in the interview, Emilia Oksanen mentioned that as a vice president, the number one way that she wants ESN Helga to be represented in social media is responsible, communicative and a safe space. "We are forced to do all of this remotely, so of course, we want to be responsible and give them as much information about COVID and the current situation of the pandemic in Finland. However, we also want to be like a safety net that they can feel like they can fall into if they are struggling, would it then be with studying or mental health or physical health or living in Finland or anything else. We want to be there so they can think that "oh, I can go and ask them, and they will help me", so someone that is there for them even though we can physically be there.". (Oksanen 9 April 2021.)

3.2 Survey Results

The online survey was conducted via Webropol service. The questionnaire was sent strictly to Haaga-Helia exchange and international students. I have managed to reach 01 students who participated in the survey, including current and past exchange students, what gives a broad view on the ESN Helga online performance. The survey consisted of 15 questions, where part of the questions was focused on overall experience and communication with ESN Helga and part was investigating the needs of exchange

students. The preferred social networks, communication channels and their taste in design were examined. The questionnaire answers will be discussed more in the next chapter.

4 Social Media Marketing Plan

This chapter includes the research and development plan for social media for the case company Erasmus Student Network Helga. The plan follows the Social Media Marketing Cycle as well as includes a summary written with the use of 4 steps social media strategy template created by Lasse Rouhiainen, lecturer in Haaga-Helia University. The handbook that contains guidelines for the commissioner is attached in the appendix.

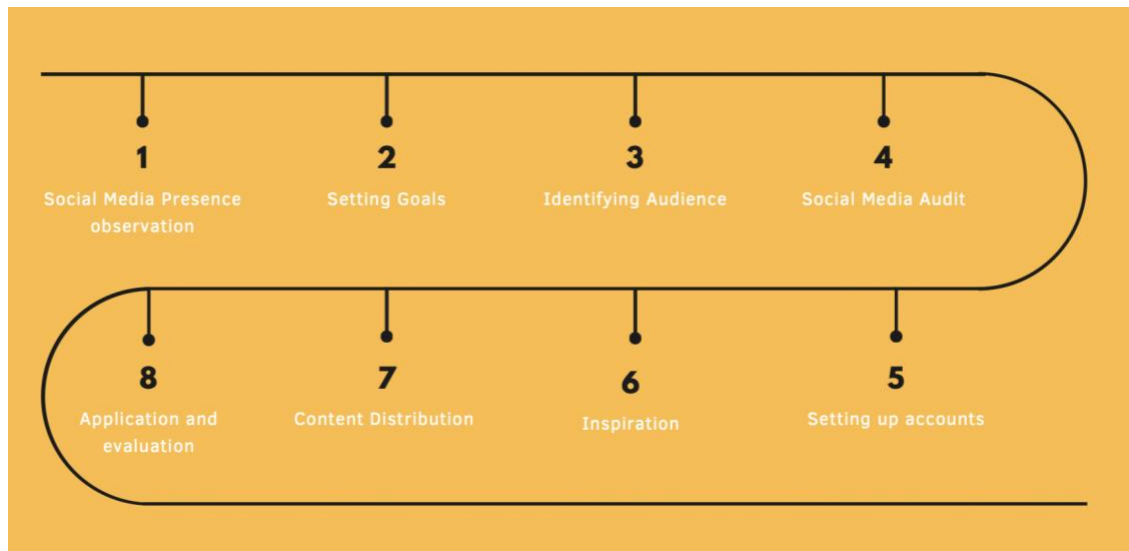


Figure 5, Social Media Marketing plan structure

4.1 Observation

It is essential first to analyze the current situation and determine pain points for future improvement. All existing social media platforms were analyzed and listed, based on them and insights from the company, the SWOT analysis was created.

4.1.1 Current Social Media Presence

ESN Helga currently has four social media channels which are Instagram, Facebook, own website and email. The content is mainly created for Instagram and then is distributed to Facebook. The website was not updated since 2020 and also, during the browsing process was found Twitter account that is not active since 2013 and is not mentioned anywhere besides the website.

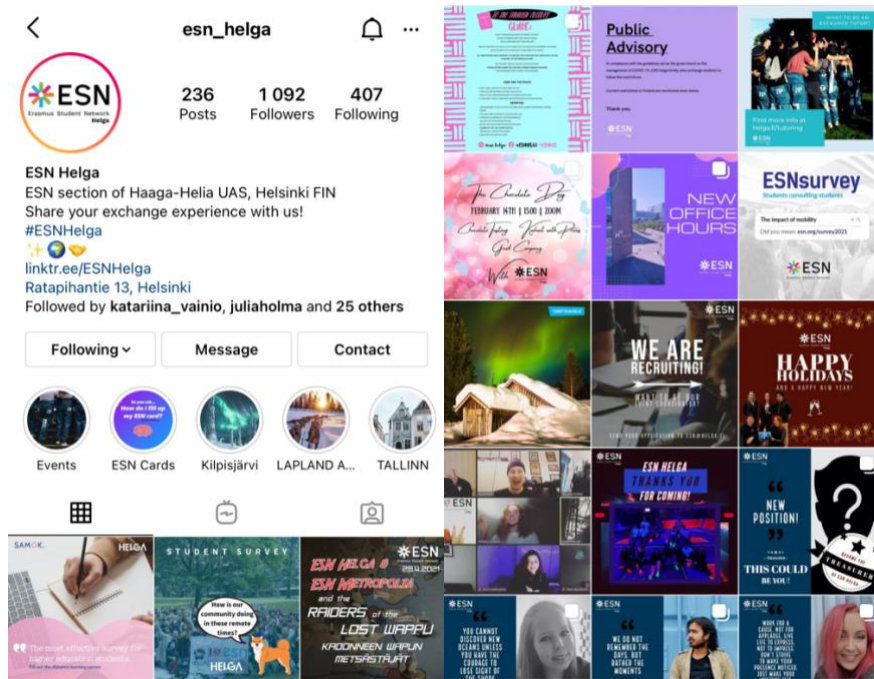


Figure 6. ESN Helga Instagram account

ESN Helga Instagram account as the main communication channel represents all of the content that is currently being shared. The description is well made and clearly explains what the account stands for, as well as has links to other social networks. Moving next to the highlights section, it is noticeable that they are somewhat random than organized, although it is still possible to navigate through them. The content itself also is entirely random and there is no standard style in posts. The last eight posts do not involve pictures of people, which makes the feed look too formal and puzzled.

Facebook is used to create and share the event as well as monitor later the number of participants. This feature was successful in the past with offline events and was often used by the company.

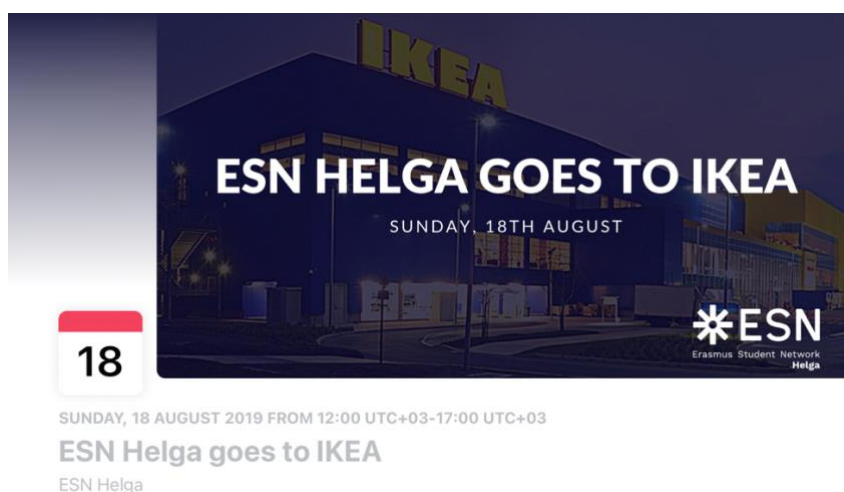


Figure 7. Example of the online event on Facebook hold by ESN Helga

The website was not updated since the beginning of 2020, but still, it is an excellent source of information for exchange students. Unfortunately, it is a helpful guide that was not taken into account in the last two years and could be promoted on Instagram and Facebook when updated.

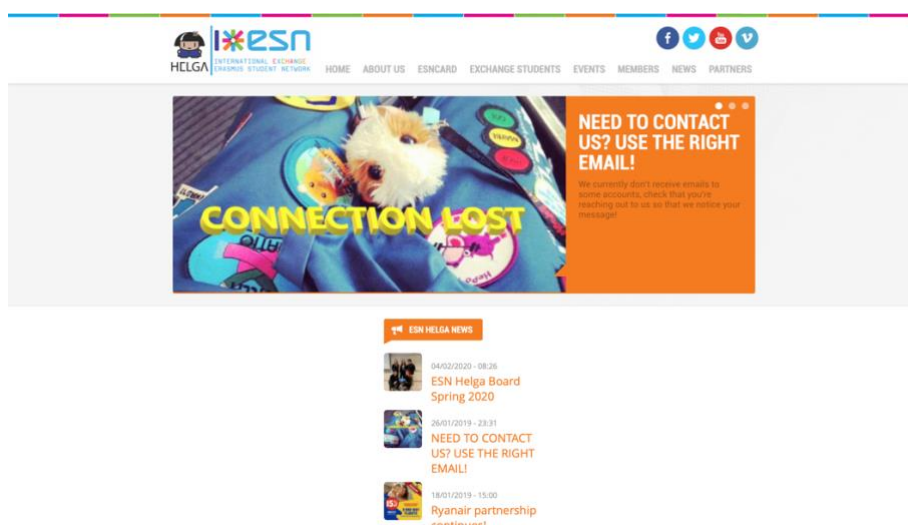


Figure 8. ESN Helga website main page

4.1.2 SWOT analysis

Based on social media analysis, my personal observations from work and insights from the vice president of the company as well as the survey results, the weak and strong spots of ESN Helga social media presence were defined.

The main strengths are that ESN Helga already has a solid social media presence, which helps a lot to analyze the effectiveness of past campaigns. In addition, ESN Helga is being

supported by the university and Helga, the main student association and the commissioner, is always presented to exchange students at the beginning of each semester.

The main weakness is that social media activities have never been planned thoughtfully and the content is usually created spontaneously, which leads to an unorganized feed and unclear online presence. The tasks are not being correctly distributed and people that do not have enough expertise have access to the platforms.

Opportunities for the case company are based on free support, collaboration and advertisement through the student network. Besides, ESN Helga offers trips that most students are interested in even before meeting the company. This gives much attention that can be forwarded to other events of ESN.

Covid-19 and restrictions related to it create many threats nowadays for ESN Helga. Students are currently overloaded with remote studies and they seek offline events. Due to the governmental restrictions, ESN Helga cannot organize those kinds of happenings and students tend to choose home parties instead. Also, due to the inability to meet face-to-face, the trust level and recognition are deficient, and it is hard to be noticed for the case company.



Social Media SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing active social media presence Successful social media campaigns in the past Promotion to students by university High trust level from students who visited invest Attention from students who want to go on trip 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is created spontaneously Different people have access to social media channels that leads to confusion and mistakes Lack of sufficient expertise in the organization Lack of prepared content
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free advertisement trough the student network Unique niche and approach Easy online interactions and possibilities for online events 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may not be interest in online events Low trust level due to lack of face-to-face meetings Low competitiveness to regular student parties

Figure 9. Social Media SWOT analysis of ESN Helga

The "weaknesses – opportunities" strategy would be the most effective for the case company. The defined weaknesses contain the lack of quality in content and its persistence and poorly organized task distribution. By overcoming those weaknesses and focusing on opportunities, achieving better visibility and a higher engagement rate will be possible.

4.2 Goals

When the fundamental analysis is conducted, it is possible to establish goals. These objectives are gathered from the survey answers and the interview with Emilia Oksanen, vice president of ESN Helga and are written in the "S.M.A.R.T." framework.

Specific: The content should be persistent, all social media channels should have a unique voice, tone and style.

Measurable: The success of the social media strategy will be noticeable by the increased number of likes, views, shares and interactions as well as the number of followers.

Attainable: Post pictures and videos with higher quality, embrace the authenticity in the account that will make the audience want to interact with the content.

Relatable: Pictures and texts should be less distant and be more about the people who create them.

Timebound: The social media strategy and content calendar should be regularly updated, at least once a semester and ideally more often, as social media is constantly changing.

4.3 Audience

The target audience of ESN Helga is incoming exchange students at Haaga-Helia University. They usually come from different parts of Europe, Asia, Russia and America. Exchange students are generally in their second or third year of university and aged from 19 to 25 years on average. Haaga-Helia invites business and tourism students both in Bachelor (significant cases) and Master's degree. Based on survey data and the company's insights described in chapter 3, were created two buyer personas that represent ESN Helga audience:

Buyer persona profile "Charlotte"

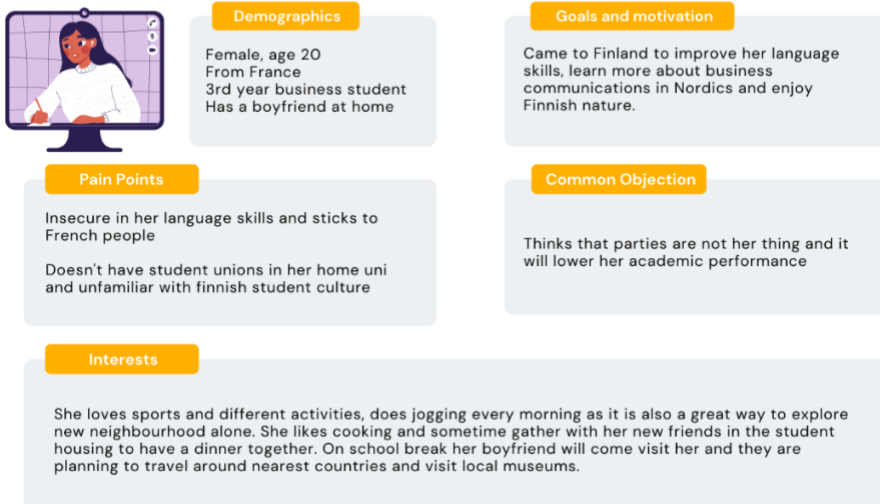


Figure 10. Buyer persona "Charlotte"

Charlotte represents students who prefer hobbies and themed events as those kinds of people want to develop new skills. They might be a little shy and hard to approach, but once they open up and start actively participating, they are really blossoming. Usually, people like Charlotte tend to gather in small groups and it is hard for them to be active with new people. Charlotte will probably go on every trip that ESN Helga offers as it is an excellent opportunity to travel with her new friends.

Charlotte can be approached by catchy event descriptions introducing benefits and presenting them as something easy and friendly as she will be careful in the beginning.

Buyer persona profile "Diego"

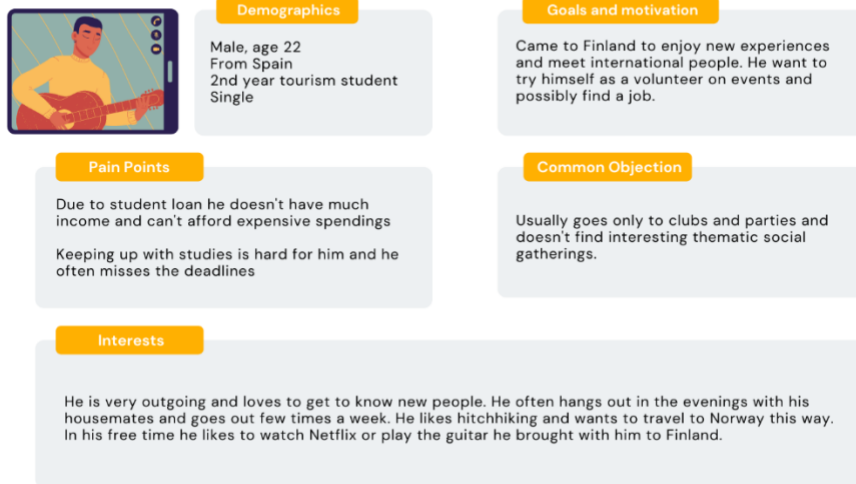


Figure 11. Buyer persona "Diego"

Diego represents people who are instead very lively and outgoing. They like socializing and are not afraid to try something new, especially with their friends. Diego is more interested in "cool" events and it might be a challenge to make him choose ESN party instead of a regular nightclub. He probably will not participate in something that is not interesting for him at first.

When approaching people like Diego it is important to show authenticity and speak the same language. If the event seems too puzzled, he would probably skip it. Also, it is important for him to participate in the events where his friends are participating too.

4.4 Social Media Audit

After primary social media analysis that was done in chapter 4.1 is essential to check the details and go through statistics. ESN Helga has two main communication channels: Instagram and Facebook. Survey results showed that most of the answered people were following ESN Helga on Instagram (48%) and 72% use this channel for contacting ESN Helga.

4.4.1 Instagram

When it comes to Instagram statistics, the highest reach has posts that somehow include people or related to them. Figure 12 shows the most and least popular posts for the last two years, including a timeline before COVID-19 affected ESN Helga's performance.

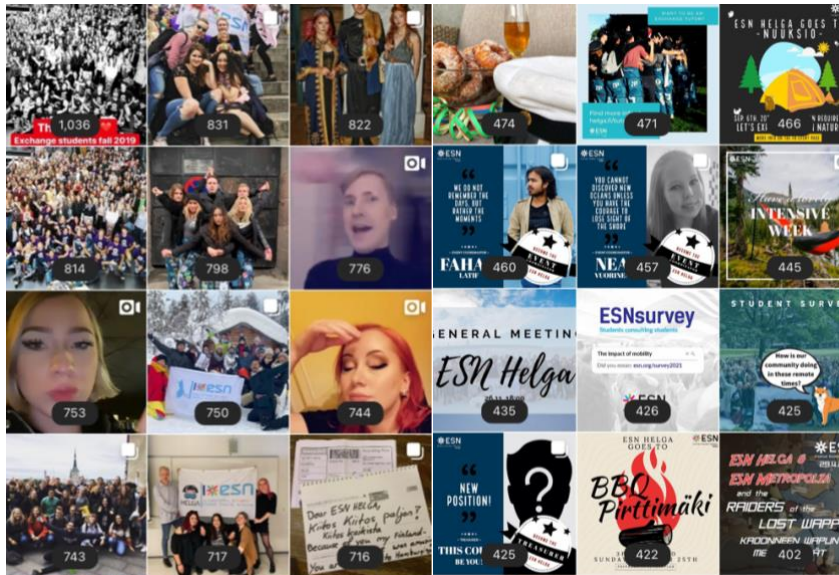


Figure 12. ESN Helga Instagram account insights

Informative posts, on the other hand, have very low reach. It is also noticeable that the posts with the lowest reach are very different in their visual identity and do not represent ESN Helga. An excellent example of a successful informational post could be seen in the Figure 13. It includes a call to action in the description, which made the audience interact with the content.

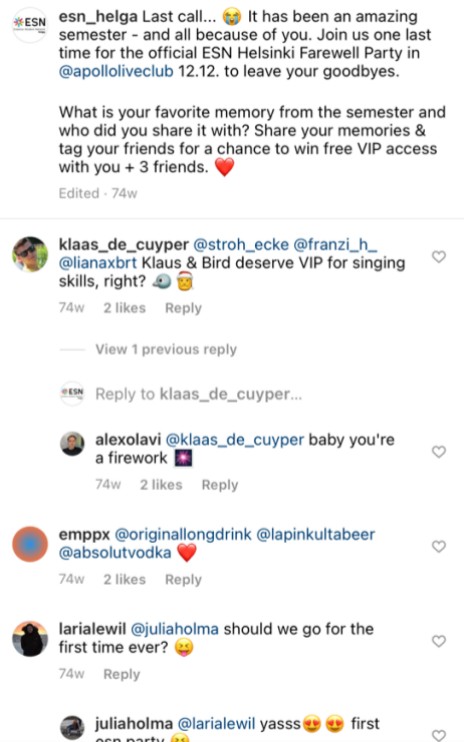


Figure 13. The comment section under event promotion in ESN Helga Instagram

Emilia Oksanen, the Vice President of ESN Helga and former Communication Manager, mentioned that interactive Instagram stories with quizzes gained a high engagement rate in the past. Another example of a successful online campaign that ESN has had consistently is the trip promotions. Those trips are very expected, students are teased about in the very first weeks of their exchange period. (Oksanen 9 April 2021.)

4.4.2 Facebook

As it was mentioned previously, ESN Helga Facebook page mainly consists of content that was initially created for Instagram. Nevertheless, Facebook insights also give a perfect image on which strategies work and which not. Figure 14 shows the most recent posts published on the Facebook page, and the highest reach and engagement rate has the post that included call to action, despite the fact that this post contained information about COVID restrictions updates.

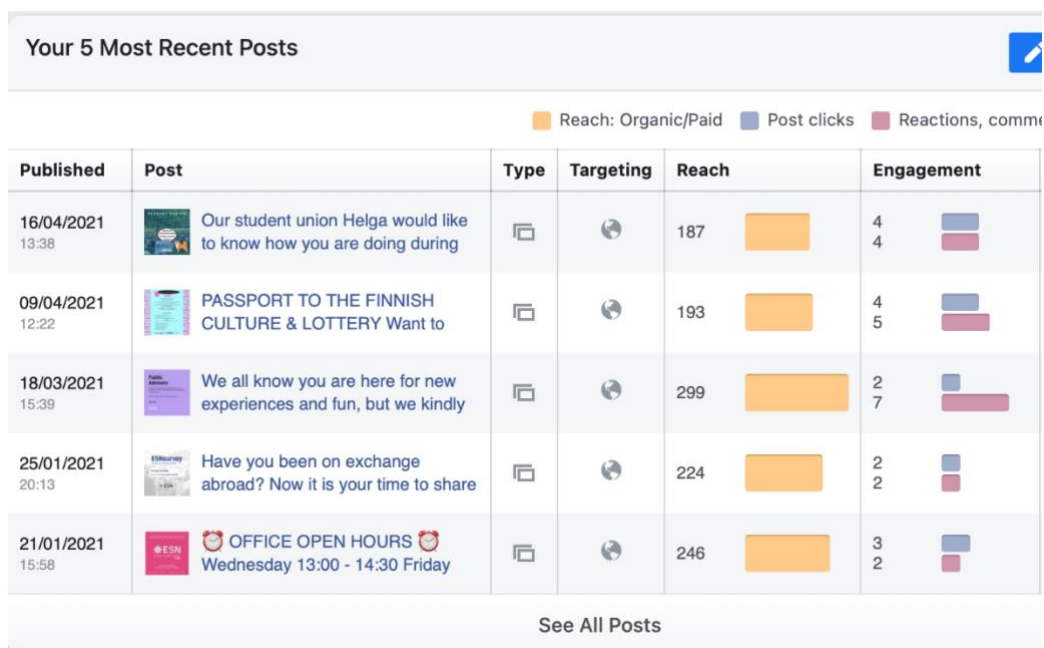


Figure 14. ESN Helga Facebook page insights 2021

Another good example of high reach and engagement rate is a post from 2019 that shares a personal story of one of the former exchange students. Compared to the statistics nowadays it was a very successful result.

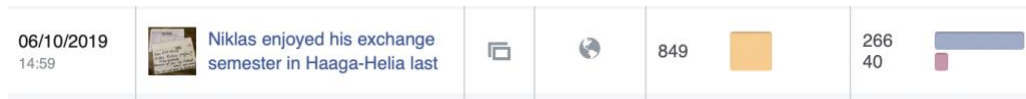


Figure 15. ESN Helga Facebook page insights 2019

4.5 Set up profiles

After conducting all the necessary analysis about social media performance, it is possible to decide which social media channels are important for the case company. Instagram and Facebook are definitely staying, although they need to be updated and have a new approach.

For Instagram profile description suggested to be updated to make it more transparent and more accessible for the audience to understand. The main changes concern the name tag, making it written in uppercase as more giant letters are more noticeable in Direct Messages. I suggest deleting the repetition of "ESN" in the following line and simplifying it as much as possible but still make it readable. The hashtag that is advertised to students is #haagaheliaexch and it has over 1000 posts under it when hashtag #ESNHelga has around 100 posts and mainly consists of ESN Helga posts itself as well as there are four

"ESN Helga" mentions already in this short bio which makes it more puzzled and harder to read. The address may seem important information, although it is placed next to the website link and could be possibly clicked by accident and annoy the audience. Instead of writing the address, I suggest recording a guide video and put it in the highlights "How to find us".

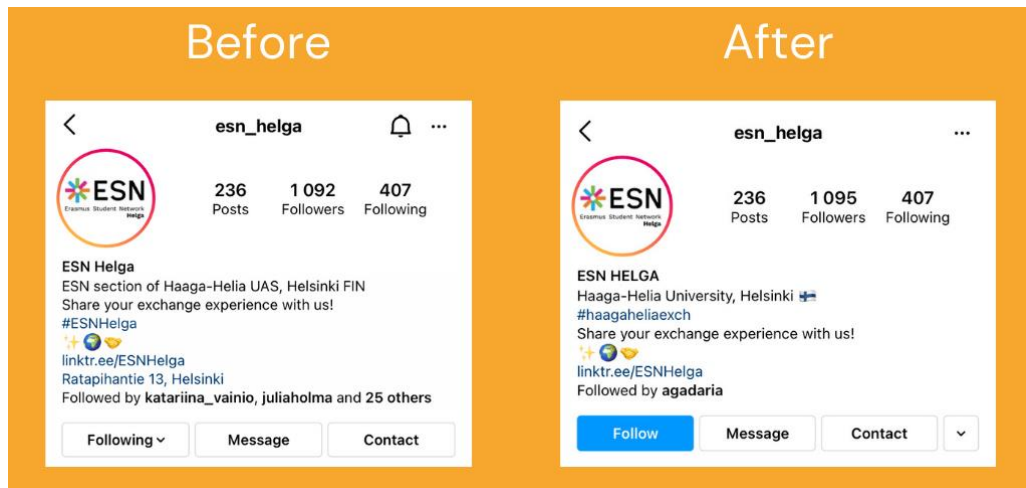


Figure 16. Instagram description option

The website needs to be updated with the new information. I suggest deleting all news and information that constantly needs to be updated and keep this platform a source of helpful information for students that ESN Helga can forward to.

It is essential to make communication work well in both ways, so the contact methods need to be established. Exchange students that took part in the survey chose Instagram Direct Messages as the most comfortable way for communication. However, this option has disadvantages as several people have access to the Instagram account and there have been situations when one person accidentally opened the message and left it without an answer, so afterwards, the message got lost.

9. If you want to contact ESN, what platform would you prefer? You can choose several options

Number of respondents: 60, selected answers: 125

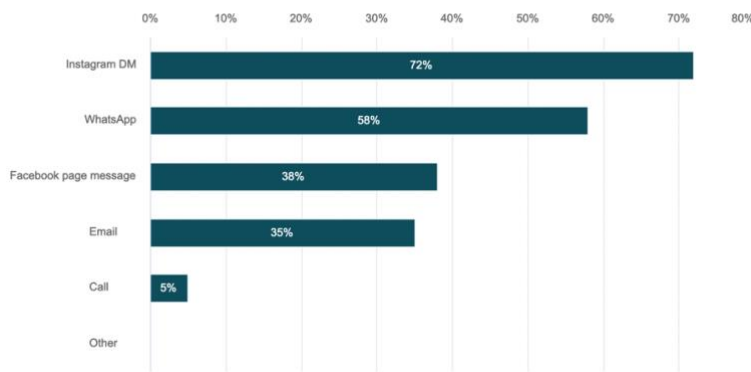


Figure 17. Survey results of preferred communication channels

The next option that participants chose was WhatsApp. ESN Helga currently does not have their own WhatsApp chat and usually, communication is done in the common chat. As in WhatsApp, people operate under their own names it is hard to make messages from ESN noticeable and they usually get lost in conversations.

My suggestion is to create a channel in WhatsApp, where only admins can send messages. As not all students use social media actively, but WhatsApp is the leading messenger in Finland (Statista 2021) and every exchange student has the app, it will be easier to approach them through this channel. As ESN Helga wants to be more seen as an "organization made by students", this would be a perfect way to communicate with exchange students in an informal way. WhatsApp channel can be created by making a regular group chat and changing settings to send messages from "all participants" to "only admins". And then, students will be instructed to contact admins if they have questions directly.

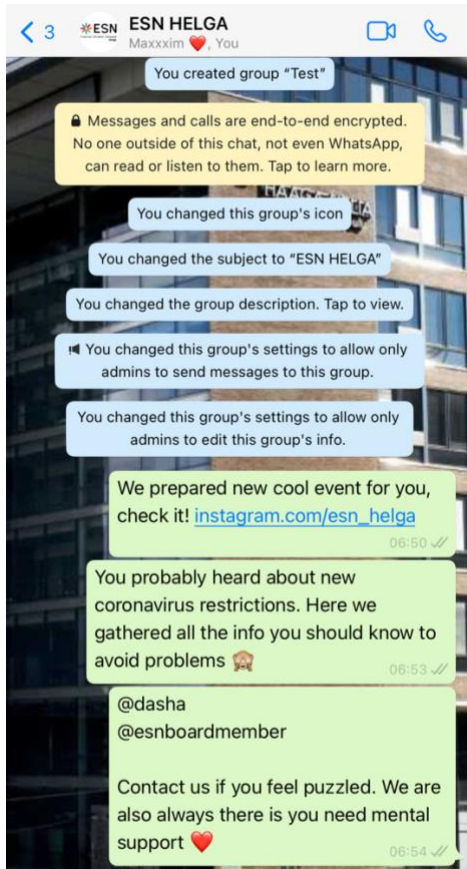


Figure 18. Example of WhatsApp Channel

Talking about other social networks, it is important to mention TikTok as it has been on the wave of popularity among younger people during the last years. Tiktok is a great platform, but it will not bring ESN Helga much extra value when it comes to communication. I recommend trying it to create more relaxed and fun content instead of a place to inform students.

LinkedIn is a professional social network and my research showed that ESN sections rarely create their LinkedIn profiles, or it is done on the national level. As the main aim for ESN Helga is to share relevant information about events and have communication channels with exchange students, LinkedIn does not suit those objectives. The case company does not have the need and capacity to create professional content for this platform.

4.6 Inspiration

There are two options to get inspirational ideas from – check competitors' social media from the same field or look for ideas from different areas. The best would be reviewing

both of them and creating a unique combination. As ESN Helga is not a commercial brand, copying styles is not prohibited.

In the survey, I offered students to choose one out of four different ESN Instagram layouts that included the original feed of ESN Helga as well other sections from different countries. 72% of the participants chose option three that can be seen in Figure 19. It combines ESN official colors and makes the account recognizable, informational posts with similar designs and pictures from events with people in it make a great combination. Number 1 is the original ESN Helga feed from 2018 and it received 17% of the voices, which shows that personality and lively pictures are still crucial for some people. Although number 2 has the same style and consistency, lack of photos and repetitiveness made participants skip this option. The last layout did not have any personality in it and the design is changing in every post what made only 7% of participants choose this option

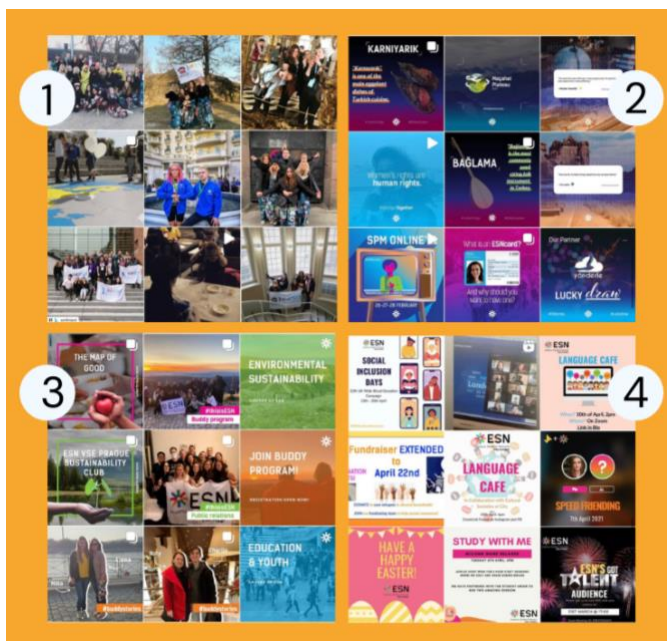


Figure 19. Instagram feed layout options presented to students

Pinterest is a great source to find creative ideas and the latest design trends. In Figure 20, I combined six Instagram feed layout ideas that ESN Helga can adapt. Their similarity is in bright color, designs that stand out and are recognizable, as well as an abundance of photos that are integrated into the design.

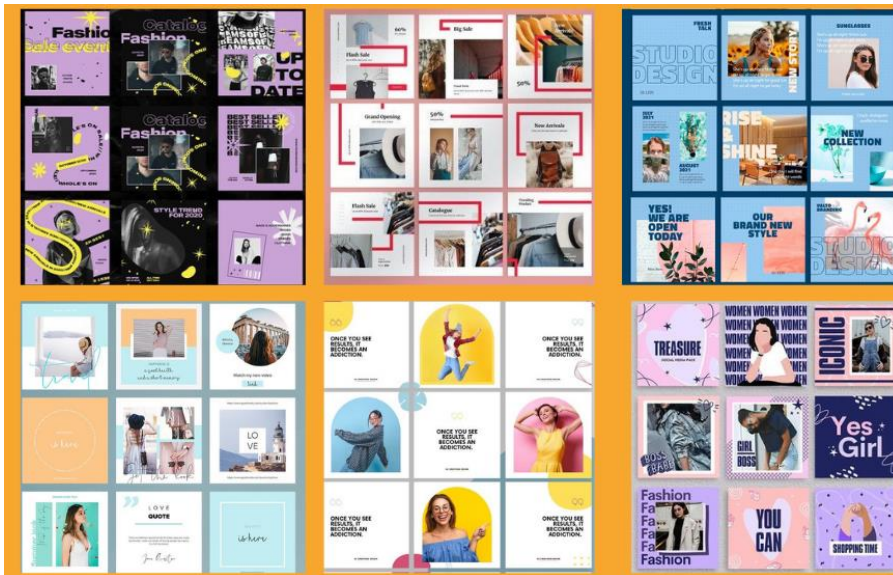


Figure 20. Instagram layout trends from Pinterest

I have created the concept of visual identity ESN Helga that can be used in the future as a reference. The primary color purple was chosen as it is one of the additional colors that are suggested in the guideline from ESN global. The Instagram grid combines catchy design and photos.



Figure 21. Concept of visual identity

4.7 Content distribution

Visual identity may change with time, but the basis of content should always stay persistent and planned. Five communication channels were chosen for ESN Helga and each of them has its own purpose.

Instagram – the main platform for announcements and interactions. Through this channel ESN Helga can promote events, share helpful information, and collect feedback. As it is a visual platform, it is highly important to create eye-catching quality content. This channel should also be promoted as contact possibilities for inquiries.

Facebook – channel for creating and promoting events and trips. Facebook features allow friends to see each other updates and notifies about upcoming events, which is beneficial for ESN Helga. Besides sharing content that was already created for Instagram, this channel could also be used for internal updates among other student unions and potential new board members and actives.

WhatsApp – informal communication and a private channel for minor news and updates as well as another contact form for exchange students. It should be created each semester for a new group of exchange students.

Email – formal communication with students and business-related questions.

Website – the source of useful information and guides about student exchange.

The following instructions will be mainly related to Instagram as it is the main platform that needs the most preparation to represent ESN Helga at its best and attract students.

4.7.1 Layout options

To make Instagram look more professional and stylish, it is important to plan the feed layout beforehand. There are several types of Instagram grid patterns exists that are explained in Figure 22. The basic idea that the pictures should be mixed and differ from each other to make Instagram look more exciting and appealing to the audience and focus attention on specific posts.

Using the more complicated patterns can make Instagram look unique, but they are hard to maintain and need to be thoughtfully planned. The easiest but still very effective option is

the Checker Board method, where light/dark or another type of combination posts are placed one by one. In this method, it is very easy to make changes if something unexpected comes up.

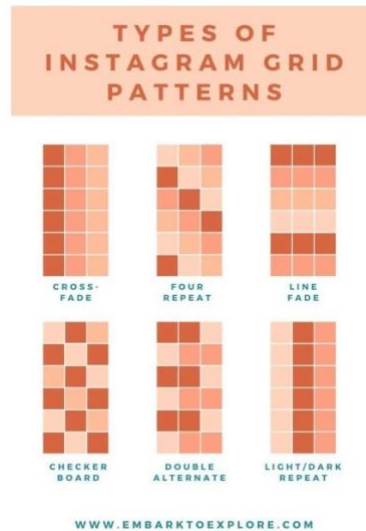


Figure 22. Instagram grid patterns

A great Instagram grid planning tool is the app "Inpreview", where you can connect your Instagram account and plan the feed by adding, moving and deleting new pictures without uploading them straight to Instagram. That will also help keep track of what should be published and will help avoid mistakes. (Rabkina 2020.)

4.7.2 Content Mix

Besides making the visual content attractive, it is also important to make an appropriate content mix. The shared content should be harmonized and be as educative and helpful as fun and easy at the same time.

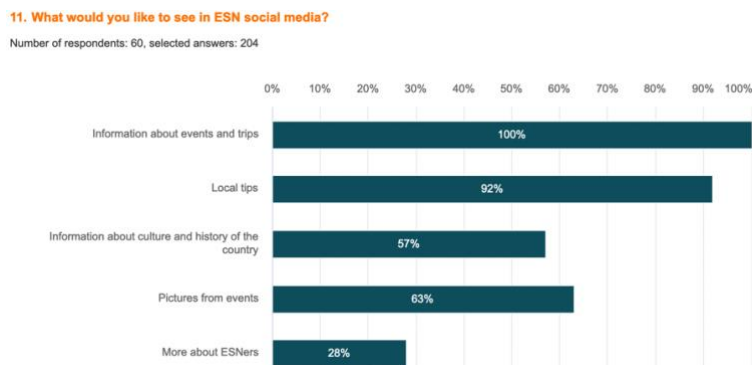


Figure 23. Content topics selection survey results

Based on possible rubrics and themes for content that were tested in the survey, for ESN Helga it would be beneficial to use "the social media rule of thirds", where content purposes will be divided into three following groups: ESN Helga events promotions, educational and valuable information for exchange students and last part should be about life moments and board itself to keep the authenticity and personality of the brand.

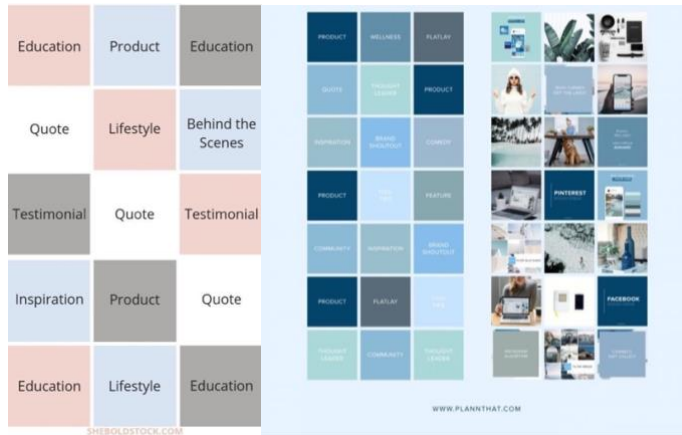


Figure 24. Topics and pictures mix example

4.7.3 Content Calendar

When the topics are prepared and mixed, they can be combined with the visual content and formed into a content calendar. It is highly important as ESN Helga plans the events for the whole year upfront and with a content calendar, it is possible to prepare advertisement content and increase sales by attracting more people to the events.

There are different possibilities to do a content calendar. The simplest is to use a mobile calendar or create a spreadsheet, but one of the handy tools for that is Hootsuite. It allows to plan and schedule content for different social networks in one place and it can be accessed by all team members.

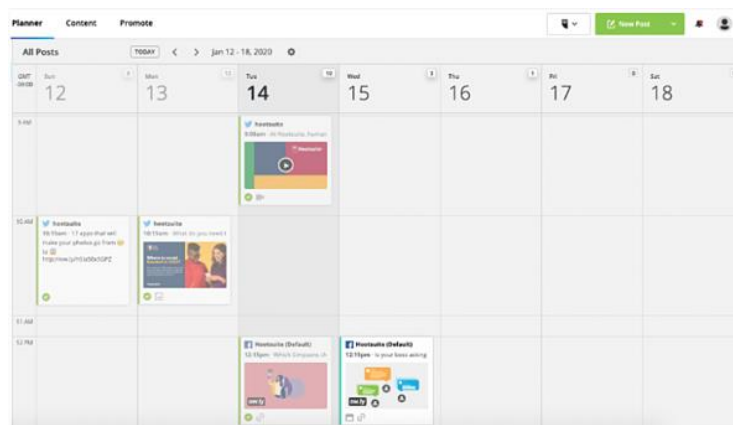


Figure 25. Hootsuite workspace

4.8 Application and evaluation

To sum up, for the social media marketing plan, the “4 step” strategy template created by Lasse Rouhiainen was used. It is suitable for small and middle-sized companies and it covers four different areas of social media marketing. The first part is research at it shows the identified target group and competitors as well as chosen main channels. The next part includes the unique content that will be generated. Lasse mentioned that many experts think using more interaction channels will bring the company closer to buyer’s decisions. In this part, all interactions with the audience are listed. In the last part the measurements channels are listed that will help to understand how successful the online campaign was. (Rouhiainen 2021.)

Table 2. 4 “step” strategy for ESN Helga

Research	Content
Ideal client – Charlotte and Diego	Instagram posts
Main channels – Instagram and WhatsApp	Instagram stories
Competition – side events	Facebook events
	Articles/Guides
Promotion	Measurement
Interaction on Instagram	New interactions
Interaction on Facebook	New followers
Promotion via Haaga-Helia/ Helga	Comments
Promotion via student unions	Sales
WhatsApp communication	Board applications
In-person communication	
	Instagram insights
	Facebook insights

4.8.1 Major guidelines

Besides creating quality content, it is essential to distribute it well. Choosing trendy photo filters, using the right hashtags and publishing posts at the correct time will help reach more audience and catch the audience's attention.

Creating content. Editing nowadays can be quickly done on the smartphone and does not require deep knowledge and a strong computer. Canva is a great free tool to create posts and stories on templates. PicsArt is an analog of Photoshop, where you can cut elements

and add them to selected pictures. For photo editing, the best apps are Snapseed and VSCO. Video editing can also be done on a smartphone in InShot app. (Rabkina 2020.)

Hashtags. The right mix of hashtags brings +20-30% reach to the post. The most popular hashtags are countries and their capitals, weather, mood and your specific theme (e.g., #studentexchange #studentlife). (Influencer Marketing Hub 2020.)

An excellent option to look up hashtags that your competitors are using. There could be a maximum of 30 hashtags under each post and they should include the mix of personal tags (#ESNHelga, #haagaheliaexch, etc.) and high (over one mill) and low popularity (1000-100.000) hashtags. (Influencer Marketing Hub 2020.)

Publication time. Before Coronavirus, when everyone was working and studying, the best posting time was in the morning from 8:00 to 10:00 and from 17:00 to 20:00. This makes sense since, in the morning, a person goes to university and scrolls through the feed on the way, and in the evening, he/she rests and looks at what happened during the day. In the morning people prefer photos with short texts like "have a nice day", and in the evening you can share profound texts and interactivities. Now users are online 24/7, it is hard to predict the time when your subscriber will come online. But nevertheless, the habit has remained with the majority. In addition, it is vital to check the activity time through Insights. (Arens 2020.)

Warming up the audience. For better results in promotion events, the audience should be "warmed up". The process of advertisement should consist of the preparation stage, where you tell the audience that you are creating "something cool" for them, teasing part where you share the announcement date and final reveal. This will keep the audience's interest and attract new customers who could have missed one ad but have better chances to notice several mentions. (Canning 2021.)

Sharing. After publication, it is crucial to share the post to as many channels as possible. First comes own communication channels, reposts from the board members and actives. It is good to build up a network with other student unions to promote each other's events. (Canning 2021.)

4.8.2 Evaluation of the results

After applying the strategy and testing its features, it is important to keep track of the results. I suggest reporting the results tracked by Instagram and Facebook insights as well as personal observations and discuss it at Annual Board Meetings that take place every month.

The strategy needs to be updated at the beginning of each semester and explained in detail when the new Communication Manager appears. The strategy should also be presented to the whole team so that other board members can post content according to the strategy if needed.

The entire strategy will be uploaded to Google docs, where ESN Helga keeps all documents and always be available for all board members, as well as a handbook that is created for easier implementation of the strategy.

5 Discussion

This chapter reviews the overall process of this project-based thesis. First, the results of the thesis are assessed and discussed. This is followed by feedback from the commissioning organization and the chapter concludes with a reflection on my personal learning.

5.1 Outcome

This thesis combines my knowledge that was gained during my bachelor's degree in international sales and marketing, my experience working in ESN Helga, the case company, and my personal interest in social media marketing. The result of the thesis is a social media marketing plan which includes practical and precise tactics and actions to utilize the social media marketing strategy.

Together with the commissioner, the problem of the current social media presence of the company and the lack of professionalism was defined. As this caused low engagement rates and the lack of communication with the exchange students last semester, it was decided to analyze the situation and create a social media marketing plan to avoid this problem in the future. The interview helped to deeply understand the needs of the case company and shift focus from increasing the rates to making the brand image of ESN Helga more human-approached and authentic.

The plan fulfills its purpose by providing recommendations on how an organization should work and focus its efforts on different social media platforms. The plan not only provides guidance for existing platforms but also suggests that the organization should apply its efforts to promising new channels.

Due to the nature of the modern world, as people do not have time to work through a whole document, and according to the request of the case company, a manual format is chosen for the plan. The handbook ensures that all the necessary and relevant information and content is included, but at the same time, it is simple, accurate and easy to follow.

5.2 Feedback from the commissioner

The thesis and the handbook were presented to ESN Helga, the commissioner at the annual board meeting on 2 May 2021. The survey results were introduced first, then followed by new suggested social media channels as well as benchmarking examples of visual identity. The plan was well received by the team and they agreed to implement it starting from next semester in Autumn 2021. During the discussion, the team believed it was a good idea to plan the posts beforehand and decided on a certain visual identity that will be applied to all posts. After discussion with the team, they acknowledged the importance of a social media marketing strategy and its potential in approaching students and establishing a better connection with them. In addition, they liked the WhatsApp channel idea and ESN Helga will start testing this communication channel in Autumn 2021.

5.3 Personal learning assessment

Since high school, social media marketing has been my personal topic of interest when Instagram just launched in 2010. I have always been using social media channels by intuition, never really knowing how it works. Every year it was developing and evolving and in 2021, social media became very complicated, and you need certain expertise to succeed in it.

This project offered me an opportunity to explore this topic more. Although I already had some specific experiences in the area of social media marketing, after writing this thesis, I have learned more particular moments, especially in the theoretical part. Doing a project for a company I worked for two years gave me more motivation and I really hope I have left a mark in this organization. It was crucial for me to gain valuable results that could be applied in the future.

It was definitely a hard challenge to write the thesis in the times of pandemic. I have constantly improved my project management skills by creating and planning the project from scratch during the process. I practiced my problem-solving skills when I faced the need to submit the thesis earlier than initially planned and reduced the timeframe. Self-motivation was the hardest to maintain, but in the end, I have managed to overcome myself and finish the project.

I am not fully happy with the web survey results as potentially more students could have been approached. But in the reality of COVID-19, I think it was still a good result. I am proud of the interview results, I managed to find unique and deep thoughts from the vice president that were not discussed previously during work, my negotiation skills and

knowledge of experience design tactics helped me achieve this. I wish I had a chance to implement and test the social media plan, but due to restrictions, all the events were cancelled, and many students left home already, so all planned social media activities were down.

Overall, it was a very challenging experience and, in the beginning, it was hard for me to choose which information should be included in the thesis and how structure it. However, as the thesis focuses on specific areas as well as the usage of critical thinking, I was able to create a meaningful project that will benefit the commissioning company as well as my future career.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Vice President of ESN interview questions

- 1) Name 3 things that are important in communication between ESN Helga and exchange students

- 2) Is good online presence important for ESN? How the situation was before COVID-19 and how it changed now?

- 3) Can you highlight main problems that ESN Helga has in their Social Media management? What could be improved?

- 4) Was there a situation where online campaign worked well? You can name several examples.

- 5) On the other hand, can you name a situation when online campaign failed? Did you analyzed why and what needed to be done differently?

- 6) Which Social Media channels you find most important for ESN? Anything needed to be added to existing ones or excluded?

- 7) As Vice President how do you want ESN Helga to be presented in Social Media? Name at least three adjectives.

- 8) Does ESN Helga have same online and offline brand image? If not, what is the difference? Should it be changed in future?

Appendix 2. Questionnaire for exchange students

ESN Social Media communication

Hey! We, ESN, are currently working on improving our social media presence and performing better communication with you, our lovely exchange students!

In this section we want to know about your experience during your exchange.

1. Have you ever been on student exchange?

- Yes, I am currently on exchange
- Yes, I have been on exchange in past years
- No

2. What was your exchange destination?

- Finland
- Other

3. Are you familiar with ESN?

- Yes
- No

4. Have you participated in events organized by ESN? (meetups, parties etc.)

- Yes, a lot during my exchange
- Yes, several times
- Yes, I have been one-two times
- Never been

5. Have you ever participated in trips organized by ESN?

- Yes
- No, I didn't want to go / Didn't have possibility
- No, ESN in my location didn't offer trips

6. How ESN affected your exchange experience?

	Agree	Can't say	Disagree
ESN helped me find new international friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ESN helped me to feel more comfortable in a new country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ESN made my exchange memorable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ESN was helping me when I needed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Without ESN I would've been so lost in a new country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ESN had the best parties during my exchange	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had a chance to travel with my friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Were you following ESN on Social Media? Mark the ones you followed

- Facebook page
- Instagram
- Other
- No

8. If no, what stopped you from following?

- Don't use social media
- Wasn't interested in ESN events
- Other reason
- I followed :)

ESN Social Media communication

Now we want to know, what works the best for YOU!

9. If you want to contact ESN, what platform would you prefer? You can choose several options

- Instagram DM
- WhatsApp
- Facebook page message
- Email
- Call
- Other

10. Where would you want to receive information about new events?

- Instagram
- Facebook
- School email
- WhatsApp
- Other

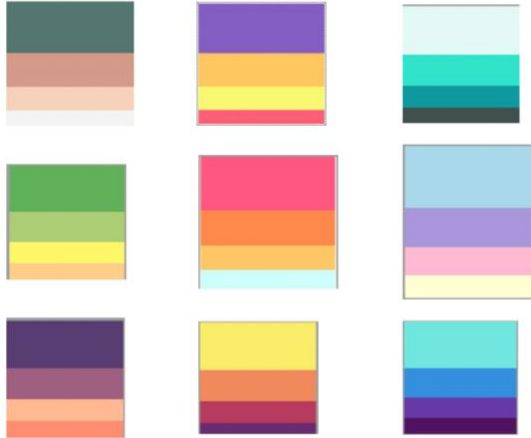
11. What would you like to see in ESN social media?

- Information about events and trips
- Local tips
- Information about culture and history of the country
- Pictures from events
- More about ESNers
- Your suggestions

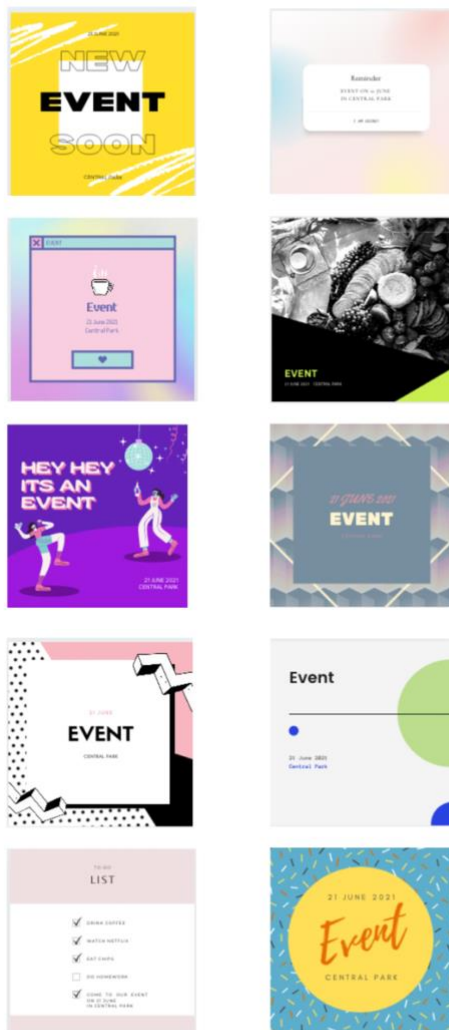
12. Which Instagram layout you like most?



13. Which color palette do you like the most?



14. Choose an event invitation that attracts you the most



15. Do you have any additional feedback? Feel free to write!

[Previous](#) [Submit](#)

Appendix 3. Social Media Marketing handbook

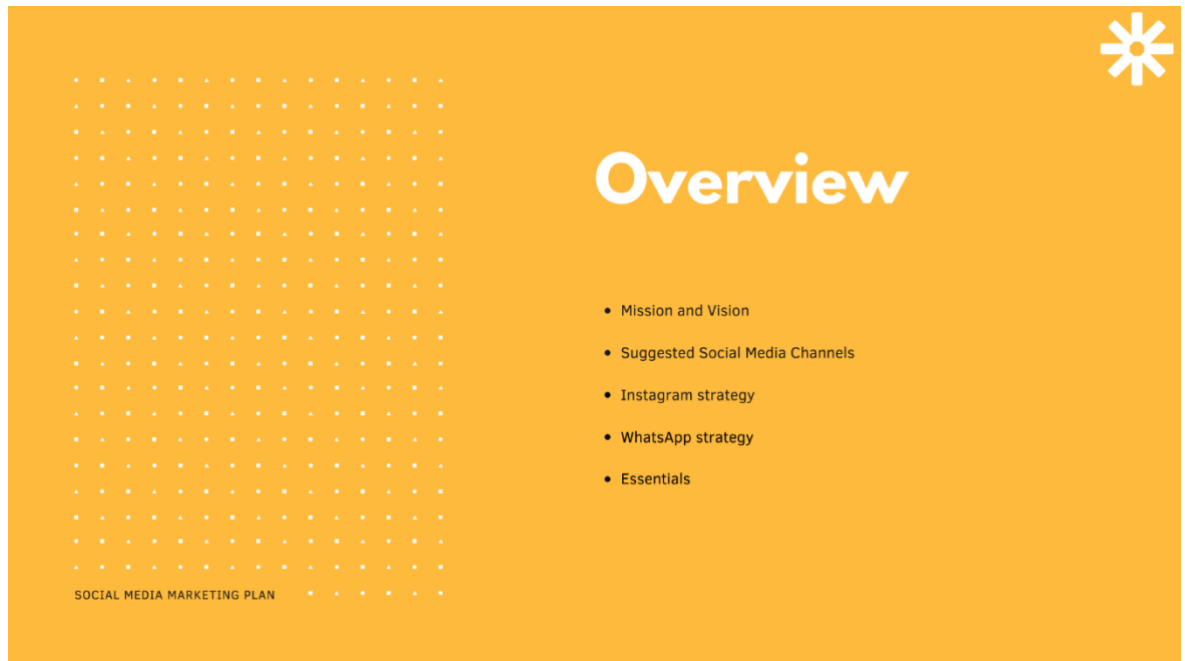



**SOCIAL
MEDIA
STRATEGY**

Daria Garbuzova, Communication Manager
2 May 2021

2021







Overview

- Mission and Vision
- Suggested Social Media Channels
- Instagram strategy
- WhatsApp strategy
- Essentials

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PLAN



SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PLAN

Mission and Vision



SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PLAN

Suggested Channels



ESN Helga is a safety net for students that they can fall into if they need help.

We are here for them

Transparency

Broadmindedness

Reliability



INSTAGRAM

Main platform for announcements and interactions



FACEBOOK

Channel for creating and promoting events and trips



WHATSAPP

Informal communication and private channel for smaller news and updates



EMAIL

Formal communication with students and business-related questions



WEBSITE

Source of useful information and guides about student exchange



Instagram

Photo Pattern

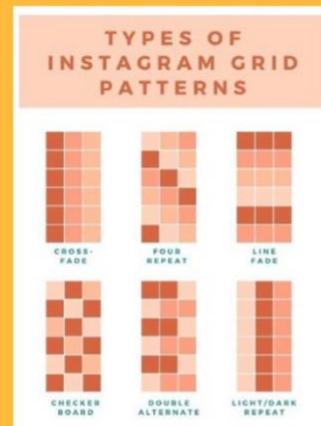
Mix the posts by using Checker Board method putting pictures light to dark

Content Mix

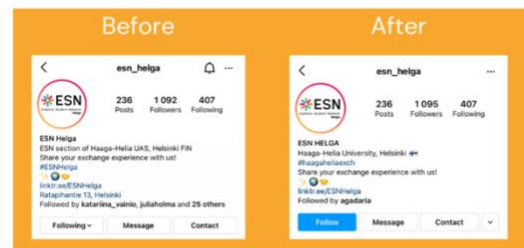
- 1/3 - event promotion
- 1/3 - useful and entertaining information
- 1/3 - about board and people

Content Calendar

Plan the content beforehand using Inpreview app



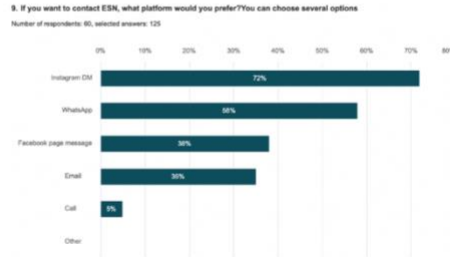
Instagram Greed





WhatsApp

WhatsApp channel can be created by making a regular group chat and changing in settings possibility to send messages from "all participants" to "only admins". And then students will be instructed to directly contact admins if they have questions.



SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PLAN

APPS FOR EDITING

Pics Art - stickers, highlights, brushes

Canva – templates for posts

Snapseed – color correction

VSCO – photo filters. The best to use are Filters E (1,2,3,6), C (3,6,8,9), KP (1,2,3)

Union - overlaying/removing objects from a photo

Plotaverse - live photo

Kira Kira + - add glitter to photos and make photos look alive

Bokeh lens - blur the background

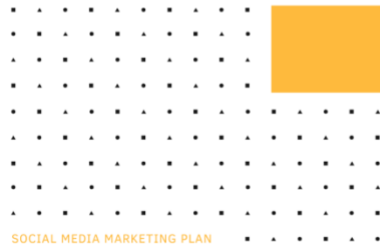
Afterlight - light effects, transitions



SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PLAN



GUIDELINE FOR POSTING



SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PLAN

01 HASHTAGS

- max. 30 hashtags
- low and high volume hashtags
- popular and personal hashtags

02 TIME OF POSTING

- from 8:00 to 10:00
- from 17:00 to 20:00

03 REPOSTS

- Always repost to all communication channels, board members and actives, other student organizations



Increasing Engagement Rate

CALL TO ACTION

Every post should include call to action. It may be the question in the end or asking for a like.

INTERACTIONS

Content that can be interacted with is entertaining and engaging. This could be a questionnaire, quizzes or games in Instagram Stories

GIVEAWAYS

Free gifts are motivating people to participate and also could increase sales by increasing visibility.



SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PLAN