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The storytelling specie

Case study for 4 Feet Under

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## Abstract

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This thesis contains three different research questions, which are the following:

1. How to build an appealing story for 4 Feet Under by using the knowledge provided in storytelling theories?

Secondary questions are:

2. Which audience resonates best with the company's story? What are the demographic and psychographic variables that are the most common in this group?
3. How could the company's story be improved?

Storytelling is becoming a trending word in the business world. However, when analysing the topic in human perspective, it has always been around. From the thousands of year-old cave paintings to parents explaining the code of conducts to their children, can all be defined as stories. But this is just the tip of the iceberg. Ultimately, people picture the world with stories and therefore our thought patterns are sometimes stories that we tell ourselves.

The reason for this thesis is to understand better the reasons why humans are constantly telling stories and how to apply this knowledge when doing business. Evolutionary perspective is highly represented in this paper and hence it should bring some new ideas to this field of social science.

Companies should try to understand their potential customers better which would allow the firms to tell more appealing stories to the right audience.

Keywords: Storytelling, storytelling in business, brand

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Opinnäytetyö koostuu päätutkimuskysymyksestä, joka on:

1. Kuinka rakentaa kiinnostava tarina Subsoccerille käyttäen tarinankerronnan teorioita hyväksi?

Sekä kahdesta ylimääräiset kysymyksestä, jotka ovat:

2. Mihin kohderyhmään Subsoccerin tarina vetoaa parhaiten? Mitkä ovat tämän ryhmän demografiset ja psykografiset tekijät?
3. Miten yrityksen tarinaa voisi parantaa?

Nykyään tarinankerronta mielletään ajankohtaiseksi aiheeksi liike-elämässä, vaikka se on oikeastaan aina ollut osana ihmisyyttä. Tuhansia vuosia vanhat luolamaalaukset tai vanhempien käytöstävän opetukset lapsilleen, voidaan molemmat nähdä hyvinä esimerkkeinä tarinoista. Edellä mainitut ovat kuitenkin vain murto-osana laajempaa tarinankerronnan kokonaisuutta, joka juontaa juurensa aina ihmisten omaan ajatusmaailmaan.

Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena onkin löytää syitä ihmisten jatkuvalla tarinankerronnalle ja soveltaa tätä tutkimustietoa liike-elämän tilanteisiin.

Etenkin evoluution näkökulma tuodaan vahvasti esille, mikä pitäisi tuoda uusia ajatuksia. Yrityksen tulisi keskittyä ymmärtämään kohdeyleisönsä, mikä edesauttaisi rakentamaan kiinnostavampia tarinoita heille.

Avainsanat: Tarinankerronta, tarinankerronta liike-elämässä, brändi

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## 1 Introduction

Today, storytelling is becoming a trending word in the business world. However, when analysing the topic in human perspective, it has always been around. From the thousands of year-old cave paintings to parents explaining code of conducts to their children, can all be defined as stories. But this is just the tip of the iceberg. Ultimately, people picture the world with stories and therefore our thought patterns are sometimes stories that we tell ourselves. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy- psychotherapist Russ Harris states “let’s consider what an opinion is: it’s a story, nothing more than words. Second it’s a judgement, not a factual description. (Remember, “Julia Roberts is film actress” is a factual description; “Julia Roberts is a very talented actress” is an opinion/judgement.) (Harris, 2020, p. 167).

In essence, the human brain craves for control which is manifested in the simplified explanation of our true existence. In other words, the brain “cherry picks” parts of the reality around us and conveys it to be the truth. In the end of the day, humans are still products of their evolution and therefore many of our behaviours are still rooting for our past at least if one is believing the theories offered by the evolutionary biologists. Therefore, one cannot analyse storytelling without actually understanding our biology which is the very foundation of all the paintings, movies and narratives told in the world (Storr, 2020).

The storytelling puzzle should be broken down from human evolution to concrete examples of our everyday lives, in order to get a fuller picture of the whole topic. Eventually, the very core idea of storytelling in business perspective is to comprehend the market, convey the customers to purchase and enhance the profits of a company. Hence, the better an organisation fully understands their target audience in terms of how they are seeing the world, the easier it is to form customer relationships with them in the long-run (Godin, 2018).

The same applies for 4 Feet Under, a Finnish start-up, for which this academic paper will be pointed towards. By applying the knowledge of storytelling theories, the firm should be able to understand better how to navigate itself in the right

market of the customers. In the end, a story is not important if the audience listening it don't find it interesting (Godin, 2018).

## **1.1 4 Feet Under**

The research was conducted for a Finnish company "4 Feet Under" which is best-known from its product "Subsoccer". Since the organisation refers itself with the name of the product, in this academic paper the company is also called as Subsoccer.

The firm's first financial data can be sourced from the year 2018 in which its revenue was 12 000 €. However, their profits were -7000 € negative. Nevertheless, it was the first year in the market and the firm was run only by its founder. The next year the company's growth was remarkable when it comes to its revenue which reached to 271 000€. Also, in addition to the founder, 4 Feet under were able to hire 3 more people to their team. Regardless, of these improvements, the company's net profits continued to decrease resulting to the figure of -41 000€ in 2019. In 2020, the company's revenue was 161 000€, net profits -142 000€ and 5 people working in the company.

The firm rapidly experiments the outcomes of different hypotheses rather than planning long-term business strategies for the future. From the results gained of the short experiments, the company decides how to proceed afterwards. In short, the organisation perceives to generate a lot of ideas how to maximise the firm's growth, then to test them in the market, quickly collect the data and finally turn the data into information which will be used as learning material for the future. If an experiment has been successful, it can be repeated by tweaking some variables in order to get comparison between the different samples. In other words, the firm uses the A/B testing in order to get a better understanding of the potential audience, their reaction to the product and the factors which are causing the outcome.

Currently, the company has customers in 20 different countries, it is in 10% of Finnish elementary schools and the organisation is constantly searching for more partners globally. Also, Subsoccer is becoming relatively popular in social media as the firm's videos have been seen by tens of millions of people even in 2021.

As the company is still very new, the potential customers of the product are not yet clearly defined. Hence, storytelling, marketing and branding offers tools to trying to find them, build connections, get revenue and ultimately achieving loyalty among consumers.

The research is focusing on the company's advertisement campaign in social media and how to make it more appealing for the audience by using the storytelling techniques and theories.

## **1.2 Research questions**

- 1) How to build an appealing story for 4 Feet Under by using the knowledge provided in storytelling theories?

Secondary questions are:

- 2) Which audience resonates best with the company's story? What are the demographic and psychographic variables that are the most common in this group?
- 3) How could the company's story be improved?

## **1.3 Limitations for the research**

Due to the guidelines of a suitable length for a thesis, this academic paper does not go into fine details of all the elements of storytelling for example books, movies, poems, paintings, music or other forms of storytelling. However, it focuses more on explaining the reason why humans are constantly telling stories. The lack of previously conducted researches which emphasized the biological aspect in storytelling, complicated the progression of the thesis in overall. The analytical approach of this academic paper does not focus a lot on the needs in the higher segments of Maslow's hierarchy including self-actualisation. The



particular reason for excluding these needs is to keep the research topic narrow to the extent that is cohesive and comprehensible for the reader. Due to both personal and external reasons among the author of the thesis and the organisation for whom this thesis will be conducted, the sample size of the research is not large enough when it comes to announcing the results as truths. However, it may give an indication on what the future findings may look like in case the company repeats the experiment held in this thesis. The shortage of the data resulted in to difficulties of applying the theoretical knowledge of storytelling in the analysing process of the advertisement campaign. The company is new and therefore the information available about the organisation is extremely limited. Although 4 Feet Under is the official name of the firm, the company is generally referred as Subsoccer and hence both names are utilised in this academic paper.

## **2 Background of the story**

Humans are a consequence of the millions of years long evolution. World's religions and their stories of creation are explaining our origins differently but later in this thesis one could understand that even the narratives in these religions can be explained with science. This isn't necessary denying the existence of supernatural forces nor higher powers but it explains why many people are believing in them. In other words, one could find it astonishing that still in the current era, a big number of people are choosing to believe in stories which cannot be scientifically proven to be true. This should actively demonstrate that humans are "naturally" drawn to stories to the extent that they are willing to defend their own biases when it comes to perceiving life. (Gottshall, 2013)

When it comes to defying stories or storytelling, it seems to be varying a lot especially in the field of business. Miri Rodriguez states that "storytelling is the emotional transfer of information (opinions, assertions, facts, data, ideas and arguments) through the introduction of a character, plot and conclusion. "(Rodriguez, 2020, p. 16) Donald Miller argues that "a story is a sense making device "(Miller, 2017, p.9) In his definition he also refers to Mike McHague: "The simpler and more predictable the communication, the easier it is for the brain to

digest. Story helps because it is a sense-making mechanism. Essentially story formulas put everything in order so the brain doesn't have to work to understand what's going on" (Miller, 2017, p. 6).

## **2.1 Scientific approach for a story**

The definitions of storytelling aren't necessarily important if one doesn't first understand how essential stories are for humans. Storytelling in marketing or narratives that are told among people are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to our whole development as a specie. Although cultures, norms and even morals have changed throughout human history, biological factors are taking a longer time to evolve. Nevertheless, in order to understand the reason why stories exist, which are portrayed in multiple different ways, it is necessary to focus on how people function especially how their brains function. In other words, it is important to understand the evolutionary, psychological and biological factors that have turned our brains into storytelling machines. In short, the development of human brain, especially the area of neocortex, seems to be the reason why our specie has become a storytelling creature. (Gottshall, 2013) (Storr, 2020)

Superficially, by only analysing some forms of narratives including movies, books or songs and call this an analysis of storytelling, would merely give a shallow comprehension of the whole issue. All of the above-mentioned parts of storytelling can be seen as a manifestation of human behaviour which seeks to control, understand and even dominate its surroundings by simplifying chaotic events into partial observations of the reality. This allows us humans to act more efficiently in the world. Hence, humans are already natural storytellers. (Gottshall 2013) (Storr, 2020)

## **2.2 Control and changes**

The natural reason for human storytelling can be logically understood with biology which seems to play an important in this phenomenon. When it comes to evolutionary biology, a big portion of human behaviour, including storytelling, can

be explained by referring to our development as a specie. Although, one could perceive these theories as overly mechanical description of our complex behaviour, in the end of the day, similar biological factors may affect individuals in a large spectrum of mammals. For example, the constant competition for a higher status can be seen as a universal race which is found in many different species in the Earth. Not to mention, the survival and reproduction game which can be positively correlated with the status as well. Without a doubt, storytelling is much more than analysing random synapses produced by our brains, but as mentioned before going to fine details of narratives, it is crucial to understand the foundations. (Gottschall. 2013)

One way to explain the reason why human brains are constantly telling stories is because they have a strong tendency to seek for a control of the events happening in the surroundings. In other words, human brains are constantly in a storytelling mode that portrays them as the heroes of their lives. Therefore, it seems that it is better for an individual to have a false sense of control when it comes to survival in life. Especially during hunter-gatherer time, the primary human purpose was to survive and reproduce just like any other living form in the planet. Control plays a big role in this game because obviously it is easier to match these goals when an individual has a firm grip of one's environment even if it's based on fallacies. The factors which de-balance our sense of control are of course the changes happening in our life. It seems that brains are operated to spot the unusual events over the regular ones. "" Almost all perception is based on the detection of change" says the neuroscientist Professor Sophie Scott. "Our perceptual systems basically don't work unless there are changes to detect- In a stable environment, the brain is relatively calm. But when it detects change, that event is immediately registered as a surge of neural activity." (Storr, 2020, p. 11-12)

Hence broadly, the reason for human's storytelling can be often explained by our need to survive and reproduce if trusting the theories provided by evolutionary biologists. It seems that although our believes, cultures and norms have changed a lot in the past years, our primary needs are still operating in the cave-man time. Therefore, these theories give a logical explanation, at least a partial one, for why

human storytelling exists. These biological explanations can be used when referring to regular stories found for example in books, movies or poems that include a hero. Ultimately, a simple story in which a character needs to overcome challenges caused by a villain, could be seen as a manifestation of our everyday struggles of spotting changes and seeking control over them. Hence, in order for a story to work in needs to somehow de-balance our sense of control since that is when new actions are taken. (Storr, 2020)

### **2.3 Norman Maier's rope experiment**

To expand this idea of people spotting changes, it also seems that more than often people are storytelling their actions even without being fully aware of it. Humans are set to find causations in complex events and most importantly regularly concluding them in a way in which the individual, the narrator, was the hero. Norman Maier's rope experiment which was already conducted in 1931 was one of the first studies that showcased the infinite capability of people creating narratives that will put them in the spotlight or in other words enhance their image. (Gottshall, 2013, p. 109-110)

In the experiment the participant were given a task to tie two ropes together which were hanging in the ceiling many metres apart from each other. Due to the distance between the ropes, the participant could not hold them simultaneously and therefore needed to find a solution how to bind them together. However, at one point during the experiment Maier entered the room and on purpose gently hit one of the ropes. Right after, the participants were always able to figure out how to solve the problem by swinging one of ropes to the other side of the room. (Gottschall, 2013, p.109-110)

As they were asked how they solved the problem, they failed to mention what actually helped them to do so. On the contrary, they would start to tell stories about different images, thoughts and ideas that suddenly appeared to their heads. One of the participants would explain his success with narratives such as the following: "I thought of the situation of swinging across a river. I had imaginary

of monkeys swinging from trees. This imaginary appeared simultaneously with the solution. The idea appeared complete.” (Gottshall, 2013, p. 109-110)

Based on this experiment, it seems that humans are explaining the reality in a way that showcases their own excellence. It also gave an insight on how changes spark our creativity since they de-balance our sense of control. In other words, in order to start or continue a story it needs to contain a significant change that makes us take actions according with it (Gottshcall, 2013) (Storr, 2020).

## **2.4 Sperry & Gazzaniga card experiment**

The neuroscientist Professor Roger Sperry and Michael Gazzaniga reinforced the ideas of Norman when it comes to our ability to create stories after our sense of control has been taken away. The scientists were seeking a way to insert commands in an individual´s brains without activating the left hemisphere which is mainly responsible for creating narratives. In other words, they wanted to know what would happen if a person obeyed the commands of the psychologist without having consciously made the initial decision to do the action that was demanded. Sperry and Gazzaniga understood that they could use epileptic patients who had had their connections between the brain´s hemispheres cut out. These patients were living normal lives and their previous procedures of treatment did not otherwise affect their wellbeing. (Storr, 2020, p.110-111)

During the experiment they would show a card in which was written the word “walk”. The card was only shown to the participant´s left eye since this way the message was only sent to the right hemisphere of the brain. After seeing the command, the patient would start walking. Once he was asked why he started walking, the patient would answer that he went to buy a soft drink.

(Storr, 2020, p.110-111)

Another participant was shown a violent video which made the patient feel strangely anxious without actually knowing the root cause for the sensation. She was suspecting that it could have been the room or even the psychologist who

made her feel uncomfortable. In conclusion to this experiment, the brain detected a change and made a fictional causal explanation of what was going on. In other words, the brain started to tell stories without actually knowing what made the participant to do the action. (Storr, 2020, p.110-111)

This experiment gave solitude to the theoretical assumptions that humans tend to find causations to non-related positive correlations. Not to mention, that this tendency to seek for a control seems to be often corrupted by an individual's biased perception of sovereignty when it comes to being in charge of a situation. The participants of the experiment seem to perceive themselves as the "heroes" even if the actual reality would be different. Sperry's and Gazzaniga's work demonstrated that humans are seeking to fill missing information gaps in a way which makes the individual as the protagonist of the event. (Storr, 2020) This is important to understand when it comes to business world as well. It is not relevant if a customer's stories are correct because eventually the customer perceives them as the truth. Hence, the companies that are able to match with the ideas of the individuals are the ones who will sustain them in the long-run. (Godin, 2018)

## **2.5 Mitch Prinstein's experiment**

When it comes to the storytelling which is derived from our biases, it is crucial to comprehend that the way humans naturally see the world is just a fraction of the larger reality that people cannot access. For example, there are a big number of colours, sounds and lights that our specie cannot observe but some other living beings can. In other words, as Will Storr argues, people are living in a hallucination that they perceive as the truth. Not to mention that, even among humans there can big differences with their capacity to observe the surroundings even if technically they should notice the same things. (Storr, 2020)

Professor Mitch Prinstein was particularly interested in this topic and conducted a famous experiment which expanded our understanding when it comes to the discrepancy of realities among observers. It seems that humans are observing different things. "Researchers asked people to watch videos of scenes that were

busy with social interactions, such as film of a school corridor. They then tracked their saccades so they could see which elements the participants' brains were attending to. Those with "past histories of social success" spent most of their time on people being friendly – smiling, chatting, nodding. But those who'd had high-school experiences of loneliness and social isolation "scarcely looked at the positive scenes at all" writes Prinstein. Instead, they spent around eighty per cent of their time looking at people being unfriendly and bullying." (Storr, 2020, p.177) Remarkably, the participants were all watching the same movie and still their experience were very different.

Hence, even the perception of the present moment is extremely subjective because humans are constantly on control seeking story-mode. Furthermore, the reality is shaped with the ideas of the hero who is experiencing the world. (Storr, 2020) It seems that humans see the world very differently and therefore one should focus on finding the audience who perceives the world the similarly. This is the very essence of storytelling. (Godin, 2018)

## **2.6 Professor George Loewenstein – photo experiment**

For the same exact purpose of controlling the world, humans are showcasing this tendency by being extremely curious about "everything". Of course, curiosity can be seen as a valuable human characteristic on its own, but the very fundamental reason for this behaviour can again be explained with evolutionary biology. Coming back to the idea that every living creature wants to survive and reproduce, the better one understands its surroundings the higher the likelihood of staying alive. Curiosity can therefore be seen as another controlling behaviour our brains are evolved to do. For instance, "nine-week-old babies are drawn to unfamiliar images over the ones they've seen before; between the ages of two and five, it's thought children ask around 40 000 "explanatory" question of their caregivers." (Storr, 2020, p. 17)

Curiosity has been surveyed by many social scientists but probably the most well-known study was conducted by Professor George Loewenstein. In his experiment

two groups were asked to click five photos that appeared on their computer screen. The first group were shown pictures of different animals and each click brought to their screen a new photo of an animal. The second group were however shown photos that portrayed only a single part of the body of an animal. Each click made another body part appear on their screens. The conclusion of the study was that the second group were more likely to proceed the clicking process although it was only required for the participants to click five photos. Uncertainty seems to be very hard for humans to bear with. “Brains, concluded the researchers, seem to become spontaneously curious when presented with an “information set” they realise is incomplete. “There is a natural inclination to resolve information gaps,” wrote Loewenstein, “even for questions of no importance.”” (Storr, 2020, p.17-18)

Unsurprisingly, due to human curiosity, stories are known to be extremely effective when it comes to getting a message across. Miri Rodriguez claims that “research confirms that stories can be up to 22 times more memorable than other types of information.” (Rodriguez, 2020, p. 7) The reason is that stories tend to activate the whole brain resulting into it producing number of different transmitter and hormones, making a listener of a story to picture as if one would be in the situation that is told in the narrative. (Rodriguez, 2020, p.7-8) By now, this is not surprising as storytelling is a key human characteristic. Therefore, implementing storytelling into a firm’s communication strategy is vitally important since it resonates with us well.

### **3 Adam Maslow’s hierarchy of needs**

When it comes to primary human needs, Abraham Maslow could be generally seen as the most well-known social scientist in this field of psychology. Later his ideas have been expanded and the terminology may have changed but the ideas are similar. For example, Miri Rodriguez, storyteller in Microsoft, calls the human needs as the universal truths since she argues that every individual has experienced the same feelings, moods and emotions. (Rodriguez, 2020)



Maslow argues that there are five needs which human are seeking to fulfil depending on which stages they are in particular occasions. Depending on the source of information the terms may vary slightly but these needs can be classified as physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem and self-actualisation needs. Although Maslow's model is often depicted with a pyramid, it doesn't mean that the needs couldn't simultaneously co-exist. In other words, one can for example be lacking of social connections but still have a need to become a professional pianist. By understanding which primary need an object is associated with, one can better understand which type of story one should tell to its potential audience. (Simply Psychology, 2020) (Rodriguez, 2020)

Using Maslow's ideas when it comes to human needs, human actions could be explained without always referring to the primal instinct of reproduction and survival. Furthermore, as human are capable of having sophisticated thinking, the needs in the top segment such as self-actualisation should not be forgotten. Hence, humans could be analysed by using all of the needs rather than only focusing on the ones in the lowest segments of pyramid. However, in order to keep the analysis part of this academic paper relatively narrow, it shall mainly focus on the needs of survival and reproduction.

### **3.1 Survival and reproduction**

It is understandable why in the evolutionary perspective it would make more sense that humans have a slightly corrupted belief of them being in charge of their life. For example, humans are constantly making cause-effect relations between events in a way that works the best for their own interest. Psychologist have actually coined a term for one's over-estimation of one's capabilities in life. It is referred as "Lake Woebegone" effect. In essence, people understandably think that they are the protagonists and hence are better than the average. "For example, Thomas Gilovich's book *How We Know What Isn't So* reports that of one million high school seniors surveyed, "70% thought they were above average in leadership ability, and only 2% thought they were below average. In terms of ability to get along with others, nearly all students thought they were above

average, 60% thought they were in the top 10% and 25% thought they were in the top 1%.” (Gottshall, 2013, p.172)

### **3.2 Status**

When it comes to evolutionary psychology, this effect can be seen as human tendency to seek for a higher status which is derived from our ambitions to survive and reproduce. To fill these needs an individual needs to get along with the “tribe” but also have the courage to get ahead of the peers in the group. The leader of the tribe has of course in this sense the best mating options and social connections which help the individual to thrive. Other than that, the leader of the group should also defend the individuals with lower status which seems to be common behaviour in the animal world and therefore it is consequently also represented in the literature. “The necessary characteristics to become a human hero mirror those necessary for a chimpanzee to rise to a position of dominance. At the happy ending of an archetypal story (Christopher) Booker writes, a “hero and heroine must represent the perfect coming together of four values: strength, order, feeling and understanding.” This same combination of characteristics is required in chimp alphas, whose place on top depends on their balancing straightforward dominance with a will (or at least its appearance) to protect those lower on the ladder.” (Storr, 2020, 2020, p. 146)

### **3.3 Group’s status**

The race for a higher status is not only competed in the individual level. Even groups are fighting against each other on who gets to climb higher in the ladder of statuses. Remembering, that humans have also the need to get along with other people in order to survive and reproduce, we value our peers over strangers at least in the hunter-gatherer time. In short, other tribes could have been competing for the same resources and therefore it was important that the one’s primary group stayed collective. Due to these reasons, humans seem to be universally valuing selfless behaviour over being selfish. “An analysis of ethnographic accounts of ethic in sixty worldwide groups found they shared these

rules: return favours, be courageous, help your group, respect authority, love your family, never steal and be fair.” (Storr, 2020, p. 139-140)

In essence, the loyalty to one’s group can of course turn into despising other members of different groups. This behaviour is constantly seen in the world. Imagining for example the political conflicts which are based on the disagreement around different world views. Neurologist Professor Bruce Wexler argues that at some point of human life once the individual internal structures have been set and shaped by the environment, it starts to defend these setting of the brain. In other words, any new change in the environment is extremely difficult for the individual. In the worst case this conflict between the old and new models may turn into anger, biased thinking or even violence. (Storr, 2020)

## **4 Plot**

All of the above-mentioned characteristics of stories are main ingredients when it comes to building a plot. In essence, a successful plot of a story manages to apply the primary traits of human nature which derive from our hunter – gatherer days. Obviously, the context of stories may vary a lot and therefore it may be challenging to find the evolutionary background underneath the plot. But when analysing deeply the meaning of an ending of a story for instance, one may find similarities and logical reasons from our past that explain why a particular narrative is popular. (Storr, 2020) (Gottschall, 2013) (Rodriguez, 2020)

### **4.1 The essence of a plot**

As humans are extremely curious almost about everything and want to stay in control of their lives, a successful plot contains multiple different changes. As learned from previous chapters, humans are drawn to notice changes and it is main reason what keeps one in move. Changes in the environment, emotions tribal and connections control, curiosity that fills the information gaps status movement, human needs, selfish behaviour, personal goals, us versus them, bad versus evil, can all be seen as crucial elements of our everyday plots. Not to mention the human bias which sees oneself as the hero of one’s own story.

Stories seen on the white screen are just the ultimate result of our capability to put these Mundane narratives into concrete objects. (Storr, 2020)

Plots are everywhere as are stories. Plots are merely just actions we take according with our storytelling minds. They derive from the changes that humans are keen to notice efficiently. When remembering that human brains are relatively calm in stable environment every change that could somehow affect our primal needs of survival, reproduction are when we start to take actions. For instance, Harris could about low self-esteem as a thought pattern or in other words a story one tells to oneself in which the individual chooses to believe in by acting accordingly with the feelings. In this example the story could be seen as the following: A person (a character) is believing that one is not good enough to apply to a university (plot). Finally, that person decides to not enter the entrance exams (conclusion). (Harris, 2020)

The low self-esteem story above might seem vague but when deeply analysing the root causes for the decision of not applying to the university, it could be much more complex than first thought. Maybe the individual wants to get along with his parents and therefore doesn't want to possibly disappoint them if not succeeding in the exam. According the evolutionary models mentioned earlier in this paper, the action here could therefore be seen as a survival coping mechanism. Tribal connections have been essentials since they offered us a higher change to survive and reproduce. One could argue these are not probable fears a modern human has but again these primal threats are still manifested in humans since the changes are relatively slow in our evolution as a specie. Hence, one could argue the human's evolutionary development is not advanced enough to the extent that we could only ignore the fear of left alone without a tribe. (Storr, 2020)

## **5 Stories in business**

Opening up to the idea of evolution helps humans to understand better themselves. Some level of comprehension gives humans a decent amount of control or at least the perception of being in control of the chaos which surrounds us with its uncertainties. This not an exception when it comes to modern

business. Comprehending the very primal reasons why our specie is behaving the way it does, should only be seen as a positive asset. Especially in case of marketing which overlaps well with human storytelling, it is important to understand what sparks the interest, keeps the attention and eventually binds people together. These ideas of justifying business action according with our primal needs seems to be direction where some marketing experts are going in the field. (Storr, 2020) (Godin, 2018) (Rodriguez, 2020)

Seth Godin shares similar ideas when it comes to stories people are talking about themselves. The stories that people tell aren't necessarily true nor that they would be universally shared with many humans. However, if an individual believes that a brand story matches one's worldview, with time the person could become a loyal customer for the organisation since it roots for same causes values, and actions for which the individual does. Only by showing empathy meaning putting oneself into customer shoes can a company fully understand its potential market. Hence, it is the job of a marketer to analyse which concerns, believes and aspirations the target customers have. (Godin, 2018)

Carlos Gil, marketing strategist, shares very similar ideas than Seth Godin as he says "every company and product or service has a target customer who has needs; your job is to connect those needs by listening and engaging directly." (Gil, 2019, p. 8) He also emphasises the importance of not falling in the trap of data but to put one's attention on the people behind the analytical figures. "Always keep in mind that clicks, reach, impressions etc are just numbers, but behind those numbers is a person. Who are they? Make it your goal moving forward to go deep down funnel of getting to know who your customers are. If you want to build an army of advocates, it begins with first getting a handful of customers, fans and followers to have a direct dialogue with you" (Gil, 2019, p.30)

## **5.1 Storytelling the existence**

One could say that the key element is to understand how a company's potential customers understand the world and then communicating with them in a way

which matches their perspective of life. However, one could argue that first it is even more important to understand the reason why the company exists. In other words, when it comes to evolutionary psychology one needs to understand the role it plays of completing the primal needs of their customers. A company needs to have a reason to exist as this is where storytelling happens. In essence, explaining why a company is in the market and how the firm will help the customer to match their primal needs to survive and reproduce. Again, these ideas may seem far-fetched but keeping mind that stories are part of us and our evolutionary background cannot be whipped off in any given moment. Once, the primal need that a company fulfils is established, the firm can start to focus on its customers. (Godin,2018)

Miri Rodriguez is mostly sharing the ideas behind the Maslow's theory of needs as she states: "Finding empathy in storytelling means understanding which needs the brand fulfils for the customer and, as a result, what feelings the brand story evokes." (Rodriguez, 2020, p. 23) The primary needs she calls as "universal truths" which she believes everyone has felt which makes them universally relatable. "Universal truth is an inclusive feeling that the story individually relatable to every person in your audience." (Rodriguez, 2020, p. 24) Therefore, if a company can clearly define which need their customer is seeking, it is easier to target the message to the audience that is willing to listen the message.

## **5.2 Rolex and status**

For example, one could argue that a consumer who buys a Rolex watch, doesn't buy it to take time. In the end of the day, it is simply a Swiss watch but the symbolic meaning is much greater. There is a particular reason for not buying a regular watch or using the phone to take time. This is where stories are important. Applying Maslow's hierarchy, the individual could be lacking need for a status or in others words, believes that people don't appreciate that person enough. Therefore, that human purchases the luxury product in order to satisfy his need for appreciation that comes from the status. Again, Harris would probably argue that these believes are fully in the individual's head but when it comes to

marketing this fact is less important. The vital part is to recognise that if that person sees his beliefs as “truths”. Then the marketer knows how to communicate with the right language. (Godin, 2018)

### **5.3 Decision making-process**

It is crucial to understand that even if the target audience is well established, the people in this group could be in a different stage of decision making-process when it comes to purchasing from a company. Hence, storytelling when it comes to convincing to purchase from a company, should vary among different stakeholders. David Jobber and John Fahy see that every purchase initially derives from a consumer becoming aware of a problem and consequently creating needs to solve the particular problem. In the case of Subsoccer, a consumer could see the company’s video on social media in which the game is played in a bar (plot) by two friends (characters) in which the other one scores a goal and they start both laughing of the silliness of the game (conclusion). The viewer may perceive the content as emotionally uplifting which could for example resonate in that person’s need for belonging. Therefore, this consumer “tags” his friends in the comment section of the video. One could argue that in this stage, the goal is to convince the consumer by showcasing the need the product fulfils and consequently which problems it solves. (Jobber, Fahy, 2009, p. 60-61)

The next stage is seeking information about a product, service or company. The aim is to learn more in order to consider purchasing later. The authors argue that a consumer may search information internally or externally. In other words, one can analyse the company in one’s head or enhance the knowledge by learning from other stakeholders or platforms including from friends, the company’s employees and the firm’s website. The group in this stage seeks to understand better how the product will actually make their lives better and solve a problem. (Jobber, Fahy 2009, p. 61)

The third phase consists of evaluating the alternatives. Jobber and Fahy divide consumer choices into four categories: technical, economic, social and personal.

Technical criteria are referring to general usability of a product or service for example, reliability, performance and durability. Economic criteria are financial factors that affect the purchasing decisions including price. Social criteria significate the external pressures from people that could influence a consumer's behaviour such as status, fashion and social belonging. Hence, the better a marketer knows the stories one tells to one self the easier it is to find the right customers. (Jobber, Fahy, 2009, p. 61-64) 4 Feet Under uses testimonials or in other personal stories which are explaining the reasons why the product is a must-have. The firm sees them to create credibility, trust and better brand image in general.

When it comes to storytelling, Donald Miller argues that these "characters" should not be the be heroes of a story but the "guides" for the consumers. For example, Subsoccer should not try to portray itself as a serious sport if the potential customers see the game only for fun. Hence it is the firm's responsibility to understand which internal problem the product solves in the eyes of the target audience. Afterwards, the brand should "guide" the consumers how their life could enhance if they purchase from the company. (Miller, 2017)

If a consumer has passed the previous stages and is therefore convinced to make the purchase, the fourth step is the buying situation. The authors argue that there are three different buying situations: extended problem solving, limited problem solving and habitual problem solving. Simply, the more alternatives there are, the higher the prize of a good and the more time a consumer has to decide, the longer will the purchasing decision take. For example, generally buying a new car involves a longer consideration, information seeking and learning period than buying a tomato in a grocery store. Therefore, the first is named as extended problem-solving, and the latter as habitual problem solving. The authors argue that the vast majority of consumer decisions belong to the section of limited problem-solving situations. (Jobber, Fahy, 2009, p. 65) As the case study's products are still seen as expensive in the eyes of general public, the company needs to do more convincing in order to convert potential customers to make the purchase.



The last stage is the post-purchasing situation in which a consumer may feel anxious about the purchase and doubt if the person has made the right decision. This effect is called cognitive dissonance. This stage is important, as the companies should try to minimize the stress of the consumer by reassure that the consumer has make the correct decision. (Jobber, Fahy, 2009, p. 63)

## **6 Brand**

Brand is a complex term since in different context it may refer to different things. In terms of business world, it usually refers to the perception an individual has of a firm or in other words stories that person tells himself about a brand. The origin of the word seems to derive from the livestock in which “branding” was used to mark the animals in order to separate them from one another. In essence, one could argue that the idea of branding has not fundamentally changed a lot since brands are still tools to differentiate from the competition and consequently gaining an advantage in the market. (Mäkinen, Kahri, Kahri, 2010) Al and Laura Ries define brand as “a singular idea or concept you own inside the mind of the prospect.” (Ries, Ries, 2002, p. 116)

### **6.1 Brand Storytelling**

If stories are a sense-making tool so are brands too. According to Al and Laura Ries the way the brands should be built is by being consistent, clear and narrow in order to be with associated with something. “Run up a red flag whenever you hear the words: “Why should we limit ourselves?” You should limit your brand. That’s the essence of branding. Your brand has to stand for something both simple and narrow in the mind. This limitation is the essential part of the branding process.” (Ries, Ries, 2002)

Donald Miller agrees as he states: “The essence of branding is to create simple, relevant messages we can repeat over and over so that we “brand” ourselves into the public consciousness.” (Miller, 2017) These definitions make sense when analysing top brands in the world. For example, Rolex’s brand would not be as

strong in case they had sold cheaper watches as well. The reason may partly rely on the stories the consumers tell themselves. One could argue that the status an individual believes to get from company's product that is not fully leaning towards high-end market may be lower than an organisation that is clearly in the luxury segment. Therefore, it is important to know the target customers before expanding the brands with line extension for instance. If status is important for the target audience, it would be unwise to offer cheaper products. (Ries, Ries, 2002)

All purchasing decisions are made due to brands since they influence the prices, beliefs and make companies differentiate from each other. (Mäkinen, Kahri, Kahri, 2010) This argument makes sense when analysing consumer behaviour. In grocery stores one can pick from a number of different orange juices. It is clear that there are price differences although the goods are ultimately the same. By combining storytelling techniques in order to enhance brand image, a firm can justify a higher price. An organisation could communicate that it is only picking oranges in the most sustainable way when it comes to causing damage to the environment. Hence, by targeting this message to target consumers who share the worldview of the firm, can the company still offer a more expensive product while being profitable as well. Also, by doing so the organisation is building its brand by focusing on a narrow area in the juice market which should ease the associations of sustainability in the minds of consumers. (Godin, 2018)

## **6.2 Donald Miller's Storybrand Framework**

Donald Miller argues that the most effective way to tell brand stories is by adapting the author's "Storybrand Framework" which in the words of the writer should be the main format how the majority of successful narratives are built. First item a story needs to include is a character which in the business world should be a company's customer who has a problem and wants to solve it. (Miller, 2017)

Secondly, the author argues that ideally a successful story gives a solution to the three main problems consumers have - internal problem, external problem and philosophical problem. For example, Oatly, the Swedish company which sells

goods made from oats, could be solving the external problem of thirst, the internal problem of personal development because someone could think that as she values animals and hence doesn't want to support the dairy industry with the purchases and the philosophical problem in which she believes that animals should not be exploited by humans. (Miller, 2017)

Thirdly, a brand should operate as a guide for the customer. In other words, understanding their concerns and showing how the company will improve their life by solving their problems. "Brands that position themselves as heroes unknowingly compete with their potential customers. Every human being wakes up each morning and sees the world through the lens of a protagonist. (Miller, 2017, p. 32-33)

Fourthly, as any story a brand should also give a customer a plan which should ease the decision-making process of purchase. "Plans can take many shapes and forms but all effective plans do one of two things: they either clarify how somebody can do business with us, or they remove the sense of risk somebody might have if they're considering investing in our products or services." (Miller, 2017, p. 87) He defines these plans as process plans and agreement plans. In terms of Subsoccer, process plan could be a guide on building of the table and agreement plan could be a guarantee for satisfaction. (Miller, 2017)

The fifth step is to call the customers for an action. In other words, ask them to make the purchase. Miller argues that "call to action" can happen in two ways either directly or transitionally. Direct call to action is for example a button on the website demanding so but transitional way could be seen as the longer route some customers need to take before buying. The author of the book argues that usually in these cases a company has to first offer something for free including newsletter, blog posts or webinars for instance. In the car industry, this is a common practice in which potential customers want usually to "test-drive" cars before buying. (Miller, 2017, p. 99)

The sixth step in a story should be about showcasing what will happen if a customer doesn't buy from a company. It seems that in general that people are

more willing avoid “pain” than to gain pleasure. “In 1979, Nobel Memorial Prize winner Daniel Kahneman published a theory about why people make certain buying decisions. Prospect theory, as it was called, espoused that people are more likely to be dissatisfied with a loss than they are satisfied with a gain. In other words, people hate losing \$100 more than they like winning \$100.” (Miller, 2017, p. 111)

The final and seventh step is to once more portray how the life of a customer will enhance when the person will do business with a company. Again, it is by reinforcing the basic solutions the firm offers for the problems a customer has, can consumer fully understand the benefits of a product. In terms of Subsoccer, this could mean offering testimonials from other users including opinion-leaders who enjoy the game. The author of the book argues that a company should not expect customer to understand the benefits of a product even if they are clear for the firm. Therefore, the main benefits need to be consistently repeated. (Miller, 2017)

## **7 Social media**

“Social media is a computer-based technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through the building of virtual networks and communities. More than 3,8 billion people use social media” (Investopedia, 2021) With the purpose of the researches conducted in this thesis, Facebook, Instagram and are used as the mediums.

### **7.1 Storytelling on social media**

Nowadays, brands might find it hard to get exposure in social media because their organic reach can be extremely limited due to the algorithmic factors in different social channels. Therefore, a company’s post may only be seen by a small number of users since the social media platforms are showing content that is both relevant and engaging to their users. For example, a Facebook post which doesn’t generate any impressions among the users, will be sanctioned by its

algorithm resulting into low exposure in the platform of only few percent of site followers seeing it. However, if the post is popular in terms of likes, shares, comments or other impressions, the algorithm will show it to more people. Although, each platform's algorithm is obviously different, they all reward content that are getting engagement from the users and penalising those which don't. "Social media is quirky with its own rules and cultures. It moves fast and changes quickly. Most importantly social media is supposed to be social." (Avery Swartz, 2020, p. 118). The reason is that the platforms try to keep the people using them as long as possible in order to show more advertisement to them. Therefore, one should mainly offer social content, engaging and "native" content to the users of social sites. (Gil, 2019) (Vaynerchuck, 2013)

Hence, engagement, connecting with the audience and showing understanding towards them has become increasingly more important in order to combat the poor reach a post may otherwise get on social media. "The reality is that people have tuned out brands the same way they've tuned out commercials on the television or the radio, so you need to focus less on getting big numbers quickly and focus more on building small relationships that eventually add up" (Gil, 2019, p. 31) Seth Godin has very similar ideas as well as he states: "For most of my lifetime, marketing was advertising. And then it wasn't true anymore. Which means you'll need to become a marketer instead. That means seeing what others see. Building tensions. Aligning with tribes." (Godin, 2018, p. 3)

One could argue when it comes to evolutionary storytelling, that many companies have failed to explain how their product will fundamentally help a consumer to fulfil their primal needs when it comes to survival and reproduction. This should result into poor engagement also in social media because the users don't understand the reason a product or service will help the individual to thrive in life. In practice, these ideas can be extended with the thoughts of Gary Vaynerchuk who argues that every company has to be "native" in different platforms. This means that a company's updates on social media should feel as if they could have been posted by a regular user of a particular platform. He argues that every platform has different set of rules, behaviours and code of conducts which have to be respected in order to be treated as legitimate user of a social channel.

Meaning one cannot treat for example TikTok and LinkedIn the same way. A native post is related to multiple different factors including visual presence, frequency of posts and the tone of voice. All of them are essential when it comes to how relevant a post is in the eyes of the audience. (Vaynerchuk, 2013)

Vaynerchuk's ideas can be correlated to all the theories above since in the end being native on social media platform means understanding your audience and speaking to them in the manner that resonates the best with them. Eventually, every company should aim to catch the attention of the people who are interested in buying from the firm. This means that a product can be good and still not succeed if the audience is not correct. Seth Godin describes this situation as a "comedian dilemma". "The comic shows up at the club; he's in a good mood. He brings his best material. He's up there, working in the room, and no one is laughing. Not a peep. He's bombing. After the show, he's beating himself up, thinking of quitting comedy altogether. Then he discovers that the audience is an Italian tour group and no one understands English. "It's not for you." "(Godin, 2019, p. 38) Therefore, the better an organisation knows its audience and product, the better the chance of finding the target audience which listens what the firm has to say. (Godin, 2018)

## **8 Storytelling in Subsoccer**

Subsoccer is using the social media as their main platform to communicate with the audience. The company seems to be the most active in Instagram, TikTok and Facebook. The firm has also a LinkedIn, Pinterest and Youtube page which are updated less frequently. The company is clearly using humor as their tone in all of the social platforms. The main problem in the company's storytelling seems to be that the target audience is not yet defined. Therefore, it is harder to tell stories without the actual understanding the key customers. Hence, the company runs short experiment that should give a better understanding of the viable market. The following campaign belongs one of these experiments the company has run this year.

## **8.1 Overview**

The campaign was aimed to target people living in Newcastle upon Tyne who were in the age range of 22-59 years old and who were working in the restaurant industry. Also, they should have had an interest towards Newcastle United by liking the club's Facebook page. It was scheduled to last 5 days with a budget of 50 € per day. The ultimate goal was to understand better for whom the brand appeals the most and also to enhance brand-awareness among general public.

The advertisement reached 7288 people and received 10 likes, 23 comments and 21 shares. In the end the campaign's overall cost was 49,99€, the cost per click was 0,20€, it got 251 link clicks and click through rate (CTR) was 3,4 %. In other words, CTR means the percentage of people who clicked the advertisement and also gave an impression for example pressing the like button in the post.

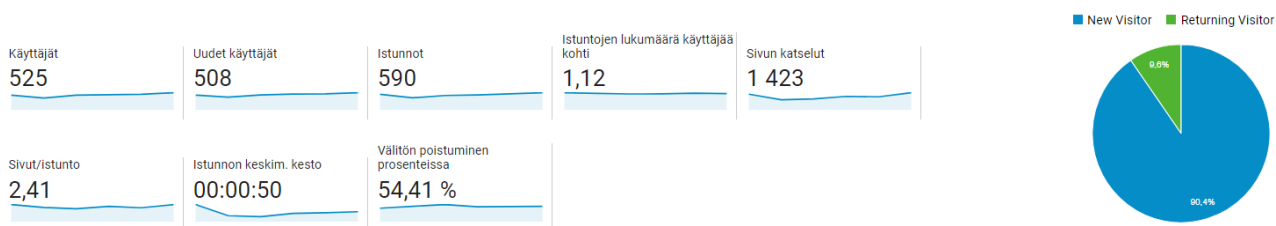
## **8.2 Story of the advertisement**

The advertisement was showing different people enjoying a Subsoccer-match in different locations but mainly in bar associated places since the campaign was targeted towards people working in restaurants who were also interested in Newcastle United.

The ad's story could be interpreted as the following by some viewers. "Two players are playing and enjoying the game. Both players are seen equal since both of them are close to score a goal. Finally, one person scores and everyone is cheering and enjoying the moment" When it comes to evolutionary approach, this advertisement focused on the status movement and tribal connection between the individuals. As learned from previous chapters in order to survive and reproduce, an individual should seek to rise in the tribe's hierarchy without forgetting the importance of having good relations with the peers. Hence, this advertisement was estimated to touch on these key aspects of our personal ambitions in life. Sure, one could argue that scoring a goal doesn't affect much on someone's status but again a game can be nevertheless, seen as a competition in which there is a winner and a loser. Although, the actual game

would not be played seriously it could still have an effect on the status movement since an individual could feel empowered when knowing that he is the best player of the group.

### 8.3 Analysing the data from Google Analytics



There were link clicks 251 but since around 90% were new visitors we may assume that the shares of the post did bring some new visitors as well.

Sosiaalinen verkosto	Istunnot	Sivun katselut	Istunnon keskim. kesto	Sivut/istunto
1. Facebook	199 (86,52 %)	327 (76,94 %)	00:00:12	1,64
2. Instagram Stories	10 (4,35 %)	38 (8,94 %)	00:00:52	3,80
3. LinkedIn	8 (3,48 %)	15 (3,53 %)	00:00:24	1,88
4. Instagram	6 (2,61 %)	25 (5,88 %)	00:00:41	4,17
5. Pinterest	5 (2,17 %)	14 (3,29 %)	00:04:14	2,80
6. Twitter	2 (0,87 %)	6 (1,41 %)	00:00:22	3,00

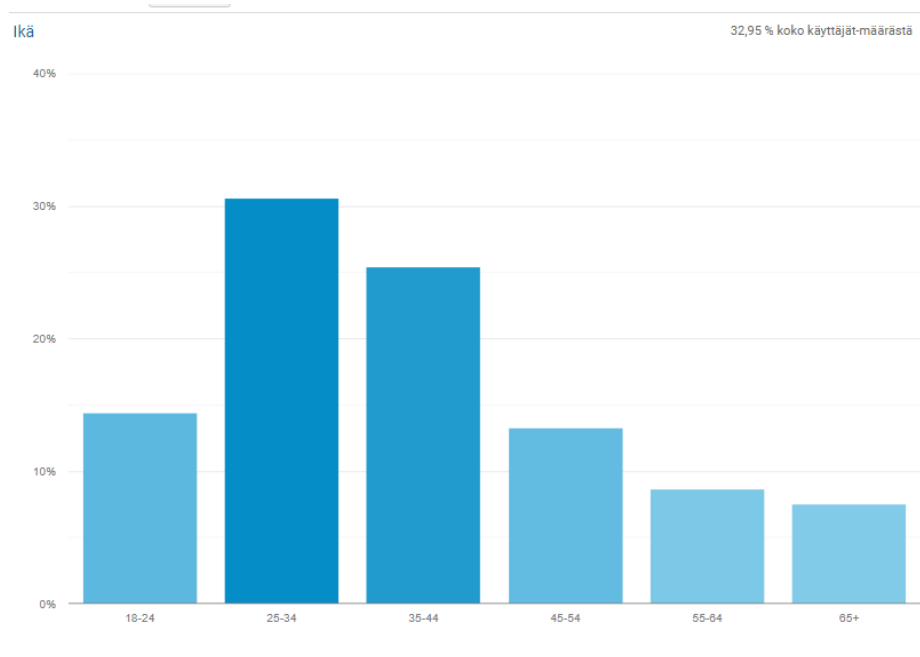
(From 4 Feet Under’s Google Analytics page)

This screen shot from the company’s Google Analytics page from the dates 12.3.2021-17.3.2021, indicates that the firm got 199 visitors from Facebook whereas the others come from multiple different social media platforms. Hence, it is unclear why 199 people are marked in Google Analytics if 251 clicked the add. When it comes to engagement and how effective the storytelling has been, one can notice that the audience coming from the Instagram have much higher pages per session rating than for example Facebook. In other words, the number of pages a visitor has opened on average in a company’s website. Although the audience in this particular example is extremely limited it nevertheless, emphasizes the importance of finding the “right customers”. The audience which are true fans, the ones which should become the evangelist of the product.



During the advertisement campaign the website was still used with the old format but nevertheless, the Facebooks 12 seconds per session is still a number which should be analysed carefully. The reason could be due to multiple different reasons but when it comes to storytelling perspective, it could be assumed that the audience is not matching the story the company is telling. Again, this campaign was not strictly targeted to a narrowed audience which means that there will be a public that disregards the advertisement. Still, when it comes to evolutionary appeal that the advertisement should have caused among a larger audience, it raises questions on how successful the campaign was.

Nevertheless. the data should also be analysed in a way that they are comparable with the average click rates of the industry. It could be that on Facebook the audience don't easily engage on ads. Therefore, it is vitally important for the company to know the industry well in which they are operating before making any early assumptions of the results.



(From 4 Feet Under's Google Analytics page)

Above it is seen that the biggest age group visiting the website during the 5 days was 25-34 years old which should mean that also there was some level of interest since the action was taken. This raises multiple questions including are younger

and older people behaving differently on Facebook. Are younger people less willing to like, comment or share posts on Facebook than older people? This question came relevant because the people who engaged the most with the post by sharing or commenting were not in this age group. In short, the traffic came from younger audience, but the engagement arrived from older demographics.

## 8.4 Psychographics of the audience

The people who engaged to the post are listed on the excel pages below. The people who engaged with the post had their accounts set either set as private or they were at least protected which posed some difficulties to do the research. However, 19 people were still able to be analysed because their security settings were limited which allowed the company to see their profiles, photos and their interests for example.

Name	Age	relationship?	Children	Job	Sports	Movies	Traveling
Michael	45	married	0	Not clear	Football, united	Humour, dum dumber, austin powers	
Dave	50	not clear	2	Post office	football, united, national team		
Jay	50	married	1 and a dog	Logistics	football, united, national team		
Anthony	35	married	2	Not clear	football, combat sport	humour, dark documentaries	
Russell	35	married	2	Semipro football	football, cycling		
Ian	40	married	2	veteran	football, combat sport	action, darker documentaries	A lot
David	50	married	4	Not clear	football		
Andrew	40	in a relationship	1	Sheltee industrial	football, shooting	Drama, Star-Wars	
Richard	45	married	1	Not clear	football, united, car		
Wayne	50	married	0	not clear	horse, gym, united		
John	55	not clear	1	not clear	football, fishing		
Paul	45	married	2	not clear	formula		
Michael C	50	single	Not clear	Not clear	football strongly represented	Humours, Austin Powers	
Bob	60	married	2	Not clear	football as cover photo		
John	45	married	1	Not clear	football, cricket		
Steven	45	not clear	2	constructional worker	Liverpool, united, semipro team		
Callum	40	single	1	Not clear	united, liverpool	Ted, Hot Fuzz, Dennis the Menace	
Stafford	50	married	2	timotei shampoo	united		A lot
Tony	35	married	2	Not clear	United, e-sports	Action, humour	

(From 4 Feet Under's Excel sources)

As seen, most of the people are married and have children which could be assumed to be an important demographic factor when it comes to parents purchasing the Subsoccer tables to their off-spring. However, their comments to the post were more indicating that they would want to play the game themselves. Job description column could be positively associated with one's status when it comes to evolutionary perspective. For example, if someone was for example a CEO of a company one could assume that pursues on getting ahead of the peers when it comes to professional career.

Sports which the target audience was interested was not a surprise for the company but again it reinforces the idea that the key customers are more leaning towards a football fan base rather than actually playing football in high level.

TV-shows and commercials were also used to understand better the consumer's worldview. Many of them had comedic shows which indicated to the company that the company's humoristic tone of voice should be appealing to this audience type. Travelling was used to find people who are seeking for new experiences. "Unfortunately," this information could not be found in most of the profiles.

TV-series	MUSIC	Food/drinks/Restaurants	Value
Family guy	Pop, dance	pub, fast-food	Friends, social life, enjoying the small moments
		pub, beer	Family, stressless life, social life
NO context max, humours	Mainstream, gigs Ed Sheeran	pub, beer	Family, stressless, life, social and simple life
Family guy, simpsons	Varies a lot	Dominos, beer	Family, home life
			Friends, social life, keeping life easy
sope-opera, documentaries	Mainstream	Fast-food, steak	Family
	underground	Good and high quality	Family, friends, exploring the world (experiencing new things)
Reality	underground	Different cultures	Family, sports, exploring new taste in cuisine
stand up		Beer, sausage, bacon	Family, right-wing political ideology
Just for fun		Social drinking	Self-care, massage, tanning, adventures...
	Underground	Fast-food,	Family, and equality in England
Crimeaired uk		Modernist cuisine	Family, nature, seeing new things
	mainstream	Beer	Keeping life simple and stressless
Reality	old classics acdc	Beer and grill	Family, social aspect of football. Enjoying the small things
Benidorm, humour	underground	beer	Family, travelling
Huumori, police reality	Classics b.marley, pink floyd	Take-away,	Family, humour, helpin others
James Corden, ross,	modern rock, pop	pizza, burger, beer	Family, friends, and hobbies
	likes to sing, rock		Family, very socia life, enjoying life, humour
news, humour	Rap, male pop vocalist	burger, pizza	Friedns, travelling, family, expressing oneself with clothes

(From 4 Feet Under's Excel sources)

The company wanted to know what kind of TV-series the potential customers watch in order to match the future campaigns with the tone that they are familiar with in their everyday life. One could also think that the TV-shows could help to make early assumptions of the individual personality traits including their sense of humour.

Music was also used to understand better the worldview and how the individual could identify oneself in the culture. For example, is the person seeking to find new artists or sticking with the mainstream music played on radios. A bigger sample of audience could help to understand better this aspect since currently the data is not efficient for the firm to make any conclusions.

When it comes to food, restaurants column, it became evident that the most engaging audience with this advertisement were mostly enjoying fast-food over something healthier or more luxurious in price.

Hence the company, made an educated guess from the insights that a typical person who engaged with the post could have a value of keeping life simple, enjoyable full of humour shared with the loved ones and friends. However, the firm cannot make premature conclusions of these findings but they can be seen as a hint of the possible customers who are willing to buy the product in the future.

## 8.5 Comments on the Facebook advertisement



(From 4 Feet Under's Facebook page)

Comments including "class" are also extremely interesting when it comes to stories a consumer may tell to oneself. Going back to Maslow hierarchy of needs these comments could be seen in the layer of esteem needs which covers factors such as status, recognition and respect. Maybe this individual sees the Subsoccer table as a product which can fulfil the needs of self- esteem the person is seeking. If Subsoccer is able to be perceived as a high-class product in the

eyes of the public, one could assume that owning the game could raise one's status among the peers. Again, this statement cannot be concretely backed up with evidence but when it comes to evolutionary biology it is a human tendency to try to positively influence the "tribe member" so that they will give protection from the dangers of life. Hence, being liked by others can be seen as a survival mechanism. (Gottshall, 2013)



(From 4 Feet Under's Facebook page)

Whereas the comments such as "not fancy getting one of these bad las for the queens haha" or tagging a Facebook friend to the post, could again be seen as a behaviour which is seeking to fulfil the need to belong since the person is inviting other people to share an experience together. Furthermore, comments which are referring to alcohol or bar life can reinforce the idea that the company's advertisement campaign has been successful when it comes to being portrayed as a fun, easily accessible and non-serious game.

## 8.6 Conclusion of the campaign

Although the campaign reached 7288 people, the actual engagement was lower. However, it is not clear if the results are significantly lower than the average

engagement level of the industry. Hence, it is the firm's responsibility to understand their market so that they can optimize their advertisement campaigns in the future. However, this campaign was more concentrated on psychographics of the target group. In other words, the actual reach is less relevant when it comes to finding the most loyal customers. Their needs, behaviour and even beliefs were tried to find in this campaign.

It seems from the experiment that the customers are searching to fulfil their need to belong when using the product. Also, status movement which derives from the competition is also an important finding in this short study. However, as the actual level of engagement was low one cannot be certain that these results are fundamentally correct. Similar experiments would need to be done in order to get a larger picture of the target audience. However, one can still assume that these results are significant to the extent that the company can use this data as a background information, when redesigning the future advertisement campaigns.

## **8.7 Future research suggestion**

Due to external reasons this research was extremely limited and needs to be repeated several times in order to get a better understanding of the possible resonating audience. Also, the variables that defined the targeted audience were precise and therefore, one cannot make any generalization when it comes to announcing these outcomes as truths. It gives merely a direction in which the campaign can head in the future.

Based on these findings it seems that the older demographics with a more easy-living mindset are interested in Subsoccer. However, Facebook's is vastly used by users who belong to the older generations and therefore the platform itself might have corrupted the results. (Vaynerchuk, 2013) Nevertheless, the company could repeat similar campaign in different social mediums to comprehend better its effectivity and observe if the resonating audience will differ.

## 9 Conclusion

The thesis was both conducted for 4 Feet Under but also in the interest of the particular field of social science. The aim was to bring relatively new ideas to storytelling by referring to evolutionary biology. When it comes to applying the storytelling theories and the results of the Facebook campaign, the company should clarify their reason of existence and consequently find out the customers who are the most interested in the brand. Although the campaign gave a hypothesis of the potential target audience, it is still not certain and therefore further researches have to be conducted in order to even get a more educated guess of the key customers. Hence, the better the firm understands the motives, worldview and beliefs of an individual, the easier it is predicting his behaviour in the future and confronting them with suitable stories that tell how the product will drastically improve their life.

Besides, continuing on finding the right audience the stories of the company should be built in a way which reinforces the idea that customer is the protagonist of the narrative and not the firm. As learned from the previous chapters, humans tend to live in biased realities that are corrupted by our storytelling minds. In our everyday stories, the missing information gaps are often filled with our corrupted beliefs of our own excellence. Therefore, the company should focus on making the audience to feel as the hero of the whole story. As learned these missing information gaps only happen when human sense of control is challenged. Therefore, in the future the company should figure out a way which challenges our tendency to control. Generally, this means bringing something unordinary in the picture.

Furthermore, the company should also clarify how it will fulfil the primal needs of a customer. Since, our behaviour can most often be explained with our evolutionary past, the company should fundamentally understand how its product will help an individual to thrive in life when it comes to surviving and reproduction. This may sound far-fetched but as learned from theories, it seems that although our specie has evolved in multiple ways, a big part of behaviour still derives from

the cave-man time. In essence, the Subsoccer's football game should be analytically experimented which need it actually fulfils.

Status movement is would also be an interesting part to analyse. In other words, which form of status movement the customers are seeking for when using the product. Based on the findings of the short experiment, the potential customers could be more interested in the tribal connections rather than competing against each other. Again, evolutionary psychology seems to suggest that humans have both of these tendencies when it comes to getting ahead of the tribe. However, in the present moment it would be overly premature to make any assumptions of the psychological factors of the potential customers without conducting both larger and extended experiments on this matter.

Nevertheless, this academic paper focused a lot on evolutionary, psychological and biological factors which have all shaped us to the form we are as a specie. The most successful companies seem to be the ones who have managed to get a particular perception, also known as a story, in the customer's head that their product or service helps him to thrive in his personal life. Putting the time and effort to truly understand the potential customers should be seen as a valuable asset rather than a lost resource in terms of income. Hence, serious market research should be seen a long-term investment that pays off later. Afterwards, with the new information, the stories of the company should improve since they would match the similar narratives that the potential customers could be telling themselves about their world.

That would allow the firm to launch advertisement campaigns to a narrower audience with a higher likelihood of becoming a customer. By knowing the most engaging customers, the company could also understand better where it stands in the market among its competitors. These are also the moments where the stories come important when distinguishing oneself from the rest of the competition who are eventually competing for the same prize - tribal connection in modern business era or in other words loyal customers.



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