TikTok As a Tool for International Growth in The Fashion Industry – Case Study for House of Halla Oy

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This project-based thesis studied social media marketing of fashion brands and more precisely TikTok marketing. The project objective (PO) was to produce, implement, and analyze a TikTok social media campaign for the commissioning company House of Halla Oy - later referred to in this thesis as Halla Halla.

The PO was divided into project tasks to obtain better results. The tasks included building the theoretical framework, benchmarking competitors, creating, and implementing a social media marketing campaign, and analyzing the results of the campaign. The study was done utilizing desktop study methods and literature reviews and exploiting mostly qualitative research methods.

The campaign proved to be profitable, although it showed that significant international growth could not be achieved in just over a week. Instead, the campaign increased brand visibility on the platform and increased brand awareness. The key findings of the campaign results are discussed in detail in the final chapters of this paper.

The results of the campaign show that TikTok is the right platform for businesses seeking viral growth. The most engaging campaign video received almost 20K views and hundreds of likes. This study shows that successful TikTok marketing requires perseverance, creativity, and ability to modify the TikTok-trends to fit the brand.

This paper discusses the theoretical framework, introduces a comprehensive four-step model of creating social media campaigns, and presents the campaign made for the commissioning company. The content calendar that was created as part of the campaign can be found as an appendix of this paper.

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1   Introduction

This is a project-based bachelor's thesis for the marketing specialization within Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences International Business Program. This chapter describes the reader through the project objective, clarifies the international scope, publications, specific project tasks, demarcation, risks and risk management, key concepts, and information about the commissioning company – Halla Halla.

1.1   Thesis objectives and publication

The objective of this thesis is to produce, implement, and analyze a TikTok social media campaign for the Finnish swimwear company, Halla Halla. Since its inception five years ago, TikTok has played a major part in launching small, indie brands to viral, global success overnight. The author seeks to understand the factors, methods, and strategies that both brands and individuals utilize in creating viral content, and to implement these tactics in this thesis. In this study, the author delves into TikTok in a systematic fashion, and uses the studied strategies to create a growth-based social media campaign for Halla Halla.

There is a massive amount of momentum already within the fashion industry. The global apparel market was valued at 1.5 trillion USD in 2020. (Statista 2021). It is a well-known fact that social media allows brands to curate and create their products and brands, while communicating directly with their customers. (Çukul 2015.) The author hypothesizes that fashion in combination with the right TikTok growth hacking methods can launch brands into global success and strives to do that for Halla Halla. The company is known as the first Finnish sustainable swimwear brand. Their sustainable and ethically made product is one that many align with, as their fabric is made of plastic collected from the oceans. (Halla Halla 2021.)

The author's main goal with this thesis study is growth – both for the company and for her as a future marketing specialist. The author is confident that during the five-month execution of this project, she will have hopefully made an enormous impact on Halla Halla and hopes to see them become big players within the global sustainable fashion industry. On a personal level she also hopes to have grown mentally, academically, and within the fashion industry, to be the best possible marketing specialist in her field.

1.2 Project Objective and International Aspect

TikTok is a mobile video creation and sharing application as well as a global social media platform. It has gained the attention of young audiences around the world. TikTok has been called a "virtual play structure" and therefore it appeals to younger generations. (Bresnick 2021.) Within this thesis, the author plans and executes a TikTok social media campaign for international growth within a global community. The paper discusses and analyses TikTok marketing strategies and trends and bases the campaign upon them. The international growth is measured at the end of the project by the company's KPI's discussed later in this paper.

The Project Objective (PO) of this thesis is to produce, implement, and analyze a TikTok social media marketing campaign for the commissioning company Halla Halla. The project objective was divided into project tasks (PT) as follows:

PT 1. Preparing the theoretical framework for the project.

PT 2. Analyzing Halla Halla's current presence on TikTok.

PT 3. Benchmarking competitors for innovative content on TikTok.

PT 4. Preparing the TikTok social media marketing campaign.

PT 5. Implementing the campaign.

PT 6. Analyzing the success of the campaign and its impact on international growth.

PT 7. Evaluating project management and project outcomes.

Table 1. Overlay matrix

Project Task	Theoretical Framework	Project Management Methods	Outcomes
PT 1. Preparing the theoretical framework for the project.	Social media campaign plan, TikTok marketing, Fashion industry, social media marketing	Literature review	Theoretical framework, Chapter 2
PT 2. Analyzing Halla Halla's current presence on TikTok.	Company analysis	Statistical analysis, working on TikTok	Company Analysis, Chapters 3
PT 3. Benchmarking competitors for innovative content on TikTok.	Competitor analysis	Benchmarking, working on TikTok	Content ideas, Chapter 5

PT 4. Preparing the TikTok social media campaign	TikTok campaign	Producing a TikTok social media campaign	A TikTok social media campaign, Chapter 7
PT 5. Implementing the campaign	Social media marketing	Working on TikTok according to the campaign plan	TikTok content creation and uploading according to the campaign plan
PT 6. Analyzing the success of the campaign and its impact on international growth.	Outcomes from PT4 & PT5	Project analysis	Analysis of the project, Chapter 8
PT 7. Evaluating project management and project outcomes.	Feedback from the company and self-assessment	Evaluation	Evaluation of the project and self-reflection, Chapter 9

The overlay matrix shows each project task and its theoretical framework, project management methods and the outcomes of each project task.

1.3 Project Scope

The scope of this project-based thesis covers social media marketing tailored for growth on TikTok from the perspective of the fashion industry. The thesis delves into global swimwear brands and the specifics of their TikTok marketing strategies. Based on the findings and the hypothesis that stems as a result, the author prepared a social media marketing campaign for Halla Halla on TikTok. Planning, implementing, and analyzing the results of the social media campaign were the key activities of this project-based thesis.

EXCLUDED

INCLUDED

-Instagram/Facebook marketing
-Other industries than fashion

PROJECT SCOPE

-TikTok marketing
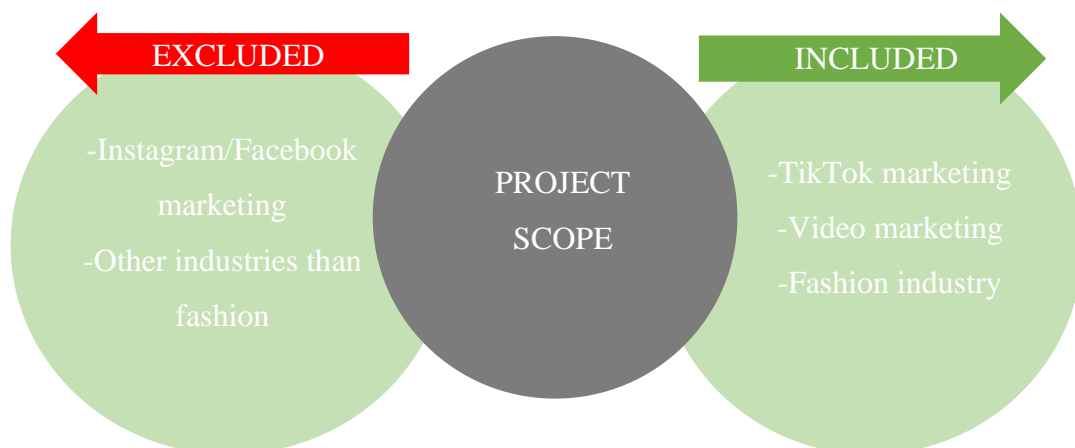-Video marketing
-Fashion industry

Figure 1. Project Scope

The project activities are to prepare the theoretical framework, analyze the company's current presence on the platform, benchmark competitors, plan & implement the social media campaign, and finally analyze the results and possible international growth. This project explains in detail how a social media campaign is generated and implemented.

This project and its theoretical framework do not include discussing theory of other social media platforms such as Instagram or Facebook but discusses the impacts of social media marketing on the fashion industry in general. The project focused solely on TikTok as a video marketing platform. The TikTok social media campaign included content benchmarked from private users in addition to business users.

1.4   Benefits

This thesis and its outcomes will benefit the commissioning company with new, international customers as well as increased brand awareness overseas. The TikTok social media campaign will support the company's marketing activities during and after the project. The project will benefit the company's customers by providing entertaining, educating, and inspiring content. The TikTok content generated during this thesis project will give the company's customers engaging ideas for styling their swimwear, as well as providing them with information on the ethical and sustainable aspects of Halla Halla.

The author will use her years of experience in the social media field, along with her studies, to learn project management skills and deepen her knowledge of the strategic aspects of social media marketing. Additionally, this thesis will possibly gain her a future position as social media marketing manager within the case company.

1.5   Risks and Risk Management

The perceived likelihood of risks and threats to this thesis project is relatively small. The data collection takes place using mostly qualitative research methods and data analyzation and therefore the biggest threats are issues of confidentiality.
Specific numbers and figures of the company's KPI's might need to be transformed into percentages to prevent confidential information being shared with outsiders.

The cancellation of the project is unlikely to happen, taking into consideration that the project is hugely beneficial to the company, it does not financially affect the company in any way, and there is a clear and structured plan as well as a Gantt chart for implementing this project.

1.6   Key Concepts

Several key concepts are defined below for the reader to comprehensively understand this thesis topic:

Social media marketing (SMM) means using social media channels for marketing purposes (Karimi 2015).

TikTok application is a mobile video creation and sharing application as well as a social media platform (Bresnick 2021).

Viral content is highly attractive content that creates emotion, includes extraordinary information, and brings practical value to the receiver (Ruokolainen 2019).

A sustainable fashion brand is a brand which manufactures, markets, and uses clothing, shoes or accessories that are made in the most sustainable manner possible, considering socio-economic and environmental aspects (Green Strategy 2014).

1.7   Commissioning Company

Halla Halla is a Finnish swimwear brand established in 2016. The owners of the company are two Finnish women who came across the plastic issue during their years of travelling and surfing. They wanted to pursue their dream as designers but did not want to contribute to the global trash issue, but rather leave a positive impact on nature.

Halla Halla currently operates only in Finland throughout its seasonal Summer Shop in Helsinki, but ships from its web shop worldwide year-round. The swimwear fabric is made of plastic collected from the oceans through multiple initiatives. All the Halla Halla items are reversible, making the product even more sustainable, as the two sides essentially function as two-in-one swimsuits. Halla Halla is known as the first Finnish sustainable swimwear brand.

After a 107% increase in turnover from 2017 to 2018 (from 153K to 380K EUR) the financial figures have remained stable. The company and its unique products and designs have been noticed abroad, but not necessarily in the most profitable geographical areas. One of the goals is to get the brand known in the U.S.A, in states where surfing and other water sports are an everyday activity, a lifestyle. This project is done with this possible international growth as the desired outcome. (Halla Halla 2021.)

1.8   Project Management Methods and Report Structure

Table 2. Project management methods

Project Tasks	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Task 5	Task 6	Task 7
Data source	Theoretical literature, industry reports	Company's social media site	Competitors' social media sites	Theoretical framework	Conclusions of theory and research	Previous project tasks, KPI's	Previous project tasks
Data collection method	Literature review	Qualitative	Qualitative	Literature review	PT1-PT5	Analyzing data and KPI's	Project review
Data processing methods	Literature review	Qualitative for written data	Qualitative for written data	Qualitative for written data	Qualitative for written data	Quantitative	Qualitative, Quantitative
Task outcome	Theoretical framework	Written analysis of current status, Analysis of KPI's	Competitor analysis	TikTok social media campaign	Implementation of strategy (content creation)	Conclusions of the strategy's success/development ideas	Evaluation of project outcomes
Project outcome	TikTok Social Media Campaign						

Table 2 introduces the project management methods and the structure of the report. Task 1 is based on collecting the theoretical framework by reading theory from high-quality sources. The data for task 2 is collected from the case company's social media site (more precisely TikTok) and for task 3 the data is collected the same way, but from competitors' social media sites. Task 4 uses the already collected and analyzed data in preparing the TikTok social media growth strategy. Task 5 is implementing the plan, so there is not a data collection method but instead the theory is used as a base for interpreting the results. In task 6, a quantitative method is used since it includes data and numerical analysis. Task 7 is the final task, and it uses both qualitative and quantitative methods in describing and evaluating the project outcomes. The project outcome is a TikTok social media campaign for the commissioning company.

2   Fashion Industry

This chapter discusses the history of the fashion industry, the industry as a business, and defines sustainable fashion and explains the ways the case company is seen as a sustainable business. This chapter includes a subchapter of social media marketing of fashion brands and explains why video is the leading marketing trend on the industry.

Originally the term *fashion industry* stood for high fashion when the term *apparel industry* was used when discussing of mass fashion. During the 1970's the lines of these terms started to fade. In the 20th century fashion was not seen any more as something that belonged only to royalty or elitists – it became a part of populists and concerned everyone interested. The 1950's changed the industry's target group from adults to teenagers. The demand for mass fashion increased and the whole industry was changed for good. (Solomon & Rabolt 2009, 5.)

Fashion falls into three categories: haute couture, prêt-à-porter and mass market. Haute couture is high fashion sewed for a specific customer using only the finest fabrics available. Prêt-à-porter (ready-to-wear) means quality manufactured clothing that is sold with standard sizing and pattern. Usually, prêt-à-porter stands for luxury brands' ready-to-wear lines. The cheapest category of fashion is the one serving the most customers: mass market. Mass market is the most non-sustainable type of fashion – the prices are kept low by manufacturing in enormous quantities and mediocre quality. (Solomon & Rabolt 2009, 8-10.)

2.1   Fashion Industry as a Business

According to the European Commission (2021) the textile and clothing sector plays a vital role in the economy and social well-being in different regions of Europe. In 2014, the yearly turnover for the industry was around €400 billion, making it a crucial part of the European manufacturing industry. The European Commission describes the textile and clothing industry as a range of different activities from the transformation of natural and synthetic fibers into yarns and fabrics, to the production of i.e., bedlinens and clothing.

The fashion industry is not only a major business in Europe, but also one of the largest businesses worldwide. A French luxury conglomerate, LVMH (Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy) is the world's largest fashion company with annual revenue up to 43 billion euros (in 2017). The second largest fashion company is US-based athleisure- and lifestyle brand Nike. Its revenues amounted 35 billion dollars in 2017. Inditex, owning brands like Zara, Pull&Bear and Stradivarius, is a Spanish fast fashion giant with a market value of almost 92 billion dollars, making it the world's third largest fashion company. (Fashion

United 2021.) These numbers of the world's leading fashion enterprises give an idea of the size of the trillion-dollar business employing millions of people globally (Hagelberg 2015, 16).

2.2 Sustainable Fashion

Not all fashion expression takes fiber form, but materials make fashion's symbolic production real and allow us to form identity and present ourselves as individuals using the physical clothes the fashion industry produces. Fletcher and Grose (2012) discuss the importance of materials in sustainable fashion. Unfortunately, materials connect us to our time's significant issues: climate change, waste creation and chemical pollution. The size and type of the impacts depend on the type of fiber used in the material.

Whether a raw material is renewable does not necessarily guarantee its sustainability. The ability of the material to regenerate quickly does not tell us enough about the conditions it was created. Production of materials require a lot of water, energy, and chemical inputs. Bamboo is a splendid example of a rapidly renewing grass, which is claimed to be sustainable but the production of viscose of cellulose sourced from bamboo has a devastating impact on air and water waste emissions.

Halla Halla proudly presents itself as the first sustainable Finnish swimwear company (Halla Halla 2021). Since the company started operating in 2016, multiple new swimwear brands have popped to the Finnish markets. Majority of them use the same sustainable fabric in their swimwear production as Halla Halla: ECONYL®. Econyl is a form of nylon generated entirely from waste products. Abandoned fishing nets, carpets and unbending textiles are examples of post-consumer waste used in the making of Econyl. (Econyl 2021.)

Econyl is not only a solution on waste, but it also reduces the global warming impact of nylon up to 90% compared to regular nylon made from oil. For every 10,000 tons of Econyl raw material, 70,000 barrels of crude oil is being saved and 65,100 tons of CO_2 eq. emissions are avoided. Econyl is a regenerated nylon fabric that can be endlessly recycled, recreated, and remolded. (Econyl 2021.)

2.3 Video Marketing

The 21st century modern business environment has developed strategic marketing planning and shifted its focus towards video marketing (Sedej 2019, 37). Videos are the most-shared type of content, and the era of social media has made it easy to display them

(Kiarsis 2020). The storyline in a video enables the video to stay on a person's mind longer than a still photo. Therefore, the use of videos has enabled businesses to increase their engagement rate, build brand awareness and convert users to a greater extent than before. (Kiarsis 2020.)

Xiao, Wang, and Wang (2019) emphasize the huge marketing potential of short video. Short video is defined as an emerging form of video, usually played by people on the move. The duration of what is classified as short video varies from five seconds to five minutes. Easy production and low costs are making the use of short videos popular. Short video has evolved through artificial intelligence technology and become more interactive and entertaining. This rapid development has made short video marketing extremely popular with marketers and eventually it has become one of the biggest marketing trends of the 21st century. (Xiao et al. 2019, 415.)

2.4   Social Media Marketing of Fashion Brands

Digitalization of the world has impacted marketing in the fashion industry enormously. The change of trends has become faster, and competition is more intense. Digitalization and the developments in technology forced the way marketing is done within fashion brands to change. Expensive TV and magazine advertisements do not fit the marketing budget of a smaller fashion company, nor are they representing the social media-oriented society we live in. Social media and its different platforms are open to all sized SMEs even with smaller marketing budgets, which is why social media is leading the digital marketing game. (Kaseva 2018, 13.)

As of July 2021, there are 4.48 billion social media users worldwide. This number used to be four times smaller only a decade ago. (Statista 2021.) This shows the rapid growth phase of social media users and explains why even the smallest companies are switching their traditional marketing to social media marketing. It is affordable, global and what comes to creativity – the options are endless.

As stated by Barker, Barker, Borman & Neher (2011, 3), Social media marketing (SMM) is the activity of using social media portals to attract consumers towards a company, website, product, brand, service, or a person. Today, social media marketing is considered as a form of word-of-mouth marketing (Barker et al. 2011, 6). Consumers share their experiences whether they are positive or negative – only this time the conversation is taking place online and on a larger scale than ever before.

The goals of SMM vary depending on the size and type of the fashion company. Increasing brand awareness, improving perceived customer service quality, and increasing sales are all examples of end-goals of social media marketing plans and campaigns (Tuten 2021,122.) A crucial aspect of SMM is aligning the company's short- and long-term marketing goals to be able to evaluate whether the chosen social media platform is suitable for the brand or product (Mou 2020). Kim (2016, 15) emphasizes the importance of approaching social media in a holistic way, diligently considering the vision of the brand and the different social media marketing tactics that can be utilized to increase overall brand performance.

Haenlein et al. (2020) discuss the importance of understanding that each platform has its own user culture and language. A video that works on Instagram may not get any attention on TikTok. Since the 1960's, recommendations of segmenting markets started to be visible on marketing literature. It was already back then known that it is crucial to develop differentiated offers for specific segments. The different idioms, languages, and cultures each social media platform has need to be reflected in the content the business creates.

To succeed on different social media platforms, specific skills, and knowledge of what works on the platform is needed. As mentioned before, the platforms have different aged audiences and therefore the content cannot be easily transferred from one platform to another, but instead should be modified to fit the culture and context of each platform. (Haenlein et al. 2020, 12-13.)

Since the case company started operating, it has been building brand awareness mostly on Facebook and Instagram. The company has more than 20K Instagram followers and is very interactive with its customers on both Instagram and Facebook. The gained brand awareness has been mostly geographically located to Finland and other parts of the Northern Europe.

3 TikTok Application

This chapter discusses TikTok as a social media platform, explains what is included in the application, and introduces TikTok trends. The chapter addresses social algorithms and explains how they work. In addition to that, this chapter includes subchapters of viral videos and success stories of businesses utilizing TikTok.

TikTok, formerly known as Musical.ly, is a mobile video creation and sharing application launched in 2014 (Bresnick 2019). The initial purpose of the software was to record and host user-generated music videos. The software intentionally targets a user group that previous video hosting websites and editing applications did not address. Bresnick (2019) explains in his article how TikTok works as a virtual playground, which offers quick video creation and sharing workflows that resemble physical playground experiences. He compares TikTok to slides on physical playgrounds. Racing down a slide works as a temporal thrill experience, as does the short-video of play serving a fast-paced target demographic.

Now, TikTok is the birthplace of many trends, and it works as a platform to share not only the latest tips but also political opinions (Forbes 2021). TikTok recently revealed it has succeeded in capturing 1 billion active global users on the platform. This number makes it the most downloaded Apple iOS video app. The platform is privately owned by a Chinese company ByteDance. (Bursztynsky 2021.) The Covid-19 pandemic created a massive increase in the number of TikTok users. The first quarter of 2020 set the record for the most downloads for any app in a single quarter. The app was downloaded 315 million times during the first quarter of 2020. TikTok is at the frontier of a new wave of social media, and it is constantly changing the way we consume digital content and interact with people.

Despite the unique design, the massive number of users, and all the entertainment the app has to offer, TikTok has faced serious difficulties on its way to its success. The Trump administration threatened the company with a ban, referencing to security and data concerns. If the ban would have been approved, today the app would be in American ownership. President Biden dropped the ban in June 2021. (Forbes 2021.) Earlier this year, TikTok was sued in the U.K. The plaintiffs accuse the software of illegally collecting children's personal data in Britain and elsewhere in Europe. The lawsuit accuses the company of violating the UK and EU GDPR. It was also questioned whether TikTok had tricked children's parents into how much the company can see children's confidential

information when using the app. In 2019, the company agreed to pay 4.7 million euros of compensation after a comparable situation was detected in the U.S. (Ilkka 2021.)

3.1 Inside TikTok

The application is developing rapidly, and new features are added constantly. Users can use a wide selection of features from sounds and song snippets to special effects and filters. The app offers the possibility to speed up or down the videos and add distinctive styles of transitions. In TikTok, there are multiple ways to create content together with other users. TikTok offers stitch and duet options, which allows creators to utilize each other's content and create entertaining videos together.

TikTok content is shown in two formats: "Following" feed and "For You" feed. The "Following" feed works similarly to Instagram and shows the user content from accounts the user is following. "For You" feed shows content an artificial intelligence algorithm predicts the user might enjoy. The complicated algorithm of the app is discussed in detail in the next subchapter.

TikTok includes a Discovery page, which allows the users to see the most trending hashtags, the most used sounds, and the most used and trending effects of that time. TikTok has different themes for each month, such as #FashionMonth and #ElectronicMusic, which are introduced for the users on the Discovery page.

In the beginning the app offered the option to film looping 15-second videos, but recently it has shifted its focus on even richer storytelling and educational entertainment by making the maximum length of a video to be three minutes. The Product Manager of TikTok, Drew Kirchhoff (TikTok 2021) explained how the longer videos work as a creative tool to captivate the community even more than before.

Recently, TikTok expanded its Shopify partnership, which allows business accounts to link products on their profile for users to shop directly through TikTok. By doing this TikTok is trying to give creators and businesses more ways to earn money on the platform. (Todd 2021.)

3.2 Social Algorithms and How They Work

To be able to understand how brand engagement works and what are the factors influencing it, social algorithms should be understood thoroughly. Social algorithms are

complex mathematical equations closely protected by social platforms and search engines. They evaluate the quality of the content and determine which content receives significant visibility on the platform. It is almost impossible to name all the factors determining what an individual sees on a social media platform. Since the algorithms determine the performance of content on a social media platform, the success of a previously made campaign will affect future campaigns. A low score on the social algorithm means the online community has previously experienced poor interaction rate which directly affects the kind of strategies needed in future campaigns. (Kim 2016, 40.)

The algorithm of TikTok is constantly changing and it is difficult to explain in detail. However, a YouTuber, Jack Gordon has done enormous research to be able to explain how the algorithm of TikTok works. Gordon logged out of TikTok to see what TikTok was suggesting for him on his For You page without having any information about him. His research included a hundred videos that he then analyzed by the number of likes, the type of the content, and the amount of total video views. (Gordon, 2020.)

In one of his videos, Gordon (2020) explains his research results that proves the algorithm favors mostly comedy videos and secondly videos that include trends and "point-of-views" (also known as POVs). The videos that included comedy had the most likes on Gordon's research but only 10 out of the 100 were comedy videos. This means that the algorithm favors comedy videos that are popular and highly liked. The more likes a video gets, the more it is shown on the For You page of TikTok users.

Gordon also explains how the algorithm of TikTok wishes the user to stay on the app as long as possible. This had Gordon questioning, why is the app showing him mostly 10-15-second-long videos, if the goal is to keep him on the app a longer period? Gordon figured out that the average user of TikTok belongs to generation Z or millennials, meaning they lose interest quite quickly and need a lot of stimuluses around them. Therefore, the algorithm does not necessarily favor longer videos, but instead wants the user to watch as many shorter, catchy videos, and as a result the user remains on the platform for a longer period (Gordon 2020.)

From these results it can be concluded that the content on TikTok should catch the attention of the user in the first seconds for the user to watch the whole video. The average user spends 52 minutes on the app daily, which is five minutes longer than the average attention span of a 16-year-old. (Gordon 2020.)

Another surprising finding was that using hashtags does not necessarily give the user a higher chance of appearing on the For You page. Using the hashtags "fyp" or "for you

page" in the caption of a video became a huge trend (16 166 billion times used) in 2019 because of a single blogpost. Content creators started using it in every video they posted, even though there is no real guarantee it will give the video bigger visibility on the platform. (Gordon 2020.)

3.3   Trending on TikTok

TikTok videos are strongly influenced by rapidly changing trends. The usual lifetime of a trend on the platform varies from several days to weeks. Sound clips alongside added dance moves, facial gestures, or pranks are forming a TikTok trend. These trends are duplicated by thousands of TikTok users and as a result, an important subculture emerges that underlies the platform. (Haenlein et al. 2020, 24.)

Joseph Todd is a Youtuber with almost 80,000 subscribers on his account. He discusses and studies all relevant aspects of social media and its different platforms. Todd has focused his research especially on TikTok and its algorithm. He is also the founder of a Facebook page called "Let's Talk TikTok". Both his YouTube channel and the Facebook page were used in this project for researching TikTok.

Todd (2020) explains the six different types of trends that help a user go viral. The first of them being *style trend*, which means the different types of effects the user has in use. A huge style trend in 2020 was the time warp scan effect, which allowed the users to get highly creative. The second trend Todd introduces is *keyword trends*, meaning the trending and relevant keywords that can be found from the discovery page. Most of the keywords are sponsored by certain brands and they are made to be very memorable so users would join the challenges these keywords present.

The third trend that Todd (2020) introduces is *social trends*, also known as *news trends*. The lifespan of these trends is usually only a few days, but they might make a video go viral rapidly if the trend can be joined early enough. These trends are mostly very controversial since they usually discuss politics and world events. Businesses should be very cautious of joining these types of trends.

Fourthly, *classic trends* are very stereotypical trends that are rooted in dance and music, which are the essential characteristics in the birth of TikTok. The fifth trend Todd introduces is *compound trends*, meaning that the content is made by stitching or duetting with someone else's video. These types of videos are a core part of the TikTok experience. (Todd 2020.)

Lastly, Todd (2020) introduces the *culture trends*, which are also referred to as *challenges.* An example of a culture trend is the #bottlecapchallenge which was not rooted to any popular song, but users replicated it all over the world.

3.4   Viral Videos

Viral video means a clip of animation or film that is spreading rapidly online (Techopedia 2021). Usually, viral videos contain humor and once they get reshared on social platforms, they might get as many as millions of views. Some viral videos were never meant to go viral by the creator but eventually millions of people are sharing and liking them.

On TikTok, multiple creators have made viral videos. For example, Emily Zugay (@emilyzugay) went viral with her "ugly" logo redesign of major international corporations like McDonalds, NFL, and Amazon. She redesigned the logos to look ugly on purpose, and unintentionally started a huge trend where major organizations were commenting on her videos and asking their logo to be redesigned as well. Even TikTok joined the trend, and among other companies used the redesigned logo as their profile photo on TikTok.

3.5   Success Stories on TikTok

TikTok is a platform for every kind of a company that understands the culture and the context of the platform. Many businesses have succeeded on the platform and gained hundreds of thousands of followers. Even companies that have been in a bad spotlight in public can succeed and go viral and be praised all over social media.

Ryan Air is an Irish low-cost airline who has been on the spotlight of news because of customers' bad experiences with the company. However, today the company is one of the most known business accounts of TikTok. The company provides its 1.2 million followers entertaining and funny content. Their most viral videos have 22 to 38 million views. Ryan Air is a notable example of a company that has been in a bad light but is more popular and liked today thanks to its self-ironic and humoristic TikTok videos. (TikTok 2021, Ryan Air.)

Converse, the famous American shoe company is also extremely popular on TikTok. They post a lot of styling videos and content that falls into comedy category. Most of their recent videos have 10-20K views and their most liked videos have more than 50K likes.

Another fashion brand succeeding on the platform is Calvin Klein, a designer brand that has 60K TikTok followers. Calvin Klein ran a TikTok campaign featuring some of the most known celebrities such as Kendall Jenner and A$AP Rocky. The campaign was successful and quickly became the most viewed digital campaign of the company, with 66K views for the most engaging video of the campaign. (Barnett 2021.)

3.6 Halla Halla's Current Presence on TikTok

Halla Halla has joined the platform during 2019 when TikTok started to be a huge trend in Finland. At first, the company was not active on the platform. The representatives said they wanted to guarantee they have the username for themselves if they one day wanted to start using the platform for marketing purposes. They started to post on the platform in March 2020, at the same time as the COVID-19 pandemic struck, leading many other companies and individuals to start utilizing TikTok.

Before launching this thesis campaign, Halla Halla had *33 followers* and a total of *207 likes.* The average likes on a video were *498* and the number of average likes per video was *8*. Halla Halla had utilized the platform to post the same content as they were posting on other platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. These videos are filmed in tropical destinations and include a model or two promoting the products. The company wanted to have a presence on the platform, since they agreed that TikTok is a great fit for their brand but did not have enough resources (time) to use the full potential of TikTok.

4 Benchmarking Competitors

This chapter discusses the relevant competitors on TikTok and presents a table of their key figures on the platform. As a result of the authors research, it can be concluded that only a few swimwear companies utilize the potential of TikTok. The author focused the benchmarking on three globally known swimwear companies: Monday Swimwear, Frankies Bikinis, and Moana Bikini.

4.1 Monday Swimwear

Monday Swimwear is an American swimwear brand established in 2013. The company founders, Natasha Oakley and Devin Brugman are known as swimwear connoisseurs and their strong body positivity endorsement. Their swimwear lines are focusing on classical cuts and neutral tones. (Monday Swimwear, 2021.) Monday Swimwear is not very active on TikTok, and they have only 13 posted videos. Their strategy is clearly re-posting content from influencers and other famous social media users wearing their products.

4.2 Frankies Bikinis

Frankies Bikinis is a Los Angeles based company owned by Francesca Aiello. She launched the brand in 2012, while Aiello was still a high-school student. Frankies Bikinis are a mixture of classical colors and cuts with more edgy color combinations and patterns. Recently, the company started to produce clothing and beauty products. (Frankies Bikinis, 2021.) Frankies Bikinis is the competitor with most followers on TikTok. For their 146,7K followers they mostly share close-up videos of their products and "how-to-style" videos.

4.3 Moana Bikini

Moana Bikini is an Australian based swimwear company known for its bold prints and edgy cuts. The company was founded by Karina Irby in 2011 with a goal to create beautiful, cheeky-cut bikinis. (Moana Bikini, 2021.) The brand is active on TikTok and posts several types of videos from try-on hauls to behind-the-scenes videos. Moana Bikini is a fun and bold brand that fits the environment of the platform perfectly.

Table 3. Competitor Analysis (Monday Swimwear TikTok page 2021; Frankies Bikinis TikTok page 2021; Moana Bikini TikTok page 2021)

Company	Country of Origin	TikTok followers	Average likes per post	Average views per post	Type of content	Most liked post
Monday Swimwear	U.S.A.	2313	113	5175	Trendy TikTok dances, using influencer marketing, reposting content from customers	Post by an influencer, introducing multiple ways to tie the swimwear (450 likes)
Frankies Bikinis	U.S.A.	147K	4764	166K	Using trendy sounds, promoting the products in close-up videos	Introducing newly launched product, girl on the beach (38,6K likes)
Moana Bikini	Australia	87K	78	1408	Promoting products, BTS from photoshoots, using transitions and trending sounds	BTS from photoshoot, girls dancing in bikinis (8031 likes)

Table 3 introduces the three biggest competitors of Halla Halla on TikTok. The number of average likes per post and average views per post were calculated from the nine latest posts of the companies. The companies' content was analyzed and categorized into "type of content" to be able to see what type on content is the most engaging.

After analyzing these three companies, it can be concluded that a two of them post entertaining content, which is explained earlier in this paper to be one of the best performing types of content on the platform. The content of these three companies differs, but all are united by using trending sounds. Surprisingly, Frankies Bikinis seems to get the most likes per post on average, even though their content is the least unique and entertaining out of these three.

Several factors might affect the number of average likes per post and average views per post: the amount of time the company has been on the platform, how regularly they post and how many total followers they have. The author took a closer look at the most liked post of the three companies, and for every company that post looks different. The most likes got a Frankies Bikinis' post where a girl is laying on the beach in a "recently launched" green set of bikinis. The video is short (5 seconds) and does not fall into the category of a "usual" TikTok video. It includes a sound that has been used in TikTok for 225K times, which may be one of the reasons for the total 1.4M views of the video.

5   How to Build a Social Media Campaign

This chapter introduces a four-step model for building social media campaigns. Using a strategic process to develop a framework for social media campaigns will give businesses a better capacity to use the full potential of social media (Kim 2016, 17). Social media campaigns should be designed to support the campaign goal and align with the brand persona (Kim 2016, 107). Therefore, the author based this thesis campaign on a four-step process explained by Dr. Kim (2016) in *Social Media Campaigns.* The four-step process consists of 1) Listening, 2) Strategic Design, 3) Implementation and Monitoring, and 4) Evaluation.

Listening

The first step, listening, works as the formative research phase of the process of making a campaign. Dr. Kim emphasizes the importance of not only how to listen, but what one should be listening to in the social media environment. Listening on social media is a key skill in understanding and identifying the people who are important to the brand. (Kim 2016, 18-32.)

This phase includes two areas: 1) Foundational background, and 2) Social landscape. Dr. Kim discusses the importance of having a strong understanding of the organization itself when preparing a plan that is aimed at strengthening the company's goals. The values and mission of the company should be connected to its social media efforts. In the research phase, the first step is to review the mission or vision statement of the brand. It has been recognized by social strategists that every campaign and strategy should align with the brand's vision. (Kim 2016, 24-32)

Completing the foundational research enables surveying the social landscape. The goal of this phase is to identify the conversations on social media that may be relevant to the brand. It is important to identify who is having those conversations and how the company could take part in that dialogue. (Kim 2016, 32.)

The social landscape research is formed of five components: key listening phrases, conversation platforms, brand community dialogue, influencers, and competition. A list of key listening phrases provides information on the most important topics and the variety of words used in these conversations. This is crucial information when the campaign messaging is crafted since it affects the content design. (Kim 2016, 33.)

Conversation platform research reveals the places where the conversation is taking place. There are multiple different tools for use that aggregate data from different platforms. This saves time and offers a more robust analysis. The data collected in this phase of the research will help in crafting the type of content for the right platform. (Kim 2016, 33-35.)

Brand community dialogue includes analyzing the audience, evaluating the content, evaluating the community engagement, and analyzing the company's interaction with the community (brand dialogue). Audience analysis is done by providing basic demographic and behavioral information of the brand's audience. It helps the company to identify the appropriate platforms and practices for engagement. Evaluating the content by reviewing and analyzing the previously posted content guides the forming of future actions. How often content is posted, how many times it discusses topics other than the brand, and how often the content is original or curated? (Kim 2016, 34-39.)

Next step is to evaluate if the content is making the community to engage with the brand. It is important to realize that different interactions have different values in the social world. Liking a photo is an easy action to take and therefore it does not have as much value as, for example, commenting on a post. Making the community to engage with valuable actions is crucial since the more valuable the action, the more it influences the algorithm, and the content is shown to a wider audience. (Kim 2016, 38-40.)

Each brand community includes influencers, also known as key individuals, who drive engagement and ignite the conversation on different topics. Influencers are identified by looking into certain topics and keywords and seeing which users frequently show up in the results. The goal is to have an influencer list which includes information such as which platforms the influencer is using, which topics they usually discuss online, and what companies are already interacting with the influencer. Once there is a full profile of each potential influencer, it is easier to effectively build a relationship with them. (Kim 2016, 43-44.)

Analyzing the competitors from the same industry on the market gives the case company valuable information of how other brands with similar visions are performing. One should create a list of competitors and mark down the platforms in their use. Analyzing which platforms are the most popular in terms of followers and engagement will give valuable insight for the building of the campaign. Another crucial area to evaluate is the competitors' social profiles and how they are designed. In addition to that, the kind of content the competitors are producing should be evaluated and analyzed to produce content that engages the community. (Kim 2016, 43-44.)

After collecting all the important data of the company's background, mission and different communication processes, the social media strategist must use the information in a thoughtful and meaningful manner for building a campaign. This data may then be utilized to inform tactical creations within a campaign, as well as to serve as a baseline for evaluating the efficacy of campaign messages. (Kim 2016, 44-48.)

Strategic Design

The second step of the process is to design the campaign. Dr. Kim (2016) explains the relation between the listening phase and the goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics that are defined in this phase. The data found from the research that was established in the listening phase will work as a framework for the strategic design of the campaign.

Another essential part of the strategic design is developing or utilizing an already existing social media voice of the company. When the interaction is similar on all platforms, the brand's overall vision is supported. The brand's social media voice is built of brand persona, language choice and tone of voice. The language choices and tone of voice should be uniquely adapted to the specific audience the company is interacting with. (Kim 2016, 59-61.)

A social media strategy works as a guiding framework for all campaigns. An overall purpose and approach to social media should be amplified before starting to produce smaller, individual social media projects. (Kim 2016, 53.) Therefore, the company should have an existing social media plan before any individual campaign is established.

Social media campaign goal will determine the end-purpose of the campaign. The goal is usually short-term in nature, relating to the company's vision and should be driven by data. Kim (2016, 72) presents examples of social media campaign goals: "Be the leading destination for summer holidays" or "Be the top charity to donate to during Christmas season".

Alongside the end goal of the campaign, SMART outcome-based objectives should be implemented in the campaign design. Objective is specific knowledge, behavior outcomes or opinion that must be attained for well-defined target audiences. Objective is also known as "key results" or key progress indicator (KPI) which will be measured to see if the campaign goal is achieved. (Kim 2016, 55.) SMART is an acronym that stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely. Dr. Kim emphasizes that each objective should have all these elements present.

After the goals and objectives are locked, it is time to create strategies that will ensure the campaign goals and objectives are met. According to Kim (2016, 74-75), strategies are defined as the "how and why campaign components will achieve objectives". Depending on the campaign, each objective may include three to five strategies.

Tactics are the actual activities needed to make the earlier defined strategies reality. One strategy usually includes multiple different tactics (tasks). Tactics should be evaluated with the question "Will this tactic make the strategy successful?". If the tactic is not supporting the successful outcome of the strategy, it should be re-evaluated. (Kim 2016, 74.)

When social strategists design strategies and tactics for a campaign, there are a few things that should be considered. The most important rule is to be authentic, real, and genuine. The content should be designed to be valuable for the online community and inspire the community for engagement. Lastly, each platform is unique and includes different functions and algorithms. A strategy or tactic should never be copy pasted from one platform to another, since it does not provide sustainable value for the company. (Kim 2016, 116.)

Implementation and Monitoring

Implementing the campaign is the most visible part of the process. Dr. Kim explains how in a poorly executed campaign the previous steps are usually skipped and the implementation is the first thing that is done, resulting in non-relevant results. (Kim 2016, 122.) This part of the four-step process includes implementing the content through content calendar and monitoring the effect of the campaign by staying constantly engaged with social communities.

A content calendar includes all necessary information of the campaign: the date, platform, campaign goal, introduction of the content audience, strategy, keywords and topic of the content, action desired from the audience, and the actual content. (Kim 2016, 123.) The purpose of a content calendar is to reflect each strategy and tactic that was established in the strategic design phase. It also guides the social strategists when the most meaningful time is to deliver a specific message to the audience.

Content calendar includes every detail of the campaign except the real-time interaction with the social community. Dr. Kim discusses the importance of continuous engagement with the social community during the launch of a campaign. Responding to comments, thanking new followers for joining the channel and being interactive are key activities for

the campaign to succeed. The SMART outcome-based campaign objectives should be monitored throughout the whole campaign. (Kim 2016, 128.)

Preparation for unplanned elements that might show up during a campaign is crucial. Crises take place on social media and a strategic approach to social media will include preparing for them before they happen. This requires a proactive approach rather than reactive. Since social media is used as a platform for sharing customer feedback, companies should be prepared to respond to negative feedback with a tone that represents the brand's vision and mission. (Kim 2016, 140-143.)

Evaluation

Evaluating the effectiveness of a campaign is the last step of managing a social media campaign. The evaluation phase provides the company with valuable information and proves the value of social media. Social media evaluation is crafted of counting and measurement. Counting stands for adding things up and getting a total, and measurement takes the totals, analyzes their meaning, and uses that information to improve business procedures. (Kim 2016, 146.)

Dr. Kim discusses the importance of velocity when gathering data. The speed which a decision maker uses to make important improvements in business practices is related to the speed the campaign data is gathered and analyzed. (Kim 2016, 148-149.)

To be able to thoroughly evaluate the success of a campaign, marketing specialists should look at three things: Preparation, Implementation, and Impact. Preparation evaluates the units from the listening and strategic design phases. The idea is to evaluate if proper preparatory work was done before launching the campaign. Implementation evaluates the delivered information and its timing as well as the audience it reached and the nature of engagement. Impact evaluates the SMART-objectives of the campaign and assesses if the overall campaign goals were reached. (Kim 2016, 149.)

In the evaluation of the formative research, it is crucial to examine whether correct information was available to recognize the key objectives, key audiences, and other elements important for the success of the campaign (Kim 2016, 150). When evaluating the strategic design, a review of the campaign's strategy should be done. It should be evaluated whether the campaign goals were appropriate for the company's current need and if each objective was SMART (strategic, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely). (Kim 2016, 150-152.)

When evaluating the implementation and engagement of the campaign, key progress indicators (KPI) will prove to be useful. KPI is a number that indicates progress toward a certain goal. In a campaign, KPIs are measured throughout the campaign to illustrate if an objective is being accomplished. Different platforms have their own dashboards of information to evaluate, and TikTok's will give the account user more data analytics if the account has 100+ followers.

Finally, the impacts and end results of the campaign are evaluated. In addition to evaluating whether the outcome-based SMART objectives were achieved, this phase includes analyzing the metrics on the social media site and website analytics. Dr. Kim suggests that the type of metrics can be categorized into four genres: consumption metrics, advocacy and sharing metrics, lead-generation metrics, and sales metrics. (Kim 2016, 170-172.)

6 TikTok Social Media Campaign for Finnish Swimwear Brand Halla Halla

This social media campaign was created as a part of a project-based bachelor's thesis in the Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. The case company was lacking presence on TikTok and together with the case company, the author decided to create a 9-day-long TikTok campaign consisting of five videos. Each video was inspired by the ongoing trends on the platform and customized to fit the brand.

This section of the paper discusses the goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics of the campaign as well as the budget, the audience/buyer personas, and the metrics used to analyze the success of the campaign. The content calendar of the campaign is attached to this paper as an appendix.

The case company had not had enough resources (time) to create engaging and trending TikTok content. The campaign served as an experiment of whether such content works for the brand's audience on the platform so the brand could focus more of its resources on TikTok in the future.

Goals of the Campaign

The main goal of this campaign was to investigate whether TikTok can be utilized for international growth in the fashion industry. The idea behind the campaign was to create engaging and entertaining content that might go viral on the platform and gain global brand awareness for the commissioning company. The focus was on international visibility since the long-term internationalization goal of the case company is to generate more conversion from the U.S. Therefore, the author was asked by the representatives of the case company to focus on results achieved solely in the U.S., excluding any other region.

The main goals of the TikTok campaign were:

-Increasing the number of international sales (in U.S.)
-Increasing brand awareness (in U.S.)
-Increase the company's visibility on the platform (global and domestic)

Campaign Budget

A marketing campaign inevitably needs a predetermined budget. Usually, campaigns are outsourced to marketing companies or if the budget is small, the campaign is produced by the company itself. Creating a successful and visible marketing campaign is not always cheap, but it is vital to create a budget for the campaign to meet its goals and objectives.

Since the campaign was established as a part of a bachelor's thesis, there was no need for a budget. The author filmed the TikTok content using her own premises. A former employee of the case company volunteered as a model for the videos and the products used in the videos were loaned from the case company. Other resources were not needed and therefore this campaign did not require a budget.

Audience (Buyer Persona)

The target audience for this campaign was defined by looking at the usual consumer of Halla Halla and the average user of TikTok app. The general buyer persona for Halla Halla is she, 20-35 years old and belongs to mid -or high-income class. She lives an active lifestyle and enjoys sports like yoga and surfing.

Since more than half (57,5%) of TikTok users are female and more than 91% of the users are under 35 (Mou 2020, 22), the buyer persona for this campaign is 18-30 years old female. She enjoys using social media for entertainment purposes and values Finnish, unique design.

She wants to express her boldness by wearing swimwear that stands out. She is taking part of the body-positivity conversations online and stands behind the "all bodies are beach bodies" -way of thinking. She is a strong, independent female who loves to embrace females and values sustainable companies.

By evaluating the company's previous content on TikTok, it was possible to see what type of content is engaging the community. The most engaging content was entertaining, providing tips for the audience, displaying different body types, or the content included the owners/employees of the brand. From these findings it was concluded that the audience likes entertaining, useful, and personal content to which one can relate to.

Objectives

The chosen objectives for this project are a mixture of awareness and conversion objectives. The aim of the campaign was to globally raise brand awareness and in addition to that gain more conversions and newsletter subscribers. The SMART campaign objectives were:

1. Video views (at least 500 per video)
2. Triple the amount of TikTok followers
3. Triple the amount of total likes
4. Triple the number of orders from the U.S. (compared to September 2021)
5. Gain global newsletter subscribers and raise the percentage of opened newsletters in the U.S.
6. Increase global website traffic (U.S.)

Strategies

The strategies in this campaign support the objectives and main goals of the campaign:

1. Create engaging and trending video content on TikTok
2. Post consistently to ensure the followers come back to the brand's TikTok page and feel the urge to follow the page
3. Promote the launch of new Lux -collection and guide the audience on the website
4. Promote the products but in an entertaining way

Tactics

The tactics work as the base of the campaign and ensure each strategy is going to succeed. The tactics for accomplishing the campaign strategies are:

- Research what is trending on TikTok and plan the content according to that
- Establish a comprehensive content calendar
- Stay active throughout the whole campaign and engage with the community on the platform
- Share the campaign content also on Instagram and promote the brand's TikTok page for Instagram's audience
- Direct the audience to the company's website through the link in the profile bio
- Engage the audience in the U.S. by considering time zones and how they affect the posting times

Platform and Timing of Posts

The author decided on the platform together with the case company's representatives. The company had previously been using the platform to post similar marketing videos as on Instagram. The company asked the author to create a campaign specifically on TikTok to investigate if it can be utilized for international growth.

TikTok users are most active during evenings. During the evening hours from 9pm to 12am there are about 26% of the overall users online (Mou 2020, 22). As explained earlier in this paper, the content cannot go viral internationally if it will not gain attention first in the country of origin (Finland). Therefore, the chosen posting time was 5:30 pm (GMT+2). This was decided by the author with the previous knowledge that a post should be on the platform a bit before the most active time. The time difference between Finland and U.S. was taken into consideration and by the time of posting the content it would be morning on the West Coast, where states such as California are located. This was decided together with the case company's representatives, since the population on the West Coast are more likely to live an active lifestyle that includes watersports like surfing and therefore there might be prospects for the case company.

Metrics to measure

This campaign focused on international growth and global brand awareness. In addition to these, the author wanted to monitor the growth (global or domestic) of the case company's TikTok page. This includes monitoring the number of followers, the amount of likes per video, and the number of views each campaign video received. Therefore, the metrics that were measured in this campaign were:

-Website visitors geographically (Finland and U.S.)
-Newsletter subscribers (Finland and other countries)
-Number of orders (Finland and U.S.)
-Numbers and regions of opened newsletters sent during the same month of the campaign
-TikTok video views by section
-Number of total views for each campaign video
-Number of total likes for each campaign video

7   Results

This chapter explains the results of the campaign and discusses whether the goals and objectives were accomplished. The conclusions of the thesis project and recommendations for the case company are discussed in the next chapter.

7.1   Achieving Goals and Evaluating the Success of the Campaign

The measurable metrics were first captured in September 2021, the previous month before launching the campaign. After the campaign was successfully launched and the last video of the campaign had been on the platform for a week, the metrics were captured again and then compared to the previous month's numbers.

Table 4. Metrics that were measured to indicate the success of the campaign, September 2021 versus October 2021

Measured metric	Sep.2021	Oct.2021
Website visitors geographically: FIN	—	33 %
Website visitors geographically: USA	—	-20 %
Number of orders: FIN	—	8,40 %
Number of orders: USA	—	-100 %
Newsletter subscribers' total amount	3087	3130
Newsletter subscribers (other than FIN)	10,90 %	11,20 %
Newsletter opened geographically: FIN	1159 (61,4% of total)	1183 (44%)
Newsletter opened geographically: USA	618 (32,8%)	1405 (52,3%)
Number of TikTok followers	33	103

Number of total likes	214	782
Average likes on a video	8	54
Average views on a video	498	2403

The table above presents the numbers from September 2021 and October 2021. It should be noted that during the campaign other videos were also posted to the company's TikTok page since the brand has followed this structure on other social media platforms as well. The company representatives explained that they wish to promote different looks and models and therefore never post a video or photo of the same model consecutively. This should be considered when looking at the "average likes per post" and "average views on a video" column, since the average is counted from the past 9 videos, pre and post campaign launch.

Due to confidentiality issues, the number of sales and website visitors are presented in this paper only as a percentage decrease or increase. Another crucial factor to take into consideration is that the platform the case company utilizes for their newsletter does not allow one to see the exact geographical locations of the countries where the newsletter is subscribed, but instead shows the countries the newsletter is opened at. The geographical locations are therefore marked as Finland and "other" - meaning all the other countries.

Surprisingly, as seen from the table above, the website visitors in U.S. decreased 20% from September. The table also indicated a decrease in international orders made in the U.S. The author and the company's representatives discussed that it may be due to the weather, timing, or the fact that the company's newest collection is yet to be launched at the end of 2021.

The total amount of newsletter subscribers increased as well as the number of newsletters opened in the U.S (table 4). It should be noted that October's newsletter included an advertisement of the company's Flash Sale, meaning selected products are on sale for 24 hours and free shipping is provided with a promocode included in the newsletter. This may have affected the number of newsletters opened in October.

What comes to TikTok statistics, the number of overall TikTok followers and the amount of total likes the company's content has received both increased in October during the campaign (table 4). It can be concluded that the objectives "triple the amount of TikTok

followers" and "triple the number of total likes" have therefore been accomplished. The objective of receiving at least 500 views per video was also achieved.

The average likes on a video were small before the launch of the campaign (8) and that number increased to 54. The average views on a video also increased from 498 to 2403. This huge increase is due to one of the campaign videos that got 15K views and 397 likes in total.

The most engaging video was the second last video of the campaign which included a joke about the strict community guidelines of TikTok. Nudity is strictly forbidden on the platform, and therefore it is rather hard to post content as a swimwear company. TikTok community violations are usually detected by TikTok's own AI system or the community of TikTok.

The most engaging video of the campaign includes a text "Tell me you're a bikini company on TikTok without telling me you're a bikini company on TikTok" and the model walks into the frame wearing the brand's leggings, rashie ("surfing long-sleeve"), and bikinis on top of them. The "Tell me you're a…" is one the biggest trends on TikTok in 2021, and so it was modified to suit the brand. Below one can see statistics from that specific video.
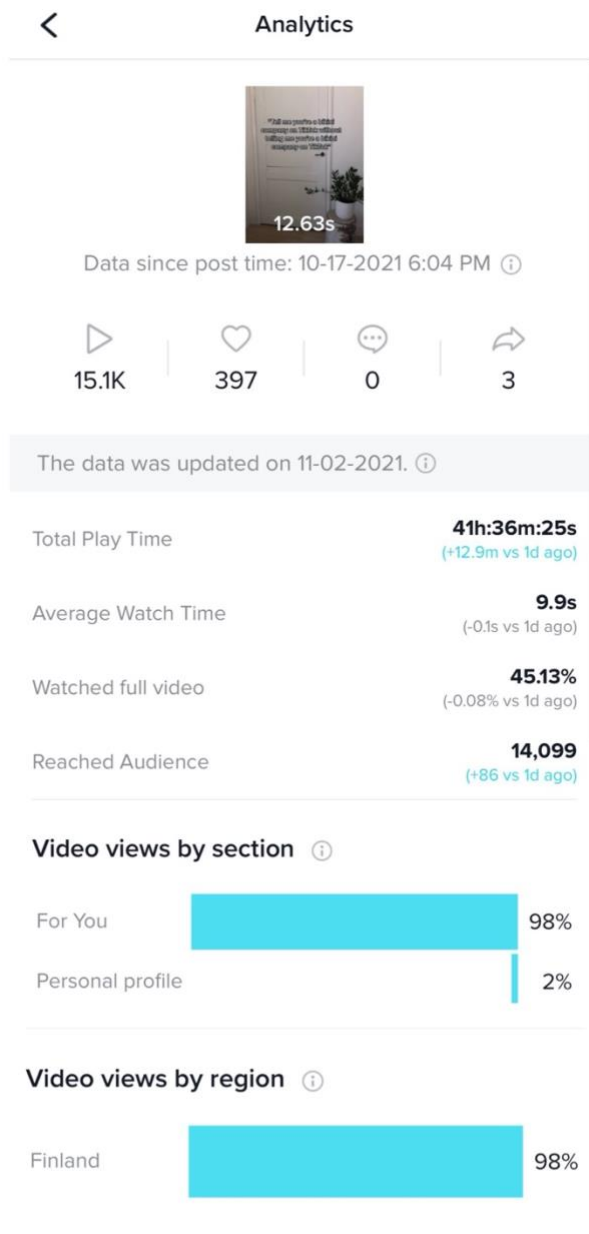
Figure 2. The statistics of the most engaging video of the campaign (Halla Halla TikTok page, 2021)

The figure above indicates the total play time of the video, which is more than 41 hours. The average watch time shows that out of a 12-second-long video, 9 seconds of it was watched. Figure 6 shows that 98% of the viewers saw the video on their For You page, and 98% of the viewers were in Finland. This reinforces the previously mentioned belief in TikTok's algorithm that videos go viral first in their home country and then globally. This specific video may therefore gain a lot of new global views and likes in the future, since it received enormous attention in Finland.

From the statistics collected, it can be stated that TikTok and this campaign did not provide the case company with major international growth. Instead, it provided brand awareness and visibility on the platform. This campaign provided that entertaining and engaging content are thriving on the platform and the company should focus on those in the future.

7.2 Inconveniences Throughout the Campaign

The author faced some difficulties in the implementation phase of the campaign. Since the TikTok account of the case company is a business account, and the author had previous experience only from personal accounts, it came as a surprise that due to copyright laws some of the trending sounds could not be utilized for a business account. This forced the author to change the previously planned sounds for some of the videos.

As mentioned earlier, TikTok's community guidelines are rather strict and one of the things that is strictly controlled is nudity. Even though the company's content on the platform does not include nudity, the AI of TikTok misunderstands videos that include bare skin and bikinis as nudity. Thankfully none of the campaign videos were banned, but it was a possible risk that was only noticed in the implementation phase of the campaign.

8   Conclusions

This chapter evaluates the thesis process and overall results. Final key outcomes, recommendations for future, project evaluation, commissioning company feedback and reflections on learning are all discussed in this final chapter of the paper.

8.1   Key Outcomes

The goal of this project was to research TikTok marketing and based on the findings execute a social media campaign for the case company. To achieve this goal, the author followed seven project tasks that guided her throughout the project.

The **first project task** was to build a theoretical framework for the project. Various sources were used to collect information about fashion industry, social media marketing of fashion brands, and short video marketing. In addition to these, the author research TikTok as a social media platform by reading multiple articles and watching videos about the tactics and trends that bring value for companies on the platform.

The **second project task** included a written analysis of the status of the company on TikTok. The author investigated the case company's TikTok account and evaluated what type of content has worked previously for its audience. This was a crucial step in creating an outcome-driven social media campaign.

The **third project task** was a competitor analysis and more so, benchmarking the main competitors on the platform. For this phase, the author investigated swimwear companies on the platform and chose three most relevant ones for closer investigation. The author then created a table out of the data she could find from the competitors' TikTok pages. The data was used in crafting the campaign and evaluating what type of content works for an audience who is interested in swimwear companies on social media.

The **fourth project task** was establishing the campaign. The author had investigated different trends on TikTok and benchmarked competitors and therefore was able to create a campaign consisting of 5 videos. The author made the videos fit the current trends on the platform but customized them for the brand. The campaign was shot during two days in the beginning of October 2021.

The **fifth and sixth project tasks** were to evaluate the success and key outcomes of the campaign. The author assessed the campaign videos to be able to tell the best performing type of content and to evaluate the international aspect of the campaign.

The **seventh and last project task** was to assess the project outcome and collect feedback from the commissioning company. These tasks will be concluding the thesis in the final subchapters below.

8.2 Recommendations for the Future

As this project and its outcomes have proved, TikTok has huge marketing potential, and it is very suitable for a brand like Halla Halla. The author strongly recommends the case company to focus their resources towards TikTok and video marketing, since they are the future of social media marketing.

The campaign could not provide the case company with major international growth and therefore it could be stated that TikTok cannot be solely utilized for international growth in the fashion industry, or at least not in as short period of time as this campaign was implemented. TikTok is the right platform for viral brand growth and the author suggests the company to utilize that potential. International growth is possible during a longer period if the platform is used continuously. This study and its results show that successful TikTok marketing requires perseverance, creativity, and ability to modify the TikTok-trends to fit the brand.

8.3 Project Evaluation

The original plan of the theoretical framework changed along the way. After researching the platform and ongoing trends on TikTok, the author decided that a Content Marketing Matrix (CMM) will not be needed. A CMM would have been convenient if the author was to create a digital marketing plan for multiple different social media platforms. The author's research on TikTok provided enough content ideas and therefore a CMM was not needed in this thesis after all.

As mentioned earlier, the author faced some issues in the implementation phase of the campaign – time usage and the lack of daylight at this time of the year being the major steppingstones that affected filming the content. The author was focusing on work and this thesis project at the same time, and it proved to cause her some issues with time usage.

Some issues were faced when creating and implementing the campaign content. The copyright laws affected the usage of some trending TikTok sounds the author had planned to use. As mentioned earlier, the community guidelines are rather strict, and the author only realized this once she started to work on the content and the platform. Some of the

company's earlier posted content had been blocked, but luckily none of the campaign videos were deleted from the platform, since it would have drastically affected the results of the campaign.

8.4   Commissioning Company Feedback

The commissioning company's representatives were satisfied with the campaign and the content the author was able to create. They agreed together with the author, that the time was too short to be able to fully evaluate if this kind of campaign brought any added international value. The company was happy with the choice of platform and is willing to invest its resources on TikTok in the future. The author was asked to start working for the company and produce content on TikTok and perhaps other social media platforms as well.

8.5   Reflections on Learning

This thesis and the social media campaign made during it serve as a good source of learning. The process of writing this thesis developed the author's academic writing skills as well as researching skills. The skill to identify academic and reliable sources developed further and the author feels more confident in writing academic texts.

The author was already familiar with the platform, but the produced campaign gave her valuable new information and insights on what works on the platform as a business. As the author will continue working for the company and producing more TikTok content, she is able to put into practice what she has learned during this project. The campaign and its results will work as a guide for future content on the platform.

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9   Appendix – Content Calendar

Date	Time	Platform	Goal	Objective	Audience	Topic	Content of post	URL for the video
11.Oct	17:30pm (GMT+2)	TikTok	Increase international sales	Introducing variable ways to wearing the products	TikTok community	"Moon" top and its suitability for a workout top	Trending "Dazaiiiii" sound and promoting the top as sustainable and reversible	https://www.tiktok.com/@hallaxhalla/video/7017817539023506689?is_copy_url=0&is_from_webapp=v1&sender_device=pc&sender_web_id=6921734280415331846
13.Oct	17:30pm (GMT+2)	TikTok	Increase brand awareness	Increase global website traffic	TikTok community	Lux collection	"Yo bro who got you smiling like that" trend and promoting the new "Lux" collection	https://www.tiktok.com/@hallaxhalla/video/7018559405675285761?is_copy_url=0&is_from_webapp=v1&sender_device=pc&sender_web_id=6921734280415331846
15.Oct	17:30pm (GMT+2)	TikTok	Gain new subscribers for newsletter	Increase global website traffic	TikTok community	Multiple looks in one video	Introducing the items as fashion pieces and playing with video transitions	https://www.tiktok.com/@hallaxhalla/video/7019319483797998850?is_copy_url=0&is_from_webapp=v1&sender_device=pc&sender_web_id=6921734280415331846

17.Oct	17:30pm (GMT+2)	TikTok	Gain visibility on the platform, increase brand awareness	Gain new followers and views, engage with the community	TikTok community	Jokingly referring to the strict community guidelines	"Tell me you're a…" -trend, model wearing Halla Halla leggings, rashie, and bikinis	https://www.tiktok.com/@hallaxhalla/video/7020051363736374529?is_copy_url=0&is_from_webapp=v1&sender_device=pc&sender_web_id=6921734280415331846
19.Oct	17:30pm (GMT+2)	TikTok	Gain visibility on the platform	Gain new followers and views	TikTok community	Reversible items that can be mixed & matched	"Oh no I hope I don't fall" - trending music and model wearing multiple looks	https://www.tiktok.com/@hallaxhalla/video/7020781561737972994?is_copy_url=0&is_from_webapp=v1&sender_device=pc&sender_web_id=6921734280415331846