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Social Media Marketing for Business-to-Business Organizations

Comptel Oyj

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<p>This study was made as a Bachelor's Thesis for the Industrial Management and Engineering degree programme in Metropolia University of Applied Sciences. The study was made in co-operation with Comptel Oyj.</p> <p>The purpose of the study was to find ways and create new ideas for how to improve Comptel's marketing in social media. The main objective was to find ways to get more followers for Comptel and how to make them more active Comptel's social media. The objective was also help Comptel to establish itself as a thought leader in its field through social media.</p> <p>This study is based on several books about marketing in social media, on relevant blog texts and articles from the experts of the field, on conversations with Comptel and active monitoring of their social media use.</p> <p>The findings of this study indicate that an efficient social media strategy is based on increasing visibility in social media, on creating intriguing content and being likeable.</p> <p>Based on the results, a complete development plan for Comptel Oyj on how to enhance their marketing in social media was created. This Plan will help comptel to get more followers and attention in social media and help them show their expertise and knowledge to its current and prospective customers.</p>	
Key words	marketing, social media, Facebook, Linked In, Twitter

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Abbreviations

B2B	Business-to-Business
FAQs	Frequently Asked Questions
SEO	Search Engine Optimization

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1 Introduction

Today it is beginning to be compulsory for companies, corporations and organizations to be present in social media. There are approximately close to one billion people using some kind of social media today: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Blogs, etc. Being active in social media is not meaningful, however, unless you are able to build an active social media following. This Bachelor's thesis about marketing in social media for business-to-business organizations is carried out in cooperation with Comptel Oyj.

1.1 About Comptel Oyj

Comptel Oyj is an international software and services company specialized in telecommunications. Comptel was founded in Helsinki, Finland in 1986 by incorporating the system development and IT subsidiary of Helsinki Telephone Company (currently Elisa Oyj). Comptel was entirely owned by Helsinki Telephone Company until 1999 when it was listed to the Helsinki stockmarket. Comptel share is quoted as a part of the Technology sector of NASDAQ OMX.

Comptel's headquarters are located in Helsinki and its other major hubs are in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia and Reading UK. In total Comptel has offices in 16 locations around the world and employs currently about 600 people. Comptel's market value on November 31st 2011 was 52.3 million Euros.

Comptel develops Operations Support Systems (OSS) for telecommunications. Its product portfolio consists of mediation, charging, policy control, fulfillment and provisioning, activation and analytics.

1.1.1 Comptel's Current Presence in Social Media

Currently Comptel has its own Facebook page, Twitter profile, company blog, LinkedIn profile and YouTube channel. The Facebook page has about 500 likes and there is on average one new post per day by Comptel. Comptel's twitter profile has around 1150 followers and about 1-2 posts per day and the LinkedIn profile has about 2600 follow-

ers. The company blog "Compelling Conversations on OSS" has been in existence since May 2010 and currently new blog posts are published a few times in a week by different authors. In spring 2013 Comptel also launched a Finnish blog.

1.2 Research Problem and Objective

Despite its relatively active presence in social media, Comptel hasn't yet been able to create an active social media following. Its blog posts are not creating conversation and its LinkedIn and Facebook posts are not generating many likes or comments and almost no shares. The YouTube channel has so far only 15 videos, which on average have only a couple of hundred views. It seems that Comptel is in social media because it has to be there, because everybody else is too, but it has not been able to make full use and benefit of the opportunities that social media provide.

The objective of this study is to provide Comptel with knowledge, guidelines and new ideas and perspectives on how its business can profit from improved usage of social media. The final outcome of the study will be a development plan for Comptel Oyj on how to use social media to improve their marketing. The development plan will explain how to create a bigger and more interactive follower base in social media and how to create better and more appealing content.

2 Execution Method

This section describes how the study is executed including a process chart describing each step of the process and a deeper look into information gathering and analysis done in the study.

2.1 Process Chart

Below is a graph of the process chart describing the steps of the study:



Figure 1. The Process Chart

The study begins by recognizing the research problem and setting and objective, i.e. improving Comptel's marketing with social media. This was done in the Introduction part. The next step is to gather and analyze information which will be dealt with in the subsection 2.2 Information gathering and analysis.

The third step is building the development plan. This is done by visiting Comptel's social media representatives and discussing with them their current use of social media and how it could be improved. Next, based on all the information gathered and analyzed, the first version of the development plan is created. After the first version is finished, there will be a second meeting with Comptel, with the purpose of presenting and having the development plan approved.

After the second meeting, the feedback will be analyzed and the last improvement to the development plan will be made, which leads to a finished and complete development plan that is the last step and the goal of the project.

2.2 Information Gathering & Analysis

The information gathering started with reading three books (Kerpen, Dave: Likeable Social Media, 2011, McGraw Hill., Scott, David Meerman: The New Rules of Marketing and PR, 2011, John Wiley and Sons Inc. and Content Rules, Handley, Ann; Chapman, C.C.: Content Rules, 2012, John Wiley and Sons Inc.) about social media marketing, or certain aspects of it, to build up theoretical knowledge about the subject. That knowledge base was supported and extended by reading relevant blogs by experts in the field and articles about different aspects of social media and marketing all along the study. Also Comptel's social media presence and activity was monitored and analyzed throughout the whole project.

One important part of the information gathering was the meeting with Comptel's social media representative. In that meeting a better view and understanding of their current state of social media use and practices was gained. The ideas presented in the next section (3 Best Practices) were presented to Comptel and discussed with Comptel expressing their own ideas too. Comptel's ideas on how to develop their social media use seemed to be very similar to those presented in the Best Practices section. Generally their level of knowledge in social media use was surprisingly high, which made it challenging for this study to provide them with new and fresh ideas.

3 Best Practises

Social media is not about advertising, it is about engaging. Social media has often been referred to as a cocktail party. This metaphor is especially true from the marketing point of view. The same kind of behavior that makes a person successful in a cocktail party makes him/her successful in social media marketing as well. Marketing is often based on interrupting people with mostly annoying short messages but this is not effective in social media. As in a cocktail party, it is more effective to have a few good and meaningful conversations instead of many really short ones. It is also worth noting that in social media people who are not actively participating in the conversation are still able to hear it because all the conversations are public. (Kerpen 2011, p. 6).

This section will describe and explore the most relevant theoretical foundations for this development plan. First, there is a quick look into the social media Comptel is using today and of few of their important features. Second, this section takes a look at what kind of behavior creates success in the world of social media. And third, it explores the importance of content published in social media and how to create good content. This is followed by a summary of the whole section and the Triangle of Success in Social Media that was created from the information in this section.

3.1 Available Social Media

Comptel is already using several different social media and has knowledge on how to use them so a detailed manual about them is not necessary. There are, however, a few important things regarding their utilization that are not necessarily commonly known and thus deserve to be mentioned.

3.1.1 Facebook

Facebook is the number one social media in the world, with currently more than 600 million users. In Facebook the important thing is to get likes for the organization's Facebook page, because people who like the page are able to see posts by that organization in their news feeds. Seeing organization's Facebook posts will create mindshare amongst its viewers and it enables them to interact with the organization by liking and commenting these posts. Facebook users are also able to share interesting posts by

the organization with their Facebook friends creating even more visibility for the organization. (Kerpen 2011, p. 228).

Because of the vast amount of posts in Facebook, users do not get to see all the possible posts in their news feeds though. So not everyone who likes an organization will necessarily see all of its posts in their feeds. Instead Facebook tries to provide its users with posts they are likely to be most interested in seeing by using a News Feed Optimization algorithm. The probability for a user to see a certain post is based on three factors:

1. How recently the content occurred or was created
2. The strength of the relationship with the organization who shared the content. (How much the user has interacted with the organization.)
3. How many comments and likes the content generates

So the more recent the post, the stronger the relationships with fans and the more likes and comments the post gets, the more people will see the content.

Dave Kerpen writes in his book *Likeable Social Media* (Kerpen, Dave: *Likeable Social Media*, 2011, McGraw Hill):

“Most important for marketers to consider is number three, as it directly affects whether or not a company’s content will be seen in the user’s news feeds. The more people who are interested in the content, or the more people who have had a positive experience with a product or service relating to the content, the more likes it will receive, and the more prominent it will be in the feed.”

So the organization can directly affect how many people see content that they publish by making the content interesting, likeable and/or in some other way worth liking or commenting. When users like or comment organization’s content that will also strengthen their relationship with the organization making them see more content published by that organization afterwards.

There is also another important aspect with liking and commenting on Facebook. When a user likes or comments on a post, whether it is a status update, a photo, a video or a link, some of his/her Facebook friends will actually see that activity in their own news feeds too. That makes likes and comments give an organization and its content even more visibility. In the best case a user might also share the content, for example a blog post or a website link, which will make the content appear in the user's own wall creating even bigger visibility for it amongst his/her friends. (Kerpen 2011, p. 41-45).

So in Facebook the main goal is to get likes for the organization's Facebook page and share content worth liking, commenting and sharing.

3.1.2 Twitter

Twitter's userbase has grown rapidly in recent years and in July 2012 Twitter had already about 500 million users. Maybe the biggest difference between Facebook and Twitter, at least from the marketing point of view, is that on Facebook people share mostly with people they know, but on Twitter almost all conversations are public. Dave Kerpen writes in his book:

"Because of this, marketers are able to search conversations on Twitter and see all the conversations currently taking place. Twitter search is like the Google of conversation and provides insight to countless companies."

Another difference is that on Twitter there is no difference if the profile is owned by a person or a company, which allows companies to send direct messages to people who are following that company. This can make Twitter an effective customer service tool. (Kerpen 2011, p. 235).

3.1.3 YouTube

YouTube is the largest video sharing website in the world with hundreds of millions of videos housed on its servers. Dave Kerpen writes about using youtube:

"Use YouTube to showcase your corporate culture, coolest products and services, and expertise so that when people search for keywords related to your business, your videos will appear."

He also advises companies to think about why people search online. Most often it is because people want to know something or know how to do something or where to find things they need. According to Kerpen, it is worth considering creating videos about the company's products or customers experiences in order to provide answers to the questions people have. (Kerpen 2011, p. 238).

3.1.4 Blogs

Dave Kerpen describes best uses for blogs for companies by saying it should be about "connecting more deeply with your target audience and positioning yourself as a thought leader in your industry."

He also says that the reason why many company blogs are not successful is because they are not updated frequently enough, and when they are, the update is in the form of press-release-like broadcast material, not offering valuable resources or content. With a blog, there is an opportunity to include longer text updates than through Facebook or Twitter and do it according to the pace and terms of the company. (Kerpen 2011, p. 245).

3.2 Behavior in Social Media

It is always important in marketing to be able to see from the consumer's point of view. This is even more true in social media because marketers are all the time interacting and joining the conversation with consumers instead of just advertising to them. In social media, marketers have to know what their consumers want, what they like, what makes them happy and satisfy them, how they want to be treated and maybe most importantly how they do not want to be treated. The last one is highly important because all the conversations are public. When one consumer is treated in a dissatisfying way, many other consumers will see it and it will give the organization a bad reputation.

This section explores what makes successful behavior in social media.

3.2.1 Language and Authenticity

Often in marketing, especially in B2B world, the language that is used is corporate language with a very official tone. This is usually not desirable in social media though. Dave Kerpen writes in his book that consumers like talking to each other through social networks by using a level of humanity they have come to expect from all users. This means that people interacting with an authentic human being even through different media. If the organization does anything less the consumers might consider the attempt at conversation nothing more than a marketing ploy, which is no better than if the organization repeated a bland corporate mantra.

Social media is about engaging. In social media people want to interact with other human beings, so it is important to get to the same level with the customers and to make them see you as an authentic human being.

In large organizations there is a tendency to regulate the speech used in social media so that it meets the corporate and legal guidelines and that nobody can say anything wrong. This is not advisable. Dave Kerpen also writes in his book:

“The more you try to regulate brand conversation, the more impersonal you’ll make them, and the less customers will respond. Worse still, the less flexible and authentic you are, the more it will show, and the less you’ll be trusted. Remember, online, your trust and reputation with customers is everything.”

The best way to deal with this is to develop a corporate wide language for social media. The language should be, of course, professional enough to maintain the organization’s reputation and keep the lawyers happy, but humane and down-to-earth enough to enable authentic conversations with customers. The language should reflect the organization’s brand, values and personality and convey them to the customers. Distinctive language is also a good way to distinguish the organization from its competitors. (Kerpen 2011, p. 95-106).

3.2.2 Honesty and Transparency

Honesty and transparency are always important when dealing with customers, but again, it is probably nowhere as important as it is in social media. Honesty and Trans-

parency are needed to build a good relationship with a customer, and any deviation from these values can erode brand trust forever. Why this deviation from honesty and transparency is even worse in social media is that through social media many other people are likely to hear about that deviation as well. Treating a person dishonestly in social media does not only erode his/her trust in the organization, but possibly and probably many other's trust as well. It is also worth remembering that nothing can be deleted from the internet and one mistake could stay "alive" forever.

There is some advice on how to be honest and transparent:

- When people ask questions, do not just tell them what they expect to hear. It is alright to answer: "I don't know – but I'll get back to you." It is especially better than a faulty response.
- Never delete negative comments. Unless a comment is obscene, profane, bigoted, or contains someone's personal and private information, never delete it from social network. Deleting negative comments will only stir customer's negativity and show that the organization does not respond to critique, but tries to hide its mistakes instead. Remember, nothing can be deleted from the internet. Even if the organization makes a big mistake, it is always better to apologize and fix it instead of trying to hide it in social media.
- Admit mistakes. It is only human to make mistakes and in social media people want to deal with human beings. Mistakes should be, of course, avoided but when an organization makes one it is alright to admit it and apologize. And then fix it. Like normally when dealing with people, saying "I'm sorry" goes a long way. (Kerpen 2011, p. 107-116).

3.2.3 Engagement and Activity

In social media it is better to be active than passive. The goal is to create discussion to increase organization's visibility and mindshare, and establish the organization as a thought leader in its field. That is done by actively engaging with consumers.

It is essential to respond to comments from customers. It shows that the organization cares about its customers, and the faster the reply, the better. The organization should also respond to positive comments too, not only bad. Responding to positive comments shows that the organization is listening and appreciates the customer's time

spend on writing the comment. In Facebook, liking a positive comment can be enough but replying with a comment is usually better. Responding to comments and creating discussion strengthens the relationship with customers and happy customers will spread the word.

Responding fast to bad comments is crucial to minimize the damage. Bad words can sometimes spread really fast in social media. Dave Kerpen states in his book that by responding quickly, the organization does not only respond to someone's complaint or concern, but it also sends the message that it listens to its customers and fixes problems promptly.

He also advises, as a rule of thumb to make sure the organization has the resources in place to answer people's negative comments within 24 hours or sooner if possible. Even if the immediate response is something like "We're sorry. We will look into that and get back to you with a private message within 72 hours," at least the organization is immediately telling the customer they care, and that they are going to fix the problem as quickly as they can. Kerpen points out the obvious by saying that an angry customer is just like any of us; we all want to be heard and understood. (Kerpen 2011, p. 79).

When there are no comments from customers, neither good nor bad, the organization should try to create discussion. Asking questions is one way to do that. It is much more stimulating to, for example ask customers' opinion about something, than to just post and update of what the organization is doing.

Engagement can be also listening. It is useful to search and listen what is said about the organization in social media, forums and blogs. (Kerpen 2011, p. 13-24).

3.2.4 Summary

Advisable behavior in social media can be summarized well by saying: be likeable. Treat consumers as you would like to be treated as a consumer. It is necessary to show consumers that they are respected and appreciated and to be honest and transparent with them. It is actually desirable to treat consumers even better than they ex-

pect to, to surprise them positively. That sets the organization apart from its competitors.

As in a cocktail party, to treat people with respect is not enough to be the most likeable person in the party. To achieve that the organization has to be interesting too and it is not forbidden to even be funny sometimes. People want to have a good time in social media and an organization that shares interesting content and provides value to consumers will get an audience. Content and providing value to consumers will be explored in the next chapter.

3.3 Content

Content is everything an organization publishes. This means all the information on their website, on their Facebook page, their blog, videos in their YouTube channel, links they share, their tweets and so on.

The purpose of the content an organization publishes is to provide value to its customers and would-be customers that give them reason to give attention and deal with the organization, and establish the organization as a thought leader in its field of business.

In their book *The Content Rules* (Handley, Ann; Chapman, C.C.: *Content Rules*, 2012, John Wiley and Sons Inc.), Ann Handley and C.C. Chapman list what intriguing and valuable content can do for an organization:

- Attract customers.
- Educate your buyers about a purchase they are considering.
- Overcome resistance or address objections.
- Establish your credibility, trust, and authority in your industry.
- Tell your story.
- Build buzz via social networks.
- Build a base of fans and inspire customers to love you.
- Inspire impulse buys.

In their book, they also say that if you produce great content the customers will come to you. If you produce really great content your customers will even share and disseminate your message for you. They say that for the content to be really great, so that people will share it for you, it needs to be customers-focused, authentic, compelling, entertaining, surprising, interesting and valuable to customers. In other words, it must earn the attention of people. (Handley; Chapman 2012, p. 8).

Ideally, whenever an organization's customer or a possible customer (anyone in the organization's or their customer's field of business) has a problem or needs information for some other purpose, they come to the organization's website, Facebook page, or blog etc. to look for that information. In the best scenario the content published by an organization would be like an encyclopedia for the field of business where its customers operate. That kind of a situation is a great help maintaining current customers and turning possible customers to actual customers.

3.4 The Triagle of Success in Social Media

This Best Practices section can be summarized through what I call The Triangle of Success in Social Media. The triangle is shown in the graph below:

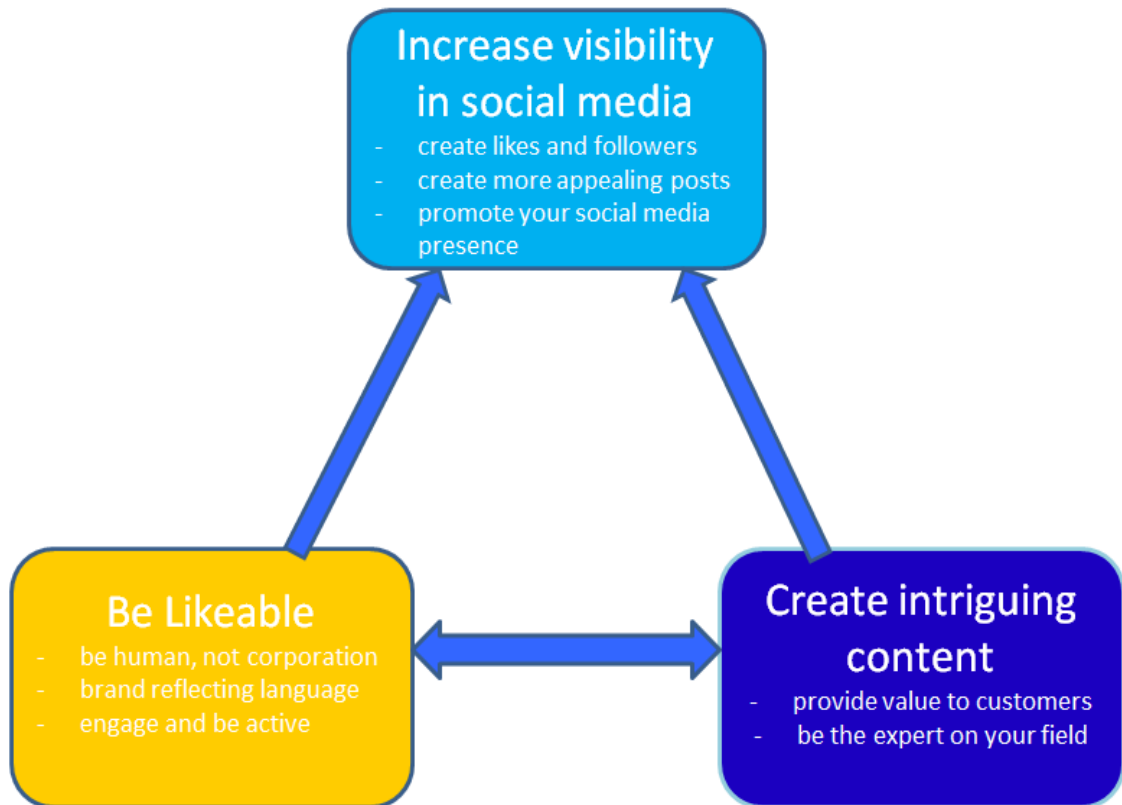


Figure 2. The Triangle of Success in Social Media

The triangle describes the three most important things to make an organization successful in social media and they should be the basis of any organizations social media strategy.

Visibility is what every organization should strive for in social media. Visibility can be increased by gaining more followers, subscribers and likes and have them to like, comment and share content published by the organization.

These three things: increasing visibility, being likeable and creating intriguing content, all go hand in hand and affect one another. Being likeable and creating intriguing content increase an organization's visibility. Also being likeable makes the content more intriguing and intriguing content makes the organization more likeable.

Being likeable does not only increase visibility but makes sure the visibility is positive. A likeable organization can even turn mistakes to its advantage by showing how it cares about its customers.

Intriguing content provides value to customers and makes them come back and continue the relationship and helps to make new customers. By creating the most intriguing content in its field of business an organization can establish itself as the number one operator in its field.

The organization that manages to be the most likeable in its field, to create most intriguing content in web, and to be highly visible in social media will surely dominate social media in its field of business and it will definitely lead to growth in sales.

4 Building The Development Plan

Building the development plan begun with visiting Comptel and discussing with its social media representative. In the meeting, Comptel's current state of social media use, their objectives concerning social media, and their plans on how to reach those objectives were discussed. Comptel seemed to have much more and broader knowledge on social media use than expected and their ideas on how to reach their objectives were very similar to those described in the previous chapter of this study (The Triangle of Success in Social Media). It shows that this study is on the right track but it also brings out the following two big challenges:

- How to bring out new ideas and perspectives on social media use that are valuable to Comptel?
- How to find an answer to why Comptel, despite its broad knowledge, has not been successful in social media marketing? (How hard it actually is to be successful?)

This study intends to find the answer by building a development plan. The development plan will be based on the three pieces of the triangle: increasing visibility in social media, creating intriguing content, and being likeable.

4.1 Increase Visibility in Social Media

This section tackles with the first issue in The Triangle of Success, increasing Comptel's visibility in social media. The section concentrates mostly on creating more appealing posts because, at the moment, that is the most crucial aspect in terms of how Comptel could make itself more visible and generate more conversation in social media.

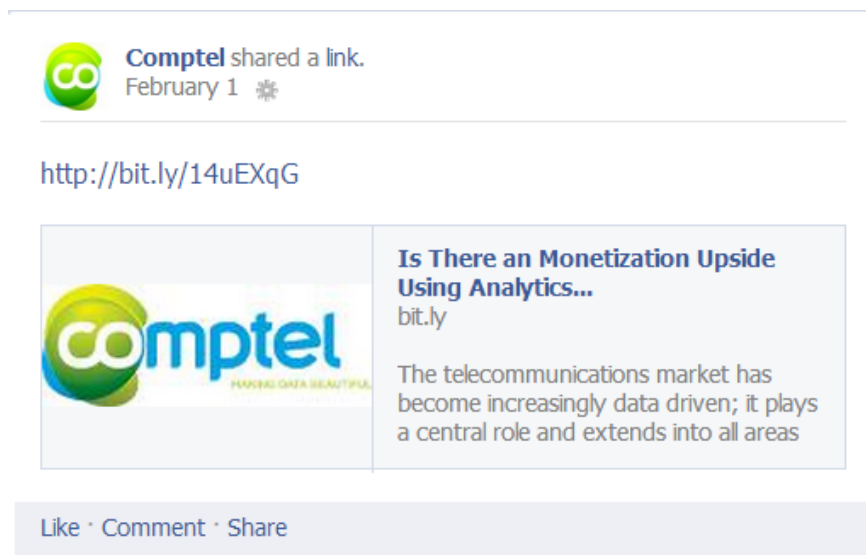
4.1.1 Create more appealing posts

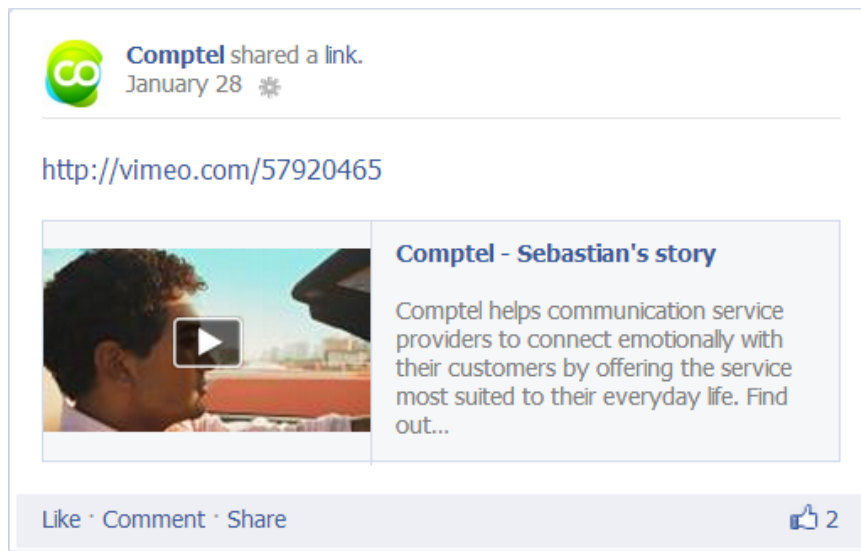
Appealing posts create more response: likes, comments, and shares. That is of course important to stir up conversation, but interesting posts are also crucial for visibility's sake. Posts with lots of comment or likes are much more noticeable and in Facebook they are actually more probable to appear in people's news feeds.

Because of the vast amount of information on the internet and in social media, people are used to just browsing through the web and their news feeds looking for something that interests them. Often even interesting content will go unnoticeable to them if it is not presented in a way that catches attention. This part will take a look at how to make posts that catch attention and create more response.

The best way to start tackling this subject is probably through a few examples. Next a look will be taken into earlier posts by Comptel to identify what has been wrong with them, and how they could be improved. (The following pictures are all screen captures from Comptel's Facebook page.)

In these first two posts there is the same simple mistake. They only have a link to another page but no explanation what the link or the content is about.





The first one is a link to a Comptel blog text. The problem is that, first of all, people do not necessarily realize that the link is actually to the Comptel blog. Secondly, there is no proper description of what the blog text is about. Only a part of the heading is visible and the short piece from the beginning of the blog text does not give much insight. As a result, the post is really vague and uninteresting.

Instead the post can be started, for example, by just saying: "Comptel Blog." and then adding a quite short, preferably one sentence description what the blog text is about. Sometimes a longer description can be necessary but usually a shorter description is better and catches attention more effectively.

The second post about Sebastian's story is already cooler, it looks more appealing, and people can see it is a link to a video clip in Vimeo. Still it has the same problem. People do not really know what the video is about and people do not often watch a video unless they know what it is going to be about. This post should again include a short and appealing description what the video clip is about.

An appealing post that catches attention must be easy to read. Making a sentence too complicated or too filled with hard business words makes a post harder to comprehend and easy to go unnoticed for people browsing the web. This mistake was made in the next example:


Comptel shared a link.
 Wednesday

Pipeline has highlighted Comptel's approach to "Making Data Beautiful" with its Event-Analysis-Action strategic framework in its Mobile World Congress wrap-up article. Read the full story at <http://lnkd.in/AVAMTG> .



Mobile World Congress 2013 | Pipeline Magazine | OSS and BSS News and Info
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Pipeline is the world's leading magazine for OSS and BSS news and information. Reporting from Barcelona, Spain, Pipeline reviews the latest news and industry

Like · Comment · Share

This 30 word sentence filled with business words is really hard to grasp. Actually, try reading this aloud: "Event-Analysis-Action strategic framework in its Mobile World Congress wrap-up article." It is a little bit hard to comprehend even when trying and most probably will be not understood by people just quickly glancing at the post.

It is also better to make descriptions more specific instead of a bit vague, and as interesting as possible. Full advantage should be taken of the possibility to shortly explain what the post is about. The description in the next example is quite vague and does not inspire as much interest as could be possible:

 **Comptel** shared a link.
10 minutes ago

Proud to be part of this great work of Kileva!
<http://kileva.wordpress.com/2013/03/16/kileva-eastfield-primary-school-prize-giving-day/>



Kileva Eastfield Primary School Prize Giving Day
kileva.wordpress.com

Back in October of last year I posted an entry explaining that Comptel Corporation (a company I used to work)

Like · Comment · Share

It says that Comptel is proud to be part of some great work of Kileva. But what is that work? What has Comptel actually done? In this case a better description would be a short explanation how Comptel has contributed to the work of Kileva. And what is the most interesting way to put it in one sentence? People and companies can be proud of many things and readers are not interested if someone is proud. They are interested in what they have done.

When a company does something good, helps people, or is part of some charity work etc., it is alright to present itself as a hero. Of course exaggeration and showing off are not good, but when you do something good, do not be afraid to present yourself as a hero. Readers love heroes and hero stories.

By following these tips, published posts will receive more attention. There are also other ways to make posts better at catching people's attention and especially at receiving more comments.

The easiest way to get more comments is just to ask questions. When explaining something to people they usually just nod or may give a *like* if they like the post. But asking questions invites people to say something. It sounds really simple and so it is.

Instead of writing a description to a post it can be changed to a question with still including the same information. Or the easiest way is just to write a short question after the description.

One way is also to just ask followers for comments or opinions about the subject or the content of the post.

Almost every post can be made to include a question, but questions shouldn't be over-used, of course, though. If every post has a question in it, questions become too much of a norm and lose their attracting power. Still joining the conversation should be made as easy as possible for customers, would-be-customers and other social media followers. Asking questions is one of the best ways to do that.

4.1.2 Promote Your Social Media Presence

One way to get more followers in social media is to just promote your presence in there. Tell people that you are in social media and that they should follow the company there. Of course there should be a reason for people to follow the company, same value to be gained from following it, but if the company's social media strategy is good and they are sharing lots of interesting content in social media, following them is valuable to people. Here are a few ways to promote social media presence:

- **Conferences.** When meeting new people and talking with people in conferences ask them to follow you in social media. Tell them about the content you share that can be useful to them.
- **Customers.** Customers are an obvious choice for followers. When dealing with customers, tell them that they can follow your company in social media where you share that can interest them.
- **Use employees to spread the word.** Your employees certainly have friends and relatives working in fields of business that can profit from Comptel's expertise. Ask your employees to tell their friends that they can follow Comptel in social media if they want read interesting articles from their field of business or other things they can benefit from.
- **Business Cards etc.** You can also write "Follow us in LinkedIn" or in Twitter or in Facebook to your business cards or create some other creative ways to promote your social media presence. Having your social media address in business cards for example also show that you are a modern company that is following trends.

In promoting social media it is important to remember to promote only when people can actually benefit from following the company. Asking someone to follow you in social media is like a customer deal. You ask a person to do something and they must get something in return. Probably the best way to give them something in return is just to have awesome content in social media, which is the subject of the next section.

4.2 Create Intriguing Content

The first thing to do when starting to create content is to think about customers and prospective customers and what they interested in. The content is created mostly to provide value to customers and to make them perceive the company as the expert in the field.

Right now Comptel is writing its blog about different interesting topics related to its business and is sharing relevant news articles in social media which are both very good ways to create content.

This section will take a look at different kinds of content that Comptel is not yet using that much or at all, and how to make that content good. As a reminder: good content is useful to a customer, it is interesting, and preferably entertaining.

4.2.1 Create More Than Just Strictly Business Related Content

Currently most of the content that Comptel shares is quite strictly business related, but sometimes it is easier to create more discussion with content that is not so strictly about a business subject. A very good example is one of the most popular posts by Comptel where they shared that they had bought 6 kilograms of Fazer chocolate for their stand in Mobile World Congress.

The two important things about this post was that, even though it was not about any business subject, it was still essentially related to Comptel and showed Comptel in a positive light. The other is that it directly provided value to readers. The people who followed Comptel and saw that post knew where to get the best chocolate, and who doesn't like chocolate?

An important thing to realize in this is that when a company tries to provide value to its customers, the value does not have to be only something strictly related to business, but can also be just joy. Even for B2B-companies it is good to be recognized as a good guy in their field of business who, besides providing good business solutions, bring joy and enjoyment to people. People are more likely to interact with a company like that and eventually do business with it.

So do not hesitate to post in social media whenever there is content that fulfills these two conditions:

- It is related to your company
- It provides value to your followers

In other words whenever there is something that can make your followers lives more easy or enjoyable, post it.

4.2.2 Make Videos

Videos are a good way to catch people's attention and convey information quickly. On average people are more likely to watch a short video than to read an article or a blog post and people in general watch more videos than read articles. Another advantage with videos is that most companies don't make them much. Instead they just rely on writing articles and blog posts mostly because they are easier to make and more traditional.

Videos that are made should be quite short, from 30 to 90 seconds is optimal. Usually people don't want to invest their time watching longer videos than that. There are three types of videos that a company should consider making:

- instruction videos
- funny videos
- videos showing corporate culture

Instruction videos are videos where for example the company's employees give answers to questions or show how some things are done. These videos can be helpful to

customers, giving answers to some of their questions or for example show what kinds of things can be done with their company's software.

These videos can be interesting to prospective customers too. They are a good way to show the company's expertise in its field and just catch prospective customers' attention. Instruction videos do not only have to be about giving instructions but can also shortly discuss some interesting topic related to the company's or customers' field of business.

It is not common in B2B-field to be funny but it is not prohibited either. Even though funny content does not usually lead to sales because it just entertains people instead of actually helping them, it can lead people to the more serious and useful content published by the company.

In the book, *Content Rules* by Ann Handley & C.C. Chapman there was a good example about this. It told about the director of Reynolds Golf Academy who created golf instruction videos for marketing purposes. Most of those videos were naturally designed to improve their viewers' golf skills, but amongst those videos were some that were mostly just for entertainment. For example there was a video about "the proper way to angrily throw your club into the water". That video probably did not make anyone attend the golf academy, but once posted on the Golf Magazine's website, it went viral and created 1.8 million views. Those views lead people to the Academy's other more serious videos.

Even though the example was not in the B2B-field the same idea applies in B2B too. Create entertaining content that is able to get lots of views that then leads the viewers to the company's more essential content. When trying to create funny content, video is usually the best medium.

When trying to figure out what kind of funny content should be created, for example try to think about what kind of problems are common in your field of business or things that often cause frustration (e.g. printer not working, problem with internet connection). Then think about some natural way to "fix" that problem or a general way to react to that problem that can be funny for someone looking at that activity.

Like every golfer can relate to missing an easy shot and getting angry, the idea is to tell about something that everyone can relate to. The videos do not have to be about someone getting angry or frustrated. (Although people, for some reason, often enjoy more seeing someone fail than seeing them succeed. Probably it is because failure is more common than success and makes it easier to relate to.) They can also be about positive things, like how to properly celebrate a sale for example.

Videos are also good for showing the company's culture. In every company there are people with different kinds of special skills that could interest other people. Make short videos about the people who work in the company and how they work there. That will also make the company more human, easier to approach and less like a normal corporation.

Making good looking videos doesn't require any fancy equipment. A perfectly alright high quality camera can be bought with about 500 euros and actually iPhone is good enough for making a decent looking video. (The 2013 Oscar winning documentary "Searching for Sugar Man" was partially shot with an iPhone app.)

When videos are made and uploaded to YouTube and Vimeo, it is recommendable in the info section to include a link to some other material created by the company that talks about the same subject (to a blog text e.g.).

4.2.3 Company Stories

One type of content that can make a company more interesting is to tell stories about the company; for example how the company was created. Everyone knows or is at least able to check the official story how Comptel was founded which is in Wikipedia, probably somewhere in Comptel's website and in the beginning of this study too. The problem with that story is that it is really boring. There must be something more to that story. Creation of a company can never be boring. Tell that story in a little bit more interesting way and it will strengthen your company's identity, give it roots and make it more interesting to follow. (There will be more talk about creating the company's story in the next section "Be Likeable".) Here is one example of a story about how

a company was founded. It is from alcohol beverage industry, from the website of the pear cognac Xante:

“The late 19th century was a time of political turbulence in Europe. As a consequence of the Franco-Prussian War, the district of Alsace came under German rule but many of the locals disagreed with the new order. Among them was future liqueur manufacturer Jean Heinrich, member of an Alsatian family of ancient lineage. He conducted a bold escape to Namur, Belgium, where he was granted shelter at a Benedictine Monastery. The monks confided Heinrich with a collection of ancient, all-natural liqueur recipes that would become the foundation of the legendary Maison Heinrich Liquoristerie Artisanale. Heinrich successfully commenced production, but decided to keep the single most superior recipe a family secret. It was solemnly passed on from generation to generation and perfected through accumulated knowledge, tradition and refined production techniques. And today – after four generations of blending excellence, the world is finally deemed ready for the Unimaginable Pleasures of Xanté.”

Again, even though this example is from a consumer business, its idea applies to B2B-business as well. Sometimes even more so, because in B2B-field people want to know more about the company before doing business with it. There are probably many more stories and interesting events in the history of Comptel that can be told to people who want to know more about Comptel. Just remember that the stories you tell have to be true.

If you decide to create stories about your company, of course, publish them in social media. Stories are also a good way to show the company’s expertise and other positive things about the company. They will bring both, customers and the company’s employers closer to the company when they learn more about it.

Content close to company stories are customer success stories. Comptel already has many of them on their web site (there they are called “customer cases”. By the way, consider would “customer success stories” be a better name?). Try to create lots of

customer cases and publish them in social media. They should be effective in B2B and give positive visibility to customers too.

4.2.4 FAQs

One type of content that Comptel currently does not seem to have anywhere is FAQs (Frequently asked questions). One reason why FAQs page (usually in company's website) is a good idea, is that it is often a very popular page where people often go when they are looking for some help, answers, or information.

In B2B environment people do not necessarily search for information and answers from FAQs page so often, but just deal with customer care instead. Still there are always questions that are frequently asked and that could be answered in FAQs page too. There are few advantages why a FAQs page is a good idea.

First, obviously it can take some load of from customer care if customers are able to find information from FAQs for some of their easier questions. Also in small matters it is an easier way to get information than contacting customer care. Serving current customers may be the smallest reason for FAQs though.

Secondly, and more importantly, FAQs can be useful for prospective customers. Prospective customers, in the very beginning or before the actual sales process, always have lots of questions and some of those can be given an answer in FAQs. Think about what questions prospective customers often have or what they maybe do not even know to ask and then give answers to those questions that are easily accessible in FAQs page.

The third reason to make a FAQs page is related to the fact that people like to visit those pages and take advantage of that. Include links to blog texts, to your videos, to your white papers and to other published content in your answers in the FAQs page. For example, after an answer to a question you can add a link to a blog text that talks more about the same subject. That way the FAQs page will channel traffic to your other content giving it more visibility. Adding links to FAQs page also helps with SEO (search engine optimization).

After a FAQs page has been created it is a good idea to publish it in social media too to give awareness and visibility.

4.2.5 Content Schedule

An important part of a content strategy is a schedule how often and when to publish content. Followers always appreciate regularity in material they read or watch. Regularity in publishing also makes following much easier because the readers know when to expect new content. A schedule also makes sure that a company creates enough content and does not get lazy. In the appendices, there is a rough example of a content schedule that can be modified for individual needs.

4.3 Be Likeable

4.3.1 Brand Reflecting Tone of Voice

In social media it is important to also sound like a human instead of like a corporation. The voice and language used in social media is also very good for conveying the company's brand to customers and to other followers and, on the other hand, good for enhancing the company's brand too.

Creating a tone of voice for a company should start with thinking about the company, its products, its values and especially its brand. It is important to know the identity of the company to be able to make its voice sound personal and different from other companies.

In this part, there will first be a few examples about what other companies have done, to see what kind of voices they been able to establish for themselves. After that, it will be discussed how Comptel can create a personal tone of voice for itself.

The tone of voice should be warm, easygoing, and as much fun as possible for the company to still be itself and seem professional. The tone of voice is one tool to make the gap between the company and its customers and other followers as small as possible. Here is one example of making a company sound much more boring and corporate-like than what it is supposed to be and actually is:

“Since its founding in 1923, [Company X] and its affiliated companies have remained faithful to their commitment to produce unparalleled entertainment experiences based on the rich legacy of quality creative content and exceptional storytelling. [Company X], together with its subsidiaries and affiliates, is a leading diversified international family entertainment and media enterprise with four business segments: media networks, parks and resorts, studio entertainment and consumer products.”

Can you guess which company? The preceding text was the description of Disney, one of the most fun companies in the world, in their LinkedIn page.

Next is an example of a much more successful execution of conveying a company’s brand and making its product sound desirable. The following text is the description of the pear cognac Xante (mentioned earlier) from their company web page:

“Allow us to introduce Xanté – the intimate result of a ménage à trois between the finest French cognacs, the affection of French Limousine Oak with its touch of vanilla, the perfect penetration of pear, and the slow tender mating process which seals the great conception delivering a flavour and taste beyond all known experience.”

Even though Xante is from a totally different industry and not a B2B company, it is a good example of how to make a company look unique, personal, and desirable. It is a good idea to visit their company page www.drinkxante.com to see more how they convey their brand.

Being personal, unique and fun is allowed in B2B industry too. The next example is the welcome message on the company home page of an e-mail marketing company Emma:

“Meet Emma, the e-mail marketing and communication service that’s taken a unique approach to web-based software. We think it should be easy to use (goodbye, cluttered interface). It should be made for you (fare-

well, generic templates). And it should even be fun (see ya around, support phone queue). It's all about e-mail marketing in style, and it's why 20,000 small and midsize businesses, non-profits and agencies have chosen Emma to power their e-mail newsletters and campaigns. And we'd love to help you."

This message gives a reader a sense that it is written by a real person and it is addressed to actual people. It also gives a feeling that the company wants to help people instead of selling a product. And of course, it is probably personal enough to be unlike any other company description you have seen and sticks in your mind.

When the identity of the company is clear, a good place to actually start creating and practicing the company's tone of voice is to shape the company description that is provided in its web page, LinkedIn page, Facebook page etc. How to make that description more interesting, welcoming, humane, customer centered, inviting, personal and memorable? The altered description, of course, should not be officially changed and published before it is totally ready and everybody is happy with it. But it is a good thing to practice to voice with. And when or if the description is changed, it is a good place to look and recollect how the company's voice sounds like, because it is always there available, reminding people about the identity of the company. In addition, when a company is using some kind of voice in social media, it is preferable that the company description is used with that same tone of voice.

Another good place to practice the right tone of voice for the company is to create the company story that was discussed in the previous section, "Create Intriguing Content".

After the company's identity is clear and the tone of voice is established, the next thing is just to start using it. Whatever is posted in every social media should be with that same tone of voice. It is important that everyone who is updating something to the company's social media pages should be aware of the established tone of voice and able to use that.

Of course every different writer will have at least a little bit different voice, but that is alright. It is good that the company voice does not become too standardized, but the tone should be the same.

4.3.2 Engage and Be Active

At the moment posts by Comptel are not getting much attention and comments but hopefully there will be more comments coming in the future. When people comment on posts it is important to comment back. Comment on people's comments whenever it is possible or makes sense to comment. When it does not, if it is a positive comment, at least *like* it. Also it is important to respond as fast as possible. The goal is to show people who bother to comment that they and their comments are respected and appreciated. Make them happy about it that they decided to comment on something.

In B2B industry companies do not usually get negative feedback in social media because other companies do not want to show that they have some problems. Still if there comes some negative comments do not panic or be afraid. Turn those negative comments to your advantage by showing how well you take care of your customers.

Engaging and being active in social media does not only mean to actively comment on comments by your followers but also to actively read and give your comments on blog posts and other articles by other people. Probably other companies and experts in your field of business also have blog or produce other articles. Show your expertise by commenting on them and make them interested in you.

4.4 Development Plan Version 1

This section is the first version of the development plan on how to enhance Comptel's marketing in social media. The development plan will basically be a summary of this section 4.

4.4.1 Increase Visibility

The best way for Comptel to increase its visibility in social media is to make all the posts it creates more appealing to viewers. This is mainly done by concentrating more on the descriptions given in each post to make it catch attention effectively and induce the viewer to react to it; to like it, or preferably to comment and/or share it. These following measures will make posts more appealing:

- Have descriptions. Always have a short description telling the viewers what the published content is about.
- Make them easy to read and understand. Do not fill the description with hard business words that just slip past the viewer's eyes.
- Be specific in the descriptions. Do not give vague descriptions, but instead explain to the readers what exactly the content is about.
- Make them interesting. Think about the most interesting way to present the content. Do not be afraid to make yourself a hero if you have done something well.
- Ask questions.
- Ask people for comments and their opinions.

Promote your social media presence to people that can benefit from following you. Do it for example:

- In conferences
- To customers
- Use your employees to promote
- In business cards etc.

4.4.2 Create intriguing content

Comptel already writes blog posts regularly, shares relevant articles, has customer cases in their web site etc. Here is some type of content that Comptel does not yet create but which is recommendable.

- Create variety of content. Do not only post something that is strictly business related. It is alright (and usually a good idea) to post something in social media whenever it meets these two conditions:
 - It is related to your company.
 - It provides value to your followers.
- Make videos.
 - Make helpful instruction videos.
 - Make funny videos to drive traffic to other content.
 - Make videos showing your employees and corporate culture.

- Make company stories. Make the story of how Comptel was founded more interesting. Also create stories of other interesting events.
- Create FAQs page for your web site. It can help current customers, give information to prospective customers and help with SEO. Also make a post about the FAQs page in social media when it is done.
- Create a content schedule. (Example in the appendices.)

4.4.3 Be Likeable

- Create own tone of voice. You can develop it by changing the company description to sound more like how Comptel is.
- Engage and be active.
 - Respond to comments, and as soon as possible.
 - Read other blogs and comment on them.

5 Approving The Development Plan

5.1 Analysis

The analysis of the first version of the development plan began with visiting Comptel's social media representative for the second time. The development plan was explained in detail to the social media representative and all the points in the plan were discussed. Comptel was in general very much agreeing with the development plan and its suggestions and did not really have anything to criticize.

However, in the meeting there came up a few things that the development plan did not take into account and would be useful to add into it. The notes from the meeting can be seen in the appendices (appendix 2).

5.2 Improved Version

This part lists the necessary improvements to the development plan that were mentioned in the analysis section above.

5.2.1 Increase Visibility in Social Media

Additional advice for increasing visibility is to share content at the right time of the day. For visibility's sake it is important to share all the content when people are on their computers and checking social media. Usually if the content gets no *likes* or comments, it will not show in people's news feeds for long. That is why the content needs to be published at a time when people see it and will *like* or comment on it. Here is a list of different times and analysis if they are good for sharing in social media:

- **weekday mornings** are often the best time to share content. People usually check their social media in the morning and will see the content. Sharing in the morning also gives the whole day for people to see the content. If the content manages to get a few likes or comments in the morning, probably everyone is going to see it during the day.
- **weekday afternoons** are also a good time for sharing because people probably spend more time in social media in the afternoons than in the mornings. The downside of sharing in the afternoon versus in the morning is that people will not have the whole day to see the content.

- **weekday evenings** are not very good time for sharing anymore (especially for b2b businesses). In evening people usually do not want to think about work related things anymore. Also when things are shared in the evening they often do not stay in the people's news feeds until the next morning giving people only a short period of time when they can see the content. The only upside in the evenings is that some people may be using social media most in the evenings, so an evening might still be good for sharing some kind of content.
- **nights** are the worst time for sharing content. Usually no one will see content shared after midnight because most people are asleep and they will not see it in the next morning anymore in their news feeds. The only upside of sharing at night is that people in different time zones will see it more easily.
- **weekends** are pretty much the same as weekday evenings. Some people might use social media more in the weekend and some people use less. But nobody usually wants to see work related things on weekends. On weekends only share something that needs to be shared right at that moment or content that is only entertaining and not so business related.

The above is the basic guide for what to consider when determining when to publish any content. One other thing to consider for businesses with global following is time zones. It is recommendable to enable people in all necessary time zones to see posts made by the company and to determine which time zone is the most important for the company.

A good idea is to try out different times to share content in social media and to follow how many views those posts get. It is in general a good idea to follow how many views all the posts get and to think about why some posts got so many views and why some did not.

5.2.2 Create Intriguing Content

In the "make videos" section it was suggested to make instruction videos showing for example how to use company's software and answer questions about how to use them. This is however impossible because Comptel cannot show this kind of information publicly. With that in mind, the "instruction videos" should concentrate more on discussing interesting topic about business that would interest Comptel's current and prospective customers.

In the "company stories" section it was recommended to make interesting stories about Comptel and events in its history. A great addition to those stories would be stories about people, about Comptel employees. Stories about people are a good way to

bring the company closer to its customers and make it more human. There are definitely interesting people with interesting personalities in Comptel who do interesting and important work and there are people who would like to read about them.

5.2.3 Be Likeable

One problem Comptel's social media strategy has at the moment is that almost all of their posts are posted by the marketing team, even if the content is not in any way related to marketing or to the marketing team.

One problem example was discussed in the meeting. Currently posts about recruitment are posted by marketing which leads to some people connecting the marketing team about recruitment. Usually in the marketing department people do not know much about Comptel's recruitment and cannot help the people who are interested to work for Comptel. It also takes time from the marketing team to answer their questions and guide them to the HR people who are responsible for recruitment.

Because of these kinds of problems, other people in the company should be able to use social media. Actually everyone (or at least someone in every team) in the company working with people outside should have some kind of access to the company's social media. That eliminates unnecessary work and gives faster and better service to customers and others wanting to contact or in some way deal with Comptel.

6 Conclusions

This part consists of a summary and a self-evaluation of the whole study.

6.1 Summary

This study's objective was to enhance the software company Comptel's social media usage, to help Comptel and its expertise receive more attention through it. The study started with reading about one thousand pages of literature about social media to build a solid knowledge base about the subject.

After the knowledge base was gathered, this information was analyzed and the most important things were filtered into the Best Practices section. As a summary of the best practices section, The Triangle of Success in Social Media was created, which showed which aspects to emphasize when starting to develop Comptel's social media strategy. Also Comptel's social media activity was monitored all the time, looking for weak spots and aspects in need of development.

Then was the time for the first visit with Comptel's social media representative to see if the study was on the right path and what ideas Comptel had about enhancing their social media usage. The meeting also shaped a deeper understanding of how Comptel uses social media than was obtained from only monitoring their social media activity. Overall Comptel's ideas of how to develop their social media usage were quite similar to those represented in the Best Practices section.

With the information in the Best Practices section and a few directions from Comptel, the making of the development plan was started. Because Comptel already had a good understanding about social media and had their own ideas of how to enhance their social media utilization, the development plan focused on creating new ideas for Comptel to do. The development plan was split into three sections: increasing visibility, creating intriguing content and being likeable, with all their own development ideas.

When the development plan was ready, it was taken to Comptel for approval and to see what could be improved. Comptel seemed satisfied with the development plan and only a few adjustments were suggested. After the meeting, the development plan was

analyzed once more, based on the suggestions from Comptel, and the necessary improvements were made.

The final outcome of the study was a finished development plan for Comptel on how to enhance their social media usage.

6.2 Evaluation

This part is the self-evaluation of this whole study; how the study went, in what things the study was successful at, and what maybe could have been done better.

In the beginning of this study I did not have much knowledge about marketing in social media, because that had not been covered at the university much. I did have a lot of experience in using social media though; I had profiles in Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and I had my own blog. I was also really interested in the subject and I was able to gather a good knowledge base about social media from the marketing perspective in the beginning of the study.

In the Best Practices section I think I was able to filter important parts about the theory into this study that made the section useful when I created the development plan. The downside of the Best Practices section was that it could have looked at the subject a little bit more from a b2b perspective. I was happiest with the Triangle of Success in Social Media that I created and I think it is a good guide whenever thinking about social media strategy.

The biggest challenge in the development plan was to bring something new to the table for Comptel, to provide them with new ideas in spite of their already great knowledge about social media marketing.

I think I succeeded well in figuring out ways how to make the posts in social media more attractive in the Increase Visibility part. Attracting attention with its posts was maybe one of the most visible weaknesses in Comptel's social media usage and with the advice in this study the situation should get much better. I was also happy with the new types of content I came up with in the Create Intriguing Content section. It could

be especially helpful for Comptel to consider making more videos to draw attention to Comptel and to support their blog.

What I hoped I could have done more was to figure out more and faster ways for how to get more followers in social media. Also I hope I could have found out more effective and surer ways to shorten the sales cycle. The development suggestions in this study will help shorten the sales cycle, but I have a feeling that even more could be done with social media.

In the Be Likeable section I think the part about creating brand reflecting tone of voice was very good. In the rest of the Be Likeable section there was some decent basic advice, but nothing revolutionary though.

In my opinion, this study was very successful in general. I learned a lot when conducting this study about a subject I am interested in, and this will most probably be as useful for Comptel too.

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Content Schedule

Daily

- LinkedIn posts
- Twitter Updates
- Facebook Posts
- Respond to comments by others

Weekly

- 2 – 3 Blog texts
 - preferably set exact dates for publishing blog texts (e.g. Tuesday and Thursday)
- Write comments to other blogs or articles

Monthly

- 1 - 3 short videos
 - instruction videos
 - videos showing corporate culture
 - funny videos

Yearly

- a couple of white papers
- a customer case (or a few if possible)
- a story about the company of some interesting event

Feedback from development plan version 1

- Share content at the right time of day
- Have the appropriate person to post updates. Also others than only marketing staff
 - o e.g. recruitment by HR
- Comptel can't show its software publicly in videos
- Stories also about people, not only about the company