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**SOCIAL MEDIA AS A
MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS
TOOL IN HEALTH AND WELFARE
SECTOR IN FINLAND**

DEGREE PROGRAMME IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
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<p>This master's thesis was commissioned by Kumppania Ltd. Kumppania is a communications agency specializing in the social, health and welfare sector. The author of this master's thesis is a project manager at Kumppania.</p> <p>The purpose of this master's thesis was to study social media channels as marketing communications and overall communications tools in organizations in health and welfare sector.</p> <p>Primary objectives of this study were to find out how organizations in health and welfare sector are utilizing social media channels in their marketing communications and overall communications, and to create recommendations for Kumppania about designing social media services to their target group.</p> <p>The theoretical part of this study dives into digital marketing communications and social media. The empirical part of this qualitative study mixes survey and observation. The questionnaire was targeted to health and welfare organizations in Finland. 66 respondents from the target group participated in the questionnaire. The internet-mediated observation was conducted towards THL (Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare).</p> <p>The author's conclusions from the observation and questionnaire are that social media is an important part of marketing communications and overall communications in health and welfare sector. Over half of the respondents answered, that they have created a strategy for social media and most of the organizations handle their social media in-house. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Twitter are the most used social media channels in health and welfare organizations. The most important social media objectives in health and welfare organizations are promotion of recruitment, sharing information, raising brand awareness, and improving the employer image. The results indicate that social media content in health and welfare sector is mostly based on informative content, describes the everyday events, and brings out employee stories. A third of the respondents think, that social media has become more important in their organization during the global pandemic of Covid-19.</p>		
<p><u>Key words</u> marketing communications, digital marketing communications, social media, health care, social care, welfare</p>		

FOREWORD

I want to thank my whole family for supporting my journey of studies in 2018–2022. Thank you for the encouragement and having faith in me. Thanks to Ville and my mom for being with the kids, while I wrote this master's thesis. Thanks to the commissioner Kumppania for the support, and to my thesis supervisor Kati Antola for guidance during the process.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This master's thesis was commissioned by a communications company called Kumppania Ltd. Kumppania was founded in 2008 and it is a communications agency specializing in the social, health and welfare sector. Kumppania develops marketing communications, corporate culture, and company reputation. (Kumppania, 2021) Kumppania's clients consist mostly of organizations operating in social, health and welfare sector. Organizations operate in both public and private sector.

The author of this master's thesis is a project manager (the project manager is referred as the "author") at Kumppania Ltd. The author has been working closely with digital medias and social media channels. Although the social media expertise of the author has grown, the need to get more information about the use of social media channels as marketing communications and overall external communications tool in Kumppania's target group was getting more and more evident. The author was also training entrepreneurs and organizations about social media. There was a need to create useful social media services and training for the target group. In order to do that it is important to learn more about the current state.

The purpose of this master's thesis is to study social media channels as marketing communications and overall external communications tools in Kumppania's target group: organizations in health and welfare sector.

Primary objectives of this study are to study social media as a marketing communications tool in health and welfare sector, to find out how organizations in health and welfare sector in Finland are utilizing social media channels in their marketing communications and overall external communications in 2022, and to create recommendations for Kumppania how they can design social media services to their target group.

There are studies about Finnish people in general using social media channels. There is a need to know more how organizations and companies are currently using social media channels as a marketing communications tool in Finland, especially in the sector of health and welfare. The knowledge of both, Kumppania's target group and social media, is easily outdated, because of the growth and changes in those fields, which makes it important to study them regularly. This study will serve other agencies and organizations as well as Kumppania.

The target group of this master's thesis, health, and welfare sector is in a turbulent situation at the moment. The responsibility for organizing the social, medical and health services will be transferred to wellbeing services counties in 2023 (Sote-uudistus, 2021) and the on-going pandemic situation both bring pressure to this sector. There is also a bright future to be predicted for this sector. The health and welfare sector is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. (TEM, 2021) As the industry is going through growth and changes, it is important to learn even more about Kumppania's target group to have well-designed services for them in the future.

Kumppania's services include social media, which is an important part of marketing communications of today's organizations and companies. Social media trends are constantly changing, and it is the marketing communications professionals' job and a challenge to keep up with the trends. Trends consist of changes in different platforms and society, algorithm change and human behavior etc. Trends communicate about new and popular ways to do marketing communications in social media. (Viesti, 2021) Many companies and organizations are going through a rough time, due to the pandemic situation, and marketing communications professionals are forced to think more strategically. Hootsuite conducts an annual survey of social media trends and this year's report has answers from 18 100 marketers, interviews with industry experts, customers, and partners, and creates five key social media trends for 2022. (Hootsuite, 2022) Trend reports tell us that social media is truly an important tool for marketers and it is vital to follow trends and development in the field. The changes in social media trends make it a hard environment for marketing communications professionals to stay contemporary and make decisions and solutions that fit the future trends. It is important to follow trends and constantly keep up with the changes. This study is

important for marketing communications agencies such as Kumppania to learn about their target group and how they are using social media.

The theoretical part of this study dives into digital marketing communications and specifically social media. According to a research called *State of Social Media 2021* done by Meltwater (2021) the most used social media channels for marketing operations in organizations are Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter. Based on that, previously mentioned social media channels are studied more closely in this master's thesis.

This is a qualitative study mixing two different research strategies. First one is survey strategy, which is a popular method in business and management research. (Saunders et al., 2019, pp. 193–194) The questionnaire conducted in this study will combine quantitative and qualitative methods. The second strategy is internet-mediated observation. Internet researcher observes archived and current online social interactions. (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 408)

This study is important for the case company Kumppania, but also for other marketing communications agencies offering their services to health and welfare companies and organizations. Also, health and welfare professionals working with social media can find this study useful as they can find out how their competitors and other organizations in their sector are using social media. This study gives important information on how companies and organizations in Finland are using social media as a marketing communications tool in 2022.

2 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this master's thesis is to study social media channels as marketing communications and overall external communications tools in Kumppania's target group: health and welfare sector, specifically companies and organizations in that sector.

This study answers to “How are organizations in health and welfare sector in Finland using social media in their marketing communications and overall external communications in 2022?” Theoretical part of the study focuses on digital marketing communications and social media.

This master’s thesis is primarily a qualitative study mixing two different research strategies: survey and observation. Primary objectives of this study are:

- To study social media as a marketing communications tool in health and welfare sector.
- To find out how organizations in health and welfare sector in Finland are utilizing social media channels in their marketing communications and overall external communications in 2022.
- To create recommendations for Kumppania of how they can design social media services to their target group.

The author will conduct a questionnaire as a method in the survey strategy. Questionnaire will mix quantitative and qualitative methods. The target group of the questionnaire is organizations in the sector of health and welfare in Finland. Questionnaires questions are divided in four sections:

1. Basic information on the organization (number of employees, sector, position of the respondent etc.)
2. Social media operations (channels, strategy, objectives etc.)
3. Social media content (content types, goals etc.)
4. Effects of Covid-19: did the pandemic situation affect the use of social media?

With questions in section one it is important to gather basic information on the sector of the organization and the position of the respondent. In section two it is important to find out if the organization has a strategic plan for social media operations, what kind of strategy do they have and if they use an agency. It is also important to know, which channels they use and what are the objectives in using social media. In section two it is also important to learn how important social media is and what are the organization’s basic social media operations and objectives. With questions about social media operations, it will be easier to know if organizations need help with strategic issues

and what are those channels they work with in their organization. These questions aim to get information, which can help to create more fitting services for the target group at Kumppania. Section three dives deeper into content and individual posts and their objectives. With more detailed information on the content, they use and want to use in the future, it will be easier for Kumppania to create services that help with those specific content types. With section four we will find out if Covid-19 pandemic has affected the use of social media. Since March 2020 the pandemic has affected organizations in many matters and this study answers, if organizations have noticed any changes in their use of social media during that time.

The author will also conduct internet-mediated observation on Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL, Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos). With observation the author will seek for answers with following questions:

- What channels does THL use?
- How many followers does THL have?
- How often does THL post?
- Does THL have a social media policy? How do they communicate about their social media channels?
- How does THL utilize different tools in social media?
- How does THL's followers interact with their social media channels?
(Comments and reactions)

With a questionnaire and observation, the author aims to gather a wide range of data regarding social media operations in the target group. Theory and research part of this study aims to gather data, which helps to consider whether health and welfare organizations are making extensive use of social media through the most popular channels and tools, which help with visibility and engagement. This study can benefit firstly the commissioner Kumppania, secondly other agencies providing social media services and thirdly professionals working with social media in health and welfare sector.

3 HEALTH AND WELFARE SECTOR IN FINLAND

Welfare as a concept means supporting the wellbeing of individuals. Welfare is sometimes considered to include social care. In this master's thesis health and welfare organizations can be privately or publicly owned or third sector organizations and they can represent health and welfare services including social care services.

The third sector (voluntary sector) refers to the sector between the private sector, and the public sector, and it is characterized by a non-profit economy. Third sector organizations are generally aid organizations, churches, associations, cooperatives, and foundations etc. (Kolmas sektori, 2022)

According to the Constitution of Finland, public authorities must guarantee social, medical and health services to all residents in Finland. Local government, the municipalities, have the responsibility to organize these services to people. (Tehy, 2022) Health care services are divided into primary health care and special health care. Primary health care services are provided by the municipalities. Special health care is mainly provided in hospitals. The university hospitals of Helsinki, Turku, Tampere, Oulu, and Kuopio provide the most demanding care. (EU-terveydenhoito.fi, 2022) The organization of public healthcare, social welfare and rescue services are under big changes and the system will be reformed in near future. From 2023 the responsibility for organizing these services will be transferred to wellbeing services counties. The goal is to improve quality and availability of these services in Finland. (Sote-uudistus, 2021) The public health care services are complemented with private-sector providers, and the share of private care has been increasing during past years. (Tehy, 2022) Health care services are provided by public, private and third sector. Private sector organizations are for example Mehiläinen, Karhulinna, Terveystalo, Oral, Attendo etc.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö) is responsible for social policy and prepares the legislation for social welfare. Social care refers to activities which promote and maintain social well-being, safety and inclusion, social services and the support services for individual people, families, and the social care professionals. Social care services include for example social work and social

guidance, social rehabilitation, family work and care support, home and housing services, substance abuse and mental health work etc. Social services are provided by public, private and third sector. Municipalities can also purchase services from private service providers. (Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö, 2022) Private social care organizations in Finland are for example Esperi Care, Touhula Leikki. Third sector organizations in social care are for example VAK ry, Ensi- ja turvakotien liitto ry, Familia ry etc.

Health and welfare as a sector is facing many changes and challenges. The aging of people and the increasing number of chronic diseases are creating issues in Finland and around the world. At the same time these challenges are bringing great opportunities. People are increasingly paying attention to their well-being and want to take care of themselves in a new way. There is more discussion about prevention and new technologies that can increase healthy choices so that people would not get sick. Before health and welfare sector has been viewed as a cost-generating sector, but now there also more business potential. (Lappi, 2019)

The health and welfare sector is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Finland is in a great position to be a part of this growth. (TEM, 2021) The Talouselämä Terveystalous 2021 report states that the growth of health and care companies slowed down moderately in 2021. The turnover of the twenty largest companies increased to 5,175 million euros, which is almost 100 million euros more than in the previous year. Before last year the growth has been a shocking several hundred million euros a year. The largest companies in the industry have doubled their turnover in five years, which indicates very high growth. Finland's largest health and care company is Mehiläinen with a 1,162-million-euro turnover in 2021. The second largest company is Terveystalo, whose turnover dropped to just under one billion euros. Attendo Finland holds the third place. Some of the more moderate growth can be explained with people cutting back on routine health care visits because of Covid-19. (Holtari & Felt, 2021) Even though the growth was more moderate during 2021, it is evident that the health and welfare industry all in all is growing and changing rapidly, and there is a need to develop many aspects in health and welfare businesses, such as marketing communications.

In addition to the reform of social and health services and the general growth in the industry, the Covid-19 pandemic situation started in 2020, which has had a huge impact in the health and welfare sector. The pandemic and its prolongation have had far-reaching and significant consequences for the health, well-being and living conditions of the population, the functioning of the service system and the use of services, and the national economy, states the THL (Finnish institute of health and welfare) expert assessment report. (Kestilä L. et al., 2021, p. 4)

While writing this master's thesis, there began a nurse's strike. The Tehy and SuPer administrations rejected the conciliation proposal by the national mediator and the nurse's strike begun on 1st of April 2022. The goal of the strike is to find a solution to the shortage of nurses. In February, Tehy and SuPer presented a rescue program for the social and health sector, which would increase the salaries of social and health personnel. Tehy claims, that the program is needed in order to have a functioning public social and health care in the future. (Tehy, 2022)

4 CASE COMPANY: KUMPPANIA LTD

Kumppania is a communications agency specializing in the social, health and welfare sector. Kumppania develops marketing communications, corporate culture, and company reputation. Operations vary from strategic planning to everyday communications in selected marketing communications channels. Kumppania's aim is to combine expertise and vision of the personnel, network, and customers. (Kumppania, 2021) Kumppania's vision is: "We are a leader and an obvious choice as a communications partner for organizations that invest in health and well-being as well as the development of corporate culture and reputation management."

Kumppania was founded in 2008 and has been operating in health and welfare sector for over 15 years. Kumppania now has 16 employees and made a turnover of 958 000 euros in 2021. Kumppania's offices are in Pori and Tampere.

Kumppania's clients are both public and private owned and are located in:

- 50 % Helsinki Metropolitan
- 20 % Tampere region (Pirkanmaa)
- 20 % Pori region (Satakunta)
- 10 % Other areas

Examples of Kumppania's clients: Fimlab, Pihlajalinna, Vitec, VAKry, LPY (Lääkäripalveluyritykset ry), Solutos, Satakunta Digihealth and Lääkärikeskus Karhulinna. (Kumppania, 2022)

Kumppania offers a wide range of services for example communications partnership, communications strategy and planning, content production and publications, websites, and SEO (search engine optimization), training and keynote speeches, project management, health communications, brand communications and building. (Kumppania, 2021)

The author of this master's thesis has been working as a project manager at Kumppania since 2018. Social media is present almost every day in the author's work tasks. Social media is a part of Kumppania's own marketing communications strategy as well as the strategies of many clients.

The author has noticed that there is a constant need to learn more about social media in order to develop as a marketing communications professional. According to the survey called *Use of information technology in enterprises 2021* (Tilastokeskus, 2021) social media is used by 79 percent of companies that employ at least ten people. Study commissioned by Innwise (Pönkä, 2021, p. 2) states that 69 percentage of Finnish people use social services. These two facts state that social media is an important tool for both individuals and organizations.

The author noticed while working at Kumppania and providing services to the target group, that there was not much information or statistics available on how the target group uses social media. It is important to study the target group in order to create well-designed services for them.

5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The framework of the study is introduced in Figure 1. The problem of this study is: how are health and welfare organizations using social media as a marketing communications and overall communications tool in 2022? In the background of this problem there are two facts: social media is rapidly growing and changing, and that Kumppania's target group, health, and welfare sector, is also going through major changes and development. This study will introduce the case company Kumppania and its target group, health, and welfare sector in Finland.

Theoretical part of the study focuses on digital marketing communications and specifically on social media. The author will briefly introduce digital marketing communications, digital solutions that aim towards engagement, consuming digital content in today's world, digital media channels and finally shortly on how success is measured by digital data. Social media will be introduced through the overall concept, basic information on channels (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Twitter) and the algorithms, and finally how social media was consumed in 2021. Theoretical part will include statistics on the individual use of social media as well as social media as a marketing communications tool in organizations in 2021.

Digital world has been a part of people's lives for a long time now. We have been using the world wide web since 1990's and from there on the development has been amazingly fast. Digital marketing communications means combining digital media, data, and technology to achieve marketing. Now over three billion people around the world use digital services daily. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, pp. 5–6, 9) One tool that has risen to be an important part of digital marketing communications is social media. Social media is a group of Internet-based applications, that are built on Web 2.0, that allow users to create and exchange user-generated content. (Fill & Turnbull, 2019, p. 366) Approximately half of the world population is using social media. (Statista, 2022) This states the fact that social media is a huge part of people's lives.

When the theoretical part is ready, the study moves on to the empirical part of the study. The main part of the research is conducting a questionnaire to the target group

about social media as a marketing communications and overall external communications tool. According to a research called *State of Social Media 2021* done by Meltwater (2021) the most used social media channels for marketing operations in organizations in 2020 were Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter. In this study, the author will send a questionnaire about social media to the target group: organizations in health and welfare. Complementing the questionnaire, the author will also conduct internet-mediated observation on Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL). With observation the author will explore what channels they use, how many followers they have, how often they post, how they utilize different tools in social media, and how their followers interact with their social media channels. The final part will present results of the study, recommendation for action and conclusion.

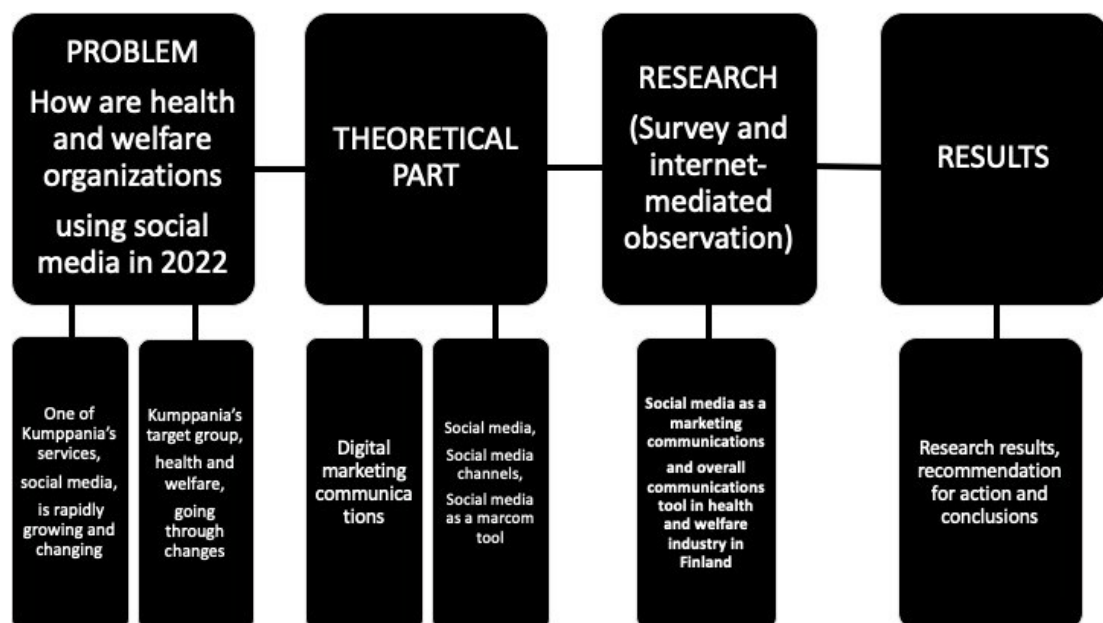


Figure 1. Framework for the study.

6 DIGITAL MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

6.1 Digital marketing communications in a nutshell

In the book *Engage! Marketing communications*, marketing communications is defined as:

A process through which organizations and audiences engage with one another. Through an understanding of an audience's preferred communications environments, participants seek to develop and present messages, before evaluating and acting upon any replies. By conveying messages that are relevant and significant, participants are encouraged to offer attitudinal, emotional, and behavioral responses. (Fill & Turnbull, 2019, p. 37.)

In marketing communications, engagement is where it all aims. Engagement between an organization and consumer is key to successful marketing communications. The so-called marketing communications mix is a used concept to describe different tools, media and messages that are used to reach, engage, and provoke audience-centered conversations. (Fill & Turnbull, 2019, p. 37)

Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick state in their book that digital marketing communications can be defined as: "Achieving marketing objectives through applying digital media, data and technology" (2019, p. 9.) The digital world is not a new concept. Nearly three decades ago we were introduced to "www", the world wide web. From there on the digital technology has developed in a high speed. Nowadays over three billion people use digital services in their daily life. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, pp. 5–6) Internet is a part of marketing communications in two main ways: distribution and communication. These two combining make into titles such as ebusiness, ecommerce and mcommerce, which benefit not only sellers but also buyers. Internet is an important part of marketing products, providing information and service online. It must be remembered that Internet is not to be considered the only marketing channel, but a part of the marketing communications mix. (Fill, 2013, p. 623)

6.2 Digital solutions aiming towards engagement

Marketing communications have evolved from TV, print and radio campaigns to a wide range of different digital media channels. In today's marketing communications it is vital to manage many different media channels. For an organization, practically speaking this means for example display advertising, paid Facebook advertising, newsletters via email, advertising through Instagram company accounts, SEO (search

engine optimization), Adwords advertising, and influencer marketing. Digital marketing communications gives more possibilities than traditional marketing communications and it is more affective. Targeting and measuring are essential in marketing communications, and it is much easier with digital solutions. Using digital marketing communication solutions is a megatrend and touches our lives in a whole new level. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 26; Rämö, 2019, pp. 6–7, 9)

Digital marketing focuses on online presence. Companies need to focus on their “owned media”. Companies manage their online company presence such as websites, social media company pages, mobile apps and integrate them with different online communication techniques. These include SEM (search engine marketing), social media marketing, online and email marketing and collaborations with other websites. In order to create a successful digital strategy, companies need to consider and combine different types of media: paid, owned and earned media. Paid media is bought media where you pay to get visitors to your channels. Owned media, as the name states, is owned by the company, such as: websites, blogs, email lists, mobile apps, social presence on social media channels. Earned media is where you earn to visitors through word of mouth, conversations in social media channels, blogs, news articles etc. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, pp. 9–10)

With a good online presence, an organization can achieve engagement with its audience through different interactions. Digital marketing communications now is more about the interactions of the audience rather than simple websites. In order to understand the importance of digital marketing communications to marketing in general, we have to learn about the audience interactions. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, pp. 5–6)

Engagement is vital to successful digital marketing communications. A range of marketing communications tools are there firstly to expose the organization, brand, or product, and then to gain the attention and captivate the audience, and then to interact with the audience. There is a variety of interactive solutions in digital marketing communications such as interactive media advertising, including display (banners), behavioral targeting, video and other interactive advertising formats, SEO (search engine marketing), social media, and in particular social networks, viral marketing,

blogging, including microblogging (Twitter), and online communities and lastly email, SMS, apps, affiliates, and both virtual and augmented reality. (Fill & Turnbull, 2019, pp. 27, 359)

Digital marketing communications content should be a blend of intellectual and emotional to achieve engagement. Online engagement may only last seconds, just enough to watch for example a funny cat video or a display banner. Engagement can also last for hours or years in some cases. This often means that the organization/brand has impacted the audience with a total brand experience. (Fill & Turnbull, 2019, pp. 27)

6.3 Consuming digital content

It is said that people make 10 000 decisions every day. Some of those are consumption decisions. Those decisions are often influenced by marketing communications. Marketing communications solutions should be considered through the organizations target audience. Marketing communications are divided into B2C (business-to-consumer), B2B (business-to-business) and now also H2H (human-to-human) marketing communications depending on who the recipient of the message is. (Rämö, 2019, p. 17)

People interact with organizations using different digital devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, desktops, TV's, gaming services etc. With their devices people dive into digital platforms, which are browsers, apps to online services like Facebook, Instagram, Google, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn etc. People consume digital media such as email, messages, social networks, search engines, advertisement etc. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, pp. 5–6) People also consume music, TV-shows, movies, and books through digital services. Digitalization has opened a new way of consuming. People can jump into TV series or newly released music album wherever, whenever. Shopping patterns have changed, and digital channels have become a strong part of it. In today's world the consumer most often decides when to buy, not when the salesman comes to their door. A consumer can do research about a product through Google, ask friends or followers through social media for recommendations, make price

comparisons online and read blog posts about product experiences. With a good digital marketing communications strategy, which includes for example SEO, influencer marketing and active customer service, the marketer can win a consumer over. (Rämö, 2019, p. 9)

6.4 Digital media channels

Digital media channels are vital in order to support company's business objectives. A practical way to explain how digital media channels help with business goals is with RACE framework, which is presented in *Digital Marketing* by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick. In RACE step one is reach. It means building awareness for a brand, its products and services in offline media and building traffic. It aims to get unique visitors and fans to the web and social media channels. Step two is act. This step aims to create engagement with the audience. Companies need to create interaction with their customers online, on its website or other online channels. Step three aims to conversion, which usually means sales on web or offline. Step four is engage, which aims to build customer relationships to achieve retention goals. Digital channels work best with other channels, which means that combining different tools like traditional offline media and digital channels together, will lead towards better results. (2019, pp. 26–27)

There are hundreds of marketing communications channels. All solutions aiming to reach out to a consumer in a promotional way is through a marketing communications channel. It is impossible to list all marketing communications channels because the channel selection is constantly changing. (Rämö, 2019, p. 43) Despite of the wide selection, it is important to learn about the main digital media channels in order to know what channels a company should use. In *Digital Marketing* by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019, p. 28) a framework of different marketing communications tools is presented (Figure 2). In that framework the tool selection is very wide and consists of many different pieces. This study has chosen one of the digital marketing tools to be presented more closely: social media.

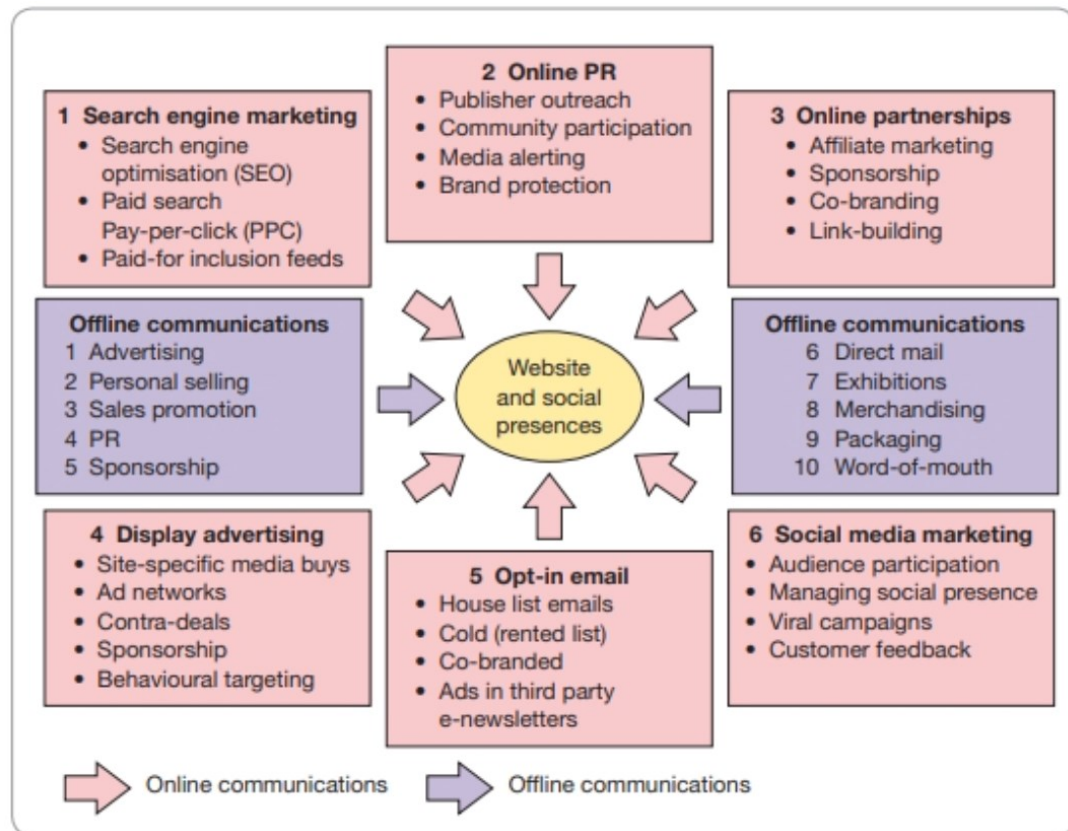


Figure 2. Six categories of marketing communications tools or media channels. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 28)

Social media can be defined as a group of Internet-based applications, that are built on Web 2.0, that allow users to create and exchange user-generated content. (Fill & Turnbull, 2019, p. 366) Social media marketing can be used for audience participation, managing social presence, viral campaigns, and customer feedback. Companies can participate and advertise in social media channels, in their networks and communities and earn engagement within their audience. Viral marketing and online word-of-mouth are also important in these channels. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, pp. 27–28) According to the Innwise research (Pönkä, 2021, p. 2) 69 percentage of Finnish people use social media channels daily. Because of this it is vital for a company to be found in these services.

6.5 Collecting digital data: measuring success

Digital marketing communications focuses on marketing to a customer, while achieving profitable business operations. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 14) Digital marketing communications operations need to be measured to know if the operations are successful. If a company wants to develop their marketing communications operations, they need measurable results. With measuring, an organization learns from failures and successful operations, which helps with strategic marketing planning. It also helps to create better financial decisions. With measuring it is also easier to provide evidence to the organization's senior management about the profitability of marketing communications. If the results are demonstrated well, it is usually easier to get more resources for marketing communications. (Rämö, 2019, p. 100)

There are four aspects to be considered, when it is time to check how a marketing communications campaign has succeeded. First one is outputs: what did the campaign deliver versus the given budget? Measuring includes reach, frequency, impressions etc. The second one is intermediate measures: how did the campaign impact target audiences' attitudes or perceptions? Measuring includes awareness, consideration, and relevance. The third one is hard behavioral measures: what did the target audience do after being exposed to the campaign? Measures includes clicks, sign-ups, and phone calls. Hard business measures are the fourth aspect: how did the campaign impact business? Measuring includes sales and shipments. (Fill & Turnbull, 2019, p. 388)

7 SOCIAL MEDIA

7.1 Social media as a concept

Social media can be defined in multiple ways, but basically social media utilizes mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms and/or applications, which are used by individuals and communities for sharing, creating, and

exchanging user-generated content. It is the closest way for a marketing communications professional to be in touch and interact with its audience. Individuals turn to social media channels to create and recreate personal and perceived identities and at the same time, without even noticing it, they help marketing communications professionals with their goals. The goal is to inspire people to behave in a way that helps professionals. At the same time marketing communications professionals learn from their audience and are able to create content, which helps with their goals. For marketing communications professionals, it is important to learn about their audience's behavior in social media, instead of just learning about the technical part of social media applications. (Mahoney & Tang, 2017, p. 9; Fill & Turnbull, 2019, p. 364)

It is safe to say, that almost everyone in the world has experienced social media in one way or another. It has become a meaningful tool for marketing communications professionals. More than 83 percent of small business owners believe that social media is essential for their business. Obviously social media has its downsides such as fake news and ever-changing technologies, but on the other side, it is a great way to be in contact with people and organizations. During Covid-19 pandemic, social media has become more and more important for people to stay in touch with their relatives and friends, but also crucial for businesses to stay in touch with their target audience. (Chambers et al, 2020, p. xi) Social media is consistently growing. The number of social media users around the world is expected to go over 4,4 billion individuals by the year 2025. This number means that it would be approximately half of the world population. (Statista, 2022)

7.2 Social media as a marketing communications tool

Social media is a great marketing communications tool for brand awareness and customer loyalty. It offers a platform for businesses to be exposed to their audience, creates web traffic, improves SEO (search engine optimization), can result in new partnerships or customers, reduces marketing expenses, and creates conversation. Social media opens a conversation between sales and customers, which is easy and convenient for both parties. This can lead to positive customer experience. Before

social media, the customer experience was a result of purchasing or product experience, but now it can be reinforced with other tools like social media. Social media provides a channel to create a more intimate relationship with customers than other marketing communications tools. (Mahoney & Tang, 2017, p. 15–16)

One concept, that social media has created is thought leadership. Thought leadership is about expressing the expertise one has in their field of work. Most thought leaders have a passion about their professional expertise and want to be innovative leaders in a particular topic or area. Using social media, they can share their thoughts and information. Many thought leaders have goals to be invited to conferences or other engagements to speak about their expertise or passion. Some organizations aim to have thought leaders to create visibility towards the organization. (Western Governors University, 2020)

In order to have successful marketing communications using social media it is important for each organization to try to recognize and understand its social media landscape. Each organization should have a social media strategy, which matches the different channels functionalities and their goals. There should also be a policy on who should be in charge of “listening” to conversations on social media and when. There should also be some scanning through conversations and information flows that might affect the market or the organization. (Fill & Turnbull, 2019, p. 365) It might not make sense for an organization to be involved in all social media channels. It is important to choose the ones that fit the organizations goals and for which resources are sufficient. (Virtanen, 2020, p. 32) Organizations have different goals regarding the use of social media as a marketing communications tool, such as: raising brand awareness, increasing traffic on their websites, increasing brand engagement, getting new customers, increasing sales, establishing thought leadership, increasing customer satisfaction, changing the image of the organization etc. (Meltwater, 2021, p. 11) Usually organizations have one to three top goals, instead of trying to do everything on social media.

There is a lot of competition in social media, which makes the visibility of a single brand without a huge community or paid advertising easily non-existent. When organizations do advertisement in social media, the costs should be considered through

seasons. Nowadays during holidays and for example Black Friday, it is much pricier to advertise on social media. The organic visibility (non-paid visibility) and regular posts are very important to organizations as well. With those credibility and SEO improve, and loyalty as well as customer experience get better. With paid content an organization ensures that their messages reach their target audience and potential customers. (LM Someco, 2022, p. 17)

7.3 Social media channels

When referring to the term social media in general it means a broad range of web-based applications, and the term social networking refers to one of the many applications that are available. (Fill & Turnbull, 2019, p. 364) Social media platforms and applications are often referred to as social media channels. In this master's thesis the author will use the term social media channel when speaking about different social media applications, sites, or platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.

Statista (2022) ranked most popular social media channels worldwide in 2021 (Figure 3) and it shows that there are more than dozen social media channels that have over 300 million users. On top of these channels, there are hundreds of smaller ones, and it is impossible to list all of them. The top five social media channels in the world are: Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook Messenger. Interesting about this fact is that four of them are owned by one company called Meta (formerly known as Facebook): Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook Messenger. (Meta, 2022) From Facebook's launch in 2004 it is evident that competition is hard, and it seems quite impossible to create a new channel, which would rise up to the top five channels.

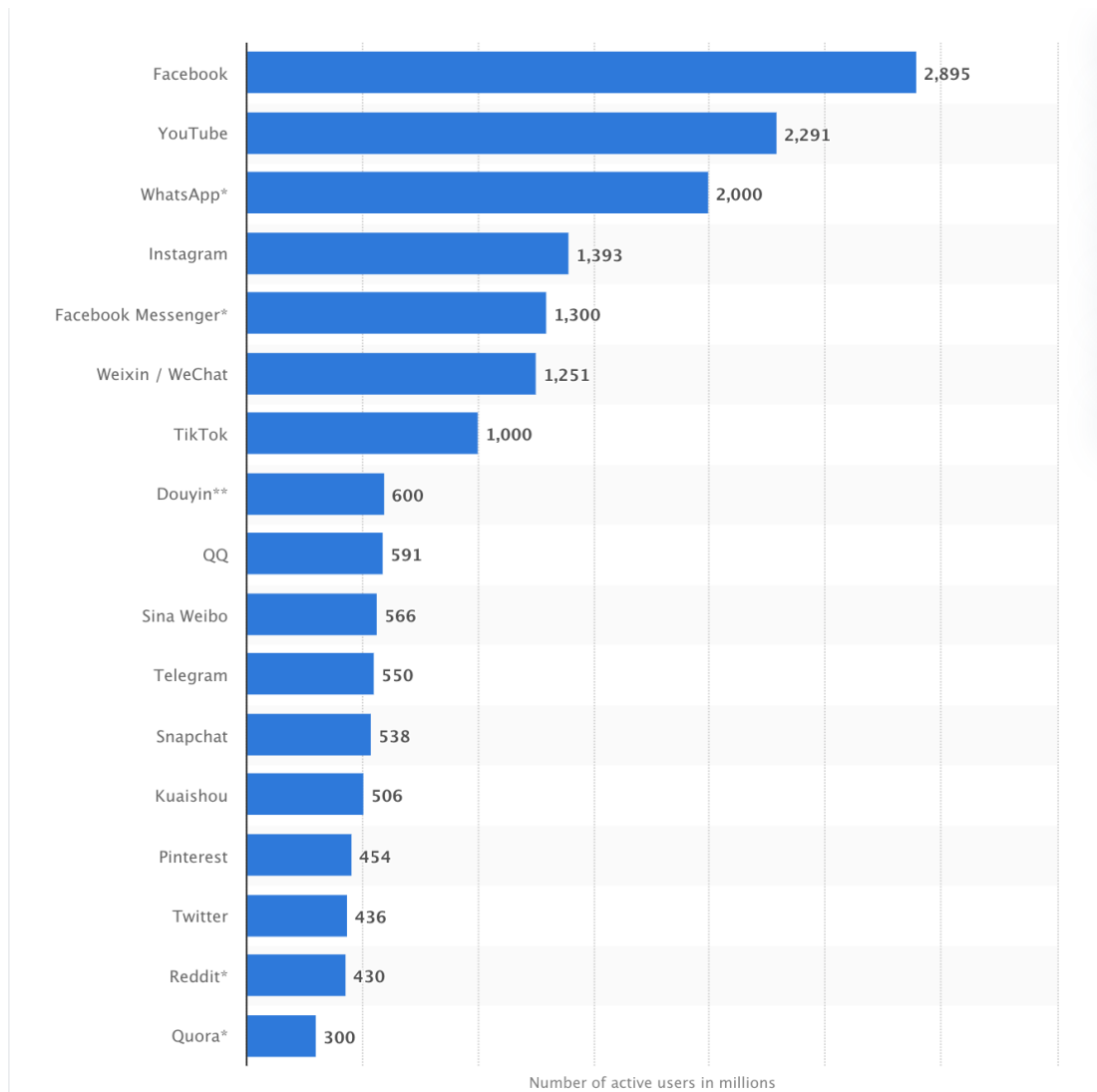


Figure 3. Most popular social media channels worldwide (October 2021) ranked by number of active users. (Statista, 2022)

According to a research called *State of Social Media 2021* done by Meltwater (2021) the most used social media channels for marketing operations in organizations in the Nordic countries are Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter. In this master's thesis, the author will concentrate on those channels in particular.

7.3.1 Facebook

Facebook had 2,9 billion monthly active users worldwide by October 2021. (Statista, 2022) Facebook is one of the most used social media channels in Finland, after WhatsApp and YouTube, with 2,9 million users (age 16–74). 56 percent of those users use Facebook daily. (Pönkä, 2021, p. 19) Facebook is a cost-effective advertising

channel and holds its place in the competition well, but there is a trend of younger active users disappearing from there into other channels. According to a research called State of Social Media 2021 93 percent of Nordic organizations use Facebook for their marketing communications. (Meltwater, 2021, p. 6)

The Facebook channel is owned by Meta, which was introduced by the CEO Mark Zuckerberg in 2021. The company formerly known as Facebook, brings apps and technologies under the new company brand. Meta's aim is to help people connect, find communities, and grow businesses. (Meta, 2021)

Facebook has the biggest reach of all social media channels. Facebook keeps its popularity with giving users freedom to create different types of content. Facebook has the most versatile tools compared to other social media channels. (Chambers et al, 2020, p. 35) Facebook highlights its possibilities to create and be a part of different discussion groups. The algorithm also likes groups discussions more than regular posts, which makes them great places to get visibility. In Facebook it is important to have a personal profile/account, which allows one to join conversations and create pages. Discussion groups are great platforms for entrepreneurs. There are groups for certain sectors of businesses and in some of them it is even allowed to advertise. In some groups people can ask for certain services or products, which is a great opportunity for entrepreneurs to advertise their businesses. (Virtanen, 2020, p. 15)

The Facebook algorithm decides which posts show up on the feed of people. Paige Cooper (2021) states in a Hootsuite blog, that Facebook reminds that there is no single algorithm, but "multiple layers of machine learning models and rankings", built to predict which posts will be "most valuable and meaningful to an individual over the long term." Practically speaking the algorithm makes sure that posts do not appear in chronological order. Facebook evaluates all users and arranges posts depending on the interests of the individual user. This happens every time a user refreshes their Facebook feed. One of the goals with this algorithm, is to keep people interested in scrolling more and more, and therefor seeing more advertisement. For a brand who wants to create organic reach (non-paid reach) it is important to aim towards engaging content. The algorithms on Facebook encourage to post videos and images, more than

plain text and links. Although some public figures can post longer text posts and get a high visibility. (Virtanen, 2020, p. 15)

Cooper (2021) listed 11 tips for working with the Facebook algorithm:

1. Reply to your audience. As stated in this study, engagement is key in marketing communications. In Facebook the algorithm also loves interaction, it prioritizes posts from Pages that a user has interacted with.
2. Make conversation. Practically speaking this means good conversations starters are really important in Facebook. In Facebook you can often bump in to posts that ask a question, where people start answering and tagging other people.
3. Aim for reactions rather than simple likes. Posts that get different reactions, do well in the algorithm. Aim for reaction buttons such as love, caring, laughter, sadness, and anger. Each reaction is indicated by different emojis.
4. Post when users are online. This tip is an old but good one. It is important to post when people are the most active on the channel. To play with this, it is key to research when the audience is online and use the scheduling of posts.
5. Use Facebook Stories to skip the algorithm. Stories have become more and more popular, and Stories are not on the page and under the algorithm.
6. Use a Facebook Group. Groups are a great way to attract similar people and get the attention of the selected audience. This also means a bit of work but is a great way to get great reach.
7. Do Facebook Lives. Live Videos are great for engagement, as they attract six times more engagement versus regular videos.
8. Become a favorite. If a page becomes a part of a user's list of favorites, it skips the algorithm. An organization can remind their followers of this factor and state that if they want to see all posts, favorites is a good way of doing it.
9. Make an interesting and long video. If a page manages to make a long, interesting video, it is a winner. The longer a user spends time with a video, the better it is according to the algorithm.
10. Do not post clickbaits, misinformation etc. Facebook notices quite quickly if a page tries to win reach with misinformation or evil posts, and the algorithm will not show those kinds of posts.

11. Use advocates. If the employees of an organization are active on Facebook, their posts are very important and can get more reach than the company page.

For a marketing communications professional, it is important to understand and keep up with the changes of social media's algorithms, in order to create successful social media operations.

7.3.2 Instagram

Instagram, which works as a mobile application, focuses mainly on images, videos, and short video stories. Visuality is highly important in Instagram. Hashtags, in other words keywords, are also an essential part of Instagram and are recommended to use with text content. Hashtags bring similar content together and users can find for example information on healthy lifestyle behind the tag #healthylifestyle. Organizations should have a company account on Instagram in order to measure activity and it is also required for paid marketing. Organizations are also advised to use their own hashtags such as #companyname or #slogan. (Virtanen, 2020, p. 15)

Instagram has over one billion users worldwide. (Statista, 2022) Instagram is currently the fastest growing social media channel in Finland. The number of registered users in Finland has increased by 23 percent from 2020 to 2021. 48 percent (about two million) Finnish people (age 15–74) use Instagram every week. (Pönkä, 2021, pp. 25–26) According to new research, there are three million active Instagram users in Finland every month, while 2.9 million Finns use Facebook. This makes Instagram bigger than Facebook in some parameters. (Valtari, 2022)

According to *State of Social Media 2021*, Instagram is one of the most popular social media channels used in organizations, especially in the B2C (business-to-consumer). Instagram is also popular in B2B sector with 73 percent of Nordic B2B companies are currently using Instagram. (Meltwater, 2021, p. 7) Advertising on Instagram, especially on Stories and Reels -videos, has grown exponentially. (LM Someco, 2022, p. 13)

Leah Golob states in a Hootsuite blog (2022) that 90 percent of Instagram users claim that they follow at least one business account. Adult users are on the platform for nearly 30 minutes per day, which makes Instagram a great place to put organizations engaging content.

Paige Cooper (2021) explains the Instagram algorithm in 2021 with four categories:

1. Relationship. The Instagram algorithm evaluates the relationship between an account and its followers. It assumes that users who have interacted an account, they will be interested in the accounts new content. Interactions can be following an account, searching by name, messaging, or leaving comments to the account, tagging the account, saving posts from the account. The algorithm will recognize loyal and engaged audiences.
2. Timeliness. Newer posts are ranked higher in the newsfeed, which makes it important to post when audience is the most active.
3. Interest. The algorithm evaluates users interests and also understands what is in a photo or video really well. This makes it easy for Instagram to expose the user to the right kind of content. It is important for an organization to create content that interests the audience.
4. Other ranking signals: frequency of use, following and session time. A lot depends on the user's frequency of opening the Instagram app. Users who open the application less frequently, rely more heavily on the algorithm. Also, users who follow thousands of accounts miss more posts than users who follow a hundred accounts. Also, users that have longer session times, are more likely to see more posts. These factors are more about the organic reach and audience's behavior, and do not affect the organizations operations much.

7.3.3 LinkedIn

LinkedIn is considered a channel for “the working life” and consist of the world's largest professional network with 810 million members in more than 200 countries. Their mission is to connect the world's professionals and make them more productive and successful. (LinkedIn, 2022) LinkedIn users create their own professional profile, where they can showcase their career. Users can fill out information on their resume

and discuss topics related to working life. Organizations have their own pages on LinkedIn, which allow employees, for example, to mark them on their profiles. LinkedIn can be used in marketing communications, for example, when you want to have an expert discussion on certain topics. (Virtanen, 2020, p. 34)

The use of LinkedIn has increased during the pandemic and telecommuting. 16 percent or about seven hundred thousand Finnish people (age 15–74) use LinkedIn every week. LinkedIn is popular with working age users. (Pönkä, 2021, pp. 45–46, 48) According to *State of Social Media 2021* LinkedIn is the third most frequently used social media channel and it is especially strong in the B2B sector with 94 percent of the B2B companies are using LinkedIn. (Meltwater, 2021, p. 7)

Katie Sehl (2019) explains the LinkedIn algorithm in three main points:

1. Personal connections. Although a user follows different social media influencers, it does not mean that the user personally knows them. LinkedIn algorithm seeks personal connections and gives them more visibility. It considers who the user has been interacting with through direct messages, comments, shares, and reactions. Also, the information on profiles is important as it considers interests, skills, work, and school history etc.
2. Interest relevance. A user can have hundreds of connections on LinkedIn, but all connections do not have the same interests. The algorithm measures the users interests through followed groups and pages, used hashtags, followed people, language and topics mentioned in posts.
3. Engagement probability. Interaction with other users is important and the algorithm evaluates if a user will share, comment, or react to a post. It evaluates the users' past reactions and offers same kind of content.

7.3.4 YouTube

Video-sharing channel YouTube launched in 2005 and since has become a great marketing communications tool for all types of organizations. YouTube carries 1,9 billion monthly users and has become the world's second-largest search engine after Google. YouTube is also Finland's second most popular website. Audiences often find

YouTube-videos by searching certain types of content in other social media channels. YouTube is an affordable channel for entrepreneurs and content creators since anyone can upload a video to YouTube without costs. (Chambers et al, 2020, pp. 63–64, Virtanen, 2020, p. 32, Pönkä, 2021, p. 16)

Videos are gaining much needed engagement and are very effective ways to get attention in social media. The book *Make Your Business Social: Engage Your Customers with Social Media* (Chambers et al, 2020, p. 64) states a few facts about YouTube, which state how important videos are:

- People watch more than 500 million hours of videos on YouTube each day.
- The average user spends 88 percent more time on a website with video.
- Viewers retain 95 percent of a message when they watch it in a video, compared with only 10 percent when reading it in text.

YouTube has been the second most popular online service in Finland for more than ten years. 77 percent, or about 3,1 million Finnish people aged 15-74 use YouTube every week. 61 percent of 16–24-year-old Finnish people watch YouTube videos daily. (Pönkä, 2021, pp. 14–15) According to *State of Social Media 2021* 76 percent of the B2C organizations and 68 percent of B2B organizations are using YouTube. (Meltwater, 2021, p. 6)

Creator Insider (2021) explains in their YouTube video *What Determines How Many Impressions Your Video Gets?* how the YouTube algorithm works and presents three main points:

- Personalization. YouTube aims to highlight content that fits the viewer's history and preferences.
- Performance. The success of the video is key in YouTube. Video's that are popular or go viral tend to appear on the viewer's feed. The algorithm evaluates how a video has appealed to the audience, has it created engagement and have viewers been satisfied with the video.
- External factors. Other factors affecting the success of a video are topic interest (is the video performing in a niche environment or in a popular topic environment?), competition (does a video have competition with better

performing videos?), seasonality (is the video posted when people are actually watching YouTube or interested in that topic that time of year?).

7.3.5 Twitter

Among the most common social media channels, Twitter is the most text-based and “in-the-moment” channels. Twitter is considered a microblogging platform. One Twitter message, tweet, can hold 240 characters of text, which makes tweets easy to create and digest in a short time period. Twitter is a channel of influence, and it is popular among decision-makers, business leaders and journalists. (Virtanen, 2020, p. 30, Meltwater, 2021, p. 6, Chambers et al, 2020, p. 70) According to Innowise survey, the number of Twitter users has increased, but the number of active users is declining about 10 percent in a year (from 2020 to 2021). 25 percent or about one million Finnish people (age 15–74) use Twitter every week. (Pönkä, 2021, pp. 30–31, 33)

For organizations Twitter opens many ways to influence. It is also great for monitoring the sector of business and competitors. To succeed in Twitter, it is important to be present, to take part in the conversation, retweet other tweets and always respond to customer discussions etc. (Chambers et al, 2020, p. 72) Twitter is the fifth most used social media channel among organizations says *State of Social Media 2021* -survey as 51 percent of B2B and 50 percent of B2C companies are using it. (Meltwater, 2021, p. 6)

Christina Newberry and Katie Sehl (2021) explain the Twitter algorithm in four points:

1. Recency. Twitter algorithm highlights newer and popular posts, more than older topics that have been popular.
2. Relevance. The algorithm evaluates the users’ actions such as users own Tweets and ones the user has engaged with, accounts that the user engages with often, topics the user follows and engages with, location etc.
3. Engagement. As almost all social media channels, in Twitter engagement is also important. It evaluates Tweets, topics and trends and gives the user content that might interest them.

4. Rich media. Twitter highlights Tweets that include images, videos, GIFs, and polls.

7.4 Consuming social media in 2021

“The covid-19 pandemic gave birth to the biggest social media boom since the spread of Facebook” states the social media study commissioned by Innowise (Pönkä, 2021, p. 2). The study says that the share of Finnish people who use social services increased by a record eight percentage points and is now at 69 percentage. The ten most used social media channels in Finland are used by people between 16–74 years on a weekly basis. These social media channels are WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Twitch and TikTok (Figure 4).

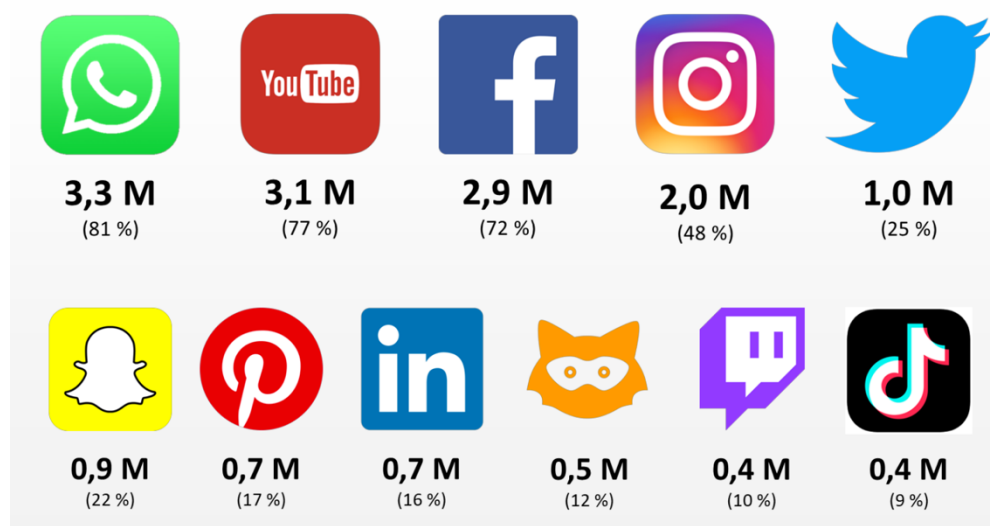


Figure 4. On a weekly basis the most used Finnish channels in Finland (16-74 years) (Pönkä, 2021, p. 4)

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed people’s lives since 2020 and it has affected both work and life at home. The pandemic made people stay at home and communicating through channels online has made a big impact on the use of social media. 48 percent of Nordic organizations claim that social media has become a more important tool in marketing communications during the pandemic. (Meltwater, 2021, p. 27) A global study about social media and Covid-19 states that social media has become a vital tool to communicate with people during crisis. Social media is used for crisis updates and

direct engagement with people, governments, scientists, and international organizations. Digital platforms are very relevant for people in lockdowns and quarantines. Social media channels are in a central role, when speaking about global crisis communications, especially reaching young citizens across the world. Local, national, and international governmental, media and public health organizations should take this into consideration, if they want to engage with citizens. (Volkmer, 2021, pp. 8–9)

According to Statista (2021) research the most important reasons to use social media in 2021 is to stay in touch with family and friends (48% of respondents), filling spare time (36%), reading news stories (35%), finding funny or entertaining content (31%), and seeing what is being talked about (29%). For a company, the following reasons on the list are interesting: finding inspiration for things to do and buy (28%), finding product to purchase (26%) and seeing content of their favorite brand (23%).

Research conducted in Finland by the National Audiovisual Institute (KAVI) and Taloustutkimus states that age is strongly related with media use: the younger the consumer, the bigger the role of media use in their everyday life. Younger consumers seek for enjoyment and social interaction, but they also want to learn new things through the media. Almost everyone under the age of 50 uses a smartphone on a daily basis, but only 14 percent of people over the age of 65 do not own a smartphone at all. Traditional media was most common among older respondents. (KAVI, 2021)

7.5 Social media usage in organizations in 2021

Companies in Finland are active users of social media. According to the survey called *Use of information technology in enterprises 2021* (Tilastokeskus, 2021) social media is used by 79 percent of companies that employ at least ten people. Social media is most used in hospitality and restaurant industry by 99 percent, information and communication activities by 96 percent and retail trade by 95 percent. There has been an increase in the use of social media as a marketing communications tool in almost all industries.

Companies and organizations use social media channels in their marketing operations and the most used social media channels for following brands were Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. (Pönkä, 2021, p. 68) According to *State of Social Media 2021* done by Meltwater (2021, p. 6) the most used social media channels for marketing operations in organizations are Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter. In this survey Meltwater had 857 respondents during November 2020 from the Nordic countries: Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. 93 percent of the survey's respondents used Facebook, 83 percent had used Instagram and LinkedIn. 73 percent of the organizations used YouTube and Twitter was used by 57 percent of the organizations.

Facebook and Instagram are the most popular social media channels used in organizations, especially in the B2C (business-to-consumer) and NGO (non-governmental organization) sector. 73 percent of the B2B (business-to-business) companies use Instagram. LinkedIn is the third most used social media channel for all the sectors. LinkedIn is a strong channel especially in the B2B sector. 94 percent of the B2B companies use LinkedIn, but B2C's and NGOs are slightly over the 70 percent. In the B2C sector, 76 percent of the organizations are using YouTube and in the B2B sector the number is 68 percent. In the sector of non-profit-organizations the video platform is much less used, only 18 percent are using YouTube. With Twitter there is a similar pattern, 51 percent of B2B and 50 percent of B2C companies are using the microblogging system and only 19 percent of NGOs are using it. (Meltwater, 2021, pp. 6–7)

Interesting about the Meltwater survey is that 46 percent of organizations did not plan to start using any new social media channels during 2021. The survey also tells that the use of certain channels is increasing. In the survey three goals for social media were asked and the most popular answer was raising brand awareness. Other goals were increasing brand engagement, website traffic, increasing sales and acquiring new customers. Establishing a thought leadership was mentioned by B2B's and NGO's. (Meltwater, 2021, pp. 8, 11)

One of the objects of this master's thesis was to find information on social media as a marketing communications tool in health and welfare sector. The author searched for

sector specific information, but did not find timely research data specifically about social media in health and welfare sector. In this thesis that sector specific information about the use of social media will be gathered through the empirical part of this thesis.

The author thinks that health and welfare sector is a potential sector for social media. The sector provides important information and touches peoples' lives every day with different matters of health and wellbeing. As social media is proven to be an important part of Finnish peoples' lives, it is important for those organizations to be found in social media. By providing interesting and informative content for the followers, social media can be a great asset for health and welfare organizations. It can be a great help with customer care among other things. With the pandemic and other changes and situations currently in the sector, social media can be an important way to communicate with people.

8 METHODS AND RESEARCH PROCESS

8.1 Research strategy

This master's thesis mixes two different research strategies in the empirical part of the study. First one is survey strategy, which is a popular method in business and management research. Survey strategy using questionnaires is relatively easy and cheap to conduct and offers standardized data for the researcher. (Saunders et al., 2019, pp. 193–194) This master's thesis will gather important information from a whole sector of businesses and organizations about the current state of using social media as a marketing communications tool, which makes the questionnaire a good choice for the research.

The second strategy is observation, specifically internet-mediated observation. Internet researcher observes archived and current online social interactions. This method comes from traditional offline ethnographic research and has led to terms such as: online ethnography, netnography, virtual ethnography and mobile ethnography.

(Saunders et al., 2019, p. 408) This method is also good, when collecting information about the current state of social media use of selected organizations.

8.2 Research methods

This master's thesis uses mixed methods to collect data for the research. Mixed methods research integrates the use of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 181) Quantitative research is the process of collecting numerical data and analyzing data statistical and graphical techniques. In quantitative research, a questionnaire is a common method to collect data. Qualitative research uses different data collection techniques and analytical procedures to develop a conceptual framework and theoretical contribution. In qualitative research meanings come from text and images, not numbers. One of the qualitative research techniques is internet-mediated observation, which will be conducted in this study. (Saunders et al., 2019, pp. 178, 180) In this master's thesis quantitative and qualitative methods are used in a questionnaire and qualitative methods in the internet-mediated observation.

Survey is the most used method in data collection. The survey method can be conducted asking questions face to face, by telephone or via questionnaires of individuals to find out personal, company or sector information. (Adams, John, et al., 2014, p. 118) When choosing questionnaires, one needs to make sure that the questionnaire is well planned, because there is usually only one chance to get answers from the respondents. They work best when questions are standardized in a way that all respondents interpret them in the same way. It is suggested that questionnaires should be paired with other methods to complement the research. (Saunders et al., 2019, pp. 504–505) One should consider the fact that questionnaires are over-used, and many people are tired of answering them, which is why it is important to plan how it can reach a good response rate. (Adams et al., 2014, p. 118) In this study, the author will send an internet questionnaire to the target group about social media. The questionnaire will explore social media operations (channels, strategy, objectives etc.), social media content (content types, goals etc.) and the effects of Covid-19.

Internet provides a wide range of data to be collected for research. This method is called internet-mediated observation and the data can be collected from social media, discussion websites or Internet forums. The data can be in different forms such as text, video, audio, and visual files. (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 408) In this study the author will observe social media accounts of an organization from the target group. As it was stated, questionnaires are rarely successful alone, which is why observation is complementing the survey method in this study.

8.2.1 Questionnaire

This study's data is collected via questionnaire and internet-mediated observation.

The book *Research Methods for Business and Social Science Students* presents the general design principles of a survey (Adams et al., 2014, p. 120):

- Keep it short.
- Open layout.
- Clear, short, unambiguous questions.
- Imbedded instructions – give examples.
- Have scales all going one way.
- Have a simple return mechanism.

The book *Kehittämistyön menetelmät* (Ojasalo et al., 2015, pp. 131, 133) mentions that it should not take more than 15–20 minutes to answer a questionnaire. It is also important to include a cover letter, which explains details of the questionnaire. A cover letter should answer following questions and details:

- What is the questionnaire/study about?
- Who is the author and commissioner of the questionnaire/study?
- Justification of the necessity of the questionnaire/study.
- A mention of how the results and data is used and if the respondents stay anonymous.
- A mention that each response is an important factor in the success of the study.
- A thank you in advance.
- Response time.

- Author's and/or commissioners' signature.

Before a questionnaire is sent, it is important to conduct pilot testing to ensure the questionnaire works properly. With a questionnaire one can produce qualitative (open end questions) and quantitative data (closed questions). The data of a questionnaire can be analyzed with many different variables. In this study the questionnaire's quantitative results will be analyzed with descriptive methods, visualized with charts and graphs. (Ojasalo et al., 2015, p. 133–134)

8.2.2 Internet-mediated observation

In this master's thesis the author selected THL as the target of the observation. THL is a great example of an organization in the health and welfare sector. According to THL website (2022) they define themselves as an independent expert agency working under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. They study, monitor, and develop measures to promote the well-being and health of the population in Finland. THL has a social media policy available on their website (2022) and it states the following:

We at the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) want to highlight issues related to health and welfare in social media meaning forums that people use actively. The institute's aim is to promote the availability and dissemination of reliable information. We use social media channels to inform and stimulate debate on THL's activities and events, as well as topical issues.

With observation the author will seek for answers with following questions:

- What channels do they use?
- How many followers do they have?
- How often do they post?
- Do they have a social media policy? How do they communicate about their social media channels?
- How do they utilize different tools in social media?
- How do their followers interact with their social media channels? (Comments and reactions)

Data from observation will be analyzed together with the collected content and the theory of this study.

9 RESEARCH RESULTS

9.1 Conducting internet-mediated observation

The author conducted internet-mediated observation on 20.2.–27.2. and 25.3.2022 in THL's main channels: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube. The author collected all posts that THL posted between 20.2.–27.2.2022 in an Excel form and observed the following:

- How many followers do they have?
- How often do they post?
- How do they utilize different tools in social media?

The author also made observations in THL's website about social media with following questions:

- Do they have a social media policy?
- How do they communicate about their social media channels?
- What channels do they use?

The author made a follow-up observation on 25th of March and checked for example commenting and likes from posts that were made between 20.2.–27.2.2022.

9.1.1 THL's social media accounts and policy

THL (2022) states in their website: "Social media is an important channel of communications and discussion for THL. This page contains the blogs, Facebook pages and other social media that THL maintains." This indicates that social media has been noticed as an important tool at THL.

THL's social media policy (2022) is easily found from the website and in the policy, they go through important practices about their social media. THL states that:

We at the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) want to highlight issues related to health and welfare in social media meaning forums that people use actively. The institute's aim is to promote the availability and dissemination of reliable information. We use social media channels to inform and stimulate debate on THL's activities and events, as well as topical issues.

THL Communications Unit is responsible for the moderation and use of social media profiles, and they have stated clear rules for good online behavior in their policy.

THL is active in the following social media channels: Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter. THL's followers (observed 25.3.2022) in each main social media channel:

- LinkedIn 28,3 thousand followers (Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare THL)
- Instagram 46,7 thousand followers (THL.fi, @THL.fi)
- Facebook 93,2 thousand followers (Terveystieteiden tutkimuskeskus THL, @thl.fi)
- Twitter 87,9 thousand followers (THL, @thl.org)
- YouTube 4,94 thousand followers (Terveystieteiden tutkimuskeskus)

THL has other accounts in Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, but the author observed only the main accounts in this study.

9.1.2 One week of THL's social media activities

The author collected all posts that THL posted between 20.2.–27.2.2022 in an Excel form. The author made a follow-up observation on 25th of March and checked for example commenting and likes from posts that were made between 20.2.–27.2.2022. Some of the information from the Excel are presented in Table 1. The observation of THL social media channels included a total of 44 posts. Some posts were posted in multiple channels, some were only posted to one channel.

Table 1. THL social media activities 20.2.–27.2.2022.

Social media channel	Posts per week	Weekdays	Reactions	Comments
Facebook	12	Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday	10–180	0–65
Instagram	4	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday	163–354	1–4
LinkedIn	8	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday	2–41	0
Twitter	5	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.	6–20	0–14
YouTube	18	Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.	0–2	Commenting was off.
Total	44			

In Facebook THL posted three THL blogs (including links to website), two THL events (made with Facebook event tool), six THL news (including links to website), and one video with tips for good everyday life. One of the news was posted in three languages: Finnish, English and Swedish. Other posts were in Finnish. The video was a part of video series called *Vinkkejä hyvään arkeen*. Facebook content was a mixture of important news, blogs, and lighter informative content. In these posts they utilized some of Facebook's own tools, which is important for the algorithm. The author did not notice any Live videos or stories posted on the time of observation. In Facebook THL used Facebook tools such as adding photos, videos, video series tool and creating an event. Posts had a range of 0–65 comments and 10–180 reactions (likes etc.) in each post.

In Instagram THL posted the least number of posts. THL posted three informative photos with numbers, statistics, and facts, and one video. The video was a part of video

series: *Vinkkejä hyvään arkeen*. Those informative photos were visually clear and highlighted a fact. They made the author stop scrolling and look at the photos, leading on to the text part of the post. Posts were very informative and as one cannot share links in Instagram posts, THL instructed to find the link in bio (THL's Instagram account's bio). In Instagram THL used Instagram tools such as adding photos and videos. The author did not notice for example any live videos or stories posted on the time of observation. All posts were in Finnish. The number of reactions were between 163–354 and one video had 4065 viewings. Posts had 1–4 comments in each post.

In LinkedIn THL posted three different THL events (made with LinkedIn event tool), two THL news (including links to website), one THL blog (including a link to website), one recruitment post (including a link to a recruitment page) and one video. The video was a part of video series: *Vinkkejä hyvään arkeen*. In LinkedIn THL used LinkedIn tools such as adding photos, videos and creating an event. They did not use LinkedIn's own recruitment tools. All posts were in Finnish. Reactions were between 2–41 and there was no commenting on the observed posts. Shares were 0–9 per post.

In Twitter THL posted two THL news (including links to website), two THL blogs (including links to website) and one recruitment post (including a link to a recruitment page). All posts were in Finnish. Posts had 6–20 reactions and 0–14 comments.

In YouTube THL posted a total of 17 videos, which was the highest amount. The observation time happened to be when THL posted a series of 16 videos, which were a part of Puutu väkivaltaan -online school. Viewing was between 31–100 per video.

9.2 Analyzing the results of the internet-mediated observation

The observation indicated, that THL has a whole page in their website for social media, where they highlight their social media channels and social media policy. Social media does not seem to play a so-called side role but is in-fact a significant part of communications at THL. THL has clear rules for social media in their policy. This is an important matter, which also makes it easier for the moderator to follow, if people are behaving according to the rules.

As this study's theory states, social media is used very actively in Finland. THL notices that fact and wants to provide people the content they follow. As Cooper (2021) stated tips for working with the Facebook algorithm, it is important to post reliable information, instead of click-baits and misinformation. THL states in their policy that they promote reliable information. They want to create discussion and events/activities in social media channels, which are also important as we look into algorithms.

As Meltwater (2021) states, the most used social media channels for marketing operations in organizations in the Nordic countries are Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter. THL has chosen the exact same channels. These channels are most likely chosen, because of their popularity and active users. THL is quite active in all their main channels, and they have a good number of followers, but they are not very active with reactions and commenting. Facebook had the biggest number of comments and Instagram had the most reactions.

They post different types of content, based on informative content. Most of their content is derived from their own media such as news, videos, and blogs. They utilize event tools and promote their webinars with them.

THL uses videos and YouTube is clearly a channel for online school and informative videos in different languages. In Instagram they did not post Instagram Stories during the observation. However, THL's Instagram bio states that they have different Instagram Highlights (Stories that are saved in categorized Highlights), which means that they use Stories, but not every week.

The author noticed that there seems to be a plan where each post was posted. Not all posts were published in all channels. For example, recruitment posts were made only in Twitter and LinkedIn, where content is usually more business oriented.

9.3 Conducting the questionnaire

The questionnaire was created through many stages. The author followed the principles and instructions of creating a questionnaire. Timetable of the questionnaire is described in Table 2.

Table 2. Timetable of the questionnaire.

Time	Task
February 2022	Questionnaire draft
4.3.2022	Comments from master's thesis supervisor
6.3.2022	Changes to questionnaire according to feedback
11.3.2022	Comments from Kumppania's representatives
11.3.2022	Changes to questionnaire according to feedback
11.–17.3.2022	Pilot testing (7 people)
17.–20.3.2022	Changes to questionnaire according to feedback
22.3.2022	Sharing questionnaire through social media: LinkedIn (personal account) and Facebook (group)
29.3.2022	Sharing questionnaire through email (clients and contacts from Alma Talent services)
31.3.2022	Kumppania's newsletter, questionnaire a part of the newsletter
5.4.2022	Reminder email (clients and contacts from Alma Talent services)
7.4.2022	Closing questionnaire
8.–14.4.2022	Analyzing data

The questionnaire of this study started from a draft, which included questions, that occurred from this study's theory, author's, and commissioner's visions of what needed to be asked. Then the draft was reviewed by the supervisor of this master's thesis. The author made changes to the questionnaire based on feedback and reviewed her own work once again. The questionnaire was also translated from English to Finnish because the target group was Finnish organizations. With a Finnish questionnaire it would most likely be easier to get answers. In March 2022 the questionnaire was reviewed and commented by two representatives from Kumppania. Pilot testing of the questionnaire was conducted 11.–17.3.2022 by employees at Kumppania. The pilot test resulted into feedback from seven employees. The author adjusted the questionnaire according to the feedback. Pilot testing resulted to be very important, and the author also got good feedback from it.

The questionnaire was shared through social media on 22nd of March 2022. The author shared the questionnaire through a Facebook group with professionals working with marketing communications in Finland. The author also made a video greeting for LinkedIn and shared the questionnaire link with a cover letter and video in her own LinkedIn account. Kumppania shared the post as well in Kumppania's LinkedIn account. On 29th of March a cover letter and link for the questionnaire was shared through email to 264 recipients. The recipients were Kumppania's clients and contacts from Tietopalvelut (Alma Talent services). All emails were sent to public and private organizations in health and welfare sector in Finland and specifically to people either in management or positions in marketing/communications. On 31st of March a short cover letter and link for the questionnaire was shared through Kumppania's newsletter. On 5th of April a reminder of the questionnaire was shared through email to 264 recipients (Kumppania's clients and contacts from Tietopalvelut). The questionnaire was set to close on 7th of April 2022. Emails resulted to be the most effective way to get answers.

The target group of the respondents in this study's questionnaire was defined with three points:

1. Public and private organizations in Finland
2. Sectors: health and welfare
3. People, who work with marketing and/or communications in the organization

Questionnaire of this study was conducted with Microsoft Office Forms. Questions were divided into four sections:

1. Basic information on the organization (number of employees, sector, position of the respondent etc.)
2. Social media operations (channels, strategy, objectives etc.)
3. Social media content (content types, goals etc.)
4. Effects of Covid-19: did the pandemic situation affect the use of social media?

Questions in section one:

- Do you work in an organization/company in the sector of health and welfare?
- Which one of these describe best the organization you work in?

- Does the organization/company you work in operate in private, public or third sector?
- What is your position in the organization?
- How many employees does your organization have?

Questions in section two:

- Does your organization create a strategic plan for social media operations?
- Does your organization use an agency to operate social media accounts?
- Does your organization encourage employees to be social media ambassadors in the organization's social media accounts?
- What social media channels does your organization use?
- What are the organizations most important social media objectives?
- How much time per week does your organization use for social media operations?
- How big of a role does social media play in the marketing communications operations?
- Does your organization follow social media analytics?

Questions in section three:

- Which of the following content formats does your organization use on social media?
- Which of the following content formats would your organization want use on social media in the future?
- Which of the following best describes the social media content in your organization?
- What functions does your organization's individual social media publications primarily aim to achieve?

Questions in section four:

- Has the Covid-19 pandemic changed the use of social media in your organization?

The author had a goal to get at least 50 answers and the questionnaire resulted in 68 answers by 7th of April 2022. The answering rate from the email to 264 recipients was 26%. The social media shares are not measurable, because it cannot be measured how many target respondents saw the author's post. From 68 respondents 66 are analyzed, because two of the respondents were not from the target group and they were excluded in the first question of the questionnaire.

Results from the questionnaire are analyzed with descriptive methods, visualized with charts and graphs (from Microsoft Forms questionnaire data). Percentages are rounded into whole numbers. All answers are anonymous, and answers are translated from Finnish to English.

9.3.1 Background information on the respondents of the questionnaire

Questions in section one aimed to find out background information about the respondent and the organization, where the respondent works. The purpose of the first question was to rule out any respondents, that did not work in the target sector.

The first question (Figure 5) resulted in 66 (from 68 respondents) answering that they work in health and welfare. This ruled out two respondents from the questionnaire.

1. Työskenteletkö terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin alalla?

[Lisätietoja](#)



Figure 5. Results from questionnaire: Do you work in an organization/company in the sector of health and welfare?

In question 2 (Figure 6) results were that 49 (74%) of the respondents work in health care, 10 (15%) in social care and 7 (11%) in the sector of welfare. The respondents were mostly from health care sector.

2. Mikä seuraavista kuvaa parhaiten sektoria, jolla organisaatiosi toimii?

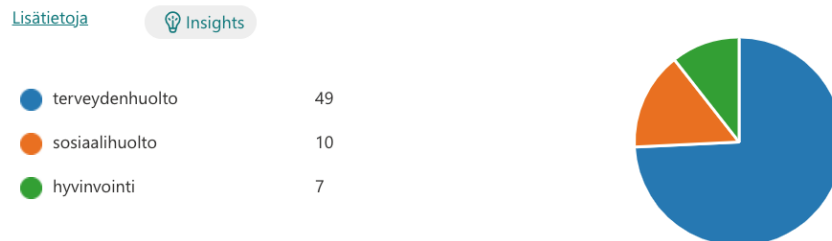


Figure 6. Results from questionnaire: Which one of these describe best the organization you work in?

In question 3 (Figure 7) results were, that most of the respondents, 44 (62%) work in private sector, 22 (33%) in public sector and only 3 (5%) in third sector.

3. Toimiiko organisaatiosi yksityisellä, julkisella vai kolmannella sektorilla?



Figure 7. Results from questionnaire: Does the organization operate in private, public or third sector?

Most of the respondents, 39 (58%), answered in question 4, that they work as a marketing communications manager or other manager level position in the organization. 16 (24%) answered, that they work as a marketing communications assistant or coordinator or specialist. 3 (5%) answered that they are content creators. 8 (12%) of the respondents answered that they are in another position.

4. Mikä on asemasi organisaatiossa?

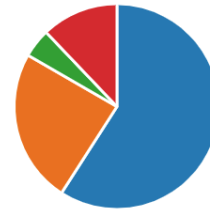
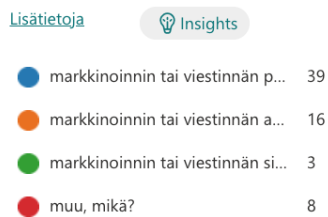


Figure 8. Results from questionnaire: What is your position in the organization?

The size of the organization was measured by asking how many people were working in the organization in question 6. This question was based on the company sizes defined by Yrittäjät (2022):

- Micro-enterprises: less than 10 employees.
- Small enterprises: less than 50 employees.
- Medium-sized enterprises: 50-249 employees.
- Large enterprises: at least 250 employees.

Question 6 (Figure 9) resulted in 6 (9%) respondents from a micro-enterprise, 19 (29%) from small enterprises, 12 (18%) from medium-sized enterprises and 29 (44%) from large enterprises. Large enterprises were the most represented in the questionnaire.

6. Kuinka monta työntekijää organisaatiossasi on?



Figure 9. Results from questionnaire: How many employees does your organization have?

9.3.2 Health and welfare organizations operating in social media in 2022

In section two the questions handled social media operations and planning. Question 7 (Figure 9) asked if the organization creates a strategic plan for social media operations and most of the respondents answered yes. 39 (59%) answered yes, 25 (38%) said no and 2 (3%) answered “I don’t know”.

7. Laatiiko organisaatiosi/yrityksesi strategisen suunnitelman sosiaalista mediaa varten?



Figure 9. Results from questionnaire: Does your organization create a strategic plan for social media operations?

If the respondent answered “yes” in question 7, they were followed with question 8. It asked: “If yes, please write in your own words what the strategy includes”. This question resulted in 38 open answers, from which 35 are described in Table 3. Answers from Anonymous 2, 4 and 26 are excluded, because they were blank. Answers have been translated from Finnish to English. Names of organizations have been replaced with “*company x*” to maintain the anonymity.

Table 3. Results from question 8.

Anonymous 1	“Social media strategy is created separately for each platform (fb, ig, twitter etc.) according to the brand. Each platform has a different target audience and different goals that are taken into account in the design of the strategy as well as the content.”
Anonymous 3	“SWOT analysis, target audience (defined by 4 different individuals), growth goal, channel-specific content plans, content types, and priority order.”
Anonymous 5	“Our strategy includes the goal we are pursuing through communications and marketing. Measures, metrics, and an evaluation of how well we have succeeded in the plan. The strategy will be updated based on the evaluation.”

Anonymous 6	“This is not really a strategy, but rather a separate communications plan for social media channels. The plan defines the channels to be used, their target groups and content.”
Anonymous 7	“Available channels, target areas and content nature / topics.”
Anonymous 8	“Goals, means, KPIs, choices about what to do and what not to do.”
Anonymous 9	“Description, instructions and a plan.”
Anonymous 10	“The annual clock and the main things targeted by marketing. Of course, there is room for spontaneous things. Recruitment is intensified with social media.”
Anonymous 11	“Channels, goals and what kind of content is shared in those channels.”
Anonymous 12	“Social media channels on which we are. Objectives. The topics we deal with, who is responsible for what, how we react, what we don’t deal with in social media.”
Anonymous 13	“Plan for next year's topics and priorities. The number of targeted customers and customer types.”
Anonymous 14	“We develop open, interactive, and proactive communications locally. We highlight our experts and care professionals. We have a positive impact on reputation, employer image, recruitment, and acquisition. We talk about the new <i>company x</i> , strategy, and vision - and the work we do every day. We give <i>company x</i> spirit and professional pride in what we do. We influence and take a stand on social issues that are important to us, even locally.
Anonymous 15	“Objectives, audiences, media, measures, year and people in charge.”
Anonymous 16	“We develop a strategy with a communications partner in which each level of the corporate governance has its own communications responsibilities.”
Anonymous 17	“Specific enough. There must be measurable goals. The target groups to be reached through social media (decision makers, influencers, users, and beneficiaries of our technology). There must be good responsibilities, maintenance and schedule related to the maintenance of channels. Definition of success analysis, measurement, and continuous improvement.”
Anonymous 18	“The strategy is defined on the basis of the brand manual and also takes into account the strategic priorities of our business, the target groups of the channels, the contents (the brand's priorities strongly guide the content), the rhythm, etc.”
Anonymous 19	“Goals and Channels and Measures and Monitoring.”
Anonymous 20	“Business-specific goals, service-specific target groups, and the channels and content plans best suited to these target groups.”
Anonymous 21	“Visibility planning on FB and Instagram pages, active homepage update.”
Anonymous 22	“Targets, audiences, channels, euros.”
Anonymous 23	“Targeted marketing to the buying customer.”
Anonymous 24	“Target audience, information on services and dental care, campaigns. The channels we use.”

Anonymous 25	“Annual light plan, plus a channel-specific general plan.”
Anonymous 27	“Channel selections, target group definitions and content types derived from them, goals and regular content planning for each channel.”
Anonymous 28	“Eg. channels used and reasons for their use, target groups, objectives, content plan...”
Anonymous 29	“Policies and content, effectiveness evaluation.”
Anonymous 30	“Social media guidelines (strategic guidelines for communications are separate), channel strategies, rules for the use of social media, description of tools and toolkit for different usage situations, needs and problems.”
Anonymous 31	“The strategy is designed with the main message or red thread that we want to implement with social media communications. We have thought, what goals we want to promote with social media communications. The strategy is planned with certain themes, which are highlighted in social media communications. In addition, social media content is planned in advance and some publications are scheduled.”
Anonymous 32	“Instructions and a plan.”
Anonymous 33	“The social media strategy defines, among other things, what goals are associated with the use of social media, who is pursued on the site, what channels are used and what content is distributed on the channels.”
Anonymous 34	“The social media strategy includes targeting, channel selection, content planning with a calendar, and collecting results.”
Anonymous 35	“Briefly about basic communications principles and channels.”
Anonymous 36	“Clear channel roles (what is highlighted in each channel) as well as designing content themes, looking at new channels and whether it would suit us.”
Anonymous 37	“We aim for a younger customer base for the pharmacy through social media. The strategy is in place, but its implementation has been weak recently.”
Anonymous 38	“The strategy includes the definition of target groups and content types per channel.”
Anonymous 39	“Targets in each channel, target groups, tone of voice.”

Question 9 (Figure 10) asked if the organization uses an agency to operate social media accounts. 22 (33%) respondents answered “yes” and 44 (67%) answered “no”.

9. Käyttääkö organisaatiosi ulkopuolista toimijaa/toimistoa sosiaalisen median tilien ylläpitämiseen?

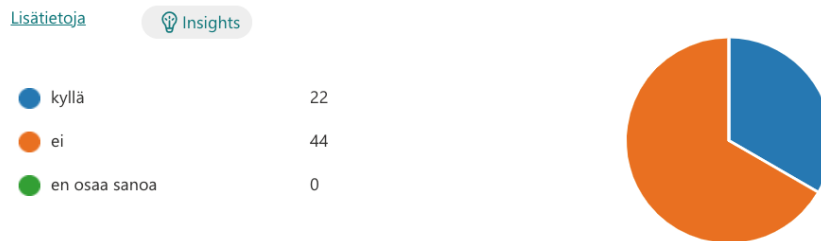


Figure 10. Results from questionnaire: Does your organization use an agency to operate social media accounts?

In question 10 (Figure 11) it resulted, that 48 (73%) respondents answered, that their organization encourages employees to be social media ambassadors in the organizations social media accounts. 17 (26%) answered no and only 1 said “I don’t know”. This shows that major part of health and welfare organizations encourage their employees to be social media ambassadors.

10. Kannustaako organisaatiosi työntekijöitään toimimaan organisaation somelähttiläinä sosiaalisessa mediassa?

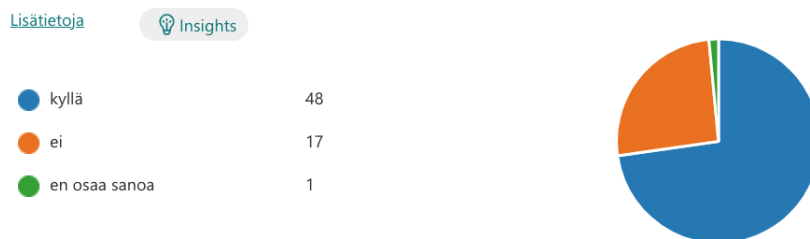


Figure 11. Results from questionnaire: Does your organization encourage employees to be social media ambassadors in the organizations social media accounts?

In question 11 (Figure 12) it shows that Facebook is the most used channel with 61 (92%) respondents. Instagram was the second most used channel with 49 (74%) respondents and LinkedIn the third most used channel with 43 (65%) respondents. Then the numbers dropped quite significantly. YouTube with 28 (42%) and Twitter with 26 (39%). Only three of the respondents answered, that they do not use any of those channels.

11. Mitä seuraavista sosiaalisen median kanavista organisaatiosi käyttää markkinointiin tai viestintään?

[Lisätietoja](#)

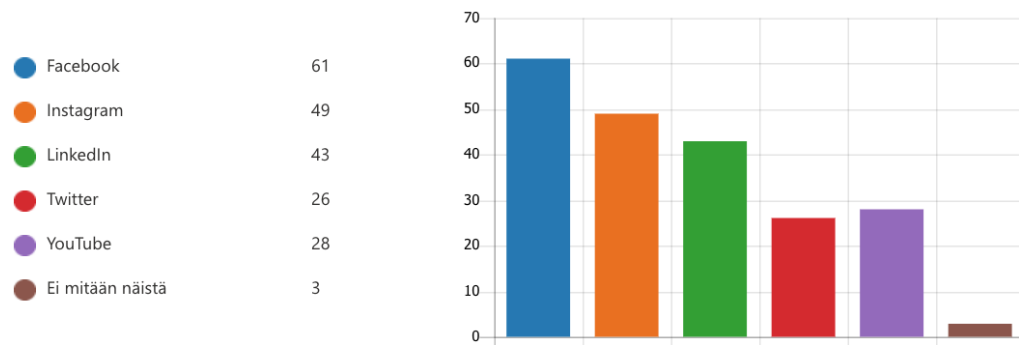


Figure 12. Results from questionnaire: What social media channels does your organization use for marketing or communications?

In question 12 it was asked, if there were other social media channels, that the organization was using, and the results were that three of the respondents answered TikTok.

Question 13 (Figure 13) asked, what are the organizations most important social media objectives.

Results in question 13 were (from highest to lowest):

- promotion of recruitment: 51 (77%) respondents
- sharing information: 50 (76%) respondents
- raising brand awareness: 46 (70%) respondents
- improving the employer image: 43 (65%) respondents
- increasing sales: 29 (44%) respondents
- new customer acquisition: 28 (42%) respondents
- increasing engagement: 27 (41%) respondents
- growing thought leadership or professional branding: 25 (38%) respondents
- increasing customer satisfaction: 22 (33%) respondents
- increasing online traffic to the organization 's webpage: 19 (29%) respondents

Four of the objectives were selected more than 40 times: promotion of recruitment, sharing information, raising brand awareness, and improving the employer image.

13. Mitkä seuraavista kuvaavat parhaiten organisaatiosi sosiaalisen median tärkeimpiä tavoitteita ulkoisessa viestinnässä?

[Lisätietoja](#)

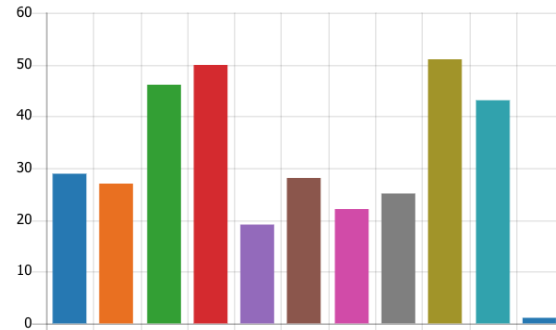
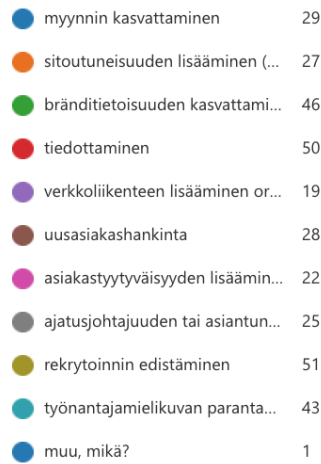


Figure 13. Results from questionnaire: What are the organizations most important social media objectives?

Question 14 asked, if there were other objectives. This question gathered 15 open answers (Table 4), with one (Anonymous 12) that was excluded because it was blank. All answers were translated from Finnish to English. Some of the answers repeated same objectives from question 13 with specifications to the objectives.

Table 4. Results from question 14 of the questionnaire.

Anonymous 1	“Increasing thought leadership and brand awareness, becoming relevant influencers and decision-makers in the field, and increasing the number of followers.”
Anonymous 2	“Different channels have slightly different goals depending on the target group.”
Anonymous 3	“Raising general child protection awareness and improving the image of child protective services.”
Anonymous 4	“Creating images.”
Anonymous 5	“Investor relations.”
Anonymous 6	“Increasing sales, raising awareness and building a brand.”
Anonymous 7	“Making everyday life visible to the general public and jobseekers - improving the image of the employer and the company's reputation in general”
Anonymous 8	“Improving employer image and reputation and engaging employees. In addition, the goal in social media (as in all communications) is to increase confidence in the operations of our company.”
Anonymous 9	“Raising the profile of a non-profit company.”

Anonymous 10	“Description of services professionally.”
Anonymous 11	“Get more awareness as both employer and a system developer.”
Anonymous 13	“Developing and maintaining a brand and employer image. The visibility of our customers reminds us of our existence.”
Anonymous 14	“The main goal of communicating on social media is to strengthen our brand image, communicate about our operations and be present in the “drive” of the target group. Social media is also used for positive word of mouth, e.g., through reviews, shares, and comments from social media users.”
Anonymous 15	“At the moment, social media is our strongest support for information communications. However, the aim of development is to increase the role of engaging communications and emphasize the role of social media as a developer of employer image.”

Question 15 (Figure 14) asked how much time per week does the organization use for social media operations. The most selected answer was “under 3 hours” with 26 (39%) respondents. The second most selected answer was “4–12 hours” with 19 (28%) respondents. 8 (12%) answered “13–20 hours”, 4 (6%) answered “over 20 hours” and 2 (3%) answered “none” and 7 answered “I don’t know”.

15. Kuinka paljon aikaa organisaatiosi käyttää sosiaalisen median toimintoihin viikossa?

[Lisätietoja](#)

[Insights](#)

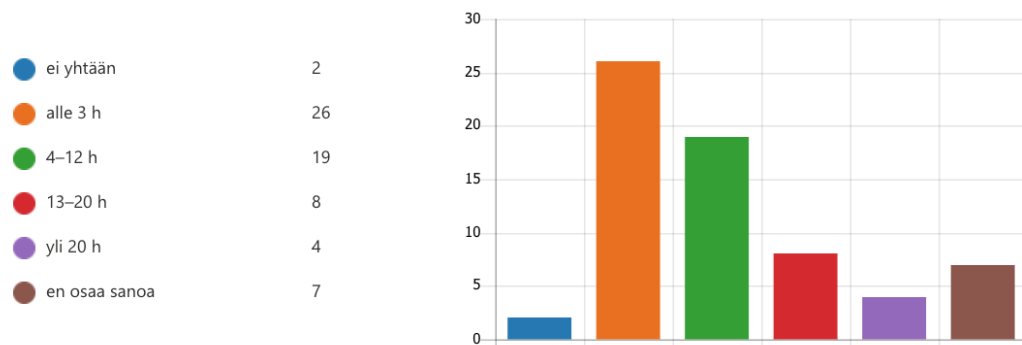


Figure 14. Results from questionnaire: How much time per week does your organization use for social media operations?

Question 16 (Figure 15) asked how big of a role does social media play in the marketing communications operations. The most selected answer was “41–60%” with 19 (29%) respondents. Close to that was “20–40%” with 18 (27%) respondents. 14 (21%) selected “under 20%”, 7 (11%) respondents selected 61–80% and 6 (9%)

respondents selected “over 80%”. The rest of the respondents, 2 (3%), selected “I don’t know”.

16. Kuinka suuri rooli mielestäsi sosiaalisella medialla on organisaatiosi ulkoisessa viestinnässä?
0–100 %

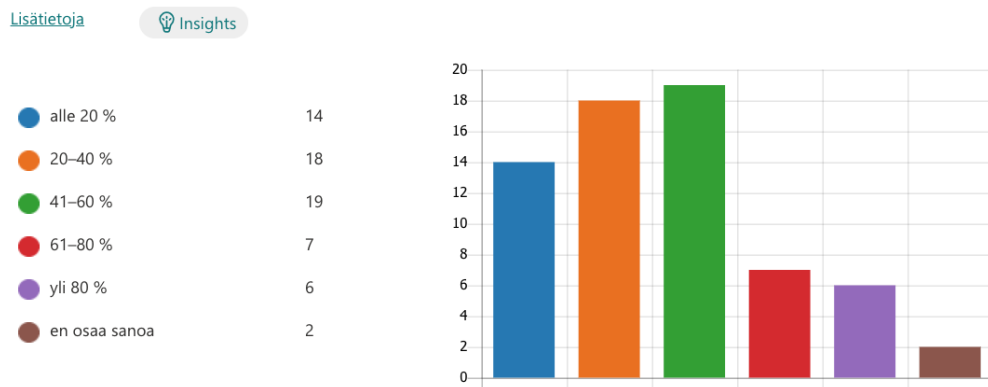


Figure 15. Results from questionnaire: How big of a role does social media play in the marketing communications operations?

Question 17 (Figure 16) asked does the organization follow social media analytics. Significant number of respondents, 55 (83%), answered “yes”. 9 (14%) said “no” and 2 (3%) said “I don’t know”.

17. Seuraako organisaatiosi sosiaalisen median kanaviensa analytiikkaa?

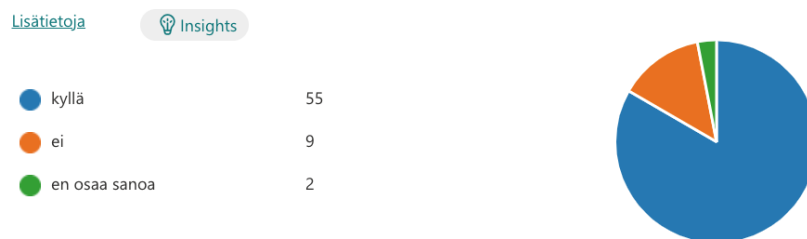


Figure 16. Results from questionnaire: Does your organization follow social media analytics?

9.3.3 Health and welfare organizations social media content in 2022

Section 3 of the questionnaire focused on questions about social media content. Question 18 asked which content formats does the organization use on social media. The top 5 answers were: pictures, text posts, videos, articles related to the sector and

external links (blogs, news, articles). The least selected were live videos, recommendations and reviews, and polls.

18. Mitä seuraavista sisältömuodoista organisaatiosi käyttää sosiaalisessa mediassa?

[Lisätietoja](#)

● kuvat	63
● videot	50
● tekstiä sisältävät julkaisut	60
● alaan liittyvät artikkelit	37
● ulkoiset linkit (blogit, uutiset t...	35
● tarina-videot (Stories jne.)	35
● live-videot	6
● infografiikka	18
● suosittelut ja arvostelut	6
● kilpailut	20
● gallupit	2

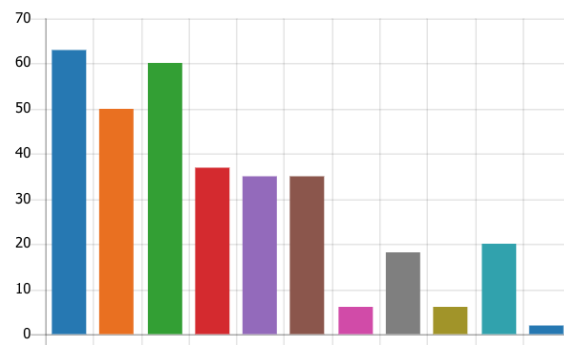


Figure 16. Results from questionnaire: Which of the following content formats does your organization use on social media?

Question 19 asked which of the content formats would the organization want use on social media in the future. The top 5 answers were: videos, pictures, story videos (Stories, etc.), posts containing text and articles related to the sector. The least selected were competitions, polls, and live videos. There was also an option to select “I don’t know”, which got 10 selections.

19. Mitä seuraavista sisältömuodoista organisaatiosi haluaisi käyttää tulevaisuudessa?

Lisätietoja

● kuvat	33
● videot	35
● tekstiä sisältävät julkaisut	31
● alaan liittyvät artikkelit	28
● ulkoiset linkit (blogit, uutiset t...	28
● tarina-videot (Stories jne.)	32
● live-videot	15
● infografiikka	21
● suosittelet ja arvostelut	23
● kilpailut	16
● gallupit	16
● en osaa sanoa	10

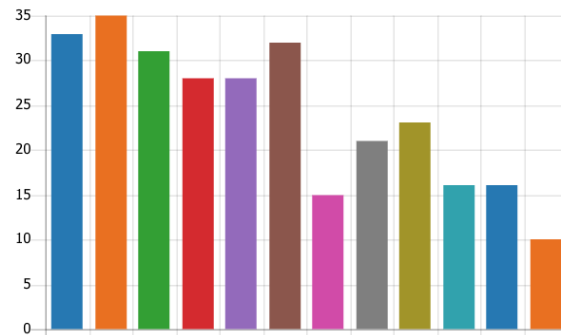


Figure 17. Results from questionnaire: Which of the following content formats would your organization want use on social media in the future?

Results from question 18 and 19 are described together in Table 5 for easier comparisons.

Table 5. Results from questionnaires' questions 18 and 19.

	Results in question 18 (from highest to lowest):	Results in question 19 (from highest to lowest):
1	pictures: 63 (95%) respondents	videos: 35 (53%) respondents
2	posts containing text: 60 (91%) respondents	pictures: 33 (50%) respondents
3	videos 50: (76%) respondents	story videos (Stories, etc.): 32 (48%) respondents
4	articles related to the sector: 37 (56%) respondents	posts containing text: 31 (47%) respondents
5	external links (blogs, news, or articles): 35 (53%) respondents	articles related to the sector: 28 (42%) respondents
6	story videos (Stories, etc.): 35 (53%) respondents	external links (blogs, news, or articles): 28 (42%) respondents
7	competitions: 20 (30%) respondents	recommendations and reviews: 23 (35%) respondents
8	infographics: 18 (27%) respondents	infographics: 21 (32%) respondents
9	live videos: 6 (9%) respondents	competitions: 16 (24%) respondents
10	recommendations and reviews: 6 (9%) respondents	polls: 16 (24%) respondents

11	polls: 2 (3%) respondents	live videos: 15 (23%) respondents
12	-	I don't know: 10 (15%) respondents

Question 20 asked which of the following best describe the social media content in the organization. information, everyday events from the workplace, products/services and their characteristics, employee stories, guidance on offices or opening hours. Clearly the least selected were humor and emotional posts, with under 10 selections.

Results in question 20 were (from highest to lowest):

- information: 49 (74%) respondents
- everyday events from the workplace: 46 (70%) respondents
- products/services and their characteristics: 39 (59%) respondents
- employee stories 32 (48%): respondents
- guidance on offices or opening hours: 29 (44%) respondents
- achievements, projects, or milestones: 27 (41%) respondents
- customer stories: 26 (39%) respondents
- sharing of researched information: 22 (33%) respondents
- tips: 21 (32%) respondents
- visions and goals of the organization: 15 (23%) respondents
- social impact: 11 (17%) respondents
- emotional posts: 8 (12%) respondents
- humor: 4 (6%) respondents

20. Mitkä seuraavista kuvaavat parhaiten organisaatiosi sosiaalisen median sisältöä?

Lisätietoja

organisaation visiot ja tavoitteet	15
työarjen tapahtumat	46
työntekijätarinat	32
asiakastarinat	26
huumori	4
tunteisiin vetoavat julkaisut	8
informaatio	49
tutkitun tiedon jakaminen	22
saavutukset, hankkeet tai virst...	27
tuotteet/palvelut ja niiden omi...	39
vinkit	21
yhteiskunnallinen vaikuttaminen	11
toimipisteisiin tai aukioloihin li...	29

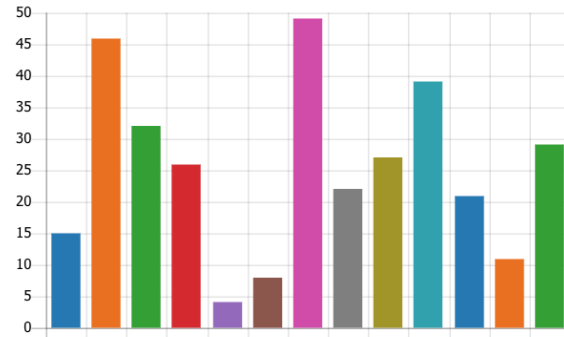


Figure 18. Results from questionnaire: Which of the following best describes the social media content in your organization?

Question 21 aimed to gather information on the primary goals of posts, but this question was clearly one that was understood in a wider perspective. The question asked: What functions does your organization’s individual social media publications primarily aim to achieve? Most of the respondents answered “other, what?”. The second most selected answer was “reactions (likes etc.)” and the third most selected was “to get followers in the channel”.

Results in question 21(from highest to lowest):

- other, what?: 16 (24%) respondents
- reactions (likes, etc.): 15 (23%) respondents
- following the social media channel: 12 (18%) respondents
- to shares (follower will share the post in their own account): 7 (11%) respondents
- discussion and interaction within the post: 7 (11%) respondents
- I don’t know: 9 (14%) respondents

21. Mihin organisaatiosi yksittäiset sosiaalisen median julkaisut ensisijaisesti tähtäävät?

[Lisätietoja](#)

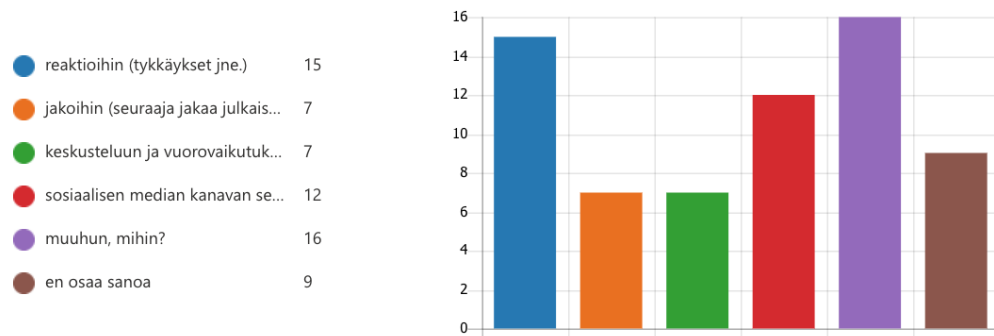


Figure 18. Results from questionnaire: What does your organization’s individual social media publications primarily aim to achieve?

In the open question 22 the respondents who selected “other, what?” in question 21, could write their open answer. In the open answers they mentioned for example sales, communications, image improvement, recruitment etc. These responses answered more to question 13 and 14 in the questionnaire. Question 21 should have had a clarification to the question. The results in question 21 and 22 affect the reliability of the results. The open answers (question 22) are not opened here, because the answers did not answer the question as it was intended.

9.3.4 Covid-19 effecting the use of social media in health and welfare sector

In question 23 it was asked, if the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the use of social media in the organization. 20 (33%) respondents answered “yes, it has become more important” and 37 (56%) answered “no, it has stayed the same”. 9 (14%) respondents answered, “I don’t know”.

23. Onko Covid-19-pandemia muuttanut sosiaalisen median käyttöä viestinnän välineenä organisaatiossasi?

Lisätietoja

Insights

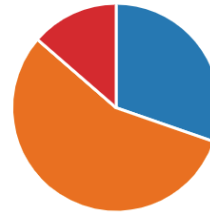
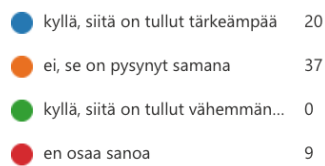


Figure 19. Results from questionnaire: Has the Covid-19 pandemic changed the use of social media in your organization?

The respondents were led to question 24, if they selected “yes, it has become more important”. Question 24 asked: If yes, it has become more important, tell me how? The question resulted in 20 open answers (Table 6).

Table 6. Results from question 24.

Anonymous 1	“People’s need for information has increased, so we have also had to invest more in the supply.”
Anonymous 2	“People’s thirst for information about corona and vaccinations has been big, so there has been an increasing need for social media communications.”
Anonymous 3	“Oh well. This field may not be enough for this. We play an important role in corona communications in this area. People have sought information from a reliable source and on the other hand corona has also sparked a lot of debate. The media grabs news topics directly from our social media channels.”
Anonymous 4	“An important everyday channel for relatives.”
Anonymous 5	“Increasing information and communications in general, reaching customers and also new customers when there are fewer encounters.”
Anonymous 6	“Reaching customers is even more important as physical contacts are reduced.”
Anonymous 7	“Sharing information to relatives about the current Covid-19 situation and how that and restrictions on gatherings affect visits, for example. In addition, it has been communicated through photos that, despite the corona and the ban on visits, the residents of the care are living a full life.”
Anonymous 8	“There have been almost no live events and social media is a channel for reporting things happening in the unit.”
Anonymous 9	“We communicate important decisions concerning corona recommendations in our area and respond to various inquiries.”
Anonymous 10	“Reporting the overall situation to customer groups, changes in opening hours and operating methods.”
Anonymous 12	“The need for information increased due to the pandemic and social media channels therefore gained a huge number of followers.”

Anonymous 13	“This allows information to be shared and customers to be involved. Previous public events will no longer be held (in this situation).”
Anonymous 14	“Social media channels have been key channels for corona information and customer guidance during the pandemic. Twitter has also become an information channel for the media.”
Anonymous 15	“Sharing up-to-date information, very important and fast via social media.”
Anonymous 16	“The situation is displayed on social media channels.”
Anonymous 17	“Relatives could see the everyday life, while they could not visit.”
Anonymous 18	“People follow more social media, maybe.”
Anonymous 19	“Information on pandemic practices.”
Anonymous 20	“The use of social media has increased significantly during the pandemic. Through social media, we communicate important information about the virus, vaccinations, and other instructions. Social media is a channel comparable to the communications of our website in the situation of a pandemic, and even more important in terms of getting the information passed on to young adults.”

Questionnaire had a final open question 25: If yes, it has become less important, tell me how? This question did not gather any answers, because nobody was led to this question due to the answers in question 23. Questionnaire ended with a thank you note for the respondents.

9.4 Analyzing the results of the questionnaire

From section one it is clear, that the questionnaire reached at least 66 respondents from the target group. Health care and private sector were the most represented in this questionnaire. Respondents were mostly from SME (small and medium-sized) organizations, but large organizations were also well represented. The respondents were mostly from a manager level position.

As stated before, it is important to have a strategy for social media. The strategy should be made considering the characteristics of each social media channel and include goals for each channel. (Fill & Turnbull, 2019, p. 365) In section two over half (59%) of the respondents answered, that they have created a strategy for social media.

In the open answers (Table 3) the following were mentioned several times:

- Target audiences/groups (19 respondents mentioned)
- Channel selection / channels that are used (21 respondents mentioned)
- Content plans (10 respondents mentioned)
- Objectives/goals (13 respondents mentioned)
- Topics/priorities (6 respondents mentioned)

Some of the strategies were lighter, with just a channel selection and a content plan. Some of the respondents answered very specific and detailed strategies. Some organizations have noticed that it is indeed better to have different content plans and target audiences for each channel. Only four respondents added measuring and monitoring a part of the strategy.

33% of the respondents claimed, that their organization uses an agency to operate social media accounts. Most of the organizations handle their social media in-house. This fits with the results of question 10, that 73% of the organizations encourage employees to be social media ambassadors in their organizations social media accounts. As Cooper (2021) mentioned, using employees as organizations advocates is good for the algorithm.

The ten most used social media channels in Finland used by people between 16–74 years on a weekly basis are: WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Twitch and TikTok. (Pönkä, 2021, p. 4) The author compared the results from question 11 (Figure 12) to the earlier mentioned *State of Social Media 2021* (Meltwater, 2021, p. 6) in Table 7. Meltwater survey had a similar question, and the respondents were Nordic organizations in general. Results from both Meltwater survey and this study's questionnaire listed Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Twitter in the same order as the most used social media channels. Facebook is the most used channel with 92% of respondents and Instagram came second with 74%. In health and welfare organizations the number of users in LinkedIn, YouTube and Twitter are much lower, but the order is the same. These results indicate that health and welfare organizations use the most popular channels in their marketing communications.

Table 7. The most used social media channels in Finnish health and welfare organizations and Nordic organizations.

The most used social media channels in Finnish health and welfare organizations in 2022		The most used social media channels for marketing operations in organizations (Nordic countries) (Meltwater, 2021, p. 6)	
%	Channel	%	Channel
92%	Facebook	93%	Facebook
74%	Instagram	83%	Instagram
65%	LinkedIn	83%	LinkedIn.
42%	YouTube	73%	YouTube
39%	Twitter	57%	Twitter

Only three of the respondents answered that they use other channels and they all mentioned TikTok.

The Meltwater survey (2021, pp. 8, 11) did not have a specific sector of organizations as the respondents and represents more of a general opinion in Nordic organizations about social media as a marketing communications tool. In the Meltwater survey the top objectives for using social media were raising brand awareness, increasing brand engagement, website traffic, increasing sales and acquiring new customers. The results from the questionnaire of this master's thesis differed quite a lot from the Meltwater survey and obviously represent the opinion of health and welfare sector. The most important social media objectives, that stand out in the questionnaire results, are promotion of recruitment, sharing information, raising brand awareness, and improving the employer image. The only similar objective is raising brand awareness. These results are not totally comparable, because the options were not exactly the same in the questionnaire of this master's thesis and the Meltwater survey was targeted to all organizations in general. However, results indicate, that there are some trends, that can be noticed in the results. There is a shortage of personnel in the health and welfare sectors, which is creating the need to promote recruitment and improve employer image. Sharing information is also very important. Brand and employer image, and reputation in general were also mentioned in the open answers in question 14.

As it was stated before, 83 percent of small business owners, think that social media is essential for their business. (Chambers et al, 2020, p. xi) Although most of the respondents claimed, that their organization uses under three hours per week for social media operations, they thought that social media plays a quite big of a role in their marketing communications operations. Almost a third of the respondents thought social media takes 41–60% part of their marketing communications. This is a quite high number considering how big of a concept marketing communications is.

As it was mentioned earlier, measuring is an important part of marketing communications. With measuring the organization can provide data about the effectiveness of marketing communications operations. (Rämö, 2019, p. 100) Significant amount, 83%, of the respondents of the questionnaire answered, that their organization follows social media analytics. This indicates that they want to know if their social media operations are effective. Question remains to be answered, if the organizations use the analytics data in planning and monitoring social media operations.

In section three, the questionnaire dove into content. The respondents claimed that the organizations use mostly pictures, text posts and videos in their social media. As it was stated in the book *Make Your Business Social: Engage Your Customers with Social Media* (Chambers et al, 2020, p. 64) that videos are an important part of marketing communications, it is clear that the health and welfare sector has noticed that and may want to add more videos to their social media in the future. Videos play an important part in algorithms, which has probably been noticed in these organizations as well. When asking about the content they would like to use in the future, the top three answers were videos, pictures, and Story videos. This signals that the organizations are aware, that videos and Stories are important in social media. The author thinks that health and welfare organizations could benefit from using more videos in different forms: YouTube, Stories and Live videos. Especially in Facebook and Instagram it has been noticed that using their tools Stories and Lives, it is easier to increase visibility and engagement. Although, Live videos are important according to the algorithms, health and welfare organizations did not see them as possible content formats for the future. The author thinks that this might also mean, that in health and welfare

organizations Live videos are more difficult to make without violating customer privacy.

Text posts, articles related to the sector and external links (blogs, news, or articles) were also seen as important content types in the future. The results indicate that social media content in health and welfare sector is very informative, describes the everyday events and products/services and brings out employee stories. The results were quite comparable with the THL observation, where the content was mostly informative and the formats were mostly text posts, articles related to the sector and external links to their own media. The results of the questionnaire do not highlight emotional or humoristic posts, which are highlighted in the algorithm, as those usually create reactions from social media users. The author wonders, whether it would be worth experimenting adding emotional content to social media in the health and welfare sectors. This might increase engagement and bring out the humanity and the strengths of these sectors. However, content that appeals to emotions, should be made carefully with good taste.

As Cooper (2021) listed tips for working with the Facebook algorithm, making conversation and reactions are important. The results from the questionnaire indicate, that health and welfare organizations do not primarily aim for reactions or discussion and interaction within the post. “Reactions (likes, etc.)” was selected by only 23% and “discussion and interaction within the post” by only 11% of the respondents. However, this particular question was understood in different ways by the respondents, which affects the reliability of these responses.

In the Meltwater research (2021, p. 27) 48% of Nordic organizations claimed, that social media has become a more important tool in marketing communications during the pandemic. In the final section of this questionnaire, it resulted that 33% of respondents answered that social media has become more important during Covid-19. The amount was a bit lower in this questionnaire compared to the Meltwater research. In the open answers the respondents claimed that social media has been a quite important channel for sharing and communicating timely and reliable information on the situation (Covid-19, vaccinations etc.), replacing live encounters and sharing the everyday life.

As a conclusion social media is playing quite an important role in marketing communications and overall communications in health and welfare sector. It is a relevant part of marketing communications, and more than half of the organizations have a strategy for social media. Content is informative and aims to create more interest in the sector/organization. The health and welfare sector are going through big challenges, such as the global pandemic, the reform of public healthcare, social welfare and rescue services, and problems in the working conditions leading to the nurse's strike. The sector is also growing and creating new businesses. These factors make it very important to succeed with marketing communications and it is important to include social media in the strategy. The author wonders, if the organizations have the time and resources to develop their social media, while the whole industry is in a turbulent situation. Most of the respondents claimed that they handle social media in-house. The author thinks that many organizations might benefit from a marketing communications agency, that could evaluate their social media operations more objectively and help create content that fits the audience and each channels specifics.

10 RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION

One of the goals of this master's thesis was to create recommendations for Kumppania of how they can design social media services to their target group. Kumppania can use the results from this master's thesis in their marketing communications. Kumppania's clients and followers can benefit from these results in different ways. These results can also benefit other agencies and health and welfare organizations.

The main target group for Kumppania is social, health and welfare sector. Kumppania does marketing communications operations targeting this sector already, but these recommendations are specifically about marketing their social media services. Obviously Kumppania has its own marketing communications strategy, and these recommendations will be evaluated through the strategy and implemented if the suggestions are in line with Kumppania's objectives.

The results from this master's thesis indicate, that there is great potential to offer social media services to the target group. Most of the health and welfare organizations handle their social media in-house, 38% do not create a strategic plan for social media operations and 39% of the organizations use only under three hours for social media operations. These facts state, that there might be room for a marketing communications agency to help these organizations with their social media operations.

The first recommendation for Kumppania is to share the results from the questionnaire in their marketing communications. Kumppania could create a PDF or a webpage, where they could highlight the most important findings from this master's thesis. The results could be visualized by Kumppania's graphic designer into a visually interesting report. A PDF would be available for all Kumppania's followers, or it could be available from the website as a download. To get the download, people would be asked for their email address for marketing purposes. The report's name could be "SOME 2022 – health and welfare sector". This report would be marketed in social media and Kumppania's newsletter. Each result from the questionnaire could be made into an infographic and these could be shared individually through social media. The text content could offer a service from Kumppania to each "issue" or matter and a note on how the client can benefit from those services. In addition to this, those posts could include a link to download the whole research PDF. This marketing campaign should start with a paid social media campaign targeting health and welfare sector in the target areas in Finland. This campaign would show the target group that Kumppania does research towards health and welfare sector, and this might create a new kind of interest towards Kumppania's social media services. People generally want to follow social media accounts that offer them information that they want or need. Offering free material in a matter that interests the target group, can be a way to gain interest in Kumppania's channels.

It is clear that most of the organizations do create a strategic plan for social media, but the content of the strategy varies quite a lot. In the questionnaire 38% of respondents answered that they do not have a strategy at all for social media. Kumppania highlights their services for marketing communications strategies, but they could market services for social media strategies even more. Kumppania could produce content about

creating a specific strategy for social media and how to integrate it into the marketing communications strategy. The importance of measuring and monitoring should be highlighted in the content because those were not mentioned in most of the strategies in the questionnaire, although they play an important part of succeeding in social media. Kumppania could highlight their services regarding social media strategies: trainings, strategic sparring, workshops, outsourcing the creation of the strategy etc.

Most of the organizations in health and welfare handle their social media operations in-house and they encourage employees to be social media ambassadors in their organization's social media accounts. Kumppania could highlight their trainings for social media ambassadors and other professionals creating social media content in their organization. Kumppania could also do content about outsourcing social media, pros in outsourcing and how it can lead to great results. In each case, Kumppania could market services more clearly for both kind of clients: those who want to keep social media operations in-house and to those that are interested in outsourcing.

As THL (2022) states, social media is an important channel of communications. THL has created their own page for social media channels and policies to their webpage. It is clear, which social media channels they have and what kind of rules and thoughts they have considering social media. As many other health and welfare organizations, THL also shares reliable information, and it is good to have a page that gathers social media channels for followers to find. If there are fake channels in social media, people can check the THL website for the right channels. As social media is becoming more and more important in marketing communications, organizations should bring their social media policies and channels for everyone to see. It is common to have a social media policy for the organization, but usually it is shared internally in the organization. Kumppania could recommend their clients to have a social media policy in their website. This creates positive transparency between the organization and its followers/customers.

Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Twitter are the most used social media channels in health and welfare sector. These channels have been a part of Kumppania's services, but this study indicates that these channels are indeed the ones that Kumppania should focus on in the future as well. This also indicates that the social

media expertise of the personnel should continue to develop within these channels. TikTok was mentioned a few times also, which means that in the future TikTok might become an important channel in the target group. It should be remembered that changes in social media trends can happen quite quickly, but at the moment Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and Twitter are the most important channels. With the data from this master's thesis, Kumppania can indicate the importance of these channels to clients.

In the theory part, it was said that digital marketing communications content should be a blend of intellectual and emotional to achieve engagement. Health and welfare sector's social media content is based more on informative content, but it might be good to promote other types of engaging content in addition to the traditional informative content. Health and welfare sector might benefit from more emotional content to create engagement and get more followers to their social media accounts. This is something Kumppania can communicate in their content.

As it has been mentioned, the sector of health and welfare is in a turbulent situation, which means that social media services should keep up with the changes. As the most important social media objectives in the sector were promotion of recruitment, sharing information, raising brand awareness, and improving the employer image, should Kumppania try to find ways to help their clients create content that aims towards these objectives. Kumppania should highlight the importance of specific content, which supports each organizations' objectives in social media. Themes of attracting more job seekers and creating a better brand and employer image with social media could be integrated in Kumppania's content.

Health and welfare organizations are interested in sharing videos, pictures, and story videos in social media in the future. Kumppania could highlight these content forms in their marketing communications. Kumppania could market their trainings and workshops about videos and engaging content in social media.

It is a fact, that different content works in different social media channels, and this is always considered when creating content. Kumppania could share information about algorithms and teach different ways to create engagement in social media channels.

As it was stated in the theory, social media has become more important to people during the pandemic. 33% of the respondents in the questionnaire answered, that social media has become more important for the organization during the pandemic. This indicates that social media plays an important part during pandemics and other exceptional situations for organizations. Kumppania should communicate more about operating in social media during crisis and other exceptional situations. Kumppania could market their trainings and workshops about this matter.

Recommendations in a nutshell:

- Kumppania should start a marketing communications campaign around these results and create a report with results and recommendations for the target group.
- Kumppania should bring their services regarding social media strategies more visible to the target group.
- Kumppania should communicate more clearly about how they can support the organization in different ways regarding social media. There are services for supporting operations in-house and services to organizations that are interested in outsourcing all social media operations.
- Kumppania can teach their clients to create transparency through a social media policy available for all followers.
- Kumppania can indicate the importance of the following channels: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Twitter.
- Kumppania could communicate how to create engagement with combining emotional and informative content.
- Kumppania could share more information and services about algorithms in general, different ways to create engagement in different channels, videos, story videos etc.
- Kumppania should communicate more about crisis communications in social media.

Overall, the author thinks that there is great business potential in health and welfare sector for social media services. It is only a matter of marketing Kumppania's social

media services to the target group even more and possibly creating new re-designed services. Communications in general is a wide concept and clients can be easily overwhelmed with the amount of operations it holds. With clear communication that stems from the research and marketing campaigns regarding specifically social media, the author thinks that potential clients can understand Kumppania's social media services better.

11 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

11.1 Summary

The purpose of this master's thesis was to study social media as marketing communications and overall external communications tool in Kumppania's target group: health and welfare sector, specifically organizations in Finland.

The goal of this study was to answer to the following question: "How are organizations in health and welfare sector in Finland using social media in their marketing communications and overall external communications in 2022?"

The theoretical part of this study was constructed with literature, professional articles, blogs and reports, different Internet sources and a YouTube-video. The author aimed and succeeded to find a diverse and up-to-date theoretical base for this study. The author succeeded to limit the theory to two main concepts: digital marketing communications and social media. The study identified important theories and concepts about digital marketing communications and social media, particularly channels limited to: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Twitter. The theoretical part of the study provided tools to accomplish the empirical part.

The empirical part of this study was conducted by a questionnaire and complemented by internet-mediated observation. Although questionnaires are not always problem-free, because of the low response rate in general, but a questionnaire was chosen,

because the aim was to gather data as widely as possible from the target group. THL was chosen as the target of the observation, because it represented a big and important player in health and welfare sector, and it would complement the questionnaire well.

There were three primary objectives in this study. The first one was to study social media as a marketing communications tool in health and welfare sector. This objective was achieved partly through the theory. There was information available on how organizations in general (not specifically in the target group) use social media as a marketing communications tool. The whole objective, concerning the sector specific data was achieved through the empirical part of the study. The second objective was to find out how organizations in health and welfare sector in Finland are utilizing social media channels in their marketing communications and overall external communications in 2022. This objective was achieved through the observation and the questionnaire. The third objective was to create recommendations for Kumppania of how they can design social media services to their target group. This objective was achieved through analyzing the data and the recommendations were explained in chapter 10.

11.2 Conclusions

The observation resulted into an overall picture of how a health and welfare organization uses social media. The observation answered to the research questions which were set for the observation. The results state that social media is an important part of communications at THL, and they have a social media policy on their website. THL uses the most popular social media channels and is active in all their main channels, but the author noticed that during the observation the followers were not very active with reactions and commenting. THL content was clearly based on informative content, and it was mainly from their own media. They utilized different social media tools in their channels. THL has probably noticed that videos and stories are important forms of content and have used them in their social media. The author thinks that THL has recognized the specific differences in different channels, and therefore did not post all posts in all their channels. The author thinks they use a social media plan, where each post has a release date and a selected channel.

The questionnaire of this master's thesis resulted to be a successful method. The author had a goal to get at least 50 answers from the questionnaire and it resulted in 68 answers by 7th of April 2022. 66 responses were included in the analysis. The author was pleasantly surprised with the number of responses.

The results of the questionnaire indicate that social media is an important part of marketing communications and overall communications in health and welfare sector. 59% of the respondents of the questionnaire answered that they have created a strategy for social media. Most of the health and welfare organizations operate their social media in-house and 73% of the organizations encourage employees to be social media ambassadors for their organization. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Twitter are the most used social media channels in health and welfare organizations according to the observation and the questionnaire. Facebook was the most used channel with 92% of the respondents. Four most important social media objectives in health and welfare organizations were promotion of recruitment, sharing information, raising brand awareness, and improving the employer image. Almost a third of the respondents thought social media takes 41–60% part of their marketing communications. 83% of the health and welfare organizations follow social media analytics, which indicate that they want to analyze the effectiveness of their social media operations. Health and welfare organizations claimed that they use mostly pictures, text posts and videos, but they would like to use videos, pictures, and Story videos in the future. The results indicate that social media content in health and welfare sector is mostly based on informative content, describes the everyday events, and brings out employee stories. It resulted that 33% of respondents think, that social media has become more important in their organization during the global pandemic of Covid-19.

The theoretical and empirical part of the study showed similarities. Interestingly, there were some results, that followed earlier studies and surveys, but there were also some results that indicated that there are sector specific factors, which affect the use of social media.

11.3 Discussion

This master's thesis answered to the research question and the objectives were achieved through the gathered research data.

The problem with a subject such as social media is that it develops at a high speed, and for example the algorithms in each channel change quickly, and it is hard to create any permanent rules or suggestions. This master's thesis and particularly the questionnaire studied all five channels (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube) together, without any channel specific questions. This decision was made by the author because it was a goal to limit the research to have a simpler approach to the subject and keep the amount of data easier to handle.

THL is a huge and important part of the health and welfare sector. Their content is very often shared in news and social media, which makes it important for them to excel and show a good example in social media. Their content is reliable and important to the sector. Therefore, the author wanted to observe THL to set an example as a basis to the research. THL is a big organization, and they obviously have more resources for marketing communications, and it cannot be directly compared to smaller health and welfare organizations. Despite of that, THL has developed active social media operations and they can be a good benchmark to other organizations.

The questionnaire was an important part of the study. The author used time and effort to plan, and pilot test the questionnaire according to the principles of making a good questionnaire and reported the steps in this master's thesis. The questionnaire resulted into data, which answers to the research question. All in all, the author thinks that the chosen research methods were justified.

The results of this master's thesis benefit the commissioner Kumppania and also other agencies and health and welfare organizations. Kumppania can use the recommendations to create more business with social media services and to get more clients from their target sector. For clients, it is important to know that the agency they work with is aware of their sectors specifics. Research in addition to client references

is a great way of demonstrating competence in the field. By sharing these results in social media and the website, organizations from health and welfare can gain interest towards Kumppania.

The author thinks that there would be another interesting approach to study social media through algorithms or channel specific themes. The problem with algorithms is the fact that they change quite often. It would also be interesting to limit the research to for example health care to gain even more specific information on the use of social media. Also, the shortage of employees in health care is an issue that might be interesting to dive in through social media.

Ethics in this master's thesis were handled with care. Sources are considered reliable and quoted properly. The observation included only public information that is available from the Internet. The questionnaire did not gather any confidential material and the answers were anonymous. There were a couple of answers where the respondent mentioned a company name, but those were deleted before reporting the results. The final master's thesis is public and does not carry any confidential material. The author has deleted all contact information that was gathered from Kumppania's client register and Tietopalvelut.

11.3.1 Reliability and validity

The main concern from the perspective of validity and reliability was the sample size compared to the population. The population of the research was not found, because it was quite difficult to define, which organizations belong in the target sector and to find the right people in the organization to answer to the questionnaire. It was impossible and not relevant to the study to reach all health and welfare organizations in Finland, which is why the sample was set to maximum 300. Small sample size in the questionnaire can affect the validity of the research negatively. The qualitative methods (open questions in the questionnaire and the observation) were added to this master's thesis to ensure reliable results.

The primary aim was to get health and welfare organizations from Finland as the respondents. The goal was to use Kumppania's own clients, but also other organizations in order to have a better and reliable view of the whole sector. A sample from the target group was pulled from Tietopalvelut. This in addition to Kumppania's clients helped with the reliability. The questionnaire was targeted to either management level professionals or marketing and/or communications professionals working in organizations in health and welfare sector. The sample from Tietopalvelut and Kumppania's client register was all in all successful.

The questionnaire was carefully constructed in many phases to ensure reliable results. Most of the questions in the questionnaire measured, what they were supposed to measure, which supports the reliability of the questionnaire. Only one question was clearly understood in multiple ways, which did not support the reliability of those results.

The author aimed for at least 50 responses from the questionnaire due to the main sample of 264 people (email recipients). The questionnaire resulted in 68 responses and the answering rate from the email was 26%. 66 responses support the reliability, because they were respondents from the target group. 66 responses were analyzed in this master's thesis.

This master's thesis concerned health and welfare organizations. 74% of the respondents in the questionnaire were from the sector of health care, 15% from social care and 11% from welfare. Welfare sector is sometimes considered to include social care, but the author wanted to define those three sectors in the questionnaire. The internet-mediated observation of THL complement the qualitative results of this master's thesis. Thinking about further research, the target group could have been even more limited, for example narrowed down to health care to gain even more reliable information.

The objectivity may be an issue because the author is working at Kumppania, the commissioner.

All in all, the target group was focused and considering the response rates generally in internet surveys, the author was pleased with the number of responses. The theoretical and empirical parts of this master's thesis supported each other. Despite the few issues in reliability and validity of this research, the author is satisfied with the validity of this research.

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Sosiaalisen median käyttö viestinnän välineenä terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin organisaatioissa

Hei, nimeni on Sonja Sjögren ja teen opinnäytetyötäni aiheesta "Sosiaalisen median käyttö viestinnän välineenä terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin organisaatioissa". Kiitos jo etukäteen ajastasi.

Kysely vie vain keskimäärin 6 minuuttia ja jokainen vastaus on tärkeä. Voit vastata tutkimuskyselyyni, jos työskentelet markkinoinnin tai viestinnän parissa terveyden ja/tai hyvinvoinnin organisaatioissa yksityisellä, julkisella tai kolmannella sektorilla Suomessa. Kysymykset liittyvät ulkoiseen viestintään ja markkinointiviestintään. Vastaukset ovat anonyymejä ja kysely ei kerää henkilötietoja. Vastauksia käytetään opinnäytetyössäni sekä toimeksiantajan palveluiden kehittämisessä ja viestinnässä.

Vastausaika päättyy: 7. huhtikuuta 2022

Opinnäytetyöni tähtää Master of Business Administration -tutkintoon (valmistuminen kesäkuussa 2022) Satakunnan ammattikorkeakoulusta. Tutkimuksen toimeksiantajana toimii työnantajani viestintätoimisto Kumppania Oy.

Tuhannesti kiittäen
Sonja Sjögren

APPENDIX 2

Perustiedot

1. Työskenteletkö terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin alalla?

*

- Kyllä
- En

2. Mikä seuraavista kuvaa parhaiten sektoria, jolla organisaatiosi toimii?

*

- terveydenhuolto
- sosiaalihuolto
- hyvinvointi

3. Toimiiko organisaatiosi yksityisellä, julkisella vai kolmannella sektorilla? *

- yksityinen sektori
- julkinen sektori
- kolmas sektori

4. Mikä on asemasi organisaatiossa?

*

- markkinoinnin tai viestinnän päällikkö tai muu esihenkilötason asema
- markkinoinnin tai viestinnän assistentti, suunnittelija, koordinaattori tai asiantuntija
- markkinoinnin tai viestinnän sisällöntuottaja
- muu, mikä?

5. Muu, mikä? *

Kirjoita vastaus

6. Kuinka monta työntekijää organisaatiossasi on?

*

- alle 10 henkilöä
- 10–49 henkilöä
- 50–249 henkilöä
- yli 250 henkilöä
- en osaa sanoa

SOSIAALISEN MEDIAN TOIMINTA JA SUUNNITELMALLISUUS

7. Laatiiko organisaatiosi/yrityksesi strategisen suunnitelman sosiaalista mediaa varten? *

Sosiaalisen median strategia määrittelee muun muassa sen, mitä tavoitteita sosiaalisen median käyttöön liittyy, keitä somessa tavoitellaan, mitä kanavia käytetään ja millaista sisältöä kanavilla jaetaan.

- kyllä
- ei
- en osaa sanoa

8. Jos vastasit kyllä, kerro omin sanoin, mitä strategia sisältää. *

Kirjoita vastaus

9. Käyttääkö organisaatiosi ulkopuolista toimijaa/toimistoa sosiaalisen median tilien ylläpitämiseen? *

Vastaa kyllä, jos organisaatiosi käyttää osittain tai kokonaan ulkopuolista toimijaa sosiaalisen median kanavien ylläpitoon.

- kyllä
- ei
- en osaa sanoa

10. Kannustaako organisaatiosi työntekijöitään toimimaan organisaation somelähteläinä sosiaalisessa mediassa? *

Somelähtelias auttaa organisaation arkiviestinnässä luomalla sisältöä sosiaaliseen mediaan. Somelähteläitä voi olla useampi ja he voivat toimia esimerkiksi vuorovikoin päivitysvuorossa.

- kyllä
- ei
- en osaa sanoa

11. Mitä seuraavista sosiaalisen median kanavista organisaatiosi käyttää markkinointiin tai viestintään? *

- Facebook
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Ei mitään näistä

12. Jos organisaatiosi käyttää muita sosiaalisen median kanavia ylläolevien sijaan tai lisäksi, voit luetella ne alle.

Jos organisaation käytössä ei ole muita sosiaalisen median kanavia, siirry seuraavaan kysymykseen.

Kirjoita vastaus

APPENDIX 4

13. Mitkä seuraavista kuvaavat parhaiten organisaatiosi sosiaalisen median tärkeimpiä tavoitteita ulkoisessa viestinnässä? *

- myynnin kasvattaminen
- sitoutuneisuuden lisääminen (engagement)
- bränditietoisuuden kasvattaminen
- tiedottaminen
- verkkoliikenteen lisääminen organisaation/yrityksen sivuille
- uusasiakashankinta
- asiakastytytyväisyyden lisääminen
- ajatusjohtajuuden tai asiantuntijabrändin kasvattaminen
- rekrytoinnin edistäminen
- työnantajamielikuvan parantaminen
- muu, mikä?

14. Muu, mikä?

Mitkä asiat kuvaavat parhaiten organisaatiosi sosiaalisen median tärkeimpiä tavoitteita?

Kirjoita vastaus

15. Kuinka paljon aikaa organisaatiosi käyttää sosiaalisen median toimintoihin viikossa?

*

Vastaukset tunteina per viikko (7 päivää).

- ei yhtään
- alle 3 h
- 4–12 h
- 13–20 h
- yli 20 h
- en osaa sanoa

16. Kuinka suuri rooli mielestäsi sosiaalisella medialla on organisaatiosi ulkoisessa viestinnässä? 0–100 %

*

Pohdi, kuinka merkittävä rooli sosiaalisella medialla on kokonaisuudessaan, kun tarkastellaan ulkoisen viestinnän resursseja.

- alle 20 %
- 20–40 %
- 41–60 %
- 61–80 %
- yli 80 %
- en osaa sanoa

17. Seuraako organisaatiosi sosiaalisen median kanaviensa analytiikkaa?

*

- kyllä
- ei
- en osaa sanoa

APPENDIX 5

SOSIAALISEN MEDIAN SISÄLTÖ

18. Mitä seuraavista sisältömuodoista organisaatiosi käyttää sosiaalisessa mediassa? *

- kuvat
- videot
- tekstiä sisältävät julkaisut
- alaan liittyvät artikkelit
- ulkoiset linkit (blogit, uutiset tai artikkelit)
- tarina-videot (Stories jne.)
- live-videot
- infograflikka
- suosittelet ja arvostelut
- kilpailut
- gallupit

19. Mitä seuraavista sisältömuodoista organisaatiosi haluaisi käyttää tulevaisuudessa? *

- kuvat
- videot
- tekstiä sisältävät julkaisut
- alaan liittyvät artikkelit
- ulkoiset linkit (blogit, uutiset tai artikkelit)
- tarina-videot (Stories jne.)
- live-videot
- infograflikka
- suosittelet ja arvostelut
- kilpailut
- gallupit
- en osaa sanoa

20. Mitkä seuraavista kuvaavat parhaiten organisaatiosi sosiaalisen median sisältöä? *

- organisaation visiot ja tavoitteet
- työarjen tapahtumat
- työntekijätarinat
- asiakastarinat
- huumori
- tunteisiin vetoavat julkaisut
- informaatio
- tutkitun tiedon jakaminen
- saavutukset, hankkeet tai virstanpylväät
- tuotteet/palvelut ja niiden ominaisuudet
- vinkit
- yhteiskunnallinen vaikuttaminen
- toimipisteisiin tai aukioloihin liittyvä ohjeistus

APPENDIX 6

21. Mihin organisaatiosi yksittäiset sosiaalisen median julkaisut ensisijaisesti tähtäävät?

*

- reaktioihin (tykkäykset jne.)
- jakoihin (seuraaja jakaa julkaisun omalla tilillään)
- keskusteluun ja vuorovaikutukseen julkaisun sisällä
- sosiaalisen median kanavan seuraamiseen
- muuhun, mihin?
- en osaa sanoa

22. Muuhun, mihin? *

Kirjoita vastaus

Osa 4

...

KORONAPANDEMIAN VAIKUTUKSET SOSIAALISEEN MEDIAAN

23. Onko Covid-19-pandemia muuttanut sosiaalisen median käyttöä viestinnän välineenä organisaatiossasi?

*

- kyllä, siitä on tullut tärkeämpää
- ei, se on pysynyt samana
- kyllä, siitä on tullut vähemmän tärkeää
- en osaa sanoa

24. Jos vastasit kyllä, siitä on tullut tärkeämpää, kerro miten? *

Kirjoita vastaus

25. Jos vastasit kyllä, siitä on tullut vähemmän tärkeää, kerro miten? *

Kirjoita vastaus