

Stakeholder Communication Planning #Web 2.0

Virve Ilkka

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Author or authors Virve Ilkka	Group or year of entry 2012
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Teacher(s) or supervisor(s) Hanna Rajalahti	
<p>This thesis investigated the benefits of Web 2.0 technological platforms as a stakeholder communication development work for a SME called How Violins. The study was conducted as an Action Research during Fall 2013 for a 4.5 month period of time. The empirical data is presented from the web analytics, and the thematic discussions with the CEO of the company that serves bowed stringed instruments in Finland.</p> <p>The theoretical framework for this study consists of communication planning and corporate strategy, as well as the features of Web 2.0 and the integration demands for stakeholder communication and corporate branding work. Research revealed a strong emphasis of communication theories focusing on bigger corporations' working contexts. Though the theories do not serve smaller businesses as accurately as the bigger ones, their philosophies and perspectives can be incorporated into the small business activities.</p> <p>The key finding of this thesis is that there are a lot of opportunities for SMEs to compete with big companies due to the democratization of opportunities online in favour of those that can use the digital platforms the smartest – not the ones who have the most money to do so. This digitally savvy communication work requires skills and understanding in the area of web analytics and search engine optimized web design.</p> <p>Stakeholder communication should bear in mind that Web 2.0 stands for a strong dialogic nature of communicating with stakeholders, not only to them. Stakeholders may also communicate with one another directly and there may be stakeholders online that the company is not even aware of. When planning communication, transparent, personable, and agile actions provoke the best response from online audiences.</p>	
Keywords Stakeholder Communication, SME, SEO, Web 2.0, Web Analytics, Social Media, Earned and Owned Media	

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1 Introduction

The reality of a company consists of customers, vendors, staff, governmental networks, competitors, the public, and many other stakeholders that have an interest in the business. Communication with all these stakeholders is a basic part of the work within any company. This study is about stakeholder communication development work in a context of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The driving force for conducting this research was to identify the best practices for a small business with limited resources to make the most of the opportunities embedded in the current World Wide Web in general, and to improve its stakeholder communication specifically.

Superficially inspected, one could argue that stakeholder communication has become easier with the fast and easy communication means provided by the World Wide Web. The new online platforms, however, require new kinds of skills and understanding. This study reflects the communication development needs against the surrounding societal reality created by Web 2.0. The development work on this thesis focuses on earned and owned media in a form of search engine optimization (SEO) and social media activity. In other words, the study concentrates on the stakeholder communication that can be improved online with certain information technology savvy.

The assumptions before the study was that SMEs should pay special attention to online solutions in their stakeholder communication development. Using web analytics in an intelligent way is expected to bring added value and cost-efficiency to the allocation of communication efforts.

The research was done in a form of an action research for a narrow niche SME called How Violins. The company sells, repairs, and reconstructs bowed stringed instruments with a lifetime guarantee. The quality work in craftsmanship demanded similar mastery in the business' communication. A challenge that was understood in the early stage of

the study was that the long-term communication development work had to be conducted simultaneously with an intense study of the content matters relating to the tradition of 400 years of violin making. My intervention as a communication specialist required me to study and to get acquainted with information that I had no earlier exposure to.

The study refers to Web 2.0 as the online reality that is considered to have started around the year 2006. Web 2.0 technology has created the boom in social media use, and the ability for everyone to follow their web performance through analytical tools. This dialogue-driven, fast, and interconnected reality of online sharing demands an updated approach also for the traditional stakeholder communication. The main shift is from communication to stakeholders into communication with them. Also the understanding and tracking of who the stakeholders are for a company deserves an update. Having distinct silos for various stakeholder groups may not be a modern solution. A matter to decide is whether it is more relevant to have a strong identity and voice for the company rather than several adjusted messages according to different stakeholder groups. The social media arenas appear to call for the latter focus.

In this paper, web analytics have a strong role as a resource for stakeholder communication planning and monitoring. Indeed, the work suggests that communications, with its roots in social sciences, can and should benchmark the other fields of science for synergy. Due to digitalization, for example, photographers no longer require expertise and understanding of the chemical compounds used to create images on paper, and a whole new skill set is required to master photography today. Though the change for communication is not as drastic, the awareness of the new skill sets required is essential. This work suggests that information technology, especially when it comes to understanding the basics of good search engine optimization and the ability to follow data analytics, is as essential for communication and brand workers as the ability to create appealing touch points at the physical business venue, and the capability to ensure the right stakeholders know of the business.

Though the work on the backend of websites and social media platforms are technical-level duties, communication professionals need to touch that level of work – especially in a company with only few staff members. Also, the ability to read and understand stakeholder and customer behavior should reflect the strategic work of communication professionals.

The study is not built around a problem to be solved but a situation to be improved. I entered the How Violins business in order to develop its stakeholder communication to best serve both the brand of the valuable product, and the stakeholders who seemed not to know too much about the instruments they were interested in. The guiding elements for the work was that How Violins does not invest in paid media and wants to be as fluent in the modern digital platforms as it is in cherishing the legacy of the great Italian violin makers hundreds of years ago.

The significance of this study for companies lies in the real life demonstration it serves on reaching to hundreds of stakeholders through smart usage of earned and owned media.

The research question for this study is:

How can SME stakeholder communication development benefit from Web 2.0?

The supporting question is:

How can web analytics be employed in SME stakeholder communication development?

As mentioned, the rationale for the company at stake, How Violins, is that quality communication is required to match its quality services and products. In order to create the ideal customer experience today, and to ensure room for growth for tomorrow, it is imperative to understand the effects of any communication and have well functioning practices to cover the vital communication areas. A societal need for research on this topic, both culturally and techonologically, has been created by the

accelerated digitalization in communication. Bridges are needed between the still-separate fields of study in information technologies and traditional communication. Web 2.0 as a phenomenon is less than 10 years old, but its consequences affect the vast majority of the current business world. My motivation to do this study is to learn something new and topical, and to broaden my understanding of communication as a professional duty.

For me, tackling these questions was entering a new arena entirely as I have never identified myself as a ‘number cruncher’. Also the realities created in social media have appeared to me superficial, distorted, and hence unappealing to tackle regardless of my communication professional orientation and background in culture studies. The action research helped me to take the bull by the horns, and even convert into a moderate believer in the opportunities embedded in these modern tools and channels.

The following four chapters first introduce the context of the study and elaborate the theoretical framework around the chosen topic. The empirical part is disclosed in chapter four, and chapter five discusses the meaning of the study and the possibilities and constraints it had.

2 Context of the Study

The case company for this study is a small enterprise called How Violins. The company sells, restores, and repairs all stringed instruments that are played with a bow. The company name is driven from the name of the luthier who is also the founder, owner, and CEO of the company, Mr. Guy How. Violins are the most common instruments that luthiers work on, and that is reflected in the company name.

2.1 Company Strategy

How Violins thrives to become a business leader in Finland for handcrafted bowed stringed instruments. Though many skilful luthiers exist in Finland, let alone in the Töölö region in Helsinki, more holistic services are needed. Here is the business philosophy the way I have understood it based on the several discussions on it with Mr. How. This philosophy is the foundation of all business actions.

How Violins stands for mastery in the handcraft of bowed stringed instruments. With the lifetime guarantee that it grants to its work, the business aims to serve the player beyond the instrument. Musicians even at the earliest stages of their path should be able to concentrate on playing - not on endless tuning or worrying about sounds that shouldn't exist.

At How Violins it is understood that any good instrument is a significant investment. It also recognises that if the instrument at hand does not match the size or the level of the player, the investments so far may have gone in vain. Therefore How Violins is determined to find the ideal instrument for every one of its customers without saving time or effort in doing so. Every instrument is adjusted to the needs of the customer cost-free and the purchase terms are tailored to be as customer friendly as possible.

How Violins is set to educate its customers to better understand the factors to consider when choosing an instrument or when having one reconstructed. The curtain between the player and the maker should be taken down. This is done, for example, by trans-

parently offering the prices on the website, by having the workshop open for guests, and by blogging about the various themes around the instruments.

How Violins is set to do the right thing, and to cater to altruism in the World. Instruments that have reached the end of their life cycle in Finland are sent to poorer countries, like Haiti and Nepal, to bring joy to children.

2.2 How Violins' Stakeholders

The identified stakeholders for How Violins are:

- Music teachers of the children who play
- Music schools as the institutions who facilitate playing an instrument as a hobby
- Parents who support playing a bowed stringed instrument
- Children who play
- Professional musicians
- Vendors of all wood materials and instruments but also the providers of business infrastructure in Finland such as accountants and credit card service providers
- Amateur violinmakers (mainly elderly gentleman who do it as a hobby)
- The Finnish governmental officials (tax authorities and National Board of Patents and Registration of Finland)
- Bank
- How Violins staff
- Families of the How Violins staff
- Neighbours of the How Violins boutique
- Competitors

Since the organization is only three years old and there are two staff members, the organisation is susceptible to any stakeholder group. However, the stakeholders are prioritized based on the sales perspective. This serves the purpose of designing meaningful communication to support the growth of the business.

The most influential and powerful stakeholders are the music teachers of the bowed stringed instrument in question. They are the experts in the eyes of the children and their parents. They are also regarded as neutral and trustworthy, because selling instruments is not the business they are in. Technically, this is not completely true as many teachers have made deals with music shops and instrument retailers, and hence the recommendations they give can be biased because of the commissions they make. However, the parents or their children do not know this and thus the teachers remain as trusted authorities.

Teachers are not only significant multipliers towards their students but also towards their employers; the music schools. In most music schools in the capital region, the schools have their own stock of instruments, which they lend to students. Being recommended for the schools as the provider and caretaker of these instruments is vital for How Violins.

2.3 Social Media use @HowViolins

At How Violins the power and influence of social media and a well-designed website is highly recognized as a phenomenon and a reality of today's business environment. However, gaining data on the potential concerned or unconcerned influencers or lurkers online, referring to the SNA model discussed in chapter 2, is not easy for the following reasons.

The services and products of How Violins serve a relatively narrow niche. There are surely plenty of children who play an instrument, but their presence online under the age of 13 should not even exist according to the regulations of Facebook, Instagram, Gmail, YouTube, and Kik Messenger. The App Store and Vine recommend users to be over 17 years of age. The parents of these children are more powerful stakeholders for two reasons: they make the purchase decisions, and they are more actively present online. But would they talk proactively about the rehairs of their children's bow? Adding to the narrow niche is the fact that one should need to buy a new instrument very seldom, and any fixing or repairing that is done should also be a rarity. How Vio-

lins provides a lifetime guarantee to its work, which means some customers might never need to come back.

Teachers and other professional musician are indeed the ones who do come back and who even do it regularly. How to map their online presence remains difficult, especially as in the current situation they do not wish to burn bridges with any other competing vendors either, in their hope for personal discounts.

Before the intervention of this action research, How Violins purchased blog texts from freelance blog writers and had them translated, after which the texts were published on the How Violins information centre. The automated notifications on new blog texts would be shown on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. This system was primarily set to improve the howviolins.fi-related search engine optimization. How Violins' Facebook site has passively existed since August 2010, but the blog updates started a year later in 2011 at the same time as the Twitter account. The LinkedIn profile was activated on July 2013.

2.4 Typical Finnish Company

Statistics Finland (2014) defines small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) accordingly:

“...enterprises which have fewer than 250 employees, and have either an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million (EUR 40 million before 2003), or an annual balance-sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million (EUR 27 million before 2003) and which conform to the criterion of independence as defined below”.

In Finland 77 per cent of the about 322 000 enterprises employ less than 10 people. If agriculture, forest, and fish industries are excluded, the percentage is 93.4 per cent (Federation of Finnish Enterprises 2014). How Violins is one of these smallest of the small enterprises but regardless of its size in staff the business is set to have the good practices of customer-oriented communication incorporated in all business functions from the get-go.

Yet when reading business communication theories, a great majority addresses communication function from a big corporation perspective. The following chapter aims to bring the theories closer to the communication functions per se, disregarding the corporate-style organisation of communication within departments, silos, and professional titles.

3 Framework

This section provides a crosscutting introduction on the multiple concepts and frameworks that a current stakeholder communication, especially online, should consider. Each theoretical entity here could consume an extended literature review alone. This chapter is therefore set to make it clear how each concept is understood and used for this study.

In this chapter I will define Web 2.0 and then contrast the traditional concepts of corporate communication against those of the digitalized age, bearing the small and medium-sized companies' perspective in mind. This is done through the case company How Violins and the communication development work that was done for it.

3.1 Web 2.0

Whosoever desires constant success must change his conduct with the times. Niccolo Machiavelli

Web 2.0 is a term used to describe the updated online reality of infrastructure, culture, and spacetime that followed the Internet and World Wide Web exuviations, and the burst of the dot-com bubble around the year 2006. The original World Wide Web – project was publicized by CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research) on August 1991. The ‘www.’ –feature gave the Internet a public interface. (Argenti & Barnes 2009, 4-10.)

The key features distinguishing Web 2.0 from the early times of Internet utilization are the shifts from observation to participation, from static to dynamic, and from monologue to conversation. The Internet is no longer dominated by published content, as the user-generated content represents almost half of all the content online. The essence of the phenomenon is the co-creation of content. This reality together with, or partly because of, the increase from 45 million global web users and 250 000 sites in 1996 to over 1 billion global users and 80 000 000 sites in 2006 have created a whole new reality of the Web that deserves the update 2.0. (Argenti & Barnes 2009, 8-10; Kumar & Bezawada 2014, 32.)

Overall, web technology has developed organically without centralized administration or protocol. Big media houses were among the first to explore the potential of the Internet as one of their service platforms, not just providing their contact information like a digital business card, but their core product itself – the news. Now, in the era of Web 2.0, it is imperative to all business to have more than a Web address and a passive site. Argenti and Barnes (2009, 11) list the following technological platforms and iterations as just some to feature the essence of Web 2.0. These are: blogs, social networks, video-sharing platforms, search engine marketing and optimization, corporate Web sites/online newsrooms, wikis, and mash-ups. (Argenti & Barnes 2009, 5-11.)

Relating to the multiple channels available, the founder of Virilion, Shabbir Imber Safdar (in Argenti & Barnes 2009, 64), suggests as a rule of thumb that if your audience is more than one million, you should publish something on your Web site several times a week. This content can then be further adapted to e-mail, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, or other channels depending on where the audiences are. Crucial here is to remember that though the content may be of the same source, the messaging cannot be the same regardless of the channel. (Argenti & Barnes 2009, 64.) Though How Violins is yet to see its first million audience members, it is vital to understand that content has to be adapted to its environment. Even on a smaller scale, ‘cut and paste’ is not a good communication practice.

Social Media

“So much so is the power of user engagement through social media that it is not only important for firm’s reputation, sales, and survival, even the Pope has started using social media to reach out to everyone” (BBC 2012, in Kumar & Bezawada 2014, 33).

Social media is an interactive, flexible, engaging, fast, easy, and global arena for digitally wired consumers. These consumers spend more time on networks than any other online media. Though social media has been recognized as a powerful marketing tool, challenges in measuring the return on investment have arisen regularly, mainly due to

the lack of understanding of the correlation between consumers' social media and purchase behaviour. (Kumar & Bezawada 2014, 2-3, 6.)

Kumar and Bezawada (2014, 6) suggest that as firms join the social networks in order to create contact with their potential or existing customers, and thus boost their brand awareness, the audience may respond in two different ways; engage or interact. Engagement refers to the need for the customer to sign-up ("Like" on Facebook) or register ("Follow" on Twitter) with the firms. This allows the firm to communicate to its audience directly, but engaging is passive as it is only allowing one-way communication. Interaction refers to the further actions of re-tweeting, liking, sharing, and commenting that the public may do. The framework of participation through interaction and/or engagement lacks the multidimensionality of customers' psychology and is hence just one way to categorize customer reactions. Vital for the communication measuring is, however, that only the ones who are engaged can be measured with the tools the firms may have. And evidently, besides these response alternatives elaborated here, there is always the option of inactive response where one neither interacts nor engages. (Kumar & Bezawada 2014, 7-11.)

When discussing consumer behavior and the rationale to participate in a firm's social media sites, Kumar and Bezawada (2014, 9) state that "consumers participate in firms' social media sites to seek information about their offerings and possibly to make purchases". On the occasion of possible problem recognition and relevant information search, the consumers who are already engaged with the firm are one step closer to their need. The rationale for the consumer's social media participation is however not this simple. Kumar and Bezawada (2014, 12) have identified four observable and measurable antecedents that affect consumer behavior. These are 1) the firm's social media efforts, 2) the consumer's social media activities, 3) marketing-mix efforts, and 4) consumer characteristics.

The strengthened customer-firm relationship is mutually beneficial, even if challenges exist in defining the objectives firms may have on their social media activities, and on identifying the impact of these activities on sales. (Kumar & Bezawada 2014, 9-14.)

There are three main metrics to follow the social media impact on sales. These are 1) leads generated and converted (i.e. the number of prospects originating from a social media campaign), 2) average purchase quantity of the socially connected consumers, and 3) overall revenue (Kumar & Bezawada 2014, 16, 30). Further measurements on sales correlation do exist but are not tackled in this paper further as the realistic objectives of How Violins are not to have an instant revenue climb due to its social network presence or blogs. However, How Violins is interestingly aligned with the three main reasons why most of the business-to-business companies would join social networks. These are creating brand awareness, encouraging social sharing, and gaining trust and followers (Kumar & Bezawada 2014, 16, 30).

The predictions of social media's future are bright, though the role it will have in B2B communication is yet to be seen. At How Violins, the fact that social media is here to stay has been accepted and treated as an equally natural thing to needing to have a street address for the boutique. Not everyone enters the door, but the door has to exist for the customers to come in. Similarly, not every update or post creates sales, but for the firm to exist it should exist also online. The ever evolving and dynamic social media combines features of traditional and new, and mass and personalized media (Kumar & Bezawada 2014, 30-31).

With these all-integrating features of social media, one can easily agree with Bryan Kramer (Figure 1); the times of 'business to business' or 'business to customer' – thinking are past, and the era of 'human to human' is present.

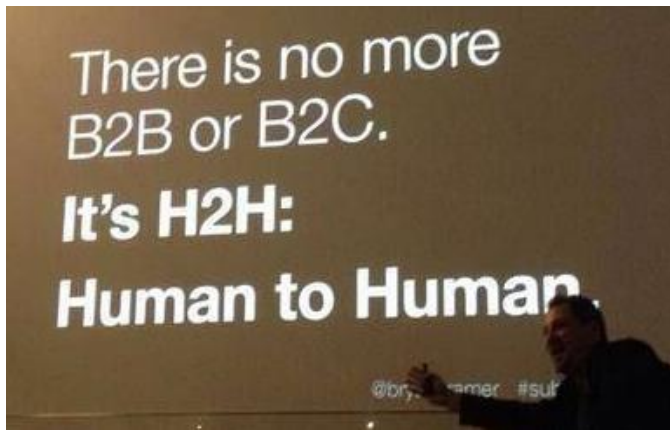


Figure 1: Human to Human Communication (Kramer 2017)

The prosperous future of social media will require the companies to have clear coordination of their integrated marketing efforts and skills to adapt to the technological requirements set by increasing mobile and tablet use (Kumar & Bezawada 2014, 32). As an example of this Shareaholic (in Talouselämä 2014) reveals that the use of Facebook via mobile devices increased 197% from September 2013 to January 2014.

Web Analytics

The Web Analytics Associations (in Kaushik 2007, 2) have proposed their first standardized definition of web analytics in 2006 as follows: “Web analytics is the objective tracking, collection, measurement, reporting, and analysis of quantitative Internet data to optimize websites and web marketing initiatives.” The organic development of sophisticated web analytics, as we know it today, has followed the steps of the development of overall web usage. The first hits were found on server error logs, following log file analysis programs, and finally around mid 90’s a feature called “counter” brought statistics understandable to others beyond the IT-sphere. Commercial web analytics followed several years later, as did the standardizing JavaScript log files replacing the original, and problematic, web server log files. A significant step towards data democracy was made in 2006 as Google released its free tool: Google Analytics. From then on, web analytics was not only for the wealthy corporations that could afford it but equally available for web-savvy SMEs. Other vendors followed the launch and the public may expect ever-easier visualizations of the complicated data on the websites and their users (Kaushik 2007, 2-5; Kaushik 2010, 3).

Web usage and investments have reached the stage where results are expected to be proven. A challenge here is that though multiple reports and excessive data are available, the ability to analyze and draw conclusions for further actions based on this data is still possessed by few. Traditional, and outdated, metrics to analyze on the web are for example page views, hits, and website engagement. None of these, however, bring deep understanding of a website's success *per se*. It is vital to develop sensitivity on *why* the numbers are what they are, and are they meeting our needs, or more importantly, the needs of the website visitor. Kaushik (2010, 9) suggests that searching for this why is best done through surveys, lab usability testing, remote usability testing, and direct customer feedback; suggesting hence that the next step for web analytics development goes beyond the use of clickstream tools. (Kaushik 2007, 6-7, 9-12; Kaushik 2010, 9.) The metrics that are used at How Violins are explained in chapter 4 together with their analysis.

Active consumers on social media help firms build their brands. This participation also provides the metrics to measure the effectiveness of companies' brand building efforts. Kumar and Bezawada (2014, 15) summarize that the "...number of fans/followers (i.e. participation through consumer engagement) could be used to measure brand awareness, whereas number of comments, liking, mentions, shares etc. (i.e. participation through consumer interaction) could be used to measure brand image." Added value to the brand is brought by the profiles of these participants (Kumar & Bezawada 2014, 15).

The research project at How Violins took place on a multichannel reality and these channels provide various data to interpret. The way the metrics are interpreted and earmarked to different communication efforts, like in the above example, is context-related. Included below are the metrics used in this thesis.

Bounce Rate

Bounce rate refers to the percentage of visitors who enter the site and leave it instantly rather than continue their visit, viewing other pages within the same site. It can hence be described as a behavioral metric.

The common rule of thumb is that the lower the percentage the better the website. Though this metric is one of the most intuitive to interpret, and the wide consensus among website owners is that the aim is indeed to have engagement, i.e. “clicks” on the website, even this metric cannot be assessed in a vacuum (Kaushik 2010, 52-53, 77, 93).

Personally I am one of those website consumers who get easily annoyed if disturbed by advertisements and invitations to become a subscriber of the website content. Therefore I would argue that, for example, encyclopedia-styled websites showcase efficiency and solid user experience with higher bounce rates. It should not always then be valued that people need to click this and that on the site. Also, if all the website visitor needs to know is where the shop is, it is great if that information is found on the first glance without further digging.

Unique Visitors and Visits

‘Unique visitors’ refers to unique browsers that are used to visit the website. Visits then measure a particular session by that unique browser. Hence, even if you have one unique visitor, that same visitor may do several separate visits. (Kaushik 2010, 55.)

For How Violins the nature of the business is that no hasty purchase decisions are made. The language and style to communicate on the web site is not pushy – quite the contrary. Therefore the unique visitors are the ones to keep closer in mind with the assumption that when contemplating an instrument purchase, several visits to the related sites will follow.

Pageviews and Pages / Visit

Related to the visits, *Pageviews* is a total number of pages that are viewed over a visit. Another overall metric is *Pages/Visit*, which reveals the average amount of pages that are clicked per visit. The higher the number, the deeper the visit is on the website. A high number, however, does not quarantine a quality visit. It could also indicate navigation challenges (Kaushik 2010, 57, 77; Google Analytics Help 2014).

Average Visit Duration

This metric informs how long people stay on the site. However, the clock only starts ticking when the visitor enters the next page. The first one is part of the bounce, which was explained earlier. As in all metrics, the average time on site does not reveal if the stay on site served the purpose of the visitor; it only gives the time. A way to analyze the data is correlating it with for example Pages/Visit. If the visitor is going through several pages but overall spent little time on site it could be argued that the visitor was looking for something and did not find it (Kaushik 2010, 56, 77).

% New Visits

New visit percentage indicates the amount of new people (or browsers) of all the visitors on the website. For growth and brand awareness, building a high % here is appreciated. However, old visitors may have a calming effect on the metrics, with less bounces and more time spent on the site (Kaushik 2010, 77).

Keywords

‘Keywords’ is not a metrics in itself but requires to be defined here. Keyword is the word used in search that led a visitor to a website. Relating to search engine optimization (SEO) work, *Keywords* play a significant role. They are the number one opportunity to know what the visitor is interested in at the website. Beyond the high-listing keywords as entries to the website, the keywords with high bounce rates are informative.

They indicate the information the audience is seeking from the site and which however disappoints them (Kaushik 2010, 80).

Search Engine Optimization

Search engines provided by vendors like Google, Bing and Yahoo! are gateways for the website users to find the content they are interested in. One types keywords or words in the search bar and the best matching websites are listed organically within a fraction of a second. The branded website, i.e. the ones that have paid to show up in the search, show up at first. Showing up in these searches is crucial for businesses, and search engine optimization is the function encompassing all the modifications that make the website search engine friendly. The better the SEO work, the less money needs to be invested in showing up on the search (Kaushik 2010, 101).

The SEO work is done at the backend of a website starting with the right kind of code, clear and logical page hierarchy and headings, optimized domain names, and efficient interlinkages. Keyword inserting to match the content on each site is an essential part of SEO. However, “cheating” by stuffing false keywords just to have as many as possible leads is penalized. Besides many technical solutions, accurate meta-descriptions guide both search engines and the searchers toward the right websites (Kaushik 2010, 101; Enge et al. 2010, 182-194, 207-211, 214-216).

The above metrics and tools only cover the ones actively used for the work at How Violins and that are discussed later in this chapter. For further improvements in the future, the supporting metrics of other channels and platforms require additional familiarization. Also, on the development work, it is essential to remember that quantitative data does not reveal the nature of the engagement (positive or negative) and when overlaying one’s own opinion or interpretation on understanding the metrics one is at risk of being on a wrong path (Kaushik 2010, 57). Before introducing the metrics data from How Violins, the end of this subchapter introduces the primary channels and tools that were used online.

Google Analytics

Google Analytics is the tool that, as discussed earlier, changed the game of web analytics by making it available to all website owners regardless of their size. The above metrics are defined the way they are interpreted and used on Google Analytics' platform. The following social media channels do have some graphs and data of their own, but even regarding those Google Analytics makes it easier to compare and analyze the efforts made in these various channels.

“Inbound marketing software”

Due to a business secret, the brand name of this tool is not revealed in this paper. However, the tool at use is developed by the creators of the inbound marketing concept and the software tool is interlinked to all the social media channels that the company uses to generate traffic and leads to its website and ultimately to its sales. Where Google Analytics reveals the outcome of the work, this tool provides a working checklist of things that can be further optimized.

Facebook

Facebook was founded on February 2004 to give people the opportunity to share, stay connected with friends, family, and the world, and on 2012 it already had over 1 billion active users (Facebook 2014a). If all Facebook profiles are real, 17.2% of the world population are registered users of the platform (Facebook 2014b, Census 2014). The estimate for Finland is that more than every third person is on Facebook (Helsingin Sanomat 2014). The white paper by comScore (2012) in collaboration with Facebook suggests three key metrics for companies to follow on Facebook. These are 1) fan reach (exposure of Facebook ad in the fans news feed), 2) engagement (fan interaction with ad content), and 3) amplification (Facebook ad exposure by friends of fans) (Kumar & Bezawada 2014, 26).

Twitter

Twitter is an online messaging application with 500 million (Wasserman 2012 in Kumar & Bezawada 2014, 3) users worldwide generating \$259.9 million in annual ad revenue (eMarketer 2012 in Kumar & Bezawada 2014, 3). Each post, or tweet, is limited to 140 characters and the platform is regarded as a good place to engage influential stakeholders such as industry analysts, communication professionals, journalists, social media influencers, and corporate executives. Twitter may not serve all industries and companies, but successes in customer service and Twitter use have been identified (Argenti & Barnes 2009 66-68; Kumar & Bezawada 2014, 3).

LinkedIn

Launched on 2003, LinkedIn is the largest professional network in the world. It has 250 million members in more than 200 countries. LinkedIn brings the users closer to job opportunities and work-related updates (LinkedIn 2014).

Google+

Ironically, when typing on the Google search engine bar “What is Google+” on 25 March 2014 none of the first page search results give a Google definition on their product. However, it is Google’s social network platform, which competes with Facebook and has similar functions. Google+ is interlinked with other Google products such as email (Gmail) and cloud storage (Google Drive) services (Google 2014a). Though Google+ with its 300 million users is the second-largest social network in the world, its added value for the companies is related to the SEO boost which having an account enables (USA Today 2013; The New York Times 2014; Search Engine Watch 2013).

To summarize the use of the various social media platforms these two images (Figures 3 and 4) circulating on social media serve the purpose. The first image is made by a

cartoonist, John Atkinson, but the latter, recreated and released among many by Tight Line, cannot be traced to its origins.

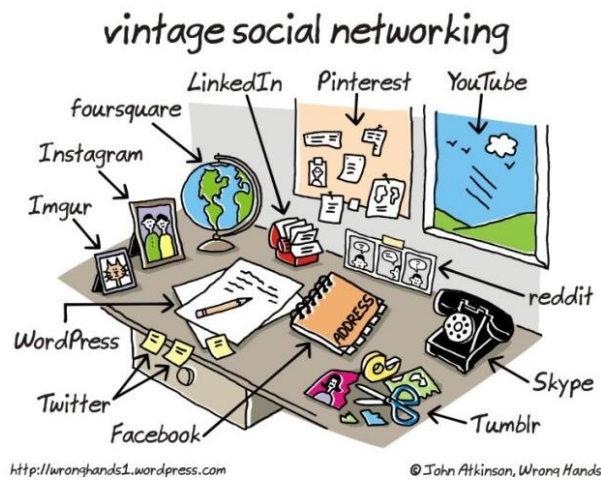


Figure 2: Vintage Social Networking
(John Atkinson 2013)

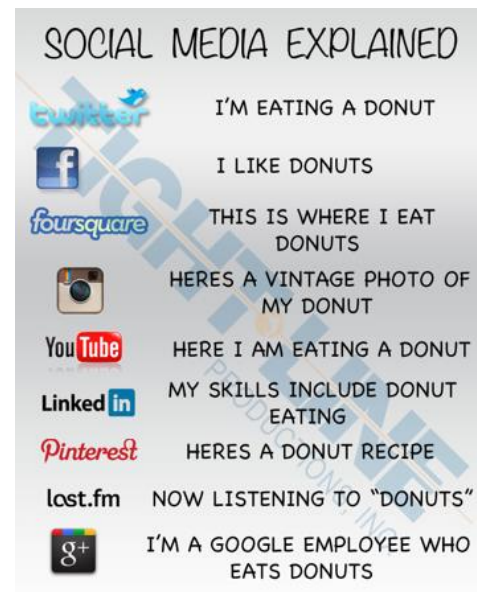


Figure 3: Social Media Explained
(Tight Line 2012)

3.2 Strategy and Communication

"Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat." Sun Tzu

"Eloquence is the power to translate a truth into language perfectly intelligible to the person to whom you speak." Ralph Waldo Emerson

Communication has several meanings and layers depending on the context. In this study, communication refers to the interaction, information exchange, and dialogue between individuals, or bigger entities and groups. Communication does not only refer to the technical data and information exchange processes, but also to the relationship between the communicators. For communication, its form may play as significant a role as its content does – in some cases even bigger (Juholin 2001, 18).

Corporate strategy determines where the company wants to go on a long term. It is the vision of a desired future that all members of the company are working towards.

Communication functions should be designed to follow, reflect, and support the business strategy, but this does not mean that communications is only a tactical function in the company and should not have a role in the strategy formulation.

Traditional communication functions within corporations have been divided under internal and external communication, which both entail various sub functions such as PR and stakeholder communication (Ferguson 1999, 8; Juholin 2006, 64, 140, 186; Cornelissen 2008, 194; Agenti 2007, 41-57; van Riel and Fombrun 2007, 260-261).

Van Riel and Fombrun (2007, 3-25) introduce “integrated communication” as the modern model of corporate communication. According to them, this brings the fragmented communication functions of management communications, marketing communications, and organizational communications better in sync, allowing the highly desired effectiveness of all internal and external communication efforts.

The outcome of successful corporate communication according to van Riel and Fombrun (2007, 31) is achieved change in knowledge, attitude, and behaviour. They, however, agree that generating all three with same communication efforts may be hard, and even damaging, if attempted. Other means to define successful communication is whether it is honest and symmetrical (Grunig 1992 in van Riel & Fombrun 2007, 33) or when it is accountable and has adopted measurable success criteria (van Riel & Fombrun 2007, 31-36).

Among the key tasks of corporate communication that van Riel and Fombrun (2007, 23) list are the corporate branding and aligning work on the desired company identity and its brand features. “Brand awareness refers to the accessibility of a brand in consumers’ memory that leads to brand recognition, whereas brand image refers to consumer perception of a brand as a result of the association held in consumers’ memory that leads to possible consumer-brand engagement” (Kumar & Bezawada 2014, 15).

Out of several definitions, van Riel and Fombrun (2007, 39) summarize that “brands create images in the minds of observers.” This is done with the combination of verbal, visual, and emotional cues. Corporate brand is a representation of a company and is created with its name, visual identity, symbols, motto, products, and services. Corporate brand unites all its separate products or businesses (Argenti & Barnes, 2009, 49; van Riel & Fombrun 2007, 39, 107).

In bigger companies, a debate between investments in product branding vs. corporate branding happens, and it may even be relevant (van Riel & Fombrun 2007, 107). However, for an SME that provides services and is fully dependent on a top-notch reputation, the focus naturally falls on corporate branding efforts.

Van Riel and Fombrun (2007, 27-28, 132) suggest four tools for branding work, the first being the application of visual identity systems, which covers the language, style, and nomenclature (meaning names and symbols) of the company. For this part digital platforms and social media have merely brought a few more touch points to align with the existing website, presentation material, and marketing. It is little work for a graphic designer to apply a coherent look and feel on, for example, a company website. The language, on the other hand, may be harder to define. Does the company tweet with “We” or even “I”? If a comment should be replied, is it done casually or in a passive corporate tone? Online interactivity indeed requires a careful sense of the tone of the brand. When deciding the tone and channels the primary question for How Violins is whether it is to communicate with an ‘inside-out’ strategy or ‘outside-in’. In other words: will the language and emphasis be dictated to match the needs of a particular stakeholder group in mind (outside-in) or will How Violins focus on being ‘true’ to itself and not try to please any particular group in mind (inside-out). This decision is both a question of stakeholder strategy and that of branding and will be discussed more in chapter four.

The second tool is the use of *integrated marketing communications*, which I will discuss more under stakeholder communication. Here I want to cover the third and fourth, which have little relevance for SMEs. The third tool is to rely on coordinating teams,

and the fourth is the adoption of centralized planning systems (van Riel & Fombrun 2007, 27-28, 132). Though coordination and centralized planning for sure are vital for a coherent brand, again, in a company of only few workers this should not require separate attention. Coordination of all tasks is a fundamental part of the existence of the company and the hectic reality does not digest separate bureaucracy-adding functions.

Communication Planning

When planning communication, one should first narrow down the parts of the communication that are being tackled. All communication planning, however, starts with certain grounding steps that are driven from the reasoning for the organization to exist – its mandate. Ferguson (1999, 4) outlines these steps to be 1) clarifying the mission statement with values and the tied guiding principles, 2) conducting a situation audit, and 3) identifying the audiences. These steps cannot precede the strategic corporate planning (Ferguson 1999, 4).

Ferguson (1999, 14-16) suggests five types of communication plans. Those are Strategic, Operational, Work, Support, and Crisis Communication Plan. A *Strategic Plan* is both general and abstract and can be done either on an annual or multiyear basis. It should be a supplementary part of the business plan and in comparison to an operational plan it represents the “what”; the destination. An *Operational Plan* then represents the route to the destination, the “how”, and is hence general but concrete by nature. A *Work Plan* is more concrete and specific extension of the operational plan in actions, methods, milestones, and indicators of success. A *Support Plan* is in fact the most common type of communication plan, as it is focused on managing a specific activity (i.e. event, campaign, issue). This plan should have both strategic and operational components, as well as the performance indicators together with suggested methodologies. The fifth plan is a *Crisis Communication Plan*, which is an integral part of an overall crisis management plan. A simplified description is that a crisis communication plan is similar to the support plan with the constraint that the issue to be communicated is yet

unknown. Vital elements of this type of a plan are the code of conduct and the chain of command (Ferguson 1999, 14-16).

Web 2.0 has surely challenged the above planning ideals with its fast and dynamic nature. It is vital for the digital communication respondents hence to be close to, and familiar with, the overall strategic plan as well as the everyday business actions in order not to get lost with every swing in the digital arena. Also, even in the digital scene the results are to be expected in 3 to 5 year cycles (Luukkonen in Juholin 2006, 253-254).

For any plan, the measurement for success ought to exist. Mike Daniels of Report International (in Argenti & Barnes 2009, 60) declares: "Research should be the foundation of any communication plan or strategy..." His rationale relies on the requirement of accountability and ability to prove their worth, which all business acts should have. Although Daniels refers to market researchers and media analysts that bigger corporations surely can afford, I would argue that the same main principle applies also to smaller businesses. Also, the availability of tracking tools for the digital platforms explored earlier brings the key figures easily for any CEO. Depending on the communication campaign, success can be measured with, for example: impressions, visits, page views, and click-throughs (Argenti & Barnes 2009, 60, 70). The ones at use at How Violins are elaborated in chapter 4.

3.3 Traditional Stakeholder Communication ft. Digital Age

A stakeholder is an "individual or group that can affect and be affected by the actions of a corporation" (Argenti & Barnes 2009, 2). According to van Riel and Fombrun (2007, 181) there are five key stakeholder groups. These groups, and the traditional corresponding business units addressing their particular issues in brackets, are employees (internal communications), customer (marketing communications), investors (investor relations), government (government relations), and the public (public relations). Argenti and Barnes (2009, 2) add to the list, or merely break the 'public' into smaller segments of media, analysts, nongovernmental organizations, lobbyists, and activists. These divisions, however, root from traditional corporate communication theory, and the Authentic Enterprise CEO Report by the Arthur W.

Page Society in 2007 (in Argenti & Barnes 2009, 2) uses the past tense when describing the above style of target audience communication (Argenti & Barnes 2009, 2; van Riel and Fombrun 2007, 181-206).

The present tense for stakeholder definition might still be in the making. For example, Sedereviciute and Valentini (2011, 230-234) mention the unknown stakeholders that the social media may uncover, but even they do not define who these stakeholders may be. More important than having stamps on each group is to understand how all these groups mix, interact, and impact one another. The practice of tailoring communication according to these different audiences and holding on to the sense of control over messages is challenged by Web 2.0.

Stakeholder communication as such is not to be put aside. The major shift is from communicating *to* stakeholders into communicating *with* them. In addition to this, the stakeholders can better communicate directly with one another, and compare their notes if they will, without the company acting as a mediator in between. The times of controlled messages have been overrun by two other C's; collaboration and community, resulting in the new kind of stakeholder empowerment (Argenti & Barnes 2009, 2-11).

Though control is no longer a key word relating to stakeholder communication, identifying the stakeholders is still useful for, if nothing else, visual sense-making. Here (Figure 4) is a simple example of a stakeholder map based on two-dimensional scale: those of *power* and *interest* originally introduced by Gardner et al. (1986). The vertical line maps the stakeholders according to their power, or influence, over the business. The higher on the scale, the more powerful the stakeholders are over the business. The horizontal line is to identify the interest of the stakeholder toward the company. The highest interest ranks towards the right on the line. The lower the interest of a stakeholder, the further towards the left that they are placed on the line. As a result of this mapping, it is easier to identify the most important stakeholders for the business. They are the ones who are high both in power and interest, and hence situated on the upper right corner of the figure.

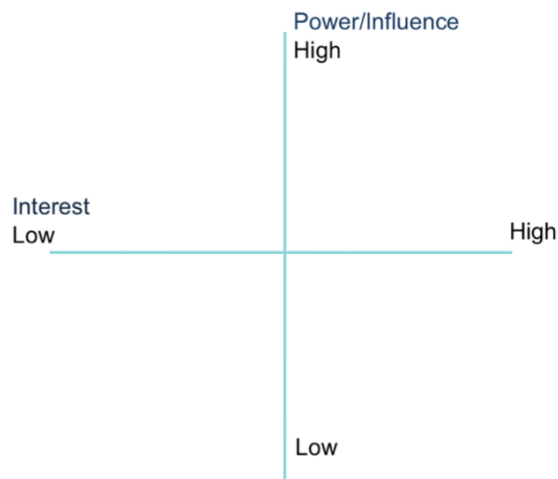


Figure 4. Stakeholder Mapping Tool

This simple model is challenged by the Mitchell et al. Stakeholder Salience Model (SSM) that suggests mapping the stakeholders according to their Power, Legitimacy, and Urgency. The matrix model from the 90's adds more layers and hence more understanding over the various needs of the stakeholders, and helps the communication professionals to prioritise their actions accordingly (Mitchell et al. 1997, 865-872).

For a small and relatively narrow niche business like that of How Violins the SSM – style mapping can, however, be quite a hit to self-esteem. There is no sense of urgency in the communication needs of the stakeholders, as purchasing a value instrument is a time consuming effort, and the actions in the workshop hardly tremble the global stock markets. Power is also very relative and boils down to reputation management. Obviously, music teachers are powerful in their multiplier position towards their employer, colleagues, parents, and students, but any stakeholder can affect the other in the field of music lovers. As for legitimacy, referring to contractual, legal, or moral rights (Mitchell et al. 1997, 861, 866), from a communication perspective these relationships are a part of different business actions. Banks and business registries, for example, expect normative paperwork with more solid accounting professionalism than that of communications.

Building on this primary division of stakeholder identification, Sedereviciute and Valentini (2011, 230) claim that organizations may not be able to recognize all their cur-

rent and potential stakeholders themselves, and that for this, social media provides opportunities. They suggest integrating SSM to their model of the Social Network Analysis (SNA). The core idea of Sedereviciute and Valentini (2011, 230) is that there are four types of actors on social media: *unconcerned lurkers*, *unconcerned influencers*, *concerned lurkers*, and *concerned influencers*. (Sedereviciute & Valentini 2011, 230-234).

The SNA model can be credited for its creation of understanding of social media's significance in the context of stakeholders, bridging hence the old and the new stakeholder theories. Also, relating to Mitchell et al. (1997, 861, 866) definitions on what constitutes power, legitimacy, and urgency, it is vital to understand the impact social media has had on these. However, being able to identify the new stakeholders online, out of whom the *concerned influencers* are the most vital ones, requires resources (Sedereviciute & Valentini 2011, 232). Personally I would argue that for a SME with a narrow niche the investment in this mapping system is difficult to justify. The risk is that all influencers and lurkers remain silent online on the topics that search engines might seek out of their posts. One cannot assume that every subject worth business is also worth a Facebook post. How often do we post about the pleasant joy ride on elevator? Yet we know KONE, the business behind so many of those elevators and escalators, is doing just well regardless.

Stakeholder communication in the era of Web 2.0 calls for integration of actions. Integration is not a new term, but it deserves to be covered here.

Integrated marketing communication (IMC), referred earlier in this paper by Riel and Fombrun (2007, 27-29), has its roots in the 1950s and in the marketing mix (Price, Product, Place and Promotion by Edmund J. McCarthy) that was accompanied by the supporting communication mix. In essence, the integration here refers to coordination, harmony, and consistency throughout all communication activities and channels. The Journal of Integrated Marketing Communication (in Argenti & Barnes 2009, 53-54) lists four features that create true IMC: customer centricism, data savvy, integrated business model, and effective branding. Common ground for marketing and corporate communications are now served online on a silver platter and the exercise of joint

efforts are reaching new levels on the viral and organic Web (Argenti & Barnes 2009, 48, 53-57; van Riel & Fombrun 2007, 27-28).

The marketing mix is still relevant today, but the emphasis of the platforms have changed. The three types of media (paid, owned, and earned) have been unevenly covered in the marketing literature, but the appeal of the lesser studied media is there for the obvious reason; lacking the term 'paid'. Owned media refers to any activity company has on the channels it owns. With the boom of social media the earned media (e.g. word of mouth or publicity) has increased its emphasis. Stephen and Galak (2012, 625) remind that the impact of earned media on sales is not easy to understand in the current situation where the traditional and social media channels coexist. However, though the study showcases that usage of both media have a positive impact on sales, investing in social media activity and word of mouth creation is a solid long-term investment (Kumar & Bezawada 2014, 13; Stephen & Galak 2012, 624-625, 636).

For How Violins, the owned and earned media emphasis is logical for two reasons. It serves the slow pace of the industry, where paid campaigns on magazines and TV would seem silly – “Special JFK violas in 16” available this week for a special price!” Also, it serves the relationship and educational emphasis that the business philosophy is thriving for. The roadmap for smart owned and earned media usage is provided by the methods of inbound marketing.

Inbound marketing is promoting a company through blogs, podcasts, video, eBooks, eNewsletters, whitepapers, SEO, social media marketing, and other forms of content marketing which serve to bring customers in closer to the brand, where they want to be. In contrast, buying attention, cold-calling, direct paper mail, radio, TV advertisements, sales flyers, spam, telemarketing, and traditional advertising are considered "outbound marketing". Inbound marketing earns the attention of customers, makes the company easy to be found and draws customers to the website by producing interesting content.
Wikipedia (2014)

Halligan and Shah, who are also the fathers of the term concept of ‘inbound marketing’, make a case example of Barack Obama’s campaign against Hillary Clinton when running for president in 2008. With less money and reputation, but more sophisticated permission marketing on digital space he can be benchmarked for any small business (Halligan & Shah 2010, 7-9).

For How Violins, the inbound marketing is not limited to the chosen channels of owned and earned media. Adapting the philosophy of earning the attention and not assuming it at How Violins extends to the attractiveness of the boutique and to the language used aligned with the negative politeness strategy introduced by Brown and Levinson (1987, 91, 132, 103).

3.4 Summary

Communication is exchange and dialogue between individuals or other entities. It is in a fundamental role in the implementation of company strategies. Web 2.0, referring to the technological infrastructures online, as a modern area of operation sets new demands for communication professionals. For example, the ability to utilize web analytics tools brings an asset to communication planning. Stakeholder communication and brand building are functions that benefit out of complete understanding and implementation of integrated communication planning.

This chapter has introduced some of the interdisciplinary frameworks worth noting when planning relevant, efficient, and measurable stakeholder communication. The value of this outline lies in showcasing the interconnectedness of all communication functions beyond the scientific borders. As mentioned already in the introduction to this framework, communication theories tend to emphasis communication functions from the big corporation perspective. For a small business, the ‘big picture’ is important in order to save resources from being lost in the technical chores that any communication or marketing function surely is full of and seems to demand addressing urgently.

4 Conducting the Research: Methodology and Data

The research methodology in this study adapted the methods of an Action Research. Action Research brings change in specific context and requires the researcher to be part of the project under study through observation, listening, evaluation, and critical reflection (Koshy et al. 2011, 1-2). This chapter introduces the methods for conducting the research as well as the rationale for choosing them, and the data gained from using them. As Chapter 5 later represents the research findings with further recommendations, this chapter already introduces the primary outcomes together with explanations on the logic behind them.

4.1 Overview of the Study

Before presenting the research process and analysing the results, this overview of the study establishes the methodological foundations for the study together with the re-statement of the research objectives.

Objectives and Questions

The driving force for conducting this research was to identify the best practices for a small business with limited resources to make the most of the opportunities embedded in the current World Wide Web in general, and to improve its stakeholder communication in specific.

The research question for this study is:

How can SME stakeholder communication development benefit from Web 2.0?

The supporting question is:

How can web analytics be employed in SME stakeholder communication development?

Researcher's Situated Perspective

In the beginning of this research my distance to the study topic was notable. I had worked with stakeholder communications for several years and had some exposure to the recommended organizational practices on social media, but I had never acquainted myself with web analytics. Also the world of stringed instruments, the context of the study, was unknown to me. The change that I was hired to do was the improvement of company communication and customer service.

For four and a half months I worked full time at How Violins, being primarily occupied with customer service. This work allowed me to get to know and understand the key stakeholders, i.e. the ones for whom improved communication acts were needed. Simultaneously I worked on all written platforms online where How Violins was visible. These duties together with the high quality standards of the company required a fast comprehensive learning of me. I was constantly briefed and educated by the CEO of the company on the products at hand, but also on his business philosophy and the motivating factors to be the best in his practise. These briefs were often fast checkups, but for all the website mock-ups, blog posts, and product and social media updates I had to question and interview him daily on several occasions also more properly.

My professional role is best described as acting as a bridge. I was the actor to materialize and to bring into daylight the business philosophy that was introduced in chapter two. I contributed the words and the face for How Violins.

Within the four months of time I was well exposed to both the power of well-timed Ad Words on Internet, as well as to the power of joining a well-fitted bridge and a polished fingerboard on to an old fiddle. Action Research creates knowledge through action and thus further personal or professional development (Koshy et al. 2011, 4). My work was constant action and reflection, correcting mistakes or updating the service after gaining better understanding of the cases at hand.

The Action Research that was conducted is described in detail under chapter 4.4. It introduces data collected from various web analytics tools. The fact that the data is in the form of graphs, numbers, and such ‘cold’ data could imply that this research is based on a positivist paradigm. After all, the epistemology on positivism relies on quantitative measures and the relationships between variables, as the ontology behind it is that there is an objective reality that can be gained from observable data (Koshy et al. 2011, 12; Saunders et al. 2009, 119).

However, because the data is an outcome of social behaviour, interpretivism (or phenomenology or constructionism) with its subjective ontology and socially constructed epistemology are closer to my worldview as a researcher. Action Research is considered also by Fisher (2007, 22) a “further development of interpretive research...” Koshy et al. (2011, 12-13) present the possibilities of placing Action Research under critical theory or participatory worldview. The critical theory could be supported with its dialogical methodology whereas participatory worldview, as driven from its name, implies for the involved role of the researcher in knowledge building (Guba & Lincoln in Booth & Harrington, 2005, 297; Koshy et al 2011, 13).

Like with the positivist philosophy, one could also argue that the study at hand could have been quantitative by its nature. After all, the data reveals information on “how often” and “how many” that are typical for quantitative research. However, my study is inductive, handling one particular case. Also its generalizability is unlikely due to the context-driven nature of analysing the data, and the causality is not clear; one can not assume law-like relationships between the variables investigated. Therefore the methodology is better ‘at home’ being qualitative, and for the strategy Action Research is the best suited for answering the research questions as it is the method involving planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and re-planning (Koshy et al. 2011, 1-2; Daymon & Holloway 2011, 3-12, 180).

Site Selection

The research project was agreed upon the work contract that I made with How Violins. The attractive factors of the business were the mastery, dedication, and dignity it entailed at the level of craftsmanship but also in serving the customer. Creation of a strong communication culture for business where one can support the product in all circumstances was an opportunity not to miss. Also combining the traditional fields of over 400 years of violin making and the rapidly erupted digitalized environment granted a fascinating exposure to opportunities, but also challenges.

Videogames and duels may start with choosing the weapons. I, however, entered my positive battle with a ready set of gear. The business functions had already been laid on specific service platforms before my time. Partly due to the budgetary reasons, but also my expertise not involving experience on various different CSR systems or website providers it was agreed that I would work on the existing platforms. I will therefore not discuss the selection of website platforms or the supporting software in use. I will only analyze the outcome of using these tools. As for the social media, How Violins was already present on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Google+ and a reserved place for YouTube existed. These would have been my choices as well due to their significance in the current social media arena (eBrand Suomi Oy 2013). A decision to only concentrate on owned and earned media was also done prior to the study. The decision was of budgetary nature and for a SME budgetary reasoning is very concrete; there is no recreational fund for the annual Christmas party to pinch from, or anything alike. These existing conditions help in narrowing down the options and to keep them realistic, and in the later discussion will opt out the broader uses of any marketing mix.

Reflecting to the stakeholder mapping introduced in chapter 3, I decided to outline some of the How Violins stakeholders as follows (Figure 5). Here the notions of power and interest are approached from the sales perspective. In other words, who are the stakeholders having the most power and interest to create sales for How Violins? On top of the list are the music teachers in the top right corner of the matrix.

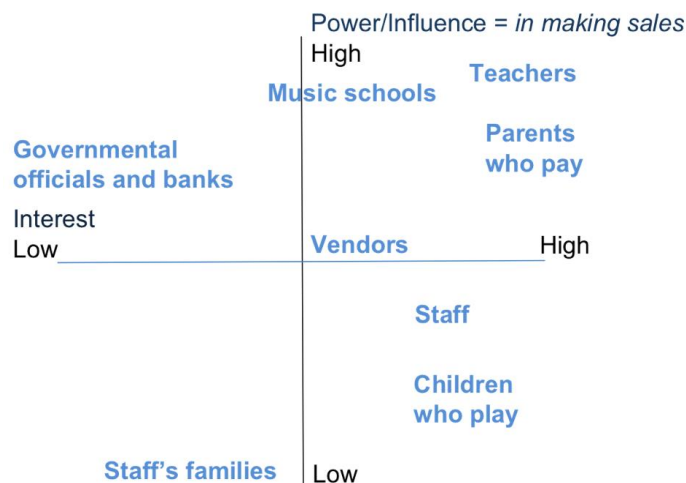


Figure 5. Stakeholders Mapping for How Violins

4.2 Data Collection Methods

The research data, which consists largely of Google Analytics reports on the How Violins website, the social media channels, and the additional host page graphs of the social media platforms, was collected over the time period of July 2013 and January 2014. Another stream of data is the notes and thematic interviews of the working discussions between the CEO and I over the four-month period when I worked for the How Violins. Most of the working documentation was done utilizing the ideas, sparring, and even templates provided by online business coaching that we both attended. The two companies with which we cooperated specialised in SME business and in inbound marketing. The data collection method focusing on online statistics reflects the arena where How Violins' communication efforts are set to take place – Web 2.0.

In addition to the data gained via the channels mentioned above, as a part of the work on further stakeholder communication plan I tested my ideas with my colleagues at the Haaga-Helia University of Applied Science. The group consisted of students in a Masters' Degree Programme in Communication Management. All but one of them was a second year student. The day I presented my communication plan there were 9 students to hear my presentation. They formed three groups of three people and spent approximately 20 minutes on discussing and making notes of my presentation. The feedback is on Attachment 1. All people contributing to the feedback were females who work in the field of communication besides their studies. A prerequisite for any-

one doing the mentioned Master's Degree is a Bachelor's Degree in a relevant field and at least three years of work experience in the field of communication (HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences 2014).

4.3 Procedures, Data and Outcome

In accordance to the Action Research's cyclical process, the data here is presented in phases together with the action outcome and the thought process it evokes. The data and its interpretations and results are based on the metrics that were introduced in chapter 3: bounce rate, unique visitors and visits, pageviews and pages/visit, average visit duration, % new visits, and keywords.

Phase One: Ground Work and Website Mockup

In July 2013 the starting point for the stakeholder communication development work was to identify the key stakeholders. This was done in a form of developing *buyer personas* or ideal customers together with the CEO (Attachment 2). The basis for developing the buyer personas was the three years' experience the CEO had running his business. Besides that he had served the same type of clientele for over ten years working as a luthier for a now-competitor. My experiences, even with lesser time serving the company, resonated with the generalizations introduced by the CEO and we decided to proceed with these half-fictionalized stakeholders in mind.

At the first stage, the decision was made to concentrate all communication efforts to resonate with these 'archetypes' the buyer personas provided. In order to do that, a style of managing the on site customer service, and the style and language of the website had to be decided. For this we discussed the positive and negative politeness strategies and developed a brand promise (Attachment 3) to help us stay aligned in all situations.

After a clear idea of who the website should be serving, the development work was started, still in July 2013. Attachment 4 demonstrates an example of the look and feel of the old website and the new one. The key elements were to bring clarity by decreas-

ing the layers on the website. Thinking of busy parents or music teachers, we wanted to serve them with fast access to the information they require. The visual elements on the website had to also be aligned with the idea of a boutique that is fine and prestigious, yet easy to approach. To do this, a white background with romantic images and as little as possible of varying colours, boxes, and fonts were established. The website was launched at its earliest possible stage on 29 July 2013 even though many elements were considered to require further fine-tuning.

The new website indicated immediate elements of an improvement. The indicators provided by Google Analytics showcase the results in both graphs and percentages. The chart below (Figure 6) showcases the *bounce rate* with a clear drop on the time of the new website launch. As explained earlier in this chapter, bounce rate refers to the percentage of visitors bouncing away from the website after the first page they have entered. Generally the thinking is that the lower the number on the bounce rate, the better the quality of the site is. Referring to that, the bounce rate drop was positive sign for healthy development.



Figure 6. Bounce Rate (Google Analytics)

Coinciding with the decreased bounce rate, the *average visit duration* decreased by 17.59 per cent. This means that the visitors spent less time on the website. However, though the average visit duration decreased, it is still demonstrating a well-targeted audience reach with the average of 2.46 minutes spent on the website. Within that time one has plenty of time to read the interesting parts.

Beyond the bounce rate and the average visit duration, also the *pages visited* decreased from the previous year 9.16%. This refers to the amount of sites a visitor goes through

during the visit and the decrease on this metric was the one to expect for sure as the website mock-up was dedicated to lessen the layers and hence the overall amount of pages.

These three factors together can be interpreted that the visitors 1) found the website interesting (low bounce rate), 2) found what they were looking for faster (visit duration), and 3) had more direct access to their content of interest (pages/visit).

Other changes in the website metrics took also place over the study period. *Unique visitors* are the browsers that are used to visit the site. The analytical tools can recognize them and differentiate the visits from these unique visitors (Kaushik 2007, 133-134). The fact that the 'How Violins' -site had a 55.23% increase in unique users compared to the year before at the same time is a strong indicator for healthy growth. This, however, cannot be explained with just things done on the website. The overall marketing mix and the growth of the brand awareness may be equally important factors to have impacted this growth.

Relating to *New and Returning Visitors*, just as Kaushik (2010, 86) noted, new visitors are always healthy sign for business. It is an indicator of wider brand awareness and only with new visitors can there be new customers. Hence it is a positive sign that the percentage of New Visitors increased for the website. Yet, the fact that a quarter of all visitors are still Returning Visitors is not alarming. The ideal ratio of the new and returning visitors is debated among experts and the outcome of these debates depends on multiple features of the business, and its website. The process of buying a valuable instrument might take even a year and within that year several instruments are tried and tested. Baring this in mind, I would expect there to always be a solid bulk of returning visitors to How Violins site.

The key changes that were elaborated above are collected from Google Analytics into the following collection (Figure 7).

13,055 people visited this site

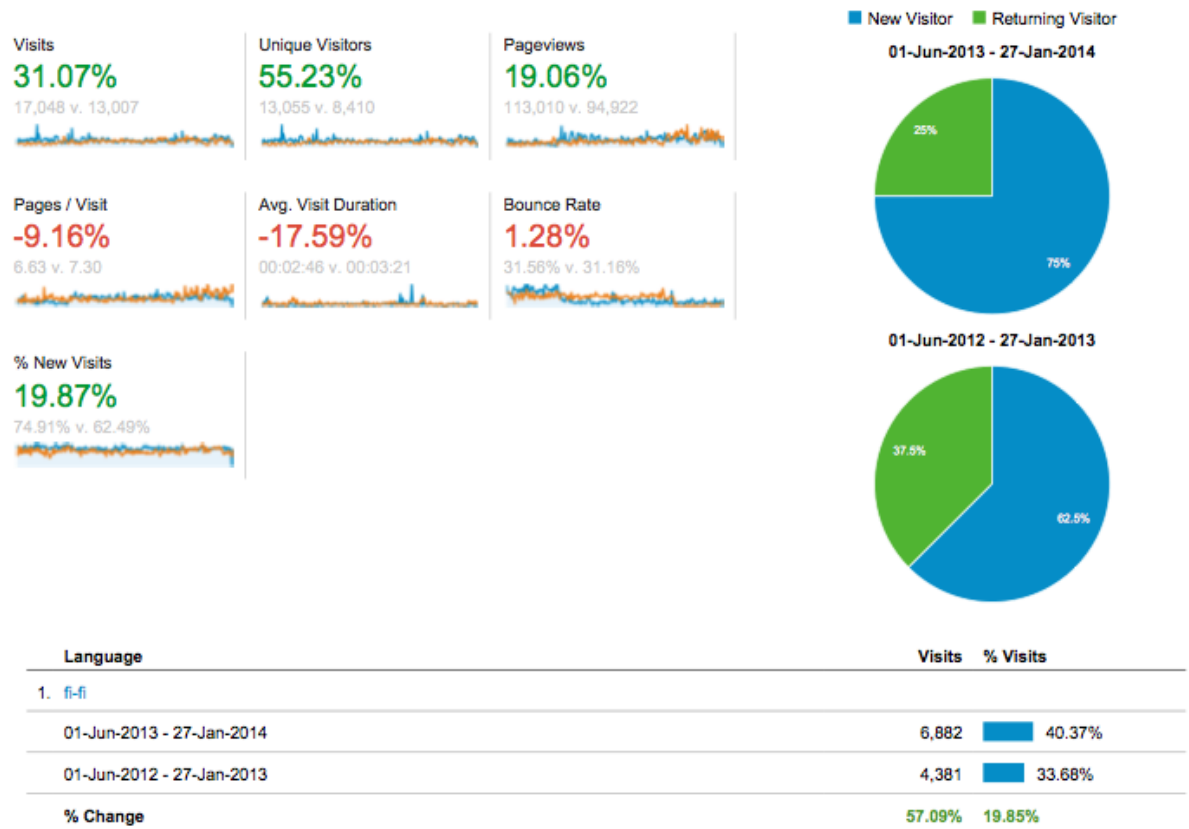


Figure 7. Overview of howviolins.fi web site changes (Google Analytics)

The content drilldown (Attachment 5) demonstrates the positive boost in page views around the key products: violin, cello, viola, double bass, and the repair work. *Behaviour flow* is not necessarily a metric but a way for Google Analytics to visualize the way people navigate on the website. It is like a linear map showing simultaneously at least four layers of 'routes' on which sites have been visited afterwards. Both the popularity of the page and the path to and from it are shown in behaviour flow. For How Violins, the individuals' behaviour flow (Figure 8) below (better readable in Attachment 6) exhibits a desired logic in, for example, finding a suitable sized violin with easy clicking. We can see that violins (viulut) are found more directly when people enter the website (increase as a landing page of 500% from previous year) and that from this generic landing page there are direct steps taken to specific violins (for example according to size like 4/4 which is the adult size) or then to the restoration site. The online customer behaviour resonates well with the core business servings.



Figure 8. Behaviour flow (Google Analytics)

Overall the website appears to have turned 'healthier' with the changes in its layout. The organic traffic is steadily growing as the statistics from Google Analytics demonstrates here:

Visits

01-Jun-2013 - 27-Jan-2014

Organic Unbranded Traffic

7,209

% of Total: **42.28%** (17,050)

Bounced Visits

5,380

% of Total: **31.55%** (17,050)

01-Jun-2012 - 27-Jan-2013

Organic Unbranded Traffic

4,495

% of Total: **34.56%** (13,007)

Bounced Visits

4,053

% of Total: **31.16%** (13,007)



Figure 9: Visits (Google Analytics)

Phase Two: Social Media and New Venue

As the website was launched and had proven immediate improvement, the development recourses were shifted to other touch points and means. A great effort was invested in the new venue. The renovations and the moving in required plenty of hands-on activity. The guiding principles for making the venue resonate with the brand are presented in Attachment 7. There were no systematic measurements to assess the work done on the venue, but we were confident of having made the right choices with it as every one of our guests who had been to the previous shop would demonstrate both verbally and with their kinetics being impressed as they came to visit the new venue. We were also requested by several different parties to arrange music related events and get-togethers in the new venue which for us was an indicator that, just as we wanted, people wanted to spend time at the boutique even if they did not have the need to buy or repair an instrument.

Though the physical space and using it as a means to communicate is not in the focus of this research, it deserves to be mentioned due to the impact and realization it led me to with the social media platforms. As mentioned earlier, the organization had a half-automated system, in which How Violins purchased blog texts from freelance blog writers and had them translated, after which the texts were published on the How Violins information centre. The automated notifications on new blog texts would be shown on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. This system was primarily set to improve the howviolins.fi-related search engine optimization, and it was clear that people did not show interest in the content created with this method. Figure 10 shows the numbers of how few people would go to howviolins.fi as a result of something going on in social media. The percentage peaks in comparing years 2012 and 2013 are impressive, but the actual scores of visits are relatively humble. For example the visits via Facebook had increased by 246.88%, but when looking into the actual visits on 2012, there were only 32 visits which means that only 111 visitors actually landed the How Violins site through Facebook on 2013 and that was enough to make such an impressive increase in the percentages. LinkedIn is even more impressive, with its 700% change, but the visits behind the percentage are 2 visitors on 2012 and 16 on 2013.

Visits by Social Network

Social Network	Visits
Twitter	
01-Jun-2013 - 27-Jan-2014	134
01-Jun-2012 - 27-Jan-2013	0
% Change	100.00%
Facebook	
01-Jun-2013 - 27-Jan-2014	111
01-Jun-2012 - 27-Jan-2013	32
% Change	246.88%
LinkedIn	
01-Jun-2013 - 27-Jan-2014	16
01-Jun-2012 - 27-Jan-2013	2
% Change	700.00%
Google+	
01-Jun-2013 - 27-Jan-2014	2
01-Jun-2012 - 27-Jan-2013	3
% Change	-33.33%

Figure 10: Visits by Social Networks (Google Analytics)

Now, returning to the venue and the move, we noticed that any image from the workshop or an update relating to the business move would create more likes and comments on Facebook than any content on famous violin players or other similar, generic themes that the blog had mainly contained. As the Facebook community was still counted in tens of people, one could judge from their behaviour and responses that the most active ones had a personal relationship with the shop, or with Mr. How.

This graph below (Figure 11) demonstrates the key figures of How Violins' Facebook connections. The overall number of 'fans' has grown, but the interaction with the site was higher over the summer time, when we published more pictures from the website and then the peaks on October around the time the shop moved to the new venue.

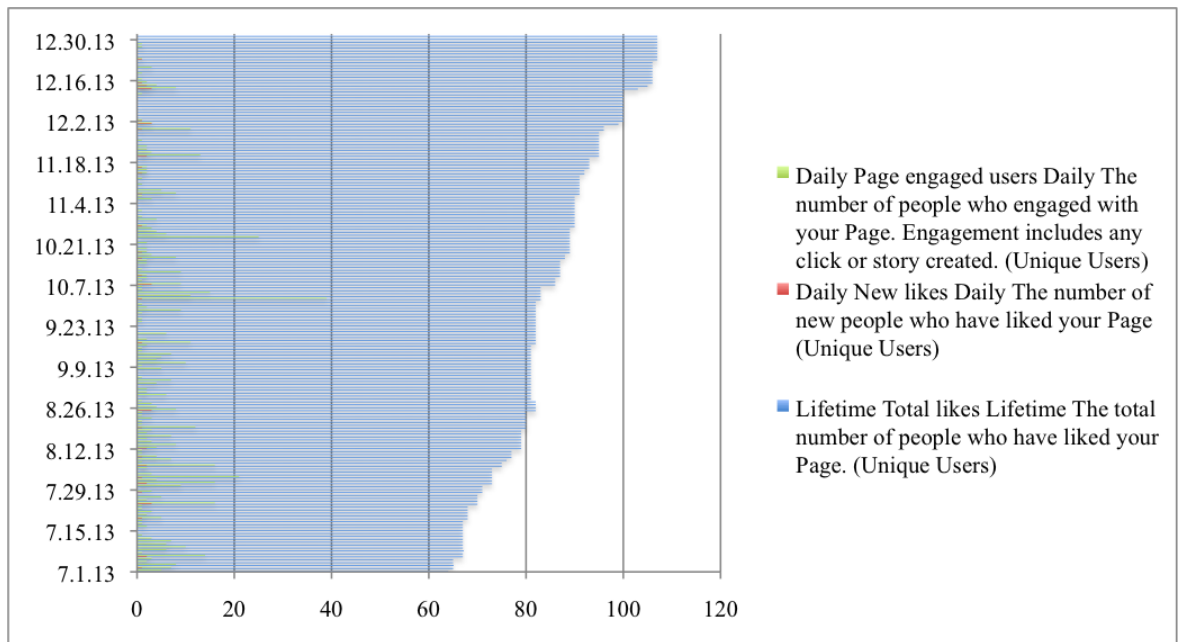


Figure 11. Facebook growth and interaction (Facebook)

Twitter and LinkedIn showed no signs of life with any updates whether they were generic or more personal. The following screen shots (Figure 12 and Figure 13) illustrate the non-viral LinkedIn site. Out of the two followers, I am the other one.

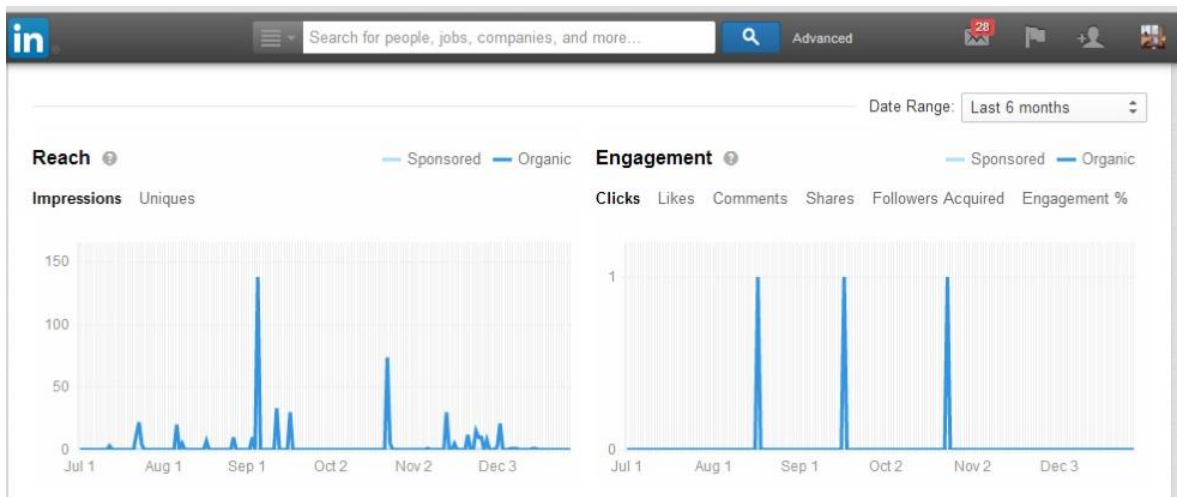


Figure 12. LinkedIn reach (LinkedIn)

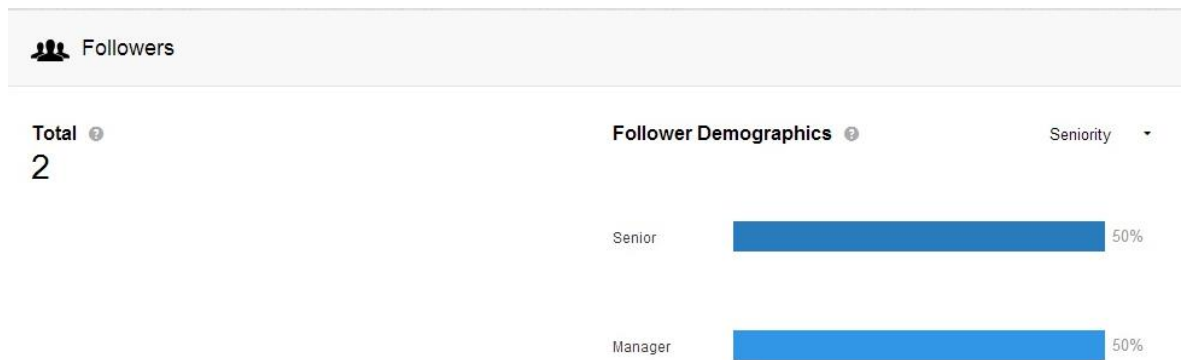


Figure 13. LinkedIn Followrs (LinkedIn)

After the move, the opening celebration on October, and settling properly to the new venue, it was clear where the next improvements should take place: in the content – both on social media and on the website.

Phase Three: From SEO to CEO

CEO stands for Customer Experience Optimization. Shifting from the SEO-driven communication strategy to the more customer minded strategy had to take place in three arenas. First was the optimization on the back end of the website software architecture. This involved the insertion of key words and adding the most suitable headers and meta descriptions for each site and product. The challenges that this phase involved was that Google Analytics recognizes 1222 products on How Violins website, though there actually are 2761 of them. In reality there are over 3000 products that could eventually be available online. Our experience is that to do a proper CEO takes about an hour per product. This amount of time we did not have. Choosing then the focus points of which products to tackle was aligned with the key products that make most of the turnover: instruments in their most common sizes. This decision was supported with the Google Analytics (Figure 8) on most visited pages.

The success in keyword setting and the website optimization takes time to measure because of the way Google “crawls” the websites and recognizes the improvements. The results can be validly measured only with several months’ time, but already now

we can tell with the following chart (Figure 14) provided by *Web CEO Online* that our keyword efficiency is the strongest among the competition.

The charts show the websites of How Violins and its primary competitors in Finland. The uppermost line (in red) on both charts is How Violins. The first graph indicates how the *keywords* How Violins is using is bringing better results to it than how the keywords are working for the competition.

The latter chart (in Figure 14) is showing how many top positions the keywords used are having in the search results. From both charts, the names of the competitors have been blurred.

Unfortunately, the data is available only from late October on. More improvement on keywords was done on November, and it would be interesting to see the results after six months, if the How Violins site is ranking even higher when comparing to its competition.

Competitors Overview for How Violins OY

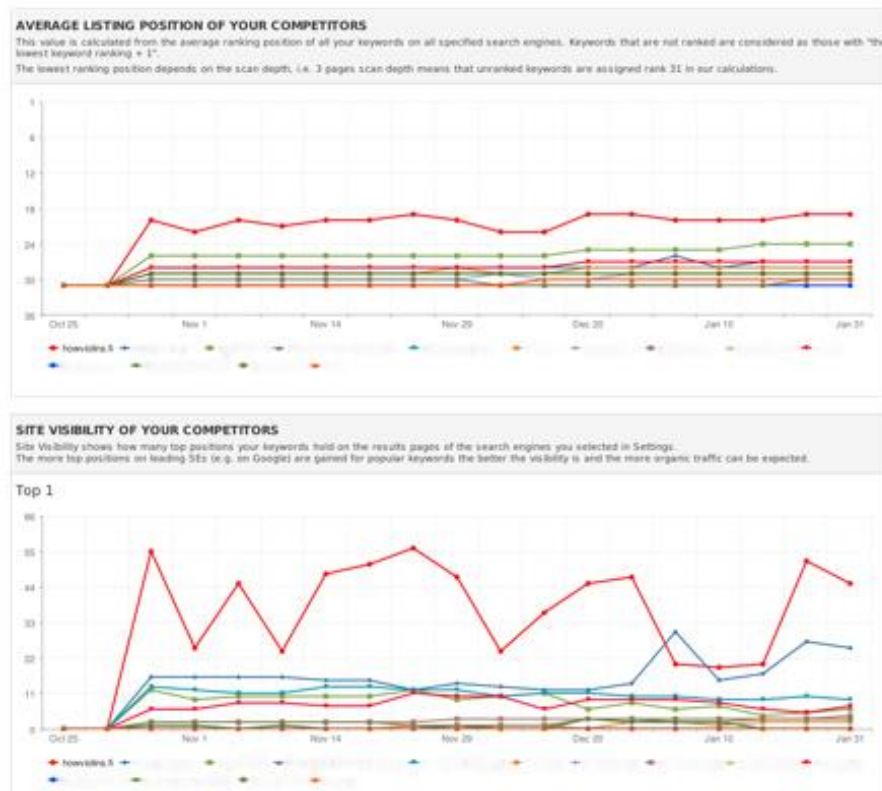


Figure 14. Competition Overview (Web CEO)

The new and more personal approach on the blogs only started just before the end of the research timeframe. I wrote one blog on a violin that was about to be restored, one on cello endpins, and one for the violinmakers on how to prepare the glue for wooden instruments. The first blog was to 'give face' both to the products but also to the man behind the work. As How Violins wishes to provide educational information and to shed light on the multiple factors constituting a fine instrument, this blog was the first to do so and it also brought the personal traits on Mr. How, introducing one of his favourite workshops from the turn of the 20th century. The blog post on cello endpins was set to offer a cross section on the variety of choices there are. This style of a post, we envisioned, could serve as a platform for professional musicians to share their views on matters of taste. With comments on professional choices we could achieve more viral online presence. The third post on glue was targeted to the less obvious, but to our experience surprisingly active, stakeholder group: the amateur violinmakers. The

CEO had been earlier teaching violin making at an adult education centre for people who wanted to make violins as a hobby. These amateur makers have proven to have an active network among them and an appetite for tips and guidance on all aspects of making any wooden stringed instrument. With the glue post we wanted to have something unique and targeted for these amateurs. With blog posts that are useful for them we also expected, eventually, to get questions posted on our site. Online discussion with amateur makers would also serve the professional musicians to better understand the delicate features that make a good and an extraordinary instrument.

Miracles did not happen overnight. No comments followed the blog posts and no one shared them on line. However, the following chart (Figure 15) proves a modest indicator that the direction chosen on more personal blog posts was right:

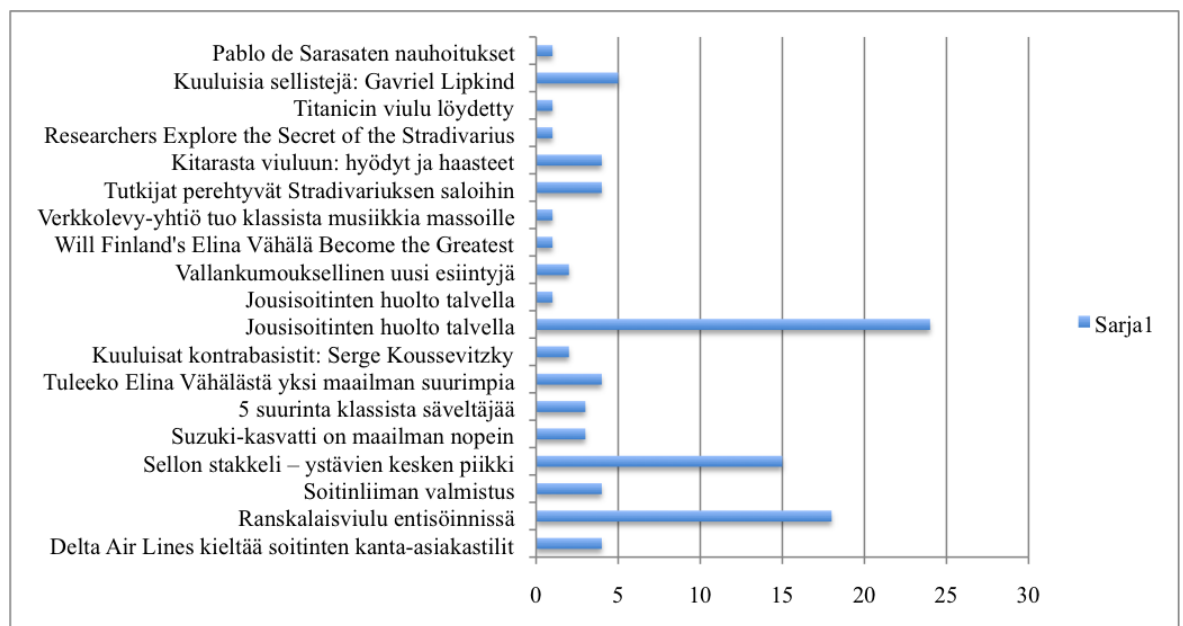


Figure 15. Most viewed blog posts (Inbound Tool)

The chart shows the names of all the blog posts posted over the research era fall 2013 starting with the posts on July 2013 on top of the list and having the posts from November at the bottom (approximately 2-4 posts per month). This chart was taken on January 2014 so no later views are part of the data. The numeric value below stands for the views each post has received. The scale is from 0 to 30 and it shows that none of the blog posts have hit the limit of over 25 views. The most viewed blog post here is the “Jousisoitinten huolto talvella” which was an old post relating to winter service for

wooden instruments that was republished in sync with the outdoor temperature drop. The other two posts having received more attention are the ones I wrote with the updated strategy in mind, described before.

Though the numbers of the blog views are modest, interestingly, the first two followers have registered to receive the How Violins updates on their email after these more targeted posts. Also, the violin described in the blog posts has collected interest in the shop and was most likely sold right after the restoration work is finished.

As for the social media platforms, the content resonated best on Facebook. This is logical as by its nature, Facebook is more social and intimate when compared to LinkedIn and Twitter.

How Violins' Twitter account has 34 followers, out of whom four are musicians, some are personal friends, and the remaining major bulk are marketing professionals of various vendors. With this demographic, we were not surprised that the channel seemed 'dead' at all stages of our communication efforts. Also LinkedIn appeared passive along the way. The assessment to be done on these channels are 1) how significant they are to invest more time to, and 2) how to tailor the content and make it more appealing for right kind of audiences in these specific channels. The outcome of this thinking is further elaborated in Chapter 5, but already at this stage it was clear that How Violins has no resources to start producing parallel content with differing messages for each different channel.

The current overview (Figure 16) on the top three social networks (Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn) reveals that of the visitors landing to How Violins' website from social media channels, the most come from Facebook. This is indicated with the visits number which for Facebook is 286, Twitter 155, and LinkedIn 32. The numbers of new visits correlate with the previous ones but interestingly, Twitter is the one with highest new visit percentage. This might explain why the bounce rate of Twitter is also significantly higher than that of the other channels. The social network bounce rates are higher than those of the direct traffic to How Violins website. However, since the so-

cial media content is linked to the How Violins information centre blog posts, it is natural that people may land on the blog post but then leave the visit there. Facebook and LinkedIn demonstrate similar values on bounce rate, pages/visit, and the average time people spend on the site, but because the Facebook brings significantly more visitors to the site, it is more valuable channel than LinkedIn. The comparable numbers from the previous year to the following chart do not exist.

Social Network	Acquisition			Behaviour		
	Visits	% New Visits	New Visits	Bounce Rate	Pages / Visit	Avg. Visit Duration
	494 % of Total: 2.79% (17,693)	69.03% Site Avg: 74.79% (-7.70%)	341 % of Total: 2.58% (13,232)	46.36% Site Avg: 30.76% (50.69%)	4.46 Site Avg: 6.73 (-33.78%)	00:01:09 Site Avg: 00:02:45 (-58.07%)
1. Facebook	286	55.59%	159	33.92%	5.49	00:01:27
2. Twitter	155	94.84%	147	78.71%	1.63	00:00:03
3. LinkedIn	32	43.75%	14	31.25%	5.09	00:02:30
4. Blogger	14	100.00%	14	0.00%	13.71	00:04:28
5. Google+	7	100.00%	7	0.00%	3.57	00:00:21

Figure 16. Social Network Development Jun 2013 – Jan 2014 (Google Analytics)

The End Situation

Reaching to the end of the Action Research the primary improvement for How Violins that resulted from the project work was the website. Not only is it looking and feeling more like How Violins' envisioned brand, but it also serves the customers better.

As the overall Audience Overview indicates (Figure 17), and as explained before, out of the 13519 unique visitors who came to the site over the period of 1 June 2013 – 31 Jan 2014, the customers find the website relevant (decrease in bounce rate) and spend a good amount of time (on average almost three minutes) on the page. They go through fewer pages (Pages/Visit) over this time, just as we have intended, even though the

overall web coverage has increased with more page views and a higher percentage of new visitors.

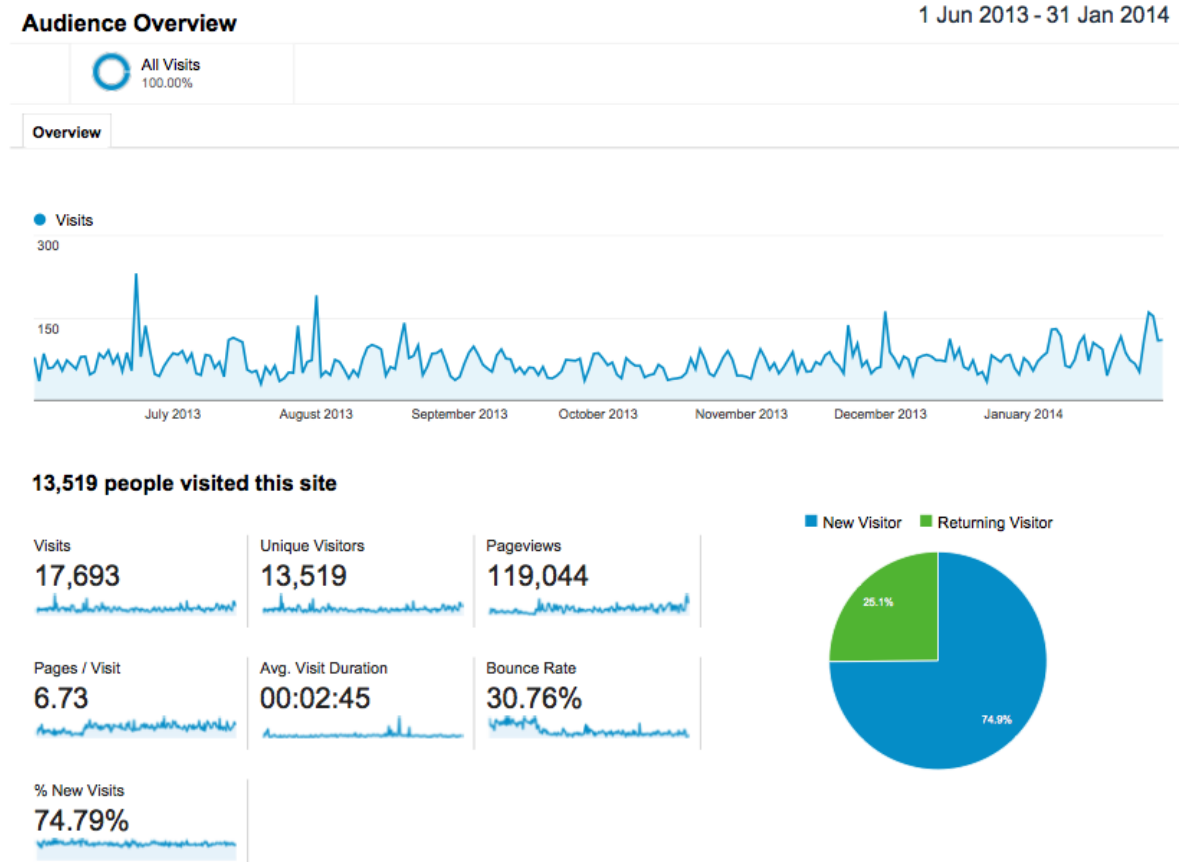


Figure 17. Audience Overview (Google Analytics)

The latter graph (Figure 18) shows the various paths that bring a visitor to the How Violins site. As expected, a communication strategy that is focusing on owned and earned media and is dedicated to smart SEO work gets the highest amount of its visits through organic search. This means that people type in something they need on a search engine, and How Violins is providing the answers to their questions without paying to be found.

The second highest ranking 'path' is (*not set*) and this refers to a placeholder for data Google Analytics has not been able to receive information on (Google 2014b) though individuals with their YouTube videos unofficially indicate that this hidden data refers to users who have Google+ account and whose online behaviour is this way protected.

Paid search refers to the use of AdWords that was not part of this research as paid SEO was not part of the communication act I was hired to do. Though the visits through social media channels is ranking only 5th on the listing it still shows that almost 500 visits resulted from the social media activity of How Violins.

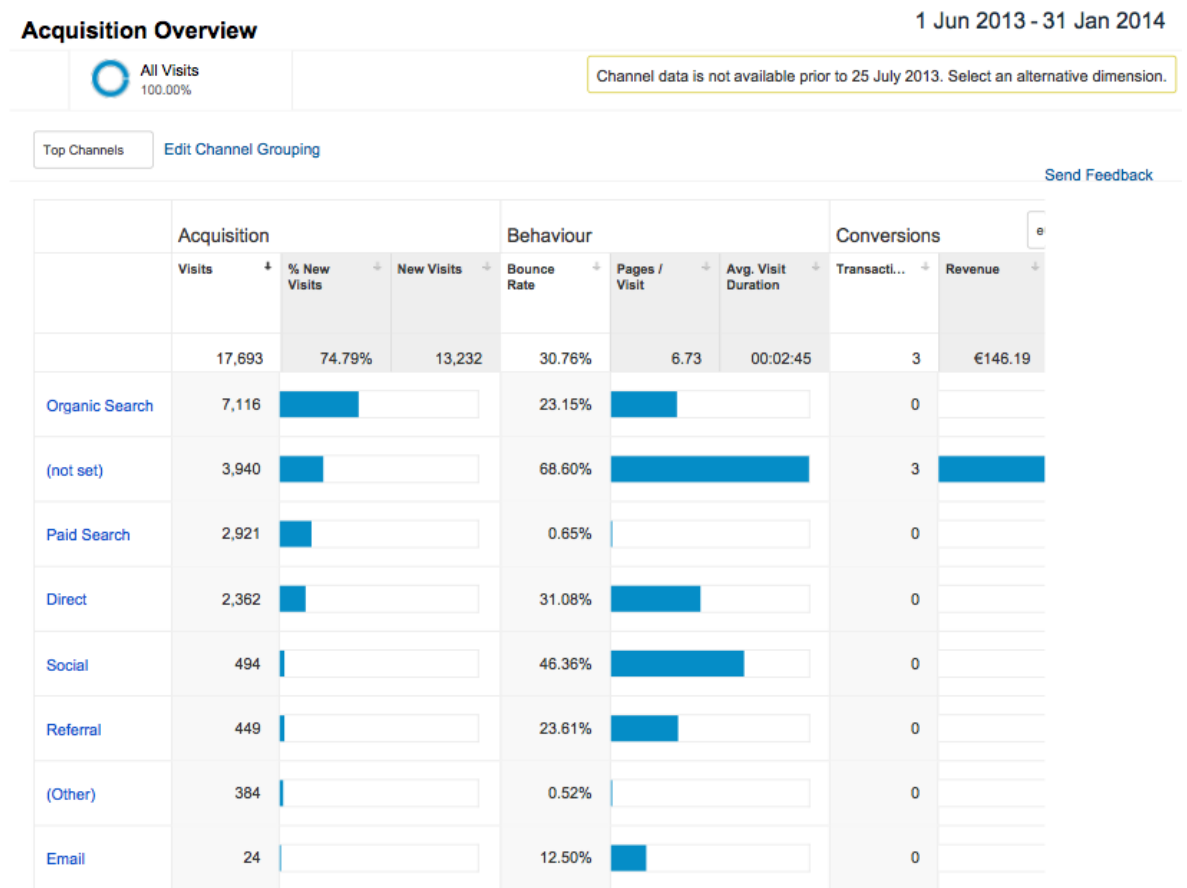


Figure 18. Audience Overview (Google Analytics)

The improvement on social arenas (blog, Facebook, LinkedIn) was the content shift from the somewhat alienating and general themes towards more personal and How Violins-focused content. The metrics to prove the improvement is humble, but the fact that a clear tone was wanted, and this was delivered, checks the goal. For future updates and posts, the thinking is no longer in SEO but in real human beings How Violins wants to serve. As discussed in chapter two, effective communication impacts attitudes and hence the behaviour. The attitudinal change here, even if not as easily measured, hence qualifies as a communication accomplishment.

The following notes/guidelines for How Violins no longer show web analytics 'behind' it but are an example of a work process that combined the knowledge gained from web analytics and from the first hand experience interacting with the stakeholders.

Preparing the Next Phase

After the four and a half months of investigating the ecosystem of How Violins and producing various kinds of content, I introduced my communication strategy to a test group introduced in chapter 4.2. This step in developing the communication strategy added little to the process. The shortcoming of the information gathering was that the form in which the feedback was given was not helpful or constructive or even understandable due to either insufficient sentence structures or high level of contextual references that I was not able to connect to my original presentation. As the written feedback was given anonymously, there was no opportunity to ask for explanations or elaborations.

However, the fact that the responses were that unclear led me to draw a conclusion that my draft had to be further developed and clarified. The improved plan is introduced next under the Stakeholder Communication Plan for How Violins 1.0.

4.4 Stakeholder Communication Plan for How Violins 1.0

Withdrawing from the interviews, and my experience at the shop, I have identified the following key attributes How Violins wants to stand for. When the stakeholders need anything relating to the handcrafted bowed stringed instruments How Violins is *knowledgeable, reliable, fast, and transparent partner*.

Methods to Communicate the Attributes

Before elaborating the attributes mentioned above a question of tone should be answered. To know whom to communicate to is essential for knowing what to communicate and how. At How Violins, the strategy is to combine the ideas of having particular stakeholders in mind when communicating (outside in), but also having a

strong, almost human, identity to have its own voice beyond ‘adjusted’ messages (inside out). In practise, this means focusing to talk only about things that are relevant for the key stakeholder (in wider definition not just the teachers but all customers). The way things are talked about is with certain warm politeness regardless if the receiver is old or young, casual or distant. For keeping the right tone, the following brand promise has been established:

“We have no customers but guests who to us are as dear as family but as respected as royalty.”

Guests in this guideline remind the staff not to try to sell, but to serve. *Family* reminds about the warmth and true caring to the concerns of the How Violins guests. The notion of *royalty* makes one distinguish the false kind of closeness. It also reminds the staff to treat everyone with the same respect.

To tackle the attribute of *Knowledgeable*, How Violins is set to have an educational role online. The content is educating the customers to better understand the factors to consider when choosing an instrument or when having one reconstructed.

Sharing knowledge happens on the How Violins Blog that has a wide selection of categories with informative blog articles published twice a week. In addition, all the other sections on How Violins’ website are written in a manner to support creation of understanding. For example a ‘JTL violin’ on the product site is not just introduced as an instrument on certain price, but is described to inform why this particular instrument is at its price range and in which kind of playing it serves the best.

Other platforms to boost the knowledgeable role of How Violins are to have an active role in contributing to Wikipedia. Linking these articles to the How Violins website will add prestige. Wikipedia is also the best channel to attract new stakeholders such as people who are interested in violin making.

YouTube is a channel to post videos and is hence an ideal platform for showcasing the knowledge and expertise in a fast and efficient way. This channel would also serve in

supporting the *transparency* discussed later, and is an excellent tool to find new stakeholders. However, this strategic channel can only be employed when there are enough resources to do it well.

Reliability is currently only communicated in one-to-one communication in person and via email. The guarantee and the terms of business are somewhat hidden on the website, but when updating the site they should deserve a more visible role. How Violins offers a lifetime guarantee to its work, and with that aims to serve the player beyond the instrument. This should be more visible on the website.

To ease the delicate decision-making when choosing an instrument, How Violins offers their instruments for a week-long trial. There is always a 30-days money back guarantee if the purchase needs to be cancelled – no questions asked. In exchange for a new instrument, How Violins offers 75% back of the purchase price of the current instrument. This information should be visible everywhere relating to a possible purchase decision, but is not suitable for social media platforms because of its unsocial nature.

Fast – This is communicated also more in customer interface rather than on any generic platforms. All emails are answered within the working day (9AM-6PM), missed calls are called back, any work order is given an exact time when it is ready and these deadlines are never missed. If a delivery is delayed due to vendor-issues, How Violins takes the bullet for the customer even at the cost of ordering the same item elsewhere and ending up with extra item in its own stock.

Transparency is vital for How Violins as only by being transparent can a relatively young company compete with the old workshops that currently rely on their reputation without offering the customers any explanations and information on how they do their work or business. How Violins is set to take away the curtain between the player and the maker. This is done by offering set prices on the website, by having the workshop open for guests, and by blogging about the various themes relating to luthiers' work.

Being a *partner* is where the current social media can be utilized the best. Having social updates on Facebook almost every day, a LinkedIn presence with work-related updates, fun, inspiring and interesting images for music lovers on Instagram, and tweets of fun or existing projects on Twitter will help to keep How Violins in the minds of its stakeholders even throughout the times they do not need the services. Instagram and YouTube could best be utilized to obtain new stakeholders. People who like music, romantic aspects of wood craftsmanship, and beauty could indeed be potential new stakeholders for the future. If there are channels to drop, my suggestions are Twitter and LinkedIn in this order.

Strategically it is most important to keep the content of these various platforms interesting and informative in a fun and engaging way. This has not been the case so far, because the social media presence has been built to create search engine optimization rather than a positive customer user experience. If content is only built with keywords and technical algorithms in mind it will turn against itself if any real human being happens to see and read the content. If updates and blog posts are found to be boring, the bounce rates will go up and at worst there is no second chance to seduce the stakeholders back, and the new ones take time to be born.

The above mapping of the use of tools is summarized in the following table (Table 1). This table is a fusion of the data gained via my communication intervention to the company, and the metrics used to analyze the How Violins website and social media platforms. The table is called Stakeholder Communication Plan 1.0 because it is the first plan for How Violins.

Table 1. Stakeholder Communication Plan 1.0

Attribute	Tool	How	Why
Knowledgeable	-Website (Blog) -Wikipedia -YouTube	-Constant -Passive updates -Monthly	To serve well and create trust.
Reliable	-Personal communication	-Politeness strategy	For long term relationships.
Fast	-Service	-Informative and accurate	To be the first choice.
Transparent	-Website -Workshop -Blog	-Constant	To bypass the competition.
Partner	-Facebook -LinkedIn -Instagram -YouTube	-Personable -Professional -Inspiring & -Romantic	To maintain relationships and to develop new ones.

At the left column of the table I have placed the five key attributes that were discussed above, and that are the characteristics How Violins should be known for. The next column lists the various tools and channels to use in communication work to strengthen the attributes. The third column reminds the reader of the style of how to use the channels, though the text above needs to be read first to understand what the words here stand for. In the last column on the right there is a short reminder for each row of the rationale of the work that is suggested in the earlier columns.

The action research on the stakeholder communication development work focusing on the owned and earned online media was an intense project for fall 2013. The work did not reach an end result – rather a few good steps in the right direction with plenty of gained knowledge for the following steps yet to be taken. The results of the work done so far remain yet to be seen. However, the weak signals provided mainly by Google Analytics indicate that How Violins communication is steadily reaching the objectives

set for it. The project case sets a solid example for other small Finnish businesses on the opportunities to create meaningful communication with a savvy use of free or owned platforms online.

5 Discussion

The research served two purposes. One was for the researcher to gain knowledge and understanding on the communication trait requirements in the era of Web 2.0. The other was for the company under study to attain practical and useful work on its communication efforts. My reflection on the study is elaborated later in this chapter. The outcomes for the company are divided into two. “The End Situation” summarized at the end of chapter 4 demonstrates the areas of development that happened between July 2013 and January 2014 (leaving two months of ‘reaction time’ after the action research intervention stopped at mid-November). After these I introduced my ‘composition’ i.e. the notes for future How Violins employees in a form of “Stakeholder Communication Plan for How Violins 1.0” also in chapter 4. This plan is aimed to help the staff to absorb the company philosophy and to have a tool to decide among the various channels they have at hand to evangelize the work done by the company.

This final chapter reflects the discoveries of the theoretical framework and the Action Research done at How Violins. I will again present the research questions and elaborate on the answers for them. In addition to that, I will introduce further ideas and outcomes of the research, as well as the main constraints that should be considered as limitations to this study, but also as windows of opportunity for further study.

5.1 Research Questions Answered

This research was done in a form of an Action Research in a small business called How Violins. The aim for the Action Research was to improve How Violins’ communication on its owned and earned media platforms. Action Research was a well-suited method, though the time constriction limited deeper cyclical processes or testing and improving the communication. During the development work, I was occupied a great deal with the analytical software behind the website fronts. As a result of the work done, the research questions were answered as follows.

RQ How can the SME stakeholder communication development benefit from Web 2.0?

The primary benefit of Web 2.0 is the equal opportunity for visibility and impact that the smaller businesses can have next to bigger companies. Beyond that, Web 2.0 with its ever-changing, fast and personal dialogue-driven culture can even benefit smaller actors. Small businesses with their lesser bureaucracy and staff are likely to be more agile to react to any discussion gone viral. Also, as in the case of the How Violins, if there is a strong founder-CEO-expert face for the business, that face can add the personable tone and easy-to-approach culture which is more likely to appeal to the social audience which expects to be treated as equals. Having a face instead of a logo to share ‘what’s up’ is easier-done and more authentic when that person actually exists.

Supporting RQ 2: How can web analytics be employed in SME stakeholder communication development?

Web Analytics provides the inside data for all the online media channels a company uses. For SMEs, this means that they have the same access to and potential intelligence about their online efforts as any bigger corporation has. This availability of data creates equal opportunities and potential to improve and develop the communication. The ability to analyse and interpret the data can create the competitive edge for any size company on the Internet where the search engine results create the impact and significance of a company more than its turnover and size do.

Web Analytics can be used for troubleshooting for pages that do not match the visitors’ expectations (bounce rate). It can be used to better know the stakeholders’ behaviour (the path they tend to take on the site). It also reveals the content that the stakeholders are most interested in with regard to keywords, page content, blog posts, and social updates. This all helps to serve the stakeholders better and to be more pleasant to them. To use a metaphor, having a company that uses their web analytics smartly is like having a boyfriend who can read your mind. Essential here is that the boyfriend should be in love, emphatic, and willing to use the data for your favour. Also the com-

pany should have the mindset to develop the communication towards the needs of the stakeholder – not pushing its own agenda blindly.

Overall, the benefits are the same for companies of all sizes. For SMEs, the added value is in the efficiency and the power that earned and owned media provide. Smart digital mingling multiplies the voice of a small business. The traditional corporate communication theories, functions and thinking may have disregarded the lighter-structured small business. The era of Web 2.0 is now crystalising the essence of good communication, bringing all companies on the same line.

5.2 Validity and Reliability

Validity, i.e. the degree to which this study reflects the concept that I was attempting to evaluate, can be elaborated from two angles. These are 1) Do I answer the research question, and 2) is my chosen methodology appropriate for the study.

Section 4.3 on *Procedures, Data and Outcome* provides an example of a way the web analytics was used as a supporting function for communication development work. Section 4.4 then further demonstrates a product that is gained with deepened understanding of web analytics. With these, the research demonstrates validity on staying targeted to the original research question.

With regards to the methodology, the core of Action Research is well summarised in the quote: “The key concepts include a better understanding, participation, improvement, reform, problem finding, problem solving, a step-by-step process, modification, and theory building” (Koshy et al. 2011, 10).

Because the research was touching a topic completely new for the researcher, and because understanding the phenomenon required trial and testing, I believe the Action Research indeed was the most suitable method for knowledge building. The 4.5 months work on the study arena combined with this research building is aligned with the key concepts of Action Research listed by Koshy et al. in the above quote.

The reliability of the research outcome deserves careful inspection. Could this study be repeated by independent and objective research, leading to the same results and conclusions? The answer to this is “No.”. This study could not be repeated only alone because of the fact that the work done so far has already reached the stakeholders and one cannot erase their earlier experiences and start from the same situation I was on summer 2013. However the way I have presented the data finding in a narrative form; describing the thinking process, explaining my rationale for the decisions made, and separating the elements that were driven from my intuition and experience from those that were based on the web analytics, all combined, should support the reliability of my study.

An interesting feature on Google Analytics, or any web analytics for that matter, is that as much as it provides numeric data on human behaviour online, it does not provide suggestion on how to interpret the data. During my research I spent several hours online, mainly on YouTube, following tutorials in order to find benchmarks on how to analyze my data. Many of those tutorials and demos conclude with “matters of taste”. Though scientific approaches exist, one cannot overlook the possibility that the way I interpreted the web analytics at hand, and draw conclusions may have been due to my closeness to the matter and to my personal experience. It could also be that, out of the enormous data available, I focused on the ones serving my purpose to see changes and development. If this has happened I have created research bias influencing the result. Someone else with only the analytical data available but lacking my subjective bias could have interpreted the numbers differently along the way, leading to a different kind of end result as well. However, Action Research requires closeness, and my results cannot be evaluated only by inspecting the numerical side of it.

5.3 Ethical Considerations

The research was conducted in a scientific manner with good research practices in mind. The underlying values of the research process were integrity, transparency, and accuracy. The research and actionable items were planned and agreed-upon ahead of time with How Violins. Confidentiality of the competitive elements in the market was agreed upon and discussed with the organization as well.

Data was collected on sustainable ethical bases. All findings were presented to the company before the publishing of the study.

5.4 Analysis and Discussion

The research on utilizing web analytics for stakeholder communication planning on a narrow niche SME generated various discoveries. I will present and discuss them one at a time. My recommendations are presented later.

SEO is actually CEO

The vitality of the SEO cannot be overlooked in the current communication field. The content, visual efforts, or the importance of any website is missed if that website is not found quickly and easily. The old saying that: “One cannot not communicate” is challenged online because a hidden website is not communicating anything to anyone. Finland is a relatively small market, and therefore many might have been lucky with their websites with little effort, but the competition on visibility is likely to increase and therefore the time to optimize website visibility is now. For this relatively intensive task it is important to understand that search engines penalize the ones trying to trick them. The right way to do optimization is to always have the customer, a human being, in mind. Therefore CEO – Customer Experience Optimization, is essential.

Targeted messages are only half the truth

The other half is being true to who you are. Our communication efforts started with narrowing down an archetype of a customer. This might have helped us to get started with our communication, but the best-resonating social media updates and posts on our website were the ones where we forgot about the one who we want to please the most, but were being ourselves and showing our personality. As in any relationship, not only the one between the company and its stakeholders, being sincere, transparent, and true is key for a sustainable dialogue.

Infrastructures are changed overnight – Cultures take a lifetime to evolve

The hundreds of keywords, meta descriptions and headings that I wrote did not change anything overnight. The cyclical Action Research of the four months was only getting started from the SEO perspective, but also from that of the community building on social media. Three quality blog posts are unlikely to make a difference. This is vital for anyone who is in charge of web improvements to understand. One should not be held accountable for results from the same quarter the work has been done – not even on the next one.

Web Analytics only provides data

With a background in humanities, I am not used to reading numbers and graphs – let alone making assumptions or predictions out of them. But having a web analytics tool is not enough; one has to be willing to learn to analyse the numbers. Digitalisation has changed the nature of many works and the required competences have been updated. Being a good communication professional requires IT savvy.

Communication efforts can be measured

Though one does not see the person visiting your website or Facebook site, the fact that everything online can be tracked and measured is powerful. As measuring success or failure is made this easy, the communication work can take a more experimental role without relying on speculations, and it can adjust the tone and messages of an ongoing dialogue – as we all do in face-to-face interaction.

Scanning the most popular platforms can be done with one look. Work planning is easy, as the numbers offer information on what needs to be developed next on a tray. Just as it should be, this is a money-saving factor. The decisions on whether to invest only time on online visibility, or money and time on a notice in some local newspaper are easily made.

5.5 Possibilities and Constraints

The most noteworthy limitation of this study is its time span. Within four months of time, plenty of updates and changes to develop How Violins' stakeholder communication could and were done. Yet the results, as forecasted already in the theoretical framework, could not be expected in their fullest within the same time frame. The fact that the web analytics have reached from June 2013 to January 2014 give some scale for the "what now" as the active development work was done only until mid-November. However, the mid-November 2013 – January 2014 data is also to be considered within the right context; after mid-November the communication efforts at all arenas decreased to the same level they had been at before the project; relying on the time and resources of the only worker in the workshop, the CEO himself. Was there a certain momentum lost for example with the silence on blog updates right after the first slightly more viral blog posts had seen the day light? This can only be speculated, but as known from the SEO perspective – regularity in updates would support better results.

Another constraint, also related to time, was the project planning. The original intention for the thesis project was planned to be longer, and for the action research conclusions to then support me to plan my own work as a permanent communication worker in-house. Due to unexpected events, the project ended with short notice and the option to create a working plan for an in-house communication worker had to be excluded from the planning. Had the timeframe been known when starting the Action Research, it probably would have been more focused on lesser channels and deeper in those few. In its current form, the Action Research was done on so many platforms, channels and media that each of them only got scratched from the surface.

Possibilities for future research are plenty. The theoretical framework revealed a great gap between the communication jargon that assumes to mainly address big corporations, and the reality that a big bulk of business in Finland is not even SMEs but micro businesses. For timely communication research, considering this scaling would likely benefit even the bigger businesses that in this digital and automated era have fewer employees as well.

Carrying on the research on earned and owned media usage could be done with separate studies focusing on, one, web analytics and SEO, and two, on the social media and blogging content. Bringing all of these elements together with the work on the concrete touch points in the boutique, and customer service, did serve the holistic approach of the company, but made the study scattered for the limited time available.

Also, the next step for further studies would address the nature of the current stakeholder communication *with* them instead of *to* them. This study focused on the platforms and the great amount of information one can gain without bothering the stakeholders directly. As discussed earlier in this paper, however, to fully understand the reactions of visitors on a webpage on social media, one should include live contact with them either in laboratory tests, or by valid questionnaires/interviews. This incorporation of live interaction would also benefit the creation of new ideas for content – not just the fine-tuning of the existing one.

5.6 Recommendations

Relating to the research questions and to the above discussion, the following recommendations resulted from the research process.

Customer, stakeholder, online audience – whomever one has in mind when in charge of company's communication, the same rule of turning the search engine optimization into customer experience optimization applies. The era of injecting the message one wants to deliver in a form of a press release, sales pitch, or annual report, is past – if it really ever existed. Just as in a pleasant one-to-one conversation, the dialogue is built and developed according to the depth of exchange and knowledge of one another. Since the dialogue and exchange cannot be avoided, the best practice is to enter it with messages and language that follow the same paths of empathy and sincerity as they would among any well-behaving human beings. Therefore – join the digital conversations boldly!

When focusing on customer experience optimization one should surely bear in mind the various needs of the various stakeholders. Yet, because of the viral web, many of them are interconnected. Therefore, tailoring messages in too much detail and far from one another according to the assumed stakeholder needs, is probably an unwise use of resources, especially for SMEs. Targeted investment is put into the keywords inserted within the owned media, and with that the stakeholders will find the information appealing to them. On social media, the messages that go viral will pass more eyes than those of the key stakeholders. Again, it is the ones who are interested who also react to the content, but at the same time the content should not seem odd to the rest of the eyes either.

Though communication should be held accountable for results and the results should be based on reliable metrics, patience is a virtue. Not every friendship starts with the first encounter, and some do not even believe in love at first sight. Just the same, and more so with the relationship-based interconnected digital space, building networks, an audience, or followers takes time. Turning these into cash flow will take even more time.

“Perfect is the enemy of good enough” – Companies should consider the return on investment in everything done within the business, and sometimes polishing to perfection is not adding value. Especially a SME should not focus on too heavy and fancy multichannel communication platforms given that, though they are good to have, they will not pay for their bills the same month. The same moderation of aspirations should go for the communication professionals with regard to their own work. Though digitalization has brought about plenty of new skills and requirements, one should not get exhausted and defensive against them at the first sight. Though one will not turn into a SEO-wizard overnight, it is already a solid first step to know what one could know better.

5.7 Conclusions

The study demonstrates a cross-cut of traditional communication, marketing, and information technology theories. For further studies, a deeper interdisciplinary

approach could be considered. The study also calls for an update on the overall curricula of corporate communication. The discussion on empathy in tone and language, the integration of communication functions and departments, and the requirement to have communication as a part of strategic business planning should not require focus and attention any more, but ought to be taken as default set-ups of a successful business. What communication then should be looking forward to is how to be competent and integrated in the new communication culture that the digitalized infrastructure has facilitated, and even beyond; how do the communication professionals proactively contribute to the inevitable further development of the digitalized infrastructures?

The main limitation of the study lies in the time frame of the Action Research and reflection of the outcome of the study. The quantitative data to showcase the results was collected from the web analytics tools right after the development work had been done. This does not allow a sufficient perspective that a proper web analytics would recommend. For deeper understanding, the results should be revisited half a year after this study is published. Also, the development work ideally would have continued for a longer time period than the, now, four and a half months of time.

Web Analytics may sound like an out of place theme for communication research under the exploration of Web 2.0. I, however, regard it as one of the fundamental pillars for Web 2.0. To me it is not a coincidence that Web 2.0 is counted to have arisen in 2006 - the same year that web analytics became 'everyone's business'. The ability to read data behind the viral discussions to me is a gateway towards what ever may be Web 3.0.

"Veni, vidi, vici." does not quite describe my project work at How Violins, nor was that to be expected. Action Research by its nature is being part of something and joining the process for a given time. The research has to end at some point, though the process continues. Also, communication as a business function is not an element that can be injected and then forgotten. The dynamic and elaborate nature of communica-

tion does not create victories but rather positive improvements for even further improvements and updates.

The fact that SME stakeholder communication can indeed benefit from Web 2.0, and also the web analytics, in several ways is an inspiring outcome of this research. The democratization of opportunities to have meaningful, targeted, and rewarding communication in the greatest marketing platform and communication channel, the Internet, which all business shares regardless of their size or age, lays a magnificent landscape for the future. New business ideas, entrepreneurship, or start-ups are not limited by the costly advertisement campaigns and market research. They can bring their unique presence in line with their personal approach, and the updated data on market behaviour is available more quickly than the cup of coffee to digest it with.

Based on all aspects that arose in this study, one cannot conclude with any stakeholder simplifications. Web 2.0 nonetheless blurs the borders of the different stakeholder groups and demands an updated stakeholder perspective. Instead of thinking what and how to say something to a given stakeholder group, one ought to think: what if the other stakeholders access the information too? And what if they discuss it and reflect among one another without your input? The sharing culture of Web 2.0 does not need to be taken as a risk. For an SME it can be seen an enriching fact that customers, neighbours, music lovers, and family members are all interconnected through the web.

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Attachments

Attachment 1. Feedback on Stakeholder Communication; Responses of students of COM4LJ008-1 on 14 DEC 2013

Group A: “You have a very good start to communicate about your business and to write your thesis. It is brilliant that you “have no customers but guests” focus on guests in comms. If you want to communicate your uniqueness (the differences between you and the competitor), how you stress it in your brand promises (maybe you have already stressed it?) Score 4”

Group B: “Virve: How Violins. Who are the stakeholder that bring money to the company? We agree that having a full lifetime guarantee can make it a tricky for some of for target audience. ei: Kids violin. And its a challenge to have a multi tasking staff that makes both the violins and takes care of the business aspect. So our suggestion if either you focus only on the most sustainable audience (with a one man show) or the company grows bigger with more staff to accommodate all the different stakeholders. (from kids to professionals.) To go international, there should be more resources. The social media strategy to get more stakeholders: One stakeholder that you forgot to mentioned is the Employee's friends :) If the employees are super active on social media, then the friends's friends will be aware. (word of month)”

Group C: “Good work and wide strategy! Thinking the attributes from different stakeholders’ view point and the additional value for them (thinking the why from their point of view) and maybe adding one column for them. How to find new stakeholders. Where does the attributes come from, those were good and clear. The table in the presentation was informative. Benefitting expert content from the workshop and for children other kind of content, for example YouTube videos for children. Grade: 4”

Teacher: ”Theoretical framework was somewhat shallow and rather than being a strategic plan the document consisted of descriptive elements of the existing operating

enviroment. Some good thoughts, but analytical thinking and communications theories were somewhat missing”

Attachment 2. Notes on articulating the ideal customer and one of the buyer personas (How Violins summer 2013)

2.

How would you describe your ideal customer in light of your brand promise and experience? Who are the best candidates for your staff and what differentiates them?

Having a clear picture of your brand promise will help you envision the type of customer you are going to appeal to most. Having clarity about your culture will do the same for your understanding of the ideal people to hire.

- ▶ A parent / amateur musician who by being a professional on his/her own field knows when to trust a professional on other fields. A person who is 'open' to the expertise coming from outside; able to negotiate as equal even if there is no common knowledge, and without roles that blind ones eyes or closes the ears for being guided. Since we deliver sincere and honest service it's hard to do so if the 'counterpart' is playing diva.
Our staff should be at ease with the world, him/her self, be able to face the customer in a polite manner yet being true to one self. One doesn't need to have specific tailored skill set but a strong respect for everyone, dignity and grace in work, and a mind set for excellence in details. I would think of us like the butler in 'Jeeves and Wooster'.

BRANDING Finding Your Own Voice

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5.

How would you define y Suurena dokumenttia and the value you offer them?
How do they benefit from your products?

A branding strategy will include a description of your ideal target market customers, what your products or services are, and what makes you unique and effectively differentiated in your marketplace.

- ▶ I'm a bit stuck with the question nr. 2. Though I get the point of having an ideal customer I rather hold on to the thought that from our perspective even the less ideal customer is offered the same value of excellent service even if we can't be the ones delivering it.

The entire business benefits of us being there like a street sign directing the clientele to right directions as, through us, they understand the business and their own needs better.

Because of us the others in the business will need to improve their act of taking care of people - not just their instruments. Maybe one day the entire service culture in Finland will have been affected.

Buyer persona – Mother

1. What is their demographic information?	Finnish female 35 - 50, mother of 1-3 children in a family of financial stability. Educated, world-seen 'big girl'.
2. What is their job and level of seniority?	Working mother. Office worker from line work to mid-management. Without the kids would have made it to higher positions by now.
3. What does a day in their life look like?	Taking children to school, going to work, taking children to hobbies. Arranging the needs for the hobbies. Attending everyone else's needs; little time for self. Yet might be active still in a union work or such.
4. What are their pain points? What do you help them solve?	Don't know what they are buying. Finding assurance that they are making the right choice.
5. What do they value most? What are their goals?	They want their child to enjoy playing and to have an educational and smart hobby; want to support them to good direction but not to become professionals. No problems. Knowledgeable staff.
6. Where do they go for information?	Internet - Teachers - Friends - Mothers of other children who play
7. What experience are they looking for when seeking out your products or services?	Fast, effortless, positive, pleasant, reliable service. Knowledgeable staff. Comfortable feeling when and after the purchase.
8. What are their most common objections to your product or service?	Price. Lack of knowledge of 'us' existing.

Attachment 3. Notes on developing the Brand Promise (How Violins summer 2013

Discovery Questions

1.

What 1–3 things did you surface in your value, vision, passion and purpose investigation that could represent your foundational brand idea?

As discussed in the lesson, sifting through your previous work provides the fertilization to discover your core brand ideas. What do you want to be known for?

- ▶ Taken from Guy's vision: Excellent service and quality. Openness and honesty. We serve the customer, not the instrument.

Relating to Guy's teacher identity and the willingness to educate and share, I'd say we are not in the industry of violin making (though I want to use the 400 years of handcraft in the artefacts) but in the business of making playing more enjoyable and beautiful.

2.

Describe how your employees feel about your business. Describe how your customers feel.

Just dive in here, and see what you can surface at this point about what they already feel.

Get it all out, don't censor. This will provide the baseline between your new ideal and what you already see to be true.

- ▶ Customer feels outside the door insecure; "What's the verdict?", "Will it turn out to be expensive", "Can it be restored", "Do I need to buy a new one", "Damn, I need to ring the doorbell. I bet I'm interrupting something"... After entrance they relax, some take off their masks, some stay in their business-mode, many smile, some cry. Some (often the ones who came along just escorting the actual customer -> the ones who have no role or expectations) want to touch the instruments and try. Also the primary customers let their eyes wander the shelves and I wish they didn't feel the rush to concentrate again as they so often apologize for not being prompt. After staying a while, there's a sense of escape, surprise and often ease (like after a dentist call that went well) the guests echo from within at the store.

3.

How has your thinking changed in regard to building your brand?

The lesson describes a different view of branding than you may have had previously.

Identify how your thinking has shifted and consider how it helps you further your brand idea.

- ▶ I don't think my thinking is changed that much. I'm only happy to have this reassurance that we are on the same page with Guy that branding is less of those 'big' campaigns and loud things but 99% of the time it is the small things that happen without the subject of branding work even realizing it. I'm happy for not needing to explain to Guy why wearing a T-shirt with a gun on it may not be a good idea :D

4.

What obstacles or challenges do you feel regarding the creation of your Brand Commitment Statement?

Identifying obstacles and challenges ahead, and working them through now, will help as you deepen your understanding and create this crucial foundational document.

- ▶ Finnish mentality. The cynical people of Finland have for so long been without even good service - let alone excellent - that the sincerity of our actions will be hard to articulate the way that we don't go overboard and start rising suspicion and alienation through that. How to keep it cozy and super professional at the same time?

5.

Why do you hire the people you do? What has guided your decisions?

It's said we hire people for what they do, and fire them for who they are.
How have you sought to discover more of who they are before hiring them?

- ▶ For me, being the hired one, it's a comforting thing to know that I'm hired to learn the things that are necessary to work behind the counter but the deciding factor in having me was the like-mindedness in the bigger picture. Hence I have the asset of trust in my own work - having the support from Guy.

6.

Can you see your company values expressed every day in how your customers are treated?
Write down a few examples.

As a leader, you are the keeper of the values and the communicator of them to your organization. Be vigilant and notice when and how you and your employees interact with customers. Are these interactions aligned with your values and brand? If not, how could it have been done differently?

- ▶ Yes. Every guest is welcomed with smile and warmth. Every guest receives an answer - not only to the question they had but often to those they didn't know to ask (this later always with the highest respect and sensitivity - not arrogantly or by embarrassing the customer).

Every instrument leaving the workshop is a demonstration of the values. The treatment people get is, however, where the magic happens.

Your Brand Commitment Statement


Using your answers to the questions in this lesson, your Values Statement and Vision Statement, use the space below to craft your Brand Commitment Statement – your promise to your customers, employees, vendors, and yourself.

We have no customers but sincerely welcomed guests who to us are as dear and important as family members and as respected as the royals.


(Here the 'guest' instead of a customer outlines the first layer of treatment upon the entrance, service desk, coffee and chat. 'Family members' refer to the genuine will to do the best for the person; the educational and supportive notion of the relationship. Reference to 'royals' closes the circle by reminding that the way we behave around family is not the communicative tool for the customer interaction; grace and seamless kindness is. Royalty also covers the tangible product. For us it's needless to say out loud that the work is premium level. And even the cheapest violins from us are worth their money.)

Attachment 4. Old and New website

Old website:



[Etusivu](#) - [How Violins OY](#) - [Jousisoittimen ostaminen](#) - [Korjaus ja Huolto](#) - [Yleiset artikkelit](#) - [Infokeskus](#) - [Yhteystiedot](#) - [Asiakastilisi](#) - [Aukioloajat](#)



How Violins

How Violinsin nettisivuilta löydät runsaasti tietoa jousisoittimien ja jousien valinnasta, ostamisesta ja huollosta. Yläpuolelta löydät runsaasti kategorioita, mutta voit etsiä tietoa myös oikean puoleisella hakukentällä.

How Violins on Helsingin keskustassa sijaitseva jousisoitinliike.

Myymme ja huollamme kaikkia jousisoittimia kontrabassosta viuluun.

Suoritamme kaikenlaisia huolto- ja restauroitustyöitä pienistä instrumenttihuolloista laajamittaisiin restauroituihin.


Työpajamme voi antaa välittömän korjausarvion, tarjota neuvoja ja korjata tai säätää soittimen nopeasti.

Saturday, 25 May 2013 06:47

Guy How
Kirjoittanut

Olen Guy How, jousisoitinrakentaja.


Toimintani ydin on taata laadukas palvelu jokaisen jousisoittimen kohdalla.



Alalle kouluttauduin Newark School of Violin Making ammattikoulussa, jonka jälkeen siirryin Risto Vainio Oy:n palvelukseen.

Olen yli 10 vuoden ajan saanut työstää jousisoittimien mestarteoksia Ranskasta, Saksasta ja Italiasta. How Violins on täyden palvelun jousisoittinpaaja, jossa jokainen soitin saa yksilöllisen kohtelun.


New website:



[Kirjaudu](#)

Ostoskori Yhteensä : 0,00 €

[ETUSIVU](#) [VIULU](#) [ALTTOVIULU](#) [SELLO](#) [KONTRABASSO](#) [SOITTINRAKENNUS](#) [KORJAUS JA HUOLTO](#)



YRITYSTIEDOT

- Yhteystiedot
- Guy How
- Yritysfilosofia

AUKIOLOAJAT

Kauppa

Ma - Pe - 1000 - 1800

La - 1000 - 1600

Su - Suljettu

Versta

Ma - Pe - 1000 - 1800

Lauantai sopimuksen mukaan

YHTEYSTIEDOT

Mechelininkatu 28 B
00100 HELSINKI

info@howviolins.fi


HOW VIOLINS

How Violins on Helsingin keskustassa sijaitseva jousisoitinliike.

Myymme, huollamme ja restauroimme kaikkia jousisoittimia kontrabassosta viuluun. Paikan päällä olevan työpajan ansiosta voi ammattilaisemme tarjota välittömän korjausarvion, antaa hyödyllisiä neuvoja, tai korjata säätöjä odotellessa - kahvikupposen kera.

Nettisivuillamme haluamme tarjota runsaasti tietoa ja vinkkejä jousisoittimien ja jousien valinnasta ja huollosta. Toivomme, että voimme osaltamme tehdä soittamisesta antoisamman, rikkaamman ja kauniimman kokemuksen.

Palveluumme kuuluu myös soitonopettajien ja musiikkikoulujen luona vierailu, jolloin viulunrakentajamme ja jousisoitinrakentaja tulevat veloituksetta varmistamaan soittimien kunnon.



Attachment 5. The content drilldown



[Go to this report](#)

http://howviolins.fi - http://www.howviolins.fi
howviolins.fi

Content Drilldown

1 Jun 2013 - 27 Jan 2014

Compare to: 1 Jun 2012 - 27 Jan 2013

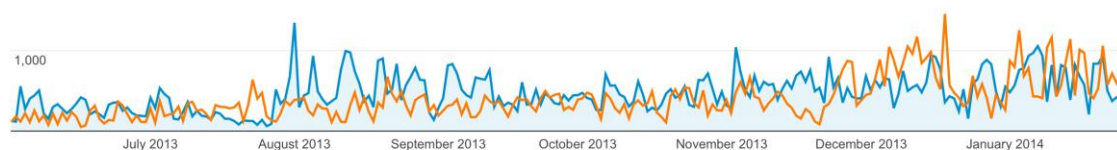


Explorer

01-Jun-2013 - 27-Jan-2014: ● Pageviews

01-Jun-2012 - 27-Jan-2013: ● Pageviews

2,000



Page path level 1	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Bounce Rate	% Exit
	19.51% ▲ 113,444 v. 94,922	6.31% ▼ 48,945 v. 52,239	8.01% ▼ 00:00:29 v. 00:00:32	1.38% ▼ 31.59% v. 31.16%	9.96% ▲ 15.07% v. 13.70%
1. /viulu/					
01-Jun-2013 - 27-Jan-2014	24,906	10,240	00:00:29	24.06%	9.66%
01-Jun-2012 - 27-Jan-2013	1,131	394	00:00:25	5.93%	13.00%
% Change	2,102.12%	2,498.98%	16.83%	306.09%	-25.64%
2. /					
01-Jun-2013 - 27-Jan-2014	15,428	4,995	00:00:25	7.06%	16.18%
01-Jun-2012 - 27-Jan-2013	11,183	6,056	00:00:39	27.89%	26.12%
% Change	37.96%	-17.52%	-36.02%	-74.69%	-38.04%
3. /sello/					
01-Jun-2013 - 27-Jan-2014	8,348	3,521	00:00:22	18.54%	11.68%
01-Jun-2012 - 27-Jan-2013	389	137	00:00:14	2.86%	11.57%
% Change	2,046.02%	2,470.07%	58.08%	549.01%	0.96%
4. /soitinrakennus/					
01-Jun-2013 - 27-Jan-2014	7,639	2,834	00:00:21	0.41%	5.05%
01-Jun-2012 - 27-Jan-2013	0	0	00:00:00	0.00%	0.00%
% Change	∞%	∞%	∞%	∞%	∞%
5. /kontrabasso/					
01-Jun-2013 - 27-Jan-2014	6,859	2,939	00:00:24	23.30%	9.83%
01-Jun-2012 - 27-Jan-2013	360	98	00:00:10	0.00%	8.06%
% Change	1,805.28%	2,898.98%	141.61%	∞%	21.98%
6. /korjaus-ja-huolto					
01-Jun-2013 - 27-Jan-2014	5,113	1,610	00:00:16	1.39%	13.30%

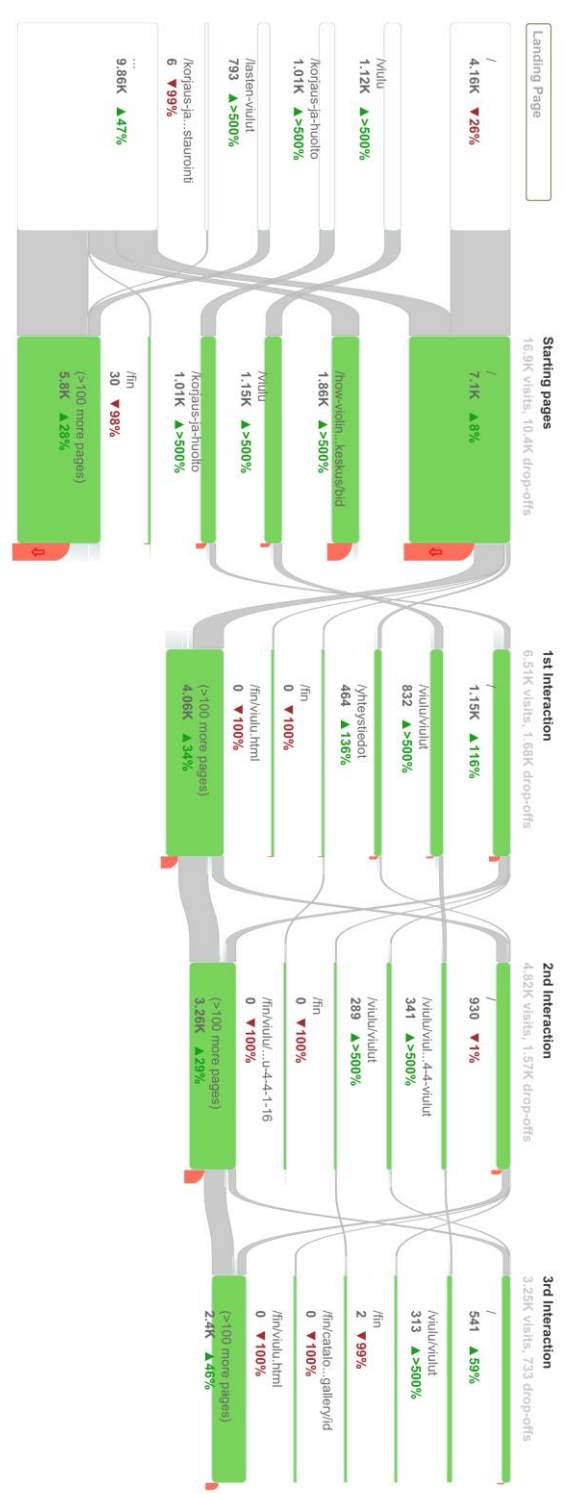
01-Jun-2012 - 27-Jan-2013	0	0	00:00:00	0.00%	0.00%
% Change	∞%	∞%	∞%	∞%	∞%
7. /viulu					
01-Jun-2013 - 27-Jan-2014	4,698	1,871	00:00:11	10.23%	12.13%
01-Jun-2012 - 27-Jan-2013	0	0	00:00:00	0.00%	0.00%
% Change	∞%	∞%	∞%	∞%	∞%
8. /alttoviulu/					
01-Jun-2013 - 27-Jan-2014	3,860	1,613	00:00:22	32.68%	9.90%
01-Jun-2012 - 27-Jan-2013	147	53	00:00:31	0.00%	8.16%
% Change	2,525.85%	2,943.40%	-29.44%	∞%	21.23%
9. /How-Violins-QY-Infokeskus/					
01-Jun-2013 - 27-Jan-2014	3,390	2,954	00:01:48	72.55%	56.96%
01-Jun-2012 - 27-Jan-2013	0	0	00:00:00	0.00%	0.00%
% Change	∞%	∞%	∞%	∞%	∞%
10. /how-violins-oy-infokeskus/					
01-Jun-2013 - 27-Jan-2014	2,596	1,873	00:00:48	68.86%	26.19%
01-Jun-2012 - 27-Jan-2013	0	0	00:00:00	0.00%	0.00%
% Change	∞%	∞%	∞%	∞%	∞%

Rows 1 - 10 of 1506

Behaviour Flow

All Visits
+0.00%

1 Jun 2013 - 27 Jan 2014
Compare to: 1 Jun 2012 - 27 Jan 2013



This report is based on 29.9K visits (99.8% of visits). [Learn more](#)

Attachment 6. Behaviour flow

Attachment 7. Notes on the Look and Feel of How Violins 9 September 2013

1. How have you thought about your look and feel up until now?

How much attention have you put on integrating each element into the whole of the brand? Take some time to consider these baseline questions. Think about what you've considered important up to this point regarding your look and feel.

The look and feel have been created along the way slightly as a side product but with a certain strong intuition. I think this not-all-sophisticated method has worked to the benefit of the brand of the start-up new kid on the violin block situation; it's been cozy, human, easy to approach, cute and not too fancy and over-thought. It's been evident that the profession-ism lies in the violin making and the income money is not 'wasted' on vanity.

If the boutique would be too polished and fancy it might create a sense of bluff or insincerity. Finns don't expect too much from craft entrepreneurs. Usually they are the ones who just own their work and that's it. Luckily Guy has good taste and the boutique has indeed been pretty and cute.

2. What is your brand idea and commitment? You should know this backwards and forward. Know it in your sleep. If you can't write it down here, you need to go back and flesh it out, with support from the two previous branding lessons.

We have no customers but sincerely welcomed guests who to us are as dear and important as family members and as respected as the royals.

3. How will your look and feel align with your brand voice and commitment? Consider the foundation, and how your look and feel comes from it.

What do you most want your customers to experience through your look and feel?

The experience should be something like the Alice in the wonderland: unexpected dream-like reality suddenly being tangible and surrounding you. Something that is so appealing that you just want to move forward and see more; to try the instruments and get excited about playing again. Candy store for musicians: something to let your eye wonder about.

Since our customers are our guests and royalty in our eyes, been with us should feel like a treat.

4. How do you feel about your company name? Does it have any or all of the attributes described in the lesson? Should you keep it or change it?

The question of your company or product's name should be on your mind as you review this lesson.

Did you make the choice intentionally? Does it align with your brand? Could it be improved? Is this the time to consider it? Ask and answer these questions and any others you might conceive around your name. It's extremely important.

I think we should not change the name. It's a slow market to learn so only if there was no business at all and the last chance to get any would be to have a fresh start with new name would that be an option. However, the name is not easy.

Finns, who still are the main target, are familiar with How being a question word. It's not your regular Smith or Jackson that even us would recognize as a surname. So the benefits-

fits of having a name on the business name is a bit lost for the new market. Also with

spelling, hearing the name on the phone right, trusting that you can deal in Finnish may be sacrificed with the name.

On the other hand, the internationals in Helsinki might find us easier to approach and for the time the company extends to other countries, this name will make it a lot easier.

5. Write down what changes you are going to make in your look and feel.

Prioritize these changes with due dates.

-decorate the new office with white, wrought iron, plants, chandeliers, living room style
d carpets and indirect lightning by 28.9.

- when setting up the new place simplicity is in the key and the warmth should come from the lights and the smiles.

- no several different kinds of fonts everywhere! My mission is to make sure that the things that are no done certain way to save costs won't stay forever for the lack of better knowledge of what works and what not.

MARKET POSITION

What fundamental idea does your business possess that clearly differentiates it from the competition?

We are telling everything about the trade. No secrets here. Open and honest. Transparent.

What do you do differently in your product, service or business that you could base your brand upon?

Inbound marketing. Open and honest about what we do.

How does the story you tell connect with the worldviews of your target market and draw them to your business?

Each piece of content is written in third person with the target persona in mind. It isn't about us, it's about you.

What are the distinctive elements of your product, service, business, that you feel create your competitive advantage? (Consider price, quality, convenience, customer service, advertising, sensory package, product features, responsiveness, speed of delivery, appearance, market coverage, simplicity, reliability, durability, and any other element that you feel elevates you over your competition).

Well set up instruments, even the cheapest ones.

Fast service.

We always respond to mail. We are human beings, and should behave like that.

Lifetime guarantee on instruments.

If we don't have it, we'll get, or find you someone else who has it.

Work has always been delivered on time. Every time.

You can take an instrument home to try it out for a week. As many times as you want.

You have 14 days money back. 90 days swap it for a different/better model.

75% cashback on upgrade of new instrument

100% cashback on upgrade of used instrument

Free winter service to look after your cello or bass

Do you have any distinctive marketing methods you feel deliver an advantage over the competition?

TARGET MARKET

What is the general classification of your target customers? Individuals, business, government, etc.

Individuals, teachers, parents.

What are the attitudes, decision-making processes, perceptions, etc. of your target market?

They need to feel informed about their decision. The teacher also has to be happy. Bigger ticket items can have several months lead.