



PRE-EVENT SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING TO PROMOTE TICKET SALES

Case: Eläköön koirat!

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ABSTRACT

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The rise of social media has provided useful marketing tools for companies to promote their events. The purpose of this thesis was to research social media marketing and how it can be used in event promotion. The theory part also includes research of the event marketing process, as it can help to plan the social media marketing strategy. The purpose of the case study in this thesis was to study the ways the commissioning company can use social media marketing in their event promotion. Hence, the main research question of this thesis aimed to find out if social media marketing could have an effect on the ticket purchasing decision of the target group. The supporting research question concentrated on the content used in the social media channels of the case event.

The practical part of this thesis was chosen to be executed with a quantitative study. The results were gathered with an online survey after the event. In addition, analytics of the Facebook Page Post Link Ads used to promote the event, were received from the company's media agency and compared to the results received from the survey.

The results of the survey show that social media is a very useful marketing channel for the event promotion of the commissioning company. According to the survey, the social media marketing actions had affected half of the respondents' ticket purchasing decision at some level. The study also showed that the respondents found the content on the event's social media channels appealing and interesting. However, in order to analyse the customer's ticket purchasing behaviour reliably, the path to the final purchase of the ticket needs to be more trackable.

Keywords: event promotion, event marketing process, social media, social media marketing plan, consumer behaviour

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1 INTRODUCTION

The rise of digitalization and mostly social media has provided new and effective marketing tools to promote events and to plan event marketing. Social media marketing can be used before the event, as well as during and after the event, to reach audiences and to get them engaged. Marketers are also able to use social media as a tool for listening and researching their target audiences. In addition, events can create personal experiences for the visitor, which are usually shared in the customer's own social media networks. This kind of shared experiences creates interesting content for the event's social media marketing.

Event marketing can generate content to the brand's marketing communication and it can be a good marketing tool for the company to reach their customers in a more physical and tangible way. However, in order to do that, the customers need to arrive at the event. This thesis studies the social media marketing plan and the ways marketers are able to promote an event on social media. Social media marketing can be cost-effective and a highly targetable way to promote an event, which makes it a preferable tool to study. The study also gathers information about digitalization and social media channels. In addition, in order to understand how the case event could benefit from event marketing, the process of event marketing is studied in the theory part of this thesis as well. The different aspects of the event, such as objectives and target groups, help to find answers also to the social media marketing plan.

The purpose of the case study was to find out if the case company's pre-event social media marketing affects the customer's decision to buy tickets, and what kind of social media actions are the most appealing. As I worked as a coordinator of the event, I was also interested in finding out how the case company could improve their social media marketing tools in the future.

2 USING SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN EVENT PROMOTION

2.1 The new trend in event promotion

Event promotion includes all the marketing actions that create awareness of the event, the customer's desire to participate and the expectations of the event. Ultimately, it can be said that the goal of event promotion is to get a target audience to attend an event. (Hoyle 2002, 30.) Event marketing, on the other hand, is a marketing tool in a company's marketing mix that can be used for example to enhance brand awareness, create leads or to promote a product (Marketo 2015).

In the recent decades, event promotion has become much more than passing out flyers and posters; the rise of social media networks has enabled audiences to get information about the event anytime and anywhere. Social media also enables the audience to participate in the making of the event as well as to give feedback, share their experiences and to participate in discussions during the event. The interactivity and connectedness of social media networks have given businesses new tactics to promote their event and get their customers involved in it before the event, as well as during and after the event (Solaris 2014, 16-19.)

According to Kärkkäinen (2015), social media will be the number one trend in event marketing in the following years. Social media has already been an important marketing tool for many years now for event marketers, but new restrictions and algorithms have made it harder for businesses to reach their customers on social media networks. These difficulties have forced businesses to focus and add more resources to social media marketing. (Kärkkäinen, 2015.) For example, a change in Facebook's algorithm released in 2016 restricted the visibility of the content posted by marketers and brands. As the algorithm prioritizes the posts shared by friends and family, marketers have to promote their posts more in order to get their posts to pop up in the newsfeed of their target audience. (Lazauskas 2016.)

The popularity of using social media as a promoting tool for events has increased as businesses have become more familiarized with the possibilities social media has to offer (Solaris 2014, 18). However, according to Solaris (2014, 18), it is good to remember that

the popularity does not mean that all events should use social media in their event marketing. Different audiences use social media differently and businesses must do their research of the target audience and its behaviour. For example, the target audience for a rock festival and an opera event are presumably very different, as should their social media marketing strategy be as well. (Solaris 2014, 18.)

2.2 Social media marketing plan for event promotion

In order for an event marketer to succeed in the big world of social media, it can be beneficial to develop a social media marketing plan (image 1). A social media plan can help the event marketers to set goals, find audiences, create interesting content and to analyse the effects. (Marketo 2015.)

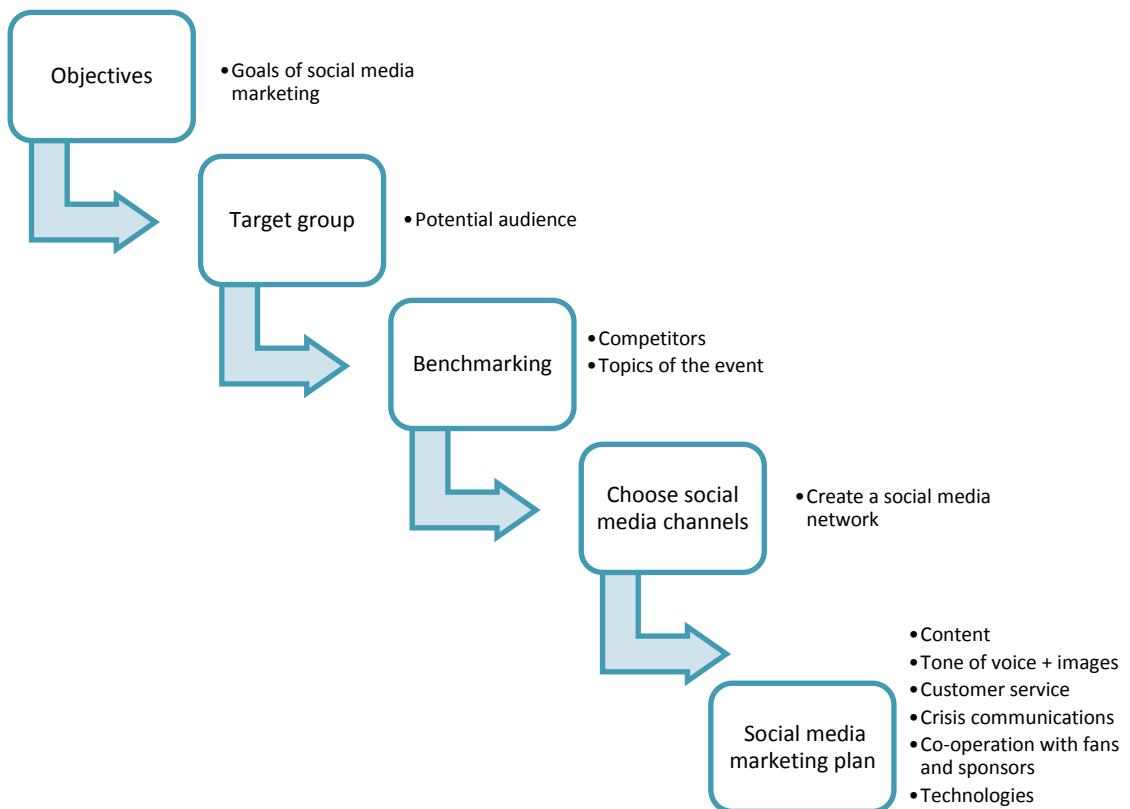


IMAGE 1. Process of social media marketing (Marketo 2015)

2.2.1 Objectives and goals

It is important to clarify the objectives and goals that are wished to achieve with event promotion and with social media marketing. For example, in order to help event's ticket

sales via social media marketing, it has to be written as an objective in the marketing plan and create a social media marketing strategy according to the objective. When the goals are clear to everyone in the marketing team, it is easier to control the marketing actions. (Marketo 2015.) Social media marketing has its costs, and without objectives, the efforts and results are easily lost (Cvent, 10). In order to measure the success of the event's social media marketing, one must set specific goals that will act as quantifiable benchmarks. Goals will help to measure the return on your social media investment and indicate the effectiveness of the social media campaigns. (Cvent, 11.)

2.2.2 Target audience

Target audiences can be described as groups of people that are most likely to show interest in your brand or, for example, to attend your event. They can be segmented in different ways, with characteristics such as demographic aspects, interests or social behaviour. (Cvent, 11.) In addition to determining the target audience, one should also research potential customers, competitors and the discussions around the topic of the event. This helps to find answers to questions, such as, what are people talking about, what people want to know more about and what trends might be occurring in the near future. If the company already has a steady crowd in its social media networks, such as the case study's company has, then the research might not be compulsory. (Solaris 2014, 68-72.) The social media audience is also a good resource when it comes to planning the event itself. Social media gives a unique possibility for companies to ask directly, for example, when the target audience would like the event to be held at, what kind of performers they would like to see and so on. This is not only beneficial for the planning of the event itself, but it also engages the audience and makes them feel like their opinions are important. Moreover, when a potential visitor feels engaged to the event, he or she will more likely attend it. (Solaris 2014, 73.)

Before selecting a target group for the event's promotion in social media, it is important to identify all possible audiences and group them into segments. The needs of different audiences may differ tremendously and the segmentation will provide better communication and service. (Mastermind & Wood 2006, 43.) There can also be audiences that do not follow the social media channels of the event or the company and have to be reached through traditional media or with other marketing tools. For example, using hashtags or

QR-codes in the flyers and posters of the event can help the audience to navigate their way to the correct platform. (Sorokina 2014.)

In addition to promoting the event to social media users who already like the organizing company or who are living close to the event venue, marketers are able to reach out to larger audiences as well (Mainostoimisto 4D). These audiences can be found with the help of the event's objectives and values. For example, if the event is a dog show, it could be promoted to social media users, who have liked various dog-related pages. In addition, marketers are able to find potential visitors by utilizing the event's subject. For example, if the event is a media conference, the event can be promoted to people working in media agencies. In addition, people who are indirectly interested in similar subjects, speakers or performers, can potentially be a good target group. (Mainostoimisto 4D.)

2.2.3 Benchmarking

In addition to researching the behaviour of the target market, it is also useful to benchmark a few competitors. One should find out what works for competitors and how their customers are reacting to their marketing actions. One of the most important factors to research is the customer engagement – even if the social network page of the competitor has thousands of followers, it does not mean it is working. If the audience is active and participating, then the actions are presumably creating results. (Solaris 2014, 19.)

Benchmarking does not always have to be about direct competition, it can also be aspirational. According to Lee (2015), benchmarking a highly successful industry leader in your field of business can be inspiring and motivating. In addition, benchmarking your own social media actions and campaigns gives a possibility to learn from mistakes and enhance the future performance. (Lee 2015.)

2.2.4 Social media channels

It is important to plan the social media network very early on when organizing an event because creating social media pages just right before the event can end up being useless.

The more time the event has social media pages, the more time it has to test which messages work the best and which actions create engagement. (Kallioinen 2015.)

There are various social media channels, which events are able to use, but it is better to manage one or a few channels in an effective manner than trying to handle a lot of channels poorly. According to a Social Media Expert and Network Community Manager Pauliina Mäkelä, four of the most important channels for event promoters are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and blogs (Kallioinen 2015). For example, on Facebook, the organizers are able to see how many people might be attending the event, the event can be linked to the brand's Facebook page and they are able to reach potential visitors through various Facebook groups. Twitter, on the other hand, works well as a platform for giving out information, for inviting people and for communicating with the audience during the event. With the help of blogs, the organizers are able to share interesting content about the event, its performers or subject. This can help to engage the potential visitors and create discussion around the event. Instagram can be used as a platform to post pictures and video clips from the event with the help of the event's own hashtag. (Kallioinen 2015.)

In addition, Instagram could be used before the event to share e.g. behind-the-scenes footage to intrigue the followers, and for introducing the hashtag which people are able to use at the event. If the event uses a hashtag to communicate and promote on social media, it needs to be short, unique and easy to remember. For example, Nordic Business Forum 2016 did not use a hashtag #nordicbusinessforum2016 but used #NBF2016 instead, which is much shorter and easier to use. With the help of a hashtag, the organizers are able e.g. to discuss with the audience, organize competitions, get feedback and ideas and use it to share photos. (Mainostoimisto 4D.)

2.2.5 Social media network

With the help of monitoring and listening to the target audience, one is able to determine the tools and tactics to use in the social media plan. Audiences have different needs and ways to communicate, and one has to find out which social networks are the most relevant for the specific group. (Cvent, 11.) Deciding which channel will be updated most frequently, and assigning different levels of importance for the channels, will help scheduling and prioritising the social media actions, as well as the integration of the different channels (Sorokina 2014).

By linking all the social media pages back to the event's website will create a net, which will potentially drive the audience to register or to buy tickets to the event (Cvent, 11). By integrating social media channels together, for example sharing Instagram photos or Youtube videos to Facebook, people following one of the channels will be able to find more interesting content about the event. For example, the Finnish music festival, Flow Festival, is well known for its effective use of different social media networks to promote their event. They link their Facebook page, the Facebook event page, and Instagram account effectively with their Twitter account by retweeting and sharing the links in both networks. Flow Festival also decided to prioritize the use of Instagram in their marketing tools in 2015. They organized a survey beforehand to research their audience's preferences and wishes for the upcoming promotion and adjusted their marketing actions accordingly. (Seppälä 2015, 9-10.)

2.2.6 Content

Social media marketing can be viewed as much more "delicate" marketing channel than some of the traditional marketing methods. As social media is often considered personal, only marketing efforts that are important or create emotions to the audience, receive more likes and shares on the social media channels. (Solaris 2014, 71.) According to Marketo (2015), the strategy of social media marketing needs to have high quality and shareable content in order to succeed. High-quality content is direct, entertaining and it gives value to the user. These characteristics make the content to be more likely shared to others. These characteristics could include for example storytelling or organising a competition

where the user might win prizes. (Marketo 2015.) Interesting content could also be information about the event's venue, blog posts, and highlights of previous events or performers' video greetings. In addition, the event's website should be updated regularly with new content and linked to the social media pages. This helps the consumers to find their way directly to the page, where they are able to register or buy tickets. (Solaris 2014, 73.)

With the help of features to schedule posts provided by the social media platforms' or by various third-party tools, event marketers are able to schedule frequent posts in order to keep the audience anticipated. Regular updates about the upcoming event, such as revealing pieces of the program or releasing a new band that will perform at a rock festival, helps to keep the audience engaged on the social media channels. (Salcido.) Additionally, visual content that shows how the event is being organized and what happens behind the scenes can often be very interesting content for the audience. Sharing information about the pains and thrills of organizing an event, including the mistakes and accidents, can make the brand and event more relatable and human. Getting glimpses of what happens behind the scenes can boost engagement and help to create a buzz in social media. (Alventosa 2016.)

There are also other ways to raise awareness of the event on social media, for example, by using guerrilla marketing, which includes unconventional ways to promote the agenda. This usually requires a high understanding of the target group's lifestyle and what type of messages influence it. For example, the Finnish music festival Summer Up spread 1000 pictures of American hip hop artist Nicki Minaj printed on cardboards on the steps of Helsinki Cathedral (image 2). The cutouts also hid 100 two-day passes to the music festival. The stunt raised awareness not only in the Finnish media and social networks but also in several foreign media, such *The Mirror* in the United Kingdom (Rutter 2015) and *The New York Daily News* in The United States (Caufield 2015). Pictures of the Nicki Minaj cutouts spread via Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook and caused not only bafflement but also indignation in the Finnish public, as well as the city and church officers of Helsinki. The stunt was also argued to be unethical due to the provocative pose and outfit that the artist was portrayed in the picture (Lumo 2015). Despite the criticism that the promotion received, it might be assumed that the stunt had boosted the pre-event marketing as intended. The promotion was also extended to the festival's own Facebook and Instagram networks, where they organized different competitions and advertisements about the cardboard cutouts. The risk of getting part of the Finnish public offended might

have paid off, since the people who found the stunt funny, was indeed the target market, which the festival wanted to reach.



IMAGE 2. Summer Up Festival's advertisement (Summer Up Festival 2015)

2.2.7 Visual identity and tone of voice

The tone of voice in the event's communication needs to be consistent and follow the brand's identity. It is also important to determine who will be in charge of the social media communication in order to maintain a consistent voice. (Schaffer 2013, 18-19.) If different people of the team maintain the social media channels, it is good to write down guidelines of the style to use in social media communication in the marketing plan. For example, a Finnish rock festival Ilosaarirock uses an informal style in their updates, which can include the use of a dialect, funny words or plenty of special characters. In my opinion, this kind of language gives the event a relaxed and fun identity and appeals especially to a younger audience (image 3).



IMAGE 3. Ilosaarirock Festival's tone of voice on social media (Ilosaarirock 2016)

In addition to the voice, also the colours, imagery and the naming of the event's social media site should follow the brand's identity. These should be written in the strategic plan and planned with the target audience in mind. Consistent colour schemes and images help the audience to recognise the event's posts and increase the familiarity. (Schaffer 2013, 37.)

2.2.8 Co-operation with partners and sponsors

Sponsors and partners of the event, that are chosen carefully, can create credibility and interest for the event, and additionally interesting content and a possibility to reach larger audiences. Not only are the sponsors a source of income for the event, they can also be great marketing resources for the event. (Gilmer 2015.) For example, in the case event of this thesis, Eläköön koirat!, one of the target groups were dog enthusiasts, who were interested in dog sports. Collaborating with the Finnish Agility Association, created credibility for the event's agility competition and enabled the organizer to reach agility athletes through the association's channels. With the partnership, the association was also able to activate their own members, to reach new potential members and to get visibility for their sport. This kind of mutually beneficial relationships can help the organizer to reach potential audiences and the sponsor to get visibility, leads and new customers (Gilmer 2015).

2.3 Paid social media advertising

What if the company does not have an active social network audience, the event is brand new or the company has limited time and resources to manage their social media marketing? One possibility is to use social media advertising, which is paid advertising on different social media sites that can show either as e.g. banners or as normal posts on the user's newsfeed. Social advertising can be targeted to a very small group by characteristics such as demographics, behaviour or even interests. This means that the target audience of the event needs to be well planned, in order for the advertising to be effective. (Solaris 2014, 94.)

If some of the social media channels cannot reach the event's target audience, one should not include the channels in the social media marketing plans. Additionally, if the event planners do not have the resources for example to create beautiful visual content, marketing on Instagram could be difficult or very unbeneficial. In addition, it is good to remember that the paid social media advertising might also reach audiences who will not attend the event but will find the advertisement's content shareable and intriguing. These non-attendees serve an important role as sharers, who forward the message to potential attendees. (Marketo 2015.)

2.4 Technologies in online event promotion

Some of the social media channels, such as Facebook, do not show all the posts to the page's followers, as there are secret algorithms that limit the visibility of posts shared by marketers. An easy way to reach your target group on social media is to use paid advertising. For example, Facebook offers multiple ways to target advertisement to a certain group and to add customized audiences to the target groups. In addition, marketers are able to remarket adverts to people on social media, who have visited the company's website and shown an interest in the company. Events are able to benefit from this by tracking down people, who have visited their website to read about the event or have added tickets to the online shopping cart but have not checked out. Facebook can also help to track down potential audiences, who are similar to the audiences, which have already visited your website. (Facebook Pixel.)

Facebook and Instagram are few of the social media platforms that offer tools for businesses to analyse the audience, its behaviour and the effectiveness of the posts and ads in order to adjust their social media marketing. These tools provide information such as demographic characteristics, engagement rate or even the best times to post updates. With the help of these metrics, marketers are able to find out, for example, what kind of posts achieve the most interactions, or what kind of advertisements are clicked the most. (Gilmer 2014.)

In order to analyse and enhance the conversion on the event's website, Google Analytics offers multiple ways to analyse the traffic and visitors of the page. The tool provides metrics and statistics for any website that installs a tracking code into their web page. With the help on Google Analytics, event organizers are also able to find out how their marketing actions – whether they are on social media or not – influences the ticket sales and the number of visitors on the website. (Eventsforce 2016.) According to Eventsforce (2016), some of the most useful metrics on Google Analytics are for example:

- The demographics of the visitors
- Where the visitors are coming from
- Which content or performers of the event are the most interesting
- What is the visitor's path on the page
- What is the conversion rate of ticket purchase or registration

For example, with these metrics, a marketer is able to study, if a web page visitor has arrived at the page by clicking an advertisement on Facebook. This enables the marketer to study which ads or campaigns drive traffic to the web pages and adjust them accordingly. (Eventsforce 2016.)

3 EVOLUTION OF MARKETING

3.1 Digitalization and marketing

It can be said that the development of technologies in the recent decades has forced the way we conduct business to change rapidly. At the same time, marketing has changed as well, and the change is even faster than before. Businesses and their marketing departments have had to adapt to new platforms, new behaviour patterns of customers as well as ways of measuring the market. (Rabinowitz, 2011.)

Before the rise of digitalization, the information, as well as the sources consumers had access to, were very limited. The conversation between the consumer and the provider was mostly one-way, and the audiences were massive. This provided the media outlets to capitalize the possibility to advertise through them. (Schaffer 2013, 6.) For example, marketing on television changed in the 1950s, from being locally controlled single-advertiser-per-show model to a network-controlled model that had many advertisers. This resulted that the viewers became a part of a mass audience and the companies lost their ability to target their message to an individual. Loyalty can be reached through individual connections and personalised service, but the limitation of media sources prevented the marketers from reaching individuals on a large scale. (Evans 2012, 4-5.)

As the Internet and other advantages of wireless technologies emerged, the media consumption and communication became digital, and the number of sources for them increased (Schaffer 2013, 6). The digital age has reduced the barriers of time and place of doing business, which means that the way people acquire information and even do commerce has changed. Digital media has given the possibility to collect data from individual customers and analyse the data, and with the help of new technology, to use it to help businesses to accommodate their business models. (Hundekar, Appannaiah & Reddy 2010, 187.) This means, that in digital marketing, the size of the audience, which receives the message, should not be a measure of success. When the message can be directed easily to a certain target group, it has possibilities to be more effective than sending it through a traditional media. (Tuten 2008, 2-3.)

It can be presumed that people are no longer satisfied with getting information only through advertisement and promotional information. The amount of information shared with other people through social networks is considered in a higher value than the information gained from the advertiser. (Evans 2010, 4.) However, the more businesses allow their customers to create content and to participate in the business' marketing, the more they will gain from it. People have the need to get their opinions and thoughts heard, and with the help of the Internet, they now have the means to do it when and wherever they wish. (Tuten 2008, 4.) This also results in the fact that the businesses need to be even more transparent than before. Businesses can no longer hide behind expensive marketing operations and trust that people will believe their message. They need to transform their business models completely to address the needs and demands of social media. (Qualman 2009, 32; 240.) The digital age and especially the use of social media has altered also the businesses' marketing expenses. The social media channels open new and free or inexpensive ways to do efficient marketing and engage customers in a new way. (Rabinowitz 2015.)

3.2 Social media

Social media is a term that is widely used in the field of marketing and communications, but what is exactly meant by the definition "social media" stays unclear. Social media can be explained by examining the words separately. The word "social" refers to the need of connecting and communicating with other humans. This need is very instinctual and includes the need for belonging to a group of similar like-minded people and feeling included. (Safko 2012, 4-5.) The word "media" means an instrument of communication, such as radio or newspaper, and includes all the technologies we use to reach other people (Safko 2012, 5). An important part of the term social media is also the importance of content. Humans have the need to share their experiences, thoughts, and ideas and use different social software to do so (Safko 2012, 5; Lietsala & Virkkunen 2008, 18).

According to Mayfield (2008, 5), social media consists of online media, which share these factors: participation, openness, conversation, community, and connectedness. Social media encourages people to participate, share knowledge and to give feedback. The most important factor is the two-way conversation that social media enables. This interaction blurs the line between the media and the audience. The communities and connectedness

create links between people, which enable the sharing of information to be potentially very fast and uncontrollable. (Mayfield 2008, 5.) Social media is mostly conversation between people and it is based on natural and genuine communication about mutual interests and things (Evans 2008, 38).

According to Agresta, Bough and Miletsky (2010, 74), this on-going conversation is unique the power of social media. It enables companies to build long-lasting relationships that will eventually force marketers to shift away from campaign-based mentality. Social media has a potential to get in a close relationship with customers that traditional marketing tools might not have. However, in order to gain mass audiences to the social media channels, marketers might need the help of traditional media tools to guide the audience. So it is not a question of whether to use only traditional media or social media, it is more a question of how to integrate them so that they support each other. (Agresta et al. 2010, 74.)

In some cases, people use social networks and other digital media to find out information about products and services by themselves rather than trusting the company's advertisement (Schaffer 2013, 6). On the other hand, according to Schaffer (2013, 6), social media was originally created for people, not for businesses. It was meant for people to keep in touch with other people and not for businesses to capitalize on it. Today, there has been a slight change in the personal use of social networking sites; it has become more of a tool to find information for personal or professional use than only to communicate with the people you know. (Schaffer 2013, 6.)

In addition, another way for companies to capitalize from social media is the possibility of data mining, which means collecting discussions, behaviours and movements from various social media channels and analysing them in order e.g. to predict the future trends and phenomena. Although a great deal of social media discussion and personal data is private and shared only to close friends, there is enough open data for companies to benefit from. (Schaffer 2013, 10-11.) Companies are now able to use social media data as a research platform in the same way they have used regular surveys or target group interviews. (Wollan et al. 2010, 70-71.)

3.3 Genres of social media

The field of social media is constantly changing, which makes it difficult to give it a single definition. There can be found many ways to define the field of social media by using various factors. According to Lietsala et al. (2008, 25), one can observe social media through six different genres (table 1). These preliminary genres show all the different motives within the social media. (Lietsala et al. 2008, 25.)

TABLE 1. Six genres of social media (Lietsala et al. 2008, 25)

Genre	Main practices	Examples
Content creation and publishing tools	Production, publishing, dissemination	Blogs, wikis, podcasts
Content sharing	Sharing all kinds of content with peers	Flickr, Youtube
Social networks	Keeping in touch and building new social networks, self-promotion etc.	LinkedIn, Facebook
Collaborative productions	Participation in collective build productions	Wikipedia
Virtual worlds	Play, experience and live in virtual environments	Second Life, World of Warcraft
Add-ons	Adoption of practices from one site to another	GoogleMaps, RockYou

Within these different genres, the users are able to change between different roles and activities according to their needs (Lietsala et al. 2008, 26). As Lietsala's and Virkkula's (2008, 25) definition with genres describes social media via the actions and motives, Mayfield (2008, 6) divides the social media more with the type of shared content. According to Mayfield (2008, 6-7), the six different kinds of social media are social networks, blogs, Wikis, podcasts, forums, content communities and microblogging. These genres differ by the content shared in them and the way it is conveyed. No matter which way social media is observed, it is obvious that it touches the layers and ways we are social in a closer way than traditional media does. (Mayfield 2008, 6.)

3.4 Social media channels

According to Egan (2016), social media is changing constantly, and businesses can find it hard to figure out which social media channel would be the best one for them to use to market their products or services. Social media can provide a great tool to promote brands, products, campaigns, and services. In addition, it also allows businesses to connect with their customers and fans on a personal level. (Egan 2016.) Social media channels can have various differences (table 1), and it is important for businesses to understand them when choosing the channels they want to use (Bendror).

Social media channels differ from each other by e.g. the number of users they have, the type of content users are able to share and other channel-based characteristics that can be beneficial also for marketers. For example, on Pinterest, marketers are able to reach young women, as most of the platform's users are female aged 25-45. Youtube, on the other hand, is a video-based platform that can be easily used for e.g. teaching purposes. Some of the most popular social media channels and their differences are listed in the table below (table 2), but it is good to remember that their characteristics are changing constantly and will most likely differ in the future. In this thesis, I will research more closely two social media channels, which were found to be the most beneficial for the case event of this thesis: Facebook and Instagram.

TABLE 2. Differences between social media channels (Egan, 2015; Bendror, modified)

PLATFORM	USERS	TYPE OF USERS	MAIN TYPE OF POSTS	EXAMPLES OF TOOLS TO UTILIZE IN MARKETING
Facebook	1.65 billion	Not specific	Pictures, video, text, links	Facebook Ads
Twitter	310 million	Not specific	Text, 140 characters	Hashtags
Instagram	500 million	70 % female, aged 18-35	Pictures and video	Instagram Stories
Pinterest	70 million	80 % female, aged 25-45	Pictures	Business Analytics
Youtube	1 billion / month	Not specific	Video	Teaching opportunities
Google+	359 million	Not specific	Pictures, video, text, links	Circles

3.4.1 Facebook

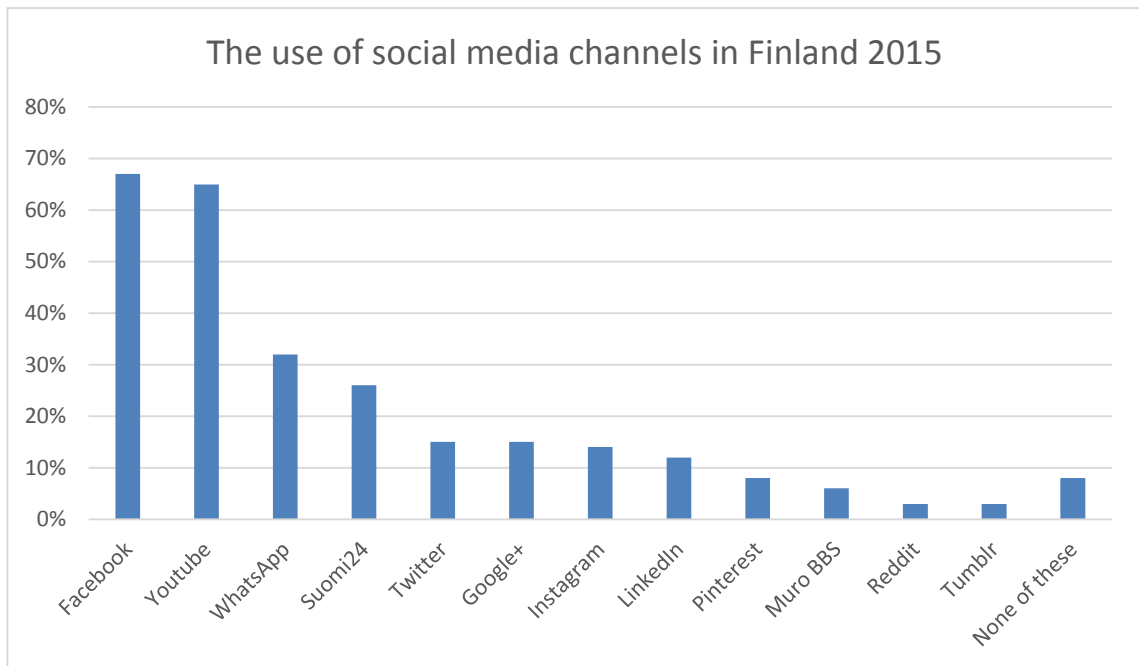


FIGURE 1. The use of social media channels in Finland in 2015 (Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2015)

According to a study by Reuters (Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2015), Facebook was the most popular social media channel in Finland in 2015 (figure 1). Facebook is not only the most popular channel for personal use, but it also has over 645 million business page views per week worldwide (Bendror). People often use companies' Facebook pages as a source for current information, updates, to explore events and to see what is generally going on. This is why it is important to keep the page updated regularly with interesting content. Facebook's effectiveness for marketers depends on the quality of the content they post. The more the audience clicks or reacts to the marketer's shared posts, the more the marketer will appear on the newsfeed. (Bendror; Egan 2015.)

If a company wishes to advertise their event on Facebook, a good option is to create an event page. With the help of clear visual content, Facebook users are able to find out information about the event with a quick glance. The event page also enables people to show the organizers that they might be attending the event. The followers are also able to invite their Facebook friends to the event as well and spread information about the event themselves. Facebook is also a good platform to engage potential visitors by organizing

competitions and polls, asking for feedback and sharing updates about the event. (Reynolds 2015.)

Facebook also offers multiple ways for businesses to advertise. Whether a company wishes e.g. to create brand awareness, create leads or to market an event, Facebook offers different tools for almost everything. Not only does Facebook offer different tools for advertising, it also provides tools for analysing the effect of social media marketing. With the Facebook's analysing tools, companies are able to see if the objectives and goals are met with the marketing actions that they have done. (Facebook Business 2016.)

3.4.2 Instagram

Instagram is a photo-based social media platform, which is currently owned by Facebook. The number of users on Instagram has increased 25 % compared to 2015, now exceeding to over 500 million users worldwide (Kolowich 2015). The platform's idea is to share pictures or short video clips to other users you that you have allowed to follow you. Also compared to Facebook, Instagram works the best if used on a mobile phone. It is possible to manage Instagram accounts on a computer, but the platform requires a third party tool to share pictures. (Bendror.) Even though Facebook has the largest amount of users than any other social media channel, Instagram has a benefit of brands enjoying an engagement rate of 4 percent of their total followers. The rate is relatively high, compared to Facebook and Twitter that have an engagement rate of only 0,1 percent. (Read 2016.) Engagement rate is calculated by dividing the interactions the page receives with the number of total fans on the page. This number is one of the metrics used to describe the marketer's success on social media. (Social Bakers Blog.)

The possibilities for businesses to market on Instagram are a bit more limited than on Facebook. As one is able to share content only in pictures or video, the marketing plan needs to be more carefully planned. According to Read (2016), companies that wish to succeed on Instagram, need to have a clear vision and visual style, to post content frequently and to create familiarity with their audience. For example, a natural soda brand called Zevia, uses very distinctive images that are colourful and bright (image 3). These images help them to connect with people who, according to Zevia, value fun, well-being, and friendship. (Kolowich 2016.)

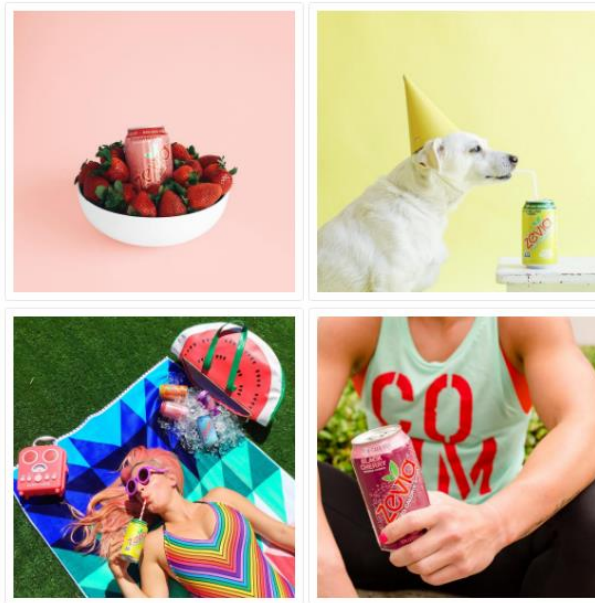


IMAGE 3. Zevia's Instagram photos (Kolowich 2016)

Instagram can help businesses to display their products and services, to build a community around the brand, to increase awareness of the brand and advertise it to potential customers. However, in order to do so, it is important to plan a platform-specific strategy beforehand. When the objectives, resources, and the visual identity have been planned, the possibilities to succeed are much higher. (Read 2016.) Instagram offers marketers advertising tools that help companies to, for example, target their ads to a specific target group. Moreover, with help of advertising on Instagram, companies are able e.g. to direct customers to their website, create leads, reach mass audiences or promote events. (Instagram Ads Guide 2016.)

Instagram has also challenged the image-messaging application Snapchat with a functionality they published in 2016: Instagram Stories. Stories enable users to share short-term photos and videos with their followers that last for 24 hours before disappearing completely. The posts on Stories will not appear normally on the user's newsfeed, but they appear on the top of the screen in a separate navigation. For marketers, Stories provides a platform to share interesting content that happens right at that moment and it enables companies to test different messages and find out what works and what does not. (Gausepohl 2016.)

3.5 Advantages of social media marketing

It can be said that social media marketing has multiple advantages compared to traditional advertising. According to Bennett (2012), social media marketing is not only cheaper to invest in, but it also enables the company to engage with its consumers in a two-way relationship, which traditional media is not always able to do. This two-way conversation enables companies to reach out to their customers on a personal level, interact with them directly and get them to participate. In addition, the ability for customers to get customer service at anytime and anywhere can be an advantage as well as a challenge. Providing customer service on a social media platform requires personnel that is able to react quickly and professionally. (Bennett, 2012.)

The messages on social media are usually non-linear and can be more often passed on from many to many rather than from one to many. Also, the fact of how fast messages move on social media is very unique – a message isn't just shared with a few friends you meet at a coffee shop, but can be shared with 50 friends on social media, who then can share it with their 50 friends, and so on. In addition, the messages are often user-generated, which often means that the messages are in some cases viewed as trustworthy and appealing to other users. (Agresta et al. 2010, 5.) The rise of using mobile devices benefits the use of social media as well. In order to reach individuals more often, marketers need to create marketing materials for platforms that are friendly for mobile devices. (Dempster, Lee & Williams 2015, 4.)

According to Tuten (2008, 10), the ability to measure response on social media channels is an important advantage that social media marketing has. Not only are companies able to find the right target groups with the help of various digital tools, but they are also able to analyse them, find out for example how long they stay on any given web page or what is their path to a purchase decision. This information can help them to personalize, for example, the customer experience on the brand's website. In addition, the relation between money spent on digital marketing can be linked directly to e.g. links clicked, interactions on Facebook or people reached with an advert. The ability to budget marketing actions effectively and being able to analyse the results have been some of the reasons that have increased the popularity of digital marketing. (Tuten 2008, 10-11.)

Some of the social media platforms provide businesses their own analysing tools, but companies are also able to buy third-party analysing tools, provided by such as companies like Social Bakers or Iconosquare. Social Bakers provides solutions for companies to measure, analyse, manage and optimize their social media pages on various platforms (image 4). Companies are also able to research social media data from different countries and benchmark their competitors with the help of the statistics provided by Social Bakers. Iconosquare, on the other hand, provides solutions to manage and analyse Instagram accounts and its users.

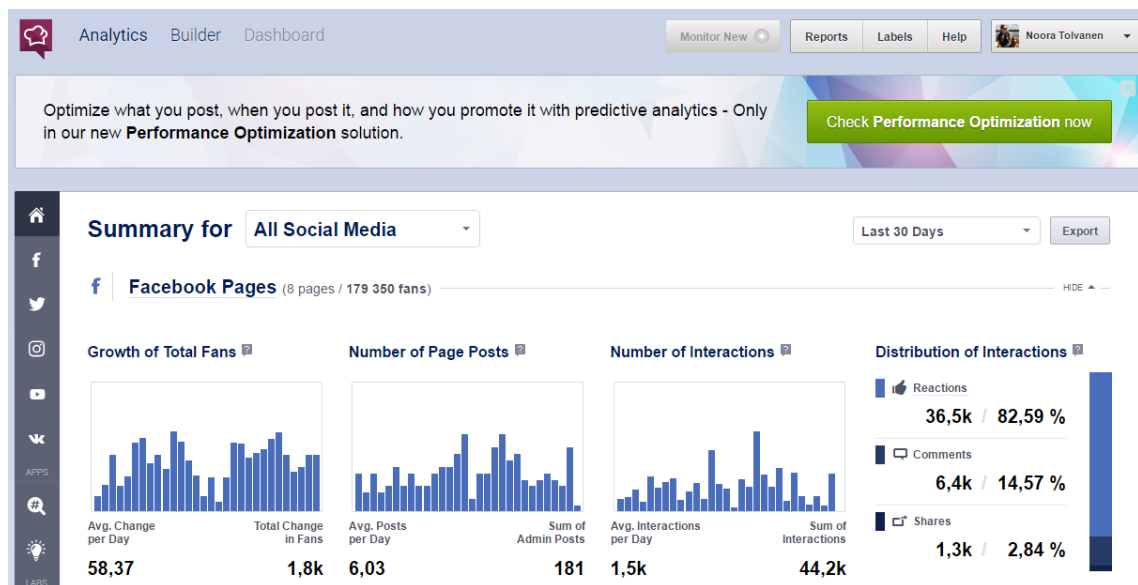


IMAGE 4. Page view of Social Bakers Analytics

3.6 Challenges of social media marketing

Social media marketing has multiple advantages, but it can also have some challenges. According to Sendenali (2016), some of these challenges can be:

- Information leaks
- Negative feedback
- Maintaining the reputation
- Over-promoting
- Reaching the correct target group

Even though marketing actions and campaigns in social media can be cheaper to create, they can have a more short-term effect than campaigns, which use traditional media (Bennett, 2012). Also learning how to use social media in an effective way, so that it eventually creates revenue, can require plenty of studying and expertise. It might also be a challenge to find the correct target groups and to learn how to direct messages to the right people so that it does not become too time-consuming. Moreover, as social media consists of human beings, accidental data leaks can be a risk as well. It is important that the employees handling the social media pages are well aware of the company's disclosable issues and are educated of what information they are allowed to share. (Sendenali 2016.)

Social media platforms can enable people to give more negative feedback and to comment things in a way they might not do in person. According to Sendenali (2016), although negative comments and heated conversation can occur on a brand's social media pages, companies should avoid using censorship or start to argue with the customer. This might be true in most cases, where brands face criticism on their own social media platforms, but in some cases, answering back to the customer in a smart way can also be beneficial. For example, Unicef Finland received constantly various negative comments on their social media pages, where people commented in harsh language and gave negative feedback with incorrect information. Unicef Finland's digital team started to answer some of the comments by correcting the wrong information and pointing out the mistakes in the criticism (image 6). These answers went viral on social media, and in the end, even resulted in the number of donations to increase. (Mattinen 2016.)

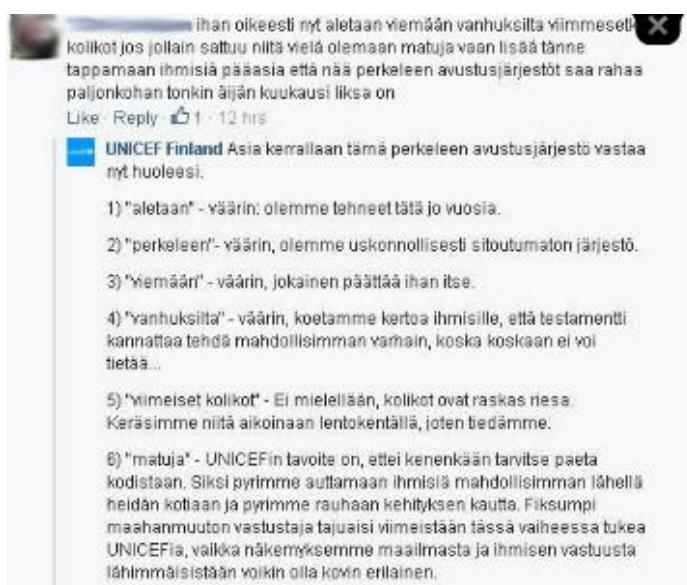


IMAGE 6. Unicef Finland's response to critic on social media (Mattinen 2016)

As mentioned before, one of the advantages of social media is its ability to reach customers at anytime and anywhere. This is an important factor if the brand faces a crisis. For example, if a visitor of the event has an accident, social media is a great tool to forward information about the incident and how it has been handled. However, if the situation is not explained at all, and the rumour of dissatisfying security measures start to spread, the organizer has to have a plan how to stop the misinformation from spreading on social media. Every company, brand, and event should always have a plan for crisis communications, especially for social media. (Sedu Events.)

3.7 Social media marketing or traditional advertising?

TABLE 3. Differences between traditional and inbound marketing (Miller 2015)

TRADITIONAL MARKETING	INBOUND MARKETING
Product-centric	Customer-centric
“Push” messaging	“Pull” messaging
Interruptive	Attractive
One-way conversation	Two-way conversation
Transactional	Relationship-based
Defined start and finish	Ongoing loop
Linear	Multi-faceted
Static	Dynamic
Brand power	Consumer power

Marketing can be roughly divided into outbound marketing and inbound marketing (table 3). Outbound marketing usually means such marketing actions that are considered to be traditional advertising. These can be for example TV commercials, printed and radio advertisements. In traditional marketing, the message is sent to an audience, hoping that a small percentage will listen and get affected by the message. (Gregg 2015.) The message is often product-based and involves solely one-way communication; from the brand to the customers. The separation between traditional marketing and inbound marketing might have started, when consumers’ individual media consumption and behaviour changed as they started to receive messages from multiple devices and platforms. Traditional marketing is still highly used and often combined with inbound marketing. (Miller 2015.)

Inbound marketing can be described as permission-based marketing. In inbound marketing, the company modifies its behaviour or messages according to the customers' needs, characteristics or behaviour, so that the customer finds the messages attractive and wants to find out more. The messages are often non-selling, but rather customer-centric that aim to create value to the customer's life. In inbound marketing, the audience to which the message is sent to is much smaller but more receptive. The philosophy on inbound marketing includes a relationship and two-way conversation between the brand and the customer that aim to create mutual trust. With successful inbound marketing, a brand can add value to a customer's life and blend's into the customer's lifestyle. (Miller 2015.) For example, the beverage company Red Bull's marketing actions create value to its customers' lifestyle by providing content of e.g. wild extreme sports, events, the brand's own magazine and sports events that interest their target group of "adrenaline junkies" (image 7). (O'Brian 2012.)



IMAGE 7. An example of Red Bull's marketing campaign (O'Brian 2012)

4 EVENT MARKETING

4.1 Process of event marketing

Event marketing is a marketing tool for brands, for example, to engage with their customers, and create brand awareness, to find new potential customers or to personalize the company and its products. Event marketing can give brands an opportunity to create emotions and experiences, and in this way, to get the customers more engaged than what could be achieved with traditional marketing tools. Additionally, as events often create experiences that people want to share with others, they also create good content for the brand's social media marketing. (Marketo 2015.)

Event marketing is not the easiest of marketing methods to use. It can require much planning, budgeting and promotion and its results can be hard to analyse. Even though event marketing can be an effective way to promote a business and get customers to engage, the actual planning and executing can be a challenge. The event can be considered successful when the visitor experiences emotions or feels connected to the organizing party and therefore wants to share this experience with others. This creates instantly good reputation to the company since the event has a unique ability to personalize the company and its employees as well as its products. On the contrary, if the event is not successful, it can create bad reputation to the company. Another possibility is that the visitor forgets the event in a few weeks and does not remember who had organized the event. This option is also a bad one since the effort and resources to create the event have been pointless. (Vallo & Häyrynen 2014, 29-30.)

4.1.1 Objectives and goals of the event

The first step of planning an event is to decide what the hoped outcome of the event is. The objective can be for example to increase sales, to raise awareness of a new product launch, to connect with business partners or to improve the company's image. When the objective is decided and presented to everyone who is involved with the event, it is easier to create a cohesive and understandable event. (Hoyle 2002, 33.) The more precise the objective is, the easier it is to analyse the results. In addition, the objectives determine the budget and the needed resources of the event (Vallo & Häyrynen 2014, 23). After the

objectives are determined, they should be converted into needs of the potential visitors. What benefits will the visitor get when attending the event? What are the needs of the potential visitor? (Hoyle 2002, 33.)

The objectives of the event can also give guidelines for the promotion of the event. The objectives define the messages communicated in the event's marketing channels and can define channels and platforms where a potential visitor could be reached. (Cvent, 10.) For example, if the event is a fishing competition for teenagers, the platform to promote the event could be social media networks and social media pages and forums for young people.

4.1.2 Target audience of the event

Every company or brand has their own target audience but will the event be marketed to them? The target audience should be determined by the nature of the event, whether it is, for example, a product introduction, a convention or a training program. The same applies to B2C events, where one should determine the demographical and geographical aspects as well as audience's interests and awareness. (Hoyle 2002, 35.)

By determining the target audience, it is easier to create marketing messages and materials, which can be personalized and noticed (Hoyle 2002, 35-36). In addition, the target audience, as well as the objective, determine the ways and tools of marketing the event. However, it is good to remember, that the target audience of the event might not be the same audience that is the target audience of the brand. (Vallo & Häyrynen 2014, 58.)

4.1.3 Place and time of the event

There are endless venues to host an event in and the chosen location might be the key asset in promoting the event. Nevertheless, if the location is situated far away from the target audience, it increases their traveling distance and maybe even accommodation costs. (Hoyle 2002, 36.) In addition, the character of the event needs to be taken in consideration when deciding a location, as it can affect the atmosphere. If the event has a formal form, the venue needs to be dignified, when if the event is relaxed, too formal venue can create an awkward atmosphere. (Vallo & Häyrynen 201, 141-143.) In addition

to the space, also the timing and season of the event should be considered. Not only is the time of day important, but also the time of week and year should be taken into consideration. Major holidays, other events and market schedules can affect the attendees' participation. (Hoyle 2002, 25-36.)

4.1.4 Features and purposes of the event

In addition to determining why the company wants to organise an event, it is also important to think what the communication that is wished to be conveyed is. Every event should have a clear main message and a few of secondary messages. The visitor should be able to walk away from the event with at least one of these messages rather than leaving feeling confused. (Vallo & Häyrynen 2014, 116.) The purpose of the event should also be conveyed in the promotion of the event. This will help the attendee to build expectations and create the need to attend. (Hoyle 2002, 40.)

4.2 Benefits of event marketing for a mid-sized company

Event marketing has many benefits for any company. In Finland, there are over 280 000 companies and staggering 98,9 % of them are mid-sized companies which have less than 50 employees (Suomen Yrittäjät 2015). This means that companies in Finland have to survive in a highly competitive business environment. The most common reasons for companies to do event marketing, regardless the size of the company are according to Marketo (2015): creating brand awareness, generating leads, engaging with prospects and existing customers and educating attendees.

According to Vallo & Häyrynen (2015, 21), event marketing has many unique strengths:

- events are personal and can create personal communication between the attendee and the brand
- the event and its messages can be controlled
- the possibility of setting an objective and receive instant feedback
- the possibility to stand out from the competition
- creates experiences and memories
- affects different senses

The unique strength of event marketing is the possibility to create emotional bonds by providing experiences, education or entertainment, which customers perceive to improve their quality of life. Moreover, because the lived experiences tend to determine people's notion of reality better than communication conveyed through traditional advertising, brands can positively influence customers' emotional attachment easier with events. (Whelan & Wohlfeil 2006, 3.)

In order to achieve emotional bonds, does the company need to invest great amounts of money and resources in order to create a monumental event? According to Whelan and Wohlfeil (2006, 326), this is not necessary. The event needs to be reflected in the target audience's everyday life. This means, that the event planners need to have an in-depth understanding not only of the core values of their brand communication but also of their target audience's lifestyle. (Whelan & Wohlfeil 2006, 326.) Social media channels can offer tools to research the target audience, as they are good platforms to conduct surveys and to analyse conversations and trending conversations (Cvent, 10).

4.3 Summary

Social media provides tools for event marketers to promote their event in a cost-effective and engaging way. With the help of a carefully planned social media marketing plan, event marketers have a good possibility to target their messages and advertisement and to create interesting content with very little cost as well. In the case event of this thesis, the theory of creating social media marketing plan was used to research the event's target group, objective and what social media actions work the best for promoting ticket sales.

It can be said, that digitalization has changed the consumers' behaviour, as well as the transparency of companies and their messages. Today, the information is available everywhere and anytime. This might have resulted that the reliability of marketing messages have decreased. Social media has created a shift in marketing, where the traditional marketing messages are not always viewed as trustworthy as the reviews and comments shared on social media channels.

In order to create a social media marketing plan for an event, it is important to understand the process of event marketing. The main objectives of what is wished to achieve with the event and its features, give guidelines to the messages that are promoted through social media. In addition, in order for the marketer to target the social media marketing actions to the potential visitor, it is important to define the target audience and segments of the event. Moreover, the place where the event will be held in gives the marketer possibilities to target social media marketing to audiences close to that certain area.

5 CASE EVENT

This part of the thesis introduces the case company, the case event, and the pre-event social media marketing actions. The case study of this thesis was executed with an online survey. The purpose of this study was to find out the respondents' opinions about the social media marketing actions and their opinions whether the actions affected their ticket purchasing behaviour.

5.1 Introduction of the company

Prima Pet Premium is a Finnish mid-size company that operates in the pet food industry. The company manufactures, imports, and wholesales pet food and pet products in Finland and in various countries around the world. The company's biggest dog product brand Hau-Hau Champion was established in 1955 and its products can be found in almost every grocery store in Finland. The company has organized a yearly business-to-business (later referred as B2B) event for their customers in the domestic pet store industry and a sales event for consumers in their own warehouse. The rest of the company's events have been exhibitions and events for the company's own personnel. The company attends to various exhibitions in Finland and abroad about 5-8 times per year. In Finnish exhibitions, the objective has been to sell products and occasionally introduce new products or brands to the market. In exhibitions abroad, the objectives have been to network and to create new leads.

In order to celebrate the Hau-Hau Champion brand's 60th anniversary, the company wanted to share the passion for dogs with their consumers and business partners. Prima Pet Premium is sponsoring the reconstruction on the Helsinki Olympic Stadium in 2015-2016, which offered an amazing venue for the event to be held at little cost. In addition, the amount of different events in the pet industry is almost non-existent and all the events are either annual dog shows, dog sports competitions or small charity events. These facts resulted to the idea of the largest three-day dog event of the year for every dog lover, called "Eläköön koirat!" event. The company has never organized an event of such amplitude and has participated only in various exhibitions and fares in the pet industry. This meant that organizing an event at the Helsinki Olympic Stadium would have its challenges in project management, resources, and marketing.

The author of this thesis worked as Project Coordinator for the company and created the event plan and social media marketing plan in co-operation with other colleagues in the company. The data collected from the survey was from guests who attended the event and the data was collected within the following two weeks after the event occurred. The survey's results were checked right after the data was collected to ensure there were no mistakes in the results.

5.2 Content of the event

The case event's goal was to offer "everything to every dog lover". This meant that the content of the event was large and the daily programs included many performers (image 8). The first day of the three-day event was Friday, which included a speech by a well-known dog breeder and a seminar by a British dog trainer, who is known from her own international television show. On Saturday, the program consisted musical performances, dog training tips and seminars, introductions of dog breeds and hobbies as well as many activities for children. The hosts and performers were chosen to entertain children when the parents were able to get valuable information at the same time. On Sunday, the program included an informal dog show, dog sports competitions with competitors from all over the world. The program included also seminars about dog's health and training and presentations of different dog sports. In addition to the program held for the consumers, the key account customers and staff had a VIP-event on Friday evening.

Considering the interests and age of the target audience, the event was divided by the days of the weekend. On Friday, the target audience was grown-ups who were interested in dog training and makes effort to gain new knowledge about dogs and dog training. Saturday was a day for the whole family, which meant that the target audience was people of all ages and especially families with small children. Sunday, on the contrary, was targeted for dog enthusiasts, who do or are interested in various dog sports and dog shows.

<div> <div>Juontaa: Ella Kallinen!</div> <div>PERJANTAI</div> </div>				
16	OVET AUKI			
17	JUHA KARES			
18 - 21	VICTORIA STILWELL POSITIVELY SHOW			

<div> <div>Juontaa: Janne Kattaja!</div> <div>LAUANTAI</div> </div>				
	olympiastadion	Expo-lava		
10	TAPAHTUMAN AVAUS SEY JA ELÄINSUOJELUNEUVONTA			
11	KENGURUMEININKI SIRKUSKOIRANÄYTÖS	VICTORIA STILWELL MEET & GREET		
12	JUHA KARES: KOKO PERHEEN KOIRANKOULUTUSVINKIT	ETSIJÄKOIRALIITTO RY		
13	ANNA ABREU KOIRATANSINÄYTÖS	OPASKOIRAT RY		
14	PAULA SPEER: NAKSUTINKOULUTUSTA KOKO PERHEELLE	SEY JA ELÄINSUOJELUNEUVONTA SIRKUSKOIRANÄYTÖS		
15	KENGURUMEININKI	KUUKURITRYN-MELLEKÖRESQUEKOIRA?		
16	KOIRAMAISIA LAJEJA - NOSEWORK, AGILITY, RALLYTOKO, KOIRATANSI, DOBO	SIRKUSKOIRANÄYTÖS		
17	ESITTELYSSÄ KAIKENKARVAISIA KOIRAROTUJA	HYPOKOIRA RY KOIRAT KASVATUS JA KUNTOUTUSTYÖSSÄ		

<div> <div>Juontaa: Satu Tuomisto!</div> <div>SUNNUNTAI</div> </div>		olympiastadion	Luentosali	Expo-lava
9	9:00 - 12:00 MATCH SHOW			
10	KOIRATANSI KOIRAFRISBEE MONDIORING	JUHA KARES: KOIRAN LUONNE		SUOMEN AGILITYLIITTO ETSIJÄKOIRALIITTO
11	TOTTELEVAISUUSKOULUTUS AGILITY			
12	VINTTIKOIRAJUOKSU PALLOPÄIMENNUS	ONEMIND DOGS: AGILITYÄ JOKA PÄIVÄ		JUHA KARES MEET & GREET TAAKANVETONÄYTÖS
13	HAU-HAU FLYBALL CHAMPION 2015			
14		PAULA SPEER: KOIRAN AKTIVOINTI JA STRESSI		NOSEWORK-NÄYTÖS
15				
16	AGILITYN KANSAINVÄLINEN KUTSUKILPAILU 2015	KOIRAKOUTSI: KOIRAN PERUSTAITOT		PAULA SPEER MEET & GREET
17				TAAKANVETONÄYTÖS
18		RUOKINKO KOIRANI OIKEIN?		NOSEWORK-NÄYTÖS

IMAGE 8. The program of “Eläköön koirat!” event

5.3 Pre-event social media marketing plan

According to Cvent, the three basic rules for event marketing in the digital age are:

1. Engage two-way conversation
2. Make your event attention-worthy
3. Welcome honest feedback

Social media offers an open channel for customers to co-operate, give feedback and share their own opinions to their peers and in this way, create attention to the event. (Cvent, 10.) Planning the social media marketing plan starts with defining objectives and the target group of the event's promotion. In the case event, the objectives were to increase awareness of the event and to increase ticket sales. The secondary goals were to increase brand awareness and to create traffic to the brand's web page.

The target group was planned to consist people who are interested in pets in the greater Helsinki area and other big cities such as Turku and Tampere. Geographically these were chosen by the fact that the journey to the event venue would be reasonably short. The event's target audience was widely aged, from the age of 10 up to the age of 50. This was

planned so that the event would be an event for the whole family and offer activities not only for the dog enthusiasts but also to their children.

5.3.1 Social media infrastructure

One must plan which social media tools and channels to use for social media marketing and how to integrate them into the registration or ticket purchase process. One should also plan what information is posted on which platform and which platform is the most important. (Sorokina, 2014.) In the case event, a designated Facebook page was created for the event. It was decided not create a Facebook event page since it is easier to promote and create adverts as well as analyse the results of a normal Facebook page. The company also has an Instagram page, which was planned to be used in the event's social media marketing. If an Instagram page had created just for the event itself, it would have needed a budget and a lot of effort to get as many followers to it as the company's account already has. This is why it was decided just to use hashtags and create posts by using them into the company's Instagram page. All important information about the event, the schedule, performers, and activities were posted on the event's Facebook page and shared on the company's page. This way it was possible to reach not only the event's fans but also the people who were interested in the company itself and to connect the event to the brand. The brand is not active on any other social media channels, such as LinkedIn or Twitter, so it was no use of targeting other platforms since it would have been difficult to connect them together.

The Facebook page worked as an information platform, which included updates about the schedule or the event, advertisement for the ticket sales, competitions, behind-the-scenes pictures and other information about the performers or the brand. It also acted as a communication platform, where people were able to ask questions before and during the event. The page also shared all pictures and video material during and after the event. The Facebook page had over 2000 followers and the brand's own Facebook page had about 20 000 followers at the time. This made Facebook a good social media platform for pre-event marketing for ticket sale.

5.3.2 Voice and imaginary

It is important for the event to have a specific tone of voice in order to help to create a cohesive identity on social media platforms. It is important that every member of the staff that updates the brand's social media is familiar with the voice to use. The tone of voice has to be related to the wanted image of the brand, whether it is fun, young, conservative or anything in between. (Harju, 2013.) The voice for the event was decided to be the same as the brand's tone of voice: relaxed, but knowledgeable. This worked well because it created familiarity to the brand's followers and suited the concept of the event itself.

The imaginary of the event was planned to be colourful and happy with playful dogs. This was planned to attract all dog enthusiasts without trying to be too professional looking or seem foreign (image 9). The same kind of imagery is used with the brand's advertisement as well and the brand's colour scheme was incorporated to the visuals as well. Happy and cute dogs also work well in social media as they work as "click-bates" by themselves (image 10). A click-bate is a post with a cute and appealing image which catches a person's attention and forces them to look instinctively at the advert more closely.



IMAGE 9-10. Event's posts on social media (Tolvanen 2016)

5.3.3 Paid advertisement on social media

Businesses have a few of options to advertise on Facebook. They can promote their posts, promote the page or create ads, which are unpublished posts. Promoted ads can be analysed how well they have reached the set objective and how much every click has cost.

In order to do that, the brand has to decide the objective they wish to get from the ad; it can be e.g. conversions to a webpage, get more followers, get page likes or app installs. (Patterson, 2014.) In the case event, it was decided to use Page Post Link Ads, which direct the click into the ticket sales page at Lippu.fi or to the event's webpage. The adverts were designed and programmed to Facebook by the company's media agency and the adverts were done with A/B testing. A/B testing means that the system analysed two different ads with different visuals and / or texts and chooses to use the ad, which got better results in further promotion. In addition, normal posts were promoted, which had an objective to collect followers to the Facebook page. In addition to social media marketing, the event was marketed also on TV, radio, print, events and with digital banners, but these channels are not included in this thesis (table 4).

TABLE 4. Event's marketing plan (Tolvanen 2016)

	DEC	JAN	FEB	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
Marketing plan									
Press relases		Press release				Press release	Press release		
Print advertisement				Print ad	Print ad	Print ad	Print ad + articles	Print ads	
Social media marketing & digital media	Sponsored posts, social media posts						Digital ads	Directed online marketin, digital banners Page Link Post Ads	
TV						week 20-22			week 32-33
Radio								week 31-32	
Events	Helsinki KV				dog fair		dog events		
In-shop marketing			In-shop	In-shop	In-shop	In-shop	In-shop	In-shop	In-shop
Direct mailing							Direct mailing		
Promotion				Promotion			Promotion		

6 RESULTS

This section of the thesis includes analysis of how well the pre-event social media marketing actions benefited the ticket sales of the event. In this thesis, it was researched if the case event's social media posts were appealing for the customers and if the posts affected their purchasing decision of the tickets. These questions were researched with an online survey after the event. Another possibility was to conduct the survey during the event, but as I was coordinating the event, I did not have any resources to that. Also with a survey, I was able to get answers from a larger group of people than if I would get with one-on-one interviews. This is why I chose to use quantitative methods to analyse the results. The effectiveness of paid adverts on Facebook was analysed from the results received from the company's media agency. As stated before, social media marketing was not the only marketing tool to boost the event's ticket sales, but in this thesis, they are not included in the analysis.

6.1 Creating the survey

In order to find out which marketing actions influenced the visitors' purchasing decision and how the different ads worked, I created a survey online with Google Forms. The survey was posted on the Facebook page of the event and the brand, as well as sent directly to the brand's newsletter followers. The survey was also sent to the newsletter group, which had applied for the dog training show of the event. As an inducement, the company drew prizes among the people who had answered to the survey. The survey was opened right after the event and lasted for two weeks, after which the data of the answers was collected.

As I was the coordinator of the event, I also wanted to know the overall experience and success of the event itself. This is why the beginning of the survey includes questions broadly about the event and the brand, as well as how the event has affected the visitor's image of the brand. These results will not be included in this thesis since they do not affect the analysis.

I wanted to know if social media marketing affected engagement or interest to buy tickets to the event, but I had a hard time figuring out how to ask this without guiding the customer into answering incorrectly. It was also difficult to form the questions so that the customer would understand them easily. Finding out the causes, which affect a customer's decision to buy a ticket, is very hard to do because people might not know it even themselves. They might be affected by many different marketing actions and aren't able to say which of them caused them to buy the ticket. In order to find out which posts or ads worked well and what did people think of them, I added questions with pictures of the ads to the survey. The results of these questions will not only help with the future event marketing the company will have, but also the overall social media marketing of the brand.

6.2 Demographics of the respondents

The survey had 219 responses that were recorded within the two-week period. The three-day event had about 5000 visitors within the weekend so the sampling of 219 visitors is a good amount to give an overall picture. The age distribution of the sampling was also expected as it reflected the set demographic attributes of the target audience. Mostly 21-55-year-old women who live in the greater capital city area of Finland (figure 2) answered the survey. This reflects the brand's target group, which is young to middle-aged women in larger cities. This demographic is usually the one who makes the daily purchasing decision in the household and participates in the family's activities. The demographic might also have an effect on the survey's results since older people who do not usually spend so much time online were not able to take part in the survey.

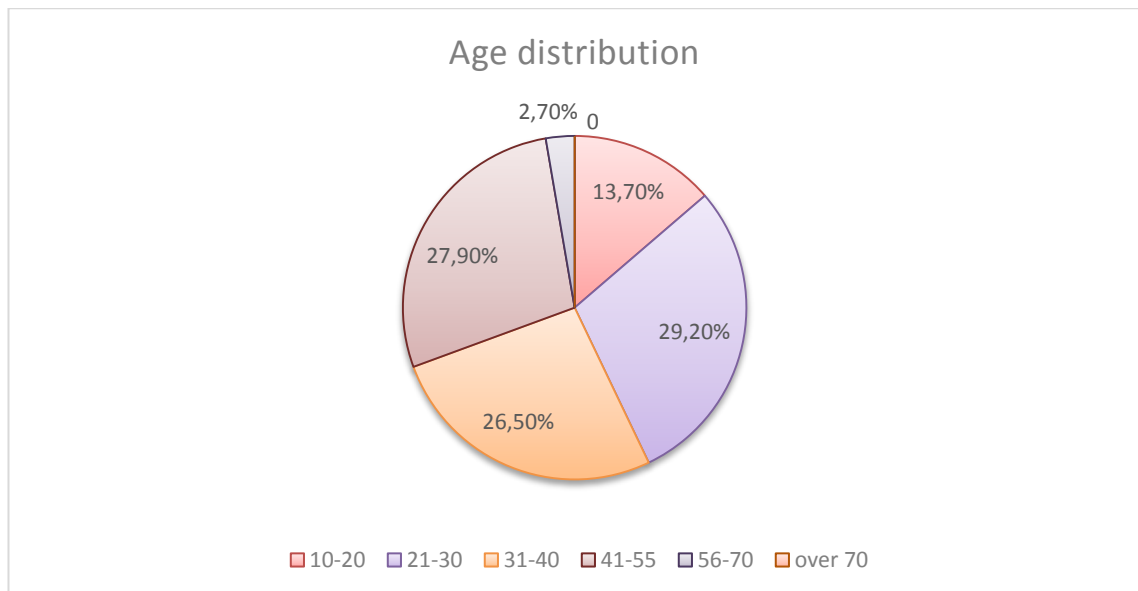


FIGURE 2. Interview respondents by age group (Tolvanen 2016)

6.3 Social media marketing of the case event

The case event's main social media channels were Facebook and Instagram. The event had its own event page, but the brand's Facebook and Instagram accounts were used as well. The different social media marketing actions included normal posts, such as pictures, videos and links of interesting issues in the pet industry and information about the event, ticket sales campaigns and competitions. In addition to sponsored and unsponsored posts, the event also had Page Post Link Ads, which were designed and posted by a media agency. Page Post Link Ads are programmed advertisements on Facebook and Instagram that can be targeted to certain target groups and the paid adverts show up on the target group's newsfeed. The case event's adverts included three different kinds of pictures and texts in order to test which one of them gained more clicks. The adverts also have a link that directs the click to a certain website. In the case event's adverts, the links directed either to the event's website or directly to the website where the tickets were sold.

Social media was not the only media where the event was promoted. Other marketing channels were for example TV, radio, events, and digital advertisement such as banners. The results of the survey indicated that social media was one of the most noticeable media in the case event. Over 189 respondents saw posts or adverts on social media about the event and 66 % of them thinks that the event was most visible in social media compared to other media (figure 3). Even though the correspondents answered that they had seen adverts also on other media, they were less noticeable than the advertisement they saw on

social media. This was an interesting result since the budget for the TV and radio commercials were much higher than for social media marketing. The commercials on TV and radio were aired locally, which should have increased the visibility of them to potential customers.

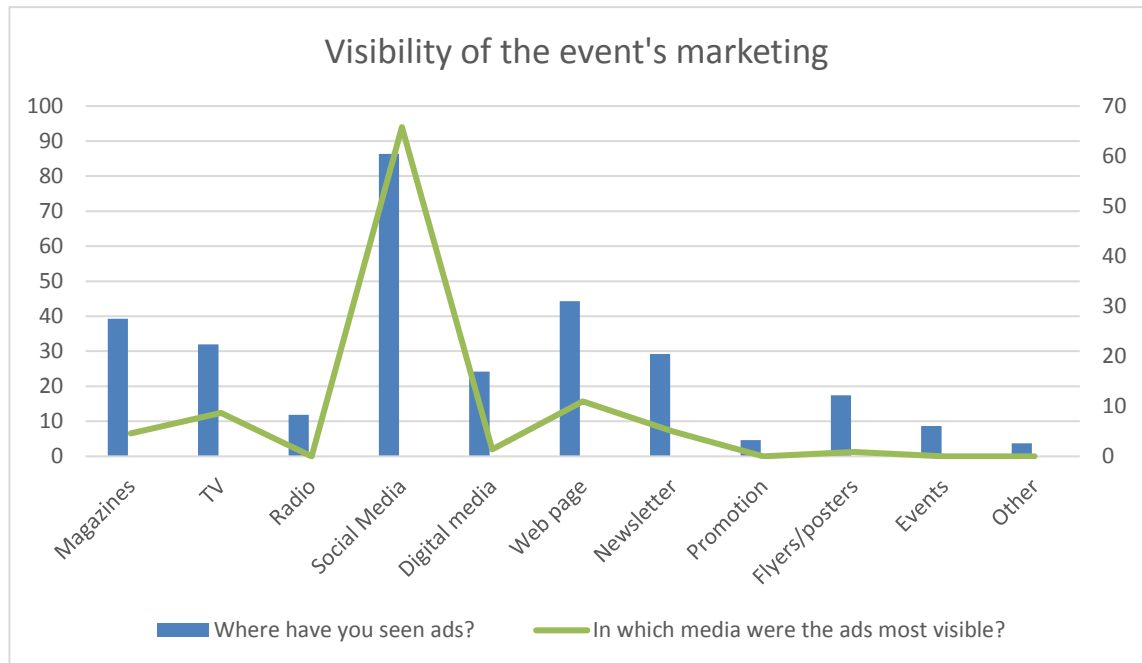


FIGURE 3. Most visible media to the correspondents (Tolvanen 2016)

The results show that most of the respondents researched information about the event either on the brand's website (62,2 %) or from the event's own Facebook page (73,3 %) (table 5). Other channels, such as the ticket sales website or the brand's Facebook page were not important channels at all. This means, that it is important to have all the current and updated information not only on the event's social media network but also on the brand's network as well – creating a "social infrastructure", as stated by Sorokina (2014). The result also shows the importance of Facebook as a channel to gain information from, and in the case event, it is even more important than the brand's website, which had a subpage for the event.

6.4 Effects of social media marketing in purchasing decision

The main research question of this study was to find out if the event's social media marketing had an effect on the respondents' decision to buy tickets. 50 % of all the respondents state that posts on the event's or brand's social media pages had affected their decision to purchase tickets at some level (figure 4). The results also show that the traditional

media, such as TV and radio that have a large audience, did not affect the participants of the survey at all or affected a little. Even the brand's newsletter, which has only a few thousand recipients, had almost the same effect than TV ads (table 6).

FIGURE 4. Social media's effect on purchasing decision (Tolvanen 2016)

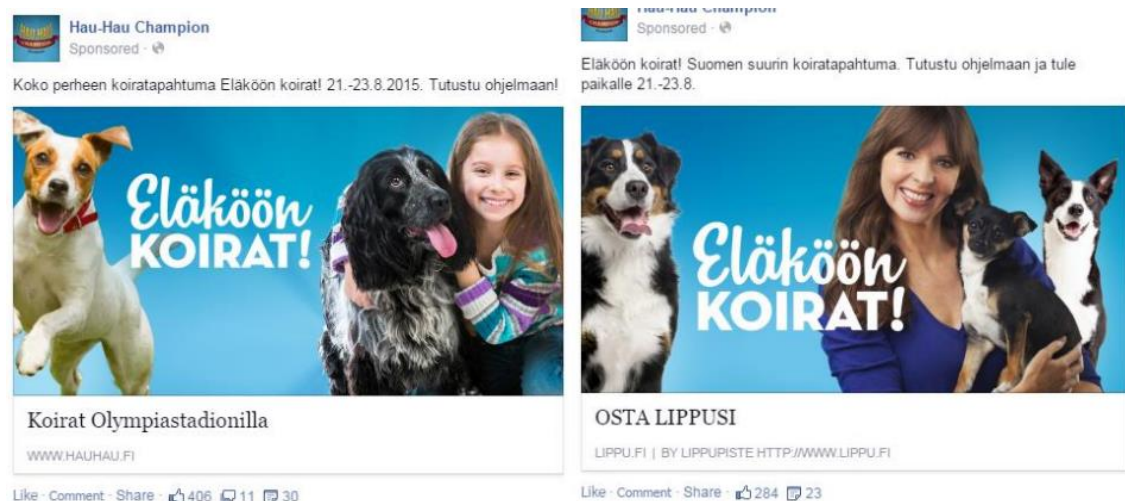
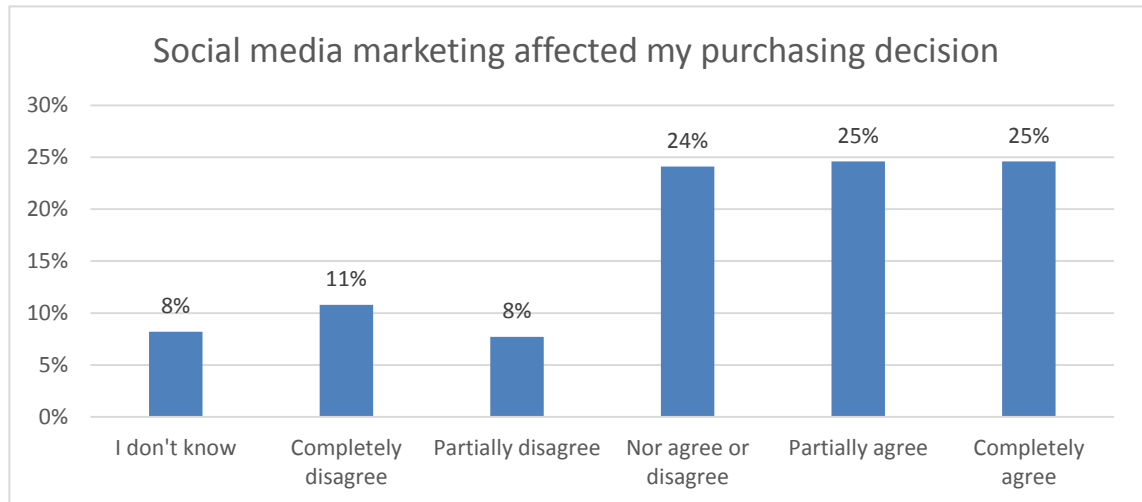


IMAGE 11. Examples of Facebook's Page Post Link Ads (Tolvanen 2016)

In addition, I wanted to know if promoted posts or Page Post Link Ads (later referred as paid ads) on Facebook had led a customer straight into a purchasing decision. Paid ads were campaigned on Facebook and Instagram for a period of seven weeks and targeted to users who are interested in dogs and animals all over Finland. Paid ads show up on the user's newsfeed as sponsored ads and can have various actions when clicked on (image 11). The Facebook ads can be analysed with the help of different metrics, such as click-rate or click conversion. Click-rate measures how many people who saw the ad clicked it and click conversion rate that shows how many clicks resulted in the wanted action, such

as a purchase. The results showed that the post, which had a message of “a fun day for the whole family”, had a greater click-rate than the post that had a call-to-action of “buy your tickets now” and that guided directly into ticket purchasing. Even though the paid ads had a smaller click-rate than average, was the overall amount of clicks relatively large – over 7000 clicks. The paid ads on Facebook reached over 1 million users in our target group and was the cheapest media to use for media visibility.

One of the questions on the survey researched which of the marketing channels affected respondents’ decision to purchase a ticket the most. 25 % of the respondents of the survey, who had answered that they had bought the ticket online, had gone to the online shop through the brand’s or event’s Facebook page or through a paid ad (table 6). This confirms the analysis by the media agency that stated that the Facebook ads had a relatively good click rate (Virta Helsinki Oy, 2015). Also, 34 % of the respondents answered that social media marketing influenced their purchasing decision the most out of all other media channels (figure 5).

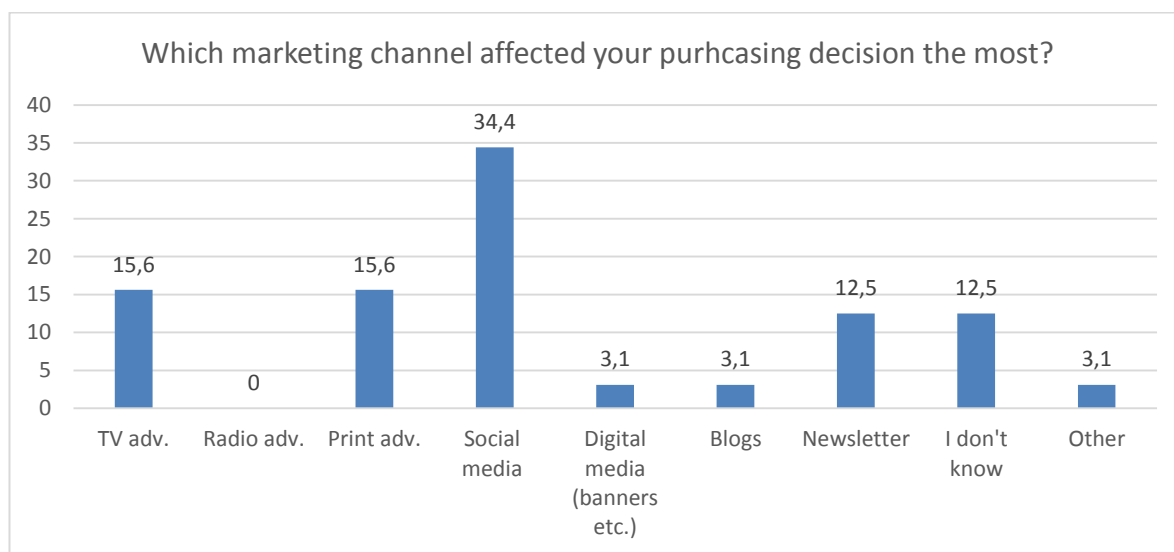


FIGURE 5. Marketing channels that affected the purchasing decision (Tolvanen 2016)

According to Solaris (2014, 73), the route to the event’s ticket sales should be easily found and preferably very direct. However, in the case event the ad, which directed to Lippu.fi was not as effective as the ad that directed to the event’s webpage. It is a possibility that the potential customers of the case event were not ready to buy tickets at that moment when they saw the ad on social media. However, it could be possible that they had noticed the ads but needed time to think about it before purchasing the ticket directly from the ticket service. This means that one should find ways to reach those people who have either

clicked an ad or visited the website, but have not purchased a ticket. These people are most likely intrigued about the event and need to be reminded to purchase the ticket.

6.5 Most appealing social media posts and adverts

One of the research questions was to find out if the event's social media posts were appealing for the respondents and if the posts affected the ticket purchasing decision. These posts mean organic or promoted posts on the event's Facebook page. 80,5 % of the respondents found the event's posts either quite informative or very informative (table 7). The posts were not only appealing, but almost half of the respondents (46,2 %) also shared the posts forward (table 9).

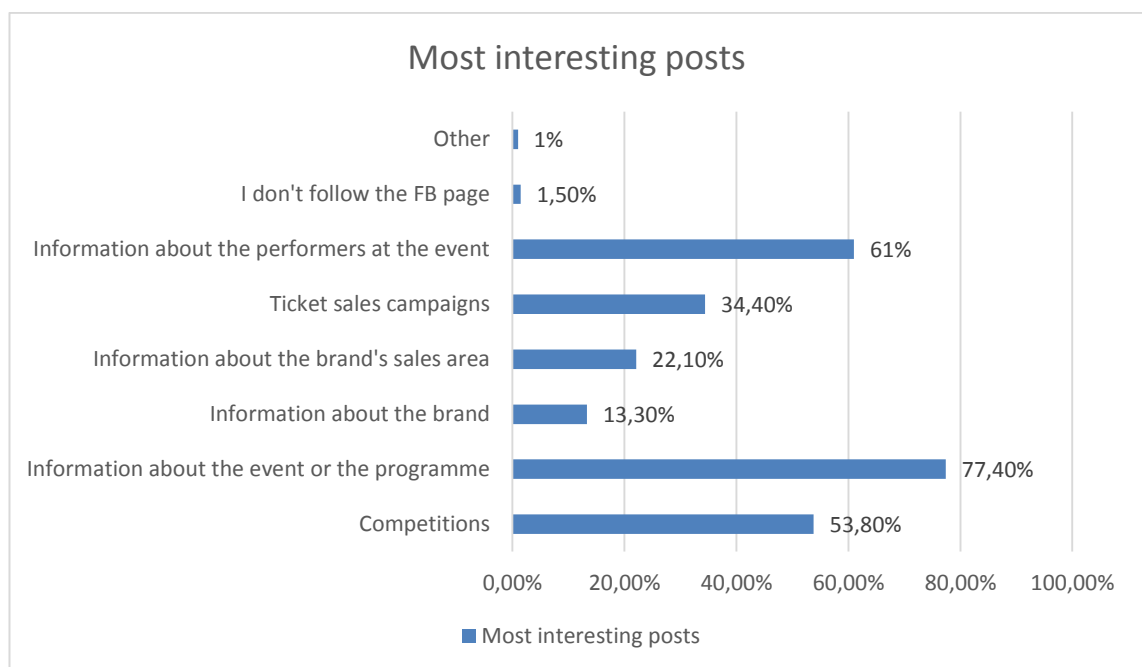


FIGURE 6. Most interesting posts of the event (Tolvanen 2016)

One of the most interesting result was that only 34 % of the respondents found the posts about reduced ticket prices interesting (figure 6). Different price campaigns were posted quite often, hoping that they would boost the ticket sales before the event. This might imply that even though price deductions are a good thing, they do not interest the social media followers as much as the company had thought. They might want to find the information about the prices from somewhere else or the information of the ticket prices does not interest them on social media.



IMAGE 12-13. Event's posts on social media (Tolvanen 2016)

The event's Facebook posts (images 12-13), were considered appealing and informative, as well as they were considered relatively shareable content. Do these aspects affect the event's ticket sales before the event? The results of the research state that 49,2 % of the respondents think that the social media marketing actions influenced their purchasing decision at some level (figure 7). 10,8 % answered that the Facebook posts had no effect on their choice of buying the tickets at all and 32,3 % of them wasn't sure or didn't know.

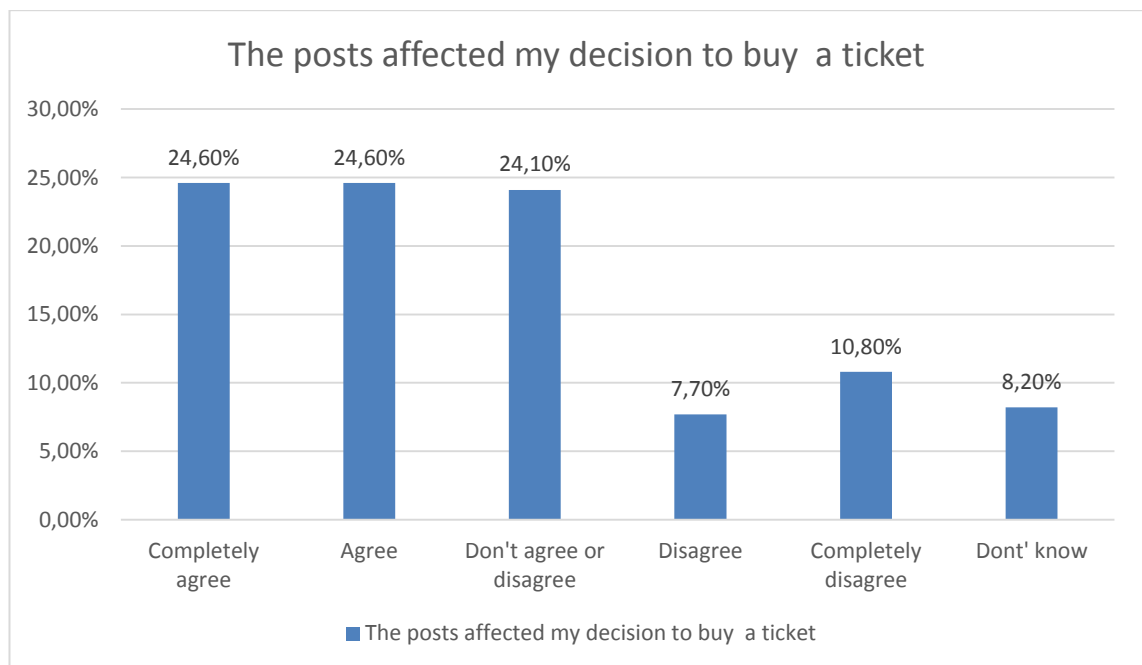


FIGURE 7. Social media posts' effectiveness on purchasing decision (Tolvanen 2016)

The question whether the social media actions affected the ticket sales is difficult to answer to and the result should be analysed broadly. It can be highly impossible to say that a certain genre of advertisement or posts affected the customer's buying behaviour, but it

can be said that it might have been one aspect of it. These results might have been easier to study with the help of qualitative research. This result indicated more that the social media marketing actions reinforced the customer's buying decision than it did to discourage it.

6.6 The survey

I decided to use a survey in order to research answers for this thesis because it enabled me to get a high amount of responses in a short period. I was also able to ask general questions about the event at the same time and the results were easy to analyse afterwards. Even though the number of respondents was satisfying, the fact that the survey was conducted online created some issues for the reliability. First, as the questions of this thesis concerned social media marketing, the fact that the survey was conducted online affects the responses. As the survey was posted on Facebook and to the brand's newsletter lists, the respondents are automatically people, who use social media on a regular basis and are relatively young people. If the survey would have been conducted for example at the event, the sample of respondents could have been much more diverse. On the other hand, the respondents might not have enough time or energy to answer the questions at the event or might find them intrusive if asked by a surveyor.

In addition, as the survey was sent to the brand's newsletter subscribers, means that most of the respondents are interested in the brand and its products. This also means that they have been more receptive to the advertisements and interested on the content than a person who is not the case brand's consumer. In addition, the case brand's customers are highly active on social media and on the brand's own Facebook and Instagram pages compared to several other brands in the same industry. Hence, the survey respondents have seen the social media marketing actions on a regular basis and can be more affected by them than a person who does not follow the brand's social media pages.

In this thesis, I wanted to find out if social media marketing has any effect on a customer's ticket purchasing decision. I also wanted to find out what kind of posts and adverts were the most appealing to the customers. It was difficult to figure out what kind of questions would be easy for the respondent to answer and for me to analyse. As in any survey, it is impossible to know if the respondents really think about their responses or if they just

answer the questions in order to finish the survey quicker. An online survey also removes the possibility to explain the questions to the respondent thoroughly; this increases the possibility of misunderstanding and incorrect answers. On the other hand, an online survey allows the respondent to answer the questions on their own time without other distractions and hurry, especially when the questions concern questions such as their purchasing behaviour.

The results of the survey do not conclude coherently how pre-event social media marketing affects the ticket sales of the case event. Even if the click-rates and the noticeability of the advertisements were relatively high, and the respondents claimed that social media did affect their purchasing decision in some degree, I am not able to proof that it is the truth. This is because a separate company conducted the ticket sales and I was not able to get any analysis from which path did the buyer end up buying the ticket. If the tickets were sold from the company's own system, I would have been able to trace the clicks and find out if a customer has ended up buying a ticket by clicking e.g. an ad on Facebook. Even though the results of the Page Post Link Ads show the amount of people clicking the ads and being directed to the ticket-selling webpage, I was not able to know if that person actually had bought the ticket. In order to find out the reasons why the consumer had noticed the advert but had not bought the ticket, could have been researched better with combining an interview with the survey.

6.7 Results of the survey

The results of the survey are listed in this section.

The overall experience of the event's marketing actions:

Bad: 1	0.9%
2	5.5%
3	17.1%
4	45.6%
Excellent: 5	30.9%

In which media channels did you hear about the event?

Magazines	39.3%
TV	32 %
Radio	11.9%
Social media	86.3%
Digital media	24.2%
Website	44.3%
Newsletter	29.2%
Promotion	4.6%
Posters and flyers	17.4%
Events	8.7%
Don't know	0 %
Other	3.7%

In which marketing channel was the event the most visible?

Magazines	4.6%
TV	8.7%
Radio	0 %
Social media	65.8%
Digital media	1.4%
Website	11 %
Newsletter	5 %
Promotion	0 %
Posters and flyers	0.9%
Events	0 %
Don't know	2.7%
Other	0 %

TABLE 5. The case event's marketing actions (Tolvanen 2016)

How did you end up buying the ticket from Lippu.fi?		
	Via a Facebook ad	6.3%
	Via a post at the event's Facebook page	12.5%
	Via a post at the brand's Facebook page	6.3%
	Via a digital banner	0 %
	Via the brand's website	21.9%
	Via another website	3.1%
	Going directly to Lippu.fi website	34.4%
	Don't know	15.6%
Which advert did you feel that affected your decision to buy a ticket the most?		
	TV ad	15.6%
	Radio ad	0 %
	Print ad	15.6%
	Social media ad	34.4%
	Digital media banners	3.1%
	Blogs	3.1%
	Newsletter	12.5%
	Don't know	12.5%
	Other	3.1%
From which social media page did you hear about the event for the first time?		
	Brand's Facebook page	38.5%
	Event's Facebook page	14.9%
	Your friends / community's FB page	13.3%
	From a FB page of a performer at the event	7.2%
	Other organization's FB page	5.6%
	A Facebook ad	13.3%
	Instagram	0.5%
	Blog	1 %
	Other	5.6%

TABLE 6. Marketing channels that affected pre-event ticket sales (Tolvanen 2016)

The event's posts were informative.		
I don't know		4.6%
Completely disagree		1 %
		5.1%
		8.7%
		52.8%
Completely agree		27.7%
What kind of posts did you find the most interesting? (Choose one or more)		
Competitions		53.8%
Information about the event or the programme		77.4%
Information about the brand		13.3%
Information about the brand's sales area at the event		22.1%
Ticket sales campaigns		34.4%
Information about the performers at the event		61 %
I don't follow the event's FB page		1.5%
Other		1 %
What kind of posts did you share on social media?		
I didn't share any posts		53.8%
Competitions		18.5%
Ticket sales campaigns		6.7%
Information about the performers		23.6%
Other posts like pictures or videos		14.4%
Other		2.1%

TABLE 7. The most appealing social media actions (Tolvanen 2016)

The posts affected my decision to buy a ticket.		
I don't know		8.2%
Completely disagree		10.8%
		7.7%
		24.1%
		24.6%
Completely agree		24.6%

TABLE 9. Effect of social media posts of ticket sales (Tolvanen 2016)

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis covers the process of planning a social media marketing plan to promote an event. In addition, the purpose of this study was to gather information about the changes that have occurred due to the rise of digitalization and social media networks, and how the new possibilities have affected marketing as a whole. This thesis also studied the process of event marketing, which is only a small section in the field of marketing communications. As social media is a relatively new field and constantly changing, a lot of the material researched was found in online materials, such as articles and e-books.

The field of social media marketing in event marketing is very large. Social media channels can be used not only in pre-event marketing but also during and after the event. The case company, and especially the brand Hau-Hau Champion, was a very good case to research, due to its very active and large social media fan base and due to its long history. Also, the fact that the company is Finnish and is very well known in the pet industry, helped with conducting the survey.

The objective of the practical part of this thesis was to find out if pre-event social media marketing can have an influence on ticket sales, and what type of advertisement is most appealing for the case event's target group. The results were researched with an online survey, which was conducted after the event. In addition, analytics received from the case company's media agency were analysed.

This thesis gives the company a few aspects to think about when planning future events or social media marketing actions. With the help of the results of this thesis, the case company is able to find out what kind of social media marketing should be used in their future marketing plans and what kind of posts and ads are the most interesting for the company's target group. This thesis also revealed the importance of analysing the chosen social media channel, its users, the brand's competitors and the brand's own social media actions in order to improve social media marketing.

The results of this study show that it could be beneficial for the case company to concentrate on social media marketing and to choose perhaps just one traditional media channel to use to boost social media marketing. By dividing the marketing budget into so many different channels, the message might have gotten lost and a customer might have seen

an advert only once and then forgotten about it. If the message is seen on the same channel, e.g. in the customer's Facebook newsfeed, several times a week for a long time, it might have resulted in an increase in ticket sales. The results of the survey also pointed out the difficulty of researching an event's purchasing decision if the ticket sales are done by a separate service. It was impossible to find out if a click had actually resulted in a ticket purchase or not. In order to analyse this properly, the company would need a service or an e-shop where they can sell tickets directly.

Also the fact that the social media adverts that directed the user to the ticket service weren't very efficient, might mean that the messages or posts were inadequate or that the customer didn't want to buy the tickets directly from a social media channel. Nevertheless, the survey also resulted that the company should use social media in their event marketing, but plan more thoroughly the message of the posts and how to reach the potential customer after they've been intrigued by an ad and get them to buy the ticket. One possibility is to concentrate the marketing actions into one or two marketing channels and repeat the ads for a longer period. This could help the potential customer to see the advert more often and in the end to buy the ticket. The messages of the adverts could be more informative in the beginning and have more call-to-action to buy the ticket later on. This way the potential customer first gets intrigued, finds information easily, and later on is reminded to buy the ticket. In addition, the type of posts the company should use in the future event marketing include more information about the event, interesting competitions or other shareable content, rather than price campaigns.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Survey questions

1. Age
2. Sex
3. Where do you live?
4. Do you use Hau-Hau Champion's products?
5. How would you rate the overall success of the Eläköön koirat! event's marketing?
6. In which media did you hear/see about the event?
7. In which media was the event most visible? Where did you see/hear about the event the most or from which media had the most recognizable adverts?
8. Which channels did you use to research about the event?
9. Where did you buy the ticket?
10. From where did you end up buying your ticket from Lippu.fi?
 - a. Facebook advert
 - b. Post on the event's Facebook page
 - c. Post on the brand's Facebook page
 - d. A digital banner
 - e. Brand's website
 - f. Other website
 - g. Going directly to Lippu.fi
 - h. Don't know
11. Was the process of purchasing made easy?
12. Which advert / marketing action affected your purchasing decision the most in your own opinion?
 - a. TV
 - b. Radio
 - c. Print
 - d. Social media
 - e. Digital media
 - f. Blogs
 - g. Newsletter
 - h. Don't know
 - i. Other

13. What dog-related websites do you follow?
14. What social media channels do you use regularly?
15. Do you follow the brand's or the event's Facebook page?
16. In which social media page did you read about the event for the first time?
 - a. Brand's page
 - b. Event's page
 - c. Your friend's / group's shared post
 - d. The page of a performer at the event
 - e. Some other organization's / group's / person's page
 - f. Facebook ad (example pictures below)
 - g. Instagram
 - h. Blog
 - i. Other
17. Evaluate the event's Facebook posts.
 - a. The posts were informative.
 - b. There were a good amount of posts.
 - c. The messages on the posts were clear.
 - d. The posts affected my decision to buy a ticket.
18. What sort of posts did you find the most interesting?
 - a. Competitions
 - b. Information about the event or its program
 - c. Information about Hau-Hau Champion
 - d. Information about the sales area
 - e. Ticket sales campaigns
 - f. Information about the performers
 - g. I don't follow the event's Facebook page
 - h. Other
19. Which posts were the most shareable?
 - a. I didn't share any posts
 - b. Competitions
 - c. Ticket sale campaigns
 - d. Information about the program
 - e. Other updates, such as pictures and videos
 - f. Other