CONTENT MARKETING'S ROLE IN

COMPANY BRANDING AND BUSINESS

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to get a deeper knowledge of the role of content marketing in building company branding and business. Further, the aim was to find out how content marketing performance can be measured and how content marketing actions can affect sales. Because the thesis is conducted in co-operation with Company X, one of the objectives was to create content marketing strategy and give clear quidelines to the case company based to the earlier theory and the inquiry.

The theoretical part provides the necessary academic research information from the empirical discussion that follows. In the empirical part of the thesis, the case company and its content marketing actions and used platforms at the moment are presented. Suggestions for the content marketing guidelines and actions are presented. The research methods are both quantitative and qualitative. The data for this study were gathered partly through a questionnaire and partly through interviews and observation.

The results of the study revealed the importance of content marketing. With content marketing, companies can increase their brand awareness, engagement and loyalty by sharing valuable and interesting content.

Based on the findings, clear guidelines were given to the case company on how to utilize different techniques and content in the most effective way in order to build brand awareness, brand engagement and loyalty, to acquire new customers and increase sales.

Keywords: content marketing, social media marketing, digital marketing, brand

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1   INTRODUCTION

The environment in marketing has changed drastically in a few years. Social media has become more common as a marketing tool. Most of the companys uses content marketing in their webpages and in social media. (Cagnon 2014) However, all potentials of the content marketing have not yet really been understood properly. (Pulizzi 2012; Jefferson & Tanton 2015)

In a new media environment, consumers have more control of contents they desire to utilize. Ever firm can and should be its own media. (Holliman & Rowley 2014; Haeusermann 2013) The traditional advertising is losing its grip, so companies are forced to find new ways to promote their brand. Thus, it is necessary to understand how content can be used in marketing and customer engagement. (Holliman & Rowley 2014)

Companies try to seek for new ways to keep current customers and bring in new ones. Content marketing can inform, educate, and deepen connections with consumers. Creating online marketing community is a way to build and develop corporate brand and it can be necessary for a business to stay alive in many branches contemporarily. (Jutkowitz 2014) People buy differently than earlier, so there is also a huge need to sell differently. (Jefferson & Tanton 2015)

The purpose of this study is to provide an understanding of content marketing and what could be the role of content marketing in company branding and business. The research has been done in co-operation with Company X.

1.1   Background

Content marketing is the method companies just now are increasingly interested in. Content marketing is the marketing technique of creating relevant and valuable content to a clearly defined customer target group. (Pulizzi 2014; Jefferson & Tanton 2015)

Content marketing has increased widely because of social media. Social media offers a great option to distribute a company's messages. It is easy to direct this message at the right focus group in order to increase brand awareness, customer

loyalty and brand credibility. Even tough most of the companies already have presence on social media, the deep understanding of contents is still missing.

Traditional marketing is becoming less effective and entering content marketing can be a solution for the companies. (Pulizzi 2014) Social media platforms allow companies to talk to their customers directly, without any other media or distributor.

If the company is using social media tools, it is essential to use them well and utilize all the benefits they can offer. Because of the Internet, information is everywhere and available to everyone. When before advertisements were meant to appeal to the general public, now a company can get the attention of the individuals all over. (Juslén 2009; Budikova 2014)

Companies have to be where their customers are if they want to deliver their messages to the right audience. It is important to remember that customers demand value for their time and money. They will use the Internet to get what they want, interruptions will not be well tolerated. Customers appreciate the stories and narratives instead of a traditional advertising. (Chiu, Hsieh & Kuo 2012)

1.2   Research questions, objectives and scope

Content marketing is a very broad concept involving many issues that can be explored. However, as the thesis is done for the case company operating in a specific business field, it is easier to build the frames of the study.

The first objective of the thesis is to get a deep theoretical knowledge of content marketing concepts, techniques, trends and statistics. One of the aims is to find benefits of content marketing for the company and to explore the meaning of content marketing strategy.

The second objective is to define the content marketing audience of the case company and understand its problems, needs, interests and preferences. It is needed to find out what kind of content is valuable for the customers and,

consequently, should be created, distributed and promoted by case company. What is the way to increase engagement of this already existing target group?

The third objective is a try to understand the concept of content marketing in relation to company branding. The process will include examining the corporate image or company brand outside the target group. How to develop a second generation of clients to be interested in Company X?

The study aims at creating a common tool for organization to develop their content marketing strategy and contents in general. This tool can provide documented strategy including objectives, audience and search engine optimization. It also can determine how and where the content is shared. Even if the Company X has operated very actively in content marketing, the essential plan for strategy and actions has missed before that study. This study is planned to fill this gap using earlier research and data gathered from the inquiry. The biggest challenge, however, is to understand the creation of truly engaging content. This can happen by knowing the clients' preferences.

There are four research issues that this case study aims at answering and they are as follows:

How content marketing can affect sales?

What is the role of content marketing in company branding?

How to engage the target group to follow a company brand?

How to increase brand awareness amongst "the next generation"?

The research will not go in deep detail into financial elements of content marketing. However, it is touched on shortly in order to understand what kind of inputs content marketing requires. Furthermore, the measurement of the content marketing will be conducted only in the limits of the case companys earlier measures. However, there is a question about the sales: is it possible to increase sales in netshop and sotres with the help of content marketing. In business this question is impossible to bypass.

It is important to define the limitations of the research. The empirical part of the thesis is limited to focus only on one case company that has practiced content marketing only a short period of time. The case company has a target group in

women's clothing in a certain age and that means that the results of the study will not be suitable for all kind of age groups and different industries. Answers from the inquiry do not apply for other companies even if they might be operating in the same business field.

1.3   Key concepts

The key concepts of this thesis are content marketing, social media marketing, digital marketing and branding.

Social media marketing

Social media marketing means an interaction between the company and the customer, including participating and relationship (Constantinides 2009). It is an ongoing process that is best integrated into overall marketing strategy, and it focuses on owning media, not renting it. According to Olin (2011), social media marketing is basically the art of communicating with customers and prospects without selling.

Content marketing

Content marketing is a marketing technique of creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience - with the objective of driving profitable customer action. (Olin 2011). Content marketing's purpose is to attract and retain customers by consistently creating and curating relevant and valuable content with the intention of changing or enhancing consumer behavior. (Pulizzi 2012)

In this study, social media marketing and content marketing are used almost as a synonymous. It is because from this point of view real and pure content marketing cannot be functioning anymore without social media.

However, sometimes content marketing is mentioned as a synonyme for native

advertising. It it necessary to separate these two concepts. Native advertisers provide useful and personalized content that is not directly promoting a product. A difference from content marketing is that the in the native advertising the content is placed on platforms outside the companys own "media" or pages. (Pulizzi 2015)

Digital marketing

Digital marketing is sometimes called e-marketing. It can be defined as the practice of promoting company's products and services in digital channels. Opposite for digital channels are traditional media channels like print newspapers, magazines and radio, television and outdoor advertising. (Smith 2011)

In this thesis, digital marketing means mostly marketing on social media channels. The content in this study is more important than the digital marketing channels themselves, that means internet, smartphone, tablets and other mobile devices. (Smith 2011)

Digital marketing communication refers to the use of new digital communication channels to create an integrated, targeted and measurable communication process that helps companies acquire and retain customers while building a deeper relationships with them. (Mulhern 2009) This includes e-marketing, internet marketing and social media. (Karjaluoto, Mustonen & Ulkuniemi 2015)

Brand

The corporate brand represents the company, it goes beyond the name or mark. Usually the most visible element of brand can be the logo but it can be more, it represents everything the company is and what it does, as well as what it wants to be. The brand should be a quarantine of for example uniqueness, quality or excellence. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000)

Kotler & Armstrong (2009) defines brand as a name, term, sign, symbol or desing or a combination of these, that identifies the products or sevices of one seller or group of sellers and differerentiates them from those of competitors. Brand name can help consumers to identify products that can benefit them. Brand also say something about quality and consistency.

1.4   Knowledge base of the research

The issue of content marketing has not yet been discussed deeply and widely in academic literature. However, there exists some relevant articles on marketing methods that can be categorizes as content marketing, such as Holliman & Rowley (2014) and Jutkowitz (2014) In addition, academic literature conserning marketing on social media has also been used, for example Hoffman & Fodor (2010) and Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi (2012) and Dahl (2015). In addition, a great amount of books are used in this thesis: about content marketing such as Pulizzi (2014) and Jefferson & Tanton (2015) and about contents on social media such as Juslén (2009) and Olin (2011).

The theoretical background information for this thesis is mainly collected from academic articles from different journals. Most of the information and researchers used for this study has been published recently.

Building and maintaining brand loyalty and awareness by marketing are one of the central themes of this research. Brand loyalty of the customers is positively affected when the brand offers relevant content and can be present on various platforms. Popular contents will be shared by peer-users. (Erdogmus & Cicek 2012) Moreover, direct marketing has expanded out of the conventional media to include virtually all marketing communications. All corporations should determine which strategies and models are most valuable to the business and which ones are becoming more or less important. (Stone & Woodcock 2013)

The knowledge base of this thesis is constructed with the idea of customers and their needs. Content marketing can be the strategic choise which sets clients into the middle of thinking. Altough many earlier researchers have written that it is important to have a certain strategy for a content marketing, according to Aaltonen (2007) this can be the wrong way to approach to this new world of marketing. We are used to think that sense-making asserts that a person's, a group's or an organization's understanding of a situation rather than the situation's objective properties shapes the way that a person, group or organizations acts in the situation.

Because the world has changed according to Aaltonen (2007) from mental model to chaos-model, companies has to be very fast and agile to react different things. Besides, social media needs agile reaction all the time. Marketing for most corporations is becoming increasingly interactive and it is "always on". (Stone & Woodcock 2014; Pulizzi 2014) Content marketing is not product-oriented, the focus is on target audience and the main focus is on the customer. If a client asks something or somebody challenges the company, there has to be a way to react almost immeaditely. (Garner 2013) According to Garner, new way is to be implied as being present and fluid in all activities but of course, especially in the activities of marketing and business.

The objective of the thesis is to gain more understanding of the real-time content creation in order to build a good content marketing strategy and to find how the results of real-time content marketing can be measured in the long run.

In this thesis, a continuum from a client based strategy through digital marketing and content marketing to a business and return on investment has been built. (Figure 1)

In addition, the theory has been constructed with the same way. In the table 1 some of the main books and articles have been collected together. There is listed shortly theory basis, author and the scientific standpoint of the article or the book.

By eyeing on the table 1, it is easy to have a quick understanding and exact idea of the theory base. However, it is important to remember that several other articles, books and researches has been used to build the concept of the content marketing and social media marketing. This study cites also a notable amount of other reseachers and articles to provide an extense overview about the subject.

TABLE 1. Essential theory base of the thesis

Theory basis	Author, year	Scientific standpoint
Strategy	Aaltonen, M. 2007. The third lense. Kotler, P. & Keller, K. L. 2016. Marketing management.	Multi-ontology Sense-Making. Strategic Decision-Making. Chaos. Connection with customers. Customer related marketing.
Digital marketing	Karjaluoto et al. 2015. The role of digital channels in industrial marketing communications.	Customer relationships communication, supporting sales, creating awareness.
Content marketing	Holliman, G. & Rowley, J. 2014. Business to business digital content marketing. Pulizzi, J. 2012. The rise of storytelling as the new marketing. Pulizzi, J. 2014. Epic content marketing. Jefferson, S. & Tanton, S. 2015. Valuable content marketing.	The role of digital content in marketing and relational exhanges. Corporate storytelling. Process of developing stories. Corporate communications.
Social media marketing and tools	Taylor, D. et al. 2011. Friends, fans and followers. Singh, S. & Sonnenburg, S. 2012. Brand performances on social media.	Social networking sites (SNS), social-networking advertising (SNA). Brand, storytelling.

Branding	Lipiäinen, H. & Karjaluoto, H. 2015. Industrial branding in the digital age.	Supporting brandind by creating relevant content.
	Jahn, B. & Kuntz, W. 2012. How to transform consumers into fans of your brand.	Customer-brand relationship

Company branding in this thesis has three components which are brand engagement, brand loyalty and brand awareness. Target of branding is to engage already existing clients and of course, aqcuisite new customers by increasing brand awareness (figure 1). These components are related to research issues *What is the role of content marketing in company branding* and two sub-questions: *How to engage the target group to follow a company brand?* and *How to increase brand awareness amongst "the next generation"?*

In business, there is always a question regarding the return on investment and in this thesis one of the research issues is *How content media marketing can affect sales?*

Some researchers (Hoffman & Fodor 2010) write that effective measurement of content marketing on social media should start by turning the traditional ROI approach on its head. Consumers has their own motivations to use social media, so managers should measure those social media investments customers make when they engage with the brand. That should be done instead of emphasizing marketing investments and calculating the returns in terms of customer response. (Hoffman & Fodor 2010)

There exist some examples how to measure social media efforts and effectiveness by classifying social media applications and social media performance objectives. (Hoffman & Fodor 2010) Kumar and Mirchandani (2012) represent seven-step process to identify and recruit pontential brand ambassadors as a purpose to improve the effectiveness of social media marketing.

However, there is still the question about if it really works regarding ROI and how soon it can affect sales.

The theory basis of this research is constructed as follows:

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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │      Strategy       │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                               │
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │  Digital marketing  │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                               │
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │  Content marketing  │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                               │
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ Social media marketing │
                    └─────────────────────┘
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Business	Company branding

Sales	Brand engagement	Brand loyalty	Brand awareness	Customer acquisition

E-commerce	Stores	Target group	Next generation

How content marketing can affect sales?

What is the role of content marketing in company branding?

How to engage the target group to follow a company brand?

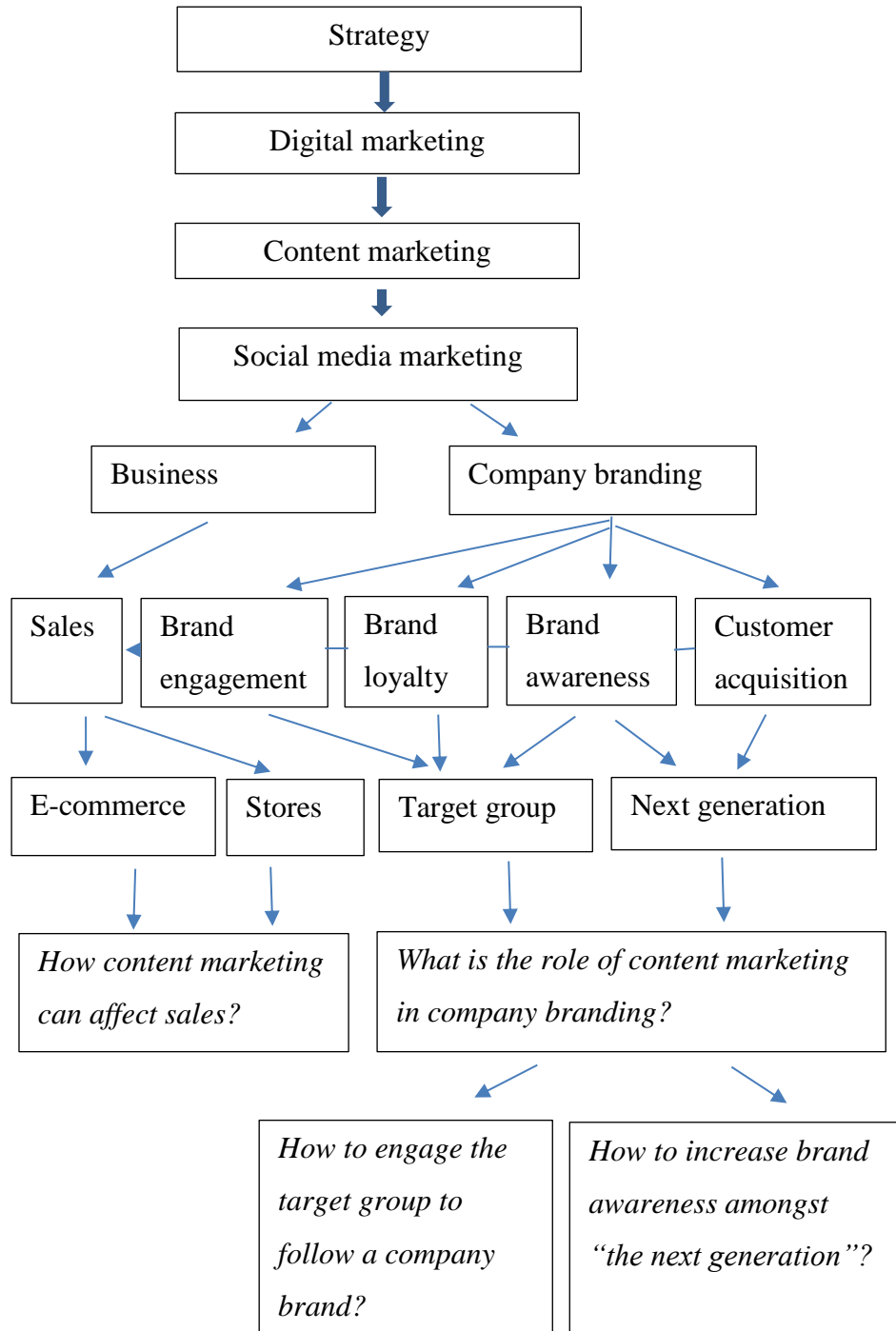*How to increase brand awareness amongst "the next generation"?*

FIGURE 1. Theory base and its connections to research questions

Of course, strategy consists a lot of things, but in this thesis strategy is explored only from the digital marketing and content marketing point of view. This figure is widely simplified in order to understand the concept of content marketing.

The theoretical framework is formed around the main concepts of this study (figure 1). Content marketing is argued to be based on digital marketing and the strategy itself. At the moment, social media is considered to be one of the best tools for content marketing. (Pulizzi 2014) Additionally, Garner (2013) wrotes that the importance of social media in order to properly act as a content marketer. According to Garner the whole real-time content marketing strategy and social media together belongs to the core principles of content marketing. Therefore, also this thesis concentrates on content marketing on social media.

1.5   Research approach

This thesis research has two research methods. First, there is a quantitative survey, using a questionnaire that has been designed for this research and has been conducted via Webropol. The questionnaire will have both quantitative and open-ended questions. The questionnaire is based on research issues.

Secondly, the empirical part of the thesis is also carried out with qualitative research in the form of interviews. The interviews implemented are semi-structure.

The research methods are both quantitative and qualitative. The data collection will be partly made through a questionnaire, partly through interviews. In addition to questionnaire and interviews, enterprise is studied by observing their webpage and social media channels and above all, the content in these platforms.

The inquiry was send by email to members of loyalty register of Company X. There are more than 60 000 members in this register and almost half of them have announced their email address. Company X has together 1 700 followers in Facebook but it is already known that almost half of their clients have an own profile in Facebook. Sometimes, consumers do not want to declare or follow any brand and sometimes they are not interested in any kind of content Company X produces in its channels. However, for a company it is worth to know why

customers do not follow them on Facebook even if they have already made a choice to be loyal and are in a loyalty register. Are they not engaged or do they not know about contents?

The second research method is a theme interview. After analyzing the facts from questionnaire there is an interview with some clients of Company X. The aim of this study is know how to keep and engage clients and how to foster next generation to appreciate a brand of Company X. The aim of this part of the study is to know, how customers have found the company and its product and how they estimate the brand and the image of the company.

In addition, the company is studied by observing. This is the third part of the empirical research. Observing has been done during the thesis process during two weeks, week 9 in February and week 33 in August. The ultimate target of this part is to recognize what kind of content marketing the company already has on social media. Are the company familiar with all those tools? How the company use social media in marketing, what social media platforms are used and what are the benefits and disadvantages for using the social media tools in content marketing. Is there already someone who oversees content marketing and social media marketing strategies?

There are also recommendations based on earlier research and gathered data for this thesis. Guidelines for using content marketing on social media are done. It is possible to form a different approach to marketing campaigns in order to achieve a better positioning in the market and strengthen the brand in people's mind.

Conclusions are based on the most important findings and the results of the questionnaire and interviews. The results are limited by the used data set, which is not representative for all industries and is cross-sectional.

1.6   Case company

In this chapter, the case Company X is presented very shortly. Company is introduced also in chapter three. One of the aims of this thesis is to research content marketing of the case company on social media context.

Company X operates in textile and fashion industry. It is quite well known Finnish company offering women's unique European fashion and accessories, it also offers office and business wear.

Company X has a total of 150 employees, of which about 90 are in Estonia. In Finland there are 60 employees working in the stores and in the headquarter. Company X has managed to navigate in difficult economic situations. Recently, the company has set a long-term goal to expand the customer base by entering in Sweden and also Baltic countries will be an important target in the future. The webshop was modernized in February 2016. At the same time, all webpages and contents were arranged under the same mainpage.

Firstly, the case company has already presented many content marketing techniques in their website, Facebook and Youtube. Secondly, the main strategy is to expand an e-commerce. Netshop was open in 2014 and renewed in February 2016. Altough the measurement of the content marketing will be conducted only in the limits of the case company, there is one big question in business: how does the money come in. How content marketing can affect sales?

1.7   Structure of the research report

This thesis research has two main parts, theoretical framework and empirical research part. The theoretical framework of the thesis is conducted by studying literature and other source materials. The theoretical part of the thesis is structured so that it tries to give logical answers to the issues stated in sub-questions. The theoretical part provides the necessary background information for the empirical discussion that follows.

The findings of this theoretical part of the study are based on the analysis of various sources of data as academic literature as well as recent studies, articles and seminar material on the area included on social media, content marketing strategy and digital marketing.

The thesis categorizes content marketing – not only as a marketing tool – but also as an instrument for corporate branding and brand awareness. In addition, the

most significant benefits of content marketing based on earlier research are presented.

The theoretical part is followed by the empirical research. The empirical part contains methodological backround for the survey and the theme interview and also analyzed data from the answers.

Results of the questionnaire will be analyzed for content and compared to theoretical framework of content marketing on social media. In this study, social media tools and platforms are not presented and explored very precisely. Social media is very common for the time being in marketing and there are lot of literature and articles about different channels on social media. From this point of view, it is quite unnecessary to present all those platforms again.

This is finally followed by discussion and conclusions, theoretical implications, limitations and suggestions for further research. Conclusions will be made based on the most important findings and the results of the questionnaire and case study.

The study goes through the following phases: 1. Introduction, 2. Content marketing, 3. Research methods and the case company, 4. Keyfindings and results and 5. Conclusions. In chapter 1 the basis for the study are discussed. Chapter 2 presents the current situation considering the concept of content marketing. Chapter 3 presents the case company and research approach and methods. Chapter 4 explores the results of the research and its keyfindings. Chapter 5 presents the conclusions found and has recommendations for the further research.

Following figure illustrates the outline of the study (figure 2).

1. Introduction

2. Content marketing	3. Case company and research methods

4. Results and keyfindings

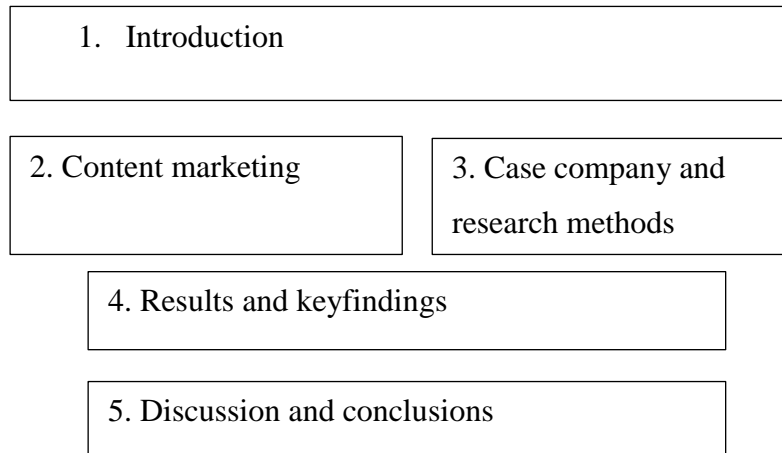| 5. Discussion and conclusions |
| --- |

FIGURE 2. Outline of the study

2   CONTENT MARKETING

This chapter is focusing on the content marketing and its benefits for the company. The concept of content marketing has arised in publicity in a few years time. It is quite well-known already but the definition is still unclear in most contexts. However, earlier literature shows that nine out of then organizations are currently marketing with their own content. (Jutkowitz 2014)

This section addresses the topic of content marketing and the concept of content marketing especially on social media. Thus, this chapter combines different views and measures of content marketing as a technique to increase brand awareness. It has been said that content marketing is more than pure advertising, it is like story-telling of a company. (Chiu et al 2012; Pulizzi 2012)

Pulizzi (2012) even sees that the future of marketing is not marketing at all, but publishing. "So, as content marketing and storytelling become a larger prt of the marketing organization in general, we are seeing an evolution of the marketing department transform itself into more of a publishing department" (Pulizzi 2012).

What is content marketing? Why is it so important momentarily? Shortly said, content marketing can be defined as publishing content that empowers, engages, educates and connects consumers. (Jefferson & Tanton 2015) There are tremendous changes in marketing, it has already shifted from the mass communication model to more personal and mobile communication. Social conversations based marketing favors lasting partnership between brands and consumers. (Budikova 2014)

Content marketing differs from traditional marketing and advertisement. Content marketing is often associated with inbound marketing, publishing, native advertising and storytelling. (Holliman & Rowley 2014) According to Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi (2012), the companies need to take different marketing theories into consideration so that they can boost their brand in different aspect to guarantee a successful attendance on social media. Earlier marketers used to tell consumers what is best for them. (Budikova 2014)

Traditional advertising media, such as newspapers, television or magazines, is

losing its effectiveness. Instead of traditional media, people are spending more time on social media: networks, blogs, videos, Facebook and other channels. Content marketing is based on the goal of attracting customers back with interesting, relevant and non-promoting content. (Jutkowitz 2014) The majority of content marketing today needs to be performed in digital form. (Pulizzi 2014) According to Budikova (2014), we have moved from an information-hungry society to an informantion-overloaded society and now we are addicted to new technology and social media.

Content marketing on social media is part of digital marketing. Changes in the digital world just comes for us, so we are increasingly forced to adapt to this new digital sphere. (Budikova 2014) Digital world means in this study internet and social media, where the customers want to participate, discuss, be a part of community and produce their own content. (Holliman & Rowley 2014) Basically, content marketing represents the ways of communication with the customer. It does this with delivering valuable information instead of more traditional communication with advertising, pitching and selling.

Social media marketing is very easy but on the contrary, it can be very difficult. However, the organizations should know better how to use different channels and what kind of content they should produce for each channel to satisfy their customers. It can be seen that the most companies' efficiency as a social media user are at a pretty good level but the marketing style is still a bit too one-sided. (Jahn & Kunz 2012) Nevertheless, marketers have already learnt something from digital failures and experiments. (Budikova 2014) So, step by step it is possible to develop competitive advantage for a brand on social media.

Content marketing especially on social media is not just advertising, in fact, companies should be widely aware not to over-advertise their products. On social media organizations can make a real content marketing campaign but first they have to create their own brand voice and a brand story. A purpose of content marketing is to tell the story of a brand rather than to transfer product-based advertisements to customers. (Sing & Sonnenburg 2012) One of the most important questions is what kind of content the companies should and are able to deliver in different social media channels. Social media offers a variety of

different online services that can help consumers to participate actively in brand communication. (Jahn & Kunz 2012)

Pulizzi (2012) does not see the differences between brands and media. Brands will have the ability to respond real-time news as the stories develop, much like the media companies of today. The only thing that separates the content developed by a media and content developed by brands is according to author: How money comes in? For a non-media company, content is created so that profit comes indirectly by attracting and retaining customers. (Pulizzi 2012)

Companies deliver content via several tools such as: websites and pages, blogs, social media sites, articles in directories, videos and video blogs, podcasts. In this study only the most common social media channels will be presented. This thesis contentrates on content marketing in channels which case company is using or considering to use in the future. However, in recommendations there may be tools and channels which are still unknown to the case company.

2.1   Content marketing on social media

Social media should be a part of marketing but it is very different from mass media and it has different codes for advertising. Marketing on social media can almost only be cost-effective when followers freely and willingly share contents forward. It happens when the message is so interesting that they want to share it. It is about customer relationship and creating a community. (Taylor, Levin & Strutton 2011; Erdogmus & Cicek 2012)

Users want to control everything that is in their social media platforms, news but also marketing. (Juslén 2009.) To make content interactive, social media should be well integrated with content creation. A good content on social media is continuous and consistent. (Stone & Woodcock 2014) Brand owners should not tell brand stories and contents alone but co-create them in collaboration with the consumers. (Singh & Sonnenburg 2012)

Almost 80 percent of Finnish citizens use mobile devices with location identification. This can be very drastic knowledge when thinking about advertising and marketing: it is possible to know exactly where target audience is.

(Leino 2012) However, it is important also because that means customers can check company pages at any time, anywhere – if they want and are considering this as valuable for them. Consequently, most of the content should be created with the mobile market in mind. Of course, content marketing in mobile space should be integrated with other channels – for example social media, other mobile channels and of course, also traditional channels in some way. (Budikova 2014)

According to Leino (2012), planning a campaign for social media platforms is similar to traditional media. But on Internet the target audience has its influence on what tools are useful to choose. Usually it is better to combine different tools and methods. Important factors are the length of the message, the formatting, all kind of visual elements and links. (DeMers 2014)

All platforms and tools do not require as much activity as others. On social media a firm can utilize relationships between customers and in that way try to create a community (Juslén 2009; Singh & Sonnenburg 2012). Additionally, there are two reasons for consumer participation in brand communities: community satisfaction and degree of consumer influence within the community. Moreover, there can be effect from community participation on word of mouth, brand image, and community loyalty. (Jahn & Kunz 2012)

Social media which allow anybody to become a producer of content and deliver it through interactive communication is recognized as the most potentially powerful tool in business practice. (Kirtis & Karahan 2011) Recently many firms have realized that one of the most distinctive ways to lower costs in marketing is to turn to content marketing on social media. Promoting brands through social media does not cost the company so much as traditional promoting, so it is widely evaluated as the most convenient way to market products to the certain target segment. (Kirtis & Karahan 2011)

Especially social-networking sites (SNS) suchs as Facebook and Twitter are growing in popularity and number of users. But those channels are not immune to user criticism about advertising but when used properly, such advertisements can be effective. (Taylor et al. 2011) Moreover, Youtube, Instagram and other visual channels and sites are growing their popularity in Finland. However, blogs and

articles, even newsletters sometimes, can be very effective when branding and creating a brand story. (Singh & Sonnenburg 2012)

Additionally, social media enables consumers to share information with their peers about the product and services. The conversations between the peers provide companies cost effective way to increase brand awareness and brand loyalty – at least if it is positive. (Erdogmus & Cisek 2012) Thus, when brands and consumers co-create brand stories together, brand owners do not have any more complete control of their brands. Consumer created stories can spread as rapidly as those created by company itself (Singh & Sonnenburg 2012), and these stories are not always exact the same what company wants to emphasize.

2.2   Marketing communications and branding

Content marketing differs from other types of marketing communications. Marketing communications means the exchange of information between a company and its customers, it is like conversation but at its best it can affect emotionally to a customer. (Hollensen 2010) It is about sharing points of view and forming relationships. (Naik & Raman 2003) Due to social media, modern marketing communications are becoming more interactive and continuous. (Stone & Woodcock 2014)

This section focuses shortly on marketing communications in general. In this thesis marketing communications is explored through content marketing and its benefits in branding.

Marketing communications has been defined as the sharing of information, concepts, and meanings about products, services and the organization that sell them. It is targeted interaction with customers and prospects using one or more media. It is essentially part of marketing mix. The classic marketing mix defines the 4Ps of marketing, price, place, product and promotion. (Kotler & Armstrong 2010) In this study, content marketing are explored in a context of social media and building a company brand, in this study promotion is what marketing communications is all about. Marketing communications represent the voice of the company and its brand. (Chiu et al. 2012) The modern marketing mix defines

7Ps of marketing as classic price, promotion, product and place, also people, process and physical evidence. (Kotler & Armstrong 2010)

Traditional marketing has always been about getting products and services in front of the right audience. Content marketing is about meeting the informational needs of customers so they become interested in the company. Interest is the basic of the brand. (Pulizzi 2014) Content marketing is closely related to designing brand stories that align with the products of the company. Stories can resonate with customers better than plain ads, and besides, stories provide an effective way to communicate with customers, because contents conveyed in story form tend to be more affective than those presented in another format. (Chiu et al. 2012)

Social media is being widely used by almost everybody and even the companies, in spite of their size have started using social media tools to advertise and promote themselves (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi 2012). Branding on social media through content marketing is to distinguish a company and its offering from competitors. With branding a company differentiates itself from others, can create brand identification and brand awareness and increase customer satisfaction. (Hollensen 2010) On social media customers are not longer only passive recipients, but they have become active participants in brand communication – even if they do not always want to be. (Singh & Sonnenburg 2012)

Marketing communications can be seen in all forms at the moment: advertising, consumer promotions, public relations, personal selling and many other activities. According to Stone & Woodcock (2014), content marketing has to be seen as a form of marketing communications, it has the same goals than all the other communication tools. In an interactive content marketing on social media, customers not only respond to branding communication but also helps to co-create it. (Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012)

The whole essence of marketing communication is dependent on consumer and customer behavior. Usually consumer behavior is dynamic – it is constantly changing. Consumer behavior involves interactions of people's thoughts, feelings and actions. (Rowley 2004) When mass media was used to transmit messages about a product, there were no direct contact between the creator of the message

and the recipient. Feedback was needed and gathered afterwards in the form of surveys and advertising research. Now the situation is totally different and both positive and negative feedback comes immediately. Feedback comes through social media where positive word of mouth can be the best way of deliver the message. (Rowley 2004)

The influence resulting from personal conversation is very powerful. Consumers are not isolated individuals, they are members of social systems and social network systems. (Holliman & Rowley 2014) Satisfied and loyal consumers communicate their positive attitudes toward the brand or toward the company both online and offline. But also dissatisfied and disgruntled customer share their negative attidues toward the brand effectively. (Hoffman & Fodor 2010) Companies have not a total control of their own brands because also consumer created contents can spread rapidly: and these consumer created stories can be useful or harmful to the brand. (Singh & Sonnenburg 2012)

2.3   Marketing tools and channels on social media

Consumers are on social media so it is a necessity for a company, also. Sometimes the biggest content marketing challenge for companies is the creation of engaging content. The majority of content marketing today needs to be performed in digital form. (Pulizzi 2014) Information is everywhere and available to everyone.

The technologies and tools, which are referred to as social media all provide means for users to create content, interact and express opinions online. There are several social media platforms to use. Each platform has its own strengths and weaknesses but if being able to combine services and create several slightly different brand voices for each platform the company can reach different audiences. (Jefferson & Tanton 2015)

Content marketing on social media can reach a huge amount of people. There is an opportunity to share information for a large audience. Information is available around the world the moment it is published. (Taylor et al. 2011) This can be an advantage in publishing for example a sale in netshop. Social media also provides information at the time when a consumer wants to consume it. (Pulizzi 2014)

Thus, content marketing on social media needs resources and work time investments from the company when used properly.

The most successful marketing campaign is the one that get the company found on the Internet. Marketing can now also take advantage of the new tools available. Media is no longer limited to just articles, mail, newspapers, television or radio. It is multifaceted and requires multiple methods of approaching the customer in order to be effective. With all of these tools available, companies have to be able to adapt their marketing in order to reach their customers in the ways they are now available to be reached. Hence, it is not all about content and marketing, it is also about channels where the audience is. (Budikova 2014)

The companies have to be where the customers are if they want them to hear the message that they are trying to deliver. In the digital environment, companys need to supply not only information and knowledge but also entertainment and experiences for consumers. (Taylor et al. 2011) When a customer is subscribing content and feels very connected to it, the person willingly talks about it with others and share company's content on social media. (Budikova 2014)

Examples of social media platforms are presented shortly in the following chapters. In this thesis, social media and social media tools are presented in the context of content marketing.

2.3.1   Social media platforms

The most popular social media tools used in content marketing point of view, are at the moment Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogs and Instagram. Additionally, Pinterest, Snapchat, Periscope and Whatsapp are increasing their impact on audience in Finland. However, in many branches, newsletter by email or SMS can still have a big role in marketing and in brand performances. (Singh & Sonnenburg 2012) The risk with applications and platforms are that they change their algorithms every now and then.

It is important to provide connections between different platforms and medias. The interconnectivity can make the relationship between customer and business more relevant and involved. On social media or blog the company can create a

link to a website and to the other way, also. Followers on social media sites can easily access to other sites, for example website or netshop, relevant to business.

However, the type of social media tools is entirely dependent on the clients the company wants to appeal to as well as already existing customers. Hence, an engagement is a certain process customers need to go through as they become increasingly interested in the brand. (Pulizzi 2014)

A brand's editorial calendar should include variety of formats, including photos and videos to engage each audience. (Pulizzi 2014) Whatever is the channel, necessity is to publish quite often. There is no need to create content and send few messages about it and then stop. On social media it is sometimes a long way to experiment, test and learn to find out what works. (Jefferson & Tanton 2015)

2.3.2   Search engine optimization

Search engine optimization (SEO), that will say getting found, should be an important part of a content marketing strategy. Any content could be effective if consumers do not know it or are able to find it. (Doctoroff 2015) In fact, it is so important for drawing targeted traffic to the site that there are companies that exist only to help to optimize sites for the search engines.

Search engine optimization is meant to increase web presence through the use of keywords and searchability. (Wuebben 2012) Keywords are the most commonly used words or phrases searched for when someone is looking for information on or about a product. However, sometimes it may be difficult to determine the specific keywords and how to place them to a text so it sounds natural. Especially in blogs keywords might sometimes be as glued on top of the text. (DeMers 2014)

The more likely someone uses keywords, the more important that keyword will be getting the site popped up in the results. There are also words that are known as long tail keywords, which are longer phrases that someone might use to find what the company offers, but fewer people would use them because they are so precise. (DeMers 2014)

However, there are two important keys: 1) the content needs to be high-quality, relevant and useful to the readers and 2) the content needs to use keywords naturally. There are also many ways to incorporate keyword naturally to the website, for example creating a FAQ page that includes keywords or creating a blog where it is possible to use and discuss keywords and related topics and continually refresh or update the content. (Wuebben 2012)

Hence, driving traffic to website through off-site internet marketing activities can be just as important as other strategies. That means efforts to drive additional traffic to website by getting links to website placed around the web by using articles, blogs and forums, social media sites, video sites and writing press releases. (Holliman & Rowley 2012)

For example, blogs and other forums can be one way of building reputation and can guide readers back to website. Blogs can develop quite a following over time. Particularly if the information that is provided is topical and relevant to the type of person who would be reading it. However, most people tend to follow up about the first ten results of the search engine result list. Even if it can be difficult, it is useful to use right keywords also on blogs.

Unique content is important in all sites, the best way to get return on time investment with blogs is to make sure that content varies on a regular basis. (Pulizzi 2014) Especially corporate blogs should also be active to comment other blogs. It is an easy way to promote business and to be ranked in search results.

According to Pulizzi (2014) business-oriented web pages with images have performed 91 percent better than those pages without images. Posts with images perform better in search results and were shared at a higher rate than those posts without images. All content should be visually appealing. The author (2012) reminds however though the brand goals are rooted in search engine optimization or leveraging social media tools, none of them will be effective without compelling storytelling.

2.4   Content creation – what is valuable content

The biggest challenge in content marketin is the creation of valuable and above all engaging content. (Pulizzi 2012) One way of creating engaging content, is storytelling. It is also a powerful branding method, because it resonates and builds posivite emotion among customers. Strong branding can even decrease the need for price promotions – if branding and content marketing has some effects on sale. (Chiu et al. 2012)

Content a company produce can be viral, it may be advertised by customers through channels like Facebook shares, reviews, tweets and blogs. Internet users trust other internet users more than traditional media or advertising or the business that sell the products. That's whay taking customer feedback into consideration can be a huge benefit. (Pulizzi 2014) "Because information sharing on the internet has allowed everyone to express their opinions, people trust peers more than organizations. Furthermore, customers evaluate products differently, often because market offerings appear on a continuum ranging from easy to evaluate to difficult to evaluate." (Chiu et al. 2012)

Now, companies have noticed the benefits to listen to their customers more, they try to engage clients in conversation and communicate with them openly and empathetically. One remarkable thing is that companies have to be transparent to build the trust. (Karjaluoto et al. 2015) Storytelling is one element to engage customers. Still, quite a little is known about the relationship between brand story elements and customer attitudes.

According to Chiu et al. (2012), four elements contribute to a good story: authenticity, conciseness, reversal and humor. All those elements related positively to brand attitudes and are to that end also used in content marketing. However, there hardly can be "one size fits to all" answer. A successful brand story is specific to the merchandise being sold. (Chiu et al. 2012)

Content must be relevant and valuable, but this is dependent on the audience. Companies have to know their audience, so they also now what content is relevant and valuable. Good content can be educative, informative, entertaining or connecting. Thus, it creates trustworthiness, because clients can be more skeptical

than before. "Therefore, when a person is subscribing a company's content and feels connected to it, the person will likely talk about content and the brand with others – he or she is also willing to share company's content in social media." (Taylor et al. 2011)

2.5   Content marketing strategies

All technology tools available are worthless without a content marketing strategy at the center of marketing. One of the most important questions for any marketer is how to recognize if content marketing is really working for them. Therefore, it is extremely important to define how to measure content marketing and which actions should be done to create an effective content marketing strategy. The first thing in creating content marketing stategy is defining the organizational goals. (Pulizzi & Barrett 2009)

As it was earlier said, the content must be relevant and valuable. Additionally, what is relevant and valuable is dependent on the target group. The real content marketing strategy often requires targeting demographies. (Jefferson & Tanton 2015) Content marketing can be a marketing strategy (Pulizzi 2014) or as it is in this thesis, a way to react to things in the short run in a digital environment. (Aaltonen 2007) The modern era of social media and content marketing has strengthened the need for companies to engage their customers in an interactive relationship. Companies should act on social media like media companies of today: respond to real-time news as the stories develop and be aware of the discussion there is on the air. (Pulizzi 2012)

If company knows it target group well, it can determine easily, what are the informational needs of the consumers. Content marketing is an answer to these questions the consumers have and cannot find an answer without a company. (Pulizzi & Barrett 2009) Currently of course, people are also filling empty surroundings by seeking information or entertainment by their mobiles.

However, all strategies and so is a content strategy, defines how a company is going to use content to meet needs of a business, guides the decisions about content and sets the measurement. (Kotler & Keller 2016) The most important

thing in the content marketing strategy is to set a process inside the company to engage employees to react and create content when it is time to be agile. (Kotler & Keller 2016; Aaltonen 2007)

The purpose of the marketing strategy is to create competitive advantage and to create more value to the customers than what the competitors are able to do. The strategic marketing plan outlines the target market and the company's value proposition, based on the analysis of the best market possibilities (Kotler & Keller 2016).

An effective marketing strategy consists for example of 1) Understanding market climate and marketing strengths and weaknesses, 2) Developing a marketing strategy, 3) Building a marketing plan, 4) Implementing the marketing plan and 5) Monitoring success of the marketing plan. (Kotler & Keller 2016)

Content marketing is often associated with inbound marketing, publishing and storytelling (Holliman & Rowley 2014) As a consequence, the companies should take on and learn the role of a publisher: to act like a media. (Pulizzi 2014) Valuable content should be perceived as a potential object for a customer engagement. However, how a company knows what content is valuable for consumers, especially when it is obvious that this kind of content does not always directly concern the company.

However, content marketing is not a short-term campaign, it is a long-term strategy to attract, convert and retain customers. Long-term content strategy needs the tools to manage it, that will say that some sort of editorial calendar or year calendar is needed. Calendar is also a basis for a brand story, because as more people in the company starts to react things and telling the story of the brand, they have to have right tools and to be trained properly to communicate in a real voice. (Pulizzi 2014) Keeping the brand voice consistent will keep content more professional and trusthworthy.

However, potential consumers are not always aware that businesses even exists. That why strong emphasis will be put on utilizing multiple social media tools. (Jahn & Kunz 2012) In a strategy, it is essential to include elements to manage the process properly. Large variety of internet tools can direct customers to the site

and home base. One of the clients follow Twitter, the other one likes Facecook and the third one reads blogs. Having multiple Internet tools is also beneficial to please a wide variety of customers. (Taylor et al. 2011; Pulizzi 2014)

There are at least three main areas to remember in content marketing on social media: interactivity, sharing and collaboration. Content marketing strategy on social media does not differ from traditional marketing strategy but should also consists of some elements which are typical for online marketing and social media. In short, content marketing strategy is a process to ensure the content is valuable to customers.

According to Jefferson & Tanton (2015) there is 10-step approach to a strategy on social media (table 2) you should remember and put together.

There should be: 1) clearness on goals, 2) knowing a business field, 3) knowing customers, 4) finding the story behind the content, 5) recognizing sweet spot and vision behind the content, 6) setting content commitment and plan, 7) setting platform and tools, 8) organizing the content creation, 9) measuring and 10) refining content strategy over time.

TABLE 2. Creating the valuable content strategy in 10 steps. Adapted from
Jefferson & Tanton (2015)

Goals	Content	Tools
• Get clear on goals • Know your customers • Know your business	• The story behind the content • Content sweet spot and vision • Commitment and plan	• Platform and tools • Organize to make it all work • Measuring for succes • Work out where your business is now

It is necessary to have consistent updates. Commitment and plan is important to
make it all work within an organization (table 2). In a strategy, it is essential to
define how often content will be created and assign content producers responsible
for that content. There could be roles and responsabilities for people who are
creating a content, and a schedule by which task are fulfilled and also rules and
quidelines written down. (Jefferson & Tanton 2012) In addition, editorial plan is
recommendable, that will define dates for both creation and publishing, persons
who will edit the content channels, publish dates, statuses and key metrics.
(Pulizzi 2014)

2.6   Content marketing measurement

Audience research is a part of content strategy. Search engine optimization should
be an important part of a content marketing strategy. Any content could be
effective if consumers do not know it or are able to find it. (Doctoroff 2015) After

all these things are in order, it is time to think about measuring the effects of content marketing.

Eventually, it is a big must to use social media and it has considered to be very cost effective way to do marketing. However, it is impossible to simply and very quickly to count on to contents benefits and its ability to increase sales or value. Returns and revenues are coming on delay. (Leino 2012; Kumar & Mirchandani 2010; Hoffman & Fodor 2010) To get some returns in the long run, there has to be a consistent presence on social media, not only to run a single project or campaign. (Erdogmus & Cicek 2012)

Social media return on investment is not like traditional marketing - in many ways, it is not even possible to focus solely on monetary returns within a fixed period (Macarthy 2014). However, content marketing can be measured by using collected data from various sources. On social media there is more need to consider metrics and value in the long run, such as brand awareness, word of mouth promotion, traffic driven to the website via social media, strengthening loyalty and engagement with existing customers. (Hoffman & Fodor 2010; Macarthy 2014)

Content marketing on social media can have a huge impact on corporation. Thus, without a correct plan and strategy, there is no chance to stand out in the rapidly changing digital world. (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi 2012) According to author this is a necessary to realize. Companies may have difficulties because lack of time and resources. Hence, it is important to decide which information is relevant for the measurement.

When it comes to content marketing measurement and return on invest, there are only three questions to be interested in. Is the content driving sales? Is the content saving costs? Is the content making customers happier thus helping with retention? Content marketing is all about developing content that maintains or changes a behavior. (Pulizzi 2014) First, the focus on measuring content marketing effects has been observed through quantities like the number of Facebook "likes" or Twitter tweets per week. However, this kind of measuring does not always correlate with business success. (Kotler & Keller 2016)

The easiest way to measure social media payoff is to include a contest or a promotion and see how many customers will enter. (Kotler & Keller 2016) In addition, there may be both short-term and long-term benefits of social media to measure. For example, is there increased revenue just after a promotion? More difficult is to measure, how the improved visibility of products cause revenue. Long-term brand lift can increase customers purchasing intentions and of course, the long-term risk avoidance is important in this type of situation. (Kotler & Keller 2016)

What kind of things are usual to measure? According to Hoffman and Fodor (2010), companies are measuring how to build brand awareness or reinforcement, how to create more effective lead conversation and nurturing, how to increase customer conversion, how to achieve customer upsell or cross-sell and how to increase subscribers our content. But also metrics can vary a lot as it is possible to see in table 3. Number of visits, tweets, likes, shares and members or fans are easy to see and measure but do they really increase sales? (Kumar & Mirchandani 2012) Owners and shareholders want to see where their money is going and what is the return for their investment.

In Finnish research (Koodiviidakko 2015) 293 companies were asked about content marketing and how to measure it (table 3), 265 companies answered question. Visitors on web pabe and blogs were the most popular way to measure succeeding but every fourth company did not measure content marketing at all.

Ten different elements were noticed as a table 3 shows. These elements are somehow related to what companies want to achieve: increase in sales, brand engagement, brand loyalty, brand awareness and customer acquisition (Pulizzi 2014). Furthermore, word of mouth is important objective because it can effect to all other goals mentioned before, for example increasing brand awareness and helping to acquire new customers.

TABLE 3. Measuring content marketing. Adapted from Koodiviidakko 2015, Jefferson & Tanton 2015, Hoffman & Fodor 2012

Metrics	Objectives	Social media applications
Number of unique visits	Brand awareness, word of mouth	Blogs, Youtube
Number of return visits	Brand awareness	Blogs, Twitter
Increase in sales	Brand loyalty, brand engagement	Netshop
Number of "likes"	Brand awareness, word of mouth	Facebook, blogs, Instagram, Youtube
Number of contacts	Brand awareness, word of mouth	Netshop, all websites and applications
Number of shared contents	Brand awareness, word of mouth	Facebook, blogs, Twitter, Youtube
Visibility in search engines	Brand awareness, customer acquisition	Blogs
Feedback from customers	Brand awareness, customer acquisition	Netshop, all websites and applications
Number of new members in newslists	Brand loyalty, brand engagement, new customers	Email, newslist
Consumed time within content	Brand awareness, brand engagement	Blogs, Youtube, Facebook

However, content marketing needs different point of views also in measuring the objectives. Effective content marketing strategies put the brand to work for the customers by satisfying their needs to be social on social media: so to say they create, consume, connect and control in the social in web (table 3).

On the other hand, effective content marketing strategies also put the customers to work for the brand. That is, customers not only consume the campaign or the products that are for sale, but comment on contents, share it with their friends and provide their uncensored thoughts about the campaign or the products for all to view. Sometimes a company has to test metrics and measure several times to be

able to succeed in content marketing. (Hoffman & Fodor 2010)

Content marketing metrics can be divided into four types: consumption metrics, sharing metrics, lead generation metrics and sales metrics. (Pulizzi 2014, 289) Consumption metrics means how many people viewed a story. Consumption metrics help to measure brand awareness and traffic on website. Sharing metrics means how often content is shared with others. These numbers help to measure brand awareness and engagement. Lead generation metrics can tell how often a lead is resulted from content consumption. Sales metrics are used to show how much money is coming in due to content. It is maybe the hardest to measure but it also tells how a content affects sales goals and customer acquisition. (Pulizzi 2014)

3   RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODS

This chapter is focusing research approach and methods of this thesis. This chapter sets out the strategy for research and the target of the reseach. The thesis researched the content marketing in case organization. The aim of this thesis is to support the content marketing development in case company.

Chapter three starts with the introduction of the Company X. Background of the case company is already presented in chapter one, but it is necessary to explore more deeply the story, values, mission and vision of Company X. These create the basic for the brand and formulates the essential quidelines for the content marketing. Content marketing has its focus on the customer and the brand story. Content marketing can be classified as a part of company branding. (Pulizzi 2014)

The selection of data collection is also discussed. Moreover, there is a brief description of the case company and the actual analysis. Finally, validity and reliabilitys of the research are considered.

This chapter also goes through the research methods and explains the execution of the research from start to end. The results and the analysis of the results are presented in the next chapter. Also, the research approach and methods are evaluated and discussed in critical form in the next chapter.

3.1   Company X

Company X is family-owned business and it was founded in 1983. It offers women's unique European fashion and accessories and also office and business wear. Company X has managed to survive in very difficult economic situations for clothing and textile companies in Finland. Couple of years ago the turnover weakened considerably from almost 9 millions in year 2010 to 7,3 millions euros in 2014.

Job places has declined in the textile and garment sector in Finland almost 60 000 from the beginning of the 1970s. There are approximately 10 000 jobs left. Many clothing companys in Finlans has reported a collapse in domestic demand after 2008. However, Company X's strategy is to be in small business in their own

niche. Thus, they have an eye on expanding market as soon as the moment is right.

Company X presents each year about 500 sets of clothes and some complements to this collection in a monthly basis due to customer feedback. Company operates in fashion business but they do not want to publish trends and phenomenas. The business is seen more long-term oriented. One garment is produced only 300-500 pieces. Group of 4 to 5 dressmakers sew one garment from start to finish. The target group is adult woman.

Prices of clothes are more expensive than in chain businesses but the customer base has been quite stable and permanent for a long time. Because Finland is the most rapidly ageing country in the Europe, the market and the target group are not going to decrease. Percentage of over 50 years old of population is growing by 2020. Over the half of the aged people are women. (Kaikenikäisten Suomi 2015)

Company X has two main targets in the future. It wants to maintain its very well-established clientele: increase brand loyalty and engage their customers. However, also important is to have an eye on next generation. Company wants to increase its brand awareness amongst younger persons.

The company understand very well the value of content marketing but just now it seems to be very confusing to know what kind of content is needed and perceived as valuable and relevant. However, the focus is on e-commerce and how to expand and develop it.

The company X has put high emphasis on content marketing regardless of the size or the financial situations in the country. Almost the whole brand story has established around content in website and around the netshop. This includes photographs, videos and blogs. The brand story comes out from the clothing for a modern adult woman. Sustainable, pretty and suitable.

The Company X wants the quality of the products and individual crafts to show. The challenge is very competitive environment. There is endless supply of netshops, clothes and offers. In this environment company has to create content that offers additional value compared to all other available information of mode

and clothes. Furthermore, according to Pulizzi (2012), content marketing has the idea of all brands, in order to attract and retain customers, need to think and act like media companies.

The typical customer of Company X is a woman over the age of fifty. The slogan tells something about ideology: customers do not need to change, lose weight or try to be suitable for dresses, these dresses are designed to fit for your womanly curves.

Most of the content is carried out with a community in mind. Registered clients get information by email or SMS. The company also gathers feedback from its collection. Customer orientation is very strong and some times it is possible to produce only 100 pieces of a certain clothes for a need.

3.2   Research context and methods

The next chapter describes the analysis methods used for the empirical analysis of this thesis. This thesis is using both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

A case study was electehd as a research strategy. The case study can be viewed as a case in one single organization. (Koskinen, Alasuutari & Peltonen 2005) Case study is one of the three traditional research strategies, along with experimental research and quantitative survey research. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009)

The case study provides detailed information about an individual case, situation, or a group of cases. In this case, there was one case company and the subject of the review was organization's content marketing. A case study allows examination of the study object in a real environment. (Koskinen et al. 2005)

According to Eriksson & Koistinen (2005) the types of case study are descriptive, explanatory, predictive and guiding. The study is determined by the type of objective research. This study is used for normative research approach. Normative research approach has an aim at improving the object of study space and begin the developmental process.

Case study provides data from real life situations. Therefore, it is very suitable for this research, because the aim of this study is to find out how content marketing can increase sales and brand awareness in a case company. It is possible to set theoretical statements via case study but it has to be supported by evidence. (Cohen & Morrison 2000)

3.2.1 Quantitative and qualitative methods

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used in this thesis. The most commonly used methods for studying issues in business are the questionnaire and interview. The research for this thesis was based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.

The empirical data for this thesis was collected by quantitative survey methods. In adition the analysis of content was used. In quantitative research method theories of earlier studies, presentation of hypothesis, the definition of the concepts and the collection of empirical dato to quantify issues numerically are the basic orientation. Attention should be paid to the selection of an adequate target group and the sample, the formation of the tables and editing data into a statistically processable form. Analysis and conclusions of results are based on statistical analysis. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009)

Another name for a quantitative research is a statistical survey. Quantitative research can be described as numbers, percentages and dependancies between things. Defendants are supposed to choose from ready alternatives for an answer, however so, that there often is also many open questions. Quantitative research is able to sort out defendants views on the matter but method is not valid for identifying the cause of things. (Heikkilä 2014)

Qualitative methods are used to carry out the other empirical part of this thesis, interviews and observation. Further, open answers from quantitative inquiry are analyzed with the help of content analysis. Qualitative analysis is the best method to study content marketing due to its newness and in order to study subject in depth. Qualitative method helps to understand actions of target group and people who participates to this research. Furthermore, the empirical research is mostly

carried out via personal or theme interviews, which is the most common technique to gather qualitative data. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009)

In addition to the analysis of the data, there is used content analysis. Content analysis can be used in both qualitative and quantitative data to describe the content of the text (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002). More specifically, this thesis uses qualitative content analysis in examining the form and content of written and spoken language. (Seitamaa-Hakkarainen 2014) This analysis examines the contents of open answers, theme interviews and observation of content marketing in the Company X. The aim of the content analysis is to provide a concise description of where the material is connected to the results of previous research results. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002)

3.2.2 Structure and execution of the research

The majority of surveys are based on questionnaires, which can be answered either in written form or orally through an interview. The questionnaire in this thesis was aimed at collecting data from the clientele of Company X.

The survey was conducted by using the Webropol 2.0 online survey software. The questionnaire was formed using structured claims and open questions. Background questions and easiest questions were included first. The questionnaire and the motivational letter were sent together to motivate and instruct the respondents. These can be found in the appendix with little changes because the case company is not mentioned by name in this study. An addition, a questionnaire was in Finnish by origin, so all the questions have also been translated from Finnish to English to this study.

The pre-selected content marketing themes formed the content of the survey. All themes were based on the earlier research and literatute concerning content marketing.

Before the actual data collection, pre-testing was done to make sure the questions operated well. Three people answered questions first and necessary improvements were made. Further, the Company X had a possibility to do some changes, for example the name of the questionnaire was changed from content marketing

survey to customer satisfaction survey due to it. Moreover, before launching the questionnaire there were three preliminary interviews with Company X, group interview with four persons in 9th of February and two telephone interviews in 12th and 24th of February.

The data was collected via Webropol survey, which was sent to the clientele by email over the course of eight days (14.-22.4.2016). The link for the surveys was also delivered through the company's Facebook page. Data gathering was implemented using an online survey until 8th of May. After that the questionnaire was on Facebook page couple of days.

A total of 969 answers were received. Furthermore, a total of 1 021 respondents opened the survey link, thus resulting in an effective response rate of 94,8 percent. Totally 1 412 persons had clicked the email link that the company send to them. So it is unclear if the link did not work or why the number of openers was different in Webropol than in company's processes.

The response rate was calculated by comparing the number of opened survey link to sufficiently filled survey responses. However, the email was sent to almost all clients of loyalty register in 17 areas: 29 205 persons. If using this number, the response rate is considerably lower, only 3,3 percent. Hence, the total number of 969 respondents is very good in this kind of study.

Additionally, open questions gathered 466-784 respondents. The survey was answered anonymously, but 905 respondents left their name and address for further interview. In addition, after submitting their responses, respondents were able to participate to the prize lottery by filling up a form. The responses were analyzed anonymously and the answers could not be connected to the respondents.

All questions were formulated so that respondents did not need to know concepts brand, brand awareness, loyalty, engagement and content marketing very deeply. The purpose was that respondents can give answers due to their own experience of the Company X.

The responses correspond to the target group that the company is pursuing: two largest age groups fell between 56-65 and 65-75 years. It represents a 71 percent share of the respondents. 44,3 percent of respondents were living in the area of Helsinki-Uusimaa.

There were three telephone interviews, which were semistructured theme interview and themes were following the pattern of questionnaire. The interviewees were selected by random from the group who left their name and number. Each interview lasted about 20 minutes and were conducted in a same day, 2nd of June.

The third part of the reseach was observation. The company X was studied by observing their webpage and social media channels and above all, the content in these platforms couple of times a week in February and August 2016. The purpose was to explore what kind of content Company X has, how often it was published and what social media tools company uses. The short excel was filled in that purpose. Remarkable thing is that Company X changed its agenda on social media and webpage at the same time they renewed webshop in March 2016. So these observation forms from February and August are not very well comparatible. However, observation gave a certain glance at company's content marketing policy and the uncertainty that there may be when seeking for the right answer to the strategy. For that reason, the results of the observation are also shortly described in this thesis.

3.3   Validity and reliability of the research

The reliability of the study refers to validity and repeatability of the results. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009) The purpose of the reliability is to prevent errors, in other words reliability concerns the researcher's ability to transcribe and code the raw data into analyzable form. Additionally, consistent methods are an important factor when it comes to reliability. (Lee & Lings 2008)

The reliability of this thesis is enhanced by the fact that the process is thoroughly explained, both quantitative and qualitative implementation phase, as it should be

done in research. The reasons for coding and interpretations from data are also explained as it is suggested according to Hirsjärvi et al. (2009).

Validity indicates if the selected measure or measurement method measures what it is meant to measure. The study shows the validity of the research method, if questions are understood differently than was the original intention, the results cannot be considered valid. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009) Validity can be divided into internal and external validity. The validity of an external refers to the generalizability of the results. Generalizability describes how well the results of the study are available to different groups and circumstances. Internal validity is used to explore if the measurement is suitable to indicate the the phenomenon under investigation, and whether the indicators used are in accordance with the theory. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009)

The concept and theory of this thesis has been strictly selected so that they offer support the research question set in an optimal way. The measurement method and the questions are considered valid since there were no problems with meanings and also applicable results were received. Additionally, the data is considered to the right for this thesis, as it provided appropriate answers to the research questions. The semi-structured interviews allowed asking for a more accurate questions when needed. These interviews completed the inquiry properly.

Furthermore, the questionnaire and interview questions were viewed and commented by the academic supervisor of this thesis. All the interviews were recorded in order to ensure that all the data could be captured. Moreover, preliminary interviews were transcribed as precisely as it was possible. However, no computer driven qualitative data analysis software was used because of a lack of resources and availability. According to Ruusuvuori et al. (2010) this kind of sowtfare is suitable for saving time in transcribe and coding process. In this thesis this was considered unnecessary because the quantitative data was so well interpreted and analyzed with the help of Webropol. In addition, interviews and perception of the companys webpage gave extra information about the subject.

4 RESEARCH RESULTS

This chapter includes empirical analysis and results of this study. Firstly, the data collected through questionnaire is presentend and analyzed. Secondly, there are analyzis and results of three interviews using direct quotes of informants. And thirdly, an analyzis of observation form is shortly presented.

The results reveal the general opinions of respondents from the company and its contents, also establishing the perceived experiences, attitudes and expectations. Brand familiarity and brand engagement are also observed from the answers. Furthermore, a synthesis is made out of the survey results, interviews and observation in order to outline what kind of content the customer wants and what could be the content marketing strategy for the Company X.

The questionnaire can be found in the appendix with little changes because the case company is not mentioned by name in this study. In addition, all the questions have been translated from Finnish to English to better understand and explore the results of this study.

4.1 Content marketing in Company X

The customer satisfaction surveys were answered by a total of 969 respondents, this was an online questionnaire using webropol survey tool. The amount of respondent was above the expected level, even if the email link was sent totally to 29 205 persons. Using this number, response rate was only 3,3 percent. But when considering openings of the link, the response rate was really high: almost 95 percent.

The responses correspond to the target group that the company is pursuing: two largest age groups fell between 56-65 and 65-75 years. It represents a 71 percent share of the respondents. 435 respondents belonged to the age group 56-65 years and 256 respondents belonged to the age group 66-75 years old (figure 3).

This is in line with the customer profile of the studied company and the field in which it operates. It also reveals that without a good brand performance and increased brand awareness, there may be difficulties in acquisition of new

customers in the future. However, it has to be remembered that the sample of this study was gathered from the existing clientele of loyalty register.
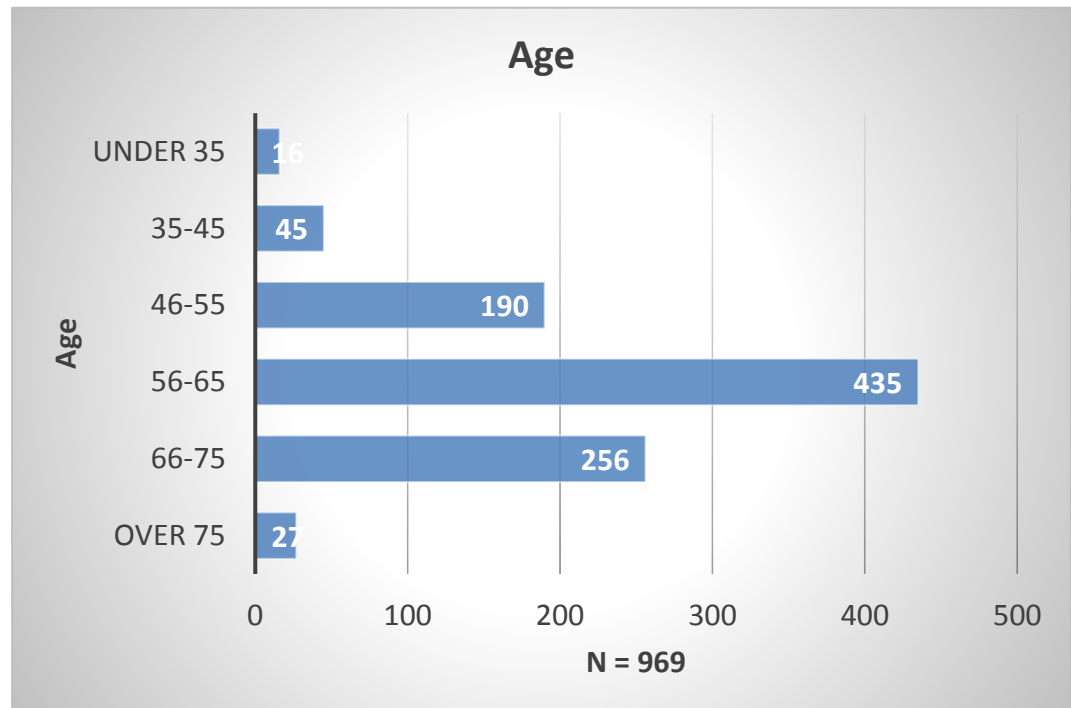

FIGURE 3. Background questions: age

The survey link was sent to 17 areas of Finland, for totally 29 205 clients. These 16 areas were the ones where Company X has their shops and the 17th one was the webshop. In the survey data collecting was done by using seven provinces in Finland. Those were Helsinki-Uusimaa, Etelä-Suomi, Keski-Suomi, Länsi-Suomi, Itä-Suomi, Oulu and Lappi (figure 4).

44,3 percent of respondents were living in the area of Helsinki-Uusimaa, representing number of 429 answers. The second liveliest amount of answers came from Etelä-Suomi, 185 respondents representing 19,1 percent of total 969 answerers.
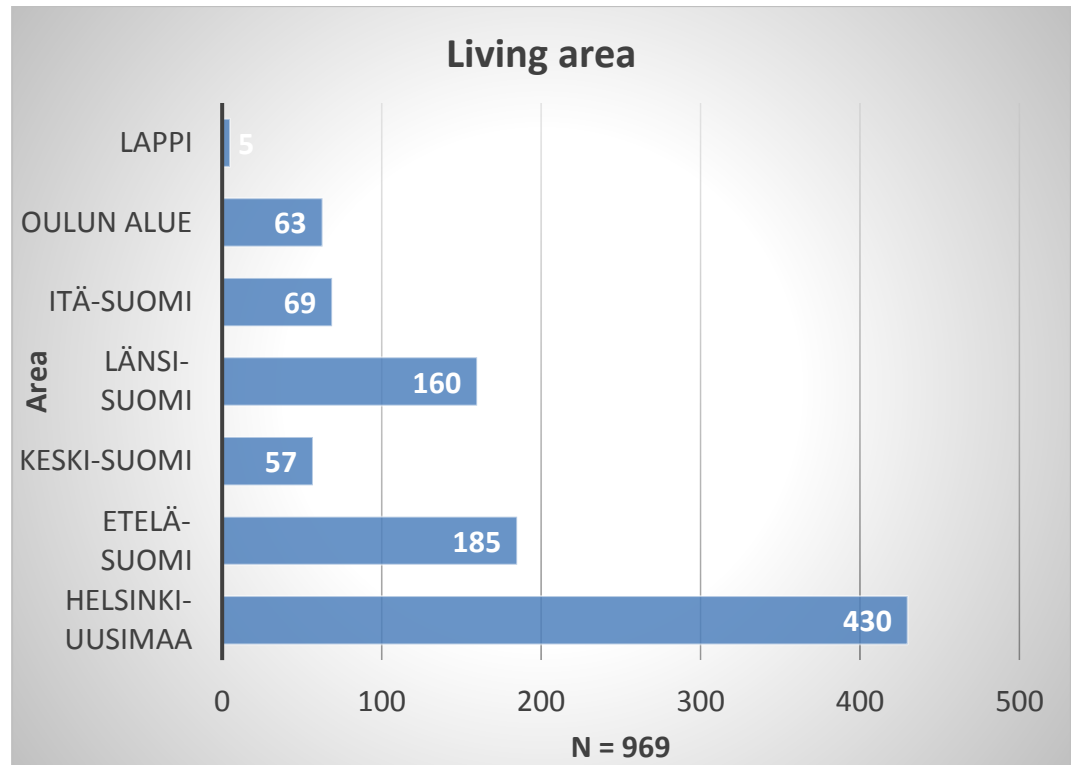
FIGURE 4. Background questions: living area

The survey link was sent to those clients who were in the loyalty register of the company. Link was also visible on company's Facebook page in the beginning of May, but it brought only couple of new answers to the survey. So we can easily say that all the respondents belong to the register.

According to the answers that are seen in figure 5, most of the respondents, 60,4 percent, had been registered only under 5 years. 23 percent of respondents were familiar with the company from 6 to 10 years and 16 percent of respondents more than 10 years.

How many years have you been a client? N = 969

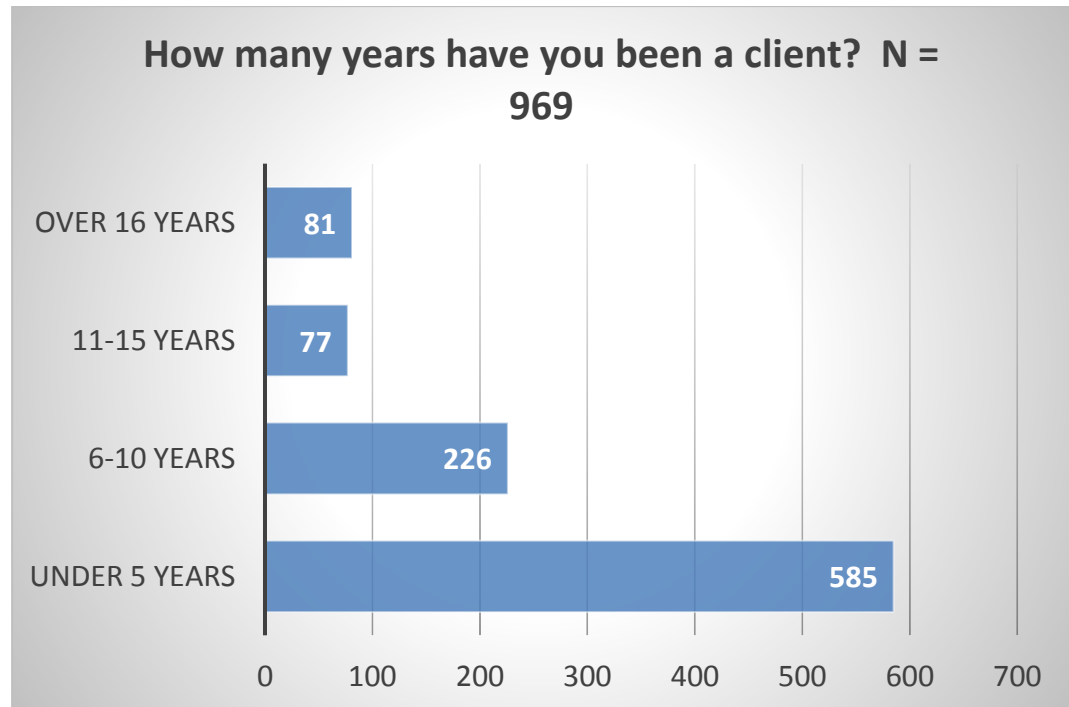|	
OVER 16 YEARS	81
11-15 YEARS	77
6-10 YEARS	226
UNDER 5 YEARS	585

0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700

FIGURE 5. Background questions: customership

After background questions, the questionnaire was based on three themes: 1. fashion and textile industry in general, 2. company X and its products and 3. social media.

The aim of the first question group was to explore how important sustainability and textile recycling are comparing to price to this group of clients, are they interested in mode and how important is the used money and time for shopping. One aim of these questions was to find out if content marketing can increase brand awareness and finally affects sales.

The second question group aimed to study the brand and image of the Company X. Is their brand well-known or not, are they known for good reasons and what is the image and reputation of the company. The purpose was to study if clients are engaged and loyal and what is the role of content marketing in company branding.

Social media was the issue in the third question group. The Company X is very active on social media but it is still looking for a good way to present its ideas and products on social media. Company had many experiments in launching content

in different channels but the own voice was still missing. The aim of this question group was to find out how to engage a target group to follow a company brand and how to increase brand awareness amongst the next generation. Every company wants to keep its current customers but at the same time acquisite new clients for its products.

The data collected from the respondents is presented in this chapter. Questions are grouped together according to similarity and the formula of survey.

4.1.1   Valuable content for customers

The majority of respondents, 75,8 percent considered the most attractive reason to get information was that they wanted to get tips from clothing, colours and style. The title question was *What kind of information do you want to get from dressing and clothing*. There was a possibility to choose three most important issues. All 969 respondents answered to this question and answers were chosen totally 2 802 times.

The 64,3 percent of respondents wanted to get information about reductions and 40 percent of respondents wanted personal advices. In this section only 5,3 percent of respondents considered that the knowledge of company and its brand should belong to the three most interesting issues (figure 6).

According to Joe Pulizzi (2014) content marketing is "the marketing and business process for creating and distributing valuable content to attract and engage a clearly defined target audience with the objective of driving profitable customer action." If some information is valuable for own customers, a company can help them to find it easily, even if it is not their own content by origin.

When the consumer is presented with information he is passionate or interested in, he will give his full attention to update or message. (Pulizzi 2014) However, finding content goals that ultimately drive business can be an excruciating process.

It takes time and research to determine what kind of content there has to be to have an immediate impact on customers. Valuable content is an useful

information created for a particular audience, content that educates, helps or inspires them. (Jefferson & Tanton 2015)

Tips for style, clothes and colours seems to be more important and valuable for customers than other options. However, customers also appreciate the information about reductions and sales (figure 6). In this question information about company and its brand and vision was not so important at all. It can be that customers already know the firm and its story. After brand engagement it is more valuable to concentrate other information a brand shares.

FIGURE 6. Valuable content in creating brand engagement

Information benefits seem to be experienced by most of the respondents (figure 6) because almost 76 percent of the respondents agreed that they want to get good tips and 64 percent of respondents said that they need information about reductions.

Content marketing is about delivering useful content at just the precise moment the buyer needs it. Content marketing is based on content, an audience appreciate and want to consume. (Jefferson & Tanton 2015) Of course, a content can be useful, informative and valuabe, even if the consumer does not know that he wants it. For that reason, companies usually have a website full of free information that is useful to potential customers, offering them the opportunity to engage service or products which are closely linked to all that information company are giving away. (Jefferson & Tanton 2015)

Personal advices are important for 40 percent of respondents. One of the main ideas of content marketing is to provide the information clients need at the precise moment he or she wants to get the information. (Pulizzi 2014) Personal relationship between a company and a customer increases brand engagement and loyalty.

On social media context, every time a person gets useful information about the company, the company gains increased exposure to its brand, often in highly relevant contexts. Thus, brand awareness is a key social media objective. (Hoffman & Fodor 2010) In addition, content marketing can be a long-tail strategy: it is a more effective way than advertising to create awareness for product or service. (Pulizzi 2014)

The second title question considering clothing and fashion was *How important are these things in clothing and garment for you?*

There was a possibility to estimate six issues which were: price, quality, sustainability, design, country of manufacture and cutting. The scale was from 1 to 5: 1 for representing not important at all, 2 = some importance, 3= rather important, 4 = important and 5 = very important (table 4 below).

TABLE 4. Factors in building a good brand story

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Price	7	62	470	289	141	969
Quality	6	3	83	450	427	969
Sustainability	5	9	136	521	298	969
Design	6	10	47	392	514	969
Fashionable	15	185	397	284	88	969
Country of manufacture	12	51	259	374	273	969
Cutting	9	21	71	294	574	969
	60	341	1463	2604	2315	6783

In the table 4 there is estimation from 1-5. The majority of respondents chose estimations 3-5, from rather important to very important. All of the respondents answered to this question, only 6 percent of the respondents estimated not important at all (1) or of some importance (2) in any questions.

The aim of this question was to explore new trends in clothing. Now, many customers consider sustainability, recycling and manufacturing countries to be very important things in textile industry. Even if the price is considered to be only rather important for many, there may be some limits for spended money in anyway.

Of course, price and sustainability are related together. Customers can pay extra if they know the garment will sustain for many years and is always goodlooking or timeless for design. Case company has a good brand story manufacturing clothes

in Finland or in near areas and taking care of their employees. We also know that this group of over 55 years old women has purchasing power, so for the case company it is very important to hear what their customers want from their clothing and brand these clients are consuming.

In the table 4, cutting and sustainability seems to be very important for most of the answerers but when we look the average of these six alternatives, we can see that design has almost the same average than cutting. Additionally, the quality and sustainability has the average over 4 (table 5).

However, customers do not care about company, they care about themselves and how to solve their problems. If company really has an important message or vision behind its content, for example of sustainability, they can tell it to customers and rely on their judgement about product. (Pulizzi 2014)

TABLE 5. Factors in building a good brand story: average

How important is for you?	Average
Cutting	4,44
Design	4,44
Quality	4,33
Sustainability	4,13
Country of manufacture	3,87
Price	3,51
Fashionable	3,25

A good brand story can build the knowledge about products and build positive emotions and relationship between a company and clients. A good brand story can also allow the manufacturer to highlight its differences from other producers and reduce consumer's price sensitivities. (Chiu et al. 2012)

Companies can add their own strong brand to their assortments and increase their attractiveness towards customers needs. That may even decrease the need for price promotions. Branding is increasingly important for textile factories to differentiate companies from competitors that sell similar products but differently manufactured. When customers appreciate a brand's good cutting and design, at the same time they solve their own problems and need for goodlooking clothes.

When consumers internalize company's values and encounter a brand story as it is, they produce few counterarguments and focus their cognitive capacities on story-cued product information, with elevated emotions. (Chiu et al. 2012) In the Company X a brand story varies from good quality and sustainability to a vision and values of family-owned small business. Even if the country of manufacture does not seem to be important to customers, open answers revealed that they are very well aware of this point, too.

4.1.2 Brand familiarity and image of the Company X

The second set of questions concerned the case company and its products. The first question of this set asked the respondents to choose the most suitable options for them which were the most important things in the case company. There was a possibility to choose two options from nine alternatives. There were total of 969 respondents and amount of 2067 answers were chosen (figure 7).

The question was *What is the most important thing in the Company X for you*? According to the results, four alternatives were the most important things for the respondents. Figure 7 shows that fashion trends were not considered to be important at all, only 1 percent of respondents chose this option.

What is the most important thing in Company X?

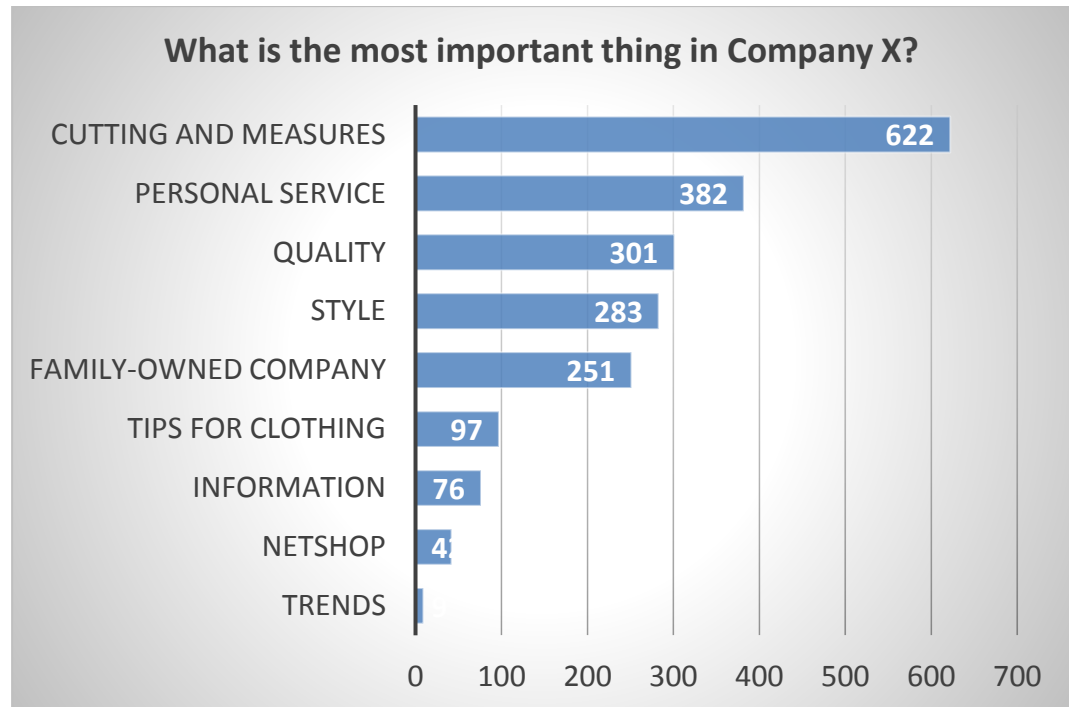| Category	Value
CUTTING AND MEASURES	622
PERSONAL SERVICE	382
QUALITY	301
STYLE	283
FAMILY-OWNED COMPANY	251
TIPS FOR CLOTHING	97
INFORMATION	76
NETSHOP	4
TRENDS	

FIGURE 7. Brand familiarity and the image of the Company X

64 percent of respondents considered cutting and measurement to be the most important for them. 39,5 answered that personal service is important. In addition, quality (31 percent) and style (29 percent) were estimated rather high. Every fourth respondent estimated that manufacturing country has importance. The case company is the Finnish familybased firm that manufactures its clothes whether in Finland or in near areas.

Other alternatives, fashion trends, easy shopping on a webshop, communication and tips for clothing gathered each under 10 percent of responses.

Building and maintaining brand loyalty are one of the central themes for marketers. Brand loyalty symbolizes the consumer's ultimate relationship and level of identification with a brand. (Pulizzi 2014) It is possible to a brand to achieve exclusive and very positive image in the eyes of consumers, and this image helps to win the loyalty of the consumers. If a brand can create irresistible and irreplaceable appearance, customers brand loyalty can, in return, bring sales revenues. At least this kind of brand loyalty helps a company to grow or maintain

its place in the very competitive market field as the textile industry also is. (Erdogmus & Cicek 2012)

Content marketing is all about communication (Pulizzi 2014) but in this question (figure 7) the communications and information did not seem to be very important for customers. Of course, telling from cutting, manufacturing and personal service is also communication and information. Is it rather clear that there is no reason to choose communication and information in the survey, if you already know the brand and get all the information you need (figure 8). All the respondents were already customers of the case company and they were members in the loyalty register.

When asked *How well are you aware of the mode and fashion by following the Company X?* the half of the respondents considered to be well informed. 42 percent answered to be well informed and 11 percent considered to be very well informed by following the Company X as it can be seen in figure 8.

How well are you aware of mode and fashion by following the Company X? N = 969

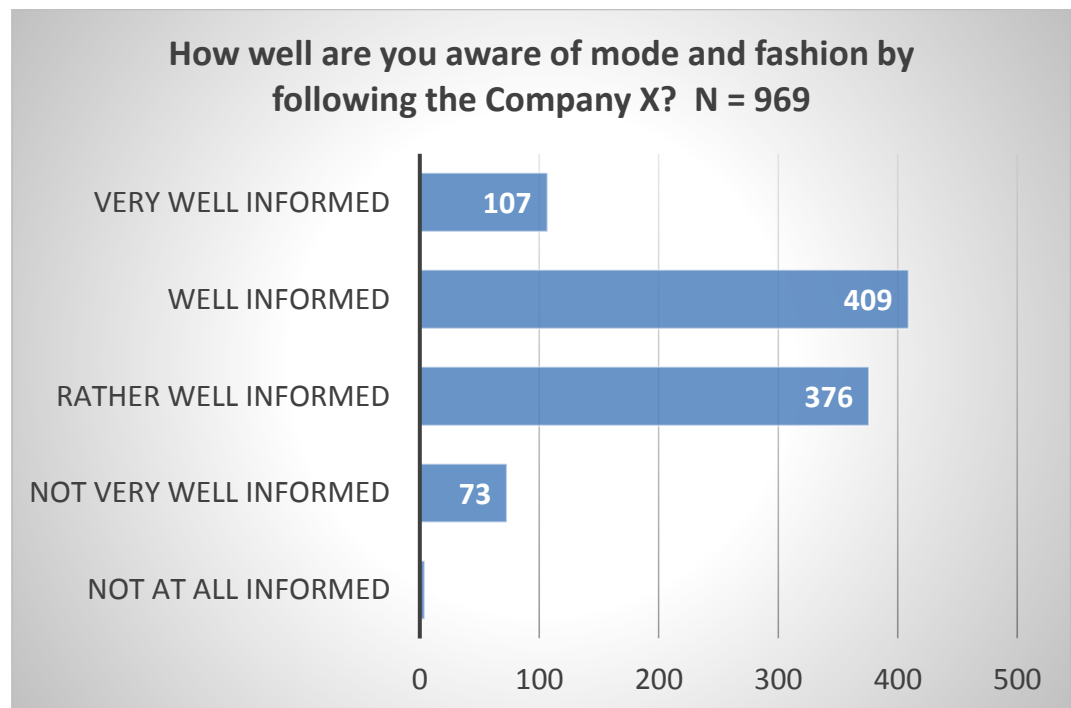| Category	Value
VERY WELL INFORMED	107
WELL INFORMED	409
RATHER WELL INFORMED	376
NOT VERY WELL INFORMED	73
NOT AT ALL INFORMED	

FIGURE 8. Sharing valuable and useful information

A company provides useful information to a customer (figure 8). As result, the most important part during the process will be an emotional bond between a seller and a buyer. Content marketing is not the iniatial goal in business, the goal is that the content works towards attracting new customers and retaining the old ones – and ultimately, bring the sales revenues. (Pulizzi 2014)

However, the most important source was not social media or internet page, it was email or SMS for 75 percent of the respondents. The second, netpage/webshop was far away, 8,3 percent of respondents considered it to be the most important channel to get information (figure 9).
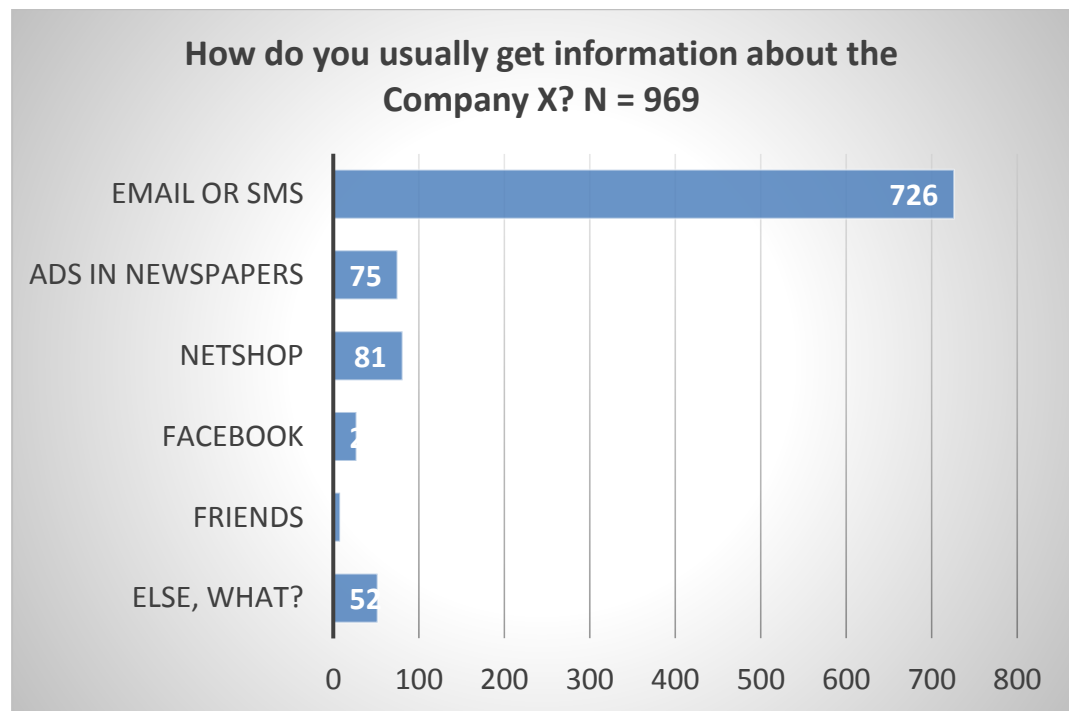

FIGURE 9. The most important source to get an information

Facebook was information channel only for 3 percent of respondents. In addition, some other social media channels were mentioned in the option Else, what? Social media applications like Youtube, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn were mentioned in this option.

The results show that even the great amount of middle-aged women are actively involved on social media, it is not the relevant channel or source to get information when doing purchasing decisions (figure 9). Since brand fan pages are organized around a single brand, product, or company, they can be seen as a special kind of brand community or the place consumers can formulate together a network or a community. (Jahn & Kunz 2012) However, even if you like the Facebook page, it does not mean that you are deeply devoted to the company and its content or are ready to share these contents to your network on social media.

"Brand community engagement can affect membership loyalty, brand image and word of mouth. Thus, community participation and membership can be seen as an important tool for a successful branding strategy." (Jahn & Kunz 2012) This kind of community engagement can be very difficult to create even if a client appreciates a brand itself. That can be seen in open answers which are quoted later in this thesis.

Most of the respondents wanted to purchase clothes mainly in store (figure 10). Over 89 percent of respondents choose this alternative while 3 percent purchased mainly on webshop. 7 percent of respondents used the both. The reasons were mentioned in open questions: it is nice to try on clothes, see them and ask about them. A personal service was said to be very important.
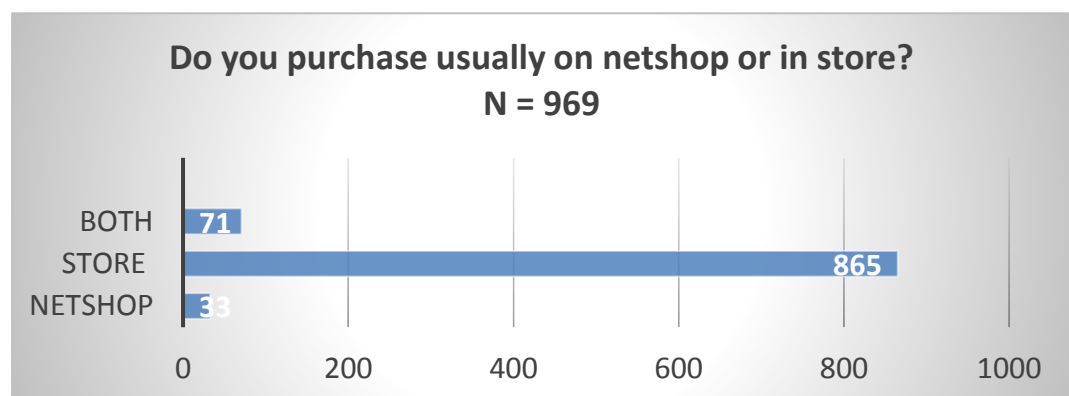

FIGURE 10. Purchasing on webshop and in store

The company wants to expand its webshop and increase sales especially by e-commerce. However, the clientele seems to be situated in the southern Finland (figure 4) where distances are not very long and it is easier to reach a store than in northern Finland. Moreover, webshop is not very widely used in this group of customers (figure 10). Remarkable was that the most respondents had never purchased from the webshop, 84 percent of respondents. 15 percent of respondents had done shopping also on webshop (figure 11).
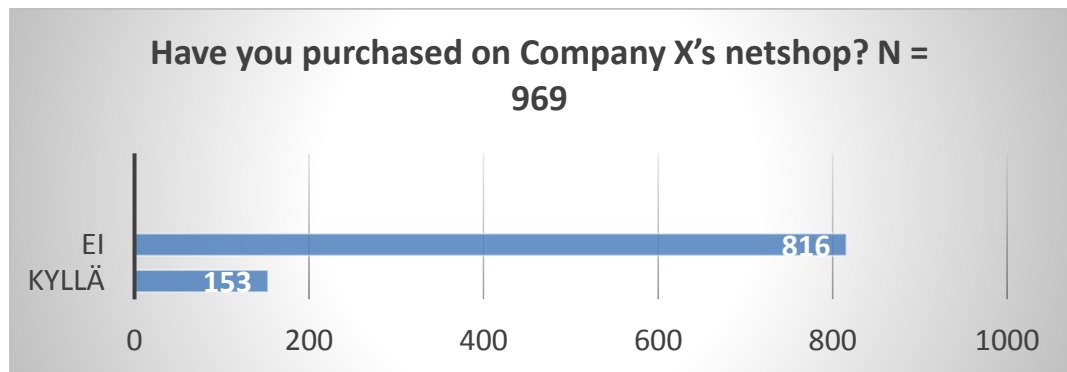

FIGURE 11. Distribution of customers on webshop

Attitudes towards the company and its products were measured by asking a school grade from 4 to 10. The scale goes from 4 as weak to 10 as excellent including 5 = passable, 6 = moderate, 7 = satisfying, 8 = good, 9 = praiseworthy and 10 = excellent.

There were several alternatives to estimate, first the brand of the Company X's brand as general, after that fashionable, quality, sustainability and service.

In the figure 12 below there is a grade as a company in general. 42,5 percent of respondents estimated Company X to be praiseworthy, 11 percent as excellent and 41 percent as good. So 94,5 percent of respondents were really satisfied with the company brand by giving a school grade from 8 to 10.
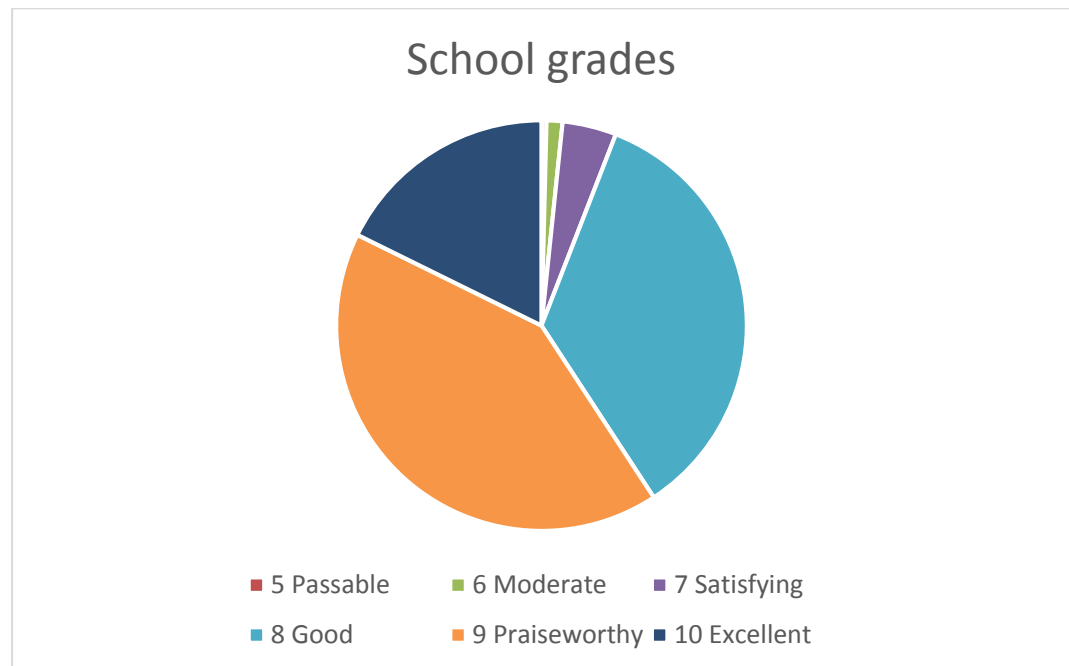
School grades

FIGURE 12. Company's brand and image. School grades 4-10

School grades were also asked from fashionable, quality, sustainability and service. 48 percent of respondents also estimated companys products fashionable by giving grade good and 34 percent gave a grade praiseworthy. 8 percent estimated company to be as excellent.

Totally 90 percent of respondents estimated companys products as fashionable by giving a grade from 8 to 10. These school grades are to be seen in a table 6 in the next page.

TABLE 6. Company's brand and image. School grades 4-10 for 5 factors

GRADES	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Brand	0	2	24	32	396	411	104	969
Fashionable	0	5	19	81	462	328	74	969
Quality	1	2	7	32	314	437	176	969
Sustainability	1	2	7	41	327	420	171	969
Service	0	6	4	20	191	415	333	969
	2	17	61	206	1690	2011	858	4845

About quality the company and its products gained 95 percent of respondents to give grades 8-10. And 95 percent of respondents estimated the company also to be sustainable and gave grades 8-10. And service, 97 percent of respondents estimated the service to be good, praiseworthy or excellent from 8-10. So most of the clients of this company are very satisfied with their choice of the Company X and its products.

The image and brand of this company is seen as very positive amongst the current clientele. In this study all the respondents were selected from the loyalty register of Company X.

4.1.3 Social media and contents

The third part of the questions asked about social media. Because the target group of the company is relatively elderly people, it was relevant to ask *Do you use social media? Which channels?* The most popular channels were given as options

and there was also possibility to choose *Something else* and *I do not use social media*. There were 969 responses, 1 413 choises in this question.

Most of the respondent said that they use Facebook, 51 percent, but almost as many said (37 percent) that they do not use social media at all. The second popular social media channel after Facebook was Youtube, 160 respondents, 16,5 percent (figure 13). Relatively big group of clients do not use social media at all. In addition, Whatsap, Pinterest, Skype and Messenger was mentioned in an open question: Else, what?

Do you use social media? Which channels?

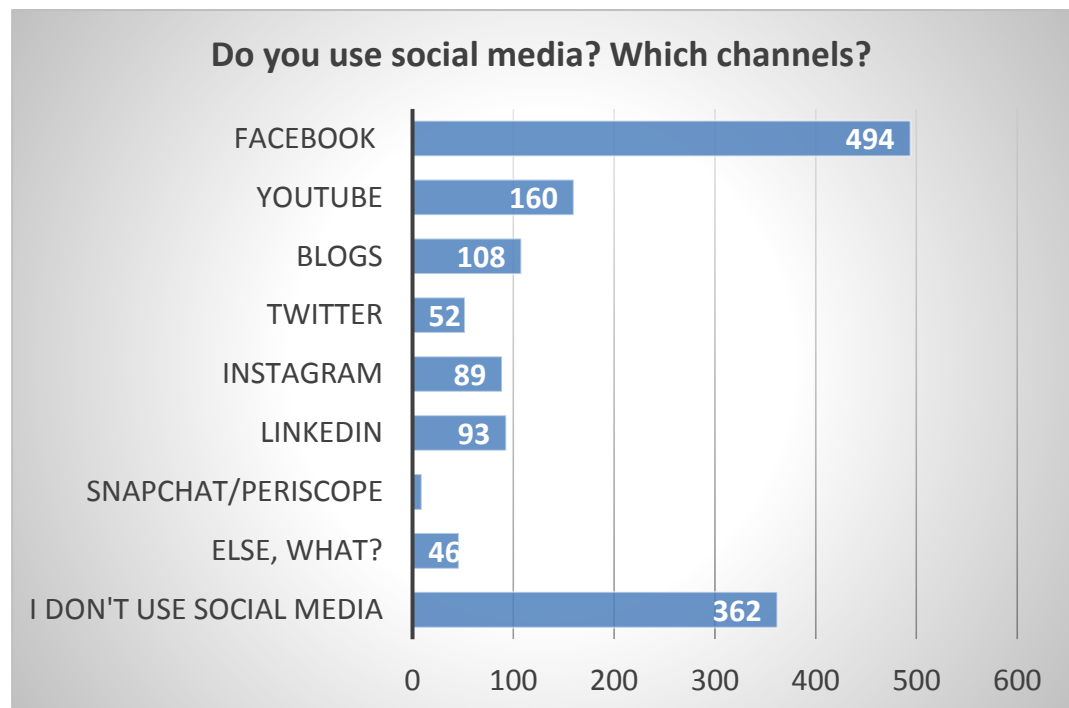| Channel	Value
FACEBOOK	494
YOUTUBE	160
BLOGS	108
TWITTER	52
INSTAGRAM	89
LINKEDIN	93
SNAPCHAT/PERISCOPE	
ELSE, WHAT?	46
I DON'T USE SOCIAL MEDIA	362

FIGURE 13. Respondents activities on social media

It is important to be present where the customers are and to know what the customers are doing on the internet and what they like and what they disgust. Without this information it is hardly possible to provide targeted messages for a target-group. Here and now, people do solve their problems by searching the internet and social media. (Jefferson & Tanton 2015)

Companies should be present where their customers are and provide the potential informations buyers need. (Pulizzi 2014) But the reality is that the company can't be prepared to have every conversation about products at any time online. Additionally, when consumers have access to information at any time at every moment, the buying process can be chaotic and nonlinear. So companies do not have total control over the discussion in online.

In this survey, mostly used platform was undoubtedly Facebook and second popular was Youtube (figure 13). This finding tells that companys videos has reached their target group very well and maybe has learned clientele to use new ways to get information about clothes and fashion. The case company should possibly use these networking channels more actively in order to find new customers. Using these channels as an extra, is nothing away from loyal group of clienteles, who do not use internet and social media.

The second question in this theme was *How often do you use social media?* The majority of those who use social media (31 percent), answered that they use different social media platforms every day. Furthermore, according to the survey, 12 percent of respondents use social media several times a day and 14 percent of respondents use it couple of times in a week (figure 14).

Earlier researches say that people nowadays are online always, and use social media and internet to fill empty surroundings while waiting something or wanting to entertain themselves during dull moments. This did not happen in according to this study, because only 4 persons mentioned to be on line "all the time".

The survey findings show that half of the case company's target group is not actively using social media. However, social media presence seems to be important when planning customer acquisition, it can be a good way to increase brand awareness amongst people who do not yet know about Finnish textile and clothing industry or the Company X.

How often do you use social media? N = 969

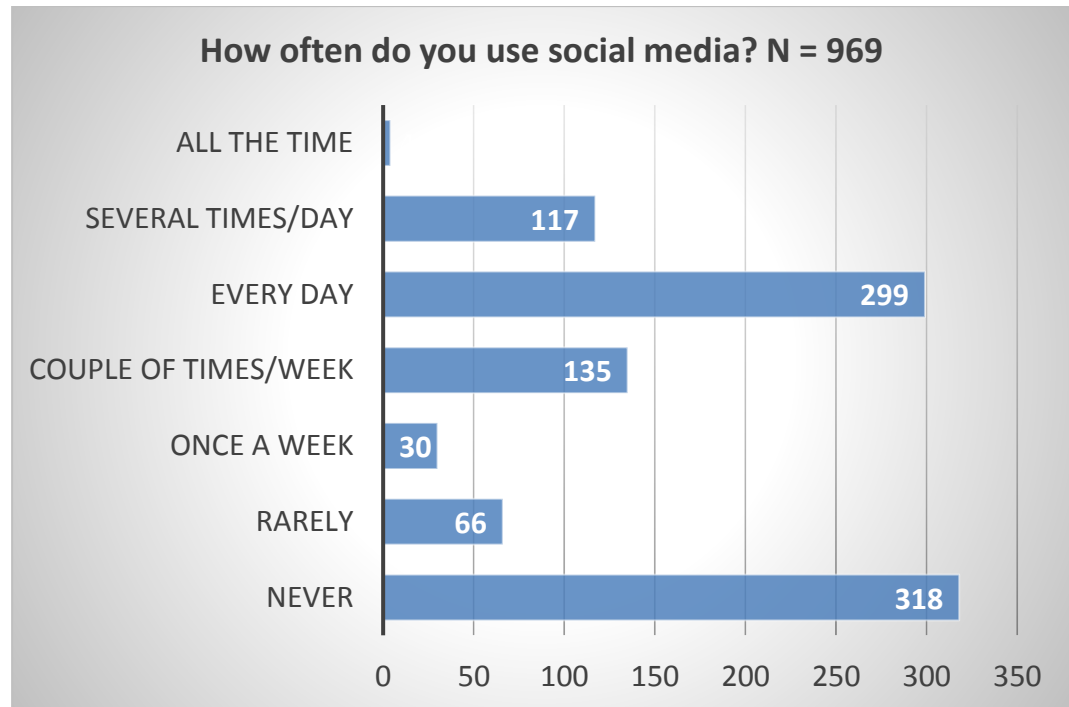| Category	Value
ALL THE TIME	
SEVERAL TIMES/DAY	117
EVERY DAY	299
COUPLE OF TIMES/WEEK	135
ONCE A WEEK	30
RARELY	66
NEVER	318

FIGURE 14. Usage of social media

The third question concerned about advertising on social media. The question was *How often do you want to get new updates from Company X on social media?* Almost half of the respondents (43 percent) answered that they want to see new updates only couple of times in a month. However, almost as many (41 percent) wanted to get a new post every time there is reductions and sales (figure 15).

Messaging provides a company possibility to have a conversation with followers and create an emotional bond with customers. Followers are people who have selected a page because they do want to know what happens in this page: they would like to keep regular tabs on. But it does not mean that people wants to share this information to their social network or that they will spend time with it. (Jahn & Kunz 2012)
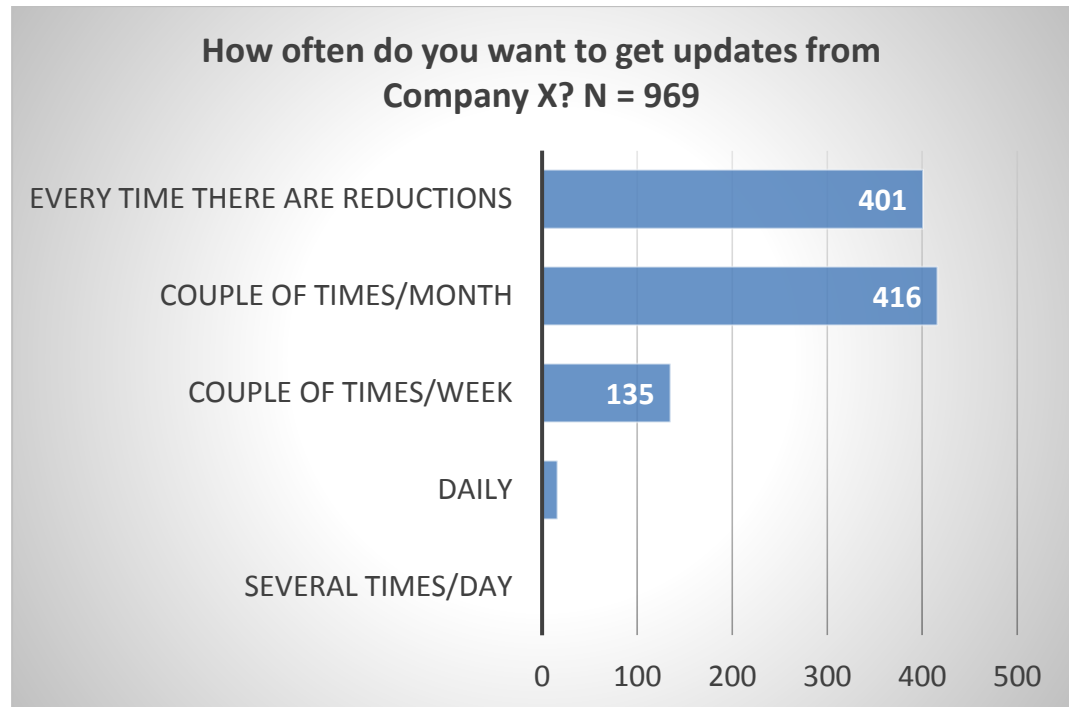
FIGURE 15. Frequency of wanted information in general

According to this surveys, there is no need to increase amount of information to a certain group of clients. 58 percent of respondents were satisfied to get information about the Company X only once in a month even if this information channel was their favourite email or SMS (figure 15 and figure 16). Despite of this, respondents were very eager to recommend this company to their friends. 44 percent of respondents answered they would recommend company's products to their friends likely and 36 percent considered to recommend products very likely as we see the figure 17 below.

Brand engagement can be enhanced through social media in various ways, according to Hoffman & Fodor (2010). This kind of engagement can hopely seen also as the bottom-line rewards through delayed sales. Traditionally, marketers measure engagement through customer surveys. "On social media there has to be different metrics: marketers can find useful to use one-time versus repeated interactions or active participation compared to passive consumption of social media as proxy measures." (Hoffman & Fodor 2010)
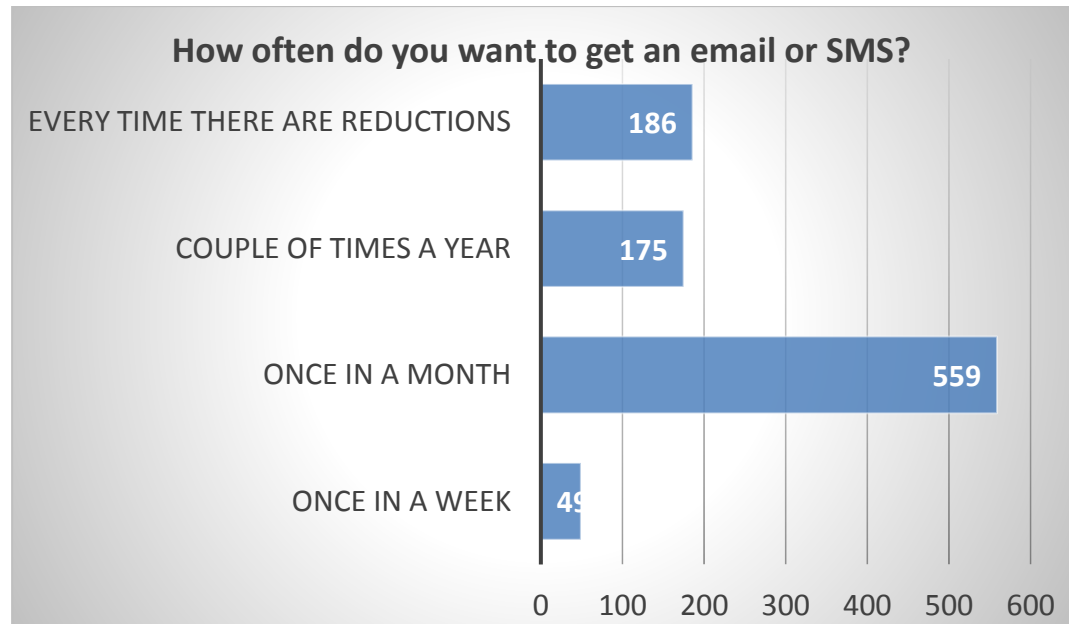
FIGURE 16. Frequency of wanted information by email or SMS

Quite many businesses chase new business when existing customers and contacts are far more valuable (Jefferson & Tanton 2015). Newsletter by email and even by SMS are not old-fashioned, according to this study (figure 9). Email is a cost-effective and powerful way to automate the process of keeping in contact with customers. Company X has built an engaged mailing list and keep in touch with valuable email content with their customers almost every month. According to these findings the loyalty register customers can appreciate that.

Email newsletters also tells something about the content. Usually people delete most of their emails even without opening them. So these newsletters will only be read if the content is valuable. (Jefferson & Tanton 2015). Actually, consumers do not read or need textile companies news, they want to get useful ideas and tips for clothing. If the email content is valuable, it can turn every contact into customer who will be motivated to buy something.

Even if the respondents of this survey did not use social media very actively, they were really eager to recommend the Company X to their friends. Word of mouth is one way to share contents, it can happen on social media by sharing articles or by writing positive or negative criticism in different sites. Usually the most

effective word of mouth influence comes by talking face to face to each other. There is no need to underestimate word of mouth because consumers tend to trust their peers and friends more than companies. (Hoffman & Fodor 2010)

Do you recommend Company X to your friends? N = 969

Category	Value
VERY LIKELY	352
LIKELY	422
RATHER LIKELY	173
NOT VERY LIKELY	2
NOT AT ALL	0

FIGURE 17. Word of mouth influence and recommendations

Social media platfors and applications will change all the time: there will be rises and falls but social media itselft is here to say. Every tool and platform is different and needs different kind on communication. The best way to be in minds of customers, is to create content that is valuable for them. Direct sales messages only irritates people if they comes too often to their newsfeed.

Findings of this survey show that consumers are very loyal to Company X. Customers appreciate the brand and are ready to recommend these products to their friends.

4.2 Brand story

The interviews gave an opportunity to the student to exchange views and ideas with respondents. Due to the scope of the thesis and given timeline of the project, three interviews were conducted. The theme interview was used by telephone and the informants were selected by random. They all were from the area of Helsinki-Uusimaa and had been a client of Company X about five years. Two of the persons belonged to the age group 55-65 years and one to the group of 66-75 years old. The informants represent very well the clientele of the Company X. However, when considering content marketing on social media and acquisition of "the next generation", the variety of interviews could have been expanded.

The questions followed the same pattern than the survey, where also were open questions. The interview gave a possibility to go deeper and ask follow-up questions and clarifications.

What kind of image you have from Company X and its products?

The first question was about the image or brand of Company X. Both in interviews and in open questions, the quality of clothes was the most important thing. Many considered that it is important to have textile industry also in Finland – so that was one reason to buy clothes from Company X. In a survey, 778 respondents answered to this question. Quotes have been picked both from survey and from interviews. The way quotes have been picked, represents wider scale of opinions, that will say that many answered at the same way.

Quality of fabrics and products were important, and so was the label country of manufacture. Although clothes were estimated to be rather expensive, it did not matter because of the sustainability and the quality.

> *"Quality for Finnish women."*
>
> *"No disposable things."*
>
> *"Maybe a little expensive for my wallet."*
>
> *"I think many of these clothes are designed for older women. But in any way, cutting is often perfect. I would like to have more fashionable clothes."*

> *"Excellent Finnish company. But usually I do not like their colours. I mostly have bought black and beige and these clothes have been very good."*
>
> *"Clothes are perfect for year to year. They are sustainable and always in fashion – not within trends but timeless."*
>
> *"Timeless models. You can find clothes to everydaylife and also to jubilees."*
>
> *"I do not like rills and fabrics of these clothes. Models are 'too aunty' to may taste."*
>
> *"Good brand but prices are too high. Really expensive."*
>
> *"These clothes are manufactured in Finland. I appreciate that even the prices are quite high. On the other hand, clothes are also quite sustainable and timeless."*

Sustainability and quality seems to be very important factors in the brand of Company X. If the current clientele is so well aware of the brand and they are quite engaged and loyal to the company, is it possible to appeal new customers and increase their awareness through content marketing? Loyal register customers were not so eager on social media but may it be a way to acquisite new customers or potential consumers? According to research women find advertisements encountered on social-networking sites (Facebook, Twitter) more informative and entertaining than men did. (Taylor et al. 2011) Also, the content of an advertisement appeared to become a topic of conversations after seen in their networking sites.

How did you find Company X in the first time?

Even if most of the answerers were familiar with company's loyalty register under 5 years, most of the respondents had found the company first time with very traditional way – by a store or by an announce in a newspaper. That came clear both in interviews and in open answers. In a survey, 784 respondents answered to this question.

> *"By accident. I was looking for new clothes to a party."*
>
> *"The store was opened near to my homeplace."*

> *"We were travelling by car and it was some mall – I do not remember where it was. But I was very satisfied with these clothes and that's why I searched a store also near my living place."*

> *"My friend told me about this company. I went to the store and were really delighted of these products."*

> *"I usually go to a certain store when passing-by on our cottage trip in Summer."*

> *"I was looking for a dress to a party and found this brand by random."*

> *"I found the company by an announce in a local newspaper. I think they still have advertising in this paper."*

Businesses often ask customers how they heard about the place or products. This will help a company to identify the visibility of business. However, everything changes over time and a business has to update their visibility in different channels to meet the changing needs. (Budikova 2014)

What is your opinion of Company X on social media? What kind of content you would like to have and share to your friends?

The third question seemed to be little complex because respondents were not really active on social media. In a survey, 528 respondents answered to this question. However, this question can be important to the company when seeking ways to acquisite new customers and planning a new content marketing strategy.

> *"I do not need social media at all. I want to try on clothes in a store. Personal service is important for me."*

Many respondents critized this question about social media because they did not use social media at all. But there were also respondents who did not know anything about companys presence on social media.

> *"I did not know about Facebook page. Now I have to go there. I wish there would be special reductions and competitions."*

Many wanted to get an information about clothes. What kind of materials there are, how to treat them and also what colours and clothes go best together.

"There could be presentations what to wear in different situations."

"I need tips for clothing. What to wear in concert, at the theatre, at the office. Which colours are good for me."

"I like videos you have had. They are very informative."

"These clothes are very old-fashioned. Also we old ladys want to be more trendy nowadays."

"I would like to know about manufacturing more. Are these really done in Finland? In what kind of conditions there are in the factories?"

The question about sharing content is also difficult. Some of the respondents said very clearly that they do not share any contents because there is no need to be involved in any kind of companys – even if the company is considered to be good and have a precious brand. This could be difficult to the case company's content strategy because the one of the ideas of content marketing is to get the benefit from content sharing. On the other hand, one of the interviewees mentioned word of mouth to be the best way to share contents.

"I do not share any contents on social media."

"The best way to share contents, is to talk with friends."

How would you improve Company X's communication?

The interviewees were quite satisfied with the communication. 466 respondents answered to this question in a survey. Some of the respondents in open questions wanted to get more information, some less. As we earlier noticed, most of the respondents were satisfied to get an email once or twice in a month. Of course, on Facebook there is need for more regular updates. But less is more, as one of the respondents formulated:

"Not too much messages. People get tired if there is too much information. Less is more."

"I was very delighted when I got a personal invitation to a

> *customer's night. It was better than any update on social media."*
>
> *"Email and SMS is enough for me. I do not need adverts."*
>
> *"I would like to get more information about fashion for middle-aged women. What colours are in mode in this season, what kind of shirt is recommendable when body changes with age."*

Posting information at too irregular intervals can be harmful. Consumers usually wants to get a new post or update in a regular base, once a week or once in a month. But also overadvertising can lose followers and repeating too much can become boring. An important thing is to keep a content relative to the audience. (Pulizzi 2014)

Even if the clientele seems to be very satisfied with current content, there could be many possibilities to increase useful information. Sometimes customers do not exactly know what they want or need. Therefore, it is very important to recognize the audience and the more essential is to recognize the buying process of consumers. (Pulizzi 2014)

4.3 Actions and contents

This chapter focuses on a content analysis about the Company X. The case company is extensively analyzed based on its webpage and social media activities. Moreover, some management statements were to be noticed after the first interview in 9th of February. Case companie's content were observed twice: during a week 9 in February and a week 33 in August.

In this observation, there were three things to be noticed: amount of content in general, content divided by blogs, videos, other channels and content creation in general. This observation was only based on student's own interest but the purpose of this overlook is to connect the previous theory and collected data to the real-life use and creation of content marketing in corporate branding.

The aim of this action was to understand better content marketing and its role in company's brand creation. Because the case company has very actively

experimented different channels and different types of content, this analysis could also provide examples of how to produce good and valuable content.

There were also several interviews and contacts concerning content marketing in Company X. All interviews were done in February by phone and/or by email. Information were given to this study by chief executive officer, sales manager, marketing manager, visual designer and social media expert.

The Company X offers content marketing to its client mostly through email and SMS, webpage and Facebook. Company delivers content by offering the loyalty register clients the information they are usually interested in: new collections, reductions, campaigns, customer's nights and so on. The company was clearly active in searching for new ways to do their marketing and find the appropriate content niche for them.

At the moment, the content is created also with the mobile market in mind. At least important factors to consider, especially in netshop, are the length of the message, the formatting, visual elements, photos and links.

According to Demers (2014), these are the elements that shape customer and user experience. Content that is easily consumed in a mobile environment will most likely become a necessity, because the mobile usage trends are growing. (Budikova 2014) Additionally, Jefferson & Tanton (2015) emphasizes the importance of mobile. A good mobile app fills a genuine need, is designed well, is accessible and is highly usable. That kind of app is still missing in company X's case but website was planned as a mobile-specific version.

The first examples of Company X's content marketing can be found from its website. The next example of content marketing is a webpage section called Living room - stories of everyday life. Some of the stories include video but most of them are plain articles with pictures. Separately, there are also lot of videos of different happenings conserning the company X. All those videos are to be found on a webpage and they seemed to be quite popular because many of the respondents mentioned these videos in open questions in a survey.

Case company's most important social media channel is Facebook. On Facebook

Company X is constantly publishing new content. The goal has been to engage customers by providing information, marketing and entertainment in a certain timetable. Nowadays, a Facebook page is a must for any business. The creation of a page on Facebook can make a brand more visible and can reach the people that may have never been interested in a company otherwise.

The purpose of the company's content marketing is to thrive the overall community-driven marketing strategy. All of the company's thinking, storytelling, co-creation and content is carried out with own community of focus group in mind. The biggest challenge in content marketing is probably the textile industry's competitive environment, not content itself.

The company did not have any editorial guide or handbook to produce material. There were couple of workers who wrote the most of the contents. Most of the contents were to be find on a website.

On Facebook the majority of the content was pure marketing: information about campaigns and reduction but also information about colours or textiles and how to handle them. Sometimes there were holiday wishes and other greetings from the company. One can say that the voice of the company was quite confused, there was no a common voice to recognize the company and its values, mission and visio.

In March, the Company X changed their content marketing strategy, whether it was on purpose or not. Now the webshop became the main location of all content. It is the place where number of sales will take place and where actions will be performed. It is useful for constant clients.

Moreover, company X has been able to combine some of the outcomes of content marketing to sales. There has been a correlation between the amount of orders in netshop and specific campaigns on Facebook. Unfortunately, this information was not available in this study.

However, potential consumers are not always aware that business even exists. For this reason, strong emphasis will be put on utilizing multiple social media tools. Large variety of internet tools can direct customers to the site and home base. One

of the clients follow Twitter, the other one likes Facecook and the third one reads blogs. Having multiple Internet tools is also beneficial to please a wide variety of customers.

The material for Company X's storytelling comes mostly from the company even if there is some links to other sites. If readers and members of this community of clients and potential clients would provide content, it would give a company a possibility to have an emotional bond with customers. Even if there are some comments in blogs or other updates, communication and interaction is not very lively now.

Company's aim is to measure everything they can and consider useful. Activies are followed per cost or per campaing in order to understand the correlation and which activities work and which not. Reactions of the consumers are followed strictly. However, the company has not tried to analyze the content itself, whether it is good or not. On the other hand, the company is very engaged with its clients and want to produce an useful information

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Business life has many challenges nowadays. Almost all of us use some sort of social media whether that be Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or other sites. In addition, many marketers and firms are thinking about web presence and what could be the best way to develop a brand following, create a community and strengthen customer loyality. (Pulizzi 2015)

The purpose of this thesis was to provide a good understanding of content marketing by examining its benefits and objectives. All this was done by studying one case company. Moreover, the aim was to examine how a company can produce good content and what is the role of content marketing in creating a brand awareness, engagement and loyalty amongst customers. The choice of the case company was a good decision because the company was familiar with the topic of content marketing and acted quite actively on social media. In addition, the selected industry was optimal to the topic.

In this chapter, discussion is presented and the reflection between the literature review against the data obtained in the case study is done. The aim is at applying the theory in practice in order to give concrete advices for the case company.

The aim of this thesis was to help the case company to use content marketing on social media as effectively as possible to increase brand awareness, engagement, brand loyalty and to acquisite new customers. The research objective was to explore if there is evidence that a company can create brand-related benefits by publishing content which is valuable for customers and is not company- or product-centered. The theoretical part combined marketing, content marketing and social media.

The results related to research about content attitude show that respondents liked the content the case company provided and felt that was relevant and interesting to them. However, the findings of this thesis provide new insights for the case company about content marketing. Content marketing needs to be understood as a long-term effort and all the marketing should be somehow integrated to content marketing. Good results can be reached when seeing new digital marketing channels as a tools for delivering company's message.

How content marketing can affect sales?

In the theory part of the thesis, it came clear that effective content marketing actions can have a positive influence on sales. However, without measuring, it is difficult to prove. Many of the companies do not exactly know, what impact content marketing have on sale and what effects came from traditional marketing. At least we know, that even if creating content costs both time and money, content marketing can lead to real cost savings. In addition, combining content marketing with traditional marketing it can be very even most cost effective.

A marketer who wants to know immediate effect on sales of a particular content marketing or social media campaign can do so relatively easily by tracking the revenue generated from the money spent. There are some indications that digital content in marketing can increase sales when done properly. However, tying social media actions directly to sales is difficult. (Hoffman & Fodor 2010)

In this case, we did not have any metrics from content marketing or social media campaings the case company had done. Thus, handling the measurements in the long run makes much more sense. User generated content can cause commitment on the part of the consumer and making the customer more likely to commit additional effort to support the brand in the future. Content helps to build brand awareness and has a big role in buying process. (Kumar & Mirchandani 2012)

The bottom-line rewards for the customer engagement may be observed through delayed sales. It is impossible to simply and very quickly to count on to contents benefits and content's ability to increase sales and values. Returns and revenues can be seen on delay.

Hence, what alternatives the companies have now? Consistent presence on social media is almost obligatory because of visibility and credibility. Of course, with all marketing everyone wants positive return but it is better to concentrate on valuable contens and measure them and at the same time be aware that there is no particular reason to be afraid of every campaings return – as long as it is not negative. The rest will come later in the fine tuning. (Pulizzi 2014)

One result of this reseach was that content marketing should be seen as a return on brand awareness and engagement, these are the main metrics of content marketing performance on social media. The main challenge is, however, how to connect the outcome directly to sales.

The answer to this research question is that content marketing can effect on sales by causing brand engagement, brand awareness and loyalty and by doing the brand familiar also to potential customers. Building the brand and creating the demand are the most effective ways to have an effect on consumers and quide purchase decision making. (Jefferson & Tanton 2015; Pulizzi 2104)

In addition, the companies need to identify the right individuals to engage on social media conversations to promote word of mouth. Best content can pull consumers to the website through search engines and all the social media channels where the content is published and shares. By linking the generated peer conversation to actual sales, social media can be used to induce positive WOM-effect (word of mouth) spread brand knowledge, generate sales and increase return on investment. (Kumar & Mirchandani 2012)

What is the role of content marketing in company branding?

Companies invest in content marketing on social media because it allows them to communicate their brand messge to a great amount of potential consumers. At the same time, content marketing is great value for current customers.

Through valuable content, consumers will be interested in the company's products and if they share the same values as the company has, they can eventually become loyal customers of the brand.

Based on the theoretical part and empirical findings of the survey in this study, it can be answered that content marketing has a very important role in company's branding. As its best, content marketing communicates the brand story clearly and has many impacts on the perceived brand image. In this case, brand communication is no longer automatically perceived as disturbing advertising but as interesting and reasonable conversation among friends. Content that is shared by other consumers, has often bigger influence than paid advertising. Consumers

tend to trust more their peers and social networks than companies. (Jahn & Kunz 2012)

For example, fan pages on Facebook can be an excellent tool for companies to have measurable effects on the customer-brand relationship. The goal, of course, is to engage and integrate users in conversation in a community. So customers would see brand as a real friend on their social media and a brand can play an important role in their everyday lives. (Pulizzi 2014)

In the empirical part of this thesis, most of the clients of the case company were very satisfied with their choice of the Company X and its products. The image and the brand of this company was seen as very positive by the current clientele. However, we have to remember that all respondents were selected from the loyalty register of Company X. So these clients were already fans and engaged with the company.

How to engage the target group to follow a company brand?

The ways people exchange information and how individuals communicate with each other have changed dramatically over the last years. There are many various brand elements companies try to utilize in order to increase a brand loyalty of their customers.

Content marketing on social media has now possibilities to reach much larger community that may not have been available via traditional channels. For this reason, many companies see the importance to join in the process that empowers individuals to promote websites, products and services through online social channels. However, many companies have difficulties to understand how they can make the content more viral. (Erdogmus & Cicek 2012)

In this survey, most of the respondent said that they use Facebook, 51 percent, but almost as many said (37 percent) that they do not use social media at all. In the open answers it came clear that many customers did not even know that a case company had its own pages on Facebook. Findings of this study can help the company to understand what kind of content is valuable for their clients and how they can engage a target group to follow a company brand.

In anyway, social media of course, is not the only way to deliver messages. But nowadays it seems to be quite effective, because people do solve their problems by searching the internet and social media. (Jefferson & Tanton 2015) Consumers actively seek out media and social media to satisfy either utilitarian or hedonic needs. (Taylor et al. 2011) People use contents to fill empty surroundings and leisure time by seeking information or entertainment.

However, it is not always easy to transform customers into fans of a brand. Many companies create a lot of contents on social media, there is some lack of knowledge how to communicate with customers and how to allow custumers to communicate with each other. Social media offers users a variety of online services to communicate with others and this is a completely new communication style. (Jahn & Kunz 2012) According to Pulizzi (2012) content marketing includes the idea that all brands need to think and act like media companies. So they can solve consumers' problems, offer totally new information, participate in discussions, give advices and entertain users. Be useful and offer valuable content. (Singh & Sonnenburg 2012)

One way to get consumers to be engaged followers is to engage them to the content creation process. In this way consumers not only embrace advertising-related content but actively can also promote it. Marketers often present their products in too positive light. It may be useful to focus more on emotions. (Taylor et al. 2011) But it is not necessary and even not desirable that brand owners tell stories alone, more useful is to co-create brand performance in collaboration with consumers. The emergence of social media has changed consumers' role in storytelling from a passive listener to a more active participant. Thus, consumers use to share neutral content more likely than very marketing oriented content. (Singh & Sonnenburg 2012)

In the empirical part of the study came obvious that many consumers do not want to get engaged with companies. Even if they have an own Facebook profile, they possibly do not want to join into a fangroup of a company or share any contents. One possibility could be separate "fans" and "followers".

Company can create a fan page on Facebook and users are listed as fans and they get contents to their own newsfeed. Followers has a possibility to follow a brand without granting a company access to their profile. That could be one way to engage people to follow a brand and increase brand awareness and engagement. (Jahn & Kunz 2012)

However, before engaging or following the brand, the content on social media should be valuable for consumers. Content marketing has recognized the power of storytelling to provide meaning to the brand and enhance consumer's connections with brand. Sometimes consumers do not care if the content is useful to others, if it is entertaining and interesting. So, interesting content increases the number of likes on Facebook. Companies should create more content with brand voice but with a hidden agenda. So content can be shared on social media and get some word of mouth effect about it.

Based on the theoretical part and empirical findings of the survey in this study, it can be answered to that question about engaging a target group to follow a company brand. First, companies have to know their clients and their needs. Secondly, all the content the company can offer has to be valuable for customers.

How to increase brand awareness amongs "the next generation"?

The case company has a very clear target group in women over age of 50. The responses of this study corresponded to the target group that the company is pursuing: two largest age groups fell between 56-65 and 65-75 years. It represents a 71 percent share of the respondents. Social media channels like Facebook and webshop were not very widely used in this group of customers. However, the case company has the main strategy to expand an e-commerse.

Company's webshop was open in February 2013. The customer profile on webshop is mainly under 35-years old women, according to a telephone interview with companies marketing manager. There seems to be an amount of potential clients who are used to do shopping on webshop but have not joined to a loyalty register.

Sales on webshop will increase 10-15 percent in this year. In the survey, only 15 percent of respondents had done some shopping on webshop. The most of the respondents had never purchased from the webshop, 84 percent of respondents. Even if the customers may still be scarce on webshop, there is a clear direction upwards. It seems also that the webshop appeals more young customers than stores.

However, many clothing companies has reported a collapse in domestic demand after 2008 in due to the economic situation, recension and import from abroad, mostly Far East. Even if the case company operates in their own niche, it is important to have an eye on potential consumers. The brand is well-known and appreciated amongst in its target group but how to increase brand awareness amongs next generation?

Content marketing on social media channels may be a good chance for the company to acquisite new customers, "next generation". In order to do this, it is important to be present where the customers are and to know what the customers are doing on the Internet and what they like and what they disgust. The image and the brand of this company is seen as very positive amongst the current clientele. In this study all the respondents were selected from the loyalty register of Company X. The case company can use the word of mouth if they allow their customers to create and share contents.

Without knowing potential customers likes and dislikes it can be difficult to provide valuable content and targeted messages. (Singh & Sonnenburg 2012) To increase virality and word of mouth effect, it may be useful to co-operate with some influencers or opinion leaders. They can share company's content to their followers and fans, but also with their help content can reach lot more people and company gets an increased brand awareness.

Based both on the empirical and theoretical analysis, the case company should focus on developing certain social media channels as well as establish a dialoque with their customers. Findings of this thesis can help the case company to see some internal and external factors that helps content on social media to get more shares, likes and comments.

5.1 Theoretical implications

Websites, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pintrest, they can play a vital part of a content marketing strategy on social media. (Holliman & Rowley 2014) There is a lot of possibilities but in the same time the firms have to think about time. Do they really have time to be everywhere or should they first think about target groups and what kind of goals and objectives they have in content marketing. In many cases the big picture of how to use social media in different ways is still lacking a bit. (Jefferson & Tanton 2015)

Nevertheless, content marketing is not just advertising. It is not just shouting advertising messages. At its best, content marketing on social media is a conversation between the firm and the customer. (Pulizzi 2012) The social media tool can offer new opportunities to build realationships, engage with customers and increase sales. Accordingly, at the same time, content marketing on social media can be so easy and so challenging. (Pulizzi 2014)

Companies should be present on those social media platforms their customers are using. However, presence must be very active. A Facebook page which is not updated frequently is no use for any company. (Jefferson & Tanton 2015) But of course, adequate resources must be dedicated to be present on social media. Patience is important, results will not show in a couple of weeks or even months. (Kumar & Mirchandani 2012) One of the biggest barriers for organizations to start content marketing activities may be resources.

Discussions, comments and questions on social media needs quick reacting. However, it is not enough just to be active, because social media is a two way communication channel. (Pulizzi 2015) Company must also have resources to follow what is discussed on social media and within a branch, listen and to be reactive. (Aaltonen 2007) Most of all, people expect dialogue from companies and answers to their questions in order to develop an emotional bond with the brand. (Hoffman & Tanton 2015)

Thus, the social media platforms must be linked with each other. It is no use in utilizing several platforms if there is no easy access to one another. (Jefferson & Tanton 2015; Doctoroff 2015) At its best, content marketing and traditional

marketins channels are integrated and complement each other. Marketing works best when each customer is provided with the most appropriate marketing channel for his or hers own use. (Pulizzi 2015; Holliman & Rowley 2014)

Company should define guidelines for acting on social media: who can act as the company's voice on social media, who are responsible for creating content to and which social media platforms are in use. Especially it is important to know who are the right experts on different subjects (Pulizzi 2014; Jefferson & Tanton 2015)

First of all, researchers are reminding of that it is important to make a thorough plan for content marketing activities on social media. (Pulizzi 2014; Jefferson & Tanton 2015) In this plan, company should consider the aims and objectives of the social media activities, customer target groups it wants to reach. Moreover, the company should recognize which are proper social media platforms for their objectives and the activities to be taken on these platforms. In order to speak about content marketing, it is also important to remember that all content should be of value for the customers. (Taylor et al. 2011)

Word of mouth marketing on social media is widely increasing: it means that audience trust product or service if his or her friend or family member has recommended it. (Hoffman & Fodor 2010) It is important to attract new potential and satisfied customers to business. These customers can spread the word about the good service or high quality products to a broad customer base. (Pulizzi 2015; Rowley 2004)

5.2   Managerial implications

One of the objectives of the thesis was to present knowledge and suggestions for company X in order to improve their content marketing strategy in webpage and on social media. This action could help company to increase brand loyalty, engagement and brand awareness not to mention for customer acquisition. One of the question facing this all, is *It is possible to affect positively sales via content marketing.*

Although return on investement ROI is maybe not the primary metric for companies when discussing content marketing, it is increasingly important to analyze all the effects on sales in the future.

The following plan and suggestions will be based mostly on theoretical research of this study. In addition, the empirical research is a good background information when planning strategies for content marketing. The case company knows relatively well their clientele but undoubtedly there are certain difficulties to find an own voice in storytelling on social media.

The case company operates in fields of business, which is quite active online. The case company offers women's fashion and accessories and also office and business wear. Company has managed to survive in difficult economic situation for clothing and textile industry in Finland. Job places has declined in this sector in Finland almost 50 000 places from the beginning of the 1970s to this day. For this reasons, it is important to know own branch pretty well: what competitors do and what is the subject of discussion concerning textile industry at the moment.

One of the benefits of content marketing is, that it can make a business and brand more visible and sellable. For example, many brands currently have to increase interest in sustainability, recycling and social conditions in the clothing industry. Safety of textiles and safety of workers in the factories are nowadays important issues for customers. Mode fashion and textile industuries tendencies are now varying more on individual aspects and on lifestyle. Each client does their personal decisions, which widely indicates the changes in values.

The typical customer of case company is a woman over age of fifty. Company operates in fashion business but they do not want to publish only trends and phenomenas. In becoming years there will be more 65 years old inhabitants in Finland. This will change purchase behavior in the future. Moreover, the middle-ages clientele is now moving to the direction of sustainability. From environmental perspective the fast fashion is turning less recommend and less popular.

When regarding these two megatrends: sustainability and ageing population, the case company should louder its voice in these themes. Through content marketing it is possible to make a vision of the company visible.

The case company can reach consumers which are interested in these themes. It could be effective to encourage also the consumers to participate in content creation through social media channels. On social media people care about people behind the brands and companies because they want to build relationships with each other. It is important to have a voice, let people know who is speaking.

What challenges companys' content marketing is particularly competitive environment. There is an endless supply of clothes all around internet shops all over the world just to waiting delivery to a customers homedoor. In this environment company X has to keep creating content that offers additional value compared to all other available information.

All of the company's thinking, storytelling and content creation should be carried out with customers in mind. They are the core of entire marketing strategy and especially content marketing strategy. Content marketing strategy's objective is to make people aware of the company's brand. And not only potential customers aware of this brand though also existing customers to better know the values of the company.

What really differizes different companies in the future, will be the capabilities to tell stories. Stories that can be emotionally and visually rich – but true, of course. Companies should create great stories, with emotional appels and with good entertainment. Company X has a good brand story but it should show more on its updates.

The recommendations for action points can be summarized per area as follows.

TABLE 7. Recommendations for quidelines and actions

Guidelines	Actions	What does it mean?
Be there	Dialogue with customers, daily updates, joint the conversation, be sociable, communicate	Daily updates keep up interest. Be on line. It helps existing customers to follow you and attract new ones.
Be valuable	Take time to decide what message you want to send	Recognize the audience: to who you want to talk. Try to find a balance with advertising and news which are interesting to the customers.
Be generous	Share other people's content	It something is valuable to your kind of customers, help them to find it - promoting only own content is not polite.
Be interesting	Mix all sorts of different types of content	Identify potential customers, what they have in common.
Be on message	Talk all things around your area of expertise	Be helpful and entertaining, educate your clients.
Be polite	Say thanks to your followers	Make genuine connections with followers, it will help to keep good reputation.
Be authentic	Be yourself and let personalities shine through.	Authenticity is also hearing and listening to feedback, both positive and negative, and responding to it.
Be in business	Remember business: launch campaigns every now and then: offer discounts and gifts. Organize competitions.	Campaigns and competitions can help to reach new customers. Word of mouth, co-operate with bloggers.

The most important thing is to recoqnize the audience. Every company should know to whom it wants to talk to. It is also important to recognize the potential customers by knowing, what they have in common by considering common interests, age groups and values (table 7).

It can be useful to invite business connections, friends and even family members to like companies websites and social media platforms. That can build credibility and increase voice-of-mouth effect and get more visibility. If succeeding to do genuine connections with followers, it will help to keep up good reputation and image.

In table 7, it can be seen that it is useful to have different kind of content in posts. It can take some time to find what works for followers. If a certain type of content works, it is useful to run with it for a while. However, if a certain type of content does not work, it may be a good idea to give it up after a experience period.

Company X should also show that it is a business that wants to listen its customers even more clearly than it already does now. When acquiring new customers it is useful to be active on social media and post messages at regular intervals. If there is a post every Monday, for example, followers will start waiting for their Monday update. In addition, discounts, campaigns and spefial offers can be published at regular intervals – not too often but also not too rarely.

Be authentic, at table 7, means also hearing and listening to feedback, both positive and negative, and responding to it. It is important to be responsive to followers. If some follower ask something – public or privately - it is important to answer it and keep on discussing. Of course, sometimes feedback is not positive, it can be harmful or damage the company's reputation. In these cases the content marketing strategy and ability to be reactive, is very important. Sometimes on overreaction or imprudent response can be more harmful than the negative comment in the first place.

5.3 Recommendations and suggestions for the further research

It has been stated also in this study that content marketing actions are strategically important and are currently one of the main tools for executing marketing. This

study has several delimitations. It focuses only on those content marketing channels the case company was interested in and was actively using. Accordingly, the further research could explore a detailed action plan on how to utilize those platforms and some new platforms in the most effective way. rThe results of the study can not directly applied to other studies or target groups. This study concerns the needs of target organization. Some parts of the study are based on information from the company itself.

The case company has a very clear target group in women over age of 50. The responses of this study corresponded to the target group that the company is pursuing: two largest age groups fell between 56-65 and 65-75 years. Social media channels like Facebook and webshop were not very widely used in this group of customers. However, the case company has the main strategy to expand an e-commerse. The customer profile on webshop is mainly under 35-years old women, according to a telephone interview with companies marketing manager. There seems to be an amount of potential clients who are used to do shopping on webshop but has not joined to a loyalty register.

For further research, it is recommended to carry out a study on those webshop customers who are not joined in loyalty register. This area of research will open up the issue of brand awareness and engagement more than this study has done. It would be also interesting to know how content marketing affects buying process and phases of customer relationship.

Moreover, further research should contentrate on examining the content marketing performance over time. What is the situation lately, if the Company X are going to use content marketing strategy and social media actions more actively and more planned way.

It could be beneficial to study also content marketing by surveying companies from other industries. Connection between content marketing and brand would generalize the results across industries.

6   SUMMARY

Consumers make their purchase based on information they have gathered across different sources on their own. Marketers have adapted to this by adopting new marketing strategies and practices such as content marketing. However, the companies have seen it difficult to determine what kind of content they should concentrate in terms of their profitability and effectiveness.

The main goal of the research was to answer how the company can increase its brand awareness and boost its business with the help of content marketing. In addition, the final aim was to explore how the case company can improve its content marketing strategy in order to attract new customers and increase brand engagement, loyalty and awareness.

At the beginning of the thesis, the content marketing concept was introduced. In addition, in order to better understand how to use content marketing, not only its possibilities but also challenges were studied. Objectives, strategies and metrics of content marketing were explored to present some detailed explanation of actions and suggestions at the end of the research.

To answer the research issues, the author searched several literature sources and conducted plenty of interviews with the management of the case company. As a part of the research, an empirical survey, interviews and an observation were conducted with the target group of the case company.

As a result of the survey, the findings stated that content marketing can be valuable and meaningful tool for a business it is used with appropriate knowledge and clear strategy. The survey showed that the case company already has a good reputation and brand image within its target group. Thus, the future challenge is to appeal new customers and increase brand awareness amongst them. In order to answer this challenge, the final part of the thesis consists content marketing guidelines and suggestions for the case company to use.

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Asiakastyytyväisyystutkimus / sisältömarkkinointi

Taustatiedot

1. Ikä *

◯ Alle 35
◯ 35-45
◯ 46-55
◯ 56-65
◯ 66-75
◯ Yli 75

2. Asuinpaikka *

◯ Helsinki-Uusimaa
◯ Etelä-Suomi
◯ Keski-Suomi
◯ Länsi-Suomi
◯ Itä-Suomi
◯ Oulun alue
◯ Lappi

Pukeutuminen ja vaatteet

3. Millaista tietoa haluaisit saada pukeutumisesta ja vaatteista? Valitse kolme sinua eniten kiinnostavaa aihetta. *

☐ Tietoa muodista ja muotivirtauksista

☐ Tietoa tekstiileistä ja niiden ominaisuuksista

☐ Tuotteiden hoito-ohjeita

☐ Pukeutumisvinkkejä, mm. värivalinnoista ja tyyleistä

☐ Tietoa alennuksista

☐ Henkilökohtaista neuvontaa

☐ Tietoa siitä, missä vaatteet tehdään ja miten

☐ Tietoa yrityksen brändistä, visioista, työntekijöistä ja työtavoista

4. Arvioi kuinka tärkeitä pukeutumisessa ja vaatteissa sinulle ovat seuraavat seikat. *

1 Ei lainkaan tärkeä 2 Vähän merkitystä 3 Melko tärkeää 4 Tärkeää 5 Hy

	1	2	3	4
Tuotteen hinta	○	○	○	○
Tuotteen laatu	○	○	○	○
Tuotteen kestävyys	○	○	○	○
Tuotteen hyvännäköisyys	○	○	○	○
Tuotteen muodinmukaisuus	○	○	○	○
Tuotteen valmistusmaa/kotimaisuus	○	○	○	○
Tuotteen mitoitus suomalaiseen vartaloon	○	○	○	○

5. Mikä on mielestäsi tärkeintä kohdeyrityksessä? Voit valita kaksi sinulle tärkeintä asiaa. *

☐ Muotivirtaukset

☐ Tyylikäs pukeutuminen

☐ Henkilökohtainen asiakaspalvelu myymälässä

☐ Helppo ostaminen verkkokaupasta

☐ Viestintä: saan paljon minulle hyödyllistä tietoa olemalla kanta-asiakas

☐ Pukeutumisohjeet ja asiantuntemus

☐ Sopiva mitoitus ja leikkaus

☐ Kankaiden ja vaatteiden laatu

☐ Kohdeyritys suomalaisena perheyrityksenä

6. Kuinka hyvin pysyt ajan tasalla muodista ja tyylistä kohdeyritystä seuraamalla? *

○ Erittäin hyvin

○ Hyvin

○ Melko hyvin

○ En kovin hyvin

○ En lainkaan

Kohdeyritys

7. Mistä saat useimmiten tietoa yrityksestä ja sen tuotteista? *

○ Kanta-asiakasposti: uutiskirje tai tekstiviesti

○ Lehtimainokset

○ Verkkokauppa

○ Facebook

○ Ystävät

Muu, mikä?

○ _____

8. Kuinka usein haluat saada uutiskirjeen tai tekstiviestien kautta tietoa kohdeyrityksestä sinua kiinnostavista asioista?

○ Kerran viikossa

○ Kerran kuukaudessa

○ Muutaman kerran vuodessa

○ Aina kun on alennuksia

9. Kuinka todennäköisesti suosittelet kohdeyritystä ystävillesi? *

○ Erittäin todennäköisesti

○ Todennäköisesti

○ Melko todennäköisesti

○ En kovin todennäköisesti

○ En lainkaan

10. Kuinka kauan olet ollut kanta-asiakas? Kerro vuosina. *

_____

11. Oletko ostanut kohdeyrityksen erkkokaupasta? *

○ Kyllä

○ Ei

12. Asioin pääasiallisesti *

○ Verkkokaupassa

○ Myymälässä

○ Molemmissa

13. Anna kouluarvosana kohdeyrityksen tuotteista *

	4 Heikko	5 Välttävä	6 Kohtalainen	7 Tyydyttävä	8 Hyvä	9 Kiitettävä	10 Erinomainen
Yrityksen brändi yleisesti	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Muodikkuus	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Laatu	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Kestävyys	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Asiakaspalvelu	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Sosiaalinen media

14. Käytätkö sosiaalista mediaa? Mitä? *

☐ Facebook

☐ Twitter

☐ Blogit

☐ Youtube

☐ Instagram

☐ Linkedin

☐ Snapchat ja/tai Periscope

Muu, mikä

☐ _____

☐ En käytä lainkaan sosiaalista mediaa

15. Kuinka paljon vietät aikaa sosiaalisessa mediassa? *

○ Lähes koko ajan

○ Useita kertoja päivässä

○ Käyn päivittäin

○ Muutaman kerran viikossa

○ Kerran viikossa

○ Harvemmin

○ En käytä lainkaan sosiaalista mediaa

16. Kuinka usein haluat nähdä päivityksiä kohdeyritykseltä seuraamissasi some-kanavissa? *

○ Monta kertaa päivässä

○ Kerran päivässä

○ Muutaman kerran viikossa

○ Muutaman kerran kuukaudessa

○ Aina kun on alennuksia

Avoimet kysymykset

17. Millainen mielikuva sinulla on kohdeyrityksestä ja sen tuotteista?

_____

_____

_____

18. Kuinka löysit yrityksen ensimmäisen kerran?

_____

_____

_____

19. Mitä mieltä olet kohdeyrityksen sisällöistä sosiaalisessa mediassa ja verkkosivuilla?

Millaista sisältöä haluaisit saada ja jakaa ystävillesi?

_____

_____

_____

20. Miten parantaisit kohdeyrityksen viestintää?

_____

_____

_____

21. Voit halutessasi jättää yhteystiedot arvontaa ja mahdollista lisähaastattelua varten.

Etunimi   _____

Sukunimi   _____

Matkapuhelin   _____

Sähköposti   _____

Osoite   _____

Postinumero   _____

Postitoimipaikka _____

APPENDIX 2

Appendix 2. Observation

Weeks 9 (29.2.-5.3.) and 33 (15.-21.8) in 2016

Webpage / netshop / Facebook

Amount of content

Content divided by blogs, videos, other

Content in general

Observations about content quality and content frequency, links between content and different channels