

## **Social Media Marketing in SATS ELIXIA Finland and in LA Fitness USA**

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<p>Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena oli tutkia sosiaalisen median mahdollisuuksia osana yrityksen kokonaisvaltaista markkinointisuunnitelmaa. Työssä havainnollistetaan kuinka sosiaalinen media on aikaansaanut yrityksille uusia mahdollisuuksia lisäämällä brändin tunnettavuutta ja uskollisuutta, sekä positiivista word-of-mouthia. Opinnäytetyöprosessi aloitettiin keväällä 2015 ja valmistui saman vuoden marraskuussa. Työn empiirisessä osassa tarkasteltiin kahden yrityksen, SATS ELIXIA Suomen ja LA Fitness USA:n, sosiaalisen median markkinoinnin toteutumista.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyön teoriaosuudessa havainnollistetaan sosiaalisen median käsite ja suosituimmat sosiaalisen median kanavat. Lisäksi teoriaosuudessa keskitytään perustelevaan sosiaalisen median markkinoinnin tärkeys yritystoiminnalle ja kuinka sen toimivuutta voidaan mitata. Lisäksi osiossa selostetaan Suomen ja Yhdysvaltojen eroja sosiaalisen median käyttämisestä, niin yhteiskunnallisesti kuin yritystoiminnallisesti, sekä sosiaalisen median markkinoinnin haasteita.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyön tutkimusosassa seurattiin ja analysoitiin kahden kuntosaliryityksen, SATS ELIXIA Suomen ja LA Fitnessin USA:n toimintaa sosiaalisessa mediassa. Tutkimus rajattiin keskittymään toiminnan analysointiin neljässä sosiaalisen median kanavassa: Facebookissa, Twitterissä, Instagramissa ja YouTubeissa. Tutkimusmetodinä käytettiin itse suunniteltuja sapluunoita joiden avulla informaatiota voitiin ryhmitellä ja vertailla.</p> <p>Tutkimuksesta selvisi, että yrityksillä oli varsin erilaiset sosiaalisen median markkinoinnin suunnitelmat ja toiminnat. SATS ELIXIA Suomi keskittyi mainostamaan kampanjoita ja tarjouksia Facebookissa ja Instagramissa, kun taas LA Fitness USA hyödynsi kaikkia sosiaalisen median kanavia julkaisemalla enemmän ja vaihtelevampaa materiaalia profiileihin.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyön lopussa koottiin ehdotuksia siitä, miten tutkimusyrietykset voisivat kehittää sosiaalisen median markkinointia, ja näin ollen vahvistaa markkina-asemaansa kuntosalialalla.</p>	
<p><b>Asiasanat</b> Social Media, Social Media Marketing, Facebook, Social Media Marketing Research</p>	

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# **1 Introduction**

Do you know the first thing most person do when they wake up in the morning? It may be shocking but 90% of people, ages 18 to 30 from 18 countries, reported that they check their social media networks on their smartphone as the first activity in the morning, even before they get up from the bed. Social media is changing the world's societies all around the world. Most of today's students have never known the world without access to Internet. Devices like smartphones, personal computers, webcams and smartwatches have made it possible for most people to access Internet anywhere anytime. (Tuten T. & Solomon M. 2015, 4-6.)

## **1.1 The objectives of the research**

The purpose of this study was to research the importance of social media marketing as a part of business' overall marketing strategy. This research explains comprehensively why social media marketing is vital in today's forever-changing business world. Customers and competitors alike have transitioned to the social web, meaning that it is more a mandatory to have an online presence and add value to the ongoing conversation. Furthermore, it is not enough for a company to have a social media profile only, it is necessary to be active on the channels, and communicate with the audience. In essence therefore, social media provides a remarkable medium to engage customers in a unique way that has never been readily available, and such a low-cost than today.

The research takes a concrete look into different social platforms and sees how companies are utilizing it as a part of their marketing strategy. To illustrate the differences between the businesses the research focused on the two companies, SATS ELIXIA Finland and LA Fitness United States. The purpose was to view the usage of the social media channels, and the possible differences within the utilization.

## **1.2 SATS ELIXIA and LA Fitness**

SATS ELIXIA Finland and LA Fitness USA were chosen for the focus of this research for a couple of reasons. Firstly, both companies are in the health and fitness industry. Secondly, they both have a strong presence in their country of location with a strong

customer base. Thirdly, it was to compare Finnish and American companies to each other to find out if there were any differences between the social media marketing utilization. This research was limited exclusively to SATS ELIXIA operating in Finland and LA Fitness performing in the United States, even though the both companies have operations in other countries.

SATS ELIXIA Finland is a part of larger company SATS ELIXIA operating in addition to Finland, in Norway and in Sweden. SATS ELIXIA was created in 2014, when Scandinavian health club competitors SATS and ELIXIA, merged and created the leading fitness chain with the vision of making Nordic people healthier and happier. Two privately owned companies Danish TryghedsGruppen 49% and Swedish Altor 51% own the merged company. SATS ELIXIA has approximately 160 health clubs with over 43,000 members in the three countries. In Finland SATS ELIXIA has a total of 41 fitness clubs, mainly located in the metropolitan area. (SATS ELIXIA 2014.)

Whereas two separate companies from outside of Finland own SATS ELIXIA, LA Fitness is a privately owned fitness club chain in the United States. First LA Fitness was established in Southern Californian city of Irvine in 1984. Company started to acquire other gyms and today it has over 600 locations across the United States and Canada with over 50 million members. LA Fitness' vision is to provide its customers a superior fitness experience, and respect members increasingly diverse base. (LA Fitness 2014.)

### **1.3 The structure of the study**

This study consists of five total chapters. The information for this study was gathered from the books, articles and websites. Following the introduction chapter is a comprehensive explanation of social media as a term, then social media marketing opportunities and benefits. After that will be the review for the four social media channels: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. These social networks were chosen to this research because the channels are extremely popular within millions of users. Another reason for selecting these social platforms was that any company could create and maintain the page on the platform fairly easily. After comprehensive explanation of the

social media channels and how companies can utilize them, the study explains the complexity of measuring the revenue from social media. Once the measurement ways are clarified, the statistics will show the social media usage in Finland and in the United States. Last part of the second chapter describes the possible drawbacks of social media and social media marketing. The third chapter is giving a complete explanation of the research done and clarifications of the templates used to view the two researched companies and their unpaid social media efforts. The fourth part emphasizes the results based on the templates and the information available by viewing the four social media channels. The fifth chapter provides a conclusion based on the research results, and the reliability and thoughts about the research process.

## 2 Aspects of social media

The question 'what is social media' can be answered in countless of different ways. Investopedia defines social media as an Internet based software that allows individuals to interact with one another, exchange details and information about their lives, do business and share content online. In the other words social media is a public network where individuals publish content creating social shared platform with other people. Content in social media can be almost anything depending on the platform. Most networks enable users to create texts, publish pictures and videos, and to share links. Another way to define 'social media' is by defining the two words separately: 'social' and 'media'. Social whereas refers to interaction of people within a group or community while media means generally to the communication of information and ideas, and to advertising through publications and channels. When taken these two words together *social media* refers to communication and publications platforms that are generated by the interpersonal interaction of individuals through a specific tool or medium. (Dr. Bhaskar & Dr. Kim, 2014.)

The influence of social media is inevitable to notice. More and more people join into social media communities to interact with other users. Information not only flows from big companies and governments to public, but it flows across people as well. Social media refers to publish content that is generated and shared by all users; it allows users to transmit information, engage in discussions, and form comments. Social media is all about people interacting with another and sharing their own content to the networks. (Dr. Bhaskar & Dr. Kim, 2014.)

The rapid growth of online communities is making it impossible for companies not to join the social media networks. With a comprehensive social media marketing plan, a company can add value for their business and increase the return of investment after all. Social media marketing plan should always be a part of company's total marketing strategy, following the same message that has been sent through the traditional marketing ways. After all, social media marketing is understanding how technology is enabling people socially, and profit from the understanding. The rapid evolution of social media demands companies to have a new type of engagement for marketing. This means

businesses have to engage customers to ongoing, productive and meaningful conversation online. To conclude, there are plenty of advantages that company can gain from efficient social media marketing and increased conversations online such as brand awareness, better customer service, improved PR and media relations, better recruitment opportunities, improved ability to manage reputation online, and stronger brand engagement. (Packer R. 2011, 5.)

## **2.1 Benefits of social media and social media marketing**

Social media is now the trend, social media is hot. Social media has become the backbone of societies by shaping people's social life. It gives a new culture of participation, democracy and freedom of speech. People can interact with other people, companies and organizations, and share information in a unique way that was never possible before. Social media is all about communicating online, and the boundaries for communication are being pushed away since anyone can either choose to communicate with only one person or with large group with hundreds of thousands people. Social media is a new type of word-of-mouth that arose when people started to communicate through online channels. (Dr. Bhaskar & Dr. Kim, 2014.)

A few years ago the social media tools could give companies a pure advantage in the marketplace, but today they are required for reaching customers, elevating relationships, and building a recognized brand name. Consumers have more options than ever before and the ease to find information online means that the brands and businesses get more exposure than ever before. Companies have to join the online communities since that is where their customers and competitors have gone. In addition, they have to know how to use and implement the tools in order to advance their personal and corporate brands, recruit best talent, generate revenue, increase customer loyalty, and to add value. (Gunelius S. 2011, 5.)

Social media marketing is marketing by using social online networks such as online communities as a market tool. Susan Gunelius (2011, 13) wrote "Social media marketing offers the single largest opportunity for entrepreneurs, small businesses, midsize companies, and large corporations to build their brands and their businesses". This



refers to the fact that despite the size of the company, anyone can utilize social media marketing as a part of their business.

One of the reasons why any company can utilize social media is that it represents low cost tools for marketing. Traditional marketing ways are expensive and does not ensure that the right audience reaches the message. Instead of spending thousands of euros or dollars to market with the traditional ways, on social media companies can do the same with almost no money and target the right audience. Furthermore, it is likely that the company will increase their revenue generation by the same time reducing costs by cutting down staff time. (Gunelius 2011, 13-14.)

In addition, there are countless of ways to market on social media platforms. Media can be divided to paid, owned and earned framework. Paid social media means that the main focus is to drive traffic to the channel by putting money into the social media posts. With paid media, company can target to the specific audience and increase social media reach for the post. Owned social media means that company maintains their own social media channels to drive the traffic to the channel. With owned social media, traffic to the channel is free, building a strong social media community with loyal visitors. Earned social media, instead, is the media that out reads both paid and owned social media. Earned social media is a new type of word-of-mouth where people organically link back to the company's channel and engage with the network. With earned social media traffic, companies get traffic to the channel without putting any effort into it. Overall, planning paid, owned, and earned media are all essential in order to help the company to manage the time, budget and effort done for the social media marketing. (Cisnero K. 2015.)

Moreover, today's consumers have more options than ever before. Thanks to the social web consumers can find information online and complete their purchasing decisions based on the information found online. Most common goals for social media marketing are relationship building, brand building, publicity, promotion and market research. Companies can build relationships online with their customers, other businesses, online influencers and peers. Brands build up with the ongoing social media conversations that will raise the brand awareness, boost recognition of the brand and

recall, and increase brand loyalty. Social media marketing offers a medium where businesses can share information and modify the negative opinions. Through social media marketing, company can offer exclusive discounts and opportunities to the audience. These kinds of promotions make the customers feel appreciated and valued and company can meet their short-term goals. Additionally, social media gives a way to do market research through the social platforms. Market research will help the company to learn about their customers, create demographic and behavioral profiles, find niche audiences, and study the competitors. Social media marketing should be viewed as a long-term marketing strategy but it can set short-term goals reachable with certain promotions online. In order to get positive promotional results, the already existing relationships and an audience on social media leads to the conclusion that social media marketing success is a multistep process. (Gunelius 2011, 15-16.)

To conclude, social media is a new form of word-of-mouth and buzz marketing where information flows from person to another. It gives an exceptional marketing tool by allowing companies to market with low-cost to the targeted audience with tailored messages. Within social media marketing, companies can show their personality and identity furthermore it can give the competitive advantage. Social media marketing is a strategic and methodical process to establish the company's influence, reputation and brand within communities of potential customers, readers, and supporters.

## **2.2 How to start social media marketing**

Before stepping into the social media marketing actions, company has to be aware that not everything works for everyone. This means is that just by copying a social media marketing plan from another company won't lead into instant success on the social web. Actually, there is no single action plan for companies to follow to lead them to social media success. Each company should have their own unique social media marketing strategy, however company can undoubtedly learn from the competitors social media marketing plans.

The first step of social media marketing is to make sure that social media is known and understood inside the company by every individual regardless the department. Many

companies mistake social media to be only responsibly of a one single marketer or a marketing department. In the bigger companies social media can be divided to every department. For example, human resources can focus on networking, executives have thought leadership, public relation department pays attention on commenting, customer service has a direct dialogue with the customers and marketers creates the content and measures the success of the actions. (Gunelius 2011, 40.)

After the company has a specific social media marketing strategy and the responsibility assigned, the next objective is to find the right audience from the web. Internet is cluttered place and the marketing efforts need to be done at the right platforms to reach out the right people. Once the right audience has been found, the company can include itself to the ongoing conversation and add value into it. After creating the profile, the company has to continuously create and post high-quality content to the social networks. The content needs be honest, personal and something that shows business' personality. After shaping the content, company can focus on research inside of the social platforms such as collecting information about the customers and the competitors. Additionally, companies have to recognize that social media is a customer-driven platform and the audience has all the power. This means that the communication and relationship building are more important actions than self-promotion on social online. Interactions can be done, for example, by asking the audience a question or by answering to the consumer's questions and concerns. (Gunelius 2011, 41-42.)

### **2.3 Choosing the social channel to market in**

There are multiple social tools available for a little or no cost to the companies. When choosing the channel, the first company to know is who are the customers and what platforms do they use, as well as what objectives the company has for its social media marketing. Market research can help the company through the social Internet and never-ending channels. Another way to get through the clutter is to divide the social media into separate sectors. "Zones of Social Media" (Figure 1.) is a framework that sorts out the functions of each social media platform and puts those into groups with similar channels. The framework will help the companies when viewing the social media as a whole and helps them to focus on the important functions of each social media plat-

form including the ones that haven't been invented yet. (Tuten T. & Solomon M. 2015, 137-138.)



Figure 1. Social Media Zones (Tuten T. & Solomon M. 2015, 137.)

Social media channels can be divided in a multiple ways but in this framework, the mediums have been divided into social community, social publishing, social entertainment and social commerce.

Zone one is Social Community. It describes the social media channels focused on the relationships and on the common activities that the users share with others who share the same interests. In these networks the relationships are the main reason to join the communities. People share information, socialize and communicate with one another, and collaborate with other users. Social communities are social networking message boards and wiki platforms like Facebook, Wikipedia and Suomi24. Zone two, Social Publishing, provides the content to the audience rather than interacting with other users. The content shared on these social networks is mainly writings, photos, videos or music. Channels that fall into this zone are mostly blogs and micro sharing sites like Twitter, YouTube and Instagram. Zone three, Social Entertainment, includes the interactive functions that can be found from multi-player games and entertainments. Within the social games, users can communicate with one another and share content such as accomplishments on their social platforms. Examples of social game channels are Candy Crush and Trivia Crack. In addition to social games, social enter-

tainment communities, such as MySpace, include into zone three. The fourth zone of the framework is Social Commerce. Social Commerce influences the stages of the consumer decision-making process. Most people go to the social commerce channels to find information and read reviews about the company, product or service. World famous social channels like Yelp and Tripadvisor are part of this zone. (Tuten T. & Solomon M. 2015, 137-253.)

Dividing social media channels into zones can help companies get a structure about social online. Some channels can have attributes from one or more zones, and the channels can be linked to all zones through one channel. For example on Facebook people can build relationships, write a blog, play interactive games and have online retail stores, which are all attributes from different zones.

#### **2.4 Most popular social media channels**

The figure 2 shows the most popular platforms by region at the end of 2013. Facebook was globally leading social media network with 55% of usage in America and 43% in Europe. The second biggest channel is Twitter, which has 24% of Americans and 18% of Europeans using the platform. The third most popular social channel was Google+ followed by YouTube with 26% of American users and 18% of European users. The fifth most popular social channel was Instagram having 12% of Americans and 8% of Europeans on the platform. (GlobalWebIndex, 2014.)

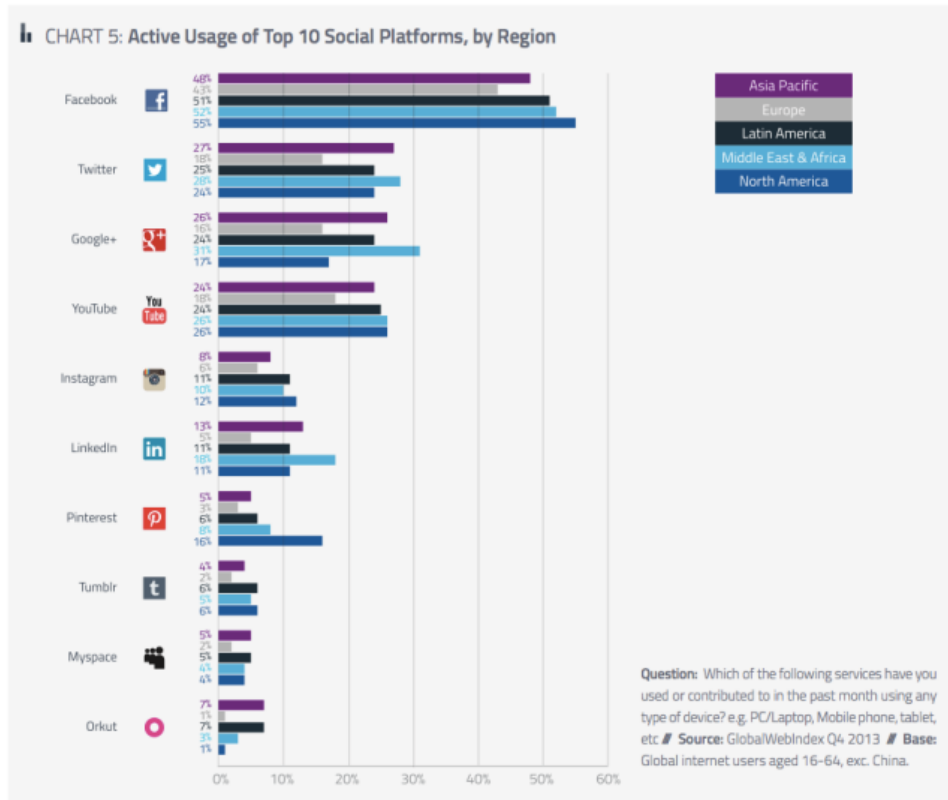


Figure 2. The Most Popular Social Media Platforms by Region (GlobalWebIndex 2014).

## Facebook

As figure 2 shows, Facebook is the most popular social media network all around the world. Facebook.com is based on the fact that people create their own profile to the website that allows them to do variety of actions. Users can do actions such as find and add friends, update their profile, play games, chat with other users, like on pages, and view their timeline among much more. Users have the option when they initially sign up to set their page as public or private. Most companies are better off using a public profile so users may view their content freely without having to “friend” them first. Having an interactive Facebook page can be a valuable asset to a company’s business efforts.

Facebook for Business 2015 states that having a Facebook page can make business more discoverable, connected, timely and insightful. Facebook’s 1.3 billion users log in and out daily, sharing messages and content with friends and coworkers of the latest news, fashion and trends in the media. They search and follow their favorite companies to stay aware incoming projects and new product content. Fans and followers

share and comment on posts sharing ideas and opinions, sometimes by the thousands and even millions. With Facebook being the new age word of mouth, it is safe to say that with so much daily interaction, having an active and engaging company profile page will logically increase the brand awareness. Businesses can connect with customers in one-on-one conversations and or get involved in an ongoing topic providing a true sense of online fellowship. This is an advantage, because as the users share the content, it can spread like wildfire, reaching a wide array of people in a short amount of time. Companies can also use their page as a source for immediate feedback on issues or topics of their liking. Demographic, social, religious opinions, political affiliations are just some of the market research topics that can be found about company's followers on the social media platform.

Facebook Insights is a tool that can be used to take a closer look at the information available coming from a company's page. Insights collect data such as page likes, reach and engagement. Insights count the likes on the page, follower growth, and where the followers are coming from. The tool shows how many people like, comment and share company's content, as well as illustrating how many came from company's customers and their friends. It creates a complete breakdown of clicks and likes on the posts, and demonstrates what post are the most popular among the people. The software let companies to discover necessary information about their audience, when they are viewing the profile as well as how they found it, enabling them to respond in the best way possible. With Facebook Insight businesses have the necessary data to gain perspective and really know their audience, multiplying their chances of success. (Facebook Insights 2015.)

## **Twitter**

Second biggest social media platform is Twitter with over 302 million active users in 2015 (Twitter 2015a). Twitter.com is an online social microblog network, which allows users to write short messages up to 140 characters. Like on Facebook, people create an account on Twitter that allows them to share thoughts, pictures, videos and links to their followers. The connecting process is similar to Facebook but users are following people instead of adding them as their friends. Characteristic to Twitter are the Tweets, reTweet, Replies, Favorites, Mentions and hashtags. Tweets are live messages streamed

and shared on timelines. ReTweets are one user posting content that another user has previously posted. Replying to someone's Tweet can create a whole conversation, and favoriting a Tweet bookmarks it to user's favorites and can be found later. Mentions allows for a personalized message to be delivered to a specific follower or active profile by "mentioning", or tagging the unique user handle. Hashtags provide the ability to engage about a given topic, or hashtag, by whoever searches or creates the exact same word or phrase. They are represented by the pound symbol and have become a vital part of Twitter's layout. (Twitter 2015a.)

Twitter for business 2015 states that Twitter is a real time information network where users can discover what is happening right now in the world, share information instantly and connect with other people and businesses around the world. It recommends companies to listen what consumers are talking about and learn about the findings and about the changing environment. Companies can communicate regularly with the followers on Twitter, which can raise the profile of the business and increase the brand's awareness. Customer service provided on Twitter can be a quick way to get positive feedback and gain customer engagement. Company can reply to the customer service issues and in that way build a strong relationship with the customer. Not only companies should connect with its customers but also with their influencers. Twitter is a tool breaking the barriers and allowing anyone to connect anyone on the network. Companies can join to the discussions with influencers and industry specialists to increase the profile of the business and build valuable networks. (Twitter 2015b.)

Twitter efforts and success can be measured by using Twitter Analytics. Data for analytics is collected from Tweet activity and followers. Analytics is a simple tool that measures how the Tweets are being received. It breaks down data such as how many favorites, replies and retweets each message got. The software counts every Tweet's reach, engagement, and impressions, making it possible to get a calculated measure on the audience. The tool creates a graph data of the page visits, follower growth and mentions, as well as notices any trends. It gives specific information about followers such as where they are from and what they may be interested in. Twitter Analytics provide insightful feedback and pin point accuracy when measuring the performance on Twitter. (Twitter Analytics 2015.)



## **Instagram**

Instagram is a newer social media network with a different function than Facebook and Twitter. Instagram is an online photo- and video-sharing platform with over 300 million active users (Instagram 2015). People create an account that allows them to share content not only to Instagram, but also to other social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter. A distinctive feature for Instagram is that the pictures and videos added are all square shaped and videos cannot exceed 15 seconds. Users can also follow other users such as friends, companies, organizations, or celebrities. Similar to Twitter, users can search for hashtags and like and comment on the posts. Having an Instagram page is a unique way for a company to share brand's personality through social media. Instagram is a visual medium and a strong engagement tool for customers. It gives normal people and businesses alike a free canvas to express their creativity through a camera lens in any way they choose to be viewed on the web. (Instagram 2015.)

Instagram.com does not provide a free analytical tool like Facebook and Twitter. There are several of third party companies that provide reports of all the activity on the company's Instagram page for a fee. Reports can include data such as information about the followers, post engagement and tagging interactions. Analyzing Instagram gives the company the necessary information that affects on decision-making, and to strategically form a plan to increase brand awareness and engagement, which will help profits grow.

## **YouTube**

YouTube is an online platform where people can share their videos. It has more than 1 billion users and people view millions of hours of YouTube content daily. YouTube differs from other social media platforms presented earlier in that people can view videos without having an account, making it difficult to count its total number of users. However only the registered users can subscribe to other pages, comment and like videos as well as share it to other social channels. (YouTube 2015.)

Companies can use YouTube in several different ways including: posting promotional videos, tutorials, video blogs, and even stream live podcasts. If they choose, brands can

purchase sponsored ads that are strategically broadcasted before a selected video begins streaming. This is unlike other social media platforms since the promoted ad actually interrupts the users viewing, leaving them no choice but to view at least the first few seconds before they are given the option to skip the advertisement and continue with their selected video. (YouTube 2015.)

YouTube Analytics allows companies monitor their performance on YouTube. The software creates up-to-date metrics and reports including all of the data that can be found from the page and from the followers. With YouTube analytics, the company can find countless amount of data including information like how many minutes video has been viewed, are the viewers page subscribers or nonsubscribers, and where is the majority of the audience located. YouTube Analytics will help company to measure the success of the videos and to know what posts are the most popular ones. (Google 2015.)

## **2.5 Measuring the success from social media marketing**

Measuring the ROI (Return of Investment) is seemingly relevant with over 29 million hits returning from quick Google search for keywords 'ROI social media'. When measuring ROI from social media, first thing company needs to do, is to forget traditional ROI. Instead of calculating the numbers, managers should focus on assessing consumer behavior on social media and the engagement to the brand online. Measuring the customer investments on social media will pay it off long-term not just short-term. (Hoffman D. & Fodor M. 2010, 41-43.)

Traditional ROI approach is ineffective when it comes to social media since today's media environment is dynamic and increasingly complex. Typically marketers start to measure the cost of social media strategy by for example counting the price of launching a profile on Facebook, and seeking to calculate the return on sales from that social media investment. Instead of thinking monetary ROI, marketer should think why customers visit the profile, what needs it satisfy, and what behaviors they engage when being on the page, that might remain linked to the company's marketing objectives. What this means is that the returns from social media investments might not be meas-

ured in dollars but in customer behavior tied into certain social media platforms. Seeing the monetary ROI from social media is short-term oriented as building meaningful online relationships takes time as they take time to evolve. Social media has four key motivations that drive consumer to use social media: connections, creation, consumption and control. In other words “4C’s framework” explains why managers cannot view social media as another traditional marketing communication channel because its consumer controlled. Narrow focus also ignores the importance of qualitative, such as the value of a Tweet about a brand. (Hoffman D. & Fodor M. 2010, 41-43.)

Social media gives unique opportunities to develop social media programs that grab brand awareness, engagement and reaches word-of mouth objectives. What can be measured from social media are customer investments like followers, comments, shares etc. It is possible to measure the likelihood of recommendation, purchase likelihood and customer satisfactory from the social online. Most companies fail on social media when they are expecting direct monetary revenue, and give up with efforts on social media. To reduce social media strategy due to the measurement difficulty would be a mistake. Instead of reducing the social media efforts, managers should make sure that the efforts done are effective, even when ROI might be less than satisfactory. In a well-designed social media campaign consumers are likely to share viral videos, create additional brand-related content, tweet about the brand and post about their experiences on Facebook. The less simple to measure from social media, are the offline purchases and the word-of-mouth. Specified social media program take into account both the brand and the online customer. As a conclusion, social media is highly measurable environment, and a carefully planned social media campaign offers remarkable business opportunities for reasonable easy and cost-efficient measurement of customer’s online investments in a company’s brand. (Hoffman D. & Fodor M. 2010, 48-49.)

## **2.6 Social media usage in Finland and in the United States**

Finns are using Internet and social media networks increasingly every year. A study by Statistics Finland in 2014, Tilastokeskus, showed that of the overall Finnish population, 86 percent used Internet and that 64 percent used it several times a day in 2014. Report indicated that the usage of social media networks increased by 4 percent from a year

ago. 51 percent of 16-89-year old Finns were following one or more social media community services online, and 32 percent reportedly check social media several times a day. It was also notable that people were going online more and more with their smartphone elsewhere than home or work. (Tilastokeskus 2014a, 1-2.)

Finnish companies have also noticed the benefits of social media and have started to utilize it as a part of their business. A study done by Statistics Finland in 2013 showed that from the companies with at least 10 employees, 38% used social media. Industries utilizing social media the most were businesses in the information and communication fields, with 80 percent usage. Facebook is the most popular and widely used social media platform, however eight percent of the companies reported using blogs or microblogs. Companies stated that the main reasons for utilizing social media were brand image development and product or service marketing. (Tilastokeskus 2013b, 14-17.)

Like Finns, Americans are using more and more Internet and social media networks. Research done by PewResearchCenter in 2014, showed that from all the people living in the United States, 87 percent used Internet in 2014, which was eight percent more than in 2010. The report indicated that people age 18 to 29-years old were using Internet the most. It was notable that the higher the education level and household income was, the more likely they were to use Internet. When researching American's social media usage, it showed to be standard practice in the daily lives. 74 percent of total Internet users were included to some social networking site and out of all social media users 18-29-years old people used the social channels the most with 90%. (Fox S. & Rainie L. 2014.)

Both small and large American companies are realizing the influence of social media for the business. In 2014, 97 percent from the U.S. companies were reported to use social media marketing, and 54 percent indicated that their social media was integrated to the traditional marketing ways. 92 percent said that social media marketing was important for their business, whenever only 43 percent felt like social media marketing efforts were effective, and 37 percent from the answers were not sure how was social media marketing working. Marketers used social media 6 hours a week on average. The number of hours was linked to the fact of how long company had used the social me-

dia, meaning that the newer the plan the less hours was put into the social media efforts. The top two benefits that the companies mentioned to gain from social media, were increased exposure to the business and traffic to the website. The same report stated that Facebook was the most popular social network used by 91% of the companies. (Stelzner M. 2014.)

Research done by Yle News 2015 about Finns and social media usage showed surprisingly that up to 34 percent of Finnish people do not use social media networks at all. This can explain why other countries are utilizing social media more than Finland. In total, 21 percent of companies did not use social media at all as a part of their business in 2014. From the Finnish companies only 61 percent reported having a Facebook page whenever the percentage was 91 percent in the United States. 59 percent of Finnish companies used YouTube as a part of their business when 73 percent of the U.S. companies reported the usage on the platform. LinkedIn was used only in the half of the Finnish companies, where 81 percent of the United States companies reported to use the platform.

## **2.7 Challenges of social media and social media marketing**

As in all aspects of doing business does social media marketing has its challenges too. As figure 3 shows businesses report the three most common difficulties occur when measuring the ROI from social media, binding social activities to business outcomes, and when developing the social media strategy. (Hill C. 2015.)

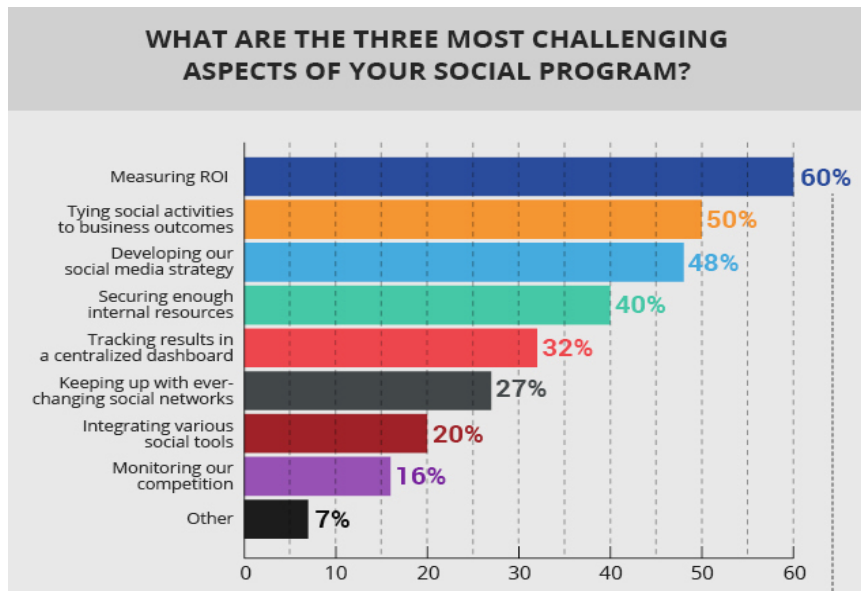


Figure 3. Most Challenging Aspects of Social Program (Hill C. 2015).

The most frequently doubted issue is finding a way to measure the ROI of the social media program inside of the company. 60 percent of marketers reported that measuring the ROI of social media is the most challenging task of the platform, and 80 percent of the marketers say that the engagement (followers, likes, comments, shares etc.) is the most important metric for social media campaigns when there is no traditional ROI available. As stated earlier at chapter 2.5, businesses are still old-fashioned, and 28% reports the revenue to be the key metric for the social media success. (Hill C. 2015.)

Another challenge is usually formed when a company is figuring out its objectives and choosing the right channels where put social media marketing effort. Social media needs continuous time from the company and the high quality content has to be created constantly. After the creation phase, a marketer has to post the content on time and be ready to answer to the incoming comments and questions. Since people sometimes use up to three screens at the same time, efficient social media marketing will stay on time with what is viral at the moment. For example, in 2013 during Super bowl, which is football game that is watched by over 100 million people, Oreo made the most awarded marketing move of the year. Super bowl was having electronic blackout and Oreo made a quick move and put Twitter ad related to the blackout. Ad got viral and Oreo gained enormous brand awareness, with over 15,000 reTweets and over 20,000

likes on Facebook. This kind of real-time social media marketing can bring the company more customers in an inexpensive way. Problems can occur if company fails on posting content or being present online. Having a company profile online, that posts valuable content to the consumer, will gain reliability for the business and brand. In some cases, company can try to do *too much* online. The content is posted regularly but it is not giving value to the customer. Company should avoid this by focusing on posting high quality content related to industry. Sometimes a company can post the high quality content but it can simply be posting too often, filling up peoples' timelines. This can harass the consumer so bad that the user stops following company's the page. (Dr. Bhaskar & Dr. Kim, 2014.)

At the research, 27 % of the companies reported that keeping up with the ever-changing social networks is one of the most challenging tasks of social media marketing. Social media is a dynamic environment, meaning a social network that was once favored, can lose its users for a new channel. To exemplify this, five years ago MySpace was the strongest social media channel but it lost the users to Facebook when it was launched. Today, over ten years from the start of Facebook, it is having a notable decline of nine percent in America and seven percent in Europe even though Facebook is still the single most used social media network with over billion users. Research shows that Facebook users are becoming passive users, meaning that 40% of users scroll down their timeline without posting, liking or commenting on anything. Most of these users are teenagers, and they claim that the "Facebook is out" and that there is more new social media networks and messaging applications available than in the past. Another reason for the decline can be explained with the growth of smartphone usage. People are more likely to scroll down rather than typing whit their smartphones than being online through computer. Smartphones encourages to more passive interaction than ever before. This proves that companies' confusion about the social online is justified, and that there is a risk that every social network loses their popularity at some point. (Olson P. 2015.)

Chart 24: TOP 10 FASTEST GROWING SOCIAL/MESSAGING APPS IN 2014



Figure 4. Top 10 Fastest Growing Social/Messaging Apps In 2014 (Mander J. 2015).

Figure four shows there are new competitors entering to the markets regularly. Snapchat grew by 57 percent last year, and it is showing the fastest growth of the social networks. While Facebook is losing active users, Facebook Messenger is having growth of 50 percent, meaning that people use Facebook more to connect with people. (Mander J. 2015.)

Additionally, companies often fail to realize is that social media is a user-driven platform, and that companies cannot fully control the social online. Social media is a new era type of word-of-mouth channel and anyone can write online. Since the customers “own” the social media, the company cannot be always be aware what has been said on the internet. Companies cannot control the negative comments or false information that people share online. The best thing a company can do is to include itself to the existing conversation, add value into it, and communicate with their audience. For the undesirable comments company can respond by either flighting, fighting or flooding. Flight means the situation where the negative information is ignored. This is the easiest course and effective especially when the single or small source. With fighting method company responds to the bad comments. Instead of getting strongly defending, company might want to lead the conversation to the right direction by shaping perceptions. Unwanted feedback can even be turned into a positive interaction by giving attention to the consumer. Flood method means the strategy where the company gives keywords to the search engine so that the links to the negative comments are buried with the companies’ own high quality content. (Gunelius 2011, 49-50.)



To conclude, without direct ROI, some companies gives up with social media, thinking that it requires excessively investments with no profit. On the other hand, some companies wants to take steps towards social media marketing, but because variety of different reasons the company is not taking the actions. In addition, notable is that social media and social media marketing are fairly new concepts, that can explain the old-fashioned thought and concerns against it. (Dr. Bhaskar & Dr. Kim, 2014.)

### 3 Research

As indicated at the introduction, the objective of this research was to observe the two companies, Finnish SATS ELIXIA and American LA Fitness, and to find out if there were any differences appearing in their social media utilization. These companies were chosen by the fact that both are in the health and sports industry, and furthermore to find out if the U.S. company had more advanced utilization of social media than SATS ELIXIA Finland.

This research was done by manually observing both companies' unpaid social media behavior, exclusively focusing on the efforts done on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. The method of the observation was to use the templates to seek out the right information from each social channel. The templates were created exclusively to this study in order to organize the research phase and to get through the extra clutter found on the social web.

In addition, an interview about companies' social media marketing efforts gave furthermore information about the utilization. SATS ELIXIA Finland was able to answer to the questions on their part. Panu Porkka, Corporate Customer Specialist, explained that SATS ELIXIA Finland has a social media marketing strategy, managed by the company's marketer. The marketer and marketing manager make the decisions on the social media marketing plan in cooperation. SATS ELIXIA Finland has profiles only on Facebook and Instagram, and the content is almost entirely related to the company's campaigns and offers. Porkka also stated that the social media is not being analyzed, and the focus is on the paid advertising online.

Even though every social channel has specific features and information to analyze, all the social medias have some common features to research from. The table one shows that in this research the information was gathered from the company's profile, followers and posts on every channel separately.

Table 1. Research Template

Profile	Was the profile updated frequently Was it interactive and engaging
Followers/ Subscribers	How many followers/subscribers are there What kind of follower growth was there in a month on average Did fans post questions or comments to the page, and did the company answer to those
Posts	What was the frequency and timing to post Were the customers engaging to the posts by liking, commenting or sharing it

### **Facebook**

The most attention on the research was paid to the globally most popular channel Facebook. The first part was to view the profile. The research of profile can include information such as was the profile and banner pictures changed, was the information updated on the company's the 'About' section, and other additional things from the company's page. The second section of the template, followers, includes the information about the followers, follower growth, and follower's posts to the page. Follower's posts to the page give an important view if the customers are commenting or asking questions about the company and moreover if the company is answering to the publications. The third section focuses on researching how often and what kind of content the company posted to the page. Additionally, the research focused on finding if the people were engaging with the posts, by viewing the likes, comments and shares on average.

### **Twitter**

From Twitter the measured information was slightly less than the information from the Facebook. Like on Facebook, the first step was to view the profile including the profile and banner picture, as well as the bio and what information was shared about the company on the platform. The information about the followers and follower growth were researched in the same method as on Facebook. Instead of posting on Twitter, people send Tweets to other users. The research focused on researching how often were the Tweets sent and what content did those include, as well as, if people were engaging with the Tweets by favoriting, reTweeting or answering to it.

## **Instagram**

From Instagram the research started in the same ways as on Facebook and Twitter. The profile was viewed by checking the profile picture and the bio. The next step was to find out the followers and the average follower growth in a month. The company's photos could be analyzed by viewing the frequency of posting and the content on the photos. From the published photos you can determine the photo by how many likes the photo got, and how many comments were there, and if the comments are questions, comments or basic statements. In addition, from Instagram, company can see the tagged pictures that are the pictures that other users post and included the company's username onto their picture.

## **YouTUBE**

The last channel on the research was YouTube. The information researched on this platform was very similar to the information from the other channels. In addition to view the profile, the subscribers were and the growth of new subscribers were given a look into. From the YouTube the success of the videos could be counted by simply noticing the views, likes and comments.

## 4 Results

The research was focused only to SATS ELIXIA Finland's and LA Fitness' Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube utilization. The table two illustrates that which channels were included to the companies' social media marketing plan. It shows that SATS ELIXIA Finland was only having profile on Facebook and Instagram, whenever LA Fitness could be found from every social channel.

Table 2. Social Media Channels and Companies

Company/ Social Media	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	YouTube
SATS ELIXIA Finland	Yes	No	Yes	No
LA Fitness	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

### 4.1 Facebook

The first social media channel under review was Facebook. Both companies were having a strong appearance on the platform, and an updated profile with thousands of followers.

Table 3. Facebook Template

Social Media/Company	SATS ELIXIA Finland	LA FITNESS
Profile	Professional Straightforward Limited information on the bio	Friendly Detailed information on the bio
Followers	30,000+ Slight growth Followers post always answered	353,000+ Steady growth Followers posts not available
Posts	No frequency on posting Internal content Varies strongly with number likes & shares Hardly any comments	Posts often but with no timing structure Diverse content Mostly 100+ likes Average 10 comments & 10 shares

SATS ELIXIA Finland’s profile consisted mainly of professionally shot advertisement posts promoting a variety of offers and campaigns that were being repeated often. The pictures gave off a highly professional and strict tone to the gym. Everything was straight forward and to the point, congruent along the lines with more traditional forms of marketing. SATS ELIXIA Finland did not share a lot of information on their bio. The information was copied from the website and was not updated anytime. It lacked some essential information like contact info and products, which would in this case be services like group classes. The page’s profile picture was the company’s logo, which consisted of white letters on a solid black background. It had four likes and one comment, and was in place throughout the entire research period. The cover photo that hovers above the profile picture, which had been updated twice, was not any special promotion picture and it had people doing sports in it. The Facebook page itself had little over 30 000 likes and was experiencing slight growth in recent months. It could have been due to a number of factors, but most likely it was due to the two companies merging together, which subsequently attracts two separate groups of users to the page. The frequency SATS ELIXIA Finland posted was varying strongly. Sometimes the content was posted once or twice a day, and other times weeks could have gone by before the company’s page was having any sort of activity. The posts them-

selves seemed to be strictly internal like campaigns and offers. Personal trainers, fitness classes and upcoming price reduction advertisements were found all down the timeline. In addition, these were the same ads that members were seeing when they are working out at the gym, which could be why users didn't like or comment on the pictures. The average like per picture for SATS ELIXIA Finland was 30 likes, and was shared on average one time per post. Videos averaged 400 plus likes and around 60 shares. Comments from followers on posts were basically nonexistent. Whenever there were comments, however, they seemed to be positive. Interactions by the gym's followers, on the company's timeline, were either questions or comments. Questions were almost always answered, however days later. Comments, whether positive or negative, were hardly ever answered or acknowledged. Whenever SATS ELIXIA Finland associates did respond, though, the information was not always helpful information leaving the user to rely on other users in the cyber community for complete answers. The page overall was genetic and was missing a sense of community and interaction, which Facebook has become known for.



Figure 5. SATS ELIXIA Finland's Facebook Post

When it comes to LA Fitness, their Facebook profile was very much similar to SATS ELIXIA Finland's profile. The profile picture, company's logo, was remaining unchanged during the research time and the banner picture was a picture of a person doing sports. The information shared by the company was completed in every topic. Notable was that the company mentioned at short description "The official LA Fitness Facebook Gym Page", and within this short sentence company is *localizing* the content to be exclusively on Facebook. At the end of the research LA Fitness was having over 360 700 fans on Facebook. LA Fitness grew the amount of followers averagely over 1000 people in a month. In addition to this, over 10 million of users had tagged themselves to LA Fitness and over 2000 users talked about the company on Facebook. These numbers were not been found on the page of SATS ELIXIA Finland. Surprisingly, the company did not have an option for the users to comment to the page. This might affect negatively to the company's Facebook reputation, since whenever the fans have comments or questions, they cannot express those through Facebook. After viewing the page, it became clear that LA Fitness did not seem to have a clear schedule to post. The content posted was mainly links to the LA Fitness's own blog articles and pictures, quotes and campaign advertisings. Unlike SATS ELIXIA Finland, LA Fitness focused on posting content aiming to engage the customers. Example of this can be seen from Figure five. In this illustration, company is asking a simple question from the fans. This is engaging the customers strongly and shows to the customers that the company wants to communicate with their followers. From these kinds of publications, the company can benefit by doing market research from the answers the fans give.



Figure 6. LA Fitness' Facebook Post



LA Fitness published content to the Facebook page once day on average and the posts got approximately one hundred likes, one sharing, and four comments.

## 4.2 Twitter

Research efforts brought back the conclusion that there was no official page for SATS ELIXIA Finland on the popular platform, Twitter. There are over half of a million twitter users in Finland which is far more than the number of active members of SATS ELIXIA Finland. Members of the gym would post photos of themselves during their workouts and use hashtags to tag and identify the company such as #satselixia or #satselixiafinland. This shows promise if the company ever wants to expand even more into the social media world and by tapping into this channel the company could reach a niche group of social media users and further grow their business.

Table 4. Twitter Template

	SATS ELIXIA Finland	LA FITNESS
Profile	Does not exist	Typical professional page Polished
Followers	Does not exist	72,000+ followers 500+ new followers per month
Tweets	Does not exist	Daily posting Fitness related content Over 10 favorites & 10 re-Tweets

While SATSELIXIA Finland did not have a Twitter account, LA Fitness had a strong presence on the platform. By viewing the page, it showed to be a typical company's Twitter profile with the logo as profile picture and basic information on the bio. LA Fitness was got approximately 500 new followers a month leading to have over 72 000 followers at the end of the research. LA Fitness Tweeted nearly every day, once or twice. In total, LA Fitness had tweeted over 8 000 tweets on the network since 2009. On occasion, company posted very regularly, however, sometimes the content was posted irregularly. Mostly, the Tweets were posted at eight o'clock in the morning and

at noon. Additionally, company reTweeted other users posts to the page couple times a week.

The content LA Fitness posted was highly engaging the followers. It used a lot of hashtags like #lafitness, #workout and #noexcuses, that would help anyone to find the company on the platform. The Tweet types were also edited to involve the fans to the conversation, as on example six, where the users were encouraged to do actions on the platform.



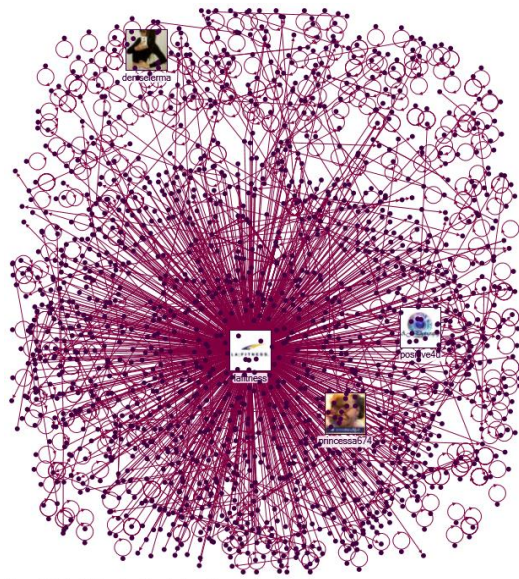
Figure 7. LA Fitness Twitter Posts

### **NodeXL graph of SATS ELIXIA Finland and LA Fitness**

To exemplify the strong presence of LA Fitness on Twitter, there was a tool to utilize to measure it from outside of the companies. NodeXL is an interactive add-on tool for Excel that helps companies to analyze and visualize networks for free. The tool supports multiple social network providers that import graph data into the Excel spreadsheet. (NodeXL 2015.)

The figure eight, done by NodeXL, illustrates how much talk is there on Twitter about LA Fitness. Keyword 'lafitness' came up with the maximum of the search results. The graph is full of arrows that indicate mentions directed towards other Twitter user, whenever the circles stands for talk that exist without straight direction to any other user. The figure shows that LA Fitness is the user mentioning 'lafitness' the most as it is located on the center of the graph with countless amount of arrows. The other users mentioning the LA Fitness' Twitter page the most are having their profile picture on the graph. To explain this phenomenon, it became clear that LA Fitness mentioned LA Fitness (@lafitness) in almost all of their Tweets. This means that LA Fitness is men-

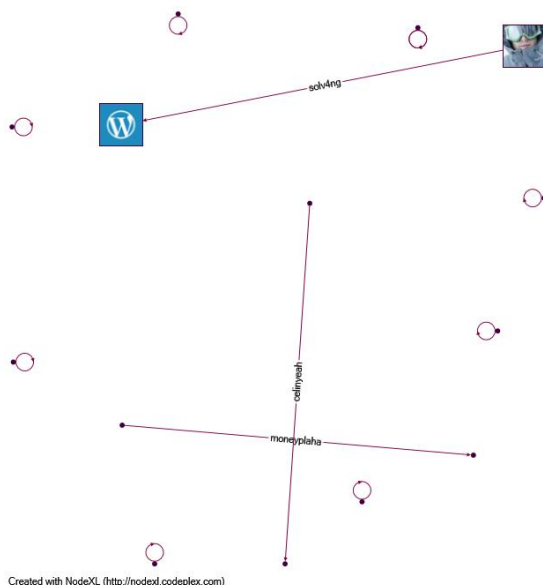
tioning their own page at their own Tweets, and that the message can be reached by millions of fans of total.



Created with NodeXL (<http://nodexl.codeplex.com>)

Figure 8. NodeXL results for LA Fitness

The figure nine is the graph done by searching the results of 'satselixiafinland' on NodeXL. This figure shows that there is not a lot of talk about the company on Twitter, which can also be a consequence of the fact that SATS ELIXIA Finland is not having a Twitter profile. The content found was mostly undirected mentions.



Created with NodeXL (<http://nodexl.codeplex.com>)

Figure 9. NodeXL results for SATS ELIXIA Finland

### 4.3 Instagram

SATS ELIXIA Finland had its own Instagram profile with slightly over 800 followers. The page grew by 50 new followers averagely a month. The Instagram profile was not professional and the page appeared unfinished. The bio was lacking the information about the company, and people could not find SATS ELIXIA Finland from the Google unless they typed exactly 'satselixiafinland'. The content that the company posted were pictures of the campaigns, and offers, like on figure ten, that the customers could find already from the health clubs and from Facebook. The photos were posted whenever a new campaign started, or when the company wanted to advertise the offers leading to repetitive posts. SATS ELIXIA Finland used some hashtags but seemed not to have a clear structure with the usage as on some pictures there was #satselixiafinland, and on others only #satselixia. SATS ELIXIA Finland had posted 40 photos of total by the end of the research, which was averagely three to four posts per month. All of the Instagram photos had 30 likes on average with no comments.



Figure 10. satselixiafinland Instagram post

Table 5. Instagram Template

	SATS ELIXIA Finland	LA FITNESS
Profile	Internal Informative	Tailored to Instagram
Followers	800+ Extremely slow growth	39,000+ Slow growth
Posts	Rarely posting No tailored messages Average 20 likes No comments	Posts almost daily Tailored photos Hundreds of likes Some comments

In contrast to SATS ELIXIA Finland’s deficient Instagram page, LA Fitness had a strong presence on Instagram. The quick view to the profile showed that there was a lot of company’s efforts put to the page. The bio was having hint of personality and the sentence “*Follow @Lafitness for a healthier lifestyle!*” was encouraging the people to follow the page. The page itself had almost 40 000 fans in total and it got 1 000 new followers on average per month. LA Fitness had the same pattern to post on Instagram, than on Facebook and Twitter; the content was posted sometimes daily and other times once a week to the platform.

The pictures posted to Instagram were different than the pictures on Facebook or Twitter. Instead of advertisings, like SATS ELIXIA Finland posted, LA Fitness focused to publish large variety of professionally shot pictures about the gym, people, food and group fitness classes. Every picture LA Fitness posted, had fitness related hashtags such as #lafitness and #lafitnesslifestyle. Many of the photos had the same style of engagement efforts that could be found from Facebook and Twitter. Figure 11 shows that LA Fitness boosted the users to like the picture, which showed to be successful with averagely over 500 likes, and more than 40 comments. In versus, the photos without a special caption got averagely 300 likes and ten comments. There were several comments on every picture however, LA Fitness did not include itself to the ongoing conversation the pictures.



Figure 11. LA Fitness Instagram post

#### 4.4 Youtube

Search for SATS ELIXIA Finland did not bring up any results on YouTube. Instead of finding a channel for SATS ELIXIA Finland, SATS ELIXIA Nordic was posting content covering all the SATS ELIXIA health clubs in the Scandinavian region. The older page, SATS Nordic, was changed to be the newly merged SATS ELIXIA Nordic, but the page included all the content that SATS used to have. Page was not updated completely, and it included wrong information such as wrong website information as [www.sats.com](http://www.sats.com). The page is having same content in different languages, like figure 12 shows. However, it is misleading and confusing to find the right information, like videos that are related to SATS ELIXIA Finland, and if the videos are about SATS or ELIXIA or both.



Figure 12. SATS ELIXIA Nordic YouTube post

Table 6. YouTube Template

	SATS ELIXIA Finland	LA FITNESS
Profile	Did not exist	Comprehensive Fitting to the image of the company
Subscribers	Did not exist	12,000+ subscribers Barely growing
Videos	Did not exist	Posting rarely Large variety of the content Up to hundreds of thousands of views

Conversely, LA Fitness had a YouTube page with over 12 000 subscribers. The subscriber growth was pretty slow, and the page got less than 300 new subscribers on average in a month. The videos were sorted into different categories such as fitness tips, quick tips and member stories, but the company seemed to be posting rarely. Most videos were posted years ago, and the older videos had tens of thousands of views with couple of likes and comments. New videos were posted typically once in a month and had couple thousand of views, with couple of likes and rarely any comments.



Figure 13. LA Fitness YouTube videos

#### 4.5 Social media zones in SATS ELIXIA Finland and LA Fitness

As presented earlier in chapter 2.4, social media can be divided into four different zones by the functions of each social network, and put those into groups with similar ones. The framework was created to ease the companies view, sort the social media

platforms, and to help them through the clutter and focus on the important functions of each social media platform including the ones that haven't been invented yet.

This study showed that SATS ELIXIA Finland had utilized very few of the sectors of the social media zones framework. The first zone, Social Community, was utilized by having a profile on Facebook and on Instagram. Instead of finding one common page for SATS ELIXIA Finland on Twitter, fans could find certain Finnish fitness club profiles like SATS ELIXIA Centrum and Jyväskylä, but not all of the SATS ELIXIA Finland gyms had a profile on the platform. Different to SATS ELIXIA Finland, LA Fitness utilized more Social Communities, and it could be found from Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Social Publishing areas, such as YouTube and blogs, were not utilized in SATS ELIXIA Finland's business, though; YouTube page, SATS ELIXIA Nordic, was publishing content related to SATS ELIXIA Finland. While it comes to blogs, a quick search on Google did not bring up any results. LA Fitness instead had an own YouTube channel and an official blog with a lot of fitness related material such as articles, tips, and workout plans. Additionally, quick search on Google brought up tens of private blogs and vlogs.

Social Entertainments are the zones where hardly any of the fitness industries would enter. Social Entertainment includes games, music and art, which are not essential mediums for either company.

The last zone, Social Commerce, includes social channels where users gives review and rating about the companies. Most popular Social Commerce channels are Tripadvisor, Yelp and Facebook. There were no results for 'SATS ELIXIA Finland reviews' found from Google; excluding some individual gyms were having ratings on some channels. However, reviews about LA Fitness could be found from several platforms like Tripadvisor, Yelp, Facebook and YouTube. Having such a lot of reviews and ratings online tell that the company has a strong audience on social online.



## 6 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to research the social media aspects and how it has been utilized in two different companies, in two different countries. This study illustrates that social media can be a competitive advance in today's markets, and increase the revenue in the long run, by reducing the costs and increasing the customer awareness, engagement and positive word-of-mouth. With a comprehensive social media marketing strategy, company reaches out the right audience with right message on multiple social media channels.

In general, both of the researched companies had some social media marketing as a part of their marketing strategy. At the time of the research, LA Fitness showed to be included into more social media platforms than SATS ELIXIA Finland did. Therefore, LA Fitness' profile could be found from all of the social platforms. However, neither of the two companies seemed to have a completely planned strategy on the social online. This could be noticed by observing the posting patterns of both companies. Both of the companies posted irregularly, and there was a lack of communication with their audience in all of the social channels. However, interview for SATS ELIXIA Finland, confirmed the assumptions by stating that the goal of social media marketing was to inform the customers about the campaigns and offers, not necessarily to communicate with the audience or to measure the success of the platforms.

I argue, that the both of the companies should take more actions towards comprehensively planned social media marketing strategy. SATS ELIXIA Finland needs to realize that social media is not a traditional marketing medium and shape the content to fit the social online. Surely the company can advertise on the social platforms, but the messages have to be different on each channel, to give a motive for the fan to follow the page. Therefore, I find it important for both of the companies take a full action and employ a social media marketer or a marketer group with a set action schedule on social media. Moreover I suggest that the social media marketer will be responsible on tasks like planning and creating the content, timing and publishing the message and finally, measuring the success of the social media marketing, furthermore answering to the questions and comments customers might have.

Therefore, I find suggest that SATS ELIXIA Finland takes an example from LA Fitness' social media utilization. First of all, the content shared on Facebook and Instagram has to be reformed completely. Right now the messages are repetitive advertisements, giving no extra value for the fans. The messages have to be specified to each channel since all of the social platforms have different features too. SATS ELIXIA could take concepts from LA Fitness' social media messages like the engaging posts shown on figures six and eleven. Second of all, when the content has been modified on Facebook and Instagram, SATS ELIXIA Finland should take full action and add itself to the other social platforms like Twitter. The figure 14 shows that there is people talking about the company on Twitter and they are already creating an exposure to the company on the platform.



Figure 14. #satselixiafinland on Twitter

Another useful idea that SATS ELIXIA Finland can take from LA Fitness is a creation of an own blog online. People who are SATS ELIXIA Finland's customers might find it strongly engaging to read a blog with health and sports related articles, tips and interviews. Last of all, I argue that with the small changes, the company can gain a strong an accelerating customer awareness, customer engagement and positive word-of-mouth, that will lead into increase of the revenue in the long run.

## 6.1 Usability of the results and expanded researches

Both of the researched companies can take an advice from the results of this research and achieve greater social media utilization in the long run. However, there are couples of reasons that can affect the comparability of the two researched companies. Firstly, it has to be noticed that LA Fitness is having enormously more members: SATS ELIXIA has over 400 000 customers in Scandinavia, LA Fitness it having over 50 million members in the U.S. and Canada. This means that, the results like amount of followers and number of likes on the posts cannot be fully compared to each other. Secondly, LA

Fitness has several multifunctional health clubs including Fitness clubs, Swimming pools, Basketball courts and more. These features cannot be found from any of the SATS ELIXIA Finland's locations, which can also affect to the results. Thirdly, the U.S. tends to be getting innovations earlier than Scandinavia. What this means is that, since all of the social media platforms have been created in the U.S. the population utilizes those more and earlier than Scandinavian people and companies does. Lastly, the major challenge of this research was that SATS and ELIXIA used to be two separate rival companies and the joint venture was formed in the late 2014. SATS ELIXIA is taking small steps towards the united business strategy, but it can take even up to years for this kind of big merged company to function properly.

Therefore, the research results might have been different if the research was done a couple of year ago or a couple of years in the future. SATS ELIXIA seems to have functions yet not completely functioned completely, which can explain why the social media was highly unutilized.

## **6.2 Reliability of the research and personal learning**

The idea of this research began to develop in my mind during my exchange year in California State University. My host university offered a social media marketing class that I attended, and social media marketing and measurement caught my attention right away. I learned to do social media marketing plan and to measure the social media environment. During this time I was sure that I wanted to do my study related to social media marketing. The idea of manually viewing and comparing the social media efforts done by two companies, formed together with my advisors. I enjoyed doing especially the theory part since I knew a lot about the topic in advance. The research part showed to be harder, and required a lot of thinking and processing. The fact that I did not have any access to any of the measurement tools, such as Facebook Insights, made it challenging to get the right and qualitative information to the research part.

The whole process of the study was interesting and motivating. I learned how the small things could make big differences on social online. Luckily, during the research phase, I was an internship as a social media analyst at social media company, which allowed me

to have all the access to that company's social measurement tools. Therefore I gained a strong knowledge of the tools in addition to the manual viewing done for this study.

To conclude, this research took me a lot of time and effort since I wanted to make sure that this paper represents the level of the education that I got along these three years at university. Even though my degree was in Finnish, I felt like doing this study in English would give me greater advantage in the long run and help to apply a job as a social media marketing manager for an international company.

## Resources

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