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**UTILIZING SOCIAL MEDIA IN MARKETING  
AND IN STRENGTHENING THE CORPORATE IMAGE**



Bachelor's thesis

International Business

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ABSTRACT

The background of this thesis lies in the author's interest in the possibilities the ever more popular different social media platforms offer to be utilized in companies' marketing and communication purposes. The commissioning company of this thesis is Kiilto, the author's workplace. The use of social media for company purposes is a timely issue and is considered currently at the commissioning company, so this thesis is intended to give ideas and food for thought for this process.

The aim of this thesis is to study the possibilities the different social media platforms offer for marketing and company communications purposes and to generate ideas and suggestions for the commissioning company. This is to be achieved by studying in theory social media and marketing, researching and generating ideas how social media could be utilized in marketing and brand building and analyzing and assessing these possibilities from the perspective of the commissioning company.

The theoretical part of this thesis contains theory on marketing, corporate image, a brand and social media studied from literacy, textbooks, articles and Internet. Field study method has been used for gathering information in the commissioning company, and field study has been carried out by interviewing the commissioning company's employees, who are responsible for marketing and company communications. The work experience of the author in the commissioning company contributes to the background information, field study and the findings of this report.

The conclusions of this thesis indicate that the success and popularity of social media should be a driving force for commercial companies to consider the use of social media platforms in their marketing and communicating with customers. The results of this thesis include several ideas how to use social media for these purposes and suggestions for the commissioning company how to proceed with its social media activities.

**Keywords** social media, marketing, brand building

**Pages** 45 pages

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## TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämän lopputyön lähtökohtana on kirjoittajan oma mielenkiinto koko ajan suositummaksi tulevan sosiaalisen median hyödyntämiseen yritysten markkinointi- ja viestintätarkoituksiin. Toimeksiantajayritys on Kiilto, joka on myös kirjoittajan työpaikka. Sosiaalisen median hyödyntäminen on toimeksiantajayrityksessä juuri nyt ajankohtaista ja pohdinnan alla, joten tämän lopputyön toivotaan antavan ideoita ja ajateltavaa tähän prosessiin.

Työn tarkoituksena on tutkia ja kartoittaa mahdollisuuksia, joita eri sosiaalisen median palvelut tarjoavat yritysten markkinointi- ja viestintätarpeisiin sekä kehittää ideoita ja ehdotuksia toimeksiantajayritykselle. Taustatietoa aiheeseen on hankittu opiskelemalla sosiaalisen median ja markkinoinnin teoriaa. Teoriaosuuden jälkeen kirjoittaja on tutkinut ja innovoinut, kuinka sosiaalista mediaa voi hyödyntää markkinoinnissa ja yrityskuvan rakentamisessa sekä analysoinut ja arvioinut näitä mahdollisuuksia toimeksiantajayrityksen näkökulmasta.

Työn teoriaosuus sisältää teoriaa markkinoinnista, yrityskuvasta, brändistä ja sosiaalisesta mediasta. Tietolähteinä on käytetty kirjallisuutta, kurssikirjoja, artikkeileita ja internetiä. Toimeksiantajayritykseen liittyvää tietoa on hankittu kenttätutkimuksena haastattelemalla yrityksen markkinointi- ja viestintäasiantuntijoita. Kirjoittajan oma työkokemus toimeksiantajayrityksessä on myös suuresti edesauttanut yrityksen taustatietojen, kenttätutkimuksen ja lopputyön tulosten osalta.

Tämän lopputyön yksi johtopäätös on, että sosiaalisen median suuren suosion tulisi kannustaa yrityksiä hyödyntämään sosiaalisen median sovelluksia markkinoinnissaan ja yhteydenpidossaan asiakkaiden kanssa. Lopputyön tulokset sisältävät myös ideoita, kuinka sosiaalista mediaa yleensä voisi hyödyntää näihin tarkoituksiin, sekä ehdotuksia, kuinka toimeksiantajayrityksessä voitaisiin edetä sosiaalisen median hyödyntämisessä.

**Avainsanat** sosiaalinen media, markkinointi, yrityskuvan rakentaminen

**Sivut** 45 sivua

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Social media seems to have become an essential part of people's free time activities and social life. According to a study made by Statistics Finland in 2012, half of the Finns aged 16-74 years follow at least one social network to which they are registered, and the popularity of social networks in Finland is still growing (Tilastokeskus 2012, 2). Half of the Finns aged 16-34 years and more than 30 % of the Finns aged 55-74 years follow some social network daily or almost daily (Tilastokeskus 2012, 20). Clearly, the most popular social network among Finns is Facebook (Tilastokeskus 2012, 19). Facebook reached the number of billion active users worldwide in September 2012 (Helsingin Sanomat 2012).

Matti J. Haverila states that the transformation of society from industrialism to informationalism challenges the old ways of marketing as well: the evolution goes from mass marketing to personalization. (Haverila 2004, 9.) The development of information technology has made it possible to approach consumers on an individual basis (Haverila 2004, 9). More focused marketing programmes are designed to build closer relationships with customers in more narrowly defined segments. The new communication technologies give companies new tools to interact with targeted customers. At the same time, companies give consumers more control over the nature and timing of messages they choose to send and receive. (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 384.)

The world of social media is ever changing and developing. There is a great number of different social media platforms available and new ones are emerging all the time while the popularity of some others wanes. Social media marketing is surely becoming essential for companies and it will be more and more added as a part of companies' business models and marketing strategies. John Reed sums up in his book, how marketing should work these days: "Going where your market is, reaching them with content they want, when and where they want you to" (Reed 2012, 8). However, the question for the future will be to what extent social media will replace the so called traditional marketing. Anyhow, they are already complementing each other.

Referring to the statistics presented in the first paragraph, it can be assumed that the consumers of today may be a way ahead of many companies when the use of social media is considered. For commercial companies there is a huge potential available to build and maintain relationships and interact with these consumers. A well-implemented presence in social media can be profile raising, enhance reputation and brand a company as a forerunner and a trendsetter in its field. According to Newson, Houghton and Patten, also the other media, like tv and press, follow social media and look there for expert opinions (Newson, Houghton & Patten 2009, 43). To make the most of different social media platforms a company can use them as

- 
- New means to connect and build relationships with the market.
  - A means of communication with its clients and potential clients.
  - A means of creating value to customers by creating useful content.
  - As a way of building awareness and trust.
  - As a tool to improve efficiency.
  - As a tool to react rapidly and appropriately if a client begins social media activities in its own business.

(Newson et al. 2009, 49; Reed 2012, 5-6.)

According to Tuten and Solomon the level of engagement makes a big difference in the buying decision process. A study made by David Evans and Eden Epstein, “Comparing user engagement across seven interactive and social media ad types”, found out that purchase intent for a brand with interactive profiles was higher than for a brand without such profiles. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 116.) According to a study made by Aalto University, The University at Buffalo and A&M University at Texas, the customers engaging with a company in social media are more profitable than other customers. The customers taking part in social media activities on the company’s social media sites are 5,6 % more profitable than the customers not taking part in social media activities. The study points out that the activities in social media strengthen the bond between the customer and the company. (Markkinointi&Mainonta 2013.)

The emergence of social media has also changed the traditional ways of marketing. David Meerman Scott emphasizes that marketing in the new media is not about advertising, but about building relations, and instead of sending one way messages educating people and giving them useful information. According to Meerman Scott, social media has provided ways of targeting specific niche target groups with individual messages. Compared to the traditional marketing for example in the press or in TV, where the marketing message usually has had to be planned and prepared already in advance before it will be shown, social media provides means for real-time responses by timely commenting and reacting on issues which are “hot” at that very moment. Kyle Lacy emphasizes in his book that one thing, which is different with social media marketing compared to the traditional marketing, is the ability to share, which has given consumers a new voice. Social media has given consumers the power to share experiences with thousands or even millions of people. (Lacy 2011, 46.)

Starting social media presence and marketing activities requires a new way of thinking in the organization. Social media is about sharing, discussing, commenting, reviewing and recommending, and like Singh and Diamond state in their book, the company must be ready to “open up its brand to the customers and let them evolve it” (Singh & Diamond 2012, 351). Companies should improve their listening skills, appreciate and learn from customer opinions and views on product and brand related issues and be ready to discuss them openly and transparently with the social media audience. The response is not always positive, but also these cases should be dealt with appropriately and not to silencing the critics.

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## 1.1 Company Presentation

The commissioning company Kiilto is a family owned chemical company founded in 1919. Today, Kiilto Family Companies consist of seven companies acting in different industrial fields in Finland. The companies studied in this thesis are Kiilto Oy, which manufactures building products, such as adhesives, waterproofing membranes, levelling compounds, wall plasters, and parquet lacquers; adhesives for different industrial fields, and foundry products; and KiiltoClean Oy, which acts in the field of cleaning and hygiene manufacturing hygiene products, detergents, and surface care products for professional and consumer use.

The turnover of Kiilto Oy was about 59 million euros in 2012, and it employs about 180 people in Finland. Kiilto Oy has subsidiaries in Russia, the Baltic Countries, Sweden, Poland, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan, which employ about 300 people abroad. All Kiilto products aimed at other markets than Russia are manufactured in Finland in Lempäälä. In Russia, there is a production plant, which manufactures products for the local market.

KiiltoClean Oy's turnover in 2012 was 45 million euros, and it employs about 190 people in Finland. KiiltoClean Oy manufactures detergents, surface care products and hygiene products under the brand names of Kiilto, Erisan, Serto, Erioil, Linna, and Farnos. KiiltoClean has subsidiaries in Russia and the Baltic Countries. KiiltoClean products are manufactured in the Turku and Hankasalmi production plants in Finland and in the Sertolovo production plant in Russia

The clientele of both companies is discussed more profoundly in chapter 5.

## 1.2 Use of Social Media in the Commissioning Company

At the moment, social media is not very widely used in the commissioning company. KiiltoClean launched Erisan Facebook page (<http://fi-fi.facebook.com/Erisan.herkalle.iholle>) in the spring of 2011. This Erisan page focuses on hygiene products, which are developed for a sensitive skin. In the spring of 2013 KiiltoClean launched Kiilto Siivousopas on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/KiiltoSiivousopas>), which focuses on home cleaning and home cleaning products. Kiilto related videos are found on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/user/KiiltoFamily>.

One purpose of this thesis is to spur the commissioning company to extend the use of social media in its marketing and communication purposes, and to generate ideas how the use of social media could be extended to cover also the product areas of Kiilto Oy.



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### 1.3 Research Problem and Objectives

This thesis studies how social media can be utilized in marketing and in strengthening the corporate image. The purpose of this thesis is to study the possibilities different social media platforms offer to be utilized in marketing by interacting with customers and potential customers and to generate ideas for the commissioning company.

The objectives of this thesis are:

- To study in theory social media and marketing and the potential and possibilities social media offers.
- To research and generate ideas how social media could be utilized in marketing and brand building.
- To analyse and assess these possibilities from the perspective of Kiilto's business operations.
- To draw up conclusions and recommendations how social media could be utilized in Kiilto in marketing and brand building.

This thesis is expected to give grounds for the commissioning company, why social media would be an essential marketing channel today to complement the other more traditional marketing channels. Another aim is to contribute in defining the approach to develop social media activities in the commissioning company by giving theoretical background information on the possibilities social media offers and suggestions how it could be utilized for marketing purposes.

The choice of specifically this subject arose from the fact that company communications is a part of the author's duties at work as well as from the author's interest to study the possibilities social media offers from different theoretical perspectives.

### 1.4 Methods

The theoretical part of this thesis contains theory and information on marketing, corporate image, a brand and social media studied from literacy, textbooks, articles and Internet.

This thesis is based on a case study approach. Field study method has been used for gathering information in the commissioning company, and field study has been carried out by interviewing the commissioning company's employees, who are responsible for marketing and company communications. The work experience of the author in the commissioning company contributes to the background information, field study and the findings of this report.

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As a supervisor for this thesis in the commissioning company has acted the Communications Director of Kiilto Family Companies, Mrs. Sirpa Virtanen, whom the author thanks for her support.

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## 2 THEORY ON MARKETING, CORPORATE IMAGE AND A BRAND

### 2.1 Definitions of Marketing

Armstrong and Kotler define marketing as “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at-large. In other words, “marketing is the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return”. Armstrong and Kotler give also a simple definition for marketing: “Marketing is managing profitable customer relations”. (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 37-38.)

According to Mustonen, P. Kotler defines marketing in his book “A Framework for Marketing Management” as “a process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering and exchanging products and services of value” (Mustonen 2009, 31).

### 2.2 The Marketing Process

Armstrong and Kotler present a five-step model of the marketing process. In the first four steps of the process, companies work to understand consumers, create customer value, and build strong customer relationships. In the final step of the process companies, by creating value for consumers, capture in turn value from consumers in the form of sales, profits, and long-term customer equity. (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 38.) The five steps of the marketing process are

- Understanding the marketplace and customer needs and wants.
- Designing a customer-driven marketing strategy.
- Constructing an integrated marketing program that delivers superior value.
- Building profitable relationships and creating customer delight.
- Capturing value from customer to create profits and customer quality.

(Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 38.)

### 2.3 Marketing Strategy

As stated above, the goal is to create value for customers and build profitable customer relationships. Marketing strategy is the logic by which the company intends to do this. The company decides, which customers it will serve (segmentation and targeting), and how (differentiation and positioning). After identifying the total market it is divided into smaller

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segments, the most promising segments are selected, and after that the company focuses on serving and satisfying customers in these segments. (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 79.)

## 2.4 Marketing Mix

Guided by the marketing strategy the company designs a marketing mix of four Ps – product, price, place and promotion (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 79).

Product stands for the goods and services combination a company offers to the target market (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 83).

Price is the amount of money customers must pay to obtain the product. Price includes variables such as list price, discounts, allowances, payment period and credit terms. (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 83.)

Place stands for the company activities that make the product available to target consumers. It includes e.g. distribution channels, coverage, assortments, inventory, transportation, and logistics. (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 83.)

Promotion means activities that communicate the merits of the product and persuade target customers to buy it. Promotion includes advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing. (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 83-84.)

Tuten and Solomon propose that today, when social media marketing continues to become more and more common, we should add a fifth P to the marketing mix. Participation would stand for the ability the new media provides for consumers to participate in the marketing process and contribute with own ideas. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 14).

### 2.4.1 Promotion of the Marketing Mix

The world of social media marketing is one part of the “promotion” P of the marketing mix – communicating, argumenting, promoting and advertising products and services for customers and potential customers.

Companies must use promotion to communicate to customers the value they are providing clearly and persuasively. A company’s promotion mix – or the marketing communication mix – consists of a specific blend of advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations and direct marketing tools. Advertising is “any paid form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor”. Sales promotion means “short-term incentives to encourage the purchase or sale of a product or service”. Personal selling involves “personal

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presentation by the firm's sales force for the purpose of making sales and building customer relations". Public relations cover "building good relations with the company's various publics by obtaining favorable publicity, building up a good corporate image, and handling or heading off unfavorable rumors, stories, and events". Direct marketing is defined to cover "direct connections with carefully targeted individual consumers to both obtain an immediate response and cultivate lasting customer relationships – the use of direct mail, telephone, direct-response television, e-mail, the Internet, and other tools to communicate directly with specific consumers". (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 382-383.) According to Armstrong and Kotler, online marketing is the fastest growing form of direct marketing (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 460).

When it comes to distributing brand messages, marketers can use three core types of media: paid, owned and earned. Paid media is usually used in advertising, defined as the paid placement of promotional messages in channels capable of reaching mass audience. Owned media are channels the brand controls, e.g. corporate websites. Earned media are those messages that are distributed at no direct cost to the company and by methods beyond the control of the company, such as word-of-mouth (WOM) communication. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 17.)

Marketers can choose from two basic promotion mix strategies – push promotion, which involves pushing the product through marketing channels to final customers, or pull promotion, in which marketers direct their marketing activities toward final consumer to demand the products from the channel members (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 388). When talking about marketing communications, push messaging means one-way communication delivered to the target audience (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 14). In other words, it is "an approach that tries to put advertisements in front of someone who does not necessarily have any knowledge of your company" (Brick Marketing Blog). Pull messaging is trying and getting consumers to find the company on their own by the means of building a successful brand. This would mean that a company has offered a valuable product and created enough visibility to become something that a person wants all on his/her own. (Brick Marketing Blog.)

## 2.5 The Marketing Funnel

The marketing funnel is one of the concepts of marketing, which differentiates between prospects and customers and maps out the journey from when a prospect learns about a product to when he becomes a loyal and repeat customer. The global research and advisory firm Forrester defines the five stages of marketing funnel as follows: (Singh & Diamond 2012, 54-62.)

- Awareness. Market prospects and potential customers are having an awareness of a product. The stage to introduce certain brand to customers.
- Consideration. Stage of considering several products and the purchasing decision.
- Preference. The prospect leans towards making a purchase after having considered several products and established his favourite.
- Action. The prospect makes the purchase and becomes a customer.
- Loyalty. The most loyal customers. Customers continue buying certain products.

(Singh & Diamond 2012, 54-62.)

Marketers employ different marketing strategies and tactics at each stage of the marketing funnel to move the prospects along the different stages. This applies just the same to social media marketing as well as to traditional marketing (Singh & Diamond 2012, 54-55.)

## 2.6 Corporate Image and the Brand

Schultz, Antorini and Csaba describe *corporate image* as how the organization is perceived by external stakeholders (Schultz, Antorini & Csaba 2005, 164). BusinessDictionary.com defines corporate image as “a composite psychological impression that continually changes with the firm's circumstances, media coverage, performance, pronouncements, etc. Similar to a firm's reputation or goodwill, it is the public perception of the firm rather than a reflection of its actual state or position.” (BusinessDictionary.com n.d.) According to Inc.com corporate image is “what the public is supposed to see when the corporation is mentioned” (Inc.com n.d.). The major elements of corporate image according to Inc.com are

- The core business and financial performance of the company.
- The reputation and performance of its brands (brand equity).
- The company's reputation for innovation or technological prowess, usually based on concrete events.
- The company's policies toward its salaried employees and workers.
- The company's external relations with customers, stockholders, and the community.
- The perceived trends in the markets in which the company operates as seen by the public.

(Inc.com n.d.)

The management of corporate image involves also managing the more mundane side of the image, e.g. the company's brand image, the company and brand logos, the look and feel of its premises, the corporate identity and good management. According to Inc.com a company can enjoy different corporate image among different publics according to their interests:

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e.g. a company's brand image can be very good, but it enjoys a poor reputation among its suppliers or it may be disliked for its employment practices (Inc.com n.d.)

Armstrong and Kotler define a *brand* as “a name, term, sign, symbol or design or a combination of these that identifies the products or services of one seller or group of sellers and differentiates them from those of competitors” (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 238). According to Armstrong and Kotler “brand names help consumers identify products that may benefit them. Brands also say something about product quality and consistency.” (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 238). According to Armstrong and Kotler “consumers view a brand as an important part of a product and branding can add value to a product” (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 238). Branding also helps the seller to segment markets by enabling the provision of different brands or sub-brands for different customer segments instead of one product. (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 238)

“Brand represents consumers’ perceptions and feelings about a product and its performance – everything the product or service means to consumers” (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 242). “*Brand equity* is the positive differential effect that knowing the brand name has on customer response to the product or service” (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 243). According to Armstrong and Kotler the brand name can become a basis on which to build the story of the product’s special qualities . A powerful brand can be a more valuable asset for a company than the so-called tangible assets, such as inventory or premises. A powerful brand is also the basis on which to build strong and profitable customer relations. (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 242-243).

Many marketing experts and visionary leaders extend the definition of a brand beyond the classical definition of a name, term, sign, symbol or design, which differentiate products or services of one another, to cover also the brand equity. For example Seth Godin, an author and public speaker on economics, presents a wider definition of a brand: “a brand is the set of expectations, memories, stories and relationships that, taken together, account for a consumer’s decision to choose one product or service over another” (SethGodin.typepad.com 2009). Marketing expert Heidi Cohen has collected 30 different definitions of a brand on her Internet page <http://heidicohen.com/30-branding-definitions/>. These include definitions covering both the name, term, sign, symbol or design aspect and the brand equity aspect.

Schultz et al. review the impact of social media to branding as follows: “Internet has made it possible for consumers – across time and space – to negotiate brand meaning with other consumers more openly, and to feed back their viewpoints and experiences to the organization” (Schultz et al. 2005, 18). “More recently, the focus has shifted from a branding of stand-

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alone products and services to a branding of the organization itself”  
(Schultz et al. 2005, 24).



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### 3 THE ESSENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

According to Mustonen Agichtein, Castillo, Donato, Gionis & Mishne, authors of an article “Finding High Quality Content in Social Media”, describe the development of Internet and social media to have started from the early 1990’s onwards, when most online content resembled traditional published material and most of the Internet visitors were consumers of content. From the early 2000s user generated content has become very popular and users are actively participating in content creation. (Mustonen 2009, 5.) John Reed states that social media, as we know it, has only been around since 2006, when Facebook opened its network to anyone rather than just for US college kids, Twitter was launched, and a new company called YouTube was bought by Google (Reed 2012, 8). The development of social media has been enabled by the Web 2.0 technology.

#### 3.1 Definitions of Social Media

“Social media refers to means of interaction among people, in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks”. Professor of Marketing and Social Media, Andreas Kaplan, and Professor of Marketing, Michael Haenlein, define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow creation and exchange of user generated content". (Wikipedia a n.d.)

The technology that enables social media is Web 2.0, which refers to digital technologies and applications for content creation and sharing. “Web 2.0 refers to what was perceived as a second generation of web development and closely linked to social media applications.” “Tim O’Reilly (the author of the book “What is Web 2.0”) defines key features of Web 2.0 as the development of software which enables mass participation in social activities and collective activity.” (Mustonen 2009, 10.)

David Meerman Scott, the author of the book “The New Rules of Marketing and PR” defines social media more practically as follows: “Social media provides the way people share ideas, content, thoughts and relationships online. Social media differ from so-called “mainstream media” in that anyone can create, comment on, and add to social media content. Social media can take the form of text, audio, video, images and communities.” (Scott 2010, 38.)

Dave Evans, the author of the book “Social Media Marketing: an hour a day”, describes social media as “conversation between people; it means sharing thoughts, experiences and information for making a better or more-informed choice”. According to Evans “social media is based on natural and genuine conversation between people about something of

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mutual interest”. Social media is built of user generated content, different communities and Web 2.0 technologies. According to Kangas, Toivonen and Bäck, the authors of the book “Ads by Google and Other Social Media Business Models”, “the applications are either completely based on user generated content or user generated content and the actions of the users play a significant role in increasing the value of the application or service.” According to Evans “social media can be characterized by the content trail: ratings, reviews, comments, voting processes and related assessments that clearly mark what the people think of the content written on the Social Web.” Social media applications are characterized by participation, sharing, openness, conversation, interaction, community and connectedness. “Social media allows everyone to publish and participate.” (Mustonen 2009, 7.)

## 3.2 Social Media Platforms

The technologies and tools, which are referred to as social media all provide means for users to create content, interact and express opinions online. Examples of social media platforms are presented in the following chapters.

### 3.2.1 Social Networking Sites

Examples of the most popular social networking sites are Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)), Google+ (<https://plus.google.com>), LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)) and MySpace ([www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com)). These sites help people cultivate a community of friends and share information. Social networking sites make it easy for people to create a profile about themselves and use it to form a virtual network combining their offline friends and new online friends. (Scott 2010, 37.)

Before September 2006 *Facebook* was open only for students. After the opening of Facebook for all the public the number of visitors has boomed: Facebook reached the number of billion active users in September 2012 (Helsingin Sanomat 2012). From 2011 to 2012 the number of Facebook users rose by 26 %. Fifty per cent of the users log in to Facebook every single day. (Statistic Brain a.n.d.) According to a report in Social Media Today by Paul Kiser in April of 2011 Facebook users are 61 per cent women and 72 per cent of users are between the age of 25 and 54. Users focus primarily on social interaction. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 121.) Facebook connects members via a friend request process. Until you approve someone as your Facebook friend your extended profile remains private. After the approval you can share your news, thoughts and ideas with your Facebook friends. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 121). A new challenger for Facebook is Google+ launched in 2011, which however still has less users than Facebook.

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*LinkedIn* is a site that professionals use to exchange information, ideas and opportunities focusing mainly on the world of work. When the user joins LinkedIn, he creates a profile that summarizes his professional accomplishments. The profile helps in finding and to be found by former colleagues, clients and partners. More connections can be added by inviting trusted contacts to connect. (Meerman Scott 2010, 188.) In LinkedIn it is possible also to start professional groups to which members can join or are invited. LinkedIn offers also additional paid premium features, which enable the user to access more profiles or to use his account on something specific, e.g. job search (Singh & Diamond 2012, 177). According to the report in Social Media Today by Paul Kiser in April of 2011 fifty-five per cent of LinkedIn users are men, 61 per cent of the users are between 35 and 54 and the users focus on jobs, marketing themselves, and selling services (Singh & Diamond 2012, 121).

*MySpace* is a casual music oriented social environment (Singh & Diamond 2012, 116). Social platform infrastructure providers, such as Ning ([www.ning.com](http://www.ning.com)) and Gather ([www.gather.com](http://www.gather.com)), allow users to create their own blogging environments or social networks on them that behave similar to the way MySpace or Facebook behaves, with member pages, community areas, and activity streams (Singh & Diamond 2012, 206).

*Foursquare* ([www.foursquare.com](http://www.foursquare.com)) helps its user in finding places of interest near the user's whereabouts. It is a location-based social network, which is accessed primarily through smartphones. The user can check-in into a location and these check-ins can be then shared with others in Facebook and Twitter. Upon the check-in the user can get also points and tips on that location. foursquare serves also as a discovery tool to find recommended places of interest and entertainment based on their popularity (Singh & Diamond 2012, 167-168.)

### 3.2.2 Blogs and Microblogs

A *blog* is a type of website or part of a website frequently updated with new content. Blogs are usually maintained with regular blog posts of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order (the most recent post appears first). Majority of blogs are interactive allowing visitors to leave comments and even message each other via widgets on the blogs. Many blogs provide commentary on a particular subject; others function as more personal online diaries; yet still others function more as online brand advertising of a particular individual or company. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, Web pages, and other media related to its topic. (Wikipedia b n.d.) At the moment the most popular blogging platform is Wordpress [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com). Other available platforms are e.g. Blogger ([www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)), Blog.com ([www.blog.com](http://www.blog.com)), and many more. According to the 2011 Technorati State of the Blogosphere report, blogs were the most

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trusted source for brand, product, or service information streams (Singh & Diamond 2012, 206.).

*Twitter* is a real-time information network that connects people to the latest stories, ideas, opinions and news about what they find interesting (Twitter). Twitter is based on communicating with quick, short messages - a maximum of 140 characters' "Tweets". People use Twitter to keep their followers (people who subscribe to their Twitter feeds) updated on their life and doings. Twitter users can choose to follow anyone they want to hear from. Because of the constraint on the length of tweets, people use Twitter to post information that is important to update their network about, but is much more concise than a blog post and more casual than an email. (Scott 2010, 180.) According to Statistic Brain, Twitter has 200 million active monthly users (Statistic Brain b n.d.). According to the report in Social Media Today by Paul Kiser in April of 2011 fifty-seven per cent of Twitter users are women and 54 per cent are between the age of 25 and 44. The users focus primarily on world events and business related topics. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 121.) Another microblogging tools are for example tumblr. ([www.tumblr.com](http://www.tumblr.com)) and Plurk ([www.plurk.com](http://www.plurk.com)).

### 3.2.3 Media Sharing Sites and Podcasts

Sites like [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com), [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com), [www.vimeo.com](http://www.vimeo.com), [www.instagram.com](http://www.instagram.com) and [www.slideshare.com](http://www.slideshare.com) provide a means for sharing and commenting photos, videos and presentations. *YouTube* and *Vimeo* allow people to discover, watch and share originally-created videos. *Flickr* and *Instagram* are online photo and video sharing sites. *SlideShare* is a community for sharing presentations.

Podcasting is a form of distributing sound recordings over the Internet. A podcast is generally understood to mean an audio file with an RSS feed attached, which means that podcasts can be picked up by RSS readers. (Newson et al. 2009, 91.) A videocast is the video equivalent to a podcast.

### 3.2.4 Chat Rooms and Message Boards

Chat rooms and message boards serve as online meeting places where people meet and discuss topics of interest, with the main feature being that anyone can start a discussion thread. (Scott 2010, 37.)

### 3.2.5 Wikis

Wikis are websites that anybody can edit and update (Scott 2010, 37). The best known wiki is the online encyclopedia [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com). There are a number of wikis handling certain issues, such as books, traveling and many others.

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### 3.2.6 Social Bookmarking Sites

Social bookmarking sites, like for example [www.digg.com](http://www.digg.com), [www.delicious.com](http://www.delicious.com) and [www.stumbleupon.com](http://www.stumbleupon.com), allow users to suggest content to others and “vote” on what is interesting (Scott 2010, 37). According to Digg it delivers the most interesting and talked about stories on the Internet. Digg helps to find, read, and share the most interesting stories. (Digg.com n.d.) Delicious presents itself to be an easy, free tool to save, organize, and remember the links you find interesting on the web (Delicious.com n.d.).

### 3.2.7 Virtual Worlds

Virtual worlds are three-dimensional communities where people create content and interact with each other using avatars. Examples of virtual worlds are Second Life, Habbo and Squidoo. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 6; Mustonen 2009, 17.)

## 3.3 Advantages and Problems of Social Media

These versatile social media platforms provide many ways for sharing information, expressing oneself, participating and interacting – both for individuals and organizations. However, every good thing has its negative sides too. The advantages and problems of social media are studied below. These aspects have arisen from the different sources used in this thesis, from lectures and classroom discussions and from the author’s opinions:

Advantages:

- The platforms are often free of charge or cheap for the users.
- Reaches huge amount of people. Ability to share information for a large audience.
- A quick information channel. Information is available around the world the moment it is published.
- Provides information in pull-mode at the time when a consumer wants to consume it.
- Everyone can contribute, participate and express opinions.
- Provides means to get connected with other people.

Problems:

- Privacy rights and ownership of the published materials are vague.
- Information and materials once published stay and are often impossible or difficult to totally remove.

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- Information and materials published can be altered and used in other contexts.
  - The quality of information and discussions varies a lot and may not always be credible or high-class.
  - Online discussions cannot be controlled and also negative information spreads.
  - Social media marketing efforts need resources and work time investments from companies when used properly.

The next chapters of this thesis are giving grounds, why the advantages of social media can very well be considered outweighing the risks listed above.

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## 4 HOW SOCIAL MEDIA CAN BE UTILIZED IN MARKETING AND PR

### 4.1 Influencing in Social Media

Singh and Diamond discuss in their book “Social Media Marketing for Dummies” about influencing. Influencing in social media works just like in the real world. Already long before the time of social media people asked others of advice and recommendations when making e.g. purchasing decisions. Human beings are naturally influenced and motivated by others to do things. We are social beings, and sharing information on our experiences is social interaction and we even tend to seek that influence. How much a person can be influenced on purchasing decisions depends on multiple factors, of which the product or service itself is the most important one. Social influence matters with every purchase, but when buying low-consideration purchases (with a small amount of risk) people rarely seek influence or are not easily influenced by others. In high-consideration purchases (which includes a large risk) social influence plays a much bigger role. In high-consideration purchases people often also want to identify with a certain brand. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 13.)

The people engaged in social media can be categorized into marketers and influencers. Marketers are those, who share content online to achieve an organization's marketing and business needs. Influencers are those, who contribute to the decisions consumers are going to make by rating, commenting, recommending or publishing comments on products. It is important to realize that it is not enough anymore to market to consumers, but one has to market also to potential customers' social influencers, who will then share the message online. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 10-11.)

Singh and Diamond categorize the influencers in three categories:

- Expert influencers, who are considered authorities in the specific domain or are people whom others depend upon for information or advice. Expert influencers do a lot to build awareness and affect purchasing decisions. Expert influencers can be e.g. subject matter experts.
- Referent influencers, who are in friend's social graph, but may not be tightly connected with the user. Referent influencers can be e.g. work colleagues.
- Positional influencers are the inner circle of the user and often have to live with the choices of the purchasing decisions. Positional influencers are e.g. family members.

(Singh & Diamond 2012, 219-220.)

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Singh and Diamond note that influencing is not just what people say in social media but also when people observe what others are doing online. So if we want others to mimic certain type of customer behaviour, we should make that behaviour visible for everyone visiting the web site. "We don't just listen to people we admire, we also copy what they are doing." (Singh & Diamond 2012, 24-25.) Singh and Diamond also remind that social media audience should not be dragged away from the platform they are using. Customers have to be engaged where they want to participate, not where the marketer wants them to be. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 80.)

According to Singh and Diamond, the consideration stage (see chapter 2.5) is the one of the marketing funnel stages, where social media marketing plays the most important role. This is the stage where the influencers help the prospect to make his purchasing decision. Also when choosing between different products the prospect customers look for others' help, recommendations and reviews. They ask their friends for advice, and search the web for customer reviews and read expert opinions on credible sources. The marketer's role at this stage is to connect the prospects with the credible sources. "Prospective customers are looking for the best information about a product, and they respect companies that help them research the product more thoroughly." By pointing to all reviews, not just the good ones, a marketer can build credibility with the prospective customers. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 58.)

It is also important to connect loyal customers with prospective customers and to give the prospective the possibility of asking opinions and recommendations, and to learn from other customers. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 63.) After the customers are at the loyalty stage, social media marketing offers many ways to stay in contact with them. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 65.) According to a study made by Cone LLC in 2010, sixty three per cent of respondents are more aware of a company or a brand if they can interact with it in a new media environment. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 66.)

As a conclusion it is important for a marketer to analyse, who the influencers are, who affect the brand affinity and purchasing decisions of the target markets, where they are actively online and then establish relations with them (Singh & Diamond 2012, 221).

## 4.2 Social Media in Brand Marketing

Singh and Diamond state: "Brand marketing focuses on building equity around a brand, its personality, and attributes. Customers purchase products based on the brand promise. Through various forms of advertising and communications, the brand promise is brought alive to generate



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awareness, build excitement, and get specific products included in a consideration set.” “All brands require significant effort to penetrate a market and generate desire.” (Singh & Diamond 2012, 70.) Singh and Diamond see the social media marketing complement brand marketing by:

- Placing extra emphasis on peer-to-peer marketing and allowing peer-to-peer decision making. Consumers are asked to do the marketing for the brand.
- Utilizing interactive channels that enable socialization and redistributing of the message.
- Becoming part of all media streams where consumers are responding to and discussing the brand messages.

(Singh & Diamond 2012, 71.)

“Because of this, messaging, advertising campaigns, and even the products themselves don’t define successful brands as much as the communities that surround them do. A brand supported by a large and influential community becomes more successful than one with a weak, disparate, and disjointed community.” (Singh & Diamond 2012, 71.)

It should be borne in mind that each social media platform has a reputation. The marketer should make sure that the brand is in alignment with the reputation of the platform chosen to be present in. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 117.)

### 4.3 Getting to Know the Customers

It is important to be present where the customers are and to know, what the customers are doing on the Internet. Without this information it is not possible to provide targeted messages for targeted customers.

There are several tools available – free and paid – to research online activities, e.g. blog search engines, buzz charting tools, forum and message board scanners and video and image search engines. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 36-39.) One good way to find out customers’ platforms of interest is to talk with them about their social media activities or to make a customer survey.

One tool which helps in understanding engagement is Quantcast ([www.quantcast.com](http://www.quantcast.com)). On typing the website address of the social platform Quantcast returns demographics information for that website. In some cases, it may even go deeper and include user segmentation responses as well. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 207.)

After finding out, what customers are doing online, it is recommended to define them more clearly by creating personas. Personas are customer profiles that represent actual buyers. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 36-39.)

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Singh and Diamond recommend e.g. the following information to be included in the customer persona data:

- Demographics: sex, place (or area) of residence etc.
- Job level
- Online places where they hang out
- Online places where they look for product information
- Hobbies and interests

(Singh & Diamond 2012, 40.)

Just as it is important to know, what customers are doing on the Internet, it is important to know, what competitors are doing there. It is important to be aware, among other things, which social media platforms the competitors are on, which distribution channels they use and what online customer service efforts they use. Being aware of what the competitors do and do not do online makes it possible to distinguish oneself from the competing companies. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 41-42.)

#### 4.4 Moving Consumers Through the Purchase Process

A major objective of social media marketing is to assist in moving consumers through the purchase process. How social media marketing can work in each stage of the purchase process is presented below: (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 18.)

- Increase awareness by maintaining an active social media presence in the social media platforms where the target customers frequent.
- Influence desire by publishing content that persuades customers to recognize a sense of desire.
- Encourage trial by supporting sampling or loyalty programmes.
- Facilitate purchase by using social media as distribution channel and a venue for sales promotion incentives including deals and group offers.
- Cementing brand loyalty by offering engaging activities for consumers that can make them spend more time with the brand.

(Tuten & Solomon 2013, 18.)

#### 4.5 The New Rules of Marketing and PR

According to David Meerman Scott, the author of “The New Rules of Marketing and PR”, introduction of the World Wide Web has brought along new ways to get noticed. Before, the means for the companies to get noticed were to buy expensive advertising, get the mainstream media to tell their story or hire a large number of sales personnel to approach the customers one by one. Now the World Wide Web provides several ways to publish content that customers *want* to consume. (Scott 2010, xxi.) The

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rise of the new media should change also the ways to communicate: applying the old rules of advertising and media relations does not work in the new media. It is not anymore a question of advertising to people but to building a relation to the readers - not sending one-way messages but educating about the company's products. (Scott 2010, 4.)

There is no doubt that nowadays people solve problems by searching the Internet. Meerman Scott states that companies should be present where their customers are and provide the potential buyers information they need. The key point is to target specific buyers with individualized messages. The Web has opened a tremendous opportunity to reach niche buyers directly with targeted messages. (Scott 2010, 5-13.) Instead of one-way interruption messages, Web marketing is about delivering useful content at just the precise moment the buyer needs it. Instead of a "one-size-fits-all" site with a mass-market message, companies should build purposeful "microsites" with purpose built content aimed at a specific target group. (Scott 2010, 18.)

David Meerman Scott has defined the following new rules of marketing and PR:

- Marketing is more than just advertising.
- PR is for more than just a mainstream media audience.
- You are what you publish.
- People want authenticity, not spin.
- People want participation, not propaganda.
- Instead of causing one-way interruption, marketing is about delivering content at just the precise moment your audience needs it.
- Marketers must shift their thinking from mainstream marketing to the masses to a strategy of reaching vast numbers of underserved audiences via the Web.
- PR is not about seeing your company on TV. It is about your buyers seeing your company on the Web.
- Marketing is not about your agency winning awards. It is about your organization winning business.
- The Internet has made public relations public again, after years of almost exclusive focus on media.
- Companies must drive people into the purchasing process with great online content.
- Blogs, online video, e-books, news releases and other forms of online content let organizations communicate directly with buyers in a form they appreciate.
- On the Web the lines between marketing and PR have blurred.

(Scott 2010, 23-24.)

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The one, who is going to be the leader in the branch, has to have news coming out. (Scott 2010, 20). Creating truly useful content to customers and potential buyers of the company's products increases the credibility of the company's expertise, builds the image and makes it possible to create new business. The focus should be on the buyers and their problems, not on an egocentric display of the company's products and services. (Scott 2010, 26-34.) A company should get down to the basics of what problems its products solve, write good stories about it, publish them online and make sure that the buyers can find them on the search engines and content sites (Scott 2010, 22). When people receive something valuable, they become more eager to do business with the company that helped and educated them (Scott 2010, 32).

Shiv Singh and Stephanie Diamond give marketers the following advice in their book *Social Media Marketing for Dummies*:

- Become the top persuader. Your task is to persuade customers to buy your products. Before you can influence you need to figure out the persuasive message that will sell.
- Utilize a variety of distribution channels. Concentrating solely on social media is not enough. Integrate social media marketing with your more traditional marketing and provide readers links to all your channels (product information, place of discussion, reviews etc.).
- Reinvent your strategy to emphasize value. Understand the value your product gives your customers and emphasize that in your marketing.
- Market to inspire. Seize the opportunity to help your business make an impact on people and participate in what is happening in the world and society. Internet has given us a window to the lives of others.
- Create and curate content. If you become a trusted source of information, your customers will visit more often.
- Know when to resist the new shiny object. New web tools pop up daily. Write down your objectives and use the tools that are appropriate to you.
- Be prepared to be wrong. You need to be prepared to experiment and change course according to the feedback you get from customers.

(Singh & Diamond 2012, 12-13.)

Singh and Diamond also emphasize that in social media people do not care about brands and products as much as they care about people behind them, because people build relationships with each other. That is why it is important to let people know, who is speaking, and not to blog, tweet, comment or discuss anonymously. One cannot be authentic by being anonymous. Authenticity is also hearing and listening to feedback – both positive and negative – and responding to it. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 87-88.)

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## 4.6 Planning Social Media Activities

For social media marketing, it is important to build a roadmap showing what is the aim and how to get there. Singh and Diamond define seven steps:

- Define tightly defined, practical, actionable and targeted objectives.
- Develop a powerful story / experience.
- Create an action plan.
- Craft the content path, e.g. document the campaign and platforms to be used.
- Execute for influence – design for sharing, influencing and reciprocity.
- Create partnerships, comply with the policies of the platforms used and engage with ad-hoc groups of the field.
- Track the results. Define what to measure and how.

(Singh & Diamond 2012, 81-86.)

Just like in planning traditional marketing campaigns, it is important also when social media activities are concerned first to define, what are the aims and objectives. The aims are the purpose of the marketing action, what the company wants to achieve. Examples of these can be raising brand awareness, communicating the benefits of new product or service or differentiating the product from competing ones. Marketing objectives can be more specific and measurable. For example, marketing aim could be to increase sales. Marketing objective would be to sell 100 pieces of product X within the next month. (Rassl 2011, lecture materials.)

The next thing to do when planning social media activities is to carefully think, who is the target group - to whom is the product and service aimed at, what information do they need and how and in which platforms they can be reached (Rassl 2011, lecture materials). Like stated earlier in this thesis, in social media it is important to approach niche audiences with targeted messages, so much emphasis should be put in analysing the customer target groups and their individual needs as well as in planning the contents and messages accordingly. It is also important to use calls to action that is what the people engaging with the content are wanted to do. Calls for action can be for example signing up for a newsletter, buying something, becoming a fan in Facebook, following in Twitter or leaving a comment. However, it is important not to confuse the visitors with too many calls for action. (Rassl 2011, lecture materials.)

It is important to measure and evaluate the results of social media activities. It is recommended to define the metrics and targets at the beginning of the process. (Rassl 2011, lecture materials.) It is preferred to choose a simple metric, like number of retweets or likes on Facebook, to start with. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 70.) Measuring the outcomes is studied more profoundly in chapter 4.17.

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It is recommended to write down a social media plan or a strategy in a format suitable for each organization. This can be for example a table containing the above-mentioned aspects: aims and objectives, target groups and their needs, optimum platforms to reach each target group, messages, activities and calls to action in each platform and metrics to measure what has been achieved.

On creating the social media strategy, it is important also to define guidelines for how to appear in social media and to consider the responsibilities, who is responsible for each platform and for updating what and how often. According to Singh and Diamond, the guidelines usually define best practices for how to participate in social media as a brand or as an employee representing the company by recommendations, examples etc. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 334).

It is important to decide how to represent the company's or brand's social persona, in other words to decide how the company or brand will behave in the social media. This decision should support the brand's position in the market. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 46.) One essential thing is to choose the right person(s) to represent the brand, to act as the company's social media voice. Singh and Diamond are of the opinion that to establish credibility a company's social media voice(s) should be authentic persons, who the audience can search in the web and find out to be real company employees. This is due to the fact that people do not trust advertising of big impersonal brands anymore, but rather the recommendations of their friends. So the brands should become more like friends by using social media voices that can be associated to a single person in the company. Characteristics of a good social media voice, among other things, are to be truly conversational – to be able to start conversation, build trust, and be responsive – to have a customer service mentality; to know the rules, social norms and best practices of social media; to have individual credibility and to be easily accessible. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 95-98.)

#### 4.7 When the Response is not Positive

The word is free in social media and it can happen that a writer's opinion on a company or its products is not positive or can even damage the company's reputation. In these cases, it is advised to think longer than twice about how to react and respond. An overreaction online – which can be e.g. an imprudent response, trying to bury or delete other person's com-

ments, or heavy-handed use of legal action – can do more harm than the negative comment in first place. According to Newson et al., it is often wiser to try to engage the negative commentator in online discussion and there trying to discuss and improve the situation, or through open online communication dealing with the problem or negative comment openly and honestly. (Newson et al. 2009, 180.)

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#### 4.8 Social Media Marketing Maturity

Tuten and Solomon define three phases of social media marketing maturity: trial phase, transition phase and strategic phase. It is important for organizations to mature in their social media marketing activities and to enter from the trial phase through the transition phase to the strategic phase. Trial phase is the first phase of social media marketing, when an organization tests out social media platforms and learns to use a new form of communication. In the transition phase, a more systematic way of thinking starts to develop. In the strategic phase the organization utilizes a formal process to plan social media marketing activities with clear objectives and metrics. Social media become integrated as a key component of the organization's overall marketing plan. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 33-35.)

#### 4.9 Social Networking Sites Enable Interactive Communication with Customers

*Facebook* provides different kinds of features that enable interactive communication. Friend-to-friend communication is the most informal way of informing Facebook friends on what's happening. Facebook users one has invited and/or accepted as friends receive posts and updates on one's Facebook personal profile page. Facebook fan pages are open Facebook pages with information that anyone can see. Facebook pages can be seen as company profiles in Facebook, where companies can spotlight their brands. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 128.)

The heart of Facebook is the timeline, which a user sees when he logs in to Facebook, which shows all the friends' activities. That is why it is extremely important to focus Facebook marketing efforts on the timeline through which many more users learn about the product or brand than by visiting the company's Facebook page. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 128.) The wall is the place where visitors go to see a user's updates. The wall should be kept lively: by publishing something only occasionally people lose interest. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 129.)

Facebook groups provide a good way of keeping interested people informed. Facebook groups can be closed, when only the invited ones can join the group, or they can be open to all. Facebook groups usually provide more in-depth information around a subject and there should be valuable information available. Compared for example to e-mail newsletters, which can be considered as push-information, a Facebook group can provide useful information on pull-mode, which people can read whenever they want.

Facebook provides also means to two-way interactive communication: the readers can post their views and opinions on the subjects and thereby contribute to the discussion and take actively part e.g. in the brand. (Scott 2010, 176-177.)

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Events can be promoted in Facebook by listing them as events. People can be invited to the event via the Facebook page, the page can contain information about the event and after the event for example photos can be shared on the event page. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 134).

Facebook allows its users also to create applications, which enable sharing information on the service in different ways. One example of these applications is TripAdvisor's map of places you have visited: TripAdvisor has created a map application that appears on the users Facebook page where one can "stick" virtual thumbtacks on cities one has visited. Around the application there have been built several other services, like reviews on hotels etc. (Scott 2010, 178.)

*LinkedIn* is mostly used in professional networking and recruiting and is not so much a place for other marketing activities. However, LinkedIn can be very well used in contacting and being presented to potential customers, for example by asking one's own contacts to introduce oneself to a desired person (Newson et al. 2009, 54).

One should bear in mind that the online communities disdain overt commercial messages. Authenticity and transparency are critical factors. Eruptions within these communities happen e.g. when they find out that fake profiles of people have been created to applause some product or company. (Scott 2010, 179-180.)

#### 4.10 Tweeting on Timely Issues

Twitter is one of the most growing social media platforms during the recent years. Twitter is a good platform for informing on company or brand news, promoting product launches and events and making special offers, deals and discounts. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 144-145.) Because the message is limited to 140 characters, one good way to share information is to share links to other sources. Twitter enables also discussions with customers, so it is a good tool to be utilized in customer service situations (Singh & Diamond 2012, 144-145). In Twitter marketers can utilize also promoted accounts, promoted tweets, promoted trends and sponsored tweets (Singh & Diamond 2012, 145-150).

In Twitter the organization should have followers to best get the message through. When for example a company has followers on Twitter, every time it posts a tweet it appears on the Twitter timeline of the followers. On Twitter it is also relied on the followers to retweet (= forward a tweet one has received). Therefore it is utmost important to share useful information first to get followers and then to get the followers retweet the message and this way to spread the word of mouth. (Lacy 2011, 11-12.)

For companies it is also important to follow, what people are saying about the company and its products, and also about the competitors. Listening is



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the first step on the way to participating to the conversations. (Scott 2010, 181.) Tools for this are for example the Twitter search engine <http://search.twitter.com/>, [www.tweetdeck.com](http://www.tweetdeck.com), [www.tweetmeme.com](http://www.tweetmeme.com) and [www.twazzup.com](http://www.twazzup.com).

Meerman Scott has the opinion that companies should be careful with using Twitter as a mere advertising channel. The best ways to market in Twitter are to be there as an expert or a consultant member of the community giving hints and advice or to alert customers and followers on special deals or offers, strictly bearing in mind not to spam the followers. (Scott 2010, 181.)

#### 4.11 Blogging Ideas to Customers

Blogs enable the writer to publish personal or organizational ideas to the market and generate instant feedback. When it comes to blogs it is essential that the communication is real and authentic. People read blogs because they want to find real and honest voices. Advertising in blogs is received with scepticism. (Scott 2010, 193-196.) Blogs offer an opportunity to express opinions, share expertise and establish thought leadership on a topic. Blogs are good tools to increase traffic to targeted web sites and to build brand awareness. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 124.)

A company should prepare well when starting a blog. David Meerman Scott recommends first to follow a couple of blogs on the field and then get acquainted with the blogosphere by commenting others' blogs before starting an own one. By doing this the blogger can find his own voice in blogging and become acquainted with the unwritten rules of blogging. (Scott 2010, 193.)

The basic question in starting a blog is "Whom do I want to reach?". The topic should be something the writer is passionate about: with painful and forced writing one is not going to succeed in blogging. It is better to start with a narrow subject and leave room to expand. In a good blog there is valuable information provided and subjects discussed that are interesting to the target group readers. It is not important to reach as many readers as possible but to reach the right readers. With a good blog it is possible to get the readers to take the message forward by referring and linking to the blog. (Scott 2010, 194-195.)

Each company should follow the updates in the blogosphere, what is said about the company and its products, and give their contribution to these updates. Tools for this are blog search engines such as Technorati [www.technorati.com/blogging/](http://www.technorati.com/blogging/), Google Blog Search etc. (Scott 2010, 64.)

It is important also to nurture relationships to expert influencers, such as bloggers, who are publishing content relating to a certain field or certain products or services. It is possible to keep contact by sharing product sam-

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ples with this group, answering their questions or inviting them to certain special events. These expert bloggers can build positive awareness to a brand. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 56.) Nowadays there is also discussion of blogger compensations. Some bloggers refuse to accept any compensations and some make it clear that any gifts do not affect their standings. It is important for a marketer to reach the bloggers in a proper way. Readers want independent reviews and it is also important for companies to get honest evaluations of their products to maintain their credibility. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 76.)

#### 4.12 Sharing Video, Photos and Presentations

Video sharing sites, such as *YouTube*, are nowadays widely used in sharing entertaining, educational and commercial material. YouTube is one of the social media platforms that has had a huge growth in popularity in recent years and it is now the number one video sharing platform. So YouTube cannot be ignored when considering marketing in social media. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 153.) Just like Facebook pages have fans and Twitter has followers, YouTube has subscribers. Every time a new video clip is uploaded, the subscribers are notified, and their names and icons are visible on the uploader's YouTube channel page. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 155.) It is important to create a customized YouTube channel dedicated for the company or brand to be able to publish all related videos in one place. A YouTube channel acts as the brand's home page in YouTube. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 156.) Companies can utilize YouTube e.g. in sharing brand building video clips or materials on its products and their use.

The contents of the YouTube video clips should be entertaining, fresh, engaging, unique, arousing emotions and sometimes also surreal to win audience and to make the viewers want to share the videos with others. Making the videos to be an advertisement should be avoided. Creative campaigns, which involve the viewer e.g. by clickable links to prize-winning contests, are becoming increasingly popular on YouTube and get a strong word-of-mouth. YouTube provides also a Show&Tell feature ([www.youtube.com/user/YTShowandTell/](http://www.youtube.com/user/YTShowandTell/)), where examples of the best creative marketing examples of YouTube are collected. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 161-164.)

Photo sharing sites can be used in sharing brand or company photos to the public. Thus, many larger companies have own media banks on their sites to share the company photos.

*SlideShare* can be used in sharing presentations on specific professional knowledge or information of the field of business, which can brand the company as a specialist organization and a forerunner in its field.

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#### 4.13 News Releases Lead the Way to the Sales Process

David Meerman Scott has a strong opinion that companies should not address press releases merely for the press awaiting them to publish the filtered story. Companies should communicate directly with consumers with news releases that are available to anyone. News releases should appear frequently, not just when some big news is happening. (Scott 2010, 86-87.)

For companies it is important to publish news releases on their own web page's media room. A steady flow of new releases brands the company as a busy market player and an active expert in the industry. The contents can be also other than a written release - audio, video, photos, background information etc. For many companies the online media room is one of the most frequently visited parts of the company web site. The releases published on Internet should contain the keywords the customers usually use to make the releases easy to find, they should be optimized for searching and browsing and links should be used to direct the readers to further information on the company's products and services. (Scott 2010, 87.)

The company's online press room contents should be easy to pluck for journalists to further publish elsewhere on the web. This means that the sharing function should be enabled and sharing should be made very easy. For making press releases social media friendly, a social media press release template can be found e.g. at <http://www.shiftcomm.com/downloads/smprtemplate.pdf> (Singh & Diamond 2012, 245-246.)

News release distribution services, or social media newsrooms, provide paid services as agreed on, distribution services to the online news services (Yahoo News, Google News, Bing News etc.) and trade and industry web sites, search engine optimization and social media coverage. News release distribution services offer also RSS feeds, which means that each time news are published the release is seen by the people who have subscribed to RSS content feeds in that market category. There are several release distribution services available worldwide, some examples of which in Finland are [www.epressi.com](http://www.epressi.com), [www.sttinfo.fi](http://www.sttinfo.fi) and [publish.mynewsdesk.com](http://publish.mynewsdesk.com). (Scott 2010, 219-220.)

When studying news releases and social media from the public relations point of view, it should be borne in mind that social media is about social influencers influencing each other through social media, not about company PR people influencing other people, like it was in the traditional sense of public relations. The PR professionals have traditionally pushed forcefully the company's message, and this conflicts with the rules of social media. In social media, the influencers should be let do the influencing. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 20-21.)

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#### 4.14 Other Social Media Applications in Marketing

Internet provides a new opportunity for organizations to monitor what is being discussed and said about them in *online chatrooms and message boards*. A swinging organization also contributes to the discussion and gives responses when it is an issue of an online discussion. The current “web generation” find it quite peculiar and suspicious if an organization is not saying a thing online. If a company actively participates in the online forums where its customers frequent, it will earn their sympathy. One means of scanning conversations on the message boards and mentions of a specific company or brand is Boardreader ([www.boardreader.com](http://www.boardreader.com)) (Singh & Diamond 2012, 217).

In *Wikipedia* it is worth checking what is written about the organization or its executives. When the organization itself makes the entry the facts will more definitely be accurate. However, it should be paid attention to the fact that all Wikipedia articles must be written from a neutral point of view and it is not a forum for promoting a company or its products or services. (Scott 2010, 53-54.)

*Foursquare* can be utilized in marketing by setting up a brand page on Foursquare. In the case of a merchant with a physical store location, the location can be claimed from Foursquare and then run special discounts and offers to attract users. Also companies, which are not merchants with physical store locations, can create location of e.g. the company headquarters to make a positive impression and help visitors find in. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 169.)

Social media users love *contests*, which usually also generate traffic to the sites. User generated content (UGC) contests are built on participants contributing something for rewards (Singh & Diamond 2012, 77).

Different kinds of *applications*, or apps as they are called, are a big business and getting bigger every year. Apps are pieces of software, which can run for example on Internet, on a computer or on a mobile phone. Social media marketers have an enormous opportunity to brand an app that is seen every day by their customers. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 49.) Apps can be practical ones, educational or entertaining. A company can create apps that provide a solution for customers or consumers. For example, a manufacturing company could create an app that searches the catalogue part numbers. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 49.)

According to Singh and Diamond there are basically two camps of people online — those who believe that *online games* are a complete waste of time and those who find them irresistible. Social games incorporate game techniques in a social setting with the aim of encouraging people to interact with an organization, and businesses of all types are creating games that integrate the use of their products with the daily play. According to a study by the Information Services Group in 2010, eighty-three per cent of

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study participants play in Facebook. And according to the same study, the average social gamer is a 43-year-old woman. One example of the many online games is Clarins' game Spa Life on Facebook, which is about the challenges of running a spa. Their products are used at the spa and become part of the game solution. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 49.)

#### 4.15 Online Advertising

"Online advertising is about identifying web sites your target customers visit, buying ad space on those web sites, and then measuring, how much those advertisements are viewed and clicked" (Singh & Diamond 2012, 21). Singh and Diamond state in their book that online advertising is not an easy task: to identify the web sites customers are going to visit, to know if an appropriate price is charged for the advertisement, and how much the advertisement affects on purchasing may be more art than science. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 21-23.)

However, online advertising is one of the most measurable and trackable form of advertising compared to the traditional advertising channels. You can track who has viewed the advertisement and what they have done with it. Today Facebook is the largest advertising platform on Internet. One example of the evolution is appvertising, which means placing an advertisement on applications residing on social networks. These produce better results by making visitors click the advertisement. Another innovation is to ask consumers like the advertisement they are viewing on Facebook, which results in their actions to be appearing in the news feeds of their friends. Another innovation is ad units, which become a platform for social interaction, so called social ads. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 21-23.)

#### 4.16 Supporting Social Causes

In the last few years marketers have more and more started to support and further specific social causes which are in alignment with their brands. This results in the marketers getting more favourable publicity and the social cause more sponsorship, so this is kind of a win-win situation. Social causes are usually subjects that people want to share and discuss about in social media, so they usually get noticed and it may be beneficial for the marketer to be connected to important social concerns.

However, when cause realm is concerned, it should be considered that people are getting increasingly sceptical of these efforts. The effort must be really genuine and meaningful to be successful. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 25-26.)

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#### 4.17 Optimizing the Message in Search Engines

Before social media marketing can become profitable, the audience need to find the message in the web. The listings of search engines are crucial for a brand or a company message to be found among the huge number of search query responses (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 130).

“The search engine results list includes the organic results, which are listings ranked in order of relevance based on the search engine’s ranking algorithms, and the sponsored results, which are paid advertising links”. Most people tend to follow up only about the first ten results of the search engine result list. Often people also consider the organic results as more credible referrals than the paid ones. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 130-131.)

Search engine optimization (SEO) is used to improve how the contents of a specific site are listed on the search engine result lists and this way to increase the site traffic (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 130). SEO has two key approaches: on-site optimization - the primary variables of which are for example keywords embedded in the page’s tags, title, URL, and content - and off-site optimization, which refers to a search engine looking at for example the number of links to the site from other sites and the credibility and type of those sites when it determines the value of the site’s content as it indexes data (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 132).

In SEO it is utmost important to use the right keywords – the terms, words and phrases that are commonly known and which the customers use, not the ones the company is used to use in its own internal language. For example, only a product name may not be a good keyword, because it may not yet be known by the consumers. But when for example the type of the product or the technology it represents is included as a keyword in the terms the customers use a search engine hit is much more probable. The terminology used by the target market can be scanned for example by monitoring the top search terms people use to search for the company or brand. Also the use of descriptive words that is saying first what one is going to talk about before talking about it, is useful for SEO (Newson et al. 2009, 34).

In addition to SEO, the term social media optimization (SMO) is gaining ground. SMO refers to encouraging people who are exposed to the site content to share, promote, and recommend it. For this to happen, the content needs to be valuable, interesting, and entertaining. Tools for SMO are for example catchy titles, the use of share tools, and the use of RSS feeds. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 136.)

#### 4.18 Measuring the Outcomes

In planning the measuring of the social media marketing outcomes the first important task is to define what is wanted to occur and thus what is needed

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to measure. The objectives should be SMART – specific, measurable, appropriate, realistic and time-oriented – to be able to adequately measure them. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 206-207.) In addition to measuring the quantity of interactions, also quality, for example the degree of engagement people feel during and after the interaction and how these exposures influence their feeling about the brand, is important to measure (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 203).

Measuring and the measured key figures should always support the business. There is no use in measuring only because it is recommended to do so if there are no practices of following up and monitoring the indicators. Before starting social media marketing it is important to think carefully about what should be accomplished and which metrics are the most appropriate to measure these outcomes. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 320.)

Different social media platforms have different metrics and forms to measure. It is also important to know how many people come to the company web pages or other online services through different social media platforms to decide how much effort should be put on each platform. There are many social media monitoring tools available, only some examples of which are listed below.

On Facebook fan page related metrics can be found in Facebook Insights, which are available for the page administrator. On a dashboard page more detailed reports are found for three key areas: number of fans and the average growth of the number of fans, how many people are reached with the content and talking about it, and how many people are interacting (discussing or sharing with others) with the content. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 317-319.)

YouTube Insights gives information on clips published and who viewed them. In YouTube Insights it is possible to follow the number of views, discovery (how people found the video), demographics, interaction (commenting, rating, favoriting), information on subscribers, and hot spots (does the video hold the audience's interest). (Singh & Diamond 2012, 320-321.)

Twitter provides good means for measuring as well: in Twitter it is possible to measure brand mentions, influence and pass-alongs, and click-throughs. The blogosphere can be somewhat tricky to measure due to the huge amount of blogs and posts emerging on a daily basis. With the blog search engines, e.g. Technorati or Google Blog Search, it is possible to measure for example the number of brand mentions versus competitors' ones, ratio of comments and trackbacks, frequency of posts and comments, ranking of blogs mentioning a specific brand, total number of conversations and total number of times the post has been tweeted or retweeted. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 322-324.)

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## 5 ANALYSING THE POSSIBILITIES OF UTILIZING SOCIAL MEDIA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF KIILTO'S BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Each company should thoroughly consider and screen, which form of social media marketing suits it the best. The fields of business are of a very different nature - comparing for example a hype IT company, the employees of which find e-mail old-fashioned, to a one-man renovation contracting company with a sparse use of Internet. A company should use those social media platforms its customers are used to use and where the customers frequent. The main idea is not trying to be present everywhere but to choose the platforms that best serve the company's customers and business activities.

The customers of Kiilto Oy and KiiltoClean Oy act in very different fields and different business environments. The product ranges of Kiilto Oy and KiiltoClean Oy are quite versatile also ranging from Kiilto's watertighting membranes, levelling compounds, grouts, other building materials, and industrial adhesives to KiiltoClean's cleaning agents and hygiene products. Kiilto Oy's and KiiltoClean Oy's versatile clientele consists of the following customer segments:

- Manufacturing companies in the woodworking, paper and packaging and foundry industries as well as in the field of structural bonding. In addition to adhesives Kiilto supplies also cleaning agents for different industrial fields.
- Construction companies and contractors, renovators
- Hardware stores and retail chains
- Professional cleaning companies
- Health care
- Primary production, food industry and institutional kitchens
- Laundries
- Consumers

One very important thing in starting social media activities is first to research, do the target customers search for information in social media, and if yes, what platforms do they mainly use. The use of social media and the messages there should be considered thoroughly by each customer segment: each customer segment's problems, which Kiilto products can solve, should be recognized, and the media each customer turns to for solving its problems should be known. Like stated before in this thesis, social media marketing cannot be "one-size-fits-all", but specific and targeted information, which is essential just for the specific customer group. When starting social media activities it is also utmost important to choose the right persons to act as the company's social media voices.

In the following chapters there are ideas and examples given, how social media could be utilized for marketing purposes in Kiilto.



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## 5.1 Facebook Pages and Groups and LinkedIn

KiiltoClean is present on Facebook with Erisan hygiene products on <http://fi-fi.facebook.com/Erisan.herkalle.iholle>, which is a Facebook page open to all consumers. The Erisan Facebook page focuses on hygiene products, which are developed for a sensitive skin in co-operation with dermatologists and the Allergy and Asthma Federation. The target audience are the users of sensitive hygiene products, which contain no additives and fragrances. KiiltoClean has also a Facebook page Kiilto Siivousopas (<https://www.facebook.com/KiiltoSiivousopas>), which focuses on home cleaning and home cleaning products.

Another potential Facebook page could be a builder's and renovator's page for Kiilto Oy targeted to private house builders and home renovators. On this Facebook page Kiilto's building professionals could give advice and tips on products and working methods. It could serve also as a channel to contact and ask questions from Kiilto's customer guidance personnel. The builder's and renovator's Facebook page could be a forum for people to exchange experiences, advice and recommendations and to learn from each other. From Kiilto's point of view this could provide an opportunity for connecting loyal customers with their recommendations to prospective customers. One possibility to mutually benefit from the most active Facebook page visitors and commentators could be to give them trial products for free. These "social media agents" could then share their experiences online and recommend the products for others.

It is quite obvious that people want to read about people. Facebook could provide a solution also for this need: Kiilto Oy could utilize its Facebook page for presenting its product and development personnel, marketing personnel or other interesting people in the company. "I developed the new revolutionary watertightening membrane" or "I solve our woodworking industry customers' bonding problems" could be interesting stories to read - not to mention the possibility Facebook offers to become acquainted with this specific person or to ask a professional's opinion for him or her.

One potential function to be utilized could be Facebook or LinkedIn groups, to which specific target customers could be invited. In these closed groups Kiilto Oy and KiiltoClean Oy could provide its customers specified and more in-depth information on products and their use, advance information on new products, technical specifications, product classifications etc. - something "special" that is not available openly on the Internet. These groups could be utilized for example in the field of building and construction with architects and designers, in the field of industrial bonding on different technical applications, e.g. timber bonding solutions, structural bonding solutions etc., or in industrial and professional cleaning sectors. These interactive groups would be of mutual benefit serving also the companies' product development and marketing with the comments, contributions and feedback from the professional group members. In Facebook it is also possible to promote events. This feature could be used for

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promoting and inviting specific customer groups to customer training sessions.

Facebook is also a good media for customer feedback. In addition to the spontaneous feedback of the Facebook updates, small surveys could be made on different kinds of issues. For example, when a new product is introduced, users could give comments on it, or tell their stories where and how they have used the products. In the more professional Facebook or LinkedIn groups the group members could act as test users for new products.

LinkedIn, which is considered to be a more professional network, would be a proper channel for presenting the companies and their employees for recruiting purposes. This could include for example presenting of different jobs in the companies and the skills and expertise the employees possess.

## 5.2 Expert Blogs

Kiilto Oy and KiiltoClean Oy could utilize blogs by starting a blog on some specific topic, e.g. building and renovating, domestic cleaning, professional cleaning etc. The blog could give answers to customers' problems in a form of storytelling. The blogger could be the company's expert of the chosen field, who could write blog posts giving tips and information on the use of products and advice on specific applications and working methods. All the information on the blog would not be related to products, but there should also be available interesting news and articles on the field. To give the blog followers something special, there could be published for example advance information on new coming products. Also podcasts could be used as interviews and product explanations.

The blog could be made also a bit more entertaining, but still professional: for example in the field of domestic cleaning a blog could be started as a diary of a domestic cleaning entrepreneur, who would share his/her stories, experiences and hints on domestic cleaning. In the field of hygiene products a professional guest blogger for example from the Allergy and Asthma Federation could cover topics on allergy-sensitive skin. A diary blog could be started also on for example building a house for a family or on renovating a home. In this diary blog case it would be utmost important to find a reliable guest blogger, who would be a good writer and could act as a proper voice for the company's brand.

One good way to utilize blogs could be to present new products of a specific product segment. At the moment new products are presented shortly as news on Kiilto Oy's and KiiltoClean Oy's Internet pages, but in a blog more in-depth information - and at its best also user comments and reviews - could be presented. The blog would naturally be linked to the company's Internet pages' product pages, so it would be easy to find and to access.

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Once again, the interactivity of social media could work for mutual benefit: the comments and experiences of blog followers contribute to the contents of the blog. At its best this user feedback would generate recommendations for potential customers and could serve also the companies' marketing and product development. As previously stated, users of social media value customer reviews and recommendations, however, customer comments and reviews are not always positive. According to Singh and Diamond also negative reviews drive customers to explore other products presented on the site. Decorous negative reviews should be considered as valuable feedback on products, what works and what doesn't, and should be answered to professionally. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 244-245.) It gives the audience a positive impact on a company, when negative customer reviews are taken seriously and improvements are genuinely strived for.

Mustonen presents in his book an idea that customers could be included in a product development project as active actors starting right from product innovation (Mustonen 2009, 23-24). In Kiilto Oy's and KiiltoClean Oy's case these could be for example some specific customers selected to pilot products, who could give their contribution to the product development project. In practice this idea could be realized in a blog or in a closed Facebook group. In case there would be no danger of revealing any corporate secrets, it could be interesting for enthusiasts of the field to follow a product development project in social media right from the beginning to the launching of a new product.

### 5.3 Twitter

Like stated before, Twitter is one of the most growing social media platforms at the moment. Kiilto Oy and KiiltoClean Oy could utilize Twitter for example in informing on noteworthy company or brand news, promoting new (consumer) products, giving tips on the use of different products and responding to customer's questions. Twitter could be utilized in customer guidance in appropriate cases, when the questions and answers do not need long explanations. For example, Twitter could be a channel for hardware store salespeople to ask for recommendations on which products to use in a given situation. To become a successful information channel, Twitter would require real-time responding to customers' questions.

### 5.4 Content Sharing Sites and Wikis

Kiilto brand has a *YouTube* channel, where guiding videos on working methods are shared. At the moment, there are mainly videos on building and renovating available, but it would be a good idea to include also guiding videos on the field of cleaning and surface care. Videos for example presenting different jobs in Kiilto Family Group or interviewing employees' could be published to support recruiting.

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*SlideShare* could be used in sharing presentations for example on chemicals and product safety, safe production, environmental issues and sustainability, or other fields, where Kiilto Oy and KiiltoClean Oy are experts. Sharing these presentations made by the organizations' professionals could brand the companies as forerunners in their field.

A *wiki* could be used as some kind of a helpdesk or a FAQ, where the most frequently asked questions about products or working methods, which require frequent technical guidance, would be collected for all consumers and professionals to find. A *wiki* or a *bookmarking site* could be used in maintaining and sharing for example the latest chemical laws and regulations. A *wiki* can also be closed, so it could be used also for internal purposes. A *wiki* could be used also as a data bank, where information and links would be available on "Kiilto Partners" - renovating contractors, cleaning companies or retailers using or selling the products in Finland and abroad.

## 5.5 Supporting Social Causes

Corporate social responsibility is one of the cornerstones of Kiilto Family Group's operations and an issue, which is continually considered and communicated. One thing that might be worth considering could be launching some kind of a "charity campaign" in social media. This could be for example letting people to suggest or vote from pre-selected charity targets for the one, which then would be supported by the company. This could result in an extensive and long-lasting social media presence by following and reporting on the progress of the charity campaign and its targets. However, it should be borne in mind that supporting social causes in social media should be done very discreetly, tactfully and genuinely, by no means commercially.

## 5.6 RSS Feeds on News Releases

Kiilto Oy's web site ([www.kiilto.com](http://www.kiilto.com)) contains an online media room for news releases, which are published frequently. There is also a news release archives available, where older news releases can be found. This is a feature that external news release distribution services cannot necessarily provide. There have been discussions about starting a news release distribution service, but these plans have not yet been realized.

The customers of Kiilto Oy are mainly approached by e-mail newsletters on issues such as product news etc. One feature that might be food for thoughts could be the use of RSS feeds for updates on issues that are important for customers, e.g. on news releases on new products or product systems, customer training etc. Those customers who do not want to receive e-mail newsletters could subscribe to RSS feeds on online news of a specific field.

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## 5.7 Games, Apps and Contests

Applications, which solve a customer's problem or give an answer to a question, are useful for customers and consumers and can attract also potential new customers to the site. Kiilto Oy has an application on its Internet pages called "Märkätilalaskuri" (Wetroom Counter), which counts the amount of needed (Kiilto) building materials to wetroom building or renovating. Applications are worth making use of, when a good idea arises. A well-built game, where Kiilto products are included, could at its best be a hit driving traffic to the Kiilto sites. However, creating games and applications usually requires external experts and therefore also financial investments.

Contests could be made use of by for example asking customers to send photos or stories about how they have used Kiilto products or funny renovating or cleaning videos etc. Naturally, there must be rewards to get customers interested. Contests have been used to some extent on the Erisan Facebook pages.

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## 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Social media marketing is no science of its own, but involves the same aims and activities as the so called traditional marketing. One of the many definitions of marketing, this one by P. Kotler, states that marketing is “a process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering and exchanging products and services of value” (Mustonen 2009, 31). Social media marketing is a modern approach to support this process. Both in traditional marketing and in social media marketers use different marketing strategies at each stage to move customers through the marketing funnel from a prospect to a loyal customer and through the purchase process from awareness to repeat purchase.

Tracy L. Tuten and Michael R. Solomon propose in their book that a fifth P should be added to the traditional marketing mix to complement the product, price, place and promotion – a P for participation (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 14) . Social media marketing is becoming more and more popular, so in this developing realm of marketing P for participation would stand for the possibility social media offers for consumers to participate in the marketing process and contribute with their own ideas. Positive word-of-mouth (WOM) is an important part of earned media companies can achieve by well-planned and properly implemented social media activities.

Among other definitions, social media is defined in Wikipedia as follows: “Social media refers to means of interaction among people, in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks” (Wikipedia a n.d.). This definition describes well the characteristics of social media: participation, sharing, reviewing, conversation, interaction and openness. Everyone can take part and give his and her contribution in social media. The world of social media is ever changing: new platforms emerge all the time, while the popularity of some previously used tails off.

Human beings are social beings and sharing information is part of social interaction. Even long before the emergence of World Wide Web and social media people have consulted each other and asked advice and recommendations on important decisions. Influencing in social media works just like in real life. Nowadays, the customers just go online to ask their peers advice, comments and recommendations. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 13.)

As studied in this thesis, social media provides many possibilities to be utilized in marketing and PR. Corporate presence in social media is considered to enhance the corporate image and the brand and to be profile raising, whereas nowadays not being present in social media can - for a certain group of consumers – mean not to exist at all.

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The rise of the Internet has changed the ways of interacting with customers. Communicating with customers is no more a question of advertising, but of building relations and providing customers with important information at the moment they want to consume it. The focus should be on the customer and his problems and the messages should be tailor-made and well-targeted instead of mass-market information. Because of this, it is essential to know the customers: what information is essential and valuable for them and which social media platforms they use to look for this information. Companies should be present on those social media platforms their customers are using. However, in social media it is not enough to market just for the customers. It is important to market also to the potential customers' influencers, who spread the word by their reviews and recommendations – the word-of-mouth.

An essential thing in succeeding is that whichever social media platform is chosen, the presence must be active. A Facebook page or a professional blog, which is not updated and commented on frequently, is, in the author's opinion, worse than not being present at all. But if this new media is utilized with commitment and passion, it can offer unlimited opportunities for a company to be a trendsetter in the field of business. To achieve this, adequate resources must be dedicated to active social media presence. One must also be patient with social media marketing. Results will not show in a couple of weeks or even months. Like Singh and Diamond state in their book: "Social media is not a campaign, rather, it is a commitment" (Singh & Diamond 2012, 359).

The social media platforms, which the company is using, must be linked with each other. It is no use in utilizing several platforms if there is no easy access to one another. When the company web pages, Facebook pages, blogs, YouTube channel etc., have links to each other, customers can easily find the information they are looking for on a platform they prefer to use. For example, the company web site can be seen as a starting point for a visitor seeking information and as a "hub" to enter the other platforms (Singh & Diamond 2012, 239).

At its best, social media marketing and the more traditional marketing channels are integrated and complement each other. Marketing works best, when each customer is provided with the most appropriate marketing channel for him, the different marketing channels are linked and access to all channels is easily provided for the customers.

It is important for companies, which are planning to start social media marketing, first to make a thorough plan of the social media activities. In this plan the company should consider the aims and objectives of the social media activities, customer target groups it wants to reach, the proper social media platforms for that, and the activities to be taken on these platforms, which should be of value for the customers. The main question is to define the needs of each customer segment and to interact with them in the pre-

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cise media these customers are present in. Before starting the social media activities, the company should get acquainted with the “code of conduct” of these chosen social media platforms. In defining the aims and objectives of the social media activities each company should consider what it wants to achieve in social media. This assists in defining the most appropriate metrics to measure the outcomes of the social media activities. When planning social media activities resources must be considered as well. Social media as a marketing channel is free or at least very low-cost compared to the traditional marketing channels, but social media activities require investments in working time.

Each company should define guidelines for acting in social media: who can act as the company’s voice in social media, who are responsible for creating content to which social media platforms, and who are the right experts on different subjects. Employees should be reminded of the fact that when discussing industry or company matters on social media they must identify themselves as the company employees either by speaking as a representative of the company or by stating that they are sharing their own personal opinions. As well, employees should be reminded of respecting the audience and of not sharing confidential customer, company or product information. Employees care about their companies and they welcome the guidelines as a way to better represent the company. (Singh & Diamond 2012, 107.)

For a proper social media presence it is not enough just to be active. Social media is two-way communication, and a company must also follow what is discussed in social media, listen and be reactive. In chapter 4 there are presented several alternatives where to follow and monitor activities in different social media platforms. People expect dialogue from companies and answers to their questions. This fact should not be overlooked in the present era of online socializing.

Kiilto Oy’s and KiiltoClean Oy’s customers operate in fields of business, which are not among the most online active ones. For this reason, the launch of social media activities should be very well thought of and planned according to the needs of each customer segment. The author suggests starting with thoroughly surveying, do the different customer segments use social media to search information, and if yes, which platforms do they mainly use. This could be done for example by personal discussions with the customers. Kiilto Oy’s and KiiltoClean Oy’s sales personnel have regular contacts with their customers, and they would be the best ones to interview the customers concerning the use of social media. Another option is to make a customer survey, but the author prefers the personal discussions, which give a more profound insight into the customer needs. After the customers’ activities in social media have been found out, it is important to make a well thought of plan for each customer segment or customer persona (see chapter 4.3): which social media platform to use for each customer segment / customer persona and what information to



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provide there. Suggestions of the ways of utilizing different social media platforms are given in chapter 5.

When drawing up the social media plan for Kiilto Oy and KiiltoClean Oy it is important to consider also the resources and responsibilities. It is utmost important that collaboration between the company's social media voices and other experts in the fields of company communications, product development and marketing works seamlessly. Discussions, comments and questions in social media require quick reacting, so product and business knowledge must be obtainable when needed. As stated before, if a company starts activities in social media, the activities must be constantly running. Otherwise there is no sense in starting social media presence.

The author would suggest for Kiilto Oy to start with a couple of social media platforms, which would be chosen according to the information gained from the survey or discussions with customers. A good way to start is first to get acquainted with the social media platforms: to follow, what is the code of conduct on each social media platform and what people are publishing and discussing there. After that, own presence can be started bearing in mind that the company's social media voice must be an authentic person representing the company under his / her own name.

One suggestion for Kiilto Oy to start with is an open Facebook page on building and renovation. There might be demand for this kind of an interactive forum, where experts could give advice and people could share their experiences (see chapter 5.1). One customer segment that could well be reached by the means of social media, are the architects and designers. They are not direct customers to Kiilto Oy, but they give guidelines and recommendations to construction companies. In this segment social media could be a competitive advantage and Kiilto Oy could brand itself as a forerunner by providing the latest information, which may not be otherwise easily found on Internet. A (closed) LinkedIn or Facebook group or a blog could be a proper media to interact with architects and designers. An open blog would benefit also other parties interested in the subject. Cleaning is an affair, which is of interest – or at least a must - to all consumers. A blog for example on “A Home Cleaner's Diary” could be worth a try as a more entertaining, but still professional, way to interact with customers (see chapter 5.2). A new products blog by product groups could be useful for customers. At the moment new products are informed of as short news on the Internet pages, but in a blog there could be included more profound information and also customer comments. Twitter is one of the most growing social media platforms at the moment, so informing on company and product news and utilizing Twitter for customer service purposes could be a good idea also (see chapter 5.3).

Relating to news releases on new products, customer training sessions or company news RSS feeds could be worth a try (see chapter 5.6). Customers could subscribe RSS feeds on news categories they find interesting.

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This would secure that customers would always receive the latest essential news right away. At the moment these news are delivered to customers as e-mail newsletters, which are not so easy to target just to the right customers, and some may find them spamming.

On designing the next generation [www.kiilto.com](http://www.kiilto.com) and [www.kiiltoclean.fi](http://www.kiiltoclean.fi) Internet sites the author suggests to consider utilizing more these several social media platforms in addition to the Internet site for different kinds of information for different target groups. All the information does not need to be on the Internet site, but the web site could serve more as a hub to social media platforms, which could provide a wider range of options for interactive communications.

For Kiilto Oy and KiiltoClean Oy the author suggests a combination social media organization structure, which combines the best practices of a centralized and a distributed structure. In a centralized structure, the social media department functions at a senior level and is responsible for all the social media activities. In a distributed structure all employees represent the brand and work social media into their roles. In a combination structure a group of employees form a committee to make decisions on the social media position and voice, but each department is left to incorporate social media into its own executions. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 52.) The author's opinion is that there should be one person responsible for the social media activities. Although in the combination social media organizational structure each department is to some extent responsible for its social media activities, there should be a "supervisor" responsible for planning and monitoring the social media activities, assisting the departments in their content creation work, providing industry and company insights and building awareness of the companies' products and services on the social media platforms. And further, this person should be a "social media native", who knows the social media rules, can speak on behalf of the company, has adequate know-how on the companies' products, and is an engaging and conversational personality.

One of the biggest barriers for organizations to start social media activities may be resources. There may also be prejudice towards social media: employees may be unsure, what kind of skills are needed, and lack of experience may lead to questioning the importance of the entire media. As the triumph of social media continues, the question to be considered for companies is, do we want to invest resources in social media activities – in a media, where more and more consumers and customers are actively searching information and giving product reviews and recommendations on a daily basis. Investments in software, hardware or advertising itself are not necessarily needed, but investments in employee resources are definitely needed due to the characteristics of social media, which emphasize presence and responsiveness.

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