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**SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN SMALL FINNISH
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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to elaborate the phenomenon of social media marketing and particularly how social media marketing is done and perceived in small companies.

The sources used in this paper were relevant. Most of them are electronic sources from Google Scholar.

The results of the questionnaire support clearly the information found in the theoretical part. This means that the survey is in line with the earlier academic findings in this field. The results of the survey elaborate these issues more, in terms of information on how and why exactly small companies use social media marketing. Naturally, there are some counter arguments for the findings. These are; the sample size was rather small and the phenomena under study is in such a phase that the findings of today may vary remarkably of the findings of tomorrow as the technological and social changes around social media in general are very rapid.

Keywords: Social media marketing, small Finnish companies

INTRODUCTION

This research paper is going to address social media marketing in small Finnish companies.

In a course of only two decades, The social media has become a vital part of peoples and consumers' daily life, even to a degree where social media is used various times and hours per day. Social media is a phenomenon that has transformed the interaction and communication of individuals throughout the world (Edosomwan *et al.* 2011).

As social media is such a big phenomenon, marketers have also noticed the power of it and started to communicate, advertise and to use other means of marketing in different channels of social media. Social media marketing has hence become a trend or so called hot topic in the field of marketing. This can be summarised by "Everyone is doing it or at least everyone should be doing it" as replied by one of the questionnaire participant. With the worldwide explosion of social media usage, businesses are feeling extreme pressure to engage where their customers are paying attention (Baird, Parasnis 2011, 30).

Social media marketing makes marketing for small companies easier than traditional marketing does because it is way cheaper, and it can gain very broad audience when comparing it to traditional marketing.

This paper deals with the subject of why social media marketing is used in small Finnish companies and about the advantages and disadvantages of social media marketing. First there is the theoretical part and after that the research part where the author will elaborate the quantitative part of the study. This quantitative research was made by a survey conducted via e-mail to a randomly chosen sample companies working in different fields. All the companies approached had one thing in common: They employed less than 50 people.

The paper consists of three main chapters. First one dealing with social media marketing, the advantages and disadvantages of it, as well as social media marketing in small companies. The second chapter is the methodology chapter, dealing with the research method, design and expectations of the study. The third main chapter is the results and analysis part of the paper. In the third chapter the author will look at the results with the help of tables and charts the author has made based on the questionnaire results, after that the author will analyse the results gained from the questionnaire.

The research problem of this paper is that there is not much research on the topic why social media is used in small Finnish companies.

The two research questions that this paper is trying to answer are the following:

1. What are the challenges of social media marketing in Finland?
2. What are the advantages of social media marketing for small Finnish companies?

In addition to the above and because of the research problem, the main research question is why social media marketing is used in small Finnish companies?

Theoretical part of the paper explains what is social media marketing as well as comparative advantages and disadvantages of social media marketing in the eyes of small companies. The research part tries to find out why social media marketing is used in small Finnish companies.

The research part of the paper consists of the questionnaire the author sent via e-mail to the respondents. The survey questionnaire was divided into three separate parts. The survey was sent to randomly chosen small companies in Finland via e-mail. The companies had one thing in common, they all employ 50 people or less.

1. SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

In the theoretical part of the research paper the advantages and disadvantages of social media marketing will be brought up. Also, some general information about social media marketing and about social media marketing in small companies.

Social media marketing is about understanding how technology is making it easier for people to connect socially with their social networks and how your business can profit from that understanding (Ahmad *et al.* 2012, 88-89). Over the past decade, social media platforms have penetrated deeply into the mechanics of everyday life, affecting people's informal interactions, as well as institutional structures and professional routines (Van Dijck, Poell 2013, 2). Marketing communications usually consists of television, radio and print advertising. Printed flyers, roadside advertising, events, promotions, sponsorship, exhibitions and similar activities have also conservatively been part of the communications package. The good part of social media is, that it can be included in all of the above marketing activities. The interesting fact is that companies are increasingly more focused on digital marketing. Because of focusing on digital media, the traditional marketing falls behind. The ways companies do marketing is at a point where social media marketing challenges the traditional ways of marketing. In the last decade there has been a major shift from traditional media (Miller, Lammas 2010, 1). Meaning that as the emphasis is online, that sector tends to develop more rapidly than others. This has a vast impact in the way of how marketing is changing. How lasting the impact of social media will have is yet to be determined, but one thing for sure, it has turned the chain of influence upside down (Gillin 2007, 7). Marketing in social media is a growing phenomenon and it is leaving traditional marketing behind. Social media marketing brings new and innovative ways for companies to do marketing.

We have to move where customers are, and they are in social media (Niemi-Korpi 2012, 22). As consumers use social media daily, it is easy way to target customers and get big audiences. As there are many different channels in social media, companies should find the channels where their target

market are. The biggest social media channels at the moment are Facebook, Instagram LinkedIn, Snapchat and Twitter. The emergence of social networking media, such as Facebook and Twitter, has opened the door to a million possibilities for marketers (Wright *et al.* 2010, 76). When the right channels are found companies can do marketing for big audiences with little money compared to traditional marketing.

Marketing in social media has its positive and negative challenges as any marketing has. Marketing in social media can be very much cheaper compared to traditional marketing and to do social media marketing you don't have to be a professional. This opens doors for many small companies for their marketing. Social media can also be used as a platform for companies to gain new innovative ideas. Social media afford individuals the ability to see information related to the status of ongoing activities in the organization (Leonardi, Treem 2012, 154).

As in traditional marketing you have to have a view how the marketing process is proceeded. The same is in social media marketing. Companies have to choose the channels where they want to market or the channels from which they want to start their social media marketing from. At the present, the marketer has several different types of social media channels that can be utilized in marketing (Salmela 2014, 8). Companies should find out what are the channels were their customers are and what kind of marketing is best for their customers. As there are consumers in many channels. The choosing of the right social media channels for each company is a critical point of social media marketing.

We are now living in the times of rapid technological changes. The technological inventions and developments are progressing in a huge speed. This progress of technology automatically means that social media is progressing too. These inventions are constantly providing new applications that revolutionise the market and hence creates new needs for presence online. And the old ones are forgotten equally as quickly.

Marketers should really start considering the use of social media as their main means of communication with the target audience. We are now living in a time that will define the companies that are going to be, the leading marketers in a couple of years.

1.1 Benefits of social media marketing

The use of social media as a marketing tool for companies is financially sensible and beneficial. Advertisers don't have to reimburse publishers or distributors huge sums of money to embed their messages and they can make their own interesting content that viewers will flock to (Saravanakumar, SuganthaLakshmi 2012, 4444).

The price of social media marketing depends entirely on the companies' own interests of wanting to pay for advertising in social media. Some marketing in social media does not cost anything. In the Internet, companies can take advantage of many different marketing tools at a very low price. These prices are commonly related to results, like the number of clicks received. As social media marketing is cheaper than traditional marketing it makes it easier for companies and especially small companies with smaller marketing budgets, to market in social media.

This remuneration system is common to internet, while the more traditional media usually charges before the action takes place and regardless of the results. As already mentioned, that companies can choose freely from various different social media channels on which of the channels they want to focus on. As companies use the channels they have chosen. They can easily communicate with their target audience in the chosen social media channels

In social media, companies can participate in the various stages of the purchasing process according to the companies own efforts. The fact that social media marketing can be very diverse, it brings the added value for it. Social media is a strong communication tool and hence a powerful tool for small companies alike.

Anna Kronberg has made a study about micro-companies and social media marketing. In the study she interviewed micro-companies. She got the following results when asking about the benefits that social media marketing brings to a company. The benefits were increased sales, inquiries about products and services, more visibility partners and customers also some contacts and customer service cases (Kronberg 2017, 45). Even though Kronbergs (2017) study was about micro-companies, the study tells that if social media can make these changes in micro-companies it can make these changes in small to medium sized companies also and maybe relevant even for bigger corporations.

The results of social media marketing can be measured in many different ways. A good example is that the clicks of an ad can be counted, and the popularity of a social media site can be measured by

tracking the traffic on a certain social media site. Communication requests or even sales figures can also be used as measurement tools in the web.

Social media can provide organizations with easier networking, better reachability, new channels of communication, increased visibility, easier collection of information and feedback, better mobility of ideas within the organization and cost-effective communication tools (Huisman 2011, 45).

1.2 Challenges of social media marketing

Like any other marketing activity, the social media marketing has some built-in challenges that companies should try to overcome to make the most of their marketing activities in the social media. However, social media is still a fairly new and constantly evolving environment, lacking established operating models, especially regular marketing practices, which makes it difficult for a company to export to this unknown operating environment (Syrjälä 2013, 10). The biggest challenge comes from the new way of cooperation and things related to the cultural actions of it (Inkeroinen 2010, 63).

There are far too many different social media channels to use. If you still need time to run your core business, you simply cannot participate in them all, especially since “being active” is one key requirement of success (Kaplan, Haenlein 2010, 65). Every company is required to find the best number and type of channels for their companies. This leads us to the fact that if a company uses many different channels, they should also have time and other resources to keep all these channels updated and relevant.

The time used for social media is another challenge in social media marketing. Even though social media marketing is relatively easy to organise and operate, it requires a lot of time from the employees or the outside content managers to keep the social media channels active. By being active in social media, the companies should also try to stand out in some way to make themselves special and noticeable. The latter being basic requirement for any marketing activity. The companies should ensure that they don't end up in the mass where no one doesn't find them.

Social networks can help companies spread good news fast, it can also spread bad news just as quickly (Assaad, Gomez 2011, 20). Even if it is positive for companies that customers can discuss, comment and help the companies with new ideas in different platforms, the customers can also give negative feedback about products. They can also criticize the company and when all this is done in the public

platforms, the content becomes truly public. Social media introduce substantial and pervasive changes to communication between organizations, communities, and individuals (Kietzmann *et al.* 2011).

1.3 Social media marketing in small companies

In the era of social media, marketers have started to take advantage of social media. By taking advantage is meant that most of the small companies have also started to use social media as a vital part of their marketing. Some even use it as the only marketing that they do. Upon the insufficient advertising budget that companies often times encounter via the traditional channels, social media marketing might be, particularly, easier and more effective for small and medium-size companies to take maximum advantage of it (Weber 2009).

If most customers engage with social media, firms should engage with social media as well (Tiago, Verissimo 2014, 704). Small companies can reach huge amounts of customers through the social media, compared to traditional marketing, because usually small companies have smaller marketing budgets which make the traditional marketing for small companies more difficult. As earlier mentioned that social media marketing is significantly cheaper than traditional marketing. It makes it easier for small companies to market themselves to bigger audiences, through different social media channels.

As companies begin to realize the value of the Internet as a primary component of their communications platform, they are correspondingly beginning to leverage alternative marketing practices that are more cost-effective and more efficient at actively engaging with consumers, than traditional advertising channels (Castronovo, Huang 2012, 117). They must remember that when doing social media marketing the results of it may not be immediate, as also in traditional marketing the results can take time that is why marketers have to be patient when using social media as a marketing tool, especially in small companies and when it is the only way for the companies to market.

Before a company starts doing social media marketing, they should do a strategy on how to market themselves in social media. Again, this applies also to other media. As with any communication exercise, viral marketing campaigns need to be carefully planned prior to their launch (Kaplan, Haenlein 2011, 261). The companies should pick the social media sites where they want to be active and then start using them actively to get results in the use of social media marketing, one should remember there should be constant work done, this should not be just a single project. There are a variety of tools to choose from when formulating a social media strategy (Castronovo, Huang 2012, 122). For small companies this is a huge leverage when using social media marketing.

2. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

In the methodological part of this research paper the method of research and the methodology of it are described also some expectations of the study are brought up.

2.1 Research method

This research paper was based on empirical study and on this paper a quantitative research method was used to get answers on social media marketing in small companies. This method was chosen for the study, because of the various fields of businesses it touches and to make the sample size greater. The research was conducted with an online questionnaire and send via e-mail to different small companies in Finland. The questionnaire was made as an online questionnaire in Google Forms and then send to the respondents. The individual respondents were chosen randomly. The only matter affecting the eligibly of the respondents were the size of the company they work for.

Quantitative research method was used for the simple reason that it made is easier to compare business field, marketing budgets and such attributes with the company size. Quantitative method makes comparisons easier and more reliable when studying rather limited number of variables, like in this research.

The aim of the research was to find out why small companies use so much social media marketing in Finland and what is it that makes social media such a popular marketing medium for smaller companies. The goal of the survey was to reach employees working in different fields of businesses in small Finnish companies.

The questionnaire was made very simple and had quite a lot of open-ended-question to let the respondents tell exactly why they use social media marketing, what are the biggest facts for that and what makes social media marketing so special. The questionnaire was made in English, so that it could reach bigger audience. The respondents had also the choice of answering the open-ended questions in Finnish, since the companies were Finnish. The survey was done anonymously.

The first demographic question asked from the respondents was about the gender distribution. The gender distribution of the respondents divided quite evenly. 27 respondents of 52 were female and 25 respondents of 52 were male.

The respondents were asked about the size of the companies. The company sizes affected this questionnaire as it is also analysed based on the size of the company.

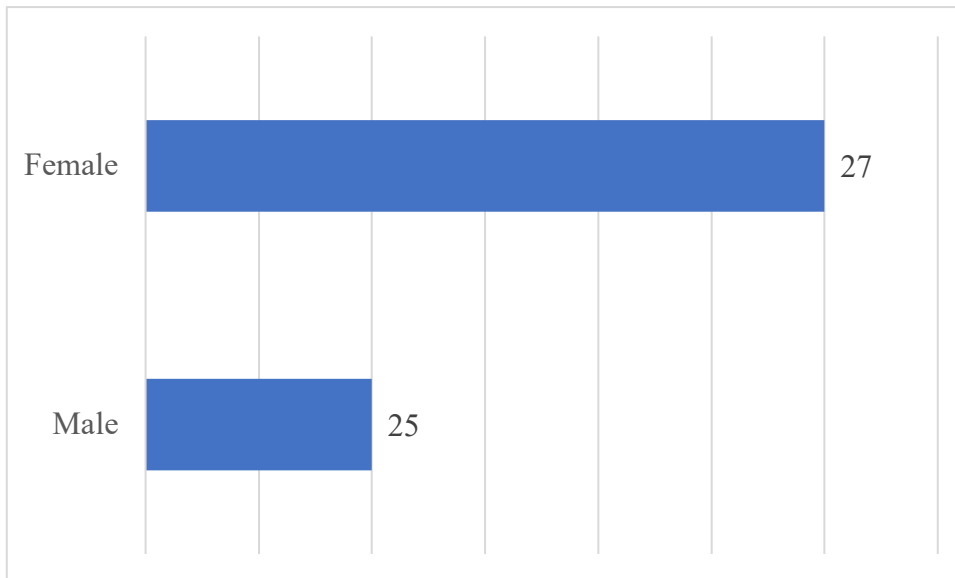


Chart 2.1.1 Size of the company (n=52)

2.2 Research design

The research object of this research paper was to analyse the data found from the questionnaire of social media marketing in small Finnish companies made by the author. To achieve the research object a questionnaire was made. The questions the questionnaire consisted of how small companies' use social media marketing and what are the attitudes towards social media marketing in small Finnish companies. The online questionnaire was chosen for conducting the research. This supported the on-line issue at hand and made it easy to reach the respondents.

The questionnaire consisted of fifteen (15) questions. The questionnaire was divided into three different parts, each having a separate function. The first questions dealt with background data questions about the companies aiming to help to index the data easily. An example of such index data questions could be: What is the number of employees in your company? After the background data

questions, came the section which dealt with questions about the firms overall marketing activities and processes. Rest of the questions dealt solely with social media marketing of the responding companies. Example of one of such questions is: What are the challenges in social media?

The questionnaire was sent through e-mail to 160 respondents. The respondents were chosen randomly, the only specifier of the respondents was that they work in small companies. The questionnaire was open two weeks in May 2018. The questionnaire got undesirable amount answers, only 28 respondents. This forced the author to open the questionnaire again and send it to more companies in November 2018 and May 2019 to get the wanted amount of respondents. After the re-opening of the questionnaire the questionnaire gathered 52 respondents. Despite this the number of respondents remained below desired level of respondents.

The survey was analysed in two different ways. The analysis was based on the answers as they are and then compared to the size of the companies respondents worked for. This was done in order to identify possible similarities or patterns to be identified according to the company size. To help the analyse of the data, Microsoft Excel was used. All the data from the questionnaire was moved to excel for easier data analysis and calculations. This was made to make it easier to analyse the data and to make it clear to see the different or possible patterns of the replies. Also this made it easier to compare, evaluate and analyse the answers. The figures are shown in the analyses part of this research paper.

2.3 Expectations of the study

Based on the theory section of this paper, one of the most expected results of the survey was that all of the responding companies are using social media marketing as one important medium in their marketing tools. It was expected or the prerequisite was that companies use social media marketing and prefer it over traditional marketing. The main social media channels that companies use are: (in order of importance to the recipients) Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. This was not in any way contradictory to the other findings in the field, as the mentioned applications are also the most commonly used. Also a significant contribution to this may be the fact that marketing in these three social media channels is quite easy to start with.

3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

In the results and findings part of the research paper the author analysis the results gotten from the questionnaire. After that the author brings out some findings found from the results of the questionnaire.

3.1 Results

In this empirical part of the research paper, the main results are elaborated. There are also some comparisons and analyses between the answers depending on the size of the company in concern. After the results and the analyses of the questionnaire, there is a part, where the author discusses the answers of the main findings and their possible implications. The answers are also compared to the theoretical part and how the theoretical part supports the empirical part of this research paper.

The first demographic question asked from the respondents was about the gender distribution. The gender distribution of the respondents divided quite evenly. 27 respondents of 52 were female and 25 respondents of 52 were male.

The respondents were asked about the size of the companies. The company sizes affected this questionnaire as it is also analysed based on the size of the company. From all of the respondents, 26 out of 52 work in companies that have less than 10 employees. The smallest amount of the respondents i.e 10 out of 52 work in companies that have 30-50 employees. 16 of the 52 respondents worked in companies that employ 11-30 employees.

The respondents were asked that what is the industry of the respondents' company. As mentioned before the online survey method was chosen to get answers from various different fields of industries. This aimed to find out if social media marketing is widely spread into different fields of businesses. From the different industries most of the respondents worked in the field of advertising 15 of 52

respondents. Most of the respondents whom work in advertising field are also the companies that have 30-50 employees. 10 of 52 respondents are working in the clothing field. 8 of 52 respondents work in the beauty industry, most of the respondents that work in this particular industry have ten or less employees in their companies. Then 19 out of 52 respondents worked in many various fields of industries the respondents work in, such as: Consulting, manufacturing and sports.

Advertising	15
Clothing	10
Beauty	8
Various different industries	19

Table1. The business field (n=52)

The respondents were asked what is their companies' yearly marketing budget. The respondents were given four different choices. The choices they had to choose from were the following, first one being 0-1000€ per year, second one being 1100-10 000€, thirdly 11 000- 100 000€ and the fourth option was something else, what?

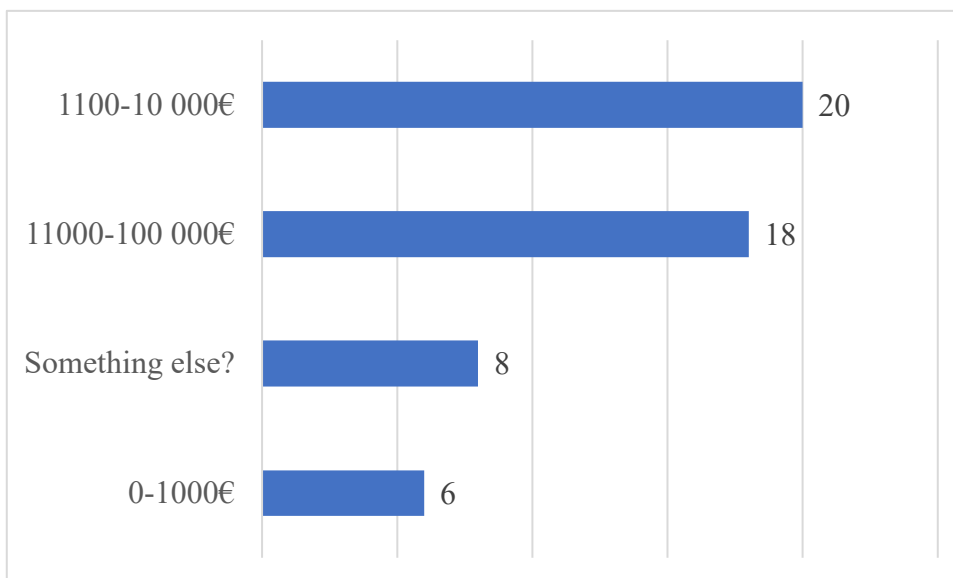


Chart 3.1.1 Marketing budget (n=52)

6 of 52 respondents answered that their companies' yearly budget for marketing is 0-1000 euros. All of the respondents who answered the first option were companies that have ten or less employees. 8 of 52 respondents answered something else, what? All of the respondents that chose this answer were from companies that have 30-50 employees and all, except one, of the respondents worked in advertising companies. They answered that their yearly budget in marketing is more than 100 000€. The answers were the following: 110 000€, 115 000€, 120 000€, 125 000€, 150 000€, 220 000€, 230 000€ and 250 000€. The one exception was a respondent that works in a company that has 10 or less employees. The respondent answered that they do not use any money for their marketing, they do it in Instagram for free. The only way they use "money" in marketing their brand in social media is 10-20 give-away shirts they draw in their account between their followers.

After these four demographic questions the respondents were asked about the importance of social media marketing in small companies. The respondents were given choices from very important to not important.

Major part of the respondents, 42 out of the 52 respondents thought that social media marketing in small companies is very important. 8 out of 52 thought it is important and 1 out of 52 thought that is mostly important or then their opinion towards marketing in social media in small companies is neutral.

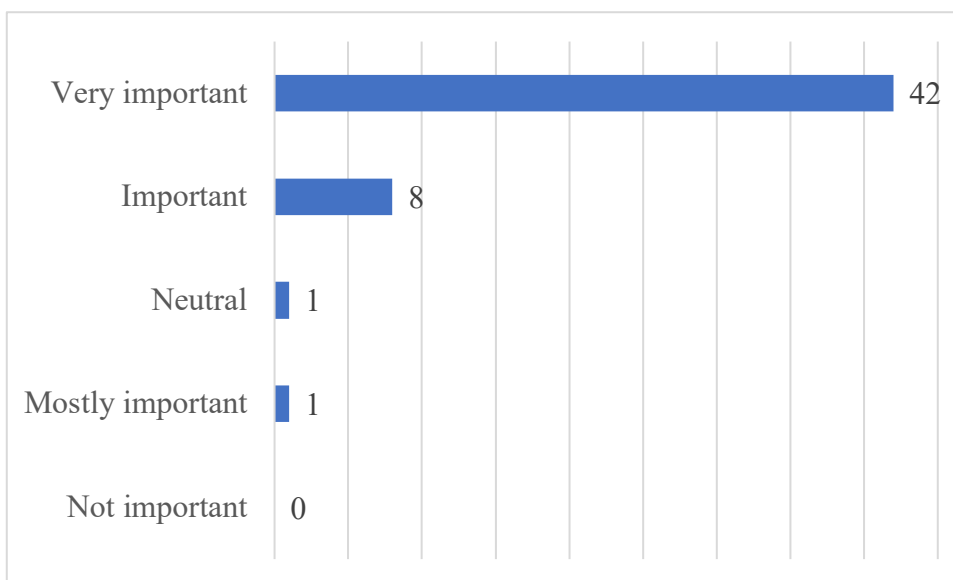


Chart 3.1.2 The importance of Social Media Marketing (n=52)

Then the respondents were asked that does their company use social media marketing. There respondents had two choices to answer yes or no. If the respondents answered no they could skip all rest of the question because they are all concerned of social media marketing and different aspects of it. Gladly, 48 of the 52 respondents answered that the companies they work for use social media marketing. Only 4 of the 52 respondents answered that their companies do not use social media marketing.

The sample size of the next 10 questions is 48 respondents.

The respondents were asked that what social media channels does their companies use for social media marketing and why they use the sites they chose. The respondents had the chance to choose from the seven most popular social media sites. They were Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, different blogs, Twitter and YouTube. Respondents had also the choice to tell what other social media sites they use besides the ones they had an option to choose from. In this question the respondents could choose several different options.

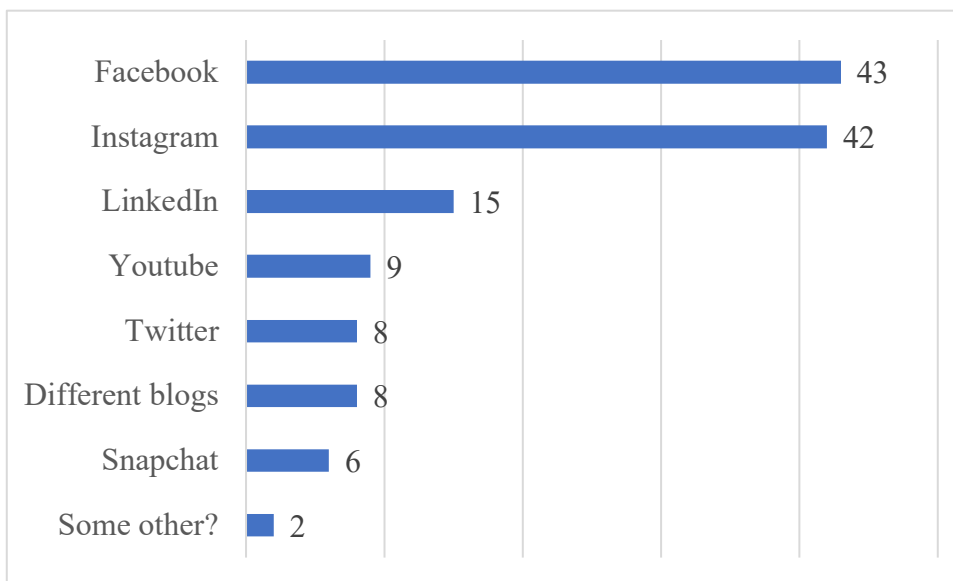


Chart 3.1.3 Social Media Sites (n=48)

As the sample size is 48, 44 of 48 companies use Facebook in their social media marketing. Instagram is the second most popular place that companies use with 42 out of 48 respondents. LinkedIn, Twitter, Blogs and Snapchat all got almost the same amount of answers. The last choice respondents could choose from was some else social media site they use as a marketing tool. The sites some of the companies use that were not on the list are Vimeo, Google Ads and Company specific Internet pages.

The respondents were asked why they use the social media sites they answered on the previous question. The result can be seen below:

Our customers are in those channels	21
They work	3
They are best for our targeting	6
Because they are relevant	1
It is easy to update them with new information	1
We get a good coverage by using those channels	1
They fit to our customers' profile	2
Most popular, biggest audience, easiest to target	1
Each has it's own purpose and target audience	1
It is easy, widely used by our clients and we have been there for some years now	1
Most used platforms for our customer segment	2
Audience is so broad	3
Because of the range of users	5

Table 2. Social Media sites (n=48)

The question asked was an open-ended question. Almost all of the respondents answered the very same reasons why they use previously mentioned social media channels in their marketing. The most popular answer was that the respondents customers are and use the chosen sites. Also 6 out of 48 answered that their target market uses the sites they answered in the previous question. Most of the companies, that have less than 10 employees, answered that they use those previously mentioned social media sites simply because their customers use them.

Then the respondents were asked why they use social media marketing and what are the advantages of it? What are the advantages of social media marketing? This is also one of the research questions presented in this research paper. This question was also an open-ended, because the author wanted to know exactly why the respondents use social media marketin and what are the advatntages of it for small Finnish companies. All of the respondents had the same kind of answers. Easy, cheap, customers use it and broad audience.

After this they were asked that do they prefer social media marketing over traditional marketing? And if they preferred, they were asked why they prefer social media marketing over traditional marketing?

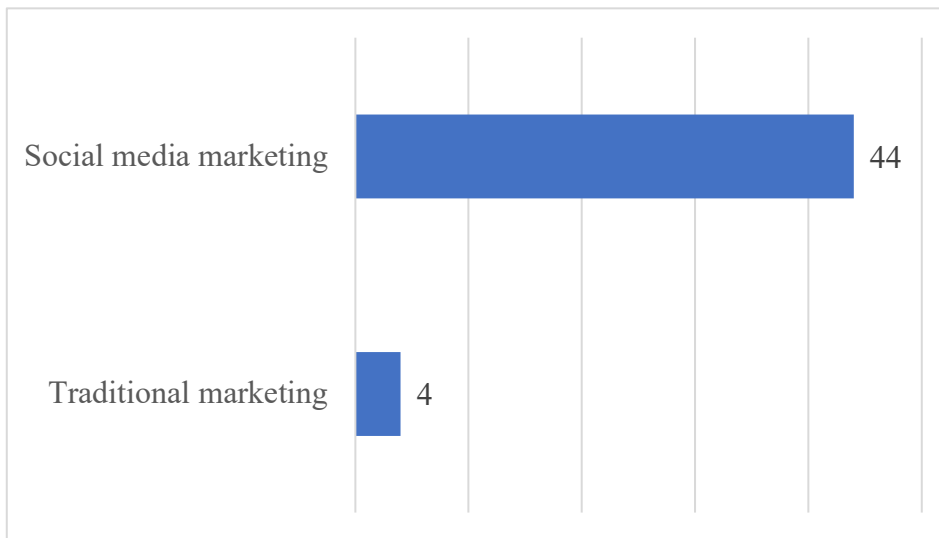


Chart 3.1.4. Social Media Marketing vs. Traditional Marketing (n=48)

4 out of 48 respondents answered that they do not prefer social media marketing over traditional marketing. Most of the respondents 44 out of 48 prefers social media marketing over traditional marketing. The respondents who answered no, to this question were ones that worked in companies with 30-50 employees and all of them work in the field of advertising.

As 44 of the 48 respondents were asked why they prefer social media marketing compared to traditional marketing? In this question all of the same answers came up as on the previous question, why the respondent's companies use social media marketing and what are the advantages of it? Respondents prefer social media marketing, because of the four facts mentioned already earlier. Namely, it is cheap and easy, it influences a broad audience and that customers are in social media.

The respondents were asked how they measure the success of their social media marketing? They had four options to choose from: By likes and followers, we have various different ways to measure it, by the growth in sales or in some other way?

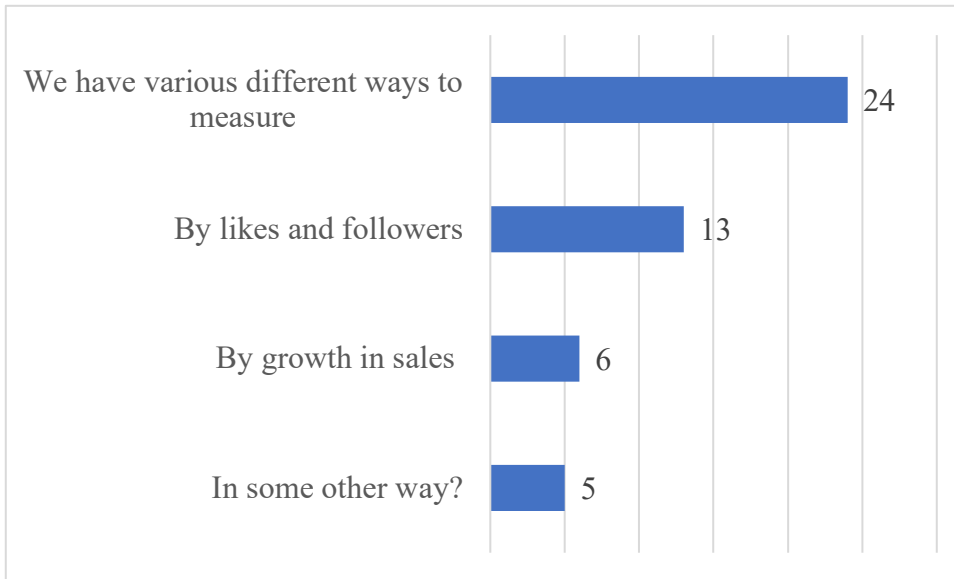


Chart 3.1.5. Measuring the success of Social Media Marketing (n=48)

24 out of 48 answered that they have various different ways they measure their success in social media. 13 out of 48 respondents answered that they measure their success in social media by the likes and followers they get into their social media sites and accounts. 6 out of 48 answered that they measure it by the growth in sales and 5 out of 48 answered that they measure it in some other way. One of the respondents answered that their advertising agency measures their success in social media for them and the other respondents answered that they have their own system how they measure their success in social media. The 6 respondents that answered that they measure their social media marketing success by the growth in sales are in fact companies with less than 10 employees. The respondents who answered that they have various different ways were mostly from the field of advertising.

The second research question of this research paper was what are the challenges in social media marketing? This was also asked from the respondents. The two biggest challenges that rise from the replies are firstly that it is really hard to stand out from the crowd and secondly that social media marketing is in fact very time consuming.

The two last question were that what do the respondents think are the future trends in social media marketing and what tips would they give for social media marketing? All of the respondents thought that video and sound are the future trends in social media marketing. Few of the respondents thought that there are coming some new cool innovative things in for social media marketing. The tips the respondents answered where that everyone should start using social media marketing if you already don't and just try to stand out from the crowd in some way.

3.2 Findings

One major issue that became evident in the survey was clear. Even though we are living in times where social media is part of daily life, not all small Finnish companies use social media as part of their marketing. However, after the results of this survey, it can be clearly stated that every small company should use social media. Even if it doesn't benefit the company in terms of sales, it enables the small company to get visibility and thus enhance the brand image of the company, because you can never have enough of it.

The critic of the questionnaire is that the sample size is quite small, smaller than expected and that not all of the respondents' companies use social media marketing which reduced the sample size even more. Because of the small sample size the questionnaire had to be opened a few times to get a larger amount of respondents. Most of the answers were gladly what was expected. The survey clearly shows that social media Marketing is worth pursuing in small companies. It is easy to use, and it helps small companies in their marketing because of its various positive reasons. Some of them being that it is cheap, target the customers well and it is easy to use.

The questionnaire gathered altogether 52 responses, with female respondents being 27 out of 52 and the rest 25 were male. As most of the respondents thought that social media marketing in small Finnish companies is very important, shows the fact that in the future social media has huge chances to become the leading way to do marketing. Because most of the respondents answered that social media marketing is very important to small companies in Finland the amount of respondents whose companies use social media marketing was also quite high. Only four of the respondents' companies do not use social media marketing. As already mentioned in the theoretical part about the most popular social media channels being Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn etc. According to the results they are still the main social networks used in marketing at least in small companies in Finland.

The biggest finding of the questionnaire was that small companies prefer social media marketing over traditional marketing, because of its many advantages. Biggest ones being that it is very cheap, quite easy and it reaches big audiences when comparing it to traditional marketing. It also came quite clear that social media marketing in small Finnish companies is used because of the three factors mentioned above that makes companies prefer social media marketing over traditional marketing.

The two research questions were also asked in the survey. What are the advantages in social media marketing for small Finnish companies? As it came clear in the survey that most of the small

companies use social media marketing because it is very easy to use it does not need any own marketing expert necessarily to use social media marketing and to get positive results of it. The use of it is also very cheap. It makes it great for small companies because usually they do not have as much money to put into marketing as big companies do. The audience in social media is very broad and this makes it easy for the companies to get their marketing for their target market. Also the fact that customers use social media, makes it beneficial for the marketers to use it as well. As almost all of the respondents answered that their customers are already in social media. For this reason, they have to market their products and brands there too.

What are the challenges of social media marketing in Finland? As in all marketing also social media marketing has its challenges. According to the survey the biggest challenge in social media marketing is standing out. Because it is so popular and so many companies are already using it, it is hard to stand out from the crowd. Social media marketing is also very time consuming and takes effort very much.

When looking at the result of the questionnaire almost all of the respondents thought that the future of social media marketing is going to be sound and video. Also they thought that the future will hold many innovative new ways to do marketing in social media.

To conclude the findings of the questionnaire most of the small companies in Finland use social media marketing and the companies that are not using it should start to use it. Social media in general and marketing in social media is growing at a fast pace, it can be stated when looking at the results of the questionnaire that social media marketing is slowly but surely taking the place of traditional marketing. The advantages of social media are stronger than its disadvantages, which also makes social media marketing popular. Because of its many advantages companies are using it and slowly leaving traditional marketing behind. For small companies social media marketing is beneficial because it can bring very much awareness for the companies. The results of the questionnaire supports and reinforce the theory of this paper.

CONCLUSIONS

The social media is a or at least should be vital part of modern marketing in small companies today. For some small companies it is the only way they communicate with their customers and its the only way they do marketing. Social media marketing has many benefits, but like any marketing activity, it has also challenges.

The research problem of this paper was that there is not much research on the topic why social media is used in small Finnish companies. The aim of this research paper was to find out why social media is used in small Finnish companies. This is why the main research question is why social media marketing is used in small Finnish companies? In addition to the main research question there are two other questions the paper is trying to answer, are what are the advantages of social media marketing for small companies and what are the disadvantages of it. As already mentioned before the main research question of this paper was to find out why social media marketing is used in small Finnish companies? The paper also aims to answer the two following questions:

- 1.What are the challenges of Social Media Marketing?
- 2.What are the advantages in Social Media Marketing for small companies?

To find out the answers for the research questions, a questionnaire was conducted. The questionnaire consisted of fifteen (15) questions. The questionnaire was divided into three different parts, each having a separate function. The questionnaire was sent to 160 companies, companies with 50 or less employees and it gathered 52 answers altogether. The questionnaire was sent through e-mail to the respondents.

According to the questionnaire social media marketing is preferred more relevant marketing tool when comparing it to traditional marketing. The answer for one the research questions of what are the advantages of social media marketing in small companies. Social media marketing is used in small companies because of its many positive aspects. Social media marketing has more positive aspects than it has negative ones. Social media marketing is used in small Finnish companies because it is

cheap compared to the traditional marketing, this makes it an easy choice for small companies to use social media marketing because small companies usually do not have big marketing budgets. Social media marketing is very easy, especially for small companies. Companies do not have to have any special education for social media marketing. Different social media sites have very big audiences, which makes it easy for marketers to reach big audiences at the same time. It came clear that Facebook is still the most popular social media site when marketing in social media, even though there are coming new social media sites everyday.

The answer for the other research question that what are the disadvantages of social media marketing. The biggest negative aspect of social media marketing that came up in the questionnaire was that “it is very hard to stand out from the crowd”. As so many small Finnish companies use social media marketing it is very hard to be unique there and hard to stand out from the many marketers in social media also because there are huge amounts of channels from where to choose from. In social media it is very important to choose the right channels for the companies to market, the channels should be selected carefully. The marketers should find the channels where they want to focus on and the channels where their customers are. It is a simple fact that there are too many channels to choose from and the marketers can not be in all of the channels. The choosing of the social media channels can make or brake companies marketing in social media. As the author wrote that social media marketing is easy and you don't need any special education for it, it still does not put away the fact that social media marketing is very time consuming. To market in social media you have to be active and innovative in the chosen channels, so that you can be active you must spend time in the chosen social media channel. Today social media is used in many small Finnish companies and is very popular way to do marketing, it gives the chance of big audiences for small companies that would not necessarily have money to do any kind of marketing.

To answer the main research question of why small Finnish companies use social media marketing is purely because of its advantages and the main advantages being that it is cheap and it can gain big audiences. For small companies it is very cost effective and they should try to use social media marketing as much as they can.

To conclude the research paper, it can be stated that social media marketing should be used in small Finnish companies, because of its great advantages. The biggest two ones being that it is very cheap, so small companies do not have to put masses of money into their marketing because they can do it themselves. Also it reaches big audiences, usually with little money for marketing it is very hard to reach many consumers at the same, but with social media marketing when choosing the right channels

to market, makes it much easier when comparing it to traditional marketing or other types of marketing. The respondents thought that in the future social media marketing will be more sound and video related. They also thought that social media marketing will become more and more innovative all the time and will evolve with a huge speed because of technology. In social media marketing the size of the company is not the crucial maker, the winners in social media marketing are the companies that find the right channels and have the most innovative content.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Social media marketing in small companies

I am doing my bachelor thesis on social media marketing in small companies (50 and under employees). I would appreciate if you could help me with my thesis and answer the questions below. You can answer in Finnish or in English. Thank you for advance!

Gender of the respondent

- Male
- Female

Number of employees in your company

- <10
- 11-30
- 30-50

The questionnaire continues

Industry of your company

Lyhyt vastausteksti

How much is your yearly budget on marketing?

1. 0-1000e
2. 1100-10 000e
3. 11 000- 100 000e
4. Something else, what?

In small companies Social Media marketing is..

1. Very Important
2. Important

5. Not Important

Does your company use Social Media marketing? (If you answer here no, you can skip rest of the questions)

- Yes
- No

Who handles Social Media marketing in your firm?

- The marketing team
- The employees
- The CEO
- Someone else, who?

Which of the following social media channels your company uses? (You can

The questionnaire continues

Which of the following social media channels your company uses? (You can choose several)

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- LinkedIn
- Different blogs
- Twitter
- Youtube
- Muu...

Why do you prefer these social media channels? (The social media channels you answered on the previous question)

Pitkä vastausteksti

Why do you use social media marketing?

Pitkä vastausteksti

Do you prefer social media marketing over traditional marketing

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes to the previous question tell why?

Pitkä vastausteksti

The questionnaire continues

How do you measure the success of your social media marketing?

- By likes and followers
- We have various different ways to measure it
- By the growth in sales
- In some other way, what?

What are the challenges in social media marketing?

Pitkä vastaukset

What do you think are the future trends in social media marketing?

Pitkä vastaukset

What tips in general would you give for social media marketers?

Lyhyt vastaus = Short answer Pitkä vastaus = Long answer

As google forms was used for the online questionnaire the words in google forms appear in the language of the country where the questionnaire was done.

Appendix 2. Questionnaire results

Q1: Gender

Man: 25 respondents of 52

Woman: 27 respondents of 52

Q2: Number of employees in the company

<10: 26 of 52

11-30: 16 of 52

30-50: 10 of 52

Q3. Industry of the company

Advertising	15 of 52
Clothing	10 of 52

Beauty	8 of 52
Various different industries	19 of 52

Q4. Yearly budget on marketing

0-1000e: 6 of 52

1100e-10 000e: 20 of 52

11 000- 100 000e: 18of 52

Something else, what?: 8 of 52 (from 100 000e- 250 000e)

Q5. Social Media marketing in small companies is

Very Important: 42 of 52

Important: 8 of 52

Mostly important: 1 of 52

Not important: 0 of 52

Neutral: 1 of 52

Q6. Does your company use Social Media marketing?

Yes: 48 of 52

No: 4 of 52

Q7. What Social Media channels does your company use? (Respondents could choose multiple)

Facebook: 43 of 48

Instagram: 42 of 48

LinkedIn: 15 of 48

YouTube: 9 of 48

Different blogs: 8 of 48

Twitter: 8 of 48

Snapchat: 6 of 48

Some other, what?: 2 of 48

Q8. Why do you prefer these social media channels? (The social media channels you answered on the previous question)

Our customers are in those channels	15 of 48
They work	1 of 48
They are best for our targeting	6 of 48
Because they are relevant	1 of 48
It is easy to update them with new information	1 of 48
We get a good coverage by using those channels	1 of 48
They fit to our customers' profile	5 of 48
Most popular, biggest audience, easiest to target	1 of 48
Each has it's own purpose and target audience	1 of 48
It is easy, widely used by our clients and we have been there for some years now	1 of 48
Most used platforms for our customer segment	2 of 48
Audience is so broad	5 of 48
Because of the range of users	6 of 48

Q9. Why does your company use Social Media marketing?

- because it is relevant
- Is a efficient way to reach people
- Easy to focus for wanted customer group
- Because of the visibility
- It's cheaper, social media is where my customers are and I can reach more people easier.
- because it is easy to update it
- It is easy for me to do it by myself
- It's efficient.
- To promote and sell our services
- targeting
- Free and effective
- It's a fun way to show what we sell
- It provides a good platform for informing about our services
- we post new products and news on our FB
- it is cheap and fast
- It is good addition to our traditional marketing and it has brought us new customers
- we are on-line and our customers are there too
- good way to promote our products and news
- It is easy in a small company to get marketing at a low price
- Easier approach to customers
- Easy
- It is easy and cheap compared to traditional marketing
- It reaches young people

Easy, simple and cheap
 Easy and because of the big audience
 It is easy and every employee can update it.
 It is easy
 Because it is easy for small brands to get noticed there
 It reaches a big audience
 it reaches our target market
 because it is cheap
 To make everyone see our photos
 it is easy and way cheaper than other ways of marketing
 easy and cheap good way to advertise
 it is easy
 easy and cheap
 easy
 easy and big audience
 it is easy and useful
 It is easy for us to do it and gain new customers
 Because our employees can do the marketing there also
 easy, cheap
 because we can do it ourselves
 it is easy marketing for us
 because we can do marketing ourselves
 cheap and easy to get new customers
 it is easy and cheap, does not cost much

Q10. Do you prefer Social Media marketing over traditional marketing?

Yes: 44 of 48
 No: 4 of 48

Q11. If you answered yes to the previous question tell why?

It is cheaper
 Cheap and easy
 price
 In social media We are able to reach our demographic better
 More customers can be targeted in a larger region with better focus on certain groups
 It is efficient
 It's cheaper, social media is where my customers are and I can reach more people easier.
 It is easy to get more younger clients from social media
 More people are able to see the ad
 It is more traceable and direct
 fluent, accurate, quick, on-time, easy
 Cheaper
 it is cheaper and results can be seen
 our customers are on-line
 Effectiveness, better CPM, easier to apply guerilla marketing strategies etc etc

Easy
 Cheap
 Easy and fun
 Audience and money
 Easy easy easy
 because of the price of it
 It is the best way for marketing today
 price is the main factor
 it reaches young people
 it is very much cheaper
 it is the new way of marketing
 it is the new way of marketing
 price
 traditional costs so much
 easy
 easy and does not cost as much as traditional marketing
 because young people are there and they are our target market
 It is so much cheaper, also quicker and easier
 It is easy
 reaches more people
 it is cheaper than traditional marketing
 because it is easy for us
 it is easy
 easy and cheap
 because of the price of it

Q12. How do you measure the success of your social media marketing?

We have various different ways to measure it: 24 of 48
 By likes and followers: 13 of 48
 By growth in sales: 6 of 48
 In some other way?: 5 of 48

Q13. What are the challenges in Social Media marketing?

To stand out
 To stand out
 to stand out
 How to reach the right target group, Facebook's continuously changing protocols and algorithms
 It's full of companies and maybe the two hardest things are finding your customers and second would be standing out.
 In social media you have to be very active and it is difficult because it is so time consuming
 To reach the right group of people
 Content handling and frequency required
 lack of systematic approach, both in frequency and content
 Time to make great content
 time required for the updating

it takes a lot of time to take photos, up load and post etc.

it takes a lot of constant effort

It feels like I don't have enough time for it

time consuming and every click has a cost

hard to ensure same message on every channel

Content production is time consuming.

Wide audience

It is difficult to handle many channels and be active in them

How to be unique there?

To be unique because it is so popular

To stand out from the crowd

To try to stand out

The fact that there are many competitors there

Very much rivals

to please everyone

that there is very much competition

to stand out from the crowd

the range of target market

many competitors

how to stand out

people

takes much time

to choose the right channel

to stand out from the crowd

to find the right channels for our customers

to post on the right time to get the most attention

to choose the right channels where to market

to reach all potential customers

it takes time and you have to be active

to stand out

to stand out and it is quite time consuming

its har to stand out from all of the other beauty salons

Q.14 What do you think are the future trends in social media marketing?

video

sound

Video marketing

Video marketing

video and sound

sound

Just sound beside the video and photos

Move from free marketing on social media to paid social media marketing such as posts on snapchat and instagram.

The future trends are more innovative marketing in social media

The younger generation becomes experts in social media

Partnerships with well-known people.

More fractions to be used and more direct approaches will emerge

more specific audiences, smaller groups, new channels

Videos

closed and carefully selected groups
FB 2.0 or similar developments
similar to instagram
I don't know
do not know
more channels to use/choose from
Maybe video marketing
Increasing customer involvement in business development
Dont know
To let the audience be part of the marketing ideas
Sound
Video and sound
New innovational ads
Voice
Innovation
video sound
sound?
Maybe videos
maybe sound
videos and innovative marketing campaigns in social media
i dont know
innovative marketing
videomarketing
maybe videos and sound

Q15. What tips in general would you give for social media marketers?

do it
Use it because it is easy
use it
Create your own personal story
Know your targeting groups
Tey to stand out
Do a plan. Don't use alot of money right a way, test first what gives you sales.
Try to stand out in as many social media channels as you can
Take advantage of it as much as you can because it is so cheap and you can do it by yourself
Be creative and don't be afraid of doing something different.
Be honest and make contacting easy
your audience is there, so you have to be there also:)
Be inspiring, informative
just do it!
behave like you would in any other media
n/a
I don't have any
be original
take good pics
Do it because it is easy
You gain much better results with proper content than just using €€€.
Do it it is easy
It is cheap! Why wouldn't you use it?
Remember to be active!

Be unique

Use it because you can!

Try to stand out

Use it, it can be the only marketing channel your company uses because of the audience it reaches

Be active and be in as many social media sites as you can!

use it as much as you can

use it.

do it it easy and cheap

do it

do it use it show it to the world

be who you are and show it in SM

Try to make you stand out in some way

Please use it!

find the best channels for you

easy to use so use it

use it because it it easy for small companies

use it

stand out and try to be unique

choose the right channels

