Social Media Marketing
- A case study of Saab Automobile AB

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Master’s Thesis in International Business 15 ECTS
Department of Economics and Informatics
University West
Spring term 2011
Acknowledgement

Having now completed our study and written our Master Thesis in International Business, we are very pleased with our performance and it has been a very educational process. The topic we chose has been very interesting due to its relevancy in today’s marketing communication.

First of all we would like to thank our case company Saab Automobile AB and our respondents Marketing Strategy Manager Jonas Larsson and Ludvig Liljeqvist who is currently working with Social and Emerging Media, who have provided their time and commitment and have made it possible for us to conduct this research.

We would also like to thank our supervisor Akbar Khodabandehloo who have supported and helped us during this process.

University West, Trollhättan 2011-05-31

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Abstract

Title: Social Media Marketing – A case study of Saab Automobile AB

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Course: Master Thesis in International Business, Spring semester 2011, University West Trollhättan

Keywords: Social media, marketing communication, Saab, marketing integration, marketing strategy.

Background and problem discussion: Today companies literally fight for consumers' attention. Competition has forced both marketers and companies to seek new unconventional ways to communicate with the market. This has lead to the development of the phenomenon known as social media. This form of media describes a selection of user generated content created by consumers’ to educate each other about products, brands, services, personalities and issues. Social media have become a major factor in influencing different aspects of consumer behavior including awareness, information acquisition, opinions, attitudes, purchase behavior, and post-purchase communication and evaluation.

Purpose: Our study focuses on describing how and explaining why companies use social media in their marketing communication strategy.

Methodology: We have used a hermeneutic and qualitative approach in our study. Our research is both descriptive and explanatory. The study is also of an abductive nature, relying on empirical data and theoretical conceptions. Our empirical data was collected through a personal interview with our case company, and through the company’s social media applications.

Conclusions: Companies should use social media in their marketing communications because it allows them to inform their customers and create a two-way communication. This communication can help companies to influence consumers and differentiate themselves. It can also help strengthen the corporate identity, build confidence for the company as well as create relationships. Social media is a cost effective way to become global and create reach.
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1. Introduction

In this chapter we will introduce the reader to our subject of interest. First we will describe the background and problem discussion of the study. Then we present the study's purpose and delimitations. In the last part of this introductory chapter there is an outline that shows the thesis logical structure and hierarchical flow of information.

1.1 Background

In the old days, traditional, non-targeted advertising via newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and direct mail where the only way to communicate with the audience. These media make targeting specific buyers with individualized messages very difficult (Scott 2010, p.6). For a long time commercial media have been used to convey messages designed to develop consumers’ attitudes and feelings towards brands. Today, many of the messages are designed to provoke audiences into responding, either physically, cognitively, or emotionally. (Baines et al 2010, p. 415).

The tools and strategies for communicating with customers have changed significantly with the emergence of the phenomenon known as social media, also referred to as consumer-generated media. This form of media describes a variety of new sources of online information that are created, initiated, spread and used by consumers’ intent on educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities and issues. Social media have become a major factor in influencing various aspects of consumer behavior including awareness, information acquisition, opinions, attitudes, purchase behavior, and post-purchase communication and evaluation. (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Prior to the web, organizations had only two significant choices to attract attention; buy expensive advertising or get third party ink from the media. But now the web has changed the rules. The web is not television, the web is different. Instead of one way interruption, the web marketing is about delivering useful content at just the precise moment that a buyer needs it. (Scott 2010, p.7). Organizations that understand the new rules of marketing and PR develop relationships directly with consumers like you and me (Scott 2010, p.5). The web has also opened a tremendous opportunity to reach niche buyers directly with targeted messages that cost a fraction of what big-budget advertising costs (Scott 2010, p.6).
The development of social media has had a profound impact on the way client organizations communicate with their audiences. Generally, there has been a trend to reduce the amount of traditional media and an increase in the amount of digital and online media (social media). (Baines et al 2010, p. 413). Digital technologies, and the impact on digital television, internet, email, viral marketing, blogging, and social networking sites, now represents major forms of interactive and direct marketing opportunities (Baines et al 2010, p. 416). According to Baines et al (2010, p. 413) the balance within the mix of media used by organizations is changing and new ways of delivering messages are evolving. As a result of an increasing internet penetration in developed countries there has been a development and adoption of digital resources, from mobile technologies to internet and social media resources such as blogs, social networking sites, wikis, and similar multimedia sharing services. These digital trends are not only altering consumer expectations of their interaction with the web or an organization, but they are also changing how we market in the digital space. (Baines et al 2011, p. 627).

Eric Frenchman, John McCain’s online consultant and Chief Internet Strategist commented on the candidates’ use of social media throughout the presidential campaign as: “The great equalizer” and the “One place where you can compete or even beat your competition with less money” (Halligan & Shah, 2010, p. 8)

1.2 Problem discussion

Marketing communications, or promotion as it was originally called, is one element of the marketing mix. It is used to communicate elements of a company’s offerings to target audiences. This offer might refer to a product, a service, or the organization itself as it tries to build its reputation. There are communications arising from unplanned or unintended experiences (empty stock shelves or accidents) and there are planned marketing communications that are built on models and theories. (Baines et al 2011, p. 369). Communication is the process by which individuals share meaning. It is necessary, therefore, that participants are able to interpret the meanings embedded in the message they receive, and then, as far as the sender is concerned, able to respond coherently. (Baines et al 2011, p.371-372).
Today producers literally fight for consumers' attention. Competition has forced both marketers and companies to seek new unconventional ways to get their message across to their audience. The increasing noise and the frequent promotion commercialized society have also made consumers jaded when it comes to advertising. One can sense a greater skepticism and disbelief from consumers' side against the companies and their products and services. This has led to consumers now more than ever trust their friends, neighbors and colleagues instead of traditional advertising messages that are sent out as to which products or services to be consumed. (Marjamäki & Svensson, 2008).

Social media allow firms to engage in timely and direct end-consumer contact at fairly low cost and higher levels of efficiency than can be achieved with more traditional communication tools. This makes social media not only relevant for large multinational firms, but also for small and medium sized companies, and even nonprofit and governmental agencies. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). One may be wondering what the advantage is of having a presence on a social networking site like Facebook when the business already has a regular website. The answer is reach. You want your message and story to reach as many people as possible. To maximize your reach, you need to have a presence where people are hanging out and increasingly they are hanging out on social networking sites. (Halligan & Shah, 2010, p. 89).

A unique role of social media is that customers can use it to communicate to one another. This has resulted in that a person has the tools to tell 10 million people if they are dissatisfied or satisfied. In a sense, this role of social media – enabling customers to talk to one another – is an extension of traditional word-of-mouth communication. The question for managers becomes; “how can this power be harnessed for the benefit of the organization?” While companies cannot directly control consumer-to-consumer messages, the do have the ability to influence the conversations that consumers have with one another. (Mangold & Fauld, 2009).

In order to stand out from all the media clutter and find their niche companies and marketers must segment the market by defining customers with similar values. Segmenting the market appropriately allows marketers to reach people who can ignite the fuse of interest among others. (Wright, 2010). Marketers that have the understanding of their brand and positioning on the market also have the vision. The social media strategy should therefore fit with the established brand identity. But it is important to not blindly apply the same strategies for social media as for offline broadcast because that has shown to be one of the worst mistakes.
Instead you should not be limited by historical theories but be willing to come up with new ideas and be willing to take risks. (Zarrella, 2010, p. 185). Done right, social media is more than a buzz and will produce winning results (Goldner, 2010).

Social media is a very active and fast-moving domain. What may be up-to-date today could have disappeared from the virtual landscape tomorrow. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

1.3 Research questions

Regarding to the problem discussion the following research questions will be addressed:

- **RQ1**: How do companies use social media in their marketing communication?
- **RQ2**: Why do companies use social media?

1.4 Purpose

The main purpose of this study is to obtain knowledge and describe how companies use social media in their marketing communications. We also want to explain why companies use social media. We are interested in describing and explaining issues concerning how companies can efficiently use social media with the help of integration, targeting the right people, use of strategies and tactics and by considering the future of social media marketing. Our ambition after this study is to give recommendations and present a strategy on how businesses should use social media in their marketing communication.
1.5 Thesis outline

In the introductory chapter we have presented the background, problem discussion, our research questions and the thesis purpose. This chapter lays the foundation for our study. The method section describes our approach and how we have proceeded with our study. The theoretical framework contains theories that we consider necessary to carry out our investigation and answer our research questions. The fourth chapter presents data that we have collected. In the last two chapters of our report, the reader will take part of our data analysis, our conclusions and recommendations, based on our theoretical framework and the collected material.

*Figure 1: Thesis outline*
2. Methodology

In this chapter, we motivate and describe our choice of research design and methods. Here we also present our study approach, sampling and data collection methods. We also discuss what approach we used in our thesis and how we chose to collect our primary and secondary data.

2.1 Hermeneutics

According to Thurén (1991, p. 15-17) positivists (analyst) use facts that we can experience with our senses and figure out with logic. They like to discover how the world looks through careful studies and experiments. Hermeneutics interpret the meaning of texts, symbols, acts and experiences. The interpreter assumes that reality cannot be seen in figures or by experiments. They do not think one can interpret anything objectively and that the results will be different for different observers. (Thurén, 1991, p. 16-17). A main theme in hermeneutics has been that the meaning of a part can only be understood if it is related to the whole. This is shown in the so called hermeneutic circle. The part can only be understood from the whole, and the whole only from the parts. (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000, s.53).

![Hermeneutic Circle Diagram](image)

Figure 2: The hermeneutic circle (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000, s.53).

In our study we have used hermeneutics as an interpretative approach. Our collected data in itself does not give us any specific information before it is inserted into the whole, i.e. interpreted according to our research questions. We want to read between the lines in our result in order to create an understanding of how and why companies are using social media in their marketing.
2.2 Qualitative research

Quantitative data usually consists of numbers, while qualitative data usually consist of words and pictures. A quantitative study is best when you know a lot about the problem that will be examined. A qualitative research, however, is better when you want to get a holistic view and understanding of the context. (Christensen et al 2001, p. 66-67). According to Merriam (1994, p. 83), qualitative data consists of detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions and observed behaviors, the direct quotes from various people about their experiences, attitudes, opinions and thoughts, and of extracts or the entire section from the protocols, letters, registers and case descriptions. These descriptions, quotes and excerpts are raw data from the empirical reality, it is information that runs deep and that provides detailed images. Quantitative information can tell us how many, how much and how the allocation looks like. All information is qualitative in nature. This means that before anything can be quantified, they must be identified, named, described and understood. Sharan B. Merriam quotes Ratcliffe, J. W, in her book: "Numbers, formulas, and words have common characteristics - they are all abstract and symbolic representations of the reality but it is not this reality". (Merriam, 1994, p. 84). We decided to first find an appropriate theoretical framework that we needed to understand our empirical study; the empirical study contains an interview with Marketing Strategy Manager Jonas Larssson and Ludvig Liljeqvist who are working with Social and Emerging Media, at our case company Saab Automobile AB as well as observations of the case company’s use of the different applications. We chose to do a study of qualitative nature, since we wanted to have a holistic view of the context and go deep in the material to find out as much as possible to answer our research questions.

2.3 Abductive approach

The deductive approach is when you develop a theory and hypothesis (or hypotheses) and design a research strategy to test the hypothesis (Saunders et al. 2009, p. 124). Deductive approach is based on a general rule, arguing that this explains a particular case of interest. This approach is often less risky. (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008, p. 55). The inductive approach is when you would collect data and develop a theory as a result of your data analysis (Saunders et al. 2009, p. 124). Inductive approach is based on a variety of individual cases and argues that a link which has been observed in all of these cases also is generally valid. (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008, p. 54).
These two methods are usually regarded as the only option, but it would be difficult to force all the research into in to only two approaches. Abduction is probably the method which is actually used in many case studies. It means that a case is interpreted from a hypothetical overall pattern, as if it were correct, explaining the case. The interpretation should then be validated by new observations (new cases). This method has some features of both induction and deduction, but it is important to note that the abduction, either formally or informally, is not a simple mix of the two or can be reduced to them; it adds new and completely own elements. Abduction is based on empirical facts as well as induction, but does not reject theoretical conceptions and lies in the sense closer to deduction. The analysis of empirical data, for example, may well be combined with, or pre-empted by, the study of earlier theory in the literature, not by application to individual cases, but as an inspiration for the detection of patterns that gives understanding. (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008, p. 55-56).

In our thesis we have chosen to have an abductive approach. During our research process an alternation between theory and empiricism is made, which both gradually are reinterpreted in the light of each other. We do not argue that our research is the absolute truth. Instead we try to explain a particular phenomenon.

2.4 Descriptive and explanatory study

If a researcher wishes to clarify the understanding of a problem he or she usually uses an exploratory study. It involves performing a journey of discovery without knowing where it will lead. Exploratory studies usually answer "what" questions. When using a descriptive study, one always has a clear picture of the problem but do not have updated information. The descriptive study tries to answer the "how" questions. If the researcher already knows most part of the problem that will be investigated, but do not know why it is that way, then he or she can use an explanatory study. An explanatory study is based on descriptive and exploratory studies, but goes one step further as it tries to find a cause. (Christensen et al 2001, p. 54-55). In our thesis we have used both descriptive and explanatory purpose. We want to describe how companies efficiently use social media with the help of integration, targeting the right people, use of strategies and tactics and by considering the future of social media marketing, and also explain why companies use social media. We also want to find the cause to why and how companies use social media.
2.5 Case study strategy

The research strategy determines the type of investigation one will perform and what kind of results you are able to obtain (Christensen et al, 2001, p. 69). According to Christensen et al. (2001, p. 75) there are four types of strategies, cross-sectional, longitudinal, case study and experimental approach. The most common approach to market research is cross-sectional approach, because it is wide and the target population is being studied at a given time. Cross-sectional approach is often used in quantitative studies when one wants to study various cases at any given time. A market that is based on a longitudinal approach is usually also of the quantitative nature and the result is generally presented in the form of statistics. Case study approach is used in qualitative studies, when you want to study a small number of respondents. It would then not have the statistical representation but instead be rich in information and generate insight cases. Experimental approach is used when you have a clear picture of what you want to examine. It is suitable for finding the causal relationship. This means finding the independent variables that will affect the dependent variable. (Christensen et al 2001, p. 75-83). A case study is the opposite of a study that is seeking answers on the surface with the help of many respondents. A case study is more narrow and deep. The purpose of an investigation that goes deep is to penetrate the surface and create a better understanding of the underlying patterns and causes. That is why we have chosen to do a case study in our thesis; we want to go deep in to our chosen case company, result and answers. We chose Saab Automobile AB because it is a big global company that uses different types of social media in their marketing communication. The company was also early adopters of social media marketing and we would like to know their opinions and thoughts about this phenomenon. With this in mind we believe that we can get ordinate answers to our research questions. Our study will also have a qualitative research method, and we will only perform one interview.

2.6 Sampling

For many research questions and objectives, it will be impossible to either collect or analyze all the data available owning to restrictions of time, money and often access. Sampling techniques provide a range of methods that enables one to reduce the amount of data one need to collect by considering only data from a sub-group rather than all possible cases or elements. Some research will require sample data to generalize about all the cases from which your sample has been selected. The full set of cases from which a sample is taken is called a
population. In sampling, the term population is not used in its normal sense, as the full set of cases need not necessarily be people. (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 210-212).

According to Christensen et al. (2001, p. 113-118), there are two types of sampling, probability sampling and non-probability sample. With probability sampling each unit or respondent will be randomly selected and all have an equal chance to be included in the sample. This means that it is possible to answer the research questions and to achieve objectives that require you to estimate statistically the characteristics of the population from the sample (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 213). Non-probability sampling, in contrast, means that the chance that respondents will be included in the sample cannot be predicted. It is impossible to the answer research questions or to address objectives that require you to make statistical inferences about the characteristics of the population. (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 213).

Having chosen a suitable sampling frame and established the actual size required one need to select the most appropriate sampling technique to obtain a representative sample and answer the research questions (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 221). In probability and non-probability sampling there are numerous sampling techniques:
Simple random sampling involves selecting the sample at random from the sampling frame using random number tables, a computer or an online random number generator. Systematic sampling involves selecting the sample at regular intervals from the sampling frame. Stratified random sampling is a modification of random sampling in which you divide the population into two or more relevant and significant strata based on one or a number of attributes. Cluster sampling is similar to stratified sampling as you need to divide the population into discrete groups prior to sampling. The groups are termed clusters in this form of sampling and can be based on any naturally occurring grouping. Multi-stage sampling is a development of cluster sampling. It is normally used to overcome problems associated with geographically dispersed population when face-to-face contact is needed or where it is expensive or time consuming to conduct a sampling frame for a large geographical area. Quota sampling is entirely non-random and is normally used for interview survey. It is based on premise that your sample will represent the population as the variability in your sample for various quota variables is the same as that in the population. Purposive or judgemental sampling enables you to use your judgement to select cases that best will enable you to answer your research questions and to meet you objectives. This form of sampling is often used when working with very small samples. Snowball sampling is commonly used when it is difficult to identify members of the desired population, for example people who are working while claiming unemployment benefits. Convenience sampling involves selecting unsystematically those cases that are easiest to obtain for your sample, such as the person interviewed at random in a shopping center for a television program or the book about entrepreneurship you find at the airport. (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 222-241).
Since we decided which respondents would be included in our study we have chosen to use purposive/judgemental sampling, which is a non-probability sampling technique. We conducted an interview with Saab Automobile AB because the company was early adopters of social media marketing and we would like to know their opinions. The company actively uses different types of social media in their marketing communication efforts, because of that we feel that they have valuable experience in this area and can help us get a deeper knowledge about what companies that work with social media think. Marketing Strategy Manager Jonas Larsson and Ludvig Liljeqvist who is working with Social and Emerging Media at our case company Saab Automobile AB were our respondents. They work daily with social media and therefore they were chosen as our sample. We felt that our case company and the people that we talked to at the company have prior knowledge about our topic and are appropriate to share their views on why and how they use social media in their marketing.

2.7 Data collection methods

There are different data collection methods. Christensen et al (2001, p. 135-219) describes questionnaires, interviews, observations and experiments. Most often a questionnaire is used to get a quantitative result. Interviews can be structured or unstructured and can be implemented with one or more persons. They can also be done over the phone. Interviews are appropriate to use when you want to know the underlying reasons for respondents’ standpoint. Interviews are appropriate for qualitative studies. In an observational study, you study only behavior, and it does not matter if the respondent remembers how he/she has done in the past. Experiments are the only data collection method that can be used in order to reliably establish a correlation between different variables. In experiments the analyst actively affects what happens. We have used interview to collect our primary data, since we want to know why and how companies use social media. To analyze our result deeply we need detailed information and clear answers from our respondents.

2.7.1 Interviews

A personal interview is characterized by a questioner and a respondent to have a dialogue with each other. As a questioner one has to be able to formulate good questions that the respondent can understand and easily answer. Interviews are great to use when you want to get respondents to talk freely in their own words about issues. Meanwhile, the questioner will get the opportunity to ask further questions about why the respondent answers the way he or she does. (Christensen et al 2001, p. 175).
There are structured interviews and open interviews. When using an open interview you want to get the respondent to talk as freely as possible about the areas. While a structured interview contains more specific questions that can get accurate answers. It is important to formulate the questions correctly. The questions cannot be leading the respondent to a specific answer but they must be concrete and clear. In interviews, you can also study the respondents’ body language which can be important in a study. (Dalen 2008, p. 30-32). We will conduct a personal interview with our case company who use social media in their marketing communication strategy. We will use clear questions and avoid leading questions to get as clear and detailed answers as possible. At the same time, we want our respondents to be able to respond fairly freely on the issues because we want to know the basis for their opinions, which is why we have decided not to use questionnaires.

2.8 Primary and secondary data

According to Christensen et al. (2001, p. 69) a study implicates that you should collect, analyze, interpret and present data of various kinds. What distinguishes primary and secondary data is when, how and where it was collected. Secondary data is existing data that can be used early in the investigation process to gain knowledge about the problem. Primary data is collected by the person conducting the investigation and will be used to hopefully resolve the problem or answer the research questions. We have chosen to collect primary data with the help of an interview with our case company to find out how companies use social media in their marketing. Our secondary data consists of observations of our case company’s social networking platforms and efforts to get a better insight on how they work.

2.9 Qualitative analysis process

In the quantitative analysis process the researcher counts the number of words instead of looking at the deeper meaning of the words. The qualitative analysis aims to highlight the underlying pattern and processes that exist in the data by finding the leading words explaining the content. (Christensen et al 2001, p. 298). In order to penetrate the data and identify the underlying pattern and the pattern of controlling variables or categories is the qualitative analysis based on three overlapping processes: the reduction-, structural- and visualization process. This involves first breaking down data by reduction and then structuring the reduced data. The data can then be clarified through visualizations to credibly describe and explain the research problem. (Christensen et al 2001, p. 300).
Our collected data has been reduced and structured in the analysis in order to find the key words which describe the content and result. We conducted our analysis based on the qualitative process; our pattern of leading key words comes from our theory and our collected data. The leading key words will help us to categorize our analysis. With our study we want to illuminate the social media phenomenon. We hope that people that are interested in this subject find our thesis informative.

2.10 Reliability and validity

No matter what type of study one performs, with help of qualitative or quantitative data, the analysis and the full report has to be reliable and trustworthy. The results and conclusions will then be useful. (Christensen et al 2001, p. 290). With reliability of a qualitative analysis means whether anyone else who performs the same study could have the same answer that we received in our inquiry. Reliability is irrelevant to a qualitative study because no one else who repeats the study will get exactly the same result. Ejvegård (2009, p. 77) writes that reliability indicates the reliability and usefulness of an instrument of a measurement unit. One must be cautious with the reliability of measuring instruments, since the researchers themselves often construct measuring instruments such as questionnaires to determine political interest. Validity of a qualitative analysis is the credibility of the report, therefore, the degree of conformity with the reality. The case company that we have chosen is a big global company, Saab Automobile AB. The Marketing Strategy Manager Jonas Larsson and Ludvig Liljeqvist who is working with Social and Emerging Media, that we interviewed at the company are very well suited for our topic about social media. Our chose of case company and respondents as well as observations of their social media efforts makes our thesis reliable and credible. The persons that we have interviewed work within this area everyday and know a lot about social media marketing. Since our study is of qualitative nature, we have tried to get as high level of credibility as possible. We have chosen to follow Christensen et al. (2001) recommendations about openly show our process and we have attempted to achieve theoretical saturation with literature concerning our research area. Merriam (1994, p. 180) writes that the validity must be accessed through the interpretation of the researcher's experience, rather than in terms of reality (which we never can experience directly).
2.11 Source criticism

To collect our primary data we have used reliable sources in the form of people that work with social media marketing at our case company. The primary data has been verified to some extent by the secondary data that we have collected. We have in our thesis, tried as much as possible to use well-known authors, as well as focusing on using up-to-date scientific articles concerning our subject. The theories that we were not able to find in literature sources have been found at reliable internet sites. The secondary data is also found at internet platforms for social media.
3. Theoretical framework

In our theoretical framework we use literature and scientific articles in the area of marketing communication and social media marketing. We want to acquire knowledge about our subject in order to execute an interesting and credible research. This chapter contains models and theories that we believe that we need to perform our study. In the end we also have a small summary of our theoretical framework.

3.1 Marketing communication

Marketing communication is an audience-centered activity. Everything that people and organizations do in the name of marketing communication should be, first and foremost, focused on the consumers. Organizations engage with a variety of audiences in order to pursue their marketing and business objectives. Marketing communications provides the means by which brands and organizations are first presented to the audiences and then to engage them over the long term. The goal is to stimulate a succession of purchases, and the task of marketing communications is to engage audiences to enable transactions. (Fill, 2006, p. 5-6).

The role of marketing communications is to deliver against one or more of the following four tasks: (Fill, 2006, p. 6).

1. It can inform and make potential customers aware of an organization’s offering.
2. It may attempt to persuade current and potential customers of the desirability of entering in to an exchange relationship.
3. Communications can also be used to reinforce experiences. This may take the form of reminding people of past transactions and as well provide reassurance or comfort.
4. Finally marketing communication can act as a differentiator, particularly in markets where there is little to separate competing products and brands.

Marketing communications plays a vital role in the development of brands and is the means by which products become brands, that is, how customers can see how a product is different and understand what the brand stands for and what its values are. (Fill, 2006, p. 22).
3.1.1 Marketing communications mix

The marketing communications mix consists of a set of tools that can be used in various combinations and different degrees of intensity in order to communicate with the target audience. In addition to these tools of communications, there is the media, or the means by which marketing communications messages are conveyed. There are five principal communication tools; advertising, sales promotions, public relations, direct marketing and personal selling.

Figure 5: The tools of marketing communications mix (Fill, 2006, p. 15)

There have been some major changes in the environment and in the way organizations communicate with their target audiences. New technology has given rise to a raft of different media, and people have developed a variety of ways to spend their leisure time. The internet and digital technologies have enabled new interactive forms of communication, where the receiver has greater responsibility for their part in the communication process. This has lead to a development of the marketing communications mix in such way that the original emphasis on heavyweight mass communication campaigns has given way to more direct and highly targeted communication activities using direct marketing and the other tools of the mix. This shift has resulted in that relationships are established by the audience, not the brand owner. (Fill, 2006, p. 14-16).

Mangold and Faulds (2009) propose that social media be considered a hybrid component of the promotional mix and therefore be incorporated as an integral part of the organization’s
IMC strategy. They write that the role of social media is consistent with the use of traditional IMC tools. That is, companies can use social media to talk to their customers through such platforms as blogs, as well as Facebook and Twitter groups.

3.2 Targeting the right people

It is important for marketers today to stand out from all the media clutter and find their niche. In order to do this, marketers must segment the market by defining customers that share similar ideals. Segmenting the markets appropriately allows marketers to reach people who can light the fuse of interest among others. This is essential to starting trends among potential and current customers. Big trends are often started by small groups of people that have the power to communicate with, inform and influence one another in society. (Wright et al, 2010).

The people that are capable of starting or ending trends are categorized as connectors, mavens, or salespeople. It is vital for marketers to understand and pay attention to them. (Wright et al, 2010). Connectors are a special group of people that have a gift of bringing people and ideas together and connecting them. Mavens are the ones that essentially soak up information. They want to know the best deal and tell everyone about it. They are credited with having the ability to start word-of-mouth trends because of their charisma and social skills. Salespeople are individuals that have the ability to convince and sell people new ideas. They are often identified by their ability to persuade others. Mavens and salespeople have the unique ability to influence a customer in the decision-making process. All three of these groups of people have the ability to produce a high return on investment. Not only does targeting the right group of people save companies expenses, but it may also dramatically improve their marketing productivity. (Ibid).

3.3 What is social media?

According to Zarrella (2010, p. 1-3) social media is best defined in context of the previous industrial media paradigm. Traditional media, such as television, newspapers, radio, and magazines, are one way, static broadcast technologies. If you disagree with something you read in the newspaper, you cannot send the editorial staff instant feedback. New web technologies have made it easy for anyone to create – and most importantly – distribute their own content. Social media allows customers to interact with companies instead of only being passive targets of corporations’ marketing messages. With social media, businesses can focus
on consumers, respond to their needs and create ongoing dialogue. Social media marketing allows companies to create new connections with customers and communicate with them, instead of sending one-way messages to people. Social media is based on a natural, authentic conversation between people about a subject of mutual interest. (Scott, 2010, p. 38-39).

The roots of online social networking can be traced to the 1980s Bulletin Board Systems (BBS). These systems allowed users to log in to share software and data as well as send private messages and post to public message boards. (Zarrella, 2010, p. 53). The current trend towards social media can therefore be seen as an evolution back to the Internet's roots, since it retransforms the World Wide Web to what it was initially created for; a platform to facilitate information exchange between users. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009). The idea behind social media is far from groundbreaking. Nevertheless, there seems to be confusion among managers and academic researchers alike as to what exactly should be included under this term, and how social media differ from the seemingly-interchangeable related concepts of Web 2.0 and User Generated Content (UGC). According to Kaplan & Haenlein (2009) a formal definition of the term social media first requires drawing a line to two related concepts that are frequently named in conjunction with it; Web 2.0 and UGC.

Web 2.0 is a term describing a new way of utilization of the World Wide Web by software developers and end-users; a platform whereby content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009). Kaplan & Haenlein (2009) consider Web 2.0 as the platform for the revolution of social media and the representation of the ideological and technological foundation.

User Generated Content (UGC) can be seen as the sum of all ways in which people make use of social media. The term UGC is applied to describe the various forms of media content that are publicly available and created by end-users. Based on these clarifications Kaplan & Haenlein (2009) give a detailed definition of what they mean by social media. Social media is a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of UGC.
3.4 Social media applications

Within the general definition of social media, there are various categories that need to be distinguished further. According to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) there is no systematic way in which different social media applications can be categorized. New sites appear in cyberspace every day, so it is important that any classification scheme takes into account applications which may be forthcoming. To create a classification scheme, and to do so in a systematic manner, Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) rely on a set of theories in the field of media research (social presence, media richness) and social processes (self-presentation, self-disclosure), which are the two key elements of social media.

Social presence theory states that media differ in the degree of “social presence” - defined as the acoustic, visual, and physical contact that can be achieved - it allows emerging between two communication partners. Social presence is influenced by the intimacy (interpersonal vs. mediated) and immediacy (asynchronous vs. synchronous) of the medium. The communications can be expected to be lower for mediated (e.g. telephone conversation) than interpersonal (e.g. face-to-face discussion) and for asynchronous (e.g. e-mail) than synchronous (e.g. live chat). The higher the social presence, the larger the social influence that the communication partners have on each other's behavior. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Media richness theory is based on the assumption that the goal of any communication is the resolution of ambiguity and the reduction of uncertainty. It states that media differ in the degree of richness they possess - that is, the amount of information they allow to be transmitted in a given time interval - and that some media are more effective than others. (Ibid).

Applied to the context of social media, the authors assume that a first classification can be made based on the richness of the medium and the degree of social presence it allows. (Ibid).

With respect to the social dimension of social media, the concept of self-presentation states that in any type of social interaction people has the desire to control the impressions other people form of them. This is done with the objective of influencing others so you will get rewarded, as well as a wish to create an image that is consistent with one's personal identity. The key reason why people decide to create a personal webpage is, for example, the wish to
present themselves in cyberspace. Such a presentation is done through self-disclosure; that is, the conscious or unconscious revelation of personal information that is consistent with the image one would like to give. Self-disclosure is a critical step in the development of close relationships. Applied to the context of social media, Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) assume that a second classification can be made based on the degree of the self-disclosure it requires and the type of self-presentation it allows.

Combining these dimensions, the authors present a classification of social media applications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social presence/ Media richness</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook)</td>
<td>Virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia)</td>
<td>Content communities (e.g., YouTube)</td>
<td>Virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Classification of social media by social presence/media richness and self-presentation/self-disclosure. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)

3.4.1 Collaborative projects

Collaborative projects enable the joint and simultaneous creation of content by many end-users and are, in this sense, probably the most democratic manifestation of UGC. The main idea underlying collaborative projects is that the joint effort of many users’ leads to a better outcome than any user could achieve individually, an example of a collaborative project site is Wikipedia. From a corporate perspective, firms must be aware that collaborative projects are trending toward becoming the main source of information for many consumers. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

3.4.2 Blogs

A blog is a type of content management system (CMS) that makes it easy for anyone to publish short articles called posts (Zarrella, 2010, p. 9). They are wide open and ready to interact with all kinds of people. Blogs let customers know what your business is about, and they create a space for customers to tell you exactly what they are thinking about. (Wright, 2006, p. 4). Every company with a website should have a blog that speaks to its current and potential customers as real people. Blogs are not the right place for corporate-speak press
releases; they should be conversational in tone. (Ibid). Blogs also enable executives to improve the transparency of their companies. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Listening to customers’ blogs is an important part of growing a business, because it gives your business a window into what the customers think about the company. (Wright, 2006, p. 88).

**Twitter** is a microblog, which is a form of blogging that limits the size of each post; Twitter updates can contain only 140 characters. (Zarrella, 2010, p. 31). Twitter was originally intended as a way for people to answer the question “What are you doing?”. Although some people post real-time updates about their lives, it can be very useful for marketers to tweet about new content, offers, and news, as well as respond to questions from other users. (Zarrella, 2010, p. 39). Most companies should be on Twitter; it is easy, cost-effective, requires very little investment of time, and can quickly prove worthwhile in increased buzz, sales, and consumer insight. (Zarrella, 2010, p. 31).

### 3.4.3 Content communities

The main objective of content communities is the sharing of media content between users. Content communities exist for a wide range of different media types, including text, photos, videos and PowerPoint presentations. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009). The multimedia content that is created is called User Generated Content (UGC). (Zarrella, 2010, p. 77).

**YouTube** is an example of a content community. It is a video sharing service. The principle of YouTube is really simple; you upload videos and share with other people. YouTube enables you to upload a video and then, put the URL as a link on your website to send people to the video. You can also use the “embedding” code to make the video appear on your own website or blog. Doing so is free and it will make your site look very professional. If you also allow people to embed your video you will create viral marketing and people will help you spread the word. Signing up to YouTube you get your own YouTube channel on which you can constantly update people interested in your business. (Clapperton, 2009, p. 88-89). Watching a video online is a large commitment of attention, because of this, shorter is better. In addition your videos must be very engaging. You must strive to keep your audience engaged the entire time they are watching your videos. YouTubers are very sensitive to product pitches, so the contribution also has to be as noncommercial as possible. (Zarrella, 2010, p. 83-87).
3.4.4 Social networking sites

Social networking sites are applications that enable users to connect with each other. Users create personal information profiles, invite friends and colleagues to have access to those profiles, and send e-mails and instant messages to each other. These personal profiles can include any type of information, such as photos, video, audio files, and blogs. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009). Social networking sites are a hot topic for marketers right now, as they present a number of opportunities for interacting with customers, including via plug-in applications, groups and fan pages. (Zarrella, 2010, p. 53). The building blocks of a social network are user pages, known as profiles. The profile page includes different information about the person. Profiles are for real people, and companies use specific pages or groups for their company information. Customizing the different pages and profiles is a good way of reflecting your personality and brand. (Zarrella, 2010, p. 57)

Facebook is an example of a social networking site. According to Clapperton (2009, p. 59) Facebook was possibly the site that got social networking moving. It has more or less coincided with the social media revolution and is today the largest social network site to date in terms of numbers. It also has the most features useful to the social media marketers. (Zarrella, 2010, p. 67). Facebook began as an academic idea which intended to keep alumni of a college in touch with each other when they did not have the time to stay in touch properly. (Clapperton, 2009, p. 59). It soon spread beyond academia as people without an email address ending with “.edu” could in 2006 create their own accounts. (Scott, 2010, p. 175). Facebook allows businesses to create public profiles that have many of the same features as a user’s profile. Users can connect with a page and become fans. Pages can have public messaging walls, events, photos, and custom applications. (Zarrella, 2010, p. 67). Essentially Facebook is one of the more complex social networking environments, but potentially very rewarding when businesses have its strengths and weaknesses in mind. (Clapperton, 2009, p. 60). It is therefore important for businesses to not underestimate the time and effort it is going to take to supervise the profile and pull together an online community. (Clapperton, 2006, p. 64). Clapperton (2006, p. 64) writes that you cannot just expect that things happened, you have to be active.

3.5 Social media participants

Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff released a report in 2006 titled Social Technographics, explaining how consumers approach social technologies – not just the adoption of individual
technologies. They grouped consumers into six different categories of participation – and participation at one level may or may not overlap with participation at other levels. The different categories were Inactives (neither create nor use social content of any kind), Spectators (consume social content), Joiners (connect in social networks), Collectors (organize content for themselves or others), Critics (respond to content from others) and Creators (make the social content consumed by others). The authors used the metaphor of a ladder to show this, with the rungs at the higher end of the ladder indicating a higher level of participation. (Forrester Research Inc. 2007).

The report lays out how companies can create strategies using Social Technographics. The authors used the "participation ladder" to help figure out which social strategies to deploy first – and also how to encourage users to "climb up", from being Spectators to becoming more engaged. Social Technographics was carefully constructed, not as a segmentation, but as a profile. That is because the actual data indicated that people participate in multiple behaviors, and not everyone at a higher level on the ladder actually does everything in the lower rungs. (Forrester Research Inc. 2007 & Forrester Research Inc. 2010).

In 2009, despite the rapid pace of technology adoption, the rungs on the ladder have shown steady growth and is still in use, with some categories (Joiners) growing faster than others (Creators). The only change made was that Li and Bernoff added a new rung, named "Conversationalists". Conversationalists voice their opinions to other consumers and businesses using channels such as social networking sites and twitter. (Forrester Research Inc. 2010).
In the figure below the social media ladder defines what the different categories of participants do:

Figure 7: Social Media Ladder (Forrester Research Inc, 2009)

These groups make up the ecosystem that forms the groundswell of social media participation. By understanding where the company’s customer’s fall within the ladder the company can determine which strategies to use in order to reach those customers. (Ibid).

3.6 Social media marketing strategies, tactics and practice

After you have considered the different social media applications and how businesses can leverage for marketing it is important to see them as parts of the whole marketing mix. Marketers that have the understanding of their brand and positioning on the market also have the vision. The social media strategy should therefore fit with the established brand identity. But it is important to not blindly apply the same strategies for social media as for offline broadcast because that has shown to be one of the worst mistakes. Instead you should not be limited by historical theories but be willing to come up with new ideas and be willing to take risks. (Zarrella, 2010, p. 185).
Zarrella (2010) has in his book identified different aspects businesses should consider when creating a strategy. These are; monitoring, responding, influencing conversations, research, campaigns versus ongoing strategy, calls to action, integration and measurement.

**Monitoring**

Whether you are a local business or an international brand, chances are good that people are already talking about you on the web. But before you launch into a conversation, you should listen. You cannot respond if you do not know what is being said, where it is being said, and who is saying it. Monitoring social media is an ongoing process, and companies should use multiple systems to be sure nothing slips through the cracks. (Zarrella, 2010, p 187).

Zarrella (2010, p. 187) proposes that the first tool that should be used is a tool that allows the businesses to search for their name, business name, and product name. He also writes that it is important to monitor the businesses industry, niche, and competitors’ keyword as they can teach you what problems your potential audiences have with existing products, what features they wish to have, and what they love most about the competitors. Doing this will enable the companies to stay ahead of the game and help them be more prepared to future problems. (Zarrella, 2010, p. 189).

Jennifer Zeszut, CEO of Scout Labs describes in Zarrellas’ (2010, p. 189) book the monitoring strategy as a hierarchy of need, with crisis management at the bottom and market intelligence near the top.

![Figure 8: Scout Labs’ social media hierarchy pyramid (Zarrella, 2010, p. 190)](image)
Responding
Once you have identified a conversation about your brand, you must decide whether to engage and what to do when and if you decide to join in. Speed is vital and the response must come as soon as possible. Depending on the characteristic of the comment of conversation you also need to decide whether your response will draw more attention to the problem than it would have gotten naturally. The businesses must remain calm when a potential social media crisis begins to break out. Becoming angry or defensive will not help the cause – it will only make matters worse. Businesses should do what they can to fix the problem and detail what they are going to do to make sure it does not happened again. These responses should be communicated in the same medium in which the negative feedback was originally communicated. They should also be posted on social media sites where this negative feedback has been discussed a lot. (Zarrella, 2010, p. 193).

Influencing conversations
While companies cannot directly control consumer-to-consumer messages, they do have the ability to influence the conversations that consumers have with one another. (Mangold & Fauld, 2009). Mangold and Fauld present nine methods of influencing the conversations:

1) Provide networking platforms: Organizations can leverage consumers’ desire of networking with each other by creating communities of like-minded individuals. These communities can center on shared interests and values. 2) Use blogs and other social media tools to engage customers: Customers feel more engaged with products and organizations when they are able to submit feedback. The feedback comes in the form of criticism, accolades, and helpful suggestions. Taken as a whole this feedback contributes to a sense of community in which honest, open communications are encouraged and customer engagement is enhanced. 3) Use both traditional and internet-based promotional tool to engage customers: People are more likely to communicate through both word-of-mouth and social media when they are engaged with the product, service or idea. Customers can be engaged by different contests. Also enabling customers to see others using the product can entertain and engage customers while communicating product benefits.

4) Provide information: Consumers are more likely to talk about companies and products when they feel they know a lot about them. 5) Be outrageous: People talk about things they find to be somewhat outrageous. 6) Provide exclusivity: People like to feel special. Feelings
of being special can be produced by offering products, information, and special deals that are available exclusively to a subset of consumers. 7) Design products with talking points and consumers’ desired self images in mind: Products and services should be designed with talking points in mind, to stimulate word-of-mouth and social-media-based conversations. Products that are fun, intriguing, highly visible, easy to use, and which engage the emotions are more likely to stimulate conversation. If customers clearly understand why they should buy one product instead of another, their understanding is likely to be communicated through consumer-generated media, as well as through traditional word-of-mouth.

8) Support causes that are important to consumers: People tell others about things to which they are emotionally connected. Organizations can leverage emotional connections by embracing one or more causes that are important to their customers. 9) Utilize the power of stories: Stories can be memorable. The more memorable they are, the more likely they are to be repeated. Stories create vivid memories that are likely to be repeated in social media, as well as traditional word-of-mouth.

Research
Once businesses have started monitoring the web about what is being said about the brand they should get to know their audience. Who they are, where they hang out online, and how they use the web. After identifying the audience they should build an initial list of sites that can be starting points of their social media marketing. (Zarrella, 2010, p. 195). Before engaging in a social media conversation in an application it is important for businesses to get a sense of the rules and customs, and of whom the influential people are. (Zarrella, 2010, p. 185).

Campaigns versus ongoing strategy
According to Zarrella (2010, p. 197) social media marketing can be divided into two types; ongoing strategy and campaigns. Ongoing strategy is the activities done on a regular basis and that should be done before the monitoring strategy finds an erupting crisis. The ongoing strategy builds the brand and the reputation. The campaigns are the social media efforts that result in large but temporary spikes in traffic.

After a foundation of social media engagement and reputation has been built businesses can start to launch campaigns. Campaigns should fit within the ongoing strategy and have specific
goals and finite timelines. These campaigns are great in supporting viral videos, contests, and product launches. (Zarrella, 2010, p. 197).

Integration
One of the main ideas of Web 2.0 is that web applications should be able to share data and collaborate nicely. Nearly every part of the social media marketing effort can integrate at least one other part, and users of one kind of social media are likely to be users of other types. It is therefore sharp to invite those who interact with you in one application to join another application. (Zarrella, 2010, p. 199). When doing integration it is important that the message conveyed is consistent across the applications.

Calls to Action
A call to action (CTA) is an invitation that businesses can make to their website visitors to engage in some type of action that benefits the business aims as well as the visitors. CTAs have usually two goals; stickiness and conversion. Sticky CTAs spikes the traffic to the website such as social media campaigns. Businesses can get thousands of visitors for a few days and you want these people to stick around, become engaged with the businesses content, and help promote the next sticky CTA. This can be done in different ways such as creating feed, email subscriptions, and utilizing the social networking sites functionality of having people connect with you there. It is important not to forget to cross-promote through the different applications. Conversion CTAs are designed to turn a visitor into a customer. They should lead a visitor into the businesses sales funnel. There are two types of conversion-based CTAs depending on the business model; leads and purchases. Expensive items such as cars,
houses as well as B2B transactions start out as leads. Lead-based businesses have a simple conversion CTA in the form of a “contact us” page where visitors can indicate that they are potential customers. E-commerce sites do not have leads. Instead visitors become customers by purchasing products directly. Conversion CTAs are more commercial and should be used with more care than sticky CTAs. (Zarrella, 2010, p. 201-203).

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) also have ten points that they consider important when it comes to social media strategies. Given that social media have both a social- and a media component, the advice split into two sections:

Choose carefully; choosing the right medium for any given purpose depends on the targeted group to be reached and the message to be communicated. On the one hand, each social media application usually attracts a certain group of people and firms should be active wherever their customers are present. Pick the application, or make your own; once you know what game you are playing, the next decision involves whether to make or buy it. In some cases, it might just be best to join an existing social media application and benefit from its popularity and user base. But in some cases, the right application might just not be available yet and you can launch your own social network. Whatever the decision is, it is vital that there is an understanding of the basic idea behind social media. It’s all about participation, sharing, and collaboration, rather than straightforward advertising. Goldner (2010) writes that you should not sell, rather be the subject matter experts in the domain area.

Ensure activity alignment; using different contact channels can be worthwhile and profitable strategy. But one must remember that one goal of communication is the resolution of ambiguity and reduction of uncertainty, and nothing is more confusing that contradicting messages across different channels. Media plan integration; what is true for different types of social media also holds for the relationship between social media and traditional media integration is the key! While you may consider these two arenas to be completely different, in customers’ eyes they are both part of the same, the corporate image. Access for all; once the firm has decided to utilize social media applications, it is worth checking all can access them.

Be active; if you want to develop a relationship with someone, it is always advisable to take the lead and to be active. Social media are all about sharing and interaction, so ensure that your content is always fresh and that you engage in discussions with your customers. In
considering your social media efforts, be aware that firm involvement must extend beyond responding to negative comments and defending product offerings. Participants on social media applications have the desire to actively engage and to become both producers and consumers of information. Be interesting; if you would like your customers to engage with you, you need to give them a reason for doing so - one which extends beyond saying you are the best store in town, or manufacture the most robust computer. The first step is to listen to your customers. Find out what they would like to hear, what they would like to talk about, what they might find interesting, and valuable. Then, develop and post content that fits those expectations.

Be humble; before you enter any application, first take some time to discover it and learn about its history and basic rules. Only once you have gained the necessary understanding, start to participate. Be unprofessional; social media, and firms would be wise to avoid overly-professional content offerings. They say that there’s no need to spend $100,000 to design the perfect Facebook presence, or hire a professional writer to manage your corporate blog. Instead, you should try to blend in with other users and do not be afraid to make mistakes! Be honest; and respect the rules of the game. Never expect that other participants may not find out who stands behind some anonymous user account, because after all, you are dealing with some of the most technologically sophisticated people on the planet. (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010)

Measurement
According to Zarrella (2010, p. 205) in addition to conducting demographic research to identify which social sites the company’s audience is using, they should also set goals with clearly defined levels of success for social media marketing campaigns in order to show business value and return on investment (ROI). The different analysis tools that Zarrella (2010, p. 207-213) identifies are metrics which he defines into two categories; on-site and off-site. On-site metrics measure activity that takes place directly on the company web site, whereas off-site metrics measure activity that happens on other sites where the company and the customers interact.

The two easiest engagement metrics are time on-site and page views per visit. The longer a visitor spends on the company’s site, or the more pages they read, the deeper the relationship is built with them. Another web metric that is being used is called bounce rates. A bounce is
when a visitor is viewing a page on the company’s site and then do not go to any additional pages; the visitor bounces right of the company’s site. This can for example be a link to a movie clip on YouTube. A such event can generate a lot of bounces, but hopefully it will also generate engaged visitors as well as links and subscribers. Other aspects that the company could monitor are number of comments the company gets on their posts and also the number of subscribers that they have. Because so many social media activities occur in places other than the companys site, the company should also be measuring a class of metrics that can be found off-site.

ROI is calculated by simply deducting the cost of the social media work from the income generated. If the result is a positive number, the investment has been profitable, if not, the company should revisit their campaigns to evaluate what is working and what is not. Zarrella (2010, p. 207-213) also recommends that companies should pay attention to which sites and tactics are generating the most value for them. The reason is that not all businesses can beneficially engage all types of social media; the company should focus on the one that is working for them.

**Mistakes**

Lontos & Ramirez (2009) has put together a list of very common mistakes that business make when they start using social media in their marketing strategy. These mistakes are good to consider if you have an upcoming business:

Mistake 1: Having more than one face on the internet  
Mistake 2: Collecting friends  
Mistake 3: Putting out the wrong messages  
Mistake 4: Posting inappropriate information  
Mistake 5: Assuming that it is better to have your messages in only one place on the internet

When someone looks at all the pieces on various sites, they should be able to put them together to see as one whole. They should not see multiple images of what you company stands for. (Lontos & Ramirez, 2009).
3.7 What new trends to watch in 2011

Rohit Bhargava, author of the book “Personality Not Included”, a founding member of the Ogilvy 360 Digital Influence team, and Adjunct Professor of Global Marketing at Georgetown University have identified 15 marketing & social media trends to watch in 2011. He writes that looking back at 2010 there were plenty of big developments that point to a 2011 year filled with innovation, new business models, possibilities for new technologies like mobile and tablets and continued growth and attention on social media. (www.rohitbhargava.com).

The trends that he identifies are:

Likeonomics: Due to the increase of microinfluence, where individuals can publish anything from personal media properties to burst of opinions a social currency is created that can have a big impact on consumer behavior. Likeonomics is a term that describes how personal relationships, individual opinions, powerful storytelling and social capital are helping brands and their products and services to become more believable. By using the power of social capital from influencers online the company can spread the word about their products. (Ibid).

Approachable Celebrity: People have always looked in at the lives of celebrities, politicians and professional athletes from a distance. The tabloid culture has led to a warped and fictional view of who those people are. As a result of this view more and more of them have turned to social media and the web to demonstrate their real personalities. Bhargava believe that in 2011, more people will enjoy direct access to those who seemed unapproachable just a few short years ago. (Ibid).

Desperate Simplification: Information overload is leading consumers to seek simplification. Consumers will cling to those small tools and personal processes that allow us to feel more in control. Essential Integration: Bhargava (2011) identifies the same difficulty as Mangold et al. (2009) which is integration, or more the lack of integration. Whether due to infighting between departments or predictable conflict between multiple agencies integration is a major unsolved problem. In 2011, integration will continue to be a huge challenge met with varying degrees of success. (Ibid). Rise of Curation: One way to deal with the vast amount of information out there is through content curation. Content Curation is a term that describes the act of finding, grouping, organizing or sharing the best and most relevant content on a specific
issue. As search engines present millions of results for queries it is important to offer each of
the users the chance to filter and share content on subjects they are knowledgeable about
online. Visualized Data: Due to the vast amount of data the information can get so dense that
it can be virtually useless. To make sense of it event managers, news organizations and brands
are turning to data visualization as a way to leverage the data and tell a clearer story. In 2011,
the niche will grow for everything from sharing real time sentiment with consumers to
creating better and more compelling visuals for senior management to keep or increase
marketing budgets for the rest of the year. (Ibid).

Crowdsourced Innovation: Crowdsourcing is a platform which enables customers to share
their thoughts and ideas. Bhargava (2011) identifies the year 2011 as the year where
crowdsourcing becomes a core part of many organization’s social and customer engagement
strategies. Additionally there is an increased understanding from customers about the concept
of crowdsourcing, which means it will no longer be just a way of engaging the social media
savvy – but rather a broader audience who will share their thoughts and ideas for the reward
of recognition. Instant PR & Customer Service: The marketing disciplines that are probably
most affected by the rise of social media and real time content online are PR and customer
service. Bhargava (2011) states that these two disciplines will continue to lead most business
towards creating strategies and practices for dealing with real time conversations happening
online. This will create great opportunities for those who act correct and take advantage of
this. Those who do not act will miss opportunities and risk crisis. (Ibid).

App-fication of the web: The rise and fascination of apps of all kinds has created a
widespread acceptance and excitement about the potential uses for apps. In 2011, as more
people purchase app-enabled devices, a large number of activities from banking to checking
email to online shopping that will shift to apps instead of the web.

Reimagining Charity: Brands and entrepreneurs create innovative new models for social
good. Great new ideas for how charity and nonprofits could be reinvented for everything from
donating money to sharing time and specific skills. Employees as Heroes: Large and small
brands have demonstrated humanity by featuring employee stories and portraying them as
heroes. The stories can aid with humanizing the brand and support recruitment efforts.
Bhargava (2011) believe that in 2011 the humanizing of brands will continue to take shape
through more and more companies realizing the value they have in their employees. (Ibid).
Locationcasting: Consumers broadcast their locations to their own social networks, offering marketing opportunities. According to Bhargava (2011) one of the major benefits of marketing with mobile devices is the ability to tailor a message to a specific location that a customer is close to. This “locationcasting” behavior helps people get specific retail offers targeted to their location, and also connect with others in their social networks who may be in the same space. (Ibid).

Brutal Transparency: Aggressive honesty can lead to edgier and more effective marketing. An extreme sort of transparency can be a competitive advantage because it reveals an unexpected aggressive honesty that consumers welcome. (Ibid).

Addictive Randomness: Random content creates unexpectedly engaging consumer experiences. As social media continues to take an increasing role in marketing efforts for brands, the power of random content is going to lead to more consumer generated campaigns where people can add content to a central archive that anyone can browse. Culting of Retail: The new world of retail in 2011 will require brands to do more than just offer a good transactional experience. The best sites will create a passionate following of users who not only buy products they like at good prices, but also share their experiences and inspire a significant portion of their social networks to try the experience for themselves. (Ibid).

3.8 Summary of the theoretical framework

It is important to know that companies today have the opportunity to reach out to potential customers in a new and very cost-effective way. It is also very vital to know how to best use these types of media. There are lots of different theories that tell us about how companies should use social media in their marketing and it can be really hard to know which one to focus on. We therefore believe that the theories we have chosen are worth considering when creating a social media strategy.

The tools and strategies for communicating with customers have changed significantly with the emergence social media. Social media marketing allows companies to create new connections with not just their customers, but also potential consumers, instead of just sending a one-way message to different kind of people. (Scott 2010, p. 38-39).
Mangold and Fauld (2009) present nine methods of influencing the conversations between consumers and we think that these nine methods are very logical so that businesses can understand what they can accomplish with the help of social media. The nine methods are; provide networking platforms, use blogs and other social media tools to engage customers, use both traditional and internet-based promotional tool to engage customers, provide a lot of information, be outrageous, provide exclusivity, design products with talking points and consumers’ desired self images in mind, support causes that are important to consumers, utilize the power of stories.

Zarrella (2010) has in his book identified different aspects businesses should consider when creating a strategy. These are: Monitoring - they should keep an eye on what people are saying about the company, their products and the competitors. Responding - decide whether to engage and what to do when and if you decide to join in. Researching - the brand should get to know their audience. Who they are, where they hang out online, and how they use the web. The use of campaigns and ongoing strategies - the companies should use ongoing strategies to build reputation and campaigns to kick start specific offerings. Integration – the social media efforts should work together, and last but not least calls to action (CTA) – use CTA to attract the visitors to stick around and steer them to other offerings on the site. While implementing these, the company should keep in mind that they should not use old offline tricks in social media but be creative in how to convert social visitors to customers.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) has also identified a few other aspects that are also important to consider such as; choosing the right medium for any given purpose depends on the targeted group to be reached and the message to be communicated. The next decision involves how you are going to play the game, whether to make a new application or picking one that already exists. They also stress that if you want to develop a relationship with someone, it is always advisable to take the lead and to be active and that the company’s involvement must extend beyond responding to negative comments and defending product offerings. Another important aspect is to be honest and respect the rules of the game. The company should never expect that other participants may not find out who stands behind some anonymous user account.
4. Empirical presentation

In this chapter we present background information of our case company Saab Automobile AB, as well as the qualitative data that we have collected. In order to answer our research questions, we gathered both primary and secondary data that will be presented below. The analysis of our results will be presented in the next chapter.

Our primary data is collected from our interview at Saab Automobile AB with the Marketing Strategy Manager Jonas Larsson and Ludvig Liljeqvist who is currently working with Social and Emerging Media. The secondary data is collected through observations of the case company’s use of the applications.

SAAB Automobile AB

Saab has been producing cars since 1949, when it was a division of the Swedish aircraft manufacturer Svenska Aeroplan Aktiebolaget (first abbreviated to SAAB and later Saab). The company is represented in more than 50 countries with key markets in the United States, Great Britain, Sweden, Germany, Italy, Australia, France and Norway. (media.saab.com).

On 23 February 2010, Spyker Cars N.V. of the Netherlands acquired Saab Automobile AB from General Motors. The company had been a wholly owned subsidiary of General Motors since 28 January 2000 and was formed on 1 January 1990, following a joint venture agreement between Saab-Scania AB and General Motors. (Ibid).

Saab is a niche automobile brand, producing cars on a relatively small scale but for a global audience. In relation to its scale, Saab enjoys customers that are extremely devoted to the brand, the history and above all – development. (Ibid).

Saab has in a very short time established itself in several social media platforms. With a presence on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and their own site Newsroom the company tries to become more open and transparent in their marketing communication. (365socialmediacases.se)
4.1 Interview

Saab's goals of using social media is primarily to communicate and building relationships with consumers. The respondent argues that the benefits of social media are that it is a two-way communication. Saab is more and more using social media in their marketing rather than the traditional marketing tools. Early proposals for using social media in the marketing process were met by disbelief from the management of Saab and the inside of the company, because it was difficult to see how many consumers the social media activity can reach. The respondents gave us an example; when a company publishes an advertisement in a newspaper the publisher can say how many consumers that the ad will reach while with social media it is much harder to tell. What initially started Saab's use of social media in marketing was when Saab was placed in reconstruction of debts. Then arose a tremendous need to communicate and their website was no longer enough for that kind of communication. The site could not handle that kind of simple, short-term solutions as a social media site could. Saab’s structure with many different languages and nations made it hard to use the old webpage for communication. Then they started up their own site called Newsroom, which was their first social media activity. Later Flickr and Facebook accounts etc. were opened. Some accounts were not independent enough to be by themselves but could be used together with Saab's Newsroom, where news could be written and then link out to the other pages.

Right now Saab is using Facebook as the largest social media platform for their marketing. The reason for this is that there are many different ways of using Facebook, it covers both text, pictures and movies etc. As well as creating a two-way communication. According to the respondents sites such as YouTube had not been as strong without Facebook. On Facebook the news is in the consumer's own news feed, which allows members to quickly get information on their private page. Saab believes that YouTube has not made it as easy to find a business pages as Facebook has, so far. Consumers usually do a search on the company name but then they will not necessarily be linked to companies’ YouTube pages. In assessing the social media platforms that Saab will use in their marketing, they saw that some platforms are more useful than others. They have chosen to use a variety of social media sites such as Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Facebook, a business blog (called “Inside Saab”) and Newsroom. To communicate the same message but in different ways depending on how engaged the consumers want to be. On Twitter, you can only use 140 characters, on Facebook, you can use text, pictures and movies, on YouTube you can publish a movie and on a blog, you can write
a longer text. The message must therefore be tailored to each channel and also for the different customers. If you know how the platforms work it is easy to see how to use it.

From the beginning it was only Jonas Larson, who decided what social media platforms Saab should use. He started these accounts himself in the order in which he claimed that Saab was developed to act. He took the decisions with the help of colleagues, and guidance from marketing agencies. The decisions were made based on what works in the different markets that Saab operates in today. The social media channels that are popular in Sweden and Europe are not necessarily popular in Asia or other parts of the world. Saab is aware of that they must be where the customers are; therefore, it is natural for them to be active on Facebook, YouTube and similar sites. Saab has identified the various pages used by different consumers. For example, in North America is Twitter a popular tool among journalists while Facebook is more for private users.

In the beginning Saab was extra cautious with what was announced on the different social media platforms. Our respondents believe it is important that the company can stand for their messages. Therefore, they control all their platforms carefully.

What Saab was afraid of at the beginning of the implementation of social media was to be open and transparent; but later it has proved that to be open and transparent was only positive. Their audience is dedicated towards Saab and therefore the platforms are self-sanitizing. The bad comments are being meet by committed consumers. What the respondents think is negative with social media is that it takes a lot of time and is a continuous job. Everything must go very fast. What can be communicated shifts every day, and all information must be current. But our respondents also believe that it is positive that everything is going very fast at social media sites because then they have the opportunity to influence the consumers in a very short time. They also point out that social media is free, whether one company is local or global; anyone can establish themselves at social media platforms. Social media has however, brought some problems for the company. For example, should you advertise to all kind of customers at once or act more local? The use of different languages can also be difficult to integrate across all platforms. The respondents hope that Facebook will help companies to handle these kinds of problems soon. Hopefully Facebook will give companies the ability to link together local pages in a global way, and also give them the ability to use comments and photos in innovative ways. Currently, this is not a reality; right now Saab is also using local
pages, for example, in southern Europe where the consumers only want to communicate in their native language.

Another challenge in the beginning of the implementation for those working with social media at Saab, was that it was hard to know which tools they should use to measure the performance of social media in order to persuade the company’s management for new financings.

Nowadays, social media has become accepted by the management and it has begun to be integrated in Saab marketing communication mix. Saab's approach to social media is no different from their conventional marketing. They are working with the same communication strategy globally and are trying to capture the younger customers who excel in social media by developing products technically. However, there are not many resources to target this group at the moment because Saab's products are still too expensive for this group of customers. The respondents say that the marketing strategy would be different if Saab launched a small and cheaper car. Then they would be working more actively with this approach.

Saab has no opportunity to advertise on television in every country where they are established, but with the help of social platforms such as YouTube, the company can now broadcast movie commercials worldwide. They also use social media to build up expectations before, during and after an event or a contest. The respondents point out that it is important that social media sites works over all instances such as customer service, marketing, etc. It also has to work internally at the company; all instances must be able to find ways to cooperate. The customers have to be able to see Saab as a single company and not as an entity made up of different parts.

Saab is listening to their customers through a variety of measuring / monitoring instruments such as Meltwater Buzz, Google analytics, etc. to see what is being said about the company. They are working to find different tools for different countries and sites. Internally, they are currently building up the infrastructure in customer service, as it is a very important part of their communications with clients. They also say that their hope for the future is to move customer service to Facebook, as the most frequently asked questions not only concern the person who asked the question. If one would publish these frequently asked questions on
Facebook, the company would be able to help several customers at once. Saab is also looking at how the customers have responded on the different platforms given time, time of day and how fast. By looking at what is being said, you have the ability to customize the material you want to publish and then you can get the customers involved. Earlier the discussions about the brand took place on the company’s own website, but now this is done on third party sites, making it much harder to control and therefore it is important to have a tool that can collect all of these discussions.

The respondents believe that it is difficult, but not impossible, to identify what a Facebook fan is worth because there are different types of fans. According to them some fans are more active than others and help the company to spread its message. By comparing with other companies within the same industry, companies can find a value for a fan. “It is about what fans do on the sites and not how many are visiting the site”. Saab feel that it is interesting to look at the proliferation of messages between different users. “By looking at the proliferation of messages companies can find the line of argument, compared to traditional media”. Using YouTube with Facebook can generate a wider distribution of the messages. According to the respondents fans on social media sites tend to be more committed to the brand or company and therefore it is better to know that you reach them than to use a television advertising that reaches out to for example 100 000 random viewers.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is an essential tool in Saab's measurement of the effectiveness of various social media platforms. KPI provides the company with data and continuous monitoring of patterns and trends. By analyzing these measurements, they can become more effective. The company wants to know that their communications/content reaches and engages people. KPI is needed as a basis for optimization of their communications. What they want to achieve is to deepen their relationships with their customers. Saab has not yet built up any method to actively engage customers. However, they are aware of this and are trying to find a good method.

Since Saab has a global target group, they have chosen to post the information at different times of day to reach customers in different parts of the world. They previously posted the information in the evening between nine and ten pm but are now posting instead twice a day on the Global page, in the morning and the afternoon. The respondents have seen that the time of the week affects how dedicated the fans are. Generally the users are more active during the
beginning of week and then lose interest towards the end of the week. Saab has been able to see that the users in the United States are much more responsive than in Europe and therefore they are posting in the morning, for Sweden and Europe and in the afternoon for the United States.

Saab analyses what the users think about the content by using tools available in the Facebook page, these include impressions, interactions, and before even post qualities. Using these tools, Saab sees how engaging the content that they publish is. If it is so compelling that the consumers distribute the content to their friends. On YouTube they are watching at the users’ feedback and grading. However, Saab like many others who work with social media believe that YouTube users are usually not as serious in their comments as Facebook users. They believe that this is because YouTube is not as personal as Facebook, which makes use of their private profile. On Twitter the company looks at how many re-tweets they get on their posted content to see if consumers are satisfied with the information. However twitter is not yet utilized as much as other applications.

With regard to moderation of comments on the various pages Saab use their common sense. Saab is keen that all may have an opinion and does not remove these comments as long as they are not about, for example, racial and sexual statements. They want people to express their feelings and create a dialogue.

Regarding monitoring of what is said on the other websites; Saab has no employees who systematically monitor only this. This is instead handled by the people who are administrators on Facebook. They try to see what people are thinking and this later affects what the company does, what content they post. In addition to using Facebook what the company does, what content they post. Besides using Facebook, Saab at the moment uses all the traditional routes such as call center and customer service. Saab would like to use the customer service in their daily commercial communication because all questions and answers are already there. The idea is to work proactively and use customer service more efficiently.

Saab Forum and other Saab dedicated sites are run by committed people that aim to help each other, therefore there is no need for monitoring. There is also no demand by the members that Saab should attend the forums. This changes continuous and Saab is looking at how other companies are working and trying to learn from their successes and failures.
Social media has not had any particular impact on Saab's website because the platform for the website they are currently using is so old that it has not been adapted to work with today's social media tools. According to the respondents it could previously take 8 to 14 hours to publish news on the old platform which is far too long. The idea now is that they will launch a new platform which has the potential to link the social media with different plug-ins.

Currently Saab is actively working with creating a much stronger integration between the sites using the new platform. They can now use one catalog for film clips and images by plugging in YouTube/Flickr in the site and have the ability to share it across all applications. It is all about linking together all the channels into a single unit. Saab.com is a huge source of visits that engages many people and the company wants to use other sites to further engage them. Because consumers are only spending a limited amount of time on a website Saab is trying to further engage them and build a stronger relationship by linking to other sites using plug-ins.

When mentioning the future the respondents say that the companies are in the hands of Facebook and Google, who dictate in the social media landscape. They determine the structure of the applications and the corporate playing field is constantly changing. Because the playing field changes constantly, it is important for Saab to keep up with these changes in order to be effective. The respondents believe that the platforms of the future will be built up together so that companies will be able to handle the different sites with one general tool. Long term goals are difficult to set. The current goal that Saab has is to deepen relationships with customers and have an effective two-way communication. A goal like for example getting one million fans in 2012 is not so hard to put up if the company is prepared to invest a lot of time and money. However, it is very possible that a lot of these fans are not worth very much, they just end up on their side but they do not engage at all. This would not be very effective.

Respondents also believe that the company needs to become better and more courageous when it comes to openness and transparency. They have much left but to trust each other is what a relationship is all about. Steven Wade, the company's new blogger who previously ran the blogs "Trollhättan Saab" and "Saab's United", blogs now on the corporate blog "Inside Saab" to create more transparency by talking about what is happening inside Saab and their
organization. To be even more open in the future, the idea is to take help of various media that reach out to different kinds of consumers.

Saab has thought a step further and has developed their own system called IQon where you lift the communication in-vehicle via an android system, a complete set of software for mobile devices: an operating system, middleware and key mobile applications (android.com). Using this system, the company may have applications in the car that is specifically designed to quickly integrate with the customer. This system could also provide information on how the car is running, where the car is at the moment, who is driving the car etc. which in turn can be used to create more value for customers.

4.2 Observation
After we conducted our interview with our case company, we collected secondary data from the company’s social media platforms. We wanted a greater insight into their business and to see if their answers to our interview questions were consistent with how their sites are used.

The marketing agency “The Viral Company” has helped Saab to develop a strategy for their social media efforts. Their goal was to give Saab fans all over the world the chance to get together online and share their opinions and stories about their favorite auto maker. The first step was to work out a strategy and activation plan to follow when implementing Saab as a social auto brand to the online community.

Their belief is that Saab should present itself and really become an open and inviting brand by encouraging the audience to join in and find out what is going on. As an example, instead of keeping the most sacred point of interest, the factory itself, closed to devotees it should be presented online for anyone interested in Saab behind the scenes. They want to tell the story of how a Saab is created so that all enthusiasts can tell their special story and feel closer to the brand. (theviralcompany.com).

Having this in mind we feel that Saab and The Viral Company have been successful in doing what they intended to do. They are actively using Newsroom, Facebook, YouTube, corporate blog and Twitter to engage with their customers and develop relationships. At their sites consumers can easily contact them by either sending an email or posting the question directly on the page.
They are continuously striving in having an open and transparent two-way communication. What is apparent on the Facebook page is that the fans are very active and engaged in the Saab brand. Both Saab and their fans are constantly publishing material such as videos, pictures and music and other interesting information. The fans are also helping each other with questions about products and problems.

We can see that they are making an effort in integrating the different applications by having plug-ins to the other sites. We illustrate this with the figure below:

*Figure 10: Saab's social media platform integration.*
5. Data analysis

In this chapter our analysis of the data is presented. Our data analysis is based on the material we have gathered and the theories we have studied.

We have chosen to develop a pattern of key words to see how our theoretical framework and our interview questions are linked together. These are: integration, targeting the right people, strategies and tactics, future of social media. The pattern of the key words is governed by our theoretical framework and our interview questions.

Integration

Saab is integrating their use of social media in to the company’s marketing communication mix, as Mangold and Faulds (2009) purposes. They are working with the same communication strategy globally, and are trying to reach out to the younger customers. The elements in the marketing communication mix, like advertising, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing can easily be used in social media. As a result of the communication change with social media, Saab has developed their marketing communication mix in a way where direct marketing and other ways to directly advertise to customers is more in focus then before. Because of that social media is very cost-effective Saab can today broadcast videos all over the world by using YouTube, and in that way increase their reach. Social media is also very effective when combined with the regular marketing efforts in building up expectations for events, due to an easy way to engage with the audience in a timely manner. Zarrella (2010) also point out that companies should integrate their social media strategy into the established brand identity, and not be limited by historical facts but instead be willing to take risks and come up with new ideas. We feel that Saab has done this in a good way, we can clearly see that the brand identity is consistent with what they portray in other media, they are also aware of that social media is different and are therefore constantly trying new ways to communicate with their audience.

The company has understood that relationships are nowadays more established by the audience and that they have to be more active in their two-way communication in order to influence what is being said online. It is therefore sharp to invite those who interact with the company in one application to join another application.
As we can see in the primary and secondary data Saab are actively working with integrating their different social platforms. They are using plug-ins which gives them the opportunity to share information across the different applications very easily. By doing this Saab invite the audience that interact on one application to join another application as Zarrella (2010) suggests. They are also aware of the importance of conveying a consistent message across the different applications. The message is the same but they are expressing it in different ways due to the technical differences as well as to the different people using the sites. A problem that both we and our respondents have identified is that certain countries only want to communicate in their native language. This makes it harder for the company to reach a global audience with sites only focusing on English. To overcome this problem they are trying to have local Facebook pages dedicated to certain countries. This can create a problem if the information communicated is not the same across the pages.

The word integration in marketing communication can also mean that the companies are integrating their strategy within the company. We believe that it is very important that global businesses like Saab Automobile AB integrate their thinking around social media into the whole business concept. All instances must be able to find ways to cooperate. By doing this they can be more successful in both communicating with the employees at the company and with their customers. The customers have to see Saab as a single company and not as an entity made up of different parts.

**Targeting the right people**

According to Wright et al (2010) marketers must segment the market by defining customers that share similar ideals. By doing this they can stand out and different themselves from other companies. We believe that Saab is focusing too much on the global perspective instead of finding local consumers who can ignite the fuse among others and start word-of-mouth trends. Saab is also at the moment not actively engaging with their customers but is aware of this and is working on finding a method to solve this problem. Wright et al (2010) also points out that by targeting the right kind of people the company can save expenses, and may also improve their marketing productivity.

We feel that Saab today is not actively targeting their customers to optimize their social media effort. We believe that this problem could be solved by using Forester Research inc. social
media ladder in identifying the social media participants. By doing so they would know which social strategies to use and how to encourage users to be more engaged. Also by understanding where the company’s customers’ fall within the ladder the company can determine which strategies to use in order to reach them. This has also been stated by Zarrella (2010), the companies should get to know their audience. Who they are, where they hang out online, and how they use the web. After identifying the audience companies can get a list of sites that can be starting points for their social media marketing.

**Strategies and tactics**

According to Zarrella (2010) it is important to not blindly apply the same strategies for social media as for offline broadcast because that has shown to be one of the worst mistakes. Saab’s approach to social media is not different from their conventional marketing communication. They are using the same kind of communication strategy globally but the message is tailored to fit the platforms, this approach can prove to be a problem in the future.

Zarrella (2010) also says that before you launch into a conversation, you have to listen. If you do not know what is being said, where it is being said, and who is saying it, you cannot respond. Monitoring social media is an ongoing process. Saab is using different monitoring instruments for listening on what is being said about their company. They are working on finding different instruments for different countries and sites. But they do not have any employees that are systematically working with only monitoring social media platforms. He also writes that it is important to monitor the businesses industry, niche, and competitors’. This can teach you what problems your potential audiences have with existing products, what features they wish to have, and what they love most about the competitors. Saab is not actively monitoring these aspects concerning the product features instead they are monitoring how other companies act on the social media market and are adapting their strategy to what is currently effective in the platforms.

Mangold and Fauld (2009) point out that companies cannot directly control consumer-to-consumer messages, but they do have the ability to influence the conversations that consumers have with one another. This predicament has also been identified by Saab, they find it much harder to control the messages and are trying to find a tool that can collect all the discussions. They are also providing the consumers with different platforms and using different methods to be present where the consumers are and to be able to influence what is
being said. Saab is also dedicated to find out what the consumers think about the material that is being published by Saab. They monitor Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and other sites by using either tools that are available in the platform as well as looking at the comments. They find it very interesting if they can see that the consumers feel that the material is that compelling that they distribute it to their friends.

Social media is a fast moving domain; the companies must be active and respond fast, the messages must also be up to date. Saab feel that this characteristic can be both negative and positive, it takes a lot of time and is continues work, but this also creates the opportunity to influence consumers in very short time. According to Zarrella (2010) responses to negative feedback should be communicated in the same medium in which the negative feedback was originally communicated. They should also be posted on social media sites where this negative feedback has been discussed a lot. Saab is not that concerned with the negative feedback. They say that their audience is dedicated to Saab and therefore the sites are self-sanitizing. Bad comments are met by committed consumers. Saab also expresses that consumers should be able to express their feelings and have opinions. Because of that, moderation of comments is just being used if the comments are offensive towards people.

According to Zarrella (2010) social media marketing can be divided into two types; ongoing strategy and campaigns. Ongoing strategy is the activities done on a regular basis and that builds the brand and the reputation. The campaigns are the social media efforts that result in large but temporary spikes in traffic. Saab is continually working with their ongoing strategy and marketing communication, to create relationships. They have not implemented any bigger campaigns to spike traffic to their sites. They do not either use sticky CTAs to try to spike the traffic to the website and to make the consumers stick around and become engaged with the businesses content. Saab has instead tried to use sites and post content to create interest for upcoming public events. They are also not actively using conversion CTA’s to turn a visitor into a customer. They admit that this is a problem and they are trying to find a solution. What they use at the moment are newsletters and “contact us” forms.

In addition to conducting demographic research to identify which social sites the company’s audience is using, Zarrella (2010) states that companies should also set goals with clearly defined levels of success for social media marketing campaigns in order to show business value and return on investment (ROI). He also recommends that companies should pay
attention to which sites and tactics are generating the most value for them. Saab’s essential tool for measuring the effectiveness of various social media platforms is Key Performance Indicator (KPI). KPI provides the company with data and continuous monitoring of patterns and trends. By analyzing these measurements, they can become more effective as well as finding which platforms work best for them. KPI is needed as a basis for optimization of their communications. In the beginning this was one of the challenges that Saab faced. They found it hard to know which tools they should use to measure the performance of social media in order to persuade the company’s management for new financings. Saab also feel that there are other ways of measuring on the social media. You can for example measure the value of a Facebook fan by looking at how active they are and comparing with other companies within the same industry. Saab feel that it is interesting to look at the proliferation of messages between different users. By doing so companies can find the line of argument, compared to traditional media.

**Future of social media**

What the future have in store for Saab, and other companies, use of social media nobody can really say. It all depends on how the design and use of the platforms develop. The respondents believe that in the future Facebook will solve the language problem by translating the global pages to the native languages of the effected countries. They also believe that the platforms will be more connected so that they can manage different sites with one general tool.

Both we and the respondents also think that companies have to become more and more opened and transparent on social media sites, because the customers demand this. According Bhargava (2011) Aggressive honesty can lead to edgier and more effective marketing.

We think that it is good that Saab has thought one step further by developing their own system called IQon. This system could provide information about how the car is running, where the car is at the moment, who is driving the car etc. which in turn can be used to create a higher value.

We believe that Saab should consider these trends for the future that were identified by Bhargava (2011). We believe that trends like likenomics, using the power of personal relationships, individual opinions, powerful storytelling and social capital can help them to
improve their products and services and become more believable. They should also use the
trend desperate simplification to make customers feel that they are in control. Another trend
that they can use is crowdsourced innovation to enable customers to share their thoughts and
ideas for the reward of recognition. They are currently trying to implement this somewhat by
posting fan pictures of the week in their Facebook album. We think that they should continue
evolving this to utilize the good ideas and thoughts that the customers might have. Another
important trend is instant PR & customer service. The rise of social media and real time
content online has affected PR and customer service. Bhargava states that these two
disciplines will continue to lead most business towards creating strategies and practices for
dealing with real time conversations happening online. The trend about employees as heroes
is also important because the stories can aid with humanizing the brand and support
recruitment efforts.
6. Conclusions and recommendations

In this final chapter we present our conclusions and discuss our research questions. The chapter also includes recommendations and proposals for future research.

6.1 Research questions

RQ1: How do companies use social media in their marketing communication?

Integration

According to our analysis we can see that it is important to integrate the use of social media into the company's marketing communication mix, as Mangold and Faulds (2009) purposes. We can see that Saab has been aware of this and are working with the same communication strategy globally. Saab has developed their marketing communication mix in a way where direct marketing and other ways to directly advertise to customers is more in focus then before as a result of the evolvement of social media. Social media is integrated in to the established brand identity, but is not limited by historical facts. The company is willing to take risks and come up with new ideas.

We can also see that there is a need to actively work with integrating the different social platforms. With the help of different plug-ins companies have the opportunity to share information across the different applications very easily. By doing this Saab invite the audience that interact on one application to join another applications. There is also an awareness of the importance of conveying a consistent message across the different applications. The messages can be the same but they are expressed in different ways due to the technical differences as well as to the different people using the sites.

The company is also aware of the importance of integrating inside the company. All instances must be able to find ways to cooperate. By doing this they can be more successful in both communicating with the employees at the company and with their customers.

Targeting the right people

According to Wright et al (2010) marketers must segment the market by defining customers that share similar ideals. With segmentation they can stand out and different themselves from other companies. In our analysis we can see that Saab is focusing too much on the global
perspective instead of finding local consumers who can ignite the fuse among others and start word-of-mouth trends. We can also see that Saab at the moment is not actively engaging or actively targeting their customers to optimize their social media efforts.

**Strategies and tactics**

Saab’s approach to social media is not different from their conventional marketing communication. They are using the same kind of communication strategy globally but the message is tailored to fit the platforms.

When it comes to monitoring they are using different monitoring instruments for listening in on what is being said about their company. They are working on finding different instruments for different countries and sites. They are not actively monitoring the businesses industry, niche, and competitors’ concerning the product features instead they are monitoring how other companies act on the social media market and are adapting their strategy to what is currently effective in the platforms.

Regarding control Saab finds it much harder to control the messages in social media. They are trying to find a tool that can collect all the discussions in order to influence the conversations. They are also providing the consumers with different platforms and using different methods to be present where the consumers are and to be able to influence what is being said. Saab is also dedicated to find out what the consumers think about the material that is being published by Saab. They monitor Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and other sites by using either tools that are available in the platforms as well as looking at the comments.

Saab is not very concerned with the negative feedback. They say that their audience is dedicated to Saab and therefore the sites are self-sanitizing. Bad comments are met by committed consumers.

They are continually working with their ongoing strategy and marketing communication to create relationships. They have not implemented any bigger campaigns to spike traffic to their sites. They do not either use sticky CTAs to try to spike the traffic to the website and to make the customers stick around and become engaged with the businesses content. Saab has instead tried to use sites and post content to create interest for upcoming public events. They are also not actively using conversion CTA’s to turn a visitor into a customer.
Saab’s essential tool for measuring the effectiveness of various social media platforms is Key Performance Indicator (KPI). KPI provides the company with data and continuous monitoring of patterns and trends.

**Future of social media**

What the future have in store for Saab’s use of social media nobody can really say. It all depends on how the design and use of the platforms develop. They have instead thought one step further by developing their own system called IQon. This system could provide information about how the car is running, where the car is at the moment, who is driving the car etc. which they hope can help them create a higher value for the customers. They also have a goal to incorporate their customer service in their daily social media efforts.

Their ambition is to continue with working on becoming more open and transparent as a company, because it has been proven to be a winning concept so far.

**RQ2: Why do companies use social media?**

According to the theory and our respondents companies use social media in their marketing communications because it allows them to inform their customers and create a two-way communication. Two-way communication enables companies to both listen to their customers and respond to criticism quick and easy. This communication can also help companies to influence consumers and differentiate their company.

Our study has also shown that the use of social media can help companies strengthen their corporate identity, build confidence for the company as well as create relationships. Companies want to be present where consumers are today, to monitor what is being said about them and their competitors and social media enables them to do that. Social media can also help companies identify their fans and critics. The use of social media is a cost effective way to become global and create reach.
6.2 Recommendations

We recommend companies that would like to start using social media in their marketing communication to first think about what their purpose and goal of social media use is. After they have formulated a goal we advise them to take part of our Social Media Strategy. To get more knowledge about how to monitor social media, engage customers, implement social media in their marketing communication and how to measure it.

We have constructed a social media strategy; which explains the main factors that we believe is important when implementing social media into the marketing communication. We have chosen to relay on previous theories when constructing this strategy and it will be explained graphically and narrative below.

![Figure 11: Conceptual framework of Social Media Strategy](image)

**Monitoring**

Before entering social media marketing companies should monitor the web, regarding what is being said, who is saying it, and where it is being said. Companies also need to know who the consumers are, where they hang out online, and how they use the web. To get more knowledge about how to act on the social media playfield companies should also monitor the business industry, niche and their competitors. By acquiring this information companies can get an idea about how to approach marketing communication with social media, which applications to use and how to reach engaged consumers. Before engaging in a social media conversation is important for businesses to get a sense of the rules and customs, and of whom the influential people are.

Companies can monitor the web by using different tools that are currently on the market, such as Meltwater Buzz and Google Analytics. They can also try to get an idea by searching for companies keywords on the search engines.
Engaging

It is important for companies to engage with their consumers and build relationships. In order to develop a relationship with someone, it is always advisable to take the lead and to be active. Because social media is about sharing and interaction, it is important to have up to date content and engage in discussions with consumers. When considering the social media efforts, companies must be aware that firm involvement must extend beyond responding to negative comments and defending product offerings. Participants on social media applications have the desire to actively engage and to become both producers and consumers of information.

It is also important to be interesting. Companies need to give the consumers a reason to engage with them - one which extends beyond saying that company is the best, or manufacture the best product. Companies should instead try to find out what consumers would like to hear; what they would like to talk about; what they might find interesting, and valuable. Then, develop and post content that fits those expectations, do not try to sell your products!

Companies should also try to implement call to action (CTA) and campaigns in their social media marketing. By doing so they could get more traffic to the sites and convince the consumers to become engaged with the businesses content, and help promote the next CTA. They should also try to use CTAs to turn a visitor into a customer. Companies should lead the visitors into the businesses sales funnel. It is important not to forget to cross-promote through the different applications.

Integrating

It is important that companies integrate their use of social media in to the company’s marketing communication mix. They should also be working with integrating the same communication strategy globally and with the already established brand identity, and not be limited by historical facts but instead be willing to take risks and come up with new ideas. Social media is also very effective when combined with the regular marketing efforts in building up expectations for events. It is an easy way to engage with the audience in a timely manner.
Relationships are nowadays more established by the audience and it is therefore sharp to invite those who interact with the company in one application to join another application. Companies have to actively work with integrating their different social platforms. By using plug-ins they can create opportunities to share information across the different applications very easily. It is also important to convey a consistent message across the different applications. The message has to be same but can be expressed in different ways due to the technical differences as well as because of the different people using the sites. Due to the issue that certain countries only want to communicate in their native language companies can have local sites dedicated to certain countries. It is important to keep in mind that customers have to see the business as a single company and not as an entity made up of different parts.

The companies should also integrate their strategy within the company. It is very important that businesses integrate their thinking around social media into the whole business concept. All instances must be able to find ways to cooperate. By doing this they can be more successful in both communicating with the employees at the company and with their customers.

**Measuring**

When measuring the consumer activity companies can use on-site and off-site metrics. By analyzing how long time a visitor spends on the company’s site, or the more pages they read, the deeper the relationship with the company becomes. Companies can also use a web metric called bounce rates’, analyzing at which page the visitor is bouncing of the company’s site. This can for example be a link to a movie clip on YouTube. Because so many social media activities occur in places other than the company’s site, the company should also be measuring a class of metrics that can be found off-site. This can be done by using tools available in different applications that they are present in. Other aspects that the company could monitor are number of comments that the company gets on their posts/content and also the number of subscribers that they have. Meltwater Buzz and Google Analytics can also be used for measuring the activity and other variables on the sites.

When trying to analyze all the data collected marketers can try to create visualized data as a way to leverage the all collected data and explain it simpler. By doing this companies can do everything from sharing real time sentiment with consumers to creating better and more
compelling visuals for senior management to keep or increase marketing budgets for the rest of the year.

Companies should measure their activities in the social media platforms because not all businesses can beneficially engage in all types of social media; the company should focus on the one that is working best for them.

Companies should not be afraid of being open and transparent on social media sites, because this is just what the consumers want and expect. We also believe that companies should not be afraid of making mistakes with the use of social media, because this is a new and still evolving media of communication.

6.3 Future research
After completing our study we have seen that social media and ROI are yet not connected. We would recommend researching more on this topic, what is ROI of social media?
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Appendix 1

Interview questions, English version

1. What is the purpose of your use of social media?

2. What do you hope to accomplish through social media and how do you plan to measure progress?

3. What tools/sites/applications are you most comfortable with? How have you gone about assessing which ones might be of value or appropriate for your company's use?

4. What experience have you gained of using social media applications?

5. Can you tell us about some of the challenges you have faced when introducing social media in your marketing mix, and how you overcame them?

6. Can you tell us about a time when something you’ve done online has not gone as planned, and how did you handle it?

7. How do you integrate your message across the different channels/applications?

8. What is your policy on moderating comments? Transparency?

9. How do you make sure participants are satisfied with the experience?

10. How do you measure success in social media?

11. How has social media affected your other digital media work – for example the main website?

12. How are you currently listening to your customers?
13. Who is currently monitoring conversations about your company/brand?

14. Where have you set up listening/monitoring posts?

15. Are you listening to customer conversations that aren’t about your brand, per se?

16. Are you listening to conversations about your competitors?

17. What tools/technologies are you using to monitor conversations?

18. Do you know who your brand enthusiasts are? Do you know who your brand critics are?

19. What methods have you used: To identify a niche audience and grow it? To engage that audience? To convert them into customers? (CTAs)

20. How will you go about determining the right social media campaign to reach your goals?

21. How much time and money are you willing to dedicate to social media projects?

22. What are your ambitions with social media for the future?
Interview questions, Svensk version

1. Vad är syftet med er användning av sociala medier?

2. Vad hoppas ni åstadkomma genom att använda sociala medier och hur planerar ni att mäta framsteg?

3. Vilka verktyg / sajter / program är ni mest bekväma med? Hur har ni bedömt vilka som kan vara av värde eller är lämpliga för ert företag?

4. Vilken erfarenhet har ni fått av att använda sociala medier

5. Kan ni berätta om några av de utmaningar som ni ställs inför vid införandet av sociala medier i er marknadsföring mix, och hur ni överkom dem?

6. Kan ni berätta om när något ni gjorde på nätet inte har gick som planerat, och hur har ni hanterade detta?

7. Hur integrerar ni ert budskap på de olika sidorna?

8. Vad har ni för policy på moderera kommentarer? Öppenhet?

9. Hur säkra kan ni vara på att konsumenterna är nöjda med er sociala medie kommunikation?

10. Hur mäter man/ni framgång i sociala medier?

11. Hur har sociala medier påverkat era andra digitala medier - till exempel företagets hemsida?

12. Hur lyssnar ni till era kunder idag?
13. Vem sköter för närvarande övervakningen av diskussioner (på sociala medier) om ditt företag / varumärke?

14. Var (sidor/applicationer) övervakar ni inlägg?

15. Lyssnar ni även på kunders konversationer som inte handlar om ert varumärke i sig genom sociala medier?

16. Vilka verktyg / tekniker använder ni för att övervaka konversationer?

17. Övervakar ni diskussioner om erna konkurrenter via sociala medier?

18. Vet ni vilka ert varumärkes entusiaster är? Vet ni vilka ert varumärkes kritiker är?


20. Hur går ni till väga när ni bestämmer vilken typ av sociala medier som ni ska använda er av för att nå era mål?

21. Hur mycket tid och pengar är ni villiga att avsätta för sociala medier projekt?

22. Vad är er framtida ambition inom social media?
Appendix 2

Social Media Applications

Facebook:
Saab Newsroom:

Saab Automobile Enters Agreement With Hawtai Motor Group On Strategic Partnership
Trolhättan, Sweden: Following yesterday’s announcement that Spyker Cars N.V. (Spyker) secured its short term funding, Spyker announces today that Spyker and Saab Automobile AB (Saab Automobile) signed an agreement with Hawtai Motor Group Company Limited (Hawtai). This agreement conditionally secures medium term funding and includes financing in the form of subscription agreements in the amount of EUR 150 million as well as a strategic alliance for China including joint ventures on manufacturing, technology and distribution.  READ MORE

Saab Automobile Secures Short-Term Funding
Trolhättan, Sweden: Spyker Cars N.V. (Spyker) announces that it secured the short-term funding of Saab Automobile AB (Saab Automobile) by entering into a EUR 30 million convertible loan agreement with Gamini Investment Fund Limited (Gamini).  READ MORE
Inside Saab:

By Swade

Mille Miglia Revisited: Classic Saabs Pay Homage to Historic Success

May 5, 2011 14:23

Saab Automobile team commemorates 1957 Mille Miglia class win
- Driver line-up includes Saab Automobile’s Vice President of Vehicle Product Development and Spyker Cars’ Chairman of the Board

Trollhättan, Sweden. A trio of historic Saab 93s will take part in this year’s Mille Miglia, starting Thursday 12 May, revisiting the scene of one of Saab’s first successes in international motor sport.

Italian towns and hillside cobbled roads once again become the distinctive cradle of a Saab two-stroke engine as the cars follow in the wheel tracks of Charlie Loheider and Harald Kromegård, who won their class with a Saab 93 in the last 1957 Mille Miglia road race.
YouTube:

Twitter: