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**DEVELOPING SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS
EVENT MARKETING
Case: Northern Game Summit**

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Northern Game Summit (NGS), on vuosittain järjestettävä kaksipäiväinen ja kansainvälinen pelialan tapahtuma, joka on suunnattu pelialasta kiinnostuneille opiskelijoille ja pelialan ammattilaisille. Työn toimeksiantajana oli tapahtuman järjestäjä.

Työ on seurausta aikaisemmasta osallistumisesta ja työkokemuksesta Northern Game Summit tapahtumassa, sekä toimeksiantajan tarpeesta kehittää sosiaalisen median kanavia tapahtuman järjestämisessä.

Tutkimusongelmana oli selvittää, miten NGS voi kehittää sosiaalisen median kanavia ja luoda sitä kautta lisäarvoa ja näkyvyyttä tapahtumalle. Aikaisempia tutkimuksia pelialan tapahtumasta ei ollut. Työllä pyrittiin selvittämään, miten tapahtumaa voidaan kehittää ja kasvattaa sosiaalisen median kanavien, niissä mainostamisen ja markkinoimisen avulla. Tavoitteena oli siten ymmärtää ja löytää ehdotuksia NGS:n tapahtumamarkkinoinnin kehittämiseksi sosiaalisen median kanavien kautta.

Työssä on lähestytty sosiaalisen median eli palvelujen käyttäjän ja tapahtumaan osallistujan, ei niinkään järjestäjän, näkökulmasta ja kehitysehdotukset pohjautuvat tähän näkemykseen. Tämä työ antaa uusia ideoita, sekä herättää pohtimaan eri mahdollisuuksia kehittää sosiaalisen median kanavia tapahtuman järjestäjille.

ABSTRACT

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This thesis is a development task for the commissioning party Northern Game Summit or NGS for short, an event for game development professionals and game development students.

The topic of the thesis arose from earlier work experience in Northern Game Summit 2015 and the need of the commissioning party to develop their social media channels. The goal is to establish better understanding about event marketing in social media and find development possibilities for NGS to grasp their potential inside the social media, as well as create development suggestions for their operation. How can NGS develop their social media channels to create more value and visibility for their event?

Northern Game Summit have not had any previous research of the subject and this thesis aims to help Northern Game Summit to further develop and grow their event.

The development ideas in this thesis are based on the viewpoint of the social media user and event participant, rather than the viewpoint of the organizing party. This work creates something to consider about and new possible development ideas for Northern Game Summit and its social media channels, and other event organizations to build up their social media visibility and effectiveness.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Northern Game Summit, or NGS for short, is an event for game development professionals and game development students. This event is driven solely by voluntary work from students of Kajaani University of Applied Sciences and, its goal is to help promote Finnish game development education and the international game development scene. This is mainly achieved by creating an atmospheric event where professionals can share their knowledge and expertise with the students and other professionals, creating new social contacts is one of the biggest aims of this event.

The theoretical background includes what kind of social media channels exist how they are being used most efficiently, how to choose the right channels to reach customers, how to create valuable context for these channels and, how the social media is being used inside NGS key customer segments.

The key concepts are described in their own chapter. The theoretical part goes through a general overlook of social media as they are, social media behaviour and increasing visibility and awareness through event marketing in social media. Social media channels for this thesis are chosen by their significance for Northern Game Summit and event marketing in general.

Development ideas for mobile versions of social media channels are left out in this work, although some references may appear in the text. Also, it was not essential to focus how to organize an event, how to build a website or use the Internet and social media software.

Northern Game Summit's web site has also been taken into account, because NGS social media channels are built around it. Websites were under construction during this work, social media links and channels (except Facebook) were not built and, therefore, were not possible to evaluate.

Development ideas are based on the assumption that Northern Game Summit has the needed resources, capacities and expertise to fulfil them. The idea is to create frameworks or building blocks for Northern Game Summit to further de-

velop and strategize their operations for more comprehensive and functional package.

2 THE NATURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media has a lot of definitions. According to Pönkä (2014, 35) social media consist of content, community and web 2.0 technologies. Another definition of social media from Korteso (2014 b, 123), states that social media can be application, programs and services inside internet, where users themselves can create their own content and comment or even modify content that has been created earlier by other users.

Kananen (2013, 13) sees social media as social interaction between people, as they create and share texts and contents, like opinions, experiences, pictures and videos. The key characteristics of social media are; A) user of the media has to have their own profile, B) user has modifiable contact list, and C) the communication inside the media has to be two-way dialogue (Leino 2012, 27).

Leino (2012, 113) describes the nature of social media from the users' perspective as a marketplace of social media, where people gather around to spend some time with others, to have a conversation, to do business, change products and services, or just to hang out.

Something in common with all these definitions are that they all believe social media to represent user created content, community, interaction between users inside media channels, which are accessible through internet by using different technologies. The most important aspect for social media is seen to be that it creates the possibility to human communication, interaction, involvement, and upholding relationships.

Characteristics of low publishing barriers, sincerity and transparency, constant change and conversation are strongly attached to the social media definition, because anyone can share their opinion disregarding their professionalism, education or profession. Social media is involvement, transparency, conversations, communities, and interactions (chat, polls, forums, messages, feedback). (Kananen 2013, 14 – 15).

Anyone can choose right media, from the great number of different social media sites, and create their own publishing medium (Pönkä 2014, 27). Transparency means that it is easy to find out who is the owner of the community site or profile (Kananen 2013, 116). Juslén (2009, 67) describes transparency as being internet users increased knowledge, channels and possibilities to use them. Kortesus (2014 a, 28; 2014 b, 16) highlights social media's core factors to be communication, interaction, creating through community and being up to date.

Based on researches, users of social media can be divided in six different types. These six types are based on how and why they are using the internet. The six types are divided as follows; 1) content, 2) functionalists, 3) knowledge-seekers, 4) social, 5) technological, 6) actives. (Pönkä 2014, 39).

Table 1 shows social media user types based on their consuming habits and preferred actions inside social media. On the side note it must be said that new social media channels are brought up and older ones are dying constantly.

Table 1: Social media user types, habits and channels (Pönkä 2014, 39 – 41).

<i>PERCENTAGE OF USERS, ACTIVITY, MEDIA CHANNEL AND HABITS (2014)</i>	
<i>Social 19 %</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>under 45 yo.</i> • <i>82 % women</i> 	Regular visits, contacts, targets of interest, playing games, several profiles, following others, having fun, Facebook
<i>Technological 18 %</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>under 45 yo.</i> • <i>86 % men</i> 	Regular usage, playing (mobile, console, computer), humor, spending time, news, short videos, fast messaging- and community- applications, Facebook, YouTube, Google, Spotify
<i>Content 17 %</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>over 45 yo.</i> • <i>retired, unemployed</i> • <i>low education levels</i> 	Seldom usage, information search, spending time, news, contacting friends and family, Facebook
<i>Knowledge-Seekers 16 %</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>over 45 yo. (75 %)</i> 	Active usage, news and timely subjects, finding new information, education, searching help, contacts, learning new skills, influencing medium, Forums, Blogs, Facebook, YouTube
<i>Functionalists 15 %</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>over 45 yo.</i> • <i>highly educated (academic education 40 %)</i> 	Usage focuses on dealing daily activities, information search, self-education, contacts, Google
<i>Actives 15 %</i>	Usage is linked to everything, prejudiceless and multidimen-

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>under 45 yo.</i> • <i>22 % students</i> 	sional usage of technology, experimentation, new media forms and services, Facebook and Mobile usage
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Content creating types are probably the three bottom groups: knowledge-seekers, functionalists and actives. They are more well versed in technology than the others and have probably more incentives to create new content inside the medias. Content type users more likely consumes the created content. Technological types also more likely consumes the content, but are more active to create new content than the Content types. When creating content, technological types uses technology and the applications in a more versatile way to their advantage.

Leino (2012, 117) presents that there are nine commentators against one content subject and 90 followers (Chart 1).

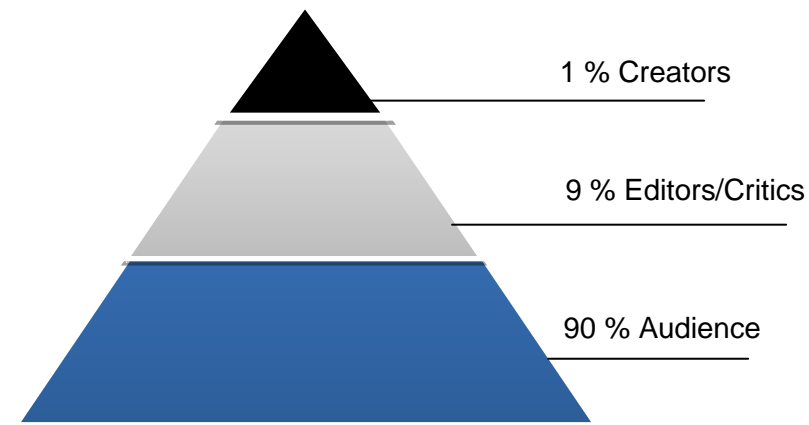


Chart 1: Content creation rule 90-9-1 (Leino 2012, 117).

The Leino's 90-9-1 rule may not be 100 percent accurate, as he does not declare how he has gathered these numbers and what kind of data rule is based on. He also does not indicate where example users, that share the contact with others, are included.

3 SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

When talking about social media, it usually means Facebook, YouTube, Wikipedia, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr and different kind of blogs which are based on network services (Kananen 2013, 13; Pönkä 2014, 36).

A few of the most popular and most famous social media sites, their concept and terminology, are described in this chapter.

According to Pönkä (2014, 36) the intention of social media services is to make consumers to use them, as of starting conversation, creating and sharing content, or creating network. This description, however, cuts off internet based virtual- and game worlds. Virtual- and Game-worlds connects their users firmly to the key factors of social media (chapter 2), as they condense the idea of interactive, social community. These worlds have had a big role in developing the social media technology, application and services.

Because of social media channels are difficult to determine and specify under one type, nine different social media channel categories have been created to match the characteristics of the channel. Even in these nine categories the line is drawn on water.

3.1 Categories of Social Media Channels

Social media channels can be divided into nine different categories, based on their intent of use. These nine categories are; 1) social networking services (SNS), 2) video sharing network, 3) picture sharing network, 4) wiki networks, 5) instant messaging and chat applications, 6) discussion forums, 7) cloud services, 8) bookmarking services, 9) online review and recommendation services (Pönkä 2014, 83 – 164).

Social media channels and services can be categorised differently depending on the viewpoint, for example, video and picture sharing networks and parts of cloud services can be described together as media sharing network.

In tables 2 – 7 (Kananen 2013; Korteso 2014 a, 2014 b; Pönkä 2014) are categorized the most popular and biggest channels according to their characteristics. Popularity of the channels are shown as monthly active users.

Social networking service channels are web community services. The user creates a profile and shares content to other users, which forms a social network. Social networking service channels used for spending time and for entertainment.

Microblog contains very short entries, usually no more than 140 characters (i.e. Twitter). Microblogs are used for fast information delivery and messaging.

Table 2. Social networking service channels.

<i>Social networking service channels</i>	
Facebook , <i>facebook.com</i> over billion users (Kauppalehti, 2015)	World's most famous and most popular social media service. Private or public user, company or group profile. Is based on user created content; status updates, chats, sharing pictures, videos or links, and following other users
Twitter , <i>twitter.com</i> over 320 million users (Taloussanommat, Digitoday 2016)	Microblog. Is based on short 140 characters long messages, called tweets. Public user profile, networking and news channel. Possibility to follow anyone or to be followed. Simple and effective messaging tool. Can share pictures and links. Search done via #.
Google+ , <i>plus.google.com</i> almost 550 million users	Googles own 'Facebook', was create to challenge Facebook. Private profile and shared user circles. Signing up opens e-mail services and other social media services, app store, chat. Fast networking through sharing user profile.
LinkedIn , <i>linkedin.com</i> nearly 190 million users	Is based on idea of Facebook for businesses and business networking. Profile is made for professional use, acts as a business card or business resume. Is considered to be good recruiting channel and business image building tool. Has also blog options.
Sina Weibo , <i>weibo.com</i>	One of the most famous sites in China. Micro blog. Hybrid version of western Twitter and Facebook. Over 500 million users.
VK , <i>vk.com</i>	Russian social networking service. Hugely popular among Russian speaking populace. Over 200 million users.

The second biggest social media category is sharing videos on the internet. Video network services are used for free-time, teaching, game streaming and active participation through chat discussion.

Table 3. Video sharing networks

Video sharing networks

YouTube , <i>youtube.com</i> over billion users	Most famous video sharing network. User profiles possible to create and upload own videos or subscribe other users and follow their content. Second most used search engine after Google.
Vimeo , <i>vimeo.com</i> 100 million users	Video sharing network favored by businesses and organizations. Makes possible to save video files into one's own computer. Used only for professional content.
Twitch , <i>twitch.tv</i> 60 million users	Video streaming service. Game, gaming or music related content. Possible to make own profile and send live video from own computer or console. Real time chat with content creators.

Picture sharing networks are used for uploading, sharing or commenting pictures.

Table 4. Picture sharing network

<i>Picture sharing networks</i>	
Instagram , <i>instagram.com</i> 200 million users	Used much like Twitter, to following favourite users and gathering own followers. Taking, sharing and commenting of pictures, adding visual effects or filters to picture, or publishing short videos. Possible to ad short messages to pictures and # identifier, which can be used to find same identifier owning pictures. Standard public profile, possible to change private. Instant messaging service, user following, commenting, liking sharing.
Flickr , <i>flickr.com</i> over 90 million users	Compilation, organising and sharing of pictures and videos based on identifiers and files. Possibility to create user groups. Publishing happens with Creative Commons (CC) license, this makes possible of using, sharing and editing pic-

tures for other users.

Get to know [CC license](https://creativecommons.org/)
<https://creativecommons.org/>

Blogs are based on writing articles or diary-type of columns. Blogs are more intimate channels to publish opinions, life stories, and news, to name a few than SNS. Blogs are a good medium to form discussions, create ideas, to entertain and share information. They are not suitable for fast messaging or sending fast information like Twitter. Users can comment and share blog writings and add links that are about the subject. Blogs can be alternative options for businesses' web pages, offering better contact with the customers and are easier to maintain.

Table 5. Blog services

<i>Blog services</i>	
WordPress , <i>wordpress.com</i> over 400 million users	Most popular and diverse blog service. Free to use, but extra payment unlocks more themes and outlooks. User account can be created as private or public. Entries will be listed in chronological order, and listing key words makes search engine optimization possible.
Blogger , <i>blogger.com</i> over 500 million users	Belongs to Google service family and are used with the same profile as all the other Google family services. Blogs have their own internet domain or they are under blogspot.com domain. Google Analytics service can be integrated in Blogger.
Tumblr , <i>tumblr.com</i> 200 million users.	A Blog service for publishing text columns, links, quotations and multimedia. Networking possible through inviting other users. Reminds Twitter micro blog, as it is possible to re-blog other users and using #-indications

Wiki networks are encyclopaedias that the network users have gathered and created and are editable by anyone. The most famous of internet encyclopaedias is Wikipedia.

Table 6. Wiki networks

WIKI networks

<p><i>Wikipedia</i> <i>MediaWiki</i> <i>Wikispaces</i> <i>Wetpaint</i> <i>Google Sites</i></p>	<p>Users themselves write, add, fix and edit the information. Wiki networks are usually vast and reliable information source in private usage, but are shun when information needs to be accurate. The quality of articles varies a lot, and the reliability of the content needs to be evaluate by the reader. For evaluating the credibility of the written information, it is necessary to check the sources.</p>
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Instant messaging and chat applications and services are designed to be easy to use, where users can exchange their opinions, experiences, and to have conversation. Services and applications can be private or public.

Table 7. Instant messaging and chat applications and services

<p><i>Instant messaging and chat applications and services</i></p>	
<p>WhatsApp messenger, <i>whatsapp.com</i> Facebook Messenger, <i>messenger.com</i> Yahoo Messenger, <i>messenger.yahoo.com</i> Google Hangouts, <i>plus.google.com/hangouts</i> Skype, <i>skype.com</i> Kik messenger, <i>kik.com</i> SnapChat, <i>snapchat.com</i></p>	<p>Applications that are downloadable for smartphones and other mobile devices. Used to send text messages, picture, videos, and audio between users.</p> <p>Skype makes it possible to have a real time conversation with one or several users. Users can send and download information and files. Kik Messenger works through internet connection and doesn't need mobile phone license, unlike WhatsApp. SnapChat is specialised in instant picture and video sharing that can last up to 10 seconds, after that deleting sent files from the servers.</p>

Cloud services offer a possibility for users to save their files into internet serves instead of installing them on their own hard drive. Cloud services can have multiple users, which makes it possible to multiple users to use and edit the files at the same time. This feature has been increasing in popularity in different consumer groups (students, organizations, businesses), and replacing many organizations intranet services. Popular cloud services are, for example, Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive and Slideshare.

Bookmarking services are internet services where users can save and file other internet pages through themes. Bookmarked groups are possible to share through your own profile. By bookmarking, the user can recommend certain internet page to one's own followers, for example, using Pin it or Like buttons. Web link collections are shown to the user as pictures. Pinteres, Diigo, Delicious are Bookmarking services.

With online review and recommendation services, users can share their opinions, experiences and reviews about the products and services they have used. These channels are possibly the most important and cheapest way to develop organizations operations, to create long lasting customer relations and creating a brand image.

In conclusion, it is for every person and organization to decide, if they want to participate in social media, in what way, and which channels they are willing to use. More thought needs to put on to whom the channels are targeted, who are using the channel and in what way. For organizations and social media professionals, it is essential to plan publishing periods, resource handling, task and responsibility sharing, and agreeing on the rules.

For anyone, who is delving into the social media business one common thing is shared, customers/followers/subscribers needs a working feedback channel. The Feedback channel creates an ability for consumers to get in touch with the organization, and organization can use the feedback to develop their processes, services, products and content.

When choosing the right social media channels, organizations must think about their consumer habits and preferred channel, the scope of involvement in social media, and what they are trying to accomplish with it. Korteso (2014 b, 106) reminds that an organization needs to think about how well different channels integrate with each other and how well the files can be moved.

Organising the social media is tapped later on in chapter 4.2.

3.2 Search Engines and Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

The most effective way to affect search engine optimization is to produce content in a way that search engines find it easily and defines the content as meaningful (Juslén 2009, 242).

When talking about search engine optimization, it usually means editing web page content, so that search engines find the site with intended search words and prioritises the site as high as possible (Leino 2012, 86). The SEO performance can be increased with paid search engine marketing. In paid search engine marketing, the marketer defines the target segment and segment's point of interests. Segments can be defined by their search words, location, age or sex group, in addition to many other possibilities.

Search engines find web pages, where the searched word, term, or subject is found. Choosing the right key words and matching options is a way to focus on those consumers who are using search words that are related to the site's content. Search results are links to web sites, whose content matches the search words. The better the site matches with the search words, the higher the web link is shown in the search results. The search terms report lists all the words and terms that have been used in the search engine and how popular they are. With the help of the search terms report, it is possible to check how effective certain key words or terms are. This helps when choosing more effective and popular key words, terms and options. Search engines find new sites independently with slight delay after the site is launched (Google. AdWords Help 2016 c, d; Juslén 2009, 108).

The defined key words, how often the words appear in the content, placement of the words and site's titles, determines how highly the search engine rates the site and its placement in the search result list. Search engines focus especially on head and sub titles, domain name, picture descriptions, and key words in the first patch of text (Kortesuo 2014 a, 46). Slideshows and their key words are an easy way to get better rating in search engine searches (Kortesuo 2014 b, 44).

Site's own domain name is recommended to be used as a key word for the search and implant it on different search engines. Although Wikipedia is not always a reliable information source, it is a widely used and popular search engine, with its results also seen in the Google search engine. Because of this integration, it is recommended to create a Wikipedia article about the organization, its operations and products with facts and links to the site.

Opasmedia has published a Finnish internet guide where people can get to know different search engines, their operation principles and manuals. (Opasmedia Oy, Suomen Internetopas, hakupalvelut). This guide is included in the reference list of this thesis.

3.3 Monitoring and Tracking of Social Media and Internet Sites

Besides maintaining social media channels, it is important to monitor, track and analyse them. These activities are useful when trying to understand why and from where people come to the site, what attracts and activates followers, how different actions and content affects the site's popularity, what works and what does not. Traditional marketing tools, other social media channels, partner networks and channels, links, banner advertisement and homepages are simple ways to create visibility to the social media channel.

A lot of programs and services have been developed to make tracking and monitoring of these sites easier. Sites dedicated to monitoring and analysing are, for example, Google Alerts (google.com/alerts), Google Analytics (google.com/analytics) or StepRep (facebook.com/step.rep). With these services it is possible to track and monitor the traffic in the internet site and social media channels daily. With Social Mention (socialmention.com/) it is possible to track blogs, comment, bookmarks, events and videos, among other things.

Twitter has its own monitoring service to track and analyse numbers of followers, tweets and their development (Kortesuo 2014 a, 76-77). Twitter counter can be found from its site twittercounter.com/.

Monitoring and analysing services of Instagram are declared to be updated in future. With update the user will get features to gain demographic data from one's own followers: age and gender distribution, location, and time of day activity. In addition to follower data, Instagram users will get more information about the popularity of their published pictures (impressions). Based on this information it is possible to rate the published content and grant better visibility. (Someco Oy 2016).

The data gained from tracking and monitoring will be useless if it is unknown what can be done with the information, what the data means or why it is measured in the first place (Leino 2012, 166). The purpose of gathering this data is to find the right target groups, find the right time to publish and chart the points of interests of followers. More specified goals can be set, for example, to get 1000 new active followers in a certain time period. When organization has information like, followers' interests and publishing time, then the set goals are easier to achieve. The indicators for social media channels and web pages can be, for example, counting visitors and changes at the count, how much time has been used during the visit, amount of likes, the number of retweets or watched videos.

4 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

The popularity of social media is based on development of technology, new application solutions and to the ease of use.

The growing popularity of social media, diversification and expansion of digital services and applications, has affected the organizations' communication, marketing habits, networking and customer relationships in very short time span. The role of the customer has also changed by this. Today's consumer is seen as an active, knowledgeable, price and quality conscious. The consumer is also thought to be an integral part in the development of the organization. Moreover, customer's own experiences and opinions of products and services are more visible than before and these reviews have big impact on consumer buying decisions.

Kananen (2013, 9) states that, social media has created co-operative environment for businesses and consumers alike. In this environment, businesses and consumers are acting in co-operation to build and to create more value, trust and image.

Social media is an effective and diverse tool for networking, marketing, creating and handling customer relations (Kananen 2013, 13; Korteso 2014 a 58). An active community network can be created through commenting, reading and sharing content between community members. Content marketing takes over sharing and publishing, when the purpose of the content is to create sales for the company inside the network (Pönkä 2014, 169).

Advantages of Web marketing are 1) brand building by raising awareness of the site, 2) direct marketing and individualized messages to the target group, 3) online sales is an interactive environment, 4) customer support and easy access to frequently asked questions, 5) marketing research which provides valuable information about customers and 6) content publishing services which makes information on organization available to a wider internet audience. (Hoyle 2002, 56).

Leino (2012, 31 – 32) claims, that the most practical way to see social media is a customer relation and a customer service channel, for example, Facebook is suited well for this kind of use. He recommends that the channels are used as a sales channel, but only after trust has been established with the potential customers.

Internet communities are important channels and resources for the members of the community. Communities can be effective educational channels and great at spreading new information and making the information available for others. Internet offers more information than only organizations' publications, as hundreds of millions users publish their own experiences, reviews and blogs for the products or services that are available for everyone to read. With social media channels and search engines this information is easily available and within hands reach for everyone. (Pönkä 2014, 11, 29 – 30).

Because the social media can be very unpredictable and can have surprising effects on the organization image, it is important to create clear plans and rules how to use social media channels and what to do if problems or difficulties arises. It must be kept in mind that what is published in social media represents the whole organization and the organization's opinions.

When something has been published once it is very hard to delete from the channels and publications usually does not go unnoticed. For these reasons organizations must be careful what they publish in social media channels.

Social media marketing is done by publishing the information in every channel at the same time. The organization can delegate a part of the tasks in social media to the communities or their members for compensation. These tasks can be, for example, product development, marketing or customer acquisition. If delegation is done properly, it can be one of the most effective problem solvers. The key questions for organizations in social media are as follows: how to activate different customer groups and communities, how to get the best benefits from social media and internet marketing, how the effectiveness is measured and monitored. (Kananen 2013, 14 – 15).

Social media marketing can be utilized in different stages of buying process (chart 2).

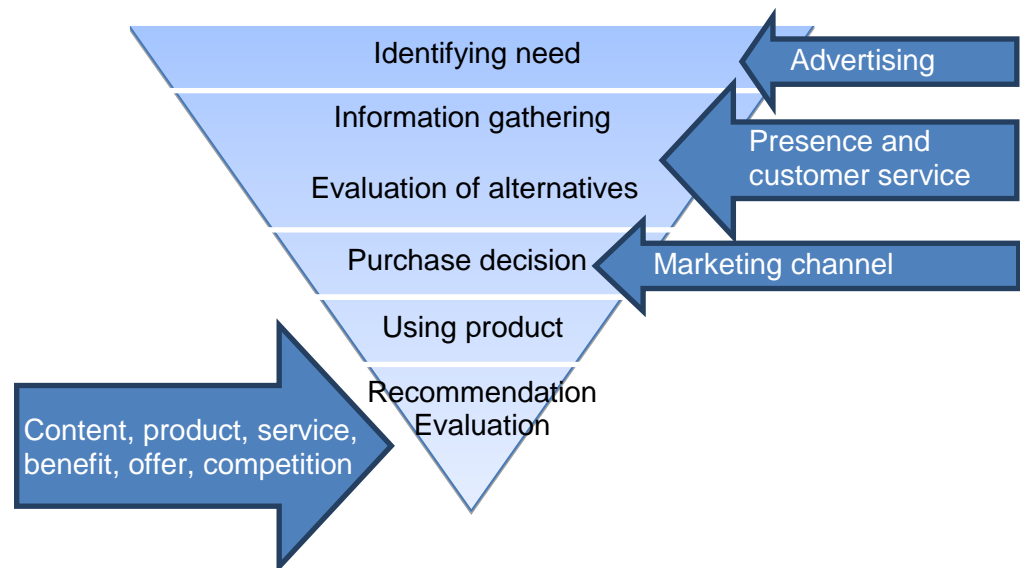


Chart 2: Benefits of social media in marketing (Leino 2012, 33).

Chart 2 describes organizations possibilities for marketing in social media. Only using the product is not included in buying process and advertising in social media channels (Leino 2012, 33).

This chart can be used in event marketing in a way, that the organizing party makes themselves and their chosen social media channels to be known, example with the search engines optimization, the key search words or the online marketing. The goal is to create interest around the event, attract consumers, possible co-operation partners and active members. Finally, the goal is to develop the event, create a community around it, and build the community to review and share the information about the event.

When choosing the right social media channels, it is preferable to choose channels that organization are familiar with and where are the biggest target segments. The content in these channels should aim to create interest and trust in readers, furthermore created content should bring extra value for the followers. Basically this means that the created content should be interesting, timely, trustworthy, entertaining, and different. The added value can be defined as a content

that cannot be found anywhere else and it can be considered as a competitive leverage (Leino 2012, 50).

4.1 Outbound- and Inbound Marketing

Juslén (2009, 57) reminds that the internet is not a traditional marketing channel, where messages are controlled and send in a one-way-stream to consumers, but rather the internet is a social and an interactive environment with two-way-stream communication. This kind of environment means that consumers have the power to affect to the organization's reputation, and marketing messages by their own internet behaviour.

To understand this dialogue in an online environment and marketing opportunities, the organization needs to change the traditional marketing ideas and assume new operating models (Kananen 2013, 11).

The way how consumers are making purchase decisions have changed, and the traditional marketing methods do not create the same impact as they used to. Consumers are not satisfied to the information that organizations offer. Besides organizations' information, consumers are looking for other opinions and reviews what other consumers have written. These reviews and opinions are usually more trusted by other consumers and they have bigger influence on the buying decisions than organization's traditional marketing. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 19).

In char 3, is described inbound and outbound marketing channels.

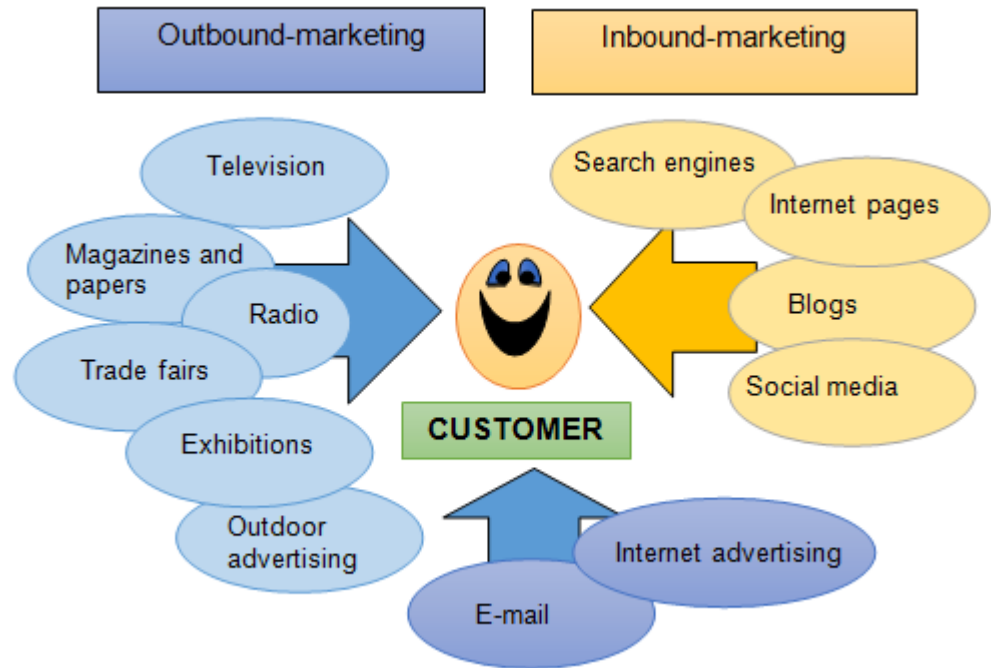


Chart 3: Outbound and Inbound marketing channels. Based information from Kananen (2013, 11).

Distinguishing difference between the outbound and the inbound marketing is the way message is send to consumers. The outbound marketing relies on sending messages through those marketing channels where the target groups are most exposed to the marketing. The outbound marketing can interrupt the consumer from his or her activities with a message which is not wanted. Most of the out-bound marketing is done via mass media. In the internet marketing; advertising, e-mail and banner ads works as an outbound principle. Usually consumers are actively fighting against these messages with example adblockers and trash e-mail filters. (Juslén 2009, 132; Kananen 2013, 11).

The inbound marketing principle is based on to the idea of consumers own inter-activity and acceptance, where the marketing message corresponds to the receivers wishes. Instead of interrupting the consumer, marketer's responsibility is to provide the right and interesting information to customers. Information should be received at the time and in a way that the consumer wishes. In other words, consumers themselves are actively seeking the information and the content they

need or the information is provided in convenient time, in example when making the buying decision. (Juslén 2009, 81, 133; Kananen 2013, 11).

Google AdWords digital marketing program has a guide for online marketing (Google. AdWords Help. 2016 a, b). The guide goes through creating advertisements and campaigns, organizing them, targeting the right segments and search engine optimization.

4.2 Organizing Social Media

When building organizations strategic view, it is good to think about a social media's role and a digital marketing as well. It is difficult to achieve anything with a social media and internet advertising, without a good plans and goals (Kananen 2013, 17). Customer satisfaction must be linked to the overall goals of the organization, because without it, it is difficult to create a profitable business model, decent follower numbers or other achievements that organization has set (Juslén 2009, 82).

Kortesuo (2004 a, 55) does not think it is necessary, for the organization to create an individual social media branch or a temporary social media projects. He thinks that the social media should be used throughout the whole organization, as in customer service as in sales, marketing, product development, management and human recourse departments.

Kananen (2013, 20) offers different kind of view in organizing social media. He believes that organizing and maintaining the social media channels effectively is challenging that binds staff in it for longer time periods. Kananen suggest two different types of operation models to solve this; 1) centralized and 2) decentralized.

In the centralized operation model, there is an individual branch dedicated to handle the social media channels and social media marketing. In the decentralized operation model, every branch themselves and several staff personnel are

in charge of their specialization in the organization and the subjects that are connected in to it and in the social media. (Kananen 20013, 20).

The decentralized operation model is closer to the preview statement from Korteso, where everyone in the organization are responsible for creating content in the social media channels and in forum discussions.

The centralized operation model would benefit from faster reaction time, a better customer service and discussion experiences, and also a better lining with the organizations operation politics. The social media branch should have vast experience and knowledge from different branches of the organization and how the organization works. Difficulties may arise when the personnel who are in charge of social media does not know enough about the organization and the operations in detail.

The decentralized operation model requires a vast knowledge and education of personnel of social media channels and their cultures. Difficulties in the decentralised model can be an uncontrollable and conflicted communication. But in a way the communication can be more natural and real, that is respected by consumers. Work distribution, personal views, and responsibility distribution can cause conflicts in the decentralised model. (Kananen 20013, 20)

In the centralized model the social media operations can be organized as functionally. In the functional model, organization has an individual branch which is dedicated for social media and other branches, under management, can focus on their duties (chart 4).

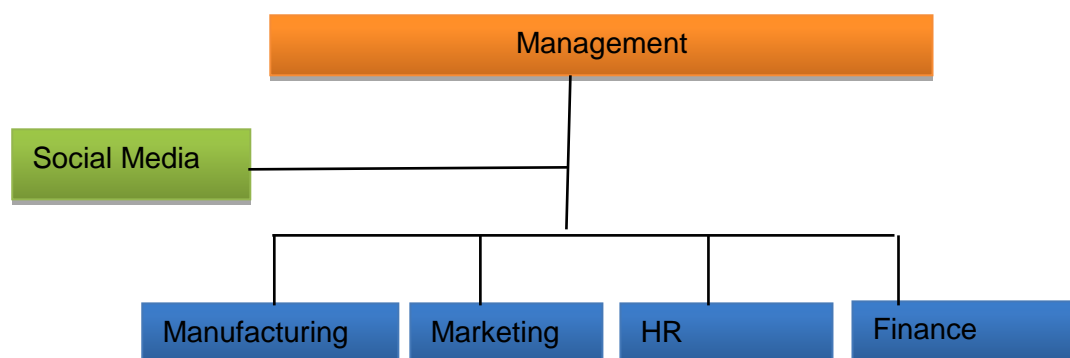


Chart 4: Functional model. (Kananen 2013, 20).

Organizations customers, a size and the nature (B-to-B, B-to-C) of the company are things that must be considered when organizing social media. (Kananen 2013, 23).

Social media channels and content marketing must reflect the organization's operation plan, the nature of operations, its goals, expertise and customer base. If organization does not have needed expertise, it is good idea to consider consultant services.

Chart 5 describes what are the basic questions that must be answered when creating internet strategy.

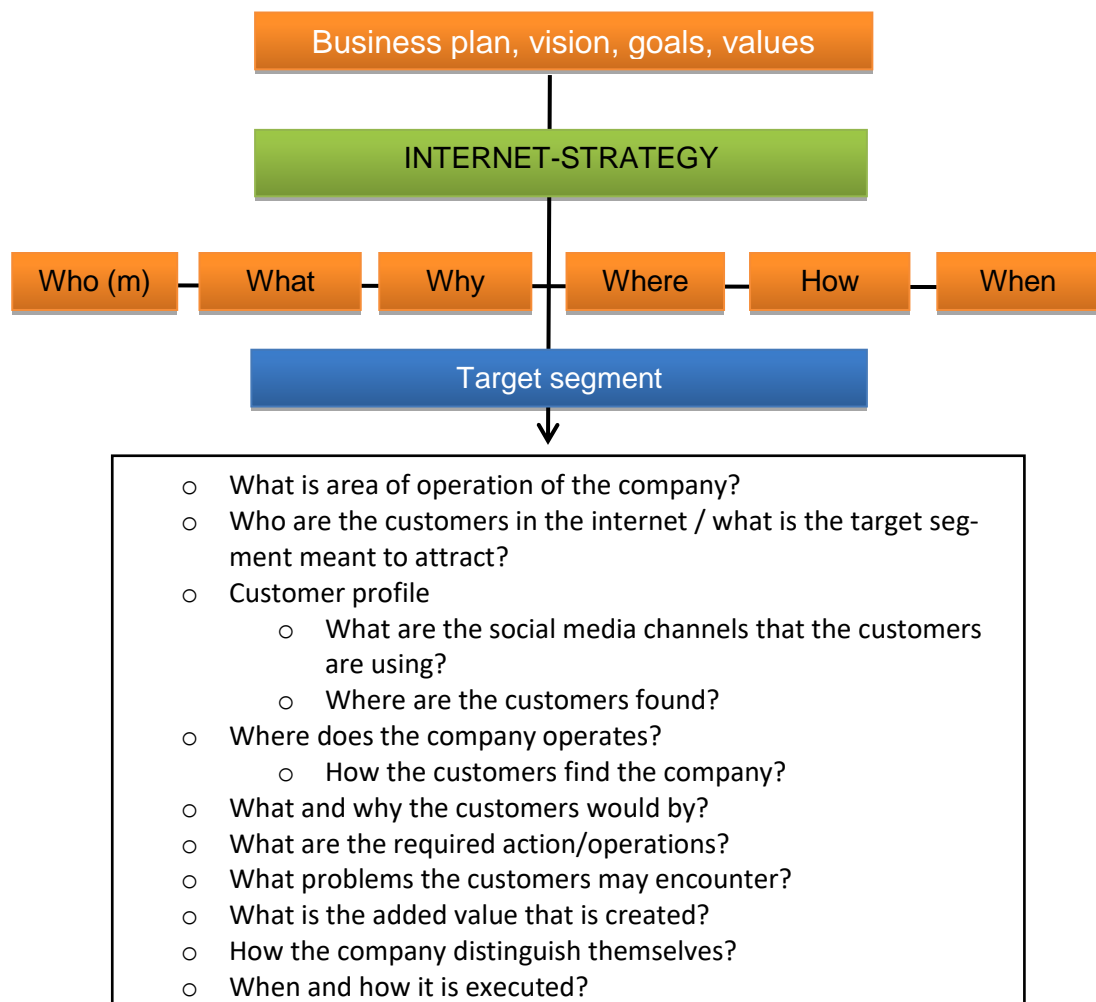


Chart 5: Creating internet strategy. Based on references of Kananen (2013, 18).

In conclusion, when creating organization's social media and content marketing strategies, companies can use same principles in every strategic planning.

5 EVENT MARKETING

Just like, when creating the social media strategy, also the event marketing is to be built from the organization operation plan and as a part of the organizations marketing strategy.

Event marketing is strategically planned, a goal oriented and an interactive operation, which task is to 1) send a message and get people to act in a way that the organization wants, 2) connect the organization and target groups with the chosen theme and idea, 3) create and fortify the organization's image, services, and brand (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 19). It is imperative in the event marketing that the event is connected to the other marketing activities and each event has defined its own goal and a target group (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 19).

Strong points in the event marketing are possibilities; 1) to create personal contacts and networks between the organizer and visitors, 2) to control events frameworks and its communication, 3) to limit participant group according to needs and goals of the event, 4) to get feedback about the achieved and unachieved goals, 5) to distinguish from the competitors in a positive way, and 6) to create memorable experiences (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 21 – 22).

An event can affect the organization's image, create social contacts and networks in many levels. As events have a big impact on the organization's image and networks, they need to be planned and organized with care. Where a single well organized event can have a huge positive boost on company's image, one single badly organized event can have a negative effect on the image and relations.

Examining in depth information about event planning and organizing is not seen relevant for this work. For this reason, subjects related to event organizing and strategy are briefly explained and summed up.

Goal	Goals are derived from business and marketing plan. Answers to the question: Why is the event organized? Answers
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to this question can be; invoking interest, educating, information sharing, creating network and customer acquisition.

What is the nature of the event (professional, entertaining or combination of these two)? Is the event singular, or a part of multiple events and is the event cyclic?

Message/Idea Answers to the questions; What is the message that is sent? Why is the event needed? What is being organized? What kind of program and content the event has? What is the atmosphere that is sought? Who are presenting in the event and what is the expertise level?

Marketing communications

Answers to the questions; What channels and mediums are used? How the communications are dealt and what kind of timetable? Who is the person responsible for communications? Is there press releases or invitational occasions before the event?

Target group Answers to the questions; To whom the event is organized for? Who are invited to the event? Is the event only for invitees or is it public?

Budget Answers to the questions; With what resources and investments the event is organized? Who are possible partners and sponsors? How these thing supports the event?

Expertise Answers to the questions; Who is organizing and how the event is organized (organization itself, outsourced party)? How project organization is build-up, who are its responsible position holders? What kind of expertise the organization has and what kind of expertise is still needed, and where it is possible to get?

Event venue and time

Answers to the questions; When, where, how and with what timetable the event is organized? This includes e.g.; nature of the event, time period, weather conditions, interior decoration, needed technology, licences, safety, how to sign in and how the payments are organized, how sponsors' names and advertisements are seen in the venue and in the materials.

Post-event marketing

Answers to the questions; How post-event marketing is planned? How materials got from the event is distributed and used (videos, pictures)?

Hoyle (2002, 33 – 34) offers five Ws strategy to help determine if the event is feasible, viable and sustainable. These questions are 1) Why, 2) Who, 3) When, 4) Where and 5) What.

Why emphasizes the benefits, describes overriding reasons for events, uses personal approach and appeals to needs. **Who** answers the question to whom are we marketing the event? It defines the audience (target group); its national, regional and local area, its disciplines and interests, awareness of a nature of event, and the level of experience. **When** answers the questions of timing and schedule such as its patterns and time of day/week/year. **Where** defines the location and uniqueness of venue, its convenience, travel accessibility and availability of local support. **What** explains the purpose of the event, determines expectations, prioritizes and identifies the program feature and reviews the "Who?" principles.

Even the event organizing was presented briefly, one can easily see that it needs a careful planning, a lot of work, diverse expertise and commitment, for the event to be successful. Even when the event is carefully planned and precautions are done, it is still good to expect that something unexpected will happen that has not been prepared for.

Vallo and Häyriinen (2012, 55) present that, if the event is public or paid, the organizing party should think about the marketing plan for the event. Vallo and Häyriinen suggest that the event marketing plan should include 1) Inside marketing for own organization, 2) press information, 3) media marketing and 4) out-bound marketing.

Vallo and Häyriinen's claim might be already little outdated as it does not include the possibilities of inbound marketing. Although they add that, for bigger events it is possible to create own websites and social media channels.

5.1 Social Media Channels in Event Marketing

Strong points for social media channels are in their flexible nature, speed, target oriented content creation and interactive communication. Events needs to have magnetic attraction, which pulls the audience and intrigues possible co-partners. This attraction can be created through intriguing social media content, interesting performances, timely subjects, entertaining content, previous events and reputation of the organizers.

It is important to create visitor flow to the organization's web pages and social media channels. To create this flow, the easiest option is to make the pages known for the audience. Supporting elements for making pages known are; 1) email, 2) email signature, 3) own web pages, 4) Facebook advertising, 5) Twitter, 6) different groups, 7) Google AdWords advertising and 8) traditional channels (tv, radio, magazines). (Kananen 2013, 128).

Wiley (2002, 63 – 64) offers eight ways to direct people to visit the organization's event site; 1) list the event web address on high-traffic search engines and directories, 2) become listed on meeting and event calendars, 3) consider exchanging links, sponsorships, or advertising with other web sites, 4) distribute news releases online, 5) include Web address everywhere you can (printed collateral, ads), 6) identify e-mail discussion groups or lists related to industry and become an active participant, 7) use signature file at the end of e-mail to provide contact

and event information, and 8) exchange links with exhibitors, so their customer can become informed about the event.

Possibilities that social media offers are beneficial when organizing an event, and these possibilities can be utilized before the event, during the event and even after the event in post-event marketing (Vallo & Häyrynen 2012, 84).

5.1.1 Facebook

Organization's Facebook-profile can be utilized for informing about the event publicly in internet. It is possible to create a public profile for the event to provide information about it, and also private groups for the members of the organization. These profiles provide fast sharing and communication, planning and inside information.

These private groups benefits from fast communication, information sharing (also links and files), reducing email traffic, and using common timetable. Of course these benefits can be found from other social media channels and services also, like example in Google Drive. In addition to previously mentioned benefits Google Drive has possibility to share the files between multiple users, this makes it possible to have multiple users editing the file content in real-time.

With Facebook's status updates are fast and easy way to share up to date information before and during the event and Facebook's mobile application makes messaging even faster. Facebook also makes it possible to share content forward.

During few years Facebook's popularity has declined, especially within younger generations, but within middle-aged and older age groups the user ratings are on the rise. Still Facebook has a big influence in social media, as it has over billion daily users and possibilities for extra services, like creating marketing campaign and targeted marketing. These services also provide tools for measuring and tracking campaigns. (Kananen 2013, 131).

When using Facebook during the event, organizers can share pictures, videos and interesting facts and news about ongoing performances, happenings and staff members. One of big advantages of Facebook is that it can share the content with different social media channels, like Twitter and YouTube. Content and communication can be done by creating polls or doing interviews with speakers, staff members, visitors, or just invoking communication about the day's performances and subjects. Pictures and videos creates rich content and it is easy to get comments about these types of status updates. With Facebooks event creation options, it is easy to invite and share the event information, also to see how many visitors are coming to the event. Adding location to the event in Facebook, participants can gather information about other services around the area.

Post-event surveys are easy and fast to execute, with example Facebooks Like-button or short and open questions. It is important to post conclusions of the event, rewarding the active members, reviews and thank you notes. The most important thing is to post and ask questions about the subjects that are most interesting for organizers, because this is where the organization can get precious information to improve its operations.

Facebook's visitor information service provides information about posts, information example posts' coverage, visitors, likes and reactions counts can be found from the service. Post coverage means, how many times the post has been seen and how many visitors have shared or reacted to the post. Post reactions are comments, shares, and answers to call to action. (Facebook 2016).

Statistics for posts are gathered for 365 days after the post is published. Numbers in the statistics can be examined from certain time periods, in what days and times peoples are in Facebook. Numbers are shown in demographic model categorised in percentages by age, gender, geographic location, language and device (computer, mobile device). (Facebook 2016)

Facebook statistics provides great material for user and consumer analysis. These demographics provides information to increase visibility of the profile, and creating better and more interesting content for the customers. It is recommended to track and monitor the statistics actively, also during the event, when

the content can be edited and modified to answer to the needs and interests of the customers.

Guides for the statistics can be found in Facebooks' Post Metrics- pages. These pages can be found from the link in the reference list of this thesis (Facebook, Help Center, Page Post Metrics). Finnish Kuulu Oy (2016) provides Facebook statistics guide in Finnish in their blog 'Facebook tilastot – mitä ne tarkoittavat?', this guide can also be found in the reference list.

5.1.2 Blogs

Number of blogs have been increasing, and they have been subsidising some of more traditional home pages. Some organizations are using blogs to replace their web pages. Even some online shops are created in blog forms. Blogs can be used in many different ways for different causes. They can be in help when creating visibility for organization, creating contacts and networks, providing information or agency services.

In a typical blog, uploaded posts are usually text columns with links, pictures or video clips about certain topic. Good blog takes a stand, gives opinion and incites readers to write a comment. (Leino 2012, 180.)

Strong points for blogs are their low costs. Costs are mainly derived from workload and optional services. Blog visibility can be created through search engine optimization, listing, search words, and links. Blog writings strengths are also their practical approaches and experience based on expertise, which creates more trust in customers. (Kananen 2013, 156.)

Blog can be used at event marketing in various ways, example, creating conversation and directing it, guidance counselling, creating visibility, gathering development ideas and reviews, and giving technical support. With blog organization can react in short time span to problems, to inform about coming changes, ask question, and take a part in conversation (Kortesuo 2014, b, 16).

During the event blog can be used much like Facebook, when posting pictures, videos and interviews about the event, share links and material from the presentations and open up conversations.

Blog writing requires time to be effective and practical to use. Like in any social media blog needs to have regular posting time and the content should give added value to the readers. But unlike other social media channels, like Twitter and Facebook, blog columns are usually much longer and needs to have more content. Recommended blog writing is considered to be one-page long. Regular posting time and using key search words creates more priority for the blog in the search engines and lists them higher in the search result lists (Kananen 2013, 157).

Blog marketing – tips and tricks for blog marketing, based on reference material from Kortesoja (2014 a, 103).

Networking Follow, take a part and link posts in conversations of other blogs, get visitors, ask and offer posts.

Follow the example

Use and utilize working solutions.

Publish Publish regularly timely subjects and interesting content, videos and pictures.

Help the community

Take a part in conversations, suggest and share ideas and solutions.

Inform Inform incoming events and interesting happenings.

Create variation Link and add blog address to other social media channels, business cards, brochures, home pages and e-mail signatures.

Search engines Determine key words and terms.

File and track File and categorise so that older and newer posts are easily to distinguished and found. Track and monitor the visitor count and activities inside the blog.

Internet page and blog tracking and monitoring services and programs are in example, Google Analytics (google.com/analytics/), Snoobi Analytics (snoobi.fi/) and Bloggaajat (bloggaajat.com/).

5.1.3 Twitter

Twitter marketing is based on links, shared by followers are called re-tweets. Re-tweeting is easy and efficient way to share the posts (Kananen 2013, 162). What makes Twitter so effective and good information sharing channels, is it's easy to use and its large pool of daily users. Twitter had in the last quarter of 2015, 320 million monthly users (Taloussanomat, Digitoday 2016).

From all of the microblog channels, Twitter is easily the most popular one. During the event organizing party can encourage the visitors to send Tweets of their experiences and opinions about the event. Especially if the event has created their own # indicators for the event.

When using Twitter organizer can also react and inform in real time, in example, if there are changes in the timetables, or other unexpected things, next presentation or its location. Through Twitter new blog articles can be forwarded to the crowd.

Event's participants can follow speakers, subjects and conversations, that are most interesting to them, even before the event, during the event and after the event. Strong advantage for Twitter channel is its unformal nature.

5.1.4 YouTube and LinkedIn

As stated before, YouTube is world's second most used search engine, Google holding the first place. It has been counted that it would take 50 years to watch all the videos that are uploaded in YouTube during one single day. It is not anymore about, that if people can use the channel but more than, how to distinguish yourself from all other videos and how to make unique channel. Leino (2012, 155) claims in his work, that it has been researched that video content are 50 times more likely shown in the first search results than ordinary text content.

In event marketing video content is usually the most interesting content that consumers can get. Interesting video content can be example, unique or entertaining speakers, behind the scenes clips, videos about organizing members and staff, events that happen during speeches, visitors themselves and their reactions, interviews and a lot more that can be connected with the event and its nature.

LinkedIn is more business oriented than other social medias, and it is developed for business networking. For that reason, event organisation should highlight their own expertise and knowledge about their business area. LinkedIn is a great channel to create network and get new contacts and business partners.

LinkedIn can have links from blogs or Slideshare account. This way possible business partner or customer can evaluate organizations expertise. (Kortesuo 2014 a,79).

6 NORTHERN GAME SUMMIT, NGS -EVENT

Northern Game Summit, or NGS for short, is yearly organized two-day conference for game development professional and game development students. Event was organized first time in year 2002. This event is driven solely by voluntary work from students of Kajaani University of Applied Sciences and, its goal is to help progression of Finnish game development education and international game development scene. This is mainly achieved by creating an atmospheric event where professionals can share their knowledge and expertise with the students and other professionals, creating new social contacts is one of the biggest aims of this event.

Most of participants of NGS are students aiming to try their mettle in game development business. Experts and speakers are from famous game development companies, like Microsoft, Fingersoft, Wooga, Digitice, Unity, Critical Force entertainment and Neogames, to name a few. Northern Game Summit provides easy going environment for game creators to mingle, meet and exchange ideas (NGS homepages 2016).

Table 8: Information table of Northern Game Summit, based on information provided in NGS homepages 2016.

Goals and nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to help progression of Finnish game development education • share knowledge and expertise • creating new social contacts • business like, entertaining • annual
Target Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • game development students and professionals • game development companies and speakers
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • voluntary work
Income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participation fee (non-profit organization)
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experts from around the world • according to annual theme • “Every year the participants have prized the friendly and com-

	fortable yet informative feel of event” – NGS homepages 2016
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fingersoft, Supercell, TeamUp, City of Kajaani, Forest Interactive, Urban Banner, ThirdPresence, Visionist, Paradox Interactive, Kainuun Etu and Reforged Studios. (Situation 9.8.2016)
Organization and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kajaani University of Applied Sciences and students (year 2016) • Event Producer and Manager • Associate Producer • Technical Director • Marketing and Financial Officer • Art and Web persons • Consulting Event Producer and Manager
Event venue and time	Kajaani, Cinema Bio Rex 6. – 7. 10.2016

6.1 Event Homepages

At the homepages of Northern Game Summit 2016 (<http://www.northerngamesummit.org/>) has all the basic information about the event; its schedule, speakers, partners, organize and event staff introduces, event location and directions, restaurants, selling tickets and pass prices, contact information and links to other NGS social media channels. TeamUp has its own news feeds integrated in the page.

Event's homepages are the primary sales and marketing channel in online. Northern Game Summit's homepages were still under editing and unfinished for the upcoming year 2016 event, which is held 6. – 7.10.2016. Event schedule was not uploaded and list of speakers were still under updating. Some of the social media links did not work or the sites had old information about the NGS 2015 event. Facebook and Instagram links worked but other had problems; link for Twitter was redirected to the NGS 2015 and was not found, and links for Flickr and LinkedIn information were not updated and they hold old information about the NGS 2015 (Twitter) and the NGS 2014 (Flickr).

Facebook profile is event's main social media channel besides the homepages, because these usually hold the most information about the event. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are important channels for interactive communication between the possible visitors and customers. It is troubling for customers, that some of the information cannot be found from the homepages or some of the links for other social media channels are not up to date. This creates difficulties in finding some of the channels and information that could have impact on the purchasing decision or organization image.

Northern Game Summit homepages are directed to be information channel, event marketing page and sales channel for tickets. Home pages are not interactive and customers do not have any way to contact the organization through the page, other than e-mail contact that has been provided. From internet user's perspective, it appears that managing and updating the page is heavy work load and it lags behind as the information is updated slowly. As stated earlier unfinished home pages may affect to the organization image and customer experience. It is good to ensure that the links are working even though the pages are otherwise under editing.

During writing this work (August), information about the NGS 2016 event could be found in Facebook pages and homepages.

Instagram and Facebook pages hold information about 'Vote Mascot' competition, which was organized to find an official mascot for NGS event. Problem here was that this competition information could not be found from the homepages.

6.2 Homepages and Social Media Channels visibility

As a search word or combination 'northern game summit' is too long and difficult, if one does not know the name of the event from before. When this was used in the Google search engine, the homepages were listed rather low on the first page. But after few days of searching and clicking the links, the pages were found at the top of the search results. Already this shows the importance of search engine optimization and linking. It is recommended for the organizer to

boost up the search engine visibility by searching their own pages from search engines and clicking the links they have provided.

Other search words, terms and their combinations (+) which were used to find the event were; NGS, event, conference, game event, game development event, Kajaani. When using search words 'NGS', 'game event', 'game development event' the results were very poor, but when including terms 'Kajaani' and 'conference' the results were much better and home pages were found at the top of the first page. Search words 'instagram', 'twitter' + 'ngs' or 'northern game summit' didn't find any results for NGS event. Facebook pages were much easier to find.

6.3 NGS Social Media Channels

During the year 2015 NGS event's social media channels were; Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Flickr. After researching, and tracking the channels this year, it seems that LinkedIn and Flickr pages were not updated after the last entries, that was made there in 2015. The main focus seems to be on Facebook and Twitter pages, and on a new addition TeamUp, as they were the most frequently updated channels. Instagram is coming fourth, with the few newly updated pictures about the NGS mascot competition, but not much more.

LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/northerngamesummit>

LinkedIn pages were outdated and had brief information about the Northern Game Summit 2015 event, it had 4 followers.

Instagram https://www.instagram.com/northerngamesummit_ngs/

Instagram pages were consisting pretty much on pictures from previous year's entries. Few new upload was done for the 2016 event and much of it was about the official NGS mascot competition choices. Instagram pages had 64 followers.

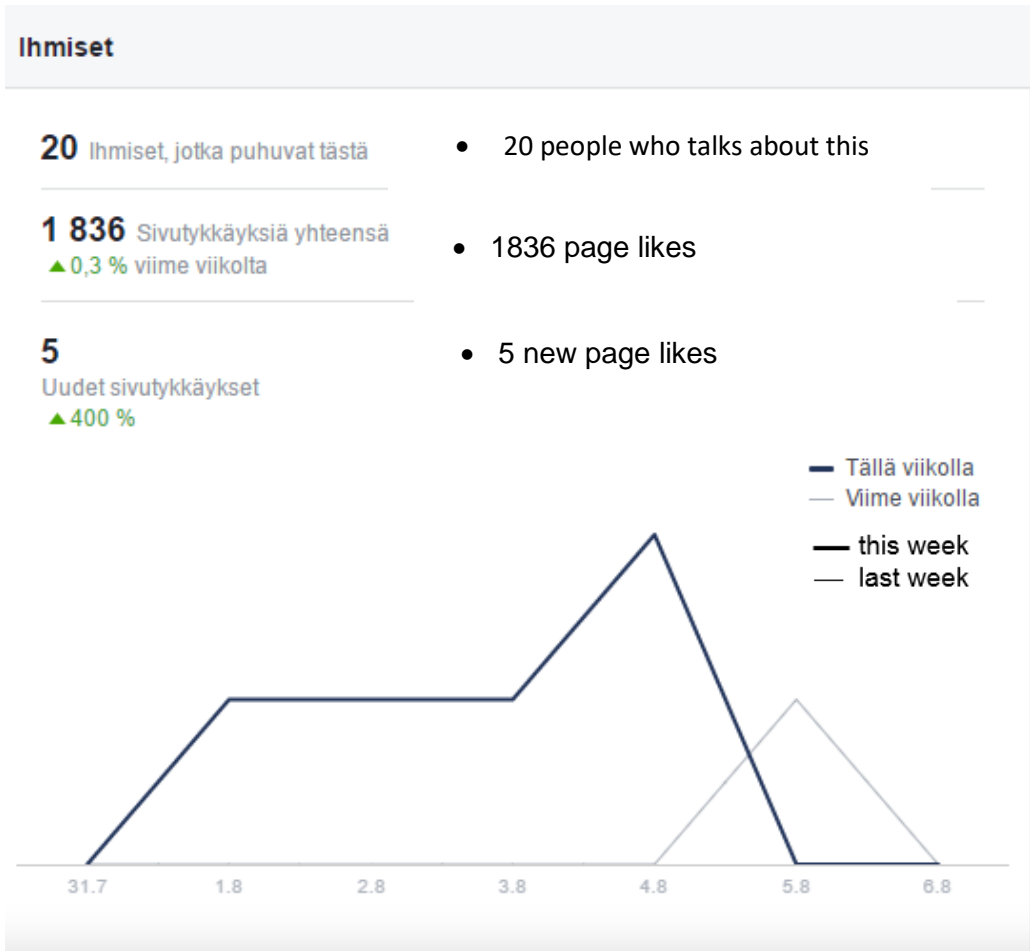
Because of the lack of updates and utilization for the 2016 event of LinkedIn, Flickr and Instagram, these social media channels are not research in depth manner for this work.

6.4 NGS Facebook pages

NGS event's Facebook pages content (<https://www.facebook.com/NorthernGameSummit/home>) are versatile, and sequenced. Updates are done over the course of year and are increasing steadily with the pace of upcoming event. Followers and readers are encouraged to comment and to take part to the community's mascot competition and to buy the tickets for the event.

Facebooks page 'Information' has the needed basic information about the event and descriptions of earlier events and link to the homepages, but the basic information that is provided is from year 2015. Pages has lots of content with pictures, varied i.e. previous events and speaker profiles. Despite of having number of followers, the posts does not have usually more than three or four likes, comments and shares are very rare. Also the pages are having very stable follower count and next to none increase in followers.

Likes in picture 1 - 3, (weeks 31, 32 and 35/2016) are demonstrating the popularity of the Facebook pages.



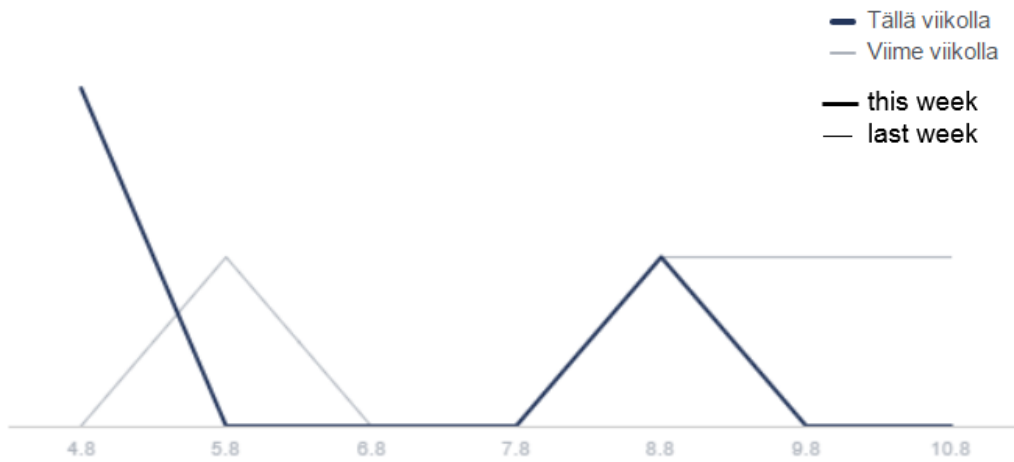
Picture 1: Northern Game Summit – NGS Facebook pages 2016. Week 31/2016.

Ihmiset

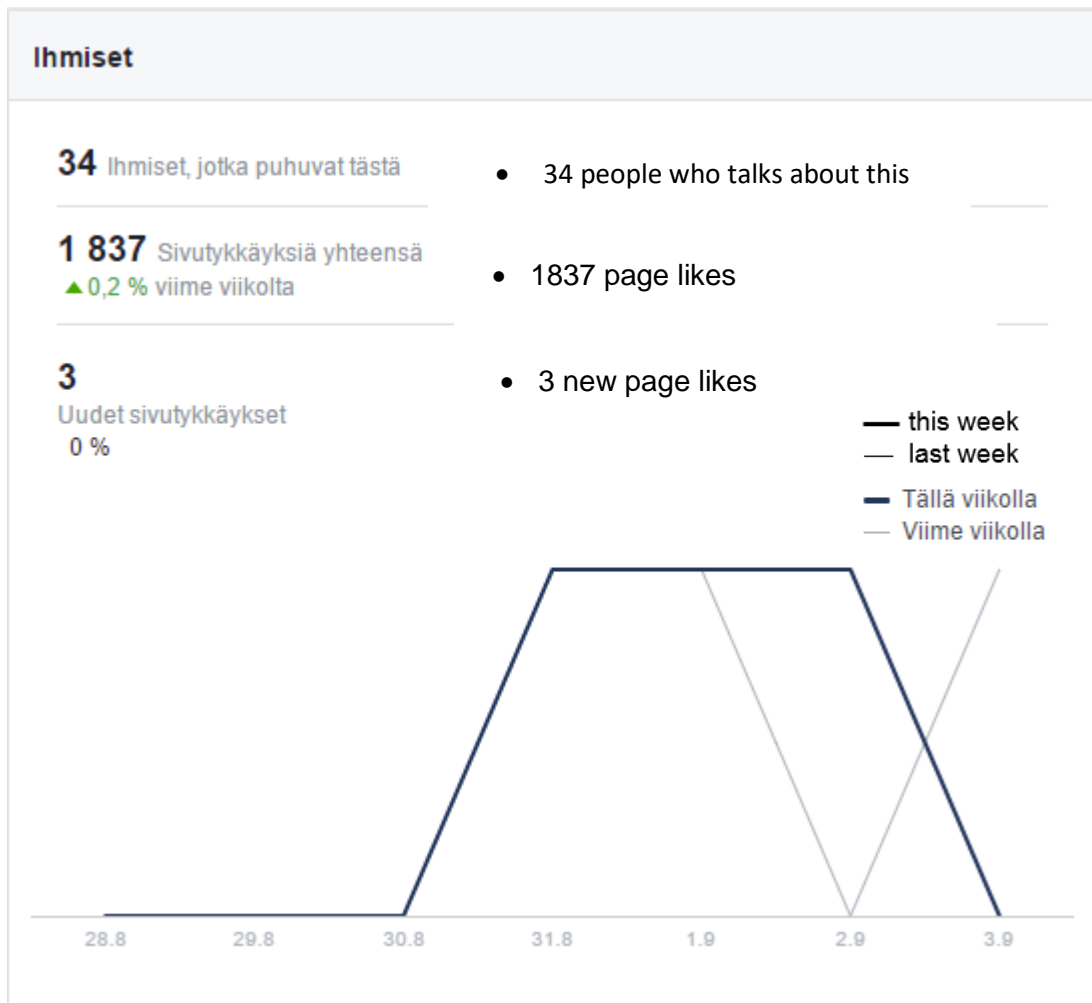
10 Ihmiset, jotka puhuvat tästä: • 10 people who talks about this

1 836 Sivutykkäyksiä yhteensä: • 1836 page likes
 ▲ 0,2 % viime viikolta

3 Uudet sivutykkäykset • 3 new page likes
 ▼ 25 %



Picture 2: Northern Game Summit – NGS Facebook pages 2016. Week 32/2016.



Picture 3: Northern Game Summit – NGS Facebook pages 2016. Week 35/2016.

Pictures 1 through 3 depict NGS' Facebook pages popularity throughout five weeks. Three different data can be gathered from these weeks; people who talk about this channel, page likes overall, and new page likes. When this numerical data has been tracked for longer time period and it is reflected with channel's content feed at that time and also to other events that are affiliated with the organization, organization can create hypotheses and conclusion, about; how active the followers are and why, what affects to the follower activity and how, state of the growth of the channel, state of the popularity of the channel.

Tracking the likes is essential, as they are social medias reviews that increases visibility and knowledge about the event and the organization behind it. Basic monitoring will not give much to work with if organization does not analyse the

posts corresponding to the likes, comments and sharing; what content was liked, commented, shared the most and what least, why, when and to whom?

The number of likes and followers may not tell the whole truth about the organization's and event's popularity or quality, but it tells about the interactivity between the event participants and the organization inside the internet. It is difficult to determine how actively event participants are talking about the event outside of the organizations social media channels. Interactivity is wanted because, by activating the community, organization can get necessary information for developing the event.

6.5 NGS Twitter pages

Northern Game Summit Twitter channel (https://twitter.com/ngs_2016) was first difficult to find, because the links in the homepage and other social media channels were outdated and redirected to the NGS 2015 pages that were not found anymore. Google search was successful when search words were 'northern-gamesummit' + 'twitter'. Northern Game Summit Twitter pages had 556 followers, roughly one third of the Facebook pages 1836 followers.

Tweets are done steadily over the course of the year and have the same entry dates as Facebook posts. Tweets are usually short titles with links to Northern Game Summit's new social media channel TeamUp (<https://www.tmup.co/t/NorthernGameSummit>) which provides the actual information and pictures, that also the posts in Facebook pages have.

7 DEVELOPING SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS AT NGS EVENT MARKETING

This chapter contains development ideas and options, that can be utilized in social media marketing for events, designing homepages and developing them. Some of these development ideas are already presented in their corresponding chapter.

Development ideas are based on the assumption that Northern Game Summit has the needed resources, capacities and expertise to fulfil them. Idea is to create frameworks or building blocks for Northern Game Summit to further development and strategize their operations for more comprehensive and functional package.

When developing social media channels, it is vitally important that the organization has working feedback channel or channels. 'Working feedback channel' does not just mean that it is functionally feasible. Working feedback channel or channels is/are consumer friendly, and the feedback is easy to find, organize and analysed from them.

Northern Game Summit has a few feedback channels in their disposal. Right now only one channel is being used and very effective feedback channel, Facebook, is underutilized.

Starting with the main feedback channel that NGS has, is their e-mail. E-mail address is located at the bottom of the homepage and it is quite hard to find. Hard to find, because it is in a pretty small font and the location of the e-mail link. Hard to find means also that it can be easily missed when surfing through the site. Other concerning issue is that the e-mail address, info@northerngamesummit.org, leads consumer to think that the email is used only in trouble-shooting or getting more information about the event, also for business contacts, but not really for feedback.

This e-mail works well for the intended use, but it might be difficult to get enough feedback this way. Other problem is that one e-mail gathers all these categori-

cally different e-mails and it might be difficult to handle and find right information when it is needed.

To increase the quality and amount of feedback, NGS could create a direct feedback textbox into the homepage. Idea of the 'feedback box' is that it would be easily seen and very accessible for everyone. Consumer could write a title of the subject and the feedback into the box and with one click send it to e-mail address that is linked to it. This creates very low barriers for visitor to write a feedback, because it is easily seen, fast and easy to use, and anonymous if so wanted. This kind of open stance with feedback creates more transparency and easily approachable image of the organization.

This solution would require that the idea and purpose of the feedback box is extremely clear for the visitor and this should be instantly understood when the box is seen. NGS organizers would benefit from this solution as they more likely are receiving more feedback about their event, organization and operations. Drawback that this solution has is that the new e-mail address should be created just for this purpose as the low feedback barriers. It also means that there might be not just more feedback but also more trash-mail.

Northern Game Summit's Facebook channel seems to be underutilized in a way that, there is no question polls or polls about visitor opinions about the event or organization. These Facebook polls, are easy and fast way to gather information about the people's opinions.

Homepage and Facebook is good combination, especially when organizers have gathered decent follower numbers for Facebook channel, and homepages have seen some development. Still both channels have been losing their popularity, especially among young adults. As previously mentioned young adults are the biggest customer base that the Northern Games Summit has, and it is more difficult to interact this group through these channels. Still Facebook channel has a good amount of followers and it is still viable channel to create visibility. It would be a good idea to consider creating a blog for NGS.

Facebook profile is one of the oldest channels for NGS. For this reason, the follower base also has grown. It is advisable to continue working on this channel.

Problems seen on the Facebook pages are the inactivity of the followers. Organizer should track and monitor channel activities and gather around information that what are the best ways to activate the community and liven up things. Facebook posts are regular and this is a good way to keep the channel alive.

The customer base for Northern Game Summit is specified to be aspiring game development students and game development professional. These segments are usually active internet users and know their way around different sites. Based this statement on work and personal experiences with the customer segment, it feels that they are very active communicators inside the internet. Especially Northern Game Summit's Twitter wall, during the event, is usually stuffed with tweets and comments. The community is very inactive before and after the event. It is likely that these consumers are not as active in social media channels as in forums and blog sites.

For this reason, it could be good idea to add 'Forum' section to the homepages where the event participants can discuss and communicate. This would create interactivity between the organizing party and the customer segments and would help gathering development ideas and reviews about the event. It would be recommended for all members of the organization to keep themselves up to date in the forums, and have at least one person solely dedicated to maintaining and monitoring the forum.

A blog can be also very powerful tool to activate and interest the target segments and attract new customers. Strong points are the ease of use, using multiple writers, publishing interesting content, commenting, and filing the blog entries according to year and subjects. Blogs also has more efficient search engine optimization and visibility.

Blog entries can be divided between members of the organization. Sharing the responsibility of the blog entries between all members of the organization, will create more interesting content and lessens the workload of maintaining the blog. The content is more interesting and versatile, if different members are sharing information about them and their jobs inside the organization, or other subjects. This kind of blog will boost the image of the organization and event, when

participants can see the faces behind the operation. Community gets more information and learns about the organization members, which will create trust and more intimate bonds between the organization and the community. This bond can increase community's activity and easy to approach image for organization. Strong advantage for blog is also that it is not so formal channel as homepages. Unformal nature of the blog creates lower barriers for commenting, which will increase activity of the community (sharing, liking) and visibility of the event.

It is more natural to make search words and terms for blogs, because writer of the article knows the subject and can choose right search words. These actions boosts visibility inside search engines, which in turn creates more visibility for the event. Regular entry intervals, determining key words and links also creates more visibility and better results in search engines lists.

Blog is easy to maintain with multiple members writing entries, when it is convenient for them. This practise lessens the work load and creates more diverse and interesting content for consumers.

Twitter is used as an information channel, more that micro blog. Mainly the tweets that were created hold the same information that was found in the NGS's Facebook channel. It is good idea for NGS to revise the role of Twitter channel and why it is used. Usually tweets are short messages that are fast to read, and are reader friendly without too much information. Is it necessary to use Twitter as an information channel when Facebook already does the job? Twitter messages could tell more about the processes inside the organization or more casual subjects related to NGS event and game development business.

As Northern Game Summit has already several social media channels, but only few of them are in active use. This leads to think that NGS does not have enough resources to provide rich and valuable content for all of them. It is recommended that Northern Game Summit goes through their social media channels and create priority order for them so that the most important ones can get the full benefit of staff members ingenuity. New social media channels should be weighed against the old channels based on the value that they can create or offer to the organization or consumers. Besides this it is good to think about what

kind of expertise the staff members have and which social media channels can be utilized optimally. Problem in this for NGS is that the staff members are changing almost each year, what kind of expertise organization can preserve and use in the longer run.

Northern Game Summit search engine optimization needs more attention, as some of the channels and even homepages were difficult to find with search engines. This affect severely with online visibility and visitor rates of social media channels. It is essential for Northern Game Summit to add more visibility in search engines by keywords and Wikipedia entry. Wikipedia is one of the most popular search engines, and right now there is no own entry result for Northern Game Summit. NGS should create their own Wikipedia article about themselves and the event as it creates more visibility and credibility, this also minimizes the risk that someone else might create the article about them and have false information.

Google AdWords guide has good tools to achieve better search engine optimization and online marketing understanding. It is recommended that NGS organizers and social media staff members would get to know this service.

It is recommended that organization, goes through their operation plan for social media channels. What do they want to achieve with each individual social media channel? How each social media channel creates additional value for the event? What kind of content is produced for each social media channel? How are the resources distributed and are there enough recourses for each channel? And most importantly what do they want to achieve with social media and the channels as a whole?

When developing the social media channels monitoring and tracking is the key, to understanding the popularity and effectiveness of specific channels, and what content in them is working and what is not. All of the social media channels that NGS has, had low activity rates and low visitor flow. This indicates that it is time to analyse the data that is available.

The amount of people talking about the event and the organization seems to increase as the closer the main event gets. This is good sign as it describes that

people are getting more excited about the event as it comes closer, there is activity and interest for the event. Still the amount of followers has been very stable and there is little to none changes, this indicates that the visibility is lacking as there is no new followers and that the people who are interested in the event are already 'veteran' visitors, who have attended this event before.

It is necessary to track the follower counts now and see when new followers emerge to the channels. If the follower count continues to be stable throughout the year and peak only right before, during or right after the event, it can indicate that the event itself encourages visitors to follow the social media channels, and that the contents inside the social media channels are not entertaining or rich enough to attract 'new blood' to the pages.

Recommended action is to evaluate and prioritise needs of development between the channels. Go through the development suggestions for prioritized channels and set development goals for each channel. These development goals can be monthly increase in visitors, followers or community activity. Analyse the success of development and achieved goals.

Northern Game Summit's organizational nature, where the staff members change almost each year, causes need to create clear plans and rules how to use social media channels and what to do if problems or difficulties arises. Creating a year plan for social media channels and main posts, that are important for the organizational goal, is highly recommended, because this helps new organization members, who are in charge of the social media, to understand their role in the organization and what is required from them. This in turn gives them more time to spend into content creation and planning, rather than worrying about what is needed to be done, when and how.

8 CONCLUSION

Developing ideas and suggestions were based on the fact, that similar work has not been done for NGS before. Suggestions were made on the assumption that they could work as a base on future development work, and as a framework where the organization can start building up their own development plan.

Time period was not the best for evaluating the homepages and social media channels, because a lot of information were missing from the homepages and social media channels were pretty quiet, as the event was still quite far away to come. Still in a way this can be seen as a good thing. The development suggestions can work as a structure for the organization to build their social media operation as a whole.

In conclusion, this work creates something to consider about and new possible development ideas for Northern Game Summit and its social media channels, and other event organizations to build up their social media visibility and effectiveness.

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