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Evaluating the Impact of Social Media on Traditional Marketing

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Social media is an emerging phenomenon in business marketing and public relations (PR). Even though the speed of adaptability of social media as a marketing and PR tool by businesses is relatively low the trend is constantly growing. Tech savvy marketers are incorporating social media in their marketing strategies to connect with their customers and prospects. Social media can be utilized to perform different tasks of marketing and communication such as marketing intelligence, sentiment research, PR, marketing communications, customer management etc.

Despite all of the supposed benefits, embarking on the social media band wagon has been a daunting task for corporate marketers and executives, partly because of its fairly recent introduction to business world and skepticism surrounding its usefulness. Most experts and authors in the area of social media marketing and PR are former online markers who have been working in the field since its inception. Accordingly, this research focuses on theories and concepts formulated by social media scholars and tries to evaluate their applicability for corporate marketing and PR purposes based on fundamental principles of branding, marketing and PR.

In addition to the above mentioned theories and concepts the research will evaluate the performance of some of the early adopters of social media by using a number of case studies and try to deduce what others could learn from their experience. An exploratory technique will be implemented as a basis to analyse the importance of social media as a marketing and communication tool in the sample case studies. Moreover, the research will

take an in-depth look on the similarities and differences between social media marketing practices and traditional marketing practices.

Keywords	Social media, traditional media, social media marketing, influencer marketing, traditional marketing

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The emergence of social media (SM) and subsequent trend of change in media consumption are pushing business to adopt social media as one of their marketing and public relations (PR) tools. Currently, the development of the internet and increased usage of mobile devices such as smart phones, tablets, and laptops have contributed greatly to the availability of various content online, the content that previously used to be available only on the mainstream media outlets such as print media, radio and television. This in turn has resulted in a growing trend in online content consumption and collaboration among members of the online community.

Online community refers to communities that are participatory, conversational and fluid, and whose members are able to produce, publish, control, critique, rank and interact with content on the web. The term can encompass any online community that promote the individual while emphasizing an individual's relationship to the community, the rights of all members to collaborate and be heard within a prospective space, which welcomes the opinion and contribution of participants (Tuten, 2008).

These changes in the media consumption and online collaboration have boosted the interest of businesses in using the social media sphere for their marketing and communication efforts. According to Shama Kabani (2010) over half of all consumers said that they had already purchased something - or switched to another brand or retailer - because of a recommendation they received through a social media website. However, due to the fact that the emergence of social media is a relatively new phenomenon, understanding its benefits as a marketing and PR tool still remains a challenge. The questions that puzzle the minds of marketing executives include but are not limited to:

- The value of investment in social media and its influence on revenue generation;
- The knowledge of easing control of the brand and additional exposure it creates;
- The accuracy and measurability of the social media activities

This research tries to evaluate whether recent social media theories and concepts are relevant and applicable to marketing and PR endeavours of businesses. It also provides critical examination of existing academic literature and expert opinions on the use of social media as a marketing and PR tool. In addition it addresses the following key research questions:

- What is social media/marketing?
- What are the different applications of social media?
- Why should businesses utilise social media marketing despite effectiveness of traditional marketing practices? Does embracing social media leads to loosing brand control?
- What are the advantages & disadvantages of social media marketing?
- Can social media marketing be a replacement to traditional marketing?
- Is social media marketing more accurate and measurable compared to traditional marketing? What are the success metrics and key performance indicators?

Further this research aims to evaluate the importance of social media as a marketing and PR tool for businesses. It also tries to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of social media marketing in comparison with traditional marketing.

In addition the researcher aspires to achieve the following objectives:
- To define social media marketing (SMM);
- To identify the key theories of SMM and evaluate its similarities and differences with traditional marketing practices;
- To present the relevant literature on SMM and traditional media marketing and critically review them;
- To evaluate the impact of social media on the day to day marketing and PR efforts of businesses;
- To check the ease of entry and adoptability of SMM for Small and Medium size enterprises.

1.2 Research Importance, Aim and Objective

While working as a social media and content manager intern at Muxlim Inc., a Helsinki based social media company for the Muslim community, the researcher became interested and aware of the potential of social media as a marketing and PR tool. During the course of the internship the researcher had been involved in different social media campaigns as a social media and content manager, and had the chance to notice first-hand the impact of social media as a means of building brand and marketing communication. The researcher had also noticed, even if the potentials of social media exist the rate of adoptability by businesses is very minimal as businesses seem to lack a sound understanding as to what they can achieve by making use of it. Due to the fact that social media is a very recent phenomenon and the lack of understanding its potential. The researcher believes the issue of SMM to be quite contemporary and worth researching from the point of view of its usability as a marketing and PR tool, especially for SMEs.

2 Social Media Marketing

The following chapters cover definitions and various theories of SM, SMM, traditional marketing, and influencer marketing and critically review the relevant literatures in order to demonstrate their interrelation and differences.

2.1 Social Media Overview: Definition of Social Media

So far there has not been a very clear definition of social media among academics. One reason for this can be the fact that shape and functionality of social media depends on many factors which make it constantly change and evolve. Technological factor plays an especially important role in social media dynamics as social media development is directly dependant on the technology and platforms that enable the interactive web's content creation, collaboration and exchange by participants. According to Solis (2007) social media is a shift in how people discover, read, and share news and information and content. Solis further explains that social media is a fusion of sociology and technology, transforming information flow from monologue (one to many) into dialog (many to many) (Solis, 2007a).

Forrester Research (2006) identified an emerging trend taking place in online communities known as "Groundswell" in which consumers interact through web 2.0 enabled technologies. Social media that use such technologies include, but are not limited to, Facebook, LinkedIn and MySpace – social networks where members can connect with each other, and such websites as YouTube, Helium, and Wikipedia that feature user-generated content. Groundswell is formed by the intersection of people, interactive technologies and online economics (Charlene, 2008) and is defined as "a social trend in which people use technologies to get information they need from one another, rather than from traditional institutions like corporations" (Charlene, 2009). Groundswell is facilitated by Web 2.0 Technologies, a term coined by Tim O' Reilly, which uses collective intelligence of people. Web 2.0 is also known as social media (Tim, 2007). Social media is interactive in nature and is therefore known as consumer-generated media, new media or citizen media (Rob, 2009). Conventional media is company-generated and information flows in one direction

i.e., messages are broadcast from company to target audience (one-to-many). In case of social media the flow of information takes the form of active communication among members of online community (many-to-many) and happens in multiple directions.

Evans (2008) defines social media as the democratization of information, transforming people from content readers into content publisher. In this definition an emphasis has been given for the capability of content creation and the understanding of the role people play in the process. According to Evans, social media in not only about people reading and disseminating information, but also how they share and create content for others to participate. O'Reilly (2005) explains this phenomenon as a shift from a broadcast mechanism to a many-to-many model, rooted in a conversational format between authors and media consumers.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) further define social media with a reference to two concepts: Web 2.0 and user generated content (UGC). Web 2.0 is defined as web technologies or applications that foster communication, sharing and collaboration on the World Wide Web (Barefoot & Szabo, 2010). UGC can be described as the various forms of contents accessible by the public and created by individuals. OECD made three pre-conditions for a content to be considered UGC (OECD, 2007):

- it needs to be published either on a publicly accessible website or on a social networking site accessible to a selected group of people;
- it needs to show a certain amount of creative effort;
- it needs to have been created outside of professional routines and practices

Based on the above explanation of Web 2.0 and UGC, Kaplan and Haenlein define social media as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content.

2.2 Social Media Theories

A large portion of media research is concerned with the question of whether or not media exposure can influence an individual's attitudes or behaviours. However, an individual's prior conditions may lead to selective exposure or attention to specific media content. This selective exposure or attention to media contents may then reinforce the attitudes or behavioural changes. This kind of reciprocal association is considered important in media research (Slater, 2004). Experts use a number of theories to explain the influence of Social Media on an individual's attitude or behaviour. These theories include, but are not limited to, such as: Social Cognitive Theory, the Theory of Social Presence and the Media Richness Theory.

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986, 2001, 2002) is one of the most frequently cited theories in the field of mass communication research (Bryant & Miron, 2004). It provides an explanation for the observational learning and explicit capability of human behaviours. Social Media's effect on the behaviour of people is an example of the domain in which social cognitive theory has been applied. The theory also suggests a causal model to explain human behaviour under the reciprocal interactions among personal (including cognitive, affective, and biological events), behavioural, and environmental factors (Bandura, 2001). According to the theory, an individual who decides to model another person's values or behaviour, acquired through observational learning, may be encouraged or discouraged to adopt it based on the perceived consequences - reward or punishment (Bandura, 2001). The theory also suggests a conceptual framework to define the successive processes governing observational learning, including attention, retention, production, and motivational processes. The attention process represents how people notice, sometimes selectively, other people's behaviour when exposed to the model. The retention process defines the extent to which people are able to recall memorized behaviour. The production process refers to the practice of behaviour or thought through the learning process. The motivational (or de-motivational) process is the underlying attraction toward the learned behaviour or repulsion from it.

Fulk et al. (1990) introduced the social influence model of technology use. According to their proposal, social influences such as work group norms, co-workers and supervisor behaviour etc. can influence an individual's choice of social media. According to social presence theory, perceptions of media are anticipated to vary and be, at least partly, socially constructed. The social psychological processes that are used to explain the development of meaning and use patterns with regard to communication technology include social learning (Bandura, 1986) and social information processing (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). According to the theory coordinated patterns of behaviour are expected to develop based on observations of others' behaviour, consequences of behaviour, and emotional reactions (Fulk 1993). This type of social influence on one's choice of media can originate from a communication partner's preference, an individual's media choice in a particular situation, or co-workers' opinion.

The media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986) is based on the assumption that the purpose of any communication is to resolve ambiguity and reduce uncertainty. It states that different types of media differ in the degree of richness they possess and based on capacity to convey multiple verbal and nonverbal signals, ability to allow immediate feedback, usage of natural language, and presence of personal focus. Accordingly, some media are more effective than other in resolving ambiguity and uncertainty. Messages that are less equivocal (e.g., letters or memos) do not require rich media. Instead, lean media should be used to adequately carry these messages. In the hierarchy of media richness, face-to-face communication is the richest, followed by telephone, electronic mail, and print communications (Schmitz and Fulk 1991, Steinfield and Fulk 1986, Trevino et al. 1990). Therefore, applying the theories discussed above to social media, people may choose to join a particular social network depending on the amount and type of information that needs to be processed or transmitted (media richness), personal reasoning or perception (social cognition) and the degree of socialization needed (social presence).

In addition the *Three Laws of Media,* namely *Sarnoff's Law, Metcalf's Law* and *Reed's Law* coined by Sarnoff, Metcaf and Reed respectively, further explain the role of a human element in the effectiveness of a medium. These laws are explained below.

Sarnoff's Law

David Sarnoff who is known to be the pioneer of broadcasting business by founding the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) postulated the Sarnoff Law. According to Ewald (2009), Sarnoff's Law states that for any one-to-one network to be worthwhile specific number of participants in that network is required. In other words, a network with one hundred participants is worth ten times more than a network with only ten members. According to Evans' (2008) explanation of Sarnoff's Law during the process of broadcasting a single message is sent to infinite number of listeners and therefore "a network with hundred people is ten times as valuable in terms of reach as a network with only ten people." However, the drawback of Sarnoff's law is that it is applicable only for one-way media like television, radio where there is no interaction between the sender and receiver (Ewald, 2009).

Metcalf's Law

Postulated by Robert Metcalfe in 1980, Metcalf's Law is well-described by Evans (2008) who states that in any network of two-way communication, the value of such a network increases by the square of the number of users in the network. This can be explained by the fact that people can communicate in two directions and there are more than one conversation taking place at a time. Accordingly, a network with hundred users is worth hundred times more than a network with ten users. However, according to Evans (2008) the disadvantage of this law is that it assumes interactions, and is only applicable to two-way communications such as email and telephone conversations.

Reed's Law

Postulated by David P. Reed, Reed's Law is also known as "The Law of the Pack" is a mathematical explanation of the power of a network. Reed's Law states that every new person on a network doubles its value. Adding 10 people, by this reasoning, increases its value a thousand fold (2^{10}). Evans (2008) states that the value of a network increases more than that of the preceding two laws during the formation of groups and communities via the inter-connections among themselves. He states that Reeds law, has considerably more coverage as it reinforces a new layer of groups such as in social network sites which creates sub groups and communities. According Evans (2009), typical examples of Reed's

Law are social media and the communities formed there in. However a drawback of the absence of human elements in computer networks is that it presumes unlimited number of senders and receivers and complete interaction.

2.3 Types of social media platforms and current usage

According to the definition by Solis social media includes online tools or applications that people use to share content, profiles, opinions, insights, experiences, perspectives and media itself, thus facilitating conversations and interaction online between groups of people (Solis, 2010). The scholar argues that while media will always keep developing, the principles that govern behaviour, interaction and support will remain constant. The role of social media will always be primarily the creation of communities and enabling of conversations among their members. According to Shneiderman et al., social media technologies such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, wikis, Flickr, and YouTube altogether have garnered more than a billion users (Shneiderman et al., 2011). These platforms enable more than friendly conversation and individual expression; they facilitate remarkably diverse and broad participation while accelerating the formation of effective collaborations.

Social media tools are categorised based on their functionality, into various groups. These groups include blogs, message boards, podcasts, micro blogs, bookmarks, networks, communities, and wikis. A few prominent examples of social media applications and their use are listed in the following table:

Table1. Types of social media platforms and their functionality

Name of Application	Type or functionality
Wikipedia	Reference
MySpace and Facebook	Social networking
Twitter and Jaikue	micro blogging
YouTube	Video sharing
Flickr and Zooomr	Photo sharing
Upcoming	Events
Blogtv, Justin.tv, and Ustream	Livecasting
World of Warcraft	Online gaming
Digg and Reddit	News aggregation
del.icio.us	bookmarking

For the purpose of this paper some prominent examples of the social media applications are described below in further detail and from the point of view of their usage.

Twitter

Twitter is a real-time information feed, where users communicate through 140-character "tweets" with their followers. Many businesses use Twitter as a means of connecting directly with their customers and to communicate company news and promotions. Most professional services firms on Twitter use it to share knowledge, communicate best practices and network with others in the industry specific communities.

According to Bernie Borges (2009), Twitter is a combination of a microblogging and social networking. Twitter gives users an opportunity to involve in real time sharing of so-called tweets. A tweet is usually no more than 140 characters, which followers of the user can see (Pearlman & Abram, 2010). According to Twitter's official statistic (Twitter, 2012) the website handles more than 340 million active tweets a day. According to Nielsen Online, Twitter experienced an unbelievable 1,382 % growth between February 2008 and 2009

(Nielsen Online, 2010) and until now has consistently enjoyed high growth rates. Twitter can be used both by individuals and companies for personal and corporate purposes respectively (Borges, 2009).

Twitter tops other social media websites on its ability to connect to a larger audience. It can be used very effectively to promote products and services online and get them noticed immediately. Twitter gives businesses the best chance to go viral. In addition, Twitter allows its users share important updates and interesting news with their followers. Although Twitter posts are limited to 140 characters, it is a very powerful tool to connect a brand with millions of people.

Facebook

Facebook is a real-time information feed, where users can create personal and corporate pages. As of March 2012 Facebook has more than 900 million registered users (Nation, 2012) and in April 2012 (Techtree, 2008) it surpassed MySpace as the world's most popular social network website based on the number of unique visitors. Facebook pages can be considered social media versions of a business's website. Firms use their pages to announce news and updates, which then drop into the feeds of other Facebook users that have chosen to receive them. Much like Twitter, businesses use Facebook to share information, and to create online connections with followers. Creating a Facebook fan page is an integral part of social media platform. The ever improving design of Facebook has made it easy to create a page exclusively to promote a brand and build an engaged and organic fan base.

However, there are some limitations associated with utilising Facebook as a promotion tool such as little authority over personalization of a fan page. Above all content available on Facebook is only accessible by registered users.

The presence on Facebook can create a fan base leading to growth for businesses (Pearlman & Abram, 2010). Provided it is created properly, a Facebook page facilitates interaction with consumers, i.e. brand fans. A fan page is a dynamic tool to encourage participa-

tion and interaction of a brand's fans with the brand. Fan pages also create more potential for going viral, offer more ways to communicate and allow offering of exclusive contests and coupons specifically for a brand fans.

Blog

According to Stokes (2008), the word "blog" was first coined by Peter Merholz in 1999. Paul Beelen (2006) describes blogs as web pages which can be easily updated, published by a single person or group of people, typically as brief articles displayed in reverse chronological order. The author further states blogs differ from a company's primary website in that new content is added on a very regular basis. In addition, blogs tend to have a conversational tone and are less formal, providing commentary on current issues and trends, with the goal of sharing knowledge and sparking a conversation.

Often, blogs are connected to a firm's main website so visitors can access one from another easily. Readers can subscribe to blogs via RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds so that they are notified when any new content is added. According to Smith (2009), a blog is a tool that helps companies build trust by posting in-depth company news, as well as creating solid "about us" and "contact us" pages, therefore, is the basic element of businesses Social Media platform. Generally, blogs are created free of charge while some blog supporting sites charge fee for displaying blogs on their sites. Blogs can be accessed on a global basis. Technorati is the leading blog search engine or a blog index as it monitors 112.8 million blogs and 250 million tagged items of social media (Singh, 2010). According to Technorati 2008 report, almost 36% are 25-34 years old, 27% are 35-44 years old, 13% are 18-24 years old, and 8% are over 55 years old (Singh, 2010). These demographics reveal the fact that the new generation of consumers is more active in the blogosphere.

LinkedIn

Founded in 2002 and launched in 2003, LinkedIn is an online contact database for professionals with more than 150 registered users as of February 2012 (Wall Street Journal, 2012). LinkedIn is basically meant for users to connect with one another for business or professional purposes such as finding jobs and exploiting business opportunities (Pearlman & Abram, 2010). Evans & Leest (2011) categorise LinkedIn as social networking site specifically designed to build professional networks. LinkedIn members can interact with other professionals in an online social setting. According to the authors it can also serve as a centralized, web-accessible database of one's professional contacts. Users can stay up to date on connections' work status or job changes and subscribe to updates from specific companies. LinkedIn groups are usually industry specific communities created on the site that allow for networking within one's own industry.

2.4 Social Media Marketing

The advent of online communities has bridged the communication gap between brands and consumers by creating a two-way communication platform. This fact has encouraged the engagement of businesses with their customers though joining the conversation on the social media sphere. According to Gillin (2009) traditional one-to-many way of sending marketing messages to potential customers is no longer enough and should be complemented by collaborative communication media to achieve the most effective and competitive communication. Gillin (2009) states that social media has given voice to millions of ordinary internet users who can now relate their experiences and opinions to a global audience at little or no cost. The scholar further explains that people don't abandon technologies that make it easier for them to communicate. According to him the sooner the marketers dive in and begin experimenting with these new channels, the more successful they will be in the future.

Barefoot et al. argue that the sense of community was largely absent from traditional media. According to them the one-to-many model didn't invite discussion, nor did it give individuals the ability to open significant discourse on topics outside the radar of mainstream.

On the contrary the authors believe social media tools enable like-minded people find each other and that this is the key benefit of social media marketing.

According to Gillin (2009) 'social media challenges nearly every assumption about how business should communicate with their constituencies. The most important change to understand and to accept is those constituencies now have the capacity to talk to each other and the businesses they patronize. In the past those conversations have been limited to groups of at most few hundred people'.

This is an indication that the traditional way of sending out marketing messages by itself is no longer able to fulfil its purpose anymore, as consumers are conversing on a wider range of issues, exchanging first-hand experience. The power of persuasion inevitably shifts from opinion leaders and gate keepers to peer influencers. Opinion leaders and gate keepers can be considered as influencers that make use of their professional and social status to indorse a brand.

According to Brown and Hayes, (2008) 'influence can be broadly defined as the power to affect a person, thing or course of events; it manifests itself in many ways, from direct purchase advice to subtle shift in perception of a vendor's credibility. It can also be the action of creating an environment conducive to affecting another person's opinion on a particular issue'. The scholars believe that in any marketing endeavour the role of influencers is paramount; these are the people who have direct and indirect control over consumers' buying decision. Therefore, it is critical for business to identify and engage with them in order to get across their marketing message to the target audience.

Social Media is all about socializing and sharing opinions. These opinions can be expressed as written entries in the form of blog posts or comments, spoken podcasts, video presentations, and votes on social media sites. These opinions are direct and unfiltered. In contrast to the mainstream media, which polishes content for appropriateness and civility, the social media world is full of people talking about topics they care about, often in blunt terms (Gillin, 2009)

The openness of these opinions is one of the main changes social media introduced to the relationship between business and customers; this has been a great challenge to the veteran marketers and PR people who are used to delivering message through a one-way media and receiving feedback in a heavily filtered form. Gillin has described the usual first time experience of veteran marketers with social media: 'the first time they are the victims of a blog attack, their instinct is either to get mad or walk away with disgust' (Gillin, 2009).

However, the freedom of opinions available on the web should be taken as the liberalization of the communication platform by social media. To be able to get the most out of social media, marketers should embrace the idea that feedback of any kind is useful. Sometimes criticism can be more useful than praise, as the former is the foundation for addressing the shortcomings that will help businesses improve their product or service.

In social media world users frequently engage in discussion of brands giving positive or negative feedback based on their experience or perception. Some businesses tend to ignore such conversations and are therefore not able to counteract to eliminate potential problems and increase customer satisfaction. One of the most important things in social media utilisation is listening to what the consumer has to say and be responsive, thereby creating effective relationship with the customer. That is the point when social media starts to create a value.

Arguably the most talked-about trend in the realm of online advertising and branding in recent years has been the growth and popularity of social communities and potential to leverage these communities with social media marketing techniques (Tuten, 2008). Tuten further states that social media marketing is a form of online advertisement that is based on social communities and social networks, and that due to the high growth rate of social communities most businesses have started to realise the potential of social media marketing in reaching the larger audience.

However, Tuten (2008) explains that companies are still reluctant to experiment and embrace social media in a way that can transform their business. The author suggests this

can be due to a number of reasons, one of the main being be fear of executives or of a possible backlash their company may suffer in case people share negative feedback about it. Nevertheless, the fact is if there is something bad about a company or a brand people are going to say it anyway, regardless of the company's responsiveness. Tuten (2008) advises instead in such situation it is advantageous to have a presence in social media sphere for the businesses to address the issues of negativity or bad image.

Gillin (2009) suggests businesses should consider customers who complain as an opportunity, should be able to identify the problem and engage with these customers to find out what will increase their satisfaction. The author further explains that ignoring such complainants does not led to a solution while conversation and responsiveness do. Proactive approach by companies in such cases subsequently leads to favourable blog posts that endorsement money couldn't buy (Gillin, 2009). By effectively utilising their social media presence businesses can build a very good rapport with their customers that enables them to alter any negative perception and build positive public relations almost in real time.

2.5 Advantages & Disadvantages of Social Media Marketing

There are many different advertising platforms businesses could consider to get their marketing messages across. However, marketing via social media is the most fun, cost efficient and eco-friendly method possible.

Through social media marketing, businesses can quickly build a network of supporters, which is vital for any business to keep growing. It is the group of loyal followers that will keep bringing a company business by referring it to others if they are pleased with the service. Social media is all about creating a long term relationship between businesses and customers and business may be the ones responsible the creation of the social media platforms. As Tuten (2008) explains it:

> *'Social media marketing is rich with potential branding opportunities and is famous for its engagement potential, due to this brands with many objectives can find social media marketing as an appropriate tool for building brand awareness, re-*

searching consumer opinions, identifying opinion leaders, driving traffic to brand web sites, spreading specific messages virally, developing customer database, instilling credibility and trust in a brand and enhancing a branding's image, among others'.

Through time, it has become common for the marketing functions of business to embrace social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to market products and services, the main reason behind this adoption could be ease of implementation, relatively low or no cost, growing tendency of target audiences using those channels and the ability to perform the tasks without the help of traditional media outlets.

However, social media is about creating community, and does not happen overnight. To be able to get the best result in social media consistent participation and engagement is required, due to this fact achieving social media success may ask for even a couple of years before it delivers its best results. This view has been supported in the work of Gillin, (2009) he explains social media works in a manner different from traditional advertising in that realising the result s of a social media effort takes a while. Tuten,(2008) also share this view, according to him while a television campaign can utilize a heavy buy early in its media plan to incite near-immediate awareness and build momentum, social media is just the opposite.

This is considered as one of the drawbacks of social media marketing. Nevertheless, even if witnessing the results take longer, social media marketing is one of the few platforms that are cost effective and capable of building a lasting relation between brands and consumers. It cost only a fraction of what the traditional media advertisement would cost, as most of the platforms are almost free. Rodney Mason, founder and CEO of http://tracker.moosylvania.com, an engine that tracks mobile, social and experiential case studies from around the world shares this fact, Mason (2011) reflects this view on his Ad-age comment for a blog posting 'There was a time, three years ago, when customer engagement required significantly more investment and resources. Now brands can actively listen and respond to their customers and their competitor's customers for a fraction of the cost via social media'.

The second issue is concerned with return on investment (ROI). Social media is such a new marketing channel that the metrics for measuring returns are still relatively undeveloped, although they are evolving rapidly (Gillin, 2009). Gillin further states that though, measuring the outcome of a social media campaign is considered to be unreliable, the cost of starting one is relatively negligible compared to traditional marketing campaigns as mentioned above, and that should always encourage businesses to give social media a try and avoid the risk of inaction.

The third issue that worries businesses concerning the implementation of social media is the lack of consensuses on how two implement different activities, as the platforms and the technologies are so dynamic and there has not been a clear guideline for businesses as to how to utilize them. Mostly business use their own experimental approach to achieve a better result and this has somehow made the task more challenging.

The other challenge in implementing Social Media is the task of setting a clear objective, surprisingly large number of businesses join the social media every year, but those who maintain their online presence effectively are relatively low, this is because many of those businesses launch the social media campaign without clear strategic goal. Gillin, (2009) explains probably most businesses want to experiment the technology or maybe they are attracted by the low cost of entry and he suggests experimenting is better than inaction, but better to have a plan.

Tuten (2008) suggests if a business is to benefit from social media marketing, the first step in the process should be to set objectives for the campaign, as setting objective is a critical step in any communication and marketing planning process. According to him, any marketing campaign without an objective cannot be measured and evaluated, and unless we are able to measure the performance it can be considered a waste of an effort.

3 Traditional Marketing

3.1 Traditional Media Overview: Definition of Traditional Media

Traditional Media is a method of communication or a form of publication traditionally used to distribute news and information. Cave paintings, homing pigeons and books were some of the earliest forms of traditional communication, or media. According to Solis (2010a) traditional media, also referred to as 'old media', is defined as media introduced before the advent of internet and that uses various pre-internet media platforms such as magazines, books, newspapers, radio and television.

The history of traditional media platforms dates back to 59BC when Julius Caesar introduced a daily sheet Acta Diurna (Daily Events), which was posted around Rome. The next major innovation came in the mid-1400s when Johannes Gutenberg first introduced printing press and by the 1500s and 1600s many sporadic newspapers had been launched across Europe. The first American newspaper, Publick Occurences, appeared in Boston in 1690. Daily newspapers in both Europe and America gained momentum throughout the 1700s and 1800s as printing and postal technologies improved (Toddand, 2006)

In the early 1900s radio technology was introduced with motion picture technology following closely behind. By 1930, the popularity of radio has spread all over the world and some people were already enjoying the first television broadcasts. Throughout the 1930s television developed significantly and by the 1950s had become one of the most popular means of reaching mass audience. In 1951, the first computer was sold commercially and in 1994, 43 years later, the World Wide Web was introduced.

3.2 Traditional Media Theories

A number of theories have been formulated about communication media attitudes and behaviour. However, current researches have tended to focus more on newer communication media such as electronic mail rather than more traditional media. Nevertheless, traditional media plays a very important role in connecting the world. It has the ability to reach wide audiences with strong and influential messages which impact society (Krishnasamy).

Television and radio have influenced people's daily lives and routines determining the content that audiences watch and listen to as well as the time when this content is broadcast. In practice this meant that people had to adjust their daily routines based on the schedule of the programming. Traditional media have played three important roles over the years. It has helped to inform, to educate and to influence opinion.

Moreover, traditional media enables people to participate in events and interact with communities over long distance. For instance global events such as:- Olympic Games, World Cup soccer and royal weddings are capable of creating an intense conversation globally. Traditional media platforms such as, TV, radio and newspapers bring the outside world into our homes. The broadcast times of programmes set the routine of life within a society. Their content provides viewers and listeners with something to talk about for days. Traditional media has served as a companion as well as an important source of information for the audience.

However, the only drawback with traditional media is the fact that it is limited to a one-to-many approach, an approach in which one entity can communicate with many people in a way which is one directional. For instance, an ad campaign on a newspaper can be sent by a business and will be seen by perhaps thousands of people. But this approach does not allow the ad readers to communicate with the business, or easily disperse the information. This is one of the drawbacks to traditional media. Due to this fact traditional media have been challenged by new media, which is changing the participation habits of the audiences. Generally most of the media theories discussed above in the Theory of social media section also apply to traditional media.

3.3 Types of Traditional Media

Traditional media exists in various form, the most common ones are television, radio, newspapers, magazines, newsletters and other print publications. The principle traditional media works is by communicating uniform messages in a one-way process to a very large mass audiences, which were assumed to be homogeneous, that is the reason why traditional media is also referred to as 'Mass Media', a media which is intended for a large mass

audience. Traditional Media may take the form of broadcast media, as in the case of television and radio, or print media, such as newspapers and magazines.

3.4 Traditional Marketing

The principles and concepts of traditional marketing describe the nature of products, the behaviour of consumers and competitive activity in the market place. These principles and concepts are used to develop new products, plan product lines and brands, design communication, and respond to competitive activity (Schmitt, 1999). According to Higuera 'Traditional Marketing refers to any type of promotion, advertising or campaign that has been in use by companies for years, and that has a proven success rate. Methods of traditional marketing can include print advertisements, such as newsletters, billboards, flyers and newspaper print ads. Other forms of traditional marketing include television spots or commercials, as well as radio spots advertising a business, product or service'.

Kotler (2003) describes traditional marketing as a collective process where individuals or groups can exchange goods or services based on their needs and wants. E. Jermo McCarthy for the first time in 1960 presented this process as a mixture of useful elements for marketing, which is referred to as the '*Marketing Mix'.* McCarty's presentation gave birth to the Marketing Mix theory. Kotler (2008) defines the marketing mix as a set of controllable tactical marketing tools that the firm blends to produce the response it wants in the target market. Kotler further states that this mix consists of everything the firm can do to influence the demand for its product and categorises these tools into four main groups of variables known as the '*4 Ps'*: Product, Price, Place and Promotion. Kotler (2008) gives the following brief definitions for the 4 Ps.

Product
Anything that can be offered to the market for attention, acquisition, use or consumption that might satisfy a want or a need. It includes physical objects, services, persons, places, organisation and ideas.

Price

Refers to the amount of money charged for a product or service, or the sum of the values that consumers exchange for the benefits of having or using the product or service.

Promotion

Means activities that communicate the merits of the product and persuade target customers to buy it.

Place

Includes company activities that make the product available to target customers.

According to Kotler, each grouping has its own sets of marketing tools such as variety, quality and design for Product; list price, discounts for Price; advertising, personal selling for Promotion; and inventory, channels for Place. However, for the purpose of this dissertation attention is given only to the promotional part of the mix, specifically to advertising.

Traditional marketing utilizes traditional media outlets, such as radio, TV and print media, such as magazines and newspapers, to convey its message to the target audience. To achieve its objective traditional media marketing uses the technique of mass advertising, i.e. sending marketing messages to a very huge mass audience. This concept is based on an assumption that when a marketing message is sent out to a very huge mass probability of converting some of the audience into a consumer is higher. However, some experts believe that in traditional marketing messages targeting mass audience result in a waste of advertisement resources by addressing both target groups and non-target groups. This idea is supported by Charles Ramond (1978) in the *Journal of Advertising Research*, who referred to media waste as 'noise, a kind of pollutant in the air' (as cited by Chiagouris and Lala). In addition this one-size-fits-all approach of advertising in mass marketing is against the basic assumption of the marketing concept, according to which products and services should be produced and marketed based on the expressed needs and wants of their consuming public.

In the traditional marketing setup most businesses are characterized by practicing 'product-centred marketing' a marketing approach that prioritises the sales of a particular product or group of products above all other marketing objectives. Despite the achievements of traditional media marketing, several criticisms have been made by the industry experts about traditional media marketing practices. According to Bell and Emory, (1971) the most common criticism faced by traditional media marketing is the use of *manipulative marketing.* The authors define manipulative marketing as a way of delivering misleading advertisement through hard selling with the objective of creating demand to meet the requirements of supply. Bell and Emory, (1971) assert because of this in 1960s major corporations have been accused of: a) misleading and manipulating children through TV advertising; b) producing merchandise with miracle ingredients which in fact are of little value; c) advertising ordinary or inferior features in a way that suggests that they are actually superior features; d) using advertising in a way that exploits the agonies and anxieties of consumers etc.

According to Celsi (1991) the excess use of manipulative marketing has resulted in the birth of consumer countervailing power (a) in a form of consumers' organizations; (b) in a form of legislations that increasingly reinforces consumers' legal rights promoted by authorities and (c) in a form of self-discipline by companies and adoption of the rules of ethics have also contributed to the development of a more ethical behaviour. As a result it has become very clear for marketers that manipulative marketing is self-destructive for corporation or a brand and goes against its perceived long-term interest.

3.5 Advantages & Disadvantages of Traditional Marketing

New marketing methods are potentially capable of boosting a company's client base, they may not be able to fulfil what traditional marketing does for businesses. Traditional marketing techniques have a high success rate and are proven. Whereas web based applications such as social media are subject to clients or customers having access to an online medium and being Internet savvy.

But in case of traditional marketing, businesses can deliver their marketing message to anyone with access to a newspaper, mail service, television or radio. These traditional media are cheaper and more accessible compared to online medium. These is considered one of the main advantages of traditional marketing, especially in places with a less online coverage traditional marketing is more viable than online marketing techniques such as social media. In addition traditional marketing has the following advantages such as:- physical access to product, personal service, face to face communication, atmosphere of physical store and more secure payment system.

On the contrary the disadvantages of traditional marketing are it is more of product centric and advertising based which doesn't give focus to the customer. It involves slow process of communication and transaction, has a one size fits all approach of marketing message, and requires very huge advertisement budget.

3.6 Comparison between Social Media Marketing and Traditional Marketing

Based on the definitions, theories, and explanations in the preceding chapters the researcher believes it is important to make a comprehensive comparison between social media marketing and traditional marketing in order to summarise different aspects of the marketing techniques in question. This comparison is presented in a table format that illustrates the different elements of the two marketing approaches and their differences and similarities.

Table 2. Social media Vs Traditional Media Comparison

Basic Elements	Traditional Marketing	Social Media Marketing
Simple Definition	The process of performing market research, promotion and selling products	The process of reaching out customers through socializing, engaging and empowering a community
Platforms	Offline medium such as:-TV, Radio, Newspaper, Banner, Magazine, fliers, Outdoor ads.. etc	Blogs, Online communities, Social Networking and sharing sites YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn.. etc
Technique	Mass marketing, creating brand awareness through hard selling	Creating interaction among like-minded people around a brand
Approach	One size fits all	Customized and teller made as per the community interest
Focus	Advertising and branding	People, Community
Customer perception	Intrusive	Inclusive and Participatory
Communication channel	One way interaction	Conversational, Multi directional
Communication style	One-to many, company to consumers	Many-to-many, company with communities, and among community members
Marketing Mix elements	Product, Price, Place and Promotion	People, Platform, Participation and Promotion
Return on investment	Return on Implementation	Return on Influence
Required budget	Huge Budget Needed	Minimum Budget Needed
Feedback handling	Not Feedback friendly due to the communication style used	Provides a real time feedback handling opportunity

4 Influencer Marketing

4.1 Influence

Brown and Hayes, (2008) define influence as the power to affect a person, thing or course of events. According to the authors influence manifests itself in many ways, from direct purchase advice to simple shift in perception of vendor's credibility. Solis (2009) defines influence as the ability to cause desirable and measurable actions and outcomes. According to Brown and Hayes (2008) influence can also be the action of creating an appropriate environment to affect another person's opinion on a particular issue.

Influence can be online or offline based on the media it utilizes, Brown and Hayes (2008) argue only in a few cases is influence gained through using social media, the experts suggest more commonly, the influence gained through social media is a subset of pre-existing media, that is to say offline influence had existed even before the advent of social media and the extra ordinary reach of the internet has only enhanced influence.

4.2 Social Media Influencers

Social media influencers (SMIs) represent a new type of independent third party endorsers who shape audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and the use of other social media (Freberg, Graham and A. Freberg, 2010). Brown and Hayes, (2008) define influencers as third party individuals who significantly shape the customer's purchasing decision, but may never be accountable for it. Although some marketing experts consider SMIs as competing, possibly hostile voices (Gorry and Westbrook, 2009), others recognize the possibilities of forging alliances with SMIs to promote a brand or organization.

Brown and Hayes (2008) state social media by itself do not influence decision makers but rather it is the content and more specifically the content creators that carry the influence. However, social media enables the spread and reach of a message sent out, in addition when social media is used by influencers the content is carried with authority, which makes its impact very significant.

Accordingly, SMIs are perceived to have a high persuasive power, because of their importance technologies have been developed to identify and track the influencers relevant to a brand or a business. And most of these techniques relay on factors such as number of daily visits on a blog, number of times a post is shared, or number of followers on Twitter or Facebook. However, According to (Basille, 2009 and Straley, 2010), online influence is about quality, not quantity; therefore they suggest these factors should be viewed only as a starting point to identify and rate SMIs.

4.3 Definition of Influencer marketing

The fact that the main objective of marketing is to address the needs and wants of consumers, makes the role of influencers in matching these needs and wants with the product and service of a brand is very crucial. In the offline influence set up businesses use different kind of endorsers such as actors, sport personnel etc to influence the purchase decision of consumers. In this model influencers use advertisement based communication method to convince consumers, which is a typical traditional marketing format, and considered as influencing by advertising.

In the online influence model influencers are able to influence because of their credibility gained through success in their profession, experience or knowledge. In addition to their connection to the topic influencers in an online environment utilise their knowledge and expertise to communicate persuasively to their connections. According to Brown and Hayes (2008) in an online influence environment marketers need to persuade those influencers to try their product, provide feedback via different online platforms, such as social networks and communicate their views and opinions to their connections. Solis (2010) explains the above approaches, 'connecting with traditional intermediaries who maintain desirable audiences is one way to stay visible and relevant'. The author further explains 'connecting with authorities and tastemakers directly in social networks represents a complementary opportunity to spread the word and apply a sense of endorsement and credibility to the marketing mix.'

Based on the above explanations, influencer marketing can be defined as a marketing technique where by businesses target the people their clientele refer for information. But of the two kinds of influencers discussed above what is close to the above definition is the online influencers, this is because in the offline influence arrangement the message is one directional and is more of advertising, therefore the influencers are not conversant or their way of communication is not persuasive. Whereas the online influencers help generate awareness and sway the purchase decisions of those who seek out and value their expertise, read their blogs, converse with them in discussion forums, attend their presentations at industry events, etc.

Brown and Hayes (2008) define influencer marketing as 'a new approach to marketing, important because sales forces both understand and support it. The experts state it directly address the most common sales barriers within prospective customers and focuses attention on those individuals who advice decision-makers. We call these people influencers, and they are as crucial to the sales process as the prospects themselves'. According authors, Influencer marketing is a discipline based on focusing attention on the individuals (influencers) who advise decision-makers. Based on their definition an influencer is a third party who significantly shapes a purchasing decision, but would never be accountable for it. Key elements of influencer marketing include identifying and ranking influencers, building influencer engagement programmes and embedding influencer-led messages into marketing activities.

4.4 Theories and Models of Influencer Marketing

For a very long period of time, marketers have accepted the conventional wisdom that a few people exert disproportionate influence over many others. The idea was first coined by Kartz and Lazarsfeld (1955), according to authors if businesses can get the ear of ten per cent of the market, word-of –mouth will do the rest of the work for them. Brown and Hayes (2008) argue that most companies don't even know who their most important influencers are and bloggers are generally overrated as source of influence. Most bloggers, they argue, focus on very small niches and audiences and while bloggers can exert great

influence in their niches, their overall importance is not that great. Further they state that based on their work of exploring thousands of influence sources for many years their best estimate was for any one market there is a maximum of seven blogs that had a measurable influence.

According to Brown and Hayes (2008) these relatively minor influencers or bloggers attract a great deal of attention, because marketers are very focused on the media, and bloggers are considered as a new media channel, and they propose there are actually more than twenty sources of influence on purchase decision, which include government regulators, financial analysts, channel partners, and system integrators.

However, the influential theory has faced challenges over the years. Among the challengers is Ducan Watts, a former professor of sociology at Columbia University, who used simulations and detailed mathematical models was able to build a controversial case that demonstrated influencer marketing underestimates the complexity by which messages are spread and that marketing campaigns that rely on solely reaching influencers are at high risk of failure. Watt argues, a more reliable approach to marketing is to supplement viral campaigns such as:- social media and influencer marketing with conventional media marketing. According to Watts, by continually re-seeding the market with the original message in this way, campaigns have a greater likelihood of long term success.

5 Methodology

5.1 Research Method

This research attempts to discover information on the inter relation between social media theories and concepts with long held marketing and business philosophies based on the fundamental principles of marketing. The review will highlight and appraise different book, journal articles and expert views on the use of social media as a tool for consumer marketing purposes. Because social media is a new field of study there is a lack of peer-reviewed resources on the subject, however abundant information is available on different blogs, published articles and books. Most of the well accomplished experts and key authors in subject are current practitioners in social media marketing sector. Therefore this research will incorporate and focus on theories and ideas by these thought leaders in the field.

The fact that the objective of this research is to evaluate the effect of social media marketing on traditional marketing creates a demand for qualitative research which is based on different marketing and media theories related to the topic. However, the researcher also included a quantitative study in the form of an online survey, which tries to relate customers experience with the two types of marketing. The survey was designed around a questionnaire that was completed by a specific group of respondents. In addition, the questionnaire tried to address the relationship between the kind of media used and its effect on the nature of content consumption especially content of advertisement in nature.

Measuring the relation between a particular type of marketing message and the influence it exerts on the target audience is a difficult task. Traditional marketing has been around for quite a while and it is perceived to serve its purpose very well by marketers, due to this fact this research attempts to assess the value of social media marketing to businesses towards achieving their marketing objectives. This done through a case study made on three case companies that have used social media marketing in their marketing efforts. The research follows an exploratory nature to analyse the case studies. A qualitative approach to research is required, allowing researchers to deal with complexity, context and persona and their multitude of factors, relationships and fuzzy phenomena; conventional

statistical methods fail in all these aspects Gummesson (2006). In addition by utilising case studies done on the topic previously helps the researcher to gather the required information, to make the necessary analysis, to evaluate the trend adoption rate and identify major obstacles in using social media marketing for businesses.

5.2 Data Collection Method

Data collection for this research has been divided into two parts. The first part was the data collection carried out for the quantitative research, which was conducted by means of an online questionnaire whereby respondents were given access to the questionnaire through a link that directs them to the database. After the sample questionnaire was completed and submitted, statistical analysis software was used to handle the responses. Whereas the qualitative research was done by means of data mining from existing case studies. The research addressed the issue set out in the research objective by recognizing patterns of relationships between the two subjects within and across case studies and their underlying logical arguments. Central to finding and proving these relationships between the case studies is replication logic (Eisenhardt, 1989). This is to say that each case study serves as a distinct experiment that stands on its own as an analytic unit. According to Yin (1994), as a series of related laboratory experiments, multiple cases are discrete experiments that serve as replications, contrasts, and extensions to the emerging theory.

For the purpose of selecting the relevant case studies a method of theoretical sampling has been used. Eisenhardt et al. (2007) describe theoretical sampling as a means in which cases are selected because they are particularly suitable for illuminating and extending relationships and logic among constructs. Accordingly the cases selected for this research are based on theoretical reasons perceived by the researcher to showcase an identified phenomenon, replication of findings from other cases, contrary replication, explanations and elaboration of the emergent theory. The cases were selected from a renowned case study database, namely *Casestudiesonline.com*, available in public domain hosting plenty of case studies under different categories. For the purpose of this research the researcher has limited the categories of the cases between social media marketing and influencer marketing.

5.3 Data Analysis Method

The researcher utilised two different data analysis techniques for the research. For the quantitative research part a statistical data analyses is utilised, whereas for the qualitative research part since the data was not in quantifiable form another data analysis method is implemented. Accordingly for the qualitative part of the research (case study based) the researcher used Systematic Combing data analysis method. Systematic combining is a process where theoretical framework, empirical fieldwork and case studies evolve at the same time and it is particular useful for development of new theories (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). According to Dubois and Gadde (2002), by constantly going back and forth from one type of research activity to another and between empirical observations and theories, the researcher is able to expand his understanding of both theory and empirical phenomena.

6 Findings and Discussion

In this chapter the findings of the secondary qualitative research (three case studies) are discussed by analysing each case based on the theoretical arguments in the literature review. In addition the data of the quantitative research have been analysed by using the output obtained from statistical analysis program (SPSS). The original survey questionnaire output is appended to the Appendix section of this thesis.

6.1 Secondary Qualitative Research

Case Study 1: Wisconsin Cheese
Title: Wisconsin Cheese Social Media Campaign Reached 100 Million Households

By incorporating social media as a means to reach out to its customers in 2007, Wisconsin cheese was able to build a global following. The strategy followed by the company was based on content marketing and social marketing. The idea is based on creating content that add value for their customers. Accordingly the company with 600 varieties of cheese to promote, a limited budget and a national scope, adopted social media to engage with its customers.

First of all the management team of the company realised that by utilising social media they were able to build an engagement campaign with little cost especially considering their tight budget situation at the time. Secondly their decision to take advantage of a new, under practiced engagement technique at that time had made them pioneers in the field and gave them the opportunity to practice it in a relaxed manner. Here as mentioned in item 2.15 of the literature review (Tuten, 2008, Mason, 2011) the company utilised the opportunity social media provided them to engage with their customers at low cost and took that advantage to try it out rather than being deterred.

At the heart of the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board's strategy is its main website, http://eatwisconsincheese.com/ which offers information for consumers as well as retail

and foodservice professionals looking for answers to their questions on cheeses and cheese related issues. In addition the websites offers different recipes from celebrity chefs and a variety of food bloggers, the site offers a learning centre for those invested in the cheese industry. Visitors can also watch a series of videos on topics ranging from ways to celebrate Oktoberfest with cheese to creating party platters for the holidays.

In addition to the main website the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board launched another four microsites that focus on more specific topics. The electronic recipe index of cheeseburgers on *cheeseandburger.com* features the voice of Patrick Warburton, the actor best known for his portrayal of "Puddy" on the television comedy "Seinfeld," offering humorous commentary on each recipe and the type of cheese it uses. Blending such humorous approach helped the company to deliver its message in a funny manner which is an important element of social media since it makes the message more of entertaining than advertising.

Currently the site has developed a global following, had helped its customers to create a community group in different localities, where some groups hold monthly get-togethers to cook different burgers and wear Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board gear. This in a way had helped its customers to socialize around the brand and be part of the whole system by advocating and engaging with each other. This enhances the conversation on the brand among its customers and beyond, and helps the company to develop further.

The other site *grilledcheeseacademy.com* offers its own set of 30 recipes in an attempt to inspire restaurateurs to work on grilled cheese sandwiches and to get them involved with the brand. The fourth site, *DairyDoingMore.org*, provides education and information about Wisconsin's dairy industry, while the last site, The Wisconsin Cheese Cupid at *cheesecupid.com*, helps users pair up cheeses with their favourite alcoholic drinks.

Wisconsin utilised social media and online conversation to its advantage, in addition to the main website and the microsites the marketing team uses their Facebook page Twitter feed to reach out their customers and other people that matter for the brand. It is through these channels that the company is able to reach unhappy customers online and answer their questions, deliver valuable content, announce special offers and most importantly

share the human side of the brand. According to Patrick Geoghegan, senior vice president of corporate communications at the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, "It's really about engagement," Geoghegan said. "When they go onto our cheese and burger site, they're with us for five or six minutes. It's an amazing thing we're seeing."

According to Geoghegan estimates the campaign has reached 100 million households in the U.S., and noted that in a recent U.S. survey that asked individuals, "When you think of cheese, what geography do you think of?" about 60 per cent responded "Wisconsin," followed by 12 per cent, who said "France."

"Certainly the perceptions about Wisconsin cheese are changing. We're making progress here," he said.

The strategy Wisconsin Cheese follows matches with the suggestion made by Gillin (2009), which states that, Social media has given voice to millions of ordinary citizens who can now relate their experience and opinion to a global audience at a little or no cost. He further explains, People don't abandon technologies that make it easier for them to communicate. According to him the sooner the marketers dive in and begin experimenting with these new channels, the more success they will have.

Case Study 2: Dell Computers

Title: Social Media Turns Dell Computers from Hell to Heaven

It all begun in 2005 after Dell ignored the compliant of an influential blogger named Jeff Jarvis about his laptop computer. The blogger's 'Dell Hell' story became a mainstream story portraying the PC manufacturer as an arrogant giant that became a case study in how one man's website could damage a corporate reputation. After this incident the company realised the importance of communicating with its customers and launched the official corporate blog dedicated for this purpose, direct2dell.com. Following that Dell IdeaStorm was launched.

Dell IdeaStorm is a website launched by the company in February 2007 to allow Dell to talk directly to its customers. In addition to the direct communication with its customers through IdeaStorm, Dell added 'storm session' where Dell posts a specific topic and asks customers to submit ideas. By doing this the company was able to gauge which ideas are most important and relevant to them, after registering users are able to add ideas, promote them, demote them and comment on them. The ideas that get the highest number of votes are promoted to the next level that allows the company to rank the suggestions and requests that are considered most important by the website's users. The idea page is maintained to demonstrate how Dell is acting upon the suggestions, the page is only changed when the status of an idea changes to implemented.

From the above strategy it is clear that after Dell realised the importance of handling customers' complaints timely, the company decided to make a direct communication with them by embraced social media as its communication tool. This approach is in line with the extensive arguments presented in section 2.1.4 above, specifically by Tuten (2008) and Gillin (2009) on the need to have a social media presence and be engaged with the community.

After launching the platforms Dell was able track blogs and other online mentions and contact customers and did its utmost to address their problems. To this end Dell's blog

and other social media platforms have been pivotal in communicating with customers in real time about product faults and related issues thereby minimising the backlash that may arise. In addition, the fact that Dell introduced the storm session was empowering to its customers at the same time it has given a very great opportunity for the company to learn what exactly its customers' needs and wants are. In 2012, Dell added idea "Extensions" where an idea poster can promote a comment made on their idea to be considered a part of it. These "Extensions" will enable ideas to evolve over time through collaboration. According to the company, Through IdeaStorm, Storm Sessions and Extensions, their commitment is to listen to the customers input and ideas to improve its products, services, and the way the company does business. These are few examples of the capabilities social media delivers for businesses, as explained by Tuten (2008) in section 2.1.5 above due to the rich branding and engagement potential of social media it remains an incredible tool for businesses with many objectives.

Until recently the Dell IdeaStorm community has contributed almost 17,078 ideas, which have been voted on over 736,692 times, have received almost 95,690 comments and almost 500 ideas got implemented. After IdeaStorm's launch the community got active, demanding 'Linux' the open-source operating system to be pre-installed on Dell computers. After conducting a detailed survey answered by more than 100,000 people, Dell selected notebooks and desktops equipped with the Linux-based operations. This has helped the company to build a 'brand trust' among its customers. A Brand trust is the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its perceived function (that is being able to cater to the needs and wants of its customers) Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001).

Case Study 3: Kotex

Title: Kotex Targets 50 Influencers on Pinterest

Kotex team started with identifying the platform where women express themselves freely and openly emphasizing style and design and came to a conclusion that Pinterest is the ultimate social platform for self-expression, and the team decided to make the first Pinterest campaign in the world. After selecting the platform the team started combing through thousands of women's pinboards in search of 50 influential users with a large number of engaged followers on Pinterest who could be future Kotex customers. Here before starting any involvement in Pinterest the team set its first objective of identifying the influential users with an engaged followers, by doing so the team gives priority to the issue of the importance of influencers in a company's marketing success. This concept is well explained by (Kartz and Lazarsfeld, 1955) in the literature review section 2.3.4, the authors state marketers have accepted the conventional wisdom that a few people exert disproportionate influence over many other people, According to them if businesses can get the ear of ten percent of the market, word-of –mouth will do the rest of the work for them. This idea is supported by (Brown and Hayes, 2008) in section 2.3.3, the authors state social media by themselves do not influence decision makers but rather it is the content and more specifically the content creators that carry the influence.

The Kortex team after identifying the 50 would be influential women started studying the women's pinboards to get a better understanding of some of the things they are passionate about. After the analysis, they created custom gift boxes for each woman filled with goodies they believed would resonate with them, with an estimated investment between $50 and $100 per gift box. After receiving the gifts, almost all the 50 women did as Kotex had hoped. They talked about Kotex online. Kotex then asked the women to reciprocate by opting in to the campaign to share their stories about the cool gifts they got. So far, there have been 2,000 interactions between the 50 women and their friends and almost 695,000 impressions.

This explains very well how giving a taste of the company for the influencers is a very important element of influencer marketing, because these influencers act based on their experience and perception business should not expect influencers to advocate their brand without having the experience with it as is in the case of traditional marketing. This approach is supported by Brown and Hayes, (2008) and Solis (2010) in section 2.3.3 of the lit review. In addition this case is a very good example of how businesses can easily start a social media campaign with a minimum cost, trigger the conversation and empower their customers to the advantage of their brand.

6.2 Quantitative Research (Survey Results)

The qualitative research portion of this paper is done through an online survey, a questionnaire of 28 questions were designed out of which 2 of the questions were simple demographic questions whereas the rest 26 questions were directly related to the research theme. The survey was initially designed to a certain group of people, i.e. students of Polytechnics and Universities in the Helsinki metropolitan area, but as the link of the questioner was shared through different social media platforms other group of people who showed interest in the survey were also allowed to fill and return it. The main purpose of incorporating the survey was to gauge and measure the current trends in media consumption by the respondents, all of the respondents are believed to have some knowledge of social media.

Therefore the researcher believes the response gathered through this survey gives him at least an indicative result if not conclusive about the questions discussed. The questionnaire had been filled and returned by 101 respondents and the responses were analysed using statistical analysis software (SPSS) and a simple frequency analysis is used. In addition for the sake of clarity the responses were divided into two sections i.e. the first two questions that addressed demographic elements as section one and the rest of the questions which are purely related to the main topics of the thesis into the second section. In the next table the responses received for each question of the survey is discussed, the original questionnaire of the survey is appended in the Appendix part of this thesis.

Table3. Discussion of survey questionnaire responses

Question No.	Results
Q No.1	According to the results obtained for this question, 39.6% of the respondents belong to the age group 22-24 years old, 27.7% belong to age group 25-27, and 17.8% belong to 19-21 and the rest 14.9% belong to the age group more than 27 years of age. This is indicative that at least more than 85% of the respondents are young people bellow the age group 27 and below.
Q No.2	Based on the data gathered 60.4% of the respondents are female and 39.6% are male. This is an indication that nearly 20% more females had participated in the survey.
Q No.3	For this question 92.1% of the respondents responded they use the internet regularly or on a daily basis, 55 responded twice a week, 1% responded once in week and 2% they don't use the internet at all, here we can conclude two things one is that the majority of the respondents are regular internet users and all of the respondents have access the to the internet, but the 2% respondents who responded as they don't use the internet can be considered as an outliers as the survey was accessible only online there could never be such a response to the question and the answer itself were purposely designed to measure how attentively respondents respond the questions.
Q No.4	The repose for this question delivers 93.1% use of the internet by the respondents both for the purpose of social media and email, news, banking followed by 82,2% for entertainment, 80.2% study

	related purpose, 47.5 % and 1% for Job search, platform development and Skype. This is a very interesting result as one of the main aims of the research is to gage the participation of the respondents in social media and it proved the assumption that respondents are active users of social media.
Q No.5	Based on the response most of the respondents 57.74% classify their know-how about social media as average level, 18.8% as basic level, 17.8% as expert level and 2% as beginners level. This is an indication significant proportion of the population have adequate know how of social media.
Q No.6	As per the response to this question with 97% Facebook is the most visited social network site, followed by YouTube 79%, Twitter and Flicker 43.6%, LinkedIn 40.6% and Myspace 12.9%, this implies Facebook and YouTube are the two most famous sites among the population.
Q No.7	The result for this question reaffirms the fact that Facebook is the favourite social network sites of all.
Q No.8	Nearly 75% of the respondents spend between 11 and 30 minutes per each session whereas exactly equal percentage of the population spends 12.9 % less than ten minutes and more than thirty minutes per session.
Q No.9	A significant amount of the respondents 84.2 % are either constantly logged on or log on several times a day, this is an indication that most of the respondents spend significant amount of their time online.
Q No.10	Only 3% of the respondents declared they don't participate on any social network site because they

	are not interested, however as all the respondents responded for question No 9 above this responses can also be taken as an outliers that are caused due to human error or deliberate error.
Q No.11	Again of all the social network sites under question most of the users have more connection on Face-book and Twitter, followed by LinkedIn. This can be an indication that the respondents connect more on personal level, followed by topic of interest and professional connection.
Q No.12	When it comes to social community or group the respondents are less connected, a significant amount of the respondents 53.5% are not connected to any community group.
Q No.13	Based on the response most of the respondents use some kind of mobile device to log on to the social network site, this could be a very important indication that most of the respondents read or consume content on the go.
Q No.14	According to the response the respondents rank the reason why social media appeal to them in the following order; 97% connecting with friends and families, 71.3% new people connection, 65.3 % people of common interest and 52.5% professional connection
Q No.15	Majority of the respondents believe joining a community allow them to stay up-to-date 82.2%, 75.2% think it is relevant and interesting to them, 67.3% think it will help them to get new connection and 46.5% think to be able to share their opinion they should be part of it.
Q Nos.16 & 17	75.2% of the respondents for Q16 say they have liked a brand or multiple brands on a social media

	site and 64.4% of the respondents have subscribed to one or more brand blogs, this tells us significant amount of the respondents in both cases have been related to a brand via social media
Q No.18	An average of 65% of the respondents said they receive product launch information, promotional news and product reviews from the social media sites and blogs they are connected with.
Q No.19	When it comes to the credibility of information the respondents tend to have a better acceptance for information they get through connections, rather than just social networking site of a brand or official company blogs or websites. This tells us something about the importance of a human element in social media.
Q Nos.20 &21	Based on the response to this question the influence level of information gotten from social media site is minimal on the respondents purchase decision. However 74.3% of the respondents believe brands should use different social media platforms to mention details about the various features associated with their product. This may be because most respondents may believe this might help them to get to know the products well.
Q No.22	According to the response to the kind of information they want to get from brands on social media sites 26.7% of the respondents responded product launch, 24.8% promotional material, 15.8% product reviews, mentions, 5.9% public relations whereas another 26.7% of the respondents didn't have any choice from the list. This figure is close to the number of respondents who voted no to Q21, plus those who didn't responded at all.

Q No.23	The response we got for this question gives us very important information about the advertisement content consumption of the respondents. With 86.1% of the respondents saying they learn about a brand from Television, 82.2% magazines, 55.4% Newspapers, 27.7% from radio and 5% from other different sources. This question was designed deliberately to gage how the supposedly internet savvy respondents see traditional marketing messages. This can be a justification even if we have an exposure to social media or any form of on line media that doesn't completely destroy our exposure to traditional media.
Q No.24	Based on the response to this question of all the respondents, 77.2% notice advertisements on social media websites, which is a significant amount, followed by 11.9% who don't notice it and 10.9% who don't give attention.
Q No.25	Of all the 77.2% of the respondents who noticed the advertisements, only 22.8% think the advertisement they saw relevant, 38.6 % think it was not always relevant, 8.9% think they were never relevant and another 8.9% being uncertain
Q No.26&27	when it comes to how often the respondents click on an ad, 40.6% of the respondents say they click occasionally, 24.8% say most of the time and 9.9% say never. And off all who said often or occasionally 36.6% believe it is relevant to them, 17.8% believe they recognize the brand, 5.9% say they do it out of curiosity and 5% say they were attracted by the celebrity on the ad.

6.3 Discussion

Based on the results obtained from both the qualitative and the quantitative research it is evident that the advent of social media has provided an amazing communication tool for the world. The results obtained in the secondary qualitative research demonstrated the fact that when businesses use social media to communicate with their customers by incorporating the necessary human elements they can achieve an incredible result. Social media has made communication easy, collaborative and fast in a way unprecedented in the traditional media. The promoters of social media marketing for enterprises believe that the right strategy can be beneficial for both businesses and customers. Eikelmann, Hajj & Peterson (2007) support the idea that companies can benefit from social media threats by implementing the right strategy. The authors assert that by engaging with their customers in conversations businesses can avoid the threat of losing control of conversation of the brand, however they should let consumers decide on the flavour of the conversation.

Dell's case is a very good example of the above approach. After suffering bad publicity in 2005, introducing the IdeaStorm platform has enabled Dell's customers to converse about the brand and be able to create ideas beneficial both for the company and themselves. Allowing the customers to acquire what they need and want by making it easy for the company to identify their need. Such is a win-win approach introduced through social media and, can be considered as the new version of marketing research. On the contrary when businesses ignore the conversation about their brand in social media and something bad happens about it is very difficult to reverse the bad publicity. In today's web connected world it is mandatory for business to incorporate social media as one of their communication tools to reach out to their customers, this is because the speed and intensity information is disseminated in social media is just unparalleled.

In addition social media has created a very good platform of collaboration between businesses and their consumers as in all the three cases the businesses utilised social media platforms to reach out to the customers either by providing a valuable content, creating the opportunity to collaborate around a common interest or reaching out to the potential influencers.

Such multi directional collaboration and conversation increases the value of the conversation exponentially as explained in Reed's law, which is a very important element of marketing as the main objective is creating a conversation around the brand and thereby increasing the brand awareness. In addition it was clear from the above three cases that social media based marketing efforts are easy to start and affordable as long as businesses have the right strategy. Due to this reason social media marketing is something businesses should consider doing than not to, since starting one doesn't come at the cost of a huge expense like traditional marketing. From the above discussed cases for instance the Wisconsin Chess team and Kotex team noted this fact and were able to take advantage of it.

All in all the above three cases are all in line with the theories and the claims made by the social media thought leaders and experts. The three cases have also demonstrated that if business can identify their customers, listen to them and converse with them at the right place and time, they can reap the benefit of social media marketing.

For the quantitative part of the research, First of all the researcher wanted to have this part of the research only for the sole purpose of incorporating a primary data that could serve as indicative if not conclusive, the researcher tried to evaluate the trend in social media adoption and its function as a marketing tool from the point of view of customers. According to the results obtained from the survey most of the respondents who are internet users have some sort of social media presence and they spend significant amount of time on different social media communities such as: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter etc. These tech savvy people have some experience with some brand communities. Further nearly 65% of the respondents have received some kind of promotional material from a brand's social media site they are connected with. Interestingly very significant amount of the respondents more than that of the social media stated that they receive ads and information about brands from traditional media outlet, this can be considered as an indication that even if people have more exposure to online media, it doesn't mean they will abandon the old media.

In addition the responds recognise marketing messages in social media but most of them believe they were not influenced to make a purchase just because they were exposed to those messages, but rather attribute their purchase influence to come from some sort of human connection in social media be it family, friend or professional recommendation.

7 Conclusion, Limitations and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusion

In this research an attempt has been made to evaluate the role of social media as an effective communication tool for businesses. Accordingly based on the media theories, other concepts suggested by scholars in the field and observations made from the cases plus the survey results it has become crystal clear that social media, if implemented with the right approach could be one of main communication tools businesses use to reach out their customers. Social media provides the benefits of long-term engagement between brands and consumers. As social media has provided an opportunity for everyone to communicate effectively and efficiently in a way unprecedented by any other media it can be considered as the communication tool of modern era.

This is because social media is reach and has given its users more options and capabilities to communicate. These new capabilities that came with the advent of social media such as sharing, commenting, tweeting, voting…etc have undermined the way information is disseminated in the traditional media. As social media has enabled users to simply disseminate information at a click of a button and collaborate more with their community, this has in turn given the ordinary citizens the opportunity to transform from content users in to content creators. As a result users have gotten more opportunity to socialize around the things that matter for them, consequently enabling marketers to locate such a group of like-minded people to engage with. Social media can be considered to be effectively implemented by businesses when they are able to identify the influencers in the community and engage them to reach their target audience.

Social media thought leaders advice for marketers to engage customers in a clear interruption free manner (Brown and Hayes, 2008). As the aim of a social media campaign is to create a conversation around the brand, enhance the brand awareness in the minds of customers and creating a brand advocate community rather than sending out direct marketing message. According to the authors once the conversation is on, it is the peer influ-

ence that plays the significant role in the purchase decision making and it is then the influencer can have a sway on others.

Based on the above mentioned facts and the dynamics of social media, it is clear that social media marketing is challenging traditional marketing practices. On the other side traditional marketing has a proven record of generating sales and boosting revenue for businesses, some experts even arguing traditional marketing is the only way businesses should use to market their products and services. The prominent social media expert and blogger, Chris Borgan, in his blog post 'Marketing is not social media-social media is not marketing' (2007), explains social media and marketing as different subjects independent from one another. His main argument is that Social media is a set of tools that permit regular people access to potential audiences of shared interest. These tools give voice, give preference, give rise to individuality, give flexibility, collaborative opportunity, and a whole lot of other things that don't resemble traditional marketing and that marketing should not own these tools.

The same thought is shared by Lee Oden, who was voted No 15 by peers in 2008's top 100 digital marketers. Oden (2009) asserts social media is no place for direct marketing and the main reason people join social networks is to be social with like-minded community, instead of being marketed.

Nevertheless, there doesn't seem to be a universal consensus on social media marketing yet. Some of these social media experts are in opposition of any kind of marketing messages being sent out on the platforms but others are fine with that as long as it doesn't undermine the social nature of the conversation. Martin(2009), in Advertising Age, doesn't agree that social media is not a channel for marketing and that the businesses involvement behind social media devalues the conversation. On the contrary, Dury (2008) shares the view of (Borgan and Oden), points out the argument that marketing has no place in social media and it destroys social media's foundations by undermining its social elements. He contends, this is because the very nature of marketing, which is a commercial corporate function.

In conclusion, the researcher is in a complete agreement with the pro-social media marketing group and believes that social media can serve for businesses as an incredible marketing tool. However the fact that whether social media could replace traditional marketing completely in the future is debatable, but it is evident that social media marketing has become one of the main components of the promotional mix of most businesses.

7.2 Limitations

The main limitation of this research is unavailability of sufficient peer reviewed academic literature that addresses social media marketing. As social media marketing is a new field of study most of the academic resources on social media marketing and PR are books written by former online markers who have been working in the field since its inception. Due to this fact the researcher was compelled to prove the objectives of the study primarily on different media theories and case-based reasoning (secondary data sources).

However, the researcher has tried to incorporate a primary data to support qualitative research findings. As qualitative research is based on a secondary data it is difficult to verify the validity of the data that is used to generalize about the research. Nevertheless the primary data obtained from the survey could only be considered as indicative of the issues under question. This is due to two main reasons, such as:

- The number of responses gathered and the number of responses required to attain a conclusive result are unmatched;
- The diversity of the demography of respondents is very narrow

This fact forced the researcher to make his conclusion based on only analytical generalization and not the statistical one. The researcher believes doing a very thorough primary survey results in a reliable generalizations of the topic, unfortunately such survey requires a very huge resources and therefore is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

7.3 Recommendations

This research has a limited scope compared to the vast nature of the topics and the issues that need to be addressed to attain the complete objective of the research. For instance as mentioned above in the limitation part it would have been great if a quantitative survey of significant amount of respondents and a different demographic classes were done, so as to come up with a conclusive statistical data to support the theories and other claims and counterclaims made by the scholars in the literature review and other academic articles.

However, due to the narrow scope of this undergraduate dissertation it had not been possible to address the issues that needed to be addressed, the topic of understanding what social media marketing will deliver to businesses is still fresh and needs more exploration especially in reference to traditional marketing. Businesses are keen to know about issues such as return on investment (ROI), measurability of social media tactics etc. Accordingly the researcher highly recommends future researches to be more of qualitative in nature and to include the underlying topics.

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APPENDIX I

Survey Questionnaire

This questionnaire is being carried out as research for a bachelor's thesis on Social Media Marketing and Public Relations. The results of this survey will be used for academic purposes only. The survey is anonymous and personal information cannot be connected to a specific respondent. The estimated time of completion for this questionnaire is approximately 8-10 minutes.

The researcher greatly appreciates your help and support with this research. Thank you for your valuable contribution!

Please indicate your response to the following questions by circling the most applicable answer(s).

1. Age: ☐ 19-21,☐ 22-24,☐ 25-27,☐   > 27

2. Gender: ☐ M, ☐   F

3. How often do you use the Internet?

 a. Regularly, on a daily basis

 b. Twice a week

 c. Maybe once in a week

 d. Not at all

4. What is the main purpose of using the internet /online presence? Please select all that apply.

        a. Work-related

        b. Study-related

        c. Entertainment, such as movies, music, online games..etc

        d. Email, news, banking

        e. Social Media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace…etc

        f. Other, please explain

_____

5. At what level would you identify your own knowledge about Social Media sites/tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, …. etc?

        a. Beginner

        b. Basic

        c. Average

        d. Expert

6. Which of the following social media websites do you use on a regular basis (once or more times a day)? Please select all that apply

        a. Facebook

        b. Twitter

        c. Myspace

      d. Youtube

      e. Linkdin

      f. Flicker

7. Of the following Social Media websites which one is your favorite?

      a. Facebook

      b. Twitter

      c. Myspace

      d. Youtube

      e. Linkdin

      f. Flicker

8. How much time do you spend on your favorite social media site (identified in question 7) per each session or per log-in time?

      a. Less than 10 minutes

      b.11-20 minutes

      c. 21-30 minutes

      d. More than 30 minutes

9. How often do you log on to your favorite social media websites/services?

      a. I am constantly logged on

      b. Several times a day

c. Once a day

d. A few times per week (i.e. 2-4 times per week)

e. Once a week

f. Less than once a week (i.e. once in two weeks or less)

10. If you are NOT participating on any social media websites, what is the main reason for the lack of participation?

a. I don't have time

b. It is not interesting to me

c. I do not want any publicity

d. It is against my religion

e. Other, please specify

_____

_____

11. Please mark the corresponding average connections you have for the following Social Media profiles? Please skip the item you don't have a profile for.

	<100	101-300	301-500	501-700	701-900	>901
a. Facebook	□	□	□	□	□	□
b. Twitter	□	□	□	□	□	□
c. Myspace	□	□	□	□	□	□
d. Linkdin	□	□	□	□	□	□
f. Flicker	□	□	□	□	□	□

12. How many social communities/groups are you a member of? A online social community/group can be defined as a collection of like-minded individuals connected by interactions.

    a. None

    b.1-5

    c. 6-10

    d.11-20

    e. More than 20

13. What device do you use to log on to your social media profile? Please select all that apply.

    a. Smart phone

    b. Tablet computer such as iPad, Samsung Galaxy Tab, etc.

    c. Laptop computer

    d. Desktop computer

    e. Other, please specify _____

14. Which aspects of social media appeal to you the most? Please select all that apply.

    a. Connecting with friends & families

    b. Connecting with people of the same profession

    c. Connecting with new people

d. Connecting with people of common interest

e. Other, please specify _____

15. In your opinion, what is the key reason to join a community/group in a social media service? Please select all that apply.

a. It is a relevant, active and interesting community

b. This will allow me to stay up-to-date with the community news/updates

c. I believe this will help me gain new and useful connections both professional & friendship

d. I would like to have my opinion and to be able to do that membership is required

e. Other, please specify_____

16. Do you like/follow a particular brand, or multiple brands, on a social media site?

a. Yes

b. No

17. Have you ever subscribed to one or more brand blog(s)?

a. Yes

b. No

If you answered yes for questions 16 and 17 please answer questions 18 and 19.

18. What type of information do you receive from the brand's Social Media sites or blog posting? Please select all that apply.

a. Product launch information

b. Promotional news

c. Product reviews

d. Other, please specify _____

19. Do you trust the information, for instance endorsement of a product or service, you obtain through social networking websites?

a. Yes

b. Yes, if it comes from my friends/connections

c. Yes if it comes from professional communities, group of professionals who share common interests around a profession, such as group for health care professionals

d. Yes, if it comes from official company profiles/pages

e. No, I am always critical to such kind of information and check their validity from off line sources, such sources as personal interaction or trial.

20. Were you influenced to buy a specific product/service based on the information you received through a social media site?

a. Definitely

b. To some extent

c. Not at all

d. I am not sure

21. Do you think brands should use a variety of social media platforms to mention details about the various features associated with their product(s)?

   a. Yes

   b. No

22. If you answered yes to question 21, what sort of information should they provide?

   a. Product launch information

   b. Product reviews, mentions and product reviews from other customers.

   c. Promotional material and advertisements

   d. Public relations, such as newsletters and company news.

23. Through what other medium do you learn about products/brands? Please select all that apply.

   a. Television

   b. Radio

   c. Newspapers

   d. Magazines

   e. Others, please explain _____

24. In the last three visits to your favorite social media website, did you notice any advertisements?

    a. Yes

    b. No

    c. I have not paid attention to whether or not there are advertisements

25. If you answered yes to question 24, do you believe the ads shown on your profile are relevant to your interests?

    a. Yes, most of the time

    b. Sometimes, but not always

    c. No, not at all

    d. I am not certain

26. If you answered yes to question 24, how often do you click on the ads you see on your profile?

    a. Often or most of the time if I feel it is relevant

    b. Occasionally or not in a regular interval even if I feel it is relevant

    c. Never, not at all

27. If you answered often or occasionally (a.) for question 26, what is the main reason that you choose to click on an ad?

    a. It is relevant to what I want/am interested in

    b. I recognize the brand or company

c. I am curious about all ad

d. I am attracted by the celebrity on the ad

e. Other, please specify _____

28. How do you compare an ad message on a social media site such as YouTube, Facebook or Twitter to that on traditional media such as, TV, radio or newspaper.

a. They are all the same

b. The traditional media ad is not interactive, cannot be commented

c. The social media ad gives voice to the audience, it is interactive

d. b & c

e. All

APPENDIX II
Survey Questionnaire SPSS Output

Statistics

1. Age

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0

1. Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	18	17,8	17,8	17,8
	2	40	39,6	39,6	57,4
	3	28	27,7	27,7	85,1
	4	15	14,9	14,9	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Statistics

2. Gender

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0

2. Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	40	39,6	39,6	39,6
	2	61	60,4	60,4	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Statistics

3. How often do you use the Internet?

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0

3. How often do you use the Internet?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	93	92,1	92,1	92,1
	2	5	5,0	5,0	97,0
	3	1	1,0	1,0	98,0
	99	2	2,0	2,0	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

4. What is the main purpose of using the internet/online presence?

Work-related

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		53	52,5	52,5	52,5
	x	48	47,5	47,5	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Study-related

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		20	19,8	19,8	19,8
	x	81	80,2	80,2	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Entertainment, such as movies, music, online games..etc

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		18	17,8	17,8	17,8
	x	83	82,2	82,2	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Email, news, banking

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		7	6,9	6,9	6,9
	x	94	93,1	93,1	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Social Media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace...etc

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		7	6,9	6,9	6,9
	x	94	93,1	93,1	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Other, Please specify

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	98	97,0	97,0	97,0
Job search.	1	1,0	1,0	98,0
Platform developement	1	1,0	1,0	99,0
skype	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
Total	101	100,0	100,0	

5. At what level would you identify your own knowledge about Social Media sites/ tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspac

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2	2,0	2,0	2,0
	2	19	18,8	18,8	20,8
	3	58	57,4	57,4	78,2
	4	18	17,8	17,8	96,0
	99	4	4,0	4,0	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

6. Which of the following social media websites do you use on a regular basis?
Facebook

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		3	3,0	3,0	3,0
	x	98	97,0	97,0	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Twitter

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	57	56,4	56,4	56,4
x	44	43,6	43,6	100,0
Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Myspace

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	88	87,1	87,1	87,1
x	13	12,9	12,9	100,0
Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Youtube

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21	20,8	20,8	20,8
x	80	79,2	79,2	100,0
Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Linkdin

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	60	59,4	59,4	59,4
x	41	40,6	40,6	100,0
Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Flicker

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		57	56,4	56,4	56,4
	x	44	43,6	43,6	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

7. Of the following Social Media websites which one is your favorite?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	80	79,2	79,2	79,2
	2	15	14,9	14,9	94,1
	4	4	4,0	4,0	98,0
	5	2	2,0	2,0	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

8. How much time do you spend on your favorite social media site (identified in question 7) per each session or per log-

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	13	12,9	12,9	12,9
	2	40	39,6	39,6	52,5
	3	34	33,7	33,7	86,1
	4	13	12,9	12,9	99,0
	99	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

9.How often do you log on to your favorite social media websites/services

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	22	21,8	21,8	21,8
	2	63	62,4	62,4	84,2
	3	7	6,9	6,9	91,1
	4	8	7,9	7,9	99,0
	5	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

10. If you are NOT participating on any social media websites, what is the main reason for the lack of partici-pation?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	3	3,0	3,0	3,0
	5	1	1,0	1,0	4,0
	99	97	96,0	96,0	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

What other reasons do you have?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		100	99,0	99,0	99,0
	It doesn't add knowledge	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

11. Please mark the corresponding average connections you have for the following Social Media profiles? Please skip the Facebook

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		1	1,0	1,0	1,0
	1	25	24,8	24,8	25,7
	2	39	38,6	38,6	64,4
	3	28	27,7	27,7	92,1
	4	8	7,9	7,9	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

11. Please mark the corresponding average connections you have for the following Social Media profiles? Please skip the Twitter

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		50	49,5	49,5	49,5
	1	35	34,7	34,7	84,2
	2	14	13,9	13,9	98,0
	3	2	2,0	2,0	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

11. Please mark the corresponding average connections you have for the following Social Media profiles? Please skip the Myspace

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		87	86,1	86,1	86,1
	1	14	13,9	13,9	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

11. Please mark the corresponding average connections you have for the following Social Media profiles? Please skip the LinkedIn

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	69	68,3	68,3	68,3
1	28	27,7	27,7	96,0
2	2	2,0	2,0	98,0
3	1	1,0	1,0	99,0
4	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
Total	101	100,0	100,0	

11. Please mark the corresponding average connections you have for the following Social Media profiles? Please skip the Flicker

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	43	42,6	42,6	42,6
1	49	48,5	48,5	91,1
2	9	8,9	8,9	100,0
Total	101	100,0	100,0	

12. How many social communities/groups are you a member of? An online social community/group can be defined as a collect

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	54	53,5	53,5	53,5
	2	31	30,7	30,7	84,2
	3	8	7,9	7,9	92,1
	99	8	7,9	7,9	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

13. What device do you use to log on to your social media profile?

Smart phone

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21	20,8	20,8	20,8
x	80	79,2	79,2	100,0
Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Tablet computer such as iPad, Samsung Galaxy Tab,.....etc.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	61	60,4	60,4	60,4
x	40	39,6	39,6	100,0
Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Laptop computer

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	8	7,9	7,9	7,9
x	93	92,1	92,1	100,0
Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Desktop computer

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21	20,8	20,8	20,8
x	80	79,2	79,2	100,0
Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Other, Please specify

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	100	99,0	99,0	99,0
iPod Touch	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
Total	101	100,0	100,0	

14. Which aspects of social media appeal to you the most?

Connecting with friends & families

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3	3,0	3,0	3,0
x	98	97,0	97,0	100,0
Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Connecting with people of the same profession

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	48	47,5	47,5	47,5
x	53	52,5	52,5	100,0
Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Connecting with new people

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	29	28,7	28,7	28,7
x	72	71,3	71,3	100,0
Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Connecting with people of common interest

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	35	34,7	34,7	34,7
x	66	65,3	65,3	100,0
Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Other, please specify

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	99	98,0	98,0	98,0
especially connecting with friends who live in different countries	1	1,0	1,0	99,0
Stalking	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
Total	101	100,0	100,0	

15. In your opinion, what is the key reason to join a community/group in a social media service?

It is a relevant, active and interesting community

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	25	24,8	24,8	24,8
x	76	75,2	75,2	100,0
Total	101	100,0	100,0	

**This will allow me to stay up-to-date with the communi-
ty news/updates**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		18	17,8	17,8	17,8
	x	83	82,2	82,2	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

**I believe this will help me gain new and useful connec-
tions both professional & friendship**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		33	32,7	32,7	32,7
	x	68	67,3	67,3	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

**I would like to have my opinion and to be able to do that
membership is required**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		54	53,5	53,5	53,5
	x	47	46,5	46,5	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Other, please specify

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		97	96,0	96,0	96,0
	Finding out information about people who are not yet my friends	1	1,0	1,0	97,0
	I can obtain a lot of useful content related to the subject	1	1,0	1,0	98,0
	sharing photos	1	1,0	1,0	99,0
	To get connected from different parts of the world.	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

16. Do you like/follow a particular brand, or multiple brands, on a social media site?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	76	75,2	75,2	75,2
	2	25	24,8	24,8	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

17. Have you ever subscribed to one or more brand blog(s)?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	65	64,4	64,4	64,4
	2	35	34,7	34,7	99,0
	99	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

18. What type of information do you receive from the brand's social media sites or blog posting? Select all that apply.

Product launch information

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		32	31,7	31,7	31,7
	x	69	68,3	68,3	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Promotional news

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		34	33,7	33,7	33,7
	x	67	66,3	66,3	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Product reviews

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		38	37,6	37,6	37,6
	x	63	62,4	62,4	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Other, please specify

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	101	100,0	100,0	100,0

**19. Do you trust the information, for instance endorse-
ment of a product or service, you obtain through social
networking**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	8	7,9	7,9	7,9
	2	44	43,6	43,6	51,5
	3	28	27,7	27,7	79,2
	4	5	5,0	5,0	84,2
	5	10	9,9	9,9	94,1
	99	6	5,9	5,9	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

**20. Were you influenced to buy a specific prod-
uct/service based on the information you received
through a social media s**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	22	21,8	21,8	21,8
	2	49	48,5	48,5	70,3
	3	18	17,8	17,8	88,1
	4	11	10,9	10,9	99,0
	99	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

21. Do you think brands should use a variety of social media platforms to mention details about the various features ass

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	75	74,3	74,3	74,3
	2	15	14,9	14,9	89,1
	99	11	10,9	10,9	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

22. If you answered yes to question 21, what sort of information should they provide?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	27	26,7	26,7	26,7
	2	16	15,8	15,8	42,6
	3	25	24,8	24,8	67,3
	4	6	5,9	5,9	73,3
	99	27	26,7	26,7	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

23. Through what other medium do you learn about products/brands? Please select all that apply

Television

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		14	13,9	13,9	13,9
	x	87	86,1	86,1	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Radio

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		73	72,3	72,3	72,3
	x	28	27,7	27,7	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Newspapers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		45	44,6	44,6	44,6
	x	56	55,4	55,4	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Magazines

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		18	17,8	17,8	17,8
	x	83	82,2	82,2	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Other, please specify

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		96	95,0	95,0	95,0
	fliers	1	1,0	1,0	96,0
	Friends, themed websites e.g. gq.com for fashion brands	1	1,0	1,0	97,0
	Internet	1	1,0	1,0	98,0
	Internet news	1	1,0	1,0	99,0
	other websites	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

24. In the last three visits to your favorite social media website, did you notice any advertisements?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	78	77,2	77,2	77,2
	2	12	11,9	11,9	89,1
	3	11	10,9	10,9	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

25. If you answered yes to question 24, do you believe the ads shown on your profile are relevant to your interests?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	23	22,8	22,8	22,8
	2	39	38,6	38,6	61,4
	3	9	8,9	8,9	70,3
	4	9	8,9	8,9	79,2
	99	21	20,8	20,8	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

26. If you answered yes to question 24, how often do you click on the ads you see on your profile?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Per-cent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	25	24,8	24,8	24,8
	2	41	40,6	40,6	65,3
	3	9	8,9	8,9	74,3
	99	26	25,7	25,7	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

27. If you answered often or occasionally (a.) for question 26, what is the main reason that you choose to click on an ad

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	37	36,6	36,6	36,6
	2	18	17,8	17,8	54,5
	3	6	5,9	5,9	60,4
	4	5	5,0	5,0	65,3
	99	35	34,7	34,7	100,0
	Total	101	100,0	100,0	

Other, please specify

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	101	100,0	100,0	100,0

28. How do you compare an ad message on a social media site such as YouTube, Facebook or Twitter to that on traditional

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	10	9,9	9,9	9,9
	2	6	5,9	5,9	15,8
	3	14	13,9	13,9	29,7
	4	8	7,9	7,9	37,6
	5	53	52,5	52,5	90,1
	99	10	9,9	9,9	100,0
	Total	**101**	**100,0**	**100,0**	