

**Social Media Marketing for Small and Medium Enterprises in Helsinki
Case Meng Loan Oy**

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<p>This project examines the role of social media marketing used by small and medium enterprises in Helsinki, Finland.</p> <p>The primary objective of the study is to research the growth of using social media as an important marketing platform of different SMEs in Helsinki and provide helpful analyses together with recommendations for Meng Loan Oy about implementing social media marketing.</p> <p>The thesis is made up of a theory section and an empirical section that deals with the case company. In more detail, the theory section discusses the foundation of online marketing, especially the different types of social media platform, social medium and the measurement tools for social information based on relevant literature and electronic sources. Meanwhile, the empirical section focuses on the situation and management of social media marketing towards SMEs in Helsinki and recommendations for case company.</p> <p>The thesis is conducted based on quantitative methods. A survey was designed and handed to different office workers and entrepreneurs dining at Meng Loong restaurant to examine the popularity of social media marketing and its impact on customer purchasing behavior. The target number of survey respondents was 100.</p> <p>The results of the study are valuable for the case company and for many other SMEs in general when they plan to expedite their actions on social media marketing and design an effective integrated marketing strategy.</p>	

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Keywords

Digital marketing, social media, marketing channel, engagement, customer relationship management

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1 Introduction

Nowadays, social media has become one of the most popular marketing channels and a strategic key for any business success especially small and medium enterprises. According to some online statistics, customers prefer to explore different brands on the Internet particularly social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. A study conducted by Nielsen also reported that 60% of consumers researching products through numerous online sources studied about a specific brand or retailer through social media. In fact, consumers are more aware of what other users review and comment about product online, and it affects their purchasing decision strongly. Many marketing managers have realized a huge potential for social media marketing to increase sales, but they lack a profound understanding on how to utilize them accurately. There is a steady growth of people from different ages joining social networks for either entertaining or doing commerce while many companies have also engage with their customers more often via social media channels. (Nielsen 2011)

Social media is undoubtedly an amazing and powerful tool to nurture a development of business branding and enhance a customer relationship that is evidenced by the fact that consumers rely heavily on social media to discover, research, and share information about brands and products. Social media provides a favorable opportunity for businesses, giving them an interactive platform to communicate with their customers more efficiently. Via plenty of social media channels, businesses are able to connect with customers while shaping their perceptions of products and services.

On the other hand, social media evolves some significant risks. With social media, consumers are more involved in creating and advertising brand image and reputation since they possess the power when it comes to what they see and how they respond to what they have known. Furthermore, because of a social aspect of social media, any company's success, inappropriate service behavior, and poor product quality are publically displayed, discussed, or shared to the whole world.

1.1 Background

The main reason to choose social media marketing as a topic for this bachelor thesis is the researcher's personal interest thorough the study time and work placement period. Being a manager trainee of a family Asian restaurant, the researcher realized a need of advertising the restaurant's image and Asian cuisines through social media alongside with traditional marketing methods.

The goal of the thesis is to explore and analyze the importance of social media usage in business marketing practices of different small and medium-sized enterprises in culinary and hospitality sector in Helsinki; what platforms and tools are most currently used; and define social media's advantages and challenges.

Meng Loan Oy is eager to strengthen its online presence as well as more efficiently engage with both existing and potential customers. Through this research, it is highly expected to develop a comprehensive social media marketing strategy that can be integrated into current company's marketing strategy by recommendations and constructed guidelines for use of different social media platforms. This research will help a commissioning company to obtain a precise understanding of social media marketing practices and a blend of different marketing strategies. Besides that, several cases of other restaurants or SMEs using social media will be presented to help Meng Loan Oy to visualize how each social media platform can be used for marketing purposes to the utmost.

1.2 Company introduction

Visitors critically undervalue Helsinki's restaurant scene, but that might change thanks to growing cultural diversity. In addition to the capital's plethora of cultural cafes and fine dining establishments, there are also hundreds of pop-up eateries serving fast food opened at different places in the city.

Established in 2005 by Ms.Loan Nguyen, Meng Loan Oy has undergone many difficulties to sustain the business and achieved the current position. Two core businesses are restaurant and catering services for special occasions such as wedding, birthday, or business conference. Meng Loong Restaurant is located in Luttasaari, near downtown Helsinki.

The restaurant offers unique and fresh flavors from Southeast Asia. Over the years, Meng Loong's simplified, modern and atmospheric decoration combined with the warm-hearted service and strong expertise in Asian cuisine creates an excellent setting for a comprehensive dining experience. The restaurant's versatile dining areas can easily be arranged to accommodate various kinds of events such as weddings, birthday party or business meal.

Over the past few years, there has been a steady increase in a number of restaurant's customers and business partners followed by the growth of our sales and profit. In June

2015, Meng Loong started to offer buffet sushi alongside with current Asian cuisines in lunchtime that has helped to attract more potential customers.

Meng Loong's main customer segmentations are office workers, local residents and foreign tourists. Every summer, the restaurant has welcomed over thousands of oversea diners especially from Asia and other European countries.

Lately, Meng Loong has not invested any significant amount of money and efforts in conducting marketing campaigns. So far, the owner has been familiar with varied marketing tools such as restaurant brochure, word of mouth, leaflets, and newspaper and be eager to increase the online presence of the restaurant through digital channels.

Nowadays, an online presence is an absolute must-have for restaurant owners, no matter what size our establishment is. According to AIS Media, a digital marketing consultation company headquartered in Atlanta, 89% of diners research restaurants online before visiting in person. Diners are living digital lives when they are not filling our seats. If we were unable to engage them online, we would be definitely missing an excellent opportunity to flourish our business. Hence, it is crucial that a restaurant maintains an online presence in order to communicate with current diners, attract new customers, and build loyalty among patrons.

A study conducted by Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration found that approximately 50% of respondents stated they make restaurant reservations online, and about 40% of those completed the reservation on the restaurant's own website. The restaurant website –its design, content, SEO, functionality and interactivity –should be the logical first step for Meng Loong Restaurant.

In addition, Meng Loong would be also likely to exploit other social media sources such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Google+, etc.

1.3 Thesis objectives

The main objective of this study is to develop a theoretical framework to understand the planning process for social media marketing, to analyze the relevance of social media marketing in business practices and to examine the current social media activities of Meng Loan Oy in order to provide with a handful of recommendations.

This research aims to carry both theoretical and empirical sections in order to answer following question:

- How do SME entrepreneurs in Helsinki use social media marketing to strengthen company image and enhance customer relationship?

This research will also answer the following investigative questions:

- What are the different platforms or channels of social media used by SMEs?
- What are advantages and disadvantages of using social in business?
- How does company analyze and manage the social media information effectively?
media

In addition to the major objectives of this study, some other objectives of the research are listed as follows:

- To understand the stages of online marketing strategic planning
- To understand the importance of the integration of social media marketing and other traditional marketing

1.4 Key concepts, demarcation and international aspects

During the whole process of doing a thesis, several important concepts will be implemented to ensure the validity and proficiency of the study. Additionally, these key concepts play an essential role to facilitate the reader's understanding of the issues discussed in this thesis.

Digital marketing is the process of building and maintaining customer relationships through several digital channels such as websites, email, TV, etc. to facilitate the exchange rate of ideas, products and services. (Dave Chaffey, 2013, 5)

Online social networks are social networking websites, blogs or virtual worlds for socializing, information exchange and like-minded conversation. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 539)

Social media marketing is the utilization of social media technologies, channels and software to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange offerings that have value for an organization's stakeholders. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 14)

Customer relationship management is defined as different activities to implement company's strategies to manage the customer relationship and ensure organization's profitability. (Payne & Buttle 2009, 18)

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the position and visibility of a website on search engines such as Google, Yahoo!, and Bing. (Kabani 2012, 29)

The research will focus on the correlation of the social media on the company's marketing activities to obtain a deeper insight of the latest trends of digital marketing globally. The author decided that the research would neither cover the emerging growth of mobile marketing nor email marketing aspects that are core components of digital marketing. Besides that, the research sample is limited to a decent amount of enterprises located in Helsinki. For that reason, the gathered research's results might not be fully applicable in other areas of the world for instance Asia.

Because of globalization in business and a relentless desire for innovation and quality from customers, hundreds of SMEs in Helsinki are increasingly cooperating with foreign partnerships, especially those neighbors such as Russian and Baltic countries. Following the stream of business, Meng Loan Oy has contracted with several foreign corresponding partners to attract more flows of foreign customers, to elevate the company's image and boost sales.

2 Theoretical framework

The purpose of this section is to familiarize with different theoretical concepts of digital marketing, marketing communication as well as social media marketing and its various facets. It is important to understand the fundamental theories that can help define a considerable perspective of planning an appropriate social media marketing strategy.

2.1 Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is a general theoretical term for a strategic, measurable and interactive marketing or promotion of products and services by exploiting one or several forms of electronic media such as internet, mobile phones, television and radio. The key goal is to increase the popularity of a company's brand, create familiar perception among the customers and boost sales through marketing activities integrated digital medium.

Much of the world's business nowadays is performed over digital platforms that connect business and customer. The enormous rise of Internet users has essentially changed customers' perception of convenience, rapidity, price, and product information. We can easily ship any cargo much faster and more competitive price from one continent to another. As

a result, it has influenced on how the marketers create values and maintain customer relationship.

The use of Internet and other form of digital networks in business has increased regularly. "According to an IBM survey of consumer digital media and entertainment habits, audiences have more control and are increasingly wised up about filtering marketing messages, with serious repercussions for marketers, ad agencies, broadcasters and publishers." (Philip Kotler & Gary Armstrong, 518)

Dave Chaffey defines digital media as digital technology platforms including the Internet, web, mobile phone, TV, IPTV and digital signage, which allow the interactive communication among users. Essentially, digital marketing is relatively similar to Internet marketing that represents the management and execution of marketing using various electronic media such as social networks, e-mail, mobile phone, smart TV, and wireless media. There is a wide range of access platforms and communication tools that shape the virtual channels that companies or marketers use to advertise their business build and nurture strong relationships with customers.

Digital marketing is an instinctive, volatile and innovative form of current marketing. Any marketers, who can pinpoint the latest trends, exploit the power of digital media, develop profound strategy and execute measurable actions, are destined to succeed. In practice, digital marketing consists of different subordinate approaches such as e-mail marketing, mobile phone marketing, search engine marketing, content marketing, social media marketing and any other form of digital media.

Digital marketing strategy is fundamentally an online channel marketing strategy thus it needs to be integrated with other marketing channels to develop an effective multichannel marketing. By using digital form of marketing, marketers are bound to accomplish several strategic advantages: market penetration, market development, product development and diversification.

Since 2012, there was a research to see how widely used digital marketing strategies are. Only two-thirds to three quarters not have a digital marketing plan. It seems that many companies are doing digital marketing without a prioritized plan of activities to integrate online marketing.

Facts that, a proper Digital marketing strategy can:

- Be a success way to promote brands, build preference and increase sales through various digital marketing techniques.
- Increase sale revenue and profit as well.
- Complete branding circle
- Avoid expensive long-term contracts that mean costs less and can give us the opportunity to control and make changes in company's campaign.
- Capture the market through remarketing/retargeting
- Gain trust through likings or feedbacks, comments. Get the ads featured on relevant sites.
- Exploit proper transparency to our advantage.
- Enjoy lower marketing cost.

However, a good research and well-planned strategy is needed in order to execute successful digital marketing activities.

2.2 Marketing communication

Building and maintaining good customer relationship plays a key role in any business's success. Companies should be truly mindful and rational to propose their values, and communicate with the customers. All marketing communication programs or activities need to be planned and blended into thorough integrated marketing plan.

Generally, marketing communications provides means by which brands and organizations are presented to their audiences. The aim is to create or stimulate a dialogue or conversation, interaction with audiences that could lead to a succession of purchases or complete engagement. In short, marketing communication is an audience-centered activity.

The subject marketing communications have no universal definition, as there are many interpretations of this. Most of the definitions only attend to the promotional outlook that is using communications to persuade people to buy products and services. Until now, the term "marketing communications" evolves a wider range of tools and media. Besides awareness and persuasion, new goals such as enhancing the understanding and preference, reminding and reassuring customers, those activities are considered as crucial aspects of the communications effort of modern marketing. When it comes to direct marketing activities, latest trend is to develop from mass to personal communication effort.

A marketing communication or also called promotional mix consists of the specific blend of advertising, public relation, personal selling, sales promotion and direct marketing tools

that a marketer uses to persuasively communicate customer value and build customer relationships. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 429)

The orientation of marketing communications is transforming recently. Initially, it focuses on information and promotion. As it is mentioned before, communications are used in purpose of persuading people to purchase more through mass media communications. Rational and product-based information is spotlighted. Nowadays, most of marketing communication activities are customer-oriented that emphasizes the importance of effective mutual conversations and fulfill the desire of customer.

The five primary promotional tools are defined as follows:

- Advertising: Any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor.
- Sales promotion: Short-term incentives to encourage the purchase or sale of a product or service
- Personal selling: Personal presentation by the firm's sales forces for the purpose of making sales and building customer relationships
- Public relations: Building good relations with the company's various publics by obtaining favorable publicity, building up a good corporate image, and handling or heading off unfavorable rumors, stories, and events.
- Direct marketing: Direct connections with carefully targeted individual consumers to both obtain an immediate response and cultivate lasting customer relationships.

(Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 429)

Moreover, messages can be delivered to target audiences by media, in which time and space can be bought. Marketing distinct mixes could be identified for business-to-consumer (B2C) and business-to-business (B2B) audiences. In B2C situation, market advertising is used to build brand values, sales promotions are used to encourage customer actions, and public relations for goodwill and interests about the company.

In addition, personal selling is considered as the essential tool in B2B markets and in retail environments. Yet direct marketing is very important in the marketing mix. Then the rapid evolution of the Internet and related digital technologies has significant change in the marketing communications approaches. Nowadays, there are plenty of possibilities to reach target groups since social networks present more efficient and challenging form of communication channel.

The role of marketing communications is all about promoting both the organization and its offerings to enhance branding and maintain customer relationship. Different marketing communication tools play a vital role in the marketing process and impact on audiences purchasing decisions.

2.3 Integrated marketing communication

Integrated Marketing Communication simply means integrate various promotional tools together for general marketing objectives. IMC is referred to be consumer oriented approach rather than organizational oriented. It is associated with positive results for business such as brand awareness, customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, vigorous brand image, increased sales and cost savings.

Philip Kotler & Gary Armstrong defines Integrated Marketing Communications as activities of carefully integrating and coordinating several different communication channels to deliver a precise, consistent and compelling message about the company's product or service. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 429)

IMC first appeared regarding the application of consistent brand messaging across unlimited marketing channels. According to Kenneth & Donald (2010, 124), integrated marketing communication is the integration and coordination of various types of marketing communication tools, platforms and sources within a business entity into a seamless program that escalate the impact on customers and other end users at minimal cost. Additionally, IMC can be defined as a concept of marketing communication planning that combine and evaluate strategic role of different communication discipline to get the clarity, consistency and greater impact. IMC is considered as a strategy using different communication tools like advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing and personal selling work together to maximize the total communication impact on target consumers. In general, it is a management concept designed to combine and unify all aspects of marketing communications tools rather than applying each one separately.

Integrated marketing communication, as any other marketing strategy is used to achieve high sales and build a flourishing brand image. In short, its objectives are to influence the behavior of target audience, create and enhance brand awareness, favorable customer attitude and to drive the business and its revenue.

Regarding to IMC strategy, it consists of three main elements – the consumer, the channels and the evaluation of results. Firstly, the approach is to define how customers get access to the information, and interrogate how the delivery of that exchange of information affects the message's form and contents. Secondly, it is the process of evaluation the effective measure of each channel in IMC strategy. Thirdly, it comes to analyzing the results. The foundation of any integrated marketing communication plan includes a deliberate review of the company's image, the customer segmentations to be served, and the markets in which the customers are clustered.

According to a study conducted by the American Productivity & Quality Center of Houston of the best integrated marketing firms shows that four stages are involved in constructing a powerful integrated marketing communications system.

The first stage is to identify, coordinate, and manage different forms of marketing communication. In this stage, all activities varying from advertising, promotions, direct marketing, to Internet and e-commerce program, public relations, and sponsorships. In the second stage, a main focus lies on communications which are examined from the perspective of the customer. The crucial point in this stage is an effective coordination between external and internal communications.

The third stage is the application of information technology into IMC programs in order to provide the fundamental for identifying and evaluating the impact of communication programs with respect to major customer segments. It is a critical part of an integrated marketing program since company take into account customer input and relevant data to make marketing and communication decisions. The final stage of IMC development focuses on the implementation of customer data information and insights to navigate corporate strategic planning. It is very important to calculate return-on-customer investment for the various marketing initiatives.

In order to measure the effectiveness of Integrated Marketing Communication, we need to examine and evaluate the result as soon as the company implements it. Kenneth E. Clow and Donald Baack said those effective results are providing information, creating awareness, changing attitude, enforcing brand loyalty and building company image. (Kenneth & Donald 2010, 40)

Yet according to Schultz (1999,18), there are five factors to measure the effectiveness of IMC activities. The initial factor is customer responses, including brand loyalty, customer

satisfaction, brand extension, brand referrals and brand preference. Another factor is market performance including sales growth, market share growth, and ability to command premium price, profitability and sales income. Third factor is brand exposures including three indicators - personal contacts, mass media exposure and contact points exposure. The fourth one is communication effect with brand knowledge, brand attitude, brand awareness, and purchase intention. The final one acts as a channel support as level of channel cooperation.

Over the past years, due to the rapid growth of digital marketing especially social media, marketers have perfected the art of marketing communication. They have evolved increasingly effective mass-media communication capability to deliver higher standardized product's values and strengthen customer relationships. Every year, companies have consistently invested millions of dollars in various types of advertising both digital and non-digital media, reaching over millions of customers from almost every corner of the world.

The rising wave of digital and social media marketing, mobile phone, and tablets gives marketers massive advertising opportunities but also tremendous challenges. It enables businesses to obtain greater access to more potential customers, and better understanding of customer demand. However, the considerable issue is the complexity and fragmentation of digital world and the way to integrate all marketing messages, channels critically and efficiently.

2.4 Social media marketing

Social media are the online means of communication, conveyance, collaboration, and cultivation among interconnected and interdependent networks of people, communities and organizations enhanced by technological capabilities and mobility. (Tuten & Solomon 2013, 2)

It can be considered as a business use of selected social media channels to understand customers and to engage them in communication and collaboration in ways that lead to the achievement of ultimate marketing and business goals. (Roberts & Zahay 2013, 31)

Traditional media, as in newspapers and television programs, is still a popular and viable forum for advertising and influencing consumer behavior. However, the reason social media is becoming more dominating for businesses are the ongoing, worldwide conversation through social media. Via social media, consumers and businesses are more informed

with real-time information and continuous social feedback, making informed decisions and fewer mistakes in their decisions.

Social media marketing is stated to be the new level of integrated marketing communication. Instead of providing mass media process (mostly one-way communication), social media represents two-way communication between consumers. Seen as the digital version of word-of-mouth, social media revived the old types of decision-making before mass media; it represents the materialization, storage and retrieval of opinions between members of a family, friends, neighbors, anybody talking about the same topic. Drawback of social media is the anonymous, large-scale, ephemeral nature of Internet lead to difficulty in analyzing, interpreting and managing social media content.

Alike marketing communication in general, there has not been a very clear academic definition of social media. According to Solomon (2012), social media is a shift available for people to discover, read, and share news and information and content. It is further explained that social media is a combination of sociology and technology, transforming information flow from monologue (one to many) into dialog (many to many). (Michael & Greg, Elnora, 2012, 191)

Theories of social media's influence on an individual's attitude or behavior are explained by experts decade ago, some of them are Social Cognitive Theory, the Theory of Social Presence and the Media Richness Theory, and the Three Laws of Media, namely Sarnoff's Law, Metcalf's Law and Reed's Law coined by Sarnoff, Metcaf and Reed respectively.

For years, the appearance of Social Media is all about socializing and sharing opinions. Usually, the advantage of social media marketing is that it is fun, cost efficient and eco-friendly method possible. A great number of businesses can build a network of supporters in a very short time, then creating long-term relationship with customers and co-operators. This is also considered as a potential tool to build brand awareness, and other crucial activities for business marketing such as researching consumer opinions, identifying opinion leaders, developing customer database, driving traffic to brand web sites, spreading specific messages virally, increasing credibility in a brand and enhancing a branding's image, among others.

Conversely, in order to get the best result this kind of marketing application, consistent participation and engagement is required, sometimes it may take a couple of years to

achieve the result. Second issue is about the unreliable return on investment (ROI) of social media. Yet according to Gillin (2009, 60-61), when it comes to cost as starting point, social media marketing worth for trying when compared to traditional marketing campaigns. The third disadvantage is the lack of consensus or guideline for businesses to utilize this type of tools. Therefore, each business uses different way, experimental approach to achieve their goal. The other challenge is about setting a clear objective. The fact is that many businesses launch the social media campaign without a clear strategic goal, following the ineffective performance of marketing campaign. (Gillin, 2009, 61)

Briefly, setting objectives for the marketing campaign is compulsory to accomplish success in social media marketing or any other type of marketing. Without a clear objective, result is unable to be evaluated, measured and analyzed appropriately.

2.5 Four zones of social media

Social media marketing platform have myriad of channels. Therefore, it is easier to compare different channels with similar features classified together. As the result, social media umbrella can be categorized into four different zones. They are called the four zones of social media that are Social Community, Social Publishing, Social Entertainment and Social Commerce. It is important to notice that some uses of social media for personal and commercial purposes that could even overlap two or more zones. It is the nature of social media as online network of relationships, technologically enables and shares participation.



Figure1. Social Media zones (Tuten & Solomon 2014, 7)

Zone 1

The first zone is called Social Community. It refers to a cluster of channels of social media prioritize the online relationship and corresponding activities of social users. Social community present both two-way and multi-way communication, conversation, collaboration and embolden the sharing experiences. The primary reason people engage in different social communities is to build and maintain robust relationship and collaboration. Social community cover social networking sites, forums, message boards and wikis.

Social networking sites are online hosts that enable participants to create and examine profiles, identify other members who are connected with them. Social presence is presented by status, availability, mood, and friend list. Besides that, connections are revealed in forms of friends, followers, or fans.

Forums are considered as the oldest venue of social media. This channel has the form of community bulletin boards, including questions, news, pictures, and opinions and focusing primarily on discussions among members with the same interest. There are thousands of forums active online nowadays.

Wikis are collaborative online workspaces. Those sites inspire users to contribute to the collaboration and creation of a magnificent shared database. Furthermore, there are plenty of instruments assisting users to collaborate, edit, or comments and share the content.

Zone 2

Social Publishing focuses on the circulation of content to social audiences. There are numerous publishing channels including blogs, micro sharing sites, and media sharing sites and social bookmarking and news sites. Social blogs (Blogger, WordPress, Squarespace, and Weebly) are channels that host online content regularly. Conversely, micro sharing sites have limits post to 140 characters, and possibly integrate a sentence, sentence fragment, embedded video, or link to content residing on other sites. There are several examples of social publishing sites such as YouTube, Vimeo, Flickr, Instagram, SlideShare, etc.

Zone 3

Social Entertainment is a third zone of social media that cover a variety of channels offering opportunities for recreation and relaxation. Social entertainment embraces social games and gaming sites, virtual worlds and entertainment communities. Rising together with a constant development of social media, social games are the most common components in the social entertainment zone. Some examples of popular social game are Candy Crush, Zynga Poker and Mafia Wars.

Zone 4

Social Commerce is the fourth zone. Social commerce indicates the use of social media to support online trade activities. Social commerce influences any kind of social shopping behaviors in order to elevate the collaboration and shopping experiences of the shoppers. Social commerce instruments vary from reviews and ratings, to deal sites, social shopping markets and social storefronts which refer to the cooperation with popular social networks such as Facebook.

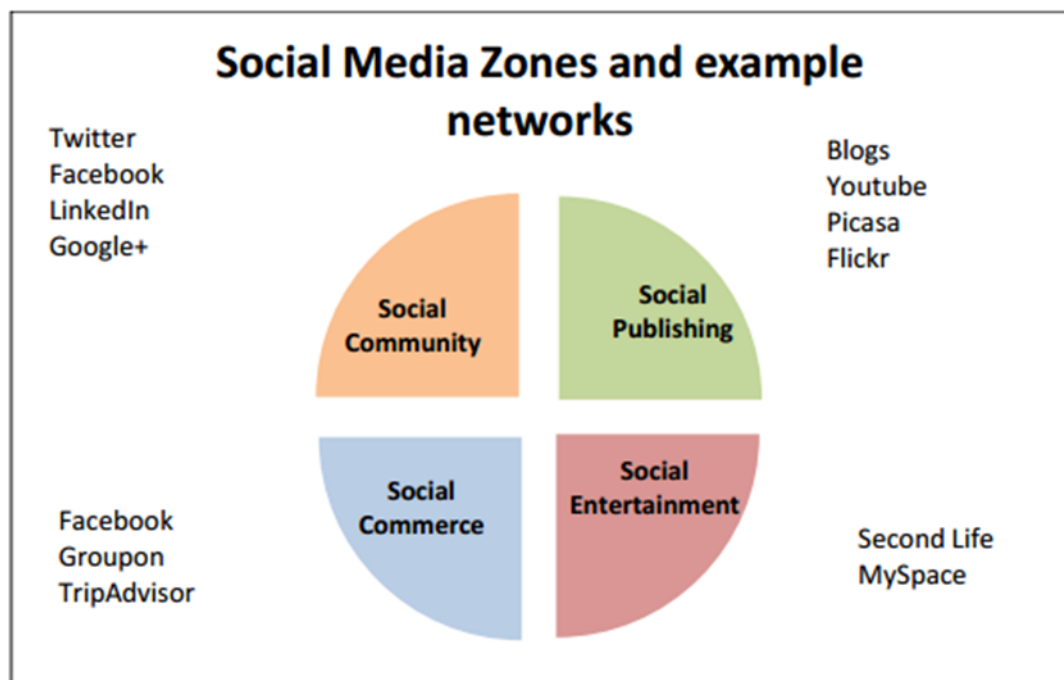


Figure 2. Social media zones and example networks (Tuten & Solomon 2014, 7)

2.6 Content marketing

Content marketing is one of the trending marketing topics discussed nowadays by the specialists and various companies. There are many theories of content marketing available on Internet and printed sources. Most of them are quite similar so the author will list a few for discussion. Joe (2014, 24) suggests that viral content is a hyper-effective mechanism to expand one's subjective lens of one's prior experiences. He proposes a theory that what makes people share a piece of content is because viral contents "represent or uncover something pleasurable that we could never have conceived with our own minds." The tendency of an image, video, or piece of information to be circulated rapidly and widely from Internet users has been rising steadily. (Joe, 2014, 24)

Below is the definition demonstrated by the Content Marketing Institute and recognized by most experts in international community of experts in marketing.

“Content marketing is a marketing technique of creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action”.

“Content marketing is the opposite of advertising. It is about engaging consumers with the stuff they really want, in a way that serves your brand’s purposes and ideals, rather than just trying to jam your logo into their periphery.” It is reaching the exact consumers you want, instead of a vaguely defined demo. It is helpfully providing an experience they want, instead of trying to distract them from the one they came for. In short, it is the very evolution of advertising itself into something more effective, more efficient, and much less odious (Keith Blanchard – Story Worldwide).

Content marketing embodies an organization’s core brand elements. It uses a variety of media formats such as text, video, photographs, audio, presentations, e-books and infographics to tell your brand or company’s story. It appears on a variety of devices including computers, tablets, smartphones and others. It’s distributed via owned, third party and social media platforms and it provides measurable results through the use of appropriate calls-to-action and promotional codes (Heidi Cohen – Riverside Marketing Strategies).

Nowadays, together with a rising blossom of social media, content marketing strategy is becoming more influential since customers are raging with tons of spams and trash email from traditional marketing. From that perspective, conventional marketing turns out to be less effective. Meanwhile, via content marketing, customers are encouraged to be passionately interactive. That is why content marketing is truly an art of grasping customers’ attentions and offering them the approach to what they are currently interested in and what they truly desire for.

Content marketing requires a handful of efforts much more than just couple of mailing words or product posts. The more sophisticated a marketing message is prepared for the targeted audience, the better outcome it will achieve. The most common content marketing types besides social media are newsletters, articles and blogs. Customers are critical towards what they read and see on the Internet thus not only written materials are crucial but visual content marketing medium are increasingly influential.

Additionally, content marketing provides customers with quality content, a solution to help them understand the company profoundly. Marketers can gain customer's engagement and come up with various innovation through social interaction with audience.

2.7 Social media channels

Social media has proven to be one of the most popular and affordable way to market a business. The world of social media is rapidly growing over the years with the increase of new social sites and networks. Social media comprises of online tools and applications that enable internet users to share worldwide information, incidents, news, personal perspectives and media. These platforms function to inspire virtual interaction and conversation between people. Based on their functionality, these tools are classified into different categories such as social networks, blogs, podcasts, and communities. In this section, the researcher aim to present a glimpse of the most trendy social media channels.

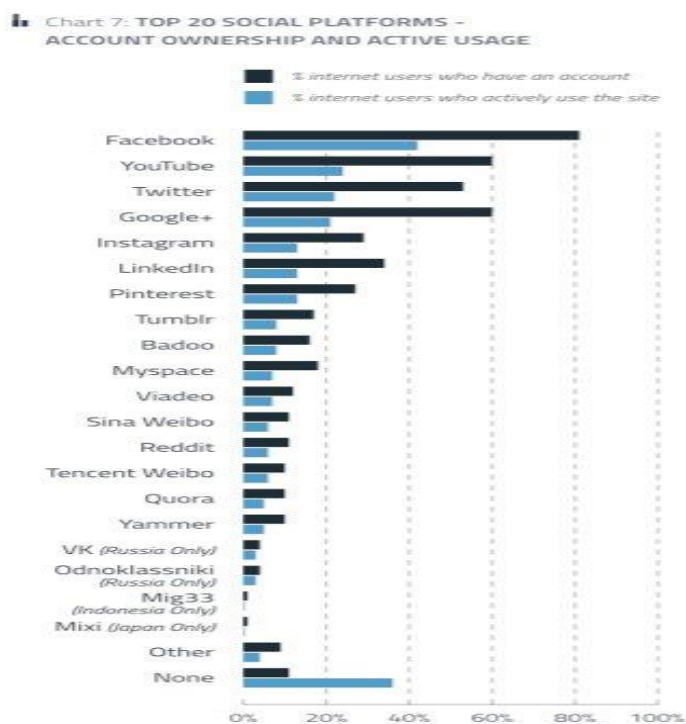


Figure 3. The most popular social networks worldwide in 2016 (Chaffey 2016, Smart Insights)

2.7.1 Facebook

Undoubtedly, Facebook is the most favored social media site in the world over the past half-decade that was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg. Preliminarily, Facebook was designed to use within a range of university intranet to connect peers to peers. However, its popularity kept spreading beyond the wall of school to reach over hundreds of nations worldwide and make the world more open than ever. People consider Facebook as their own public profile, showing their lifetime memories, and stay connected with friends, and family. Facebook allows users to share photos, world news and communication tools such as Facebook messenger, Facebook video call.

According to Facebook's latest statistics, there were 1.09 billion daily active users on average for March 2016 and approximately 84.2% of its active users residing outside of the US and Canada. (Facebook Newsroom, 2016). Furthermore, Facebook also provide social marketers with the most handy features that allow companies to create their own Facebook pages and communication platforms where they can engage with the customers all over the world. Via Facebook page, companies are capable of offering various special discounts, benefits for their followers in order to maintain a robust customer relationship and expand its page's popularity. (Facebook 2016)

2.7.2 Twitter

Created in March 2006 by a group of friends Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams, Biz Stone, and Noah Glass, Twitter's popularity has been rising magnificently. According to Twitter's statistics in March 2016, Twitter has approximately 310 million active users globally. A majority of Twitter users follow other companies, brands or celebrities on social networks. Besides that, alike Facebook, Twitter also offers a unique marketing opportunity for companies. (Twitter 2016)

2.7.3 Instagram and Pinterest

Both Instagram and Pinterest are highly popular photo-sharing sites and considered as showroom of thousands beautiful images revealing unforgettable moments, product, hobbies, and lifestyle of users. These sites are connected that allow users to like, comment and pin them to their own pin boards in Pinterest. Lately, Instagram and Pinterest have over millions visitors monthly and are now integrated into company's social media marketing strategy for various digital marketing activities.

2.7.4 YouTube

YouTube is the world's largest online video sharing community founded in 2005. It provides a platform where millions of people can discover, watch and share originally created videos for private or public viewing (YouTube, 2016). Currently, YouTube has reached over a billion users and people watch and upload hundreds of various videos daily. Many companies or entrepreneurs have created their own YouTube channels where they display corporate commercials, promotion videos related to their product and service. Users are normally attracted to the videos with interesting and appealing contents. (YouTube 2016)

3 Empirical part

The research was carried out through data collections from primary and secondary sources. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were implemented during the research stage. The primary data was obtained through quantitative questions. The quantitative approach was important in this kind of research to enable researchers gather mass information from respondents. A survey consisted of structured and open-ended questions, which is highly understandable to answer.

3.1 Research methods

The primary objective of this bachelor research was to figure out the broad perspective of social media usage among different companies in Helsinki and how to utilize social media in the case company's marketing activities.

The empirical research was carried out through a quantitative method in the form of a thoroughly designed survey in order to answer the research questions presented in previous section. The target group of the survey was employees of various companies surrounding restaurant area since many of them choose Meng Loong at their favorite place to have lunch and spend their spare time with colleagues or friends. The researcher decided to compose a survey in English and made it via a free online survey tool named Google Form.

The main reason for a researcher to prefer a quantitative method rather than qualitative one was a possibility to gather a greater amount of responses in a limited time span. The ready survey paper was handed to diners together with a KitKat candy as a small incentive when they were having meal in the restaurant and collected as soon as they made

their payment and got out of a restaurant. This gave a respondent a decent amount of time to answer questions without rush and annoyance.

3.2 Data collection and analysis methods

The researcher composed a questionnaire via a handy online tool named Google Form that enabled user to create different types of question with various options available. The user was able to choose a delivery form of survey either share a hyperlink to public, friends or print out a hard paper. The researcher decided to have a survey ready on papers and give them to diners at restaurant in couple of weeks planned. An advantage of this method was to increase a level of communication between a researcher and respondents since he could spend few minutes to explain about the survey and convince them to give such an invaluable and useful answers rather than worthless information. However, a researcher had to gather and analyze all answer by hands then summarize them in excel spreadsheet for further analysis.

The research questionnaire was designed in English since he believed most office workers possessed an adequate knowledge of foreign linguistics and English is one of the most popular business languages worldwide. With roughly 20 questions, a survey took a respondent around 10 minutes to answer, and every respondent received a small KitKat chocolate bar together with 10% discount coupon as thank you gifts for his participation.

At Meng Loong, there are over hundreds of customers coming to eat and take away food daily which helped the researcher to collect dozens of answers for the research analysis. The survey participation time started from the beginning of January 2016 to the end of February 2016 and the researcher delivered 100 pieces of survey paper to 100 diners at restaurant. After a participation period, the survey had total exact 100 answers collected from anonymous respondents. A researcher analyzed all the answers confidentially and thoroughly.

3.3 Survey respondent analysis

Based on the result of the quantitative research, 80% of the respondents are working in Helsinki and 20% of the rest are in Espoo and Vantaa region. While 90% of survey respondents know about Meng Loong restaurant via friends and family recommendations, only less than 50% know about restaurant via social media including Facebook and Instagram.

The majority of the respondents informed that their companies have Facebook account and considered it as an important platform for marketing activities. Surprisingly, approximately 80% of the respondents are not following Meng Loong Instagram/Facebook even though some of them are a loyal customer of a restaurant for years.

3.4 Survey result analysis

In this section, the researcher demonstrates results of different survey questions with clear figures. In fact, people nowadays have spent couple of hours surfing on the Internet especially social media like Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. The result of a survey apparently shows that Meng Loong has a poor existence on social networks since only 20% of the respondents like or follows a restaurant's Facebook page and Instagram account. 60% of all respondents are willing to become a fan of Meng Loong social media channels to help advertise restaurant more popular while 30% of them wanted to be updated with any latest happenings at restaurant and the rest 10% said that their decision were influenced by their friends.

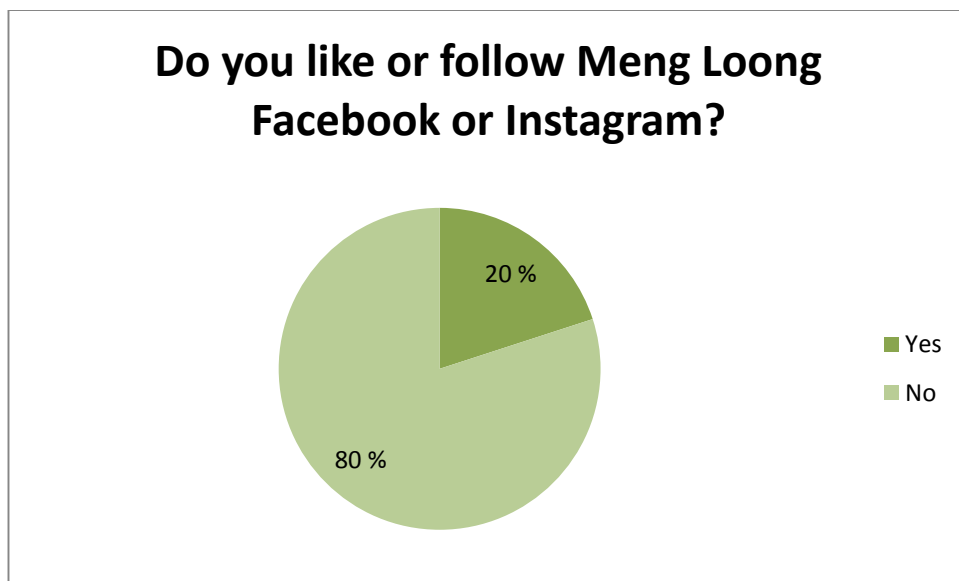


Figure 4. Do you like or follow Meng Loong Facebook or Instagram?

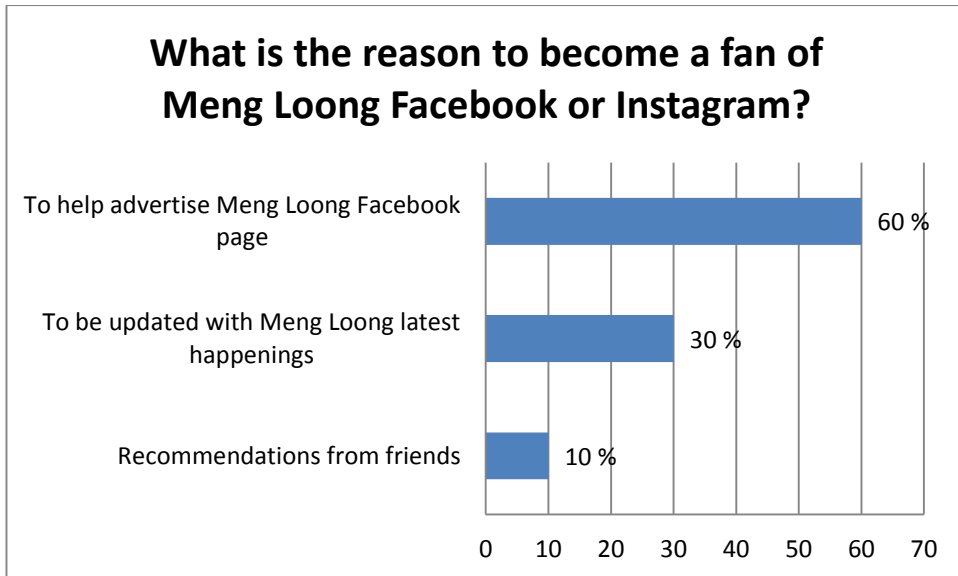


Figure 5. What is the reason to become a fan of Meng Loong Facebook page or Instagram?

When the researcher asked some respondents about what contents they want to see on Meng Loong Facebook page, there were several interesting and unique responses. According to the survey result, 44% of the respondents wanted to widen their knowledge of some famous Asian cuisines, 32% of the survey respondents preferred to see more photos of exotic Asian cuisines prepared by Meng Loong chefs. Meanwhile, 21% of the respondents were interested in anonymous culinary videos or cooking tips, and 3% of the rest wanted to have more information about restaurant's discounts and events.

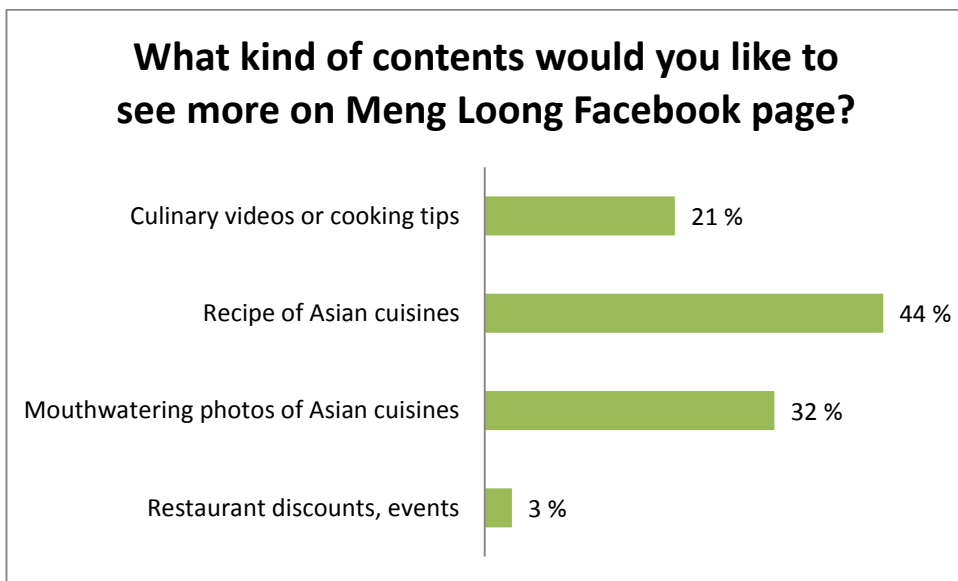


Figure 6. What kind of contents would you like to see more on Meng Loong Facebook page?

The research result demonstrates clearly that there is a high number of small and medium companies in Helsinki are using social media to advertise their business and engage with customers. Based on the spreadsheet analysis, 84% of the respondents confirmed that their current workplace has a Facebook page, 10% are using Google+, while 18% of the respondents said their companies have a Twitter account, 7% has Instagram account, and 7% are using others such as LinkedIn, YouTube, blogs and Pinterest.

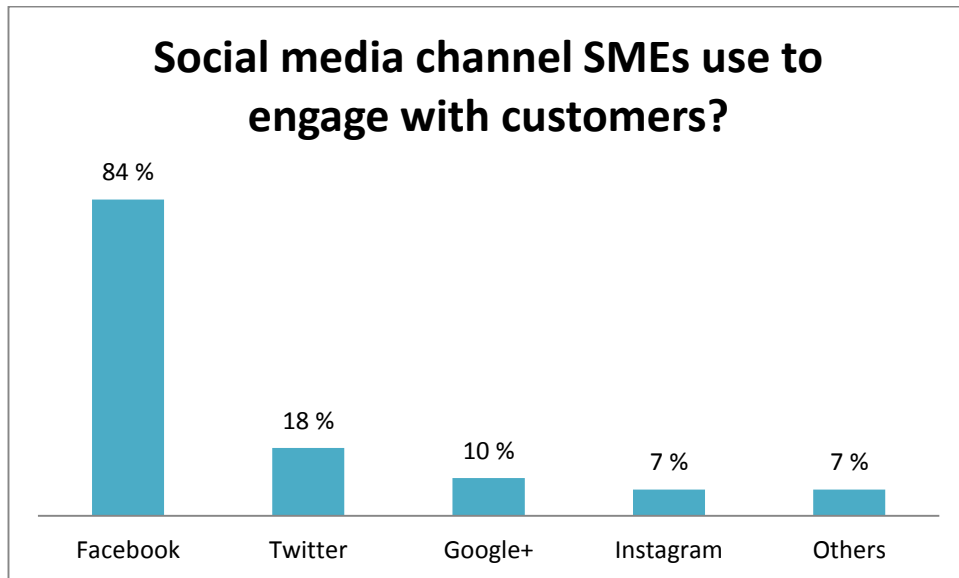


Figure 7. What type of social media channel does your company use to engage with customers?

The research also shows that 66% of the respondents said that their companies' Facebook page has got from 101-1000 likes while 23 % has more than 1000 likes, 9 % enterprises have around 51-100 likes and the rest 2% has less than 50 likes on Facebook page.

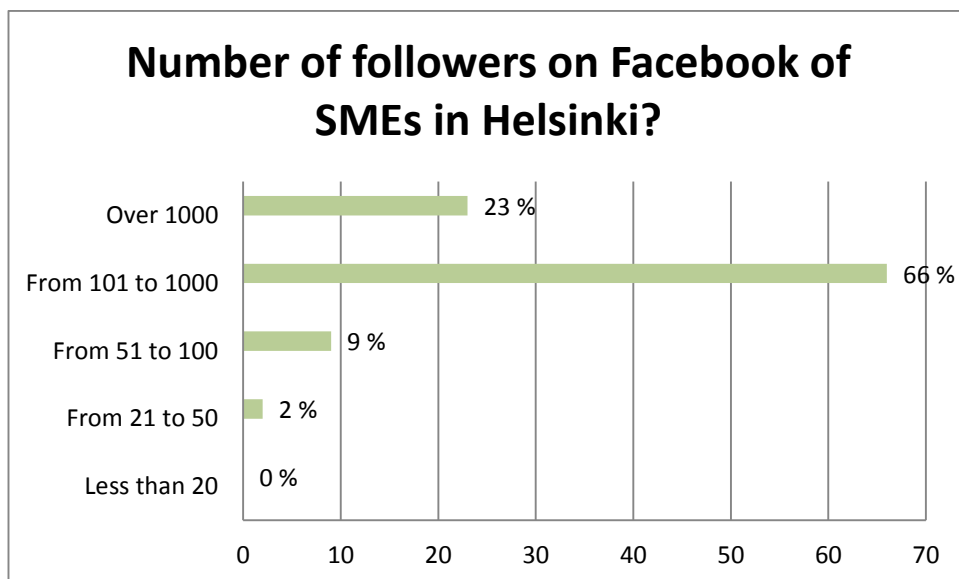


Figure 8. How many number of followers does your company has on Facebook page?

Another interesting question was included in the research to figure out how long it took a company to update a new post on Facebook page. There were a majority 46% of respondents believed that their companies upload a new post on Facebook few times a month. While, 28% of the respondents said their companies update a newsfeed twice a week and 26% indicated three times a week.

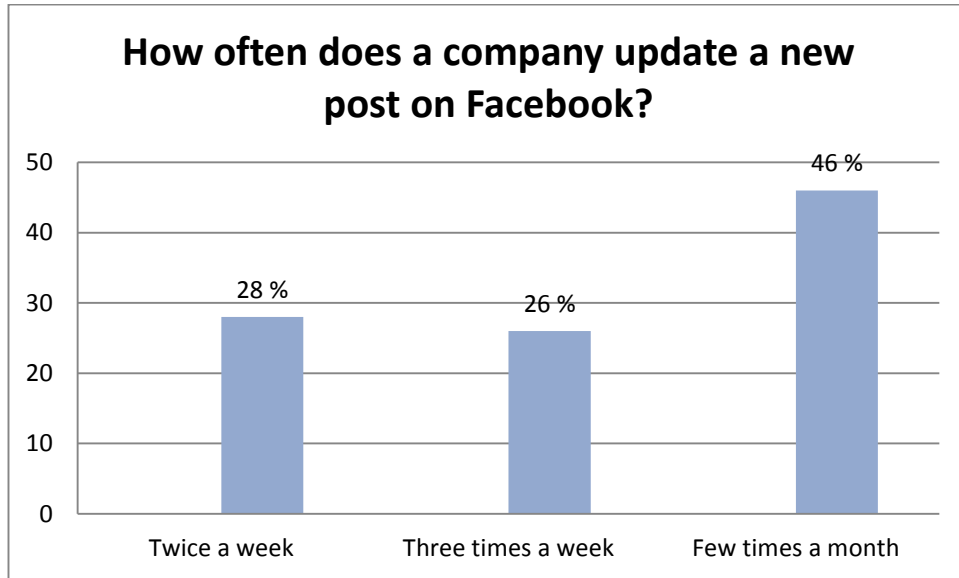


Figure 9. How often does your company update a new post on Facebook?

The research furtherly asked respondents to clarify whether their companies have allocated any budget for Facebook advertisement. Only 8% of the respondents selected an answer "yes", 17% of the survey respondents said "no", and a large number of respondents recorded 75% said that information was ambiguous so they were uncertain about it.

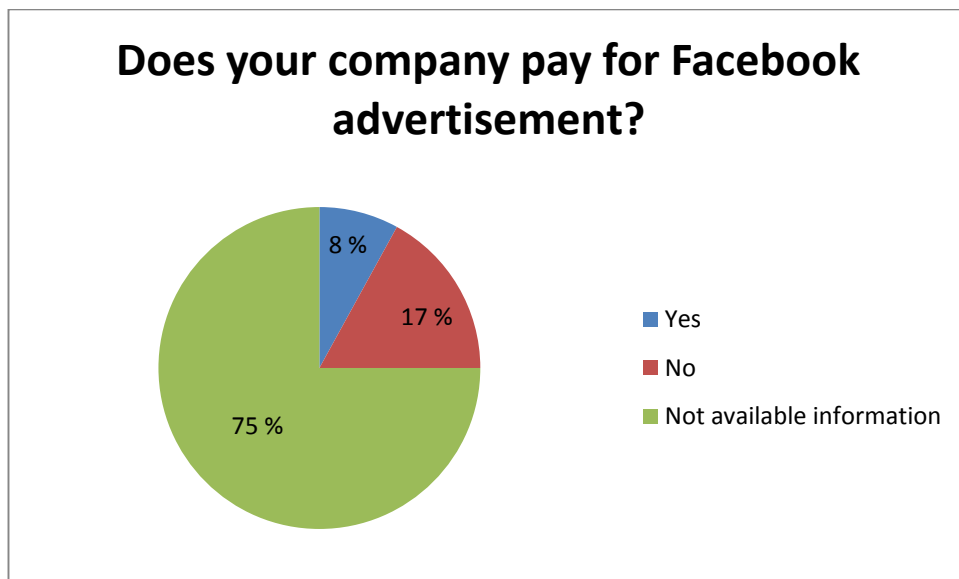


Figure 10. Does your company pay for Facebook advertisement?

Relating to the level of engagement between companies and customers, respondents were asked to indicate how often they reply a follower's comment on their Facebook page. Only 6% of the respondents assured that they did a quick reply to user's comment less than an hour, 47% chose an option "within a day", meanwhile 34% of the survey respondent believed their responsible colleague would check the Facebook notifications within two days and 13% of the respondents ticked an option "within a week".

In fact, several small and medium enterprises in Helsinki have already expanded their marketing on Facebook and other social media but not all of them have administered deliberately their online activities and engagement with customers. Social media marketing requires a dedication, fascination and instantaneous engaging with customer from a marketer to achieve flourishing outcomes.

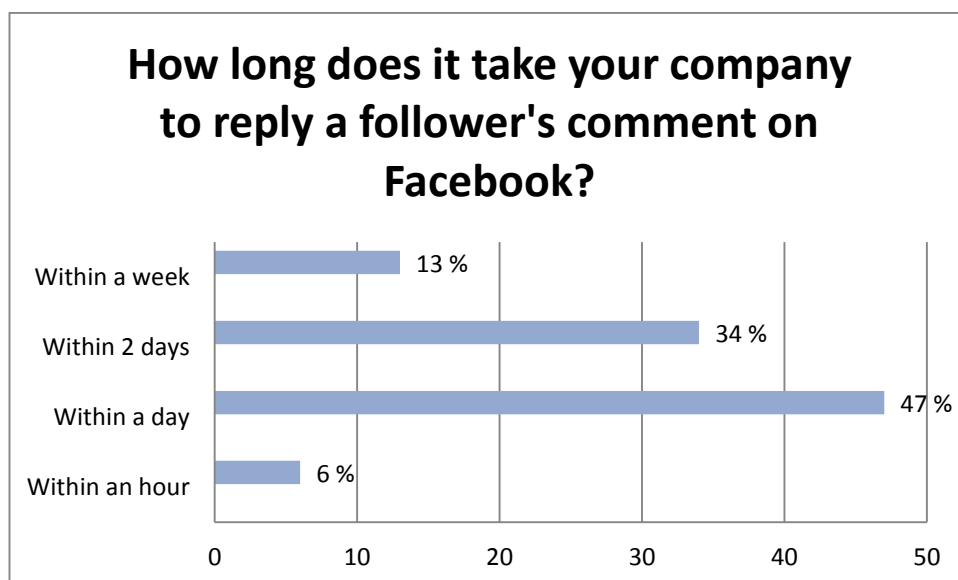


Figure 11. How long does it take a company to reply a follower's comment on Facebook?

Besides those multiple choices questions, the research survey also included open-ended inquiries to extract deeper answers or innovative ideas from the respondents' viewpoint. In a final question of the survey, the researcher asked the respondents to demonstrate their ideas of effective methods to appeal more people to like or follow their company's Facebook page. There were 46% of the respondents said that they should post as much as great contents as possible, sharing necessary information about their product or service, and the business industry related to their company. Meanwhile, 33% of the respondents believed that the active engagement and appealing visibility of their company's page would grab more likes and followers. Exactly 18% of the respondents said the company

should offer special discounts, incentives for Facebook users to exchange for their following and attention. The rest 3% of the survey respondents shared some other thoughts for example running some online competitions for lucky anonymous user.

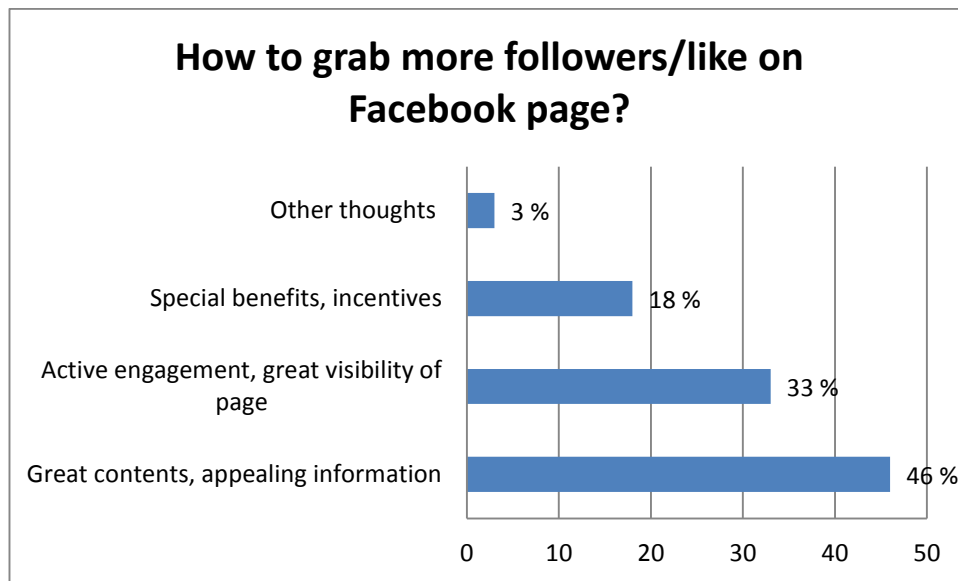


Figure 12. How does your company grab more followers or like on Facebook page?

4 Meng Loong on social media

In this section, the researcher demonstrates various suggestions of how to implement some popular social media networks for marketing activities based on the research result in the Empirical part.

It is indisputable fact that social media marketing is one of the most influential and powerful marketing strategy nowadays that has been implemented by almost any business.

Even though a restaurant or any company does not officially own a Facebook page or Twitter account, customers would help them to create the online presence by Tweeting, posting on Facebook, uploading Instagram photos and writing blog reviews. The advantage of social media is the wide reach and the swift interaction with customers. People from the other side of the world could easily know and share some amazing stories and photos of restaurant.

It is truly important to determine what the business owner wants to achieve before creating an appropriate marketing plan that will work for the restaurant.

4.1 Meng Loong Target Market

The main customer segmentation of Meng Loong is the office staffs and local residents of Lauttasaari who are mostly elders and young families. Besides that, another crucial cluster is foreign tourists especially from Russia and Asia. Every year, there are thousands groups of tourist coming to restaurant thanks to the good cooperation with several domestic and international business partners and travel agencies. Hence, it is important to keep customers updated with any new incidents of the service by exploiting the power of social media platform.

Many customers are hesitant to visit a new restaurant to eat unless they believe their friends' recommendations. People tend to spend few minutes or even hours to check the restaurant's photos, Facebook posts and reviews of food, service in different travel forums or blogs. The more information they can find, the higher percentage they trust and be willing to visit the restaurant.

4.2 Brand position and image

In the market with several competitors, the owner should have a strong competitive advantages and unique strategy to position her business's image into customers' mind. "A brand name is any word, "device" (design, sound, shape, or color), or combination of these that are used to identify an offering and set it apart from competing offerings." (Roger A.Kerin & Robert.A.Peterson 2010, 147).

Positioning a brand or business offering is the act designing and bringing the company's product or service with core values integrated and company image to the customers. In this case, Meng Loan Oy has to brand them as a strong challenger on the hospitality market who offers exotic Asian cuisines with pleasant aroma and the top option for business rendezvous or party planning in Helsinki.

In practice, Meng Loan Oy requires a consistent, and thorough advertising plan, a comprehensive customer research, a good-timing and decisive implementation. Via different social media platforms and traditional marketing tools, the owner has to increase the level of business presence both online and offline. Eventually, customers tend to choose the most familiar brand or the first name that pops up in their mind when coming to purchase decision.

4.3 Meng Loong on Facebook

This section will present some fundamental and cutting-edge examples of restaurant advertising on Facebook to show how Meng Loong can develop their Facebook marketing and increase their page's awareness.

According to the statistics of the thesis's survey, Facebook lies in top social media platforms that customers visit to search for information about restaurant. They also check restaurant photos, posts and comments of other experienced diners and those contribute to construct their initial impression or perception of the restaurant.

Currently, Meng Loong's Facebook page has already over hundreds likes and still in stage of designing and developing. In the short following time, Meng Loong will accomplish its Facebook page and integrate it with other social media platforms to enhance the company online presence.

Meng Loong's exotic food quality and cozy interior design should be highlighted through a daily posting agenda on Facebook. One brilliant idea set up by me is to have an exclusive theme for everyday post weekly, related to the exquisite elegance of Asian cuisine, the priority of healthy nutrition and the magnificence of culinary skills.

The themes should be universal so that they can be reposted weekly with new and much more appealing content.

Nowadays, there are countless restaurants owning Facebook page and each of them has different strategy to abolish their page. In order to make a Facebook page stand out and seize more "like", "share", Meng Loong's page should feature an impressive blend of these core facets:

- Exciting, appealing and practical or informative content
- Engaging, mouthwatering photos, alluring visualization
- Social activeness, invite as many social users as possible to visit page
- Followers engagement, mutual interaction, quick comment reply
- Regular updates

Here could be one example of a week posting agenda for Meng Loong:

Monday: Fresh start, and strong kick off for a week

Vivid lunch buffet dishes photos, special dish for the day and some inspiring Chef's quotes.

Tuesday: Culinary education, sharing some cooking articles

Cooking basics, how to plate food, cooking vegetables, culinary knives usage, wine basics, etc.

Wednesday: Question of a day

Create conversations with followers by asking some questions about nutrition or healthy lifestyle. It is a great way to increase page's conversion and online awareness since people love sharing their knowledge, experiences and eager to learn new things.

- How to prepare a salmon?
- How to keep pasta from clumping?
- How to keep vegetable fresh?

Thursday: Recipe of a day

We can share different dish's recipe with social users or followers and wait for their engagement. In another way, Meng Loong can introduce a "30-minute meal with Meng Loong chef" series to help people to prepare a delicious dinner or family meal. It would be extremely helpful for office workers who often have so much time for cooking due to high workload at company.

Friday: Cooking trends, sharing weekend menu and some nice photos

Saturday: Party time, food and drink for entertaining, events and party

For examples, some fascinating cocktail's recipes: Martini, margarita, mojito, fizz, daiquiri, etc.

Sunday: Relaxation time, food & drink for holiday

Some examples topics could be healthy smoothies for holiday, relaxing food that melt stress away, natural wellness, etc.

In fact, the Facebook post's content should not be rigid but flexible and always needed to be updated weekly or monthly. The owner can modify or change the topic of each day in order to keep the restaurant's page on fire.

Below are some small tips for Meng Loong to use Facebook page to entice more customers:

- Add a restaurant's menu to Facebook page to make it easier for customers to find what dish they want to order when visiting a restaurant.

- Highlight upcoming events at a restaurant so visitors or people who are interested can join or help to spread the words on social media.
- Offer some coupons for those who are able to get hundreds or thousands “like” by sharing a restaurant’s page or restaurant’s event.
- Take photos of restaurant’s special dish of a day or chef’s signature dish and post them on an official Facebook page daily or weekly.

4.4 Meng Loong on YouTube

Many businesses have built a solid presence on YouTube making it a crucial and critical component of their digital marketing strategy. During recent years, YouTube has proven to be a powerful marketing channel to advertise products, enhance business’s brand and attract more potential customers.

YouTube virtual world is immense and has become a remarkably important digital forum where brands and their customers, partners, and business rivals all engage.

Besides Facebook, YouTube is a great social platform for Meng Loong to advertise its business and engage with customers. An increased interest towards food and cooking subject on YouTube represents a massive opportunity for Meng Loong to establish its appealing contents and entice prospective visitors into restaurant.

Followings are some proposed examples of how Meng Loong can establish its marketing strategy on YouTube.

A restaurateur should produce a wide range of video content for different customer engagement objectives. Short form video tends to create a strong impression for customers, while longer ones maintain an influential customer relationship. Another vital point needed to keep in mind is to balance the marketing objective with a factor of entertainment and education.

Meng Loong can classify its videos into different categories such as:

- Restaurant Introduction
- Foodie mouthwatering videos: appetizer, food recipe demonstration
- Cooking skills
- Restaurant’s event review: short videos of latest party hold at restaurant

YouTube provides a marvelous instrument for businesses to both entertain and educate visitors visually. For many restaurants including Meng Loong, a demonstration of a chef's signature dish executed through a simple but inspirational recipe is most appealing and favorable.

An introduction video should be brief, entertaining and comprehensive that delivers a vivid and precise marketing message to audiences. The integration of background music and video frame transition (visualization) help to make a highly influential impact on watchers. The restaurant video would present a variety of information such as interior design, daily stream of work, morning preparation, handful of cuisine photos, restaurant' staff during working hour.

The main purpose of the introduction video is to instill a general image of a restaurant into customers' mind and generate positive emotions in their heart.

Cooking videos-Appetizing video content, culinary skills

This alluring type of content presents educational and useful information to YouTube users or restaurant existing customers. During a few minutes of a recording, restaurant chef would show his culinary expertise to prepare a simple family meal, his iconic dish as well as his cooking experiences.

The content can be categorized by different topics and be adjusted weekly. A key here is to create an emotional connection with the audience and maintain their engagement. Normally, people stay focused on a video for first few seconds then they would kept watching it if they find it exciting, entertaining or useful. Any person who appears in a restaurant video should be able to transmit a vigorous passion to the audiences.

An excellent cinematography is highly essential to video engagement and fascination. This element varies depending on a proficiency of an editor and a marketing fund spent for video marketing. However, in any cases, the final ready dish is the key player of the game and should be filmed with amplified precision. The restaurant kitchen is always hustling and noisy so filming in there is indisputably challenging but we have to be extremely patient to take all necessary shots for video. When the customers have enough time to marvel your production, a level of customer engagement will rise significantly.

YouTube and other social media integration

A great restaurant video with numerous breathtaking photos does not totally guarantee an instant triumph for Meng Loong. All restaurant posted videos should be optimized and

clustered under one restaurant Meng Loong channel. In consideration of building a strongly consistent brand image, Meng Loong should link their YouTube channel with their restaurant Facebook page and Twitter profile. The integration of different social media platforms would be exceptionally effective and strategic. It helps to enhance an online presence and increase customer awareness towards Meng Loong.

4.5 Meng Loong on Instagram

Alike Facebook and YouTube, Instagram is one of the most popular social platforms nowadays. There is a growing of business choosing Instagram as one of their core social media marketing channel to build brand and engage with customers.

The huge advantage of Instagram is a seamless connection with Facebook since almost photos captured by Instagram application are shared on Facebook. Diners tend to take a couple of amazing photos of their meal before eating and also tag a restaurant to publicly applaud or complain about their food or restaurant service. Many images of food and restaurant are uploaded to Instagram everyday with some common hashtags such as “food porn”, “foodie love”, “ilovefood”, “cuisine heaven”, etc.

Meng Loong has already created an Instagram account recently and starting to learn how to utilize it correctly.



ravintola_mengloong

FOLLOWING

...

Ravintola MengLoong Kiinalainen Ravintola Itälahdenkatu 27, Lauttasaari Helsinki
00210 Puh:096820866 Aukioloajat: Ma - Pe 10.30 - 19.00 La - Suljettu Su - 12.00 -
19.00

49 posts

42 followers

43 following



Figure 13. Meng Loong restaurant Instagram's page. Screenshot of Meng Loong Instagram

Instagram hashtags

Hashtags help to classify restaurant's photos and make them more accessible for social users. Meng Loong can apply a wide range of hashtags such as trending ones, niche hashtags, or campaign-oriented hashtags.

In order to boost online social awareness of Meng Loong, they should insert trending hashtags into their photos as much as possible. On the special occasions such as New Year celebration or Valentine's Day, a restaurateur would use "#newyeareve", "#happynewyear", "#valentinesday", "#loveday" as hashtags.

Besides that, Meng Loong should come up with some unique hashtags such as "#mengloong", "#ravintolamenglong", and "#menglongdelicious" in order to create an iconic buzz.

Furthermore, when hosting an event or party at restaurant, Meng Loong should create a specific tag for instance “#mengloongwedding”, “#birthdaypartymengloong,” “#ronaldoparty-mengloong”.

Here are some examples of using Instagram for restaurant marketing

Dunkin’ Donuts-Instagram Contest

Dunkin’ Donuts set up a fascinating marketing campaign called “UpgraDDe Your Sandwich Contest” last year. During the contest, Dunkin’ Donuts encouraged their customers to share photos of their homemade meal on Instagram with hashtag “#UpgraDDe”. When the campaign time was over, Dunkin’ Donuts decided to choose some random participants to reward them with their gift cards.

Margaritas Mexican Restaurant-Weird and interesting photos Instagram

Margaritas Mexican restaurant provided a customized menu with an image of a mustache. Diners coming to restaurant could take some silly picture with that unique menu stacked to their face and then post them to Instagram. The restaurateur inspired the customers to use hashtag “#Newmustache” to classify their funny photos.

5 Discussion and recommendations

As mentioned above, a quantitative research was applied as a major method to gather information and answer a research question presented in section 1.3. The researcher designed a questionnaire with different types of questions relating to social media usage and impact of social media marketing in business. The Likert-type scale question was the most commonly used approach and provided the researcher with feasible and comprehensive data. Furthermore, the researcher was able to collect information that was invaluable with open-ended questions applied in survey. The researcher believes that the interview with some entrepreneurs or marketing consultants would present further perspectives for not only this study but also be beneficial for commissioning company. Unfortunately, the researcher was unable to execute that approach. Regardless of limited sample and respondents, the researcher was capable of answering the research question and providing helpful suggestions for case company.

From the research result, most of the small and medium enterprises in Helsinki regardless of their business industry are now actively present on social media channels and networks increasingly. Since customers spend couple of hours online, purchase commodity stocks

and recall several discussions about sellers, marketers and company managers should construct an appropriate marketing strategy in order to maintain a robust customer relationship. Only a minor disastrous move would bring harmful consequences to company's brand image.

Contrary to the indisputable advantages of social media in marketing, small and medium enterprises in Helsinki like Meng Loong has to deal with diverse difficulties including measurement methods, a lack of consistency in online engagement, and insufficient personnel responsible for administering social media. Many companies have started using Facebook to advertise their products and services but after months of trial accompanied by tremendous expectations, what they have received are just handful of "like" and followers on Facebook and the unchanged figures in their sales and profits. A failure might possibly happen to any business since social media marketing demands much more than just a brave mind and determination from a marketer. It requires a deliberate market research, together with a down to earth executing planning and a patient social data measurement progress.

It can be clearly seen from the research result that not so many respondents recognize the presence of Meng Loong on social networks. That points out the recommendation of integrating the social media marketing strategies with the current traditional marketing methods such as word of mouth, and leaflets. Via numerous existing business networks, Meng Loong manager is able to promote restaurant's social media channels. Besides that, a manager needs to be patient and determined in order to exploit the power of social media at the utmost since managing social media marketing is a hugely time consuming effort.

Another recommendation is that a manager should set up a strict posting agenda and checking schedule so that it reduces a gap time to reply any comments on Facebook or Instagram. Furthermore, Meng Loong manager could also be enlightened with brilliant ideas for social content from employees' viewpoint. Because a crucial factor influencing the popularity of Facebook page is its appealing content and outstanding visualization.

6 Conclusion

This bachelor thesis was accomplished to help the author to perceive a broad image of social media marketing among part of small and medium enterprises in Helsinki area, the most common social media platforms companies are using recently and some situational strategic tips for case company while using social media marketing.

Social media is an important instrument of digital marketing in business world nowadays and has a massive impact on our daily social life. Generally, social networks have altered the way people communicate, entertain and merchandize goods and services. A latest trend in social media marketing has shifted to instinctive, appealing content and intense level of social interaction. There is a rise of businesses or organizations employing the power of social media to market their brand and enhance the vigorous relationship with customers.

Since the essence of social media is rapidly changing, it is undoubtedly challenging to monitor and measure various online statistics unless the goals are clearly defined and marketers have sufficient measurement tools. There is a suggestion for case company to use Facebook analytics in order to analyze and measure the traffic and data on Facebook page more efficiently.

The research draw out a large potential of implementing social media into Meng Loong marketing strategies since an era of social world is flourishing steadily. The case company would strongly benefit from the magnificent power of social media if the manager pays sufficient attention to creating an appealing contents and actively engagement with social users. All success needs careful planning, precise execution and solid patience.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Meng Loong Social Media Survey

A survey was designed to help Meng Loong manager to understand a broad image of social media usage among SMEs in Helsinki and how to utilize social media in restaurant's marketing activities.

1. Which area your company is located?

Mark only one oval.

- Helsinki
 Espoo
 Vantaa

2. How do you know about Meng Loong restaurant?

Mark only one oval.

- Via word of mouth
 Via Facebook
 Via Instagram
 Via online advertisements

3. Do you like/follow Meng Loong Facebook or Instagram?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No
 Have not noticed yet

4. What is the reason for you to become a fan of Meng Loong Facebook or Instagram?

Mark only one oval.

- Recommendations from friends
 To be updated with Meng Loong latest happenings
 To help advertise Meng Loong Facebook page
 Other:

5. What kind of contents would you like to see more on Meng Loong Facebook page?

Mark only one oval.

- A diverse variety of restaurant events, discounts or other benefits
 More photos of delicious Asian cuisines
 Recipe of some popular Asian cuisines
 Culinary videos or any cooking fun facts
 Other:

SMEs social media usage perspective

6. Which of the following social media channels/networks does your company use to engage with customers?

Mark only one oval.

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- Google+
- LinkedIn
- Blogs
- Other: _____

7. What time do you usually use social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn?

Mark only one oval.

- 1am-6am
- 7am-12pm
- 1pm-6pm
- 7pm-12am
- Never

8. How often do you use social media?

Mark only one oval.

- Many times a day
- 2-4 times a week
- Few times a month
- Never

9. What sort of purposes do you use social media?

Mark only one oval.

- I follow my friends' newsfeed
- I follow interesting upcoming events,
- I research information about different companies
- I keep in touch with my friends, colleague, and business clients
- I use them to do online trade
- I watch videos and photos to relax

10. Do you often see and click on ads displayed on Facebook or other social networks?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- Often
- Rarely
- Never

11. How often do you visit your company's Facebook?

Mark only one oval.

- Daily
- Once a week
- Twice a week
- More than three times a week
- Very rarely

12. How many companies do you follow on Facebook?

Mark only one oval.

- 0-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 21-30
- 30+

13. How many followers does your company's Facebook get?

Mark only one oval.

- 1-20
- 21-50
- 51-100
- 101-1000
- 1000+

14. How often does your company update a new post on Facebook?

Mark only one oval.

- Daily
- Twice a week
- Three times a week
- Few times a month

15. Does your company pay for Facebook Advertisement?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Not available information

16. How often does your company reply a follower's comment on Facebook?

Mark only one oval.

- Within an hour
- Within a day
- Within two day
- Within a week
- Within two week or more

17. Does your company use any social media statistics analyzers such as Google Analytics, Facebook Analytics, Hootsuite Analytics, IBM social media analytics, Oracle analytics, etc?

Facebook Analytics

18. How could your company plan to do to get more Facebook followers?

Post great contents, images