

## **Digital Marketing Plan for an International Event. Case: Guinness Sauna event.**

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<p>With the development of technology and new customer touchpoints, the primary aim of the thesis is to determine out the connection between digital marketing and event management. The sources of the thesis are in the form of books, journals, Internet sources and previous studies. The secondary aim is to collect a useful dataset by conducting a benchmarking research method to understand old problems, adapt outstanding practices and identify potential improvements concerning three different event management organizations in Helsinki. Finally, the outcome of this thesis are guidelines to manage digital marketing activities in an event according to the SOSTAC model and to measure its effectiveness by digital techniques.</p> <p>The research findings show that there are multiple ways of interacting with customers in the event industry. With different digital marketing tools, there are various aspects, management, evaluation support tools and customer touchpoints. As a result, this thesis can be seen as a vast database and framework not only to help marketing specialists produce a digital marketing plan for any company in the 4.0 industry but also to support event organizers to create a successful event in the competitive environment.</p> <p>The case project is the Guinness Sauna event. The author believes that this thesis will provide an effective and efficient digital marketing plan, which helps fulfil its goal of increasing the Haaga-Helia University of Applied Science's brand equity.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> Event, event management, benchmarking, digital marketing, SOSTAC model.	

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## **1 Introduction**

The goal of this chapter is to give the reader the general information about the thesis topic's background and the main ideas of the project, including the project's objectives, tasks, and scopes. Furthermore, the author explains the benefits of the project in multiple perspectives and critical concepts from academic sources. Finally, the introduction of the commissioning company will be provided.

### **1.1 Background**

Since the 2000s, traditional marketing trend has been declining steeply even though it is still the most significant percentage of media spend on marketing communications and media businesses (Vranica, 2009). As a result, many marketing managers and advertisers had been searching for an alternative communication touchpoint and found out the enormous impacts of event marketing on the business operation (Miller & Washington 2012; Schmitt, Rogers & Vrotsos 2003). The effects of event marketing have been strengthened by previous literature (Close et al. 2006; Close, Krishen & Latour 2009; Sneath, Finney & Close 2005; Martensen et al. 2007). In sum, those works of literature highlight the facts that event marketing, in general, and specific types of events, in particular, have effects on business dimensions. It helps companies achieve not only corporate objectives, for example, public awareness improvement, valuable corporate image, community involvement, but also marketing objectives, such as the target markets penetration, brand position and the increase in sales.

Moreover, event marketing is a growth industry. A study conducted by sending surveys to brand marketers, top industry influencer and interviewing with procurement executives of Fortune 500 companies has shown that there was 11% average increase in experiential marketing budgets, with almost 60% increase spending on event marketing in 2017. (Event Marketer, 2017).

Being inspired by the above theories and researches, the author had a passion for working in the event industry in the marketing department. As a result, the thesis is mainly focused on event management and marketing, especially for the Guinness Sauna project of Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. With the effective digital marketing plan, the event will fulfil its goal of increasing the brand equity of Haaga-Helia UAS.

Considering about the project, its goal is to get more than 99 different nationalities into one sauna on October 8th. The original goal now is 110 nationalities. Initially, the project's core idea was to have Haaga-Helia students as sauna-visitors, but the event needs more nationalities to reach the goal, for example, university and UAS students from the whole capital area. The project will be a full day of international activities and finalizing the day with a nice party at the Sauna. It can be seen easily that digital marketing will play an essential role in attracting students to the event.

## **1.2 Thesis structure**

The zipper structure is used for this thesis. However, there will be a general theoretical part for two headings of empirical project management part, benchmarking analysis and digital marketing plan. They will be intertwined (appendix 2). These are the main headings of the thesis:

- Introduction
- General theoretical part: Digital marketing and events
- Project management:
  - o Topic A to be studied: Benchmarking analysis
  - o Topic B to be explored: Integrated digital marketing plan
- Discussion

## **1.3 Project Objective**

The primary aim of the thesis is to find out the best practices to manage digital marketing activities in an event and to measure its effectiveness by using digital techniques. The finished product will be the clear guidelines that the case company (Haaga-Helia UAS) can follow in its daily marketing activities. Ideally, the implementation of the plan will be in July 2019, which aims at reaching international students with different backgrounds in the Helsinki area, Finland by using digital marketing tools.

## **1.4 Project Tasks**

There are four main project tasks including

### **PT 1. Designing the theoretical framework and theories:**

Desktop research will be used to collect beneficial information for the conceptual framework. By collecting data from multiple existing resources, the proper

knowledge of event, digital marketing, its integration and strategic digital marketing planning model (SOSTAC®) are provided.

**PT 2. Benchmarking analysis:**

Using benchmarking to evaluate related types of event and its program, the most suitable tools for the digital marketing plan are chosen.

**PT 3. Building the guideline / integrated digital marketing plan:**

Building guidelines for all chosen digital marketing tools by using the SOSTAC model then setting up the integrated plan in details within three months of implementation. A SWOT analysis will be conducted along with the SOSTAC model that helps the project stay in line with the core values, missions of the project and give a deeper understanding of the event.

**PT 4. Evaluating project outcomes and developing possibilities:**

Discussing the essential findings and recommendations. The best out of the dataset collected from the benchmarking analysis and digital marketing plan provides considerable benefits for all the involved parties.

The below figure represents the overall picture of the research process to collect data and answer project outcome (PO) and project tasks(PTs).

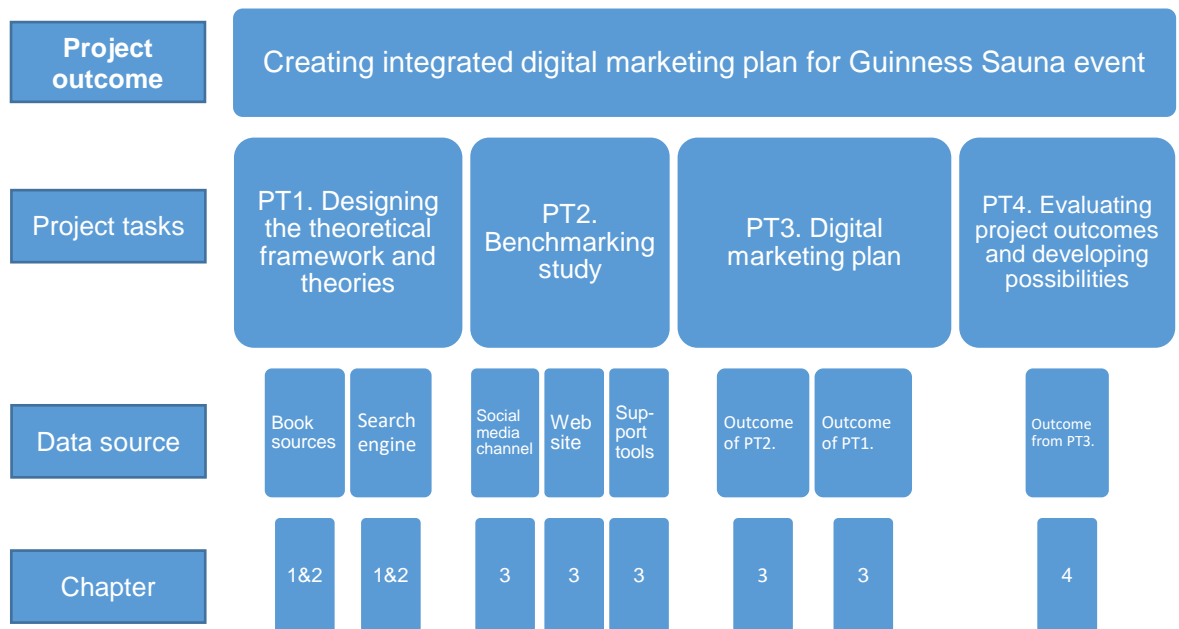


Figure 6. Research design

## **1.5 Project scopes**

The project will cover the topic of an integrated digital marketing communications plan for attracting the significant amount of participants to the event. Notably, the program will solely focus on promoting the event among international students in a specific area (Helsinki). However, it will not treat the concept of marketing in details because the traditional marketing tools will not be included to make sure the project will not become too broad.

## **1.6 International Aspect**

The author is an International Business student at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, specialising in customer relationship management and communication, and is doing the integrated marketing communication plan for an international event which aims to attract international students from more than 100 different nationalities.

## **1.7 Benefits**

The bachelor thesis provides benefits for three different groups, including the event organisers, international students and the author.

Thanks to the strategic integrated digital marketing communications plan (IMC), the event organisers will have a particular guideline, which includes the information necessary to run an effective marketing plan. The guidance also provides an implementation schedule to achieve the primary goals of the organisers. Doing so helps them to save the time of planning from the beginning and save costs of hiring additional staff to create an IMC plan. With the usage of the program, the organisers can raise its awareness in the eyes of customers, achieve the aiming number of participants, and fulfil the missions of the project in general.

On the other hand, international students, as customers of the project, will also benefit in this case. By interacting with the digital marketing tools used in the project, students can gather exciting and valuable information about the student life in Finland, social inclusion and international perspective in Finland education system. Such information will make student's life more comfortable in a foreign country, inspire students to participate in cultural activities and provide interesting information about internationalisation.



Last but not least, the author will have chances to develop knowledge of IMC, understand the multicultural aspects and learn how to reach and satisfy the need of all audiences from different backgrounds. A thesis project is also a tool for the author to decide whether the marketing field will be the main focus in the future's career path.

## 1.8 Key Concepts

The key concepts can be divided into two parts regarding the theoretical idea and practical notion. However, there is a connection between them: theory concepts are basic for useful concepts. In general, four concepts have been defined for this project thesis:

- **Event marketing:** *“Event marketing is planning, organizing, and executing an event for the purpose of promoting a brand, product, or service. Events can take place in-person or online, and companies can either host an event, attend as an exhibitor, or participate as a sponsor.”* (Hubspot, 2019.)
- **Digital marketing:** *“Digital marketing is the use of the internet, mobile devices, social media, search engines, and other channels to reach consumers. Some marketing experts consider digital marketing to be an entirely new endeavour that requires a new way of approaching customers and new ways of understanding how customers behave compared to traditional marketing.”* (Investopedia, 2019.)
- **Digital marketing tools:** *“With the purpose of promoting products or services, digital marketing reaches its consumers by digital channels. In other words, it helps promote brands through various forms of digital media. Digital marketing includes tools requiring the use of the Internet, such as social media marketing, emailing, search engine marketing, display advertising and any other form of digital media; and tools not requiring the use of the Internet, such as mobile phones (both SMS and MMS).”* (Financial Times, 2019.)
- **Integrated marketing communications (IMC):** *“IMC is viewed as a simple concept which links and integrates all promotional tools, all forms of communications and messages together carefully. All of the communications tools work better while working together in harmony rather than in isolation. Their sum is greater than their parts*

*which provides information by one voice all the time, every time.”*  
(Scarpino, 2013.)

## **1.9 Case Company**

The project of International Sauna will be under the name of Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (UAS) which is also a course in the marketing specialization programme. Besides the goal of creating an extracurricular activity to balance Haaga-Helia student's life, International Sauna event is also one of the promotional strategies to enhance the image of the school and compete globally for improving the number of international students.

Haaga-Helia UAS is an international university of applied sciences which has more than 170 partner universities, over 630 employees and 10 500 students with more than 90 nationalities. Cultural sensitivity, international aspects and diversity are core values of the school. Haaga-Helia has the mission of growing internationalization and attracting international students all over the world. There are three competencies following in its strategy including

- Enthusiasm and know-how of the students and the staff
- Worldwide growth together with partners
- Digital solutions in services and operations

(Haaga-Helia 2018.)

Regarding the event, the original name was World Sauna Challenge, held ten years ago in Lapland, Finland. The main goal of the event was to gather fifty nationalities altogether in a sauna. However, it gained success more than expected, which attracted 76 nationalities in total, recorded by Guinness for the most significant number of nationalities in a sauna. To celebrate the record after ten years, Haaga-Helia UAS aims to re-organize the event with a goal of 110 nationalities this time. The planning phase started in Spring 2019, and the chosen day is the 9th of November. The name of the event may be modified to fit into the concept. Some recommendations are Sauna Event, International Sauna Event, Guinness World Challenge, ...

## **2 Digital marketing and events**

This chapter aims to give readers an understanding of digital marketing and public relations in an event context. First, by providing the meaning, drivers and critical elements of an event, the essential roles of event management in today's modern markets are highlighted. Then, the chapter will look for a detailed explanation of how digital marketing plays a position within the events field. In the end, strategic digital marketing planning will be called for promoting the event effectively.

### **2.1 Introduction to event marketing**

Within this heading, the readers have chances to familiarise with the main concepts, the background, elements and factors influencing event marketing.

#### **2.1.1 Definition**

The definition of an event has changed that can be divided into three main stages: The first stage defined event from a broad perspective, which was difficult to apply directly in the business field. In particular, Collins Concise Dictionary (2001) considered an event as "Anything that takes place, especially something important; an incident". This meaning was affected by history and political sciences. Additionally, Deleuze (2004: 7) suggested that an event was not a thing or a fact which could be said to exist, but instead, it subsisted or inhered. These definitions fulfilled the intangible value of events, which cannot be taken and stored. However, at this stage, the temporary nature was not mentioned.

In the second stage, the definition was provided in more detailed and tailored. For example, Getz (2005) pointed out two main elements of the event, which were temporary and unique. To support the first characteristic of event, which is temporary, Silvers (2008:7) wrote that an event was "the gathering of people at a specified time and place for celebration, commemoration, communication, education, reunion and leisure". Besides, the other trait of uniqueness was covered by Yeoman et al. (2006), who suggested that there is no standardized solution to manage the event appropriately. After all, due to the lack of people orientation, the definition of an event changed again.

The last stage gave the substantial meaning of an event. According to Jackson (2013, 1-2), events are incidents created to gather people for a defined period to accomplish a specific purpose. The definition reminds marketers about the im-

portance of planning and communication integration, which influences different stakeholders regarding organizers, funders, participants, residents and political actors. In other words, this integration needs to be taken into consideration concerning what the consumer wants, how the event manager promotes the event, and what specific event should be delivered.

### **2.1.2 Types of events**

Based on the different approaches to organize an event, there are two ways of identifying the event's typologies. First, considering the size, events can be sorted into four different types (Bowdin et al., 2010.)

- Mega-events: - these events are symbolic and have significant impacts on a host country's society, economy and politic. They require a long-term planning process, which is usually risky and expensive.
- Hallmark events – are not necessary to be bigger than significant events, but they can be identified as synonyms of the cities or regions where they are held.
- Notable events - by drawing the attention of substantial numbers of visitors and media coverages, a significant event can bring positive economic benefits to organizers, for examples, a competition between teams or individuals representing several countries which engage significant public interest internationally.
- Local or community event – these are the smallest size events which attract participants from the local market. Some typical examples are a graduation ceremony, local festival, competitions in particular geographies ...

With this classification, the bigger size an event has the broader impacts on the society, economy and politic it creates. The second common way of categorizing events is by form. Based on the differences in the nature of events, its stakeholders' demands and its final aim, Getz (2008) codified events into ten types including cultural celebrations, religious events, arts and entertainment, political and state events, business and trade events, education and scientific events, recreational events, sports events, private events, and events at the margin. The variety of event categorization reflects the fact that there are specific requirements for event manager in a particular type of event and market.

### 2.1.3 External factors of an event

Event trend is not static but predictable. Understanding the key drivers of an event as external factors helps marketers identify the current trend in the market. Three main factors are affecting the nature of an event including societal, economic and political (Jackson, 2013, 6-7.) For example, the event can be influenced by the differences among dedicated groups in societal factor, by the spending money behaviours in economic factor and the national policy interference.

To follow the trends in the event field, event organizers should acquire the knowledge of the event's contextual framework, which consists factors (tourism, hospitality and public relations marketing) to adapt the changing markets. (Lim and Jackson, 2009.) Here is the figure to explain the interactions between the mentioned factors and their key elements:

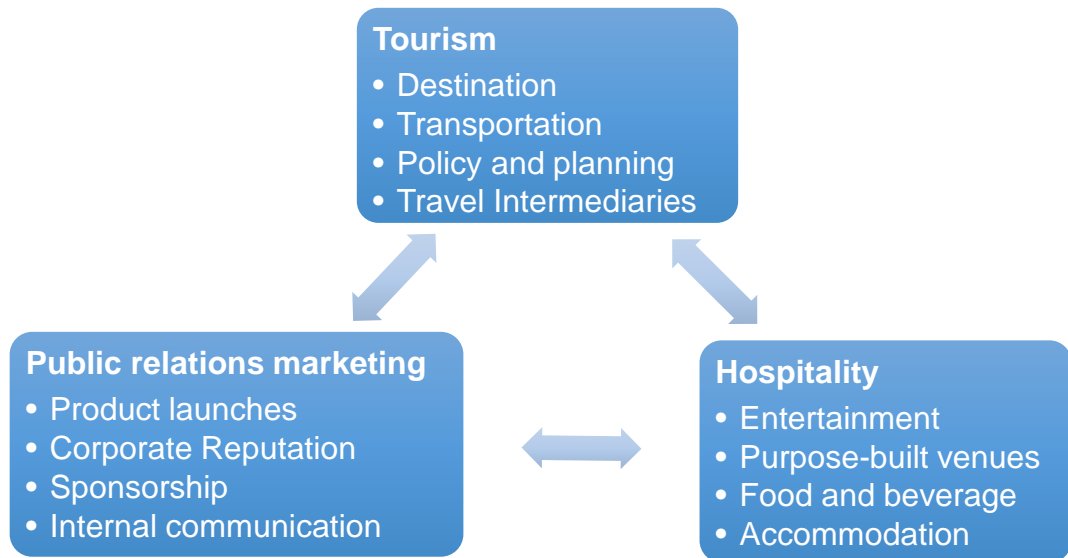


Figure 1 Event's contextual framework. Source: Lim and Jackson (2009)

### 2.1.4 Internal factors of an event

Five Ps of Event marketing plays an essential role to recognize internal elements of an event. Five Ps stands for product, price, place, public relations and positioning (Hoyle, 2002, 1-29.)

- Only when the product is finally defined, the decisions on other factors are made later on. There are three questions which should be put under consideration while figuring out the product:
  1. The history of the event
  2. The value of the product
  3. The uniqueness

- Economic factor, price, is secondary to perceived value. While creating an event, the organizers should focus not only on the cost of doing business but also on the financial demographics of the target audience. Doing so helps them determine the willingness and the ability of participants to buy the ticket at different levels.
- The place reflects the values of an event. Various elements are affecting the location of an event such as parking and public transportation availability, surrounding infrastructure, ability to fit the event's characters, safety and security, ...
- The public relation campaign can drive the perception of audiences on an event. There are many ways of practising public relations regarding media kits, phone call, a trade publication, radio and television advertising, or articles on newspapers. A positive impression on the product may generate a significant number of participants.
- Last but not least is positioning. Positioning is a strategy that helps marketers measure the potentials of success or failure of an event by using intuition, evaluation and research. Some key elements help position an event marketing plan effectively regarding location, attention span, competitive costs, program and simplicity. With positioning, it will be easier for event managers to fulfil the unstable demands and expectations of participants.

## **2.2 Introduction to digital marketing.**

The goal of this heading is to provide readers with crucial information about digital marketing regarding definition and model. Furthermore, the benefits and challenges of it in the view of an organization are explained. Finally, the heading introduces the favourite tools this type of marketing is using to people who do not familiarise with the digital marketing field.

### **2.2.1 Definition.**

In 1989, The International Journal of Bank Marketing defined marketing as a tool to meet the desires of customers while managing human, financial and physical resources in an organization. This definition focused mainly on a certain decision-making area in a narrow business context. Broadly defined, marketing was considered as a social and managerial process, which creates and exchanges the value among different individuals and organizations. Looking from the different

points of view, two definitions still share the same goal of marketing that is to attract customer by making promises through value proposition and to maintain current customers by delivering satisfaction (Armstrong et al., 2017, 10.)

For many years, strategic marketing campaigns were related to televisions, radio ads, print and public relations. Thanks to the development of the Internet and digital media, customer behaviours transformed business marketing strategy (Chaffey et al., 2012, 10). Since then, digital marketing was involved in new business models and communications approach as an essential activity to generate profits to the company. Chaffey et al. (2012) defined marketing such as “achieving marketing objectives through applying digital technologies”. The definition was expanded due to new social media and mobile tools emergence. From the concept of advertising new techniques for users, the idea was to create customer experiences connected with those innovative techniques. (Brosnan, 2012, 154-159).

### **2.2.2 Digital marketing communication (PESO models)**

To develop a strategy to reach potential customers online, marketers need to consider PESO model that refers to four media types—paid, earned, shared and owned—and know how to merge them (Gini Dietrich, 2014.)

- Paid Media are bought Media. The company needs to pay directly to an ad site owner for reaching visitors, display ad networks, search conversions or affiliate marketing.
- Earned Media can reach audiences by editing, commenting and sharing actions through partner networks such as bloggers, publishers, influencers.
- Shared Media are otherwise known as social media, which interact with customers through multiple social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, ...
- Owned Media are also known as content marketing, which is managed by a company's website, blogs, and email list.

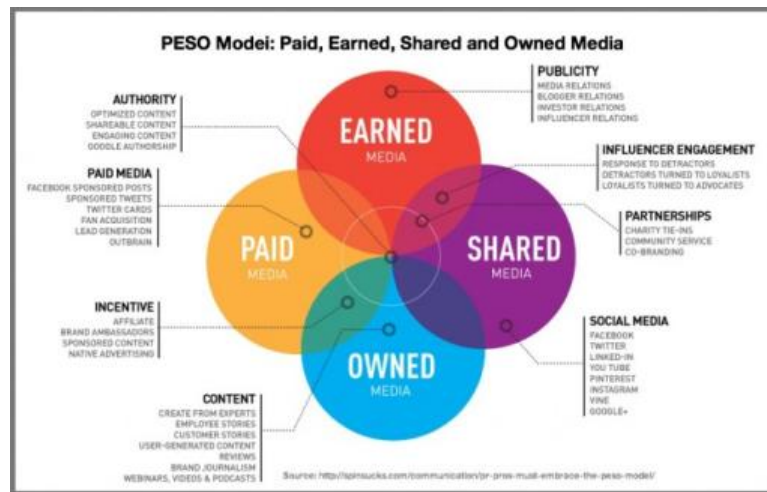


Figure 2 PESO model. Source: Gini Dietrich (2014)

### 2.2.3 Direction, benefits and challenges

#### Directions

There are four strategic directions on the Internet. The first direction is market penetration, which is conducted by using the Internet to sell more existing products in the current markets. Market development is the second driver. It means the Internet can be used to support the strategy of selling into new geographical markets. Furthermore, the Internet also helps develop new products and services, particularly digital products, to benefit the value chain of the company. Last but not least, diversification is the fourth sector, which is delivered by the Internet to sell new products into new markets. (Chaffey et al., 2012, 15-16).

#### Benefits

The benefits of digital marketing can be suggested by understanding five goals of digital marketing– 5 Ss of Chaffey and Smith (2008):

1. Sell Growing sales by offering wider distribution and product range than offline sales.
2. Serve: Adding value by collecting feedback from customers to inform product development and giving customers extra services online.
3. Speak: Getting closer to customers by increasing customer interactions through forums and surveys and then monitoring conversations to learn more about them.
4. Save: Saving costs by using online communications, sales and services to reduce numbers of staff, print and postage.
5. Sizzle: Extending the brand online by offering new experiences and propositions online as well as building customer communities.

(Chaffey et al., 2012, 16.)



## Challenges

Because digital marketing is a new industry which takes time to control it fully, challenges in developing and managing are unavoidable. Based on 7 Ss framework of Waterman et al. (1980), EConsultancy (2008) investigated and summarized some of the strategic issues that should be taken into consideration.

1. Strategy: items may come from the significant influences of digital marketing in an organization's strategy, for examples, estimating appropriate budget, techniques for aligning, annual plan, ...
2. Structure: when organizations try to modify the current arrangements to support a new digital marketing plan, the problems that occurred from the integration of departments to form a cross-functional team are risky.
3. Systems: To promote digital marketing, some organizations may develop information systems. This action will influence customer information management, the reporting process and internal integrated technology solutions.
4. Staff: digital marketing field requires some specific IT and marketing background that will impact not only the staff recruitment process but also staff training and development programmes.
5. Style: this factor is related to the working culture of a company. The question is if the company environment is dynamic or conservative, where the behaviours of the digital marketing team are fit in.
6. Skills: with a wide range of digital marketing areas, there are many particular skill sets regarding content management, social media management, online advertising, email marketing, ... The main problem is how the company can find the right person, at the right place, and at the right time.
7. Superordinate goals: the main question goes with the strategy of the company. Many organizations try to figure out how to improve the interactions between related departments, for example, IT and marketing department. Doing so helps improve digital marketing effectiveness and internal communications.

(Chaffey et al., 2012, 24.)

## 2.2.4 Digital marketing tools

According to the data collected from Statista (2019), five main tools regarding Website, Social media, Paid advertising, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), and Email marketing are the most important digital marketing tools in Finland.

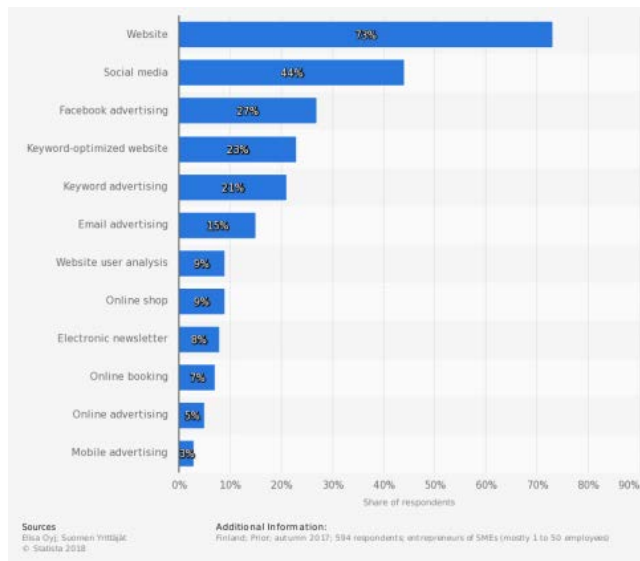


Figure 3 Most important digital marketing tools for SMEs in Finland 2017.  
Source: Statista (2019)

### Website

A website represents a company online which generates online customer experience for its audience. However, to add values to the company operation, a website needs to be more than a visual presence. With the goal of customer-centric online presence, the challenge is how the organization satisfies whatever customers demand to learn about, purchase from, and refer someone else to the business, in other words, how to bring a website from a visual presence to an interactive communications channel that connects the organization with its customers and partner businesses (Newlands, 2011, 74).

Three elements are impacting the success of a website, which are site design and structure, page design and content design. While developing a website, the business should consider critical elements to deliver promised experience (related factors: product, interactivity, service), emotional values (related factors: design, reassurance) and rational values (related factors: ease of use, relevance, performance) to the customers. The process of creating a website includes activities regarding registering a domain name, selecting a hosting provider, creating a communications plan, starting promotion and doing central development. (Chaffey et al., 2012, 380-382.)

- Domain name registration: the purpose of this step is to identify the website in a search engine or web browser. The company should choose not only an available and simply name but also catchy and memorable as possible. Some other factors influencing the choice of the domain name are target audience location, competitor names, registering similar names and keywords assisted by SEO (Heinze et al., 2017, 154).
- Hosting provider selection: based on the size of the company, the web server used to host the content is whether managed by its IT department or partnered with a specialist hosting provider. Both types of hosted service significantly depend on two main factors: availability and website performance. The website performance is evaluated by page download performance or transferred data speed. On the other hand, the accessibility of a website is indicated by how easy users can connect and access to a website (Chaffey et al., 2012, 381.)
- Communications plan: A successful website should provide useful content and beneficial usability to the customer. Add-value materials are information that leads customers toward making a purchase and interaction with the business. The content should be accessible and frequently update. Besides, a website should consist of the usability element, which delivers user experiences by understanding what people want to do on the site, calling to action and making them happen. Some tools can support a communications plan. In particular, search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine marketing (SEM) will support content creation. Social media plays an essential role in shaping the content and drawing attention to the web page. Updated pictures and new taglines will pull new traffic into the site (Newlands, 2011, 78-79.)
- Promotion activities: there are two main stages of promoting a website, including starting the promotion stage and main promotion stage. Starting the promotion stage occurs when developing content for the website before testing and revising. Main promotion stage is conducted after launching the site. (Chaffey et al., 2012, 381-382.) With different aims of promoting, companies can market a website through the usage of business cards, company literature (for example, company reports, brochures, posters), video, inbound links and social media listing (Newlands, 2011, 79-80.)

Besides the content and visual design of the website, information architecture and website structuring also play essential roles in the favourable outcomes. These factors can be achieved by site map creation (representation of the logical structure of content) and navigation, including menus and submenus. (Heinze et al., 2017, 154-156.)

### **Social media**

Social media marketing is defined as a digital marketing category to monitor customer interaction and encourage positive engagement on company sites, social networks and other third-party sites, blogs and forums (Chaffey et al., 2012, 536). In the 20th century, marketing was conducted as a one-way conversation by sending information to the customers, which was considered as an interrupting action. In the 21st century, marketing became a part of the customer experience, which has become a boomerang conversation between customers and brands. (Newlands, 2011, 10-11.)

Using social media consists of both advantages and challenges. On the pros side, with the multi-functional of social media, they allow companies to share the content not only to targeted customer groups but also to individual customers. Social media actively start the conversation to carry out customer engagement and listen to customer feedback to improve current activities. By effectively knowing the trends and customer persona, social media can also be used to reach the right customers at the right time and in the right place with relevant information. Moreover, social media can be cost-effective. Nowadays, many social media channels are free of charge or inexpensive to create an account; thereby, social media's return on investments are higher than those of traditional media.

Last but not least is the engagement and social sharing capabilities of social media. With the power of creating customer's communities, social media finds it easy to get customers to involve with a brand in sharing experiences, information and creating contents, ideas. On the cons side, social networks are under controlled of users which is hard for many companies to measure and create a social media marketing plan effectively (Armstrong et al., 2016, 470-471.) Other challenges to engage audiences are the hesitation of customers to interact with brands and the content creation to draw the attention of customers to the brand. (Chaffey et al., 2012, 539)

The usages of social media can be as simple as posting message and promotions on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, or creating images and videos on YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram. With the variety of social media channels, it helps the business interact with a broad range of different customers, at the same time, it requires an integrated social media marketing strategy to manage all the tools successfully (Armstrong et al., 2016, 471.) To tackle with this requirement, organizations should look more specifically at how to create a presence of on social media networks. Newlands (2011, 12) created a process that included ten steps to create a social media presence:

1. Assessing current social media.
2. Researching and joining potential social media networks that fit customer persona.
3. Adapting existing contents to new systems.
4. Cultivating social media presence.
5. Planning an overall social media campaign strategically.
6. Creating unique social media contents.
7. Listening and finding potential customers.
8. Interacting with current and prospective customers.
9. Representing products and services as a part of the brand.
10. Measuring, evaluating and reporting.

### **SEO: Search Engine Optimization**

Search engines (SE) are used as tools to search for information, product, service or entertainment on the Internet. The operation of search engines is to attract users to the website. To satisfy searchers successfully, the SE must show the results that solve the problems, which the searcher is looking for (Charlesworth, 2014, 191). The main options are Google, Bing and Yahoo. Utilizing search engines effectively, many companies will be able to deliver relevant content in the search listings and encourage searchers to click on a destination site. This action is called search engine marketing (SEM). SEM has become a vital area of digital marketing in locating brands and reaching audiences. There are two main types of SEM:

1. Search engine optimization (SEO) is a practice of increasing the position of a company or a product in results listings of the search engine for a specific enquiry (keywords, phrases) of human searchers.

2. Search engine advertising or paid search marketing (PPC): as SE decides the top of organic listings, organizations try to create awareness and response from ads displayed on third-party sites when the user of a search engine types in a specific phrase.

(Chaffey et al., 2012, 490-493.)

In this heading, in-depth look into SEO is analysed and search engine advertising is covered in the online advertising part. Two essential factors are affecting the ranking positions of websites in all search engines:

- Matching between searched phrases and web page. The process to improve this factor is known as on-page optimization. The marketers can highlight the content to a search engine by writing copy and applying mark-ups, such as heading tag and title tag for relevant key phrases. Some practices of using on-page optimization are search term occurrence in body copy, alternative image text and document meta-data including page title tags (Chaffey et al., 2012, 494.)
- Inbound or backlinks are hyperlinks within a document linking to a specific web page. By considering backlinks as a part of a search engines algorithm, SE will raise the site's validity and ranking when a site has lots of links going into. Therefore, the more links to the site, the more valuable the content and the higher the rating (Charlesworth, 2014, 210.) The SEO processes to advance results in this area are external link building and internal link architecture.

However, everything has both sides. Besides the main benefits of SEO such as driving significant traffic, reaching targeted groups, encouraging purchase behaviours and attracting potentially low-cost visitors, there are some disadvantages indicated by the difficulty in predicting results for return on investment, time-consuming for results to be implemented, the complexity created by hundreds of SE rating factors, and ongoing investment to create the content (Chaffey et al., 2012, 494-495.)

To create a valuable SEO strategy and have a positive impact on SEM long-term performance, marketers should take four pillars of SEO under consideration. The first pillar is high-quality content, which must be relevant to the buyer persona. The content creation can be supported by strategic keyword research, whose process

includes three stages: keyword brainstorming, keyword refinement, keywords prioritization and selection. On-page optimization is the second pillar that develops overall website architecture and detailed page structure. On-page optimization elements are text, local search engine, images and links optimization. Thirdly, off-page factors optimization pillar influences the SE by creating keyword rich anchor text and links ecosystem that links users to the most significant pages. Last but not least, technical optimization is the methodical optimization to improve the findability of a website. Some functional elements are XML sitemap, robots.txt structured data and moving pages. (Heinze et al., 2017, 169-187.)

### **Paid advertising**

There are multiple paid marketing types, such as paid search marketing, paid social media marketing, affiliate marketing, online public relations and display advertising. Different tools have a different definition, key performance indicator (KPI), advantages, disadvantages, and how the tools can be used to improve the results. By understanding the concepts of the advertising activities, companies will be able to choose the suitable means to be applied in the integrated digital marketing strategy. The table below gives a broader awareness of paid advertising metrics.

Table 1. Paid advertising tools. (Chaffey et al., 2012, 500-535.), (Heinze et al., 2017,239-259.)

	Paid search marketing (PPC)	Paid social media marketing	Affiliate marketing	Online public relations	Display advertising
Definition	A relevant text ad displayed when a user types a specific content on a search engine.	Organic content is promoted to reach more potential customers on social media platforms, where content's filtered to display on relevant material.	An arrangement between referring sites and merchants' e-commerce sites, where merchants pay publishers a commission on sales or leads	Getting favourable mentions from third-party website on advertiser's company, brands, products or websites.	Paid advertising placements on third-party websites using graphical or rich media ad units.
Main operation channels	Google, Bing!, Yahoo	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn	Referring sites	Third-party websites, Web 2.0-based approaches	Third-party sites
KPIs	Quality score for keywords Cost-per-click (CPC) Pay per action (CPA) Generated impressions Conversion rate Click-through rate	Post reach of content User engagements (views, likes, responses) Cost per click Conversion rate Cost per customer	Leads or sales generated Conversion rate Conversion of call-to-action Revenue on ad spend Cost per acquisition	Revenue on spend Conversion rate Conversion of call-to-action	Cost-per-thousand (CPM) Click-through rate View-through rate Ad impressions Interaction rate
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- By using cost-per-click (CPC) model, the cost is only incurred when an user click on the link and direct to the adviser's website.</li> <li>- Targeting to the right users who search for the specific phrase</li> <li>- ROI can be calculated or predicted for individual key words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More possibilities to integrate ads into the content of social communications.</li> <li>- Ability to reach new potential customers from organic contents.</li> <li>- Increasing the web traffic to the advertiser's web page</li> <li>- Low prices comparing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reaching different audiences backgrounds</li> <li>- Less responsible for the marketplace changes</li> <li>- Increasing visibility and reach on search engine results pages (SERPs)</li> <li>- Pay per performance system helps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low cost method</li> <li>- Reaching audience directly</li> <li>- Cost effective achievement from no media placement costs</li> <li>- Raising trust from personal recommendations and independent comments</li> <li>- Favourable stories of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delivering more details information on an offer</li> <li>- Direct response from audiences</li> <li>- Building brand awareness</li> <li>- Interacting with user by asking to type in an email or other information</li> <li>- Encouraging reten-</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PPC gets posted quickly</li> <li>- Ability of remarketing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wide segmentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- control the costs of acquisition</li> <li>- Share risks with affiliates with SEM management problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the brand can reach new audiences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- tion about on-site sales promotions</li> </ul>
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Competitive and expensive due to its popularity</li> <li>- Time consuming to manage and update PPC account</li> <li>- Lack of trust to click</li> <li>- PPC requires special knowledge to configure, bid, report and update the changes of paid search services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Less engagement to organic post.</li> <li>- Time consuming to constantly monitor and check ad</li> <li>- User rejection by the belief that the content is not relevant to their needs</li> <li>- Competition due to the increasing number of advertisers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limiting the profits from sales</li> <li>- Not having a full control may damage brand reputation and face the risk of brand name exploitation.</li> <li>- Expensive and time consuming to form and maintain a good relationship.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High-risk on investment due to unpredictable outcomes and less control on third-party sites</li> <li>- Negative comments can damage company's image</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low click-through rates due to the ads ignorance and instructive finding.</li> <li>- High costs lead to an inefficient marketing plan</li> <li>- Brand reputation can be damaged when it is linked with unfavourable contents</li> </ul>
How to apply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Managing key words individually</li> <li>- Targeting with well-plan strategies</li> <li>- Managing budget and bid</li> <li>- Creating testing and campaign strategies</li> <li>- Integrating communications</li> <li>- Being aware of face clicks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creating content and buying ad from different social media channels based on different purposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facebook: private social networking and friend sharing</li> <li>- Instagram: fast developing channel with many influencers accounts</li> <li>- LinkedIn: professional networking</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creating reliable network with affiliates</li> <li>- Setting a win-win benefit commission agreement</li> <li>- Paying attention to cookie expiry period</li> <li>- Monitoring carefully affiliate agreements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finding and communicating with online influencer outreach</li> <li>- Link building from relevant site with a good page ranking.</li> <li>- Interacting with Web 2.0 content including podcasting, widgets, blogs, RSS feeds, ...</li> <li>- Well presenting on third-party sites</li> <li>- Creating online viral marketing strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Constant measurement the effectiveness of the display ad campaign</li> <li>- Creating interactive ad formats and banner ads</li> <li>- Ad targeting process: targeting user' profile, indicating a particular registering time of day or week, follow users' behaviours.</li> </ul>

		- Twitter: global platform with over 330 million active monthly users.			
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## **Email marketing**

Email marketing is a communication method of the company to interact with its customers by using email. There are two main types of email marketing, including outbound and inbound email marketing. Outbound email marketing is applied to encourage trials and purchases directly through sending promotions emails as a part of CRM dialogue. On the other hand, inbound email marketing is the management of emails received from customers (Chaffey et al., 2012, 527.) According to Chittenden and Rettie (2003), the application of email marketing impacts sales promotion, customer data gathering activities, lead generation, customer retention, brand awareness and customer acquisition. With the different purpose of using email marketing, there are various options to run an email marketing campaign. For example, to acquire new visitors and customer to a web page, advertisers can choose options of a cold email campaign, co-branded email and third-party e-newsletter. At the same time, to achieve prospect conversions and customer retention, some options for in house email marketing are conversion email, regular e-newsletter, house-list campaign, event-triggered and email sequence (Chaffey et al., 2012, 528-529.)

Considering factors affecting the success of email marketing, Chaffey (2006) created a CRITICAL checklist to improve the email campaign response: creative design, relevant content to meet recipient needs, incentive benefit production, targeting different segments on the list, integration with other marketing communication channels, copy to create structured content, attributes consideration to match users' preferences, landing page design after click-through action. Besides, choosing the right email service providers and measuring email marketing campaign are essential practices to support the success of email marketing. Key measures include delivery rate, open rate, click-through and click rate and most importantly, the marketing outcomes and value added after the campaign.

### **2.3 Summary**

Understanding the concept of event management and marketing communications, it can be seen easily that there is a secure connection between event experiences and digital marketing strategy. Customer satisfaction and value creation generated from an event are vital indications to evaluate the success of a marketing strategy. On the other hand, marketing strategy provides beneficial tools to interact and communicate with customers, which has effects on internal and external factors of events.

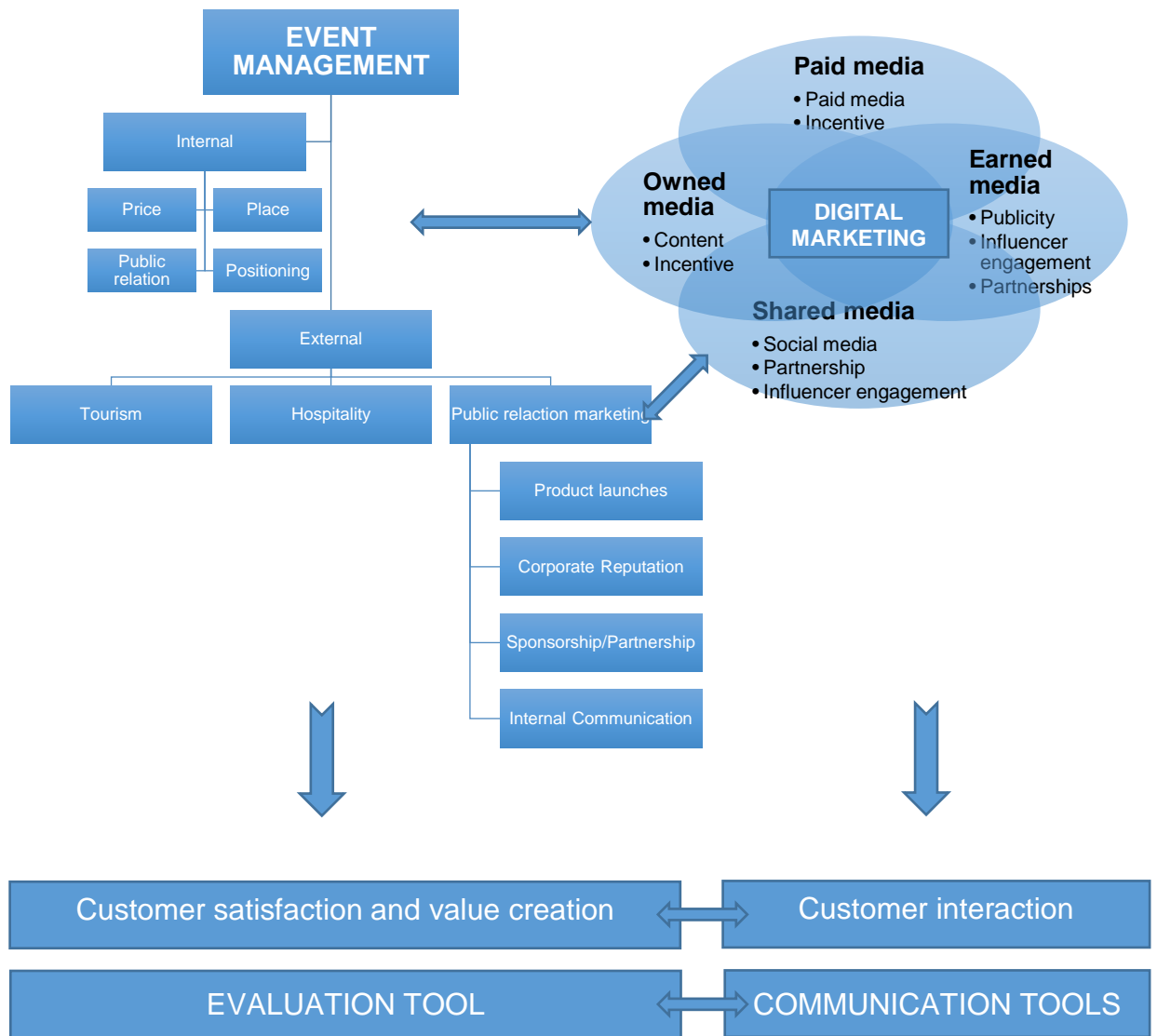


Figure 4 Relationship between event management and digital marketing

To conclude, this theoretical part will be a knowledge base and critical driver to all actions of the project management in the next chapter.

### **3 Benchmarking analysis**

The purpose of this chapter is to give the reasons for choosing the benchmarking method approach for collecting data to the research questions. The the main concepts of the method, its importance and usages are introduced. After having the set of the database from the benchmarking study, the SOSTAC model is applied to create an integrated digital marketing plan for the event in the next chapter.

#### **3.1 Introduction of benchmarking**

This chapter will provide readers with an awareness of benchmarking with definition, benefits, advantages, disadvantages and its usage. Furthermore, theoretical knowledge will be put into practice by benchmarking related events with sufficient background information.

##### **3.1.1 Definition**

Benchmarking is commonly applied in organizations' activities to compare their performances with others in the purpose of improving current operations. However, there are different ways to view benchmarking. According to David, CEO of Xerox Corporation, benchmarking can be used in many areas of organizations, for example, products, services, and practices, which can be generated as the process of evaluating the fiercest competitors and industry leaders to find out the highest performance that the market currently achieved. Meanwhile, for others, benchmarking is not only a comparison of practices but also the similarity of performance. Doing so helps the organizations figure out what they are good at and what problems should be solved to run the business better. To conclude, benchmarking is defined as a method of measuring and improving organizational performance by the process of comparing organizations with the outstanding and best industry leaders. (Stapenhurst, 2009, 3-6.) The other definition comes from Tuominen (2016, 10), who stated benchmarking is the continuous process rather than a one-off process to strive for considerable improvements and support final goals.

In short, it can be seen easily that there are two main aspects of this performance evaluation method, which are the comparison of current performances to find the performance gap and the study of the best and superior performances of industry leaders to adapt and adopt their practices and performance probably. In the case of Guinness Sauna event, the second approach of adapting others strategies will be the perfect fit to the current situation of the event because it is the new project and still in imagination and planning stage.

### **3.1.2 Roles and benefits**

Having mentioned above, benchmarking can be involved in many activities of the organizations regarding project selection, define, measure, analyse, improve and control (six sigma). In this thesis, the measurement field is focus, which means learning from others to give valuable information to contribute to the integrated digital marketing strategy. In particular, benchmarking plays the role of doing secondary research to understand old problems and adapt outstanding practices and identify potential improvements from others.

### **3.1.3 Methods of benchmarking**

There are many benchmarking methods with different purposes of using, strengths, weaknesses and process. In this section, the concept and usage of each type of study are discussed to choose the right and appropriate method to achieve the objectives of the event. Most of the benchmarking strategies are covered by seven following methods (Stapenhurst, 2009, 19-45.)

1. Public domain: data is collected from public sources. After analyzing the available information, a report will be conducted. Public domain is applied when participants or service users may not be aware that they are a part of the study. The use of this method is to provide information to the public and help them to make decisions based on their priorities and needs of products and services.
2. One-to-one: this method includes four main actions regarding finding out the best organizations with outstanding performance, visiting and collecting beneficial information about those successes, adapting their performances if suitable and adopting new practices into operational activities. This method is best carried out when the imitator has a clear idea of its current situation and has questions to ask for further learning and improving from specific participants or organizations.
3. Review: This study is conducted by comparing a particular working activity or entirely of data from different participants. The objectives are to recognise the new performance levels, to identify the performance gaps between compared parties, to figure out what are the differences and similarities in performance levels and finally, to give practical recommendations with the aim of further performance improvement. The review is fit for people who do the study for their benefits. The usages are quite similar to the one-to-one method, but it has the matter of the number of participants (more than two).

4. Database: the final goal of this method is to provide an overall database from many organizations. Initiating participant is usually an independent consultant, who controls most factors of the study. The improvement is based mainly on the quality and success of the database collected by the study maker.
5. Trial: with the same aim as public domain benchmarking, trial benchmarking also focuses on improving products and services in the eyes of the public. However, the main difference is that the study is carried out by the initiating organization itself. The organization will need to choose the appropriate competitors to monitor competitor performance, to find out some potential development for the current products and at the same time, to figure out the current position in the marketplace.
6. Survey: the method is quite similar to the trial benchmarking in term of usage and purpose. The only different thing is how the data collected. In this case, it is made under control of questionnaires.
7. Business excellence model: understanding that different organization performs excellently in different areas of businesses, this study method is carried out to provide a list of interrelated criteria under a structured standard. By scoring and comparing all the performances of all the sample group of organizations, business excellence model method helps review all activities of an organization and identify weak as well as strong areas. The company can gain the most from this study only when it aims to have a quick and anonymous review of the whole organization.

### **3.2 Benchmarking process**

Being described as a structured process (Gunasekaran and Putnik, 2006, 24), benchmarking follows four sequential phases. Gunasekaran and Putnik proved their statement by sorting seven different methodologies into their four-stage process, including plan, collect, analyze and adapt.

- Plan stage includes determining objectives of the study, identifying target rank organizations, choosing the specific subjects or criteria to benchmark.
- Collect stage includes developing a profile for selected organizations, defining the metrics, doing online research on their performances and practices
- Analyze consists of identifying the performance gap, analyzing the data, finding the reasons for the gap.
- Adapt stage regards the full database to utilize in the next chapter (integrated digital marketing plan)

However, it is unlikely to have one process to meet the requirements of all organizations in all situations. Regarding the research on benchmarking club, a group of organizations doing benchmarking together based on a basic, Stapenhurst (2009, 50) came up with a fundamental process of regular benchmarking including three core steps: internal preparation, benchmarking performance and improvement. The key difference between the two processes is the way of presenting it. While Gunasekaran and Putnik work on the collecting and analyzing stage separately, Stapenhurst combined it all and renamed it a benchmarking study.

- **Phase 1 - Internal preparation:** The goal of this step is to create a project proposal to initiate a benchmarking study. The actions are identifying the objectives of the study, developing a winning proposal, selecting potential participants or competitors, determining available resources to study and developing metrics to compare performances between participants.
- **Phase 2 – Benchmarking performance:** Benchmarking performance: After deciding which data to collect, this step has the role of finding data based on available resources and then validating it. Once all the data has been validated, the analysis stage will start with evaluating practices, comparing the performance level and performance gap, testing theories and giving recommendations.
- **Phase 3 – Improving the organization:** There are many choices to drive the improvement regarding implementing an internal processor taking part in a benchmarking club. In this case, because the event has not created any marketing plans which need to be improved or developed. Therefore, the objective of this phase is to carry further in-depth studies before improving.

In this thesis project, the process of Stapenhurst is applied to collect the data. The reason is that this process is easy to follow and presented in a high-standard structure.

### **3.2.1 Internal preparation**

#### **Objective**

This study objective is to give the event access to the effectiveness of the digital marketing communication mix by comparing the marketing performances of current events. Notably, the aim of this thesis is to focus mainly on the marketing field



by doing online research and measuring the activities of fiercest competitors to give a valuable database to the planning process. Therefore, the database method is the most suitable and beneficial in this situation. The outcome of this research will be a set of valuable data to create a digital marketing plan in the next chapter.

### **Potential participants**

Here are many methods of identifying participants regarding functions, industry contributions, competitions factors. In this project, the choosing process will base mainly on finding competitors who have the similarity of service to the area. As mentioned earlier, the goal of the event is to attract at least 110 nationalities. Therefore, the chosen participants should also be an international event held in Finland, which has the most people from different countries participating. By using web searches method, there are three potential participants, including SLUSH, JUNCTION and Nordic Business Forum. These three events have different products contributing to the industry. However, they perform excellence in the digital marketing area.

- Slush is a student-driven, not-for-profit event initially founded in 2011 to help the next generation of entrepreneur and to build a global start-up community. The initial idea is to facilitate a meeting between investors and entrepreneurs. After seven years of success, the concept of Slush expands to everyone who has a passion for a start-up. In 2018, Slush was organised globally in four countries: Japan (Tokyo), China (Shanghai), Singapore and Finland (Helsinki) attracting more than 40000 attendees. Slush in Helsinki is the most significant event, which has 20000 attendees, 3100 start-ups, 1800 investors, more than 130 nationalities with +300 side-events. It costs around 300-800 euros to participate in the event depending on kinds of tickets (Slush, 2019.)
- With the same organization type as Slush, Junction is also a non-profit community run by volunteer-lead teams. The main activities are organizing hackathons, speaker events, coding workshops and other events relating to technology. The main difference between Slush and Junction is the target attendees. A junction is a meeting place for techies, such as developers, designers and other computer sciences people. After four years of running, Junction 2018 reached 1250 participants over 60 nations, creating more than 600 tech projects for +60 partners. It is free for participating (Junction, 2019.)

- Nordic Business Forum (NBF) has started in 2010 as a small event in Helsinki; it now becomes the world-class business conferences among Nordic countries (Finland, Sweden and Norway). The event aims to build the connections among preeminent thinkers, renowned experts and business leaders. NBF 2018 gathered about 10000 attendees with 7500 CEOs, top executives and entrepreneurs from over 40 countries. The critical difference between NBF and others is that the event has a live stream channel which attracts around tens of thousands of viewers. With different categories, the ticket varies from 1000 to 3000 euros (Nordic Business Forum, 2019.)

## Resources

The web searches method is applied to find related information. Free web searches tools are Google search, social media channels. Evaluation and analyze process will be conducted through supported websites and applications, for example, Likealyzer, Ubersuggest, Google Lighthouse analysis and Minter.io.

### 3.2.2 Benchmarking performance

Having mentioned earlier, five focused digital marketing tools in this thesis are Website, Social Media, Paid Advertising, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), and Email marketing. However, due to the limited access to the organization's information and search resources, above organizations are compared the based on underperformances of Website & Search Engine Optimization (SEO), and Social Media channels (Facebook, Instagram).

#### 3.2.2.1 Performance on website.

##### - Brief information

Before going to the analysis part, the table below shows the brief information of different visual homepages. (Table 2)

Table 2. Brief information on homepages

	Slush	Junction	NBF
Navigation bar	Why attend, about, resources, academy, new, buy a ticket button	Slogan: hack the future	Main, events, live stream, newsroom, Nordic business report, contact, get your ticket button
Logo	At the top left corner	Middle of the home page	At the top left corner
Main page	Slogan, Slush in numbers, time of the event and "buy tickets	Automated introduction video	Automated introduction video, logo, slogan and clickable "Nordic Busi-

	now” button		ness Forum 2019” button
Content of the front page in order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Main page</li> <li>- Quote from the wall street journal</li> <li>- Speakers information</li> <li>- Short introduction video</li> <li>- Investors information</li> <li>- Event photos</li> <li>- Read more information by choosing “for investors”, “for start-ups”, for “scale-ups”</li> <li>- Contact information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Main page</li> <li>- About Junction</li> <li>- Junction in numbers</li> <li>- What we do (main and side events)</li> <li>- Partners information</li> <li>- Subscribe button</li> <li>- More information based on three categories: “For partner”, “for volunteer”, “calendar”</li> <li>- Contact information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Main page</li> <li>- About NBF</li> <li>- Upcoming events</li> <li>- Subscribe button</li> <li>- Newsfeed</li> <li>- Listen to podcast</li> <li>- Contact information</li> </ul>
Other	<p>On the foot right corner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cookie permission</li> <li>- Subscribe button</li> </ul>	<p>At the top left corner, there is a button for the navigation bar.</p>	<p>On the foot right corner, there is a box for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Subscribe</li> <li>- Ask more information</li> <li>- Get the tickets</li> </ul>

**- Analysis tool – Google lighthouse**

Google Lighthouse is used as a support tool to analyse the performance on the website. It is an automated tool for evaluating and improving the quality of the webpage. The audits for performance, best practices, accessibility and SEO are managed.

**SLUSH**

The figure below represents the Slush home page performance under Google Lighthouse audits analysis. (Figure 6)

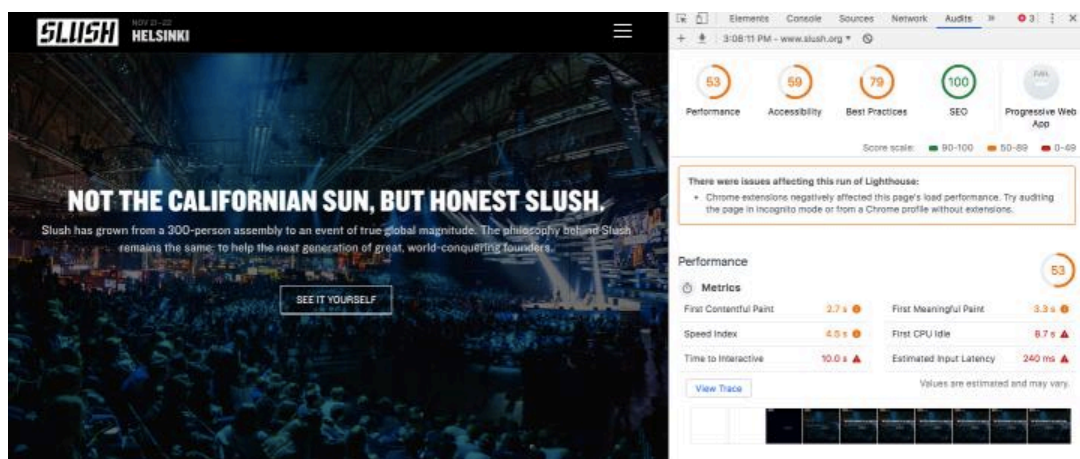


Figure 5 Google Lighthouse analysis on Slush webpage.  
Source: Google Lighthouse, 2019.

In general, for the scale from 0 to 100, Slush webpage gain the maximum score in SEO (100) and average levels in performance (53), accessibility (59) and best practices (79).

- Positive features:
  - o Performance: video format for animated contents; no large network payloads; low numbers of page redirects; low server response time; good encode images; different off-screen images.
  - o Accessibility: all buttons have available names; the page contains heading, landmark, and skip link regions.
  - o Best practises: the site is protected with HTTPS, which means there is no sensitive data; clearly asking for permissions on page load; avoiding application cache; the page is also mobile friendly and valid structured data.
  - o SEO: using descriptive text and legible font sizes; valuable tags and successful HTTP status code, which influences the properly index pages.
- Negative features:
  - o Performance: page load time (10 seconds to interactive, 240ms to Estimated Input Latency); some texts remained invisible during web font load; long JavaScript execution time.
  - o Accessibility: low-contrast text; insufficient contrast ratio of backgrounds and foreground colours which make users difficult or impossible to read; limited valid languages (only English); some links do not have discernible names.
  - o Best practises: cross-origin destinations are unsafe; some front-end JavaScript libraries with security vulnerabilities.

## JUNCTION

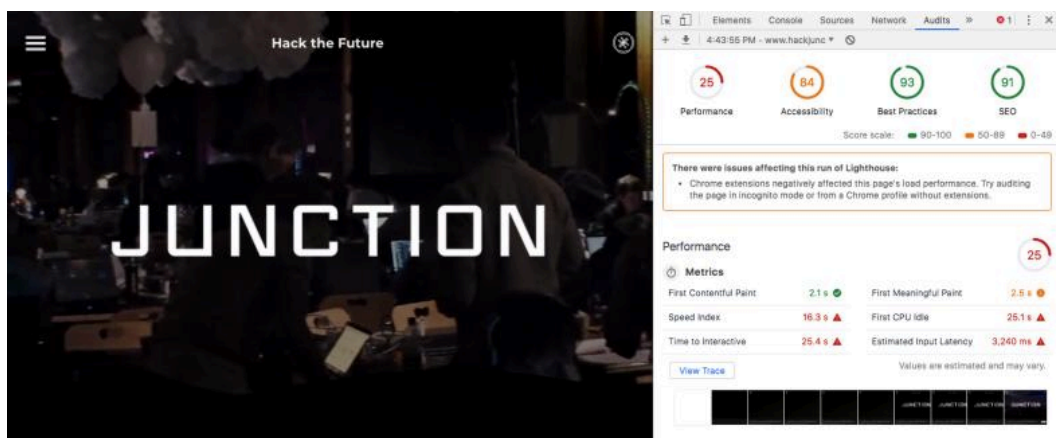


Figure 6 Google Lighthouse analysis on Junction webpage

Source: Google Lighthouse, 2019.

Junction webpage has the highest score in best practices field with 93 scores, followed by SEO (91) and accessibility (84). However, the site gained a meagre score in performance (25) (Figure 7.)

- Positive features:
  - Performance: fast full-content paint (2.1s); proper size front and off-screen images; effective videos usage; multiple redirect pages' avoidance.
  - Accessibility: fulfil the roles of ARIA, which has a positive effect on the accessibility of the webpage; most of the links are accessible with discernible names; most of the documents have titles.
  - Best practise: applying passive listener method which gains benefits by improving scrolling performance; good quality of images and videos with correct aspect ratio; detected front-end JavaScript libraries.
  - SEO: 100% legible text; documents consist meta descriptions; successful HTTP status code.
- Negative features:
  - Performance: page load time (25.4 seconds to interactive, 3240ms to Estimated Input Latency); JavaScript execution time (26.4s); text remaining invisible during web font loading time; weak static assets with cache policy.
  - Accessibility: some form elements are not controlled properly; the content is hard to understand because it relates to technology;
  - Best practises: one link is failed to lead resource.
  - SEO: problem with crawling and Indexing, which has impacts on search results.

## NORDIC BUSINESS FORUM (NBF)

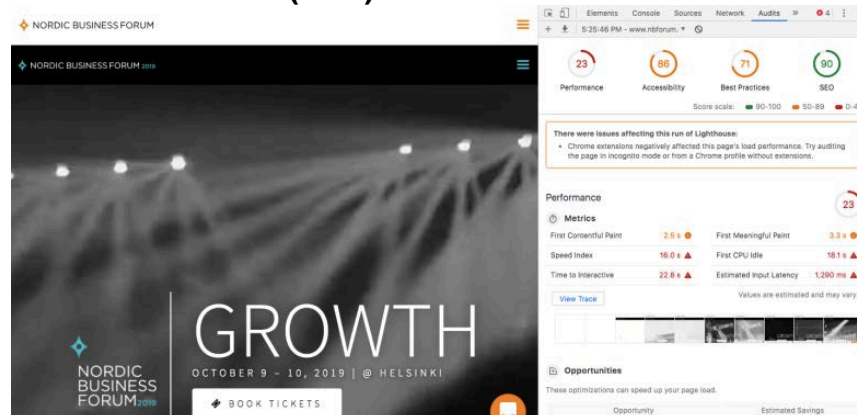


Figure 7 Google Lighthouse analysis on NBF webpage  
Source: Google Lighthouse, 2019.

Based on data collected from Google Lighthouse, NBF gets the best performance in SEO (90), other medium factors are best practices and accessibility fields. Even lower than the performance of Junction, NBF gains 23 scores in this sector.

- Positive features:
  - o Performance: efficiently encode images; using video format in the front page; minimizing the delays of loading page by avoiding page redirects.
  - o Accessibility: the page passed 21 audits of the issues in this field, which means the site is easy to be viewed and accessed.
  - o Best practises: NBF gains the same audits as others in the practises.
  - o SEO: 98% legible text; the page consists of meta tag to optimize mobile screens.
- Negative features:
  - o Performance: time-consuming for loading off-screen images, proper image sizes and executing JavaScript; some text not remaining visible during web loading; slow speed index showing how quickly the contents are visibly populated (16s)
  - o Best practises: front-end JavaScript library has a security vulnerability; unsafe cross-origin destinations.
  - o SEO: problem with the descriptive text.

### **3.2.2.2 Performance on Social media channels.**

#### **- Facebook**

##### **Brief information on Facebook pages**

By using social media research method, a table is created to compare three different competitors based on main categories: type of organization, main page, number of posts, type of contents, number of likes, the highest likes post, materials of the post, campaign, hashtags used and comments.

Table 2. Facebook management of main competitors. (Facebook, 2019.)

Facebook page	Slush	Junction	NBF
Type of organization	Non-profit organization	Non-profit organization	Non-profit organization
Interaction	76,263 people like 77,636 people follow	6,711 people like 7,062 people follow	28,181 people like 38,841 people follow
Main page	-Cover: automated video of SLUSH 2019 -Right side in order: about Slush, community, related pages	-Cover: taken a photo with Junction logo in the middle -Right side in order: rating, about Junction, community, related pages	-Cover: automated video of NBF in general -Right side in order: community, contact information, related pages
Number of posts	-Off-season (from January to July): 4-10 posts per month. -High season (from August to November): 1-2 post per day. -The event in December (3 days): 8-10 posts per day.	-Off-season (from January to July): 3-7 posts per month. -High season (from August to November): 3-4 posts per week -The event in December (3 days): 5-8 posts per day	The content goes along the year with different information. The posts are published frequently (20-30 posts per month)
Type of contents	-Off-season: speaker reveals, video related to speakers, early bird ticket promotion, related post sharing, Slush blog sharing, side events post. -High season: venue reveals, programmes information, speaker announcement and related speaking videos, ticket promotions, related event sharing, Slush in numbers, side event information, Slush blog sharing. -Event: program posts, winner announcement, interesting speeches, event highlights, thank you and feedback posts.	-Off-season: side events information, interesting old pitching videos, Junction blog sharing, award/milestones, videos for promoting from volunteers, -High season: application information, challenges announcement, venue reveal, event information, Junction blog sharing, Junction in number, throwback, speaker announcement. -Event: photos from participants, livestream, short video per day, winner announcement, thank you post	Main contents - Team stories - Speeches from different fields (shared from Nordic Business Report) - Short cut videos from speakers on stage - Side events - Speaker announcement

Number of likes (depends on types of contents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Side events: +3</li> <li>-Speakers announcement: +30, depending on the reputation of speakers.</li> <li>-Blog sharing: +24</li> <li>-Related content sharing: +10</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Side events: +10</li> <li>-Challenges and speakers' announcement: +5</li> <li>-Junction blog sharing: +10</li> <li>-Photos from participants: +30</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Team stories: +15</li> <li>- Speeches from different fields (shared from Nordic Business Report): +10</li> <li>- Short cut videos from speakers on stage: 5+</li> <li>- Side events: +5</li> <li>- Speaker announcement: +100</li> </ul>
The posts have the highest likes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Related content sharing about Oodi new library: 391 reactions</li> <li>-The slush blog post about the events (challenges, new function): 140-220 reactions</li> <li>-Slush introduction video: 564 reactions</li> <li>-The short cut of a speech during the event: 3.2k reactions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Junction in number: 267 reactions</li> <li>-Winner announcement: 233 reactions</li> <li>-Short video per day during the event: +200 reactions</li> <li>-Thank you from Junction team: 95 reactions.</li> <li>-After movies: +100 reactions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Speaker announcement: Andrew McAfee (1k reactions), Barack Obama (1.3k reactions)</li> <li>-10-year challenges: 149 reactions</li> </ul>
Materials of posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Well-edited photos</li> <li>-Posts with attached links to the main websites or partner websites.</li> <li>-Short introduction videos</li> <li>-Camera photos and albums.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Meme gif</li> <li>-Event introduction video</li> <li>-Blog share links</li> <li>-People photos/albums</li> <li>-Links from related events/side events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Shared links from NBF blog sites</li> <li>-Photos/albums from participants and speakers</li> <li>-Short videos</li> </ul>
Campaign	Counting down Ticket selling promotion	Counting down Storytelling for volunteers	WemakeNBF campaign
Hashtag used	#slush18	No hashtag	#wemakeNBF#NBFForum2017 #NBFForum2018
Comments	There is no post which has only text Most of the post is share links or well-edited photos with the logo on top. No people oriented posts.	The posts reached the highest reactions are human-oriented posts Each post has a clickable work (Junction 2018) linked to the event.	Most of the posts are shared links from the web blog. The highest engagement posts go with speaker announcement contents.



## - Analysis tool – Likealyzer

Likealyzer is the free online service, was created by Meltwater to help companies measure, analyze and optimize their professional Facebook pages. It enhances the possibilities of managing Facebook page successfully by evaluating activities and dialogues.

## SLUSH

The figure below (Figure 9) shows the overview performance of Slush on Facebook account. With 226 interactive people, more than 76000 total page likes with 33 average page likes per post; Slush gains 50 scores on Likealyzer analysis.

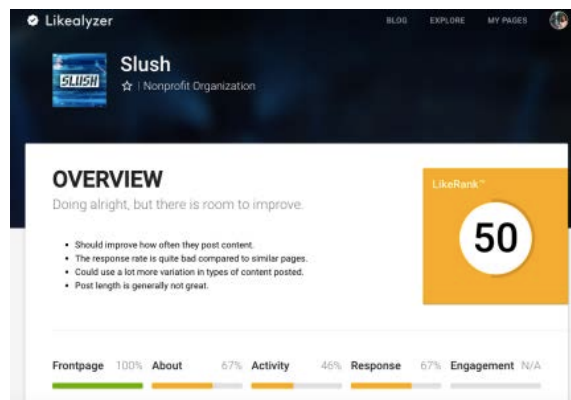


Figure 8 Likealyzer analysis on Slush webpage  
Source: Likealyzer, 2019.

## JUNCTION

Junction Facebook page achieved 63 scores on LikeRank (Figure 10) with the following numbers:

- Number of post per day: 0.2
- Average page likes: 6
- Interactive people talking about Junction: 142
- Total page likes: 6771
- Percentages of content materials: 20% photos, 40% videos, 40% notes.



Figure 9 Likealyzer analysis on Slush webpage  
Source: Likealyzer, 2019.

## NBF

Receiving the highest score comparing to others (73), NBF performs well in fields of the front page, about and response. These are some outstanding numbers reported from the tool:

- Number of post per day: 0.7
- Average page likes: 3
- Interactive people talking about Junction: 1684
- Total page likes: 29,049

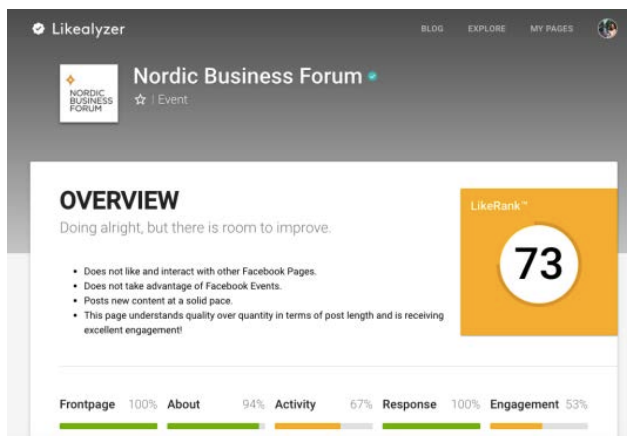


Figure 10 Likealyzer analysis on Slush webpage  
Source: Likealyzer, 2019.

## - Instagram

### Brief information on Instagram pages

Same method used on comparing competitors' Facebook activities, the table (Table 3) is designed to show the differences, similarities based on 7 factors including: type of organization, interactions, number of posts and the appropriate amount of likes, the highest likes post, type of contents, content of Instagram post in general and other comments.

Table 3. Instagram management of main competitors. (Instagram, 2019.)

Instagram page	SLUSH	JUNCTION	NBF
Type of organization	Non-profit organization	Non-profit organization	Non-profit organization
Interaction	- 578 posts - 12.3k followers - 547 following	- 306 posts - 3342 followers - 343 following	- 320 posts - 5275 followers - 226 following
Average interactions per post (Phlanx.com)	- 335 likes/post - 7 comments/post	- 102 likes/post - 2 comments/post	- 167 likes/post - 4 comments/post
Frequency of post	- During the event (2 days): 7-8 posts per day - Other time: 3-7 posts/month	- During the event month: 1-2 posts per day - Other time: 4-10 posts/month	- During the event (2 days):10-16 posts/day - Other time: 3-5 posts/month
Engagement rate	2.76%	3.12%	3.24%
The posts have the highest likes (within a year)	Volunteer photo: 1325 likes Evergreen stage photo: 739 likes Welcoming post: 1377 likes	Venue reveal: 324 likes Thank you post: 285 likes	- Speaker announcement: Barack Obama (2215 likes) - Venue photo (450 likes) - Speaker on stage photo: Barack Obama (486 likes), Marcus Buckingham (394 likes)
Materials of post	- Well-edited photos from venues - Viral clips (Event introduction videos) - Albums from participants, organizers and volunteers	- Photos from participants, volunteers, organizers - Viral clips (Event introduction videos) - Albums from participants	- Photos from participants, volunteers and speakers - Viral clips (Event introduction videos) - Albums from participants
Content of posts	- During the event: venues photos from different stages. - Other time: ticket selling posts, photos from volunteers and organizers, throwback, people on stages.	- During the event: participants' photos, venue photos, winner announcement, short cut after the movie. - Other time: participants geographical post, organizer's information, side events.	- During the event: thank you post, after the movie, speakers on stage photos, venue photos. - Other time: 10-year challenges, throwback, questions posts, speaker announcements, inspiring quotes.
Hashtag	#slush18 #slush19 #slush #slushvolunteers	#hackathon #junction2019 #hackthefuture #junction2018	#NBForum2018 #NBForum2019 #NBFSweden #NBFNorway #wemakenbf
Comments	Well edited-photo/ post	Most of the posts are participants photos	Most of the posts are speakers photos

### 3.2.2.3 Performance on Search Engine Optimization.

#### Analysis tool – Neilpatel

Founded in 2017, Neilpatel is a free analysis tool to check SEO performance. The tool provides easy-to-understand contents with website reports, SEO errors, and how to fix them. The figure below is collected from competitor analysis function of the webpage (Figure 12). It shows that Junction has the most affected SEO management.



Website	slush.org	nbforum.com	hackjunction.com
Traffic Rank			
SEO Score	<b>60</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>85</b>
Total Number of Warnings	6	3	2
Total Number of Errors	0	0	0
Total Number of Indexed Pages	0	0	0
Total Number of Back Links			
Top Keyword	partner	business	junction
Top 2 Word Key Phrase	co founder	nordic business	2019junctionxhel techtech
Top 3 Word Key Phrase	co founder ceo	nordic business forum	2019junctionxhel techtech racecommunityfor

Figure 11 Competitor analysis of Neilpatel  
Source: Neilpatel, 2019.

Based on collected data, a table is created to compare different SEO elements regarding positive and negative features, keywords related information and ranks by countries (Table 4).

Table 4. SEO elements of leading competitors. (Neilpatel, 2019.)

	Slush	Junction	NBF
Organic key-words	5640	723	965
Domain score	80	76	76
Back links	4125	2274	4966
Top SEO key-words	Slushs, what is slush, slush Helsinki, slush conference.	Junction, what is a junction, job hack, game junction, junction hackathon.	Nordic business forum, business forum, Nordic business forum Obama, nbforum
Positive feature	Good length heading tags, include the alt attributes, the keywords can be found on heading titles, heading tags and mega	Good length of wording tags; keywords are found in site titles, meta description and heading tags.	Good length of key-words. Has the alt attribute and mega description.

	description.		
Negative feature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Many links on a given page.</li> <li>- Has iframe content.</li> <li>- Limited amount of content-rich pages</li> </ul>	Low social share because of low-quality content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Has iframe content.</li> <li>- Lack of high-quality content relating to the keywords.</li> </ul>

### 3.2.3 Improving the organization

Because the event has not had any performance before, this phase will be excluded in the project.

### 3.3 Result summary

By comparing two different theories of Stapenhurst and Gunasekaran, Putnik, three steps model is applied to the case project. With the support of digital tools including, Google lighthouse for the website, Likealyzer for social media, Neilpatel for SEO, the positive and negative figures of top leading events were showed clearly. Moreover, thanks to the knowledge transferred from the benchmarking method, a data resource is used to create a digital marketing plan in the next chapter.

## **4 Digital marketing plan**

The purpose of this heading is to explain the reasons behind selecting digital marketing, and the model of conducting a digital marketing mix plan for this thesis. However, before diving into the insights of this topic, it is essential to clarify its definition, drivers and elements. After that, the author can create a digital marketing plan by utilizing SOSTAC model with the data source from the outcome of the benchmarking study above

### **4.1 Integrated digital marketing strategy**

#### **4.1.1 Definition**

According to Armstrong et al. (2016, 394), marketing communications is a term to portray the usage of promotion channels that benefits the companies by engaging customers, creating customer value through communication and building customer relationship. The promotion tools are divided into five categories, including advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relation and direct, digital marketing. Due to the changing of customer's behaviours, marketing strategies and digital technology, there is a need for integrated marketing communications (IMC). IMC is defined as an action of attentively integrating and coordinating many communication channels to provide concrete, necessary and clear information about the company and its brand.

#### **Drivers and elements**

By understanding the core players in the markets, it will be easier for the company to acquire the knowledge of IMC key drivers. Three main drivers are affecting IMC including organization-based drivers, market-based drivers and communications-based drivers. By understanding these three opportunities, the business managers will be able to drive down the cost, improve the profits and levels of productivity. These are some examples of key drivers:

- Organization-based drivers: improved efficiency, levels of marketing accountability and responsibility, competitive advantages, provision of a direct marketing framework...
- Market-based drivers: media costs, levels of brand differentiation, development of networks, competitor activity ...

- Communications-based drivers: technological advances, brand images, brand reputations, core messages ...

(Fill & Turnbull, 2016, 328 – 350.)

According to Chris and Sarah (2016, 350), IMC has a wide range of elements regarding communication channels, marketing mix, strategy, technologies, ... However, in the research project, the integration of communication channels is focused.

### **Advantages and disadvantages**

Although IMC has a variety advantages to the business, three main pros fit in the company case.

- IMC has the potential to improve the effectivity of the marketing communications and to review the current communications strategy
- IMC has the capability of developing communications activities
- IMC helps the foster customer focus and encourage brand development

Having said that, IMC also has some disadvantages, which should be put into consideration:

- IMC may require more management and contribution time of all involved parties
- IMC may face the restriction of local adaptation on global brands.
- With the incorrect or unsuitable IMC strategy, it may lead to severe damage to a brand's image.

(Fill & Turnbull, 2016, 328 – 350)

### **Strategy**

To attain the effective and efficient IMC strategy, the marketers should have basic knowledge on two promotion mix strategies: pull promotion and push promotion. While a pull strategy uses direct marketing activities to induce the final customer to buy the product, a push strategy focuses mainly on promoting the product to members in the value chain who in turn promote it to the final consumers. (Figure 4)





Figure 12 Push versus Pull Promotion Strategy.  
Source: Armstrong et al. (2016)

The differences between these two strategies can be seen clearly by how the companies apply them. In particular, the companies usually consider two main factors when creating IMC strategy: type of product and type of market. For example, business-to-customer companies usually use a pull strategy, spending more money on advertising and sales promotion. On the other hand, business-to-business companies tend to apply a push strategy by putting more money into personal selling. (Armstrong et al., 2016, 401-402.)

#### 4.2 Planning framework (SOSTAC® model)

Theoretically, SOSTAC® model is a digital marketing planning model created by Paul Smith to provide channel-specific guidance for marketers. Smith declared in the book that “eventually we will not have digital marketing plans, it will just be integrated marketing plans”. (Smith, 2015).

The primary purpose of this method is to determine the common elements of marketing planning tools in order to synthesize them into a flexible and accessible approach. SOSTAC® process comprises six stages which stand for Situation, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Actions and Control (Reed 2014, 146-147). These six stages are managed by answering six different questions: (Figure 5)

- Situation: What is the current position?
- Objective: What are the final goals?
- Strategy: How to achieve those goals?
- Tactics: How exactly an organization can be able to achieve them?
- Actions: What is the plan?
- Control: Did the organization manage to get there?



The SOSTAC® model is designed to create the strategic digital marketing plan for the commission company.



Figure 13 SOSTAC® model. Source: Reed (2014)

#### 4.2.1 Situation

##### Background

World Sauna Challenge has held 10 years ago that got recorded by Guinness in 2009 for the most significant number of nationalities in a sauna (76 different nationalities). The event gained successes more than expected, even though there was no detailed plan. Stated by one of project managers, Mr. Kevin, “the success came from presses outside of Finland due to the Guinness record”. Based on the old concept and the goal of making the event even more significant, Haaga-Helia teachers and staff decided to create a Guinness Sauna event in November 2019 to reach east 110 nationalities in a sauna. The planning process started in May 2019, with around 6 core organizers. This event belongs to major event type with international recognition.

The table below comes from the implementation of chapter 2.1 into practices which explains the external and internal factors of the event.

Table 5. Internal and external factors of Guinness Sauna event

Internal factors	External factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Product: majors event with the goal of attracting at least 110 nationalities in a sauna.</li> <li>- Financial factor: asking for funding from sponsorship and partnership</li> <li>- Place: in a Sauna with a capacity of 150 people.</li> <li>- Public relations: using mainly integrated digital marketing strategy</li> <li>- Positioning: one day programmes in a Sauna area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Destination: Helsinki</li> <li>+ Transportation: not included</li> <li>+ Policy and planning: get approved by foreign ministratation.</li> <li>+ Travel Intermediaries: contacting travel agencies for partnership</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Hospitality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Entertainment: Sauna event with a relaxing atmosphere</li> <li>+ Purpose-built venues: rent venues with international theme decorations</li> <li>+ Food and beverage: received from partnerships</li> <li>+ Accommodation: partnership (Original Sokos hotel Helsinki)</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Public relations marketing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Product launches: 8<sup>th</sup> of November</li> <li>+ Corporate Reputation: Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences</li> <li>+ Sponsorship: to be contacted</li> <li>+ Internal communication: Email.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Looking at the project in a bigger picture, the SWOT analysis is conducted to help the project stay in line with the core values and missions.

Table 6. SWOT analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experienced and professional staff</li> <li>- Wide network connections</li> <li>- Unique concept with clear a goal</li> <li>- Government support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have not gained confirmation from partners and sponsors</li> <li>- A new event which has limited marketing source</li> <li>- Lack of recognition</li> <li>- Limited budget</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reputation from Guinness can boost the potential of market attention</li> <li>- The event is held in November, which is the perfect time for Sauna.</li> <li>- Helsinki is the dynamic marketplace for the event industry</li> <li>- Interested investors/ partners/ sponsors in the event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Competitive market: there are multiple types of events in Helsinki area for international people, for example, SLUSH, Nordic Business Forum, Lux exhibition, ...</li> <li>- Venue problem relating to the capacity</li> </ul>

#### 4.2.2 Objectives

As mentioned earlier, the goal of the event is to attract 110 nationalities in a sauna. This is a brand new event which has the international aspect, therefore, an integrated digital marketing plan plays a vital role in public relations and event promotion. With an effective plan, the organization will able to generate high en-

agement rate and to draw the attention of not only potential participants but also partners, sponsors and third parties to the event.

### **4.2.3 Strategy**

A digital marketing strategy can be created by using the 4-step model: research, content, promotion, and measure.

#### **Phase 1: Research - understanding the organization**

Our ideal client would be:

- Backgrounds: people are from different countries, preferably who are currently living in Finland.
- Language: Have the capability of using English in the international environment
- Insights: Most people have not been to Finland before, as a result, they have endless passions on experience Finnish culture and eagers of networking, communicating and making friends from all over the world.
- Target location: Helsinki area and other big cities in Finland, for example, Turku, Tampere, ...
- Demography: there is no limit for the age range. However, potential participants can be from 19 to 60 years old.
- What they need: information related to living in Finland, for example, information about the Finnish culture experiences, activities, events and trips. Moreover, because of being new to the country, networking and communicating to meet new people is also an essential factor.
- Other: Actively use different social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube mainly as a source of information, LinkedIn for networking and job opportunities, English-speaking forums such as Reddit/Quora to gain knowledge and assist others.

#### **Product and offer.**

There are two focus groups of the event: the participant and third parties, such as partners and sponsors. By using digital marketing channels, the organization is able to offer to:

- Participants:
  - o Useful and valuable information based on their needs.
  - o Information about the event.
  - o Competition with awards (marketing campaigns).

- Partners and sponsors:
  - o Logo visibility in all marketing materials including posters, flyers, event slides, Facebook page, Website and viral videos.
  - o Involved in Facebook and Instagram posts with the content written and prepared in co-operation with partners/sponsors.

### **Industry trends**

Experience industry is blooming quickly. Understanding the trends that people always want to try something new and different, the organization aims to create a unique and stand-out event that helps improve attendee experiences. Besides, according to the trends of using digital channels, five tools should be integrated into the digital marketing plan: Website, Social media channels, Search engine optimization, Paid advertisement and Email marketing.

### **Phase 2: Content**

The main content of digital channels should include different types regarding videos, visual content, articles, the podcast of influencer marketing. There are some special rules which should be followed while conducting content marketing:

- Images: should include organization logo and sponsorship information. Quality images should be used with eye-catching colour.
- Text: use “we” instead of “I” and try to put the main hashtags of the event. Try to start with a short and attractive title indicating the whole idea of the content.
- One content should focus on one specific topic which should not be too long and hard to read or follow.

### **Phase 3: Promotion**

As mentioned above, promoting an event requires the integration of digital marketing channels. Therefore, the organization should have a detailed and useful plan to communicate with the target group of audience.

### **Phase 4: Measure**

The measurement contributes to the success of any marketing campaign. In this case, it can be evaluated by several people did sign-up to the event, engagement

rate on the social media, and feedback from audiences. The figure below shows the management process of measuring the Social media crisis. (Figure 13)

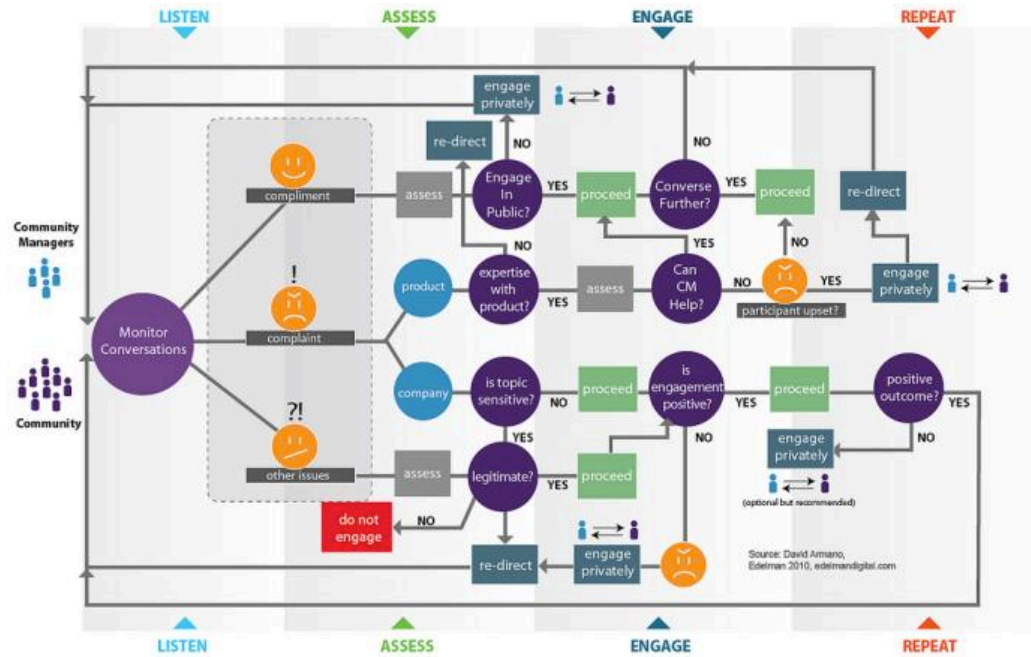


Figure 14 Social Media Crisis Management Framework.

#### 4.2.4 Tactics

##### Editorial calendar

By understanding the importance of digital marketing calendar in keeping the business on track and up-to-date, a calendar is attached based on the Editorial Calendar Template founded on Bobangus (Figure 14). The calendar is made for four months started from the beginning of August until the event date.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	bobangus.com GUINNESS SAUNA EVENT DIGIAL MARKETING PLAN								
2	Copyright © 2012-2017 bobangus.com. All rights reserved.								
3									
4	Editorial Roadmap								
5	August		September		October		November		Event date - 08.11
6	Purpose		Audience engagement		Final information		Final information		Final information
7	Content		Partners and sponsors information		Event program and venue		Important and necessary information for participants		Updating event status and photos of participants
8	Marketing Campaigns		Content marketing		Content marketing		Counting down campaign		
9	Holidays				2nd of November: All Saints' day				
10									
11									
12	Editorial Calendar								
13	Name/Title	Content Type	Owner/ Author	Priority	Publish Live Date	Status	Theme/ Categories	Audience	Social Media Channels
14	Introduction	Event post	Marketing manager	Medium	first week of August	Not Started	Content	Niche audiences international sauna lover / Mass: different nationalities who are able to understand/speak English	Facebook and Instagram
15	Related information about sauna	Regular post		Low	2 posts per week during August	Not Started	Photo + video + content		
16	Photo campaign	Campaign		High	21/08-10/09	Not Started	Photo		
17	Partners and sponsors information	Announcement		High	15/09-15/10	Not Started	Photo + content		
18	Event program	Announcement		High	20/10.	Not Started	Photo		
19	Venue reveal	Infographic		Medium	25/10.	Not Started	Photo		
20	Important information and reminding	Announcement		High	5/11.	Not Started	Photo + content		
21	Event status and participants photos	Information		Medium	8/11.	Not Started	Photo		
22	Holiday post	Infographic		Low	2/11.	Not Started	Photo		
23									

Figure 15 Editorial Calendar Template for GWC

##### Supporting tools

Following tools are chosen based on reviews on Google search engine and personal experiences of the author. These can be seen as supportive sources that make the digital marketing plan more effective and efficient. The tools are divided

into four main categories based on their distinguish functions: tools for images, tools for video, tools for SEO, tools for paid advertisements and tools for email marketing.

Tools for editing and creating images:

- **Canva.com** is a graphic-design tool website, which allows users to drag-and-drop feature, photographs, graphics, fonts, layouts; share and print business cards; design logos, presentations, images, ...
- **VSCO** is a mobile photography app which can be used to capture, edit photos through pre-set editing tools and various filters. The toolkit features include fade, clarity, skint one, sharpen, saturation, contrast, temperature, exposure and other adjustments.
- **Facetune** is another photo editing application that is available on iOS and Android devices. With the usages of filters, lighting, contrast, frame options and textures, the tool helps users edit portraits and selfies, reshape images, draw, and enhance photo's quality.
- **Afterlight** is outstanding for quick and straight forward editing application. The designs are simple, with powerful and snappy tools.

Tools for editing and creating videos:

- **Quik video creator app** is a free application that allows users to do amazing quick videos with different colour filters, text fonts, music and speed effects for Facebook and Instagram. A video can be created with just a few taps by choosing your favourite photos, and video clips then follow the inscription, which takes take a few seconds.
- **FilmoraGO** is also a free video editor application which has no time limit on the clip. It allows users to make a video with music and effects. Having the same function as Quik, FilmoraGO is easily shared on Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, WhatsApp, ...
- With the mission of connecting experiences among people, **Magisto** tries to transform the videos and photos taken by people into smart and short movies with emotion and excitement.
- **Videolean** is a platform to create an informative video which does not require film-marking knowhow. The video is conducted quickly and cheaply on existing templates. The main focus group of this entrepreneur is business and project management groups.

Tools for search engine optimization

- **Ubersuggest** is one of free and useful keyword research tools for creating a content marketing strategy. By using Google autocomplete to produce good keyword ideas, Ubersuggest allows users to get insights into strategies that are working for others in the market. Doing so help marketers adopt the best strategy, improve it, and gain an edge.
- **Google tools**
  - o **Google trends** is another tool to search for keyword popularity and media coverage of a specific topic. Google trends work as an analysis tool that gives an insight into the popularity of top search queries in Google search among a variety of countries and languages.
  - o **Google ads keyword planner:** is different from Google trends by giving specific suggestions for the right keywords to targeted advertisements.
- **Keyword tool (keywordtool.io):** has the same function and algorithm as Ubersuggest, Keyword tool also gives offers such as creating content, making pay-per-click advertising and other marketing activities.

Tools for a paid advertisement:

Considering paid advertisement, paid social media and paid search engine ads are well-known for cheap and useful tools. With the support of SEO, the business will be able to find new potential customers based on the things they are interested in and the ways they access online search tools. In this case, to minimize the cost spending on marketing, the author recommends using Facebook Ads and Google AdWords.

Tools for email marketing

MailChimp is an effective email-marketing platform for small businesses. With the integration of sending emails, managing subscribers and tracking results, the platform helps the business maintain a long-term relationship with the customers. Personally, choosing the free pricing option with 2000 subscribers and 12000 emails per month will be beneficial action if the organization considers using this platform for the email marketing strategy.

## 4.2.5 Actions

In the beginning, this heading will provide recommendations with the supports of mentioned digital tools. The recommendations will carry out some actions generated from the best practices of each participant according to the benchmarking database. In general, the information is sorted into four main headings: website, social media, search engine optimization and email marketing. In the end, a campaign is presented, giving necessary information and explaining the usages of different web technologies in an integrative way.

### 4.2.5.1 Website actions:

- Performance:
  - Navigation bar: should include About, Programmes/events, Resources, Contact Register buttons.
  - Front page image/video: viral clips or image relating to the sauna with people orientation. It should include proper size images/videos, the logo of the organization, navigation bar, slogan and call-to-action buttons.
  - Slogan and call-to-action buttons should be placed in the middle of the front page. It should be 1-2 lines with “register now” button.
  - Content of the front page: main page; about the Guinness Sauna event; main and side events; partnership information; more information based on three categories: “for partner”, “for volunteer”, “for participant”; contact information.
  - Others:
    - Making sure the page has no enormous network payloads; proper size front and off-screen images; low numbers of page redirects; low server response time; good encode images; different off-screen images,
    - Improving page load time, JavaScript execution time and speed index
    - Avoiding texts remained invisible during web font load, multiple redirect pages
    - Reducing the time of eliminating blocking systems, deferring unused CSS, checking the web font visibility.
- Accessibility:
  - All buttons should have accessible names
  - The page contains heading, landmark, and skip link regions



- Use low-contrast text, an insufficient contrast ratio of backgrounds and foreground colours, which make users difficult or impossible to read
- Fulfil the roles of ARIA, which has a positive effect on the accessibility of the webpage, make sure that the content is perceivable in the view of customers.
- Apply UI components and navigation bar to make the website operable.
- Avoid confusion while creating the content. Users can understand the interface.
- Try to provide the content which can be consumed by a wide variety of user agents (browsers). It should be robust with assistive technology.
- Best practises:
  - Make sure the site is protected with HTTPS, which means there is no sensitive data.
  - Clearly ask for permissions on page load.
  - Avoid application cache.
  - The page should also be mobile friendly and valid structured data.
  - Maintain good quality of images and videos with a correct aspect ratio.
  - Pay attention to front-end JavaScript libraries, for example, security vulnerability and cross-origin destinations.
  - Make sure all the links leading to valid sources.
  -
- SEO:
  - Use descriptive text and legible font sizes; valuable tags and successful HTTP status code, which influences the properly index pages.
  - Try to create 100% readable text with meta descriptions and meta tag to optimize mobile screens.

#### **4.2.5.2 Social media actions**

The table below shows the recommendation for social media performance.

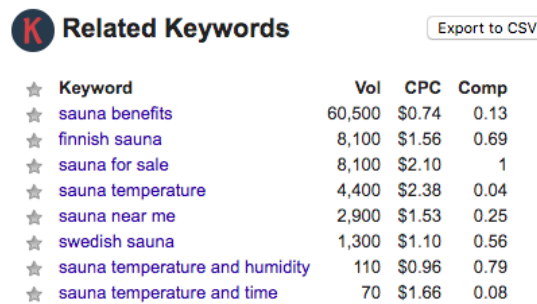
Table 5. Recommendation for social media performance

	Facebook	Instagram
Cover photo	Automated video relating to Sauna	No
Number of posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Off-season (from January to July): 3-10 posts per month.</li> <li>- High season (from August to November): 2-3 posts per week.</li> <li>- A event in November (1 day): 8-10 posts per day.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- During the event (2 days): 7-8 posts per day</li> <li>- Other time: 3-7 posts/month</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Off-season: partnership reveals, early bird registration promotion, related post sharing about Guinness, Sauna ... side events information if the event has, interesting old sauna related videos, videos for promoting from volunteers.</li> <li>- High season: venue reveals, programmes information, video related to the programme, speaker announcement and related speaking videos, ticket registration promotions, Sauna in numbers, side event information.</li> <li>- Event: program posts, exciting speeches, event highlights, thank you and feedback posts, photos from participants, livestream, short video per day.</li> <li>- After movie</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- During the event: participants' photos, venue photos,</li> <li>- Other time: registration information posts, photos of the organizers, programme schedules, 10-year challenges, throwback, questions posts, venue and partnership announcements, inspiring quotes.</li> <li>- After the movie</li> </ul>
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adding Facebook event announcement</li> <li>- Focusing on image and video - Instruction, tutorial videos: How to do sauna in Finnish way?</li> <li>- Specific posts for days/occasions/holidays</li> <li>- Keep track of messages coming to the Facebook account to see message requests/filtered requests from time to time</li> <li>- Creating posts mentioning about users' testimonials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- While writing content, use popular hashtags and trendiest Instagram hashtags under the support of SEO.</li> <li>- One of the great ways to drive not only photo likes but also comments is using photo captions to ask questions.</li> <li>- Focusing on "story" on Instagram: The Instagram stories, there are plenty of features that can drive engagement such as Polls, for an instant, have you ever gone naked to the sauna? Yes/No, or Questions, e.g. Which is the most exciting things to do in sauna trend to you?</li> <li>- Discover new people and brands to follow, especially experts in the service, event and experience fields. It could also be potential partners and sponsors.</li> </ul>

Materials of the post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Well-edited photos</li> <li>- Posts with attached links to the main websites or partner websites.</li> <li>- Meme gif</li> <li>- Links from related events/side events</li> <li>- Diversify the image: Based on the psychology of people, they do not want to see the same highly polished images used for adverts, they want to see images that are more relatable and less edited. Therefore, images should be people-oriented.</li> <li>- Short viral clips / Event introduction video</li> </ul>
Campaign	<p>Counting down to the event day          Storytelling for volunteers          Photo competition.</p>

### 4.2.5.3 Search Engine Optimization actions

As the core idea of the event is related to the sauna, sauna-related words below are recommendations for trending keywords (Figure 15).

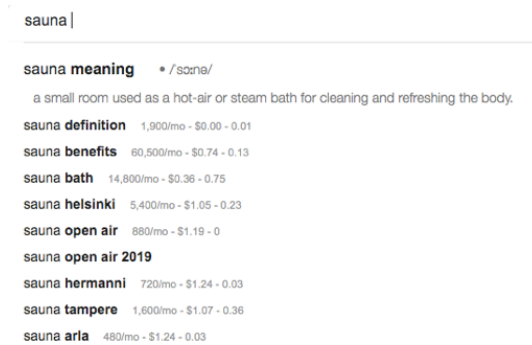


The screenshot shows a table of related keywords for 'sauna' on Keyword.io. The table has four columns: Keyword, Vol, CPC, and Comp. There are 10 rows of data, each starting with a star icon. An 'Export to CSV' button is visible in the top right corner.

★ Keyword	Vol	CPC	Comp
★ sauna benefits	60,500	\$0.74	0.13
★ finnish sauna	8,100	\$1.56	0.69
★ sauna for sale	8,100	\$2.10	1
★ sauna temperature	4,400	\$2.38	0.04
★ sauna near me	2,900	\$1.53	0.25
★ swedish sauna	1,300	\$1.10	0.56
★ sauna temperature and humidity	110	\$0.96	0.79
★ sauna temperature and time	70	\$1.66	0.08

Figure 16 "Sauna" word on Keyword.io

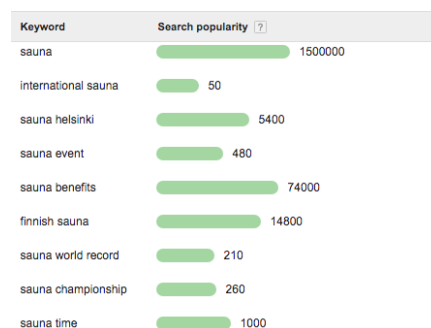
Besides, with the support of Google search engine, these are suggestions while looking for the sauna topic (Figure 16)



The screenshot shows Google search engine suggestions for the word 'sauna'. It includes a definition, a pronunciation guide, and a list of related terms with their respective search volumes and metrics.

sauna meaning	*/sɑ:nə/
a small room used as a hot-air or steam bath for cleaning and refreshing the body.	
sauna definition	1,900/mo - \$0.00 - 0.01
sauna benefits	60,500/mo - \$0.74 - 0.13
sauna bath	14,800/mo - \$0.36 - 0.75
sauna helsinki	5,400/mo - \$1.05 - 0.23
sauna open air	880/mo - \$1.19 - 0
sauna open air 2019	
sauna hermanni	720/mo - \$1.24 - 0.03
sauna tampere	1,600/mo - \$1.07 - 0.36
sauna arla	480/mo - \$1.24 - 0.03

Figure 17 "Sauna" word on Google search engine



The screenshot shows a table of search popularity measurements for various keywords related to 'sauna' on Google Keyword Planner. The table has two columns: Keyword and Search popularity. The search popularity is represented by a green bar and a numerical value.

Keyword	Search popularity
sauna	1500000
international sauna	50
sauna helsinki	5400
sauna event	480
sauna benefits	74000
finnish sauna	14800
sauna world record	210
sauna championship	260
sauna time	1000

Figure 18 Search popularity measurement by Google Keyword Planner

The actions above help create digital marketing content with higher viewer engagement. To make the content more attractive, there are some tips for creating article headlines regarding: using how-to articles, negative words, exciting adjectives,

tives, and numbers in headlines, asking a strange or funny question, making a bold statement. To conclude, these are some recommendations for the content:

- 10 sauna benefits that you may not know.
- 5 best saunas in Helsinki areas
- How to do the Finnish sauna in the right way
- What is the perfect sauna time?

#### 4.2.5.4 Email marketing actions

Email marketing actions will be powerful in case of retaining potential customers.

Some practical actions that can be done with email marketing:

- Sending updated information relating to the events to registered customers
- Counting down campaign before the event date

#### 4.2.5.5 Example of integration

The table below describes the ideas of a campaign using digital marketing mix.

Table 7. Example of using digital marketing integration

Name	Photo competition
Purpose	Raising awareness and participants engagement
Description	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Taking photos with something representing your home country (for example, flag, costume, food, ...)</li> <li>2. It is a plus if the photo is taken from the sauna or related to the sauna</li> <li>3. Posting it on the social media channels with hashtag #photo-challenge #guinnesssaunaevent</li> </ol>
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- August</li> <li>- Duration: 1-2 weeks</li> </ul>
Content marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction to the competition</li> <li>- Rewards</li> <li>- Reminders</li> <li>- Winner announcement</li> </ul>
Website	Creating posts, articles based on above content marketing. Pay attention to article headline, keywords and backlinks.
Social media	<p>Create posts with detailed instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facebook: create posts, events and invite people to participate</li> <li>- Instagram: use hashtags and story function to repost the photos</li> </ul>
SEO	Finding suitable keywords relating to photo competition, sauna photos, ...
Email marketing	<p>Sending email informing about the competitions</p> <p>Following up with the newest status of the campaign.</p>

#### 4.2.6 Control

To measure the outcomes of the strategy, there are a few ways to do so:

- Direct method

- Quantitative research: Sending a survey or feedback form to collect useful data
- Qualitative research: interviewing participants through a one-on-one meeting or group interview.
- Indirect method:
  - Finding reviews and information from social media, search engine tools and some reviews websites
  - Using supporting tools and applications
    - Likealyzer: is a free online service, users can use the service only by entering the URL of a Facebook page in the search-box and press enter. This tool helps companies measure the possibilities of their Facebook presence and analyze the potential and success rate of a Facebook Page by evaluating activity and dialogue to ensure success.
    - Minter.io is a tool for Instagram Analytics and Hashtag Analytics. With Minter.io reports, the users will get detailed information about their performances on Instagram (male/female distribution, countries and cities in which they are the most followed, their most engaging posts and topics) and recommendations to increase engagement.
    - Neilpastel tools are free tools to measure the performances of online marketing strategies including websites, SEO, hashtag and backlinks.

### **4.3 Result summary**

Following SOSTAC model of creating a digital marketing plan, the author explained step by step from the beginning to the end of the chapter. Starting from the theoretical background, then moving to the planning process, the ideas were showed clearly with practical examples. In the end, the uses of four main digital tools and how they can be generated were provided beneficially. The tools used during the analysis process were explained in details. As a conclusion, there are four main actions that the project managers should consider about regarding website, social media, SEO and Email marketing. Each digital marketing field has different aspects, management, evaluation support tools and customer touchpoints. The ideas of each action based on the data collected from the benchmarking process.

## 5 Conclusions

This chapter provides critical findings of the thesis project. It is also the tool to round up the thoughts and draw conclusions based on the benchmarking research method and digital marketing plan. The further recommendations for future research and self-evaluation on learning are given.

### 5.1 Key findings

Starting from the significant development of the event industry, the author decided to dive deeper into factors affecting the success of an event. Moreover, digital marketing is growing significantly with the booming of new technologies. Therefore, the primary objective of this thesis project is to find out the connection between digital marketing and event management. Based on desktop research as well as previous theories, the consideration is explained by finding the common points integrating these two fields. It turns out that customer satisfaction and value creation generated from an event are vital indications to evaluate the success of a marketing strategy. On the other hand, marketing strategy provides beneficial tools to interact and communicate with customers, which has effects on internal and external factors of events

The data collection process was genuinely challenging. Guinness Sauna is a brand new event of Haaga-Helia UAS. Due to the lack of recognition, the benchmarking method was chosen to collect the dataset and support the digital marketing plan. By comparing two different theories of Stapenhurst and Gunasekaran & Putnik, the author decided to apply three steps model of Stapenhurst to this case project. Three various top-trending events in Helsinki for students are analysed: SLUSH. Junction and Nordic Business Forum, the positive and negative figures have been showed with the supports of digital techniques including Google lighthouse for the website, Likealyzer for social media and Neilpatel for SEO.

Thanks to the dataset given by the benchmarking research method, I created a digital marketing plan in details based on the SOSTAC planning model. The situation shows the background, SWOT analysis, internal and external factors of the case project. Moving to the objective and strategy parts, I have been given the insights and more in-depth understanding of the event's current situation. Tactics part includes digital tools that can be used during the project management pro-

cess. Four main actions that should be considered are website, social media, SEO and Email marketing. Knowing that each digital marketing field has different aspects, management, evaluation support tools and customer touchpoints, I have explained carefully based on the data collected from the benchmarking process with clear examples. The control can be seen as further ideas in the future if these tools are implemented.

Overall, this thesis mainly gives potential ideas to develop the marketing strategy of the Guinness Sauna event. It can also be seen as pieces of advice and a framework for marketing specialists to conduct a digital marketing plan for any companies in the 4.0 industry and to event organisers to improve the interactions with participants.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The digital marketing plan in this thesis project focuses mainly on integrating four main techniques including websites, social media (Facebook and Instagram), SEO and email marketing. However, there are more digital tools that should be put under consideration for any future research such as paid advertising, blog, YouTube video marketing, ... If there is any more in-depth analysis on social media marketing, Twitter, LinkedIn and Reddit should also be included.

Some more suggestions can be made about the integrated digital marketing planning process. For instance, during this thesis, I paid attention mostly on how to create the best out of other competitors. However, while creating any services, customer orientation is an essential factor. Therefore, future research should dive deeper into the customer journey and match different digital techniques to different stages of the customer journey.

## **5.3 Evaluation and reflection on learning**

Even though the writing process has been very time consuming, it is yet very educational. I attained useful knowledge about different social media channels, digital techniques to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of the marketing strategy as well as learning about project management. The thesis also inspires my self-study motivation to watch the videos and to read related articles, previous researches, theories.



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