jamk.fi

Making It Out of Wood
Luxury marketing through social media for small business

Kati Cartmell

Master's thesis
November 2019
School of Business
Degree Programme in International Business Management

jamk.fi

Description

Author(s) Cartmell, Kati	Type of publication Master's thesis	Date November 2019
		Language of publication: English
	Number of pages 45	Permission for web publication: x

Title of publication **Making It Out of Wood** Luxury marketing through social media for small business

Degree programme Degree Programme in International Business Management

Supervisor(s) Saleem, Salman

Assigned by Company X

Abstract

Company X is a one-man woodworking company in Central Ostrobothnia, Finland and it has been in business since 2017. The company offers customer-oriented services in restoration, recycling and upcycling furniture, as well as in creating new pieces of furniture to meet the customer's wishes and needs. The set of services that the company provides can be seen as luxury, so they need to be fully aware of the niche market that they are trying to appeal to and who their potential customers are.

This study examined luxury marketing in the era of digital marketing. More precisely, it focused on what digital marketing means and how valuable it would be to businesses to determine who their potential customers are, how they behave and how they can be reached. The study discusses how marketing has evolved during the recent decades and how social media has changed the game when it comes to marketing products and services to a targeted audience.

The case company wished to learn how they could use digital marketing and social media to boost their business. Moreover, the company wanted to know whether they could learn from other businesses that are trying to attract the right customers in the world of luxury products.

The author conducted a study for which a sample of companies was selected, their use of their digital marketing channels was monitored for 30 days and then compared to each other. The research method used in this process was comparative analysis. As a result, Company X received proposals on how they could improve their status in the social media channels and provide better content for their followers and in this way, attract more customers.

Keywords/tags (subjects) woodworking, carpentry, luxury marketing, digital marketing, social media, comparative analysis

Miscellaneous (Confidential information)

jamk.fi

Kuvailulehti

Tekijä(t) Cartmell, Kati	Julkaisun laji Opinnäytetyö, ylempi AMK	Päivämäärä Marraskuu 2019
		Julkaisun kieli: Englanti
	Sivumäärä 45	Verkkojulkaisulupa myönnetty: x

Työn nimi **Puusta veistetty** Pienen yrityksen luksusmarkkinointia sosiaalisen median avulla

Tutkinto-ohjelma International business management

Työn ohjaaja(t) Saleem, Salman

Toimeksiantaja(t) Yritys X

Tiivistelmä

Yritys X on yhden miehen puusepänyritys Keski-Pohjanmaalla, Suomessa, ja heidän toimintansa alkoi vuonna 2017. He tarjoavat asiakaslähtöisiä puusepänpalveluita entisöinnistä ja kierrättämisestä uusiokäyttöön, sekä suunnittelevat ja toteuttavat asiakkaiden toiveista ja haaveista koostuvat unelmat uusista huonekaluista. Tämän tyyliset palvelut voidaan kategorisoida luksuspalveluiksi, joten heidän täytyy ymmärtää, miten pienelle markkina-alueelle he yrittävät markkinoida palveluitaan ja ketä heidän asiakkaansa ovat.

Tämä tutkimus käy läpi luksusmarkkinointia digitaalisen markkinoinnin aikakaudella, mitä se oikein tarkoittaa ja kuinka tärkeää yrityksien olisi selvittää tarkoin, ketä heidän potentiaaliset asiakkaansa ovat, miten he toimivat ja miten heidät tavoittaa. Tutkimus selventää, miten markkinointi on muuttunut viimeisten vuosikymmenien aikana ja miten sosiaalinen media on mullistanut tavan, miten yritykset voivat markkinoida tuotteitaan ja palveluitaan kohdennetulle yleisölle.

Yritys X halusi saada selville, miten he voisivat käyttää digitaalista markkinointia ja sosiaalista mediaa hyödykseen saadakseen lisää asiakkaita ja näkyvyyttä markkinoilla. Heitä kiinnosti myös tietää, miten toiset luksuspalveluita ja -tuotteita tarjoavat yritykset käyttävät sosiaalista mediaa hyödykseen.

Tekijä teki vertailevan tutkimuksen, johon hän valitsi tietyn määrän yrityksiä ja seurasi heidän sosiaalisten kanavien käyttöä 30 päivän ajan ja vertasi niitä sitten keskenään. Tutkimuksen lopuksi Yritys X sai koosteen tuloksista, miten he voisivat parantaa näkyvyyttään sosiaalisissa kanavissa ja tuottaa parempaa sisältöä seuraajilleen, ja samalla saada uusia asiakkaita.

Avainsanat puuseppä, puusepäntyöt, luksusmarkkinointi, digitaalinen markkinointi, sosiaalinen media, vertaileva tutkimus

Muut tiedot

Contents

Figures

Tables

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Since the beginning of time as we know it, people have always been making and creating things with their hands. Throughout this time, the motivation behind this has varied dramatically. At first it was a necessity but nowadays it is mostly a way to pass the time.

Making things by hand has always been a big part of the Finnish culture, where people have been able to build their own houses from scratch for centuries with their hard-working attitude and knowledge that has been passed on from one generation the next (Puutyön historiaa [History of woodworking]). When most of the Finns still lived in the country, most of them could not afford to buy food or clothes for themselves so the only option was to grow one's own crops and make one's own clothes. Even at difficult times, Finns have always been hard-working and well-known for their "can do" attitude.

Finland has always been known as a land of forestry, and our ancestors have been able to take advantage of it throughout the years. Wood is durable, flammable, adjustable and versatile, and it has been turned into shelters, furniture, vehicles and tools from very early ages (Puutyön historiaa [History of woodworking]).

When the population began to move into bigger cities to live and earn their money in factories and other bigger facilities, there was not enough time or need for hand crafting and people drifted away from these skill sets. This was the time when mass production became prevalent which brought the prices down so that more people could afford to buy goods.

When people can afford more things and their money stretches further, their purchasing behaviour changes and decisions can be made quite impulsively and without further thought. This means that many end up regretting their purchases and that the bought goods are not used and may be thrown away soon after purchasing. Many companies have started to produce products that intentionally do not last for as long as their former goods have lasted, so that

the customers are forced to buy new ones once the products have been broken and cannot be used anymore. This has also taught consumers to replace their goods with very flimsy excuses at times. Alternatively, they do not want to repair the products even if that was a possibility and even cheaper than buying a new one. Products have become more disposable and they do not hold their value in the same way as they used to. In the meantime, companies producing these disposable items are making great profits and our planet is becoming filled with the waste that these disposable products cause.

Thankfully, global warming and other environmental issues are slowly starting to make people think differently. They have started to think about their spending and materialism and question whether that is the best way to live. People have woken up to the thought that, perhaps, longer-lasting products may be the way forward, even if they may be more expensive. Spending a little extra may mean that they do not have to buy a new pair of shoes or a new suitcase as frequently and that they will save money in the long run.

This is when smaller businesses that provide longer-lasting, environmentally friendlier products and services can gain more market share against the mass-producing large corporations. They just need to know how to make themselves seen and heard, so that the customers know that they exist and why they exist.

1.2 Motivation for the research

New business ventures are emerging all over the country every day and every one of them has one top priority on their mind when they begin: to make the business succeed and last. However, not every business owner understands how important it is for them to know who their potential customers are because not everybody goes to business school or takes studies about being an entrepreneur. Some of them just want to do what they are good at and make some money with it.

This is very much the situation with the case company of this study, Company X. After doing several different kinds of jobs for the past two decades, the business owner of Company X found their true passion in woodworking in

their late 30s and understood that this was what they wanted to do in their life from there on. Better yet, they did not only want to do it as their hobby, but they wanted to make their living out of it as well. They wanted to make wooden goods for others to enjoy, and they wanted to help people hold on to their old, beloved pieces of furniture instead of throwing them away and replacing them with mass produced items.

Company X has been in business since September 2017 and the company operates out of a small town in Central Ostrobothnia, Finland. The company offers customer-oriented services in restoration, recycling and upcycling furniture, as well as in creating new pieces of furniture to meet the customers' wishes and needs. During the two years that the case company has been in business, the business founder has seen that there is a demand for these services in Central Ostrobothnia. Practically every month, they hear positive remarks about the fact that they are "providing old fashioned carpentry services" when people learn about the business.

Most fields providing handmade products and detailed services have a relatively small market area, and their customers may be spread widely around the country. Not everybody can appreciate and value the time and effort that goes into a hand carved wooden spoon or a custom-made table, for example. This is why, carpentry can be seen as a luxury service, because the field requires serious skills, expensive tools and plenty of man-hours, and not everybody can afford or wish to pay for it.

Company X did not seek any funding for their business even at the beginning, so the start was very humble, and the finances had to stretch far. When most of the cash must be invested in the expensive material costs of the customer projects, it automatically ensures that the money that can be spent on advertising and marketing shrinks to a bare minimum. However, the company is fairly unknown even in the town where it originates from, and the business owner understands that there have to be ways for marketing and finding potential customers. This is where I entered the scene.

I can fully relate to the problem that Company X is facing from both parties' point of view. I, too, am a customer who too often falls for the cheapest option, even if I am very well aware that I may be returning to buy the same cheap

pair of shoes in a few months' time or a new cheap washing machine when the old one breaks down after only a year or two. If one does not have the funds to spend at that time, it is difficult to become convinced about saving money for a more expensive option, when the cheap option can be purchased immediately, and the whole matter solved for the time being.

At the same time, I can see how difficult it is for Company X to convince the potential customers that for the money that they may spend on their products and services, they would receive 100% craftmanship and skills that are quite rare today. Simultaneously they are serving the rest of the world by holding onto their old coffee tables or cupboards and having them repainted, instead of throwing them away and buying new ones. By keeping their old pieces of furniture, it is possible that the products also gain more value through the attachment that develops between the owner of the piece and the piece itself. Moreover, they teach their children and other family members that not everything needs to be replaced if it can be mended. Old pieces of furniture have often fond memories associated with them, after each family member that has owned them.

Company X did not find it possible to devote enough of their time to go to a business school before starting the business venture, so they chose another way. They wanted me to complete a research project for them, and show how a business, such as theirs, selling luxury products and services, could find their potential customers by using digital marketing, which is the latest and most cost-effective way of marketing in the modern world.

Marketing has always been one of my favourite fields of study and I have always wanted to devote my studying time to it and develop my skills further. Conducting this research for Company X was very suitable for me since I have realised how big a part of our lives digital marketing is affecting currently, and I wish to investigate it more. It also pushed me outside of my comfort zone when for the past six years, my career had focused solely on financial management and accounting.

Customers can have very specific needs, and companies must be aware of these needs in order to be able to fill them. We need to go back to basics to fully understand what makes people buy something. We also need to be able

to find the values and motivations behind the consumers' actions, and then adjust the advertisement accordingly to find the most potential customers.

The motivation and values behind purchases change all the time and they are strongly influenced by global phenomena, such as economic changes, environmental concerns and other major matters. These issues shape the world all the time.

I decided to include the aspect of social media channels in my research because I use them to great extent myself. Hence, I am very familiar with them, but at the same time I wish to know more and gain knowledge of how companies can utilise them in their marketing. Social media channels offer a very easy and affordable way to connect with customers, to make a firm known to big social groups and to make any business more interesting and approachable than the ones that are not using social media channels. I felt that Company X could benefit from the research more if they could carry on keeping their marketing costs down by using the more affordable tools and still reach new potential customers every day and bring joy to their followers with their content.

1.3 Research questions

The company owner wished to learn more about their potential future clients. This would help them to choose and plan their marketing strategy correctly from the start and give their company the best possible way to succeed.

The chosen research questions for the thesis were:

1. How can small companies that provide luxury products and services use digital marketing and social media channels to boost their business?

2. What can a small woodworking company learn from other small businesses and their use of digital marketing and social media channels and how could they put it to use to gain more potential customers?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Luxury marketing

Luxury products are the type of products that cannot be purchased by everybody, either because of their value, location or attractiveness. Luxury goods are the opposite to the necessity goods, that everybody buys on day-to-day or year-to-year basis (Bastien, 2015.)

Vincent Bastien and Jean-Noël Kapferer co-wrote a book called The Luxury Strategy in 2009 and in this book, they argue that there are three different strategies to sell luxury products: luxury, fashion and premium. Bastien and Kapferer state as follows:

> *"The luxury strategy aims at creating the highest brand value and pricing power by leveraging all intangible elements of singularity- i.e. time, heritage, country of origin, craftsmanship, man-made, small series, prestigious clients, etc.*
>
> *The fashion strategy is a totally different business model: here, heritage, time, are not important; fashion sells by being fashionable, which is to say, a very perishable value.*
>
> *The premium strategy can be summarized as "pay more, get more." Here the goal is to prove -through comparisons and benchmarking- that this is the best value within its category. Quality/price ratio is the motto. This strategy is, by essence, comparative." (Bastien, 2015)*

Out of these three options, the luxury strategy fits the best for a carpentry business, because its focus is on to making the products stand out next to the mass-produced goods. The challenge is to make the products more attractive by emphasising the craftmanship and uniqueness so that the customer would be willing to choose them over the competitive goods and pay the extra money for them.

The Lombardo Agency writes on their blog post, in August 2017, that there are eight principals when it comes to luxury marketing mix. These eight principals are:

1. Performance
2. Pedigree
3. Paucity

4. Persona
5. Public figures
6. Placement
7. Public relations
8. Pricing

The first principal, performance, refers to how the purchased product must work and perform as expected. However, the performance must be in a higher level of efficiency compared to its medium range competitors. (Lombardo Agency, 2017.)

Pedigree represents the history behind the brand of a luxury product that has a great influence on the customers when they purchase an item. Some well-known brands have existed for decades, and they are well-known for their long line-up of admired and appreciated goods, for example, Chanel, Ferrari or Rolex.

There are three different kinds of paucity; natural, technology-led and tactical-driven paucity. Natural paucity occurs, when the ingredients for luxury products are difficult to find or require rare craftmanship that cannot be done by mass-production. Tactical-driven paucity is used when popular brands create limited editions of their products so that only a handful of their customers will be able to purchase them, and this makes the goods more wanted and adds to their value in their clients' eyes.

The fourth principal, persona, is about the character of the luxury product and how it is showcased through its advertising. Persona reflects the brand strongly in its marketing, so that the benefits of the strong brand will help the sales and attractiveness of the goods.

Public figures are often used to boost the sales and attractiveness of luxury brands. A new perfume or a sparkling watch may appeal more to the audience if it is being advertised by a famous actress or a handsome athlete. Luxury products may also be used for product placements in movies, TV shows or magazine advertisement, when the advertisement is a little subtler.

The placement of a luxury product is about where the major brands place their stores, as well as the events, sports or other phenomena that they like their

products to be linked with. Major brands do not want to be reached by everybody, so they do not have their stores everywhere, only in well-chosen cities to add to the speciality of it all. They put a great deal of effort into training their staff, so that as soon as the customer walks into the store, the staff can provide them an experience that they would not receive in any other store, and this makes the products even more appealing.

Public relations can be used to attract public interest in luxury products in the shape of a fashion show, for example. That is when the famous designers showcase their upcoming collections by inviting a very small selection of press and other well-known people to watch the show.

Pricing is a careful thought process when a brand needs to price their products so that their customers know to expect a certain price level. However, they would be pleasantly surprised if the prices were not quite that high. (Lombardo Agency, 2017.)

2.2 Customer segments

Customer segmentation is a skill where a company categorises their customers under different labels, usually based on their demographics, benefits, motivation, behaviour and other relevant factors. By doing the segmentation successfully, it is possible to learn exactly what the customers need and want, who they are and how a strong customer relationship can be built with them. (Weinstein 2004.)

Market segmentation is a term used for analysing and categorising all customers into different groups that share a need, or that react in a similar way to one kind of marketing. In this way, the business can find the most suitable and potential customers for each of their products and target the marketing better at those who may respond the best. (Kenton 2018.)

Businesses use segmentation when they want to use their limited resources by choosing the most ideal target groups for themselves and their products. There is no such thing as a product or a service that should be targeted at all the people in the world. (Kauppila 2015.)

Segmentation is part of a strategy development tool called Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning, or STP. This development tool is used almost as often as the most popular tool, SWOT analysis. (Hanlon 2018.)

The well-known ways to segment customers include:

- Demographics
- Psychographics
- Lifestyle
- Belief and values
- Life stages
- Geography
- Behaviour
- Benefit

(Hanlon 2018.)

2.2.1 SWOT analysis

Each company and business tend to have a strategy and vision in place: a plan of how they will make themselves last in the competition against other businesses. The strategies reflect each company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and possible threats. A simple way to analyse a company's strategy is to create a SWOT analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

The SWOT analysis has received some criticism from experts because they find that the analysis is created in a brainstorming session between the participants and they may not be completely subjective and may let their own opinions affect their analysis more than they should (Phadermrod, Crowder & Wills, 2016). The SWOT is not the only way to analyse a company's strategy and at whom the company's products and services are aimed. Instead, it is possible to complete a market segmentation process.

2.2.2 Buyer personas

Creating buyer personas is the next step from customer segmentation. This means a procedure where the customer analysis goes into an even greater detail, so that it is possible to be very specific about marketing and aim it at exactly the right groups.

Annemaria Duran (2018) sums it up as follows: "*Buyer personas make it possible to target ads to specific needs, behaviours and concerns*" Otherwise, the company runs the risk of losing plenty of money and resources on unsuccessful marketing.

Creating buyer personas can also benefit companies that already have a longer history behind them but wish to renew themselves or their stock and/or their services. They already have an existing customer group so that they can conduct some further research into who these people are, what kind of problems or needs they have and how the company could provide solutions to these problems. (Duran 2018.)

Making a buyer persona can be described as creating lifelike characters that personify the ideal customers of a company. Jon Simpson states in his article, Finding Your Audience: The Importance of Developing a Buyer Persona, (2017) that there are two ways to create a buyer persona. The first method is to conduct research on a firm's current customers and find out more about them. It is also possible to conduct surveys or interviews in order to determine why they chose a particular product or service amongst the competitors and whether they could share some insight into what they are still missing in the product or service.

The second method is to use a company's existing customer service management or sales data. If there is a sales team in a company, they may also be able to provide some good insight into what kind of thoughts people have about the goods or services when they have been in the middle of sales negotiations. Sales data shows the trends which products or services sell the most, and companies should be able to draw conclusions out of that. (Simpson 2017.)

Especially interviews, should have a few key points that are asked every respondent, so that a proper analysis can be conducted, and the results compared to each another. The possible general points to keep in mind for the interviews could be the following:

- Demographics
- Pain points
- Values
- Research habits
- Priorities
- Identifying factors
- Psychographic characteristics

(Simpson, 2017.)

Pain points are very informative for customer research. It means the key issues that the customers or potential customers may have related to a firm's products or services. These issues may be stopping them from completing a purchase.

Research habits vary greatly these days, and they can be closely linked to the demographics of customers. Younger customers, from teenagers to middle-aged, use the internet for their research purposes and may rely more on online reviews than confining to a friend or a neighbour for the feedback on a product or a service before buying it. The elderly customers may still rely more on the word of mouth and hearing about products from their friends and family, than using online services on the issue. This may vary from one culture to another, so that is good to keep in mind, too.

2.2.3 Consumer behaviour

What is consumer behaviour in a nutshell?

> *"Consumer behaviour is the study of how people make decisions about what they buy, want, need, or act in regard to a product, service, or company."* (Schofield 2017.)

Jeff Bray explains in his published research paper Consumer Behaviour Theory: Approaches and Models (2008):

> *"Contemporary research on Consumer Behaviour considers a wide range of factors influencing the consumer and acknowledges a broad range of consumption activities beyond purchasing."*

The activities he is referring to are usually:

- realisation of the need
- information research
- going through the alternatives
- building up the purchase intention
- purchasing the good
- consuming the good
- throwing the good away once it has been used

Moving the businesses into the world of online has changed the consumer behaviour and the companies need to acknowledge this change. The act of purchasing now includes a strong social community link, when customers will search information before making the decision of purchasing and they find out comments and feedback from other users before committing to their final decision. The word of mouth travels very fast and far online, and this can be both good and bad thing.
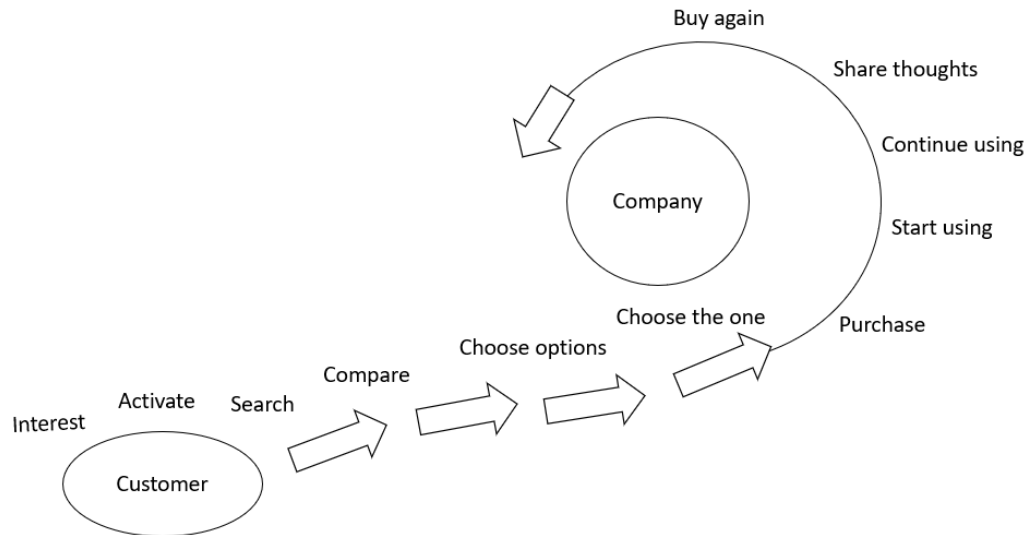
Figure 1. Consumer behaviour, adapted from Ilmarinen & Koskela, 2015.

These days consumers are more aware of businesses' backgrounds and they wish to support companies with good and valuable visions and missions, even if it costs them more (Kotler, Kartajaya & Setiawan 2011). Companies must acknowledge this and make sure to bring more of themselves out in the open, so that they could have a better chance in the competition against other similar businesses. However, they should remain truthful to their audience because a lot of bad publicity can follow if the customers discover that the company is just trying to pretend to be something they are not. If your products are not made from organic materials, there is no point whatsoever to claim that this would be the case.

Companies will more likely benefit the most if they are able to find themselves a good and cooperative network that will help them stand against the competitors (Kotler et all 2011). They can focus on their core services and products, and delegate other areas of business to other professionals. This way they can give the best results to their customers.

2.3   Digital marketing

One may say that the name of the game has changed dramatically when it comes to any business, and that also includes the carpentry business. The internet is the source of knowledge that everybody turns to, even if they are in need of a carpenter. If a company wants to be discovered by new and potential customers, they need to make themselves visible and findable online. (Oppong 2018.)

Digital channels are becoming more widely used in many parts of people's lives and shopping is one of these. If consumers do not order the products from online stores straight to their homes, they will spend hours investigating the options and comparing the products before settling on one. (Ruokonen 2016, 8.)

Even if marketing has evolved during the past two decades, the value of the customer service experience or engagement has not disappeared anywhere. A customer still wishes to be treated well and efficiently from the beginning until the end, and it does not matter if they walk into a store to get this customer service or if they reach out to a business from the comforts of their own home by writing an email or asking a question on their Facebook page. The winners of this game will be the ones that manage to satisfy their customers through all these different channels. (Filenius 2015, 46-47.)

When companies decide to take their business to the digital world, they have several ways to do it. They can either start doing business completely via digital platforms by having online stores where people make their purchases and then the goods are delivered to their doorstep in a few days. Many businesses feel that even if they cannot move their whole business to the internet, they can take good advantage of it by using it as a way to advertise and market their business further than before (Ilmarinen & Koskela 2015). Every type of traditional marketing can now be done online, for example instead of printing an advertisement in the local newspaper, the business may decide to pay for a banner that will appear on a website or in search engine when potential customers go to search for products that can be found from the business' range. Newsletters go straight to customers' inboxes as emails

these days and websites are like companies' brochures. (Ilmarinen & Koskela, 2015.)

However, the companies do have to invest time and effort into bringing themselves and their business online, and it cannot be done too lightly. If the entrepreneur creates a Facebook page for themselves and just leaves it be for months and does not update it at least once in a while, it can have a negative impact on the customers looking into finding the business. This can create an illusion that the business may not exist anymore or that they do not care to give a good image of themselves to the customers (Ilmarinen & Koskela 2015). So if the company decides to get themselves a website or a Facebook page for example, they are recommended to put some effort towards it in the beginning and plan it so that they can update it easily enough with small and simple ways to keep the customers happy and interested.

2.3.1 Marketing 3.0

Digital marketing has taken companies into a completely new level when it comes to doing business and interacting with their customers. The fast development of technology is constantly changing the world, and there is nothing else one can do than just try to keep up!

Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan wrote a book about the development of marketing and called this phenomena Marketing 3.0 (2011), the era of networking and doing good things together. They believed strongly that the times when the customer was king are long gone and that now we are heading towards the time when every business and shop needs to have a story and a deeper meaning behind it to make it stand out. When the news is full of devastating stories about the effects of global warming and other miseries human beings have caused to the planet Earth, customers are looking for the businesses' core values and try to make better choices to help the planet even a little bit. (Kotler et all 2011.)

This chart mimics the concept Kotler and his colleagues came up with (2011) and how they want to showcase the differences between these three eras, and how it can be seen from the business' and customer's points of view.

	Marketing 1.0 Product focused	Marketing 2.0 Customer focused	Marketing 3.0 Value focused
Goal	Selling the products	Happy customer	Saving the world
Business point of view	The physical needs of the consumers (masses)	Thinking and feeling consumer	People are the whole package
Marketing point of view	Product development	Standing out	Values
Values, motives	Practicality	Practicality and motion based motives	Practicality, motion based and spiritual motives
Interaction	From one to many – way of thinking	Individual customer relationships	Networking with masses for joint goals

Table 1. Marketing 1.0-3.0, adapted.

Marketing is strongly influenced by the phenomena of the economic world and the results can be seen in consumer behaviour. Marketing 1.0 began around the time of World War II when the mass production revolution began and people's economical state slowly started to recover from the poverty when the factories made it possible for thousands and thousands of people to have a job and earn a proper living and then spend their hard earned money on mass produced goods. (Kotler et all 2011.)

Marketing 2.0 started when competition amongst different companies got tougher and there were more goods on offer than there were buyers. During this buyers' market times the businesses had to stand out by making good relationships with their customers and putting real effort on making the customers choose them instead of the similar company just around the corner. They had to acknowledge that their customers were thinking, feeling human beings that needed more than just the product itself – they also needed the service that came with purchasing the good.

Now that marketing 3.0 is here, the companies have had to adjust themselves yet again to stay in the game, and that is the key to having a good and long lasting business: the owners' ability to change and develop the business to fit into the world we live in at this moment. Climate change is just one of the reminders that people have not treated Earth as well as they should have done and now the future generations will pay the price for that unless people step up and change their ways. If every human being did their share for the sake of this planet, it could be turned around, but it will remain to be seen, whether people succeed in this mission. Companies have noticed that many of their customers feel bad for their forefathers' actions and are trying hard to make even a small difference by consuming sensibly. They make the effort to think before they buy, and they spend time on choosing where they buy from in case there is a difference between the businesses and their core values. So, when the consumer buys the product or the service, they do not just get the purchased item, but they also get a clear conscience that they have done good for the whole world by choosing an appropriate place to buy it from. Not only that, but they may also share this purchase widely on their social media pages to show others how they are making a good deed and encourage others to do the same. The company they purchased their item from gets good feedback and potentially more customers without even needing to advertise themselves more.

2.3.2 Social media

15 years ago, the concept of social media was completely different when comparing, what it is today. There are not many people anymore that would not go on Facebook or Twitter as part of their daily routine, to either see what has been going on with their loved ones or in the world in general, or share moments of their own life with others by posting funny comments, photos or videos. Especially now when smart phones have become so popular, it is easy enough to keep up with the social media channels by accessing them with your phone on the move.

Scott Brown states well in his book Social Information (2012):

"Social networking tools are, at their core, about connection. Social networking as a concept goes back to the beginning of history. We, as species, get together and share information. We tell stories. We hear stories." (Brown, 2012.)

Social media happens over many different kinds of platforms where people can share, follow and interact with either their friends and family or chosen businesses on daily basis. They are also widely used for collecting information (Sundheim 2011). The most used social media pages are Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Twitter and Youtube, but new channels are appearing every year and taking the limelight away from the existing ones. People's need for sharing and gathering information is ever changing, so the tools that we use for them will develop the same way.

Businesses have recognised the social networking sites as a way to market their products or services, as they are very cost effective and can reach a very wide audience with very minimal effort. Published posts can be liked by clicking the like-button and this helps the post to spread further and reaching a wider audience than just the publisher's original network had. The post goes even further if people choose to interact by another way, such as commenting on it or sharing it to their own followers. Some of the most popular pages can gain thousands of interactions in just minutes.

What businesses may also benefit from using the social media channels is that they can connect with their customers, find out what their thoughts are about the provided products or services and get them to market the business for you for free. Since these sites are such a big part of people's lives, it can be easier for some to ask for a quote for garage services or give customer feedback to a mobile phone operator via their social media page than by picking up the phone and calling them. Especially in cultures where people are shy and do not like to speak their minds straight to other people's faces for the fear of upsetting them, taking care of business over Facebook or Instagram can be a relief. Individuals can share whatever they wish about their lives without being rejected or ignored.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research methods

In order to reach the bottom of the research dilemma, I had to think about what the entrepreneur's core problem was and how it could be solved. This was the result: the carpenter wanted to make his business profitable and make a living by doing what he loves and for that, he needed to find customers that would need his products or use his services.

The case company has their own website as well as relatively active pages on Facebook and Instagram. The website has not been updated, and it has been created only for the basic details about the business and links to the social media pages that are updated on a monthly basis. In that way, the potential customers that find the website can also see the social media pages and find more information.

The entrepreneur updates the social media channels roughly every second week with a photograph of the current project in progress or a picture of a finished product and, perhaps, another picture of how the piece looked like in the beginning before the work began, in order to give the viewers an idea of how much has been done to the item and how it has changed. The purpose of these posts is mainly to give ideas to other followers, what they could potentially do if they decided to seek for the carpenter's services and what kind of different skills the company owner has. These before and after-styled posts are usually well received, and they gain from 20 to 100 likes and a few comments in a matter of days. Every now and then, it leads to a potential customer sending an e-mail or another type of contact and requesting a quote for some service. However, this could happen more often.

Company X has been wondering whether there would be something that they could do to boost the interaction in their digital marketing channels, spread the word about their services and gain more customer requests in that way. They want to know whether there are different ways that they could try to reach out to people and put themselves on show, so that people requiring their services could find them more easily.

Instead of focusing on the carpenter's colleagues or competitors and how they operated, I decided to focus on what they could learn from other small businesses that were trying to achieve the same goal, in other words, offering luxury services and trying to find the customers using mainly digital marketing. The idea was to use businesses from different fields and see if there were practices that could be transferred to the field of carpentry.

The choice for the research method was comparative analysis. Frank Esser from the University of Zurich describes comparative analysis in his article Comparative Research Methods as follows:

> *"Comparative research in communication and media studies is conventionally understood as the contrast among different macro-level units, such as world regions, countries, sub-national regions, social milieus, language areas and cultural thickenings, at one point or more points in time." (Esser)*

Comparative research is often described as positive research, and this is one of the reasons why it was used in this study. Maybe this research would help to see the positive sides more often even after the work is done.

For the comparative research seven different kinds of businesses from different fields were selected. Moreover, their way of marketing themselves and being active in the digital media was followed for 30 days in order to discover how they tried to find customers and make themselves known. They were followed on all the platforms that they used, which consisted of social media pages (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter), their websites and printed media. All the businesses were relatively young, and they had not been in business for more than a few years, so they all still had a deal of work ahead of them. The most important aspect about them was that all of them were offering luxury services and/or products, in other words, something that people did not essentially need. However, it was their job to make people feel that they needed them.

The comparative businesses were a personal trainer, a painter, a band, a jewellery maker, a beauty salon and an escape room. The variables for choosing these companies were their location and their size, the age of their business and their product and/or service that could be seen as luxury. These

businesses were all based in Finland and active in the digital world trying to provide content to their potential customers. They were all small companies, either one-person companies or companies with no more than three employees. The companies had not been in business for more than 10 years, and most of them had begun their business ventures only a year or two ago. One quality in common for these businesses was also that I had come across them at some point during the past few years and begun to follow their journey. I do not have any other connection to these companies.

3.2 Data collection

The plan was to follow these chosen businesses for 30 days on all of their marketing channels and collect information about how they marketed themselves, their services and what kind of data they provided for their potential customers. If it was not possible to collect in written form, for example, as Instagram stories, notes were written about what the publication had included so it could be analysed later. The collected data would not be used for anything else than the purpose of this research and when collecting the data, the names of the businesses and others involved were left unmentioned in order to protect the privacy of the entrepreneur(s).

As well as collecting data manually, a marketing data collecting tool called SocialBakers was chosen to be used in this research. The data was collected from the chosen businesses through this tool for 14 days during this 30-day research period, and the data came from their Facebook and Instagram pages. This data provided the research with information about how many people interacted with their sites, how many followers they had, how many posts they did during this period, and other significant information.

It was vital for the research to have the numerical data as well as more detailed data from the content these businesses provide and share, so they could be added up and conclusions could be drawn about how much interaction and likes they received. This approach would benefit the case company the most if they wish to learn from the research and put the suggestions to good use in their own digital marketing plans.

In the data collecting, the focus was on what kind of material the entrepreneurs were providing to their target audience, how often they would do it and in what format, and what kind of reactions they get to the posts and on their page in general. Social media sites are constantly changing their algorithms and making it harder for companies to reach more customers and have their posts show up on their followers' feed, and people treat this problem differently. Some companies think that mass posting several times a day is the answer, and some think that paying a small fee to have the post shown up more is the key. Nobody can say for sure if there is a right way to do it, and sometimes it is all down to a company's followers, how they like it.

3.3 Data analysis

The data from all these different businesses was collected for 30 days. Once the time was up, the analysing process could begin. The businesses' data was analysed one by one based on the numerical data that had been gathered through using SocialBakers online data gathering tool and the notes that had been written down from the posts.

Once the data from each individual company had been gathered, the results of each company was compared to one another, to see how they would stand out next to each other. The plan was to show, how the amount of posts and the content the posts included, would show in the amount of interactions and page followers the company would get after that.

In this chart below, the researched companies have been gathered together and the data showed in a nutshell. The data was gathered between August 9th and September 6th, 2019.

Company	Facebook posts	Instagram posts	Instagram stories	Website updates
Band	8	8	45	0
Personal trainer	11	26	259	-
Jewellery maker	10	12	25	4
Escape room	2	0	0	2
Beauty salon	5	1	12	-
Painter	22	17	75	26

Table 2. Research results in a nutshell

4. Research Results

Once enough data gathering had been done, it was time to bring the results together. The researched data included good results from all the different companies that had been researched. The results had been collected in two different ways: all the numerical data was gathered by using the SocialBaker online data gathering tool and downloading them as ready-made charts straight from their website, and notes were written from the posts to provide extra valuable data for the research.

Drawing the information out of the data gathering tool was very quick and effortless, and the tool provided data from certain parts of these companies' social media pages that one could not have gotten any other way, or at least as quickly and easily. The data gathering site was able to produce some information from the past as well, not just the information that happened during the researching period.

Writing down notes manually after viewing the companies' posts, comments or Instagram stories for example, was very time consuming and awkward. However, this still allowed one to view and compare the companies together on a whole other level to the numerical data. It was possible to see the videos and interactions that the companies did, and not just see the photo they may

have posted, and conclusions could be drawn from these as well. This gave the research a deeper level.

4.1 Painter

The painter's business is to sell the paintings and other related things that they have made. The painter has their own online store, where the paintings and other related products are placed for sale, and they also have a couple of shops that stock their postcards, for example.

The painter has Facebook and Instagram pages as well as their own website, and they are very active on both of the channels. They post fairly regularly, even several times a day, but they use different channels, so they do not bombard their followers too much in one day. They use Instagram story-option a lot as well.

The topics of the painter's posts are almost always their work; the paintings. They tend to post a picture of the new releases that have just been added to the online shop, or share pictures from their followers, who show where they have placed the purchased paintings. The painter had an exhibition in their hometown for a couple of weeks and they posted actively photos and little videoclips from the museum in which the exhibition was held.

The painter has a very strong fan base and they receive a good amount of interactions per post, even when they post so frequently. From the research results can be seen that on Facebook they get 67,73 interactions per post on average, whereas on Instagram it is even better at 83,73 interactions per post. The amount of comments received during the research period is also impressive, 109 comments on all the profile posts done so that is 4,95 comments per post. On Instagram they received a little fewer comments, 3,58 comments per post. Each post on Facebook received 63,63 likes whereas each post on Instagram did a little better by reaching 82,35 likes. Despite the painter having more followers on Facebook than Instagram, the more active crowd can be found on Instagram. The amount of profile posts was less, but Instagram stories may have made up the difference between the amount of posts that were made during the research period.

Painter	Facebook	Instagram
Total amount of followers	2000	1600
Change in followers	+1	+12
Profile posts	22	17
Avg interactions per post	67,73	83,73
Amount of likes	1400	1400
Amount of comments	109	61
Shares	3	-

Table 3. Research of a painter

4.2 Personal trainer

The personal trainer is a one-person business where they offer personal training services, from work out sessions to eating plans, and either locally or remotely. The personal trainer is part of a franchise chain of fitness services and they represent the franchise in most things they do, displaying the logo and so on.

The personal trainer does not have their own website, so they use only their Facebook and Instagram pages, as well as the franchise chain's website, to advertise their services. If they make fitness programs or diet plans to sell, they can be purchased through the franchise's website. Some programs may only be available through e-mail.

The personal trainer is very active on Instagram, and especially on Instagram stories, they can make several videos or posts on a daily basis, sometimes even over 20 videoclips per day. This is why the amount of profile posts does

not seem that much because the Instagram stories were not part of the collectable data. The Instagram stories were documented manually during the research period.

The topics on the posts and videos rely heavily on keeping fit, eating healthily and improving one's life. The personal trainer uses these channels to teach their followers about weightlifting techniques, dieting, staying motivated with exercising and many other matters clearly close to their heart. However, the personal trainer also takes time to open up about their personal life, their partner and dog, so the posts are not just about exercising. They want to get across that they live as they preach but also want to show their fun side and bring a little amusement to their followers' life with funny videoclips of their dog running around with a big stick on their walk.

The fact that the personal trainer is so much more active on Instagram than Facebook shows in the number of followers they have on each channel, Instagram leading by 247 followers. The average amount of interactions was a lot higher on Instagram as well, they received 84,08 interactions per post in average, 69,23 likes per post and 13,34 comments per post during the research period. On Facebook they received only 23 interactions per post on average, 21,54 likes per post and just 1,18 comments per post.

Especially the Instagram stories may be enough to sway the test results in favour of Instagram, when the personal trainer is able to make themselves seen and heard better to their followers. The results could be different if Facebook supported a similar way of communication.

Personal trainer	Facebook	Instagram
Total amount of followers	496	743
Change in followers	+2	-10
Profile posts	11	26
Avg interactions per post	23	84,08
Amount of likes	237	1800
Amount of comments	13	347
Shares	3	-

Table 4. Research of a personal trainer

4.3 Band

The band is a two-person business who provide music for all kinds of events from weddings to office Christmas parties and entertainment from day-care centres to old people's retirement homes. It is mostly just the two of them that take care of the performances but at bigger events they are joined by more players to provide a proper show. They travel around Finland for their events and offer music for all kinds of moods and situations.

The band updates their website fairly actively as well as their social media pages on Facebook and Instagram. On their website they publish their upcoming events and more information about how to book them and some samples of their previous shows. On the social media sites, the band publishes more about themselves when they are out and about performing or on their way to perform somewhere in Finland. They like to show their humorous side a lot and especially on Instagram stories they can be seen making comedy videos for their followers' entertainment. They rarely post about anything too serious.

The research results about the band's social media channels were quite surprising in that sense that even though the band posts a lot of Instagram

story videos, they are much more popular on Facebook, by 618 followers. However, they seemed to be gaining followers throughout the research period so if this trend continued, the number of followers could eventually catch up. Otherwise the research shows that the band receives similar amounts of interactions, likes and comments on both channels. Considering the fact that they have over 600 more followers on Facebook than on Instagram, you could assume that they would get more interactions on Facebook if all of their followers were as active as on Instagram. Their humorous videos do not always reach their Facebook page so maybe this is something that the Facebook followers do not get to witness unless they follow the band on Instagram as well.

Band	Facebook	Instagram
Total amount of followers	1100	482
Change in followers	+1	+11
Profile posts	8	8
Avg interactions per post	50	41
Amount of likes	389	309
Amount of comments	11	19
Shares	0	-

Table 5. Research of a band

4.4 Jewellery maker

The jewellery maker is a one-person business that is all about making jewellery by upcycling fabrics and other used materials in an eco-friendly manner. The jewellery maker sells their products through their online store on

their website and through some retailers, that can be found through their website as well. All the jewellery pieces are handmade and unique, and the entrepreneur tries to use as much recycled materials as possible so that the business would support their green values better.

Like mentioned earlier, the jewellery maker has a website, where they have their online shop. They are also fairly active on both social media channels, Facebook and Instagram. What the company posts on social media, is mostly just the products themselves, trying to tempt the followers to purchase them. In the posts the products are either displayed on their own or worn by a model.

The jewellery maker is quite popular on both social media pages, but Instagram has the lead by 183 followers and counting if the trend in change in followers remains the same as it was during the research period. The research results show that the jewellery maker posts similar amount of profile posts on both sites, but the average interactions per post is a lot better on Instagram, 60,92 per post! During the research they received 679 likes on their posts on Instagram, 512 more than on their Facebook page. This means that the jewellery maker received 56,58 likes per post and 4,33 comments per post on Instagram. In comparison, on Facebook they received 16,70 likes per posted profile post and only 0,3 comments per post. The more active followers are clearly in this case on Instagram.

Jewellery maker	Facebook	Instagram
Total amount of followers	794	977
Change in followers	+2	+13
Profile posts	10	12
Avg interactions per post	17,10	60,92
Amount of likes	167	679
Amount of comments	3	52
Shares	1	-

Table 6. Research of a jewellery maker

4.5 Escape room

The escape room is quite a new type of entertainment, where the business gives their customers a colourful made-up story, locks them up in one of their rooms with a handful of clues, and then it is up to the customers to get ahead with the clues and solve the puzzles so that they will find the key to the door in the given time. Escape rooms test people's mystery solving skills and team working skills in a stressful and possibly even scary situation but in a safe way. It is a way for groups and teams to seek excitement and thrills and even improve their team spirit if they get out of the room in time. The business creates themed rooms for players to enter and changes the themes after a while so that the same players could return to try and test their skills all over again in the same place.

This escape room business has a website as well as a page on both Facebook and Instagram. The appointments to go and try the rooms can be booked through the website so the social media channels are used purely to advertise the business otherwise and post pictures of the players that have passed the challenge on time. Some posts consist of information about upcoming available appointments or changes in their schedules, for example.

This particular escape room has a good number of followers on Facebook, but their Instagram page could do with more followers, when it is 549 followers behind Facebook. The reason, why there are not more followers on Instagram, may be the lack of profile posts, since the business failed to do any posts on Instagram during the research period. They did not do much better on Facebook, when the amount of profile posts was only two. Considering that the company has a good number of followers on Facebook, their lack of profile posts may be affecting the interactions they received because the average during the research period was 14,50 per post. They received only 29 likes for these two posts, and that is just under 4% of their followers, so their followers are very inactive all in all.

Escape room	Facebook	Instagram
Total amount of followers	780	231
Change in followers	-1	+3
Profile posts	2	0
Avg interactions per post	14,50	-
Amount of likes	29	-
Amount of comments	0	-
Shares	0	-

Table 7. Research of an escape room

4.6 Beauty salon

The beauty salon consists of two beauticians that work under the same name as individual entrepreneurs who share the same workspace and marketing. Their services consist of beauty treatments, facials, eyelash and nail extensions, massages and other therapeutic or relaxing treatments. Their products and services can help people to relax and feel better about themselves. On the side of the services they provide, they also sell some cosmetical products such as creams, ointments and make-up products from their salon. They do not have an online store for the products.

The beauty salon has their own website, as well as Facebook and Instagram pages. They have a short list of their services listed on the website and updated list of current prices, but otherwise the site does not seem to be updated. Most of the updates are done on their social media sites, like mentions of holidays and special offers for example. However, the social media sites are not updated very frequently either.

During the research period, the beauty salon created five profile posts to Facebook and one on Instagram. They did create a few Instagram stories as well, but they could not be recorded on the standings below. For those few posts they created, they received relatively low amount of interactions, average of interactions was 8 per post on Facebook and 18 on Instagram. The result could have been a little different if they had posted a few more posts on Instagram so that the results did not base just on one post.

The beauty salon received 38 likes as their total amount of likes on Facebook and 18 likes on Instagram, as previously pointed out. Some Facebook post received two comments as well, whereas none of the Instagram followers left a comment on their singular post. The beauty salon does not seem to put a lot of effort into their Instagram site and that shows in their number of followers and posted posts. They have 212 more followers on Facebook compared to their Instagram page. If they posted more frequently on Instagram, they could potentially gain more followers and be more discoverable through that channel as well.

Beauty salon	Facebook	Instagram
Total amount of followers	373	161
Change in followers	0	0
Profile posts	5	1
Avg interactions per post	8	18
Amount of likes	38	18
Amount of comments	2	0
Shares	0	-

Table 8. Research of a beauty salon.

5. Conclusions

Observing the other businesses' marketing channels for the research period showed that there are very many different ways to boost the business and make a firm visible to the potential customers. Nobody does it exactly the same ways as the others and there is not just one way to do it. Each and every one of these businesses are doing something to put themselves out there and making it at least possible for consumers to find them and learn more about them and their products or services.

5.1 Posted profile posts

One might think that the solution for gaining more followers on their social media channels is simply to post more. I would argue based on the research that this is not the case. The research data shows that each of these companies did not post dozens of posts during this research period even if some of them have thousands of followers. Most posts on Instagram were done by the personal trainer, and on Facebook the painter posted the most. Both of them posted easily under 30 posts during the research period.
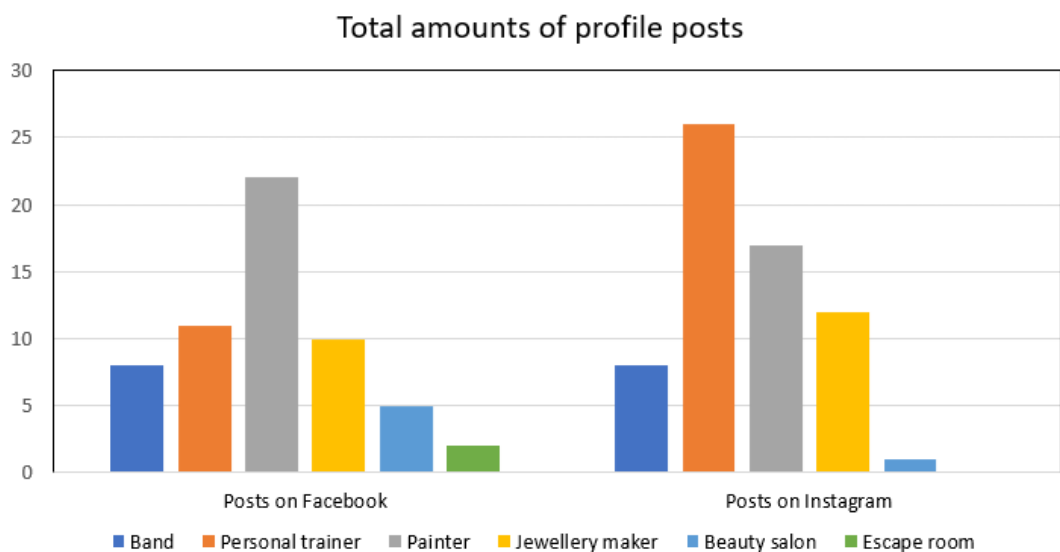
Total amounts of profile posts

Figure 2. Comparing the total amounts of profile posts
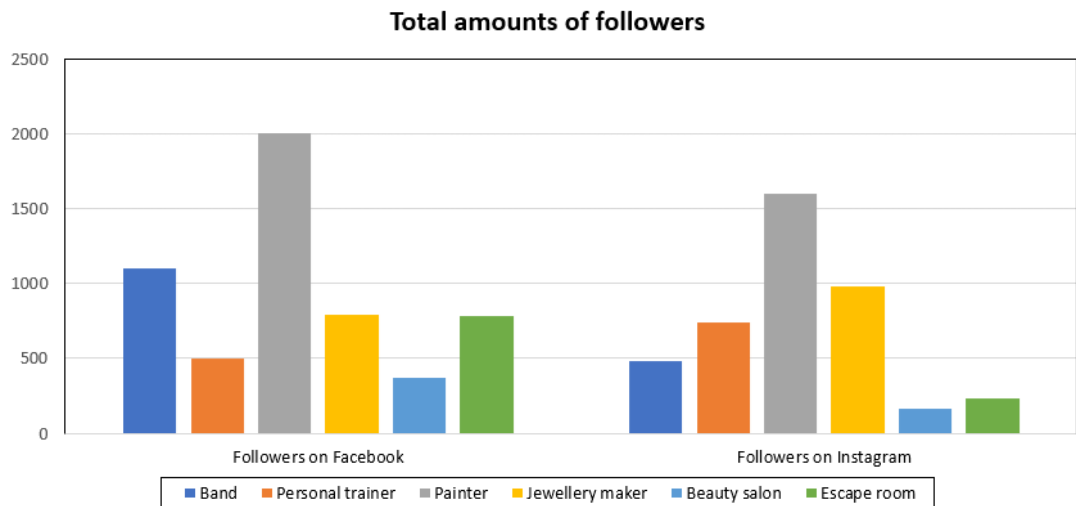

Total amounts of followers

Figure 3. Comparing the total amounts of followers.

When a company provides consumers content on their page, their content can be categorised into three different contents: reachable, committing and activating content (Keronen & Tanni 2017). Reachable content's main goal is just to reach people, appear on their newsfeed on Facebook or as a link on an e-mail newsletter, so that as many people as possible would see the post and possibly click the link to find out more, if there was one. Committing content is a few steps ahead of reachable content, as their target is to make the reader or watcher to use the content for a longer period of time, order a newsletter that creates a bond between them and the company and ensure that the viewer is more likely to come back and check out the source again. When the person viewing the content makes the decision to order the newsletter to their e-mail or follow the page and get updates from the page straight to their phone, it is called activating content. The company tries to provide interesting and inspiring content for the consumer that they would remain on their site and possibly even start looking into how they can learn more about

purchasing from the company in question and make themselves form from a viewer to a customer. (Keronen & Tanni 2017.)

All of these different types of contents are important, and the researched companies should try to use them to their own advantage. Their content should include some thought as well, not just that they took a nice picture and want to show it to the world, there has to be an agenda behind it. They need to use each opportunity to make the profile post be more than a pretty picture and a few funny words as a caption. Every post is an opportunity to reach a new person that has not yet heard of the company and make them interested to find out more.

5.2 Quality of the posts

When I was observing the companies' posts, I also observed the quality of the posts, not just the amounts. There are many ways to compose a profile post on Facebook or Instagram: some post just some text, like for example that they are on holiday next week and cannot be contacted during that time over the phone. In most cases, the companies post a picture and add some text under it, this kind of post may grab the viewer's attention easier than just plain text without a picture, even if one was only informing that they will be away for a week and cannot be reached during that time. On Instagram, it is not even possible to add just plain text, since the tool is solely based on people sharing pictures. The third way of posting on Facebook or Instagram is to add a photo, some text and end the text with several hashtag words that make the post easier to find via used search words, for example #carpentry or #personaltraining. Sharing your location in the post is one way to add extra info for the viewers, since they can click on the location and see, where it is on a map.

I believe that each business reflects the person or persons behind the account, the style of the photos, the way the captions and other texts are written, how often they post and so on. Company accounts on social media need to show some of their personality in there too if they wish to gain more

followers and interactions to their posts. Basic and short written profile posts will only get them so far.

The fact that all these companies have their Facebook and Instagram pages, as well as their own websites or other platforms for communication and advertisement, is a big step forward when it comes to marketing themselves to their potential customers and finding their target audiences. They have all realised that social media channels are a valuable tool for a business selling luxury service or products, and even if they do not post that frequently necessarily, just having the page is still a big bonus these days.

Kati Keronen and Katri Tanni describe in their book Sisältöstrategia: Asiaskaslähtöisyydellä tulosta [Content strategy: Getting good results from customer focused business, 2017] how companies should develop a set of criteria for themselves, what they base their content on. They feel strongly that the person providing the information to their followers should be able to answer at least most of these questions before posting it anywhere:

- Who is telling the story?
- Which channels are being used for this story?
- Which stage of purchasing does the story link to?
- In what form the story will be told?
- Who is the receiver of the story?
- What are the hopeful reactions for the story?

By answering these questions, it will help the business to keep their content good and valuable and it has a better chance of reaching the right people that it is aimed at. However, if the company cannot answer some of these questions, they should question if the content is good enough to be published at all. (Keronen & Tanni 2017.)

If the companies wished to take their accounts to the next level, they could benefit from figuring out their buyer personas and find the most potential customers for themselves that way. If they were to figure out who they are trying to market their product or service to, they could dig deeper to find out how these consumers use Instagram for example and go from there. If their customers are mostly elderly people, they cannot rely solely on social media

channels, and they also have to have more conventional type of marketing on the side of them, like printed media. If they are trying to reach younger people, like teenagers, then even Facebook and Instagram may not be enough and they may look into other forms of social media, like Snapchat or Periscope.

The companies I observed mostly used their services or products when they posted pictures on their social media pages. The painter posted hardly anything else besides pictures of their paintings in different kinds of settings, and the same goes for the jewellery maker of their products. The personal trainer and the band were slightly different in this case because they do not have a visible product what to take photos of, so they portrayed themselves in the pictures most of the time. This suited their businesses well in my opinion. However, I would like to see more personality of the painter and the jewellery maker, maybe action shots of themselves drawing or making the jewellery so the followers could see some variety in their posts. Most people are curious to find out more information about the company than just the products, they like to know some background information, history, and process how the products are being made. This kind of information may be enough to make the company more appealing compared to the competition.

5.3 Answering the research questions

In the beginning of this research, two research questions were chosen for the thesis that this journey would be based on. The questions were:

1. How can small companies, providing luxury products and services use digital marketing and social media channels to boost their business?

2. What can a small woodworking company learn from other small businesses and their use of digital marketing and social media channels and put in use to gain more potential customers?

After conducting this research, I feel that there are very many ways that small companies boost their business by using digital marketing and social media channels. The first step for any company entering the world of digital marketing is to come up with a vision that they will base their marketing on.

They need to answer the questions: Who? What? How? and Why? They need to know who they are trying to sell to, what the products or services are they are trying to sell, how they are trying to do it all and why they are doing it. They need to convince themselves about their idea first before trying to convince anyone else.

The world of social media has become such a big part of modern people's lives that companies would be fools not to take advantage of it. It has been made easy and affordable and does not require a special set of skills to use. Companies that sell luxury products or services have a niche market to play in, people do not have a pure need for them, like they do for products like food or medicine or services like garages or hair salons. Digital marketing makes it easier for them to reach more people and use target marketing based on their buyer personas to reach the most potential customers out of a big crowd.

The research results showed how these chosen companies used their digital marketing channels and what the outcome of it was. In the previous chapter I already discussed my points on posted profile posts and content of the posts what I noticed from my research and the sample companies. I have collected a few points and suggestions for Company X to try out.

5.4 Suggestions for Company X

Company X has been relatively active on their two social media channels for a little over two years since their business began. They have felt that it is their job to remain active and post something at least once in 1-2 weeks to keep people aware of what they are doing and reminding their followers of their existence. The common topic for them to post is the before and after shot of a project they have completed, to show the difference between the two stages and possibly give some ideas to others what they are capable of.

It was important to know the statistics behind the Company X's posting routines so their social media pages were included into the research and the same data was pulled out of them as for the other small businesses, just so they would be easier to compare to each other. The same ways were used to analyse their posts, by manually following their pages and writing down the

comments about the content, as well as the SocialBakers analysis tool. The analysing period was the same as for the other companies.

Company X has quite equal number of followers on both of their pages, Facebook and Instagram, the difference being that they have 67 more followers on Instagram. They seem more active on Instagram as well, since they posted six profile posts to Instagram during the research period, versus to only three posts on Facebook. However, during this period the growth in their follower amounts was 3% on Facebook, compared to the 1,4% growth on Instagram.

The average amount of interactions per post on Facebook was a decent 23,44 interactions per post, whereas on Instagram the same figure was only 11,08. This comparison leads one to believe that the more interactive followers are on their Facebook page, but it is impossible to say for sure since there were fewer profile posts on Facebook. The company received a good amount of likes on their posts on both pages. Company X did not use the Instagram story-feature at all during the research period.

Company X	Facebook	Instagram
Total amount of followers	275	342
Change in followers	+8	+5
Profile posts	3	6
Avg interactions per post	70,33	66,50
Amount of likes	206	386
Amount of comments	5	13
Shares	-	-

Table 9. Company X's data

As mentioned before, the topics that Company X mainly posted about on their pages, were the before and after pictures of their most recently finished projects. One picture on Instagram was a picture of an ongoing project. The owner or Company X explained that the idea behind this is to showcase the projects when they are finished, so that followers could imagine themselves getting their pieces of older furniture redone the same way or commissioning a custom piece of furniture just for their needs and purpose. Sometimes people just need that little bit of help to get their imagination going.

What Company X's followers may be lacking is the face behind the company's name because the pictures always portray the projects and never the human behind the lens that makes these transformations happen. During this research the other companies have shown that it is ok to show oneself in the pictures and give the brand a more human connection, to ease people's curiosity if nothing else. It is natural for the followers to wonder 'who is the person behind the company' and by showing it they could make themselves more approachable. It was easier to get attached to the content that the companies were posting when every now and then one could also see the human connection there, whether it was just a picture of them or the entrepreneur talking to the camera in a video. Adding more personal touch to the content should happen gradually and at the company's own phase since forced and uncomfortable material in a company's content serves no one. It takes time and practise to get better at it, and there are no shortcuts to it.

Some people have no idea of the processes that woodworking and carpentry involve, because it is not as common skill anymore for the more recent generations. Company X could see this as an opportunity to educate their followers by showing glimpses of the stages in their projects, without revealing too much to their competitors. The company that is proud of their craftmanship and wants others to respect the skills as well, it is very important to show the masses that the stages of each project requires serious skill and effort to get to the finish line and to the finalised piece at the end of it all. People need to understand that some stages can take hours to complete and if they wish to have the fine detailing on the final product, it takes time and costs them money.

Another thought comes from the Marketing 3.0's perspective, which shows that the ways of marketing are more vision and value based than during the previous phases 1.0 and 2.0 (Kotler et all 2011). When we live in the world that wants to preserve what we have and treat the natural environment in a kinder way, this is Company X's chance to join in and show what the values are behind their business. If people are trying to stop mass production and wasting the energy resources by creating new pieces of furniture, fixing and refurbishing the old ones is another way to make the world a little better place for the future generations. The company could showcase that they use environmentally friendly products on their projects and support the fellow local businesses by shopping for their tools and other products at the nearby stores. This would show how the business wishes to be part of the community as well if they support each other against the bigger corporations.

5.5 Limitations to the research

Comparative analysis does not have strict rules and limitations to it, so it flexes around the research topic well. It makes it nice and easy to use and it fitted well into this thesis

The research period that was chosen to use in the thesis was relatively short, 30 days, that was spent observing and collecting data from the chosen companies. This period was chosen for personal reasons and could not be extended. If the research period had been longer, for example from 10 to 15 weeks instead of 4 weeks, there would have been much more data available and the results could have different. In ideal world this kind of research could be even conducted over a year's time so that one could gain knowledge of all the different times of the company's annual calendar and how season changes effect on their content for example.

The batch of companies observed in the research, was selected to be six to gain enough diverse knowledge out of very different kind of small companies. I found that six was definitely the minimum that the research could be conducted and to gain better idea and perspective on the companies, the batch could have included even more companies than it did.

I feel that extending the research period would have brought more significant data and if there were to be another research project based on this same topic my advice would be to compile the research over a longer period of time rather than by making the sample size too large for the researcher to handle. This, of course depends on what the research is focusing on.

5.6 Recommendations for the future research

As already discussed in the previous chapter, if one was to take this research to the next step the research period could be extended to gain more information out of the companies throughout the year. This way the knowledge could be divided into different seasons of the year and compared how the content differs from summer to winter for example.

The next step for Company X would be to take the advice gained from this research and put them into a test and see what the results would be. They could take on board some of the suggestions and try to activate their social media channels according to them, and then follow the results that they would get to see if those suggestions benefit their business or not. As long as they first sit down and draw up a clear idea of what they want to provide for their followers and potential customers, and then put this plan into action. Once the tests were done and the results were in, they could make changes according to the feedback they receive from their content.

If Company X felt that they needed to learn more from their initial competitors, another research could be performed for them that only paid attention to the companies that provide the same products and services as they do in the woodworking industry. This could make it easier for them to stand out next to the opponents. During the research, a small round of interviews could be conducted as well to find out exactly what their followers thought about the content that Company X is providing compared to their rivals, and if any suggestions came up about how it could be improved. To gain more precise knowledge about their followers, they will need to reach out to them directly and ask.

References

Bastien, V. 2015. *Marketing To A High-End Consumer, Using The Luxury Strategy.* Accessed 20 January 2019. Retrieved from https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/250745

Bray, J. 2008. *Consumer Behaviour Theory: Approaches and Models.* Accessed 30 January 2019. Retrieved from http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/10107/1/Consumer_Behaviour_Theory_-_Approaches_&_Models.pdf

Brown, S. 2012. *Social Information: Gaining Competitive and Business Advantage Using Social Media Tools.* United Kingdom: Chandos Publishing. Accessed 10 October 2019. Retrieved as an e-book.

Duran, A. 2018. *Sink or Swim: How to Create a Buyer Personas to Ensure Marketing Success.* Accessed 26 January 2019. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescommunicationscouncil/2018/03/20/sink-or-swim-how-to-create-buyer-personas-to-ensure-marketing-success/#16d1e4e6f30b

Esser, F. *Comparative Research Methods.* Accessed 27 July 2019. Retrieved from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/9781118901731.iecrm0035

Filenius, M. 2015. *Digitaalinen asiakaskokemus: menesty monikanavaisessa liiketoiminnassa.* [Digital customer service experience: succeed in multiple channel business] 1st edition. Jyväskylä: Saarijärven Offset Oy.

Hanlon, M. 2018. *The segmentation, targeting and positioning model.* Accessed 22 January 2019. Retrieved from https://www.smartinsights.com/digital-marketing-strategy/customer-segmentation-targeting/segmentation-targeting-and-positioning/

Ilmarinen, V. & Koskela, K. 2015. *Digitalisaatio, yritysjohdon käsikirja.*[Digitalisation, the handbook for the head of the company] Talentum 2015. Accessed 2 September 2019. Retrieved as an e-book via Alma Talent Bisneskirjasto

Kauppila, K. 2015. *Markkinointiviestinnän ulottuvuuksia.* [The extremeties of marketing communication] 1st ed. Helsinki: Libris Oy.

Kenton, W. 2018. *Market Segmentation.* Accessed 22 January 2019. Retrieved from https://www.investopedia.com/terms/m/marketsegmentation.asp

Keronen, K. & Tanni, K. 2017 *Sisältöstrategia: Asiakaslähtöisyydestä tulosta.*[Content strategy: Getting good results from customer focused business] Helsinki: Alma Talent Oy. Accessed 7 October 2019. Retrieved as an e-book via Alma Talent Bisneskirjasto

Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H. & Setiawan, I. 2011. *Markkinointi 3.0: Tuotteista asiakkaisiin ja ihmiskeskeisyyteen.* [Marketing 3.0: From products to the customers and human focused business] Helsinki: Kariston Kirjapaino Oy. Accessed 5 September 2019. Retrieved as an e-book via Alma Talent Bisneskirjasto

Lombardo Agency, 2017. *8 Principles of Luxury Marketing.* Accessed 20 January 2019. Retrieved from https://lombardo.agency/the-8-ps-of-luxury-brand-marketing/

Oppong, T. 2018. *How to Succesfully Market Your Local Carpentry Business.* Accessed 22 January 2019. Retrieved from https://alltopstartups.com/2018/03/21/how-to-successfully-market-your-local-carpentry-business/

Phadermrod, B., Crowder, R. & Wills, G. 2016. *Importance-Performance Analysis based SWOT analysis.* United Kingdom: Electronics and Computer Science, University of Southampton, Southampton SO17 1BJ. Accessed 26 January 2019. Retrieved from https://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S0268401216301694?token=486FC84DFEA370DB145DCA1E70FF78FB1E4D7CBF3E99CD5AAAA9A25C51B63F85E8511A955F8153A235D0D53504678EF5

Puutyön historiaa.[History of woodworking] Accessed 4 February 2019. Retrieved from http://www03.edu.fi/oppimateriaalit/esine_elaa/puu/historiaa.html

Ruokonen, M. 2016. *Biteistä bisnestä!: digitaalisen liiketoiminnan käsikirja.* [Business from bits: handbook for digital business] 1st ed. Jyväskylä: Docendo Oy.

Schofield, T. 2017. *What Is Consumer Behaviour in Marketing? – Factors, Model & Defininion.* Accessed 30 January 2019. Retrieved from https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-consumer-behavior-in-marketing-factors-model-definition.html

Simpson, J. 2017. *Finding Your Audience: The Importance of Developing a Buyer Persona.* Accessed 30 January 2019. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2017/05/16/finding-your-audience-the-importance-of-developing-a-buyer-persona/#4b71183c4734

Sundheim, K. 2011. *Where They Started, the Beginning of Facebook and Twitter: A Brief History of Social Media.* Accessed on 10 October 2019. Retrieved from https://www.businessinsider.com/a-brief-history-of-social-media-2011-7?r=US&IR=T

Weinstein, A. 2004. *Handbook of Market Segmentation : Strategic Targeting for Business and Technology Firms.* 3rd Edition. United Kingdom: Routledge. Accessed on 13 October 2019. Retrieved as an e-book.