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INSTAGRAM AS A MARKETING TOOL IN ELITESERIEN FOOTBALL CLUBS

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Social media has grown to become a constant part of people's everyday lives. It is utilised by individuals and organisations to connect and communicate with counterparts in an effective and effortless way. Within this study, the use of Instagram as a marketing tool in Eliteserien football clubs is the subject of research, with the teams Rosenborg BK, FK Bodø/Glimt and Sandefjord Fotball being observed and analysed. The aim of the research is for the author to examine the activity on Instagram conducted by the teams, and with this, recognise development areas for the commissioning company Sandefjord Fotball, for them to advance their use of Instagram as a marketing communications tool. Various aspects on the creation of engagement, concerning current and potential customers through Instagram, are of high interest within the research.

Prior to the research period, a variety of literature was gathered and reviewed regarding social media communications within football clubs. Additionally, characteristics on the motives and behaviours concerning supporter engagement towards football clubs on social media was assessed, along with the current sports marketing trends and theories related to the topic.

The research was completed in a qualitative manor, with the author applying observation and content analysis as the research methods of choice. Data was collected from the chosen team's Instagram accounts during a period of ten days, with 132 pieces of content being analysed.

Based on the research, results of the similarities and differences concerning strategies between the three football clubs were noted, with Rosenborg BK and FK Bodø/Glimt operating in a comparable manor. Positive variety and frequency of content, along with the use of engagement tools were noticed among these clubs. On the other hand, Sandefjord Fotball was perceived to use Instagram in a less strategic way. Subsequently, being less effective in creating and maintaining engagement towards the club. However, through this research, development suggestions were listed for the club to make improvements, in order to benefit from the use of Instagram as a marketing tool in various ways.

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1   Introduction

Social media has been around for many years now. It is a phenomenon that has grown to be a vital aspect of people's everyday lives. Different social media platforms offer users an effortless way to follow and interact with their desired interests. Whether it is by sharing a picture on their own profile, viewing what another person posts, or like in the case of this research, following and interacting on what someone's favourite football team posts. The number of social media users worldwide is incredible, it is reported that there are 5.04 billion social media users worldwide since January 2024 (Petrosyan, 2024).

The use of social media as a marketing tool, is already a common characteristic amongst organisations. Instagram for example, is now thought to be a must for all brands due to its simplicity regarding sharing and viewing content, while also being cost-effective (Rezvani, 2014) Already in 2018, within the top divisions in: England, Spain, Italy and Germany, there was not a single team that did not utilise the use of Instagram (Aichner, 2019, p. 242). Therefore, within this thesis, an analysis will be made on how Instagram is utilized as a marketing tool in Eliteserien football clubs.

Eliteserien is the highest division of Norwegian football and has a total of 16 teams competing in it. Between the months of April and December a total of 30 games are played by each team. In 2023, there was a total of 1 733 660 spectators coming together to watch the teams compete in the stadiums around Norway, making an average of 7 223 spectators per match (Norges Fotballforbund, 2023) In the UEFA association club coefficient ranking, the Norwegian league is currently ranked 15th in Europe, one position lower than neighbouring country Denmark, but ahead of fellow Nordic countries such as Sweden who is placed 24th and Finland ranked 34th. (UEFA, 2024)

1.1   Aim of the research

The goal and target of research within this thesis, is to complete a qualitative analysis on the use of Instagram in three Eliteserien football. The three football clubs under review will be FK Bodø/Glimt, Rosenborg Ballklub and finally the commissioning company Sandefjord Fotball. What makes this research interesting, is the comparison of the use of Instagram as a marketing tool between three different organisations who compete in the same division. Within Norwegian football, the three clubs being analysed have differences in the number of following and what they have achieved in the past, but when it comes to the use of social

media, will the organisations have much in common with this marketing channel? Or will there be major differences in strategy and communications? These types of concepts will be of high interest within the research. Rosenborg Ballklub is now on its 46th consecutive season in the Eliteserien, and is also the most successful organisation in Norwegian football history (Transfermarkt, n.d.). However, FK Bodø/Glimt, who is on their seventh consecutive season, has finished within the top two in five out of six seasons, reaching first place three times. Making them the most successful in recent years (Transfermark, n.d.).

The commissioning company for this thesis Sandefjord Fotball, is competing for the fifth consecutive season at Norway's highest level in football (Transfermarkt, n.d.). They are known to be one of the smaller organisations in the Eliteserien, having less resources to work with, especially when comparing to the two other clubs in question. Through the research being conducted by the author, Sandefjord Fotball is hoping to receive valuable insight and information on how to improve the use of Instagram as a marketing tool, and in return, take steps forward in creating an improved social media strategy within the club.

1.2 Research question

To reach the required outcome of the research, the author is aiming to answer the research question:

- How can Norwegian football clubs improve the use Instagram as an effective marketing communications tool to increase engagement with current and potential customers?

In addition to the main research questions, the author will consider three partial problems for added insight:

- In what way does the content engage customers?

- How is the content used and posted?

- How versatile is the content?

Currently there is little research on the use of Instagram as marketing tool within Eliteserien clubs. This makes the purpose of the research, particularly for the commissioning company, a viable one.

1.3   Background of the author

The author conducting the research possesses a long footballing background, having played professionally for already nine years on various levels and in multiple countries. The work experience the author possesses in the football industry, gives them good knowledge from a player's perspective. However, this experience does not benefit them highly in the research, due to not having experience in the marketing communications side of football clubs. This in return, makes the completion of the research extremely interesting for them. Receiving the opportunity of combining work, studies, and passion for football, will hopefully lead to a successful research project and a prosperous learning experience for the author.

Currently the author is a player for Sandefjord Fotball. Working for them enables the author to have some previewed knowledge on the football club's way of working with social media. However, despite the working relationship, the author will maintain a neutral perspective when conducting the research in order to gain authentic results.

2   Theoretical Framework

In the chosen field of research, the theoretical framework focuses on the approaches of social media marketing from a sports organisations perspective. In addition to this, the researcher looks at concepts on other aspects of marketing as well. More specifically, sports marketing trends and the effective ways of marketing communications through content marketing. Literature based on a consumer's behaviours and motivations are respectively an area of interest with the subject of research in mind. Also, as Instagram plays a vital role in this research, the definitions and tools regarding the use of Instagram as a marketing communications tool in a general form and in a customer engagement perspective are explained.

2.1   Social Media

When searching for definitions of social media, you come across many different classifications. New platforms are being constantly being created with innovative features which in return makes the search for one perfect general definition challenging.

Coles (2015) approaches the definition of social media by separating the term into two parts, "social" and "media". The "social" is because the motives of use regarding social media are

to socialise with people is one way or another. Then again, "media", is because the content viewed, created, or posted will be published on the web. Summing it up, social media is an online platform used as an alternative way of communication in comparison to the traditional ways. It has created value by giving users new access to communications and initiating a possibility of communicating with multiple people at once. It has grown to become a beneficial platform for both the individual persons, and business purposes for organisations. These two aspects can work hand in hand, but also there are differences when it comes to an individual's social use of social media and the companies use of the different platforms. (Coles, 2015)

Obar and Wildman (2015) have combined definitions found in current literature to identify similarities between social media services into four steps:

1. "Social media services are Web 2.0 Internet based applications"

2. "User-generated content is the lifeblood of social media"

3. "Individuals and groups create user-specific profiles for a site or app designed and maintained by a social media service"

4. "Social media services facilitate the development of social networks online by connecting a profile with those of other individuals and/or groups"

(Obar & Wildman, 2015)

Adding to the difficulty of the wanted definition, is the huge, varied number of social media products and services. The main goal of social media is to bring people together. However, at what time do we reach the line in separating something from not being a social media platform, and to one being a social media platform. Obar and Wildman (2015) asked the question that, should platforms such as emails and fax machines also be considered as social media because they too are bringing people together. (Obar & Wildman, 2015, pp. 2-6)

When it comes to marketing, the human needs, wants and demands are the most important aspects to take into consideration. Furthermore, social media cannot be thought about as the perfect counterpart to traditional marketing. The same rules apply, that one marketing tactic will not be a fit for every individual viewing, and the common thought of just selling and

advertising is not enough in the current day and age (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2015, p.35; Kotler et al, 2018, p.29). There must be a strategy behind what you are doing as an organisation. Kotler et al. (2018) has defined marketing as "a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with each other" (Kotler et al, 2018, pp. 29-31) Within social media marketing in sports, this is the process in which clubs interact with customers to gain something from them.

2.1.1   Instagram

Instagram is a social network platform that is free for all of its members. Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger are the creators of the platform, and they released it to the world on the Apple iOS platform on October 6th, 2010. Within the first two years of its release, Instagram gained more than 40 million active users, and in the year 2012, Meta (formerly known as Facebook) purchased Instagram for $1 billion (Holak & McLaughlin, 2017) The main purpose of Instagram is for people to create, share and view content in the form of pictures and videos. In addition to these features, users have the possibility to converse with others via their messenger and shop for items people have put on sale through the shopping sector. Through their various features, they aim to help people express themselves and connect individuals with one another (Instagram, n.d.) Instagram has also become a popular platform for businesses. For them, it is also a free network to aid in the promotion of their products and services, in addition to the sharing of the brand (Holak & McLauglin, 2017) Currently, Instagram reports that there are 200M+ business accounts opened on the platform (Instagram, n.d.).

👥 **2 826 900**

♀ **57%** women   ♂ **43%** men

13.9%

11.7%

10.7%

9.8%

10.8%

8%

9.2%

6.4%

7%

5.4%

4.1%

2.9%

| 13-17 | 18-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ |
| n/a | 20.5% | 25.6% | 18.8% | 15.6% | 11.2% | 8.3% |
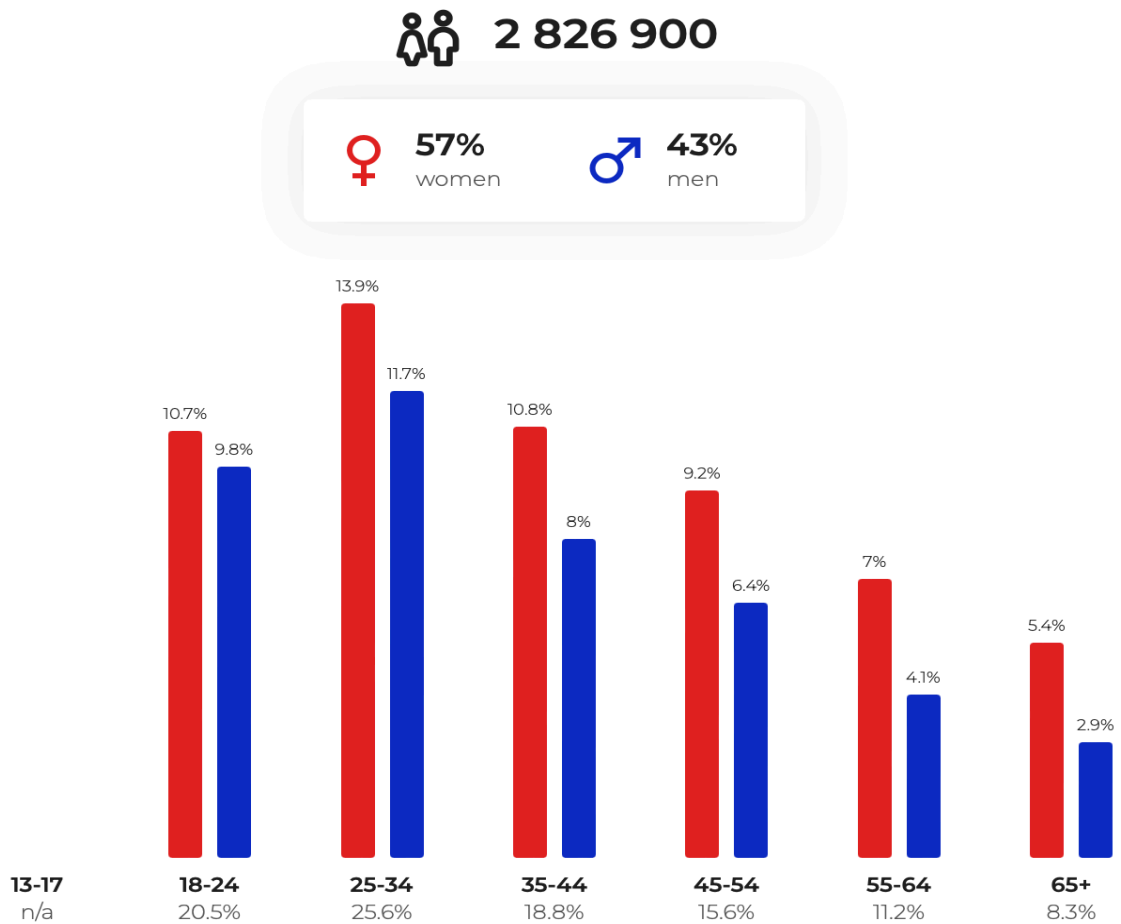
Figure 1. Instagram users in Norway February 2024 (NapoleonCat, n.d.)

In February 2024, there is around 2,8 million within Norway. 57% of the users are women and 43% are men, with the highest age of users being aged between 25-34 (NapoleonCat, n.d.) Despite the number of Instagram users accounting for around 50% of Norway's population, it is still regarded to only be the fourth most popular social media network accessed within the country (NapoloenCat, n.d.; Similarweb, 2024).

2.2 Football clubs and social media

Brands in all industries are users of social media. Football clubs are not an exception in this. There are no well-managed football organisations in the world that can afford to disregard the use of social media to engage customers. Football attracts a huge amount of interest on social media platforms. However, the information we currently obtain on how the consumers in the football industry react to different content available, is still somewhat minimal. What is the most effective content in terms of activating them to like, comment and share what they

view, is one question that would highly benefit organisations, not only in the footballing industry. (Aichner, 2019, p. 242)

Football clubs utilize social media platforms with an aim of it contributing to their financial success. With this in mind, the analysis of customer engagement is an important variable. In a study conducted by Aichner on user engagement (2019, pp. 250-253), they made a discovery that currently there is no major differences in user engagement on the variety of posts a football clubs publishes. Essentially, marketing departments in football clubs should not currently neglect certain types of content to others. As, if everything is done well, the result of user engagement will all be quite similar when analysing likes, shares and comments (Aichner, 2019, pp. 250-254) For football clubs, when it comes to which social media channel is the most effective, Instagram, comes first, in terms of amount of engagement and frequency of posts. (Romero et al., 2023, p. 10).

2.3 Sports marketing trends

The sports marketing environment is one that is constantly taking steps forward. Marketers must be highly aware of all the new changes and trends that are coming in to play regularly, otherwise the risk in falling behind to your competition is high. Sports marketing is defined by The University of Kansas (2023) to be, "the strategic application of marketing principles and techniques to promote sport-related products, events, teams, or athletes". Within sports marketing, the transformation to the digital age, has allowed organisations to enable effective communication and engagement with everyone involved. Most importantly, the communications between organisations and fans. (University of Kansas, 2023)

When thinking about the current trends, social media marketing comes up first. With the assistance of social media, organisations have achieved a new level of interaction with their fans. Through the multiple platforms, they can reach a high number of viewers at a fast rate and increase the brand loyalty of their supporters with the posts they publish. Sports brands must keep two aspects in mind with social media marketing: influencer marketing and social media advertisement. With the use of influencers, such as athletes and content creators, organisations can build stronger connections with their fans with more personal content. Social media advertising on the other hand, allows the creation of marketing campaigns by organisations. These in return, will help brands maintain their visibility as a brand itself, and in terms of ticket sales, organised events and other beneficial features. (University of Kansas, 2023)

Video marketing has also taken steps to become an important pillar of sports marketing. The possibilities and versatile manor in how content can be created has become a vital feature in capturing the attention of an audience. If conducted well, videos on subjects such as: highlights, storytelling, short-videos and behind-the-scenes content, has the opportunity of going viral and reaching/engaging with a significant audience. (University of Kansas, 2023)

The ability to generate personalized and engaging content towards the target audience, is an aspect that deepens relationships between fans and organisations. If brands are able to activate emotions such as belonging and excitement in consumers, there is a chance that they will begin to create user-generated content to benefit the image of the brand. Another form of strengthening a brand-customer bond, is to create interactive content. This is content such as quizzes, polls and interactive videos. These encourage participation towards the brand and other people around it, eventually growing the overall relationship between different aspect around the brand. (University of Kansas, 2023)

2.4   Using Instagram content as a sports brand management tool

It is clear, that at this current time, it is highly critical for sports teams to operate at a high level when it comes to social media. The adopting of advanced branding techniques are something that will differentiate themselves from competitors in the long run. These are skills that will enable organisations to consistently maintain and create two-way interactive communications with their fans through social media. When comparing Instagram to other social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook, the difference is that Instagram has a heavier focus on the visual content that is posted. Even though Instagram is a social application for many, studies have shown, that it can also be utilized by engaging supporters for business objectives in addition to sporting and social goals by sports organisations. (Anagnostopolous et al, 2018, pp. 5-6)

When using Instagram, a sports organisation can use product and non-product related posts to help brand themselves. According to research done in the University of Central Lancashire, product-related (e.g. pictures of players) elements were more consistent in gaining larger numbers of engagement compared to non-product (e.g. pictures of fans) related elements. Using qualitative research, supporter's interactions on Instagram posts fall into multiple categories: aspiring, belonging, criticising, and loving. The simple and effective way to share content on Instagram, makes it one of the best tools to boost fan engagement and build a positive image on their brand through social media, while targeting both current and new audiences. (Anagnostopolous et al, 2018, pp. 5-11)

In a research conducted between two teams, one of the teams had more focus on the current products inside the club e.g. manager. The other team had a heavier focus on non-product aspects, such as posts about historical happenings. According to these findings, the team with more product related posts received a greater amount of engagement on their posts from the supporters. (Anagnostopolous et al, 2018, pp. 3-34)

When making branding decisions through Instagram, it is clear that the chosen format of visual content and communication has a great effect on what feedback you might receive. However, despite the variety of feedback the organisation receives on posts due to an outcome of many factors such as, bad/good results, or other emotionally awakening aspects in the sporting world, fans do recognise a value in these transactions, and so should the organisations. Currently, it is thought that decisions made about posts are done more on an intuitive level, rather than analytical. This is something that is encouraged to be changed to possibly enhance positive results. (Anagnostopolous et al, 2018, pp. 3-34)

2.5 Motives to engage with sports brands on social media

Sports brands are often organisations that have a high number of stakeholders associated with them. The main consumers, who are the supporters of either a specific team or sport, should be maintained and kept active consistently. Despite supporters commonly possessing some sort of long-term brand loyalty/commitment to their favourite teams, it is no longer enough to expect good performances from the team will maintain the relationship in the most effective way. The effective use of social media plays a large role in creating a sustainable relationship between sports organisations and supporters. Continuous development on this, will then lead to relationships being less dependent on the sporting success. (Machado et al, 2020, p. 328)

In the research conducted by Machado et al (2020), they explain five motivations that link consumers with social networking services:

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Social influence

Search for information

Rewards

Conversation

Entertainment
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Figure 2. Five social media motivations (Machado et al, 2020, p. 329)

"Social influence", is linked with the consumer's opportunity to associate themselves with the brand in question, and in return, gain recognition and identity from peers by doing so. "Search for information", is dependent on the accessible information created by the brand, to then motivate the consumer into action on the social networking services. "Rewards", will motivate customers into action by generating an opportunity for customers to benefit in a chosen way. This can be done by discounts and promotions posted on social media channels. "Conversation", is focused on the brand being able to have a channel where supporters are given the opportunity to interact with the organisation in a convenient accessible way. "Entertainment", is the final motivation that is linked with the emotional side of sports and social media. This motivation enables followers to express their emotions by engaging with the brands page. (Machado et al, 2020, p. 329)

In the sports world, when it comes to the supporter's preference of viewing content regarding different teams, social media has become the platform of choice, compared to traditional media channels such as printed magazines and newspapers. The availability of desired content, such as videos on social media, is an aspect that plays a large role in this, also due to the emotional effects that are connected. These in the longer run, will in return, have a more positive effect on customer satisfaction and loyalty for sports organisations. (Hussain et al., 2022, pp. 1470-1471)

In a research studying the different motives and activities from sports supporters regarding social media, the numbers confirmed how imperative it is. When it came to supporters following their favourite athletes/teams on social media, 89.8% of the participants did so. Secondly, the number of supporters preferring to find increased information on players and games through social media content, was at 89.3%. This same statistic is aligned with a

question questioning which platform a fan will make their way too when searching for updates on teams. 89.1% of participants favoured their team's social media channel to the official team website. (Hussain et al., 2022, pp. 1468-1469)

2.6 Sports supporters behaviours on social media

Football supporters have often built a unique relationship with the clubs they follow. The most committed fans partake in multiple consumer-to-consumer activities related to their favourite team. These include activities such as positive word-of-mouth, display of supporting, interactions in fan communities, and the acquiring of information on their team. These are considered some significant behaviours towards customer engagement, beyond the level of purchase. (Vale & Fernandes, 2018, p. 38)

From the beginning, sports organisations are already well positioned to succeed with the use of social media. The different platforms have generated a powerful form of communications between organisations and supporters, and this is the result of the sport or the team having a large part in the spectators' day to day life to begin with. However, despite the supporters already somewhat becoming co-owners and co-creators of the club's brands on social media due to their activities, clubs still fight the feeling of wanting to control their own brand image on these networks. The empowerment of fans in sports, and the integration of their activities and behaviours into the brands social media presence is still something that needs to be considered by organisations. (Vale & Fernandes, 2018, pp. 38-39)

When speaking about customer engagement behaviour on social media, Vale & Fernandes (2018) have split them into three categories; "consumption", "contribution" and "creation" (Vale & Fernandes, 2018). "Consumption", is the most minimal, but most common activity conducted by the consumer, and it relates to the reading, viewing and clicking of brand related content. "Contribution", which is the second level of engagement, is linked to the interactions created by the consumers. These interactions include liking, sharing, commenting and other forms of communication on brand content. "Creation", is when the consumers begin to produce and share their own content regarding the brand. These can be pictures, videos and even reviews on games where they a talking about their clubs. (Vale & Fernandes, 2018, pp. 39-40)

2.7   Challenges of customer engagement on digital platforms

Customer engagement is regarded as one of the most fundamental metrics to measure when considering digital marketing. Often, customer engagement can be understood to be the time a customer spends on a brands digital platform. However, it is actually the brands ability to capture the attention of the customer on a consistent basis in order to raise emotional, psychological or physical investment towards the brand. Ultimately, the end goal is to utilize the customer interactions to develop increased customer value for the brand (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2015, p. 308) For sports brands, the success on social media can be seen within the supporter behaviours on various social networking channels, and increased motivation to interact with the organisations digitally.

The customer relationship management aspects must also be acquired when brands look to improve engagement and loyalty. Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2015), mention five aspects of customer relationship management for companies to consider in terms of development and maintaining a successful plan:

Listening

Talking

Energising

Support

Embrace

Figure 3. Five customer relationship management characteristics for social media (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2015, p. 324)

These five activities all have characteristics which include the customers, more specifically, the most loyal ones, which then mend and improve your strategy to fit them. Even your most loyal customers could have criticism towards the brand strategies, and often as they are loyal advocates, a brand might have to make small changes to maintain the relationship. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2015, p. 324)

Within digital interactions with customers, the aspects of what they value is something that must be strategized as well. Customer value and loyalty falls into two categories: emotional and behavioural. Emotional, includes features when consumer's express positivity by the perceptions, opinions and recommendations they share. If a consumer is engaging with a brands digital platform with successful emotional loyalty, they are likely to remain positive advocates for the brand, and possibly help them reach new customers. Behavioural loyalty is a metric that can also be measured by data. Activities on an organisation's social media channels, such as: visits, interactions and the responses regarding customer activating content, give essential data on customer behaviours. Relevant and motivating content is an area which companies work hard on to achieve behavioural loyalty. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2015, p. 324)

2.8   Chaffey's Theory-Social Media Marketing

The RACE marketing framework, which stands for "reach", "act", "convert" and "engage", was developed by Dr Dave Chaffey and Smart Insights in 2010 and was formed to help companies have a simple structure for their digital marketing communications. Before the creation of this framework, Dr Chaffey had for many years been assisting businesses adapt to different opportunities of digital marketing. However, the digital expert concluded that most businesses do not attain a planned, strategic approach to digital marketing. In a research by Smart Insights, results showed that half of the businesses involved did not possess a marketing plan for the digital side of business (Chaffey, 2023) The RACE marketing framework has been developed from a similar concept named REAN (reach, engage, activate, nurture), which was created by Xavier Blanc (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, p. 26).

The RACE framework contains four steps and one pre-phase to increase a business's engagement amongst customers. The pre-phase is also known as the planning phase. This is when the business creates a digital strategy with objectives and resources which are in use. The multiple activities that have been created, are considered to activate and contact customers on different stages of the customer lifecycle. (Chaffey, 2023)

The first step after the pre-phase is "Reach". The objective within this step is for the business to generate awareness and visibility towards the brand, product and its services. In addition, the attempts are to build as much traffic as possible to the businesses network. Multiple marketing techniques should be utilized to receive the best results. Interactions with the aid

of paid, owned and earned marketing concepts will assist in the maximisation of driving reach. (Chaffey, 2023)

Secondly, we have "Act". This step was created for businesses to have a plan for them to be able to encourage customers into participating towards the act of purchasing or signing up for something via the network. Dr Chaffey explains that the "Act" stage, has somewhat similar features as the conversion step, but due to the difficulty in enabling conversions in today's consumers, it was made into a separate step. Some success that can be measured in this stage is: registration of memberships, signing up for newsletters, viewing of a product. Overall, the encouragement of participation is the main target. (Chaffey, 2023)

The third step is "Convert". As mentioned above, this has similar feature as the second step. However, it is more concretely focused on transforming the different activities into a sale. This is the stage of the lifecycle when the individuals make the transition towards becoming paying customers. It is important to keep in mind that these transactions can end up being made through online and offline channels. (Chaffey, 2023)

Lastly, we come to the final step of the framework, "Engage". This step is planned to assist the business to construct a long-term relationship with their various customers. Depending on the network chosen, the connection can be maintained via repeating sales, email subscribers, sharing of content and customer satisfaction feedback. The maintenance and growth of customer lifetime value, through forms of engagement and communications on a business's social networking services and website, have a high significance in customer retention. (Chaffey, 2023)

2.9   Social media engagement theory

Social media engagement is currently a subject that consequently still requires additional research to the information we currently possess. The social media engagement theory is a complex field which brings to light both the positives and negatives of engagement. The theory concentrates on an individual's activity on one's content through active participation and interaction. When talking about engagement within this theory, we focus on individuals expressing their reactions and opinions in the form of liking, commenting and sharing content they come across. In the sense of emotions, this theory reviews the contributions from content towards users receiving a sense of belonging and connectedness concerning a brand or community. When one creates a sense of trust on social media with their audience,

the content shared will enable engagement with a larger sense of credibility and nurture engagement. (TheoryHub, n.d.)

Social influence is equally a key feature in the social media engagement theory. Individuals have been proven to engage with content that has a higher rate of popularity or been distributed by sources they trust. When reaching a position where the content you share is at a state of social influence between customers, the spreading and engagement towards your content will become highly effective. However, several factors play a role in how to make the content engaging for consumers. A consumer's characteristics and motivations must be studied, alongside the favoured platforms used and the format of content you are producing. (TheoryHub, n.d.)

The feature of creating your social media content in a gamification format, is a powerful way of building engagement and utilizing specific user behaviour. Gamification includes the activation of consumers through content where they must handle game-like actions. This can be through clicking interactive posts, or content which can work in a competitive way, such as filters. These can lead to an increased number of comments and shares on posts, which is a powerful aspect in promoting engagement. Activating content created by brands are an effective way to increase visibility of their products and services. (TheoryHub, n.d.)

3 Methodology

3.1 Research method

Research projects can be completed either in a quantitative or qualitative manor. Within this research, the author has chosen to utilize qualitative research methods. Qualitative research includes a wide variety of techniques and philosophies. It is a way of researching that leads the research to examine data on people's opinions and experiences in detail. Qualitative research includes methods such as in-depth interviews, observation, focus group discussions and content analysis, while also having a concentration on visual aspects. Qualitative research methods can often be used when exploring topics around a person's beliefs and behaviours in addition to the identification of social/cultural norms within groups or societies. Often when reviewing research questions surrounding qualitative studies, they are built around "why" and "how" questions. This is because, the questions regularly look to explain and understand concerns, or study processes and behaviour (Hennink et al., 2020, pp. 10-11) Within this research project, the author will be assessing characteristics related to

engagement behaviour initiated from the activities conducted on Instagram media pages. The consumer processes on why and how they are activated by the use of Instagram as a marketing tool in Eliteserien football clubs.

The author has chosen a combination of observation and content analysis as the qualitative research methods used. Observation in research, is when a researcher systematically observes and records data on the chosen subject of interest (Hennink et al., 2020, p. 170).

In observation studies, often the researcher can decide whether to participate in engagement with those being observed. However, since this is a research of, so called, document and archival analysis, the researcher does not notice any need for interaction with the material observed. Content found on media channels, are material that are recognised as "documents" within an observation research. Observation is acknowledged as a convenient method when studying social media. The way it can be applied to a variety of chosen aspects is a feature that is a strength of the method. When it comes to the collection of data in an observation research, it can be carried out in a "structured" or "unstructured" manor. Within a structured collection of data, the researcher will form the gathering of information in a pre-defined schedule along with specific outlines of the variables observed. Unstructured data collection offers a wider approach when thinking about the schedule and the pre-determined variables planned. The observation method also includes strengths such as: the possibility to develop new questions while the research is ongoing, level of flexibility regarding viewing data and the broad opportunity to describe what kind of social environment the research is being conducted in. (Alenezi, 2020, pp. 40-41)

Content analysis, is a data collection method which when conducted in a qualitative manor, concentrates on the interpretation and understanding of words, themes and concepts. Data is often written, oral or visual. In a qualitative content analysis, objectives on areas such as: similarities/patterns in communications, consequences of communications, differences in communications and intentions of communications, are all features to be analysed (Luo, 2023) When thinking about social media, content analysis is utilised in receiving information on your strategy. Your audience is the main source of data in this area: what types of content engages with them? Does your content create a sense of emotion? What format do they interact with the most? These are just a few questions that can be studied when conducting a content analysis on social media. The results of content analysis can then in-return, be applied to improve and develop strategy if needed. (Päivärinta, 2023)

3.2 Research design

Within this research, the use of observation and content analysis as qualitative research methods were utilised on the chosen Eliteserien teams Instagram accounts. The data required from the social platform Instagram, were collected throughout a period of ten days (12.03.2024-21.03.2024), and the data was collected from the football clubs own Instagram accounts. The author has noticed the two research methods in question to be fitting for the chosen research problem. Furthermore, in terms of the theoretical approach to the research. The researcher made notes on how the theoretical aspects of the RACE marketing framework happened to be utilised along with the social media engagement theory when assessing the data. The researcher believes that the two theories analysed within the theoretical framewrok complemented each other in a good balance and were in a convenient position to be utilised together for the research in question.

As the main subject of research was concentrated on the use of Instagram as a marketing communication tool regarding engagement, the management of pictures, videos, stories, captions and comments were all analysed, along with the overall visual connectivity and possible utilisation of cross-marketing via Instagram within the profiles. These are all features that in different ways play a role in engagement between consumers and brands. Topics which were examined in the literature review completed, are utilised in the analysis of data gathered. In addition, as the end objective was to collect information for Sandefjord Fotball to hopefully use, comparisons were made on the data and methods used by the other research subjects in order to evaluate similarities and dissimilarities. When collecting data, the researcher took notes of the information gathered along with visual screenshots of elected examples if necessary.

When examining the content posted by the football clubs, there will be several featured to consider within the data.

Table 1. Points of interest within data gathered.

Activity: This includes the frequency of content posted (e.g. Posts + Stories = X)

Quality of content: Personality of content (player interviews, takeovers and presentations. Aspects such as consumer motivation/behaviour will be applied within these), visual connectivity of the profile, overall quality and level of professionalism.
Use of engagement tools: Instagram includes many possibilities of activity via multiple tools such as voting, question boxes, polls and emoji tools. How and why the clubs utilise these will be assessed.
Cross marketing: clubs often have several social networking services available to consumers. These also have a role within the customer engagement life cycle. How the clubs enable the strengthening of a consumer relationship, with the activation of engagement through cross marketing via their Instagram will be viewed

When observing, and analysing the data on the Instagram profiles, the researcher will continuously be taking recognition on the three partial problem questions mentioned earlier:

- In what way does the content engage customers?

- How is the content used and posted?

- How versatile is the content?

4   Results and findings

In this chapter the author will be presenting and analysing the data that has been gathered on the subject. The assessment of data will be conducted on a general comparative level between the three different football clubs, along with individualised sub-chapters, where the research analyses the activities in a more specific context. Subjects of research mentioned within the research design section, will be assessed along with the facts presented. Screenshots will be presented when necessary to enhance the output of information towards readers.

4.1 Analysis of general data

When analysing the football clubs chosen for the research between each other, we directly notice differences in statistics, which can be seen in the table below. Rosenborg BK, has the largest following on Instagram, followed by FK Bodø/Glimt and then Sandefjord Fotball. The author recognises that the population of the cities can have a correlation also towards the number of following a club obtains on social media. In this occasion, Trondheim, the city from which Rosenborg BK originates, withholds an estimated population of 214,565 persons (Brinkhoff, n.d.). Whereas Sandefjord is the second highest in this category with an estimation of 66,231 residents (Brinkhoff, n.d.), and Bodø coming lowest with 53,712 (Brinkhoff, n.d.). However, despite Bodø maintaining the city with the lowest number of residents out of the three, they have managed to reach an Instagram following of almost x6 more than the counterpart Sandefjord Fotball. The recent success of the FK Bodø/Glimt will surely have a meaning within this, but further on we will assess how the Instagram activities affect the attraction towards the number of followers between the clubs.

When contemplating the information that was gathered for the literature review of the research, we can make assumptions towards the number of followers each club withholds. It is clear, that when you follow an account on Instagram, you are searching for many different features. When assessing the number followers, we notice that Rosenborg BK and FK Bodø/Glimt have created good methods of motivation for fans to engage with their brand, especially in-terms of the receiving of a tangible association with the brands in the form of a follow. On page 8, the author listed five motivations for fans to engage with sports brands (Machado et al, 2020, p. 329), and with the statistics on followers, we can assume that the individuals that follow the clubs, more specifically, Rosenborg BK and FK Bodø/Glimt, receive fulfilment towards these five aspects from their Instagram profiles. From FK Bodø/Glimt's follower statistics, we can also note that they have successfully attracted engagement from individuals outside of the Bodø municipality. Further analysis, of the geographic location between followers, on all the accounts should be done through account insights to receive exact information, but since the number of followers is more than the population of Bodø, the author sees this as a calculated observation of data. When calculating the percentage of Instagram followers in comparison to the population within the cities, Sandefjord Fotball comes up to a percentage of ≈16%. This is notably lower than Rosenborg BK at ≈38%, and FK Bodø/Glimt with an impressive ≈106%. Even though, we should recognise that all followers are not local people within the cities, the comparison of these statistics communicate to us, the interest individuals have towards the clubs Instagram accounts and content.

Continuing to the number of posts published by the organisations, differences can be noted, especially between the two "larger" organisations, and Sandefjord Fotball. Rosenborg BK and FK Bodø/Glimt have posted around two times more content on their profiles than Sandefjord Fotball. As reviewed in the literature earlier on, the frequency of content posted, has a vital role in creating engagement between the brands and supporters within the social media services. Therefore, an observation can be made that the level of posting frequency is not on the required level for Sandefjord Fotball when comparing to the two other organisations. However, further on in the research, an assessment will be made on if it is due to strategy or lack of variety in content. Instagram stories are also an aspect the researcher is analysing in the research. The use of this feature is a vital tool for creating user engagement, but we note that as the "stories" content is only available for 24 hours, unless saved by the account or user, past statistics are not available to recover afterwards. However, during the decided research period, the researcher is assessing the frequency and content posted using the "stories" tool.

Especially when we think about the attempts to reach and build new connections towards a new customer base, the verification of a brands is something that should be kept in mind. When we search for why a business should obtain verification Instagram advises, "A verified badge. Help your business stand out with enhanced verification that confirms that your business is validated and authentic". In addition to this, verification allows your profile to appear on an individual's search results earlier and become more visible in suggested accounts (Instagram, n.d.) In the instance of this research, two out of three football clubs have obtained the verification for their accounts. These clubs are Rosenborg BK and FK Bodø/Glimt. Once again, we note that the verification of the accounts come with many benefits. Especially regarding the creation of new sources of customer engagement, the aid of verification brings more visibility to new customers, while also making it clear that they are indeed engaging with the clubs official account due to being authentically verified. If we contemplate the RACE framework theory with the verification. This is an aspect that interacts with most stages in one way or another. This is because, this activates trust between customers and brands, which in-return, ease and enable the proceeding on every stage of the RACE framework.

Table 2. General data on the football clubs Instagram profiles.

Clubs	Followers	Following	Posts	Verified
Sandefjord Fotball	10,6K	324	1682	No
Rosenborg BK	81,1K	3704	3521	Yes
FK Bodø/Glimt	57,1K	219	3230	Yes

Furthermore, we analyse additional features that any customer will encounter when opening the chosen brands Instagram pages. Firstly, with Rosenborg BK. Besides the clear verified badge, we notice they have listed their current accomplishments as a sports organisation. Viewers will immediately receive information that they are 26-time league champions in Norway, and 12-time cup winners additionally. These are statistics that capture the viewers interest and encourage them to engage furthermore with the possible content posted. Below the two statistics, we find a clear "call for action" engagement message towards viewers. Translated to English as "But you don't want to miss this!", is a clear call for action to encourage visitors of the profile to access the list of links published. The objective of this is to utilise Instagram as a form of cross-marketing towards their other social networking services, or other beneficial features. Rosenborg BK's list of links include pathways to their: YouTube profile, TikTok profile, Facebook profile and a link to their new match jersey on their official website. Additionally, there is an action button which immediately directs engagers to Rosenborg's Threads account. One aspect we notice that only Rosenborg BK has taken into use out of the three clubs is, the creation of an Instagram broadcast channel tool for their account. The broadcast channel tool is available only for Instagram creator accounts. It allows followers of the Instagram pages to join the broadcast channel as members and therefore, receive access to various content posted by the main account. This enables members to easily receive and react to content, and in-return, grow a more unique relationship with the brand (Instagram, n.d.) Rosenborg BK has managed to activate approximately 2900 followers to join their broadcast channel as members. They have currently posted news on upcoming events, training and games onto the channel. Along with

these, videos and pictures are used as engagement in addition to a few informative messages to the supporters. Supporters have been able to engage with the content posted with the help of a variety of emoji reactions. The use of this tool to engage with supporters is highly efficient. The aspect of having to be a follower of the account to join the broadcast channel communicates that, the ones who then furthermore decide to join the channel despite already receiving information from original Instagram content, are the ones who are really looking to enable an active relationship with the brand. Finally, Rosenborg BK has applied the Instagram business account tool on their account. This not only allows new engagers to immediately recognise that they are a sports and recreation business, but it also enables Rosenborg themselves to receive up to date data on what their statistics are on everything they post and when/where their account is being clicked on. This is highly important for an organisation like Rosenborg BK, who are active publishers on Instagram.

Moving onto FK Bodø/Glimt, and the analysis of general information on their profile. When we analyse their profile, we see that they have many similar features to Rosenborg BK. They immediately mention the same statistics on their success in Norwegian football. They state that they have been winners in the Norwegian league during the years 2020, 2021 and 2023, along with Norwegian cup champions in 1975 and 1993. However, one feature that FK Bodø/Glimt has decided to insert onto their Instagram biography that Rosenborg does not, is the address to their stadium. This is a very good piece of information, particularly concerning new consumers who may be visiting Bodø. New visiting consumers can be expected to obtain this as valuable information, especially as noted before, that the number of followers that FK Bodø/Glimt has, is higher than the population in Bodø itself. The sharing of the location is a good way of giving people who are engaging with the account, some initial added information on the clubs' stadium's location, even though they might never even visit it. Just by giving this location is a beginning in building a relationship with engaging individuals. FK Bodø/Glimt has also placed a "call to action" list of links to their different content. They have listed a total of 11 different links related to the brand that individuals can access. In-terms of cross marketing their multiple channels through Instagram, an individual can find all the information needed from this list of links to interact and engage with. Likewise, to Rosenborg BK, they have also decided to attain the use of a business account on Instagram. FK Bodø/Glimt has however only decided to describe themselves as a sports account. This does not have a massive affect comparing to the other description due to them being very similar.

Lastly, we assess the data that Sandefjord fotball have applied to their Instagram biography to capture and engage visiting users from the first sighting. Comparing to the two previous

football clubs, Sandefjord Fotball has some small differences. On the contrary, due to the two other teams have obtained a reputation for being successful teams in Norwegian football, Sandefjord Fotball has decided to communicate that they are a part of the 2024, Eliteserien series. Analysis should be conducted on what is the best form of information towards consumers if a club has a similar history to Sandefjord Fotball, where there has been no major success in the top division or cup tournaments. Therefore, we note that the data on this, is on a similar level to the other clubs in question. Like FK Bodø/Glimt, the location of the stadium is announced in the biography for individuals to engage with. Earlier on, we reviewed the positive aspects within this feature, especially towards new and visiting supporters. Similarly, to the other two organisations, Sandefjord Fotball correspondingly shares a link for individuals to engage with. However, unlike Rosenborg and Bodø/Glimt, who included various links to other networks, Sandefjord Fotball only includes a source to the main page of their website. As this research is mainly focused on Instagram, we will not go further into if Sandefjord Fotball could add links onto their other social media channels there, but we will note that the activation of cross-marketing on Instagram to other sources, provides a healthier relationship towards the organisation as a whole. It is a form of maintaining the engagement lifecycle between supporters and the brand. One aspect that was observed is that Sandefjord Fotball have not yet formed their account into an Instagram business account. This is a feature that would add credibility to their account towards consumers, while additionally preventing Sandefjord Fotball from missing out on all the important data they would receive from their social media activities.

Below you will see visual pictures taken from the football clubs Instagram account to aid the information that was reviewed.

Figure 4. Rosenborg BK Instagram biography (RBK, 2024)

Figure 5. FK Bodø/Glimt Instagram biography (FK Bodø/Glimt, 2024)

Figure 6. Sandefjord Fotball Instagram biography (Sandefjord Fotball, 2024)

4.2 Observation and Content Analysis findings

Within this section of the research, the author will be analysing the information gathered from each individual football club, regarding their Instagram activities during the time followed. All the aspects mentioned in the research design alongside the reviewed literature, will be used for the assessments on how they attempt to activate engagement towards the football club.

4.2.1 Rosenborg Ballklub

Beginning with Rosenborg BK, the organisation which possesses the highest number of followers out of the three clubs in question. Previously, we analysed how they interact and engage with their supporters through their Instagram biography, and now we will dive deeper into the actual content they share with the supporters to build relationships and engagement. During the ten days, their Instagram was being observed, Rosenborg BK published a total of approximately 50 pieces of content. These were calculated in the form of posts + stories. We recognise, that with the number of stories being applied in the calculation, were in the form of sharing something new, and mostly leaving out the stories which only withheld a picture/video of an already published post, without any unique or additional methods towards engagement. However, with the statistics on the number of posts Rosenborg BK has published in the ten-day period, we expect that many supporters receive fulfilment to their needs in accessing content and information about the club.

Table 3. Data gathered on Rosenborg Ballklub's use of Instagram during time of research (RBK, 2024)

Rosenborg Ballklub	Total Frequency of posts (posts + stories)	Pictures	Videos	Stories
=	50	13	15	22

4.2.1.1 Pictures

Focusing more on the pictures that Rosenborg BK post on their Instagram profile, we recognize three aspects that are mostly published about, in addition to a few individual posts within the time of observation. These aspects are insights from training, new jersey release and match information.

Table 4. Average sum of data gathered from Rosenborg BK's picture posts

Average of statistics gathered from picture posts:	Likes	Comments
=	1563,5	8,7

The insights within the picture form that has been published from training, includes high-quality images of players and coaches from the football pitch. This is a simple way for Rosenborg to grow the profiles of their main employees, which are the football players and coaching staff, and give supporters insight on daily activities. In addition to these aspects, Rosenborg has often utilised captions of the training pictures to engage with individuals to purchase tickets to the first official Eliteserien league game of the season. Within these captions in which they attempt to reach, engage and convert customers into buying a ticket to a game. They have used phrases and countdowns to enable supporters to express their

excitement to the league starting, while also, adding the link to where they can make a purchase and stating the time and place of the event in question. With these captions under the images, Rosenborg have a clear aim of engaging with the supporters, not only towards their players/coaches, but also to activate them into becoming paying customers and creating a possibly new or renewed relationship with the football club.

With the time of research being completed during the pre-season, meaning the period when all the teams prepare for the official league to start. Often, teams release new kits that will be worn for the upcoming year, and this is also the case with Rosenborg BK. When we think of all the content that Rosenborg posted, this is a phase they clearly wanted to build hype around. Before releasing the first content of the new kits on March 16th, 2024, they published two visual picture feed posts during the research, which were related to the release. The first one includes a small sneak-peak of some details of the home and away kit without any additional information within the image. However, they are informing in the caption that the new kit will be "waiting" for the supporters at the club shop at ten o'clock the next day. Within the post they have also incorporated the account of the women's team, therefore possibly engaging with the fans that follow one of the teams more than the other. The feature of using the phrasing that the new kit is "waiting" for the supporters at the shop, is a feature that Rosenborg is hoping will activate their supporters. The second post prior to the kit launch includes information within the pictures of what direction Rosenborg BK is taking in the details of the new kits. These mostly include the colourway of the overall kit and the specific details of the logo. With the colourway pictures, they have included a colour palette next the two phrases which relate to the colours chosen. Within this post, they additionally included a link for the supporters to click to get more insight on the information. Especially in this post, where they informed information of the upcoming kits, they received engagement in the comment section, both positive and negative from supporters who agree/disagree with the choices they made on the kit. However, despite the different feedback, Rosenborg has successfully activated the supporters on the emotional side, which then motivates them to engage with the post in the form of conversing in the comment section.

Figure 7. Rosenborg BK Instagram feed post about a pre-season friendly (Rosenborg BK, 2024)

The third focus that Rosenborg BK had in their picture feed-posts were the games they were playing (see image 7.). Altogether they played two friendly games at the time of observation. In total 3 picture posts were uploaded to their feed regarding the games. These posts included pictures of the players taken from the games, visual information on the starting 11, and information prior/after the games. In addition to the visual aspects of the posts, Rosenborg consistently used the caption section to inform more information on the time and place of the game, other sources where it can be watched, squad information and short summaries on the happenings of the game. The use of the captions combined with pictures, was something that enabled supporters to take part in comment section about the game and the squad. Relating to this, we saw supporters ask each other on performances of the team and find information as to why a player was or wasn't participating in the game played. These are all features that include the customer relationship management activations regarding social media, and the creation of motivation for the supporters to end up increasing engagement with your brand.

An aspect that Rosenborg BK is attempting to create with their use of Instagram pictures is the feeling of being one with the community. During the time of research, Rosenborg published one post of the players visiting the local children's hospital, and one post in collaboration with a charity raising funds towards the conflict in Gaza. With these, they are displaying that they belong and play their part in the same community as their followers, to

engage and encourage them to also take part in acts of goodwill to those who need it the most. These posts will highly engage with supporters on the emotional side, and most likely increase the social influence and support to be associated with a brand like this.

4.2.1.2 Videos

As seen in the table above (Table 2.) Rosenborg BK published a total of 15 pieces of video content onto their Instagram feed. Within the literature review on page 8, we explored the positives that video marketing brings to sports organisations. The number of videos that Rosenborg published within the research period, communicate to us that they are genuinely attempting to master this feature of sports marketing as well. In many ways, the posts which are in the video form, have similarities to the pictures. They include focus points in the: trainings, games and new match kit, but additionally they incorporate more personal posts towards some of the players. As mentioned by the University of Kansas (2023), often emotions such as belonging and excitement are attempted to be activated in supporters with video marketing, and we note that this is exactly what Rosenborg BK is going for with their video content. With many of the video posts, they are also conducting cross-marketing towards their YouTube channel. Often the posts, especially from training, are short videos, which in-return with information in the captions, build the excitement for viewers to engage further to the full YouTube video through the snippets.

Table 5. Average sum of data gathered from Rosenborg BK's video posts

Average of statistics gathered from video posts:	Views	Likes	Comments	Shares
=	36,6K	1493,5	8,2	6,7

When we analyse the content created from training, we come across three videos. All these videos have one feature in common, they are focused on only one player at a time. It is clear that the strategy here is to create a more personal connection with the supporters and players with the higher level of individuality within the post. One example we notice, is that

they have placed a microphone on the captain who is being filmed, so that the fans receive more personal insight on his personality and how he communicates in training. This is a great way of creating a more in-depth relationship towards supporters and players through social media. The other two video from training, on the other hand, include clips from individual actions within the training sessions instead of the voice of the players. They have chosen to display videos of goals and skills from the players, to enhance a sense of excitement for fans of what to expect in the coming season.

Secondly, we look at the content from games. Opposite to the picture posts, which were are a more informative format of post to this regard. The videos include highlights of goals from the friendlies games played, while also involving clips from last season's games to build excitement for the new upcoming season. The highlight videos of goals scored is an effective way of engaging with supporters. Often, football supporters come looking for information on games that have been played on social media, especially if they have not seen the games themselves. Therefore, the inclusion of video material from a game is highly engaging, and during this research, Rosenborg published three videos of goals that they scored in friendlies. In addition to those three videos, Rosenborg published two videos with goal from the previous season. These two videos have the sole purpose in building hype around the first game of the Eliteserien league. Both the goals are filmed from Rosenborg BK's home stadium and include a countdown and link to the tickets within the caption, to build emotion towards the game in question, with an end-goal of turning the viewers into paying customers.

Next, we assess the videos from their release of the new match kit. Before the three initial release videos of the kit, Rosenborg posted three videos during our period of research, to build anticipation aimed at the official release. In the first two videos prior, they slowly added up details of aspects in the new kit to keep the supporters guessing. Then, in the final video, they included historical images of the club to activate emotion regarding their history. Afterwards, they released three high quality videos of their home, away and goalkeeper kit. The videos were filmed in a creative manor to encourage viewers to watch the full video, and then subsequently transforming into making a purchase through the link provided to them in the captions. The release of a new match-kit is an exciting moment especially to those who support the club closely, therefore, it is important to conduct it well to gain the best results of engagement towards the club. With the videos that Rosenborg BK released, we can notice that they have been planned and finalized in an extremely professional style, to apprehend high levels of engagement from viewers.
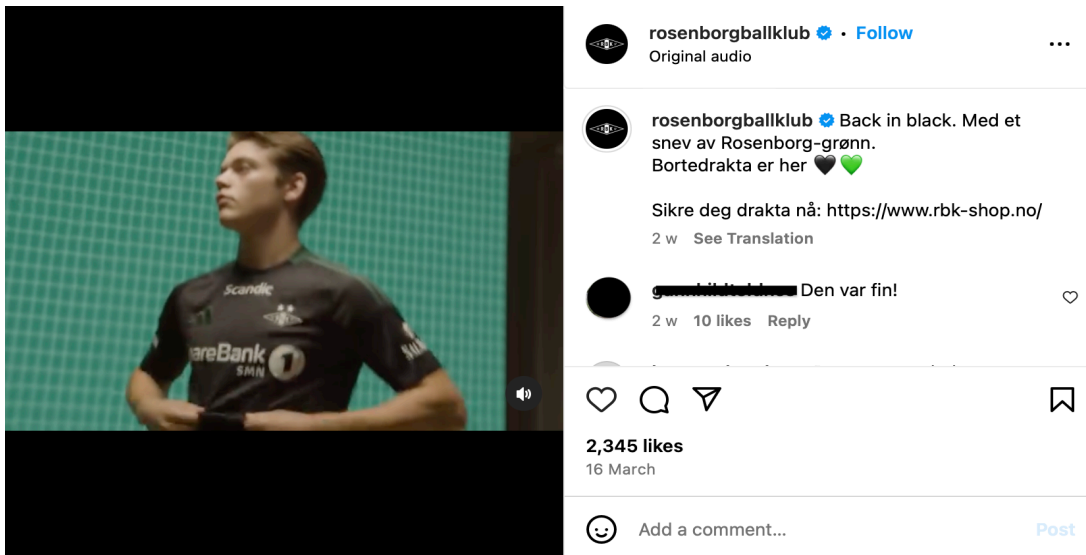
Figure 8. Rosenborg BK away-kit release video (Rosenborg BK, 2024)

Finally, Rosenborg also seek to initiate the strengthening of customer relations and engagement towards their brand by releasing video content off the football pitch as well. During our observation and content analysis period, they published a short video taken from their longer YouTube episode, which documents the team when they are at work. The video that was published, includes a light-hearted comical perspective of one of Rosenborg's star players Ole Sæter. With this, the aim is to build an even more personal feeling in the relationship between supporters and players. In these clips, the fans get insight of the personalities of the players and attracted to engage with the content due to this.

4.2.1.3 Stories

Instagram story posts are a simple and effective way to post updates from different circumstances towards followers. They can be used to boost the visibility of feed posts, deliver information before/during or after events, and overall, increase the sharing of content that is currently happening (e.g. videos/pictures from training, fan visits done by players). With the approximate number of 22 stories that Rosenborg BK published during the period of research. They included a large variety of content, which many had the inclusion of engagement activators such as links or tags to different features. The content that was included in the stories related to similar segments as the feed pictures and videos, these being: trainings, matches, fan events/meetups, kit release.

Content from training included various high-quality pictures of players and staff, with the engagement tool of tagging utilized. Tagging the players and staff in the pictures published makes it an easy way for supporters viewing the content to make their way onto their favourite players Instagram profiles. Including features such as tagging in the picture/video stories, increases the likelihood of supporter motivation and behaviour to engage with the content as they receive the feeling that it might include information they are searching for, or aspects they can entertain themselves with, while also embracing their passion towards the club. Videos from training were also types of content that Rosenborg BK applied. In the stories that Rosenborg posted from training, they had marked the location. In addition to the supporter's interest to view up-to-date content from training, this can be an aspect that encourages some supporters to make their way to the actual training field and watch their favourite player's train.

When we think about the kit-release content that Rosenborg BK posted, it was mostly about boosting their feed-posts and links related to the subject. Like in the feed-posts, they exploited the tool of Instagram stories to build up excitement and anticipation regarding their new kit. Eventually, when the kit was coming reaching its release, they switched to the boosting of the feed-posts through stories. This is an effective way of ensuring the visibility of their content to not miss out on engagement. However, in this research, we did not have access to the tools to find out the effectiveness of this strategy.

The ability to use stories as an informative communication tool to attract engagement towards the club was also applied by Rosenborg BK. During pre-season, football clubs often organise events such as open sessions and kick-off events to draw interest towards the club before the new season, and at the same time introduce new players and staff to the supporters. Rosenborg BK was an active user in sharing reminders and information through stories towards supporters, to activate engagement. During our research, Rosenborg organised an open day at their training facility and a kick-off party with their supporters. With the help of the stories, they published an image where they reminded the supports of the open-day, added with a link to where the supporters will find their favourite players. Similarly, with the kick-off event, they posted a reminder of the event, and a story later informing that the event was sold-out. However, the supporters that could not make it to the event, had the possibility of engaging with content in the stories format, which was filmed from there.

Figure 9. Rosenborg BK Instagram story (Rosenborg BK, 2024)

4.2.2   FK Bodø/Glimt

Next up for analysis, we have FK Bodø/Glimt. They have the second highest number of
followers out of the three clubs reviewed, and now we will see how they utilise Instagram as
a marketing communications tool to attract and enable engagement with current and
potential customers. As seen in table 5. FK Bodø/Glimt published a total of approximately 52
pieces of content in the ten-day, data gathering period. In comparison to Rosenborg BK, who
posted slightly less content with 50 pieces, we notice some differences in numbers. FK
Bodø/Glimt with 27 posts in feed-pictures, is around double the amount to Rosenborg BK.
On the other hand, Rosenborg BK had around double the number of activity in video posts
comparing to FK Bodø/Glimt. Regarding the use of stories, they were in fairly equal numbers.
Next the different content will be analysed, and in addition, the researcher will assess if there

are any major differences within the social media behaviours of FK Bodø/Glimt and
Rosenborg BK.

Table 6. Data gathered on FK Bodø/Glimt's use of Instagram during time of research (FK
Bodø/Glimt, 2024)

FK Bodø/Glimt	Total Frequency of posts (posts + stories)	Pictures	Videos	Stories
=	52	27	7	18

4.2.2.1 Pictures

When we analyse the use of feed-pictures for FK Bodø/Glimt, we come across many
similarities to Rosenborg BK, in terms of posts published from trainings and games.
However, there is also differences in some aspects, and with these differences, even for FK
Bodø/Glimt, there is clear variances they receive in the engagement of posts. To summarize,
the content FK Bodø/Glimt has chosen to focus on with feed pictures are related to: trainings,
matches, the women's team, kit launch, and supporter competitions conducted on Instagram.

As we see in the numbers on Table 6. FK Bodø/Glimt received an average of 1059,9 likes in
their 27 posts published during the research period. During the analysis, it became clear to
the researcher which picture posts supporters engaged with to raise the average, and which
posts brought this number down. In addition, when we inspect the average of comments in
the 27 posts, we notice that it is almost three times the amount that Rosenborg BK obtained,
and later within the research this sub-chapter we will analyse how Bodø/Glimt managed to
enable engagement in the comment section.

Table 7. Average sum of data gathered from FK Bodø/Glimts picture posts

Average of statistics gathered from picture posts:	Likes	Comments
=	1059,9	23,6

Firstly, we will speak about the content published regarding matches, both current and future. Like mentioned earlier on in the research, the Norwegian teams are currently in their pre-season. Therefore, they are not playing any official competitive games, but only friendly games. During the research, FK Bodø/Glimt, made posts from a friendly match they played during their training camp in Spain, while also including posts about their women's teams upcoming game, and the advertisement of the Eliteserien games which were about to begin their ticket sales to the supporters. In these segments of posts, we witnessed an interesting variation of engagement from supporters, especially when looking at the number of likes.

Regarding the content from the men's friendly game in Spain. These were pieces of content that received a respectable amount of engagement from viewers, mostly around the average number of likes that FK Bodø/Glimt obtained, with one exception. They began the building up to the game with an informative post of when and where the game was being played, which also contained the details to where the supporters who did not make the trip to Spain could view it. This was then followed up with high-quality images of the match venue, and the starting 11 that would play the match. FK Bodø/Glimt then released posts of the half-time and full-time scores of the game with an additional post of pictures of players taken in the match. We see these as valuable posts for the supporters who made their way to the clubs Instagram in search for information about the match. In addition to this, the numbers of engagement from supporters towards these posts, also communicate that these are important features of content. With the post of players from the game receiving 2803 likes and 10 comments.

When contemplating the low-engagement posts that Bodø/Glimt published during the research, these were related to the activation/advertisement towards future games. We recognise that the end-result of consumer engagement in these cases is not always seen from the outcome of likes/comments per post. However, these posts could somehow be seen

as improvement areas for FK Bodø/Glimt, with the highest number of likes in this segment of posts reaching 559 likes. The posts related to the upcoming games, were often published in a simple more informative way. Comparing to Rosenborg BK, who attempted to capture and form excitement towards the upcoming games with a video format of the team scoring goals at their home stadium. FK Bodø/Glimt opted with the concept of the logo of the two teams that will meet each other, and the inclusion of a text stating that the tickets are now on sale, or how many tickets have already been sold. These posts don't necessarily spark excitement or anticipation in supporters, and the average of likes and comments in these posts communicate this to us. However, Bodø/Glimt do still attempt to activate supporters with their captions and with the providing of the link to where tickets can be bought. Therefore, it is difficult to tell without further research, how engaging these posts are in terms of supporters being directed to buy tickets after viewing the post.

FK Bodø/Glimt also included regular picture content concerning their women's team. The researcher notices this as a way of attracting the behaviours and motivations of belonging among supporters to strengthen the community around the whole organisation. In the same manner, as with the men's team. They created a build up towards the women's match that was being played at the time of research. They informed when and where the game was being played, along with details on where tickets can be bought and where it can be watched if they can't make it to the stadium. As with every game, this is important information to include for the supporters who engage with the Instagram account to search for information. FK Bodø/Glimt additionally look to increase engagement towards the women's team by informing the schedule of their upcoming games and encouraging supporters to come and watch in the caption section.

When it comes to the feed-post concerning the launch of the new kit. FK Bodø/Glimt only provided the supporters with one post which included three pictures. Unlike Rosenborg BK, Bodø/Glimt did not publish any feed-posts to build up anticipation towards the new kit in the few days prior to launch. However, the post they published with the kit, received a large amount of engagement from viewers. They used two pictures of the men's players wearing the kit, and one picture of a member of the women's team wearing the kit, and included tags of the players included, the teams and the club shops profile. The pictures were edited in a creative manor, and the club encouraged supporters to go and secure their kit as quick as possible. FK Bodø/Glimt reached a number of 4698 likes and 57 comments on this post. Making it a piece of highly engaging content from them.

As mentioned earlier, FK Bodø/Glimt additionally organised a competition among their supporters. This was done in cooperation with their club shop profile after the kit-launch, and was an effective way of activating fans to engage with their profile and merchandise. The competition gave supporters a possibility to win the new match-shirt, while also organising an opportunity for a fan meetup with the players. The picture-post which included the information of the event and competition, gathered 969 likes and an impressive 437 comments. The huge amount of comments shows us that this was a successful form of activating the supporters within the club's community. Furthermore, the next day from this, the day of the event. They followed up with a reminder post of the event to maximise visibility to increase engagement from supporters.

Figure 10. FK Bodø/Glimt Instagram feed-post (Bodoglimt, 2024)

Likewise, to Rosenborg BK, Bodø/Glimt also consistently published feed-picture content from training sessions. These were all conducted in a professional manor when thinking about the quality of pictures, and the addition of tagging the players so that supporters find their profiles easily. However, one post from training was done in a light-hearted, more comical form. This was when they handed out the role of photography to one of their players. In this post, they published some of his not so "professional" pictures and wrote in the caption that it gets better the more pictures you slide through. This post received a good amount of engagement

within the comment section from supporters. As an example of the engagement, they made some jokes about his photography skills, which showed us that this was a smart piece of engaging content from FK Bodø/Glimt.

4.2.2.2   Videos

In the statistics (Table 5.) we see that during the period of research, FK Bodø/Glimt published a total of seven video posts onto their Instagram feed. Earlier, we made the notice that comparing to Rosenborg BK, who had a similar number of overall posts, FK Bodø/Glimt had a lesser focus on video content than Rosenborg BK. However, despite publishing less video content than picture content, we see below in (Table 7.) that they still receive a similar amount of engagement in terms of likes, towards their videos. The content that the videos contained, were almost exactly aligned with the picture content. However, because there was less content published, there was less video material on the men's game, which was replaced by one video where FK Bodø/Glimt made a more personalised video with two of their players. Generally, the video contents included: women's team material, training videos, kit-release, one collaborative video and player interview/personalised content.

Table 8. Average sum of data gathered from FK Bodø/Glimts video posts

Average of statistics gathered from video posts:	Views	Likes	Comments	Shares
=	27,7K	1017,3	9,5	6

Beginning with the video content published about the women's team. Out of the seven videos which were posted during the research, the two videos concerning the women's team received the most views and likes. This communicates to us, that this is a form of content that interests the community around FK Bodø/Glimt. Therefore, the posts that are done in a collaborative form with the women's team account, is a good strategy when thinking about the numbers of engagement. One of the posts included a highlight video of the season's first goal that the team scored with some edits and music in the background. The researcher notices this as a form of keeping the excitement and anticipation of the women's team

among the fans. The second post, was a video of the team celebrating their victory with the supporters that joined to watch the game at the stadium. These videos activate the feeling of belonging among the community and the football club, while also showing people the atmosphere at the games, to hopefully enable even more people to visit.

When we assess the training material that FK Bodø/Glimt published in the video form, there was one video to review. This video included a variety of light-hearted content from the team's training camp in Spain. It included not only clips of the players, but also all the other staff that were there on the trip. Therefore, giving supporters added insight of possibly more unknown figures around the club. Under the video, they wrote in the caption about the good atmosphere in the team. Consequently, hopefully bringing good emotions to the individuals watching the video as well.

Moving onto the kit-release, which is a highly anticipated moment for everyone following FK Bodø/Glimt. They release only a video of their new home kit for the outfield players, comparing to Rosenborg BK, who released videos of three new kits. However, the video Bodø/Glimt released, was done in a very professional way, when we think of the editing and creativity. Within the video, they started off by bringing aspects of Northern Norway, the area FK Bodø/glimt is from. Aspects like a lynx running in the dark forest, followed by the players sprinting on the pitch with a ball while dressed in the new kit. These can be aspects that excite the viewers on the emotional side, and build up the hype towards the new kit. Additionally, they included a link in the post where supporters can find more information on the kit, and incorporated tags to the women's team, club shop and the kit provider PUMA's profile. The post concerning the new kit, was one which exceeded the average statistics that Bodø/Glimt received on average in a video post, making it a successful launch for them in terms of supporter engagement.

For football clubs, the aspect of creating content on their main assets, which are the football players, is an important feature regarding supporter engagement. Football supporters who use social media are extremely likely to be interested in getting to know their favourite players better. During our research, FK Bodø/Glimt published three pieces of video content concerning this. The first one was simply an interview on their upcoming friendly game against Premier League team Crystal Palace. These types of opponents are not usual for Norwegian football clubs, therefore, for supporters to hear a player's pre-match thoughts on the game, is an attractive form of content. Secondly, FK Bodø/Glimt produced a video including two players who were playing a football related game which was in the form of an Instagram filter. The game forced them to choose between different world-class players to

form a starting 11. This is a good tool to utilise on Instagram if you want to engage viewers in the activity, because at the same time the viewers are watching the players make their choices on the starting 11, the viewers can compare the choices they would make in the same situation. Finally, they created a collaborating video with the company the coffee company that would be sponsoring the coffee at the club's stadium. However, despite it being an advertising piece of content, it still included some players of the men's and women's team, therefore bringing small features of their personalities available to the viewers.
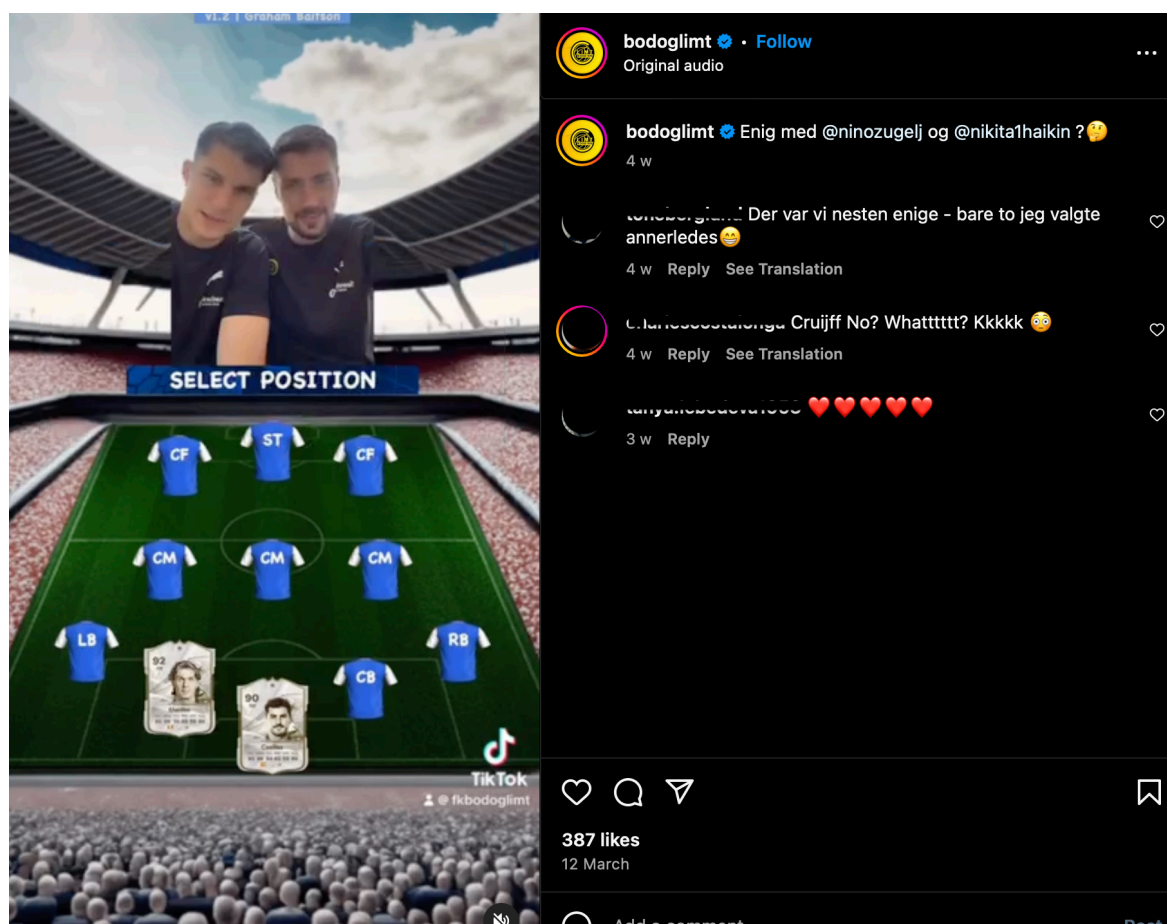

Figure 11. FK Bodø/Glimt video post with an Instagram filter (Bodoglimt, 2024)

4.2.2.3 Stories

During the time the author was completing the research, FK Bodø/Glimt published approximately 18 stories. As mentioned earlier, Instagram stories are an effective way of either re-posting a feed post that one has published to gain additional engagement, or inform viewers on different events in real-time or before and after. With the Instagram stories tool, Bodø/Glimt had a focus on the: reposting of posts, women's team, fan events, interviews and the kit-launch.

Once again during our time of research, the upcoming women's team game was of high interest on FK Bodø/Glimts Instagram stories. All in all, eight of the 18 stories were related to creating visibility and engagement towards their first match. They utilised different techniques such as, the production and sharing of recognised individuals in the community speaking in videos encouraging people to purchase tickets to the game, with the addition of the direct link to make it easily accessible for viewers. Furthermore, on the match-day itself, they posted stories consistently regarding the game so that viewers more information concerning it. The amount of content they released prior to the game, was surely reaching the followers of Bodø/Glimt, therefore, increasing the possibility of positive engagement, leading to supporters making their way to the stadium. In addition to the posts they release prior to the game, they shared the full-time result, and a video of a goal scored from the women's teams profile to increase the engaging traffic there as well.

The kit-launch was also a feature of the stories Bodø/Glimt published. They had organised an event where supporters could make their way to a location to have a look at the kit and purchase it if wanted. Bodø/Glimt communicated about this event prior and during the event. Before they event, they released a story which included the time and place on where it was happening, with an extra link to more information, finalised with the sharing of a video feed-post. During the event, they shared the picture of the supporter who was the first one to get their hands on the new kit, while also reminding the time and place of the event. They also shared a up to date video of the atmosphere at the event. For the individuals who couldn't make it there in person, they shared the pictures of the players from the kit-launch, with a direct link to where supporters could purchase the kit. Finally, they additionally included the supporter competition within the stories. As mentioned earlier, this was an extremely engaging form of content in the feed-posts, and the sharing of it on the stories tool, was likely an adding factor to that.

Figure 12. FK Bodø/Glimt Instagram story (FK Bodø/Glimt, 2024)

The last story features that Bodø/Glimt included during our content analysis, were from their training camp in Spain, and this made up three stories altogether. The first one, was simple a re-post of training pictures that were published within their feed. The second feature, was a picture and link to an interview where supporters could receive more information on everything that was happening during the training camp. Lastly, they release a video from the team's training session in the build-up towards their friendly game against Crystal Palace.

4.2.3   Sandefjord Fotball

Finally, we end up with the analysis of Sandefjord Fotball's use of Instagram. The comparisons towards the two larger organisations that were analysed earlier on, will indicate to us if there are major differences in strategy, or if Sandefjord Fotball use their Instagram in a similar way to them.

As we see from the table below (Table 8.), Sandefjord Fotball did not achieve the same levels of activity on their Instagram profile as the other two teams analysed. Sandefjord posted only six pictures onto their feed with no video material included. Therefore, an analysis cannot be made on a video segment. In the statistics, it is also noticeable that a heavy focus has been on the use of Instagram stories.

Table 9. Data gathered on Sandefjord Fotball's use of Instagram during time of research (Sandefjord Fotball, 2024)

Sandefjord Fotball	Total Frequency of posts (posts + stories)	Pictures	Videos	Stories
=	30	6	0	24

4.2.3.1 Pictures

When we begin to speak about Sandefjord Fotball's use of feed-pictures on Instagram, we immediately notice the areas they focus on, partly due to the low number of activity, especially when we compare levels of posting frequency to the two other clubs analysed. Additionally, the statistics of engagement that Sandefjord Fotball receive on their feed-posts is lower than the other clubs analysed. We recognise, that Sandefjord Fotball does have significantly less followers than Rosenborg BK and FK Bodø/Glimt, and this is an aspect that plays a role in the statistics regarding engagement (Table 9.). However, if Sandefjord would post picture content more frequently, these statistics could reach higher levels. As mentioned earlier, Sandefjord Fotball had two focus points within their feed-posts during the time of research. Shortly summarised, the two themes Sandefjord posted on were: trainings and games.

Table 10. Average sum of data gathered from Sandefjord Fotball's picture posts

Average of statistics gathered from picture posts:	Likes	Comments
=	281,5	4,8

Beginning with the published content from training, this involved one post out of the six published. The picture published was photograph of the winning team from their training session. In terms of numbers, this post received 316 likes, which is over the average for Sandefjord Fotball, therefore, we can say that it is a piece of content that some supporters actively engage with. However, despite it being a picture that gives supporters insight from the training session, it does not include the use of any engagement tools that supporters could further interact with. The caption includes a message which states that this is the winning team from training, although the picture does not include tags of the player's accounts, which could lead to further engagement with the club's assets. Additionally, because it is pre-season, and training games are being played along with the build-up to the start of the Eliteserien league. The club could have utilised the caption section to create excitement and anticipation to these events in the same way as Rosenborg BK and FK Bodø/Glimt.

Regarding the second theme and the remainder of feed-posts that Sandefjord Fotball posted on, which were the match content. The content Sandefjord provided on this aspect, was in a similar form as the two other teams analysed. The first picture that was posted concerning a training game included information to supporters that the match was cancelled due to snow. Along with the information about the cancellation and that supporters should stay tuned for more information, Sandefjord Fotball chose to include some pictures of the players completing a running session on the pitch instead of the game. The fun pictures of the players running on the snowy pitch was a good addition to the post, and it managed to receive decent levels of engagement with 360 likes. However, thinking about engagement tools, they could have included a link to where supporters could find out the upcoming information on the new date of the game. The reason for this is because, the next post that was published was already from the new day of the game. Therefore, the supporters that visited Sandefjord's Instagram in search for information, most likely did not find it.

However, moving on to the content from the new game day. They started off with a similar post as the other teams, which included information on the game. The start time, location and where the supporters who can't make it to the stadium can stream the game from were informed. This is positive informative content, but the real actions of engagement are difficult to calculate only from the pictures likes and comments. Furthermore, Sandefjord Fotball publish content on the starting 11 from the game, followed by the end-result. These were posts that are vital for the supporters searching for information on the game, and the number of comments the two posts received, were a sign of good engagement. Altogether, 26 comments were published under the two pictures, therefore, showing that supporters were active in communicating about the information posted. The post released about the end-result, additionally included a short summary of the goal scorers in the game, and also reminded supporters that there is one more rehearsal game to be played before the season starts. Lastly, Sandefjord Fotball finished the series of posts regarding the game, with a sequence of in-game images taken of the players. These were high-quality pictures which also included tags of the players included, so that the viewers could continue their engagement towards the club.
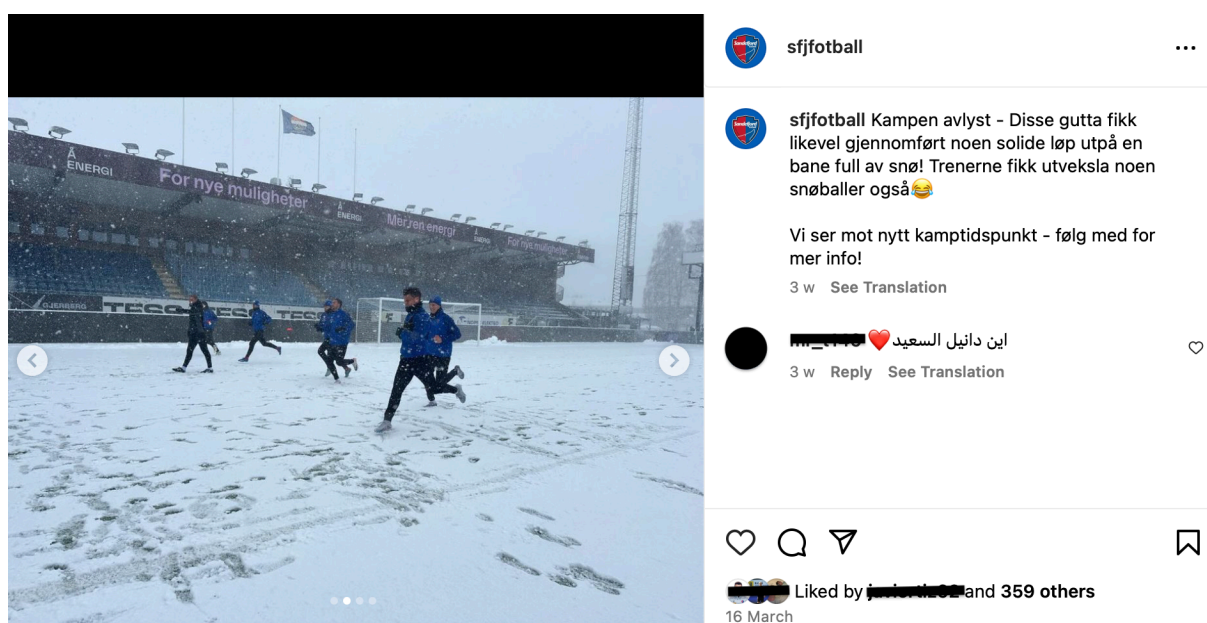

Figure 13. Sandefjord Fotball feed-post (Sandefjord Fotball, 2024)

4.2.3.2 Stories

Altogether Sandefjord Fotball published 24 sets of Instagram stories during the period of research. Out of the three clubs analysed, this is the highest number of activity utilised with this feature. With the stories that Sandefjord publish, they try to enable engagement by releasing mostly video content from matches. Other than those certain pieces of content, Sandefjord released only one story not related to a match, and this was the sharing of their feed-post of the winning team in training.

As we know from earlier, Sandefjord Fotball played one training game during our time of research. Beginning with the stories content from the club, the first nine stories published were concerning the game which was cancelled. They started off by informing the time and place of the match to supporters, when the match was still thought to be played. However, after some videos of the team arriving to the stadium, they shortly released the information that the match was cancelled with a picture of the snowy pitch. Despite this information, which helped supporters find out that the game wasn't being played, they shared some up to date videos of the team completing their running session on the snowy pitch. With this, they most likely wanted to create entertaining content for their followers to show what kind of snowy condition there was at the stadium.

Moving on to the day of the re-scheduled match, which was also the next time Sandefjord Fotball released a story. After the informative story of the time and location of the match, Sandefjord began to share videos from the team's warm-up- In these stories, there were also different captions utilised commenting on the videos, and one video with a timer counting down to the start of the game. This can be engaging content to all the supporters who could not make it to the stadium to watch the match. Especially when Sandefjord Fotball was also updating the score on their stories, however, this only happened during the first half for some reason.

Comparing to the Rosenborg BK and FK Bodø/Glimt, Sandefjord Fotball was fairly one-sided in their Instagram stories content. The other two teams, included more variety within their content and utilised certain engagement tools such as links to different websites, in order to create engagement increased engagement towards different aspects of the clubs. Whereas, Sandefjord Fotball did not include a single link in any of their stories, and possibly lacked the same strategy and variety of content as the two other teams.

Figure 14. Sandefjord Fotball Instargam story (Sandefjord Fotball, 2024)

4.3 Discussion

Earlier in the thesis, the RACE marketing framework for the use of social media by Dr Dave Chaffey (2023) was reviewed. When applying this theory and framework towards this research, we notice that Rosenborg BK and FK Bodø/Glimt are in many ways following a similar concept to the theory in question. With their Instagram behaviour, regarding the choice/application of content and use of engagement tools/activators such as captions and links, they follow the different stages of the RACE framework, while also suggesting that they have additionally applied focus on the "pre-phase" stage. This stage is a vital one, as is sets the organisations strategy and goals along the RACE marketing lifecycle.

When we apply the theory towards Sandefjord Fotball's way of utilising Instagram, we notice that they do not currently possess such a planned and strategic approach with Instagram as

a marketing communications tool. With the low number of posts, subsequently only spread out among three days of the period of research, we notice an absence of the "pre-phase", which then reflects on the whole cycle, when applying the RACE theory towards their activities. To improve their use of Instagram as a marketing tool with the applying of this theory, the frequency of content posts must reach a higher number, and to maintain the "act", "convert" and "engage" stages among consumers, they need to apply engagement tools within their posts similarly to the other two football clubs analysed in the research.

5   Recommendations to Sandefjord Fotball

When it comes to the aspects that Sandefjord Fotball can develop on to improve their utilisation of Instagram as a marketing tool, especially to increase engagement in current and potential customers, there are certain aspects they need to consider. The first attribute that Sandefjord must focus on, is the posting frequency regarding their content. Comparing to the other two clubs included within the research. Rosenborg BK published on average 5 pieces of content a day, with FK Bodø/Glimt publishing 5,2 posts on average. With the same calculation method, Sandefjord reaches an average of 3. However, during our research, the author noticed that Sandefjord Fotball only released content on three of the 10 days, which was not the case with Rosenborg BK and FK Bodø/Glimt. Therefore, Sandefjord must focus on spreading their content around various days to maintain consistency and rhythm across posts to increase activity regarding engagement from viewers. Additionally, with the added frequency of posts, come more reach, which ultimately leads to an increase in all the aspects of customer motivations and behaviours linked to supporters that were listed within the literature review (Page 9-10 & 12-13), concerning supporter engagement in sports. Once these are aspects are boosted, also the number of followers Sandefjord obtain on Instagram will most likely increase, due to more consumers knowing that Sandefjord Fotball's Instagram is a place where they can find information and engaging content.

Aligned with the frequency of releasing content. We notice comparing to the two other clubs, that Sandefjord Fotball lacks variety within their content. During the research, it was noted that Sandefjord Fotball did not publish any video content onto their Instagram feed. However, despite not including video content within their Instagram feed. The use of video content in the stories tool is a detail that the club should maintain and build on even further. Adding content from training and other situations involving the team is an engaging way of sharing aspects of the team's daily activities, and build excitement/anticipation at the same time. Within the literature review, it was evaluated how important this sort of content is when

thinking about the current social media trends and the engagement between brands and consumers.

Additionally, the involvement of features that would enable engagement between viewers and the club is something that Sandefjord Fotball lacked. These features play a vital role in possibly converting the individuals who view the content created, into tangible customers of the club. The use of links towards items such as tickets to games and match kits, are features that both Rosenborg and Bodø/Glimt utilised, subsequently, using the power of Instagram engagement to improve engagement elsewhere as well. Furthermore, the use of creative, activating captions under posts, is a feature that can capture the engagement of a viewer and convert them into taking a monetary or engaging action towards the organisation.

Ultimately, with the analysis which was completed, it is recommended that Sandefjord Fotball attempts to create an active, consistent social media strategy. A feature that is also vital in terms of customer engagement on Instagram for Sandefjord, is the creation of a business profile. With this, they will be able to receive accurate insight on what their engagement numbers are concerning their various posts and profile in general. For the effective use of social media as a marketing communication tool, there is a large variety of different strategies that can be utilised, and each organisation must find the right strategy for them with the resources they have. However, with football clubs who are active on social media, more specifically Instagram, strategies are commonly similar, as noticed with Rosenborg BK and FK Bodø/Glimt. Instagram is an extremely cost-efficient marketing communications tool when utilised in the right way. Therefore, it is crucial for Sandefjord Fotball to find out the best strategy for them, to utilise the information listed within this research, in a consistent manor, similarly to the two other clubs included.

6   Conclusions and Summary

Within this research, the author reviewed the importance of Instagram as a marketing communications tool for football clubs, especially when thinking about the creation of customer engagement. In the literature review, information can be found on what aspects effect the consumer's motivations and behaviours, which lead to them engaging with football clubs on social media. Additionally, as social media is a continuously growing industry, with new trends coming to play consistently. It is important for football clubs to essentially keep up to date with these to gain the best results.

Studies on how football clubs in Norway utilise Instagram as a marketing communications tool, is a topic that has not been excessively reviewed at this current time. Therefore, the results of this research hopefully obtain useful information to the commissioning company.

In this study, three teams from the Eliteserien league were reviewed. Differences and similarities were noted between all of them. Strategy wise, Rosenborg BK and FK Bodø/Glimt were the most similar, with both teams releasing a variety of content on a consistent basis in attempt to fulfil the needs of their followers on Instagram, while also looking to gain from it at the same time. Sandefjord Fotball, on the other hand, was perceived to use Instagram in a less strategic from, and was subsequently assessed to be less effective in the creation and maintenance of engagement from current and potential customers. However, with the research completed, suggestions were listed for Sandefjord Fotball for them to develop their use of Instagram.

Future research on the use of Instagram between Norwegian football clubs could be done to receive more insight and results regarding the subject. Even more detailed studies, with increased information gathered directly from the football clubs Instagram accounts, would be an effective form of receiving accurate data on engagement in general, while also being highly beneficial for the football clubs.

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Appendix 1. Observation Plan

Total pieces of content gathered from each football club's Instagram profiles between 12.03.2024-21.03.2024.

TEAM	TOTAL NUMBER OF CONTENT	PICTURES	VIDEOS	STORIES
ROSENBORG BK	50	13	15	22
FK BODØ/GLIMT	52	27	7	18
SANDEFJORD FOTBALL	30	6	0	24

Appendix 2. Data management plan

Before this research was completed, a thesis agreement was signed between the author, the commissioning company and the thesis supervisor from Häme University of Applied Sciences. As the data used within this thesis was gathered from the Instagram accounts of the football teams which are publicly available for everyone to view, no additional security precautions were required for the data management.