



Facebook in the Banking Industry

A Case Study in SEB Sweden

Bachelor Thesis within Business Administration

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Abstract

Background:	The technological progress the world is experiencing has also changed the way banking is done in Sweden today. One tough challenge for the banking industry is the moderately homogenous products and services they offer, which make banking particularly exposed and sensitive to customers and their switching behaviour.
Purpose:	The purpose of this thesis is to investigate what the role of Facebook is in relationship marketing within banking, a case study in SEB, Sweden.
Theoretical Framework:	The theoretical framework is focusing on three major parts for this paper. Bank marketing involves ways of marketing and segmenting a bank, furthermore relationship marketing includes theories on building long-lasting relations with customers, and finally service related technology contains technological developments and strategies of social media
Method:	This thesis is done according to an explanatory technique as material has been collected by qualitative interviews and the findings have been textual data. The study has been designed into a single case study of SEB. Interviews has been conducted to understand the way a Swedish retailing bank is using social media to enhance their customer relation.
Empirical Findings & Analysis:	It was found that SEB is seen as a personal and rather modern bank with good accessibility according to the respondents. Furthermore, customers are kept satisfied and maintained through trust, loyalty, and proactive acting. Also, the Facebook service is a good communication tool that gives fast replies and is available to use anytime.
Conclusion:	The role of Facebook within banking is multiple in association to relationship marketing. For instance, it brings along a fast communication tool and a great flexibility. SEB is rather innovative in their operation by rapidly adopting new means of technologies. The bank's brand image as a personal and proactive bank can further be strengthened through Facebook. Additionally long term relations can be stimulated through the increased communication, collaboration, and trust that Facebook builds. SEB operates proactive relationship marketing and Facebook is one of their latest proactive approaches. What has been realised is the role of Facebook to enhance customer satisfaction and relations in the long run.

Kandidatuppsats i Företagsekonomi

Titel:	Facebook inom bankmarknaden, fallstudie på SEB, Sverige
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Sammanfattning

Bakgrund:	Den teknologiska utvecklingen som gjorts de senaste åren har medfört förändringar i hur folk sköter sina bankärenden. En stor utmaning för banker är branschens homogena produkt- och tjänsteutbud, vilket gör banker känsliga för illojala kunder.
Syfte:	Syftet med uppsatsen är att undersöka vad Facebook har för roll i relationsmarknadsföring inom bankmarknaden. En kvalitativ fallstudie har genomförts på SEB i Sverige.
Teori:	Den teoretiska referensramen fokuserar på tre huvudsektioner. Bankmarknadsföring innefattar marknadsföringsmetoder och segmentering inom banker. Relationsmarknadsföring inkluderar teorier om uppbyggnaden av långsiktiga kundrelationer. Slutligen förklaras teorier om servicerelaterade teknologier, teknologiska utvecklingen, samt strategier angående sociala medier.
Metod:	Uppsatsen är genomförd med en utforskningsteknik då materialet har erhållits genom kvalitativa intervjuer. Studien har utformats till en fallstudie på SEB banken i Sverige. Intervjuer har sammanställts för att skapa förståelse för hur svenska banker kan använda sociala medier för att förbättra deras kundrelationer.
Empiri & Analys:	Efter studien är uppfattningen att SEB är en personlig och modern bank med bra utvecklad åtkomst för sina kunder. Banken bibehåller sina kunder genom tillit, lojalitet, och proaktivt agerande. Facebook som del av service utbudet är ett bra kommunikationsmedel som ger snabba och smidiga svar då det är tillgängligt dygnet runt på Internet.
Slutsats:	Facebooks roll inom bankmarknaden är mångfaldig när det kommer till relationsmarknadsföring. Exempelvis, för det med sig ett snabbt kommunikationsverktyg och stor flexibilitet. SEB är ganska innovativa i sin verksamhet genom att omgående införa nya typer av teknologier. Bankens varumärke som en personlig och proaktiv bank kan ytterligare bli stärkt genom Facebook. Långsiktiga förhållanden kan även bli stimulerade genom ökad kommunikation, samarbete, och förtroende som byggs upp av Facebook. SEB driver en proaktiv relationsmarknadsföring och Facebook är en av deras senaste proaktiva steg. Facebooks roll har insetts kunna förstärka kundnöjdheten och relationer på lång sikt.

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1 Introduction

To introduce the topic this section will start with a background supporting the problem area and continue with a clear purpose followed by a few research questions.

1.1 Background

The banking market has undergone an immense transformation during the last decades. Since the Swedish government in the 1980's established a new legislative proposal that allowed foreign banks to enter the Swedish market the competition has grown stronger (Svenska Bankföreningen, 2011).

The technological progress the world is experiencing has also changed the way banking is done in Sweden today. Many banks have introduced Internet and telephone banking in their operation, which implies that the personal contact between customer and banker has decreased (Eriksson, 2006). The society with vast information sharing and technology we find ourselves in today has increased the competition between the bank actors. At the same time it is becoming easier to switch bank and customers are becoming more disloyal (Cron & DeCarlo, 2006). Furthermore, people are becoming more flexible and well informed as a result of the extensive information supply. The banks must therefore reach their attention and put much effort in creating an interest from the customers in their product and service offers.

One tough challenge for the banking industry is the moderately homogenous products and services they offer, which make banking particularly exposed and sensitive to customers and their switching behaviour (Chakravarty, Feinberg & Rhee, 2004). Customer loyalty brings lower service costs, diminished marketing expenses and larger profits. The banks benefit from loyal customers as less accounts need to be open and closed. Furthermore the banks can enjoy the benefit of getting to know their consumers, which enables them to target and customise their offerings (Levesque & McDougall, 1996). Therefore the focus on retaining longer customer relationships built on trust, loyalty, and customer satisfaction through means of relationship marketing has become more important (Tapp, 2005). Retail banks' prime task is to take care of and handle money of their clients, which further creates need for mutual trust. Relationship Marketing is the key activity for companies to reach the attention and devotion from their customers. The centre of relationship marketing is relations and how to uphold relationships between the corporation and the players in its surroundings which plays a great role for the future banking sectors.

1.2 Problem Area

Improvements in technology and information sharing have provided banks with an opening to develop their business processes and obtain competitive advantages. There are more tools to engage in reciprocal activity between the bankers and clients, which can result in personal and direct marketing execution and added individual service (Pettinao, 2010).

Swedish banks are engaged in Internet banking services since over a decade and have numerous users. Benefits including customers' increased access to administer their accounts have lead to more active banking. Meanwhile, the financial institutions enjoy the advantage of low costs, effective distribution and production. The use of the web has enlarged the opportunity for companies to cherish their customer relations and effective marketing.

Social media has grown to be a platform that is straightforward and available to anybody with Internet access, creating opportunities for organisations to increase their brand awareness and customer conversations. Furthermore, social media offers a relatively inexpensive platform for businesses to employ marketing campaigns. In 2008, 75 % of all Internet surfers utilised social media including social networks and blogs (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Banks have realised this trend and started market themselves through different channels of social media. By using this new instrument they can enhance the relation with their customer through improved service, product offering and advertising.

Social media as a marketing tool is a relatively new phenomenon. In late 2010, SEB employed social media as a new marketing tool. They have engaged a professional group of bank employees providing customer service on the new Facebook webpage. SEB is the first Swedish bank utilising social media in their marketing, and it is therefore interesting to understand its cause and effect. As Swedish banks are new entrants in the field of social media, information of the potential benefits is not confirmed or assured. With an internal focus on the company side, the research will give a deeper insight in the new marketing trend to realise the prospective advantages or weaknesses banks can achieve in the aim for future successful business.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate what the role of Facebook is in relationship marketing within banking, a case study in SEB, Sweden.

1.3.1 Research Questions

Following research questions are addressed:

- How can the traditional marketing in SEB be supported through Facebook?
- How can Facebook stimulate long-term relations?
- What are the effects on service quality when implementing new means of communication?

2 Theoretical Framework

This section consists of retail banking theories as well as marketing strategies and customer satisfaction. The theory describes the most important concepts in the research: Bank Marketing, Relationship Marketing and Service Related Technology. The chapter explains the broader theories and also gives an understanding of more precise and narrow concepts that help to reach the purpose of this research.

2.1 Service Company

Definitions of the term service has been constantly created and improved during the last three decades and there are still differences in opinions. Most of the definitions however mention the services' process nature, intangible aspects and wide interaction (Grönroos, 1990).

Grönroos definition: "A service is a process consisting of a series of more or less intangible activities that normally, but not necessarily always, take place in interactions between the customer and service employees and/or physical resources or goods and/or systems of the service provider, which are provided as solutions to customer problems" (Grönroos, 2000, p. 46).

Relationships are more expected in a service industry than a manufacturing industry due to three motives (Benpauldi & Berry, 1997). First, many services offered are continuous, hence they continue for a longer period of time. Second, since services engage in intangible products customers become keen on reducing risk by creating relationships. Lastly, customers tend to build relationships with individuals rather than with products. Based on these drives it is more important for service companies to build strong relationships and loyalty than within the manufacturing industry (Zeithaml, 1981).

2.1.1 Retail Banking

Retail banking consists of deposits, investments and additional transactions from private persons and households as well as small and medium sized companies (SME's). The main services private customers seek within a bank are deposits and lending as well as transfers of money between different parties. Further assistance the customers search for is counselling in forms of financial expert advice and investment services as well as debit and credit cards support. Retail banking is a characteristic mass-market banking where large banks have many local branches. In the market of retail banking much emphasis is put on the extended bonds and long- term customer relations are much desired (Beerli, Martin & Quintana, 2004).

Previously the banking market had merely a small number of competitors to fulfill the market demand and customers had little options in supplier (Becket, Hower & Howcraft, 2000). Customers tended to stay devoted to one bank since the choice of financial tools and delivery channels were minor and switching bank provider was too expensive and complicated. Further regulation matters in the financial sector created stillness and immobility between competitors, which reinforced the long-term relationships between bank and customer (Konkurrensverket, 2001).

Preceding decades have implied immense changes in the banking industry. Deregulation and new technological solutions have changed customer behaviour and the degree of loyalty (Becket et al., 2000). Today the financial sector is facing a stronger competitive spirit implying a wider variety for customers to select providers that fit with their wants and needs. When there are few options of bank providers the customers tend to stay loyal despite being unsatisfied. However when competition rises the customer can be critical, evaluate their provider and compare to alternative

contenders. This was demonstrated in a Swedish study when 15 percent of the respondents were exploiting the service of a larger amount of banks than three years before (Konkurrensverket, 2001).

Companies within the service sector vary from manufacturing organisations in the way to market their products. The products within the service zone are mainly intangible, more tentative and less standardised within the sole company. In the past, the focus within the banking industry has been on corporate customers while the private consumers mostly turned to alternative financial institutions. This setting has changed immensely during the last decades. Private bank loans are regarded as one of the most beneficial assets and private consumers are enormously vital in the financial provision to the banks. It has now therefore become more vital than ever to build strong bonds and relationships with the public private customers (Gupta & Torkzadeh, 1988).

The increased rivalry and competition between banks today has put emphasis on building strong interactions with their customers. According to Gupta and Torkzadeh (1988) the key purpose of relationship marketing is to construct and uphold customers' attraction, custody, and enrichment. Disappointed and frustrated consumers give low loyalty and defection across all industries and can often lead to consumers switching bank. One tough challenge for the banking industry is the moderately homogenous products and services they offer which make banking particularly exposed and sensitive to customer and their switching behaviour (Chakravarty et al., 2004).

2.2 Bank Marketing

Within the finance and banking sector it is particularly important to use the right marketing tool, since it is all about building credibility, personal private information, and long-term committed relationships with its customers (Sunikka & Bragge, 2009). The information about the customer is used to enable supply of the right messages belonging to the right group of customers. It is becoming more and more common to implement electronic channels for financial service's communication purposes (Sunikka & Bragge, 2009). One of the reasons for this is that there are more personalised options within the electronic channels now than before, making it important to be a part of the advantageous marketing techniques before competitors. The impression of IT is that it provides a significant opportunity for banks to progress their performance and thus gain competitive advantages (Pettinao, 2010). It has been detected how the interactivity through the Internet assists the joint creation of value between the trader and the recipient. As a result of the networking technology, banks can retain direct contact with their customers and with one-to-one marketing implementation supply superior and more individual service (Pettinao, 2010).

2.2.1 Segmentation

Customers of banks are attracted and retained thanks to communication and services that are customised and personalised. Personal banking often leads to enhanced customer satisfaction due to the personal relationship and trust they build with the banker (Gupta & Torkzadeh, 1988). When using messages with personal information attention from customers can increase. However it is important that the designs of the messages are carefully considered by the bank provider in order not to damage the initial message or lose its significance. Sunikka and Bragge (2009) further argue that marketing within banking is different than within other environments since it has to be more discrete and sensitive. Efficient and competent banks and other financial institutions should offer more services than merely taking care of their customer's funds. Instructive services and education within personal financial management and personal tax record keeping are some examples of added value from the organisation (Gupta & Torkzadeh, 1988).

Another key aspect of the marketing within service scheme includes customer segmentation. To offer a strong and customised service the banks have to segment their market and differentiate the offerings of products and services to each segment. For banks to be able to progress any communication strategies it is vital to recognise differences of needs between customer segments (Laukkanen, 2006). When the companies construct different customer profiles it enables them to focus and communicate the right marketing channel to the audience. Furthermore, the advertising campaigns are supposed to reveal product service and the firm's uniqueness, which consumers evaluate and compare when deciding on which bank to choose (Gupta & Torkzadeh, 1988). Eriksson and Mattsson (1996) say that market conditions as well as market production technology and culture should be taken into account in bank services.

2.2.2 Innovative Interactions

Interactions are mutual events and are not restricted to person-to-person connections. In the twenty-first century's retail banking industry, customer-bank interactions go further than face-to-face, telephone dialogues, Internet, e-mails, and post. Citizens cooperate and communicate with their banks in non-personal situations by using self-service technologies and new innovative tools (Ahmad, 2005). The increased use of technology can imply both threats and opportunities in the banking business. Existing services can be supplied more efficiently, new services can be created, it lowers entry barriers and it changes the economics of delivery as within any industry (Llewellyn, 1996). Technology further holds the possibility to raise accessibility to a higher level and decrease the cost of information, which is one of the key competencies in banking. One strategic concern to consider is the role of technology in changing the economics of delivering financial services. Technology impacts the way banking services are supplied. In specific, the new deliveries condense the reliance on the branch networks as a central part of the delivery. Previously the banking markets main competitive advantage was the branch network, which acted as an entry barrier. The new organisational arrangement of the banking market might also change costs due to transformed infrastructure (Llewellyn, 1996).

2.3 Relationship Marketing

In a global and constantly changing world, it is getting more difficult for companies to maintain a competitive position. To reach success it is of great importance for companies to have long-term financial relationships with their stakeholders (Alrubaiee & Al-Nazer, 2010, De Madariaga & Valor, 2007).

Relationship marketing was first stated in the service marketing literature in 1983 and is important because it can contribute to improved customer loyalty (Anvari & Mohamad Amin, 2010). According to Alrubaiee and Al-Nazer (2010) underlying results shows that a five-dimension scale consisting of bonding, trust, communication, satisfaction, and commitment possess reliability, convergent validity, and internal consistency. These are all important dimensions of relationship marketing orientation. Relationship marketing can explain the customer loyalty and its variation where customer loyalty has been pointed out to be the most vital factor in an attempt to create long-term financial performance (Anvari & Mohamad Amin, 2010; Oliver 1999).

As stated by Morgan and Hunt (1994) the definition of trust is when one party is confident in an exchange partners integrity and reliability. Trust is said to be a core component in every relational exchanges and is important because it provides a ground for future collaborations (Dwyer, Schurr & Oh, 1987). According to Farrelly and Quester (2003) commitment is another important part of relationship marketing because it shows enduring stability at the theoretical level. It is working as

a trustful surrogate measure of long-term relationships on the operational level as well as the empirical level. Communication is also important to create successful relations (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) and can be formal as well as informal information sharing between partners. Supported by research, communication is said to contribute to an increased level of trust between participants. This is true because it is a mechanism, which can be used to resolve disagreement and where participants can state their expectations and thoughts (Anderson & Weitz, 1992, Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The dimension of bonding, which applies to relationship marketing, is to maintain customer loyalty, which can provide the customers with a sense of belonging to the relationship as well as to the organisation (Sin, Tse, Yau, Chow & Lee, 2002). One of the key conditions for customer loyalty is the overall customer satisfaction. Research and study expose that the general customer satisfaction is a better indicator than service quality to realise if customers would re purchase a good or service (Leverin & Liljander, 2006). A pleased customer shows greater tendency to stay loyal to the company for a long period of time and purchase more frequently.

One important ingredient and competitive strategy is to uphold and provide greater customer value than competitors. The capacity to craft this value turns into differentiation and competitive advantage for the company (Christopher, Payne & Ballantyne, 1991). Added value can be achieved through improved product quality and supporting services related to the product. When firms try to advance their customers' satisfaction the connections becomes stronger and thereby loyalty is realised. Reicheld and Sasser (1990) also identify the benefit with creating long-term relationships with customers. They support the argument that both profit and sales do increase when the relationship last during a longer period of time. The more needs or expectations that are met the more they are buying (Francis, 1996).

2.3.1 Levels of Relationship Marketing

There exist five levels of relationship marketing that can be accomplished by companies: basic, reactive, accountability, proactive, and full partnership (Kotler, 1992). The levels are illustrated by the degree of interaction between the selling organisation and its clients (see model in Appendix 2). The first level, the basic stage, does not involve building a relationship. A basic sales situation implies a sales situation when the seller hands over the product to the buyer, thanks the buyer and the deal is done. No further relation between them will exist in the future. Reactive is the next stage of relationship marketing. A reactive situation would add some degree of service from the seller, offering added satisfaction. The seller can for instance propose his help and let the customer know he can be contacted if problem arises. Next level is called accountability, and is a higher degree on the relationship marketing. An accountable seller is more active and open for feedback from the customer. The seller can for instance call the buyer after sales and get comments and opinions about the product. A higher level of relationship marketing is proactive relationship. In a proactive relation the seller creates a dialogue with the buyer and keep a regular communication (Kotler, 1992). The last and most developed stage of relationship marketing is partnership, a full partner relationship where the seller actually lives with the customer.

According to Kotler (1992) each level on the relationship stair adds more cost for the company, which makes it important to decide if and when it is worth proceeding to the next level. Two aspects that are significant in the decision are the profit margin that the firm earns on the business and the number of customers buying the products. Low-margin businesses with many customers tend to stay with basic level relationships. Such an organisation has too many customers and makes little money per unit that it would be too costly to develop a relationship on a higher level.

2.3.2 Banks and Relationship Marketing

Technological developments and loosening of administrative and monetary interventions are factors that have led to the globalisation of banking service markets and the emergence of leading parties (Alrubaiee & Al-Nazer, 2010). Over the past years there has been an increased interest and focus for banks to keep hold of clients. Customers are the most vital assets a bank can have and therefore it is important for them to continuously expand. According to Eisingerich and Bell (2006), their study shows empirical findings that banks and similar financial institutions should understand the relative effectiveness of individual relationship building strategies in order to create customer loyalty. Due to the increased competition in the banking sector, customer loyalty is the most significant challenge to create in terms of creating long-term relationships. This can be done through banks adopting relationship marketing which works as a strategic tool and can lead to banks enjoying benefits such as increased sales, lower costs, higher prices, and bigger customer shares (Alrubaiee & Al-Nazer, 2010).

Holmlund and Kock (1996) state that for banks and other service organisations it is more profitable to focus on their present customers instead of attracting new ones. Banks have to meet their customers' needs in an attempt to make them satisfied. If these are not met, consequences can be that the customer starts searching for another bank offering similar services. It is through long-term relationships the bank can access important information about the customer and due to this develop a core group of satisfied and committed customers (Holmlund & Kock, 1996).

2.3.3 Loyalty

In the definition of customer loyalty Oliver (1999) mentions the commitment to rebuy or repeatedly support a product/service consistently. He further points out the condition when the customer frequently acquires the same brand regardless of marketing efforts and influences made to cause switching behaviour (Oliver, 1999).

Behaviourally loyal customers tend to have a more favourable attitude towards the chosen organisation compared to its rivals (Liljander & Roos, 2002). There is a clear correlation between customer satisfaction and loyalty. Customers who are satisfied with the company are likely to become loyal. Loyalty is beneficial for all companies as loyal customers are generally less price sensitive and tend to repurchase more frequently than the average customer (Bowen & Chen, 2001). As it is less costly to maintain former customers than acquire new ones, this situation is much sought after by companies (Söderlund, 1998). Added benefits with loyalty are the free marketing of the company that the devoted customers bring by positive word-of-mouth, spread of knowledge, optimistic brand attitude, and awareness.

“The Wheel of Loyalty” is a model constructed to illustrate how companies can attain loyalty. The starting point of the process is to segment the customer base in order to deliver products and services of good quality adjusted for each segment. The second step involves building customer bonds with each segment through relations, services, and awards that fits that specific segment the best. To follow up, the company needs to understand the motives for switching behaviour to another competitor. When these motives are established the firm can work proactively to prevent customers from switching supplier and provide high-quality customer service (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007).

One proven strategy of creating long lasting relationships is to have a proactive approach to the customers. If the company constantly works to create value enhancing processes for their clients they are more likely to maintain a large share of their customer base (Ylinenpää, Johansson & Johansson, 2006).

2.3.3.1 Customer Loyalty in Banking

Customer loyalty is a fundamental aim of relationship marketing and a key intention in the bank industry as customer loyalty can help reach profitability by lower marketing costs and increase good reputational value (Reicheld & Sasser, 1990). Nordman (2004) states four aspects of customer loyalty supporting relations within banking: functional satisfaction, responsiveness, relationship history, and relational benefits. The functional feature involves a general satisfaction with the service and company relationship. Even with increased Internet banking services the importance of personal interaction plays a major role for the service quality. Good personal service is considered to be vital to reach functional satisfaction (Nordman, 2004).

Banks' activeness and affirmative attitude is a key for good relationship. When customers feel welcome and appreciated by their bank positive relations are created. Generation of good responsiveness can be reached by regular communication, sharing initiatives, and providing advice. One further important aspect of good responsiveness is the flexibility of the bank (Nordman, 2004). Customer loyalty is much affected by the length of the customer relationship in service markets such as banking. According to Trubik and Smith (2000) customers that were provided with financial services from the same bank for more than eight years are more likely to stay loyal to their bank. This type of relationship history hence creates positive relationships between banks and customers.

Supplementary services provided from the bank exceeding the core products of financial services are important to their overall business and the relational benefits. One such exceeding service concerns the technical satisfaction (Nordman, 2004). These services are rather abstract and difficult to evaluate for both provider and customer and includes services such as ATMs, online banking and other service delivery tools. The technical aspect of the bank implies delivery and accessibility.

2.3.4 Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

The general hypothesis suggests that customer satisfaction is an ancestor to customer loyalty and relationship upholding (Oliver, 1997). There is a common reflection that satisfied customers or clients who recognise high service quality are more likely to stay loyal to the firm or service provider (Gabbott & Hogg, 1997). Moreover, customers that are satisfied with previous service practice tend to become more dependent on the organisation and hence increase the constancy. However, customer satisfaction does not always assure customer loyalty. Studies have provided evidence that even satisfied customers have switched company and service provider (Reichheld, 1993).

Customer satisfaction can be seen as a successor of service quality (Liljander & Strandvik, 1995, Oliver, 1997). Service quality can further be divided in three dimensions; technical, functional, and image quality (Grönroos, 2000, Zineldin & Bredenlöv, 2001). The technical dimension is more outcome-related and describes customer satisfaction associated to the core service provided by the company. On the contrary, the functional facet measures the satisfaction with the delivery procedure. Finally, the image of the organisation influences how customers perceive the total quality and sequentially their strategic position. All three aspects are reflected as causes of degree of loyalty.

In the existing competitive bank setting the key to good customer maintenance is to provide value-added products and services (Gassenheimer, Houston & Davis 1998). Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml (1988) define perceived service quality as a global judgment, or attitude, relating to the superiority of the service. They further provide a model named SERVQUAL with five

dimensions of service. This model was later adopted by many other professors and researchers and is widely accepted today. Service quality is designed with the aim to develop competitive advantage. Parasuraman et al. (1988) suggest with the model that levels of assurance, reliability, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness measure service quality. Assurance shows the knowledge of the workforce and their capacity to transmit trust and confidence; reliability measures the ability of a firm to perform the service consistently and precisely; tangibles promote a business' physical environment, for instance facilities, utensils, and communication resources; empathy measures the employees' enthusiasm to give attention to each customer; and ultimately, responsiveness shows the keenness of employees to serve customers on time. The model is a useful supervision instrument as it intends to recognise gaps between customers' expectations and their actual observation of the services (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

According to Jun and Cai (2001) there are six key dimensions to consider in order to uphold high quality in the banking service. In order to be competitive the company should provide customer service quality through effective responsiveness, reliability and straightforward access. The online systems provided by the bank should further be correct, precise and uncomplicated to use. In addition the bank ought to supply high quality service products by offering a variety and combination of products. Service quality is influenced by particular manners and behaviour. Customers who receive more assurance and empathy from service agents tend to be more loyal and less price sensitive than the customers that experience less understanding. The major concern related to measuring and controlling quality is the ability to present an accurate reflection of how resources are used. To improve service quality in an organisation and hence strengthen its market position the managers must understand the interaction between quality, productivity and positioning.

When too much promise is given to customers, high expectations are raised leading to sensitivity for bad quality. To present less undertakings as a marketing tool can lead to more satisfied customers as they expect less service (Grönroos, 1997). Service quality is according to Grönroos (1997) based on seven different criteria. These criteria can be used as guidelines and frame to reach good service quality:

- Professionalism and skills
- Attitude and behaviour
- Availability and flexibility
- Trust
- Correcting
- Service environment
- Rumour and trustworthiness

A company can never fully control their customer relations. Instead marketing is concerned with customer satisfaction. Good customer relationships must develop within an organisation, as it is one of their most important resources. A keystone to build good customer relationship is the bond, communication, appreciation, and good offers (Ford, Gadde, Håkansson & Snehota, 2003).

2.4 Service Related Technology

During the latter two decades service delivery has become more linked with technology and the industries are recommended to invest a lot of resources in various equipment, skills and

machinery. The use of much technology within the service sector has increased the standardisation of the services provided. Also the effect of reduced personal interaction between customer and employees has been realised (Quinn, 1996). Technology based services have opened up for new ways of distribution as customers' contribution and involvement has increased (Dabholkar, 1994). The key changes have created improvement of data storage, communication, speed, and news retrieval services.

2.4.1 Internet Banking

Sweden launched their first Internet based banking services in 1996 with instant success. Within just over a decade the Swedish Internet banks had around 8.5 million users. The increased employment of Internet service has confirmed benefits for both customers and the banks. The customers have better access to handle their finance and the private banking has become more effective and easy. This has further increased the action as more clients become more active in banking. From the banks' perspective the increased Internet use brings effective distribution and production. It carries lower costs in the long run due to the decrease in bank offices and employees. The major motive for bank offices is moving toward advice, financial consultancy, and sales (Svenska Bankföreningen, 2011).

Modest empirical studies have given attention to the subject of Internet banking and service quality. Further research is necessary to validate Parasuraman et al.'s (1988) service quality model with the focus of Internet. Thus far there has not been proof that service in technology is perceived the same as with personal contact (Parasuraman & Grewal, 2000). However, there are ideas that tangibility could be substituted with the client interface, responsiveness could answer to the organisation's reply to customers' needs and the rapid confirmation, and reliability may possibly communicate the on-time delivery of orders and correct information provision (Petersen, 2001). Assurance may answer to safe business transactions online and the companies' privacy policy when using confidential information. Lastly, empathy may well respond to the level of customisation of exchanges and the companies' attentiveness and understanding of the clients individual wants and needs (Urban, Sultan & Qualls, 2000, Chang & Tseng, 2010).

2.4.2 Online Relationship Marketing

To be able to create and maintain engaging relational exchanges with customers, many financial service providers believe in offering convenient, timely, customised and integrated communication (Maas & Graf, 2008). Literature is supporting the fact that financial service industries do need relationship marketing (Liang & Chen, 2009). Research results demonstrate that through the online channel the financial service sector has been able to build up, maintain and create customer relationships (Liang & Chen, 2009).

By using the Internet the communication has become easier and provides simplicity for the companies to find their individual customers, to understand their needs in a better way and to give faster service in for example answering questions. According to Sheth, Sisodia and Sharma (2000) the Internet is an important factor to build relationships and it exist a synergy between the function of the Internet and the functioning of relationship marketing. Liang and Chen (2009) argue that online relationship marketing can improve customers' commitment and satisfaction which may result in a better relationship between the firm and the customer which additionally can lead to an improved performance of the business (Bolton, Lemon & Verhoef, 2004).

2.4.2.1 Possibilities and Difficulties of Technology and Relationships

Through IT including the Internet, communication and interaction have been improved. Internet has been used as a medium to handle relationships according to Sheth et al. (2000). Evidence points out that the increased Internet usage affects relationship marketing and that technologies will be enhanced in an attempt to maintain customer relationships (Colgate, Buchanan, Oliver & Elmsly, 2005). Shankar, Smith and Rangaswamy (2003) found out that satisfaction remains the same, both online such as offline when a service was chosen. Loyalty is thus explained to be higher towards a service firm that uses the Internet in comparison to ones that does not (Shankar et al, 2003). These new types of technology improvements and their technology-based interactions are expected to be an important component for creating long-term business success (Meuter, Ostrom, Roundtree and Bitner, 2000).

Not everybody is willing to say that technologies and the use of Internet only provide benefits. Meuter et al. (2000) believe that it could lead to difficulties in the case of relationship building toward customers in the matter of lack of social interactions. They further explain that lack of privacy and financial security could lead to problems for the customer who uses technology. Gremler and Gwinner (2000) also see difficulties by having relationships based on technologies. They claim that it may hinder the firm and the customer from having an emotional attachment, which some customers create through face-to-face dialogues with the employees of the firm. Gremler and Gwinner (2000) argue that the nature of technology is rather impersonal and can result in a reduction in social context cues.

2.4.3 Social Media

When talking about social media today, blogs, Twitter and Facebook may be the most mentioned ones. As a matter of fact media in form of newspapers that later continued to develop within radio and television may also be considered as a form of social media. Nowadays people want to make something already existing more valuable. The social web has been growing for approximately ten years and it is built up on interactions and dialogs within blogs where anyone is able to do their own comments and share information (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Furthermore, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) argue that the social media phenomenon is built up upon the Web 2.0, which is referred to as a platform where participants who collaboratively contribute with e.g. blogs replace regular web sites. The actual term “blog” comes from the online dairy firstly created by Bruce and Susan Abelson during the second half of the 1900’s where people were able to come together online (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). It was then called a “weblog” and transformed into “we blog” and finally only called a “blog”. This has in the early 21st century developed into social medias including social networking, which refers to sites such as Facebook, Twitter and MySpace. Social media has been existing for longer than many of us think but especially the social networks of today has created the term social media into a new era and able to give it a more valuable meaning.

Social media has become a platform that is easily accessible to anyone with Internet access, opening doors for organisations to increase their brand awareness and facilitate conversations with the customer. Additionally, social media serves as a relatively inexpensive platform for organisations to implement marketing campaigns. With emergence of services like Twitter and Facebook the barrier to entry in social media is greatly reduced. There is proof that the social media was used by 75 % of all Internet surfers during late 2008 including social networks and blogs (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). There is an on going growth of not only teenage users but the generation 30-40 years old as well as 50 years old and above. Based on this, social media is becoming more and more representative for all age groups, leading to a higher interest for different kind of businesses to come in touch with their customers through social media. This

trend of more engagement within the social media could be seen as a transformation of the World Wide Web which was initially built up to be able to share information and communicate with each other (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

2.4.3.1 Social Media in Strategy

The communicating strategies have undergone an immense transformation since the appearance of social media and networks. Social media makes it easier for organisations to access their customers and create dialogues between the two parties. Furthermore, it builds ability for customers to communicate with each other without the involvement of the company itself. Both satisfied and unsatisfied customers can share their opinions and an easier word-of-mouth action is therefore created (Vollmer & Precourt, 2008).

Mangold and Faulds (2009) suggest that companies could incorporate social media in their promotional mix. They further argue for different ways companies can include social media in their relationship marketing activities. One proposal is for the organisation to build platforms and networks where the customers can share data, information, and opinions, while the company can manage some control of the information stream. The firms could also utilise blogs and other social media to create a deeper connection with the customers. An open communication would be easier to develop where feedback can be received and answered to. However Mangold and Faulds (2009) further argue that the traditional promotional tools should not be a substitute, but instead used in a combination to reach the best result.

Social media as a marketing tool can be much used in creating good awareness and understanding. Today there is much focus on social responsible companies and many customers consider it important for companies to show their vision and action taking on the topic. It is easy for firms to show their social responsible manners and similar on the Internet and sites of social media. Other happenings and stories can further be shared on the Internet and create value for its customers. Social media is recognised as more reliable and trustworthy information source by many customers due to the enjoyed transparency compared to traditional promotional mix tools. The reason for this is the open information provided, potential feedback and the possibility for scrutinising the data in contrast to the traditional statements originating by merely the corporation (Foux, 2006).

2.4.3.2 Facebook and Business

From the beginning Facebook was thought as a tool for college students to be able to keep in touch and communicate with each other (Pannunzio, 2008). It has become a social networking site where people share personal information profiles through photos, videos etc. and stay connected to their friends (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). As the years have passed by it has developed into a combination of users including both private persons and businesses. Nowadays it is widely used as a new communication tool for businesses (Pannunzio, 2008). Bradley (2010) argues that Facebook is also starting to become more of an alternative search engine to Google, which is one more reason for companies to engage in social networking. Bradley (2010) furthermore states that within most results in search engines there will appear some information from a connected social media site. Hence, it is becoming significant for even businesses to connect to e.g. Facebook to get even more hits within search results and consequently being available for their costumers everywhere. Facebook along with other social networks have boomed the last few years and become increasingly popular and is no longer avoidable for businesses to adopt. Early implementers can push out competitors and create a competitive advantage (Leader-Chivée, Allen Hamilton & Cowan, 2008). According to Leader-Chivée et al.

(2008) there is no longer a need to question if a company should engage within social networking, rather a question of how to best utilise it for their business.

Clarifications

A number of questions were raised from the theories regarding what role technology, Internet and Facebook can play in the informational and revolutionary world of today. The theoretical framework has been a foundation for the further empirical findings, and the base when building up the analysis. The three major topics that have been reviewed are Bank Marketing, Relationship Marketing, and Service Related Technology. The initial basic concepts for the thesis were traditional bank marketing, and Facebook, which refers to the technological section. The third concept, relationship marketing was brought in as a bridge in between, to realise the role of Facebook in banks to create relationships. Finding the correlations between these and connecting them to the empirical findings have been a key aspect to be able to answer the purpose of this thesis. Furthermore, each research question is related to one topic and has also been a help to reach a conclusion. First, "How can the traditional marketing in SEB be supported through Facebook?", relates to the concepts presented within bank marketing and later in the paper connected to SEB's Facebook service. Second, "How can Facebook stimulate long-term relations?" is answered by collecting information about relationship marketing and integrated into the empirical findings. Finally, "What are the effects on service quality when implementing new means of communication?", refers to service related technologies and Facebook as a new communication tool, and is used to see how the quality of SEB's service provision is affected. The paper aims at finding out the role of Facebook in relationship marketing within banking by connecting the theories about bank marketing, relationship marketing, and service related technology to the empirical findings of SEB where interviews have been done with questions covering all three areas.

3 Method

The following section explains the research method that is used for the empirical study. Some of the included parts are presentation of different methods and approaches to conduct research. Additionally the data collection method is outlined together with information about the interviews and a presentation of the chosen company, SEB. Lastly, the data collection method is analysed and criticised.

3.1 Qualitative vs. Quantitative Method

One method is not more suitable than the other within scientific research, rather it depends on the problem and purpose of the research in question in order to decide which method suits better (Ghauri & Gronhag, 2010). The optional substitution to qualitative routines is the quantitative method. The main difference that differs them is that quantitative processes entail figures, statistics and quantified measures (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Furthermore quantitative methods engage in decision making of the category measures before conducting a research. The data assembled with this method are standardised implying that each unit in the study will be treated uniformly. Furthermore, qualitative methods commonly include some kind of interviews or observations. It is important to state that the two methods are not mutually exclusive and a paper can indeed include a combination of the both. A qualitative technique involves unstructured and semi-structured interviews, whereas a quantitative approach emphasises more on questionnaires that can be put on a scale (Ghauri & Gronhag, 2010).

The decision to use a qualitative method for this thesis is partly based on the quote “Qualitative research is a research strategy that usually emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data,” (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 402). With the qualitative approach the relationship between banks’ customer relationship and social media utilisation will be explored. According to Jacobsen (2002) the central advantage of the qualitative technique is the open and untied information acquiring. Crewsell (2003) further added the dimension of gaining diversity in information.

One of the most important factors when deciding the method was the advantage of flexibility. The topic of this paper is relatively novel and the possibility to change and refine the problem formulation and purpose during the course of the study was of the essence for the research. As the qualitative method is untied and not strict to information it can allow the characters to describe their understanding of the topic (Jacobsen, 2002).

As this thesis has been concentrated to one specific bank, SEB, the qualitative approach allowed focusing on this chosen company (Jacobsen, 2002). The method allows meetings, interviews and interactions with the people in the organisation and receives a fair view of the real case. The qualitative technique further presents the opportunity to locate details as a focal point (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Using this tool it allocated focus on the respondents within the study and their view. The relationship between social media and increased customer relations was investigated and how the bank and its’ employees observe the phenomenon.

However there are some disadvantages that require to be mentioned with the chosen method of qualitative technique. One of those is the disadvantage of complexity of replication of the study. To meet this difficulty the investigator needs to emphasise one particular area within a study while the other areas are put aside (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

As mentioned this thesis is committed to a qualitative method as the most suitable means for the purpose. In this way the investigation of the purpose and focus on specific details and

expressions is facilitated (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Furthermore the qualitative technique offers the opportunity to collect wide information from human resources at SEB. The chosen information collection method is semi-structured interviews. This technique is further presented in section 3.4.1. Since social media is a rather new topic within business and there is little know on how it works within banking, a qualitative study can provide more elaborated details and understanding than a quantitative study. Moreover the study will be focused on one retailing bank, thus a qualitative method containing flexibility and unstructured in-depth insight is appropriate.

3.2 Induction vs. Deduction Approach

An inductive approach is merely on empirical findings, whereas logic is the key ingredient within a deductive approach (Ghauri & Gronhag, 2010). With induction, the research begins with observation, followed by findings, and ends up with building a theory. The new built up theory most often becomes a result of a qualitative type of research (Ghauri & Gronhag, 2010). On the other hand, the deductive approach draws conclusions through logical thinking by forming hypotheses from existing knowledge, which after tested in the empirical study can be either accepted or rejected. Consequently, a deduction starts with an existing theory, which is tested throughout the research, and is associated with a quantitative research process (Ghauri & Gronhag, 2010).

Even though this paper is not building up a new theory, it is more close to an inductive approach, which is therefore used to be able to reflect upon different theories after qualitative research is done. There is also no hypothesis testing involved in the study that can refer to a deductive approach.

3.3 Research Design

Anderson (2004) describes three different research types including exploratory which gains new insight through qualitative data, descriptive which contains outlines of people or situations, and finally the explanatory research type which is used for this paper since it is able to understand a problem or situation with the help of why and how questions.

An exploratory study is usually accompanied when there is restricted or no material about the research topic. The intention is then to get a deeper understanding of the problem. One method of doing it is by conducting interviews (Sekaran, 2003). An explanatory research is appropriate when the objective is to describe how and/or why a certain occurrence arises. This type of investigation tries to relate the source and the action of the study subject (Jacobsen, 2002). A descriptive study method is appropriate when the investigator wants to examine the features of the variables in the research. The goal is to define significant characteristics of the examined problem. Typically a descriptive study is used when characteristics of a study is researched. This thesis is done according to an explanatory technique. Even though the purpose of the thesis is stated with a “what” question, the respond and related research questions answers to how and why Facebook can be used in relationship marketing. A descriptive research approach will be taken to portray the phenomenon. However, the research design is more explanatory related, as a further ambition is to explain why Facebook could be implemented in banking. It has been chosen to construct a case study. The choice of the company will be provided in the next section.

3.3.1 Choice of Company

The focus of this thesis is on personal retail banking and the relationship between the bank and the private persons. SEB is describing itself as a relationship bank that put effort into maintaining their customers in the best possible way. In the end of 2010, SEB implemented a wide spread social media, which is Facebook. They have employed a group of professional bank employees who are offering customer service with quick answers for their customers' questions. The group is available Monday to Friday between 8 am until 10 pm. SEB was chosen to do an investigation in, since it suited the criteria to study the connection between relationship marketing and social media implementation in a bank.

3.3.1.1 Company Background

SEB (Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken AB) was established in 1856 and is today occurring around Europe. The bank is focusing on international presence, entrepreneurship and on a concern for long-term relationships. SEB offers its private customers and companies the promise of a fruitful relationship and the bank is constantly trying to think in innovative ways, eyeing for new ideas, markets and people. SEB describes itself as making the life easier with a contribution to the society's development. It wants to be seen as a bank that stands for good ethic with lasting development in all of its operations. SEB wants to help companies and private customers to reach their financial goals, which would lead to a positive development and economic welfare. Further contributions made for the society's development is the creation of more work opportunities and the buying and selling of services and goods from a broad amount of suppliers (SEB, 2010).

SEB provides services for approximately 400 000 companies and institutions and to more than five millions private customers. The bank has around 17 000 employees where more than half of them are working outside of Sweden. The bank is established around the world in 20 countries such as in Denmark, Finland, Germany and Norway and has established offices in all major financial centres such as Shanghai, New York and London. SEB's vision is to be a reliable partner for its customers with the mission of helping individuals and businesses with advice and financial resources so that they can do well (SEB, 2010).

Continuity, mutual respect, professionalism and engagement are all values that play the core of SEBs brand. The bank learns and acts along its long experience and is open-minded with the aspiration to earn its customers' as well as employees' trust. SEB wants to make it easier for the customers when doing business by sharing experiences and taking a full commitment for their acts in an attempt to make the bond stronger. The goal is to create value for all stakeholders, employees and customers. To be able to reach the long-term goal the bank has set up a strategy that is called "road to excellence". SEB wants to reach more growth within the cornerstones of the bank, which is investment banking, services for companies, fund insurances, and investment management (SEB, 2010).

3.4 Data Collection

The theoretical framework was built up by using applicable academic theories for the purpose that was later combined with the empirical primary data. The literature assortment for the theoretical framework was collected from articles, books, databases and other Internet sources. The primary data was conducted by collecting new material for the given purpose of this thesis (Burns, 2000). The primary data collection method that was selected was in depth interviews.

3.4.1 Interviews

The information collection procedure that was chosen was semi-structured interviews. This method is a combination of controlled and unstructured questions (Gillham, 2005). This facilitates the interviewer to raise supplementary questions if the first responses are not satisfying (Williamson, 2002). In the collection, interviews and insights were received from different people within the organisation, which is why different interview guides were conducted. The questions were the same to the entire group of respondents while some added questions were formed specifically to one person working explicitly with the Facebook project. Before conducting the interview guide a minor pilot study was carried out in Jönköping. This pilot study was aimed at giving a view of the trends and reflections of the public's relation to social media and banking. The study was conducted as a preparation and practice for the authors and will not have any greater importance in the actual thesis. The interview questions are provided in Appendix 1.

The interview guide and questions have been developed especially for this research by the authors of this thesis. With the help of cues the interviewer has the tool to guide the interviewees to get correspondence in the subject of concern (Gillham, 2005). The aim is to assemble information from different interviewees with questions to facilitate an answer to the purpose of the thesis. The interviews were structured but during the interviews the order of the questions could differ as well as the follow-up questions, all depending on how the respondent replied. By using this technique there was a focus to reach the goal with the interviews without limiting the respondents from expressing their own point of view.

In line with Williamson (2002) it is important to create a setting that does not put the respondent in an uncomfortable situation to get as good and honest results as possible. As it is essential to create an environment that is not inferior during the interviews they were conducted in relaxed surroundings with the interviewers and the interviewees seated around a table. All the nine interviews have been conducted face to face and have taken between 25-60 minutes. During the interviews a recorder was used in order to be precise and get a detailed analysis of the responses. The recorder was further a helpful tool to leave out potential interpretations of the interviews, and instead work with exact and literal announcements. Another benefit with the recorder is according to Williamson (2002) the prevention of added distraction and interruption of taking notes during the interview session. Instead focus can be put on keeping discussion and interaction flowing.

One important aspect of interviews is the potential affect of different interpretations. Answers can vary based on how the interviewer and the interviewee interpret each other and further attributes such as gender, age, religion, education, nationality, and background can bias the interview and discussion (Williamson, 2002). A guarantee that these forms of biases have been present or left out cannot be given, as it is a natural part of interviewing as a technique. One further important feature when carrying out semi-structured interviews on more than one person is to hold the same time duration (Gillham, 2005). The different candidates should be allowed the same time. Since the chosen company in this thesis is a Swedish bank the interviews were conducted in Swedish. To utilise the citations and observed findings in the research all material has thus been translated into English.

3.4.1.1 Selection of Respondents

The interviews in the analysis included nine persons with different positions and varying work duration and experience at SEB. The interviews were conducted in different cities (Jönköping, Habo, and Stockholm) and the respondents therefore represent different locations in Sweden.

Having interviewed these persons gives a good understanding of how the employees experience the relationship and marketing within SEB and how they can use social media in their operation. When presenting the empirical data it has been chosen to identify the respondents by their first names in order to keep it personal but still give the respondents a level of privacy.

Employee	Occupation	Date	City	Place	Approx. Duration
Fredrik	Customer service, counter	2011-04-14	Jönköping	Seminar room, JIBS	35 minutes
Ulf	Company advisor	2011-04-18	Jönköping	Board room, SEB	30 minutes
Amanda	Customer service, counter	2011-04-20	Jönköping	Seminar room, JIBS	25 minutes
Elona	Customer service advisor	2011-04-20	Jönköping	Board room, SEB	35 minutes
Marianne	Advisor	2011-04-20	Habo	Coffee room, SEB	30 minutes
Per- Johan	Office manager	2011-04-20	Habo	Coffee room, SEB	35 minutes
Johanna	Customer service, counter	2011-04-26	Jönköping	Group room, JIBS	30 minutes
Cecilia	Channel responsible, Facebook	2011-04-27	Stockholm	Coffee room, SEB	60 minutes
Ingvar	Private advisor	2011-04-29	Jönköping	Private office, SEB	40 minutes

3.5 Limitations

Since SEB has only used Facebook since the end of 2010 it may not be a completely fair view of how it can be employed in the banking sector. SEB may itself not know all the future aspects of this project yet that could be of this thesis' interest. Since the company still is in the beginning of this project the people who work with it do not have much time to offer. Therefore this paper only got one in-depth interview from one person who actually works and is responsible for the Facebook site. Furthermore, as this thesis takes an internal perspective, researching from the company's point of view, customers' perception will not be included.

3.6 Trustworthiness of Data

In academic writing trustworthiness is a key element that is based on more than a few concepts. There are various definitions and descriptions on the subject of validity. Svenning (2003) expresses validity as the link between what is intended to be determined and what actually is determined in the end of the study. He further explains the importance of results to be reliable, which implies that if samples are unchanged, two studies with identical purposes and methods should result in similar outcomes. Hammersley (1990, p. 57) defines validity as “the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers”. Validity and reliability are two theories that are closely linked to quantitative research. It has been debated on how applicable and significant these methods are in qualitative research, hence four conditions have been related to qualitative data in order to label it trustworthy. These measures are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.6.1 Credibility

One way of making a research paper credible is by means of confirmation and support. This can be made by allowing people within the research to validate the material and results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, Bryman, 2001). A further requisite to ensure credibility is the study’s pursuit and standard of high-quality practice (Bryman, 2001). The majority of the journal articles were taken from recognised sources in order to avoid bias and non-credible information. If there were no sources found related to an article, the article was not chosen to be used since then it seemed non credible. The thesis was during its progress also sent out to the participants that were interviewed. They were then able to read through and make sure that at least the empirical section where they were involved did go in line with what they said on the interviews.

3.6.2 Transferability

Qualitative research is generally focused on smaller set of candidates (Bryman, 2001). Hence it is complicated to ensure that the outcomes are functional and applicable in other circumstances (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To mitigate this concern the examiners can present a defined explanation on how the research has been done. In this way the audience can decide if the investigation can be related and transferrable to other research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In section 3.4.1 it is presented as comprehensive information as possible on how the interviews were carried out. Included is data on duration, place, settings and interviewees in order to give a clear view. In part 3.3.1 a further description of the company investigated is presented. As a result of the details provided it is open for future potential examiners to apply and transfer the same study and make new research.

3.6.3 Dependability

Dependability is used in qualitative research for the same purpose reliability would be applied on a quantitative research. As research can be changed and revised during the analysis Lincoln and Guba (1985) claim that dependability includes factors of instability, design, and phenomenal adjustments. When information is widespread and the data collection is made over a longer period of time, there is a risk of irregularity in the data set. Lincoln and Guba (1989) further argue that dependability can be achieved through “inquiry audit” which implies that someone besides the authors themselves examines the development and result of the research. This person then

confirms and verifies the precision and accuracy of the research (Bryman, 2001). SEB employees who participated in the interviews were given an opportunity to read, respond and comment the material. Emails including the final thesis and empirical findings were sent to all respondents in order for them to assure it was accurate. They were given the possibility to come back with suggestions and opinions if they thought something was not correct.

3.6.4 Confirmability

Confirmability guarantees that personal beliefs and opinions of the authors are left out of the research paper. Hence the theoretical framework should be unbiased in order not to influence the outcomes (Bryman, 2001). The belief of this thesis is that no personal values and opinion is present in the study. The interviews have been conducted in a way to create as little bias as possible. Additionally the paper was able to gain comfirmability since it had three researches that collected and interpreted the data, and in the end could agree upon the best suitable solutions.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis can be viewed as a sequence with three steps of description, categorisation and combining (Jacobson, 2002). The description should give a detailed picture on how information has been collected. Next is the categorisation part where the authors present an outline of the accumulated data divided into appropriate categories. The categories facilitate the selection of the most essential information from the vast collection of assembled data. To finalise the sequence the last step is combining. When the authors combine the data they analyse the information and relate it to the achieved answers and outcomes with the intention of realising a correlation (Jacobsen, 2002). Gathering all the information and transforming the recordings from the interviews into paper writings conducted the data analysis in this thesis. In this way the vast mass of information that the interviews contained could be simplified and understood. Further the process continued by summing up the findings and write reviews as argued by Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2002). With these reviews and summaries the different interviews could be evaluated and compared with each other.

To categorise the data, the empirical material was divided according to three different sections and relevant topics from the theoretical framework. The three sections, Bank Marketing, Relationship Marketing, and Service Related Technology were considered as most important and covering the different areas related to the questions asked to SEB. After dividing the categories the relevant questions asked during the interviews were assigned to one of the three sections. Some questions were left out as it could be realised which questions were more significant than others to reach the purpose. The three different sections also strive to relate to the three research questions developed in the beginning of the paper. The final steps included combining the findings in the selected categories with the theory gained in prior research, and strive to fulfil the thesis' purpose.

This study is arranged according to a funnel design. In the theoretical framework the most important concepts for this research is found and further used all through the entire study. The concepts have been the foundation when constructing the interview guide and the empirical findings are therefore structured in the same way. The key questions are presented in relation to each central concept followed by the empirical findings. As the interviews were directed in a semi-structured way the questions asked varied somewhat depending on the interviewees. Hence, the empirical findings are presented in a concise and summarised way for each chosen section.

4. Empirical Findings

This chapter presents a summarised description of the conducted qualitative interviews. The chapter is structured according to the important concepts described in the theoretical framework: Bank Marketing, Relationship Marketing, and Service Related Technology. The main questions related to each concept are presented to give a detail of the empirical data collection.

4.1 Bank Marketing

The main questions asked within this section during the interviews were: According to your opinion, does SEB differ from its competitors. If yes, how? How does SEB market itself? Do you divide customers into different segments? What is your view on adopting new ways of marketing?

During the interviews the participants were asked if they thought that SEB was different from their competitors and if that case, how this could be explained. The responded had a common view and they were all agreed upon that they do differ. Ulf (personal communication, 2011-04-18) explained that they are trying to be more modern and to be on the leading edge. Marianne (personal communication, 2011-04-20) thinks that many banks today are rather similar. She does share the same belief of SEB being a professional bank that is always trying to be on the cutting edge, even sometimes too much. Since SEB also has a big focus on businesses quality this is also something that SEB is radiating (Amanda, personal communication 2011-04-20). This was further strengthened by Fredrik (personal communication, 2011-04-14) saying: *“We won the award for best business bank in Sweden last year”*. Cecilia (personal communication, 2011-04-27) thinks that the bank differs from their competitors due to their good accessibility. SEB can be reached during the whole day via their telephone service, while some other competitors only have contact during office hours. Fredrik (personal communication, 2011-04-14) thinks that they are working more with personal service and that they have shorter queues but can still offer good consultation. He believes that the contacts with the customer are something that they stand out with. Innovative thinking, trust and focus on their customer through more personal contact were all main reasons that could be seen as factors that differentiate SEB from other banks.

Marketing of the organisation can be done through different channels and be performed on a local as well as on a wider level. SEB are running campaigns, TV-commercials, and mail banners (Cecilia, personal communication, 2011-04-27). TV-commercials were a general opinion throughout the interviews that was seen as the main marketing factor at the moment. The bank does an after work-campaign on TV4, in connection to the national newscast which reaches a rather big audience. Commercial signs can also be found inside of the bank, but they are only seen when you are visiting the bank so they may not play that much function (Elona, personal communication 2011-04-20).

Further marketing can be found online via blogs and through their collaboration together with the Swedish newspaper, Aftonbladet. Ads can further be seen through channels such as magazines and on columns around town (Ulf, personal communication, 2011-04-18). SEB also markets itself by having their VD, Annika Falkenberg showing up a lot in different medias (Marianne, personal communication 2011-04-20). Per-Johan (personal communication 2011-04-20) further explains that on the local offices they are working more with local marketing but is convinced that SEB do segment their customers. At the local offices they see the specific customers in front of them, but otherwise it is the central SEB who is taking care of the marketing. He continues by saying *“they are professionals so I am convinced that they make sure that it is directed to all sorts of target audiences”*.

Cecilia (personal communication, 2011-04-27) describes how they segment their customer by saying that *“we are picking out similar target audiences which we believe fits different products and channels”*.

Furthermore, *“The target audiences control channels and messages, that’s the way it is, Internet for the younger generation and magazine ads for the older”* (Ulf, personal communication, 2011-04-18). Another interesting question that was raised during the interviews was what the employees’ general opinion was regarding adopting new ways of marketing. Cecilia (personal communication, 2011-04-27) finds it very interesting and exiting with new ways of marketing. The feedback has been met with positivism and she cannot see any disadvantages. Because it is a tough competition in the bank market to be seen and heard it is really good to find new ways to market your company.

“Sometimes you can feel that commercials and advertising does not really play any function, but in the end it is important to be a bank the customer feels comfortable with and trusts, which is done through commercial” (Per-Johan, personal communication 2011-04-20).

New marketing channels are also good because you have to be where everybody else is. As today, it is common for people to have laptops, iPhones and iPads at hand, and therefore you have to be there as well. *“If you don’t follow the trend you can become forgotten and therefore Facebook, twitter and different chats are good to adapt”* (Elona, personal communication 2011-04-20).

4.2 Relationship Marketing

The main questions asked within this section during the interviews were: Do you usually measure any feedback regarding your service? How do you think you can create happy customers? How can you handle an unsatisfied customer? Do you have any training session on employee/ customer behaviour or how can you assure that the employees are behaving well with the customers? How can you try to keep your customers? How do you experience the communication between you and your customers?

One question that was raised during the interviews was if the employees receive any feedback on their services and products. The most useful and important feedback is according to the respondents, the reaction and immediate response the employees get from the customers directly. *“You always get a direct contact and understand what the customers think about the service and products”* (Per-Johan, personal communication 2011-04-20). Measuring on customer satisfaction is done in SEB offices all over the country. The personnel have briefings about the results and according to the respondents in Jönköping, their office scored high in recent measures. When asking why they think they have high customer satisfaction the answers related to the nice atmosphere in the office, nice staff and good relationship between employees, and quick customer service. They further explained that they do random feedback measures by sending out emails to customers that recently visited the office. In these emails the customers have to answer a few questions on how they experienced their visit to the SEB office.

Further in the interview the respondents were asked how they believe that happy customers can be generated. Most respondents explained that you achieve happy customers by supplying them with time, attention and good information. The belief that you get satisfied customers from satisfied employees is strong, and many respondents also emphasised offering safety, trust, and loyalty. According to Per-Johan (personal communication, 2011-04-20) it is important to have good information about you customers, in order to provide personal and designed advice and products to each customer. As SEB is aiming to be a personal bank it is important to adapt the products and fulfil the needs for every individual customer, be nice and polite, and to meet the customers need in a quick and flexible way. Happy and satisfied customers are also reached by

means of the Internet bank. According to Fredrik (personal communication, 2011-04-14) it has become more smooth and easy for customers to deal with their accounts and finance on the Internet. This flexibility is something that is believed to bring happiness to their customers.

The best way to handle an unsatisfied customer is according to the respondents to express and convey an understanding. *“The customer is always right in what they are experiencing. If they feel neglected, they feel neglected”* (Per- Johan, personal communication 2011-04-20). Hence it is important to confirm the customer and try to rebuild trust. According to Marianne (personal communication 2011-04-20) it is vital to be humble and listen to what the customers have to say.

“You can not always give the customers what they want, but you can listen and try to do the best in meeting their needs” (Marianne, personal communication, 2011-04-20).

One interesting question was to find out how SEB ensures good customer treatment from the employees. Many of the respondents think that the culture within SEB is very moral and professional which creates a better work environment for the employees. Well-being, comfort and a positive attitude in the work force brings better service provision. According to Ulf (personal communication, 2011-04-18) it is important to find a balance in what the customer expects from the staff, dress code and service in each specific SEB office. Each employee receives educational training when they start at SEB and according to Elona (personal communication 2011-04-20) there are further arranged customer meetings where a manager is present to give feedback and evaluate the employee’s customer treatment. The bank and managers further promote a service-minded atmosphere and the employees themselves perceive the behaviour and norms as something you learn from other employees. According to Fredrik (personal communication, 2011-04-14) the setting in SEB is like a spiral that stimulates good customer service from happy employees.

One other question asked during the interview was how SEB can try to keep their customers. *“Simply by being proactive”* (Ingvar, personal communication, 2011-04-29). According to many of the respondents it is important to be active and have a constant communication with their customers in order to maintain them. They have to make sure that they are always flexible and can give the customers what they need. Another aspect of keeping customers for a longer time is to be competitive in the market, to match and meet offers from other competitors. Trust is considered an important aspect, although some of the respondents admit a decline in trust in the overall banking industry related to the financial crises. According to Fredrik (personal communication, 2011-04-14) it is important to be a comprehensive bank that can offer a customer all the services and products that they need.

“We have to make sure we have products and services to cover the needs for the customers in each period of their lives, all the way from teenage years to the years of retirement” (Ingvar, personal communication, 2011-04-28).

Moreover it is according to the SEB employees important to be professional and flexible in order to make it as easy as possible for the customers. It is of course important to meet the expectations of the customers but according to Ulf it is sometimes the little things that make a difference. *“Simplicity, contact, and a smile on your face”* (Ulf, personal communication, 2011-04-18).

When asking about the communication between SEB and their customers all the respondents answered that they perceive it as really good. The common perception is that SEB is a personal bank that puts an effort to give the customers what they need. According to Johanna (personal communication, 2011-04-26) the communication is very good and personal, although she says that it to some extent depends on the size of the office and customer base. As argued by Ulf (personal communication, 2011-04-18) SEB has a well-studied system where each bank clerk has

records of each customer. These records facilitate the communication as each clerk is familiar with its customers and does not have to make unnecessary phone calls but instead can call regarding important matters.

Assistance is also retained from a telemarketing group in SEB who works to book customers for meetings. Ingvar (personal communication, 2011-04-29) explains how the SEB telemarketing group works during evening hours to call and market SEB and set up appointments with different bank clerks in order to ease the work load for the employees. The respondents also believe that the communication has been much improved by the Internet bank and telephone bank provided by SEB. According to Ingvar (personal communication, 2011-04-29) the simple hand transactions have vastly decreased as people do much bank errands over the Internet. Customers can contact the bank in a variety of ways, which often implies that the customer coming into the offices are customers who need more advice and professional help.

The perception from the employees is that they have a very close and personal relation with their customers. *“Many of my customers know that I am married, where I live and that I have two kids, since we create a kind of bond together”* (Ulf, personal communication, 2011-04-18).

4.3 Service Related Technology

The main questions asked within this section during the interviews were: Is SEB generally good in implementing new technology? After starting with Facebook, what is your spontaneous reflection about the service? Did you have any thoughts or expectations before starting with Facebook? What do you consider being the most frequent using area with Facebook? Who is the target user of the Facebook service? Did you encounter any positive or negative aspects with SEB’s Facebook site? How do you market your Facebook service? Can you give a brief explanation on how the Facebook service has affected your organisation? What is your thought about SEB’s Facebook in the future?

The general thoughts about implementing new technologies within SEB are that the bank is good at it, it is prioritised, and a lot of resources are put on developments in new technologies. The interviewees perceive SEB as being a modern bank, which always is in the front edge. Johanna (personal communication, 2011-04-26) mentions that SEB was the first bank in Sweden to introduce an iPhone app. She considers it to be important to be first out and in that way be able to attract new customers. It is also argued that SEB was very early to introduce their Internet bank and as known now also the Facebook service. It remains to see if this new service only is a trend, but Cecilia (personal communication, 2011-04-27) believes that this is the new way of socialising and communicating also within business.

Some spontaneous reflections after starting with the Facebook site were that it is a good way to find information and ask questions that are not found on SEB’s webpage, a good complement so to say. Also it is believed that it is something that many can have a use of, and that the use will increase. Furthermore, Cecilia (personal communication, 2011-04-27) who works with the Facebook site perceives it as being more positive than she thought from the start. She argues that it is easy to picture all the negative outcomes that can happen when hearing stories and rumours.

“Instead it became more positive effects that they could not anticipate, like internal cultural change in the organisation as well as increased customer contact and the ability to see what customers actually think. Also there are more users than what was expected, consequently a greater success” (Cecilia, personal communication 2011-04-27).

On the other hand other SEB employees did not have many more reflections since they did not receive that much information about the Facebook site from the start, and did therefore not have any specific expectations more than it is a good communication tool with their customers and makes the bank more attractive. It was also perceived as a fast way to get in touch with SEB and get updated information. The employees who work with the Facebook site did have a program for what was going to happen and clear goals on what to be done.

“The reason for the Facebook site is to be a customer service, to help the customer in their everyday life and to be where the customers are” (Cecilia, personal communication, 2011-04-27).

The people who worked with the idea from start understood the potential for a Facebook service within SEB and the need for their customers. Mostly general questions are of use on the site, since personal information like account number cannot be given out. It is also seen as a modern way to meet customers, therefore many younger customers are attracted to this way of communicating with their bank (Marianne, personal communication, 2011-04-20). Most of the interviewees had a feeling of the great importance for businesses to be available where their customers are. It also applies to SEB and Facebook, they should be there to be flexible and reach out to as many as possible. Customers expect businesses to be proactive and easy to get in touch with. Being on Facebook is seen as being a modern bank, a bank which is following developments. Furthermore, by using the Facebook service there is no need to wait in a phone queue for assistance.

Ulf (personal communication, 2011-04-18) mentions that *“approximately 60 % of SEB’s customers are active users of Facebook, and for SEB to be there as well makes it an additional way to communicate and be available for its customers”*.

The interviewees have encountered many positive aspects about the Facebook service. They argue that customers appreciate and think it is good that SEB is available on Facebook. It is hard to find really anything negative about it. Fredrik (personal communication, 2011-04-14) says that Facebook users mainly think it is a good service and there is good information available, while non-users do not have any expectation and cannot complain. Moreover customers think that they get answers fast, that SEB is more available since the opening hours are longer, and that the staffs working with it are professional, nice, and have good replies. The Facebook service is not aimed at a specific target group, but those who are interested in questions within banking. Though, 75 % of the people on SEB’s Facebook site are below 40 years old, meaning that there is a need to adapt the message towards a younger public than usual (Cecilia, personal communication, 2011-04-27). Questions that are received at Facebook are very similar to questions asked through the phone.

The Facebook group has chosen to not market the new service very aggressively. Rather they want to grow with genuine subscribers who really find the service useful, and not try to attract as many people as possible by doing contests on the site and so on. They believe that this will make the Facebook site grow slowly in a long-term perspective including more significant users. One useful way in which they have been marketing the service is to add the text *“check what others ask on Facebook, or ask your own question”*, on the webpage where customers log out from their Internet bank. This has made the traffic increase on the Facebook site, and at the same time staying with customers who find the site useful.

“The Facebook service will hopefully strengthen the relationship with SEB’s customers and make the online relation more personal” (Cecilia, personal communication, 2011-04-27).

Also in contrast to asking questions through the phone, customers who view the Facebook site may already find their answer by looking at what others have asked. This will hopefully make the

queuing time on the phone decrease in the near future. It is still hard to know what the revenues will be, but SEB does believe that Facebook is here to stay and that businesses are adapting it more and more, making it easier for them to believe that their service will be of use for a long period of time. The main increased costs within the organisation have been human resources. At the same time Facebook is a flexible, simple and inexpensive way to communicate through. Cecilia (personal communication, 2011-04-27) concludes by saying that SEB's Facebook site is dependent on if and how Facebook may change the way it looks and works, meaning that SEB has to adapt to the rules on Facebook.

5 Analysis

This chapter is built up by linking together the concepts in the theoretical framework with the findings in the empirical data. The section is structured in the same manner as in previous sections: Bank Marketing, Relationship Marketing, and Service Related Technology.

Globalisation and the move towards a more universal way of life emphasises the need of improved communication and collaboration. Taking a longer view, the population is growing and people are demanding more convenience and easy access to services. To be able to serve multiple customers at once is beneficial as it saves costs and time for both service supplier and receiver. Citizens are increasingly mobile and demand banking solutions that accommodate them in better ways. At the same time, additional requirements are related to the environmental challenges we are facing and a more green approach should be taken. New means of technology and communication aims to make life easier for the human being and give more flexibility to the populations. The need for innovation, new thinking and improvements are current in all industries and even the banks must change the way they do business to sustain.

5.1 Bank Marketing

This section is regarded to give focus to the research question: How can the traditional marketing in SEB be supported through Facebook?

BRAND IMAGE

SEB is explained to be a complete bank that offers a wide range of services for their customers and the bank itself stands for professionalism. Fredrik (personal communication, 2011-04-14) argues that SEB stands out with their good customer contacts. In relation to this he believes that they have big focus on working with personal service where they can offer shorter queues but at the same time provide good consultation with their customers. The brand image of SEB is trying to show a personal bank that takes care of its customers and offers customised services. The personal contact is important and the bank makes sure to keep well in touch with customers. In line with bank marketing, it has been shown that through services and communication, which is more customised and personal, the customers will be attracted and retained (Gupta & Torkzadeh, 1988). Furthermore, the carefully chosen green colour for SEB's logo relates to simplicity and environmental thinking. By putting a happy colour SEB shows that they gladly invite their customers into a relaxed relationship. As citizens can communicate with their bank over the Internet and is no longer required to travel to their branches, Facebook and similar services are means of environmentally friendly technology. This highlights SEB's effort in trying to be an environmentally friendly and sustainable bank.

SEB puts effort on creating satisfied customers that can be supported by the reward they received of being the Swedish business bank of the year 2010. The bank is providing personal banking services, consultation and put a lot of effort on their customers which will lead to more satisfaction among their customers that may lead to a more trustworthy and personal relationship. SEB does also offer good accessibility towards their customers via their telephone service which is available during the entire day, whereas other banks normally have less contact hours. This service is one illustration that shows the banks effort of creating new and diverse ways of meeting their customers as they can enjoy benefits such as flexibility and simplicity by contacting their bank after their own needs.

INNOVATION

With new marketing techniques within SEB such as Facebook, competitive advantage and enhanced customer satisfaction can be reached. Since SEB is a relationship bank trying to focus on their customers and be seen as a partner to them, it is a good strategy to always be on the cutting edge in order to meet the new and upcoming needs of their customers. Credibility, personal private information, and customer commitment are all factors we can see that SEB is enjoying by their strategies. Being innovative and adopt new trends such as social media can further be supported by Christopher et al. (1991) who state that the provision of better customer value in comparison to the rivals can be transformed into differentiation and a competitive advantage.

SEB in comparison to their rivals are trying to use a lot of marketing in order to be seen and heard. Marketing can be performed in several different ways, which SEB has adopted. SEB is trying to reach out to as many customers as possible and have a wide variety of marketing channels, including vehicles, TV commercials, newspaper ads, commercial signs, and Internet ads. It is important for banks and similar financial sectors to implement the right marketing tool and SEB truly shows their attempts to do this by using various innovative channels. Facebook is one new way for SEB to be seen by people and become more attractive. Through the site more people get noticed and a word-of-mouth is created. Word-of-mouth is a great marketing tool, since those who already are customers and experiencing the benefits of the bank very often convince people. People tend to trust stories that are assured by friends and family. In addition, word-of-mouth is a powerful marketing channel provided completely without cost.

Ingvar (personal communication, 2011-04-29) says that it was not too long ago people were sceptic about the Internet and its commercials. He continues by saying that this has changed and other interviewees also underlines that Internet has become one of the new acceptable ways of reaching out to customers in a reliable way. Using the Internet can retain customer satisfaction, which also can be supported by Pettanio (2010) who says, that for a bank to have networking technologies it leads to a direct contact with customers as the service becomes more individual.

SEGMENTATION

SEB is customising their marketing through segmentation which is done by trying to pick out similar target audiences that they believe fit into different products and channels (Cecilia, personal communication, 2011-04-27). This can then lead to benefits for the bank to tailor their services which can help them to progress communication strategies (Laukkanen, 2006) in order to meet the needs and to find the right marketing tool that fits the target audience. Further empirical responses from the employees underline this by saying that Internet can be seen to focus on the younger generation whereas ads in magazines are for the more general audience.

Trust and commitment are two factors that can be reached through commercials due to the attempt to customise the marketing to the different customers (Per-Johan, personal communication, 2011-04-20). In relation to the existing varying market it is important to show security and long-sightedness and to be able to offer durability but still keep up with the new (Ingvar, personal communication, 2011-04-29). During the interviews with the SEB employees, it was clear to us that they always tried to meet their customers in the best way possible. And by doing this we could understand how they create long-term beneficial relationships. Since customer is the most important assets for a company, it is important to always try to expand and as Eisingerich and Bell (2006) points out, it is vital to understand the importance of effectiveness of individual relationship building strategies in order to create loyalty among customers. The use of Internet is further argued by Sheth, Sisodia and Sharma (2000) as an important factor in an

attempt to build relationships. By creating online relationship marketing both leads to a better relationship toward customers as well as improved business performance (Bolton, Lemond & Verhoef, 2004). We therefore believe that Facebook is one of these new strategies, which is efficient both for the customer as well for SEB. They can by this offer personal communication in an effective, personal, time saving, and non-costly way. Along with technology improvements, more information about the customers is recorded. Data related to consumer behaviour and patterns are easily gathered and can be used in segmentation, which becomes enhanced and more accurate. The segmentation will give more hints on what the customers really need in order to assess them accordingly.

EFFICIENCY

By adopting the increased use of technology, it can lead to less pressure on the banks local offices. The one to one contact can still be exchanged online via the Facebook site and therefore leave more space for the employees in the offices to provide better consulting to their customers concerning errands that require more time and capital. Also, due to the limited hours of desk service and customer assistance in banks customers find it hard to see their banks during available office hours. As realised from SEB, much assisting services have lately been moved to means of telephone and Internet, which has decreased queues in their offices and improved their efficiency. Time and costs are aspects that are greatly valued, and when reducing them it gives a lot of appreciation from customers and the bank itself.

Since it is widely common to have your own cell-phone today to communicate, more people may replace their home telephones with these. Therefore we can see that in the future, telephone service of the bank may get replaced with the use of Internet since it is the new way of communicating while offering simplicity just like the cell-phones are doing today. New ways to communicate is changing with a rapid speed. Hence it is vital to be updated about these while at the same time holding on to the old ones to be sure that everybody's communication need is met. In the longer run we can see the possibility for banks to cut down on office space as more customers can be accommodated by non-personal interactions. As buildings are costly to maintain and operate, the communication online can in the long run save building and energy costs. Relating back to SEB's brand image as a "green" bank, this is something that can further support their environmental friendly approach.

Technology gives the opportunity for better-shared information, from both the banks' perspective as well as the customers. Quicker information encourages quicker action and more active customers. This in turn brings better business. Increasing the operational speed and efficiency is essential for any business, including banks, to thrive and excel.

5.2 Relationship Marketing

Writing this section the second research question was kept in mind: How can Facebook stimulate long-term relations?

As realised in our empirical data it is important for SEB to be a personal bank and cherish the relationship with their customers. Per-Johan emphasises how valuable it is for the bank to know their customers in order to design right products and services to each client (personal communication, 2011-04-20). This goes in line with Alrubaiee and Al-Nazer's (2010) argument on how important it is for companies in today's global market to create long-term financial relationships with their stakeholders. Reicheld and Sasser (1990) also identify the benefit with

creating long-term relationships with customers. They support the argument that both profit and sales grow when the relationship last a longer period of time. The benefits of long lasting customers have been much realised in SEB as they are trying to bind young customers and follow them throughout their different stages in life. It is not a coincidence according to Ulf that SEB are focusing on retaining students as customers, and try to build a strong bond early in life.

DEGREE OF CUSTOMER RELATIONS

Much evidence was revealed in the empirical findings that pointed to Kotlers' levels of relationship marketing. The random feedback emails SEB sends to their customers about the bank experience they have realised can be viewed as an accountable relationship approach. Judging from SEB's communication and contact with their customers they reach even higher on the relationship marketing steps. Kotler (1992) describes a company that creates a dialogue with the clients and keep regular contact as proactive. This is demonstrated by regular telephone calls and invitations to participate in private advisor meetings that SEB offer their customers. According to Ingvar (personal communication, 2011-04-29) it is important for a bank like SEB to be proactive. They should always aim to be active and stay one step ahead of the customer, to realise what they need before they ask for it. This is according to Söderlund (1998) a steady strategy to create long lasting relationships. "*It is about finding and fulfilling the needs of the customers in each period of life*" (Ingvar, personal communication, 2011-04-29). Ylinenpää et al. (2006) argues that companies who are constantly working to produce value enhancing processes for their customers are more likely to maintain a greater part of their customer base. One important ingredient and competitive strategy in a company is to uphold and provide greater customer value than competitors as this value can turn into differentiation and competitive advantage (Christopher et al., 1991). SEB considers itself as professional when it comes to meet the competitors' offers and services. One specific term that almost all of our respondents used in explaining SEB was "leading edge", as they perceive their bank as always being innovative and modern compared to their rivals. According to Per-Johan (personal communication, 2011-04-20) there is big competition in the space to be seen and heard and it is vital to take as much place as possible. He further explains that SEB is developing all the time and that the company is often in the front line when it comes to new services and products. However, we believe SEB is still not a full partnership company, according to Kotler's definition. To reach full partnership relationship marketing we believe they would need to extend and expand their services and offerings even more to reach out to everybody, everywhere, every time. Nevertheless, SEB is on a good way of becoming good partners with their clients. The more visible and present they are the better are the chances of realising full partnership and hence high quality relationships.

TRUST AND COMMUNICATION

It was clearly understood from the interviews that SEB is putting an effort to create trust between their customers and employees. Marianne argues for the importance of sharing thoughts and expectations with the customer and hence building confidence (personal communication, 2011-20). Dwyer et al. (1987) claim that trust is a core component in all relational exchanges and is vital as a ground for future collaborations.

The empirical findings in this research shows evidence that communication between customers and employees contributes to increased flexibility and level of trust. Customer communication in SEB has been much improved by means of Internet and telephone services (Fredrik, personal communication, 2011-04-14). By giving the customers alternative ways of contacting the bank they are given a higher level of flexibility. According to Morgan and Hunt (1994) communication between partners is central in creating successful relations. The communication can build trust as opinions and ideas can be identified and disagreements can be solved. The last and most

developed stage of relationship marketing is partnership, a full partner relationship where the seller actually lives with the customer. Today, rapid technological and architectural changes are converting the way we interact. Network and other collaboration systems adjust the communication between partners. By implementing new communication tools, SEB can be seen as a company embracing collaborative practices and encourage employees, customers and partners to connect and interact more frequently.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

One of the key conditions for customer loyalty is the overall customer satisfaction. According to Per-Johan (personal communication, 2011-04-20) satisfied customers can be achieved by keeping good information about customers, to facilitate a delivery of personal and designed advice and products to each customer. As SEB is aiming to be a personal bank they believe it is important to adapt the products and fulfil the needs for every individual customer, be nice and polite, and to meet the customers' needs in a quick and flexible way. Additionally a positive attitude is believed to bring satisfied customers in SEB. Cost savings that the bank generates by providing more efficient service can be used to enhance the operations even further. The added resources can be managed to produce better educated staff or improved service and offers and in this way to please customers to a higher degree.

Loyalty is obtained when a product or service is repeatedly supported or repurchased according to Oliver (1999). By reading this reasoning, Facebook can be seen as a loyalty captivating resource, as it is a continuous service. Once a Facebook user becomes supporter of the SEB Facebook site, the supporter will repeatedly receive updates and new information automatically. Loyalty is beneficial for all companies and adds benefits as loyal customers supply marketing by positive word-of-mouth, spread of knowledge, optimistic brand attitude and awareness (Bowen & Chen, 2001). This is further attained with the Facebook service as more supporters bring more brand awareness through an automatic electronic spread and visible word-of-mouth. When one person becomes follower of the SEB Facebook it will be visible to all his or her friends and thus start recognition and extended marketing. The possibility of creating fan pages on the Facebook platform is another path in the journey of spreading the brand name and valuable rumour.

When asking the employees about their customer base in SEB they believe that the customers are divided in different segments that are matched with a suitable marketing channel and objective. According to Fredrik (personal communication, 2011-04-14) SEB is a widespread bank that holds products for every segment in the market. According to Lovelock & Wirtz's (2007) model, "The Wheel of Loyalty", loyalty can be attained by segmenting the customer base in order to deliver products and services of good quality adjusted for each segment. Hence SEB can reach loyalty through their customer segment approach.

MEETING CUSTOMER NEEDS

During our empirical data collection with our respondents we found out that SEB is aiming to be an uncomplicated and straightforward bank. They try to market themselves as a simple financial provider who can offer easy solutions to their customers and clients. The use of Internet and telephone banking has improved the customer service according to SEB's employees. The opportunity for customers to make personal transactions and errands easy and quick with means of technology has enhanced the customer relations, and given more quality to the face-to-face customer interactions. According to Jun and Cai (2001) high quality in the banking service can

be reached through effective responsiveness, reliability and correct, precise and uncomplicated access. Responsiveness is more important today than ever. When the surrounding is changing in the rapid pace we experience currently, it is significant for the banks to answer to new suggestions and influences. Following this idea we believe that SEB is creating high quality in their business operations. They provide a variety of goods that reach out to all different segments in the market, and their services are widespread with examples of the Internet, telephone, offices, iPhone applications and events. We believe that a use of social media enhance their service delivery even more and increase their opportunity of being reactive and flexible.

As competition increase in the bank market with similar and homogenous products we believe that SEB is focusing on providing added value. The introduction of social media in form of Facebook can be viewed as an effort to be proactive and offer their customers something innovative and modern, as it is the first bank in Sweden with this type of media. The different means and variety of communication channels in SEB provides a sensation of presence. Customers can get in contact with the bank in numerous ways and at different times. In line with Morgan and Hunt (1994) we believe that this communication between partners is helping SEB to create successful relations. It provides a perception of professionalism and new thinking. Grönroos (1997) describes several criteria to reach service quality including trust, availability, professionalism, rumour and attitude. We strongly consider SEB to strengthen all of these factors in their operations and implementations. By starting new means of technology and social media they are increasing their availability, as they are accessible in multiple locations and time periods. The availability is advanced as people located outside the country borders can contact their bank with merely Internet access. In the global and dynamic world of today there is an increased need of making communication easier over borders and different nations. The availability and flexibility opens up the possibility of getting in contact with the bank despite time zone differences and distance. The attitude and rumour related to SEB as positive brand association improves a brand, as they are visible and perceived as modern and fashionable, yet keeping a traditional and sustainable base. By innovation and new means of communicating like social media we argue that the trust is strengthened. In line with Morgan and Hunt (1994) trust can be achieved by communication as the parties get an opportunity to exchange their ideas and views. We further believe that the perception of a forward and long-term stand from a bank portray a level of professionalism and assistance.

SUSTAINABILITY

Relation enhancing means of communication like social media and Facebook can help to strengthen the long lasting relationships between SEB and its customers. Citizens are gradually becoming more mobile and require banking solutions that can assist them in better ways. People are seeking convenience and effortless services. To be able to serve numerous customers at once is advantageous for both provider and customer as it saves costs and time. In the active modern surrounding customers find it hard to see their banks during available office hours. New ways of contacting, communicating, and collaborating with your service providers give added benefits for the customers. A call for increased flow of life is current and by new ways of communicating SEB can serve the citizens by being more connected, responsive and green. Facebook can further open up for bond establishment with younger customers as it is easier and more personal for them to contact their bank in the communication and media they are comfortable with.

As mentioned we further consider that loyalty is created in SEB by addressing the needs of different segments by offering adjusted products and services. Social media and Facebook is an example of providing new services to one specific segment, frequent Internet users. We argue that the younger populations and mobile people will have a great use of the new communication

tool that is provided by the SEB Facebook page. We also believe SEB is addressing new and upcoming requirements of technological improvements with their service addition. In line with Nordman's (2004) theory that loyalty can be divided in four aspects: functional satisfaction, responsiveness, relationship history, and relational benefits, we claim that SEB creates loyalty with their social media services. Nordman (2004) brings forward the idea that personal interaction is vital despite increased Internet use, which can be emphasised by the great personal aspects of Facebook. The visitors can post questions and receive personal answers directly linked to the request instead of traditional mass emails. Communication and advice provision is also improved by means of Facebook, which has great impact on the responsiveness from the bank. Another aspect argued by Nordman to enhance loyalty by relational benefits are the supplementary services provided from the bank such as ATMs, online banking and service delivery tools. Social media and Facebook is a new addition to the supplementary services that enhance the delivery and accessibility of the bank service.

5.3 Service Related Technology

In this section the aim is to provide a response to the third research question: What are the effects on service quality when implementing new means of communication?

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Since SEB was the first bank in Sweden to introduce Facebook into its business it may be considered as a rather modern bank, as mentioned in the empirical findings. Additionally it was first with the iPhone app as well as one of the earliest to adopt the Internet bank service. Being a bank that is good at implementing new technologies and introducing them at an early stage can bring along an enormously advantageous position against its competitors. Particularly, as mentioned earlier by Leader-Chivée et al. (2008) it is possible to build up a competitive advantage towards competitors by being fast on creating and getting new products and services out on the market. It may in this case mainly be referred to the Facebook service implemented by SEB. According to Leader-Chivée et al. (2008), utilising social networking within business and always having the urge to be where the customers are is becoming more of a must than a question of the need to do it.

As argued by the interviewees the Facebook service turned out to be more positively encountered than thought from the start. It was found out that it is a good source for finding information and asking relevant questions to the bank. Introducing new technology is for instance by Dabholkar (1994) considered as increasing customer's involvement in the business as well as improving the communication between organisation and customers. The Facebook service is a way for SEB's customers and those interested in SEB to engage more with the bank and feel more connection to the organisation. Looking back on the theoretical framework this can also be related to the Internet nowadays being a part of most people's everyday life, and according to Svenska Bankföreningen (2011) the increased use of Internet contributes to banks becoming more productive and efficient with their customers.

ATTRACTIVENESS

During the interviews it was stated that the Facebook service is seen as a fast communication tool and that it makes the bank more attractive from the customer's point of view since the site is always available and it can be used whenever it suits them. Referring to Sheth et al. (2000) who

say that Internet makes communication faster and simpler it can clearly be seen that SEB has succeeded in understanding the needs of their customers in a more efficient way through Facebook.

As mentioned by Cecilia (personal communication, 2011-04-27) SEB's Facebook site is working on helping the customers' everyday problems, simply being a customer service. Using the Internet to create customer service has become more common. As Sheth et al. (2000) argue, building relationships through Internet is a process that strengthens the already existed relationship as well as attracting new ones. Being where the customers are makes the bank more available and flexible. For instance, the Facebook site may be greatly appreciated by Swedish customers living abroad and want to avoid making expensive phone calls, and can instead contact the bank through Facebook anytime. As Lang and Chen (2009) claim, online relations with customers make them more committed and the level of satisfaction increases. People find it convenient when not having to wait in long phone queues and they can decide when to go online and just ask a question or even find the answer from someone who already asked the same.

RESPONSIVENESS

Given that SEB during the interviews was considered as a rather modern bank, and Facebook as being a modern way of meeting its customers it does attract communication with more young customers who are the main users of Facebook. More precisely 75 % of the users of SEB's Facebook service are below 40 years old (Cecilia, personal communication, 2011-04-27). Meaning that the Facebook site may be considered as a tool attracting the young customers within SEB and not incorporating all ages. Meanwhile Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) say that there is a growth of subscribers to Facebook of the older generation including up to 50 years old and above. This proves that the use of SEB's Facebook service might increase in all generations in the future. Since 60 % of SEB's customers are active Facebook users (Ulf, personal communication, 2011-04-18), it makes sense for SEB to also be active and flexible, and meet their customers where they are. This interface with customers online as mentioned by Petersen (2001) could be referred to the tangibility within the communication process. Also the idea of responsiveness by Petersen (2001) could be compared to customers' need of the Facebook site including for instance fast replies on questions. Speed is nowadays considered vital in the everyday life. Everything should be fast, email responses, Internet services, orderings, and so on. In the same sense users of SEB's Facebook service expect to get fast replies, and a flexible availability.

Furthermore it is important for customers to know that they cannot share any private information like their account number on the Facebook site and this can be referred to Petersen's (2001) description of assurance and the importance for businesses to always coordinate safe transactions. If customers would put any private information on Facebook, SEB would not answer that in public, but delete the message to insure no confidential information is visible. Like mentioned earlier it is also important to understand the customers' needs and wants which may according to Chang and Tseng (2010) be done through empathy. The replies made by employees on the Facebook site are customised to every individual inquiry and the respondents have their own personal touch when writing the messages. This makes the conversation not look like a computer is giving the answers, but indeed that a closer relationship is tried to be created between the customer and the bank. Customers then feel like they are personally treated and that someone actually listen to them. This is also what SEB tries and wants to achieve, being a personal bank, with trustworthiness and professionalism.

As Cecilia (personal communication, 2011-04-27) mentions, the online relationship with SEB and its customer is hopefully going to be more strengthened through the Facebook service. To support this Vollmer and Precourt (2008) also mention that relations between the customer and

the organisation become somewhat stronger through social media. Facebook as a social media makes it easier and faster to communicate between the two. This, because many are nowadays used to stay in touch via Facebook or the like when travelling or regularly keeping updated about their friend's lives. So to contact their bank through Facebook would not be a huge effort, on the contrary it might be a convenience since those people are often connected.

SERVICE DELIVERY

During the interviews it was discussed how customers are able to ask questions on the Facebook site, but also that they are able to already find answers if someone else asked the same type of question. As Vollmer and Precourt (2008) claim this would be considered as a word-of-mouth contribution since customer share their opinions, comments, and questions with each other on the site. This important step may in the near future hopefully make the phone queues decrease since more and more people can find their answers on Facebook through someone else's question or by writing a question. According to Svenska Bankföreningen (2011) the more the Internet will be used in business, the less will the costs be within the organisation in the long run. The only cost increase for SEB since the introduction of Facebook has been human resources since Facebook itself is such an inexpensive communication tool.

By introducing the Facebook site, there has been an increased amount of service provision to SEB's customers. This has in turn increased the technological service quality and created an improved delivery of the service quality. Referring to Grönroos (2000) and Zineldin and Bredenlöv (2001) about service quality being divided into different dimensions we believe that the technical dimension has added value to customer's satisfaction of the service provided by SEB. Also the functional dimension of the way SEB delivers its service on Facebook can be seen as more satisfactory since it is less time consuming and costs decreased by using this kind of service rather than a phone or going to a banking office. We believe that Facebook is, as described by Maas and Graf (2008) a service that provides customers with convenience, customisation, time savings, and integrated communication. These are all factors that can be valued by customers in order to not having to pay too much for a service, get the help they need, when they need it, and bond a stronger relationship with their bank.

After making the analysis we believe that Facebook is a useful communication tool for SEB. It is essential for businesses to adapt to new technologies to be able to compete and even eliminate some competitors. As new technologies evolve organisations should adapt and try to be early implementers in order to be attractive for its customers and maybe attract new ones. SEB has so far succeeded in being an early adopter of technologies compared to its competitors in Sweden by being first on Facebook, with the iPhone app, as well as the Internet bank. This says a lot about SEB as a bank, being modern and pleasing its customers by always meeting them where they are. There might be a new function on Facebook or a new form of communication tool in the future which may have to be taken into account, but for now we believe that Facebook is here to stay within people's as well as businesses' lives. Furthermore we think that the Facebook service is a good way to strengthen relationships with customers by providing them with simplicity, flexibility and availability.

6 Conclusion

This section will explain the concluding thoughts based on the analysis carried out in the previous chapter. To simplify the findings a model has been developed and further explained.

The role of Facebook within banking is multiple in association to relationship marketing. After investigating SEB's use of Facebook and analysing the results, the service can be considered to generate essential value for their customers. It brings fast communication and a great flexibility. As people and communities are changing the way they are socialising, networking, and communicating it is essential for organisations to follow the citizens in the development. Banks are in a rather homogenous market with few alternative offerings available. Therefore it is important for the individual banks to reach customers' attention and create awareness and interest in their product and service offers, in order to enhance their relations. SEB is rather innovative in their operation by rapidly adopting new means of technologies.

The traditional marketing can be supported through Facebook by strengthening SEB's brand image as a personal and proactive bank. Moreover, it is an approach to be innovative and stretch marketing in new ways and define customer segments. Another important aspect is the efficiency, which is reached by accessibility, flexibility and increased information. A model has been developed to clearly see what the most important outcomes are. It shows how Facebook can be perceived as enhancing customer relations, being a part of relationship marketing.

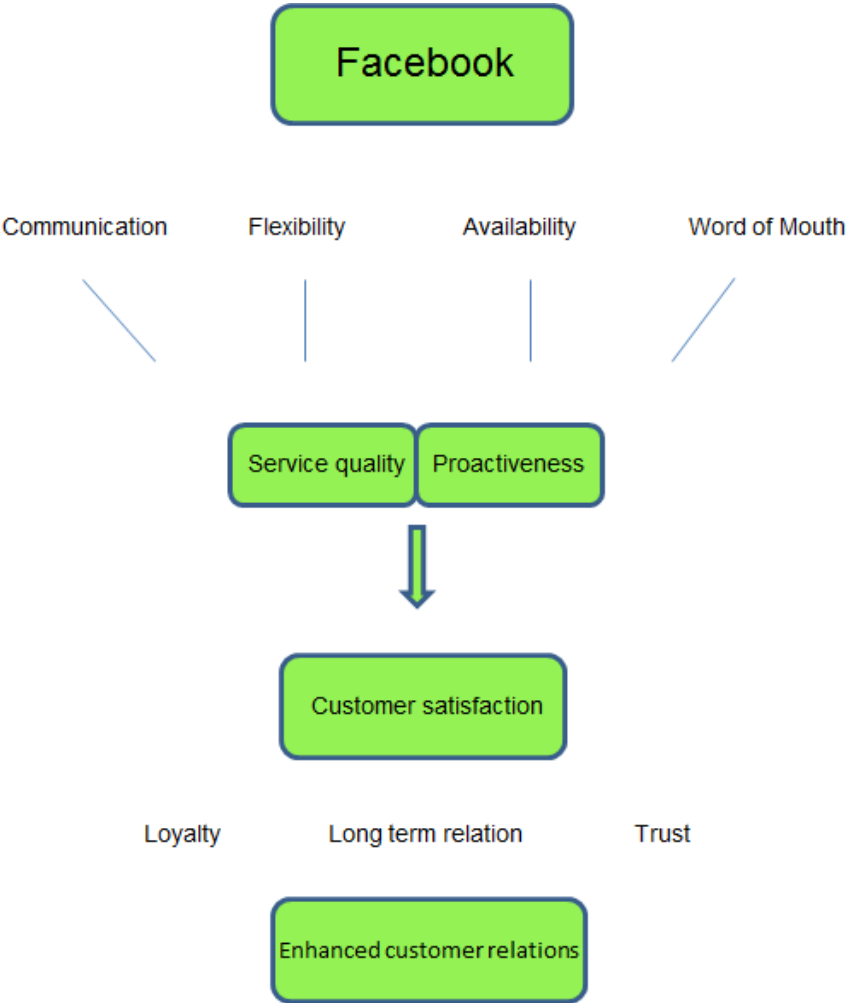


Figure 1
(created by the authors)

Long term relations can be stimulated through the increased communication, collaboration and trust that Facebook builds. By having proactive relationship marketing and meeting customer needs SEB can realise satisfied and loyal customers. Furthermore, by starting new means of technology and social media, SEB is increasing their availability, as they are accessible in multiple locations and at wide spread time periods. Social media is a straightforward and available platform to everyone with Internet access, creating opportunities for organisations like banks to increase their brand awareness and customer conversations. The platform promote word-of-mouth, spread of knowledge and brand image through their supporters. In addition, since the Facebook site is public it gives the benefit of transparency. Users can see what others have written and get answers on their questions, or get inspired to asking their own. This leads to creating a word-of-mouth between users and non-users, attracting more customers.

Implementing new means of communication such as Facebook enhances the service quality within SEB. Competitive advantage can be realised by responding to new needs in the market. The overall satisfaction within SEB becomes more attractive by offering new and varied options of service delivery. Communication is a key part of any relationship and it is important for companies to meet their customers in different ways. Various communication channels give flexibility and a perception of presence, which are cornerstones in the construction of trust between parties. Trust and loyalty are vital parts for customers to stay committed and hence generate long term relationships.

Supported by theories, SEB operates proactive relationship marketing and Facebook is one of their latest proactive marketing approaches. What has been realised is the role of Facebook to enhance customer satisfaction and relations in the long run. Cost and time savings generated from Facebook can be used as resources to enhance the overall operation. The savings from achieving a higher efficiency can be invested in staff education, new technology and service processes, to provide even better customer service in the future. In this way SEB can create sustainable proactive relationship marketing and maintain their long term relations. To reach the highest and most developed level of relationship marketing, full partnership, SEB should sustain and strive to be even more present with their customers. They should generate the feeling for the customer of living with its bank, and that the bank is always at hand and available for them. Facebook is proof of the ambition SEB comprises to be visible and present for their customers. To reach full partnership they should stretch their limits and exist in anytime, anywhere with any device possible.

7. Recommendations and future research

7.1 Recommendations

The benefits we have realised with social media have been plentiful, but we still have some recommendations to share with SEB or similar banks implementing social media in their marketing scheme. We believe that as times are changing and people are socialising and communicating in new ways Facebook is an example of a new relevant marketing platform. Using Facebook can save costs, time and increase the efficiency and we believe that even more marketing could be on this platform. However, we believe that there is also the need of promoting the Facebook website itself, to increase the awareness of the service. The first step to do this is to better inform the staff about all the aspects and benefits with the Facebook service. We found out during our research that many of the employees in SEB are unaware of the idea, use and benefits with Facebook.

As mentioned people trust social media advertisement more than traditional TV, Internet due to its transparency. Due to this SEB can use social media to put more focus on advertisement and reach out in new ways. It can be further important when rebuilding the trust that was lost during the financial crises. Due to the transparency and high degree of response we believe it can be beneficial to use platforms like social media to do product and service research. By using platforms it opens up for feedback and a dialogue which can help the banks understand new needs in products and services

We can further see the use of Facebook as a complement to SEB's telemarketing group which works with setting up customer meeting and consultations. Social media can be a new way of trying to attract new customers and inviting them to office meetings with SEB. This is a cost and time efficient, flexible and responsive way to get in contact, and can sometimes better be responded than telephone marketers.

As SEB was first with social media in Sweden they should keep up and try to launch new and innovative services. This can enable them to hold the leading position and be seen as a forward thinking competitor in the banking industry. We can further see the use of social media as a means of increasing brand awareness through "network friends" and cooperation with other companies that are located on the platforms, such as car companies, estate agents and similar "bank cooperation" companies. We believe they will benefit from implement new trends and always be ready for upcoming developments to be in the leading edge.

7.2 Future Research

As we have focused our research on one specific bank, SEB, we believe it would be interesting to continue the research to understand more of the phenomena of social media in banks. It would be interesting to compare SEB with other Swedish bank to understand if social media such as Facebook would be beneficial for all banks, or if SEB is a specific case due to its company culture of being innovative, modern and personal. A comparison to cases abroad would be relevant, where social media has been used for a longer period of time.

As it is very recently that SEB started with their Facebook service, it would further be motivating to investigate SEB again in the future to see if the longer perspective. We would then have wanted to have time to talk more to employees actually working with and answering the Facebook questions. It would be interesting to do a quantitative research to find out if the impact before and after the implementation on customer satisfaction or loyalty.

We can also see that future research would be interesting in investigating and comparing the bank industry to other service industries such as insurance or airline companies.

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Appendix 1

Questions in English

SEB Employee

1. For how long have you been working in SEB?
2. Please describe briefly your daily work tasks in terms of responsibility and daily contacts.
3. What do you consider the most frequent use of Facebook from the company's point of view?
4. Can you tell us if you have discovered any positive and negative aspects with SEB offering the Facebook service?
5. According to a pilot survey we did in Jönköping on 100 people, the respondents did not know about your Facebook site. What are your thoughts and reflections about that?
6. Do you see an opportunity to engage in other social media as well, except from Facebook?
7. Can you tell us about if you had any thoughts and expectations about SEB starting with Facebook?
8. After the implementation, what is your reflection about the Facebook service?
9. Have you received any feedback from your customers/employees and Facebook users?
10. Can you tell us according to your opinion, does SEB differ from its competitors? If yes, how?
11. Tell us what SEB as a brand mean to you?
12. Can you tell us how SEB market themselves?
13. Do you receive any general feedback about your service and products provided?
14. What is your opinion about implementing new marketing tools?
15. Do you think SEB is generally good at introducing new technology?
16. How do you consider that you can generate pleased customers?
17. How do you deal with unsatisfied customers?

18. Does SEB offer training in customer service or how do you assure that the employees provide good service?
19. How do you think you can maintain customers?
20. Can you tell us how you experience the communication between you and your customers?

Additional questions asked to the responsible for the Facebook service

21. Who is the target user of the Facebook service?
22. How do you market your Facebook service?
23. Can you give a brief explanation on how the Facebook service has affected your organisation?
24. What is your thought about SEB's Facebook in the future?

Questions in Swedish

SEB-anställd

1. Hur länge har du jobbat på SEB?
2. Kan du kortfattat beskriva dina dagliga rutiner i form av ansvar, kontakter och arbetsuppgifter?
3. Vad anser du är bankens främsta användningsområde med Facebook?
4. Har du stött på några positiva eller negativa aspekter med Facebook-tjänsten?
5. Enligt en undersökning vi utförde i Jönköping med 100 personer visade det sig att majoriteten inte visste om Er Facebook tjänst. Vad är dina tankar och reflektioner kring detta?
6. Kan man tänka sig en användning av andra sociala medier, förutom Facebook?
7. Hade du några tankar och förväntningar inför att SEB skulle starta med Facebook?
8. Efter införandet av Facebook, vad är dina spontana tankar kring tjänsten?
9. Har ni fått någon feedback från kunder/anställda och Facebook användare?
10. Enligt din åsikt, skiljer sig SEB från sina konkurrenter? Om ja, hur?
11. Vad betyder SEB som varumärke för dig?
12. Hur marknadsför SEB sig?
13. Brukar ni mäta feedback från era tjänster? Om det är något som är speciellt bra eller ngt som kan förbättras?
14. Vad är din tanke kring att använda nya sätt att marknadsföra banken på?
15. Är SEB generellt bra på att införa ny teknologi i marknadsföring och övrigt?
16. Hur anser du att man kan skapa nöjda kunder?
17. Hur hanterar ni missnöjda kunder?
18. Har ni något träningsprogram, kurser eller liknande i kundservice, eller hur försäkras ni er om att era medarbetare bidrar med god service?
19. Hur bibehåller ni era kunder?
20. Hur upplever du kommunikationen mellan er och era kunder?

Ytterligare frågor ställda till kanalansvarig för Facebook-tjänsten

21. Vem riktar sig Facebook-tjänsten till?
22. Hur marknadsför ni Facebook-tjänsten?
23. Kan du kortfattat beskriva hur Facebook-tjänsten har påverkat organisationen?
24. Är det (Facebook) något man vill satsa på inför framtiden?

Appendix 2

5 Steps of Relationship Marketing

Relationship Marketing Level	Characteristics of Level
1. Basic	Does not really involve relationship building, but does feature positive interaction between the seller and customer when a product or service is sold.
2. Reactive	As above, but seller also suggests that the customer can contact them personally if they have any problems or queries.
3. Accountability	Here the seller actively contacts the customer after sale to check that the product is satisfactory and to receive feedback.
4. Proactive	At this level the seller continues to contact the customer and proactively attempts to understand and satisfy their needs.
5. Partnership	The ultimate form of relationship marketing, involving actually living with the customer. Usually confined to business-to-business relationships.

Source: Adapted from Kotler [1992].