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Social Media within a B2B context

A qualitative study about how industrial corporations can use social media to maintain B2B relationships

Bachelor's Thesis within Business Administration

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Abstract

The last thirty years there has been a dramatic change in relationship marketing. The use of computers connected to the Internet at work places has increased over time and social media is widely used in marketing strategies. Social media is a new phenomenon to communicate with each other, it enables market information based on individual consumer's experiences. Therefore managers are seeking a way to incorporate social media into their strategies, but this is more common within B2C than B2B.

The purpose is to investigate the potential for industrial corporations, within the warehousing industry, to use social media for maintaining established relationships within B2B, as a part of their marketing strategy. The primary data is collected by qualitative interviews with relevant corporations. The study includes four corporations within the industrial industry, an illustrative corporation that have issues regarding using social media or not, and one expert interview. The secondary data is collected from previous research, articles and journals. From the theoretical framework and empirical research, it seems to be more useful for corporations acting in the market of B2C rather than in B2B to use social media. Major of the interviewed corporations were thinking of using social media as a part of their marketing strategy, but almost no one were using it as a tool today.

The younger generation, raised in a technological society, seem to generally have a broader knowledge of social media and what advantages and disadvantages the use can lead to. From this thesis it does not seem that one social media is better than another since different social media platforms are used in different ways. Therefore, it is not possible to say that one specific social media suits all corporations. However, if a corporation decides to use social media as a marketing tool, they need to be aware of the time required for it and be prepared for negative effects since they are open platforms, free for everyone to express their feelings. Within B2B, the trend of having a personal relation with customer and supplier is very strong and social media can never replace this personal relationship. The conclusions and recommendations is instead to use social media as an integrated marketing tool within their strategy.

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Sophia Andersén, Annie Bengtsson and Sandra Gilén

Table of Contents

1   Introduction

The students at the marketing management program at Jönköping International Business School write a bachelor thesis within business administration the last semester of the third year. This section will present an introduction towards this bachelor thesis.

Brands in today's society are switched on 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year. The explosion of social media has made customers use their own personal technology to become active, to always be switched on (Burrows, 2010). The past decades have witnesses a major change in both marketing theory and practice (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

There is always a new way to communicate towards a customer in this digitalized world, and marketers are given infinite ways to create and maintain customer relationships. Digital technology has enable a two-way communication process which is a powerful marketing strategy if you want a close relationship towards your customers (Fill, 2009). Social media is a new communication tool within marketing (Efendić, 2014) and according to Jung, Ineson and Green (2012), the popularity and strength of online social platforms continue to revolutionize communication, information accessibility, and the Internet itself. It is further seen that corporations do not only use social media to market themselves, they also use it to keep track of their competitors (Efendić, 2014). It is equally important to be on social media's today as it was to be included in the telephone catalog in the 1970's. Social media is commonly seen within large corporations as a communication tool towards their customers and especially the social media platforms Facebook and Twitter are used (Efendić, 2014). Svensson (2013) sees Twitter and Facebook as tools for a corporation to use when interacting with customers.

A. Selvander, project manager and market strategist at the advertising agency Bolt Kommunikation in Jönköping, states that social media is commonly used as an interaction tool in a business to customer (B2C) context but are less common when it comes to business to business (B2B) relations (personal communication, 2013-12-18). He further thinks that using social media in a B2B context is an upcoming trend and that many corporations today are interested in how social media can be used in such relationships. This has made it interesting to analyze social media and whether a B2B corporation can use social media to interact with other businesses.

1.1   Background

During the last thirty years, there has been a dramatic change in relationship marketing and today relationship marketing is used by almost all marketers. For many corporations this has been a commercial success (Alam, 2012). According to Alam (2012) social media can be seen as a type of relationship marketing. The use of computers connected to the Internet at work places has increased over time. In 2013, surveys indicated that 72 % of the coworkers at corporations with more than ten employees use connected computers at least once a week. Ten years ago that number was only 52 % (Davidsson, 2014). An explosion of Internet based messages has been viewed during the twenty-first century, but unfortunately there is lack of

academic literature describing how managers can incorporate social media into their integrated marketing communication (Hollensen, 2011).

We can no longer ignore the new paradigm that includes all forms of social media in our marketing strategies. Social media enables managers to seek market information, based on individual consumer's experience, to incorporate social media into their strategies (Hollensen, 2011). Social media is a new phenomenon to communicate with each other (Hollensen, 2011), it offers the cheapest and fastest way to target the audience (Alam, 2012). In large corporations, with more than 250 employees, 69 % of the employees use social media at work, but in small corporations with less than ten employees, the number is only 28 % (Davidsson, 2014).

Social media include blogs, microblogs as Twitter, media-sharing sites as YouTube and social platforms as Facebook and LinkedIn (Zarrella, 2010). No corporation can underestimate the usefulness of social media. With these tools, marketers can interact, influence, educate, and build relationships, which can have an enormous financial impact on businesses (Zarrella, 2010; Alam, 2012; Safko & Brake, 2009). *"Whether you are part of a small, medium, or giant business, or are an individual entrepreneur, your customer are using social media, and there's no reason you shouldn't be, too"* (Zarrella, 2010, p. 8).

According to Michaelidou, Siamagka and Christodoulides (2011), research of social media within B2B is in its early stage and the focus is primarily on B2C. The primary purpose for corporations today is to market their products and develop their image and brand (Davidsson, 2014).

In 1983, Campbell and Cunningham published an analysis of how a corporation can develop a strategy for existing customers, even here businesses could tell that there is a need for customer analyzes. In their article they say that customers are the greatest assets for an industrial corporation. However, the authors could tell that customers were starting to be less loyal and that businesses would have to start work to keep their existing customers (Campbell & Cunningham, 1983). Even today it is important to have loyal customers since it is easier and cheaper to maintain a relationship than creating new relationships. Loyal customers tend to buy more frequent and they also tend to repeatedly recommend your business to other customers (Bharwada, 2010).

1.1.1   Definition of Social Media

In order to define the word social media, the word social and media must first be defined. Social is the ability to influence and interact with others. It is a positive word for most people (Safko & Brake, 2009). Within business there are social platforms, which Michaelidou, Siamagka and Christodoulides (2011) explain as an exchange between two or more business partners. The second word, media, is a method of sharing news or stories and engaging people in different ways by prints, texts, audio, videos, or photos. A more traditional view of media is newspapers, television, and magazines that influence human beings (Safko & Brake, 2009).

Social media is used by regular people who create and consume contents to share with others; for example comments on websites, sharing photographs, conversations in platforms or communities, blogs, et cetera (Singh & Diamond, 2012). The difference between mass media and social media is that the content within social media are created by the users (NE.se).When engaging people, the outcome will hopefully be a desired action, which can be positive word of mouth (Safko & Brake, 2009).

L. Miranda, marketing manager at Skill Scandinavia AB, define social media as:

"Social media are the activities that combine technology, social interaction and user- targeted content. It can also be described as a democratization of content. The activities are adapted for how people read and spread the information. It also allows the users to create a content which others can interact with. The interaction is central, it is a platform where everyone are able to take an equal share depending on their ability to break through. It is the message and how we package them that is crucial for how we succeed." (Personal communication, 2014-02-04).

In this thesis social media will be defined as a way to communicate and interact. The users can create content with other users by using photos, audio, text messages or other channels (L. Miranda, personal communication, 2014-02-04; Singh & Diamond, 2012). It is a combination of technology, social interaction and user targeted content (Lena Miranda, personal communication, 2014-02-04). This definition is in time, based on theory and also supported by a marketing manager working with this daily.

"How social media was defined yesterday may not be the same as it is defined today, tomorrow, or in two years." (A. Selvander, personal communication, 2014-01-28).

1.1.2   Definition of Business to Business

Business to business (B2B) is activities of marketing and sales of goods and services to the business sector within business oriented operations (NE.se, 2014). According to Hom (2013), multiple B2B transactions are involved within the supply chain since different corporations provide raw material that is necessary for the manufacturing corporation's process. Hom (2013) gives an example of the automobile manufacturing industry, where the components in a vehicle are mostly manufactured piece by piece by other corporations. Then the components are sold to the final automobile manufacturer before it ends up in the hands of the ultimate customer.

Strategic partnership among firms and their suppliers of goods or services is what explains B2B relationships (Campbell, Papania, Parent & Cyr, 2010). To connect this to marketing, Business dictionary (Businessdictonary.com, 2014) defines B2B marketing as *"The process by which businesses employ a multi-layered strategy consisting of web communications, email, media campaigns, and relationship management for the purpose of converting targeted business prospects into customers".*

The e-commerce within B2B has the purpose of trading and it is an electronic exchange between businesses. The exchange includes declarations, global trade compliance, order management, contract manufacturing and logistics. There are different categories of B2B e-commerce including the corporation website (inclusive extranet and intranet), sub websites

with access to information about a specific industry, infomediaries that are sites mostly used as trade or industry standard organization sites, brokering sites, et cetera (Hom, 2013).

1.2   Specification of Problem

There are several different factors to why this topic is interesting to study. As mentioned in the introduction, A. Selvander (personal communication, 2013-12-18) sees a trend in using social media as a marketing tool. He further talks about the usefulness of social media in different contexts and thinks B2C is more developed and more commonly seen compared to B2B. He states that many corporations wonder if social media can be a good marketing tool for a B2B corporation. Michaelidou et al. (2011) also talk about B2B marketing and compare it to B2C marketing. They point out that the interest for social media marketing has been growing slow within B2B compared to B2C.

Another thing that makes this topic interesting is the increasing use of computers. Statistics shows that computers are more used today than it was years ago (Davidsson, 2014), and the popularity for social media has grown rapidly. Web 2.0 has created new communication op- portunities (Michaelidou et al., 2011) and social media has made it possible for customers to express their emotions for products and services. This type of expression has made it possi- ble for corporations to take advantage of their customers which can led to an increased cus- tomer loyalty (Rodriguez, Peterson & Krishnan, 2012). Corporations are learning to turn this growing trend into their advantage (Bernoff & Li, 2008). One advantage a corporation can gain from using social media is trust (Alam, 2011).

There are lot of different advantages by using social media, but as said above, today this is more common in B2C than in B2B. The trend for using social media in B2C has been going on for a longer time while the trend for B2B still is in its growing phase (A. Selvander, per- sonal communication, 2013-12-18). There is still much to research within the area before implement social media as a communication tool (Hollensen, 2011). It is a relatively new phenomenon and the outcomes are essentially unknown (Rodriguez et al., 2012).

Zarella (2010) points out the usefulness and the advantages a corporation can get by using social media. She talks about social media in a B2C context and there is actually few academic literature describing how a B2B corporation can use this kind of marketing. There are obvi- ously a lot of research about the usefulness of social media when it comes to B2C but there is little information describing how a B2B corporation could do this type of marketing. There is little evidence describing their advantages or possibilities by changing their marketing strat- egy. Further this could be seen as a problem since there is no guidelines describing the effec- tiveness. Michaelidou et al. (2011) states that the interest for social media in B2C has exist since 2004 while the interest within B2B only emerged 2010. There is lack of research within B2B environment and evidence argue that social media is important for B2B marketing (Michaelidou et al., 2011).

Based on the facts above it is interesting to analyze social media platforms and how they are used as a marketing tool. It is also interesting to analyze whether social media can be a useful marketing tool for B2B corporations and if social media would be implemented as a part of the marketing strategy.

1.2.1 Research Question

The following research question will be paid attention to in this thesis;

How can corporations in the warehousing industry use social media as an integrated marketing tool to maintain established relationships within a B2B context?

1.3 Purpose

The purpose is to investigate the potential for industrial corporations, within the warehousing industry, to use social media for maintaining established relationships within a B2B context, as a part of their marketing strategy.

1.4 Delimitations

The research will be delimited to the microblog Twitter, the media-sharing site YouTube, and the social platforms Facebook and LinkedIn. The financial issues will not be taken into account.

1.5 Disposition

Chapter 1, Introduction:

In the introduction the authors present the topic in general and why this is interesting. An overall introduction is presented followed by a background where the authors present why this topic is a problem. In this section the authors also defines definitions that are used within this thesis. A problem discussion is included where discussion about the problem of the topic is held. Further the purpose is stated and the delimitations presented.

Chapter 2, Method:

This section describes how the authors achieve the purpose of the thesis. Here it is presented how the primary and secondary data is collected and how the collected data are summarized. Quantitative and qualitative methods are presented followed by choice of method for this thesis. In this section, an illustrative corporation is presented and the weaknesses of chosen method are stated.

Chapter 3, Theoretical Framework:

The theoretical framework is constructed from a broad perspective and then narrowed down. The section starts with information about B2B marketing followed by relationship marketing. Further, integrated marketing communication is presented. Finally, these subjects are narrowed down to social media where risks and advantages, common platforms, generation Y, and a model of social media are presented.

Chapter 4, Empirical Study:

This section conduct the results from the interviews that have been accomplished during this thesis. Primary data has been gathered from several interviews, and to get a broader perspective an expertise interview have been held with an advertising corporation.

Chapter 5, Analysis:

This section presents an analysis of the empirical study with a comparison of the theoretical framework. This section is divided into the following subdivisions; B2B marketing and relationships, social media within a B2B context, how to use social media, and summary of analysis. Also the research question is discussed.

Chapter 6, Conclusion:

This section respond to the purpose of the thesis. The authors conclude final statements and come up with an answer to the research question; how can corporations in the warehousing industry use social media as an integrated marketing tool to maintain established relationships within a B2B context? The authors answer this question with support from the theoretical framework, the empirical study and the analysis.

Chapter 7, Recommendations for Garantell:

In this section the authors give recommendations for the illustrative corporation. These recommendations are be based on the information collected from the interview as well as the information from the other interviewed corporations. The theoretical framework is also taken into account when giving recommendations to the illustrative corporation.

Chapter 8, Further Research:

In the last section the authors present suggestions for further research within the topic. Further researches will be discussed and recommended within different areas such as the countries impact of using social media, as well as the individual's knowledge of how to use social media.

2   Method

This section will present an understanding of the research philosophy used in this thesis. Here it will be presented how the primary and secondary data is collected and how the collected data are summarized. Even qualitative and quantitative methods will be discussed. Finally, the weaknesses of chosen methods will be analyzed.

2.1   Primary Data

Primary data is the initial data which often includes new information or new findings (MDH, 2014). In this thesis, the primary data is the empirical data collected by qualitative interviews with relevant corporations. Quantitative methods of collecting data prove something and qualitative methods instead help getting knowledge and understanding for the consumers and illuminate concepts (Sayre, 2001). Cassell and Symon (2004) explain that the most successful method when collecting data is a qualitative approach, which gives an understanding of the actual phenomenon. According to Lekvall and Wahlbin (2001) the reliability of qualitative data is in many cases limited because it is hard to get the same result, even though the basic structure is the same on all interviews. On the other hand, the validity is in many cases better for qualitative methods and gives a wider perspective. The quantitative structure is often simplified and more general (Lekvall & Wahlbin, 2001). Since this thesis should illuminate how warehousing industries use social media and which platforms that can be useful, a qualitative method is chosen to give more information about the attitude against social media.

Personal interviews were used and the interviewee got question of how they maintain relationships with other firms, their experience of relationship marketing, social media as a tool and future possibilities within the area. The questions are semi-dispositive, which means there are basic questions with space for comments, thoughts or other input within the topic. The interviews have been conducted in Swedish, therefore it has been important to translate the result in an appropriate way. To ensure the reliance of the result the text were sent back to the four interviewed industrial corporations for approval.

Four industrial corporations have been interviewed, these have been selected since they all operate within the industrial industry in a B2B context. Another criteria for the interviewed corporations was that they should operate within the warehousing context. The authors have chosen corporations with different products and services. An illustrative corporation and an expert person have also been interviewed. The expert interview was held after the others and were aimed to give inputs from a person that have a great knowledge of social media. This interview was held with A. Selvander that works with social media within B2B and B2C, which is useful within this thesis. He gives his opinion of the usefulness of social media within B2B and what he thinks about the future and upcoming trends. Both small and large corporations have been interviewed. At the last interviews the answers were common so the authors did not feel there was a need for further interviews.

For this thesis an illustrative corporation has been used. In chapter seven the illustrative corporation is used to illustrate an example of how a corporation can use social media based on the result from the theoretical framework and the empirical study.

2.1.1 Illustrative Corporation

In this thesis an illustrative corporation will be used to get a broader perspective of the problem. The illustrative corporation that will be used is a Swedish corporation called Garantell. Garantell is an industrial corporation with forty employees with their head office in Värnamo, Sweden. The corporation has been active for ten years and has a turnover of around 80 million SEK. K. Hallgard (personal communication, 2014-02-03), Marketing Director at Garantell, describes the corporation's principal activities as three core stones within wire mesh decking, which are;

- Warehouse- and industrial walls
- Industrial machine protection
- Apartment storages

According to her some of their typical customers are construction corporations, pallet rack manufacturing corporations, and machine - and robot manufacturing corporations. Apartment storage products are available within Scandinavia while the other products are available within all the European countries. Their primary market is Germany and surrounding countries. Garantell's main goal is to sell their products toward markets were the languages English or German can be spoken (K. Hallgard, personal communication, 2014-02-03).

2.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data are all types of data that analyze, comment, develop or criticize primary data. It is existing information collected by another person (MDH, 2014). The secondary data within this thesis includes material from scientific articles, magazines, relevant literature for the topic and trustworthy electronic sources. This has been found on the library, Google scholar and other trustworthy Internet websites. When searching for information, further key words have been used; social media, B2B, social media within B2B, relationship marketing, warehouse industry, marketing B2B, risks social media, advantages social media, et cetera. To ensure certain reliability, data for understanding the problem and to define the background is chosen from recent articles only a few years old, since social media is fast growing and there is a need for updated information. Data for the theoretical background is selected by relevance of the topic and found in trustworthy scientific articles.

2.3 Structure

In this thesis an inductive approach have been used. This means that the thesis starts with a problem statement, and from that problem statement the topic is specified. When the topic is set, the collection of theoretical and empirical information starts (Prince & Felder, 2013).

In this thesis interviews have been used combined with an illustrative corporation in order to apply the theoretical framework and empirical findings on the stated problem. The illustrative corporation has been used to exemplify how the information from this thesis can be applied to corporations within the warehousing industry.

2.4 Weaknesses of Chosen Method

When using a qualitative method it is difficult to get the same number of respondents as in a quantitative research (Crowther & Lancaster, 2009). Since a qualitative method has been used, few corporations have been interviewed and it is therefore difficult to generalize the answers of the whole warehousing industry. Another weakness that the authors have identified is the problem of have a wide geographical spread of the interviews. It is time consuming to get a general perspective of the warehousing industry and the chosen method have only made it possible to investigate corporations within the local area. The result might have been different if the national spread were greater. As stated above, it is difficult to generalize all corporations within the industry based on the local interviews. Further, Crowther and Lancaster (2009), state that qualitative data is not that objective and scientific as quantitative data, which can also be seen as a weakness.

It is impossible to interview every corporation using, or thinking of use, social media as a marketing tool. The result is based on few corporations but with important and interesting information. Several warehousing corporations do cooperate with different kinds of corporations, and the result may not be applicable to all established relations.

2.4.1 Validity

"Validity relates to the extent to which the data collection method or research method describes or measures what it is supposed to describe or measure". (Crowther & Lancaster, 2009, p. 80). In a validity measure the observed information should be as equal as possible to the truth. It should be noted that often this is not the case (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010).

When doing data collection the authors can seldom be sure of the information being valid. In this thesis the interviews have been carefully selected to get as valid information as possible, despite the result can seldom be proved as valid.

2.4.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the stability of the measure (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010), and to which extent certain data collection will return the same result in different occasions (Crowther & Lancaster, 2009). *"…a valid measure also is reliable, but a reliable measure does not need to be valid."* (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010, p. 79). This means that even though the interview answers seem reliable, there cannot be any guarantee for valid answers. As mentioned in the paragraph above, the interviews have been carefully chosen to create such a reliable result as possible.

3 Theoretical Framework

In this section, a theoretical framework will be presented which will be a part of the later on analysis and conclusion. The theoretical framework will be constructed from a broad perspective and then narrowed from B2B marketing down to social media.

3.1 Business-to-Business Marketing

B2B marketing has existed in society over a long time but has less scientific identity. The research within B2B marketing is still young and there is much left to discover (Hadjikhani & LaPlaca, 2013). Even though there has been a slow move to digital marketing within B2B, the movement from traditional marketing vehicles is starting to speed up. However, it is most common to add digital marketing to the marketing mix rather than eliminate traditional marketing completely (Miller, 2012).

Sajid Saeed (2011) at Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland, states that B2B marketing is about meeting the requirements of other businesses. He defines B2B marketing as: *"The practice of individuals or organizations, including commercial businesses, Government institutions, facilitating the sale and resell of their products/services to other organizations/institutions."* (Sajid Saeed, 2011, p. 815).

B2B marketing is different from B2C marketing, the sales cycle is longer and more involved. B2C is typically a short transaction with a quick response and an obvious call to a single decision maker, whilst the B2B sale process is longer and more complex. In B2B sales there are often several multiple decision makers involved and it is more focus on building relationships. The tools for marketing B2B and B2C are the same but they are supposed to be used in a different way. There is also a significant difference in messaging between B2B and B2C. B2C is often more emotional driven and more operable of price, although B2B marketing is more fact-based (Miller, 2012).

Branding is just as important in B2B as in B2C. Branding is helpful to increase customers' loyalty, reduce buying risks, add value for customers, and communicate complex information about products and services. The problem might be that B2B marketing has a more complex decision making process compared to B2C markets (Sajid Saeed, 2011).

Sarkees (2011) argue that B2C corporations have more focus on its marketing activities than B2B corporations, and perhaps this depends on the perceived distance between the firm and its customers within B2B relations. Activities such as advertising, branding and marketing research may be at the vanguard of B2C marketing while in B2B, sales teams are the primary customer service and relationship touch points with marketing in a support role. Further on B2C corporations are more likely to take risks and to try out different types of marketing to engage a wider audience of customers. Nevertheless, B2B firms appear to advantage more than B2C from a strong marketing emphasis in the technological opportunism performance relationship (Sarkees, 2011).

Industrial markets differ from the consumer market, not only because of their products, but also when it comes to the purchasing decision-making process. Regarding the purchase of high-risk products, such as materials and construction equipment, the purchased is normally

reviewed by top management. Middle and lower level lines are responsible for the purchase of low-risk products such as insurance agency and stationary (Sajid Saeed, 2011).

Sajid Saeed (2011) argues that there is little attention of B2B marketing in the academic literature and claims that the main reason for this is that industrial buyers are not affected by emotional values corresponding to the brand. He also states that some experts believe that branding plays no role in B2B marketing because of impracticality of B2B branding while other authors express the importance of B2B branding because of its positive impact on perceived quality of products and services.

There are financial advantages of B2B marketing for both manufacturer and reseller in the way of increment of sales volume, but there are also non-financial advantages that shows branding has a positive impact on the perceived quality of the product or service. A strong brand can also increase the corporation's power in the distribution platform and open up new opportunities for licensing. From the buyer's point of view, a well-known brand can be a security and reduce perceived risk and uncertainty in buying situations (Sajid Saeed, 2011).

3.2 Relationship Marketing

The development of relationship marketing has led to a paradigm shift in marketing theory and practice from the traditional transactional approach. This new relationship orientation appears particularly useful for service and business-to-business corporations, which can achieve great advantages by adopting this relational approach. The traditional transactional marketing approach implied mainly standardized mass consumption, but this type of marketing began to weaken when attempts were made to apply this type of marketing within B2B. Since then, a new approach to marketing has emerged. Relationship marketing emphasizes the importance of establishing and maintaining relationships between customers and buyers. In the beginning, the focus within relationship marketing were relations to external customers, but later on there have been an understanding of the advantages of building relations with even other actors (Iglesias, Sauquet & Montaña, 2011).

Grönroos (2007, p. 275) states that a relationship definition of marketing can be formulated as: *"The purpose of marketing is to identify and establish, maintain and enhance, and when necessary terminate relationships with customers (and other parties) so that the objectives regarding economic and other variables of all parties are met. This is achieved through a mutual making and fulfillment of promises"*.

This statement is usually meant for long-term relations. Long-term relations implies that the main objective of marketing is to seek enduring relationships with customers. Profitability cannot be measured immediately as a result of the first transaction, it is a long-term measurement which could develop from an ongoing and enduring relationship (Grönroos, 2007).

Campbell et al. (2010) claims that relationships are central to the success of supplier to distributor partnership. They also argue that studies have shown that a successful firm, within a partnership, require a financial performance and stability from each partner. To get this, there is a need of compatible top management and organizational culture, an overlap in manufacturing and design skills, good safety statistics, and an attractive customer base.

To maintain a relationship, all types of service elements have to be good. Good selling does not only mean good sale performance by professional sales people, but also good communication skills and interactions with customers as a part of the service process (Grönroos, 2007). It is highly appropriate to apply relationship marketing theory within corporations' social media platform in order to develop a relationship with the customer (Jung, Ineson & Green, 2012).

3.2.1 The Commitment-Trust Theory

Morgan and Hunt (1994) have developed a trust and commitment model, which is central for successful relationship marketing. Two keywords are used in this model to demonstrate relationship marketing, namely commitment and trust. Commitment and trust encourage marketers to work with preserving relationship investment and resist customers from attractive short-term alternatives. Further the authors argue the importance of commitment in the marketing relationship strategy, and states that commitment is central in this context. Trust on the other hand is conceptualized as existing when one party has confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity according to the authors. Trust is further about the willingness to rely on an external partner. Those two keywords together, and not just one of them, can be successful when it comes to producing productivity, effectiveness and efficiency. This leads to beneficial behavior that are related to successful relationship marketing. By having a two way dialog of commitment and trust, both parties are allowed to fulfill their needs. This creates extra value except for the products and services that already are offered (Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

3.3 Integrated Marketing Communication

The focus of integrated marketing communications (IMC) has gone from an audience of only consumers to all stakeholders (Reinold and Tropp, 2010). *"IMC is a process by which a client or brand leverages all relevant forms of communication to deliver a consistent expression of a product or brand values, positioning and message"* (Kitchen, 2010, p. 131). Today the marketers are driven by customers, consumers and prospects instead of driven by products or production (Kitchen, 2010). It is of importance to adapt to all relevant contact to the brand and not only rely on mass media. Another important process is to managing information to a specific product or service. The process is driven by audience to managing content, stakeholders, channels and results of communication programs (Reinold and Tropp, 2010). When using integrated marketing, a strong communication channel can compensate a weaker one, and it is possible to synergize different elements and combine and integrate them (Kitchen, Brignell, Li & Spicket Jones, 2004). Kitchen (2010) suggests that IMC depends on the context and the certain situation. Customers do not really buy a product, they buy something that helps solving a problem for them. Therefore it is of significant importance to know the customer, and then come up with an idea what needs to be done and how to do it with an integrated marketing strategy (Kitchen, 2010).

To have a successful IMC program there are, according to Kitchen (2010), some points that need to be in order. First, the leadership team need to be confident and empowered, and that

often comes by experience. It is important when guiding to take fast decisions and it is also important for the members of the team to think in a large perspective. Second, the team needs to have the right attitude. This implies that the members need to be able to listen, to consider and to support others disciplines and suggestions. They would further stay focused but still be open minded to great ideas, and also critical but not judicial. Third, the process needs a co-created team, and fourth, the IMC process needs a client that is empowered to demand from agencies and who supports the process (Kitchen, 2010).

3.4   Social Media

3.4.1   Advantages and Disadvantages

There is little business journals and other academic literature describing how marketing managers can use social media as a part of their integrated marketing strategy. Therefore many managers have lack of appreciation about social media and its role in promotional efforts (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). By using social media businesses can get ideas from various parts (Briones, Kuch, Fisher Liu & Jen, 2010), and by having a two way dialogue corporations can offer a faster service to customers (Briones, Kuch, Fisher Liu & Jen, 2010).

Today customers have created different filters that helps them limit the amount of marketing that they receive, such filters can be caller ID to filter unwanted phone calls, record television programs to skip the commercial, and sift through unwanted mail. This type of marketing is ineffective today since customers rather would like to have a relationship with the sellers (Borges, 2009).

Social media can have two promotional roles in marketing, it can either be used for corporations to talk to their customers and vice versa or it can be used for customer to talk to one another, which is an extension of traditional word of mouth communication (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Ward (2014) argue that social media can be time-consuming, which he sees as the main problem with social media. He also says that larger corporations like Dell, HP and Microsoft have the budget to use social media effectively which small corporations do not have. He further thinks that small corporations could get advantages by using this type of marketing tool, such advantages could be to find out more information about their customers. The main goal of social media is to create a corporation reputation and to establish relationships toward your customers (Ward, 2014). There are several advantages of including digital marketing in the B2B context, for instance digital marketing is cheaper than similar traditional marketing. Digital marketing also helps establishing closer bond with your customers (Miller, 2012).

3.4.2   Social Media Platforms

In today's society, social platforms allows people and corporations to share their ideas on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. These social platforms play a major role in promoting brands where individuals and corporations can build a community to make the difference (Sajid Saeed, 2011).

According to an online ranking site (eBizMBA, 2014) Facebook is the most common and popular social media platform. Facebook has 900 million visitors each month while twitter, which is the second most popular social media platform, only has 310 million visitors per month. On third place LinkedIn can be found with 250 million visitor per month. Sajid Saeed (2011) also describes this three platforms as common for people and corporations to share their ideas and views. Another common site that have not been found on a ranking list is YouTube. YouTube has 1 billion users each month according to Smith (2014) and YouTube (2014) themselves. These four social media platforms will briefly be described below.

3.4.2.1 Social Networks

Lapointe (2012) describes Facebook as the marketer's jackpot, since it is a cheap way for commercial. Furthermore he thinks that corporations can use Facebook to create value for a fan. Users can click "like" for a specific corporation and by that earn some kind of engaging towards the corporation. Lapointe (2012) also talks about becoming a fan to a specific corporation, but he also points out that we really do not know how much this will do for the corporation, and that it might say more about the different users then it will engage users to a specific corporation. According to White (2011) Facebook is the simplest way to engage into social media.

White (2011) believe it is important, when using Facebook as a marketing tool, to be consistent, which is not unique for Facebook in particular but also for other types of social media platforms. It is worthless to join social media platforms if there is no attention paid later on. A suggestion of how often a new publish would be is about three times a week. It is also important to remember that Facebook is a site where people share their lives with one another and that users want to socialize through this site. There is a risk of turning people off by selling things to them in an unwanted way (White, 2011).

Another social network is LinkedIn. LinkedIn is a site with affluent audience, and many corporations use this platform for creating a profile. Advertisers at this platform get the opportunity to show expertise about their area, and are able to customize products and services at the site. Some of the most successful corporations at LinkedIn have uploaded pictures of their brand which is a cheap way of advertising. LinkedIn also provide the opportunity to upload videos. The content that is shared on LinkedIn can be integrated to other common social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook (Hershberger, 2012).

It do not necessarily needs to take much time to use LinkedIn. The most time-spending part is to set up a profile on the platform. This can be seen as a big investment according to Hershberger (2012). There are some advantages of using LinkedIn as a marketing tool, one is that marketers can publish corporation updates that goes into newsfeed and then get public. Another advantage of LinkedIn is that a corporation profile can be claimed, which mean that it will show up when people search for corporations at the platform (Hershberger, 2012).

3.4.2.2   Microblogs

Twitter is the most common microblogging site. By using Twitter corporations can either have a one-to-many conversation or they can have a one-to-one communication (Burton, Dadich & Soboleva, 2013). Twitter is further about sustaining a dialogue with the audience, it enables individuals to connect with corporations, celebrities, and politicians. It is a platform that can be used at two levels, mass communication and an interpersonal level to interact with the audience. This social media platform is a communication activity that enables word-of-mouth (Sevin, 2013).

3.4.2.3   Media-sharing Sites

Thousands of advertisers are using YouTube and 40% of the users are visiting YouTube from a mobile telephone (YouTube.com). YouTube are not typically commercial, and the videos can be shared, discussed and rated. Advertisers can buy dedicated "channels" to show-case videos related to their brand. The most effectively market spot on the website is the home page, since a pattern have shown that this spot helped videos to kick off at YouTube. A video placed on the website's home page, might in the end of the day be the most viewed of that day. YouTube is a place to share videos and advertisers can use this opportunity to create commercial, in the long run it is up to the users to decide whether to look at the video or not (Steel, 2007). However, younger people are more difficult to reach through this platform, since patterns have shown that this audience have easier to sift through this type of advertising. Another thing about YouTube's users are that they have had a tendency to fickleness. As an advertiser, there are some things to be aware of when marketing on YouTube, such thing is to think about the individual audience and not the huge hit it can make. Another important thing to be aware of is to tag your video so that users can search for it (Steel, 2007).

3.4.3   Generation Y and Social Media

Social media were generally adopted from 2003 and have existed since 1981. Generation Y is the generation that has grown up with computers, Internet and social media which can be described as technology savvy and digital natives. The generation Y has no direct specified years, but people born somewhere within between the years 1981- 1999, because there are not that much research of children younger than that age. The early and constant exposure for technology has made it possible for the generation to experience quick advance within communication technologies, socialization and going global. The generation is also called the millennial and a generation that "want it all" and "want it now" according to salary, advancement within the career, life balance et cetera (Bolton, Parasuraman, Hoefnagels, Migchels, Kabadayi, Gruber, Loureiro & Solnet, 2013).

3.4.4   The Seven Functional Blocks of Social Media

Kietzmann et al. (2011) use the model honeycomb of social media (Figure 1) to explain how executives can understand different social media activities and functional traits of it. It is built on seven blocks that put insight in to how social media can be configured. The different blocks will be explained below.
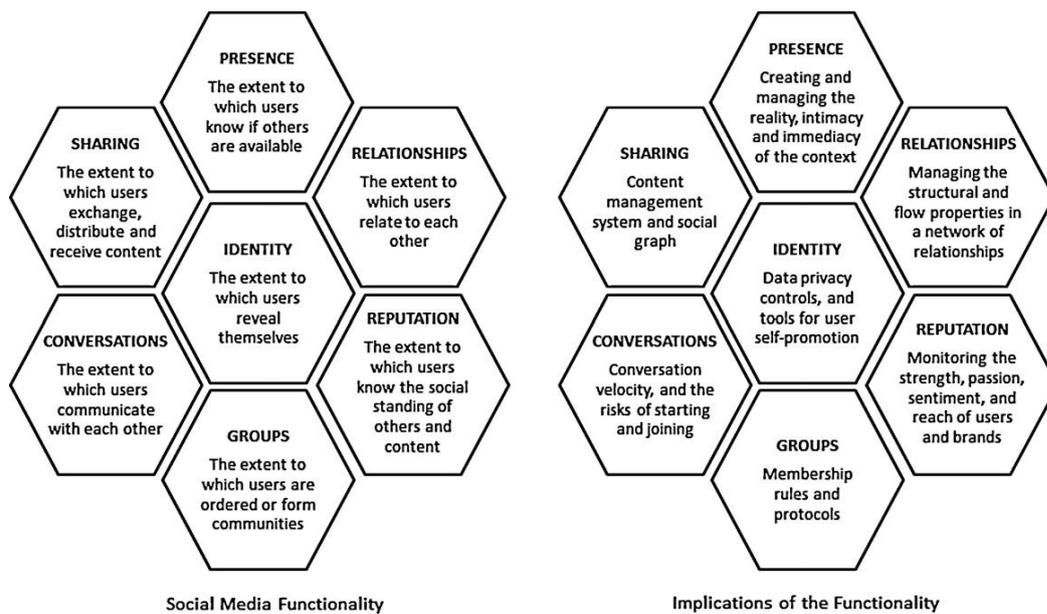
Figure 1. The honeycomb of social media (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011)

Identity is how the users present their identity within social media. Here it is possible to disclosure parts and the users can do it conscious or unconscious and it depends on what the user want to show and which media it is. For example, in some media a nickname is used and then the real name can be hidden. Many social media sites have a base where the profile is the starting point at the platform. The profile can include information such as name, profession, age, location and other disclosing information. This has made the users use different tools for advertise themselves through social media profile cards, similar to business cards or email signatures. When corporations use social media to develop their sites or engage with other sites, there are some implications, as for example privacy. It is important to choose the right media tool and to understand the balance between sharing identities and protect privacy. Users that share information care about how secondary firms use their information to surveillance how social media platforms affect the activities.

Conversation explains in which extent users of social media communicate. There are different motives why the users utilize the media and many social media platforms exist to facilitate individuals or groups with conversations. People are tweeting, blogging, making comments et cetera. It can be different reasons why using it, as for example political reasons, making their voices heard or making impact. According to Kietzmann et al. (2011), depending on which social media that are used, the content and frequency are different. With a tool as Twitter, corporations must learn to communicate small and fast conversations (tweets). Blogs, on the other hand, are more detailed and less frequent. Twitter might be connected to a social media exchange in a wider perspective than a blog, even though the blog can be useful and informative. One implication within the conversation block is when firms joins

or manipulate conversations. There are advantages of doing it, but also risks. It is important for the corporation to understand when it is appropriate or not.

The block *sharing* contains; distributing, receiving, and exchange. There are reasons why people share and meet online, and social media connect people to a shared object. That could be a picture, a text, a song et cetera. It is important to have shared objects that connect people, and not only feel trust in the connection between people themselves. One implication is copyright, since it can be hard to ensure where the material comes from and whether it is legally used or not.

Presence is about accessibility and knowing where people are and if they are available. That could be both status of knowing if you are connected right now, or updates telling where you are in the real world. One implication is that corporations need to put attention to the degree of relevance of the location and availability of the users. Another implication is that the social media platforms influence the presence since it is linked to other blocks within the model.

The block of *relationships* contains users that are connected somehow to each other and to which extent. The level of relationship can differ from accepting a friend on Facebook to meet up and have conversations. How people are connected can be a part of the platform, and this type of connection is typically seen at LinkedIn. The type of relationship differs from different social media platforms. At some social media it does not matter if the users know the other person, while at other platforms it is more important. To explain the implications, Kietzmann et al. (2011) use structure and flow. Structure within this block means number of connections and the position the user got within the platform. The more connections and the higher grade of position, the more influential is the user. Flow contains how resources are used, exchanged and transformed and which types of resources involved within the relationship. For the social media platforms it is important to understand whether the relationships could be formal and regulated with for example valid authenticity or informal.

The *reputation* block has different meaning within social media and mostly it is connected to trust. Technology tools are used to collect information to determine the trustworthiness within social media. The trustworthiness and following reputation at YouTube can include number of views or ratings of the videos. Is the number of readers the most important or is it to be sure that the posted messages are actually read? How to measure reputation differ, it could be counting followers or measure how many times the firm is mentioned or linked to.

To which extent the users can form communities are explained in the last block; *groups*. There are primarily two type of groups; self-created groups where users can sort and place their friends, followers, or others, and there are online groups everyone can join. These groups can be open, closed, or only open for invitation. Indirect implication of this is the different permissions depending on to which group. It is such high traffic at many social media platforms, so there might be need for filter the information. The identity of the users might be presented in different ways depending on which group. The groups can also allow different

details. There are opportunities for users to hide information from one group and open it up for another. This could, however, be a problem if hidden information reach users that are not supposed to be aware of this information.

Kietzmann et al. (2011) explain that depending on which social media, the focus is different. Further the platforms cover more than one block, rather three or four blocks are common. For example, primary focus of LinkedIn is *identity*, for Facebook it is *relationships* and for YouTube it is *sharing*.

3.4.4.1 The four C's

To help corporations set up strategies for understanding, monitoring, and responding to different social media platforms and activities, there are guidelines. It is based on 4C's; Cognize, Congruity, Curate and Chase (Kietzmann, 2011);

Cognize; It is important for a corporation to understand the social media landscape. They can do it by use the honeycomb model to understand the function of the different social media. It is of importance to know if there are conversations about the firm, where they are being held and how they are enabled to the different functions within the model. It is also important to know which the influences are at social media, but also other critical elements that can affect the firm.

Congruity; When building strategies, the firm would ensure the strategies are equal with the goals of the firm. It is important to use the right functions within social media and then put focus towards the right blocks. To get the best result, it is important to integrate social media with other marketing strategies. Understanding this concept makes it possible to learn how the activities can help the corporation to gain trustworthiness.

Curate; The firm needs to understand when and at which frequency they can interact at social media, and also who represents the firm at the Internet. There are no rules of how to involve within social media, but it might be a good idea to make policies to increase certainty. The mission is to find employees with a feeling for what is emotional appropriate at social media platforms. It is also important to find employees who care and can listen to the chatter online. Another option is to combine functionality and content from already existing sources. This is called mash-ups. It is challenging and all firms do not have the ability to succeed. It is important to have the right tools and control in position.

Chase; It is time consuming to constantly search for information at social media platforms.

Therefore it is of importance to understand which information that are useful, and affect the firm. The honeycomb model helps evaluate the market, understand assumptions about engagement needs and see how other social media platforms are involved, but also see how competitors are responding. The basics are to follow interactions about the brand, product, firm et cetera.

4 Empirical Study

In this section the empirical study will be presented. In order to get a broad perspective, information have been collected from the illustrative corporation, several interviews, and one expert interview. All questions asked can be seen in appendix 1, 2, and 3.

4.1 Illustrative Corporation Interview

4.1.1 Garantell

Interviewee: Kristin Hallgard, Marketing Director, 16th of April, 2014.

Garantell is a corporation that sells most of their products on export and most of their relationships are maintained by telephone contact, but they also meet customers at fairs. Every seller have a goal of how many hours they should spend on maintaining relationships over telephone.

K. Hallgard says that she do not use social media in private, but have a LinkedIn account that she uses in business purpose for recruiting. This account is not used to scout competitors and neither for building and maintaining relationships. K. Hallgard means that many of their customers, which is primary located in Germany, use social media platforms but she also says that Germany is behind Sweden when it comes to using social media platforms. She states that Facebook has been used in Sweden for a long time while in Germany it is still in its early stage. Another reflection she states is that a corporation nowadays only reach about two percent of their target group through Facebook in Sweden. This causes problem for Garantell since the developing stages of using Facebook differs from Sweden compared to Germany. She states that some social media platforms might be useful to reach customers in some countries but it can be waste of time in other countries. According to K. Hallgard, the easiest way of connecting through social media to their German customers might be through Facebook but this media is less useful when it comes to, for example, the United Kingdom. Further she does not think that social media are integrated as a work task in other countries, to the same extent as in Sweden, which also can be seen as a barrier.

The purpose for Garantell when using social media is to reach existing customers and maintaining relationships. They see social media as a complementary part of their existing marketing strategy. Another state K. Hallgard makes is that they might be able to reach corporations through social media that they have processed for several years, but never have managed to process them as customers.

Garantell is thinking about using Instagram, Twitter and YouTube as a part of their marketing strategy. Instagram and Twitter will primary be used for publishing pictures and writing short descriptions of the corporation's products. YouTube will mainly be used for videos of product descriptions. For the moment K. Hallgard does not think that LinkedIn is appropriate since the main focus there is private persons and not corporations. Even though they do not plan to integrate LinkedIn in their marketing strategy, K. Hallgard sometimes use the platform for person searching when she is about to contact a corporation.

K. Hallgard thinks that Garantell can strength their corporation brand and image by using social media. She further mentions that a disadvantage by using social media is unpredictable criticism.

4.2 Corporations Interviewed

4.2.1 Tenzo AB

Interviewee: Sandra Frylén, Marketing Communicator, 4th of April, 2014.

Tenzo AB is an international warehouse and furniture corporation with headquarter located in Smålandsstenar, Sweden. The corporation operates in a B2B environment and most of their customers are international, only five percent of their selling occurs in Sweden. Tenzo AB conducts their own production, lacquering and packaging. They have 80 employees and a few subsidiaries abroad.

To maintain relationships with other corporations, most conversations occur through e-mail or phone calls. Within marketing, they establish the relationships through the sales persons. The sellers are the face of the corporation. To complement, they also use e-mails, folders and sometimes their website. It is used to strength the brand, but most customers do not visit the website continuously and therefore they do not focus on using the website in a relationship approach.

The organization overall do not use social media, but the designers use it in purpose to search for trends within the industry. Social media platforms are not used in Tenzo's marketing strategy, but sometimes it happens that employees use their private accounts, to search for anything written about the corporation on different social media platforms. S. Frylén also comments that she is friend with some of her suppliers on LinkedIn. Many of Tenzo's customers are active on social media platforms since they are B2Corientated. Platforms that are commonly used are Facebook and Instagram, and S. Frylén states that she has seen that people have linked their corporation to different activities on Pinterest. She also comments that no one of their customers seem to use Twitter. S. Frylén says that she think YouTube might be a good marketing channel, but once again, she thinks it is most advantageous for B2C corporations. Another comment that she makes is that LinkedIn might be the most business oriented of them all.

S. Frylén do not think that a broader usage of social media would has advantages for the corporation today, but for B2C corporation social media would probably be more useful. She says that corporations within a B2B context is much more about building relationships and she thinks it is difficult to build relations through social media. Today, there is no focus on social media within the marketing strategy, S. Frylén instead says that the next step for the corporation might be press releases.

Further, S. Frylén states that the corporation will not use social media only because it has become a trend and she thinks it is difficult to see what usage of social media would actually generate in terms of profit. Social media platforms have long been used by customer-orientated corporations and it seem to be more advantageous for them. S. Frylén instead sees

potentials in the corporation's intranet. Through certain intranet it is possible to create a corporation profile and chat rooms. There is much lower risk of information leak through intranets compared to share information at social media platforms on the Internet.

What stops Tenzo from using social media is the uniqueness they offer each of their customer. Further, information would no longer be secret for different customers. S. Frylén says that social media may be various useful for different industries and that advertising agencies would use social media platforms more widely than industrial corporations. Tenzo perceives it as a risk by using social media since there is a risk of information leak, which can cause product copying. Some products are designed specialized to one customer and no other customers are allowed to sell this specific product. Since their customers are competitors to one another they see social media as a risk. When showing a product for a customer, that customer are supposed to feel special and feel that this specific product is designed for them. This can be seen as a competitive advantage. *"The best thing about social media is that it is free. TV commercials do not feel very trustworthy anymore. Social media might be the communication channel of the future but within a B2B context the development is not there yet"* (S. Frylén, personal communication, 2014-04-04).

4.2.2 GA Industri

Interviewee: Fredrik Lidbacken, Marketing Manager, 8th of April, 2014.

GA Industri is a private family owned corporation with headquarter located in Smålandsstenar, Sweden. The corporation operates in the steel industry were they buy steel from abroad and sell it within Sweden. Their production occurs close to their head quarter in Smålandsstenar. They have 60 employees and 350 active customers.

The corporation is traditional and most of their relationship marketing occurs through traditional sales efforts by visiting their customers, also phone calls, email and sometimes through their website. F. Lidbacken points out that most of their customers are very traditional which affects the way they maintain relationships with their customers. GA Industri always seeks to create relations with other employees within their customer organizations, except the purchaser since they already have a relation towards GA Industri. F. Lidbacken (personal communication, 2014-04-08) says *"we always try to build a relationship with the employees within the production area since we think it is good to know more than just one person in the organization"*.

GA Industri's marketing begins through traditional selling. The corporation does not work specifically with relationship marketing but they do market their corporation through contacts with customers. However, GA Industri operates in a traditional industry, which tends to be dominated by men older than 50 years. Several employees, customers, and suppliers do barely know what social media is about. F. Lidbacken states that GA Industri has tried to rejuvenate their organization by hiring a person under 30 years old, who has tried to point out the advantages of social media. The corporation does not use any social media platforms today but their goal is to, within a year, use some kind of social media. F. Lidbacken does not think that any of their customers or suppliers uses some kind of social media and he does further not think that social media can build relationships in a short-term, but in a longer

term he thinks it can be useful. He thinks that the industry has to mature before social media can be seen as normal. He also states that social media primarily would be useful when recruiting.

There is a desire for using social media within the corporation, but still there is a lack of knowledge. The goal is to, within a year, have a corporate Facebook page. F. Lidbacken claims that if their stakeholders would be more active on social media platforms, it would also be more obvious for GA Industri to be active as well. Though, there is nothing preventing GA Industri from using social media, but once again F. Lidbacken notes that it is an old fashion industry dominated by older men which he thinks is a barrier for the corporation. He also says that if a corporation is registered on different platforms, it is very important to be active and regularly update the information. If the corporation is inactive, it can instead be a disadvantage to be registered on social media platforms.

4.2.3   Industrikompetens AB

Interviewee: Joanna Engström, Project Manager, 11th of April, 2014.

Industrikompetens is a recruitment agency operating within the industrial industry, and are located in Norrköping, Linköping, Katrineholm and Motala. The owners of Industrikompetens are municipalities and corporations within the region. Their customers are both consultants, potential staff for the recruitment, but also the corporations they are recruiting for and doing research to. Last year Industrikompetens bought another recruitment agency, Skill Scandinavia AB, operating primarily within the IT/engineering business and now Skill is a subsidiary to Industrikompetens. Industrikompetens and Skill have together 37 employees and about 200 consultants and works with 200-300 different corporations. Together Industrikompetens and Skill help other corporations with staff, recruit, provide competence and provide different kinds of research, as for example marketing research.

Every employee at Industrikompetens work with their relationships towards other corporations somehow, but the sellers are the primary relationship creators and maintainers. The recruitment team has good contact with the corporations they recruit for. Industrikompetens works with customer care and employer branding. They try to serve a package where they can provide customers with all their needs, and not only help them with the recruitment. Most contact within B2B occurs in person, and they work different with their specific relations depending on personality. They use a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) – system to know which contacts are established, who contacted them last time, when they were in touch, and other important knowledge to maintain a good relationship with their customers. Industrikompetens has a well-established brand within the region and the business, and many corporations already know the corporation and contact them when they need help. They use advertisement, but the most important is the personal meeting. The advertisement is more directed towards the job candidates, but contribute to the brand awareness both for Industrikompetens and the corporations they are recruiting for.

Industrikompetens uses social media, and J. Engström and a colleague of her are responsible for this. They have a structured strategy for how it should be used and when. They use

different media within depending on the purpose. J. Engström thinks it is important to enjoy working with social media, and to have a good structured plan and policies for how to use it. Within their marketing strategy they primarily use Facebook and LinkedIn. They also have an Instagram account, but this is not actively used at the moment. Twitter, were they also have an account, is used primarily for recruitments. It is important to use hashtags to raise awareness of the brand and to make it easier for people to find the recruitment advertisements. Facebook is more used for persons and to reach candidates for jobs. They use LinkedIn mostly to reach students and corporations. Industrikompetens searches for information of other corporations to understand what they are doing, if they may be a threat, or to find interesting information about the corporation. They also search for candidates to their recruitment mission.

It is important to be active and to update continuously, and to stay active within discussions, forum, create debates, or ask questions. It is also important to be aware of what to say and how to say it, which forums to being active in et cetera. If not, it can have a negative impact for the corporation. Industrikompetens communicates with other corporations primarily through LinkedIn. Joanna thinks that Twitter is ranked higher than Facebook when it comes to find information. Several students are active at Facebook, but less corporations according to her. Numerous corporations have an account at Twitter, even though they are not always active themselves.

J. Engström believes that not all of the corporations they are having a connection to use social media, but many corporations have accounts, active or inactive. She believes it gets more common that corporations are active at social media. A good example she talks about is Toyota that has an own page only for engineer jobs and they are really good at employer branding. However, J. Engström believes that personal communication always is the most effective when building relationships, but it can be easier to recognize a corporation if they are active on social media. It is much about building a brand, and show other people and corporations that you exist. It can be a good way of finding new candidates, suppliers and customers. It is not only social media that makes it easier, the Internet over all makes it easier and simplifies things. Industrikompetens wants to focus more on social media. Skill that was acquired by Industrikompetens, are experienced within social media and both corporations can learn from each other and both want to develop and improve the use of it. They want people to be aware of them.

For now, it is less important that their customers use social media in a wider range, but J. Engström sees a potential for a wider use in the future for their customers. The brand awareness increases if customers and suppliers use social media platforms. Though, after the merging with Skill, there is a challenge to find the job roles and who is responsible for what part. There are more opinions than before and therefore it is important to find who is responsible for which area and have clear defined roles. J. Engström also points out that their website is more important than social media and they are doing a thoroughly work with it.

4.2.4 Husqvarna Group AB

Interviewee: Marcus Rejnevik, Project Manager within Digital Media, 14th of April, 2014.

Husqvarna is a Swedish manufacturing corporation and one of the oldest in the world. This year they celebrate their 325th anniversary (husqvarnagroup.com). They manufacture forest and garden machines and they are market leaders worldwide within their business. They establish and maintain relations with suppliers, customers, partners et cetera.

To establish relationships with other corporations, personal meetings and traditional contacts are important. It is a big difference of how they establish relationships depending on the type of corporation. It is important with good relationships in all the different sale channels. To keep the relationships alive, the personal meeting and conferences are important.

When it comes to social media, they believe it is important to have a clear mission with their presence and also evaluate if the channel is effective to use. Husqvarna uses Facebook and YouTube as social media channels. YouTube is used as a one-way communication while Facebook is used for marketing, inform and inspire their customers. Social media, overall, are also used for finding information. They do not know if their suppliers use social media, but many customers use Facebook and Instagram to marketing themselves and their products and offerings.

M. Rejnevik believes that an increased use of social media can develop a better relationship with existing customers or to create new relationships with customers. This is not the case when it comes to suppliers. While these customer relationship extends the brand gets more personal. It is important with personal contact to maintain a good relationship towards the brand.

Husqvarna does not feel a need to use more social media channels, they rather put focus on the one they use today. They neither think their suppliers need to use social media in a wider range, but they support customers to use it. If they use social media in a proper way, it is open, quick, and clear. Barriers of using social media are the advantages versus the resources it takes to maintain the social media platforms. Also the structure of the organization can be a barrier.

4.3 Expert Interview

4.3.1 Bolt Kommunikation

Interviewee: Anders Selvander, Project Manager and Market Strategist, 7th of April, 2014.

Bolt Kommunikation is an advertising agency located in Jönköping city with 15 employees. Bolt's customers are of different corporation sizes, most customers have a global focus and almost everyone is active within B2B selling.

The contact between Bolt and its customers occurs mostly through phone calls and emailing. To maintain the relationships with customers, A. Selvander says that they always try to contact the customers after every mission to make sure that the customer is satisfied and feel

appreciated. Another way that Bolt is using to maintain relationships is by sending monthly newsletters. Usually when Bolt gets a new customer it depends on customer disappointed with previous agency.

A. Selvander says that he can see a change in how corporations market themselves, and maintain relationships, within a B2B context. Almost every corporation did socialized with their customers and suppliers after the working day through activities, such as playing golf, eating dinner together. Today, this is less common. Businesses have been more equalized and A. Selvander thinks that person's private time has a higher priority nowadays. However, he further claims that he sees a trend in corporations using social media. He says that numerous of corporations want to be active on social media only because it is a trend, they do not always now what the advantages of using it is. He further says that the advantages for corporations to be active on different social media platforms might have decreased since several platforms have started to charge an amount for corporations marketing themselves on the site. By this said, he thinks that social media is no longer that cheap marketing alternative that it once was.

Industries can have different advantages depending on which social media platform they use. A. Selvander thinks that the IT industry is the one that easiest can adapt trends like social media and he thinks that social media is already quite widespread in that industry. One example that he comments, is that Twitter is most used by journalists and marketing managers. He further talks about Instagram, a social media platform where the main focus is to publish pictures, which he does not think is useful for the industrial industry. He also mentions LinkedIn and comments that even this platform starts charge an amount of money from corporations marketing themselves. A. Selvander states that there is always a risk by being public on social media platforms, and the image of the corporation might not always be the same as planned. He exemplifies large corporations that create accounts on different social media platforms and only get a few followers or likes. This is negative and embarrassing for corporations and in cases like this, corporations should wonder if it is necessary to be a part of this type of marketing.

A. Selvander claims that to have a good relationship to customers the corporation has to be where the customer is located. If the customers are active on social media platforms, even the corporation should be there. It is, however, important to understand that being a part of this platforms opens up for criticism that the corporation must be able to handle. A. Selvander says that if a corporation receive criticism, they cannot be quiet instead respond to the criticism quick. If they do not respond, it can cause bad attention for the corporation. Even though there are risks by being registered on social media platforms, A. Selvander would recommend corporations to join. He says there are several advantages of active participation at different social media platforms, and there is probably any platform that fits corporations. A. Selvander believes YouTube is a good channel for several corporations, especially within industrial industry. At YouTube corporations can post videos of their products and how to use and install them.

In the future, A. Selvander thinks that everyone will be active on different social media platforms. He states that the definition of social media today is probably not the same as it will

be a few years from now. A. Selvander thinks that activities such as traditional printing will disappear and that cheap or free types of media will be even more used. The generation that grows up with social media platforms will probably see it as an obvious choice. Further he reflects that social media is in its early stage, and it might be too early for several corporations to use.

5 Analysis

In this section the theoretical framework and the interviews will be analyzed. The section will be divided into the following subdivisions; B2B marketing and relationships, social media within a B2B context, how to use social media, and summary of analysis. The analysis will discuss the research question: How can warehousing industries use social media as an integrated marketing tool to maintain established relationships within a B2B context?

5.1 B2B Marketing and Relationships

Iglesias et al. (2011) define relationship marketing as the importance of establishing and maintaining relations between customers and buyers. The empirical study shows that the most important and common way to maintain a relationship is to have personal contact with customers and suppliers. From the interviews, it can be seen that the personal contact mainly occur through a sales persons at the corporation (S. Frylén; F. Lidbacken; J. Engström; M. Rejnevik; A. Selvander; K. Hallgard). It is important to include personal meetings in the relation depending on which relationship the corporation have or want to establish with the customers and suppliers (S. Frylén, F. Lidbacken, J. Engström, M. Rejnevik, and K. Hallgard). According to Grönroos (2007), a long-term relation implies that the main objective of marketing is to seek for long-lasting relationships with customers. Profitability cannot be measured immediately as a result of the first transaction, it is a long-term measurement which could develop from an ongoing and enduring relationship. As written in the empirical study and the theoretical framework, to build a long-lasting relationship takes time and effort, and to have personal connection is important. Consequently, there is a high focus on relationships within B2B, and it is important to maintain and to put value towards those relations.

According to Miller (2012), B2B is more focused on relationships and it has a longer and a more complex sales process than within B2C. The interviewed corporations are all using personal contact, which complements Borges (2009) statements that many customers want to have relationships with sales persons. Sarkees (2011) explains that in a B2B context the focus is to let the sales persons create and maintain relationships, compared to B2C where they put more focus on advertising, branding and marketing research. This can also be connected to Morgan and Hunt's (1994) commitment-trust theory which explains the advantages of a two way dialogue. A two way dialogue can create something extra and make the relationship successful and trustworthy.

Further, Miller (2012) and Kietzmann et al. (2011) say that it is most common to add digital marketing to existing marketing and not completely eliminate the traditional marketing. This complements S. Frylén's thoughts of that it is hard to build a relationship only through social media. One suggestion can be to complement the personal contact and marketing with social media, not replace it. This seem to be the most trustworthy, and the personal contact is important and is hard to replace by digital marketing.

When planning a marketing strategy, it is of importance to know your customer, and then come up with ideas to reach this target group (Kitchen, 2010). Further it is explained that when using integrated marketing, a strong communication channel can compensate a weaker

one, and it is possible to synergize different elements and combine and integrate them (Kitchen et al., 2004). This can strength that social media can complement the sales persons.

5.2   Social Media within a B2B Context

Several of the interviewed corporations are using social media in some way, but not always to maintain relationships within B2B. GA Industri (F. Lidbacken) is not using social media at all and has little knowledge about it, whilst Tenzo (S. Frylén) use private social media accounts to search for information about suppliers and competitors, but not within a marketing purpose. Industrikompetens (J. Engström) uses social media partly for recruiting, but also in a B2B context for communication and to search for information via LinkedIn. Even Husqvarna (M. Rejnevik) uses social media to search for information about other corporations. According to the interviewed corporations, the usage of social media for maintaining relationships do not seem to be widespread within the warehousing industry. Social media is most commonly used for information search, recruiting and communication. However, some of the interviewed corporations would like to increase the use of social media (J. Engström, K. Hallgard, F. Lidbacken), whilst another (M. Rejnevik) instead wants to improve the social media they already use. Further M. Rejnevik, at Husqvarna, explains that they can see advantages of using social media in the relationship with their customers but not with the suppliers, since the customer relationship is more personal. Mangold & Faulds (2009) say that social media can either be used for corporations to communicate with the customers and vice versa, or it can be used for customers to communicate with each other. As mentioned in the interview with S. Frylén, at Tenzo, some corporations have different terms and conditions to their different customers. If the customers should start talk to each other they soon would discover these inequalities. This, of course, is a fear for the corporation since it in the long run can lead to loss of customers if the customers discover that they have poorer conditions than others.

The honeycomb of social media (Kietzmann et al., 2011) helps the user to understand different social media activities and functional traits of it. It puts insight to how social media can be configured. A. Selvander, at Bolt Kommunikation, thinks that different industries can have different advantages of the social media platforms. From this, it can be stated that every corporation have to understand which social media are most appropriate for their business, which can be done partly through the honeycomb model and by having knowledge of the differences and advantages of the different social media platforms.

A. Selvander explains that the IT industry is the industry that easiest can adapt trends like social media and he further thinks that social media is already quite widespread in that industry. It might be more natural for corporations operating within the IT industry to be involved in techniques such as social media, since the corporation already has the basic technical knowledge (A. Selvander). This can make it easier to understand the different functions and what is suitable for the market. There can be different advantages of using social media depending on what industry the corporation operates in. F. Lidbacken and A. Selvander say there might be lack of knowledge of how to use social media as a marketing tool, especially

in corporations where the average age is high, which strengths what Bolton et al. (2013) state about Generation Y. For this generation it is more natural to use techniques such as social media platforms.

Through the interviews, it is seen that several corporations were using social media in some way, but almost no one were using it as an integrated part of their marketing strategy. The majority of interviewed corporations did not have any social media accounts. An advantage of having a corporation account is the additional way of interaction towards the corporation for customers and suppliers. However, three quarters of the employees are using connected computers at work (Davidsson, 2014), which creates conditions for corporations to implement social media to their marketing strategy. Though, from the interviews' it can be told that some corporations rather put focus to their website than being active on social media.

Miller (2012) explains the differences between B2B and B2C. He believes that the same tools can be used, but in different ways and with different messages. This can be important to have in mind when using social media. Some corporations have both B2B and B2C relations, which mean they must decide to whom the messages are directed and who they want to reach. S. Frylén, at Tenzo, believes that social media is more useful within B2C, and according to Michaelidou et al. (2011) the previous research focus is primarily on B2C. Grönroos (2007) believes that all service elements have to be good, not only the selling but also interaction and communication. There is potential in using social media within B2B since this is a fast and easy way of interact, communicate and ask questions. Social media can possibly be a way to complement the service process. Sajid Saeed (2011) believes that branding is just as important in B2C as in B2B and can, in both cases, increase loyalty and communicate complex information about products or services. Further he argues that a strong brand can increase the corporation's power in the distribution platform and open up new opportunities for licensing. From the buyer's point of view, a well-known brand can be a security and reduce perceived risk and uncertainty in buying situations.

If a corporation is active on social media, it is accessible for everyone and not only the corporation itself. Even if a corporation not directly are branding themselves towards other corporations, it can be advantageous to be on social media anyway. Many of the employees at the interviewed corporations have private social media accounts, and probably the employees of their customers have too. This increase the reasons for corporations to have accounts on social media platforms because when the employees surf with their private accounts, they might come across the account of a corporation and thereby raise awareness of this brand. This means that whenever they see this brand the next time they will recognize it. Even though this not directly leads to sell, it increases the awareness of the corporation which would be in every corporation's interest. This is strengthen by Ward (2014), who says that the main goal of social media is to create a corporation reputation and to establish relationships toward your customers.

Zarella (2010) states that if customers of a corporation are using social media, the corporation should also do. According to the interviews, most of the corporation wants to learn more about social media and how it can be used. Since there are some risks when using social

media, corporations will probably not use social media only because their customers use it, if they have lack of knowledge. This can also be related to Ward's (2014) statements of social media being time consuming, which can make small corporations have lack of resources and time required for being active on social media. One observation made from the interviewed corporations is that the control for how to use social media seems to be higher for large corporations, such as Husqvarna. Large corporations might have greater resources and therefore can afford to make mistakes in the start-up. Ward (2014) also strengths this and says that large corporations like Dell, HP and Microsoft have the budget to use social media effectively which small corporations do not have.

J. Engström, at Industrikompetens, believes that social media can have a negative impact on corporations if it is not used in a proper way. Further A. Selvander, at Bolt Kommunikation, states that it is important to understand that being a part of these platforms opens up for criticism that the corporation must be able to handle. If a corporation receives criticism but do not handle it appropriate, it can cause bad attention which he sees as the main problem with social media. A. Selvander further thinks that small corporations could get advantages by using this type of marketing tool. These advantages can be to find out more information about their customers.

5.3   How to Use Social Media

The honeycomb of social media (Kietzmann et al., 2011) is one example of how to look at the different social media platforms. If there is a clear plan for why to use social media, this model makes it possible to see what platforms that is the best alternative according to the purpose. Even J. Engström, at Industrikompetens, mentions the importance of having a plan before implementing such marketing strategy. When using social media as a marketing tool, it is important to; have the confident and be empowered, have the right attitude, have a co-created team, and to support the process (Kitchen, 2010). Further M. Rejnevik, at Husqvarna, mentions how the mission of the corporation affect the use of social media. He also states the importance of evaluating the different platforms to make sure that these are used in an efficient way. Consequently, the suggestion is to collect information and knowledge about the different social medial platforms and be careful of how to write things and understand how it can be perceived.

However, different social media platforms can be used in different ways. A media-sharing platform, such as YouTube, can be used to share videos. YouTube enables advertisers to create commercials (Steel, 2007). Another common way to use YouTube in the warehousing industry is to share videos in purpose of showing new products and their functions. This gives the customer the opportunity to see the functions of a product before taking a decision, or to be prepared before a meeting. A. Selvander claims that there is a positive trend for industrial corporations to use YouTube. An example of a corporation already using YouTube is Husqvarna, who market, inform and inspire their customers through this platform. Another social media platform is Facebook, which is a cheap alternative for commercial (Lapointe, 2012). According to White (2011), Facebook is the easiest way to engage into social media. Facebook is much about relationships (Kietzmann et al., 2011) and as in real

life a relationship needs to be maintained. However, many people use Facebook and there is a potential for using this platform in a wider extend to maintain relationships.

Using LinkedIn, which is a social platform, can be seen as a big investment according to Hershberger (2012). S. Frylén sees LinkedIn as the most business oriented social media platform. There are some specific advantages of using LinkedIn, advertisers at this platform get the opportunity to show expertise about their area and they are able to customize products and services at the platform. However, another social media platform is Twitter which is a microblogging site. This platform enables the user to have a one-to-many conversation or one-to-one conversations (Burton, Dadich & Soboleva, 2013). Corporations can use this platform to communicate short messages (Sevin, 2013) to their stakeholders. Though, Twitter do not offer something unique compared to the other mentioned media. It enables a quick spread of information, as well as the three other media does, but are more compatible with hashtags.

5.4   Summary of Analysis

B2B has a more complex sales process than B2C and therefore it is important to create and maintain long-lasting relationships. A personal contact and a sales person to rely on at a corporation can be more trustworthy, and a way to build long-lasting relationships. It seems to be difficult to replace the personal contact with social media, but it can be a part of an integrated marketing communication. Our interpretations are that we believe it is important to understand why and how social media should be used. There are both advantages and disadvantages of using social media, and therefore it is important to have a structured plan. What industry, the size of the corporation, and the habits of using social media platforms are playing a major role when deciding if social media should be used as well as which platforms to use.

We have understood that it is important to learn about the different social media platforms for understanding which are the most appropriate according to the corporation's strategy. The corporation can use different platforms within different purposes, and one purpose that probably is difficult to measure is if the corporation has the primarily goal to raise awareness of the brand. It can be an effective way since several social media platforms can create awareness with word-of-mouth. It is also important to evaluate other marketing alternatives, social media might not be the most effective for your corporation.

We have not found one specific answer to our research question; how can warehousing industries use social media as an integrated marketing tool to maintain established relationships within a B2B context? It seems impossible to say that one social media platform fits all corporations. From the beginning we knew it was less research of social media within B2B, and the results are not surprising. What we did expect in the beginning was a more specified answer and at least one social media platform that was suitable for most corporations. The closest findings regarding one suitable social media platform is YouTube, several interviewees point out this platforms as a demonstrative way to show their products. Though, we found a model, the honey comb of social media, which a corporation can use step by step to introduce social media within their IMC. Consequently, the answer of the research question

is various depending on which corporation it is. It is important to be aware of the purpose of using social media, and then find one or additional suitable social media platforms for this purpose.

We have also seen that social media might no longer be the cheap marketing alternative as it once was. One advantage of social media, from a business point of view, is probably that it can offer fast and cheap marketing. If social media starts to charge for corporations being active it might be questioned if social media fulfill its cheap marketing alternative as it is seen as. It can be important to list the advantages and disadvantages and consider if there are any better alternatives. It might be better for corporations to abstain from integrating such tool and instead finding new creative ways of how to market.

6   Conclusion

This section presents the final conclusion of the thesis and attempts to answer the research question. The conclusion are based on the discussion, previously held in the analysis section, and will raise the advantages and disadvantages of using social media in a B2B context.

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate the potential to use social media for maintaining established relationships within B2B, as a part of a marketing strategy, for industrial corporations within the warehousing industry. The study has been done through collection of previous research combined with interviews. We have seen similarities of the theories and the interviews. One thing that almost every theoretical theory has in common is the statement of social media being more useful for corporations acting in the market of B2C rather than in B2B. This statement has also commonly been mentioned during the interviews, which gives us the strength to conclude that social media is more common within B2C marketing.

The majority of the interviewed corporations have considered to use social media as a part of their marketing strategy. Though, almost no corporation has implemented such marketing strategy at present. Some of the interviewees are, however, using private accounts on social media platforms to search for information about customers, suppliers, and competitors. From this, we can conclude that social media is an efficient and fast way to find meaningful information.

Throughout our study, we have seen some potential in using social media within B2B, even though earlier research within this subject area mainly focus on B2C. Social media may possibly be a way to complement the service process. From both earlier research and our interviews we can conclude that marketing, in a B2B context, is most commonly done through interaction between seller and buyer. Moreover, we can conclude that there is a high focus on building and maintaining relationships in B2B, why we state that social media is a complement for the corporations when interacting with customers and suppliers.

According to the opinions that emerged from the interviews, we can establish that a person's age has an impact upon his or her use of social media. We can further establish that generation Y, who is raised in a technological society, has a broader knowledge of social media and its advantages and disadvantages. Due to this, we can conclude that the probability to integrate social media in the marketing strategy is greater if the majority of a corporation's employees are part of generation Y. Consequently, a potential of using social media in a wider extent has been identified based on the technological development of the society. On the first hand, we can establish that the corporations have all the essentials to use social media, but on the other hand, we can establish that the corporations active in a B2B context preferably focus on their websites instead of social media.

From our research, we cannot conclude that any of the examined social media platforms is preferable in front of another. This is the case since different social media platforms are used in different ways and for various purposes. Thus, it is impossible to find a social media platform that suits all corporations. Consequently, it is important for the corporation to first

decide what purpose they have with their presence at social media. When that is identified, then choose the right social media platforms for the purpose. Social media is not meant to replace existing marketing, it is rather a complement that can be used for strengthen the already existing activities. Due to this, it is important to have knowledge about the different platforms and how they should be used. Further, to have a structured plan and people responsible for these activities is advantageous.

Furthermore, once signed up at social media platforms, we would like to emphasize the importance of being consistent active. If a corporation decides to use social media as a marketing tool, they must be aware of the time required and all the potential negative feedback that might occur.

Finally, we would like to stress that social media is more appropriate in some cases than others. In B2B, there is a great trend of having personal relations with customers and suppliers. Social media can never replace this personal relationship. Instead, social media can complement and strength the relationship. Further, it can be used to create an image, raise awareness of the brand, to demonstrate products, communicate, inform, and to show stakeholders that the corporation is in the leading edge.

7   Recommendations for Garantell

In this section the authors will illustrate how a corporation can use the information from this thesis. This will be done through the illustrative corporation Garantell. The recommendations will be based on both the theoretical framework and the empirical study.

Garantell wants to know if social media can be useful for them or not, and how social media can be used if they choose to integrate it in their marketing strategy. As a first recommendation, the corporation should get knowledge about the different media platforms and understand which are the most appropriate according to their purpose. This is comparable with the suggestions of Kietzmann et al. (2011). Garantell's purpose of integrate social media to their marketing is to reach existing customers and maintain the relationships. According to this, Garantell should start by gather information about the different platforms in order to create a perception of the differences. A recommendation for Garantell is to use the different platforms to really understand what each platform are about, so called learn by doing.

A further recommendation is to start investigate the different platforms by using private accounts to see how everything works and which of these that fits their purpose. It can also be useful to have the knowledge of which platforms the customers and suppliers are using. This is required to create a perception of which social media platforms is useful for Garantell.

During the interview with Garantell, K. Hallgard said that YouTube can be a good channel for demonstrating products. For an international corporation as Garantell, with the majority of their customers widespread, it is time requiring to arrange a meeting. To still be able to demonstrate a product, YouTube is an alternative for reaching the customers abroad. This is further time saving, and one video can be spread to several customers compared to a meeting were the corporation need to allocate time for each customer to demonstrate one product, in a similar way, several times.

A. Selvander at Bolt Kommunikation states that it is important to be where the customers are. Since many of Garanell's customers use Facebook, it would be a good idea for Garantell to do too. One advantage of using both YouTube and Facebook is that these are compatible and YouTube videos can therefore be linked on Facebook.

With regard to these statements, a good start for Garantell would be YouTube and Facebook. If the corporation later on want to broader their use of social media, they can then add LinkedIn and/or Twitter. As mentioned earlier, Twitter is a fast way of spreading information but might be time consuming while LinkedIn is not that information focused and do not require that much time and updates. LinkedIn and Twitter are two platforms with different purposes, and it is therefore difficult to state why one can be more useful than the other. Once again, Garantell should compare these two to understand the differences and which is most advantageous for them.

Kietzmann et al. (2011) encourage corporations to spread their core value through social media which would be a good idea for Garantell. Further, Kietzmann et al. (2011) state that

it is important to understand when and how regularly there is a need for updates and inter-action. A further recommendation is to set up policies for the "when and how". It should be clear which social media platforms is included in the marketing strategy, which person is responsible for the updates, how Garantell wants to be perceived, and how the corporation will present themselves in the different social media platforms.

Social media creates a great opportunity to increase the awareness of the corporation. There-fore social media should be used even if Garantell do not want to market their products through these platforms. When using social media it is important to remember; to stick to the plan and follow up continuously, to evaluate what works and what does not work, to be clear who has the responsibility for the updates, to understand that everything they do affect how they are perceived by the followers, and to be able to handle uncomfortable and negative comments. If Garantell handle this potential criticism in a proper way it can advantage the corporation and gain a trustworthy result, but if Garantell instead do not answer the com-ments or do it in an inappropriate way it can harm the corporation. Finally, it is important to know how the corporation wants to be perceived and stick to the plan.

8 Further Research

This section will give suggestions of further research with basis from this thesis. Further research will be discussed and recommended within different areas such as the countries impact of using social media, as well as the individual's knowledge of how to use social media.

Social media within a B2B context is a fairly new trend and further research could either strengthen the conclusion or come up with other conclusions and recommendations. There are areas that need to be researched further to truly understand how social media should be used within B2B. One such area is the age. From the interviews we can tell that the younger people interviewed were generally aware of how to use social media in a wider range and had more knowledge about the different platforms that exist. Further research can contain if the age affect the use of social media in a B2B perspective. Though, this can also be researched with a perspective of knowledge, and then investigate whether the knowledge is the limitations for using social media within a corporation's marketing strategy.

Another reflection regards the different platforms, these need to be investigated and analyzed to see whether certain platforms are more preferred in certain industries. During this thesis it has been seen that social media platforms have different purposes and can therefore be preferred in different situations. It has also been seen that the sale processes is different within B2B compared to B2C, a suggestion of further research can then be to investigate if the sale processes is the limitation for social media within B2B. However, information gathered in this thesis have creates awareness of the uniqueness of using social media in B2B and there is actually little academic literature describing how a B2B corporation can use social media as a marketing tool. Further researches can investigate if there is a lack of available information and if there is a need for more available information that helps to understand how to use social media.

Husqvarna is the largest corporation interviewed in this thesis. Husqvarna seem to have the recourses needed for using social media, whilst smaller corporations might not have the time and knowledge required. Further research can investigate whether it is more common to use social media in large corporations rather than small corporations. Several of the interviewed corporations were operating international and a further suggestion is to investigate if different social media platforms are preferred in different countries. It can also be questioned whether it is worth the resources it takes to build and maintain social media accounts. Even this is an area that can be further investigated. A final suggestion for further researches within this area is to look if a corporation's purpose, culture and values have an impact of how to use social media as a marketing tool.

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Appendix I

Interview questions

1. How do you maintain relationships with other corporations?
2. How do you work with your relationships within marketing?
3. What adjust do your corporation have towards social media and is social media something that you use within your marketing strategy?
4. How do you use social media platforms within your marketing strategy and what kind of medias are used? (This question was only asked for those who already used social media in their marketing strategy).
5. Do you search business related information through social media platforms? (This question was only asked for those who already used social media in their marketing strategy).
6. Do you communicate with customers and suppliers through social media platforms? If you do, in which way and through what platforms? (This question was only asked for those who already used social media in their marketing strategy).
7. Do you know if your customers and suppliers use social media platforms? In that case, do you know in which context?
8. Do you think a broader usage of social media platforms could develop or create relationships to customers and suppliers? If you think that, how could this be done?
9. Would you like to focus more on social media within your marketing strategy?
10. Would you prefer your customers and suppliers to be active on social media platforms and in which way would you like them to be active?
11. If your customers and suppliers is using social media, would you then prefer to use it as well? (This question was only asked for those who not used social media in their marketing strategy).
12. Is there something preventing your corporation from using social media in a greater extent? If, what is the reason for that?

Appendix 2

Expert interview questions

1. Can you the corporation?
2. In which industries are you most active?
3. How do you work to maintain relationships with other corporations?
4. Which are the most common tasks that corporations hire you for?
5. What trends do you see in marketing when it comes to B2B?
6. What changes have you seen during the years when it comes to relationship marketing?
7. What trends do you see in using social media as a marketing tool?
8. Do you know corporations who use social media in their B2B marketing communication?
9. Is there specific industries that are more appropriate than others when it comes to using social media as marketing tool?
10. What kind of social media platforms do you consider effective in a B2B context?
11. Do you see advantages of using social media in B2B industries where typical marketing is not that common?
12. What disadvantages do you see of using social media as a marketing tool?
13. Would you recommend a corporation that is active within B2B, to use social media in their marketing strategy?
14. Do you think that social media is more appropriate to use in some marketing situations compared to others? For example, for maintaining relationships, for finding new customers, etc.

Appendix 3

Interview questions for the illustrative corporation

1. How do you maintain relationships with your customers and suppliers today?
2. Do you use any specific strategy?
3. Do you use social media in a private context?
4. Do you know if any of your customers or suppliers use social media?
5. If, what kind of media?
6. How would you like to integrate social media platforms into your marketing strategy?
7. Would you like to use social media as a complementary tool or would you like to erase existing marketing by social media?
8. Is there any specific social media platforms you would prefer to use? Which ones?
9. Do you know if any employees within the corporation have earlier experience of using social media in a B2B context?
10. Do you search for information through social media today?
11. What advantages do you see by using social media?
12. What prevents you from using social media?
13. What disadvantages do you see by using social media?
14. Why do you want to use social media in your marketing strategy?