The use of data in social media marketing

An explorative study of data insights in social media marketing

Authors: Sophie Grönlund
         Tommy Schytt

Supervisor: Gert-Olof Boström
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Sophie Grönlund & Tommy Schytt
Abstract

The marketing possibilities on the Internet is growing and so are social media marketing. The budget devoted for marketing activities on social media is constantly increasing every year and the time users are spending on social media is also increasing. Among the increasing activities comes a vast amount of data which create endless of opportunities for companies to optimize their marketing activities. In marketing the most important has always been to know your customers and how to reach out to them. The Internet and data that comes with it has made it possible for companies to get to know their customers even better and to reach them with more precision if data is correctly used.

A gap was identified from the literature search which showed that it is not always clear how to utilize social media for marketing and it is not easy to analyze and interpret the data derived from social media. This has lead to a lack of knowledge on how data can be used for social media activities. From the identified gap regarding data usage in social media marketing, a research question was formulated:

“How is data used in brand’s strategies for social media?”

A qualitative research design conducting semi-structured interviews was used to examine the research question. A purposeful sample of eleven respondents, defined as experts within the research field, from ten different companies was selected. A pilot study was carried out to get insights in the identified gap, to set a base for the theoretical framework, and to optimize the interview questions. All respondents represented agencies except for the respondent in the pilot study.

Academics and business communities are interested in how data is used in marketing purposes and therefore it was elaborated further in this thesis to how data can be used in social media activities. Branding activities are becoming more engaged with its customers, thus marketers need to keep up to date with the new and emerging trends. Furthermore, the aim was to explore how data is used in social media marketing and how data affect decisions in social media strategies.

The results found in this study shows that data is used to define audiences on social media and to enable a greater reach of the messages for the audiences. The audience is defined by data analysis mostly based on consumer behavior in social media. To achieve reach marketers use programmatic buying tools, which are based on data and ultimately enables conversions among the audience. Data is also analyzed by opinion mining where data insights can show what topics customers are engaged in. Data insights can further give direction on how content can encourage engagement among the targeted audience. Lastly, the result shows that it is important to have knowledge about how to analyze, interpret, and use data insights in order to create successful social media activities.
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1 Introduction

Every day, we spend an average of 118 minutes of our lives on different social media platforms, those minutes are increasing every year. In 2012 an average user of social media spent 96 minutes daily. Four years later, in 2016, those minutes invested in social media increased by 22 minutes and amount to 118 minutes spent every day on social media platforms. (Asano, 2017) Teenagers spend more time than the average user, they spend up to nine hours on social media daily. This increasing use of social media has lead to companies increasing their presence by investing in ads and other activitons on these platforms. The expected amount spent on social media ad buying in 2017 will reach to 36 billion US dollars. (GlobalWebIndex, 2017)

Social media presence among companies started somewhere between 2007 and 2010 (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis 2014, p. 333). Several authors emphasize on the importance of having a strategic plan when using social media (Chaffey & Allen, 2016, p. 3; Kabadayi & Price, 2014, p. 205; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014, 339). Lipsman et al. (2012, p. 40) argues that in today's digital era companies have to decide when developing a strategic plan for their brands on how much of the marketing activities should be online and how much should be devoted on traditional marketing.

Since the brand is the most fundamental and long-lasting asset of any company, companies are constantly trying to improve the brand value (Martin et al. 2005, p. 275). Traditional branding activities used to be one-way push-communication but lately it has changed to instead be between consumer and brands which could be called a triologue where all three actors engage (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis 2014, p. 329). Like never before are customers engaging, talking and discussing with each other in different social media platforms, for example companies and brands are discussed widely both with and without them. Therefore, brands need to focus more and take part in these discussions rather than only focusing on the traditional static relationship where they push the information to the customers. (Woodcock et al., 2011, 51)

Companies’ interest in social media marketing and the interest in engaging with its customers is increasing and the budget devoted for social media marketing is growing as well (Lipsman et al., 2012, p. 40). The increased interest in marketing in social media can be explained partly by the fast development of IT solutions and applications, and partly by the increased use of social media by consumers. Consumers, especially younger ones, are using more online channels rather than traditional channels, and the engagement it drives is to a much lower cost than the traditional channels in relation to its engagement (Gillin, 2007, cited in Dobscha, 2007, p. 568). The traditional one-way push-communication has changed to a relationship where consumers engage with one another and with brands which could be called a triologue where all three actors engage (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis 2014, p. 329).

Funk (2013, p. 2) present social media statistics in his book which shows that consumers’ positive impression increases with 74% after they have interacted with a company through social media, and after clicking the “like” button the likelihood of committing to a purchase increases with 51%. But most interestingly a brand’s Facebook fan tend to spend as much as double than a non-fan (Funk, 2013, p. 2). Statistics like these make marketers interested to adapt to the new channels of communication, like social media. Other reasons for the interest to be present in social
media could also be for spreading word-of-mouth online, often called eWOM (Chu & Kim, 2011, p. 48). Social media channels are perfect for customers to spread information about brands and their products and services (Kabadayi & Price, 2014, p. 203).

The success of brands’ social media presence is dependent on consumer engagement. If they do not have active consumers who like, comment or share their content the overall performance on social media would be very limited. Therefore it is of great importance that a brand’s consumers are active and engaged in order to maximize the benefits of social media, and to get there the brand need to find ways to enable and encourage such behavior. (Kabadayi & Price 2014, p. 218) It is a well known fact that “content is king” in the social media environment. Therefore it is extremely important that brands’ has new, original, and insightful information in order to increase the chances of social media engagement. (Bija & Balaș, 2014, p. 160) Further, Rohm et al. (2013, p. 306) argues for that the strategic use of social media could have multiple objectives related to consumer communication.

As of today many organizations are active on social media but do not have a clear plan for the activities in these channels like they have in traditional channels (Chaffey & Allen, 2016, p. 13). Likewise, firms ought to realize that social media platforms are more than simply gaining “likes” and followers, but also conveying content that consumers value, such as informative, timely, and entertaining content. Ultimately, these types of content should be sharable and lead to positive consumer experience that lead to a purchase intent. (Rohm et al. 2013, p. 305-306) Other researchers stress the importance of having a clear digital strategy that is a part of the marketing plan (Chaffey & Allen, 2016, p. 3).

The ease of spreading content online, has enabled new business opportunities by harvesting data for marketing purposes. Today it has become possible to collect marketing data from various sources online, like social media, transactional data, survey data etc. (Fan et al., 2015, p. 28). Online consumer data has lately been a hot topic and is predicted to revolutionize marketing and sales, simply because from data can managers analyze and measure more about their business and from that information improve decision making and performance. (McAfee & Brynjolfsson, 2012, p. 62) Most data are relatively new, notably looking at the data from social media sites since it is only as old as the medium itself, in the case of Facebook that was launched in 2004 (McAfee & Brynjolfsson, 2012, p. 63). McAfee and Brynjolfsson (2012, p. 64) research showed that “The more companies characterized themselves as data-driven, the better they performed on objective measures of financial and operational results.”

So where does data come from? Data can come from pretty much anywhere. It can derive from, for example Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, from customers interactions in marketing or customer service, online surveys, customer feedback and from listening to people on Social media (e.g Facebook, Instagram). There are also external providers of data that offers real time data on for example business to business data about customers and prospects. (Kaneshige, 2015) There are also several sources such as Google Analytics and Facebook which can provide data about purchase history, behavior, and demographics.
Marketers can by analyzing data get important insights in which type of content that is the most effective in communication with users online. By analyzing online data, CRM systems can be improved but also improvements in conversion rates, engagement and increased revenue can be achieved by analyzing data. Data can help companies to get better customer insights and to accomplish greater customer responsiveness. (Columbus, 2016) In other words, data can provide market- and consumer-insights which will drive the development of social media strategy.

For marketers who have the knowledge and are interested in IT, online marketing can be fun and exciting, but for those who lack knowledge and interest it can be very difficult and hard to understand. Many marketers lack the technological knowledge to explore all of the marketing capabilities on the Internet and therefore miss out on several business opportunities. It is becoming more common that companies search for people that have the competences of both IT and marketing and if they cannot find the right candidates they hire expensive consultants or agencies that specialize in these two functions. (Gay et al., 2007, p. 4)

Artun and Levin (2015) discuss in their book “Predictive Marketing” how important it is for marketers to use and understand data driven marketing. Data driven marketing provide consumers with more relevant and meaningful experiences. Data insight will also help companies to build more profitable relationships with consumers. Within companies, marketers will also contribute to visibility and respect by utilizing data insights. (Artun & Levin, 2015, p. 1)

“The evidence is clear: Data-driven decisions tend to be better decisions. Leaders will either embrace this fact or be replaced by others who do.”
- McAfee & Brynjolfsson (2012, p. 68)

1.2 Problem discussion
We have decided to not distinguish between the different types of data, (e.g. big data and small data) since we aim to look at all data associated with marketing in social media. Often in the literature terms such as “Big data” is used, however in this thesis the term data is related to all data that exist on the Internet and within companies (e.g. social media data and CRM data).

It can be difficult for companies that are eager to adopt to data-driven marketing if they lack a strategic plan for how to interpret the results from data analysis. Therefore it is important to design a process for refining the metrics into insights and actions in order to assess marketing performance. The data gathering is depending on which metrics that is selected and it can be a difference in what a company want to measure and what it actually can measure with the methods and tools in use. (Järvinen, 2016, p. 58) To set a strategic plan companies need competences in terms of analytical skills and knowledge of measurement techniques to handle the data (Järvinen, 2016, p. 58). If the company has the right capabilities, or acquiring them, analyzed data can be used for measuring and optimizing social media marketing performance (Järvinen, 2016, p. 15), for example when utilizing data marketers will get a better understanding of their consumers and can thereby optimize the consumer experience (Econultancy, 2017).

It can be difficult for companies to understand social media activities due to a lack of understanding their audience on these platforms, which is an essential part in the
strategy development. In order to create engagement, loyalty, and trust online, companies need to know how their consumers interact and behave on social media. (Laroche et al., 2013, p. 81) Another study shows that 90% of consumers trust reviews from people they know and 70% of consumers trust reviews by people they do not know (Funk, 2013, p. 2). Furthermore, Funk (2013, p. 2) shows that social media users forward the message of good customer service to their peers as much as three times more than non-user of social media, and a brand’s fans tend to spend double as much money as a non-fan of the same brand. When exploring consumer engagement, research shows that online consumer engagement share some components with relationship marketing, where the most important aspect is to establish trust and commitment (Kabadayi & Price, 2014, p. 206). The traditional consumer marketing centric approach which is that companies must understand consumers’ needs in order to create value and engagement is more important than ever (Kabadayi & Price, 2014, p. 205).

Even though these numbers show all the good impact social media has on marketing, companies are still not using social media to its full potential. A study by Lorenzo-Romero et al. (2013, p. 209) indicates that the most common reason for not using social media as a marketing platform is the lack of knowledge regarding social media itself. The same goes for data analytics where Gay et al. (2007, p. 4) stress that marketers lack data knowledge, which is an important skill in order to explore marketing capabilities on social media.

Internal factors such as the company’s general targeting strategy as well as their positioning strategy where all the marketing activities should be included need to be considered when developing a social media strategy (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014, p. 337). As shown in Figure I many companies around the world do not have a strategy for their digital marketing channels. Some companies are active on digital channels but still lack a clear strategy, even though some have a separate plan for the digital activities. (Chaffey & Allen, 2016, p. 13)

![Organisations with a clearly defined digital marketing strategy](image)

*Figure I - Digital marketing strategy (Chaffey & Allen, 2016, p. 13)*

1.3 Research gap
Data insights about consumer behavior has made it easier for marketers to target and personalize marketing communications. Through data marketers can learn about the consumer’s individual needs and preferences in order to develop content that consumers respond positively to. (Järvinen, 2016, p 38)
Liking and commenting on social media platforms has lately been a hot topic among academic researchers while the research on engagement in social media strategies have been quite limited (Kabadayi & Price 2014, p. 204). BarNir et al. (2003, p. 792) argue regarding the lack in the research when it comes to “empirical work examining the Internet from a strategy perspective”, especially when it comes to the managerial and competitive implications (BarNir et al. 2003, p. 792). This problem still occur, as Tsimonis & Dimitriadis (2014, p. 329) highlight in their research that it is a lack in the literature when it comes to examining the strategies companies use for their social media and how to motivate and engage customers in these channels.

According to Bengtsson et al. (2007, p. 3) companies are facing a great challenge when building up digital marketing channels and this specific area need more attention and research. Furthermore, Vanyushyn (2008, p. 319) sees that further research, especially in the form of qualitative in-depth interviews, is needed to get a deeper understanding of the use of the Internet for marketing and sales. Dibb et al. (2014, p. 398) also highlights that more research regarding how professionals implement and practice data-driven marketing, using qualitative interviews is needed.

Barger et al. (2016, p. 279) claims that more research is needed regarding how social media can create relationship and engagement between brands and consumers since much is unknown about how to engage profitable consumers using social media communication. Other authors suggest that companies should develop a strategy solely for social media which will be supported by the company's staff with the right competence (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014, p. 338).

Researchers point out that more empirical findings regarding data opportunities in social media is needed (Kumar et al., 2013, p. 345; Blazevic et al., 2013, p. 307), especially since social media is a great driver of brand awareness it is important for companies to create strategies for this type of channel (Funk, 2013, p. 3). Furthermore, social media has made customers more powerful than ever and because of that clarifies Blazevic et al. (2013, p. 305) that more research is needed regarding how to develop strategies for social media.

Järvinen (2016) emphasize in his recent study the lack of research on data and how data can be used and implemented to get the most out of it in digital marketing activities. Järvinen’s (2016, p. abstract) research shows that the difficulties for organizations lies in the “ability to process the data into meaningful insights and act upon those insights to continuously improve results”. The gap is therefore identified regarding how to analyze and interpret data for a better understanding of marketing activities in social media.

1.4 Aim and purpose of the study
The aim of this thesis is to advance the general knowledge of how marketers use data for optimizing social media marketing activites. There are several different approaches in the usage of data, and therefore we aim to explore how marketers are using data in social media marketing. In order to find out how data is used in strategies for social media we also aim to explore how strategies for social media marketing take form.

Theoretical contribution
The aim with the area of study is that it should contribute to the scientific field of marketing by the exploration of how practitioners work related to the identified theoretical gap. We researched how data is practically used in social media marketing efforts by professionals within their individual expertise area. We applied these efforts in a scientific manner to reach a conclusion that contributes to the academia, and furthered the research regarding how data is used in social media strategies.

**Practical contribution**

The practical aim of the study should contribute to how a social media strategy that focuses on customer acquisition, conversion (i.e. consumer react on social media efforts), and how long-term engagement (e.g. retention and loyalty) evolve, where analyzed data have had an impact on the strategy. Furthermore, the practical aspects of the research should contribute to practitioners who wish, or are working with, data in social media marketing. Since many marketers lack the knowledge regarding management of data on social media the aim is also to contribute to the understanding about how data can be used in social media marketing.

**1.5 Research question**

From the identified research gap within social media marketing and the use of data, the following research question was developed:

*How is data used in brand’s strategies for social media?*

Research objectives:

- **Objective 1:** Understand what type of data to use for social media marketing
- **Objective 2:** Understand how data affect decisions in social media strategies
- **Objective 3:** Explore the importance of the use of data in social media strategies

**1.6 List of definitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>Related to all data that exist on the Internet and within companies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data-driven marketing</td>
<td>Refers to the use of data to inform and optimize the execution of marketing activities. (Kumar et al., 2013, p. 332)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>Also called Social networking sites SNS, are online communities where people and brands can communicate with each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media marketing</td>
<td>The use of social media channels where brands can communicate their products and services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Refers to every reaction from users on social media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UGC</td>
<td>All Internet users are seen as content contributors and to underline this special attribution the content is often referred to as User Generated Content (UGC). (Constantinides &amp; Fountain, 2008, p. 233)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table I - List of definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>eWoM</th>
<th>Electronic word-of-mouth is UGC related to companies, brands, products and services, online.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persona</td>
<td>A typical customer from the targeted audience.</td>
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1.7 Limitations
Firstly, this study has been narrowed down to how data is used in social media marketing, which means that other marketing efforts online has been excluded. We do not differentiate any types of online data but consider all data from the Internet as “data”. Sometimes the word “Big data” is used in the theory chapter but it is only because it is the word the author of the theory has decided to use for data. This means that general conclusions regarding “Big data” cannot be drawn.

Some might differentiate between content-marketing and data-driven marketing however we see all marketing efforts that has been affected by data as data-driven marketing in this thesis.

Lastly, in this thesis we do not differ between paid or organic content since we do not aim to explore differences in paid or non-paid advertising on social media.
2 Research methodology

In this chapter we will explain the methodological process of the study which was developed to answer the research question: “How is data used in brand’s strategies for social media?” The chapter is divided into two categories, namely Scientific Method, and Practical Method. In this chapter we will explain the choice of topic, the research philosophy, aim of the study, research design, and the selection process of the literature search. We will explain the data collection, the sampling strategy, and the analytical process. Finally we will discuss the ethical aspects and the limitations of the method.

2.1 Scientific method

The scientific method will explain the philosophical points of departure in this research. The choice of topic will be explained as well as the research design and research strategy. The literature research will also be accounted for.

2.1.1 Choice of topic

As we have studied marketing for many years – both at bachelor level and present at master level – we wanted to further our knowledge into the field of data-driven marketing. Because we felt lack of knowledge in the area, we wanted to learn more about data-driven marketing in social media. We also wanted to investigate and deepen our knowledge in strategy development and data analysis for social media marketing. As mentioned in the introduction the budget devoted for marketing activities on social media is constantly growing and there is an identified lack of knowledge of the use of data in social media marketing. Furthermore, insights from data analysis is becoming more common in today's workplace thus the need to attain knowledge regarding social media marketing and data insights. Also since we want to become more competitive in the market we saw our opportunity to gain knowledge in data and its usage in marketing which several theories confirm is needed.

Study perspective

The thesis is written from a business perspective where we aim to get a better understanding of how brands can use data in marketing efforts on social media. In order to explore the topic from a business perspective we looked at the processes relating to understand the targeted audience by analyzing data in marketing efforts on social media. To explore the marketing efforts as a function we looked at key activities performed by experts in the field.

2.1.2 Research philosophy

The adopted philosophical assumptions reveals how the world is viewed by the researcher. The assumptions will also determine the methods used, and the process of the research strategy, which in sum make up the research philosophy. The research philosophy consists of axiology which describes the researcher’s biases, ontology which is the knowledge of how the researcher views the world and epistemology that reveals what the researcher accept as knowledge. (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 128)

Preconceptions and Axiology

The philosophy of judgements is called axiology, which describes the researcher’s values and interests, and how the study might be affected by these. Understanding and being aware of that the results of the study may be influenced by the researcher’s own
values and preconceptions will in turn make the study more credible, according to Saunders et al. (2012, p. 139).

We, as marketing students, might be biased towards a perspective of viewing processes and events similar to that of a marketer’s perspective and therefore draw conclusions that could be viewed in favour of marketing activities and be biased on the basis on our beliefs, thoughts and values respectively. Furthermore, one of us have previous experience working as a junior brand manager at a global company and have studied in the United States, in Sweden and in Thailand, and the other of us have studied their bachelor in Thailand. Hence our broad and different experiences might have gained different types of experiences that might affect the study’s results and inclination. Although we both have studied bachelor of business administration and majored in marketing, due to the different experiences we have, might as well have different perspectives in common areas which could instead strengthen the credibility.

**Ontology**

Ontology describes the researcher's assumptions of how the world works. There are generally two accepted views, namely objectivism which describes the world as independent of social actors, and subjectivism which treats the world as influenced by social actors (Saunders, 2012, p. 130). Ontology should answer the questions whether social phenomena exist independently of social actors, if it has a reality external to itself, and if it constructed by social actors (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 20).

Our standpoint about the ontological assumptions is that of a subjectivist view, where social phenomena are created and revised continuously (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 111). This means that the world have different meaning to different individuals, that individuals see the world and experience the world differently. Since data is vastly used among professionals within marketing and analytics this thesis will explore how these different professionals on an individual level approach the area of study. There are several different approaches in the usage of data, and different definitions of what data is, thus the subjectivism approach would be the most suitable for the purpose of the study.

The professionals within the field of study have different professional knowledge and therefore have different perspectives on common areas within such as social media marketing and view things differently how to approach consumers. Hence the argument to use subjectivism is further enhanced and will be the point of departure in the ontological assumptions.

**Epistemology**

Epistemology was proposed by Isaac Newton and Francis Bacon (Ritchie & Lewis, 2014, p. 9), and is the study about knowledge. Epistemology is concerned about the social world, how we can learn about each other through knowledge. Questions like what is knowledge, where does knowledge start and end, and how do we generate, verify and validate knowledge are all concerns regarding the research methodology. Epistemology can be categorized generally by two stances, namely positivism and interpretivism, however, a mix between these are sometimes used and is called realism. Positivism has had a major influence on the development of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Ritchie & Lewis, 2014, p. 8). Auguste Comte (1798-1857) founded sociology and also developed positivism. Auguste Comte thought that by
observing the social world like one observe the natural world it was possible to define “laws” of human behavior. Further he thought that by analyzing empirical evidence new insights could be found. (Ritchie & Lewis, 2014, p. 9) Realism on the other hand see the ontological view as independent of beliefs and knowledge is something that is relative to opinions and what questions are asked. Knowledge is not seen to be existing outside our mind and is therefore subjective. (Langemar, 2008, p. 187)

Interpretivism however, underlines the differences between individuals and their role in society. Interpretivism emphasizes on how humans are acting in a specific environment and act out their part in accordance with their interpretation of the environment (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 116). In order to conduct research in an environment which has adopted interpretivism, the researcher must be able to understand and have an empathic stance towards the research object. To understand the object, the researcher must enter the world as the object sees it.

The most suitable epistemological standpoint of this study was considered interpretivism due to the aim of exploring data usage, how professionals use and interpret data differently, and how professionals view strategies in social media. Data, as an information source, can be defined and interpreted in many different ways, therefore the adoption of an interpretivist philosophy is the epistemological point of departure. Furthermore, Saunders et al. (2009, p. 115) argues that business environments are too complex to be regulated by “laws” like the positivist view define the world and points out that interpretivism is often used in the field of marketing and organizational behavior, which further strengthens the choice of epistemological philosophy.

**Research approach**

Epistemology can be defined in two different directions by how we acquire knowledge, it could either be through an inductive approach where you start by analyzing patterns from collected observations, or it could be through a deductive approach where you develop a hypothesis which you then test against your observations. (Ritchie & Lewis, 2014, p. 6)

This study can be seen as having an inductive approach since wanted to draw conclusions about how data is used in marketing on social media. The inductive reasoning in this thesis can be noted since we first started by collecting theories, then interviewed professionals and Lastly analyzed the result. Although, no study is entirely inductive or deductive (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 129), thus this study will have some influences of deductive reasoning. For example, we started the study process by compiling theories and throughout the study process modified these parallel to the data collection and the data analysis, which is common in grounded theory (Bryman, 2011, p. 519). Some researchers call this approach abductive reasoning (Elsenbroich et al. 2006, p. 2; Johnson & Krems, 2001, p. 905).

**2.1.3 Research design**

A research design can be explained as an established plan with a collection of activities that will help to answer the research question. A research design includes different sources from which data will be collected, methods for the collection of data, how to analyze the data and ethical considerations. There are two methodological approaches to choose by, namely quantitative and qualitative methods. (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 159)
Quantitative methods are often differentiated from qualitative methods by being numeric and collected through surveys and questionnaires (Sobh & Perry, 2006, p. 1194). In qualitative research the data collection and analysis techniques embrace and provide verbal and non-numeric data (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 161). Qualitative research is used to gain insight in an emerging topic or phenomena and to uncover people's thoughts and opinions in order to get a deeper insight into the topic (Yin, 2011, p. 19).

We have chosen to conduct a qualitative research in order to answer our research question “How is data used in brand’s strategies for social media?”. This approach was chosen since our intention is to explore how practicionars are working with data in social media marketing and how strategies for social media take form. Since we aim to explain how data is used for social media marketing a collection of numeric data was not considered to be appropriate and therefore a qualitative research design was applied. Thus, a quantitative approach would not have made it possible to get deeper insights into the topic as a qualitative approach would.

Every study should have one or a mix of the following three purposes, exploratory, explanatory or descriptive. An exploratory study is suitable if the aim of the research is to dig deeper into a topic that need more research by understanding what is happening and by exploring the nature of the issue. Descriptive studies on the other hand examine factors that explore and further explain a topic where the groundwork is well established, by asking what and how questions rather than why questions. (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 171) While, compared to previous two studies explanatory research is trying to explain an understanding of the cause and effect regarding something that is going on, often occur when exploratory and descriptive studies have already been made on the topic since a solid groundwork need to be in place (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 172). Since we chose to make a qualitative research a conclusive study was not considered a good fit mainly because it is mostly used in quantitative methods were the research is more rigid and less flexible.

Exploratory study
Considering the three different types of research designs we have chosen to conduct an exploratory study mainly because there have not been much research about how data is used in social media marketing and therefore needs to be further explored. Also, Saunders et al. (2012, p. 171) discuss that if the purpose of the research is to understand a problem then an exploratory design can be the most appropriate choice. Some of the components in an exploratory research is interviewing experts in the field, conducting in-depth personal interviews and searching for suitable literature (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 171). Another source to gather information from is by conducting observational studies. A great opportunity in observations is the ability to gain access to groups that are experts in the topic and the ability to perceive evidence from inside the company rather than being external to the occurring event (Yin, 2009, p. 112). One way to approach this research could have been through observations, for example by observing a group of people that were developing a strategy for social media. However, even though both interview and observational design can be seen as appropriate for this study we chose to attain only interviews in order to collect as many and broadly perspectives as possible on the topic.
In social sciences, interviews has been used extensively in the last two centuries in several different science disciplines, although in an informal manner, and it is not until the last few decades that interviews has been utilized in social sciences for formal and strictly scientific purposes (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 11-12). Qualitative interviews is very common to use in the sciences of marketing and customer behavior (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 13). Kvale and Brinkman (2009) illustrate on the cover of their book the interpretivist nature of interviews by showing an image where it could be interpreted as either a vase or two people facing each other. Kvale and Brinkman (2009, p. 4) points out that the image of the two people can be further interpreted and seen as the construction of knowledge between the interviewer and the respondent, the knowledge creation between two people, or the image could represent the context formed by two people within a specific context surrounding them (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 5). Thus, the choice of collecting interviews are in line with our philosophical interpretivist view on how to acquire knowledge in the field of social media marketing.

2.1.4 Research strategy
A research strategy can be seen as the plan to achieve the research goal and the strategy should explain the linkage between the methodology and philosophy of the study. There are several strategies to choose from due to different views in the literature. Some of these are: case study, experiment, archival research, survey, actions research, ethnography, grounded theory and narrative inquiry. All of these are not suitable for qualitative research, for example, experiment and surveys are mostly associated with quantitative research, and case studies and archival studies can both be seen in quantitative and qualitative studies (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 173).

Grounded theory
The study is inspired from grounded theory and considered the most appropriate strategy to use considering the aim and research question but also because we aim to explore the research topic within several real-life contexts (David & Sutton, 2011, p. 166). During the 1960s and the 1970s grounded theory was developed by Glaser and Strauss. At that time the quantitative methods was dominating the field of social sciences. Glaser and Struss’s arguments of grounded theory made qualitative studies receive more legitimacy among social scientists. The two researchers had scientific roots from two different schools. Strauss came from a school that was standing for symbolic interactionism, peoples’ meaning making and how to understand peoples actions. Strauss believed in pragmatism, where there is no single one true reality, instead there are always multiple realities. (Charmaz, 2001) Glaser on the other hand came from a school which had a more systematic and quantitative point of view.

In the 1990s the two went separate ways in how they view data. Strauss focused more on an abductive reasoning whilst Glaser developed a more classical grounded theory with an inductive and quantitative reasoning, where the focus was on searching for patterns and creating categories and concepts. (Charmaz, 2001) Later on Kathy Charmaz developed grounded theory with a constructivist approach and argued for that you construct data together with the person you are interviewing, instead of discovering data (Charmaz, 2001). Today many different types of grounded theory are used and it is becoming more common that researchers that use an inductive study are applying a quite loose-grounded theory approach (Ritchie & Lewis, 2014, p. 14), like we are doing in this study.
The chosen topic of this study is currently underexplored, therefore a grounded theory inspired study was applied to further investigate how several different companies are working with data and social media marketing. This explorative approach will help us further our knowledge regarding the phenomenon of data and social media marketing and attain richer and deeper knowledge regarding the topic.

The reason to draw inspiration of applying a grounded theory approach and not use it in its entirety is because that grounded theory is very time consuming, and within the constraints of a 30 credit thesis to apply the grounded theory fully. The saturation principle was followed in line with grounded theory which mean that the collection of data stops when the answers are becoming more related to each other. When the process of collecting data started the analysis started as well. When no more dimensions of categories are emerging it is called that the concept has been theoretically saturated. When the theory is saturated you do not need to sample anymore since the theory is complete. (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010, p. 281) Some of the criterias for grounded theory that was not followed are for example the sampling and deep analyzing criteria. The sampling method in grounded theory is usually inductive and cyclical (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010, p. 156) however, this research did not follow this rule since the sample was selected with a purpose. The analyzing procedure was followed by open coding and categorizing of the data even though the deeper axial and selective coding was not done according to proper grounded theory since it would have taken too much time (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010, p. 201).

2.1.5 Literature search
In order to gain knowledge and develop more insightful questions regarding our topics, a literature review was conducted. Relevant literature was retrieved mainly from online publications from large renowned databases using Umeå University Library in order to assure high quality sources. The databases include Web of Science, EBSCO, Wiley, ScienceDirect, Elsevier, Google Scholar, Emerald Insight, Libris, and Sage Journals. All sources containing high-quality metadata including author name and institution, journal name and date, and article title and abstract. When using articles retrieved from the Internet it is important to be critical to the source since anyone can publish information on the Internet (Bryman 2008, p. 115). Articles with a high citation score and written by renowned authors was used which strengthen the validity and overall quality of the study. Newly published reports and news articles retrieved online were used to a limited extent, mainly for the introduction. By the use of other media other than scientific journals, made it possible to extend our knowledge in emerging trends and reassured us that the topic of the reviewed articles were still relevant to the study. Due to the fast development of the research area, newer publications were favoured to ensure the latests insights in the field, and relevancy.

Certain keywords were part of the criterion for the scientific articles to ensure consistency and relevance to the chosen topic. The keywords were chosen to focus the literature search of direct relevance to our interest and provide the base for the topic of this study.

The keywords searched for include:

- social media marketing
- data driven marketing
- data analysis
- social media engagement
- brand strategy
- customer analytics
- big data
- data insights
2.2 Practical method

This chapter describes the execution of the pilot study, sampling strategy, and the data collection. Furthermore, the analytical procedure, and the ethical aspects will be discussed.

2.2.1 Pilot study

In order to get a picture of the chosen area of study a pilot study was conducted in the beginning of the thesis process. According to Bryman (2008, p. 258) it is great to conduct a pilot study not only to make sure that the interview questions are working but also to make sure that the research as a whole is well thought through. Since we wanted to get a better understanding of the use of data in social media marketing we decided to interview a person who was working as a Social Media Manager at a global management firm to provide a better understanding of the subject from a professional point of view.

Before the data collection started an interview guide was made with questions regarding the chosen topic with subtopics. Bryman (2008, p. 259) explain the importance of having well understood questions and questions that are relevant to the research topic when collecting data. After the conducted interview the respondent was asked about the relevance of the topics and if the questions were understandable and relevant to the discussed topics, which is in line with Bryman’s (2008, p. 259) arguments. This was done to make sure that we had a reasonable understanding of the chosen area of study but also to make sure that the questions were easy to understand and relevant for the field of study. The pilot study, supported by theories, was later compiled as a foundation for the theoretical framework where key activities and main concepts was distinguished. It was also suitable to conduct the pilot study for us as interviewees to become comfortable with the interview process, as Bryman (2008, p. 258) argues for.

2.2.2 Sampling strategy

It would be difficult for us to know which companies that embrace data driven marketing we therefore decided to choose respondents working mainly in the area of social media marketing and data driven marketing. We chose a sampling strategy that is called purposive sampling method (Ritchie & Lewis, 2014, p. 112) and is often used when studying experts within their field. The respondents that were chosen for this study are professionals that could be called “experts”, professionals that have a broad knowledge and insight into the process of strategy for social media marketing and/or the use of data within social media marketing activities. The respondents were therefore strategically chosen in relation to the aim of this study and also by indirect factors such as for their expertise and experience within the chosen field of the study. After conducting the pilot study we realized that it is often agencies who are hired by companies to analyze data and develop strategies for social media, therefore we decided to only interview professionals that are working at agencies. Some respondents were chosen by referrals from previous respondents. When targeting a group with similar characteristics like in this study could be called a homogeneous sampling method (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 240).

Another sampling method that could have been used is self-selection sampling where the researcher publicise the need of respondents and then the respondents who wish to
participate contact the researchers. This could for example have been done by us advertise on communities where participants in the chosen area are active. (Saunders et. al., 2009, p. 241) However this sampling method did not suit our research strategy of choosing experts within the field of data-driven marketing and social media marketing and therefore a purposive sampling was applied.

The identification criteria of the desired respondents, as follows:

- The respondent work with data insights
- The respondent consult social media strategies or data insights for clients
- The agency, where the respondent is working, is considered successful (based on recommendations)
- The respondent’s main focus is social media strategies and/or data analysis
- The respondent is willing to fully participate in the study

When the respondents had been identified they were either contacted by email, phone call or both. They were explained to why they were contacted, who we are, what we do and what the aim of the study is. When they accepted to be interviewed they then received the Informed Consent Form by e-mail with information about the study and what a participation in the study implies.

The number of respondents were not decided from the start when the research design was established, instead the saturation principle was applied according to grounded theory (Bryman 2011, p. 436). When the interviews no longer produced any major differences, the data collection ended.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Interview type</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 1</td>
<td>Global Management Firm</td>
<td>00:58:12</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>17/02/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 2</td>
<td>Halleluja</td>
<td>01:21:28</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>21/03/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 3</td>
<td>Pondus</td>
<td>00:55:20</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>21/03/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 4a</td>
<td>Bloom Agency</td>
<td>00:56:08</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>23/03/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 4b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 5</td>
<td>Punkt PR</td>
<td>00:50:49</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>23/03/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 6</td>
<td>Context Media</td>
<td>01:07:08</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>06/04/2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2.3 Data collection

Interviews are the most used source to gather information when conducting qualitative studies (Yin 2009, p. 106). Interviews are usually guided conversations that aim to be more fluid than rigid. There are three different types of structure in interviews namely, structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 374; Yin, 2009, p. 107) Structured interviews can be seen as quantitative interviews since the interview procedure must be followed strictly in order to avoid bias (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 466). This procedure is similar to surveys and follows the same sampling procedures and analyzing processes as surveys (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 466; Yin 2009, p. 108). However, contrary to structured interviews unstructured interviews do not have pre-made questions since they are considered to collect data in an informal manner (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 374-375; Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 467).

For the collection of data semi-structured interviews were chosen since it is one of the more flexible methods. This qualitative method was considered to be suitable for a research of this kind where the respondent were expected to be able to discuss and associate to the object of study as easily as possible. By utilizing this design the aim was to collect a broader perspective of data. There are many reasons for making interviews and one main reason is to get access to the respondent’s knowledge (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 4). In this study the aim was to collect and explore the respondent’s knowledge regarding the usage of data for social media marketing. Another aim was also to understand the motives, experiences, choices and actions that take place when using data and working with social media marketing. By using semi-structured interviews the hope was to explore a deeper individual experience and perspective on the phenomena in this area. An extensive literature review was conducted before the interviews began in order to formulate relevant questions, however, the development of the theoretical framework was improved in parallel with the data analysis.

**Interview guide**

It is an advantage to use an interview guide when conducting semi-structured interviews so as to have some guidelines throughout the interview. In contrast to surveys where usually a set of questions are strictly followed, an interview guide on the other hand is more of a helpful tool to make the conversation flow in a natural way. (Bryman, 2011, p. 419)

It is important to be able to adapt the questions according to the context, when conducting semi-structured interviews. A challenge is though to ask the right questions, therefore to attain more experience of this task a pilot study was made, which Bryman
(2011, p. 422) argues is a way of practicing and developing question skills. (Bryman, 2011, p. 422) Furthermore, advantages of conducting a pilot study are to refine the questions so that the respondents have the ease of answering the questions with minimal doubt (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 394).

It is not necessary to go through the interview guide question by question however, in this way the interview guide is a good base to start from. A semi-structured interview also allows the interviewer to ask supplementary questions which is important in this type of interpretivist study and would for example not be possible in a study of quantitative nature. (Bryman, 2011, p. 419) To get the fullest answers and rich descriptions open questions was used. When more in-depth answers were needed, follow-up questions was used and if something was unclear then specific questions was used. In order to answer our research question “How is data used in brand’s strategies for social media?” interview questions as following were asked:

- What type of data do you work with?
- How do you determine what type of data is to be analyzed?
- How does your strategy development for social media take form?
- How do you define goals for the strategy?
- Have you used data in order to find out what determines user engagement on social media?

These type of questions were also asked in the pilot study to attain a better knowledge of what is relevant to the aim of the study, to understand what theories are relevant to the study and finally provided insights to develop better questions for the interview guide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What type of data do you work with?</td>
<td>Data insights</td>
<td>Järvinen, 2016; McAfee &amp; Brynjolfsson, 2012, p. 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you determine what type of data is to be analyzed?</td>
<td>Data insights</td>
<td>Chen &amp; Storey, 2012, p. 1174; McAfee et al. 2012, p. 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is the data interpreted and used?</td>
<td>Data insights</td>
<td>Chen &amp; Storey, 2012, p. 1182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What trends have you seen within this field?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What social media sites do you work with?</td>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>Rohm et al., 2013, p. 305-306</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is usually the purpose of being active in social media? | Social media | Doran, 1981, p. 35
---|---|---
How do you define goals for the strategy? | Social media strategies | Johnson et al., 2014, p. 8; Doran, 1981, p. 35
What connections do you see between a client’s social media strategy, market strategy and business strategy? | Social media strategies | Johnson et al., 2014, p. 8; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014, p. 337
How important is it to engage users on social media? | Engagement | Kabadayi & Price, 2014, p. 205
Have you used data in order to find out what determines user engagement on social media? | Engagement | Rohm et al., p. 307

Table III - Interview guide

**Interview proceeding**
The interviews were both made face-to-face and conducted via telephone. The respondents were asked to decide a time and a place in order for the interview to occur where the respondent could feel safe and relaxed which is argued to be a wise choice by Ritchie and Lewis (2014, p. 181).

The reason for why some of the interviews were conducted via telephone was due to cost and time restrictions. It would have been too expensive to travel to these respondents. Furthermore, within the time frame of this study traveling to these respondents would have been too time consuming. Bearing these aspects in mind, telephone interviews was chosen as a means of collecting data for the study when face-to-face interview were not possible. When collecting interviews over the phone it can be seen as some non-verbal information is lost (Langemar, 2008, p. 82). However, this did not seem to be a problem during our phone-interviews firstly because we were not analyzing non-verbal queues and secondly because we did not see any differences in the answers compared to the face-to-face answers. Another issue could be the lack of
personal contact with the respondent and a decreased willingness for discussions during a phone interview (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 349). During the collection of our interviews we did not see any of these issues which also can be noted in the similar length and breadth of all the collected interviews. An important aspect to bear in mind is to sound reliable when talking to the respondent to decrease any possible uncertainty (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 331). All interviews were conducted in Swedish except for one that was conducted in English.

To be able to keep the conversation neutral and flowing without intensive note taking the interviews were recorded, this also to keep track on what was said. As a precaution one of us took a few notes while the other one was asking the questions in case the recording would turn out bad. Always before the recording started the respondent was asked once again (the first time in the informed consent form) if it was okey to be recorded. It was also explained that the recording was going to be handled and stored only for us to use, which is in line with the concerns about confidentiality (Ritchie & Lewis, 2014, p. 172).

2.2.4 Analytical procedures
The interviews were recorded and transcribed which generated a mass of data, hence data that was not relevant to the study was deleted to be able to analyze the relevant parts. The analysis method consisted of constant comparative method. The method seemed to be the most suitable for analyzing how data insights influence the strategy process (Glaser & Strauss, 2009, p. 32). In constant comparative method, data phenomenon like concepts, principles or processes are identified and analyzed. The first step were to code the data and phenomena into groups, which provided the base for further categorization of the data. When coding the data, highlighting in the text was used carefully to find concepts. Codes that were similar and related were grouped together and thus formed categories. From the categories theories emerged and took form. When no more dimensions of categories could be found the concept had been theoretically saturated. When the theory is saturated there is no need to sample any further since the theory is then complete. (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010, p. 281)

2.3 Ethical aspects
The study was conducted in accordance with the Swedish ethical guidelines for research that states that the research must benefit society, and the individual protection claim states that no individual should be exposed to psychological or physical harm, humiliation or violation. Furthermore, the individual protections claim consists of four subcategories, namely the information requirement, consent claim, confidentiality requirement, and useful requirement. Which all together states that the individual’s privacy and integrity must be respected, that the participants have received information regarding the purpose of the study, any possible implications for the individual, having the choice of being anonymous, and that the individual must give their consent. (Langemar, 2008, p. 147-148)

The above described claims was considered in written as well as oral information that was provided to the respondents before the collection of data. The information was given to the respondent, stating that their participation was completely optional and that the interview could at any time be cancelled, if they so wished. It was also stated that they could remain anonymous. The reason to give the participants the choice of being
anonymous was that hesitant individuals can sometimes be more willing to participate if their name or organization they represent would remain unexposed. (Langemar, 2008, p. 148)

Due to the nature of the respondents’ business affiliation, there are some ethical aspects to consider, for example trade secrets. To ensure that we do not publish any trade secrets, we have asked each respondent to verify the transcription of the interview, where they had the choice to review what was to be published. We gave the respondents the opportunity to delete sensitive information and trade secrets, and asked for their approval for what to be published.

2.4 Advantages and limitations of the design

When the interviews were being conducted the aim was to understand the motives, experiences, choices and actions of the respondents, but also to understand on a deeper individual experience level and perspectives of the respondent. During the interview it was difficult to know if the respondents for example where being completely truthful which can be referred to the pragmatic theory (Ritchie & Lewis, 2014, p.8). Another area of concern is that all the knowledge a person possess might be affected by the person's values which is called knowledge as value-mediated (Ritchie & Lewis, 2014, p.7). An interviewer can easily affect or “pollute” a respondent’s answers by not being objective when asking questions (Kvale & Brinkman 2009, p. 170), which was a very difficult task to bear in mind during the interviews since we all affect each other in some ways whether we want it or not when interacting with people.

The chosen sampling method, purposive sampling, can be seen as having a low level of reliability and as being easily biased, it can furthermore be seen as vulnerable for errors and unable to generalize findings. It is therefore important to clarify that assumptions and biases are reflected upon, being self-critical and self-aware when conducting the study. (Bryman, 2011, p. 392)

The language barrier is also something that had to be considered in this study. Since both of us are native Swedish speakers the translation and interpretation from Swedish to English and vice versa can affect the study in terms of misinterpretations. Although, being non-native English speakers could be seen as an advantage because of the knowledge of possessing the skills of being bi-lingual, more theories and information could be collected among both Swedish and English written articles.

Some aspects of grounded theory can be very difficult and could be immensely time-consuming, for instance the analyzing and the coding. The study can be affected by the writers’ theoretical backgrounds in grounded theory when proceeding with the coding processes. The coding process is sensitive in two different ways, on one hand if the researcher has too much knowledge in the researched object the coding could be affected negatively in terms of being biased. On the other hand if the researcher has too little theoretical knowledge the coding process could be difficult due to the lack of knowledge. (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010, p. 203)
3 Theoretical framework

This chapter presents the theories within the researched area, to relate how data is used in brand’s strategies for social media. The findings from the pilot study is explained, and so are the theories developed from that pilot study. A model is presented where the theories are illustrated to provide an overview for how they are interconnected.

3.1 Pilot Study

Respondent 1 has several years of experience from social media marketing and was when conducting the interview working as student coordinator and social media manager at a global management firm. Respondent 1 is working mainly with Facebook and Instagram but also with LinkedIn and Twitter.

Data insights are very useful in terms of reaching the right audience and provide statistics of reach (Respondent 1). Most data that respondent 1 uses comes from Facebook and LinkedIn’s own analytics tools. Difficulties in defining what data is and how to collect data is discussed by the respondent, this is important to understand when working with social media analytics. Research has also been conducted on the targeted audience to find out what the different target groups want to see in the different online channels.

Mapping all the activities in the marketing channels, both online and offline, is important to get an overview of all activities that occur. It is important to have this type of map to be able to see what kind of content that should be in each channel and in order to reach the right audience. The purpose of being present in the chosen channels is also discussed. The purposes are usually connected to general marketing goals. Working with this type of mapping makes it easier to achieve the marketing goals and to eliminate any kind of double work that might happen if you do not know what content to publish in each and every channel. Content in the different channels should match the target audience and be aligned in a smooth way. (Respondent 1)

When developing the social media strategy, guidelines are taken from the global brand strategy. Guidelines such as layout, tonality, and value words are discussed and implemented in the strategy for social media. (Respondent 1)

On a six month basis Respondent 1 together with colleagues evaluate the strategy and look at what activities went well and which ones did not go as well. The respondent does a manual evaluation of the content by for example looking at content that created more engagement to see how they can create more of that. The evaluation can also show what type of content that their target audience want to see, this is done by trial and error. (Respondent 1)

Respondent 1 further explain that for the Swedish office they do not use agencies to the same extent as they do in other parts of the world within the company. For example at the office in England they outsource several of the social media tasks connected to social media marketing activities such as content creation. (Respondent 1)

3.1.1 Theoretical framework

The theoretical model (Figure II) was based on the empirical findings from the interview with Respondent 1. The figure was set as a base for our interview guide and
for the operationalization of theories and concepts. The figure shows how we connect the three main topics of the study, namely data, social media strategy and engagement.

Figure II - Theoretical model (Grönlund & Schytt, 2017)

Figure II shows that companies collect and analyze data from previous engagement on social media. The results of the analysis can for example be insights about customers and content. Insights regarding customers can result in a better targeted audience, well defined user profiles, and a greater reach. The insights from the data analysis will then further provide incitements for what activities that drives engagement among the identified targeted audience. Data insights also shows which channels that are the most appropriate for the selected user profiles. The findings will then set the base for the social media strategy and when the strategy has been implemented it is important to evaluate the process and then re-engage by analyze data from the last engagement.

3.2 Data-driven marketing

In this chapter we explain different types of data, how data is currently used and analyzed within companies for marketing activities. The theories in this chapter highlights the nature of the research, which is the use of data in social media marketing. First we explain what data can be, what insights data can provide, we will look at analyzing methods (e.g. opinion mining), how programmatic buying is used, and the challenges of data analysis.

3.2.1 Data

Since the early 2000s, the development of the Internet has offered unique data collection and analytical research and development (R&D) opportunities (Chen & Storey, 2012, p. 1167). Business Intelligence (BI) and analytics technologies that are grounded mostly in data mining and statistical analysis is often referred to as Big Data (Chen & Storey, 2012, p.1174). Data mining and statistical analysis of communities has been quite successful which have led to it being an active area of research (Chen & Storey, 2012, p.1175). Big data focuses on understanding, interpreting, strategizing, and taking action
to further organizational interests (Chen & Storey, 2012, p.1182). If the organization has the right capabilities, or acquire them, analyzed data can be used for measuring and optimizing social media marketing performance (Järvinen, 2016, p. 15).

Customer databases takes an important role in data-driven marketing, although analytics tools has increased the variety of data concerning customers that can be used in real time marketing. Utilizing the speed of the Internet has made it possible for marketers to run quick experiments, using data to see for example what type of ads or content that acheive reach. (Järvinen 2016, p. 40) The availability of customer related data has increased from the emergence of social media platforms, which have led to a strategic movement towards data-driven marketing. In data-driven marketing the aim is to inform and optimize the execution of marketing activities through the use of data. (Kumar et al., 2013, p. 332)

Lorenzo-Romero et al. (2013, p. 214) argues that by collecting data in terms of customer dialog on social media provides companies with valuable information, for example about trends, but also help companies understand the market and customers better. This type of data is inexpensive and valuable to the marketing department in terms of information and R&D purposes, as well as identifying issues at an early stage (Lorenzo-Romero et al., 2013, p. 214).

Within the context of this thesis we view all content created, shared, and engaged with and by users on the Internet, as data that can be used for marketing activities. However, data can also come from different types of sources, for example CRM-systems and sales data. Data analytics is reshaping business intelligence, it provides better insights for businesses to base their decision-making by analytics related to marketing decisions and opinion-mining regarding products, services, and companies. It is possible to collect marketing data from various sources, such as social media, transactional data, and survey data. (Fan et al., 2015, p. 28) Harvesting data for marketing purposes has enabled new business opportunities by the ease of spreading content online (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008, p. 232).

3.2.2 Data insights

When a brand decides to start using social media platforms for marketing purposes it is important that the brand analyze how their customers behave on these platforms, by analyzing data (Chen & Storey, 2012, p.1169). Insights regarding customer behavior will also provide knowledge regarding factors of consumers’ personality that leads to engagement in the forms of “likes” and comments. Knowledge of the personality factors are important in order to develop effective brand engagement strategies, according to Kabadayi and Price (2014. p. 205).

Data insights derives from web analytics tools. Most data has been generated by, and comes from, the Internet and e-commerce communities and the development of web analytics and social media platforms derives from the major Internet giants such as Google and Facebook (Chen & Storey, 2012, p. 1169).

“Big Data can leverage opportunities presented by the abundant data and domain-specific analytics needed in many critical and high-impact application areas like e-commerce and marketing”

- Chen & Storey (2012, p. 1168)
The Internet has enabled new opportunities in the form of reaching niche markets via highly targeted searches and personalized recommendations based on data insights, which results in increased sales and customer satisfaction, argues Chen and Storey (2012, p.1169).

Large and complex data sets, for example from social media, can be described by data analytical techniques and requires advanced and unique data storage, management, analysis- and visualization-technologies (Chen & Storey, 2012, p. 1166). It is not advised to base data analysis on one data source since that data source can be skewed, however to attain a better analysis, firms should integrate heterogeneous data from several different sources which are more representable and useful in marketing activities (Fan et al. 2015, p. 28). According to Sallam et al. (2011, cited in Chen & Storey, 2012, p. 1166) many data processes and analytical technologies are already incorporated into the leading commercial BI platforms offered by major IT vendors including Microsoft, IBM, Oracle, and SAP.

In order to understand consumers’ needs and identifying business opportunities, IP-specific user search and interaction logs are collected through cookies stored in devices used to access the Internet. Tools such as Google analytics can by analyzing the log of clickstreams from customers provide a track of the user’s online activities and reveal the user’s browsing and purchasing patterns. (Chen & Storey, 2012, p. 1167)

3.2.3 Opinion mining
All users of the Internet are seen as content contributors and to underline this special attribution the content is often referred to as User Generated Content (UGC) (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008, p. 233). UGC that is spread on social media is data that can be used to extract opinions of social media users (Fan et al., 2015, p. 28). Different social media platforms such as forums, online groups, blogs and social networking sites (SNS’s) developed after 2004 has provided plenty of UGC. UGC consist of everything from celebrity chatter, socio-political events to everyday conversations. A large volume of timely opinions and feedback from a diverse customer population can be gathered through Internet applications such as social media. (Chen & Storey, 2012, p.1167)

Companies can collect UGC and other web intelligence through the Internet, and then can analyze both text and unstructured web contents. A whole new world of opportunities has opened up for researchers and practitioners when it comes to listening to the voice of customers, employees, the media and investors alike, with the emergence of UGC from various platforms such as social media. Customer opinions and text analysis techniques are constantly adopted for social media according to Pang and Lee (2008, cited in Chen and Storey, 2012, p. 1169).

Due to the massive amount of data, opinion mining can be used to extract relevant information. Opinion mining refers to “the computational techniques for extracting, classifying, understanding, and assessing the opinions expressed in various online news sources, social media comments, and other user-generated contents” (Chen & Storey, 2012, p. 1176). Content from the Internet and social media have created and opened up great opportunities regarding the understanding of opinions expressed by the users of social media. (Pang and Lee 2008, cited in Chen & Storey, 2012, p. 1176). According to
Järvinen (2016, p. 107) companies are becoming more interested in opinion mining because of the opportunities to extract what internet users are saying about brands. Järvinen (2016, p. 107) also discuss that companies’ interest in opinion mining is due to the increasing amount of UGC and business-related eWoM.

3.2.4 Programmatic buying/Media buying
Programmatic media buying, also called real-time bidding, is the fastest growing area in online advertising and is more cost effective than traditional media buying (Yuan et al., 2013, p. 1; Li & Guan, 2014, p. 447). This type of media buying utilizes algorithms in a way which is similar to stock exchanges. Programmatic media buying is all happening automatically and targets the audience based on predetermined criteria retrieved from data about them. Programmatic buying is very effective by showing ads that the target audience would be interested in. (Yuan et al. 2013, p. 1) Advertising online is a potential goldmine according to Bayles, (2002, p. 363). One of the most used tools to measure the effectiveness of ads is click-through rate (CTR) which is a rate that tells you how effective an ad has been by the number of clicks it had in relation to how many views (Bayles, 2002, p. 363).

3.2.5 Challenges
The major challenge with data insights lies within the management of internal business and transactions, while academic research has mainly focused on traditional business needs. These problems still remain in the data world with a change in shift to data analysis and rapid business decisions making which are based on a great amount of information. These decisions often take place outside the Information Systems (IS) or IT functions and instead take place in functions like marketing, finance or logistics. Therefore Chen and Storey (2012, p. 1182) suggest that marketing and finance practitioners should be provided courses in data mining, text mining, opinion mining, social media/network analytics, web mining, and predictive analytics. (Chen & Storey, 2012, p. 1182) Järvinens (2016, p. 59) study show that the most crucial parts are the data analysis and the interpretation, and if it is not managed properly the marketing performance will suffer. The benefits a brand can get from data insights are largely depending on the company’s ability to handle the analytics tool effectively (Järvinen, 2016, p. 15).

It can be difficult for companies that are eager to adopt the use of data analysis if they lack a strategic plan for how to use the results from the analysis to achieve improvements. Therefore it is important to design a process for refining the metrics into insights and actions in order to assess marketing performance. What type of data gathered depends on the metrics that is selected and it can also be a difference in what an organization want to measure and what it actually can measure with the methods and tools used. (Järvinen, 2016, p. 58)

3.3 Social Media Strategies
Theories regarding the development of strategies in social media will be presented, and how these strategies evolve and are connected to data insights. We will explain different types of segmentation strategies and how to target customer audiences (e.g. through online personas on social media), how to evaluate and measure the results will also be explained.
3.3.1 Social media

The Internet consists of open-source, interactive- and user-controlled applications, for example social media. By these online applications, Internet users can further their knowledge and experience, thus increasing their own market power. With the development of the Internet, it is easy to participate and create online content, providing users to facilitate networks where ideas and knowledge are easily shared and edited. (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008, p. 232) These traits of sharing and editing online content has made it possible to exchange ideas instantly across the globe, where Internet users can refine the content and share their experiences with others (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008, p. 233).

Research show that the main reasons for companies to engage in social media are, to compete on price by for example posting coupons and discounts, to introduce new products and services, increase brand awareness, create positive word of mouth and the most important one to create engagement (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014, p. 335; Wirtz et al., 2013, p. 227).

According to Bengtsson et al. (2007, p. 3) companies are facing great challenges when entering digital marketing channels and this specific area needs more attention and research. Digitization can lead to a broad variety of new capabilities which can lead to a variety of benefits, they might facilitate both competitive positioning and pursuit strategic objectives (BarNir et al., 2003, p. 793). Another benefit that Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 67) argues for is that marketing on social media is very cost-efficient since the direct end-consumer contact is relatively low in price and high in efficiency compared to traditional channels. Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014, p. 338) suggest that companies should develop a strategy solely for social media which will be supported by staff with the right competence.

3.3.2 Strategies

To be able to monitor and measure the success of different actions it is important to have a strategy. A well-structured and organized strategy can be crucial for an organization to achieve its goals. (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 8) A strategy process goes through how the strategy is formed and how it is implemented (Johnson et al. 2014, p. 19). In order to develop a strategy it is important to have an understanding of the organization's weaknesses and capabilities to be able to focus on the right things and by evaluating the strategy makes the firm more adaptable to a changing environment. (Johnson et al. 2014, p. 92)

There are many different strategies, but there are two common denominators among the most widely used strategies, these are (1) the strive to make the organization as unique as possible and (2) to bring the most value to the customer. The firm strategy must differentiate from competitors, which can be achieved through terms of understanding the target customer. It is important to understand what the customers are looking for and why they are buying a specific brand instead of another. By constantly studying the customers and reevaluate and adapt the strategy to fit the customers’ needs better will make it possible for firms to get the most out of the market. (Burns, 2011, p. 321)

It is important to define activities, implementation and follow up plans when the social media platforms have been chosen (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014, p. 339). Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014, p. 339) argues that online activities should be in accordance with
offline activities in order to create synergies. These synergies should encourage the customers not only to liking or commenting but also to a purchase intent (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014, p. 339).

When a brand decides to start using social media platforms it is important that they analyze how their customers behave on these platforms. When brands know how customers behave they will know what types of personality factors customers have which will lead to engagement on for example Facebook. (Chen & Storey, 2012, p. 1182) Knowledge about personality factors is important to develop effective brand engagement strategies (Kabadyi & Price, 2014, p. 205) and can be found through data which focuses on understanding, interpretation, strategizing, and taking action to further organizational interests (Chen & Storey, 2012, p. 1182). Also, in order to find the right digital channels it is critical to know social media users evaluations, behavior and experiences of different applications (Kim & Malhotra, 2005, p. 741).

Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014, p. 337) explores the external and internal factors that impacts a brand's digital strategy. The external factors include “the fast growth and popularity of social media, their viral nature, the competitors’ presence on social media, and the low-cost solutions offered by social media platforms” (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014, p. 337). And the internal factors that need to be considered when developing a social media strategy is the company's general targeting strategy as well as their positioning strategy where all the marketing activities should be included (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014, p. 337). The results from a brand’s social media presence might affect and make the company revise their strategy, targeting, and positioning. The research also shows that the main benefit consumers get from brand’s social media pages are the potential relationship the consumers develop to one another. (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014, p. 339)

3.3.3 Segmentation and targeting
Marketers has for many decades used segmentation for marketing strategies and it is generally considered effective (Goneos-Malka et al., 2014, p. 906). In the process of segmenting, a company usually start by dividing their consumer market by potential and existing consumers. These groups are called segments and can be further divided into different subgroups depending on their characteristics such as demographics or lifestyles (Goyat, 2011, p. 46). Those segments that are considered to be the most important can be referred to as target markets (Goyat, 2011, p. 45). When the segmentation is done it is important to develop a positioning strategy that aligns with the segmentation in order to differentiate offers from competitors (Wood, 2014, p. 82). From traditional segmentation, online personas can be developed. Online personas are used to give marketers a detailed understanding of their targeted audiences, to be able to know their needs and preferences. (Wood, 2014, p. 81)

**Online personas**
One of the most important strategic assets a firm possess is consumer information. It is also the most important information for an online marketer (Trusov et al., 2016, p. 405). Persona segmentation derives from traditional segmentation and is meant to give a human “touch”, or face, persona segmentation is used by marketers to perceive a deeper meaning and understanding of the consumer’s needs, preferences, buying and consumption behavior. (Wood, 2014, p. 81) Online persona segmentation differ from traditional persona segmentation and one of the most important significations is that the
targeted offline segment might not be present in the online channels or they may be sparse internet users (Charlesworth, 2014, p. 16).

When a company decides to use social media platforms it is important to analyze how their customers behave on these platforms. When the company knows their customers’ behavior they will know what types of personality factors these customers have that can lead to “likes” and comments on social media platforms. Knowing the factors that can drive “likes” and comments is important knowledge in order to develop effective brand engagement strategies that will lead to loyalty and awareness. (Kabadayi & Price, 2014, p. 205; Trusov et al. 2016, p. 405) In a report from 2013 by the consulting firm McKinsey, show that Big Data will play a big role in identifying online user profiles which will help companies achieve competitive advantage (Hazan & Banfi, 2013). Kim and Malhotra (2005, p. 741) also emphasize on that it is critical to know user evaluations, behavior, and experiences of different applications in order to find the right digital channels.

Kabadayi and Price (2014, p. 208) have developed two different consumer interaction modes to identify different personalities, namely “broadcasting” (one to many style of interaction) and “communicating” (one to one and more private interaction). Kabadayi and Price (2014, p. 217) suggests that an individual’s mode of interaction is affected by its personality traits which will determine if it is likely that the consumer will be liking or commenting on the brand’s Facebook page. “Broadcasters” “likes” content that encourage them to share opinions and emotions since they get to self-present themselves to many people (Kabadayi & Price, 2014, p. 217). Therefore Kabadayi and Price (2014, p. 217) suggest that companies that seek widespread engagement on their Facebook pages should target the consumers with “broadcasting” traits since they are more likely to “like” and comment than others. Although, “communicators” should not be forgotten since they are also important in terms of liking the brand’s page. This type of personality trait strategy could be useful for brands that are already using demographic- and psychographic-based segmentation in their online channels. (Kabadayi & Price, 2014, p. 217)

Influencers are personalities that people look up to, they can be experts within a field or early adopters, they are opinion leaders that influence other consumers. Companies can use influencers to talk about their brands on social media. This type of marketing is also part of traditional marketing, however, the Internet has made it possible for online influencers in the form of bloggers that drive high web traffic, they can function as free product advocates and drive word-of-mouth to reach mainstream customers. (Constantinides, 2014, p. 47) The most popular blogs are those that provide new product information, usually content that do not reach traditional channels (Constantinides, 2014, p. 48). Influencers can be seen as “broadcasters” in Kabadayi and Price (2014, p. 217) interaction model.

3.3.4 Measurements
In order to evaluate a brand’s activities online it is important to have equity measurements, like return on asset (ROA), sales, costs, margins and profit. These are however mostly short term measurements and provide little incentives to invest in brand activities. (Aaker, 1996, p. 103)
Social media engagement can be very difficult to measure in terms of sales, however it is argued that this type of engagement should lead to increased sales in terms of increased awareness. Woodcock et al. (2011, p. 55) believes that the short-term return on investment (ROI) on individual campaigns will in the future be prominent in a correlation analysis between activities, engagement and sales. (Woodcock et al. 2011, p. 55) A more recent study on the effect of purchase intention in correlation with social media activities, by Hutter et al. (2013, p. 347) shows that users’ engagement with a brand on social media has a direct effect on the purchase intention through brand awareness and WoM. Further argues Hutter et al. (2013 p. 348) that brands’ utilization of social media is a good marketing channel. When measuring awareness on social media it is important to use clear defined goals which are are easy to manage according to Bija and Balaş (2014, p. 160). Examples of goals are how much content to produce, how often content should be published and the time it takes to answer consumers questions (Bija & Balaş, 2014, p. 160).

**Key performance indicators**

One way to measure business performance over time is by using Key Performance Indicators (KPI). Examples of KPIs are revenues and profits. (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 449) In today’s business environment, fierce competition prevails, this has led to the implementation of several KPIs, and it has proven difficult to prioritize between them. Therefore researchers has proposed different approaches in the prioritizing of KPIs. (Shahin & Mahbod, 2006, p. 226) For a company, well defined goals are important to have, for it is the determinant of how resources are distributed on different activities. Hence the first step of any firm ought to be to define their goals, and set up KPIs for how the goals should be met. It is important to bear in mind that each indicator should be analyzable when defining the KPIs. Often the KPIs are taking elements from the SMART-criteria. (Shahin & Mahbod 2006, p. 227-228) KPIs can be very different depending on the size of the company, different level of complexity, (Shahin & Mahbod 2006, p. 236) and naturally each company has their own unique goals, therefore when prioritizing the KPIs, it can be made in a consensus group where the KPIs are discussed. (Shahin & Mahbod 2006, p. 232)

The SMART-criteria, developed by Doran (1981, p. 35-36), is the abbreviation for “Specific”, “Measurable”, “Assignable”, “Realistic”, and “Time-related”. The SMART-criteria was created to help managers at various levels for effective goal- and objective-setting, by following each criteria of the acronym SMART. Doran (1981, p. 35) made a distinction between goals and objectives, where goals defined as a belief, a philosophy, and long-term, whereas objectives defined as a quantifiable support to the manager’s beliefs. Furthermore, objectives provide an organization with guidance on the direction of the goals and spot problems along the way (Doran, 1981, p. 35). “Specific” goals should be specific and detailed, “Measurable” goals should be clear and simple, and avoid being ambiguous, “Assignable” goals should be reasonable and within reach, “Realistic” goals should be realistic for the specific work environment and “Time-related” goals should have a time frame and structure to allow monitoring progress. (Shahin & Mahbod, 2006, p. 228-229) Doran (1981, p. 36) points out that every criteria in the SMART acronym does not necessarily need be considered in every objective. However, the closer the objective is to the SMART criteria the better according to Doran (1981, p. 36).
3.4 Brand Engagement

In this chapter, we will explain the phenomena of engagement which is an important part of social media strategy. We will present essential brand factors of consumer engagement on social media, how brands can facilitate data to drive consumer engagement, benefits of engagement on social media, and the importance of content and activities to enable engagement on social media.

3.4.1 Brand

A brand makes it possible for consumers to identify a product or a service while also making it possible to distinguish a brand from its competitors (Aaker, 1991, p. 114). The aggregate of a brand most likely consists of a composition of letters, a symbol, a logotype, and a design or parts of these (Zhang, 2011, p. 59). Marketing managers constantly seeks to improve the value proposition of the brand since it is the most fundamental and long-lasting asset of an organization (Martin et al., 2005, p. 275). Brands are excellent information carriers when it comes to identity seeking and identity building, it makes it possible for the company to educate consumers around the brand (Zhang 2015, p. 59). A brand can provide specific facts regarding the quality and functions of the product or service and can also be used as a positioning tool (Aaker, 1991, p. 103).

**Brand loyalty and brand awareness**

The value a brand creates through its functions and perceived benefits is called brand equity. According to Aaker (1996, p. 103) brand equity consists of five dimensions, namely (1) perceived quality, (2) brand associations, (3) brand loyalty, (4) brand awareness, and (5) other proprietary brand assets. When working on brand associations it is important to differentiate the brand. Differentiation can be seen as the bottom line characteristic for the brand to be able to support a price premium or a price that will maintain an attractive margin. (Aaker, 1991, p. 114)

Delgado-Ballester and Luis Munuera-Alemán (2001, p. 1239) discuss the importance of Aaker’s five dimensions where brand loyalty and brand awareness are the two most important ones when establishing realtionships with consumers. Brand loyalty is a relationship consisting of commitment and trust between the consumer and the brand (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001, p. 1239). The interaction between the brand and consumer can lead to a long-term relationship if the brand develop a positive and favourable attitude and also develop trust (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001, p. 1240). If the consumer have a sense of trust in the brand it will also have a feeling of security, that the brand can meet his or her expectations (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001, p. 1242). According to Ravald and Grönroos (1996, p. 24) trust develops from previous experience and prior interaction. A consumer’s experience will be affected by any direct contact such as usage or satisfaction in the consumption and is also by indirect contact such as advertising, word of mouth and brand reputation (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001, p. 1243).

For brands to be known on the market it is a requirement that consumers can recall and recognize a brand and that is what is called brand awareness. There are different levels that reveal the salience of a brand, particular recognition, recall, and top-of-mind. Recognition answer the question if you have heard about the brand. Recall is connected to the brands you can recall when you are asked about a specific category and top-of-
mind is the first brand you recall when being asked about a category. (Aaker, 1991, p. 114) Brand awareness is a very important component of brand equity and is sometimes undervalued (Aaker, 1991, p. 114). The greater the awareness of the brand the greater dominance in the competitive market (Goyat, 2011, p. 50). Social media is a great driver of brand awareness and customer recommendations (Funk, 2013, p. 3).

3.4.2 The development of online brand communities
Roberts and Alpert (2010, p. 198) defines consumer engagement as a consumer who is loyal to a brand and who recommends the brand’s products/services to others. In the pre-internet era engaged customers formed communities surrounding a brand which they identified with. Some brand communities that formed in the pre-internet era have now also gone online and continues going strong, for example Harley Davidson and Lego communities (Wirtz et al., 2013, p. 226).

A brand community, as defined by Wirtz et al. (2013, p. 224) is a relationship between providers and consumers who identifies with the brand and perceived value of being engaged with the brand and who connects with other enthusiasts, and together form a network. Brand communities in the pre-internet era, like Harley Davidson’s is only possible due to the highly engaged customers together with the introduction of mass media and modern marketing which made it possible to reach a mass of consumers (Wirtz et al., 2013, p. 224). With the ease of connecting with people via the Internet, traditional brand communities have evolved into online brand communities (Wirtz et al., 2013, p. 225), such as brands’ Facebook pages. About half of the top 100 global brands had their own online brand communities by 2012 (Manchanda et al., 2012, cited in Wirtz et al., 2013, p. 224). Online brand communities can also have offline aspects, for example meeting for face-to-face interaction and engage in activities.

3.4.3 Social media engagement
Social media engagement should be mutually beneficial, both for the company and the consumer (Barger et al., 2016, p. 279). Marketers should engage in social media communication not only for short term revenue, but also benefit from long lasting engagement which leads to loyal consumers (Barger et al., 2016, p. 268).

Social media is a perfect medium for marketers to spread content, as Barger et al (2016, p. 279) clarifies: “Only when marketers view their role on social media as more than simply supplying content in hopes that consumers will engage with that content will firms realize the true potential of social media marketing.”

Barger et al. (2016, p. 269) stresses the importance of consumer engagement in social media and explains that it is a primary area of concern. Barger et al. (2016, p. 270) operationalize consumer engagement into a set of actions that consumers take on social media related to brand content, such as reacting to content, commenting, sharing, and provides UGC. It involves the overall value a consumer receives from a brand and also the interactive experiences with the brand (Barger et al., 2016, p. 270). Companies must understand consumers’ needs in order to create value and engagement which is a traditional consumer marketing centric approach (Kabadayi & Price, 2014, p. 205). Consumer engagement also share some components with relationship marketing, where the most important aspect is to establish trust and commitment (Kabadayi & Price, 2014, p. 206).
Benefits of social media engagement
Social media engagement can help companies explore new opportunities for brands by increasing insights from existing and potential customers which in turn will provide the brand more value in terms of easily acquired and fast feedback and knowledge. These aspects will also lead to faster response time to consumers, improved offerings and handle consumer related problems and provide better service. (Kabadayi & Price, 2014, p. 204) Engaging in social media platforms can be a rewarding investment for a number of reasons, for instance communicating product information and new products, addressing customer service issues, engaging consumers with entertaining content, providing timely and relevant information, foster eWoM, and provide consumer sharing experiences (Rohm et al., 2013, p. 305).

Engaged consumers are more likely to discover additional product offerings by the company and also more likely to be satisfied and stay loyal to the company (Kabadayi & Price, 2014, p. 207). Consumers can also engage in non-interactive ways, for example reading others’ comments but not comment themselves. This could be explained by that they just want to learn about other consumers’ experiences regarding specific products or services. (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014, p. 330) These consumers can be seen as “communicators” in Kabadayi and Price’s (2014, p. 217) modes of interaction.

When choosing which social media platform to be active on it is important to look at the engagement level that these platforms facilitate. Figure III show that Facebook clearly drives engagement of a much bigger scale than other social media platforms among people in the U.S in the age group of 18-34. Facebook reach nearly 100% of this audience and it is also the social media platform that is spent the most time on. (Martin, 2016)

![Figure III - The importance of engagement (Martin, 2016)](https://example.com/figure3.png)
3.4.4 eWoM
While the confidence of traditional marketing channels has decreased in consumers’ minds, confidence in peer-to-peer word-of-mouth (WoM) has increased significantly (Price & Feick, 1984; Roberts & Alpert 2010, p. 199). Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955, cited in Chu & Kim, 2011, p. 48) defined WoM as the exchange of product and service marketing information between consumers that shape consumer attitude and behavior. Social media has transformed the traditional WoM into electronic WoM, or eWoM, which has made it possible for people to talk to each other across the globe regardless of geographical location.

eWoM can be defined as “any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet” (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004, p. 39).

According to Chu and Kim (2011, p. 50) eWoM in social media is defined as when consumers provide or search for informal product-related advice via the social media platform. Peer-to-peer communications are rapidly taking control over the traditional marketing approach, as consumers are generating their own content and spreading it to other consumers (Chu & Kim, 2011, p. 50).

This development of eWoM poses a threat to business reputation, for example a simple Twitter post can have the power of severely damage the reputation of a brand (Lorenzo-Romero, et al., 2013, p. 199). Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014, p. 332) also discuss the negative WoM social media activities can cause and it is therefore very important for companies to have appropriate response strategies for these types of actions. If they do not handle these online complaints quickly it can affect the brand’s image and sales negatively (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014, p. 332). Consumers can easily access information that is spread through eWoM, this spread of information provides consumers with new sources of information and empowerment, this is because consumers tend to trust their peers more than they trust marketers and product experts (Lorenzo-Romero et al., 2013, p. 198).

According to Vollmer and Precourt (2008, cited in Chu & Kim, 2011 p. 49) the ideal tool to support eWoM is SNSs themselves, since consumers can without restriction create or share and spread UGC in their social network. Without any monetary expenditure and regardless of time anyone can share eWoM in the form of text, pictures and videos, which means that consumers have unlimited opportunities to express their opinions regarding specific brands and products (Järvinen, 2016, p. 28). By understanding the mechanisms and drivers of eWoM, SNSs can be a good tool in creating efficient online advertising strategies (Chu & Kim, 2011, p. 49).

3.4.5 Content and activities
Rohm et al. (2013, p. 305) argues that companies using social media could have multiple objectives related to consumer communication that should be of strategic use. Likewise, companies ought to realize that social media platforms are more than simply gaining “likes” and followers, but also conveying content that consumers value, such as informative, timely, and entertaining content. Ultimately, these types of content should be sharable and result in positive consumer experience that leads to a purchase intent. (Rohm et al., 2013, p. 306)
Rohm et al. (2013, p. 295) suggest that social media interaction between a company and consumer can be narrowed down to five primary motivations, namely: (1) entertainment, (2) brand engagement, (3) timeliness (e.g. information and service response), (4) product information and, (5) incentives and promotions. Furthermore, links have been found between the different motivations and the respondents’ age, gender, and social media use (Rohm et al. 2013, p. 295).

The practical use of the five identified motivations in Rhom et al.’s (2013, p. 306) study, could provide guidance for managers in the pursuit of framing and aligning the social media use by understanding what types of content the consumers value and are willing to engage in. Rohm et al. (2013, p. 306) stressed that the two interaction motivations (1) timely customer service and (2) incentives and promotions, are important because they identify how firms can improve the service quality and generate equity-building touchpoints with consumers. Regarding equity-building Zeithaml (1988, p. 2) also stress the importance of perceived service quality.

It is very important to acquire timely information and timely content for organizations, because it is the most common incentives to interact with firms through social media, which comprise of 25% of all social media brand interaction (Rohm et al. p. 306). Rohm et al. (2013, p. 307) suggests that firms should include an interface that convey real-time information such as timely answers, that relates to both pre- and post-purchase. Which in turn leads to increased social media engagement, while organizations being able to better meet customers’ needs through, for example co-creation and crowdsourcing product ideas as part of social media strategy (Rohm et al. p. 307). For a brand’s social media strategy, engagement itself is vital for success (Kabadayi & Price, 2014, p. 216).
4 Empirical findings

To present the empirical finding in an understandable way we present the collected interview data respondent by respondent, following the structure of the theoretical framework in the presentation. Since not all questions was answered by all respondents this way of presenting the findings was considered to be the ultimate presentation style to get an overview. Before the findings are presented an introduction of the respondent’s background is provided. Since the respondents are more or less inclined towards either data aspects or social media strategy aspects, in some cases the questions could not be answered by the respondent.

Confidentiality aspects

When exploring how data should be managed for a better understanding of how to use data in social media marketing efforts, we realized that it is a quite competitive area and therefore some aspects was confidential and withheld from us. Due to confidentiality some question was not answered or not answered in its entirety.

4.1 Respondent 2

Nico Allergren
CEO
Halleluja

Nico studied service management at Umeå University and upon graduation took a liking for marketing. Nico has worked with marketing since the 90s, and today runs an advertising firm where strategy and idea is the main theme. Nico is client- and project-manager, but ultimately the CEO of Halleluja.

Halleluja is an advertising firm based in Umeå, and is part of Norrland 2.0. They help clients with creative and strategic aspects to perform better business through effective brand and marketing communication solutions. Halleluja have offices in Stockholm and Gothenburg, apart from Umeå.

Data insights

The data that Respondent 2 is using is mainly data derived from programmatic buying, and general market data such as traditional insights regarding a target audience and demographic aspects. Another type of data used by Respondent 2 is different type of metrics.

Respondent 2 says that it becomes more common nowadays to attain a broad understanding of what to analyze rather than being too detailed, and it is important to develop things incrementally, understand the core. The data to be analyzed vary from client to client, says Respondent 2, it could be values and opinions of the target audience such as market data. It can be difficult to find the balance of how much to analyze, according to Respondent 2, to only analyze what is relevant.

It is easy to measure click-through rate and conversion rate, but to it is not as easy to measure the building of the brand, argues Respondent 2.
Respondent 2 analyzes the data based on historical events, what happened before determines future decisions. Respondent 2 also analyzes data to develop scenarios and then select the most feasible scenario.

**Social media**

Respondent 2 work predominantly with the social medias Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat, in that order ranging from used more to less. Respondent 2 thinks that social media almost ought to be its own discipline however, it is also pointed out that it is still the same engagement rhetoric that drives engagement in social media channels as it is in other channels.

Respondent 2’s company usually segment the target audience based on demographic aspects when it comes to reach. However, if the target audience is already quite narrow, for example based on a geographical location, then Respondent 2 usually do not segment the target audience further. Respondent 2 points out that if they were to segment the audience, the segments would be too small, and due to the low cost of advertise using Facebook there are further no need for them to segment

The reason for why clients want to be active on social media is, according to Respondent 2, because it is a cost-effective marketing tool, for example using Facebook ad-manager to buy and monitor advertisement.

**Social media strategy**

The clients of Respondent 2 usually have a brief that they present to Respondent 2, and from that brief structured marketing processes are defined, including key activities. Usually there is a solid brand-platform and communication strategy, inside the brand-platform there are values that ought to be highlighted. Respondent 2 says it is important to follow up and measure the performance once a year. It is also important to make sure all the campaigns and activities are relevant to the marketing processes, says Respondent 2.

Respondent 2 is skeptical to developing strategies in social media and the paperwork involved in any type of strategies, hence Respondent 2 prefer to use of marketing plans instead due to that plans are usually not as extensive in nature. To achieve reach in social media channels, it is important to be aware that it costs to be visible. It is simply not enough to post content, rather money is always involved, argues Respondent 2. Also, the social media strategy must relate to the overall business strategy, says Respondent 2.

Respondent 2 says the goals of social media strategies can vary quite much from client to client. It could be a concrete goal for example to extend the reach or attain more followers, which is easy to measure. Although, often clients have too many objectives that both time and resources are not enough, and then the goals and activities must be prioritized based on sort of a market plan which is based on the brand-platform. Often time there are some sort of obstacle to reach the goal, then the objective is to get around it. And how to get around the obstacle is to attain insights about the targeted audience, the more exact insights the better solution, argues Respondent 2.

Conversion rate is often a goal and what drives conversion better for a specific brand varies, for example Respondent 2 says social media as a marketing tool is cheap enough for trail-and-error that it can be money well spent to produce ten different
advertisements and analyze which drives conversion the best. For some brands it works very well to spend much money on adverts to achieve reach, especially brands and products with low engagement level. The client’s social media strategy, marketing strategy and firm strategy must all be relevant to the brand-platform, and must be well structured through a strategic basis, says Respondent 2, and it is only then the main theme will be prevalent.

**Engagement**
Respondent 2 says it is more important to invest the time to develop quality content than purchasing the visibility. It is also important understand what drives engagement relevant to the brand-platform, and to be more in-depth what content drives engagement. If done correctly the organic reach, with the help of sponsored, will multiply the reach.

Engagement on social media can range from a simple like or a share to more complex actions for example to submit a recipe or a picture. Respondent 2 says the there are three key to drive engagement: (1) an engaging message, (2) ease of participation, and (3) feedback. An example of how important feedback is, take child sponsorship programs, it is simply the feedback that motivates for continued action, argues Respondent 2. To find out what drives engagement for the moment, Respondent 2 says a good way to find out is to look at what others are doing, and analyze market data. In order to find out what it is that engage users Respondent 2 is using market data to some extent in the form of surveys, however, Respondent 2 is usually relying on past experiences rather than raw data.

**Trends**
Respondent 2 wants to see more disciplines in the professional marketing world, for example disciplines from behavioral sciences instead of relying so heavily on market data.

**4.2 Respondent 3**

Sarita Nath  
Marketing & Communication Strategist  
Pondus Kommunikation

Sarita studied the international marketing program at Umeå University and has also studied in the U.S where she earned an MBA degree. Sarita has work experiences from different advertising agencies. She has also worked as a product specialist and has had the client role working with agencies. Sarita has worked at Pondus for two years and is working mainly with communications and marketing strategies.

Pondus is an agency that has been around for about 25 years. They have customers all over Sweden and operate in many industries and sectors. Except working with digital strategies they also do brand platforms, marketing strategies, branding, design, CSR, writing texts, making webs, magazines and movies.

**Data insights**
Respondent 3 is working with all data she can get from social media platforms such as Facebook where she look at interactions such as likes, comments, shares. If it is a
sponsored posts she look at the number of impressions, both unique and total. If it is a video she look at for how long did the user look at the video and how many has seen it.

Respondent 3 work together with an external media agency that provide them with data from Sweden’s largest data base. This media agency is used when she wants to optimize campaigns and be able to reach the targeted group and get statistics of it. Google Analytics is also used for the webb. The purpose of being present on social media will decide what data to use. Questions like what is the purpose of this campaign and why should we buy ads arises and out of questions like those they decide what type of data to use.

Another thing to bear in mind is to consider where to upload a company’s videos. Respondent 3 explain it is important to think strategically when choosing platform for video content on order to get the statistics in one place. One example is to use YouTube for all videos and then link to that from for example the webpage instead of uploading the video on the webpage and then on YouTube.

In collaboration with the media agency Respondent 3 does the data analysis out of the parameters that the respondent has provided the media agency with. In other words when the respondent get the analysis she interpret it in how to make the creative part of how the banner should look like for example or how the display ad should look like. Facebook data is used to look at where the users are coming from, what pages are they visiting and for how long are they there. Analysing of sponsored and organic posts is also a part of the process.

Respondent 3 work a lot with programmatic buying on social media where you can arrange so only your targeted group will be the ones that see your ads. When using programmatic buying you usually segment on demographics, interests, followers and friends of followers. Sometimes the segments are super niched and sometimes they are broader. Programmatic buying enables the clients to spend money on ads just for their specific target group.

**Social media**

Respondent 3 is working mainly with Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, and is working less with Snapchat, Kik and Twitter. Respondent 3 mostly do segmentation out of geographic and demographic variables like gender and age. However, she also do some psychographic segmentation based on for example interests or behavior. Interests is something that is used a lot on for example Facebook where you also can segment on friends of friends and things like that.

In comparison to the traditional channels where it can be harder to reach a majority of a targeted group Respondent 3 says that the majority of a target group can easier be reached through digital channels especially since Facebook has reached a high number of elderly people. The benefits of the digital channels are that they are easier to measure, you can real time results and it is cost-effective. The purpose is usually to build brand awareness but also to establish a presence online, be available online, and show offerings. It is also another way for them to reach their target group. Some clients choose advertise on social media like Facebook and Instagram instead of advertise in traditional newspapers or they go more to banner advertising or different types of displays or programmatic purchases rather than choosing the traditional channels.
When the client reach out to Respondent 3 they usually know which their target group is. The respondent can then use web analytics to confirm that the target group really is what the client think it is, and sometimes it is and sometimes it is not.

**Social media strategy**

When developing strategy for social media Respondent 3 start by looking at the client’s needs and focus on the dialogue with the client, and discusses the purpose of being present on social media. Respondent 3 do not necessarily look at the overall business strategy but do a background check-up of the company. That include checking out the company’s webpage and social media pages and also the marketing plan, what type of marketing activities are in the loop, how does the presence in social media look like and so on. The purpose of being online is discussed. It is not always that the clients have a clear marketing strategy and then they need to start with that. How much time the client can put on marketing in social media is also discussed.

If also the segmentation and target groups are unclear they do that followed by defining goals for the social media strategy and how are they going to reach these goals. After that the posts are being discussed in terms of tonality, image selection, what should we target, what should we write about and what should we not write about because that is as important as what we should write about. A content plan is established and discussions about how many posts there should be each week is also discussed and should the posts be similar or totally different and least how should the goals be measured. The measurement can include both long term and short term goals. It can be how you want the posts to perform.

Respondent 3 almost always recommend her clients to be on Facebook because almost everyone are present there, she wants to recall that in 2015 92% of Sweden's population was present on Facebook, at least in the younger age around the ages of 18-24. At least for the brand management Facebook is one of the best social media sites. Depending on the type of company the respondent recommend Instagram if the client have time for creating content since it is quite time consuming to take pictures and videos. If the company have products they want to show she also recommend Instagram. When it comes to the analytics the clients usually lack in knowledge of how to read the data. Then they usually buy that service from Respondent 3 and the respondent handle that and also the buying of ads and sponsored posts.

When working with defining goals for the social media strategy Respondent 3 start by looking at previous posts, how they have looked like, what types of posts it has been and the success of them. She also look at which posts has generated more interaction and which of them have not generated that good of engagement, is there a pattern and so on. A lot of focus is put on what has happened before. It is also important to listen to the client and come to a conclusion of what is possible and what is not possible as well as educate them.

A common goal is to increase the number of followers and likes. Respondent 3 usually set up those goals because if a company should be on social media then she mean that the purpose is to have followers and likes. Then there are always the possibility to buy reach on terms of sponsored posts in order to reach a broader target group. The goals
are also very controlled by the devoted budget for social media. How much is the company willing to spend on campaigns on social media for example.

It is kind of like a funnel with the company's purpose, vision and mission work as the backbone of the company in other words that is why they exist, it is their purpose and their value base. Brand platforms or market strategies will emerge as well as the brand strategy and out of that emerge a digital strategy and also sometimes a print strategy. They are all build upon each other and will eventually funnel.

**Engagement**
Engagement is important because it is a type of evidence of what you are doing is good or bad. Not all posts are made for creating engagement, some posts are just to show the company’s values.

In the beginning when you try to create engagement it is some trial and error. You try some posts and analyze it as it goes to see what is working and what is not working. Usually we try different copies and visuals to see what creates most engagement. It is important to differentiate posts on different platforms so you do not post the same things on the different platforms. It is also important to make posts that the followers can benefit from. Respondent 3 do not see as much engagement on Instagram, it is not as much shares and comments on that platform. Even though we do not see as much engagement there it is a great platform to show your products at. Respondent 3 does not use data in order to find out what it is that engage their audience on social media, they can however do it but they have never got a request for it. When the respondent get a new client they usually look at the history of the previous posts, which posts has generated more interactions than others and is there a pattern.

Since the digital channels are so packed with messages from all over you need to be more edgy in these channels and therefore most of the content for the traditional channels does not work in the digital channels. Mostly because you do not have as much time to reach out with the message as you have in the traditional channels. Respondent 3 have seen an huge increase in engagement on moving image and they have invested a lot in that the last year.

**Trends**
The use of data is getting more popular and the outcome is being more relied on. Because of the huge amount of data that is available makes it easier to measure and the measurements are often very well founded. It is also getting more common that businesses start to sell data to each other in order to get more insights.

4.3 Respondent 4a and 4b
Peter Laflin
Chief Data Scientist (Respondent 4a)

Adam Pawson
Account Director (Respondent 4b)

Bloom Agency
Peter is a mathematician and is working as Chief Data Scientist at Bloom Agency. After he finished his academics he went into marketing. During the beginning of 2000 he found very quickly marketers’ potential use of numbers and data and saw his chance to help and improve with his expertise in the area. He has spent a large part of his career focusing on the use of data in marketing. Before he joined Bloom Agency in 2011 he ran a number of high profile campaigns, and had a number of database management roles. Today he helps marketers understand the value of social media.

Adam has been working at Bloom Agency for about two and a half years, currently working as Account Director. He has been working with data throughout his career, from search PPC data through display impressions, social media data and digital marketing data. At Bloom Agency he sits within the pitch team. His role is as strategic consultant and he bridges the gap between data and insights to provide recommendations to clients.

At Bloom Agency they instinctively embrace discovery and celebrated change, helping clients stay one step ahead of the competition and evolve to the world and the customers around them. Today, data, creative, digital and social experts work collaboratively to deliver great work. Planning and processes built on unique data and insight tools, are at the heart of the firm, invented by Bloom Agency to help brands tell their stories and engage with their customers. (http://www.bloomagency.co.uk/about/)

**Data insights**

They work predominantly with social media data from all various platforms. Which includes data from Twitter and Facebook where Twitter data is more readily available. They also have a number of data collecting platforms themselves which collects digital data. A few platforms that, through cookie technology can harness the browsing behavior of individuals, it is all consentive, so the privacy policies are open and makes sure that the user is aware of the data captured from various websites. They also work with transactional data, that includes e-commerce data from, for example e-commerce retailer.

They also deal with behavioral data, they sit on a number of data-sets that help them understand peoples’ attitudes, beliefs and needs. They try to merge all these data-sets together in different ways for clients with different problems. They argue that there is very much data available, and that not one single data source can provide enough information to properly answer questions. What they are trying to do is taking disparate data sources that are essentially about the same thing and merge the data together. They work on a lot of problems that help them merge data sets together, so that they join transactional data with social data for example.

They are trying to prove the value in social media data, that you can tie social media data to harder metrics. Some data has to be licensed to a cost, whereas Facebook and Twitter will give you access to different data lays at different prices. Bloom Agency have quite a large data management practice in the business where actually often the challenges are in accessing the data in the first place and putting it into a form that they can start to work with. In order to determine what data to analyze they have developed algorithms, which is taking in raw data and transforms it. Quite often the data is not in a form that you can readily analyze and often with transactional data you just get a dump of things that happen at a certain time point. In order to analyze the data in conjunction
with other data-sets, like social data, they have to go through what they call a data transformation process and then they apply various modeling processes to the data, ultimately looking to explain how one variable is related to another. A team of experienced consultants take the output of those algorithms and interpret it and explains what it means for the clients, for example how the clients can use the data and helps the clients with implementation.

**Social media**
Respondent 4a explains that they analyze social media data in order to find different types of users. They are trying to build a behavior model to understand why the individuals that they are interested in are doing the things they are doing. In social media Respondent 4a and 4b have a number of behaviors that they classify every individual in within a conversation. They work with influencers and have a variety of technology that helps them find influencers in social media.

There are significant differences between the traditional offline behavior and the behaviors you can measure online. It is important to understand the measured behavior online, what is driving that, and is that real behavior or is that subject to some kind of psychological bias by the process of the fact that you are being online in the first place. Respondent 4a thinks there is a clear bias in online and offline behavior. People through social media have a number of reasons why they engage on social media, one is to present a true form of themselves, the other is to present a form of themselves that they want other people to see. (Respondent 4a) Online you are consciously aware that other people can see what you are saying and how you are acting so some people start to go and change that they did to fit the behavior that they think other people expect rather than their true behavior.

Some clients of Bloom Agency want help to optimize the social media elements of an integrated campaign, and at other times help clients understand their target audience by utilizing social media to better understand the target audience’s behavior, interests and drivers of engagement, and then, for example, apply that insight to a campaign that is not directly run on social media.

**Social media strategies**
At Bloom Agency marketers and mathematicians work closely together and they do both the strategy development and the creatives. The mathematicians are helping marketers understand cause-and-effect in social media marketing, and they have done that through mixing the skills of a marketer with the practical skills of a mathematician. Everyone at Bloom are genuinely interested in turning data into value for clients and they do not expect marketers to have a background in large scale data and therefore analytic professionals bridge that gap. In this way marketers can get added value from the project and the campaigns that they run.

> "Many marketeers have an interest in data analytics and know that it’s a really important part of their job. Most marketeers want actionable insight from data but they don’t have the time or resources to help them get actionable insight from the raw data. Our job is to help turn raw data into valuable insight which helps marketeers understand what to do next to achieve their objectives"

- Respondent 4a
It is very important to understand clients' problems. Respondent 4a describe the classical Henry Ford situation where he asked people what they wanted and they asked for a faster horse and he gave them a car.

There is a similar situation here in that if the respondents we expected their clients to ask them specifically to the things for what they were gonna do for the clients, they would waste a lot of time. That’s with no disrespect what so ever to the clients, it’s just that as analysts we (Respondent 4q) speak a different language than marketers for most of the time. There’s a shared volume of understanding, specifically around digital marketing where actually the two disciplines are coming much more closer together. It’s about understanding what the client is trying to achieve, it’s about trying to understand where the client is coming from, and then trying to do some explorative data analysis on some sample data to get a feeling of where Bloom Agency could be of most help. They always try to go through this sort of discovery phase. Discovery is very important to their business, and it’s about trying to take the clients on a journey from the beginning when they approached Bloom Agency to the end. That might take six weeks - two months, sometimes it could be shorter than that, but often it could be up to two months of work where they are just trying to tease out exactly the thing that going to be of most value.

Respondent 4a’s team produce insights, and then Respondent 4b is using that insights to provide a number of strategic recommendations for the client to implement. The insights could for example be the audience behavior and build recommendations like how to target the audience for example using influencers. Respondent 4b will then work with the client over the next three to six months to make sure the strategy is implemented in the right way. and then the respondents (a,b) come back in six months’ time and measure and sort of quantify the impact of those recommendations.

Respondent 4a highlight that analysts and marketers have different core skills and that it is unusual to find individuals that can bridge marketing and analytics perfectly and cover everything. While marketers think more in creative concepts, analysts on the other hand think more about what model or formula they can apply or what code they can run. That is why it is so important to to get the translation of the analytics right in the later phase of the process and why Respondent 4a and 4b spend a lot of time with their clients in the beginning of the project.

At Bloom Agency they also do standard reporting in terms of counting, helping clients to understand numbers in for example different departments at larger organizations where they want each department to measure and count thing in the same way. “For example, if I were to say to you: “I have measured an engagement rate”, that could mean very different things to different people, what we counting as engagement, are we counting tweets and retweet or are we just counting tweet or only retweets?” (Respondent 4a)

Therefore when working with social media data they often make sure that they have placed a standard that allows them to understand when they count something they know exactly what they are counting. For some clients they go beyond counting, so rather than just checking and putting numbers in a spreadsheet, they start to understand why is this happening when this has been happening, cause and effects.
A few years ago most focus was on softer metrics and Respondent 4a describes that they trying to go away from these kind of metrics like a number of engagements (e.g. likes, reposts) on social media. Now they are trying to take a step back from that to get a broader picture by for example asking themselves, What does the client actually want because 10 000 engagements is just great for social engagement but is it going to solve our problems for example. Now Respondent 4a and 4b try to ask larger questions like “yes we got 10 000 engagements but would you also like to see an uplift in sales 20%?”

The respondents try to be more creative in the strategy development to work towards more harder goals or business objectives as opposed to softer marketing metrics which are very straightforward to achieve. The respondents (4a & 4b) are looking into how clients can use social media and the marketing chart to achieve business goals in order identifying the bigger picture as well as the clients more secondary picture and softer metrics.

Respondent 4a says that they can take harder metrics to apply that to social media metrics. They can estimate the return on investment based on offline sales data for clients, for example if a client sees an increase in demand due to a campaign, then the strategy should be to increase conversation regarding that brand in social media channels. Respondent 4b says that it is easier to give recommendations to a recurrent client, because the first time you work with a client you learn very much about them, hence making it easier to give clear recommendations about future strategies. It is important that everything that is reported back to the client is in a format and language that they can understand, says Respondent 4b. Respondent 4a says that there has been interesting and technically adapted pieces of work done for clients, but has not gotten any value from because the clients could not understand it.

Clients often want to measure the amount of engagement or re-tweets, but what is more important is how the social media activities can generate more awareness and positive brand sentiment says Respondent 4b, and also how these can increase in sales or leads that connects with your business goals. The question that must be answered is what the actual benefit of social media has to the business, for example does the business attaining more sales, retaining their customers etc.

**Engagement**

They can use social media data to help see changes in peoples’ behavior and then when they merge that into transactional data that the brand has as a closed data-set, they are able to link things together to be able to see if people start talking more in social media, and then turn that into increased sales. The respondents (4a & 4b) can from social media data categorize behavior and from that be able to recommend a different strategy that will encourage people with that specific type of behavior to evolve in a conversation with a piece of content that is created specific for the type of behavior.

Some of their clients that they have active projects for want to know if people are talking more about their particular deals for example, they look into if more people buy those deals in the stores. That is one described problem area, they do work in other areas like trying to identify lapses from customer bases, for example get a lot of repeat visitors to a website, they can identify who are just there to browse and who are going to purchase. Important there is across the entire customer database can they build a predictive model that might tell them which of those customers are the most likely to
not come back to purchase again, because if we they understand things like we can change our marketing activities, they might run a specific campaign for just those individuals that they identified as being a high risk of lapsing.

**Trends**
Respondent 4a sees that the concept of open data is becoming much more prevalent globally. Respondent 4a thinks we are moving from a marketplace where everything have to be bought and licensed, to more of a hybrid. Respondent 4a believes that in the data marketplace, data aggregators are going to be the most interesting businesses to look at over the coming years.

Respondent 4a think there will be a lot of companies emerging over the next five years who do quite a bit of that pre-processing for you, so that it’s much easier for you to just come along and pick that data up and then apply some of the models to it. Especially with the rise of the artificial intelligence platforms where you can essentially hire a machine to do some machine learning for you and not having to understand it.

Respondent 4a also think that the market place is realizing that there are a number of different disciplines in it and the marketers need to be good in analytics and need good insight in order to make better decisions and that the process of doing that is a little bit more evolved than providing them with the output from mathematical models.

Respondent 4b see a trend in how brands can utilize the data within SnapChat like they have been doing with Facebook for example in terms of how you can highly target very specific demographics of people. So how can brands utilize that from a marketing perspective if they have not got very much of video content? This is something Respondent 4b think that we will see more of in the future.

**4.4 Respondent 5**
Jakob Mjöbring  
Digital Strategist  
Punkt PR

Jakob is from the start a journalist, educated at the University of Gothenburg and has been working for Sveriges Radio. Jakob has been active in the communications industry since the late 90s, tackled roles like copy, project manager, production manager, and been working at Umeå University with marketing. In 2013 won a gold medal in Sweden's most renowned PR-competition, Spinn. And on top of that has authored two novels.

Punkt PR is part of Norrland 2.0, and are experts in strategic communication and engaging driven content. Punkt PR is a member of GlobalCom PR Network, which is an international public relations network.

**Data insights**
The data Respondent 5 is mainly working with data that is connected to increase brand awareness, preference, and brand, but also data concerned with message reach and engagement. However, Respondent 5 points out that they do work with any type of data they can get their hands on.
Advertisement tools found on social media is also very helpful to target an audience. Respondent 5 argues that Facebook’s advertising tools are the best and cannot be compared, to how exact they can target an intended audience, to banner and display advertisement. Respondent 5 says what determines the type of data to analyze is dependent on the social media channel, usually the data to be analyzed is concerned with engagement and reach. The cornerstone is how many have been engaged and how many the message reached, argues Respondent 5.

Respondent 5 has recently developed their own data index for Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn where they can follow the engagement level correlated with the number of followers. The point about the index is that it reveals the engagement level regardless of an increase of followers. The index will last long and be relevant as the social media channels grow, says Respondent 5. The good thing about data is that it is black on white, says Respondent 5. The results derived from the data, says Respondent 5 is used to support their recommendations to their clients.

Social media
The social media that Respondent 5 work with is mainly Facebook and Instagram. Respondent 5 is identifying the target audience more based on their interests than on demographical aspects. To find information about the target audience, Respondent 5 says insights are very important. The reason to be active on social media, says Respondent 5, is to be able to reach the target audience and to get a good spread on the message, it is also a good tool to build brand awareness, thus increasing revenue. Other reasons as to why being active in social media is the ease of targeting your audience with your advertisement, and utilize influencers’ followers.

Social media strategy
Often the clients already have a social media account, says Respondent 5, however they do not always know the reason why they have a social media page and struggle to attain results. Respondent 5 also says clients often have a difficult time to find relevance in what they are doing on social media to the company in general. Respondent 5 work with social media in a proactive way, giving recommendations to their clients, giving feedback, and ultimately trying to educate their clients in how to be better at using social media in a long-term and sustainable way, where the goal is often that the clients should be able to manage their own communication. At other times Respondent 5 is managing their clients’ social media communication hands-on, or a combination of hand-on and giving recommendations based on analysis.

Respondent 5 prefer to set the goals and start their client’s social media strategy from scratch, but often the client have set the goals or parts of it already. If the client have a social media strategy, the work of Respondent 5 is then to collect the statistics, make qualitative interview with the clients and then analyze the results and give recommendations based on that. Sometimes the clients lack the resources needed to maintain all social media channels, hence need to scaled down or combining common areas and make it more manageable. If channels are to be combined, then possible consequences and other outcomes must be analyzed first before a decision has been reached.

Respondent 5 points out that, from experience, has seen companies bought a social media strategy that has not been properly implemented, that is one area that need
attention, to be able to have all employees understanding and striving towards a common goal. It is also very important to find relevance between the company strategy and the social media strategy. The strategy for social media presence is based on the goals that the clients want to achieve, and on the resources, for example what can be achieved. Oftentimes, the person managing the social media has no one to report to, therefore claims Respondent 5 that it is important to regularly report the goals and to check that parts of the goals has been fulfilled. By regularly report, Respondent 5 claims that it becomes easier to fulfill the goals within the timeframe.

When it comes to define the goals for the social media strategy, says Respondent 5 that it can vary depending on who the goals are to be set for. For example, PR might need goals that define engagement and reach, while goals that fulfil the organization’s general goals must be defined as well. The question to ask is if each activity will fulfill the goal. Often Respondent 5 will consult their clients regarding the goals on social media, however most of the clients have a business goals but lack communication goals. Respondent 5 says there are many goals on the way to reach the social media goals, often the goal setting is conducted incrementally. The most important in the goal setting process argues Respondent 5 is to have the client’s whole organization understand why they are on social media.

The connection between the client’s social media, marketing and firm strategy do not always connect rather well, argues Respondent 5, but they ought to be today, and it is not even sure that the client will attain a relevant connection between the strategies.

**Engagement**

When people engage in content, that content will then also attain reach, says Respondent 5, engagement is the core. Engagement is about long-term relations with the target audience, says Respondent 5, and that is why they measure and analyze to be able to create engaging content for the intended audience. One way to get engaged followers on social media is to be active, and always try to create content that is appealing to the target audience. Respondent 5 do analyze data to understand what drives engagement of the target audience, and to understand how to build a relationship with the target audience. To find out what drives engagement, Respondent 5 says that insights regarding how the audience have reacted to previous content is very helpful. To understand what to measure in social media is not an obstacle, says Respondent 5, usually it is quite straightforward, however, the clients might not always know.

**Trends**

The trend Respondent 5 sees is the extended use of Facebook, the use of buying and selling on Facebook, the ease of use compared to a website and therefore some organizations might utilize Facebook instead of having a website. We are seeing Facebook creating its own universe, says Respondent 5, where you do not have to leave it.

4.5 Respondent 6

Christoffer Danell
Media Strategist
Context Media
Christoffer has several years of experience in media sales and has also been working in more technical professions. Christoffer has also working experience from abroad and is technology-oriented.

Christoffer started Context Media together with a companion 2014 and have representatives all over Sweden. They help customers with analysis of data in terms of optimizing banners and online ads, how to find out and reach target groups, how target groups consume all different types of media, both online and offline.

Data insights
Respondent 6 work daily with data from Sweden's largest database, which consist of market-, media-, and consumer-surveys. He also work with data that customers provide, for example through CRM systems or sales data. Sometimes clients does not even realize how much data they actually have themselves.

Purpose and goals are deciding what types of data to use. Questions like why are we doing this? and why are we going to analyze data? At Facebook you can also see if how relevant your ad’s communication is for your audience and if it get a low rate you know that you should change the ad. If they for example are planning to buy banner ads they analyze the targeted groups interested and life phase, out of the data of the targeted group they decide which banners to buy and to whom to target according to the data about for example psychographics. When a person with the set psychographics visit a page they will see the ad that the respondent has chosen to be shown out of those parameters. They are using data to help clients find their target group but also potential secondary groups.

There are also some risks when analysing data. It is important to be careful since the data can show the results of what you have done and does not necessarily mirror what you wish to achieve. Respondent 6 is mostly working with programmatic buying where Facebook is a good example of where clients can buy programmatic ads. You can for example tell Facebook to optimize an ad and how much you are willing to pay for it. If you want to control the parameters of who the ad should reach you can set them yourself instead of letting Facebook decide. For example I want to reach men between 25 and 30 who lives in Umeå and when those conditions are met I am willing to pay this much. A good thing with analytics is that you get real time feedback on for example campaigns. If a campaign is not going well and you need to adjust it you can do it right away.

Social media
Respondent 6 is working mostly with Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. On these platforms they are focusing on reach and frequency since they are working mostly with programmatic buying. Brand awareness is also something respondent 6 mention is important for brands and a reason for being active online. Especially if a brand got bad reviews and you don’t know much about the brand you rather not pick that one but can pick another brand which you are more familiar with even it they also have got bad reviews.

When identifying users the respondent 6 uses demographics, geographics and psychographics, especially behavior, phases in life and interests. When Respondent 6 has a target group he search in Sweden’s largest database to get information of for
example what kind of media the targeted group consume or what they think about certain things. Since that database has an enormous amount of data regarding things they have asked Sweden’s population about he usually find what he searches for there.

Respondent 6 also work a lot with web- analytics. He explain that they sometime look for a so called twin-behavior which means that people usually behave similar as their closest family and friends. When the respondent finds a behavior that stands out he tries to find a possibility for some other person with the same behavior if they would like the same things or products. They also use Facebook data and client's own data to identify users on social media. Respondent 6 is trying to get insights about those who visit their client’s website and often the traffic comes from social media and therefor can use the data from social media in order to find out about their clients customers.

Engagement
It is very important to engage people on social media. It is not very common that organic content get more dispersion than paid ads but very rarely it happens with video content. It almost never happens that organic content get viral it is usually a lot of money behind the viral success that has been spent on paid ads. Since respondent 6 does not work with creating content they do not look at engagement parameters like shares and like they only consider how many people have received this content and did the right audience recive it. The constantly seek to optimize the reach of the content and to the lowest cost possible. While the PR agencies try to create the best communication in the content so people get eager to share it, sometimes this is done through influencers.

At Facebook you can also see how relevant your ad’s communication is for your audience and if it get a low rate you know that you should change the ad. Respondent 6 has never used data in order to find out what it is that engage users on social media since they do not create content themselves.

Trends
Respondent 6 believes that programmatic buying will increase and become more popular when publishers will realize how much money they can earn on programmatic buying. He means that today the knowledge is quite low both among agencies and clients. The marketing is not yet mature for programmatic but will be in the future.

Respondent 6 also thinks that marketer will expand their views regarding last click conversions. Instead of only looking at the last click before purchase, look at the whole journey, from the first click to the last. In the future respondent 6 sees that the online and offline channels will merge better and more effectively than they are doing today. He also believes that working with data such as text analysis of social media sites will grow and get more common among PR agencies. However, among media agencies data analysis will grow. He also think that TV ads will be more integrated with online ads through data driven initiatives.

4.6 Respondent 7
Krishna Gustavsson
Product Manager
*Undisclosed*
Krishna has a degree in Business and Economics. He is a product manager and has several years of experience in marketing and sales.

Respondent 7 has been working with companies that develop technology platforms for advertisers where data is utilized for programmatic buying.

**Data insights**

Respondent 7 work mostly with programmatic buying. There are two perspectives. One is from the publisher’s side who sell their views programmatically, through bidding. The other is advertisers who can buy ad views in the same way, both of them need a platform. They have their own platform in which they collect data and also attain data from a large Swedish data collector, with this data they can run probability-testing on different target groups. Respondent 7 has been working with a company that developed a DSP (Demand Side Platform) which advertisers can use to buy ad-views that they think would fit their specific ads. The data analysis will enable that the ad view will fit specific requirements, in contrast to where previously ads were bought for a target audience through a “buy media”. Respondent 7 explains that Facebook ad-manager is a type of programmatic tool where you buy ad-views out of demographics and interest parameters.

Respondent 7 describes that he sees marketing activities on social media as classical word of mouth marketing and imagines that there is a greater connection between common sense and data used on social media. Respondent 7 describes that if a celebrity writes about a product he is able to see from the data if the product has sold more since that celebrity wrote about it. It is then possible to link that data directly to the campaign and see the different outcomes. As soon as you have such incentives, you can start working more in detail and compare campaigns with each other. Respondent 7 also mention that there is a general confusion regarding what data is. Respondent 7 does not help clients to interpret the data, it would take too much time instead this is something that the media agencies do.

Respondent 7 sees a knowledge gap when it comes to handling data and social media, for example the wrong type of data is often connected to social media activities. This is due to a lack of knowledge in data analysis among marketers and the lack of knowledge in marketing among those who buy ads and has more technical knowledge. Respondent 7 also mention that the laws in Sweden and the EU has been regulated regarding storage of data regarding individuals and that is why the laws of cookies exist. Respondent 7 does not work with text analysis in social media, but believes that there are much more to explore and work with in that area.

**Social media**

So-called personas or profiles is something that Respondent 7 is working with, where the personas are clustered correlated to their online behavior. From that analysis they can also determine probabilities based on demographic variables. Respondent 7 does not see any difference regarding the purpose of being active on social media as any other media channels. It is an opportunity to spread one's message and depending on how good the advertising agency is working with the campaign thus the outcome will differ.

**Engagement**
Respondent 7 does not analyze data in order to find out what engage customers on social media. However, he problematizes that it can be difficult to measure how many people a message has reached since people can actually see an ad and take on a message without clicking on it. Respondent 7 has also experienced campaigns where they have tried out different copies in order to see and measure which ones that creates the most engagement.

4.7 Respondent 8

Anonymous
Data Scientist
United Minds/Prime Group

Respondent 8 has a background in mathematical statistics and has worked a lot with statistics in previous professions. Today Respondent 8 works at Prime and United Minds with social media, text analysis and image analysis, all open data that is related to online activities, for example public pages, public forums and places where people communicate online.

United Minds is a part of Prime Group, a leading communication agency in Europe. Based in Stockholm, Sweden, the group consists of more than 100 specialists in all aspects of marketing, corporate communications, public affairs, digital media, business intelligence, planning and strategic counseling. (United Minds, 2017)

Data insights
Respondent 8 works, among other things, with text and image analysis, for example with specific event that has occurred that a client want to know more about. During this event the activities on social media will increase and then the client wants to know about what types of activities are going on, what are people talking about and so on. In order to be able to analyze, Respondent 8 collects data from social media sites and analyzes it in statistical programming software.

In text analysis Respondent 8 is usually looking for patterns for example how often something occur during a period of time. It can be all sort of things like what is people writing about regarding this specific sports event or what do they say regarding the housing market for example. Through this type of analysis respondent 8 can find subjects among others that occurs more or less often and when something occur it has this intensity and it is a hot topic for this many days etc. It can for example be output, time axis, frequency and intensity, diverging semantic things in news texts. On Facebook it can be a brand that is interested in how the activities on their Facebook page look and how the activities on a competitor's Facebook page look like. In this type of analysis it is important to look at the administrators rather than the users or followers since you want to explore how often they make updates on the page, how fast they are answering questions, how much text they are using in posts, to which extent they use links in posts, and then they also look at the engagement level.

Regarding image analysis respondent 8 analyze images like a person would do manually but instead using software in a much larger scale. An example is pictures of homes, where Respondent 8 might see that the images often show furniture and not persons or vice versa. They do this type of analysis on thousands of images and texts. It is very unusual that they buy data most of the times they get the data for free through
the different social media platforms API’s (application program interface). API is a type of channel from where respondent 8 can download data from for example Facebook and Twitter. Most data that respondent 8 work with is open and free for the public. There are two rules of thumb that Respondent 8 always follows, these are that the data should be easy to access and it should be representative. By “easy to access” Respondent 8 mean that the data should not take weeks to find and should be easy to verify, and by “representative” that the data should represent the population you want to look at.

“For example in Sweden is Twitter easy to access but not that representative since it just a few people in Sweden using it, and even fewer who are active on that platform. Instagram on the other hand is a great platform for image analysis however it is not so easy to access data from there.”
- Respondent 8

Sometimes clients have their own data. It is important to understand what you want to do and to take data that is as representative of the issue as possible and never shape the results that you think are interesting. To let the data speak for itself is fundamentally important.

When meeting the client for the first time respondent 8 explain that it is important to create a relaxed and collegial relationship. This is important because it might be a bit hard to go through abstract things like data analysis with the client. Therefore when discussing the opportunities regarding data analysis it is important to establish a good and relaxed relation.

Respondent 8 explain that the interpretation of the data is as important as the previous steps in the data analysis process. When respondent 8 has analyzed data it take some time to process and make the results understandable for the client, because it is not always clear for the client how to use the results. It is usually in this step where the client is trying to interpret the results that too little time is spent. It requires that you are prepared for different outputs or results since you do not know what to expect. Respondent 8 describes that one can never put too much time in trying to understand exactly what the client is searching for in the data analysis. One way of reaching out to the client, and to be able to understand, is to ask lots of questions like, how is the client going to interpret the results in practice? And how do the client believe that the results will look like? It is also good to describe how different scenarios could turn out. In this way they try to crystallize the working hypothesis as best they can.

Another thing that respondent 8 is seeing as a highly discussed topic is data integrity and the legislation on how to use data, for example how to use and whether you can buy people’s Facebook activities or not. Since most of us are living a large part of our lives online this is a very important topic, explains respondent 8. It is also important to be aware of it. There are laws in the EU, which state that you can not buy and sell data on an individual level which Respondent 8 believe is good, however laws has been changed earlier so those can be changed.

**Social media**
Respondent 8 is working with Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Respondent 8 can by social media data and analysis, segment and identify different target groups. On a more advanced level they can also explore how different groups on social media are engaging
and are active in different ways. Demographics and socioeconomic variables are not used that much since it is difficult to get that type of information in terms of PUL and therefore the users need to give his or hers approval.

Since people spend a lot of time on social media it is a good place for brands to increase their awareness through for example ads. It is also a cost effective channel where you can use different tools to reach out to your specific target groups. It is good for those that do not want to aim their ad to everyone but have a very specific customer base and can therefore aim their ads direct to them and does not have to pay for reach to people who are not in their targeted group.

Engagement
Through text and image analysis is it possible for Respondent 8 to identify what is more and less engaging. For example if a client have had ten different campaigns on Facebook respondent 8 can analyze and map what it is and which of the different campaigns that have created more comments and interactions. It is also possible to map activities that increase users engagement on social media and vice versa, activities that does not engage.

Trends
In the future Respondent 8 believes that more people will get the interested in start using data. The big social media sites will probably also realize even more the true market value of the data that they possess. On the other hand Instagram has already realized this and that is why it has become difficult to access their data.

4.8 Respondent 9
Jakob Rydberg
CEO
Contentbyrån

Jakob has been working with marketing and sales in the advertising and communications for about 20 years, but been working since 1991 where he started as a computer instructor. Jakob was one of the founders of Contentbyrån where he is working today.

Contentbyrån is a firm in Umeå which mainly work with content-marketing. Contentbyrån is working with a network of consultants with a broad knowledge, for example filmmakers, writer, illustrators etc.

Data insights
An aspect of content marketing is to measure the results, and analyze it (Respondent 9). Respondent 9 says that it is possible to track the target audience outside of the sphere of social media, for example Facebook provides a code that is placed on the customer’s website which send back information about the browsing behavior of the targeted audience. The data extracted using Facebook’s own codes is in the form of CTR (click-through rate) and how many views a site have had. The data then can be used to measure, says Respondent 9, how many leads it has generated and how much sales has increased.
It is the KPIs that determines the data to be analyzed says Respondent 9. The results of the analysis of the data, is interpreted as to what can be made different or what has been different, for example about a content that generated more engagement than usually, says Respondent 9.

Social media
Respondent 9 is mainly working with Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat, and Instagram. Respondent 9 identifies target audiences by their behavior through data-analysis, which is called psychographic aspects. Demographic aspects are something Respondent 9 do not use much, they do target the desired audience via Facebook’s demographic parameters. Based on common aspects found from empathy maps, then Respondent 9 segment the target audience based on personas. These personas are often revised so to stay updated of trends and other shifts in behavior. To acquire more information about target audiences, Respondent 9 is also talking to them to verify whether they have the correct understanding of who they are. Respondent 9 says that it is desirable to conduct an in-depth study about the behavior of the target audience, however, there are usually no budget for this and the clients often want to start producing content as soon as possible. Often the clients of Respondent 9 have defined personas, but lack the knowledge of what content drives engagement for that specific persona.

Social media is a very good tool for re-targeting, says Respondent 9, utilizing re-targeting can bring back the customer in an effective way. Respondent 9 argues that social media have an impact indirectly on search engine optimization due to the number of links to websites fund on social media. Respondent 9 work with optimization of organic social media traffic through providing content. Respondent 9 points out that their clients are often sales driven and less of brand building. The goal of being active in social media is usually to increase revenue.

Social media strategy
Respondent 9 do not like to use the term “strategy” for social media, he rather prefers the term “plan”, due to the fast-changing environment of the digital world, for example if a firm has developed a strategy based on social media, and then the next day the policy for that social media changes, then the firm must change their whole strategy. When Respondent 9 develops a social media strategy, the first thing to define is a content strategy in terms of goals and meaning as to what want to be accomplished, and after that starts to produce content in terms of marketing and how to spread that content in social media channels. Respondent 9 says it is important to identify customers that is in the exploring-phase, when they are searching for a product/service through re-targeting.

Often clients of Respondent 9 do not have much experience of social media and therefore hesitate to enter that world, but when the Facebook- “door” opens many realize that there are many interesting things to do there, however, LinkedIn is usually easier to convince clients to use. Respondent 9 is working less with Twitter, and more with Facebook and the ad-manager to advertise. To make better decision it is important to get your hands dirty, argues Respondent 9, by working with social media on an operational level and not only strategically. To develop good strategies for social media, it is important to understand what social media can do for the clients and what goals they have.
When being active in social media channels, Respondent 2 always try to reach the target audience as effectively as possible. The determining factor to choose a social media channels, like Facebook, or exclude it is based on whether the target audience is present in that channel.

Respondent 9 develops goals and strategically selected topics for the content/message, then the operational aspects play a big role in how the strategy is going to play out. Here, Respondent 9 says that they are constantly evaluating the results and then make necessary changes. Respondent 9 points out that it is very important to take part of the campaign till the end. Some clients of Respondent 9 has about 30-50 Facebook pages, a challenge there is how they are going to be managed in terms of having the same tonality across all pages.

Respondent 9 says that what determines the goal-setting is the budget and other resources, and what Respondent 9 think is feasible within the set constraints. Other factors that determine the goals are what the client want to achieve in terms of how their brand is presented in relation to the strategy, which includes tonality in the communication.

Furthermore, Respondent 9 is also determining a set of KPIs (Key Performance Indicator) that are to be measured regularly to see that the outcome is what it is supposed to be, or desired. If the firm has defined a proper firm strategy, argues Respondent 9, then there is no need for a separate social media strategy. Often the link between social media, marketing and firm strategy is nonexistent, says Respondent 9.

**Engagement**

To find out how what drives engagement, at least two set of messages are published and then compared to each other to see which worked better, says Respondent 9. The underlying reason for this is what drives engagement can vary quite much in a short time period, argues Respondent 9. Respondent 9 says that to find out what could drive engagement, they must understand the target audience, for example understanding what motivates them. To understand the target audience, Respondent 9 is utilizing empathy maps to find out what drives engagement. Respondent 9 evaluates the results of the advertisement by analyzing the data extracted from the KPIs to find out what drives engagement.

**Trends**

Respondent 9 says there will be more video advertising in the near future, and firms generally will also be better at utilizing the possibilities of social media marketing argues Respondent 9. Facebook will continue being a big player in the marketing world due to the cost-effective advertising.

**4.9 Respondent 10**

Peter Stopp
CEO
More Data
Peter is the CEO of a firm called More Data and has several years of experience in marketing communications. Peter is also an educator in digital marketing at IHM Business School.

More Data is based in Gothenburg and have eight employees, they help clients reach potential customers through a sales and marketing perspective in digital channels. They help companies to improve marketing ROI with digital strategy, analytic services and solutions for measurement of their marketing performance

**Data insights**

Respondent 10 is working with data for marketing purposes derived from social media. Respondent 10 argues that firms in general are bad at utilizing data-driven marketing where aspects of click and traffic from social media to their website. Respondent 10 argues that there is too much data today and the mission become then to know which data to prioritize.

Because today there are an abundance of data, to understand what to prioritize you must look at the goals and objectives of the business strategy says Respondent 10. When analyzing the data, Respondent 10 says that you must always look at what the firm’s general strategy.

**Social media**

Respondent 10 is mainly active working with Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Snapchat, Twitter. Respondent 10 uses audience mapping that are developed from interviews and other types of research which are then translated into personas. Often clients have a rough personas that needs more development when they come to Respondent 10 for help. Respondent 10 further develop the personas in terms of what drives engagement for that specific audience and how to best reach them. Facebook collects very much data from its users and therefore make it possible for marketers to accurately target an audience using Facebook’s tools, says Respondent 10

**Social media strategy**

When developing strategies for social media, the first to identify the target audience and then analyze them, says Respondent 10, through research and mapping, finding out what drives engagement of the target audience. Respondent 10 is also utilizing qualitative customer interviews to find out more about the target audience’s social media habits, for example which social media they are using and not using. This results into recommendations for the clients of Respondent 10.

Respondent 10 argues for content to achieve great reach, there must be money involved in terms sponsored content or advertising. It is important to be agile when working with social media, which Respondent 10 refers to regularly measuring results and optimizing to achieve the best outcome. The most important is the result of the strategy rather than the reach which is called performance oriented, argues Respondent 10, for example if the reach is greater for one advert but generate less results than an advert that reach fewer but generate more qualitative results.

Often clients of Respondent 10 do not have defined goals as to why they are active in social media, and sometimes do not know if their target audience can be reach there, therefore an important question to answer is in which channels to be active in by
analyzing the target audience. When clients are active in social media, it is important to be active and to drive traffic, both organic and sponsored, for example on Facebook it is more of sponsored and Snapchat is more organic.

The goals are defined in terms of general firm objectives, target audiences, and which in the target audiences are the most important. Respondent 10 says that the social media strategy must connect to the general marketing activities.

**Engagement**
It is important to have good content that the target audience would engage with. To be visible on Facebook, it is a must to sponsor the content or else the content will only reach about 10% of the audience. (Respondent 10) To find out what drives engagement, Respondent 10 says that you must analyzes what the audience would most likely engage with. Respondent 10 analyzes the customer journey from click to purchase to attain a better understanding of the target and to be able to optimize the different parts in that journey. View social media not as a part, but as a part of a whole in the marketing activities, argues Respondent 10.

**Trends**
Respondent 10 says the trends of social media is its fantastic use of the advertising-platform in for example Facebook and Instagram, and the measurability of data derived from social media where it is possible to see the results clearly. A trend is that it is easier to measure concrete results from the social media activities in terms of generated revenue, visits to the site, argues Respondent 10.
5 Presentation of result and analysis

In this chapter the theoretical framework is presented in combination with the empirical results. This is done in a systematic way where the theoretical framework is first presented followed by the empirical findings.

The structure of this chapter follows the structure of our theoretical model (Figure II). First we start by analyzing theories and empirical findings regarding data that has been extracted from previous engagement. What types of data is used in social media marketing and how it is analyzed and interpreted. Thereafter we continue with analyzing theories and empirical findings regarding strategies for social media and how data affect that process. Lastly we analyze theories and empirical findings on engagement that is facilitated by the social media strategy.

5.1 Data driven marketing

In this section we wanted to explore how data is used in marketing on social media. We asked questions regarding what types of data is used, how it is analyzed and how do companies interpret insights from the data analysis. We also wanted to explore what trends the respondents see within this fast developing area.

5.1.1 Data

Chen and Storey (2012, p. 1167) discuss that that the Internet has offered a unique data collection since the early 2000 and most of the analytics technologies are grounded in data mining and statistical analysis which can also be called Big Data (2012, p. 1174). The emergence of social media platforms have increased the availability of customer related data (Kumar et al., 2013, p. 332). When using Big Data, or as in this thesis any kind of data, the focus is on understanding, interpreting, strategizing, and taking action of the insights to further organizational interests (Chen & Storey, 2012, p. 1182). Data from different sources, for example social media, transactional data, and data from surveys, can be used in marketing and also be integrated into analyzing the behavior of consumers. Data analytics can provide better insights for marketers to base their decision-making on. (Fan et al., 2015, p. 28) Data can also be extracted from customer databases which have an important role in data-driven marketing. Analytics tools have increased the variety of data that can be used concerning customers. (Järvinen 2016, p. 40)

In accordance with the litterature review data from social media can among others be used for better target an audience outside of social media, it can for example give information about behavior, interests, and engagement drivers. Social media data can also contribute to optimize social media integrated campaigns. (Respondent 4a; Respondent 4b) Several respondents (Respondent 3; Respondent 4a; Respondent 4b; Respondent 5; Respondent 6; Respondent 9) use data from web-analytics, Facebook data, and clients own data, which can be used to identify users on social media. Respondent 6 is also collecting data from clients website where the traffic often comes directly from social media. Data is also collected from Sweden’s largest database (Respondent 3; Respondent 6). Respondent 8 is analyzing data from social media to segment and identify different target audiences, it is also possible to see how the different audiences on social media are engaging and how active they are. Research in terms of customer surveys are also used as a data collection method (Respondent 2; Respondent 10).
Large and complex data sets require advanced data storage, skills to manage these data sets, and skills of analysis argues Chen and Storey (2012, p. 1166).

Respondent 4a and Respondent 4b have a large data management practice at their firm, and to access the data and transform the data in a way that they can work with can be challenging. Respondent 4a and Respondent 4b have also developed their own platforms which are collecting digital data.

To assess marketing performance it is essential to design a process for refining the metrics into insights and actions. (Järvinen, 2016, p. 58) The metrics selected decide what type of data that should be collected but also what capabilities the business has in terms of methods and tools used for data analysis (Chen & Storey, 2012, p. 1166; Järvinen, 2016, p. 58).

When deciding what data to prioritize and analyze it is important to look at the overall business goals and objectives (Respondent 6; Respondent 10) and the firms KPI’s (Respondent 9), which is in line with Järvinen’s (2016, p. 58) theories.

There are two rules of thumb that Respondent 8 always follows when collecting data, these are that the data should be easy to access and it should be representative. By easy to access Respondent 8 mean that the data should not take weeks to find and should be easy to verify. Being representative mean that the data should represent the population that the company want to look at.

“For example in Sweden is Twitter easy to access but not that representative since it just a few people in Sweden using it, and even fewer who are active on that platform. Instagram on the other hand is a great platform for image analysis however it is not so easy to access data from there.”
- Respondent 8

5.1.2 Data insights
As Fan et al. (2015, p. 28) points out, data-driven marketing is reshaping business intelligence. The aim in data-driven marketing is to inform and optimize the execution of marketing activities through the use of data (Kumar et al., 2013, p. 332). Collecting data insights regarding audiences will provide decision-makers with information about their targeted audience. However, to get a holistic view and be able to more precise target an audience, several heterogenous data sources should be analyzed in conjunction (Fan et al., 2015, p. 28). Data can also be used to measure and optimize social media marketing efforts thus implies that the organization has the right capabilities to manage data analysis (Järvinen, 2016, p. 15). To achieve improvements from data analysis it is important to have a strategic plan for how to use the results from the analysis (Järvinen, 2016, p. 58).

Just as Fan et al. (2015, p. 28) argues regarding analyzing heterogeneous data sources to get a holistic view about an audience, Respondent 4a and Respondent 4b says they work with many heterogenous data sources to be able to properly answer questions regarding marketing activities. Furthermore, Respondent 4a and Respondent 4b points out that there is an abundance of data available nowadays, and Respondent 4a and Respondent 4b merge data-sets, for example with transactional data to get a deeper understanding of
the targeted audience. To manage data, algorithms are used to analyze data, Respondent 4a and Respondent 4b use these types of algorithms because they want to be able to analyze it in conjunction with other data-sets, for example data from social media. The data is going through a data transformation process and ultimately the process can explain how one variable is related to another. The analyzed data that Respondent 4a and Respondent 4b have been able to extract, is then handled to a team of consultants whose job it is to interpret the analysis and make it understandable for clients. Furthermore, all respondents confirms that data can provide important insights regarding targeted audiences for marketing activities.

McAfee and Brynjolfsson (2012, p. 68) has evidence that data-driven decisions tend to be better decisions and leaders that do not embrace that fact will be replaced by people who do. Respondent 4a believes that marketers must become better at analytics for better decision making, which confirms McAfee and Brynjolfsson’s (2012, p. 68) fact about leaders, also include marketers.

5.1.3 Opinion Mining

There are new ways for practitioners and researcher to understand consumers, for example by analyzing UGC, consumers’ opinions expressed online and text-analysis (Pang & Lee, 2008, cited in Chen & Storey, 2012, p. 1169). Opinion mining is the extraction and analysis of opinions expresses on the Internet (Chen & Storey, 2012, p. 1176). Opinion mining can provide better insights, regarding for example specific products, for marketers to base their decisions on (Fan et al., 2015, p. 28). There are different ways to extract consumers’ opinions, this can be achieved through cookie technology where a cookie is stored on a browsing device, and then through analytics it is possible to see clickstreams which reveals the user's browsing and purchasing pattern (Chen & Storey, 2012, p. 1167).

Cookie technology and text-analysis can be used in opinion mining. Cookie technology can extract the browsing pattern of individual Internet browsers (Chen & Storey, 2012, p. 1167) used by Respondent 4a and Respondent 4b, they are also utilizing data-sets to help them understand peoples attitudes, beliefs, and needs. When using text-analysis Respondent 8 is usually looking for patterns in the text and what people are writing about specific events or what people are writing about a competitor’s Facebook page. When analyzing a competitor’s Facebook page, it is important to look at the page administrators to analyze how often the page is updated, how fast they are answering questions, how much text there is in each post, and to look at the engagement level of their audience (Respondent 8).

5.1.4 Programmatic

The fastest growing area in online advertising is programmatic buying, which is popular due to its low cost and effectiveness at targeting an audience rather than traditional media buying, all based on data (Yuan et al., 2013, p. 1; Li & Guan 2014, p. 447). The most widely used tool to measure the effectiveness of programmatically bought ads, is click-through rate (Bayles, 2002, p. 363).

Many experts within marketing is using programmatic buying (Respondent 2; Respondent 3; Respondent 6; & Respondent 7). Programmatic buying is used all over the Internet, and very effectively used in social media, where you can target an audience very specifically, usually based on demographics and interests and have your ads appear
for that audience (Respondent 2; Respondent 3) The audience can be very narrow or it can be broad where programmatic buying enables the buyer to spend money on ads for their selected audience (Respondent 3). Facebook is a good example regarding programmatic buying, where you can use Facebook to optimize the reach of an ad and select parameters regarding how much you are willing to spend on it (Respondent 6; Respondent 7). It is easy to measure the ad’s effectiveness through click-through rate, for example using Facebook’s own codes (Respondent 2; Respondent 9).

5.2 Social Media Strategies
From the questions regarding social media we wanted to know which social media platforms that are mostly used and how users are identified and targeted on these platforms through data. We also wanted to know what the purpose usually is for companies of being on social media and how strategies for social media evolve. We wanted to know if the strategy somehow is connected to any of the other strategies that a company has. Segmentation, goals and measurements for social media was further discussed to contribute to the discussion of the strategy process.

5.2.1 Social Media
The most frequently used social media platforms by the respondents are Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and to some extent Twitter and SnapChat.

Funk (2013, p. 3) is emphasizing on the great opportunities on creating brand awareness on social media platforms, the greater the awareness is the greater the dominance is for brands in a competitive market. Brands can also provide specific information regarding products and services and be used as a positioning tool (Aaker, 1991, p.103).

The opportunities for creating brand awareness on social media is also strengthened by Respondent 3, Respondent 4b, Respondent 5, Respondent 6, and Respondent 8. Respondent 3 and Respondent 5 also says that the main reasons for companies to establish a presence on social media is to be available on these platforms and show offerings. Another reason is also to reach specific target groups online (Respondent 2; Respondent 5; Respondent 6; Respondent 8), where you do not have to pay for for people who are not in your targeted group since you can aim ads direct to specific groups of people (Respondent 8). It is also confirmed by Respondent 4b who says that it is important to measure how the social media activities generate awareness and positive brand sentiment which is inline with Funk’s (2013, p. 3) theories about brand building. Another reason for brands to market themselves on social media is to generate more sales or leads and retaining customers (Respondents 4b; Respondent 9) but also to increase revenue (Respondent 5; Respondent 9). The clients of Respondent 9 is usually more sales driven and less of brand building on social media. Respondent 7 argues that social media is just another channel to spread a message.

Other benefits for being online is that it is often cost-effective. Kaplan and Haenlein, (2010, p. 67) argues that marketing on social media is very cost-efficient since the direct end-consumer contact is relatively low in price and high in efficiency compared to traditional channels.

The same argument is made by Respondent 2, Respondent 3 and Respondent 8 which describes that clients often wants be on social media since it is a cost-effective channel
for marketing activities. It is further explained that by utilizing social media as a marketing tool trial-and-error is a good way to analyze what drives conversion the best and is well spent money (Respondent 2).

Delgado-Ballester and Luis Munuera-Alemán (2001, p. 1240) stress that if a brand develop a positive and favourable attitude among consumer it can lead to a long-term relationship and trust. When consumers have trust in a brand they will also get a feeling of security regarding the brand meeting their expectations (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001, p. 1242).

When Respondent 6 discussed the effects of when a brand get bad reviews he also stressed the importance of being familiar with certain brands and the effect of not being familiar with brands. For example if a brand got bad reviews and you don’t know much about the brand you rather not pick that one but can pick another brand which you are more familiar with even it they also have got bad reviews, which can be connected back to Delgado-Ballester and Luis Munuera-Alemán’s theories about the feel of security when deciding upon which brand to buy (2001, p. 1242).

5.2.2 Strategies
Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014, p. 338) have highlighted that companies should develop a strategy solely for social media that should be supported by employees with the right competence. This inline with Chaffey and Allen (2016, p. 13) who also stresses the importance of having a separate plan for social media activities.

Respondents 5, Respondent 9 and Respondent 10 all described the importance of having a strategy solely for social media activities. However Respondent 2 is skeptical to having a separate strategy for social media since it just becomes another “paper pile” and prefer to have a “plan” for social media in the marketing strategy instead. Similar discussion has Respondent 9 who prefer to use the term “plan” instead of strategy due to the fast-changing environment of the digital world that might cause changes in the entire strategy, for example if social media policies change (Respondent 9).

Respondent 5 has identified a problem where companies has bought a social media strategy but have not been able to implement it properly sometimes due to lack in knowledge among the employees. Another important factor which is in line with Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014, p. 338) theory is to have support from the whole organization and an understanding on why they are on social media (Respondent 5). Respondent 4a also strengthen the fact that it is important to have knowledge of analytics and master data insights in order to bridge marketing and analytics, however this competence is unusual to find (Respondent 4a). A lack in knowledge of how to use analytics in marketing as also something that Respondent 3 has noted.

In order to achieve goals, especially for companies, it is crucial to have an organized and well structured strategy according to Johnson et al. (2014, p. 8). Furthermore argues Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014, p. 337) that the general targeting and positioning strategy need to be considered when developing a strategy for social media.

Just like Johnson et al. (2014, p. 8) argues Respondent 2, Respondent 3, Respondent 5, and Respondent 10 for the importance of having a social media strategy that is connected to the business strategy, however Respondent 3 do not necessarily look at the
overall business strategy but does a background check of the company. Respondent 2 says that it is important that the client’s social media strategy, marketing strategy and firm strategy all are relevant to the brand-platform and that they are well structured on a strategic basis. Respondent 3 is also discussing social media connection to the brand strategy and says that it is kind of like a funnel where the company's purpose, vision and mission work as the backbone of the company. They are all build upon each other and will eventually funnel (Respondent 3).

However, Respondent 9 and Respondent 5 highlight that many times the link between social media-, marketing- and business-strategy is nonexistent. Respondent 9 argues that if the company has defined a proper business strategy then there is no need for a separate social media strategy. Respondent 10 also emphasize on the importance that the social media strategy is connected to the marketing plan and the general marketing activities. When analyzing data it is important to look at what the general business strategy is (Respondent 10). Companies that fail social media strategy has usually failed because the strategy has not been properly implemented. It is therefore of extra importance to find relevance between the business strategy and the social media strategy. (Respondent 5)

Targeting and segmentation
The insights, or results, from a brand’s presence on social media might affect the company in terms of revising their targeting and positioning strategy (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014, p. 339). Burns (2011, p. 321) further emphasize on the importance for brands to differentiate from competitors which can be achieved by understanding the targeted customer and why they are buying a specific brand. Burns (2011, p. 321) also argues that by constantly studying the customers needs and evaluate the strategy from the findings will make it possible for firms to get the most out of the market. When deciding upon which digital channel to use it is vital to know which channels the users are present on and how their evaluations, behavior and experiences of different applications look like (Kim & Malhotra, 2005, p. 741). In the work of segmenting the market different variables can be considered, for example demographics and lifestyles (Goyat, 2011, p. 46).

When developing strategies for social media Respondent 10 explain that the first thing they do is to identify the target audience. Through research and mapping Respondent 10 finds out what it is that drives engagement. Sometimes qualitative customer interviews are used to find out more about the target audience’s social media habits, for example which social media they are using (Respondent 10).

Several respondents (Respondent 3; Respondent 4a & Respondent 4b; Respondent 5; Respondent 6; Respondent 8; Respondent 9) are using psychographic variables like interests and behavior in the segmentation process. Respondent 3 is mentioning that interests are used specially when they segment on Facebook using targets like friends of friends.

Respondent 2 and Respondent 6 said that they do segmentation of social media users based on demographic aspects. However Respondent 2 usually do not segment the target audience further specially not if the segments already are small. Some respondents (Respondent 5; Respondent 8; Respondent 9) however never segment on demographics at all or do it very rarely. Thus Respondent 9 use Facebook’s
demographic parameters in order to target the desired audience on that platform. One of the reasons for not using demographic variables is because it can be difficult to get that type of information due to laws regarding information about individuals (Respondent 8). Instead Respondent 8 are studying how groups are engaging and are active in different ways on social media.

Generally when Respondent 3 is working with target groups the target group is usually already defined by the client. Sometimes they use analytics to confirm that the target group really is what the client think it is (Respondent 3). Respondent 4a confirms further that they are analyzing data from social media in order to identify different types of users and their behaviors. In order to understand why users are behaving differently and are acting in different ways on social media Respondent 4a and Respondent 4b build a behavior model.

Influencers are also identified and they are found through a technology that Respondent 4a and Respondent 4b work with. Respondent 6 elaborate the analytics further and explain that they sometimes look for so called twin-behavior which means that people usually behave similar as their closest family and friends. When respondent 6 has identified these twins he tries to find the possibility of a twin with the same behavior would like the same offer.

Respondent 5 also confirms that social media has made it easier for businesses to reach their target audience and also made it easier to find information about the targeted audience. Social media has made it easier to reach specific target groups in comparison to traditional channels especially since Facebook reached a higher number of elderly people (Respondent 3). In line with Respondent 3 and 5 is Respondent 10 who also argues for that Facebook’s data and tools has made it possible for marketers to accurately target different audiences. Further discuss Respondent 2 that time is often the biggest obstacle in social media marketing and to get around that the key is to attain great insights about the targeted audience, the more exact insights the better solution.

**Online personas**

McKinsey presented a report in 2013 that states Big Data will have a large role in identifying online user profiles, and be useful to achieve competitive advantage for organizations (Hazan & Banfi, 2013). Kabadayi and Price (2014, p. 205) as well as Trusov et al. (2016, p. 405) all discuss the importance of analyzing how customers behave on social media platforms in order to know what type of personality factors the targeted customers have. When the personality factors are identified specific marketing activities can be developed that will lead to engagement (e.g. like and comments) which in turn will lead to increased awareness and loyalty (Kabadayi & Price, 2014, p. 205; Trusov et al., 2016, p. 405). It is also crucial to know customers evaluations, behavior, and experiences of different applications in order to find the right digital channels (Kim and Malhotra, 2005, p. 741).

For marketers to get a human “touch”, or face, persona segmentation is used to perceive a deeper meaning and understanding of the consumer’s needs, preferences, buying and consumption behavior (Wood, 2014, p. 81). Charlesworth (2014, p. 16) argues that online persona segmentation and traditional persona segmentation differ from each other and one of the most important significations is that the targeted offline segment might not be present in the online channels or they may be sparse internet users. Further
have Kabadayi and Price (2014, p. 208) developed two different types of online personalities namely “broadcasting” (one to many style of interaction) and “communicating” (one to one and more private interaction).

Respondent 4a agrees with Charlesworth (2014, p. 16) regarding the difference between online and offline personas:

“There are significant differences between the traditional offline behavior and the behaviors you can measure online. It is important to understand the measured behavior online, what is driving that, and is that real behavior or is that subject to some kind of psychological bias by the process of the fact that you are being online in the first place.”

- Respondent 4a

Just like Kabadayi and Price (2014, p. 208) has identified different personality types online has Respondent 4a and Respondent 4b done that as well and explain that on social media users are constantly aware that other people can see what they are doing. Because of that some people go and change what they did to fit the behavior that they think other people expect or want to see rather than their true behavior (Respondent 4a).

Several of the respondents (Respondent 4a; Respondent 4b; Respondent 7; Respondent 8; Respondent 9; Respondent 10) cluster personas depending on their online behavior. Respondent 9 is using aspects from empathy maps when defining personas. In order to acquire deeper information Respondent 9 is also talking to the targeted segment to verify whether they have the correct understanding of who they are. A similar approach is used by respondent 10 who do research in terms of audience mapping and collect interviews in order to define personas. Respondent 9 problematize the fact that clients usually have a defined personas but lack in knowledge of what content it is that drives engagement for that specific persona. Which is also problematized by respondent 10 who says that often they need to develop clients personas in terms of what drives engagement for that specific audience and how to best reach them.

Measurements

Analyzed data is used to measure the outcomes and to be able to optimize social media marketing (Järvinen, 2016, p. 15). Analytics tools have made it possible to analyze a variety of customer data, hence the availability of customer related data has increased by the popularity of social media, which in turn have led marketers towards data-driven marketing, where the aim is to inform and optimize marketing activities by the use of data (Järvinen, 2016, p. 40; Kumar et al., 2013, p. 332).

Experts within social media marketing is using as much data as they can get their hands on extracted from social media, in the form of “likes”, comments and shares, the number of impressions among other things (Respondent 3; Respondent 5). However, it is pointed out that the data to be analyzed is determined by the purpose and the goals for the firm to be present on social media (Respondent 3; Respondent 6), then certain parameters are defined that the expert together with the firm has agreed upon, and out of these parameters are what to be analyzed (Respondent 3). The parameters depend on which social media channel is used, the parameters can be concerned with engagement and reach (Respondent 5). Algorithms are used to analyze raw data and to make social media data more relevant that data is tied to harder metrics, for example metrics in
terms of revenue (Respondent 4a; Respondent 4b). It can be difficult to analyze the results, for example it is possible that the results show what you have done rather than showing what you have achieved (Respondent 6). In short it can be said that you first measure the results and then analyzing it (Respondent 8; Respondent 9).

When working with any type of strategy it is of importance to have defined goals in order to be able to measure the outcome (Shahin & Mahbod, 2006, p. 228-229). Digital and internet related capabilities, can lead to enhanced cost control and efficiency due to improved knowledge of customers, competitors, price, products and strategies (BarNir et al., 2003, p. 797). Brand’s activities are usually measured in terms of ROA, sales, costs, margins and profit (Aaker, 1991, p.103).

It is important to look into how social media activities can generate awareness and how this is connected to increase in sales that connects with the business goals (Respondent 4b). Respondent 2 argues further that goals in social media vary very differently among clients. Sometimes it is concrete goals like attain more followers and sometimes it can be goals like conversion rate. If there are too many goals both time and resources can be scarce in order to achieve them, in those situations the social media activities get prioritized based on the marketing strategy. (Respondent 2)

5.3 Engagement
In social media marketing engagement is an important aspect in terms of getting traffic or attention. Therefore we wanted to know how marketers create engagement on social media by utilizing data insights.

Understanding the drivers of engagement among a targeted audience by knowing the personality factors are important to develop effective engagement strategies (Kabadayi & Price, 2014, p. 205). Barger et al. (2016, p. 279) clarifies:

“Only when marketers view their role on social media as more than simply supplying content in hopes that consumers will engage with that content will firms realize the true potential of social media marketing.”

- Barger et al. (2016, p. 279)

According to Barger et al. (2016, p. 270) can consumer engagement on social media be related to brand content, such as reacting to content, commenting, sharing, and providing UGC. To be able to create engagement on social media, businesses need to understand consumers’ needs (Kabadayi & Price, 2014, p. 205), which can be done through data analysis.

As Kabadayi and Price (2014, p. 205) points out the importance of understanding the drivers of engagement, Respondent 10 is doing this through research and mapping to find out what it is that drives engagement among a targeted audience. Respondent 9 uses psychographic aspects to identify their targeted audience behavior and to understand what drives engagement, while Respondent 6 is analyzing data from databases to identify their targeted audience. Respondent 4a and Respondent 4b is helping clients understanding their targeted audience attitudes, beliefs, and needs through analyzing data-sets into insights, then applying those insights to for example a campaign. However, drivers of engagement in social media is also seen to be the same engagement rhetoric that drives engagement in traditional channels (Respondent 2).
Marketers has been able to use the Internet to retrieve quick results from testing activities like campaigns to see what works and does not work (Järvinen, 2016, p. 40). This has resulted in social media being more cost-effective due to fast response on marketing activities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 67).

Utilizing data insights is a cost-effective way to try two similar concepts in social media advertising to see which of the two got more attention (Respondent 9). Working with data analytics will provide you with quick, real-time feedback, that means that you can easily modify your campaigns (Respondent 6). By trial-and-error tests different campaigns can be tested in order to see what content that drives more traffic (Respondent 2) which is also argued for in the literature review (Järvinen, 2016, p. 40; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 67).

Consumer engagement involves the overall value a consumer receives from a brand and the interactive experiences with the brand (Barger et al., 2016, p. 270). From brand experience can consumers develop trust (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996, p. 24) and trust is a vital part in the relationship between the brand and the consumer (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001, p. 1239; Kabadayi & Price, 2014, p. 206). In order to develop trust the consumer need to have a positive and favorable attitude towards the brand (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001, p. 1240). When trust is established in the consumer’s mind a feeling of security, that the brand can meet his or her expectations will also be settled (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001, p. 1242). Furthermore is the consumer’s brand experience affected by any direct contact such as advertising, WoM and brand reputation (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001, p. 1243). In order to create positive engagement on social media loyalty and trust is a must and it is also important to know how consumers interact and behave on social media (Laroche et al., 2013, p. 81).

5.4 Trends
Respondent 2 hopes for the future to deliver more academic disciplines taking part in marketing for example from behavioral sciences, and rely less on data. On the other hand Respondent 3 foresee the future in terms of more data, which is also supported by Respondent 8. The trend for data insights in marketing is increasing in terms of the amount of data used, decisions based on data is becoming more relied on, and data is becoming easier to measure, just as well as many businesses are starting to sell data (Respondent 3). Respondent 10 think we will see a continuation of measurement of social media data due to the clarity it provides, but it will also be easier to measure concrete results, for example measure how much an ad increased the revenue.

Respondent 4a see the trend of open data, and that data is becoming less bought and sold, instead it is becoming easier to access. The most interesting business to look at in the future is data aggregators. Respondent 4a thinks more data will be pre-processed for marketers to use, pre-processed by artificial intelligence together with machine learning. Snapchat will probably be better at targeting audience based on demographics (Respondent 4b). There will be more video in marketing online in the near future (Respondent 4b; Respondent 9).

The extended use of Facebook, in the form of buying and selling directly on Facebook will attract some businesses to drop their website (Respondent 5; Respondent 9).
Facebook will be growing, and further expand its own “universe” (Respondent 5). Facebook will continue to play a large role in marketing, due to its cost-effective advertising platform (Respondent 9; Respondent 10).

Programmatic buying will grow and be more popular as the knowledge regarding this increases, also marketers will expand their views on last click conversions, to try to see the whole picture of an individual’s search-journey. Offline and online channels will merge better than today, TV ads will be more integrated with online ads, text analysis will be more common and data analysis will grow. (Respondent 6)

**Modified theoretical model**
The theoretical model (Figure V) which shows how data is used in social media strategy was confirmed by our findings. The model has been modified where the references has been excluded in order to show the theoretical contribution in a more comprehensible way (Figure V).

![Modified theoretical model](image)

*Figure IV - Modified theoretical model (Grönlund & Schytt, 2017)*
6 Conclusion

In this chapter we will answer the research question and present the main findings connected to the three objectives. The theoretical and practical contribution will be further reflected upon. Thereafter the limitations and truth criteria will be discussed in accordance with the findings. Lastly the societal and ethical aspects will be explained.

Ten semistructured interviews were conducted and then analyzed together with the literature review to answer the research question:

_How is data used in brand’s strategies for social media?_

First of all, the analysis of the collected data suggest that to be efficient in using data for marketing in social media it is of importance to have the right competence in order to interpret the data, which confirms the literatue review. Usually it is the lack of competence in analyzing and interpreting data that make a social media strategy fail.

Our findings suggest that data insights help practitioners to take initiatives in marketing efforts on social media as well as helps businesses to create relevant and meaningful experiences for its customers. Data analysis, such as opinion mining and programmatic buying, is used to identify and target specific audiences of the market. To understand how these specific targeted audiences behave and what content they engage with, data insights are used, which confirms the litterature review. Data can not only provide insightful facts about customers but also competitors and their customers. Our analysis show that scenario outcomes based on data can be used to create the optimal content or ad. Lastly, the analysis of the collected data propose that data insights enables marketers to make better decisions.

The findings also show a lack of consensus regarding the need of a separate strategy for social media, which was also discussed in the literature review. If a company has a clear and well-structured marketing and/or business strategy, companies might not need a separate strategy for social media. However, most respondents thought that the need for a separate strategy for social media is very important, especially since many companies lack a plan for their marketing activities on social media. The findings shows that data can be used for many different purposes in social media, however one main purpose seem to be the ease to reach a specific targeted segment and the fact that it is a cost-effective marketing tool.

6.1 Main findings

Three objectives were developed in accordance with the research question. The objectives are presented and answered.

_Objective 1: Understand what type of data to use for marketing purposes._

The findings together with the literature review shows that there are many different types of data that can be used for social media marketing purposes. The data used for social media strategies ranges from traditional market data (e.g. demographic) to complex data analysis (e.g. opinion mining) to understand behavior. An increasing
method to specifically target an audience is called programmatic buying, where datasets about the audience is utilized to aim ads towards a specific target audience.

A common source of data that practitioners use is Sweden’s largest database containing surveys about market-, media- and consumer-information. The data from this database is used in the development process of content and ads, for example to increase reach and engagement.

Data derived from social media platforms can be used to understand audiences, this data can be applied for social media activities but also applied on activities outside of the social media sphere.

A type of data that is widely used to understand Internet browsing behavior of individuals (although anonymous), is through cookie technology. Practitioners use the data to understand the behaviors of consumers and to be able to optimize the content for engagement. Data is used to optimize content and ads in social media, where practitioner can analyze the engagement level and make changes if needed. When deciding which data to analyze it is important to look at the overall goals and objectives of the business strategy. Finally, data should be easily accessible and relevant to the task at hand.

**Objective 2: Understand how data affect decisions in social media strategies.**

Some practitioners want as much data as they can get their hands on, others want a more moderately amount of data that is more manageable in terms of analysis, while others want to start off with a small amount of data and increase the data incrementally, trying to attain relevant data in every step. Nowadays there are an abundance of data available for anyone with the knowledge of how to use it, but it can also prove to be challenging to extract data of relevance, hence the amount of available data can be overwhelming for professionals. Therefore it can be advisable to start off with a small amount of data and the incrementally increase the amount of data.

Data mining and statistical analysis affect decisions throughout the social media strategy process. Data provides insights about the targeted audience and affect the decisions regarding which audience to aim different activities to. Practitioners can use probability testing if enough relevant data can be collected and merged, this data is used as an indicator of how well-targeted their content or ad is for the targeted audience which is used to base decisions on. Data also enables practitioners to use programmatic buying in order to make sure that a segment receive the right marketing message in terms of ads. Finally, data-analytics provide quick and real time-feedback on social media activities which mean that campaigns can quickly be tested and modified to see what content that drives the most traffic, it is in other terms cost-effective to use data insights.

**Objective 3: Explore the importance of the use of data in social media strategies.**

Since social media is built on data it is vital for marketers to have knowledge in data analysis and the usage of data for marketing activities on social media. The most
important is to understand how to segment the targeted audience on different parameters. The most important parameter to segment on was in this thesis shown to be online behavior. By knowing how customers behave on social media companies can choose channels and create content that will engage a specifically type of behavior. It has further been proven that there is a difference in consumer behavior offline and online which is important to be aware of when creating content based on personas. Data from analysis, such as opinion mining, can reveal important topics that are discussed regarding brands and different events. The knowledge regarding these important topics can then be used to create engagement on social media. Insights in what social media users discuss can be important for marketers to know about when creating content for these channels and to be a part of these discussions. Creating a triilogue where the brand take part in discussions on social media can lead to increased brand awareness which ultimately lead to increase in sales.

6.2 Theoretical contribution
Our findings give value by contributing to the identified research gap which showed the lack of research on how data is used and implemented in social media strategies.

The findings contribute to the research field of social media marketing and how data is being used for marketing purposes on social media platforms. Just like Burns (2011, p. 321) emphasizes in his work, this study shows that data insights are important when identifying targeted audiences on social media platforms. Furthermore, this study contributes and builds further on Burns (2011) theories by showing the importance, when approaching targeted audiences, data insights are to create engaging content for the audience.

Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014, p. 338) study explain the value of having a strategy solely for social media that is supported by employees with the right competence. In this study the right competence is taken a step further and show that the competence in data analysis is of significant importance in order to choose the right data to analyze and to be able to use the results of the data analysis for marketing purposes. McAfee and Brynjolfsson (2012, p. 68) also highlights that data-driven decisions tend to be better decisions, while leaders that do not embrace that fact will be replaced by people who do, which furthermore is strengthened in this study by the fact that skills of how to manage data and data analysis are important skills to obtain.

In accordance with the literature review does our findings further explain how data from social media can be used to better target an audience both inside and outside of social media. It can for example give information about behavior, interests, and engagement drivers which all are important drivers in marketing.

The analysis of the data collection shows that data usage in social media marketing is an emerging trend that needs more attention. Authors have previously emphasized on the importance of having a separate strategy for social media marketing (Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014). Our findings also highlights the significance of having a well-defined social media strategy that is based on data insights which is another contribution to the marketing academia. Brands can by utilizing data insights better define their target audiences and also try similar concepts in a cost-effective way in social media advertising to find out which concept receive more attention among these specific target audiences. Furthermore is the use of data insights explained more detailed in this study...
than in previous studies (Järvinen, 2016, p. 40; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 67) especially regarding the value of knowing how to analyze, interpret, and use data insights in order to create successful social media activities.

6.3 Practical contribution
The findings about how data can be used in social media marketing have several practical implications for professionals working with social media strategies, giving them opportunities for how data can be used to achieve marketing goals on social media platforms. Our research show that data insights enables marketers and leaders to make better decisions, therefore our findings regarding how data can be used in social media marketing is important knowledge for marketers within this field. The findings can also benefit any type of practitioners working with marketing who wish to learn more about how data can be collected and used for marketing purposes. Our findings shows clearly how data insights can impact a social media strategy in terms of target audiences, increase reach and adopt content to increase egagement.

6.4 Limitations
Due to confidentiality regarding how the respondents are managing data, it was not possible to fully explore the process of the data aspects. Questions regarding how the data was collected and analyzed were especially sensitive for the participants to answer due to the sensitive nature of the industry and high competitiveness.

The explanations for how to use data in social media marketing could be criticized for being too broad. It is however, argued that this was done to clarify in a simple way how data can be applicable for many different types of companies and brands in their work with social media. That is why we only collected data from agencies who are working with an array of clients.

6.5 Truth criteria
The credibility of the results is an issue that must be addressed, hence the discussion regarding this in the following chapter. According to Saunders et al. (2009, p. 156) it is impossible to know if the evidence and conclusion of any study have been correctly understood. Therefore what can be done is trying to reduce the risk of misinterpretation through a solid, well-thought research design, especially in two aspects, namely reliability and validity. Saunders et al. (2009, p. 156) Reliability, validity, and generalizability of the results will be discussed in this chapter.

6.5.1 Reliability
Reliability refers to whether the data collection and procedure of analysis have produced consistent findings and is an essential part of the study (Gustafsson et al., 2011, p. 45; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 156). Generally there are three questions that should be reflected upon to test the reliability of the results, namely (1) will the study produce the same results at another point in time? (2) will others reach similar conclusions? (3) is the results transparent in terms of how the collected data has been interpreted? (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 156)

Threats to reliability includes subject error and participant error, where it could be said that for example the mood could change from one week to the other and therefore
impair the results of the study (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 156). We believe the subject and participation error has been minimal in the data collection process due to the fact that the respondent had the choice of time and place where the interview were to be conducted, as well as the choice of being part of the study. Another type of threat to reliability is subject bias and participation bias where the respondent is telling the interviewer what the respondent think that the interviewer want to hear (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 156). Subject and participation bias is more likely to occur in an authoritarian management style setting. To minimize the risk of these types of bias is to offer the respondent the choice of anonymity (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 156), which were one of the very first questions that was asked to the respondent in the data collection process. Thus we believe that the subject and participation bias have been minimized.

Other types of threats to reliability is within the observer, called observer error and observer bias. Observer error is the risk that the questions could be asked differently to one participant to another. And observer bias is when the data is interpreted differently from one respondent to another. (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 157) This is a calculated risk researchers often have to take in semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2011, p. 244). However, this risk has been taken into consideration. The observer error was considered by conducting a pilot study where the questions were tested, since we created the questions they have therefore not been tested before. Furthermore, to minimize the risk we have both analyzed the same interviews so that it is minimal that interpretations of the interviews would differ. However our individual preconceptions can still have influenced the results even though we strived for it not to happen. Since some of the interviews were conducted in Swedish there is a chance that some information can have been misinterpreted in the translation process which might affect the result. Thus the intention was always to strive for a fair translation in order not to misinterpreted any information.

Finally Gustafsson et al. (2011, p. 45) discusses that researchers often have to lower their ambition level for the analysis to not become too extensive. When these limitations need to be done it is even more important to explain the basis for the analysis and its limitations (Gustafsson et al., 2011, p. 45), which was done in this study under 6.4 Limitations.

6.5.2 Validity
This section is concerned about the findings. That is, if the findings actually are what they seem to be about. There are six important aspects that might pose a threat to the validity, namely history, testing, instrumentation, mortality, maturation, and ambiguity. (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 157) These aspects are not relevant to all studies. However, some of the aspects will be discussed:

- History aspect, the threat is that if something out of the ordinary would recently have happened that could impact or alter the respondent’s answers compared to if nothing out of the ordinary had happened. Due to the nature of data policies and restrictions in the usage of data, it could be altered in the course of the data collection, then we would experience a sudden shift in the answers. However this was nothing that we noticed. Furthermore, due to the fast changing nature of marketing in digital channels, there is a possibility that the result of the study might be outdated in a short time.
• Testing aspect, refers to when the data collection interferes with the researched topic, thus impair the result. Relevant to this study would have been if the respondents tried to give us answers that they thought we would want to hear. The questions asked were semi-structured and open-ended, therefore the risk of impairing the testing aspect was considered to be low.

• Mortality aspect is when participants no longer wish to participate thus their results would render nonexistent. This was not a problem in our study since no participant wished to withdraw their participation.

• Ambiguity aspect refers to when incorrect conclusions are drawn due to an incomplete understanding of the underlying issue, that for example drive a behavior or cause for something to happen. Since we were using semi-structured and open-ended questions, there was room for the participant to fully in-depth answer the questions and to elaborate freely. Furthermore, after the transcribing was conducted, the respondents had the chance of reviewing what they had said and to further extend and elaborate their answers, thus the issue of ambiguity was low.

The validity of the data collection can be discussed due to the two different data collection methods used, namely phone interviews and face-to-face interviews. Although, we did not see any distinct differences of the data collected from the two different types of methods and therefore argues that it should not affect the findings. However, it could be argued that there is no certain way to say that the findings would have looked different if only one interview method had been used.

6.5.3 Generalizability
Generalizability is often referred to as if the results can be transferred to become the same if the study was reproduced at a later point in time. In quantitative studies generalizability is often related to whether or not the sample method was correct and the population was presentable. (Bryman, 2011, p. 168-169) Since we wanted to explore how professionals are working with data insights and social media marketing, we did not aim to draw any general conclusions, rather show how data is being managed among professionals. We hope that the experiences and knowledge described in this study will be useful for others working in comparable situations and for other researchers. Within this study we wanted to draw a theoretical understanding of the subject social media marketing and the use of data insights for marketing. Since this area is fast developing it could be argued that our findings will be outdated in a near future.

6.6 Societal and ethical aspects
Brands can through data insights and social media more easily manipulate consumers to increase their consumption which is unethical in terms of both personal integrity and sustainability. If consumers are aware of this they can use our research to be better informed about how they can be manipulated by the data about themselves, and to make better informed decisions, thereby be better able to protect themselves from over consumption.
The sustainability aspect of the results could lead to an increased use of digital marketing, taking shares from physical ads, for example printed ads that are placed in mailboxes around the world. Thus, leads to a decreased deforestation and pollution from the paper pulp industry, a decrease in pollution from the ads being transported from the factories, to the postoffice and then to each mailbox. On the other hand, the sustainability aspect of the result could lead to an increased consumption by the knowledge of how to more effectively target consumers, making them more willing to purchase products that most likely have an impact on the environment, for example pollution from the process of producing the product, pollution from the transportation of the consumption to the consumption place.

Despite that the study has focused on brands usage of data for social media strategies the findings can also be used for society as a whole. For example, municipalities that are present on social media platforms can use this research in the same fashion as brands. By that we argue that municipalitites can utilize data by analyzing social media data for their own advantage. Analyzing social media data could also be a way to find out what the population is dissatisfied with and therefore could make better decisions regarding improvements.

Having a large amount of data regarding individuals’ behaviors can be problematic, for example if the data security is compromised and anyone can access it, possibly for illegal and highly unethical intentions. A security compromise of personal data could lead to personal disaster or for the greater society.

For the greater society, having a large amount of data about individual and group behavior can be problematic in terms of democracy aspects. For example if an extremist group get access to large amounts of data related to the vast population of a society, they can then more easily manipulate that society for their own benefit.
7 Further research
We have discovered that it is quite difficult to separate social media marketing from other marketing activities online. Therefore we suggest that a study about how data affect marketing activities on all online channels would be interesting. We would further like to see a similar research utilizing a case study approach where an agency more specifically and in depth got explored in order to see how the results would differ. It would also be interesting to read about how to approach content solutions for specific audiences and different platforms since this seem to be the most important in social media marketing.

An obstacle that we discovered was the wide array how data can be interpreted. The different interpretations of data by the individual respondents could indicate the need for further exploration of the term. Therefore, a study explaining more in detail the different categories of data that exist in order to get a broader understanding of this terminology.

Our findings show that there is a lack of knowledge among marketers in data analysis and therefore this issue need further attention in the academia.
8 References


Appendix 1: Informed consent

Dear Sir or Madam,

This information is provided for you as a respondent to gain insight into the areas of the study. Your participation will contribute to the research in the relatively new field of social media marketing and data insights.

There are several different approaches in the usage of data, and different definitions of what data is, therefore we aim to explore how different agencies are using this type of online information in marketing. The aim of the study is to contribute to the field of social media marketing and more specifically to data insights.

The objective of the interview is to acquire knowledge of what type of data to use for marketing purposes, understand how data affect decisions in social media strategies and explore the importance of the use of data in social media strategies. Another objective is to gain insight into how data is implemented and used in strategy making. The interview questions are based on three subcategories in digital marketing, namely social media strategy, consumer engagement, and data insights - these were chosen to get a broader picture of how they affect the development of strategy making for social media.

Participation in this interview is voluntary, an oral approval will give us your consent. The interview will be used for research purposes in order to contribute to our essay about the development of social media strategies. The material extracted from the interview will only be used for research intentions in the study, therefore the material will not be reused in future studies. The material from the interview is handled confidentially and will not be traced back to you.

We will send the transcript to you later on in the research process to confirm that the material from the interview is interpreted correctly.

If you have any questions regarding the study, don’t hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for your participation!