Digital Marketing For small businesses
From zero to online superhero; how an unknown business can become popular overnight.

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ABSTRACT, With the development of the popularity of Social media and web 3.0, the power of regular "old school" marketing begins to fade. However, still a lot of companies don't recognize the power the web can offer to a brand or product. In fact, it is believed by marketing leaders that Social Media and marketing have become intrinsic to 21 century brand building. The purpose of this research paper is to provide a framework for the successful start up of a new company and creating a community around it, based on the findings found by doing literature research, conducting expert interviews and by distributing and analysing a questionnaire. These findings are supported by the analysis of several cases. The most important finding was that there is currently no suiting framework for building an online customer base available. Because of this, a new framework was created based on the most important findings of both the qualitative as well as the quantitative research. This framework was named A.S.S.S.S; which stands for: Analyse, See, Stick, Share and Speak. These five components resemble the steps that need to be taken in order to achieve successful online community building.

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Online Marketing, Community Building, Social Media, Word-of Mouth Marketing.

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INTRODUCTION

With the development of the popularity of Social media and web 3.0, the power of regular "old school" marketing begins to fade. However, still a lot of companies don't recognize the power the web can offer for a brand or product. In fact, it is believed by marketing leaders that Social Media and marketing have become intrinsic to 21st century brand building, with community building as the newest acquisition. *(Forrester Research, 2012; Kim 2000)*

Interactive consumer marketing has shown large promise as a marketing tool with a positive effect on product sales. *(Hutter et al., 2013; Trusov, Bucklin and Pauwels, n.d.; Qualman, 2009; Briones et al., 2011)* But the existing literature on this subject gives no information on how to leverage this potential. Even papers specifically meant for companies that want to start using Social Media, only describe the components needed for change in a company or show different ways on how Social Media could be applied in a company. *(Social Business Now, 2016; Kietzmann, 2011; Kaplan, 2010; Briones et al., 2011; Safko and Brake, 2009)* There are two things the existing literature is lacking. First there is no clear framework on how to find and acquire the very first community member. Secondly, there are no guidelines available for what to write and how to write it in order to keep community members active. Even so, most available information is focussed on already existing companies with existing customers. There is no information available for start-ups and new-to-the-market companies who are planning on launching a new product.

In classic marketing, the 4P marketing mix model, (Price, Product, Promotion, Place) *(McCarthy, 1960)* is widely used. However, small companies and companies that are new to the market often don't have a large advertising budget. Because of this, these companies will not be able to work with this conservative marketing mix and will depend on word of mouth marketing and other methods

of free advertising instead. *(Berger, 2014)* Even so, the 4P marketing mix is lacking strategic components as well as that the 4Ps play a less prominent role in the online environment. *(Constantinides, 2002)* Two things that are essential for inexperienced companies when trying to build an online community.

With this research paper, I want to explore new methods of (online) marketing and find out how using these online channels can help with the launch and popularity of a new product. After writing this paper, there should be more clarity in how to use the web for the launch of a new product and how to create a strong supportive customer base (i.e community) for that product.

In contrary to what most companies think, using Social Media to build a supportive customer base is not a fast way to success. However, it can be very effective way and will only need a small budget, or no budget at all in order to be successful. *(Raaphorst, 2016)* Mentioned several times in the expert interviews conducted for this research paper, (see appendix 3) this misinterpretation of using Social Media is seen as a common mistake made by both new to the market as well as already established companies and something that is important to clarify in order to avoid misunderstandings later on in this report. *(Raaphorst, 2016)*

Research problem
How can Social Media marketing be used before, during and after the start up of a new company to create a strong community around it?

Goal

Provide a framework for the successful start up of a new company and creating a community around it, based on the research findings.

Research contribution

This research paper will provide a clear framework on the use of Social Media marketing and community building for new to the market companies or smaller companies that want to launch a new product. Even tough there is a lot of academic information available containing data about the usefulness of social media, there is no clear and easy to use framework or information about how to apply these benefits. Especially not for smaller companies that have no experience with using social media for building a community. By doing literature research, a framework will be created that is easy to use and easy to understand for both existing as well as for new-to-the-market companies. This framework will fill the gap between academic research information and the lack of a practical overview or framework in order to apply the knowledge in practise.

BACKGROUND

In studying how new to the market companies can use Social Media to build a brand community, one needs to know what is understood by the term "Social Media" and

what it is composed of. We also need to know what a community is and what is written about online communities in existing literature.

Social Media

The term Social Media is nowadays a often used word. However, it is not always clear what is exactly meant by the term. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p.60) define the term Social Media as being " a group of internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content." Evans describes Social Media as: "the use of web based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue". (2008)

As both of these definitions show, the component of sharing content and creating dialogue is the base of Social Media. Examples of online media that provide for such things are blogs and Social Networking websites as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Communities

The term community is described by Macqueen et al. as a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings. (2001) This being a definition of an offline community, one could extend this definition into a definition of an online community. Thus making an online community a group of people with diverse characteristics who share a common perspective or engage in joint action in the environment of Social Media. This definition corresponds to the definition of community in the free dictionary 2016, where a community is described as a group of people with common interests or a group of organisms interacting with one another and with the environment in a specific region.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the field of marketing there have been several larger frameworks and concepts for helping with the marketing of products and brands. In classic marketing, the 4P marketing mix model, (Price, Product, Promotion, Place) *(McCarthy, 1960)* is widely used. However, small companies and companies that are new to the market often don't have a large advertising budget or no budget at all. These companies will not be able to work with this marketing mix and will depend on word of mouth marketing and other methods of free advertising instead. *(Berger, 2014)* Even so, the 4P-marketing model only focuses on offline marketing channels and lacks the strategic elements that are so important for making a model practical to implement. *(Constantinides, 2002)*

Another marketing mix that is often used is the 4S (Site, Scope, Synergy, System) or 5S marketing mix model of digital marketing (Sell, Speak, Serve, Save, Sizzle) *(Chaffey, 2012 ; Constantinides, 2002)*. These marketing models are much more suitable for the practises of digital marketing, since they include details about the digital world. Even tough these models are created to serve as a base for designing, developing and commercialising online projects *(Constantinides, 2002)* they only show objectives that are important for the successful implementation of all digital marketing channels in general and do not prescribe objectives for any of the specific channels, (as for example Facebook, LinkedIn or a blog) making these theories quite broad and hard to practically implement because they don't contain strategic components or guidelines. Even so, the 4S and 5S models are focussed on larger and already established conventional companies, making it hard for small and new-to-the- market companies using these frameworks to grow their market share. Lastly, these older theories also lack a more specified framework for implementing the objectives on Social Media in order to create word of mouth and a strong brand community; something that can be a vital way of promotion for start-ups and other smaller companies *(Berger, 2014)*

Knowing the customer

As described in the research paper by Hanna, Rohm and Crittenden 2011, most companies already know the importance of Social Media, but they don't know what key performance indicators to use or how to use these media in their marketing plan. Besides a lack of knowledge about application, more than 5% of Dutch companies don't know anything about their customers. This is something that withholds them from flexibility and adaptation to the needs of their customers. *(Adfo Group, 2016)*

When starting a new business or launching a new product, creating a marketing plan is essential. Too often companies just implement digital marketing without a clear plan. This makes success almost impossible. *(Cohen, 1995; Zimmerer, Scarborough and Wilson, 2008; Safko and Brake, 2009)* The practise of market analysis and marketing planning will thus be a very important component of a practical framework. The knowledge obtained from the market analysis about the target group can create a stronger and more effective marketing message that will make the customer feel part of the company and with that make the customer feel part of a larger community i.e. a group with a shared interest. *(Fexeus, 2007)* By using the same kind of words and length of sentences in marketing messages as your target audience uses in communication, you will make customers recognise themselves in the message and because of that they instantly become more positive about the product and company. *(Fexeus, 2007)*

Social influence

In the literature it is often mentioned that the principles of Social influence, both in the online as well as in the offline world, when buying a (new) product are very important. *(Blattberg, Briesch and Fox, 1995; Centola, 2010; Chen and Xie, 2008; Fromkin and Olson, 1971; Kietzmann, J., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I. and Silvestre, B, 2011; Sridhar and Srinivasan, 2012; Burns, 2008)* However, these principles are not mentioned in any existing online marketing framework, making these

frameworks incomplete and possibly not as effective as they could be.

Besides this, the Social behaviour of people is very important. Social reinforcement and other consumer behaviour principles play a large role in the buying behaviour of consumers. *(Centola, 2010; Bughin, 2010; Fexeus, 2007)* These psychological principles can be used to enhance the success of marketing practises.

Disturbingly, according to research by *Keller and Fay 2012*, even tough people spend more and more time online, they still spend 8 times as much time offline as they spend online. This is something that should be taken into account when trying to create word-of-mouth and build a community.

METHOD

This research paper will deepen the literature study on word-of-mouth marketing and online community building and provide for a clear framework on how to build word of mouth and a strong brand community as a new business. This framework will be strengthened by literature as well as by the conduction of expert interviews and examples of relevant industry cases. Even so, a large-scale survey will be conducted in order to fill the gaps in the available literature about the use of Social Media and the participation in communities. For this survey, Facebook was chosen as the most suitable medium. This, because it is relatively easy to find communities on Facebook and see what members these communities have. Even so, the largest portion of the total population is currently active on Facebook. (72%) *(Pew Research, 2013)* This is a much larger percentage than on any other Social Media. Because of this, it is likely that Facebook will be used by most start up companies for the promotion of their brand or product. Assuming this is indeed the case, Facebook would be the most interesting medium to conduct the research.

The data was collected on the 17th, 18th and 19th of April 2016.

After the first version of the framework is created, the theory could be tested in a case with a small start-up company and product. The findings on this case will be used to improve the quality of the first version of the framework. Since a complete new product will be launched for a company that has not launched any products before, the results of using the new framework cannot be compared to previous practises. Because of this, K.P.Is were selected that could be tested against the norm.

The first K.P.I that could be used is the IPM score of a Facebook page. As this K.P.I is the only K.P.I that shows the direct activeness of any online community, *(Pixelfarm-creative online marketing, 2016)* the IPM+ is seen as most relevant for testing the framework. The IPM+ score shows the number of interactions per thousand fans and is calculated using the formula shown in figure.1 below.

$$\frac{\text{Total Number of likes, shares and reactions}}{\frac{\text{Total number of Posts}}{\text{Number of page fans}}} *1000 = \text{IPM+}$$

Figure 1 Formula for IPM+

An IPM+ of 4 is considered as average. An IPM+ below 2 is considered as very bad. *(Pixelfarm-creative online marketing, 2016)*
Two other K.P.Is that could be used in combination with each other, are the number of Social Mentions and the number of product sales. The number of social mentions could be an indicator of how often the new business or product is on top of mind of people and it could also be an indicator of the number of people who have heard about the business or product. The last K.P.I that will be used is the growth rate of the online community. According to fanpage karma 2013, the median growth rate for a Facebook community is 0.64% per week and the top 10 of fan pages have a median growth rate of 2,22% per week. *(Eyl, 2013)* The growth rate can be an indicator of the virality (i.e how fast the message spreads) of your online message. However, depending on the target group, the growth rate will even out at a certain point in time. After this, the community can still be very active and will also still be able to grow in activeness, making the growth rate of a community only a suitable for measuring success in the beginning of the community building process.

When all these K.P.Is will show to be above average, it can be assumed that the framework created in this paper is indeed effective.

In the next chapters the expert interviews as well as the empirical research will be discussed. After this, all findings will be summarized leading to a clear answer to the research problem: How can Social Media marketing be used before, during and after the start up of a new company to create a strong community around it?

Expert interviews

Summarizing the expert interviews conducted (see appendix 3), the ability of a company to share fascinating stories and to involve consumers in the company processes can be vital for smaller companies to get noticed and to build a community. When consumers feel valued and feel like they can really contribute to the product, they are more eager to defend and promote the product later on. Companies are often afraid for negative feedback and are not ready yet to fully let go and involve consumers in the processes before, during and after the launch of a new product. However, it is often shown that by letting consumers contribute, chances of the success of the product will increase. *(Karen; Raaphorst M.; Straathof C., 2016)* These findings are supported by researchers as Fexeus, Centola, Lambert and Prahalat who all emphasize the importance of customers feeling part of something bigger, together with social influence playing a large role in buying behaviour. Prahalat and Ramaswamy even underline that customer value is more and more shifting towards experiences, making conversation, interaction and consumer communities the

only way of value creation for most customers nowadays. *(Prahalat C.K., Ramaswamy V, 2004)* In order to improve the quality and frequency of these conversations, storytelling has proven to be very efficient. (*Lambert J., 2012*) Also the interviews show the shared opinion, that viral content is often remarkable, simple and unique in its sort.

The biggest reason for companies to fail in community building is, according to the interviewees, because the companies fear the change that needs to be made from push marketing into pull marketing. They see pull marketing as a huge risk, since they lose control of a large part that is said about their brand or product both online as well as offline. Another thing that contributes to companies failing to build community is that they often don't have the required knowledge of new media in order to start the conversation with their target audience.

EMPERICAL RESEARCH

For the purpose of this research paper, a survey was conducted among two large active Facebook communities and was answered by 376 people. According to research, sharing images or messages containing high arousal emotions: i.e. Awe, excitement, amusement (humour), anger or anxiety create more reaction than sharing content containing low arousal emotions. *(Berger, 2011)* However, this only shows what form and tone of voice of content would be best to use. What type of content community users prefer and react to and what drives users to contribute to a community often, is not yet answered in existing literature. The survey conducted should give us an answer to this problem.

Based on the information gained during the expert interviews, the hypothesis is that content that gives community members the opportunity to share their ideas and opinions will be the type of content that will motivate active participation in the community the most.

The questions asked on the survey can be found in appendix 4 as well as rough data collected from the survey. The results of the survey are summarized in figures 2-4.
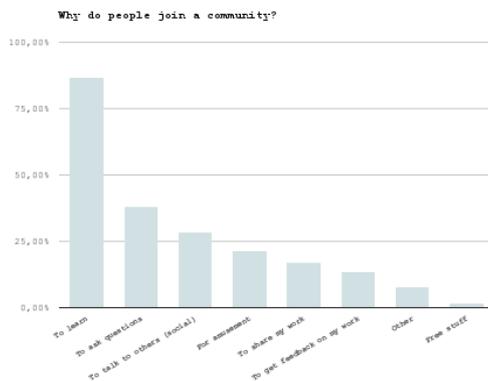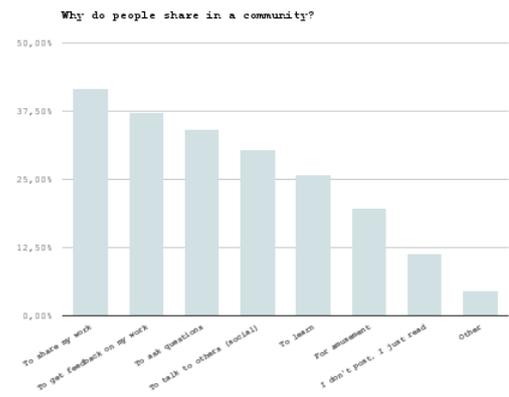

Figure 2 Why do people join a community?

Figure 3 Why do people share in a community?
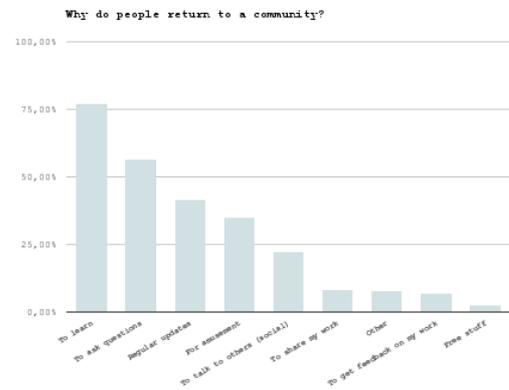
Figure 4 Why do people return to a community?

As can be seen in the figures above; the clear majority of people join a community to learn new things and get inspiration. Once joined, the reasons to share in a community are more dispersed. People like the exposure for their own work and the possibility to receive feedback on their work or ideas. They also like the possibility to ask questions when needed. However, not all of these are also the main reason for returning to the community regularly. The main reasons for returning are the possibility to learn new things and the possibility to ask questions to either a company or other community members.

It is interesting to see that only 55 % of people return to the community for the same reason as they once joined. This means that if the methods used to get the consumer to join the community, will not change after the person joined, 45% of the consumers will not return and participate in the community. (See table 1)

Table 1: People who join a community for reason x return for y

Join	Total	Return	To share	To get feedback	To ask questions	To talk to others	To learn	Amusement	Free stuff
To share	**66**		**39%**	30%	32%	29%	42%	14%	0%
To get feedback	**52**		35%	**37%**	38%	37%	52%	19%	0%
To ask questions	**144**		25%	21%	**55%**	36%	67%	16%	2%
To talk to others	**107**		31%	25%	48%	**60%**	69%	27%	1%
To learn	**325**		16%	13%	37%	28%	**83%**	19%	1%
Amusement	**80**		36%	31%	79%	60%	145%	**81%**	6%
Free stuff	**6**		50%	50%	117%	50%	150%	50%	**33%**

Another interesting thing is that the people who joined a community for only amusement, often return to a community to make active contributions to this community in the form of sharing ideas and asking questions. This is in contrast to people who join a community solely for the purpose of learning. People who join a community for the purpose of learning, make relatively less active contributions to the community in the form of sharing work and ideas.

From this could be concluded that acquiring people with entertaining, remarkable content could contribute to a possibly more active community later on, than if people are acquired with informative content. Nevertheless, in order to do so, people should also be given to opportunity to share ideas and ask questions once joined the community.

Lastly it can be noted that almost nobody returns to the community for free products. Offering lotteries with free products for community members could thus be a way of keeping community members away, making the community less active and effective in contributing and sharing content.

Reviewing the results of the survey, it can be said that content that gives the opportunity to share ideas and opinions, is indeed the type of content that activates most community members in active community participation. However, learning seems to be the most important driver for people to sign up to a community in the first place. The hypothesis that content that gives community members the opportunity to share their ideas and opinions will be the type of content that will motivate active participation in the community the most, can be accepted with the side note that learning seems to be a strong motivator as well.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Table 2: Summary of theories

	Research	Word of Mouth	Co-creation	Remarkable	Social Currency
Obi4wan	x				
Berger		x		x	x
Hermkens		x			
Kietzmann		x			
Bughin		x			
Berger and Schwartz		x	x		
Zhang		x			
Centola		x			
Fexeus					x
Rantalankila					x
Raaphorst		x	x		x
Adfo Group	x				
Hanna et.al.	x				
Zimmerer, Scarborough and Wilson	x				
Cohen	x				
Chen and Xie		x			
Sridhar&Srinivasan		x	x		x
Bughin					x
Keller&Fay		x			
Empirical Findings		x			x

Combining the theories and knowledge gained from the literature, expert interviews and empirical findings; table 2 can be created.

As could be concluded from the literature review, the conventional marketing models are, in case of the 4P model, not suitable for the online environment and in case of the 4- and 5 S model only meant for already established companies that want to create online presence for their business. None of these models describe ways to create an active community by using the strength of free advertising or word of mouth marketing. This, even tough the importance and effectiveness of word-of-mouth marketing and social currency is named in most literature about Social media (see table 2)

This leaves a research gap between existing knowledge and a framework for the practical implementation of this knowledge.

Since the components named in the table are components that are named in several of the theories and papers, their

importance is more apparent. Combining these factors, a framework can be created based on the most important and frequently named items. This framework will still have the strategic components that made the 4S model a good model for digital marketing, but will also take the new insights into account. Together this will create an easy to use framework for smaller and new-to-the market companies that will help them in building a supportive online community and in effectively making use of word-of-mouth marketing.

THE A.S.S.S.S FRAMEWORK

Because of the reasons mentioned in the previous paragraphs, a new framework for the practical implementation of Social Media marketing is proposed: This framework will be a guide for smaller companies that want to create word-of-mouth and that want to grow their business using social media. The framework will use principles mentioned in earlier marketing frameworks and combine them with new and practical findings in order to create an easy to understand framework that can be used by new-to-the-market companies to create awareness for the company and its products and in order to create an active community (i.e. a community with regular content updates (at least twice a week) created by its members) around it.

In the next chapters, this new framework will be discussed in detail, using literature to explain and justify the different components of this framework.

Analyse

The first step when launching a new product, will often involve doing research on the product and the target audience. Doing market research has always been part of building a brand and a marketing campaign. (*Cohen, 1995; Zimmerer, Scarborough and Wilson, 2008; Safko and Brake, 2009*) However, with the growth of Social Media, doing marketing research has become not only easier, the results have also become more viable. This is because of the large databases of information Social Media platforms provide access to. [1] (*Obi4wan.nl, 2016*)

The availability of large amounts of Social data from previous years and events gives the opportunity to predict what will happen when a new product or a new business is launched. In this way, the company can prepare for the questions that will be asked and can avoid problems similar businesses had to handle when they first launched. *(Obi4wan.nl, 2016; Domingos, 2005)*

In more practical words: Before starting any of the marketing tactics, try to get to know potential customers as good as possible. What does their daily life look like? What are their hobby's, their concerns and how do they speak? What words do they use? *(Fexeus, 2007)* Also analyse competition on the market: What questions are their customers asking? What went well and what went

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[1] Analysing Social Media on what your target group is talking about or how people are talking about your brand or product is also called "Social listening".

wrong when they launched similar products or brands to the market?

This knowledge can be gained using tools as Google Analytics, Coosto or Social Harvest. These tools gather information from large Social data sources. This way of gathering data is also called Social Media Mining.

Because of the importance of getting to know thy customer and of creating a solid plan for a marketing campaign. The first step in the new framework will be called Analyse. This step allows preparation for the coming steps of the framework and provides a solid base of knowledge about the customer.

See

The second step in the framework is about making the product visible online. Without knowing about the existence of a product, there is no possibility in buying the product or contributing to a community around it. Because of this, it is very important to get the product visible online.

As discussed in the first part of the theoretical framework, digital word of mouth marketing can be a vital way of marketing for start-up companies, since these companies often do not have access to large marketing budgets. *(Berger, 2014)*

Digital word of mouth marketing is when a Social-Influencer recommends a product or brand on an online channel, such as a blog, video or on other social media, and one or several followers decide to buy the product because of that. This follower shares a message about the product on social media or recommends it to his/her friends. This viral way of marketing (the message spreads from person- to- person like a virus) is both present in online interactions i.e. the act of watching, reading, sharing, liking or clicking on a social message, as well as in daily life where people talk about the product, company or commercial during their daily activities and meetings. These messages created by Social Influencers are playing a large role in the reputation of the firm, making it very important to manage these messages very well. *(Kietzmann, Hermkens, 2011)*

As discussed before, the digital world has become very important over the last couple of years. However, still people spend the majority of their time offline. To be more precise, people spend 8 times as much time offline, as they do online. *(Keller and Fay, 2012)* Because of this, being able to create word-of-mouth on Social media, leading to a word-of-mouth offline will benefit both the online as well as the offline possibilities of marketing, without the need of any expensive advertising.

Finding the right social influencer can be the catalyst in the process of creating a community base for a start-up. A social influencer is often an early adopter or innovator in consumer types (but doesn't have to be). *(Keller and Berry, 2003; Rogers, 1962)* Because of this, they can be interested in new to the market products or innovative products of smaller companies, before the early and late majority *(Rogers, 1962)* start showing interest in the product. Even so, Social influencers often have a large

network of followers interested in the same kind of products and brands. Since 20-50% of purchases are made after someone recommended the product *(Bughin, 2010)* social influencers can help catalyse the process of creating a customer base. Furthermore, seeing others do something makes people more likely to do it themselves. *(Berger and Schwartz, 2011; Zhang, 2010)* After seeing a product seven times, it is enough for a consumer to want it as well. *(Meindersma, 2015)* All of this is according to the principle of Social Reinforcement. *(Centola, 2010)*

A nice example of a start-up that became very successful by using the right Social Influencers is the Australian Triangl Company. Selling premium bikinis of neoprene material, they needed to stand out in order to become known. Triangl looked for a handful of Female Social Influencers with great photography skills, a well-trained body and a large follower base. They sent one of their bikinis to these influencers, leading to a series of photos of these Social influencers on several social media. Very soon, a lot of their followers wanted to try one of these special bikinis as well. Thus making Triangl very successful in less than three years of going in business and making the owner of Triangl one of 100 the wealthiest people in Australia under 40 years old and one of the 4 wealthiest women. *(Mail Online, 2015 ; Skynews.com.au, 2015)*

Making the new business visible via relevant Social Influencers will catalyse the word of mouth process and the subsequent course of the marketing campaign and community building. Since consumers tend to want a product after seeing it seven times or more, *(Meindersma, 2015)* it is recommended to find at least that many Social Influencers that potential customers in the influencer circle of these Social Influencers will see the product or brand at least seven times. When the product is relatively low in acquisition, while it's users are mainly experts in the field for which the product is used, it has shown to be beneficial to delay the availability of Social Influencer reviews. Thus making the reviews not directly available after the launch of the product. *(Chen and Xie, 2008)*

Besides making the new business visible via Social Influencers, extra visibility can be created by creating a smaller online advertising campaign, visible to the target audience. *(Wordstream.com, 2016)* Since the budget for this campaign is limited, it is recommended to choose one Social Media channel on which the campaign will be performed. The Social Media channel should be chosen based on the target audience. Demographics of the users of different social media channels according to Pew research center 2013 can be found in appendix 5.

It is advised to choose the channel on which your target audience is the most active. Make sure the advertisements are narrowly targeted in order to make the advertisement as effective as possible for a small budget. Information gathered in the first step of the framework could be used for the effective targeting of the advertisement.

Without people knowing of a product or brand, there will never be an active community supporting the product or brand. Since the brand or product first needs to be seen. See will be the second component of the framework.

Once the new company is more visible on the web, it is important to not only appear for potential customers, but also that the company or product "sticks" in the mind of these potential customers.

Stick

In order for a message or image to stick in the minds of consumers, the image needs to attract the attention of the target audience. First of all, people are very visual. *(Bradford, 2004)* Because of this, it is recommended to use images rather than only text.

The colours used in the image should be contrasting to the colours used by the chosen social media platform. This, in order to make the image stand out as much as possible. *(Snowden, 2002)* Even so, in order to make the advertisement stand out to the right people, the advertisement should copy the emotions potential customers are feeling. For example, when advertising for an energizing pill the person on the advertisement could mimic the very tired and worn out feelings of the potential customer. It is proven that one notices people and images of others in the same emotional state better and more often than other images. *(Fexeus, 2007)* In the same theory, it is advised to use the same kind of words and length of sentences in the advertisement and other messages as the words and length of sentences your target audience uses. When doing so, potential customers will recognise themselves in the message and because of that instantly be more positive about the product and company. *(Fexeus, 2007)*

When sharing information about your product, the information provided should be complimentary to the information provided in influencer reviews (as in step two of the framework) when the product is low in price or its users are experts in the field. When this is not the case, the provided information should be substitutes. *(Chen and Xie, 2008)*

Once you capture the attention of the target audience, one wants to keep this attention long enough in order to make the consumer read and processes the message. When the message is seen, but not noticed, it will not stick with people. *(Fexeus, 2007)* This is why logically the third step of the framework will be; Stick. Named for the importance of being able to make a message stick in the minds of people following the principles of "On top of mind, on tip of tongue".

In order to make the message stick and easy to remember, it should be simple. Even so, the message and/or image should be remarkable. When the message or image is remarkable, not only will the message stick easier, it will also be a good communication piece to share between two people. *(Heath & Heath, 2007)* This brings us to the next step in the framework.

Share

As mentioned earlier, people spend a lot of time online but they still spend eight times as much time offline *(Keller and Fay, 2012).* Because of this, it is important to

bring the online message to the offline world since this can increase the scope and reach of the message and thus the virality of the campaign.

As mentioned in the previous section, the online message should be remarkable. *(Heath & Heath, 2007; Berger, 2011)* When a message is remarkable it is not only easier to remember, it will also form an interesting conversation piece. Think about Susan Boyle doing audition for Britain's got talent. Nobody expected the dusty old lady to sing "I dreamed a dream" quite as well as she did. The video of the audition went viral almost instantly. People will talk about remarkable things because sharing this new information will make them look more intelligent or wittier. Making ourselves look better with the things we say is something that we instinctively do. This is called Social Currency *(Berger, 2011; Rantalankila, 2015)* These findings correspond to what community expert M. Raaphorst said about the virality of content posts in an interview that was conducted for this research: (see appendix 3) "Viral posts grab the attention immediately, they give people a so called "WTF" moment, are great in storytelling and often show an uncommon situation."

In order to make people remember the remarkable message, the memory of it should be triggered by something in the everyday environment. For example, when creating an online message about a certain type of cookie to eat while drinking coffee, seeing a cup of coffee might trigger the memory of the commercial or advertisement. Once this memory is triggered, this person might tell the people they are drinking coffee with, about this remarkable message. *(Berger & Schwartz, 2011)* Thus sharing the message by making use of word-of-mouth.

A company that made use of this principle is Kitkat. Colleen Chorak, the marketing director of KitKat, the candy bar company that is owned by Hershey's, came with the idea to create a commercial where the connection between a coffee break and a KitKat was made. Because this connection was not made by any other company and because coffee is such an everyday product, every time someone drank a cup of coffee after seeing the KitKat commercial, they were remembered of the commercial. This "trick" helped the brand grow from $300 million to $500 million. *(Executiveeducation.wharton.upenn.edu, 2013)*

Not only offline, but also online social currency seems to be the driving force behind people sharing a video, message or image on their Social Media profiles. The things someone shares on the internet, mirror the person they want others to think they are. Funny, smart or intellectual. *(Berger, 2014)*

Sharing a remarkable message makes sure that as many people as possible will hear about this message or the brand of product it is related to. Because of this, the fourth component in the framework is called; Share.

Besides spreading a simple and remarkable message, another thing that could increase the likelihood of sharing your message online, is asking early in the design process of the product for the feedback of your target group. Make them engage in the development process will help

people feel part of the company. They will feel important and smart for helping create a great product, making it more likely they will share the content of the company. *(Raaphorst, 2016)* This is also one of the reasons why crowdfunding is such an effective way of collecting funds and doing successful marketing at the same time during this stage. *(Gerber, Hui and Kuo, 2012)* This finding is also very important for the last component of the framework; Speak.

Speak

After the first four steps of the framework, the consumers now know your company and share your message. They have your company on top of their minds and they are enthusiastic about it. However, in order to create a long lasting and loyal customer base or community it is important to keep the growing community active. This is the last step in the newly created framework: Speak.

Speak is essentially different from Share even tough in both stages of the framework content could be shared both on social media and in everyday life. As during Share, the consumer shares a message either online or offline solely because that one message stood out to them, it gave them social currency. In Speak the person feels already part of a larger community and already feels a connection with the brand. Sharing content is now not only because of a remarkable message. The person shares in the community because it wants to make a contribution to the brand or product.

The finding from the survey telling that 45% of people return to a community for a different reason than they joined, show us the importance of a different approach once the consumer has joined the community. The steps up to and including share all contribute to the acquisition of a community member. The practises from the component speak contribute to keeping people active in a community after they've joined.

In order to keep the community active, the company should be active in contributing to the community as well. According to research, making contributions with images or messages containing high arousal emotions: i.e. Awe, excitement, amusement (humour), anger or anxiety create more reaction than sharing content containing low arousal emotions. *(Berger, 2011)*

The majority of people join a community to learn new things and get inspiration. Once joined, people like the exposure for their own work and the possibility to receive feedback. However, this is not the main reason for returning to the community, the main reason for return is to learn new things and to ask questions.

When building a strong community, giving the members the possibility to share their own work and giving them a voice is very important. Combining this with regular inspirational and interesting content updates will help to keep the community active.
In the answers of the questionnaire it also became clear that having a common interest to talk about and an open minded and non-judgemental way of interacting between community members gave people the drive to return to

the community often and really feel part of the group. This corresponds to what community expert M. Raaphorst described in his interview (appendix 3): People need to have a shared source of interest in order to form a community. This can be a shared interest in a certain topic, but also in building something together, sharing data or downloads or other types of shared interest.

The findings of this survey, summarized in figure 2-4, can be used by new to the market companies to keep their community active and loyal. Giving them the ability to share and learn, will increase the likelihood of customers joining the community and after that, participating actively to the community. This will keep the community created with the first four steps of the framework active and effective for a long time.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this research paper was to create a framework that could be used by new to the market companies and companies with a low budget to create a strong community by using Social Media and digital marketing. By analysing existing theories about consumer behaviour and online marketing, it can be said that current available research lacks a practical framework with the most important concepts of successful community building using Social Media. It was found that knowing the needs and behaviour of potential customers is very important in order to be able to send a message that will interest the potential customer. Because of this, the component Analyse was created as a first step in creating a successful online community. Even so, it was found that making ones message visible is essential for the successful spread of the message. When the message is not seen, it will not be spread. Also in most literature the large influence of Social Influencers was mentioned as well as the importance of Social Currency. Because of this, the component See was created as a second step in creating an online community. It was also found that if a message was simple, but remarkable it would most likely spread faster and would reach a larger public, than a message that did not include these components. In order to make sure the message would be noticed and would spread to as many people as possible, the component Share was created as well as the component Stick, which emphasized the importance of word-of-mouth as mentioned in the largest part of the literature as well as in the expert interviews.

Even tough these steps created a base for creating awareness and building an online community, there was no information on how this newly created community could be kept active. Because of this, a survey was conducted. Findings from this survey showed that community members stayed active in a community to learn and to share their own ideas. Based on these findings the last component: Speak was created in which the importance of giving community members the opportunity to speak their minds and share their ideas is emphasized.

Together these components (Analyse, See, Stick, Share and Speak) form the A.S.S.S.S framework, which helps

small and new-to-the market companies in a practical way with building awareness and creating an active online community.

LIMITATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH

When writing a paper, time seems always to be a limitation. The framework created in this research paper, is developed based on both existing knowledge as well as new knowledge. However, in order to fully confirm the usability of this framework it should be tested thoroughly. This test can be done by implementing the framework at a small company that was already using online tools in order to create a community before. As mentioned in the methods chapter, the IPM+ could be used to track the success of the community. Old statistics can then be compared to new ones, in order to fully confirm the effectiveness of the A.S.S.S.S framework. Also, this test should be done with several companies in a variety of disciplines and countries in order to test the framework optimally.

Another way of testing the framework is by launching a product by using the A.S.S.S.S framework. While doing so, the K.P.Is could be taken as described in the methodology and tested according to the norm. A product for the purpose of testing the framework was already created and published. *(see: http://withoutelephants.com/is-koop-the-ultimate-blogger-workbook/ and http://www.boekenbestellen.nl/boek/the-ultimate-workbook-for-bloggers/17463)* Also, some research was performed in order to successfully complete the first steps of the A.S.S.S.S framework. (see appendix 1) Due to time limitations, this research could not be completed. This could be done in a future study.

Except from time, which is almost always a limitation in research, another limitation on this research was that the student edition of the Social Media tracking software COOSTO could only use information of Dutch Social Media users. Information extracted from this tool, was thus only focussed on the Dutch market. Because of this, it is important to analyse markets outside of The Netherlands before applying the A.S.S.S.S framework. Even so, the A.S.S.S.S framework should be tested in several countries in order to make sure that the framework is applicable in all countries.

As was mentioned in the expert interviews several times; the biggest reason companies fail in building community, is because they fear the change from push marketing into pull marketing. They see it as a huge risk to let customers speak and they also often don't have the required knowledge of new media in order to start the conversation with their target audience. Even though the A.S.S.S.S framework forms a solid base for building a successful community, companies need to recognise the importance of these communities before they will start using a framework like this.

Why companies will not go into conversation with their customers and ways to convince corporations into the importance of these conversations would be a very

interesting subject for further research. It would
supplement this paper and it would be a great addition to
the overall knowledge pool.

RESOURCES

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Expert interview with Karen: *owner of met-k.com*

Expert interview with Marco Raaphorst: *owner of Melodiefabriek.*

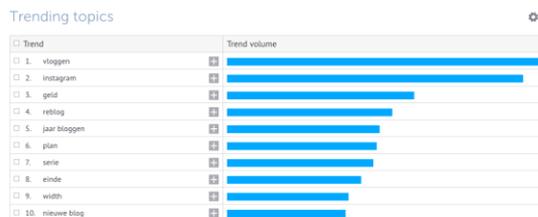Expert interview with Collin Straathof: *Marketing & Communication Specialist at Woeler.*

APPENDIX 1: Source Coosto.com

* Messages about blogging are mostly positively or neutral formulated.
* Messages about Planning are also mostly positively or neutral formulated.
* For blogging, Twitter and Blogs are the most important platforms, for Planning Twitter and Facebook play the largest role.
* Mostly Females write about Blogging
* Blogging was the most spoken about in the city of Amsterdam, Arnhem, Rotterdam and the Hague in the past year.
* Other popular topics of people writing about blogging are: Instagram, Vlogging, Planning and Money.

Bloggen	90.800 berichten	32% 28.920 positief / 4% 3.853 negatief	van 13 mei 2015 tot en met Nu
Plannen	828.979 berichten	19% 154.714 positief / 6% 50.599 negatief	van 13 mei 2015 tot en met Nu

Src		Bloggen Nr.	Berichten	Plannen Nr.	Berichten
Twitter		1.	39.212	1.	304.960
Blog		2.	35.771	4.	125.613
Facebook		3.	6.224	2.	161.786
Instagram		4.	5.650	6.	19.774
Nieuws		5.	1.433	3.	154.640
Forum		6.	1.255	5.	54.910
Google+		7.	613	7.	2.448
Pinterest		8.	321	10.	1.141
YouTube		9.	230	8.	1.512
LinkedIn		10.	73	11.	487
blendle		11.	4	9.	1.406
Nieuws		12.	1	12.	196

Bloggen	30.806 auteurs	23% 7.003 mannelijk / 42% 12.836 vrouwelijk	van 13 mei 2015 tot en met Nu

Trending topics

	Trend		Trend volume
1.	vloggen		
2.	instagram		
3.	geld		
4.	reblog		
5.	jaar bloggen		
6.	plan		
7.	serie		
8.	einde		
9.	width		
10.	nieuwe blog		

Potential interesting influencers:

http://Kellycaresse.nl

http://www.iliveformydreams.com/

https://mijnkladblog.nl/ik-ook-van-mij/

http://laurasblog.nl/binnen-kijken/persoonlijk-interieur/

APPENDIX 2: Interview Questions

1. What is your name?
2. Where do you work?
3. How do you think startup companies can build a community for their brand or product?
4. Why do people share on social media and how could you make people share content
5. Why do a lot of companies fail in creating a succesfull online community?
6. What contributes to the virality of a content post?
7. What makes a trend? i.e. a product of practise that increases in popularity very fast.

APPENDIX 3: EXPERT INTERVIEW ANSWERS

Karin
Owner at MET-K.COM
first believing in your brand/product, then sharing many stories about them and use plenty of social media.
social media = communication, being noticed and speaking your voice so if you share good content people will like it and share it.
because they think in numbers instead of people and they think it supposed to be a quick fix, but it takes time! also not interacting with the crowd is why it fails.
emotion, personal story, authentic and honest content.
when people want to wear/ use the product because it makes them feel good and because people want to connect with it. it's identity based!

Marco Raaphorst
Owner at Melodiefabriek
By allowing people to help the company by asking them for feedback on things like early design and future plans. There must be a shared source of interest and allowing people to discuss these things will build a community. Or share data, downloads, build things together etc.
People want to help other people. They want to show there expertise. They want to show the stuff they like. They want to find soul brothers. In general: interesting stuff will be shared by a group of focussed people. Put time an effort in making quality content and writing about it. Show your expertise and be open to suggestions. Focus on soul brothers. People who share the same interest. Don't see other companies as competitors but try to find commons ground. Make links to anything you think is mind blowing fantastic.
Because they are afraid. They can't stand people asking "difficult" questions. They are not open. They are not creative. They don't think that mistakes will make them any better but are afraid to make mistakes. They can't relate to modern times. No vision, they lost track on the digital/online environment.
Something that grabs the attentions immediately. Great storytelling, something that will change your views on life. An uncommon situatie or story, a WTF moment.
A lot of luck imo. But some people who are seen as inventing trends are often simply following the trend but were at the right moment in an early stage. So, what makes a trend? A lot of followers of the trend. And if you're among one of the first, you are a trendsetter. You need to "feel" modern times. Have a keen eye and ear for modern inventions, online happenings. I know many people who didn't see the internet coming. Didn't see the smartphone coming. Didn't see blogs coming. Podcasting. YouTube. But some did. They can feel it. I recon myself among those who have that special connection with modern time.

Collin Straathof
Employee at Woeler
People have to love the products or content from a company
There should be a reason for people to share the content.
Because their content isn't interesting for people on social media.
When something is funny or very interesting then it could go viral.
-

APPENDIX 4: Survey Questions

1- Why did you sign up for this community?

    * To share my work

    * To get feedback on my work

    * To ask questions

    * To talk to others (Social)

    * To learn

    * For amusement

    * Free stuff

    * Other…

2- Why do you post in this community?

    * To share my work

    * To get feedback on my work

    * To ask questions

    * To talk to others (Social)

    * To learn

    * For amusement

    * I don't talk, I just read

    * Other …

3- Why do you keep returning to this community?

    * To share my work

    * Regular updates

    * To get feedback on my work

    * To talk to others (social)

    * To ask questions

    * To learn

    * For amusement

    * Free stuff

    * Other…

4- What do you love about this community (and/or what not)

Question 1: Why did you join?

Answer	nr.answers	percentage of people with this answer
To learn	327	86,97%
To ask questions	144	38,30%
To talk to others (social)	108	28,72%
For amusement	81	21,54%
To share my work	65	17,29%
To get feedback on my work	51	13,56%
Other	29	7,71%
Free stuff	6	1,60%
Total number of participants	376	

Question 2: Why do you participate?

Answer	nr.answers	percentage of people with this answer
To ask questions	158	41,80%
To learn	141	37,30%
I don't post, I just read	129	34,13%
To share my work	117	30,95%
To talk to others (social)	98	25,93%
To get feedback on my work	75	19,84%
For amusement	44	11,64%
Other	17	4,50%
Total number of participants	376	

Question 3: Why do you return?

Answer	nr.answers	percentage of people with this answer
To learn	290	77,13%
To ask questions	212	56,38%
Regular updates	156	41,49%
For amusement	132	35,11%
To talk to others (social)	84	22,34%
To share my work	31	8,24%
Other	30	7,98%
To get feedback on my work	27	7,18%
Free stuff	10	2,66%
Total answers	376	

APPENDIX 5: Social Media demographics 2012 (pew research)

	Facebook	Pinterest	Instagram	LinkedIn	Twitter
% of total internet users	72%	31%	28%	25%	23%
Men	66%	16%	24%	26%	25%
Woman	77%	44%	31%	25%	21%
18-29	82%	37%	55%	22%	32%
30-49	79%	36%	28%	32%	29%
50-64	64%	24%	11%	26%	13%
65+	48%	16%	4%	12%	6%
High school or less	71%	25%	25%	9%	19%
Some College	72%	37%	32%	25%	23%
College+	72%	31%	26%	46%	27%
Less then $30.000/yr	73%	24%	26%	17%	21%
$30.000-49.999/yr	72%	37%	27%	21%	19%
50.000-74.999/yr	66%	41%	30%	32%	25%
$75.000+ /yr	78%	30%	26%	41%	26%
Urban	74%	26%	32%	30%	30%
Suburban	72%	34%	28%	26%	21%
Rural	67%	31%	18%	12%	15%