Social Media Marketing:

A critical look at how companies use social media

By Joshua Diaz
Date: 28th of May 2015
Student number: 500640557
Year: 2015
Coach: Constantin von Maltzahn

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Date : 28th of May 2015
Place : Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Name : Joshua Diaz

___________________________________
Signature of the author of this research/thesis paper
Joshua Diaz
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Rationale

A quick online search of social media marketing will reveal various articles about the key steps to create the ‘perfect’ social media marketing plan. Most articles focus on tips and tricks that will lead any company to social media success. There are many arguments for and against social media. On the one hand, there are people who see social media as a dying fad. Forrester Research, a global and advisory firm, sees it as inefficient. According to an article on Marketing Land by Beck (2014), Forrester announced that Social Media platforms like Facebook and Twitter are a waste of company’s time. In fact, the vice president of the company said “It’s clear that Facebook and Twitter don’t offer the relationships that marketing leaders crave, yet most brands still use these sites as the centerpiece of their social efforts — thereby wasting significant financial, technological, and human resources on social networks that don’t deliver value.” On the other hand, there are those who see social media as a communication tool that enhances the relationship with customers. Vaynerchuck, founder of the social media agency VaynerMedia, argues in his book Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook (2013) that it is important to see social media as a long term investment. Companies should focus on building and developing an authentic and active customer relationship. In fact, he states that companies should “use content to express yourself authentically, not commercially” (p. 295). This relationship does not happen overnight, but it can be accomplish if companies keep working on it. Hyder, founder and CEO of Marketing Zen Group, mentions in her book the Zen of Social Media (2010) that many companies are “spending hours on social media only to be disappointed by a zero return on your investment” (p. 22). They don’t get the return on investment they were hoping for. She argues that many companies don’t know how social media works and how the consumers using these platforms think and act, and it is this lack of knowledge that separates success from failure on social media.

The goal of Social media is not the same for every company. Some of the reasons why companies use social media are to build/strengthening the brand, increase/monitor brand presence/awareness, retaining customers, reducing marketing costs, drive customers to website, convert consumers to customers, etc (Daoud, 2014, Evans-Cario, n.d., & Kirk, 2012). While there are many reasons why companies use social media, the issue becomes more complicated when you look at why companies uses specific platforms. Mobile app Hootsuite has made it easy for companies to post on all selected social media (Hyder, 2010, p. 263). Instagram also
has a feature that allows companies to share the same post on other social media platforms. However, others believe that each platform has its own characteristics and thus should be treated differently for each post. Native advertising is also seen as key to succeeding on any of the social media platforms (Hallett, n.d.), which means using each social media for their strength. Another way people segregate the different platforms is by demographics. For example, Pinterest users are mostly women, and some argue that Pinterest are used by users who want to get inspired as to what to buy. Thus, having an ecommerce is very important on Pinterest (Scherer, n.d.). With many contrasting viewpoints, this research will use theories and observation to understand how companies are using social media to enhance their businesses from a strategic level.

1.2 Aim

The aim of this research report is to find out how companies are using social media. The information of this research report has been used for an article that explores the relationship between companies and social media. Through this article companies will be able to understand what social media is and how different companies are using it with marketing. This will not be done on an operational level. However, this research will look at what social media marketing is at its core.

1.3 Questions

In order to reach the aim, a research question has been developed. Because the research question is broad and vast, three sub questions have been created to narrow and help guide the research. These sub-questions’ purpose is to focus on different elements of the main research and to answer it. The research question is as follows:

• How is social media being used by companies for marketing purposes and how does this compare to offline activities?

There are three important points that comes out of the research question. These are translated in the following sub-questions:

1. What is social media?
2. What is marketing?
3. How does social media affect marketing?
1.4 Methodology

Social Media is a very unstable platform in terms of research. The best way to approach this research is from an explorative point of view. The research mainly focused on gathering information and looking for patterns in them. The nature of the research was also an interpretive one, with the aim of describing the phenomenon as it is now, which changes rapidly.

The research consists of primary and secondary data analysis. The secondary data will focus on answering the three sub-questions. Literature and theories were collected to help answer the questions. For the topic of social media, a few platforms were chosen for in-depth research. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat have been chosen because of their popularity. It was important to look at the key characteristics of these platforms and how they viewed companies on them. Hypermodern and postmodern marketing and the glue value theories were used to understand how companies view and use marketing, while the elastic self theory was a way to categorize social media platforms.

The primary data consisted of observation of how three companies (H&M, Adidas, and Nordstrom) use social media. The companies were chosen because a research revealed that they had different marketing strategies. This research aimed at getting as many different perspective on social media marketing as possible with these companies. This consisted of looking at the text and graphic used on different platforms in comparison to how the companies described themselves. These information were put together in a multiple case study. To conclude, the secondary data were used understand the different parts of the main research questions and to answer it, while the primary data was used to see if these theories represented how companies are currently using social media.

1.5 Limitations

There are several limitations that arose during the research which impacts the results. First of all, the research focuses only on the company’s perspective. During the research it became clear that understanding how companies use social media and how consumers perceive their activities became too vast for the time that was available. There were two possible options, either to keep the research broad and cover both subjects or to focus on one aspect and go in-depth. This research focuses only on how companies use and engage with social media platforms. Secondly, a lot of the information gained from companies in the case studies were from their website and from their behavior on social media. The original plan was to study their social media activities
to have an idea of their strategy and then compare and contrast it with an interview with them. However, the companies were too busy for an interview or did not reply. In order to still get an idea of the companies’ strategies, the result of social media was compared to the description of their company on their website. However, this does not confirm if the findings are indeed correct, but if their social media activities matches their description of their offline strategies. This was important for the research because it was one way that the social media results can be compared to a company’s general marketing strategy. Third, this research avoided any debates on marketing. This research did not go into the debate of whether postmodern marketing does indeed exist and whether it is superior or inferior to modern marketing. This thesis used these theories as a way to understand and verbalize how companies possibly approach marketing. Last, there was no postmodern companies analyzed in the case study. It became difficult to find a company that fitted the profile. The result talk about the hypermodern and interactive marketing, but avoids postmodern results. However, in the conclusion there is an educated guess as to the behavior of such a company, but no solid conclusion is made.

1.6 Structure

This report follows a chronological order to answer the research question. It can be divided into two parts. The first part consists of chapter 2 to 4. This is the main research phase. Secondary research methods are used to answer the sub-questions. The secondary methods consists of theories and literature analysis. These were essential in understanding social media (Chapter 2) and marketing (Chapter 3), and in connecting the two topics to each other (Chapter 4).

The second part consists of chapter 5, which is the observation part. This part looks at how social media is used by companies. This chapter focuses on primary method, which is a multiple case study. This method was necessary in connecting theories about social media marketing to the practical world. It was a way to verify the answers to the sub-questions.

Chapter 6 is the conclusion to the whole report. Here the main research question is answered using findings from the previous chapters.
Chapter 2: Social Media

Meriam Webster (n.d.) defines social media as “forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content.” There are three aspects that makes a social media. First, it has to be electronic, or available on an electronic device. As the research will show, social media is currently on desktop sites (laptop or PC) and on mobile apps (also including tablets). The second important aspect of a social media platforms is that it is meant to create communities and let users interact with other people through the platform. Last, it is a platform primarily for people and not companies. A platform is created for the people, and as the research will indicate, advertising features are not part of the original function and they are usually an aspect that came after the platform became popular.

As of the 1st of February 2015, eBizMBA (2015) ranked Facebook as the most popular social media platform with approximately 900,000,000 estimated unique monthly visitors, while Twitter came in second with 310,000,000 estimated unique monthly visitors. Other platforms that were also ranked as popular are LinkedIn with 225,000,000, Pinterest with 250,000,000, and Instagram with 100,000,000 unique monthly visitors. Snapchat also has around 100,000,000 unique monthly visitors (Rusli, 2014). Furthermore, Facebook was ranked number 1 for the most popular social media site among adults (18+). Pinterest, LinkedIn, Instagram and Twitter all continue to grow. Usage of multi-platforms has also been increasing with over 52% of adults using two or more social media sites (Pew Research Center’s, 2013).

While the previous paragraph gave a snapshot of how the platforms are currently doing, a look into how these platforms are growing reveals a different story. According to a research by Lunden (2014), Facebook has only grown over the past six months with 2% active users. Tumblr, on the other hand, had the biggest growth with approximately 120% active users over the past six months. Tumblr was followed by Pinterest (111%), Instagram (64%), LinkedIn (54%), and Twitter (26%). When looking at the growth of new members over the past six months, Pinterest came first with 57% while Facebook only had 6%. Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter also had a bigger growth in new members than Facebook. When looking at the Mobile apps, Facebook had the second biggest growth with their Facebook Messenger app with approximately 52%. The number one social media app was Snapchat, with a growth of 56%. Instagram came in third with 47% growth.
These figures indicate that Social Media is unpredictable. One social media can dominate in one area, while be weak in another. All these different types of social media have a strong hold on the market, and it is unclear which one will still be here in five years. Furthermore, the line between social media sites for desktop and social media apps keep getting blurred. Instagram and Snapchat are strong contenders, despite being only a mobile app. While many platforms that started as desktop platforms have a mobile app (Ad Week, 2014).

The four chosen social media platforms that have been chosen for further analysis are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. Facebook and Twitter were chosen because they represent the beginning of the growth of social media’s popularity. Furthermore, they still dominate the social media platforms. Instagram and Snapchat were chosen because they represent the new era of social media, which started around 2010. One characteristics is that they are solely mobile apps.

2.1 Facebook

According to the website Mashable (2006), Facebook was launched as a campus social media platform in 2004. Since then, Facebook has gained over 1.3 billion users, and around 64% of them uses the platform daily (Facebook for Business, n.d.). According to Saul (2014), a research of US users, which is the biggest group on Facebook (Datagenetics, 2010), reveals that the only age group that is continuously growing are the age group of 25 and up. This same research shows that users between 13 and 24 has been declining.

According to the company (Facebook for Business, n.d.), Facebook is not about getting many likes, but rather a way for companies and brands to connect and engage with consumers. The way that Facebook is being used for social media marketing can be divided into three aspects.

First of all, Facebook (Facebook for Business, n.d.) sees their platform as a way for companies to “authentically connect with their customers”. The main method for companies to communicate with the consumers who liked their page is through posts. An article in Ad Week (2015) states that organic posts, which are posts that have not been paid for as advertisements, have a lower reach. Organic reach have been widely debated, but it is said to be between 5% and 11% of the total likes of a page. For Facebook, there are only four actions that counts as engagement. According to Porterfield (2015), A post is considered engaging only if a consumer

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1 Majority of information were gathered from: Facebook for Business, n.d., 'How To Use Facebook For Business Marketing' [https://www.facebook.com/business/overview](https://www.facebook.com/business/overview)
likes, comments, shares, and/or clicks on the post, and the more engagement a post receives, the more it will be pushed into consumer’s newsfeed. In other words, if a consumer does not do any of these actions, the post is considered not engaging and its reach will be effected by this. There have been many discussions as to why organic posts have a low reach. Some companies say that the algorithm of Facebook has made it difficult for companies to reach their consumers (Facebook for Business, n.d.), while others say that this algorithm is a way to fight the excess content that consumers would deal with, with so many companies trying to advertise to them. According to Birt (2015), Facebook defends themselves by saying that there are three types of posts that will lower a posts reach:

1. “Posts that solely push people to buy a product or install an app.”
2. “Posts that push people to enter promotions and sweepstakes with no real context.”
3. “Posts that reuse the exact same content from ads.”

This statements says a lot about how companies should be using Facebook, which is not as any regular advertisement platform. They are saying that if companies treat Facebook like a TV ad or a billboard, they will get little reach. Instead of looking at how companies should not behave on Facebook, it is important to see what tips companies should follow.

There are several tips for organic reach that are given by Facebook (Facebook for Business, n.d.). To increase a posts’ effectivity and reach, Facebook advices companies to experiment with posts. Do not focus on one type of post, for example pictures, but experiment and see what your consumers engage with. Facebook has various features for posting. However the company advices to find what works. Next to experimenting, Facebook has ten tips for company’s posts (Facebook for Business, n.d.):

1. Keep it short
2. Beautiful images
3. Exclusive content
4. Have special deals for consumers. This way companies can get consumers interested and drive sales.
5. Keep track of holidays and special events to relate to your posts.
7. Be responsive: Reply to comments and messages.
8. Be consistent: Post as often as possible and monitor which posts are doing better.
10. Turn successful posts into advertisements. As they have already received positive reaction, chances of a wider reach is positive when turned into advertisement. These 10 tips are just another way of telling companies to act like a friend of the consumer, and not as a corporation.

Secondly, the platform has a paid advertisement service that helps companies achieve their social media goals and get a wider reach (Brennan, 2015). Facebook has a total of 10 goals to choose from (Facebook for Business, n.d.). Each is specific to an area of the platform that the company wants to aim for. What becomes clear from looking at the goals is that each one is a quantifiable goal, which makes it easy to measure the success. The 10 goals are:

1. Boost your post
2. Promote your page
3. Send people to your website
4. Increase conversions on your website
5. Get installs of your app
6. Increase engagement in your app
7. Raise attendance at your event
8. Get people to claim your offer
9. Get video views
10. Local Awareness

Choosing a goal is followed by choosing specific groups to target. Facebook’s paid advertisements gives companies the ability to reach specific groups of people. There are five different methods for using this (Facebook for Business, n.d.). First, companies can reach people in specific locations, for example, people who live in the neighborhood of a store. Second, companies can reach specific demographics (gender, education, etc.). Third, there is shared interests. For example, a company can reach people who like reading books. Fourth, there is behavior. Companies can use Facebook to target people based on what they do. Whether they go online on their phones or for specific shopping behavior. Last, companies can target connections. With this feature, companies increase visibility of people who have already liked their page.

Lastly, Facebook gives companies the tools to analyze how both organic and advertised posts are performing. Facebook has features that gives insight into what is happening on a company’s page. They do this so that companies can make informed decisions about their social media
strategies (Facebook for Business, n.d.). Companies can see how many likes their page received, how many likes, comments, and shares a post or advertisement is receiving, what section of the page gets the most views, how many clicks on links, whether consumers are viewing content on computer, phone, or tablet, etc. Furthermore, with Facebook Graph Search companies can research how competitors are doing, overlapping interests of fans of their page, and research what consumers are talking about (Degani, 2015).

2.2 Twitter

According to the website Mashable (2011), Twitter went public in 2006. The fact that Twitter has over 500 million daily Tweets and 240 million active users is why Twitter markets itself as a platform that connects businesses to what consumers are talking about right now (Business Twitter, n.d.). Pew Research Center (2013) shows that the majority of Twitter users are between 18 and 29. Unlike Facebook that aims at creating communities, Twitter is more focused on real time interactions between companies and consumers (Twitter Business, n.d.). This, according to Twitter, gives companies the opportunity to use context to connect their tweets and messages to consumers. This unique selling proposition is translated in three areas of the platform.

First of all, tweeting is their key way of communicating with consumers. One of the key elements of Twitter is the hashtag. The hashtag is the name of the symbol #. It is used to highlight words or topics of interest in a tweet in order to categorize tweets. With hashtags, companies can connect to current events and popular themes among consumers. Furthermore, the company sees it is important to showcase a variety of relevant content and to connect the company’s followers to other influencers in your industry (Twitter Business, n.d.). In other words, a company should follow industry leaders. Twitter gives these tips for tweeting:

1. Keep it conversational
   a. Write as though you are writing with a good friend
   b. Be genuine
   c. Avoid marketing speak

2. Employ knowledge and voice
   a. People use Twitter for educational and entertainment
   b. Use tweets to inform or entertain.
   c. Make it shareable

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2 Majority of information were gathered from: Business Twitter, n.d. 'Grow Your Business | Twitter For Business'.
3. Write funny, helpful, newsworthy or insightful tweets.
   a. Think of what would make people share your tweet
4. Tweet exceptional content
   a. The most retweeted contents are: links, pictures, videos, or quotes.
5. Engage followers
   a. Ask questions
   b. Listen
   c. Respond and show you’re listening
6. Watch the clock
   a. Twitter happens in real time, so tweet when your audience are online
   b. Tweet during events
7. Iterate
   a. Experiment with different wording and content, mentions, follows, and unfollows.
8. Monitor your campaign goals

With these tips, Twitter shows that their platform is not about advertising, but about connecting through real time happenings.

Secondly, Twitter has an advertisement plan that companies can follow. The advertisements are based on business objective, which are divided into:

- Increase tweet engagements and followers,
- Get more website clicks/conversions,
- Get consumers to install an app or engage with it, and
- Leads on Twitter.

According to the platform’s website Twitter Business (n.d.), the three main ways to reach consumers is by monitoring campaigns in real time, use creativity and humor to humanize brands and to encourage people to follow your brand through promotions and special offers. Companies can also target people based on usernames, keywords, interests, location, device, gender, language and conversation. With Twitter, companies can target device, carrier, and mobile users with advertisement. With this feature, a company can target iOS devices, Android devices, Desktop and laptop computers, Blackberry phones and tablets, and mobile web on other devices. Furthermore, with iOS and Android devices, a company can target a specific
model, so for example, a company can target only users with Iphone 6. Another phone feature, is that companies can target only users on their phone who are connected to WiFi.

Lastly, Twitter has special features to help companies track their performances. For example, the tweet activity dashboard gives insight and information into tweets, campaigns, and ads that can help companies optimize their performances (Vaynerchuck, 2013). Companies can also find out how many impressions (engagements) their tweet receives, which tweets does better with which target group, how well organic and promoted tweets do, a comparison in performance between tweets, and a breakdown of engagement per type. However, the only way to access the tweet activity dashboard is through Twitter Ads or Twitter Analytics, which both requires a sign up to use. Another activity Twitter does to track their consumers is by working with Cookies, a message given to a web browser by a web server, to personalize and tailor contents and ads, measure their performance and to provide users with a better, faster, safer Twitter experience. In order for companies to know more about their followers, Twitter has the Followers dashboard, which is a feature that gives companies real-time look at their followers growth and demographics. Furthermore, it also gives insight into location, gender, and interest of these followers. Companies can see exactly when they gain followers, the top interests that distinguish their followers, which state and country they come from, which gender, and who else they follow. To track engagements, the Twitter cards gives companies insight into how their contents are being shared. It gives companies a snapshot, which is an overview of how tweets and contents are performing, with the number of tweets containing a link to your website and how it changes overtime (Twitter Business, n.d.).

2.3 Instagram

According to an article in Forbes by Lagorio-Chafkin (2012), Instagram was launched in 2010. In 2012 the platform was acquired by Facebook (Hill, 2012). Instagram (Instagram for Business, n.d.) sees itself as a platform of over 300 million users who “capture and share the world’s moments”. It is also a platform for a wide range of people, from “celebrities to teens”, for visual storytelling. Instagram is a global community that shares over 60 million photos each day. According to Apuzzo (2014), the biggest age group of users are between 18 and 29. The aim of the platform is to let their users share life events in a “fun and quirky way”, which is also a reference to the filters that users can choose to adjust their pictures. The main strategy of

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3 Majority of information were gathered from: Instagram for Business, n.d., ‘Instagram For Business’.
the platform is to let their users experience moments in their friends life as it is happening. Like Twitter, Instagram focuses on what is happening now. This is also the “Insta” part of the platform’s name (Instagram for Business, n.d.).

The technology that has led to the app’s success is the advancement of mobile phones. The founders of the app wanted to address three core issues with Instagram (Instagram for Business, n.d.):

1. “Mobile photos always come out looking mediocre. Our awesome looking filters transform your photos into professional looking snapshots. “
2. “Sharing on multiple platform is pain – we help you take a picture once, then share it instantly on multiple devices. “
3. “Most uploading experiences are clumsy and take forever – we’ve optimized the experience to be fast and efficient. “

Instagram is in development for advertisements on their platform. They are working to make sure that these ads stay true to Instagram’s image. With Instagram, users can hide ads they don’t like and provide feedback as to why they didn’t like it. Instagram tries to show ads from businesses their users find interesting, they do this by finding information about what consumers do on Instagram and Facebook. Right now, Instagram is only working with a handful of brands that are already great members of the Instagram sponsors, which includes Adidas, Ben & Jerry, Burberry, General Electric, Lexus, Levi’s, Macy’s, Michael Kors, PayPal, and Starwood (Instagram for Business, n.d.).

Advertisement is relatively new to the mobile. According to Sloane (2014), the first advertisements, which were only available for US consumers, came out at the end of 2013. The users will see pictures of brands that they are not following on Instagram. In keeping up with the brand’s policies, these advertisements have to keep up with high quality pictures. They want these ads to feel like a natural post that a consumer might get from brands they are following. They want ads to be enjoyable and creative in much the same way that magazines are engaging and of a high-quality (Instagram for Business, n.d.). As of April 2015, Instagram has yet to create a payment advertising service for companies that are not their sponsors.
2.4 Snapchat

According to Larson (2012), Snapchat was first launched in September 2011 as a mobile photo sharing app. The platform currently has over 700 million users (Picker, 2015). The company has stated that what set Snapchat apart from other photo sharing apps is that they did not focus on stylizing the pictures, but instead they created a place where people can share awkward selfies and funny pictures with friends for a limited time (Blog Snapchat, n.d.). In other words, the main usage of Snapchat is not about creating the perfect “Kodak” moment, but it’s about sharing human emotions. Shontell (2015) wrote that the majority of Snapchat’s users are what the media calls the millennials, which are users between 13 and 25.

Snapchat is also new to advertisements. The company (Blog Snapchat, n.d.) has stated that one way that they advertise is with their newly launched Discover feature, which is a new media on Snapchat where users can explore different stories from different editorial teams, which includes CNN, National Geographic and Yahoo! among other brands. These editorial teams are only partners of Snapchat. The aim is to put the narrative first. Users get the news from different outlets, and in between brands can sponsor contents. Other non-sponsors brands can advertise on the Discover feature, however, this new feature comes with a high price. According to an article on CNBC by Wastler (2015), Prices for advertising in this feature is around $ 750 thousand for a day’s ad.

Next to the Discover feature, Snapchat (Blog Snapchat, n.d.) says that there are two other ways brands can advertise on Snapchat. First, there is the Snapchat Ads. These appear in “Recent Updates” of the users, and if not viewed, they will disappear after 24 hours. However, this is currently only available in the US. Snapchat wants these ads to be a fun and informative experience. Second, there is the sponsor stories. According to an Adage article by Peterson (2014), in June 2014 Snapchat launched their “Our Story” feature, which collected photos and videos, and organized them according to topics and events. However, this feature is not available for all companies. Past brands who have had sponsored stories were Samsung for the American Music Awards, Macy’s for the Thanksgiving Day Parade, and Amazon and Hollister for Black Friday (Dua, 2015).

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4 Majority information were gathered from: Blog.snapchat.com, 'Snapchat'.
2.5 Conclusion

Figure 1 gives a summary of the four chosen social media platforms. There were a lot of Social Media platforms that came before Facebook that still are active today. However, these four platforms are dominating the field of social media platforms. The first two, Facebook and Twitter, represent the beginning of the phenomenon. The latter two, Instagram and Snapchat, are seen as the fastest growing social media platforms. Therefore, it was important to see how they described the rules of their platforms, especially when talking about how advertising should happen on it. All of the four platforms exhibit strong feeling towards native advertising, which means using content to build and maintain communication with consumers (Hallett, n.d.). Looking at these platforms next to each other, the transformation of social media platforms becomes visible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Unique Monthly Visitors</th>
<th>Founded in</th>
<th>Dominant Age Group</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Paid Ads service introduction</th>
<th>Paid Advertisement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>300,000,000</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>Connect and Engage</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>- Choose a goal&lt;br&gt;- Choose goals&lt;br&gt;- Advertise&lt;br&gt;- Analyze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>310,000,000</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>Connect through real-time topics of interests</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>- Choose objective&lt;br&gt;- Choose targets&lt;br&gt;- Advertise&lt;br&gt;- Analyze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>100,000,000</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>16-29</td>
<td>Capture and share world's moments</td>
<td>- Only partners can currently advertise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>100,000,000</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>13-25</td>
<td>Communicating with the full range of human emotion</td>
<td>- Advertise with Explore section&lt;br&gt;- Approach sponsor to advertise with them&lt;br&gt;- Busy with reinventing how to advertise on the platform</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Social Media Summary

First, social media platforms are transitioning from desktop to mobile. When Facebook and Twitter started their platforms, it was reserved only for desktop. However, as technology advanced, both platforms made mobile apps to accompany their desktop sites. The newer platforms are cutting out the middle man and going straight to phone apps. Both Instagram and Snapchat represents this trend as both of them moved away from desktop sites, and solely focus on mobile usage. This is no surprise if we look at how technology is making phones into an all-encompassing machine. According to Nu (2015), the public transportation service in Amsterdam, GVB, is working with the telecommunication company Vodafone to test the first phones that can check in and out of trams and busses, and Google Wallet is one of the services that lets consumers pay with their phones (Google, n.d.). Second, and what might be tied to the first trend, is that platforms are concentrating on a real time experience. Both Twitter and Instagram aim at connecting their users to friends, family, and businesses in real time. There are two ways of looking at this, how companies provide real time information and how people
Social Media Marketing, A Research Paper

Joshua Diaz

engage with real time information. Both CNN and BBC have their own breaking news page on Twitter, with BBC having 14.6 million followers and CNN having 26.1 million followers. When the 2011 earthquake hit Japan, it was Facebook that provided a place for families and friends of people in Japan information on what was happening (Wallop, 2011). When American actor Channing Tatum lost his bag in a NYC cab, he tweeted this and within a few days received it back (Fisher, 2015). These are stories of the need for real time information. Snapchat is taking this a step further. The platform has a time limit on the pictures and videos. For the platform, it’s a onetime only experience users can enjoy. Last, native advertising is what social media wants from companies. All of the platforms have stated that they want advertising to feel as natural as possible and to make it blend with the user’s friends and family posts.

This chapter answers the sub-question: what is social media? To sum up and compact the answer in one sentence: From a companies’ perspective, social media is various digital platforms that act as a mediator of the communication between companies and consumers in the form of how many consumers will read and see a company’s message and giving them the option to engage with the message and share it with their friends and family.
Chapter 3: Marketing

The second sub-question of this research report focuses on marketing. There are many debates about what marketing is and what it should do for companies and consumers. Marketing as a concept has been around for quite a while. According to Wilkie & More (2003), it has been around since “the time of the ancient Greeks through the time of the great economist of the 1700s and 1800s” (p. 116). However, it was in the twentieth century that the term marketing became an individual field (Wilkie & More, 2003). Defining what marketing is becomes hard as there are many different definitions. Investopedia (n.d.) defines marketing as:

“… marketing is everything a company does to acquire customers and maintain a relationship with them. Even the small tasks like writing thank-you letters, playing golf with a prospective client, returning calls promptly and meeting with a past client for coffee can be thought of as marketing. The ultimate goal of marketing is to match a company's products and services to the people who need and want them, thereby ensure profitability.”

This definition sees the core of marketing as getting the company product or service to the right consumers. Furthermore, Investopedia puts emphasis on the fact that any activities that focus on the relationship between the company and consumers are marketing activities.

In 2013, the American Marketing Association (n.d.) approved the following definition of Marketing:

“Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.”

The AMA believes that marketing can be an activity, an organization, or a process. This is a move from only defining marketing as an activity. While marketing can be many things, the main aim of it is giving consumers something they will value. This means that values plays an important role in marketing.

Philip Kotler (n.d.) has been vocal on what the definition of marketing is. His definition of marketing is:

“Marketing is the science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. Marketing identifies unfulfilled needs and desires. It defines, measures and quantifies the size of the identified market and the profit potential. It pinpoints which segments
the company is capable of serving best and it designs and promotes the appropriate products and services.”

Mr. Kotler sees marketing as the exact science of fulfilling targeted group’s unfulfilled needs and desires. In other words, marketing is about offering the right product and service to the right target customers.

These definitions show that there are different points of views on marketing. However, they do have one thing in common. Marketing at its core is the interaction between companies and consumers, whether one is looking at marketing as an activity or an institution. This interaction is then translated into different views, such as seeing the aim of the interaction as maintaining a positive relationship with consumers and offering products which are valuable to customers. However, this interaction does not mean it’s coming from both sides. Communication can come from only the company, be built around what consumers have to say, or be a combination of both.

With an understanding that marketing is the interaction between companies and consumers, two models are used to further understand this interaction. The models are not used for arguing which marketing approaches are better than others, but they are used solely to observe and understand the interaction between companies and consumers. First, there are the two different viewpoints on Marketing that describes two different marketing perspectives: Hypermodern and Postmodern marketing. Second, looking at how a message is being translated to consumers and how they react to it is an important part of marketing, which is why the glue value model is also an important tool to understanding the complexity of marketing.

3.1 Hypermodern vs. Postmodern

In the 1950s, companies were dealing with the growth in population and new mediums for advertisement. According to Baudrilliard (1998), “The 1950s was a decade of economic boom. Americans were eager to spend their money on goods that had been scarce during World War II” (p. 187). In this era, marketing was experiencing several new developments. The first one was the introduction of market research, which according to Wilkie & More (2003) covered the following topics: “consumer purchasing, attitudes, sociodemographics, advertising research, and motivation research” (p. 128). The second was the practice of drawing upon work of other fields, such as psychology and sociology. Using different fields helped to segment the growing population. For example, motivation research, which drew from the works in Psychology, was
According to Fullerton (2011) used for “product design, trade relations, training of salespeople, and store layout” (p. 65). These methods focused on understanding the consumers and segmenting the growing population in order to control the various consumer groups. While these methods were seen as successful, after the 1960s something peculiar happened. Consumers broke away from the passive role of “the consumer” and from their social backgrounds, and they became more educated and started to recognize the various marketing schemes. According to Jacobs & Mossinkoff (2007), “Ever larger groups broke away from their social and ideological backgrounds. As a consequence, in their different economic and political roles of consumers and voters, people became more volatile and unpredictable” (p. 461). This unpredictability led to the following two views on Marketing: hypermodern and postmodern marketing.

It is important to understand that within this research, when looking at hypermodern and postmodern, you are looking at marketing through the eyes of companies. In other words, it is not about whether or not the arguments for both sides are true or false, but these arguments indicate how a company sees the market and how they approach it. While there are many points to look at when comparing the two perspectives, According to Jacobs & Mossinkoff (2007) it comes down to two fundamental issues: who is in control and are we looking at the level of products and the level of values. The first issue deals to what extend does a company have control. This question simplifies the complexity of who is in charge. There are many ways that this question can be interpreted in the realm of hypermodern and postmodern marketing. It can be seen as control over consumers, or in other words, can consumers be manipulated into purchasing? Another way of looking at it is by looking at the products. Do companies have total control of the design, or do consumers dictate what a product will look like and what features will be included? Furthermore, looking at it from the perspective of who is in control of the meaning or value of a product and/or brand, which is called the valuation process, is also another way of looking at the question of control. Looking at who is in control is a good way of encompassing all these marketing related issues, and much more, into one question. However, this research will look at it from a company’s point of view, and this means that a company is simply giving up some control to the unknown. Hofstede’s (1991) theory on cultural dimension of Uncertainty Avoidance fits in better in this research because it touches upon this aspect of the unknown. Hofstede introduced his cultural dimension model after he researched a survey he conducted with the employees of IBM in the 1960s and 1970s. Baker & Carson (2011) sees Uncertainty avoidance dimension as to what extend does an individual tolerate
ambiguity, or to what extend are individuals comfortable with unknown situations. Looking at control through this model, a company that is more hypermodern, would be more in control and avoid unknown situations. On the other hand, a more postmodern company would accept ambiguity and unknown situations as they cannot be controlled. What’s important about this question of uncertainty avoidance is that it is how the company sees itself, but it might not mean that they are succeeding in it. The second issue is whether the company focuses on the level of a product or value. A company decides whether they focus more on the products itself, for example a car that goes fast, or on values, for example the car offers protection for your family. Companies that are more on the hypermodern side tend to focus more on the level of products while companies on the postmodern side tend to focus more on the value connection between consumers and brand.

Figure 2 shows the hypermodern and postmodern on a scale. According to Mossinkoff (2012), there are five sub-categories on the scale. On the left hand side are the most hypermodern categories, which includes:

1. The manipulation of consumers’ perception and buying behavior (HyPo 1)
2. The manipulation of consumer’s perceptions, hoping to influence their buying behavior (HyPo 2).

Both sub-groups have a high uncertainty avoidance, but HyPo 1 has a higher uncertainty avoidance as its aim is to manipulate their behavior and to avoid any uncertainty, while HyPo 2 is a bit (not too much) comfortable with the unknown as it only hopes to influence and not manipulate consumer behavior. In both HyPo 1 and 2 companies focus on the level of products. It is about pushing the products to the consumers. In the middle, there is:

3. Interactive market research and co-evolution (HyPo 3)

With HyPo 3 there is a lower uncertainty avoidance than with the previous two categories. However, it is by no means low. Companies understand that consumers can influence them and they can influence consumers, they still have the need to be in control. On the right hand side of the scale there are the following postmodern sub-groups:

4. Interactive marketing and co-evolution (HyPo 4)
5. Consumers in the lead (HyPo 5)

Companies in the postmodern side are aware and are more comfortable with the unknown. They don’t have the need to take control, but accept the uncertain external situation. In fact, with HyPo 5, companies give up control completely to the consumers. In the postmodern side, focus
on the level of values that the products and brands give becomes more important than the actual product.

Figure 2: Marketing at extremes, including intermediate forms (Jacobs & Mossinkoff, 2007)
*Red texts are additions by author of this research paper

3.2 The Glue Value

Hypermodern and postmodern touches upon marketing, but there is another model that explains how meanings are shared and how consumers interact with them. According Mossinkoff (2012), “marketing is essentially a process of valuation, in which two main actors are involved: suppliers and consumers” (p. 51). The glue value model focuses on the complex valuation process, which includes the strategic relevance, cultural context, and if there is a group triggering. Figure 3 shows this model, however it is important to note that this does not reflect the outcome of marketing strategies but rather the intent of a company. First, there is the strategic relevance, which relates to the aim of the glue value. There are five strategic relevance: efficiency & effectiveness, recognition & status, belonging & reciprocation, differentiation through belonging, and differentiation through contribution. On the left hand side, the strategic relevance are focused on the products while on the right side the strategic relevance are more focused on belonging to a group. Second, there is cultural context focuses on the act of defining the values. On the left side, there is a broad audience that understand and share the meaning of the values and benefits. For the company and consumers, this meaning of the message is clear and explicit. However, the more to the right you go, the more implicit the benefits and the participating audience become. If a company is on the right hand side, context is important to understand the message. Third, there is group triggering. The group in this instance should be seen as a brand community. According to Muniz and O’Guinn (2001), “A brand community is a specialized non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand” (p. 412 – 413). Mossinkoff (2012) Further adds that “the brand, therefore, should have a central and prominent place in the discourse of modernity,
community, and society” (p. 63). In other words, consumers can choose these groups based on the standing they have in their social groups, society, and community. Furthermore, they participate in a group with its own sets of rules and social orders. The group triggering factor measures to what extent do brands/companies trigger consumers to participate in these brand communities. On the left side, there is little to no trigger to join a brand community. On the right side, there is a trigger to be part of a brand community and to participate in their activities. In Glue Value C and onwards the group triggering begins. In C for example there are massive gatherings, such as King’s Day in the Netherlands. The more to the right you go, the smaller the gatherings become. In E, for example, you can find Nutella Parties that consumers host themselves. To conclude, by looking at if a company focuses on products or values, sharing a message with a big or smaller group and if there is a group triggering for consumers, do we begin to understand how the message of marketing is interacted with by consumers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Glue Value</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Relevance</strong></td>
<td>Efficiency &amp; Effectiveness</td>
<td>Recognition &amp; Status</td>
<td>Belonging &amp; Reciprocity</td>
<td>Differentiation through belonging</td>
<td>Differentiation through contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural context</strong></td>
<td>Meaning is shared worldwide</td>
<td>Meaning is shared in a specific society</td>
<td>Shared in a specific society and historical context</td>
<td>For some consumers meaning is localised</td>
<td>For most consumers meaning is localised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group triggering</strong></td>
<td>No triggering</td>
<td>Standing out from the crowd</td>
<td>Massive gatherings</td>
<td>Occasional smaller gatherings</td>
<td>Frequent smaller gatherings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examples of related brand values</strong></td>
<td>Faster, Cheaper, Vitamine-rich, Lower cholesterol, Improved, Reliable</td>
<td>Wealth, Perfection, Social achievement, Sex/Lustiness, ‘Cute’</td>
<td>Autenticity, ‘Tongue-in-cheek’ humour, Ideological values (environment, health)</td>
<td>Marginalisation, Controversial issues, Offense</td>
<td>References require knowledge of a quite small group of ‘those-in-the-know’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: The Glue Value qualifier (Mossinkoff 2012).

*Red texts are addition by the author of this research paper.*

### 3.3 Conclusion

Marketing is hard to define especially as there are many contrasting viewpoints on what it is or should be. In order to understand where marketing currently is two models have been used. The first one concentrates on the aims of marketing and there are three key viewpoints. First, there is the hypermodern viewpoint, which is when companies who use marketing as a way to manipulate consumers. The two key characteristics of these groups are that they want to be in
control of every process and they focus on the level of the products. Second, there is the postmodern viewpoint, which is when companies see consumers as the lead in the market and should know what they want from a company. They don’t seek total control over marketing, and they focus more on the level of values that consumers can get from brands. Last, there is the interactive viewpoint, which is the middle point between the previously mentioned extremes. This is where companies and consumers interact and work with each other, but remain different parties. Companies see the value of consumers and their input, but they don’t want to give all control to them. The second model focuses on how marketing messages interact with consumers. The Glue Value model gives insight into how strategic relevance of a message impacts the cultural context and group triggering of consumers. Both models are from the perspective of the company. Furthermore, these models are not an indication that marketing is changing or shifting, but it’s growing and going in-depth. In other words, marketing is not changing in becoming more hypermodern or postmodern, but they are adding varieties to marketing.

To come back to the following question: What is marketing? The answer is: From a company’s perspective, marketing is the process of choosing a message (or an approach) based on the company’s overall marketing strategy/viewpoint (hypermodern or postmodern), which leads to an approach that will be communicated to consumers based on the core strategic relevance of the message and this will determine how wide or narrow the recipients of the messages are. (Figure 4).
Chapter 4: Social Media Marketing

The last sub-question of this research paper deals with how social media affects marketing. This chapter will look at the previous two chapters on social media and marketing, and will see how they interact with each other. Mostly the theories of the marketing chapters are translated to social media platforms. However, there is an introduction of a new theory to categorize social media platforms for marketing purposes.

4.1 Elastic Self

One theory that deals with the complexity of consumer’s relationship with their self on social media is the Elastic Self theory (Wang, 2013). The theory came out of a research of how the Chinese youth are using social media to experiment with different facets of their identity in a culture that is heavily influenced by political anxiety and culture based on not losing face. The Elastic Self framework depends on two types of self. First, there is the prescribed self, which according to Wang (2013) “dictated by one’s social existing social structural categories, such as ethnicity, gender, nationality, or family, and are externally imposed on the actor according to generally accepted beliefs of how someone should be.” (p. 31). Second, there is the elastic self. This describes the feeling that one’s identity is not rigid but is instead flexible and one can try and experiment with identities that are still part of one’s prescribed self (Wang, 2013). In other words, the prescribed self emerges from social interaction with one’s surroundings, while the elastic self emerges through informal modes of interactions. While the theory was formed out of ethnographic research into the Chinese youth who live in the danger that their own friends and family can betray them to the political party if they behave in a way that is not in accordance to the rules, this theory is also applicable in other cultures.

4.2 Formal vs. Informal Platforms

While the elastic self gives insight into consumer’s identity online, this research will focus on another aspect of the theory. There are many different theories about social media and identity, however this research will see how the theory of the prescribed and the elastic self are translated on social media platforms. A platform can either be more formal and link social media to a consumer’s prescribed self, or it can be more informal and link social media to a consumer’s elastic self. According to Wang (2013), there are three key features to consider in determining if a platform is more formal or informal (Wang, 2013). First, there is the issue of the suggested contacts. On formal social media platforms, consumers are encouraged to connect with people
in their offline social network. Furthermore, the algorithm on these formal platforms work on a system where they suggest friends of friends and family. Thus, these formal platform focuses on social ties as a way to connect. On the other hand, informal platforms encourage consumers to connect with unknown contacts. The informal platform algorithms tend to focus on interest over social ties. Second, there is the terminology for contacts. As mentioned with the previous point, formal platforms focus on social ties. This can also be seen in the way that these platforms refer to people that consumers are connected to. They are usually called “Friends” and if you want to connect you have to send a “Friend Request”. With informal platforms, this connection to social ties is taken out. These platforms have different names, for example followers. Last, there is the adjustability in username. With formal platforms, consumers are expected to only have one profile with their real name and background information, such as ethnicity, education, and location. Informal platforms, on the other hand, do not require some of these information as they do not focus on “real identity”.

Figure 5 shows a chart with how the social media platforms that were analyzed in chapter 2 fall on the formal – informal chart. Each of the social media platforms were analyzed based on the three previously mentioned aspects of the prescribed or elastic theory. Furthermore, for each aspect the platforms were given a number. The number 1 represents answers that are related to the prescribed platform, while the number 3 represents answers that are related to the elastic platform. There is also the possibility of receiving number 2, which represent both elastic and prescribed aspects in the platform. Only Instagram received a 2 with the suggested friends. The reason for this is because the platform is about following people based on their interests. However, since the acquisition by Facebook, they now also suggest users to connect with their Facebook friends on Instagram.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Instagram</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Snapchat</th>
<th>#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suggested Friends</strong></td>
<td>Social Circle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>People you follow</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>People you follow (Random) and Facebook friends</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Friends in your phone</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact List Name</strong></td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Followers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Followers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Username</strong></td>
<td>Fixed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elastic/Prescribed NR:</strong></td>
<td>1,0</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td>2,7</td>
<td>1,7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1: Prescribed
2: Prescribed and Elastic
3: Elastic

Figure 5: Social Media – Prescribed or Elastic table

The elastic/prescribed number is the average score of the three aspects. Each social media platform has been placed on the prescribed vs. elastic scale in figure 6. On the left hand side of
the scale are the more prescribed social media platforms. These include Facebook and Snapchat. Snapchat leans more towards the center of the graph because of their username. There is no strict rule that users should put their real name on the platform. However, Snapchat does automatically connect a user with their contacts on their phone, making it more prescribed than elastic. On the right hand side of the scale are the more elastic social media platforms, which includes Instagram and Twitter. There is an important difference between Twitter and Instagram. Twitter has the feature to retweet, or share another person’s tweet on a company’s page, which Instagram does not have. As mentioned in the Twitter chapter, this is a way to show consumers that they are leaders of topics or interests. Companies retweet other industry leaders to enhance their position in a market (Chapter 5).

![Prescribed vs. Elastic scale](image)

Why is categorizing social media platforms as prescribed or elastic important for marketers? Whether a company is hypermodern or postmodern, this gives an important information about consumers on the different social media platforms. Wang (2013) suggests that the elastic platforms tend to focus more on shared values because the focus is on common interests. On prescribed platforms, the focus is who is in someone’s social circle. Whether it’s a prescribed or elastic platform, marketers should understand the nature of its design and what it says about users.

Whether a platform is prescribed or elastic is no indication that the platforms are solely hypermodern or postmodern. If we go to the basics of hyper vs postmodern marketing, it is all about who delivers the message. Facebook can be used to target specific consumers to deliver the message to, but it can also be used to let consumers deliver a specific viral message. When looking at online communities, Twitter can be used to target specific demographics, like women in their 30s living in New York, or in a more postmodern method, Twitter can be used to look for consumers who share the same interest, such as sustainable fashion. The different platforms have a variety of contrasting characteristics, but they are still a medium to communicate, and thus they are objective when it comes to hyper and postmodern aims.
4.3 HyPo on Social Media

The last paragraph raises an important question for social media marketing: What does social media do to marketing, or more specifically hyper and postmodern marketing? In other words, how is it different than advertising in a magazine or billboard? From a practical perspective, social media is basically cost efficient as it is free to use and the advertising costs are usually low and it’s easier to measure the success of campaigns or what consumers are saying about your brand in real time scenario. However, if we look at social media marketing from a broader perspective it comes down to one issue: reach. Just like radio and TV did, so is social media the current place to spread message. As mentioned before, the biggest social media platform has a unique monthly visitor of around 900,000,000 people, which is almost 13% of the over 7 billion people on earth (World Meter, n.d.). Furthermore, users are giving information for free, including demographics and shopping behavior, which would have taken marketers a lot of effort, time, and energy to gather. Figure 7 shows how social media works in the HyPo case. Social media is where the interaction is happening. Furthermore, there are two things happening on social media. First, according to Oracle (2012) the interaction is happening live. Whether it's the market research, interaction or provocation it is happening faster than before. Marketers don’t have to wait for results after a campaign, they can follow the success and still make adjustments. Secondly, consumers can communicate back. They can interact and share campaigns and they can talk to other people about it, whether it’s good or bad.

Figure 7: HyPo interaction on Social Media
4.4 Glue Value on Social Media

As mentioned before, the glue value has three main aspects: strategic relevance, cultural context, and group trigger. The more to the left a company finds itself, the more it is focused on the product, a meaning that is understood by a wide group, and does not trigger people to actively participate. The more to the right a company finds itself, the more it is focused on values, meanings that is understood and shared by a narrow group, and it does trigger people to actively participate. Since social media platforms are about the reach of messages, figure 8 shows how the reach is in the glue value. Towards the left of this figure, the glue values require a wide reach on social media. The same message might be used on various social media platforms. On the right of the figure, the glue values require a narrow reach. Messages are tailored for specific platforms (See Chapter 5: Case Studies). When it comes to the glue value on social media, the reach of each message is key to marketing.

Figure 8: Glue value and reach on social media
4.5 Conclusion

Does social media have a role in marketing? The answer is yes. It has one role when it comes to marketing, and that is of managing the reach of a company’s message. Social media makes sure messages are seen, read, heard and shared by consumers. As social media becomes more crowded, the platforms have to find a way to deal with all the information aimed at their users. When a social media platform becomes crowded with people and companies, it goes into what Schaefer (2014) calls content shock, which is a term for a mass increase in content that exceeds a consumer’s ability to process them. This phenomenon leads to three activities on social media (Schaefer, 2015). First, companies will have to pay to get their content viewed. This is already visible by looking at the analyzed social media platforms. The more crowded Facebook and Twitter have elaborate advertising possibilities for companies. Snapchat and Instagram are just developing what their advertising possibilities will look like. This is happening as they are gaining more users and the platform is becoming more “noisy”. Second, there is a need to focus on new content distribution strategies. A quick google search of social media marketing tips reveal 172,000,000 results (as of April 2015). There are many apps that help companies distribute their content on social media, such as Buffer, Edgar, and Hootsuite (Lee, 2015). These are indications that companies are looking to understand social media marketing and they are willing to use apps that helps them increase their reach. Last, companies will move away from crowded platforms and focus on less noisy channels. This last point is hard to prove, as most companies are on more than one social media platform. However, there is an indication that companies are focusing more on Snapchat than other more crowded social media platforms. This can be seen in the higher advertising costs on Snapchat than other platforms. For a comparison, Facebook has different prices, but one is paying $1 per day for a promoted post (Facebook for Business, n.d.). As shown in the Social Media Chapter, Snapchat charges $750,000 for a day’s advertising. All this leads to the role of social media, which is to monitor and organize the reach of company’s messages. For example, According to Hyder (2010), if Facebook does not monitor and control the messages of company, a user would be flooded with around 2,000 company posts a day.

To answer the question “How does social media affect marketing”, this chapter focused on comparing and contrasting social media and marketing. When looking at social media and marketing, the key issue that is analyzed and discussed is how big or small a company’s reach is. Thus, the simple answer to the question is that social media controls the reach of a company’s marketing message/approach.
Chapter 5: Case Studies

The previous chapters focused on theories about social media marketing. This chapter will focus on three companies to see how they use social media. H&M, Adidas, and Nordstrom have been chosen because an analysis of their brand reveals that they have different strategies for marketing. Furthermore, these companies are considered industry leaders in their field, which makes them exemplary for other companies to follow their leads. The case study will follow three steps. First, look at how companies describe themselves. This is important to get an idea of what their strategies are. Second, analyze company’s messages on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Last, compare the two to see if a company’s social media activities are similar or different to their strategy. Snapchat was not chosen because all posts on the platform are deleted after it is sent out. Furthermore, the case studies are not about how many engagements they receive, but about the company and their social media strategies.

Each post will be analyzed on two points which are important parts of the theories explored in the previous chapter. First, there is the analysis of the text of the post. The aim here is to look at whether the same or different text is used on different platforms and whether the posts are descriptive or contextual. Second, there is an analysis of the nature of the posts. Each post will be analyzed to see what the core of the message is and whether it focuses on level of products or values.

5.1 H&M:

The first H&M stores, which then were called Hennes, opened in 1947 in Sweden (About H&M, n.d.). Since then, it has opened around 3,500 stores worldwide. The company advertise itself as “Fashion and quality at the best price” and “always offering inspiring fashion with unbeatable value for money”. Furthermore, they see their role as always offering the best products in all the different markets they function in. They create a wide variety of products for women, men, teenagers, and children. H&M is on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. On Facebook they have 21 million likes, on Twitter they have 5 million followers, and on Instagram they have 6 million followers.
Post 1:
The first analyzed post was on Twitter and Instagram. It is a picture post of the Spanish model Andrés Velencoso and it is about his interview with H&M Life, the company’s blog. Twitter had the addition of a link to the interview.

The two post gives insight into H&M’s social media strategy. First of all, H&M chose to use the same message for both social media. This indicates that they wanted a wider reach for a broad audience for this post. The message is descriptive. They mention that Andrés is a Spanish model. This shows that H&M wants this message to be clear to a wide group of people, not just those who know about him. Secondly, the actual interview that the Twitter link goes to is on the H&M website. The interview is about getting to know Andrés. The content of the post and the interview does not seem to be about any H&M products, but about getting to know fashion model. However, he is not just a fashion model, but he is a model for H&M.

Post 2:
The second analyzed post was on Facebook and Twitter. The picture posts focus on H&M’s home products.
These posts reveal three different points. First, like with the post 1, in this post H&M chose to use the same text in both platforms. Even the links led you to the same page on their website. This message is being enhanced by posting it on two different platforms. Furthermore, it is also clear and descriptive so that a wider audience can understand it. Second, the posts focus on H&M’s pick for products of the month, which in this case focused on their H&M Home products. This indicates that the focus of this post is on the products. H&M made sure that even though both platforms have different frame size for the images, users were still able to see them.

Post 3:
The third analyzed post is for a story on Coachella that appeared on all three social media platforms.

Comparing the posts leads to insight into the aim of the post. First, the core of the message for all three platforms are the same. The probable reason why Twitter had an adjusted text is due
to the limit the platform has on tweets. The text was clear and not ambiguous, which means that it can be understood by a wide group. Even if someone does not know what Coachella is, there are enough verbal cues to indicate that it is a festival in the desert. This means that the message was meant for a broad audience. Second, the post’s message is about Coachella festival. If users wanted to know more, they had to click on the link. While the blog looks like a focus on values of the company instead of the products, upon closer inspection it is still an ad for the company. H&M sponsored the Coachella party that was mentioned in the article, and the blogger who wrote the article casually mentions that “H&M throws the best parties”. This is more an attempt to manipulate consumer’s perception of the brand.

Post 4:
With the last analysis, the most typical post of each platform was chosen. For H&M, all three platforms focused on the products.
H&M tends to use Facebook for pictures of models wearing their products, while they use Twitter for product shots, which consists of a white background, and the products placed around each other. For Instagram, they follow another rule. The images on this platform are more stylized and artsy. This might be linked to the platform’s aim for their users to create visual stories. H&M is very descriptive with the text on all three platforms. They refer to their “top picks” or “must haves”. Furthermore, they tend to describe the products. For example, in the Facebook post they write about the flowing silhouettes and loose cuts, while for the Instagram post they mention accessories. The images and texts indicate that they focus on being clear on what consumers are seeing and reading on social media. There is no inside jokes or messages for people in the know, it’s meant to be understood by anyone who reads it. The message that H&M sends out is one way. They do not expect any replies or input from consumers. The Facebook post asks a question, but it is more rhetorical in nature. It is even a closed question that only requires a yes or no answer.

**H&M Strategy**

The company’s description of their aim and values gives clues about their marketing strategy. First of all, H&M puts a lot of emphasis on the products. They do this by saying that consumers get value and quality for the money, which all refer to a product that consumers will like. This focus on the level of products says that H&M leans towards the left for both HyPo and Glue Value models. Another clue that H&M leans towards the left of the HyPo model is that they see themselves as a company that offers great products to consumers, thus the consumer is the receiver of the products and in no way involved in any process. This indicate that H&M has a high uncertainty avoidance as they are in control of the brand’s products. For the Glue Value model, H&M already mentioned that the strategic relevance is value for money, which means it leans towards Glue Value A, which is effectiveness/efficiency.

When comparing the analyzed social media posts with the description of their aim, H&M is consistent with their online and offline strategy. Their online strategy was analyzed on two points. First of all, H&M used the same text on all posts analyzed. It did not matter if the focus of the message was on products or values, the text remained the same on all three platforms. Even the post on Coachella, which is a festival for a specific crowd, had an explanation of what it is. The action of being descriptive with their messages is an indication that H&M’s social media strategy consist of one message for a wide group. Second, the context of the posts are mostly focused on product with a touch of value. This means that products are the primary
theme in their social media posts. However, H&M is showing in non-product theme. This can be seen in their interview with the Spanish model and with Coachella. However, the underlying tone of these messages are focused on the products.

To conclude, putting the three points analyzed in social media marketing context reveals the company’s strategy. Using the same message on all the different platforms and being descriptive indicates that the company leans left of the Glue Value model and the HyPo scale. The company wants a wide reach, which is why the same message is spread over the platforms to increase likelihood that more people will see it. Furthermore the focus of their posts are mostly on products, not values. More specifically, fashionable products. While the company focus on value for money, they don’t indicate this on their social media. They don’t mention the price of the products nor do they mention that the products are “cheap” or “affordable”. It is likely that social media is used for the “fashion quality” part of their mission. A wide reach and a focus on product value leads to a Glue Value score of A: Efficiency and Effectiveness and a HyPo score of 2: Manipulation of consumer’s perception and hoping to influence their buying behavior.

5.2 Adidas

It was in 1949 that the company as we know it today was registered in Herzogenaurach, Germany (Adidas Group, n.d.). 66 years later, the company is seen as innovative in the sports industry with their many inventions, including computerized shoes to help athletes “track, record, and improve their performance.” Adidas aims to “help athletes perform better, play better, feel better”. The reason they do this is because of their love of sports. The company wants their customers to know that they are there for more than just the products, but to help them enhance their performance. They are on Facebook with 19 million likes, on Twitter with 2 million followers, and on Instagram with almost 4 million followers.
Post 1:
The first analyzed post was in regards to Adidas’ collaboration with Stella McCartney. It was featured on all three of their social media platforms.

The first analyzed post indicates Adidas’ strategy with their collaboration. First, the text is similar on all three platforms. The one for Twitter is slightly adjusted to fit the word limit on that platform. The posts are full of contexts. First, there is a reference to the ultra boost collective. These are Adidas shoes that contain 3,000 energy capsule (Byrne, 2015). For runners, these capsule in the sole of the shoes reduces the shock when jogging, and thus makes it more comfortable for them to exercise. Adidas also mentions the collaboration with Stella McCartney. They don’t introduce her as a fashion designer, but just mentions her name. This is probably because they see the group they are aiming for, in this case women (based on Adidas Women in the text), already know who she is. Second, the aim of the posts is to inform people
about the collaboration with Stella McCartney. As mentioned before, the text is more contextual than descriptive. However, the image that goes along with the text is of the product. The picture of the product is put into the context of running. While Adidas focuses on both the product and values, they do put more emphases on sports values.

Post 2:
The second analyzed post was in regards to the company’s Prime Knit with compression fit shoes. It was posted on Facebook and Twitter. Facebook had an album with more pictures of the same shoe, while Twitter only had one image of the product.

The Prime Knit post focused more on the company’s own collection. First, the text on both platforms had similar text. Facebook had the addition of “the best fitting football boot”. The lack of this text might have been due to the fact that Twitter has a word limit. Furthermore, Facebook had an album made for this product while Twitter had a link that led to the website that contained the same images. Just like with the previous post, this one also had more contextual cue in the text. The compressed fit is a technology that lets the shoes compress the foot at a maximum comfort (Adidas News Stream, n.d.). Second, the text focuses on the limited collection from Adidas. The focus is textually and visually on both the product and values. In both instances the product is at the center of the message, but there is also the elements of movement, energy, and comfort surrounding the product.
Post 3:
The third post is in regards to Adidas’s collaboration with Pharrell Williams. It was featured on their Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages.

The post analyzed here gave insight into Adidas’ collaboration with Pharrell Williams. First, the text is not the same on all of the platforms. For Facebook and Twitter the text was direct in the explanation of the products, which came in 50 colors. The name of the collection is Super Color. For Instagram the text had a contextual undertone. While it did mention the amount of colours it came in and the collaboration, it focused more on individuality. Furthermore, all three platforms mention Pharrell Williams without mentioning what he does. Secondly, the post’s main aim was to introduce the collaboration with the Artist. Like the previous posts, this one also focus on a blend of values and product. On Instagram the focus seems to be more on values with the opening sentence. Unlike the previous posts, there is nothing mentioned about the
technology or features of the product. Adidas Originals focuses more on design elements than technology. This might be a reason why the overall tone is different than the other posts.

**Post 4:**
For the last posts, the focus was on what was a typical post on each of their social media. It is slightly different for all three platforms.

**Facebook**
Facebook typically focuses on products. The text is frequently a reference to sports. In the chosen post, it is about how the football shoes are the lightest in the collection, which an athlete would benefit from. While the focus is on the product, there is also a focus on values. The text starts with “The dream is now a reality”. While this is in regards to the shoe, it is also related to competition. The image is of a shoe, but there are light to signify energy from football. There

**Twitter**

**Instagram**

Facebook typically focuses on products. The text is frequently a reference to sports. In the chosen post, it is about how the football shoes are the lightest in the collection, which an athlete would benefit from. While the focus is on the product, there is also a focus on values. The text starts with “The dream is now a reality”. While this is in regards to the shoe, it is also related to competition. The image is of a shoe, but there are light to signify energy from football. There
are many variations of posts on Twitter. The chosen post represents the relation between Adidas and a sports leader in Tennis. They also do this with football and running. They also relate the winning of the competition to their products with the hashtag “ImpactTheGame”. On Instagram the company focuses more on the values. They do focus on products in pictures, but they are usually within a context of sports. Such as with the chosen picture, it’s about the running shoes, but the focus is more on the experience of running. The text is also relatable for runners. In the chosen post, the text relates to energize runners into pushing themselves to keep on running.

Adidas Strategy
The way Adidas described themselves indicate that they focus on level of products and value. On the one hand they talk about products with the right features that help athletes, and consumers, perform better. On the other hand, there is the love they share for sports and the feeling that athletes get from sports. With the connection to sports and athletes, Adidas seems to be focusing on Belonging and Reciprocity. While Adidas seems to be in control of the products, they do see a mutual love for sports. They don’t own this value, but share it with their customers. In this sense, Adidas seems to be in the middle of the HyPo scale at Interactive Marketing.

Adidas has similar strategies for their social media platforms. On all three platforms they convey their love for sports, and usually in connection to their products. Looking at the two analyzed area reveals the company’s social media strategy. First, Adidas uses similar text on Facebook and Twitter. These are focused on a mix of products and values. On Instagram the company does focus more on ambiance and values. Furthermore, the company also have more pages dedicated to different areas of sports or country. This is an indication that they focus more on contexts. Second, the company focuses on both values and product in their posts. As mention before, on Instagram they focus more on values both visually and textually. On Instagram, Adidas uses images and texts that explains the feeling of doing sports. On Facebook and Twitter the focus is slightly more on the products. The texts are usually shorter and thus does not focus as much on creating a feeling around the product.

Looking at these analysis reveals that Adidas falls more into the Glue Value C: Belonging and Reciprocity, and HyPo 3: Interactive Marketing. The focus on context in their text and the different pages indicates that their reach is smaller than with H&M. For Adidas, the focus is more on reaching specific people. However, because they do use same text on Facebook and Twitter, this shows that they are not aiming for a small niche. Their strategy is focused on both
the level of products and level of values. Both aspects are visible in most of their posts. Furthermore, the images of their products are usually placed at certain angle that suggests movement. Adidas focuses on the added value of their products. They also lets consumer know that they understand the good and hard part of sports. They don’t focus on exclusivity, but anyone who does the sports they focus on would be able to be part of their community. However, the way that Adidas interacts with consumers shows that they are separate from consumers. They don’t converse with them, but just show them the message.

5.3 Nordstrom

Nordstrom started as a small Seattle shoe shop in 1901, and since then has grown to work in 38 states, 116 stores in the US and 2 in Canada, and provide service to 96 countries through their online store (Nordstrom, n.d.). To business aims to deliver the best “shopping experience” and they focus on helping their customers “possess style”. Nordstrom sees that shopping as an activity is changing, especially due to technology advancements, but they still see their aim at “relevant shopping experience” and “inspiring style” as still important to keeping their customers happy. Nordstrom is on Facebook (3 million likes), Twitter (578 thousand followers) and Instagram (882 thousand followers).

Post 1:

The first analyzed post is in regards to earth day initiative by the company. They had a recyclable and reusable cup for $1. It was posted on all three of their social media platform.
This post reveals several key actions of Nordstrom. First of all, the key message for all three platforms are the same. However, each platform had a slightly different text. The Facebook text had the full version with no hashtag. Twitter had a short version of the Facebook text. Instagram changed the line “available in all eBars today” to “available in all our eBars today”. This additional word (our) makes the Instagram post more approachable and friendlier. While on the first glance this post looks like it is filled with contexts, upon further analysis it is more direct and descriptive. While Earth Day might not be known by everyone, the company does mention “green”, “reusable” and “100% recyclable”, which describes what earth day is about. Secondly, the image and text focuses more on the product than values. The company does not take a stand in the post, they relate earth day to their product. The key message seems to be more about the recyclable cup that costs $1 than being environmentally good. The pictures used focus on the product and the logo than anything related to earth day.
Post 2:
The second analyzed post is about Nordstrom’s collaboration with Nike. The post was featured on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Nordstrom’s posts revealed a lot about the collaboration with Nike. First, the text used on all three was similar but not the same. Facebook had a more descriptive message, which only stated the collaboration. Instagram and Twitter added the girl power and the nordstrompop hashtag. Interestingly, neither Twitter nor Instagram put the girl power in hashtag. Furthermore, there was a link on Twitter and Facebook that redirected consumers to the website. The posts seems to be more contextual with referencing Nike and Girl Power. However, the text’s message is quite direct and descriptive. It about going to the store and seeing the collaboration with Nike. Second, the image and texts refer to a feminine post. The texts do not mention the products. However it is clear in the picture that the product is at the center of the message. The company does make the post more feminine with the “girl power” text and the flower background of the
picture. However, because the company did not put the “girl power” in hashtags asks the question of whether they intended to use it as an added value. The company seems to not use hashtag on Facebook, but on Twitter and Instagram they do use it. A possible reason for this is to keep the focus on the product and not to focus on the girl power value.

Post 3:
In the third analyzed post, Nordstrom highlighted products from their “Activity” clothes. It was only posted on Facebook and Instagram.

![Facebook](image1)
![Instagram](image2)

This post focused more on active wear. First, the text on the two social media platforms are not the same. As per usual, the company did not use hashtags on Facebook. On Facebook, the focus of the text was more specific with focus on dancing type fitness with the “bust a move” text. Instagram was vaguer with “get up & go”. Even when Nordstrom is being more contextual in their message, it seems as though they try to be more direct on Facebook. Second, both platforms focused on exercising products. While the text for both seemed to focus more on values, the picture brings it back to the product. Furthermore, on Facebook there is a direct link to the online store. Both the text and the picture leads to a more product focused message with some value elements.

Post 4:
The final analyzed posts are based on what is the most common type of post on the three platforms.
On Facebook and Instagram, Nordstrom mostly focus on product combinations to create a whole look. Visually, both platforms have similar type of images with the products laid on the floor. On Twitter, the company tends to add more focus on different variation of a product group. The text for all three platforms tends to be short. On Twitter and Instagram the brand uses hashtags to categorize the posts. On Instagram they make more use out of the hashtag, as in the example where the whole text is written in hashtags. While textually and visually there are differences between the posts, the focus of all three are still more on the products of the company.

**Nordstrom Strategy**

Nordstrom described their brand mission as focusing on shopping experience. This indicates that level of value is important for the brand. It is about the experience of getting inspiring style.
Part of Nordstrom’s aim is to give consumers the fashionable products. There is a mixture of the level of values and that of the products. For both HyPo and Glue Value this places the company in the middle. With the HyPo, the company is also mostly in control, as it provides consumers the product. Nordstrom is the one who brings fashion and shopping experience to the consumers. The level of Values and Products and their control over what happens places Nordstrom in category HyPo 3: Interactive Marketing. Nordstrom aims at creating a shopping experience that anyone can enjoy. This leads to glue value C, which is belonging and reciprocation.

Nordstrom uses social media to enhance their brand and products. Looking at their social media reveals insight into the company’s social media strategy. First, the text for the different platforms reveal that the company has different aims with each platform. On Facebook the texts in the posts are more descriptive. Twitter and Facebook usually contains the same texts, including links. This means that Twitter is also more descriptive in the posts. On Instagram the company focuses more on a community feeling. The tone on Instagram is different than with Facebook and Twitter. For example, in the earth day post they use the word “our”. However, the company does sometimes use the exact text as with the other platforms. While in general the company uses the same message on all platforms, they do use Instagram for messages specifically for this platform. Second, the posts are mostly focused on the products. The texts and images are usually focused on the different styles that Nordstrom offers. However, the company does include values in some of their posts. For example, Nordstrom’s collaboration with Nike mentioned “girl power”. While this seems like a value focused strategy, the fact that the word was not put in hashtag on Twitter or Instagram makes it look more like an attempt to make the product more feminine. From the observation made, Nordstrom seem to be more focused on the products than on values.

The analysis of Nordstrom leads to the assumption that the company has a Glue Value A: Efficiency and Effectiveness and a HyPo score 2: Manipulation of consumer’s perception and hoping to influence their behavior. While the company seems to focus on values with earth day and girl power, upon closer inspection it seems more like a ploy to increase the level of products. The fact that the company mostly used the same text for all three platforms indicates that they want to maximize the reach of their messages. This means that Nordstrom mostly has a wider audience. This is also visible in the descriptive nature of the texts. Even when covering specific topics, they make sure to include words that explain what they are talking about. The company
is leading the consumers to what the actual meaning is. For example, with the third post analyzed, the company puts the text “bust a move” with an image of an outfit. With this text, they lead consumers to the conclusion that the clothes can be worn for dancing/cardio workout. This indicates the company’s control over the products and their meanings.

5.4 Conclusion

The aim of the case studies were to give insight into social media usage by companies. As mentioned before, the three main elements of the case studies was the message that was being delivered, the aim of the message, and whether the posts initiated a conversation. These elements were instrumental because they gave hints of how the theories of the elastic self, Hyper- and Postmodern, and Glue Value are in the practical world.

The Elastic Platforms

Looking at the three social media platforms analyzed here, Facebook (scored 1) was on the far left of the scale indicating that it is more prescribed, which means that the focus of this social media is more on social interactions. Instagram (scored 2,7) and Twitter (Scored 3) are more on the right side of the scale indicating that they are more elastic in nature, which means that shared interests are more important.

From the analyzed companies, there is one element that separates the two types. Hashtags were created as a way to connect posts to topics. All three platforms have this feature. When looking at general differences, there were two ways that the analyzed companies used the more prescribed Facebook. They either used hashtags to refer to the name of their company, collection/product and people, or they did not use hashtags at all. For example, H&M used hashtags on Facebook to refer their brands (#HMLife #HMHome) and named of people (#AndrésVeloncoso and #CamilleChariére). In general, the more elastic Twitter and Instagram also contains names of brands/collection and people, but also to connect the post to topics of interests. For example, Nordstrom used hashtags for ‘fitness’ and ‘workout’. When the message was posted on all three platforms, it generally contained the same hashtags. Furthermore, the way that the companies used the prescribed platform was to relate the post to the product and they used the elastic platforms in the same way and to connect posts to other subjects and interests.
Hypermodern vs. Postmodern Platforms
Looking at the Hypermodern and Postmodern scale, the analyzed companies fell on either the hypermodern side or in the middle of the two sides (interactive marketing).

H&M has social media tendencies that leans more towards the hypermodern side of the scale. The company has two types of posts. They mostly post about their products. Interestingly, a lot of the text that goes with the picture are usually about “Our Favorites” and “Our Pick of the month” type of posts. This indicates that the selected products are important because they are the company’s top pick. The second type of post is not directly linked to the products. These are posts about events and people in the fashion industry. Together, the two type of posts reveals the company focuses on the level of products. They do this by ensuring the consumers that they are experts in fashion products. The second type of post supports the first type by consolidating that H&M is expert in fashion products. By talking about festivals, fashion shows, and models/designers, the company ensures their consumers that they know what they are talking about. Social media is not only used to display products by hypermodern companies, but as H&M shows, it can also be used in combination with other posts to increase the level of products.

Nordstrom leans more towards hypermodern on the HyPo scale. The company also uses values to increase the level of products. In the analyzed posts, Nordstrom has used earth day and exercise to increase the perception of the brand/products. The earth day post was used as a way to link the brand to the sustainable event. However, the focus was only on the recyclable cup that they sold in their eBars. For the post that focused on exercise elements, it was in relation to the product. In other words, the company was merely stating that the clothes can be worn to “bust a move”. The same can be said about the company’s collaboration with Nike. The post focused on “girl power”, but only in the context of the product. It is as though they are saying that the product is for “girls”. There is no depth to this statement, such as how the collaboration is empowering for girls/women. The values that Nordstrom use are secondary characters of the products. The company seems to have a strategy of having different types of posts to enhance the perception of Nordstrom’s brand and products.

Adidas, which is more in the center of the scale also puts enfaces on their products. However, the company also focuses on values. They use texts that indicates that their products are “the
greatest” or “the best fitting”. However, the company uses their products and brand as a way to connect to the sports world. Adidas sees their products as a way to help issues in sports. It becomes more than just a product. Furthermore, Adidas has many pages that deals with specific sports or regions. In Adidas’ case, the product help enhance the value that connects consumers to the company. For a company focused on interactive marketing, the product and values complement each other. A key characteristic of this interactive marketing on social media is that the value and products influence each other. The shoes help you perform better in sports (performance, health, exercise values), but these values also enhances the quality of shoes. This is a cooperation between values and products.

The Glue Value Platforms
When it comes to the Glue Value, there are two key elements to social media: reach and context. The case studies looked at whether contextual or direct/descriptive posts were posted on one or more platforms. When the texts used in the posts were direct and descriptive, it tended to be for a wide reach. On the one hand, there are companies that mostly focus on descriptive messages. On social media, being descriptive and using the same message on various platforms increases the likelihood that more people will see it and that they will understand the message as intended by the company. On the other hand, there are companies that mostly focus on contextual texts. Using contextual messages on multiple platforms is a method of finding people with the same values. The reasons do differ between contextual and direct message. As with H&M and Nordstrom, they were casting a wide net around anyone who would see the message. On the other hand, Adidas used the different social media as a way to reach more people with interest in sports. So while both the left and the right side of the scale might use the same text on different platforms, the aim of the message remains different.

Figure 9 puts the result of the case studies in a graph. H&M focuses more on products and they use all their social media for the same message, which is clear and easy to understand. On the graph, H&M and Nordstrom are placed at 2A. However, Nordstrom is leaning more towards the right. Adidas focuses on value and products. Furthermore, Adidas has different pages for different sports and demographics. On both the HyPo and Glue Value scale they are placed in the middle. Adidas is placed higher than Nordstrom because they do focus more on values.
Figure 9: Case Studies Graph
Chapter 6: Conclusion

Social Media is not a dying fad. In fact, it continues to grow and become more diverse with the various platforms on it. While there are articles and books that talk about the one way of using social media, the fact remains that there are many different ways of looking at social media. The vice president of Forrester was quoted in the introduction as saying that “It’s clear that Facebook and Twitter don’t offer the relationship that marketing leader crave” (Beck, 2014). While it is debatable whether Facebook and Twitter offer something valuable to marketers or not, it does up bring an important question that became the cornerstone of this research. What does social media offer companies?

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to look at the two parties involved: Social Media and Companies/Brands.

First of all, there are the companies behind the social media platforms. Going back to chapter 2, social media is meant for people to use, not companies. This is visible in the fact that all the platforms analyzed did not start with an advertising feature. Furthermore, all the platforms are in agreement in their advice of how companies should use their platforms. The core of this advice is as follows: companies should use social media to authentically connect with their customers. This is clearly visible in the paid advertisement features, which disguises an advertisement in such a way that it looks like a post from one of a friends. Furthermore, social media do have features that allows companies to monitor their success.

However, the elastic-self theory shows that social media is more complicated. On the one hand, there are platforms that focus on social circle. These are the prescribed platforms. On the other hand, there are platforms that focus on shared interests/values. These are the elastic platforms. To go back to the advice of social media for companies, there is a difference between platforms. The prescribed platforms wants companies to use social media to add value to consumers’ social circle, while the elastic platforms wants companies to use social media to add value to consumers’ interests/values.

Furthermore, social media platforms have to deal with the many companies joining their platforms to attract consumers. Many of these platforms are dealing with content shock. The fact that so many companies are putting out content makes it becomes impossible to view all of them. Special features are used on social media, such as Facebook’s algorithm, to sort out which campaigns will be seen by which consumers. On social media, if a company does not get
engagement (likes, comments, shares), it will not reach a lot of consumers. This is what social media platforms mean when they say that companies should create authentic communication with consumers.

Secondly, there are the companies/brands who want to use social media for marketing purposes. In chapter 3 marketing was define as at its core being about the interactions between companies and consumers. However, this relationship is not as simple as it sounds. Two theories were introduced to characterize how different companies have different aims. First, there is the theory that deals of how companies approach marketing: Hypermodern and postmodern marketing scale. Companies who fall on the hypermodern side of the scale tends to want to be in control and focus on level of products. Companies who fall on the postmodern side of the scale tends to be more comfortable with the unknown and focus on level of values. Second, there is the theory that deals with what the message of the marketing accomplishes: The glue value scale. On the left side of the scale, the marketing message is aimed for a large crowd that will understand the clear and easy to understand message and it does not trigger any group activities. On the right side of the scale, the marketing messages are contextual and focus on triggering group activities.

However, when it comes to social media, all the marketing theories focus on one point: reach. Whatever the approach and the aim of a marketing message is, if there isn’t anyone to see it it’s not effective. It was important to look how the level of products and values were translated social media. There is a characteristic of hypermodern companies on social media. While, as expected, there were posts that focused on the level of products, there were also other posts that focused on the level of values. However, these posts’ core purpose was to influence the consumer’s perception of the products. There was one company that was categorized as interactive marketing. The posts researched here revealed a different dynamic between products and values. The two influenced each other on social media. The values were used to indicate that the product was the best in its category (level of products), but the product was also used to solve problems or to highlight aspects of the value (level of values). While there weren’t any postmodern companies analyzed, an educated guess would be that the product’s sole role would be to benefit the value. Instead of focusing on special features the product has, its sole role would be to strengthening the community. However, more research is vital to answer this with more certainty. This research has shown that on social media, whether a company is more
hypermodern or postmodern, both deals with products and values. The difference lies in which is dominant on the platforms.

The most important research result in regards to the Glue Value is how contextual and clear posts are used on multiple platforms. It turns out that a posts that are either contextual (right side of the glue value) or clear (left side of the glue value) are sometimes used word for word on other platforms. However, there is a difference in the reason why a contextual posts are used on multiple platforms in contrast to posts without context. A company that focuses on clear and direct posts aims for a large crowd. By posting the same message on various platforms they increase the chance that more people will see the message and immediately understand it. On the other hand, a company that focuses on contextual posts aim for specific people. By posting the same message on various platform the company increases the chance that the right people will find the post and understand the message.

This research has shown that the relationship between companies and social media is more complicated than it seems. Social media wants companies to use their platform as a way to connect with consumers, but companies use platforms as a way to communicate with them. The two parties have different agendas that makes it complex. Furthermore, the fact remains that many people are using social media, and companies want to reach them. Social media platforms will continue to change, but this research has shown that it is important to understand the relationship between the two parties.
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Appendix

A. Case Studies: H&M Visual Analysis

A.1.1 Facebook:

A.1.2 Twitter:
A.1.3 Instagram

A.2 Adidas Visual Analysis
A.2.1 Facebook
A.2.2 Twitter

A.2.3 Instagram
A.3 Nordstrom Visual Analysis

A.3.1 Facebook

A.3.2 Twitter
A.3.3 Instagram