SMEs and social media

- A study about how SMEs in the fashion industry should approach social media
ABSTRACT
Master thesis, Swedish School of Textiles, Borås 21/05/2012
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Title: SMEs and social media - A study about how SMEs in the fashion industry should approach social media.

Background The rules of marketing are changing all the time and companies have to develop new types of marketing to survive in the hard competition today. Technology has taken marketing in a new direction, where online marketing is the most dynamic and fast-moving field within marketing today. Social media is a part of online marketing that has increased a lot over the past years. Companies in the apparel industry are using social media frequently today as a way to communicate with their customers and are now being able to communicate and reach to their consumers to a much lower cost than ever before.

Research Question: - What should a small and medium sized enterprise in the fashion industry consider when approaching social media successfully as a marketing strategy?

Method: This thesis is based on a qualitative study with mainly in-depth interviews. We have held interviews with several respondents within our research field but with knowledge in different areas. We believe that this gives an overall perspective to the problem.

Purpose: The purpose of this thesis is to increase our knowledge of how social media can be used as a marketing tool by SMEs in the fashion industry.

Conclusions in short: Our main conclusion to the research is that to work with social medium in a successful way as a small or medium sized fashion company you need devotion. There is no ”right” way, and the strategy takes time. Everything should be well planned according to the nature of the business and the goals. Furthermore it is important to realize that social media is not focused on creating sales, but instead on building relationships and giving you as a business owner an insight to your customers’ minds.

Keywords: Social Media, SMEs, Fashion Industry, Marketing, Strategy, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Tumblr, Fashiolista.
Preface

We would like to thank everyone who have helped us these months and made this master thesis possible. A special thank to the persons who kindly took they time to help us answering our questions despite a busy schedule. Thank you all very much!

*Calle Bodestig, Mandel*

*Annica Ljungberg, XLNT Communication*

*“Ljung”, anonymous company*

*Hanna Stefansson, Bloggare*

*Emelie Sobels, Fashiolista*

*Inmaculada, Sofoco Media*

We would also like to give a big thank you to our supervisor Elias Le Grand who has helped us a lot during our work.

*Borås, May 21, 2012*

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1. Introduction

In the introductory section the chosen subject of the thesis will be introduced and explain how technological changes have created a new way of marketing goods where the customers are being more involved than before. It’s also explained how social media is a part of online marketing and the web 2.0 concept and how companies in the fashion industry are using social media today. Thereafter the subject will be problematized where potential problems that might occur when using social media are discussed. This will further leads to the thesis research question and purpose.

1.1 Background

The rules of marketing are changing all the time and companies have to develop new types of marketing to survive in the hard competition today (Kumra, 2007:1). Thorp (2007) mentions in the article “Tomorrows word - Re-evaluating the role of marketing” that the shift in marketing can be referred to elements such as globalization, massive technological changes and the spread of marketing techniques in to new areas. Kumra (2007:1) also argues that information technology is one element that has caused big changes and is one reason why the power has shifted from marketers to consumers. By having greater amount information about anything, consumers are now more active, careful and informed (Kumra, 2007:1). Sheehan (2010:7) agrees that technology has taken marketing in a new direction, where online marketing is the most dynamic and fast-moving field within marketing today. Online marketing tools like Google Analytics can be used to see where the visitors come from, what pages that are most popular, things that people click on e.g. (Agresta and Bough, 2010:109.) The authors state that this kind of data never would exist without our current technology and it’s opening up a whole new world for marketers, who’re looking to get a better understanding in online consumer behavior. Sheehan (2010:7) mentions that even if online marketing is very dynamic it’s also a quite new idea and is still in experimental stage. The author mentions that we are now only in the beginning of realizing the huge potential of the web that could offer the best possibilities to create ideas that could change the world.

Carlsson (2009:8) says that people have always gathered around the “lunch table” to tell stories and gossip about, everything from traveling, food and diet tips or how awfully that sales lady
treated them at the store the other day. You did it in the god old days and you do it now. The difference today is that peoples’ social network is often more world spread then it was some years ago (Carlsson, 2009:8). Through social media the communication has gone from the small lunch table at the office to be a global gathering place. Through social media we inform, interact, react, discuss and share with the whole world in real time our thoughts and opinions (Carlsson, 2009:8).

Social media is a part of online marketing and can be described as the act of when someone creates and posts substance in an online, mobile or virtual environment (Agresta and Bough, 2010:2). Agresta and Bough (2010:2) argue that the key message of social media is that information is shared with people in your inner circle who are identified as your friends or followers. Due to Selg (2010:8) social media combine technology, social interaction and user-generated content and therefore fit to the concept of Web 2.0. Selg (2010:8) further explains that social networks, blogs, micro blogs, wikier and communities are part of this Web 2.0 concept. According to Findahl (2011:18) 52 % of Sweden’s population (of those who are 12 years or older) are using social media today. The statistic further shows that the most common use of social media is Facebook, but other communities where people can share and talk about their special interest are still very popular. People who are writing blogs haven’t increased so much in recent years, but on the contrary people who read blogs have increased a lot and have created a new type of media form where the women are most active (Findahl, 2011:19).

Companies in the apparel industry are using social media frequently today as a way to communicate with their customers. Fashion company Kate Spade has for example used social medium to communicate with their customers and have different medium to serve different purposes. Their Facebook is used for mainly customer inquiries and fielding, Twitter for talking to fans and sharing images and other content related to the brand’s different campaigns. On YouTube they post short brand films and finally Instagram to post images (Indvik, 2011).

In 2009 American Apparel launched a campaign on lookbook - which is a community where users can upload their outfits (Wright, 2010). The campaign consisted in letting customers upload looks while wearing the brand. This was later used to create the first “lookbook” ever of this kind, consisting of 64 pages with their consumers, was printed in 150 000 companies and was spread to
over 20 countries. Furthermore it was spread by the use of Facebook and Twitter, encouraging users to participate and push it forward. Wright (2010) argues that the emerging use of social media is clearly visible within the fashion industry and is often included in the strategic communication plan for many companies. Companies are now being able to communicate and reach to their consumers to a much lower cost than ever before (Wright, 2010). The importance of online marketing is further enforced by the fact that many companies are even hiring “specialists” on social media. Recently Swedish company Cheap Monday announced the position as a social media project manager. Furthermore, Facebook selected Amsterdam based Fashiolista as one of the first fashion communities in the world to be able to launch an app for the Facebook timeline. This allows Fashiolista users to easily share pictures of their most wanted and loved items amongst their friends by publishing them on their timeline (Darlington, 2012). New communities come up constantly and Instagram (an app on iPhone and now android) has gained an impressive amount of users recently. It has become a fun and easy way for fashion bloggers and also fashion companies to keep their readers updated about their latest news through pictures. Another appreciated community is Pinterest where users can upload things they like and you can follow companies and “pin” loved items. Famous Swedish fashion icon Elin Kling's apparel company Nowhere is one of many companies to follow this trend.

1.2 Problem Discussion

Whilst the competition is hard amongst companies, the importance of finding new creative ways to communicate and creating a dialogue with potential and existing consumers also raises. A couple of years ago having a blog and Facebook account was then seen as something innovative and new, but has now turned into a normality if not to say a necessity. Even high-end brands like Oscar de La Renta and Alexander McQueen uses new digital platforms, such as Tumblr, to attract a new audience (Indvik, 2011). Participating and being active within the different digital communication platforms, is something that therefore has become necessary for almost every company today. As we mentioned in the introduction the role social media plays for communication amongst people and companies has increased dramatically. People create blogs that is incorporated into their CV’s while applying for jobs and employers often does background checks on potential employees on Facebook or LinkedIn. The problem for companies with this kind of communities often lays in the lack of control the company has over what’s being said
about them. For example McDonald’s used Twitter to start a campaign where users were suppose to share their favorite memories about the company (emirates247). Instead the campaign backfired and people started to write about bad food and service they had experienced on McDonalds (emirates247).

Almost every big company use social media today as a natural way of communicate to their consumers. Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) on the other hand don’t use it as frequent or not at all. The definition of SMEs could be explained as enterprises that have less than 250 employees and not exceeding an annual turnover of 50 million euro and/or an annual balance sheet not exceeding 43 million euro (ec.europa). One reason why SMEs don’t use social medium as frequent as bigger companies is the fact that social media often is too time consuming for smaller companies with few employees (Cowbrough, 2009-2011). Cohen (2011) agrees and means that SMEs tend to have more limited personnel and financial resources and therefore need to be more creative in how the business can use social media. Therefore it’s important for these small companies to consider a social media strategy. By having that, companies can in many ways reinforce and strengthen their brand image. Reaching appropriate customers and creating a dialogue with them can gain great knowledge of their customer base and can also result in valuable input from them. Furthermore it may also be easier for companies to avoid spread-each of rumors and being able to deal with rumors when being active themselves. There is a constant addition of possible Internet communities to use for a company and the fashion industry is often a big part of those. Fashion companies are nowadays often aware of the big possibilities using social media and social communities as a form of communicating, but many of the SMEs don’t know the best way to approach it. So what should these minor companies think about when approaching social media and what possible difficulties might they run into?

1.3 Research Question and Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to increase our knowledge of how social media can be used as a marketing tool by SMEs in the fashion industry. Through interviews with different key players in the industry we will see what kind of social media tools that are used most frequent and how a minor fashion company can use them in the best way.
To enable the purpose the following two questions will be the core of this thesis.

- What should a small and medium sized enterprise in the fashion industry consider when approaching social media successfully as a marketing strategy?
  - What possible difficulties could the companies run into from using social media?

1.4 Delimitations

Considering the empirical delimitation the study examines the fashion industry, SMEs and is based on an empirical material from a Swedish context. Our theory is limited to marketing strategy and we have chosen not to touch areas of branding or consumer behavior since it makes the study unfocused.

1.5 Contribution to the Fields

Out thesis will contribute first and foremost to the field of marketing and strategy. Previous research and articles mention how social media is used both in bigger and smaller companies but not much research takes the fashion industry in consideration, therefore we want to do research about how a minor fashion company could use social media as a marketing strategy in this industry. Most of the researches also lack SMEs and social medium within a Swedish context and it’s therefore interesting to examine these as well.

Our aim is to first and foremost write a thesis that can gain a better knowledge of social media for SMEs in the fashion industry. However small and medium sized companies within the fashion industry have the same limited time and resources, and in some cases knowledge, as other minor companies and therefore we believe that our thesis could act as a small guideline for building social media marketing strategies. Hence it could generate a greater knowledge for social media in another context then has been discussed before and contribute to the fashion field in other ways.

The mixture of theories we have chosen for this thesis will together with our empirical part take the discussion of social media in another direction that hasn't been discussed much before. Since social media is up for discussion almost every day we find it as a very relevant subject to study,
describe and analyze it in context with small fashion companies.

1.6 Disposition

Section 2 - The method. The methodological approach is and choice of respondents is discussed. Information collection and validity is also discussed. The section ends with some critiques towards out chosen method.

Section 3 - Theoretical framework. Presentations of theories of relevance treating social media strategy and SMEs. A discussion of the used literature is also included.

Section 4 - Result. An empirical analyzes is here presented where the respondents answers is compiled. It analyzes pros and cons with social media as a strategy. Also treats different social media that can be used within fashion companies.

Section 5 – Discussion. Discussion treating social media strategies, which a minor fashion company should consider to use. Potential risks and difficulties with social media will also be discussed.

Section 6 - Conclusion. Contain what we have learned from the study. A discussion about future research within our chosen field will also be mentioned in this section.

Section 7 – List of Sources. The last section shows all gather sources, which our thesis contains and are built upon.
2. Method

In this section we will first present our choice of research method, which is qualitative in depth interviews. How our respondents were contacted, whom our respondents are and why our chosen respondents are important for our specific thesis are also discussed. Furthermore we mention how we through both face-to-face and e-mail interviews collected our information. How the usage of Dictaphone affected out data analyzes is also mention. Furthermore we will discuss how the respondents’ specific knowledge within their area will affect the validity of the thesis. In the end we mention criticism about our chosen research method where we discuss the fact that interviews often are based on subjective thoughts and how that might affect the thesis. We will not present theories of different methodologies but will instead evaluate pros and cons with our chosen method.

2.1 Choice of Research Method

There are two main types of research methods that can be used, quantitative and qualitative. Compared to the quantitative approach where the focus is on being able to measure the collected data in numbers and answer the question what, when and where, the qualitative approach focuses on words, text and symbols aiming to answer the question “why” something is the way it is (Bryman and Bell, 2011:410-412). Hence it also contributes to a deeper understanding of reasons that govern a certain behavior. Our thesis is based on qualitative research methods where we through interviews will find answers to our chosen research questions. Using qualitative interviews we will get in-depth information with detailed answers from our respondents. According to Ryen (2004:14-15) the qualitative approach has no standardized method when collecting data. Researchers can adopt several strategies when collecting data; interviews, observations, analysis of texts and documents and so on. In our thesis we have focused on conducting a few handpicked in-depth interviews from different key-players within our chosen research field to get a wider perspective on how social media can be used.

Furthermore, due to the time limit we believe that the information given in a few handpicked in-depth interviews will be much more valuable for us when answering our research questions than having surveys’, as would be the case with a quantitative approach. Jan Trost (1997) states that when choosing research method you should have your research question in mind. Our research
questions aim to answer why and how something is the way it is rather then wanting to measure a phenomena, hence the qualitative interviews will help us achieve the purpose of the research.

2.2 Information Collection

2.2.1 Interviews

To achieve the most valuable information as possible we conducted individual in-depth interviews to four of our six respondents. In addition, we conducted two of our interviews through e-mail, mainly due to geographical issues. Doing in-depth interviews allows you to discover shared understandings of a particular selected group. The in-depth interviews seek to give an understanding about an individuals experiences and opinions on the researched area. Patel & Davidsson (2001) states that not using standardized question allows the respondents to speak more freely and it creates a bigger room for elaborating their answers. Hence we held semi-structured interviews that also are the most common when doing a qualitative research. Semi-structured interviews are made by first preparing some topics and question that act as a guideline during the interview (Patel and Davidsson, 2003). This allowed us to have a more in-depth and relaxed discussion. By doing so we believe that the respondent also was able to develop their own thoughts and ideas more freely, and at the same time be more in-depth in their answers. Furthermore, it allowed us to elaborate our questions during the interviews as new interesting angles came up.

Following DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), we based the selection of respondents on an “iterative process referred to as purposeful sampling”. In other words all respondents where strategically selected having our research question in mind. By doing so you can achieve a high richness and depth of the data that hence helps answering the research question (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). For our interviews we tried to pick several different persons approaching different angles of the subject. Trost (1997) states that you should have a heterogeneous group but within a set frame. All our respondents represent different sections within our research field. What they all have in common is their high level of expertise within this field. With expertise we mean the specific knowledge within their area.

Considering our respondents, one enterprise wanted to be anonymous which we have to respect.
Therefore this respondent will be named Ljung in our thesis. This company is a minor Swedish fashion enterprise with seven employees that design their own clothes. The other enterprise we had contact with was Calle Bodestig who is CEO at Mandel, a small Swedish company with seven employees, situated in Gothenburg. The company is an e-commerce reseller within fashion. We also did an interview with Annica Ljungberg, CEO on XLNT Communication, which is a minor communication agency within social media situated in Gothenburg, Sweden. We additionally took contact with Hanna Stefansson (www.hanna.metrodmode.se) who is a Swedish fashion blogger that has made several collaborations with different companies. Our e-mail interviews was conducted with Emilie Sobels at Fashiolista which is a website that helps you save and share fashion finds from all over the web and with Inmaculada Urrea founder Contents and -Social Media Manager at Sofoco Media in Spain, which is a small fashion consultancy agency with focus on brand building. In our analysis the respondents will be named following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>POSITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Ljung&quot; (confidential)</td>
<td>Marketing and Sales, small fashion company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stefansson</td>
<td>Blogger, Metromode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sobels</td>
<td>Representative, Fashiolista</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ljungberg</td>
<td>CEO, XLNT Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodestig</td>
<td>CEO, Mandel E-commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urrea</td>
<td>Co-founder, Sofoco Media</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When we had decided on which companies and persons we found adequate to participate in our interviews we took the first contact by either calling or sending an e-mail explaining our purpose and their role for the research project, and of course asking if the respondents was interested in participating. The reason for having two fashion companies is that we wanted to be able to compare similarities and differences between them.
After contacting our respondents for interviews we elaborated our questions based on our theories and with the respondents particular field in mind. During the interview our aim was to get an answer to why and how companies use social media, which media are the most relevant to use for a small and medium sized fashion company and the best way to approach the different medium. We are of course aware that the telephone and e-mail interview cannot count as in-depth interviews and they also lack the possibility to ask follow up questions but they still are qualitative interviews as the data generated from them is qualitative as the questions are open-ended and the interview answers will be interpreted according to the same or similar principles as our face-to-face interviews.

According to Bryman (2002) it is vital that the questions allow the researcher to get information from the respondents on how they perceive their environment. They should also allow a high amount of flexibility, therefore we let the respondents choose date and location so they would feel as comfortable as possible. Furthermore before meeting with the respondents we sent out some of our topics and questions so that they had the chance to prepare some material. At the same time they did not get all the questions we were also able to get some more spontaneous reactions and thoughts during the interviews. All our face-to-face interviews were recorded with a Dictaphone. Ryen (2004) claims that using recording devices can alienate the respondents and make them feel less comfortable and hence affect the profundity of their answer. Even so we still believe this was beneficiary as we could assure all information given was noted. Furthermore we did not perceive our respondents to be affected by the recording they all seemed very enthusiastic and comfortable. When doing our analysis we noticed we needed some more information and therefore made some follow up questions with a few of our respondents via e-mail.

Trost (1997) explains several approaches when processing and analyzing the collected material. As we had made recordings we could make sure no vital and important information were missed. Trost (1997) says you have the possibility to re-listen to the recordings several times, make a transcription of the recorded material or the third option that we choose; to re-listen to the recordings and write down the most important parts of the interviews and thereafter structure the information according to our questions. This allowed us to really analyze the significant material.
2.3 Validity

Reliability and validity are two very important issues to discuss in a research, as in them the credibility and objectivity of the research is at stake (Silverman, 2004:283). However in the qualitative researches the term reliability has not been so important as in a quantitative research (Silverman, 2004:286). The idea of reliability is that you measure and specify values and numbers for every entity, something that differs from for example trying to understand a respondent in an interview (Trost, 1997:100). Therefore the focus has instead been on the validity of the research. How high the validity is on a research refers to the researchers ability to include only what is relevant for the research. According to Patel and Davidsson (2011) the validity of a research incorporates the whole research process and not only the part related to the gathering of empirical data. In other words it also considers analysis of data and writing up of data.

As mentioned we have mainly collected our primary data through in-depth interviews with several “experts” within their field, all from different angles considering our subject and all recorded. This gave us the possibility to go through the interview again and analyze the respondents’ answer and tone very thoroughly. Although the interviews are semi-structured we have tried to keep the interviews as similar as possible when it comes to elaborating the questions and conducting the interviews. With this said as the respondents are working within different areas we have adapted the questions to every respondent. As the respondents are working within their field on an everyday basis we believe that their knowledge is satisfactory enough to be seen as reliable. Furthermore we believe that by having many different perspectives we have been be able to collect an extensive and broader amount of knowledge and comprehension of the field. A high validity on a research is achieved when you have “researched what you aimed to research”. As most of our respondents have agreed on key-points in or research it has contributed to a higher validity of the findings.

2.4 Critics Toward Chosen Method

We are well aware that many interviews often are based on subjective thoughts from the respondents and may therefore affect the validity on the research. Although as mentioned earlier we believe that since we have many different respondents from different areas we will get some kind of uniform objective thought on our research question and therefore decrease the risk.
As we have mentioned several times the qualitative approach is based on analyzing the respondents answers and cannot to the same extent as a quantitative approach be measured in numbers, hence the result is a conclusion made of the respondents own thoughts and interpretations. This could in some cases affect the result as many factors can affect our capability to interpret the respondents in the best and most accurate way. As we have had semi-structured and interviews with open questions this can affect the research result as the interviews may differ from each other and this can affect our possibility to see connections and patterns. The open questions and themes can also make us as researchers influenced by the particular situation and our own emotions that situation brings. Furthermore, as we gain more experience and confidence during time we may have developed our ability to do the interviews and ask follow up questions which have led to the interviews differing a bit from each other. We are also aware that adding quantitative data from a consumer point of view could give the thesis another approach, but time constraints did not allow for a quantitative survey to be conducted. Therefore we added the interview with blogger, Hanna Stefansson, as we believe will act as an “expert consumer” and will give us an understanding on what approach companies have to have towards the consumers.

However, it is difficult to claim that our suggestions are valid and are right for every company. It’s difficult to conduct one manual for a social media strategy that will appeal to all consumers and work for every company. Therefore every company needs to try and test what works best for them.
3. Theoretical Framework

Our theoretical framework is structured in the way that we first discuss the literature that we have used and which sources that has been used. After that we will talk about why it has been important for fashion brands to use social media and mention tools like Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, Blogs and other fashion communities that fashion companies are using today. Additionally we will after that discuss social media within small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and what opportunities and risks that might occur when using social media. Then we will mention how companies can implement social media strategies in a more practical way in six different steps and in the end name some important characteristics a company should have when working with social media.

3.1 Discussion of Literature

We have made use of relevant studies from our Master’s course and we have also searched for relevant literature to use. Since social media is a quite new marketing tool there is not many books written in this area yet. However there are a lot of articles, newspaper articles, and scientific papers on the Internet that have been written about this phenomenon. The articles are often very updated and are research that we have to discuss and relate to since it is within that field our thesis will contribute.

We have used a book called *The social media bible: tactics tools and strategies for business success* (2009) because it explains how to use social media in a more practical approach and give examples of six steps how to implement a social media strategy within a company. We also used a book called *Fashion Brand Merchandising* (2009) that explains more what a fashion brand is.

We complemented the books in our theoretical framework with scientific articles, which were read and found in different marketing journals online. Bryman and Bell (2011) explains that secondary sources are those elaborated by another person and not collected directly from the original source, like literature and scientific articles. Our secondary data is collected through mainly scientific articles and other articles online. As our subject is constantly evolving and is changing in a high pace we believe that this is the best way to collect the most relevant theories and information as possible instead of using literature that may not be the most update. We have
also looked into previous research and student essays in the subject to see already existing conclusions and from that elaborate our own. Furthermore Bryman and Bell (2011) state that using only one search engine as for example Google or Yahoo can result in just reaching a small amount of the information available. Therefore we have used search engines like Ebscohost and the Swedish school of Textiles databases when searching for theories and articles about our thesis subject. We believe that this also contributes to a higher credibility of the found sources. We also used reports and articles that were published in newspapers and different trade magazines. We believe that these sources are trustworthy since the writers of these trade magazines often are consultants with several years of experience in marketing. Theory about different types of social media we found online from different sources.

3.2 Fashion Brands and Social Media

According to Gordon T Kendall a fashion brand is “any apparel, accessory, cosmetic, nondurable home product or service offered for use, sale or exchange that exhibits characteristics intended to identify and differentiate it from other similar goods and services and which is further intended as means of expression of personal preferences, tastes, or acknowledgment of prevailing style trends” (2009:374). The author states that fashion brands are generally offered through channels that are easy for the consumers to access, for instance Internet or mail order companies. Due to the technology Internet has become more and more important for fashion brands since it makes them more available to the customers (Kendall, 2009:131). Hedén and McAndrew (2005:64) agree and say that Internet plays an important role when it comes to the marketing of many fashion brands and states that Internet is an indispensable marketing channel for fashion products.

According to Corcoran (2009) the reason why fashion companies have started to use social media is because the advertising budgets are being slashed so much that the companies have to look at other cheaper alternatives. The author also explains that marketing today is no longer about a one-way conversation but instead it’s a many-to-many conversation. Social media is about social listening where companies have to use their tools to listen to the conversation and get feedback (Corcoran, 2009). The writer means that the meaning of your brand lives in these conversations. Corcoran (2009) further states that fashion can learn how to create an interest through social media. It’s no longer about creating exclusivity and hold people out, it’s more about creating
something people can be a part of and that enable them to share it (Corocan, 2009). Lai and Turban (2008:388) agree on this many-to-many reasoning and talk in the context about the development of Web 2.0, which they explain is more user generated, and have a greater collaboration among the users comparing to the traditional Web. Corocan (2009) further mentions another reason why fashion companies have started to use social media and it’s because the fashion life cycle doesn’t fit with the speed of communication and instead of showing things on the runway that can’t be bought they should show things that can be bought instantly. The answer is to give people what they want when they want it (Corocan, 2009).

3.2.1 How Fashion Brands Could Use Social Media

According to Burns-Whittemore (2012) people express who they are with help of fashion; this gives the fashion industry an advantage when it comes to the business of social media since many people wish to be connected with the brand of the clothes they wear. The following social media tools are popular amongst many fashion brands today:

3.2.1.1 Twitter

Twitter is a “micro blog” where you can send and read short text messages with maximum 140 signs (Findahl, 2011:20). According to Findahl (2011:21) 7 % of Sweden’s population use Twitter sometimes where students, IT and data people and consultants use it the most. The UK based fashion brand ASOS is a quite new fashion retailer on the Internet which last year gained more Twitter followers than any other retail brand in the UK (Burns-Whittemore, 2012). ASOS’s approach to its customers has been to hold a conversation in a “down to earth” tone of voice and at the same time maintain intrigue among the followers (Burns-Whittemore, 2012). Further the author mentions that in the company’s twitter stream there is a balanced numbers of social to promotional information and it’s also very sociable. It’s asking for opinions and getting people to open up and engage (Burns-Whittemore, 2012). Furthermore the author says that ASOS uses the consumers as a promotional tool and is tweeting about discounts, sales, new editions of its magazines, and gives style tips.

3.2.1.2 Facebook

According to Findahl (2011:19) Facebook is a social network where you get information from your friends or make own status updates of what you are doing. Facebook is the most dominant
social network and is used by 63% of Sweden’s population (Findahl, 2011:19). The British designer menswear called Hackett is a frequent user of social media and especially on their Facebook page (Burns-Whittemore, 2012). The writer mentions that the Facebook page shares a lot of information about different products, upcoming styles and promotion events that Hackett participate in. Visual content like video and photos and personal content from the founder can also be found on the page (Burns-Whittemore, 2012).

3.2.1.3 Blogs

According to Frankel (2005:13) weblogs or “blogs is a world-spread phenomena that engages millions of people. Explained in a simple way a blog is a simple homepage, it is like a diary where the author can post texts, pictures and videos. Anyone can visit the blog and can often leave a comment to discuss the post. As the blog is connected to all search engines the posts can reach a lot of readers, and a blog is often frequently updated and contains a lot of links which leads to it being on top of the search results on Google, where almost half of all the searches are made on a search engine (Frankel, 2005: 28).

46% of the women in Sweden read blogs, however the differences between young and older readers are big (Findahl 2011:20). Young women between 12-15 years old read blogs as a daily activity (Findahl 2011:20). Recently brands have tried to reach out to bloggers to promote their products hoping to gain competitive advantages over their competitors (Fenner, 2012) Frankel (2005:34) says that there are companies that offers bloggers free products or money, and in return asks them to write about their product and show them in their blog.

Collaborations can be seen everywhere as for instance whit Swedish blogger Angelica Blick and Caroline Blomst with Din Sko (DinSko) Kenza with jewelry brand Guldfynd (guldfynd) and the clothing company Jofama (jofama). Another Swedish blogger, Columbine Smille recently launched an “edit by Columbine Smille” for Topshop (columbine.freshnet). A collaboration that received much attention in Sweden was in 2011 when H&M for the first time used a fashion blogger to design an entire collection for them, Elin Kling (Milligan, 2011). In the article by Fenner (2012) it’s mentioned that bloggers are important since they have a preexisting connection with the readers that brands can’t create through advertising. Further the author mentions that brands should only work with bloggers if they aim to gain a new audience or potential
consumers, if they want to have a for instance stronger e-commerce there are other platforms that can be used for this. Building brand through collaboration with bloggers could be an interesting way for companies to cut into a new market or change the way they’re perceived in the digital world (Fenner, 2012). Wright (2006:3) claims that blogs can help smaller companies to grow and it can be a good way to be noticed.

3.2.1.4 YouTube

YouTube are often seen as the most dominant tool amongst the others and are successfully used by for instance the brand Calvin Klein to project their image and promote their campaigns (Burns-Whittemore, 2012). However according to Wright (2010) YouTube is an outlet where many companies are missing the mark because they are only using it for one purpose and are not connecting it to the many others market objectives. Companies have to understand that YouTube is built around the concept of engagement and that the members on YouTube are very vocal about what they like or don’t like (Wright, 2010).

3.2.1.5 Other Fashion Communities

Fashiolista (fashiolista) is one of the fastest growing fashion communities where users can discover and share new fashion items, brands and stores, get inspired and share their personal style with other users. With over two million fashionable members and a newly introduced Facebook app this is a great opportunity for brands to make business (fashiolista). If a company is willing to invest a budget in Fashiolista there are some business opportunities the company can choose between. Brands can choose between classic advertising such as banners or in newsletters (fashiolista) or more engaging way of promotion such as premium account, featured products or having a “love” button on your website (fashiolista). According to the website there are many influential bloggers on the social networks today who have many followers, so if a brand manage to get “loved” by them it’s likely that their followers will to.

Indvik (2011) states that there are an increasing amount of fashion companies using Tumblr as a marketing platform. Kayleen Schaefer for New York Times magazine believes that; Tumblr, (founded in 2007) “has reached out to the fashion community in a way no other social networking site has”. The Tumblr staff truly believes in the strong influence that fashion has on the community and have for the second time chosen Tumblr-bloggers to create posts and update
during the New York fashion-week 2011. Companies like Oscar de La Renta and Alexander McQueen are one of the first fashion companies to use Tumblr as a marketing tool to reach a new set of customers. 18% of the most followed Tumblrs are fashion related and Indvik (2011) believes companies can benefit of the high response companies can get on Tumblr. She believes companies can spread visually rich, branded content through a Tumblr.

The theory above show us different examples of how fashion companies involve social media in their marketing and take up examples like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Blogs, etc. Further this leads us in to how minor companies can use social media successfully in their marketing strategy.

3.3 The Use of Social Media Within SMEs

As explained before social media is a popular marketing tool among fashion companies. For us to understand how minor fashion companies can use social media we have to discuss different opportunities and risks with using this specific marketing tool.

On the website företagande.se the editorial staff, who work to lift and keep the business and entrepreneurship in Sweden, is pointing out that social media can have following advantages: For instance a company can create a dialogue with the customer and get feedback without any delay at all. The company can also get information about the users and customers so that the product range and the assortment of goods can adapt after real needs. In the article it’s also mentioned that being on social media increase the credibility of the brand if the different tools are used in an accurate way. Many companies spread their knowledge for free that others can take part of and by doing so companies can be seen both as a good source of information and believable in its competence. Another reason to use social media in small business is word of mouth (WOM) and a number of studies have showed that recommendations from existing customers is an important source of getting new customers (Barclays Review, 1997). According to Barber and Wallace (2009) there is no stronger communication technique then WOM and the usage of WOM can when used as a marketing strategy be very effective as it travels fast, is personal, trustworthy and honest. (Barber and Wallace, 2009:36) WOM is a very powerful tool, and social media is nothing but an enhanced word of mouth (yell).
According to Garnett (2010) the ability of being online 24/7 for the consumers has increased in the business environment today and particularly SMEs are feeling this pressure of being online all the time. Although it is not easy for SMEs to develop and maintain user loyalty since they really can’t compete with the bigger organizations that have better manpower and financial resources (Garnett, 2010). The author says that SMEs need to be aware of that many of their users are not only online and in the buzz but are talking about the company's products and services when they are there. If a problem occurs the customers usually use social media like Twitter or Facebook to leave a comment, therefore the company needs to engage with their users wherever they are and find a solution to the problem before the problem escalates (Garnett 2010). Garnett (2010) claims that many consumers expect this kind of service today and SMEs that are not engaged in social networking risk being left out and loose market shares to competitors that are responding to these issues much faster.

From the theory above we can see that there are lots of possibilities for SMEs when using social media such as cost effective and getting closer to the customer. But risks like lack of financial and manpower resources can also be seen. Having discussed the relation between fashion companies and SMEs leads us to how a company can implement a social media marketing strategy.

### 3.4 Building a Social Media Marketing Strategy

Having a social media marketing strategy is important for all companies that have decided to engage with this marketing tool. To understand how companies can build strategies within this area we are going to mention Safko and Brake’s (2009) six different steps companies can follow.

As we mentioned before social media is a powerful tool that allows companies to reach more customers worldwide and engage with their customers in a more easy way than before (Winterfeldt, 2012). According to Winterfeldt (2012) a natural consequence of using social media is the trademark and brand enforcement challenges companies face. To avoid damage like this it’s important to have a social media business strategy within the company.
3.4.1 Six Steps to a Social Media Business Strategy

• Step one includes Define a 12-month Social Media Macro Strategy where a new tool will be added every month (Safko and Brake, 2009:760). The authors states that the macro strategy should be realistic, flexible and experimental and by adding a new tool every month the company will be able to promote every new tool to the employees, customers and prospects. With this strategy the company are able to look back on previous month and see how effective that month’s tool were implemented (Safko and Brake, 2009:760). According to the authors examples of tools could be bloggers, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter or Flickr.

• The second step according to Safko and Brake (2009:760) is Engage Your Employees. The authors state that the company will have a greater success with social media if they first implement some strategies with the employees. Letting employees using these tools on an every day basis they will eventually become accustomed with one another in a new way than before (Safko and Brake, 2009:760). The authors give an example of starting a company blog where people can share expertise within the company.

• The third step that’s important for a company is to Get Closer to Customers and Prospects (Safko and Brake, 2009:762). The authors mean that in order to influence the conversation of the customers it’s important to get closer to them and finding out what they want. There are several ways of trying to get closer to the companies’ customers and prospects according to Safko and Brake, 2009. One way is to create a public blog and use search tools to identify blogs and blog topics that might be in the company’s interest (Safko and Brake, 2009:762). Another way is to create a Facebook account or join other social networks to attract the attention of people who needs the product and service of yours.

• Step number four is to Think Like a Publisher since with social media everyone is a publisher (Safko and Brake, 2009:763). As a publisher the company has to deliver something that engages that audience and by adding (often in months 5-7) videos (YouTube) and photos (Flickr) the company increases their ability to engage their audience with components that ease communication, education and entertainment (Safko and Brake, 2009:763).
• *Create a Community* is step number five and is usually done in month 8-12 in the macro strategy (Safko and Brake, 2009:763). Tools like Twitter or Survey Monkey can be used to involve the audience around details of the content that might be of interest for them (Safko and Brake, 2009:764). The authors state that it’s important that the tools work together, for example Twitter could be used to send a tweet about an online survey or a blog post that has been posted.

• The last step is to *Measure What’s Most Important* by involving the employees, customers, and prospects in the process (Safko and Brake, 2009:764). According to the authors the first thing that has to be done is to ask people for feedback, which can be done by encouraging, comments on the blog. According to Safko and Brake (2009:764) another valuable measurement tool is Google Analytics which is highly recommended and best of all it’s free. This tool gives metrics on traffic patterns for your site and see where people actually is spending time and is tracking the actual behavior of the companies community, although the most convincing metrics would be if the macro strategy is impacting sales and profitability.

### 3.5 Five Ways of Being Social

To make the social media strategy work after its implementation there are certain characteristics a company should have to be able to get closer to their customers. We will discuss five important characteristics according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2009) that are vital for companies to have if they want to be successful with social media.

#### 3.5.1 Be Active

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2009) a company has to be active if they want to develop a relationship to someone. They should ensure that the content is always fresh and that they are engaged in the discussions with your customers (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009). They further explain that social media effort should be more than only responding to negative comments and defending product offerings. It should be more about engaging others in open and active conversations (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009).

#### 3.5.2 Be Interesting

No one would be interested in speaking to a boring person and that’s why it’s important to give
the customers a reason to engage with the company (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009). The authors state that the first step a company has to do is to listen to the customers and find out what they want to hear, talk about or what they find interesting and enjoyable. Then a post content should be developed that fits those expectations as for instance Starbucks did when they created “My Starbucks idea” platform where the consumers can present new ideas to the company (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009).

3.5.3 Be Humble
Another thing that’s very important is to be humble and never forget that social media existed before most of the companies decided to use them (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009). The author further says that you should not expect that you now better how to use social media than those people who have spent countless hours on Facebook or second Life. Before a company starts to use any new application it’s important to find out about its history and basic rules otherwise it could be a failure (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009).

3.5.4 Be Unprofessional
According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2009) companies should avoid being too professional in the content offerings as for instance hiring a professional writer to the blog. They should instead try to blend in with the users and shouldn’t be afraid to make mistakes. They continue in the article that social media users are just like you and understand that things can go wrong sometimes.

3.5.5 Be Honest
It’s important to be honest and respect the rules of the game and some social media (Wikipedia) doesn’t allow companies to be involved and therefore you should stay out (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009). Other participant can easily find out who’s standing behind an anonymous user account since many of them are on of the most technologically sophisticated people on the planet (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009).
4. Result

From our chosen theories we will in this section analyze what different key players say about social media as a new communication tool and why fashion companies has started to use it in their marketing. We will then analyze social media in the context of fashion companies and see what our respondents think about Twitter and Facebook etc. and if they use it in their marketing strategy. Then we will discuss pros and cons whit social media in SMEs and after that analyze the six steps to a social media strategy and if our respondents agrees with the theory or not. At last we will present what the respondents think is the most important characteristics to have when working with social media.

4.1 Social Media – A New Communication Tool

As mentioned in the theory chapter, Corocoran (2009) explains that many fashion companies have started using social media as a communication tool due to the economical situation that has resulted in cutbacks in the marketing budget. Ljungberg, Bodestig and Ljung, enforces this theory by saying that they see social media as a low cost communication tool that is very good to use. Bodestig says that it provides the ability to give a very high service, something that they value highly. Ljung states that they rarely use any traditional marketing strategies as they often are very expensive and the Return On Investment (ROI) rarely pays off when having an add in for example a magazine. Ljung continues and says that it also is quit difficult to create an interesting content in an add and the benefit with social media therefore lies in being able to create a more interesting content and being able to create a dialogue with your customers. Ljungberg agree and say that traditional marketing such as ads are very expensive for company to use, and social media has therefore become a new way of communicate with people.

Corocoran (2009) also explained that the marketing no longer is a “one-way” conversation” But instead is a many to many conversation and companies need to be where their customers are. Our respondent agrees with this theory and points out the importance of having a conversation with the customer. Urrea believes that every company small or big can benefit from being active on social media networks. She says that “it is not only about selling more products its about creating a long term commitment through a community”. Sobels explains that social media is an easy way to create a positive brand connection and stimulate interaction with your customers.
The benefit with social media, not only for fashion companies, lays in being where your customers are and always being able to monitor what is going on and what is being said about you and also of course being available for your customers.”

- Annica Ljungberg XLNT Communication

Ljungberg further explains that this allows companies to create a more personal contact with their customers and make them feel more important and appreciated. At the same time it also allows companies to make amends and defend themselves if they receive any critics, Ljungberg continues. Bodestig means that social media gives you the possibility to give the customers what they want, which is in line with what Corocan (2009) states. He says “having a blog is very important in the fashion industry as customers quickly and almost instantly can be a part of anything new”. Furthermore he explains that not all industries may need social medium as a communication tool but in an industry where it is important to create a relationship with you customer it is, since you want your customers to come back to you due to the nature of the buying pattern when it comes to clothes.

4.1.1 Social Media is For Every Fashion Company

“Social media is everywhere! It has become a big part of our normal life these days. It's a great and easy way to monitor your brand online and to get in touch with your users. In the end, they provide meaning to your brand and it's important to listen to them.”

- Emelie Sobels, Fashiolista

4.1.1.1 Twitter - Better for Bigger Fashion Companies

Our respondents have different thoughts about Twitter as a social media tool. According to Ljungberg they usually do not recommend their customers to start of with a twitter account as she believes that Twitter is more for publishing people and people in the media industry. She says it is important to adapt which medium you use to your audience. However when starting to use social media she believes there is better ways to go about then Twitter, as Twitter is not one of the biggest media. “Compared to for example Facebook Twitter is just a small drop in the ocean”. However, she believes that when the company grows bigger and gain more knowledge about how
to use the media it could be beneficiary to use Twitter as well. This is something we can see the big e-commerce ASOS and other bigger Fashion companies are doing at the moment. Burns-Whittemore (2012) says that ASOS use twitter to communicate with their customer, ask for their opinions and promote campaigns and give discounts and also to give styling tips. Ljung and Bodestig say that they don’t use Twitter at the moment. Ljung says they prefer Facebook because “everyone is on Facebook”, whilst Bodestig says the “company should use the media we believe suits our best considering our company’s goals. And at the moment that is not Twitter.” Sobels says that they do communicate with their users partly through Twitter.

4.1.1.2 Facebook - Not an Obvious Choice For All Companies

As we have seen earlier Facebook is the most dominant network in Sweden. Almost all of our respondent think that Facebook is the number one platform to be at, except for Bodestig. Ljungberg says that they often recommend their customers to start off with a Facebook account. She says, “The good thing about Facebook is that almost everyone from all different kinds of target groups have a Facebook account.” Ljungberg mentions that Facebook is not only a great place to post news about products and promotions but is also a great place to use as a customer support and to create a dialogue with customers. “It is on Facebook that everyone is, they also have a great statistic tool so you can see who your customers and followers are”. Our other respondents agree with Facebook being the biggest network and almost everybody has an account.

Ljung mentions Facebook as the one and only social media they are active on today. Ljung states, “It is an easy way to inform our followers with any news and collections, although we aren’t as active as we wishes we were.” Furthermore Ljung says it is a great channel to upload pictures and videos that symbolizes the brand. This is in line with Burns-Whittemore (2012) who mentions that fashion companies use the Facebook page as an information source about different products, upcoming styles and promotion events. Sobels mentions that they mainly use Facebook to get in touch with their customers. Bodestig says that they don’t have a Facebook today, which many think its weird, but he says that he doesn’t see Facebook as a tool to create buying customers. “As a customer relation building tool it is great, but to create a buying customer I don’t believe it is”.


“One must ask what it is that gets better with a Facebook page? The advantage of Facebook is that everyone has it and that it is accessible, you can see who “likes” you, but will they become a customer? So far, I feel that with the resources we have we get more out of focusing on improving our blog. But Facebook is always there. And may be used in the future when we grow bigger”.

-Calle Bodestig, Mandel

4.1.1.3 Bloggers and Companies Collaborate

As we saw earlier Fenner (2012) says that collaborating with bloggers could be a way to gain a new audience or potential customers, this since they have a preexisting connection with readers that brand’s can’t create through advertising. Most of our respondents believe that collaboration with bloggers is a good thing, although it’s nothing our company respondents do. Ljungberg says that collaboration is good advertisement place for companies because they reach many people. Stefansson says, “It is an easy way to reach a selected target group.” She says that many brands can also make smaller collaborations with blogs and she has for example styled her self in garments for Gina Tricot and Vero Moda. ” Sobels mentions that Fashiolista is a great platform for bloggers to share their style with other fashion lovers. “We spotlight them on our platform and they feature our name on their blog. Or we set up nice collaborations like styling contests” Ljungberg means that companies only should collaborate with companies if it’s credible and states that H&M is the forerunners for this. She says that “it’s about personifies it, like for instance this is something that has been made by someone that you almost know.” Stefansson thinks that fashion blogs in generally a have big influence on companies and when it comes to her influence on the readers she says:

I’m a positive thinker and I like to think that all my readers like me and like to read my blog. I think I have a big influence on my readers to a certain degree but at the same time I know that most of my readers are cool girls that I believe are pretty confident and hard to influence too much.

- Hanna Stefansson, blogger
Recently brands have tried to reach out to bloggers to promote their products hoping to gain competitive advantages over their competitors (Fenner, 2012). Stefansson says “it’s often a PR person who through e-mail handles the contact with me before invitations to shows, press views etc. She mentions that she likes to do things and if she like the event in a nice environment or a showroom full of clothes is automatically becomes a blog post. She continues saying that “it is very important that I can associate myself with the brand I collaborate with, and that brands therefore should seek for a person that can represent their values.” Franklin (2005) mentions also that companies hand out free products and/or offers money to bloggers in exchange for publicity. Hanna says that she would never do that sort of collaboration. Ljung and Bodestig mentions that they have no plans on collaborating with a blogger and has not offered any money or free gifts to a blogger. Bodestig says that they have instead built up a strong company blog that many customers visit daily to see news. Ljung mentions that they send out news to bloggers and agrees that blogs has the potential to reach new or existing target groups and to give a new value to their brand, which is in line with what Fenner (2012) states, that bloggers can be an interesting way to change how the brand is perceived in the digital world

4.1.1.4 YouTube - a Way of Showing Fashion Products

Our respondents don’t mention YouTube when asked which social medium are the most important according to them, which is nor really in line with what Burns-Whittemore, (2012) says that YouTube is one of the strongest media for a brand to use. However Ljungberg believes that being on YouTube is a great potential for a fashion company to show the products. Both Ljung and Bodestig say that they don’t use YouTube at the moment. The main reason for this is that both believe you should focus on one social media tool at the time and do it well, instead of trying to be on every place. However they do believe that the video format is beneficial for showing fashion products. Ljung mentions they have uploaded videos on Vimeo and Bodestig says that they do have plans on using videos in their blog to communicate with their customers. “A big part of our business is around showing our products and adding videos could therefore be very beneficial for us.” However he don’t think that they will use YouTube more then to frame the video in to their blog. Ljung continues saying that YouTube requires so much more than just uploading the video. “You should create a channel and be active on the network with comments and recommendations as well”. Ljung states that they don’t have the resources to do that right
now.

4.1.1.4 New Upcoming Fashion Communities

Concerning fashion communities most of our respondents agree that it’s a good way for fashion companies to bee seen on. Sobels says that brands have several opportunities using their fashion community, Fashiolista. First and foremost they have a high audience worldwide, and focus on a target group. With the new app on Facebook she believes “will helps to bring more exposure to a brand and allows you as a brand to see exactly what people like and not like.” She continues saying that Fashiolista often collaborates with bloggers to set up styling contests together with brands. The customers can also create a contest to go to a particular web store and “love” a set number of items and create a list on Fashiolista. Sobels also says they are very open for other creative suggestions companies may have. Ljungberg says that it’s good for a company to be visible everywhere and encourage fashion communities. She thinks it is a good idea to have an account at as many places as possible it doesn’t have to be in the companies name but it can still work as a source for business intelligence. As an example she mentions that you can start out by observing new social media like for example Pinterest. Ljungberg continues saying that lookbook could be a good way for a fashion company to get attention, “you can create a personal account and relate it to the company”: She says that “the more niche it is, the better”, something Ljung also agrees on. Both Bodestig and Stefansson haven’t heard of Fashiolista, but Stefansson says that fashion communities use to contact her and ask if she want to write a blog for them.

Many of our respondents see Tumblr as possibility to inspire customers through pictures. At the moment Ljung and Bodestig says that they are not using Tumblr. Ljung though agrees with Indvik (2011) saying that it can be a beneficial way to show the brand values through images. Additionally Ljung thinks it’s a funny and easy way, without being to dependent on texts and frequent updates. It can show and tell a story of the brand and therefore they have plans on creating a Tumblr on their ordinary website. Ljungberg thinks the benefit with Tumblr is the limitation of possibilities and that they are forcing the user to focus and make priorities in what you post. “I think this platform is great for fashion companies where pictures and/or video posts are the most frequently used”. However Ljungberg says that at the moment Tumblr is not that big in Sweden and at the moment it works best as a compliment to other platforms.
“I don’t know Tumblr that much, but those pages I have seen have been very inspiring and therefore I think that it’s a good fashion community. Although I’m not sure that brands can been illustrated that good through Tumblr”

- Hanna Stefansson, blogger

### 4.2 SMEs Can’t do Everything

Ljungberg explains that the low cost is one of the biggest reasons for SMEs to use social media. She explains that her own company has for example not used any “traditional marketing” as printed advertisement and television and radio, during the last seven years even though they could afford it. Instead they have been active online and created a buzz and hence a positive word of mouth (WOM) for their company. Barclays Review (1997) points out the importance of WOM as it easily can attract new customers and social media is nothing but an enhanced word of mouth, Ljungberg explains that WOM is very good way of spreading the word and it gives seven times more result than printed adds and gives three times more result than personal selling.

Having the time is one of the biggest problems for small companies according to our respondents. Ljung says that this is one of their biggest problems, as the lack of time often prevents them from being as active online as they wish to be. Garnett (2010) claims that this can be a problem as many consumers expect quick and fast service today and SMEs that are not engaged in social networking risk being left out and loose market shares. Ljungberg says that this is one of the most important reasons for being active in social media. “It gives you a quick an instant overview of what is being said about you and you can quickly respond to any comment of a customer”. Ljung says that they try in the extent possible to be quick and answer any comments left by their followers. The editors for Företagende.se say that being on social media increases the credibility of brands if used in the accurate way. Ljung, Ljungberg, Bodestig and Sobels points out the importance of using social media in the right way. They all pinpoints the importance in not trying to be in every place, instead you should focus at one place at a time, and continue in the pace you feel you can control.
“You can not be active everywhere and do it well. If you have the resources to have a blog and Facebook at the same time, and customers know where to contact you, then it can work. But there are extremely few companies that get it right, especially the smaller ones”.

- Calle Bodestig, Mandel

Furthermore Ljung says it only takes a minute to create an account at a network, but the importance lays in doing it well. Ljung continues explaining that many smaller companies think that by creating an account at every place will solve their problems, but instead it only creates more as they cant live up to the expectations of their customers. Ljungberg says that you should be very clear with information you give, they should know what they can expect from you and by doing so you can avoid disappointing them.

Considering the differences between the larger companies usage of social media and SMEs Ljungberg believes that social media is more suitable for SMEs. She explains that “H&M for example can have millions of followers but they can’t communicate with everyone at a personal level in the way a smaller company can.” Bodestig also believes that a smaller company does it better and explains that one of their biggest strengths lays just in their personal contact with many of their customers. “The customers know everyone at the company and can ask them for advice when for example buying a garment.” He continues explaining that in a smaller company the manager is much more closer to the customers and can therefore in a better way apply the strategies with social media to their needs as you have a better sense of you customer. In the article by Företagande.se it says that a great possibility for companies when using social media is that they can get information from users and customers and therefore be able to adapt the range of assortment of goods to the real needs. Ljungberg says that this is one of the benefits SMEs have when they can create that personal contact with their users.

“The smaller companies often knows their client much better then the big ones and can therefore communicate with them in a more personal level. Bigger companies like H&M have instead used social media in for example localization strategies and opened up a store in the east.”

- Annica Ljungberg, XLNT Communication
Although Bodestig explains that this also is a risk as a smaller company since you achieve that close bound with the customer; he continues, “they expect so much more and you get more vulnerable as it depends so much more on the personal level”.

### 4.3 Start With a Plan

According to Winterfeldt (2012) it’s important to have a social media strategy to avoid damage on the brand or trademark. Ljungberg agrees on that it’s important and says that you have to look at what resources the company has before you make a plan. “The plan should be a framework and in the beginning it should be quite empty, then you can build it gradually says Ljungberg.” Sobels says that the strategy depends on the company’s goals and that you should think out a plan before you create a profile. Out other respondents don’t mention the importance of a social media strategy.

#### 4.3.1 Create a Strategy in Six Steps

- Most of our respondents say that they don't have a strategy they follow and are not adding new tools every month, which is not in line with the first step where a new tool will be added every month by, Safko and Brake. Ljung says that they try to keep a news-value and that they have made a plan, but it’s hard to follow due to the lack of resources. Bodestig says that they have some target they try to work after but no written plan they follow and he tries to keep up with what’s happening around him. Safko and Brakes (2009:760) states that the macro strategy should be realistic, flexible and experimental. Ljungberg agrees and says that the strategy should be dynamic, flexible and practical. It should be 10% tactic and 90% practical so that you know what you are doing.

- The second step according to Safko and Brake, (2009:760) is Engage Your Employees. There are some shared opinions from the respondents about engaging all employees in social media.

> “It’s very important to engage all employees in social media because it gets more authentic. It’s important to involve people who likes to work with social media, because it will be noticed”

> - Annica Ljungberg, XLNT Communication
Bodestig doesn’t really agree and says that it gets less personal if they involve more persons writing in their blog. Although they try to involve more persons little at the time because the one who is currently writing the blog can never take a day off or take vacation. Ljung says that if every employee is active the brand image could suffer. “It’s difficult for us to involve all employees because we are in the fashion industry and have a brand focusing on prestige”. Ljung continues. Ljung states that it’s easier for brands that focus more on availability than prestige to have more employees working with social media, for instance H&M.

• The answers from the respondents show us that having a company blog is very important, which is line with the third step that says its important for a company to get closer to their customers by creating a public blog. Ljungberg says that a company blogs is important for small companies to have, and it is with a blog you have to start. Ljung explains that they had a blog but it’s currently down since they don’t have the resources to update is.

“The blog is like a publication tool where news letter is published. You don’t have to blog every day but it’s important that you are clear in the presence of the blog, she explains. “
- Annica Ljungberg, XLNT Communication

Ljungberg further continues that it’s important to search engine optimization a blog post since “Content is king but context is president”. Bodestig agrees with Ljungberg and think that every company should have a blog, and in the fashion industry it’s almost necessary to have a blog today. He also talks about search engine optimization and that it’s important how the web page is built and that Google wants pages with a lot of text. He explains that the blog is really important for his company since new arriving products are written about in the blog as well.

“Having a good and funny blog is the best way of getting new customers.”
- Calle Bodestig, Mandel

Another way to get closer customers is to create a Facebook account or join other social networks (Safko and Brakes, 2009:762). Bodestig agrees and means that they have to find a way to communicate with their customers and get under the skin of their customers. “Then if it’s Facebook or Twitter that you use depends on what’s best for the company,” he says.
• Step number four is to *Think Like a Publisher* and as a publisher the company has to deliver something that engages that audience as for instance adding videos and photos (often in month 5-7) (Safko and Brake, 2009:763). None of the respondents have a strategy where they add videos or photos in month 5-7 but Ljungberg says that both YouTube and Flickr (a photo site were you share pictures) are good to use to engage and entertain the customer. Bodestig also think it’s important with photos and says that the company will start with moving pictures on their e-commerce to engage the customers more. Ljung says that they before every new season take photos to their e-commerce on “this seasons shirt” but Ljung states that they can do much more than that but they are lacking resources.

• *Create a Community* is step number five. Our respondents thinks that having a community can be hard. Urrea believes that you can create a community but not in that sence. Like Ljungberg she believes that the different platforms should be approached in different ways. e.g you can post about the same thing on the different communities but in different ways.

> I’m skeptical about blog posts that are being auto-generated out to other media. It’s difficult to create a community because Facebook and Twitter for instance have two different target groups. You can use the link from the blog post but write two or three sentences more on the other tool you aim to use together with the blog.
> 
> -Annica Ljungberg, XLNT Communication

Our company respondents on the other hand don’t think it is that important to create a community. Bodestig says that they don’t have a community and they will only frame in the video in the blog so the customers just click on it. He further says that it probably will be name of the garments in the name or title on YouTube so when people search on videos on Google they will get some extra hits. Ljung mentions that they don’t use any community at all; they just link the products to Facebook.

• The last step is to *Measure What's Most Important* and involves employees, customers and prospects where the first thing that has to be done is to ask people for feedback, which can be done by encouraging, comments on the blog (Safko and Brake, 2009:764). Having comments on
the blog to get feedback is important according to Ljungberg, Stefansson and Bodestig. Ljungberg thinks “this is a great way to gain visitors to your blog assumed that you have integrated the blog”. According to Bodestig the company has many regular customers so they don’t have to encourage comments on the blog, they comment anyways. If they should ever receive a negative comment most of their regular customers will instantly defend them. Furthermore, Bodestig says that “they get lot of comments on the garments and if a customer ask something they’ll always get a quick answer back”. Bodestig explains that every Friday all the employees go through the weekly comments both on the blog and e-commerce to see what the customers think and what they might have to improve. According to Bodestig the sales on the web page is connected to the traffic in the blog. Can they get more readers on the blog the sales will increase, he continuous. Stefansson says that she wishes she could be better and faster in the communication with her readers, especially in the comment field, to get a better feedback on the blog.

Another valuable measurement tool according to Safko and Brake (2009:764) is Google Analytics. Both Ljungberg and Bodestig agree on that Google Analytics is a good tool for companies to measure statistics. Bodestig means that it’s important for them to be in the top if people search on a product they’ve seen in a store. Ljungberg says that it’s good because you can connect Facebook with it. Bodestig on the other hand says that Facebook has a low conversion rate what statistic shows. Facebook is good to have if you want to build a relation with the customers but it’s not efficient when it comes to outright he says. Ljungberg continuous with saying that there is no tool to see if you get any profitability.

4.4 Characteristics SMEs Should Consider When Approaching Social Media

4.4.1 Be Active on The Internet

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2009) a company has to be active if they want to develop a relationship to someone. Ljung, Ljungberg and Bodestig agree on this and Ljung says that it’s important to be active to be able to show. Ljung means that they try to be more active in the conversation with the customers but since they don’t have that many customers comment on their Facebook it’s hard to do so. Bodestig says that they have an active conversation with the
customers, since they update every day and answer to questions people ask. Ljungberg explains that it’s important to update and be active but if you don’t have the resources to be as active as you want to it’s important to be clear with that.

4.4.2 Be Interesting in Different Ways

Ljungberg, Sobels and Bodestig all thinks it’s important to listen to the customers and what they want, whilst Ljung is more unsure. This is someway in line with Kaplan and Haenlein (2009) that states that the first step a company has to do is to listen to the customers and find out what they want to hear, talk about or what they find interesting and enjoyable Sobels states that it’s important to listen to what your followers have to say. Ljungberg means that you should share things with the customers that have an additional sales value, as for instance “have trend analyses and ask the clients if we should make this sweater in this or that color, or what they think about a special product”. Bodestig says that they use to write in the blog what garments they plan to take in. The people respond differently and some say that they think the garment is really ugly an others say that they love it. He further explains that it’s important to listen and “if the customer feels that she has been involved and affected that is very strong”. Although Ljung doesn't really agrees and means that:

“When you create fashion you do it for the customer. I think it can feel anxious to ask the customer which color we should have on this or which sweater we should do. As a customer I think that the company should now what they are doing”

- Ljung

4.4.3 Bee Humble to Avoid Mistakes

The authors say that it’s important to be humble and before a company starts to use any new application it’s important to find out about its history and basic rules otherwise it could be a failure (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009). None of our respondents mention humble to be one of the characteristics they find most important when working with social media. However both Urrea and Ljungberg mention that you should know how to use the different medium before you involve them in the strategy. You can start a private account and observe first, before engaging actively.
4.4.4 Be Unprofessional to Blend in With Your Customers

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2009) companies should avoid being too professional in the content offerings and they should instead try to blend in with the users (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009). Two of our respondents mention this as an important characteristic to have. According to Bodestig they try to blend in with the users by writing posts in a more every day language, which also is a way to make the posts more personal. Urrea says that it is a big importance in adapting your language and what you post to the different media as they all serve different purposes and have different users. “I don’t post in the same way on for example my Facebook as my Twitter or Instagram. The Instagram account is for example often more “fun” and personal updates whilst Twitter often functions as a platform to communicate news and discuss with followers.

4.4.5 Be Honest to Gain Peoples Trust

Ljungberg, Bodestig and Sobels all believe that being honest is important when working with social media which is in line with the theory that it’s important to be honest and respect the rules of the game. Ljungberg mentions a campaign Lindex did only in sizes Small and Medium. The customers got really upset and Lindex replied that they were going to take it in consideration to next time, Ljungberg continuous. She means that in this situation Lindex should have been honest and admits that they did wrong. Bodestig stays that “companies have a tendency of being dishonest since sales is their main goal”. He continuous by saying, “you have to see the customers as friends and create a band of trust with them”.

The respondents also mention other characteristics that they find important in the use of social media. Stefansson thinks it’s important to be personal but also to keep the things that are extra private to your self. She also mentions creativity, curiosity, innovative and applicants confirmed are important to have. Both Ljungberg and Stefansson think humor is important to have and Ljungberg says, “You can never get enough of little humor”. Ljungberg also thinks it’s important to listen, have courage application and a lot of passion. She motivates that by saying that “today people search collaboration with companies that have passion, ambition and have the courage of shopping. The ones that are testing new ideas and believe in their heart that they can make a difference, the inspirers!” Sobels together with Ljungberg thinks transparency is an important characteristic as well. Ljung thinks that it’s more about doing things right and do what is right for your brand more than having specific characteristics.
5. Discussion

In this chapter we will discuss the most important aspects when approaching social media as a SME in the fashion industry according to our respondents. We will discuss the difference between some of the respondents’ thoughts and why we don’t think some of our theories are realistic. Furthermore we will have a discussion based on our research and as a result be able to answer our research question. We will also discuss the possible difficulties SMEs, according to our respondents, are facing when using social media as a marketing strategy and our own opinion on these issues.

5.1 How a Minor Fashion Company Should Consider Using Social Media

As a result from our analysis we have come to an over all result that social medium may be cheap in terms of money but might be expensive in terms of time. When approaching social media as a SME in the fashion industry all our respondents agree on one main thing; there is no strategy that works for all companies. Most of our respondents think you should set up goals and then work around them. However we believe that it is important to have some kind of structure when approaching social medium. With this said we don’t think it should be something “written in stone” but instead a structured idea on how and why the different platforms should be used. We believe that the companies could benefit from hiring a person with a lot of knowledge of social media to develop this communication tool in the right way.

Our company respondents say that the biggest problem with social media lays in lack of time, and personnel resources. They believe that the key to be successful is to focus at one social media tool at a time that fits the company best. Ljungberg and Urrea agree on not doing anything half hearted and always commit fully to the used medium, but also on that one doesn’t necessarily have to exclude the other as they all serve different purposes. We understand the difficulties SMEs faces and that it is difficult for them to find the time and be consistent in using and updating, although we think it has to do with what your priorities are. We think it is important to commit fully to the medium you use; it is very easy for companies to open accounts and believe that this will solve all their problems. However we think that fashion companies should start out
with engaging in one media and as their knowledge grows they should consider adding more social medium to approach new customers. A problem we see is that the commitment often stops with just posting about sales or perhaps product information. Hence the social media doesn’t serve its full potential or purpose. The importance doesn’t lay in just updating the customers, it lays in engaging them, and making them interested to share and spread the world about something the company has done. After all social media is an extension of WOM.

We believe that fashion consumers often are very active, updated and engaged when it comes to new trends. This is something we believe companies could benefit from, by being a part of the conversation with their customers. SMEs also have the benefit of often being very close to their customer and knowing what they want. Therefore it is easier for SMEs to get personal and having a conversation with their customer, something that might be harder for larger enterprises. We believe that SMEs especially within the fashion industry should consider getting personal with their customers and benefit from all the information they would be given even the negative one. We thought that negative critic when using social media could harm companies. Instead we can see that companies can’t “stop” negative critic, but they can make something good out of it. Bodestig’s company is a great example on how a SME in the fashion company can benefit from using social medium to communicate with the customers. The great relationship they have built through their blog and website has been one of the company’s key success factors. As seen in the analysis, the company’s regular customers are quickly there to defend them if negative comments are written. The company responds as well and tries to fix any misunderstandings.

We can see a pattern in the answers of our respondents, in how much they believe in social media as a good marketing tool and the amount of interest they have. However not all of them priorities being updated in social media because they believe they lack the time. On the other hand both Sofoco Media and XLNT communications are quit small enterprises (even if not in the fashion industry) and they are both very committed to various social media tools. They have frequent updates on most of the tools, because they believe in the power these tools have and also have the knowledge it takes. This shows that even if you are a small company it is not impossible to find the time to be fully active within the different social medium as long as you truly believe in the power it has as a communication tool and you know how to use it to serve different purposes.
Our analyze shows that different social media suits different companies, although there is an overall agreement that Facebook and blogs are the tool that’s most used by customers and prospects. Considering Bodestig’s comment that he thinks adding additional platforms (even if it can be beneficial) might confuse their customers and that there are very few SMEs that can succeed with operating several platforms at a time successfully, we don’t really agree. We believe that adding another media as for example Facebook is a way to attract new potential customers and we don’t think it will confuse the existing customers since most of them already are on that platform.

Considering YouTube it is not as big and strong tool as we though it would be in a minor fashion company, at least not in the Swedish market. The reason for that is once again the lack of time and resources, according to the analysis. We believe YouTube would be a great platform to show garments on in a more visual way than before and create even more engagement with the customers and also show off the brand in a fun easy way. YouTube is also known for having very engaged users and they often comment, recommend and share videos. Something we believe the companies truly could benefit from more then some of them do today.

We could in the analysis also see that it is very important to realize that the different medium serves different purposes. Something that not all companies are aware off. Furthermore we could see differences in how much you should involve your customers. We believe this depends on the nature of the company. For example Ljung thinks that they with own design and production shouldn’t ask for the customers opinions on which garments to produce. As they should be the ones to “lead the way”, whilst Bodestig's company that are a reseller instead thinks they benefit from involving their customers on which colors and products they should sell. We believe it can beneficial to involve your customers and letting them give their opinions as it makes them feel special and appreciated. We think that even as an own brand you can involve your customers and still be the “expert”. There just needs to be a balance. Furthermore, companies can involve their customers in different ways and we can see that it is important to update about things that shows the expertise of the company and what they are good at. We agree with Urrea that you can show the companies personality in different situations. Like Sofoco Media, which, for example
constantly updates about news in the fashion industry on Twitter and with more unprofessional and “fun” images on Instagram. This shows that they are highly educated on everything revolving fashion even things that is not in their own field, which is fashion consultancy, and at the same time aren’t afraid to be personal.

Through the analysis we found another important social media a minor fashion company should consider, which is having a company blog. We can see that having a blog as a fashion company could be truly beneficial as fashion is a very fast moving industry and companies need to update frequently what is happening and what they are doing. We think that companies really can get personal with a blog and make the customers involved and interested in their business with frequent updates. On the bad side we think that SMEs who have frequently updated blogs can be quit vulnerable as the customers often relies on frequent updates. Bodestig even mentions how he can see the sales going down if the blog hasn’t been frequently updated. It is very important to be clear with the readers/customers on how often you plan on updating the blog, as they otherwise might be disappointed. Once again we can see that the problem often lies in time and as a company you should be aware of the amount of time it takes to keep the blog running successfully. The blog “never” takes vacation and therefore this can be quit demanding.

The other part of blogs can be when companies make collaborations with bloggers. Here the companies could benefit from attracting a specific target by choosing the right blog to collaborate with. On the other hand we think that if not done right it can be quit obvious it is just a business set-up and therefore loose the credibility. The reason we believe that SMEs in the fashion industry should consider collaborating with blogs is that companies can create new fun ideas and with the right blog it can give a boost and added value to a fashion company. As mentioned Guldfynd did a collaboration with the famous blogger Kenza (who has a younger audience) by doing so Guldfynd started to appeal to a new target group. We think that the blogger is sort of an ambassador for the brand and people likes when they can relate to someone. The blogger could therefore “represent” the typical customer or target group they are aiming for. Furthermore, bloggers often are very personal which makes their readers feel they are like a friend and become open to their advice and ideas. Nevertheless one must not overestimate the influence the blogger has on their readers. Like Stefansson mentions, many of her readers don’t follow what she says at all times.
We have found that a mutual opinion on which characteristics you should consider when working with social media are being active, interesting and honest. We therefore see “newer” platforms and communities as Pinterest, Instagram, Fashioliista and lookbook as interesting platforms for SMEs in the fashion industry to go about. We can for example see that Elin Kling’s company Nowhere is already active with uploading their products to Pinterest. We believe that companies with an innovative leader that already is very active within one social media (in this case Elin Kling’s blog) tend to be early adopters to other sorts of social media. We believe that SMEs in the fashion industry should take these companies as examples when approaching social media. We agree with Ljungberg that the more niche platform the better. Additionally we agree with Ljungberg and Urrea that not all companies need to use all the social media actively, but instead use it for business intelligence and finding information on what your customers like and not like or what your competitors are doing.

We have seen a difference between our respondents in the analysis whether the company should involve all their employees in updating and using social medium. Some believe its best if just on specific person does it and some believes that everyone should be involved. We think that it depends on the company; the important part lies in being consistent and clear so the usage of the medium send out a uniform message that is consistent with the brand and company goals. It is important not to confuse the customers.

Considering our theories we have seen in the analysis that there is a difference between theory and reality. “The six step strategy” theory is not applicable for all SMEs. We think that building up the presence on social medium gradually is something that we believe companies should consider. However the theory mentions stricter timelines when introducing different tools, something we don’t agree on. We think a company should have a strategy but it has to be much more flexible and adapted to the specific company and the environment they work in. We think that the five characteristics mention by Kaplan and Haenlein are all-important when approaching social media. Nevertheless we do believe it is equally important to consider characteristics, such as passion, creativity and a high knowledge to be successful.
6. Conclusion

In the conclusion we will point out the most important part as a result of the discussion. Hence we will also mention the most important aspects to consider for SMEs in the fashion industry when approaching social media successfully. Furthermore, we will finish with a section of further research we believe would be interesting to research about.

6.1 What to Consider When Approaching Social Media

- For SMEs in the fashion industry to have a successful social media strategy they should consider first and foremost to use the social media tools that fit their company the best. Different social media suits different companies but Facebook and blogs are two platforms that fit the most companies since almost every customer use them. Blogs however demands more time and effort.

- Consider following some kind of strategy when approaching social media, set up realistic goals and build your presence on the different medium gradually depending on the goals.

- In the fashion industry it is almost always preferable to be updated with the latest trends within social media. At least to gain business intelligence. The more niche tools the better e.g. fashion communities or other platforms where fashion has a strong presence.

- Having a conversation and a good relationship to the customers are very important when approaching social media. Being personal with the customers are important as well and is something that can be easier for SMEs comparing to bigger companies. Be aware that social media is mainly a platform for building relationships. See it also as an investment on ROE and not only ROI.

- Don’t be afraid of negative critic, use all information given to you by customers and try to make something good out of it instead.

- The main characteristics you should have to be successful within social media are being active, interesting and honest. Other important characteristics are passion, creativity and
knowledge.

- Finding the time and personnel resources are two difficulties for SMEs when approaching social media. However as long as you priorities the time and have the interest to develop within social media this might not be such a big problem.

6.2 Future Research
As social media is a quit new marketing tool we believe there is much further research that can be done. The subject is also constantly evolving and hence new aspects come up continually. One interesting research could be in new additional medium that with all probability will come in the future. Furthermore, we think it would be interesting to do a case study on the benefits with using a specific media as for example, Fashiolista, Instagram or Tumblr. We also think it could be interesting to do research from the consumers point of view, to see how they use and interact with the different medium. Finally we also think it would be interesting to see how a company can build up a close collaboration from start to finish, with a blogger.
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Appendix

Interview questions

*Ljung and Calle Bodestig - Mandel*

Allmänna frågor
1. Vad heter du? Ålder? Bor?
2. Hur länge har du jobbat på Velour?
3. Vad har du studerat/arbetat tidigare?
4. Vilka är dina nuvarande arbetsuppgifter?
5. Kan du beskriva företaget? (Målgrupp, omsättning, antal anställda, affärsidé)
6. Har företaget en e-handel?

Möjligheter and risker med sociala medier
7. Hur viktigt tycker du att det är med sociala medier i dagens marknadsföring?
8. Tror du att det är någon skillnad på hur små och stora företag jobbar med sociala medier? Varför/Varför inte?
9. Vilka möjligheter finns det med att använda sociala medier enligt dig?
10. Vilka risker finns det med att använda sociala medier enligt dig?
11. Har närvaron via sociala medier gett ökad försäljning? På vilket sätt?

Om företaget
12. Hur viktigt är sociala medier i företagets marknadsföring idag?
13. Hur mycket tid lägger ni på att uppdatera/underhålla SM/per vecka?
14. Ni är som sagt ett ganska litet modeföretag. Känner du att ni har tid att arbeta med sociala medier eller är det väldigt tidskrävande?
15. Hur tror ni att ert varumärke påverkas av sociala medier?
16. Har sociala medier bidragit till att förstärka (alt försvaga) varumärket?
17. Har ni upptäckt om något mindre bra rykte sprids om era produkter på Internet vid något tillfälle? Är det något ni kollar upp rutinmässigt?
18. Hur många är ni som jobbar med sociala medier idag?
Strategier
19. Har ni några strategier ni följer i ert användande av sociala medier?
20. Finns det någon strategi som är bättre att använda än andra för just ert företag?
21. På vilket sätt använder ni sociala medier? Göra erbjudanden, ge rabatter, berätta historier, mm.
22. Finns det länkar från er hemsida till sociala medier? Vilka?
23. Använder ni foton and videoklipp? Om ja, hur?
24. Berättar ni en historia via SM, om företaget eller produkterna?
25. Mäter ni på något sätt om bloggar, Facebooksida (annat alternativ) bidrar till ökad försäljning alternativt andra uppsatta mål?
26. Vilka mål vill ni uppnå med engagemanget i sociala medier?
27. Försöker ni lösa kundernas problem med hjälp av sociala medier?
28. Tycker du att det är viktigt att alla anställda på företaget är engagerade i sociala medier?
29. Använder ni olika sociala medier tillsammans för att skapa en community? Om ja, hur?
30. Vilka egenskaper är viktiga att ha som företag när du sysslar med sociala medier?

**Annica Ljungberg - XLNT Communication and Immaculada Urrea - Sofoco Media**

**Allmänna frågor:**
1. Vad heter du? Ålder? Bor?
2. Hur länge har du jobbat på Sofoco Media?
3. Vad har du studerat/arbetat tidigare?
4. Vilka är dina nuvarande arbetsuppgifter?
5. Kan du beskriva företaget? (Målgrupp, omsättning, antal anställda, affärsidé)

**Om sociala medier i mindre företag**
6. Varför tror du att sociala medier har blivit ett så viktigt marknadsföringsmedel för mindre företag idag?
7. Tror du att det är någon skillnad på hur små och stora företag jobbar med sociala medier? Varför/Varför inte?
8. Vilka möjligheter finns det med att använda sociala medier i mindre företag enligt dig?
9. Vilka risker finns det med att använda sociala medier i mindre företag enligt dig?
10. Vad behöver ett mindre företag tänka på vid användning utav sociala medier?
11. Vilka är de vanligaste problemen mindre företag har när det kommer till sociala medier?
12. Hur tror du att ett företags varumärke kan påverkas utav sociala medier?
13. Hur kan företag bygga sitt varumärke genom sociala medier?
14. Har ni någon erfarenhet om modeföretag använder sig annorlunda utav sociala medier än andra företag?

**Strategier**
15. Anser du att det är viktigt för företag att ha en social media strategi? Varför? Varför inte?
16. Hur kan företag mäta användandet utav sociala medier?
17. Vilka strategier inom sociala medier är mest vanliga att använda när det kommer till modeföretag?
18. Hur viktigt är det att alla anställda är engagerade i företagets sociala medier?
19. Hur viktig är det att använda flera sociala medier för att skapa en community?
20. Vilka egenskaper är viktiga att ha som företag när du sysslar med sociala medier?

**Stefansson, blogger**

**Allmänna frågor:**
1. Vad heter du?
2. Hur gammal är du?
3. Vad heter din blogg?
4. Hur länge har den funnits?
5. Vad fokuserar bloggen på?

**Bloggare Vs. Företag**
6. Vilken är den främsta anledningen till att företag vill samarbeta med bloggar enligt dig?
7. Vilken relation har du till modeföretag genom bloggen?
8. Har du/har du haft några samarbeten med modeföretag? I så fall vilka?
9. Hur går det till när företag tar kontakt med dig?
10. Finns det några exempel där du inte velat samarbeta? Varför?
11. Händer det att företag bara skickar saker till dig? Vad anser du om det?
12. Vilket inflytande har du som bloggare på företag?
13. Vilket inflytande har du som bloggare på dina läsare?
15. Använder du dig av några fashion communites?
17. Har du blivit inbjuden till olika events eller showroom av företag? Hur ställer du dig till det?
18. Vilka egenskaper tycker du är viktiga att ha när man jobbar med sociala medier?

Fashiolista – e mail
1. What’s your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Where do you live?
4. How long have you been working with Fashiolista?
6. Describe the heart of Fashiolista? History, purpose, number of employees?

About Fashiolista
7. How has Fashiolista collaborated with bloggers, such as the blondsalad etc?
8. How does Fashiolista use social medium?
9. Have you been contacted by any fashion companies for any collaborations? If so, what kind of collaborations?
10. Can Fashiolista help fashion companies to build their brand or create brand awareness? If so in what way?
11. What differs Fashiolista from other fashion communities?
12. In what way do you think the new Fashiolista app on Facebook can be beneficial for companies as well?

About social media
13. Why do you think social media has become a so important marketing tool for fashion companies today?
14. Do you think it’s important for fashion companies to use social media in their market communication today? Why/Why not?
15. What possibilities can you see by using social media in Fashion companies?
16. What risk can you see by using social media in Fashion companies?
17. What strategies do you think companies should have when using fashion communities as Fashiola, Interest etc?
18. Which characteristics are important to consider when you use social media as a company?
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