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Podcasting as a Digital Content Marketing Tool within B2B

A qualitative case study exploring why and how Swedish B2B companies use podcasts as a marketing tool

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Preface

We would like to take the opportunity to sincerely thank the many people that have made this thesis possible. First, we would like to thank our supervisor Jon Engström, who by providing valuable feedback and much inspiration has been fundamental for the progress and result of this thesis. Second, we would like to thank our fellow students in our supervision group and opponents who have read and given constructive criticism towards our thesis throughout the process. Third, we would like to thank all participants that have dedicated their time towards us, the interviews were not only crucial for the thesis but also a great learning experience and much joyful.

We would also like to use this opportunity to recommend the episode *Digital Content Marketing, B2B och podcast* of Jonas Jaani's personal podcast where you can listen to one of our interviews.

Spotify

Apple podcasts

Arvid Lögdberg
Linköping, May 24th 2020

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Abstract

Title	Podcasting as a Digital Content Marketing Tool within B2B
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Supervisor	Jon Engström
Purpose	The purpose of this thesis is to explore why and how B2B-companies use podcasts as a marketing tool and evaluate how it can function together with other marketing strategies.
Problematization	Digital content marketing is an increasingly popular marketing strategy within B2B. There is however a large content saturation online, this puts pressure on organizations having to increase their marketing creativity and finding alternative means to stand out from the crowd while at the same time staying within their marketing budget. Podcast marketing is a form of content marketing being fairly untapped territory and with little research dedicated towards it, however being the fastest growing medium it is of high interest to better understand its marketing potential and how to utilize it.
Methodology	A qualitative case study with an iterative approach. The empirical findings derive from semi structured interviews with five selected case companies and a podcast producer.
Conclusion	Why B2B companies use podcasting as a marketing tool varies somewhat, the five main reasons identified are cost and time efficiency, active listening, building relationships, branding and employer branding. Some view podcasting in a strategic sense first, while others seem to use podcasting just as much for their own enjoyment as they do for strategic purposes. There are challenges in regard to measuring success. However, those challenges do not appear to be very problematic as costs are low. Reaching the right people is more important than reaching the masses.
Contribution	This study adds to existing research within the field of B2B content marketing by exploring podcasts as a marketing tool.
Key words	Podcast marketing, marketing communication, content marketing, business to business marketing

Contents

1. Introduction

This chapter provides the reader with a background to the current state of research in the field of digital content marketing, B2B marketing and podcast marketing. The problematization then explains why it is of interest to better understand the effects of podcast marketing. After that the thesis purpose and research questions are introduced along with the research contribution.

1.1. Background

Since the introduction of digitalization, companies are put before new market dynamics that have led to a shift in how business to business, hereafter referred to as B2B, companies market themselves online and how they communicate with customers digitally (Holliman & Rowley 2014; Järvinen & Taiminen 2015). The entrance of internet, social media and other digital solutions on the market have heavily impacted the power dynamic on the market (Holliman & Rowley 2014). No longer do customers have only a few local businesses to inquire or buy from when they search for products or services. Instead they have unlimited information easily available on the internet, where they can compare different products from different producers, as well as obtaining customer reviews from hundreds, if not thousands, of people. This shift has given customers more power and facilitated a shift from traditional outbound marketing strategies to inbound marketing. The tools of traditional outbound marketing, for example cold calling, telemarketing, mail campaigns and similar, has lost their edge due to the customers power to choose their means of interaction to a larger degree (Opreana & Vinerean 2015). Opreana and Vinerean (2015) further explains how this effect is strengthened by consumers' increased exposure to marketing messages through digital media, making it harder to reach potential buyers through the information clutter. Jefferson and Tanton (2015) also show that customers complete almost 60 percent of the purchase process before getting in contact with the selling company.

In response to this, marketers can introduce inbound marketing strategies as a tool to manage these dynamics. As a less intrusive method, inbound marketing has gathered importance in today’s market and with components like content marketing, search engine optimization, and social media it aims to obtain organic results and attract potential buyers to the company, rather than push the company's offerings to said buyers (Opreana & Vinerean 2015). Content marketing is a large part of inbound marketing and it is focused on the creation and distribution of content that is valuable, relevant, and consistent with the goal to attract and maintain buyers. Digital Content Marketing, hereafter referred to as DCM, has been developed as a way to communicate without the clear intent to sell (Hollebeek & Macky 2018). The adoption of DCM tactics is becoming more and more widespread within B2B companies (Järvinen & Taiminen 2015). DCM is described to foster consumers' brand perceptions with the aim to develop customer relationships by increasing engagement and trust. DCM does so by creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to current or potential customers (Hollebeek & Macky 2018). This includes searching for information, which makes it important for the selling company to supply relevant information for the customer to take part of. Holliman and Rowley (2014) further notes that this demands that companies develop content marketing strategies, as its importance is increasing.

Podcasting is one of the multiple tools that can be used in content marketing initiatives in order for businesses to communicate to stakeholders without clear selling intentions. Waddingham, Zacary and Ketchen Jr. (2020) define podcasting as *"...a series of audio files available for download over the internet. Its format is similar to traditional long-form content like talk shows and documentaries, but listeners can tune in when it is convenient instead of a set show time".* Hammersly (2004) coined the phrase Podcasting as a merger of the words iPod and Broadcast since the introduction of iPods facilitated the media to rise. Podcasts are a relatively new concept but are steadily increasing in popularity. Internetstiftelsen (2019) is reporting that 55 percent of all Swedish internet users listens to podcasts and that 9 percent does so daily, which marks a doubling of listeners since 2015 and as such podcasting is the quickest growing medium in Sweden. Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos and Nielsen (2019) found that Sweden is one of the countries that have embraced podcasts as a media, which raises questions regarding how they can be used from a marketing perspective. The reason for listening to podcasts differ from person to person, 46 percent use them to stay updated regarding topics of personal interest and 36 percent want to learn something new. However, 25 percent of listeners want to fill out free time and 22 percent just want an alternative to listening to music.

Podcasts differentiate from other content in numerous ways making it a potentially very effective marketing tool. First, podcasts are consumed in a different way than most other media (Rowles & Rogers 2019). With the use of smartphones people can access podcasts almost anywhere and anytime (Waddingham et al. 2020). While it can be difficult to dedicate full attention to for example reading while multitasking, podcasts can easily be consumed while performing other activities such as taking a walk, cleaning your house or cooking a meal providing a level of flexibility that other media can not. Second, podcasts typically run as an ongoing series making people engage with them over long periods of time (Rowles & Rogers 2019). Third, they can also be more effective than other media in the sense that listeners engage on an emotional level and have more trust towards podcasts. Listening to someone talk is viewed as more intimate than for example reading a blog post.

The changing market climate is also creating an abundance of ways for companies to communicate, making it challenging for these to decide what ways to communicate in the most effective way (Batra & Keller 2016; Keller 2016). Newer digital channels like social media and blogs have added to traditional channels like cold calling, print and TV-advertising, which have made decision making regarding market communication more complex, making the concept of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) even more important (Keller 2016). The reason for adopting an IMC program is that companies can distribute a clear message of who they are, what they stand for, and what they offer; in order to break through the vast amount of information available to the public. IMC activities are then supposed to be integrated so that the full potential of cross-effects can be achieved in communications to buyers and stakeholders (Clow & Baack 2018).

There are several differences between B2B and B2C (business to consumer) marketing (Frankelius, Norrman & Parment 2015). In B2B the size of purchase is often substantially larger, there are more individuals involved in the process, the process takes longer and the emphasis on relationships is larger. The decisions of purchase are also mostly based on rational basis rather than emotional which often is the case of B2C purchase processes. Research has also found that messages are received differently through social media depending on what kind of business is the sender. For example followers of B2B businesses are interacting more with content that has functional messages compared to B2C followers (Swani, Milne, Brown, Assaf & Donthu 2017). Due to the differentiations in how B2B and B2C companies market themselves it is important to separate B2B research from B2C research.

1.2. Problematization

Holliman and Rowley (2014) stated that DCM is a relatively unexplored subject within academic research, despite the considerable interest from practitioners and companies. As such, the majority of the data on the subject is produced by non-academic sources. Given that the Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs' (2017) study found that 89 percent of asked B2B-businesses stated that they work with DCM, and that 88 percent view it as an important tool; combined with the changing buying behaviors as stated by Jefferson and Tanton (2015), there seems to be a considerable trend and importance of the subject that reinforces the need for further research.

Considering the fact that the total value of transactions within B2B and within B2C are roughly the same amount, a surprisingly small part of marketing research is towards B2B (Lilien 2016). Both professionals and academics witness the lack of research (LaPlaca and Katrichis 2009; Lilien 2016; Reid & Plank 2000). Marketing within B2B is at change, competition is growing and focus is shifting towards a more customer oriented focus (Lilien 2016; Wiersema 2013). At the same time businesses are facing challenges in regards to incorporating digital trends with their traditional marketing methods (Popovici & Muhcină 2018). These recent changes are one reason why there is a lack in both academic and practical understanding of B2B marketing. A second explanation to the lack of academic research is due to B2B practices being less approachable than B2C practices (Daneels & Lilien 1998). Much effort is put into marketing developments, however their implication can differ greatly in a B2B context than in the B2C realm (Wiersema 2013). Therefore there is a great need to increase knowledge regarding B2B marketing practices (Lilien 2016). DCM is one of the increasingly popular methods B2B companies use to market themselves. There is however a large content saturation online making it challenging to stand out of the crowd (Rowles & Rodgers 2019). This puts pressure on organizations having to increase their marketing creativity and finding alternative means in order to maximize their reach while staying within their marketing budget (Opreana & Vinerean 2015).

The use of podcasts as a business tool is a relatively new concept but rapidly growing (Waddingham, Zachary & Ketchen Jr. 2020). Journalist Miranda Katz (2018) describes it as a boom that is only getting louder. One reason why podcasting has not been commonly utilized is that the entry barriers to creating a podcast have often been overestimated (Rowles & Rogers 2019). Moreover, data on how listeners engage with podcasts have for long been scarce making practitioners doubt the effects of it. Recent data has however indicated that podcast listeners are well engaged and highly supportive, 80-90 percent of content typically gets through (Katz 2018). Due to the large amount of written content podcasting can be a potentially highly effective tool to break through the noise (Rowles & Rogers 2019).

As podcasting is a relatively new phenomenon there are large research gaps in the subject, and there is to the authors knowledge no academic sources that explores the use of podcasts in a marketing strategy for B2B businesses. There are numerous reasons to fill in these knowledge gaps, for example how to reach out to target audiences, how to measure reach, how to stay relevant, on what ways to deliver the desired message, how to integrate podcasts with other marketing strategies, how to balance marketing effort and entertainment etcetera. Due to the increasing usage of podcasts (Internetstiftelsen 2019; Newman et al. 2019) its marketing potential is also increasing.

There is also reason to investigate what role podcasts have within a broader IMC strategy. IMC as a concept is relatively diffuse, as there is not a set definition of what it actually entails. However, the basic notion is that all communications and promotions that are distributed from a company must be integrated and send coherent messages through every medium (Taylor 2010). According to Keller (2016) there is also a need to research specific communication platforms and options, in order to discover what strengths and weaknesses they supply to effectivize market communications. As previously mentioned, podcasting is a rather new concept and as such, there is also a lack of research that investigates what role it has, and how it can be integrated in a broader IMC strategy. This is important in order to unveil how podcasts can be used with other channels in order to achieve the desired outcome of the medium.

1.3. Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to explore why and how B2B-companies use podcasts as a marketing tool and evaluate how it can function together with other marketing strategies.

1.4. Research questions

- How and why are podcasts used as a marketing tool in a B2B setting?
- What role does podcasts have in a broader marketing strategy?

1.5. Research contribution

As podcasting being a fairly new marketing tool (Waddingham et al. 2020), especially within B2B, there is not much research about the subject. Being the fastest growing medium in Sweden (Internetstiftelsen 2019), it is of high interest to better understand its marketing potential, especially within B2B as relationships go deep and stakes are higher (Popovici & Muhcină 2018). This thesis explains why and how B2B-companies use podcasts as a marketing tool and evaluate how it can function together with other marketing tools. The results show that there are many benefits to podcasting, some being but not limited to; cost and time efficiency, active listening, building relationships, branding and employer branding. It is apparent that the level of strategic intent varies between the companies, some taking on a more strategic approach than others. The main challenge faced is how to measure effect, however due to the little resources required the demand for measuring effect is not as high.

2. Theoretical framework

This chapter summarizes previous academic literature regarding Marketing Communication, Branding, Content Marketing and Business to Business Marketing that will later be used to analyse the empirical data.

2.1. Marketing communication

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) is a framework that aids in planning a company's communication strategy (Taylor 2010). The notion of the concept is that all promotional activities businesses conduct must be in order to send a coherent message to its stakeholders (Porcu, Barrio-Garcia & Kitchen 2012; Taylor 2010). Understanding the underlying correlations between different marketing tools is crucial as they in practice are typically closely incorporated, therefore it is not only important to understand their separate functions but also their effect on one another (Ots & Nyilasy 2017). Keller (2016) too, argues that there is more to IMC than sending the same message in different ways. The IMC strategy should rather be formed in a way where these different activities achieve synergistic effects, meaning that different communication mediums work together to reach the desired outcome.

Due to the changing climate within the media landscape triggered by digitalization, new challenges arise in terms of how businesses should practice marketing communication (Batra & Keller 2016). Today businesses are choosing to put more resources in below-the-line marketing instead of traditional outlets (Ots & Nyilasy 2017). Below-the-line marketing is when promotional activities are performed in other mediums than mass media, for example e-mail marketing, sponsorships and catalogues (Carter 2003). This is a response to consumers using different methods in their search of information (Batra & Keller 2016). The result of this is that when, where and how they come in contact with resellers are different than they used to be. Their path to purchase is fundamentally different; it is less time consuming, less hierarchical and more complex (Court et al. 2009 in Batra & Keller 2016). Consumers are less receptacle in their passive phase, for example through print and television, and are less likely to store the communicated information. Instead they take on a more active approach in their gathering of information. They expect to receive information when they themselves need it, and this is most often done through digital outlets such as search engines, blogs, mobile web pages and traditional web pages.

A core fundamental of marketing communications is to create meaning with the message and not only transform information (Klepek & Starzyena 2018). Marketers should focus on the receiving end and what value the communication process can bring to them. Choosing the right communication channels with the highest reach while being the most cost effective is a major marketing decision (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2016). There is also more ongoing communication between consumer to consumer, consumer to company and consumer about company (Batra & Keller 2016). Social influences and word of mouth have an increasing effect on the customers purchase decision, meaning the company has less control of their message. Meanwhile digitalization has enabled companies to provide more personalized content, better timing and increased geographical precision. For marketers the digitalisation has also disrupted matured and well understood structures and processes regarding advertisements and traditional media, further increasing the complexity of the market landscape (Mulhern 2009), and therefore also the complexity of marketers' decision making (Keller 2016).

In order to explore how integrated an IMC strategy actually is, Keller (2016) developed a framework that investigates what he calls the seven C's. These are *coverage, cost, contribution*, *commonality*, *complementarity*, *cross-effects* and *conformability.* Keller (2016) divided these into two sections, where coverage and cost answers basic criterias that aims to enable the company to reach as many as possible from the target group, to the least possible cost. The remaining five C's concerns the effectiveness of the communications, and whether or not the strategy reaches the set objectives. These IMC choice criteria are then matched towards different media platforms to explore how specific platforms perform in relation to each other and the 7C's. Marketers can use this model to evaluate specific marketing platforms and tools, both in relation to one another and in isolation, in order to create a synergetic communications program. To do so Keller (2016) sets definitions to, and questions to ask in order to be successful in this undertaking, see table 1. For this thesis the section of basic criterias was found best suitable to analyse the empirical data, hence only *Coverage* and *Cost* will be used and the remaining five criterias will not be included in the analysis.

Table 1. Framework to evaluate IMC choice criteria (Keller 2016)

Criteria	Definition	Representative questions
Coverage	Proportion of the target market reached by each communication option, as well as how much overlap exists among communication options.	- How many target market consumers are reached by the communication options? - How much overlap exists among communication options across target market consumers?
Cost	The financial efficiency associated with the communication options and program.	- How much is the total financial cost of communication options? - What is the relevant cost per thousand and other efficiency metrics? - Are there any relevant non-financial costs?

2.2 Branding

Branding is described as a process of generating value by offering consistent offers and experiences resulting in buying customers making repurchases (Simmons 2007). A brand is much more than its name or logo, often it has more to do with association and impressions (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2016). Branding is what sets companies apart from their competitors, it is the act of differentiating your companies from others (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2016; Lipiäinen & Karjaluoto 2015). Companies strive to build a brand value around the core product to further distinguish themselves from the competition. In a digital context branding gets increasingly important as there are less physical cues and tangibles for the customer to value the offering than in a physical context (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2016). Since online presence is increasing in importance so is also branding. Establishing a desirable position in the market involves a precise choice of target market and developing a clear differential in the minds of the people. The digital evolvement of the market has created a shift from companies controlling the information that reaches the market, to buyers that have high possibilities to create and share content affecting the company (Lipiäinen & Karjaluoto 2015). The authors continue that even though companies can not control external parties' communication, they can still be active participants in discussions and affect the perceived influence of the company in that way.

Brand awareness has a crucial role when the consumer is valuing different alternatives (Hoyer & Brown 1990). A strong brand is especially important when the consumer has little or no previous experience. Bergström (2009) describes the state of being synonymous with a product segment as being top-of-mind. Being first in mind in the decision-making process is valuable, it typically has a significant impact on the final decision. Branding plays a crucial part when building strong relationships in the digital era (Holliman & Rowley 2014). Brand knowledge and trust are two goals of content marketing. Within B2B, branding is especially important as a strong brand gives the buyer an indication of trust, and this in turn results in a stronger will to purchase. Trust is however more difficult to attain in a digital environment than in a physical one (Li, Pienkowski, Van Moorsel & Smith 2014). Many aspects that are important in order to build trust in a physical world are not present in a digital one, for example the ability to read body language. The authors concluded that trust is a main aspect of building a strong relationship. Taiminen and Ranaweera's (2018) study also supports this, and further notes how behavioral brand engagement does not have any significant effect on consumers' perception of relationship to a company. This study also highlights the importance of trust in relationship building, but further notes that trust is fostered by information sharing in later parts of the relationship building, which digital content marketing can help facilitate (see chapter 2.3).

Traditional research regarding branding has typically lifted three attributes of successful branding: *Understanding the customer*, *Marketing communications*, and *Ongoing interactions with customers* (Simmons 2007). First, the brand is relying on customers' perception of the company. As the company is supplying different products or services that are connected to the brand, there is a need to understand the customers in order to fulfill their needs, thus increasing brand-equity. Second, when the brand is established, it also has to be communicated to target audiences. It is also dependent on continuous dialogues or interactions with target customers, centered around the development and protection of the brand identity, in order to reach competitive advantages over time (Simmons 2007). After the introduction of the internet, content has become an important factor to branding. As visitors on web pages often are looking for specific information or topics, there is a large need to supply such valuable content in an easy accessible fashion.

Simmons (2007) continued to create an organising framework that is to help marketers integrate internet branding (i-branding) in their organisation, see figure 1.

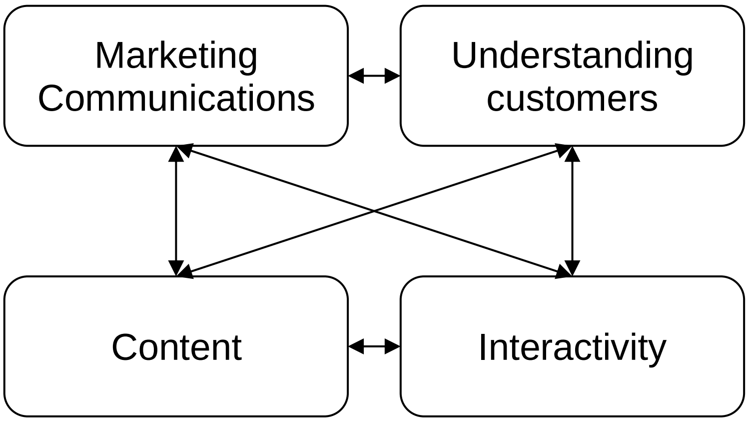

Figure 1. The Four Pillars of i-Branding (Simmons 2007).

Understanding customers is described as pillar one of the i-branding model (Simmons 2007). A company that understands their customers has a greater chance of achieving a successful branding strategy. There are different ways of creating such understanding, but thanks to the world wide web and its abundance of data, companies can utilize tools that fit their needs. By knowing the customer companies can design marketing initiatives and content that is suitable for the targeted customers, increasing the chance of better relationships to these (Simmons 2007).

Marketing communications is the second pillar of creating successful i-branding. In accord with IMC literature Simmons (2007) also finds that there is a transition from traditional push-techniques to more contemporary pull-techniques. The main criticism towards more traditional marketing tools is that it is most often a one-to-many medium that sends the company message to many, of which some do not find it valuable. Whereas modern approaches can be adapted to sending targeted personalized marketing messages to customers that are accepted to a different degree.

Interactivity is the ability to interact and create discussion amongst customers to be able to understand their needs. The internet's ability to facilitate such interactivity and engagement is a large benefactor to create positive perception of the company's brand (Simmons 2007). By supplying interactivity tools customers‘ levels of awareness can be increased, helping in the development of stronger brand relationships with said customers.

The fourth pillar is the one of *Content.* The notion of content has gotten increased attention since the introduction of the world wide web, especially since customers most often are actively searching for information when visiting websites. Simmons (2007) notes how one of the troubles that customers can experience is finding the information or content that they are interested in. By designing the navigation to, and the content supplied in an easy to find fashion, the chance for effective i-Branding becomes larger.

Simmons (2007) continues that the four pillars of i-Branding in itself cannot describe how to design internet activities in order to succeed in the branding effort. It is rather a tool for marketers to use when constructing branding campaigns, by exploring what opportunities lie within the integration of the four pillars. For example, understanding customers is highly linked to marketing communications, as it enables companies to design content for specific users and subsequently send the content to these specific users. This creates more personal and relevant information that the customer will find more valuable, and as such increases the perceived benefits of the brand as well as strengthening the relationship between the two parties. The internet is also increasing the number of tools that can be used in marketing communication, for example e-mail marketing can be paired with social media marketing to increase awareness. In combination with knowledge about customers marketers can use different means to reach different people in their own preferred way, strengthening the brand. As previously discussed, the customer understanding is also creating opportunities for marketers to create pin-point content that is deemed more valuable to specific buyers. This too will help companies succeed in their i-Branding efforts (Simmons 2007). Interactivity is closely linked to customer understanding, as the two-way communication that the internet has provided gives companies the chance to not only talk to many individuals, but also partake in discussions in online communities. This is a valuable source of information, which enables the company to not only design their content and marketing efforts efficiently, but also its products or offerings.

2.2.1 Employer branding

Across most sectors the recruitment process has undergone changes in the last decade (Gulati 2019). Recruitment is getting more competitive and dynamic, the new trends are that companies are more actively pursuing talent acquisition. Competent staff is important to raise performance and add value to businesses (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004). Attracting the right staff is crucial in order to maintain and grow business which is why companies use employer branding (Parment, Dyhre & Lutz 2017). Employer branding can be described as the practice of setting yourself out as an employer from the rest of the competition, a form of recruitment marketing. The purpose is to be seen as an attractive employer by existing and potential new employees (Gulati 2019). Giving current employees a platform to express their personal experiences of working at the company is a common way to create a positive impression for prospective candidates.

2.3. Digital content marketing

Digital content marketing, DCM, is becoming a crucial part of digital marketing (Taiminen & Ranaweera 2018). DCM involves creating, distributing and sharing relevant, compelling and timely content (Holliman & Rowley 2014). DCM is a form of inbound marketing tool using web pages, social media and other value-added content forms in purpose of creating and maintaining trust. In order to be successful, it is essential to understand what the accounts are searching for and at what time (Järvinen & Taiminen 2016). In practice DCM takes place in the form of a company's digital platform such as web pages, social media, mobile apps, blogs and similar. Different types of content are podcasts, news articles, live broadcasting, competitions, informative guides, whitepapers and virtual conferences (Hollebeek & Macky 2019). What sets content marketing apart from traditional marketing is that it is not meant to disturb the recipient. Instead content marketing aims to provide meaningful content that the consumer wants and chooses to take part of, the consumer is then said to be earned instead of borrowed. When the consumer has made an active choice to take part of the message, they are more receptive than if they had not.

Through DCM focus shift from selling to helping, this in turn requires new marketing methods and set of skills used then previously with a more traditional marketing approach

(Holliman & Rowley 2014). One of the main reasons why many businesses choose to turn to DCM is due to the more and more critical approach to traditional marketing among consumers (Matteo & Dal Zotto 2015). Advertising is often seen as intrusive which leads to a negative effect. Traditional methods are often referred to as push marketing while DCM instead is viewed upon as a pull marketing (Chaffey & Ellis Chadwick 2016; Jefferson & Tanton 2015). Jefferson and Tanton (2015) provide three trends that explain these changing buying behaviors. The first is the introduction of the world wide web in which an abundance of information has enabled buyers to finish around 60 percent of the purchase journey before contacting the selling company. The second trend is the emergence of social media, through which buyers can investigate the company and see how the company conducts itself towards customers, and if they keep what is promised. Jefferson and Tanton (2015) further explains how the changing buying process doesn’t remove the importance of recommendations in the purchasing decision, but rather that the internet and social media has made it easier for customers to make public reviews of the service. This poses not only great challenges, but also great opportunities for businesses, and DCM is a tool to manage these. The third trend that increases the importance of DCM is the ever-increasing disbelief towards selling messages (Jefferson & Tanton 2015). Consumers are to a larger degree ignoring many selling channels, such as advertisements and selling calls, which causes more pressure towards marketers to distribute relevant information and content, rather than focusing on push techniques.

Even though the end goal of DCM is increased sales leads and won opportunities, this is done through an indirect approach. Through engagement, trust and strong relationships the marketers aim to increase sales in the long run thanks to future loyalty (Hollebeek & Macky 2019). DCM can be said to be the practice of communicating with accounts without having the intent of immediate sales. Thanks to the large reach and fairly low-cost DCM is today the most rapidly growing form of content marketing (Hollebeek & Macky 2019).

Studies show that accounts engaging with digital content have a positive impact on sales (Wang, Malthouse, Calder & Uzunoglu 2019), 82 percent of purchasers within B2B say that content has a significant impact on their purchasing decision (Minsky & Quesenberry 2016). Sales leads and won opportunities are the strongest when it is employees with senior job titles that engage with digital content (Wang et al. 2019). The study shows that content marketing aimed at lower leveled account employees has a direct impact on sales leads but not on won opportunities, however the increase in sales leads result in more won opportunities meaning it has an indirect impact. One potential explanation to this could be that employees with low job titles are necessary in order to get the lead but do not have the authority to execute a deal. Establishing relationships through digital content with all leveled employees should therefore be desirable.

2.4. Business to business marketing

Historically B2B businesses have mainly competed through technology and innovation, but through time the barriers have decreased leading to less significant competitive advantages (Lilien 2016). Instead focus has shifted to competing through more customer focused approaches (Lilien 2016; Wiersema 2013). B2B companies are gradually succumbing to the need of having to compete as more modern digital businesses (Popovici & Muhcină 2018). The digital era has given marketers new means of communication (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2016), this transformation requires a level of digital commitment and new marketing skills (Popovici & Muhcină 2018). B2B marketers have to find the balance between sticking to traditional methods and embracing digital transformation as traditional communication still often has a crucial function as they are in total control of the message delivered (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2016). Digital platforms like social media, blogs and websites are enabling B2B businesses to communicate personalized content in a fast fashion, increasing the chance of establishing strong relationships (Houtari, Ulkuniemi, Saraniemi & Mäläskä 2015).

Buying behaviours within B2B differs from consumer buying behaviours in various ways (Grewal et al. 2015). Digital marketing strategies within B2B often relies on explaining the value adding processes offered. Within B2B (Vieira, Severo de Almeida, Agnihotri, Corrêa da Silva & Arunachalam 2019). They have to face more challenges than their B2C counterparts to attract and retain customers (Popovici & Muhcină 2018). First, B2B purchases are more objective and clearly stated, most often well thought through and rarely impulse driven (Grewal et al. 2015). Second, typically there are multiple individuals involved on both ends, they involve stakeholders both internally within in companies and externally. Third, due to the high involvement and high costs purchases are more complex. Purchases may involve negotiations and can be time consuming. Fourth, due to the complexity it is not always clear for neither the buyer or the seller which offer is best suited. Customer relationship development is another central element in marketing for B2B businesses as relations go deeper and stakes are typically higher (Popovici & Muhcină 2018). Mutually investing, entangling resources and sharing data are some value creating processes accomplished by a strong buyer-seller relationship (Mora Cortez & Johnston 2019).

The differences between B2B and B2C markets also demand different marketing methods as well (Swani et al. 2017). B2B businesses most often use more corporate brand names rather than product brand names, and a greater focus on functional and informational aspects than B2C counterparts. However, it has also been found that B2B followers also reacted more strongly to emotional messages compared to B2C followers, indicating that a mix of both emotional and functional content might benefit B2B businesses in their marketing efforts (Swani et al. 2017).

3. Methodology

This chapter serves to explain the working process throughout the study and to justify the reasoning behind the methodical choices taken. The case companies and respondents are also presented along with an explanation why they were chosen.

3.1. Method strategy and design

3.1.1. Scientific perspective

Traditionally there are two philosophical research paradigms that affect how people find research should be conducted (Collis & Hussey 2014). These paradigms contain sets of beliefs of what constitute knowledge, reality and existence. Today there are two main paradigms that most research follows: *positivism* and *interpretivism* (also known as *phenomenology*). Research that is based on positivism is mainly characterized by a view of reality as independent from observation, and that research is to be conducted to create theories based on empirical data. Positivists in business research are normally focused on predicting or explaining certain social phenomena by creating theories (Collis & Hussey 2014). Criticism toward positivism are, amongst others, that one cannot research people or social phenomenon without taking their context in consideration, and that the highly structured research that often comes with positivism might disregard other important findings of the study.

As a result, interpretivism came to. The basis of interpretivism is the belief that social reality is not objective, but rather subjective as it is created by people's perceptions (Collis & Hussey 2014). Interpretivists find it impossible for researchers to be objective as the researcher is taking part of what is researched, affecting the reality that is researched. The focus of interpretivist research is not to measure and predict social phenomenon, but rather investigating the entailed intricacy, and supply a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Therefore, interpretivist researchers often use qualitative research methods, rather than quantitative.

Collis and Hussey (2014) however notes that studies are seldom entirely positivist or interpretivist, and that they are more to be seen as extremes to either end. Just as research paradigms have shifted throughout history, they are also changing now. As this study aims to research a social phenomenon in the form of producer perceptions of podcasting in a B2B context, the study follows more of an interpretivist paradigm that is suitable to offer the deep understanding that is needed to answer the research questions.

3.1.2. Research design

As an interpretivist view of research was adopted, a qualitative approach was taken throughout the work process as this is suitable for the paradigm and this study. Qualitative studies are well suited when pursuing a deeper understanding of a specific scenario (Bryman & Bell 2015). As the use of podcasts in a marketing perspective within B2B has not yet been researched a qualitative method with an explorative approach is well suited. There are advantages and disadvantages to using a qualitative method. Bryman and Bell (2015) point out that the most common criticism towards the methodology are related to subjectivity, replicability, generalizability and transparency. Subjectivity is at risk since authors have to value what is of importance or not towards the purpose, what they choose to include could have an impactful meaning towards the end result. This risk increases if the relationship between the authors and participants grows too strong which could lead to biases. Another outcome of this are challenges in regard to replicability. As different authors would have different interpretations of what material qualifies to be included in the research it could lead to different end results even though the methodology and findings are the same. The third challenge, that of generalisability, is due to the limited scope of qualitative studies. Since focus typically only is on one or a few phenomenon it is difficult to determine how applicable the findings are in other situations. Lastly, transparency is a criticism brought up because many qualitative studies fail to describe how the analysis is conducted and what methodical choices have been made. To counter these drawbacks, Guba & Lincoln’s (1994) aspects of *trustworthiness* and *authenticity* has been regarded to ensure a high-quality level, this is covered further in chapter 3.6.

A multiple case study was done through interviews with various persons involved in the creation of podcasts at different B2B companies. The insights from multiple companies and people in different positions provided a solid base for analysis. Case studies are used to get a deeper understanding of a certain scenario and its inner characteristics, the prime focus is not to get a comparative result (Bryman & Bell 2015). This does not per se mean that one case cannot be compared to another (David & Sutton 2011). A case study can either be the sole foundation of a study's research design or be used as a part together with other methods. The strength of a case study lies within the time and attention that are given to deeper understand the processes and interactions that occur. The end result is suitable to base new ideas upon, especially when previous research is scarce, case studies are viewed upon as a solid starting point for research (Siggelkow 2016).

The weakness of a case study is typically argued to be that it comes with the cost of not being able to identify correlations that could have been discovered using large samples (David & Sutton 2011). However, although case studies lack in terms of generalisability they instead compensate by the deeper understanding that is accomplished. Identifying underlying causes and explanations can be just as important as identifying statistical correlations. It is neither not always desirable to accomplish generalisability, it is often the specific case that is of the most interest (Siggelkow 2007).

3.1.3. Research approach

Qualitative studies most typically take on an inductive and explorative approach (David & Sutton 2011). The reason for this being the deep validity that is desired. Since the aim of this study is to research a subject not previously researched an inductive approach was primarily applied. The inductive approach is beneficial because it does not rely as heavily on previous research allowing for more freedom to make an independent analysis (Alvehus 2013). Some assumptions of the outcome were made in the beginning of the project, these were not considered to be strong enough to be viewed as hypotheses that were to be tested. A number of research questions were therefore constructed for further research. Through an inductive approach with research questions a more open approach was allowed which is suitable when exploring new research areas (David & Sutton 2011).

However, a study does not necessarily have to be described as entirely inductive or deductive, more accurately these should be seen as tendencies (Bryman & Bell 2015). Most research falls in a spectrum somewhere in between full openness and closure (David & Sutton 2011), therefore research is rarely either fully inductive or deductive. As some deductive elements occur in regard to the frame of reference and theories this study can best be described as an iterative one, existing theories should be taken into account (Alvehus 2013). An interplay between the inductive and deductive are accomplished when shifting between empirical findings and theory (Bryman & Bell 2015).

3.2. Data gathering

3.2.1. Selection of sources

This study is primarily based on first-hand academic papers. Using first-hand sources reduces the risk of faulty interpretations as secondary sources are already an interpretation of the primary source (Rienecker & Jørgensen 2014), this was done in all instances but one where the primary source could not be accessed. Academic articles are favorable to use in the sense of being condense and specific which allows for faster and more efficient gathering of information about the research subject (David & Sutton 2019). Furthermore it is also beneficial as academic articles tend to be up to date to the latest trends within the field, this enables the readers to use the references to find new relevant research. Articles were found using Linköping University library's search function, as this service allows to filter peer reviewed articles. After the initial academic articles were found chain search was also used. Peer reviewed articles were primarily used as they can be seen as more credible than those who are not (Bryman & Bell 2015). This is as peer reviewed articles have undergone an often lengthy feedback and review process before being published.

A systematic approach was applied in the data gathering process (Collins & Hussey 2014), the initial search was done using broad search terms such as *digital content marketing*, *content marketing*, *B2B marketing*, *podcast marketing*, and *integrated marketing communications*. The initial searches provided a solid base for the frame of reference. A chain search method was then used to find more relevant articles.

Other than the academic articles a number of books have been used, primarily to aid through the methodical process. Alvehus (2013), Bryman & Bell (2015), Bryman (2016) Collins & Hussey (2014), David & Sutton (2011), Rienecker & Jørgensen (2014) and Yin (2018) and have been used to determine and motivate what methodical processes that have been used.

3.2.2. Semi structured interviews

Semi structured interviews were chosen as the method of collecting qualitative empirical data. According to Collis & Hussey (2014) this is a suitable way of conducting interviews, as the structure enables the capture of the interviewee's perception of the researched phenomenon, giving the deep understanding that is aimed for in this study. The structure also keeps the interview within the bounds of the research purpose, which an unstructured interview might not do. Semi structured interviews were also chosen as entirely structured interviews might hinder the occurrence of interesting themes that exist outside of the premeditated ones (Collis & Hussey 2014). Bryman (2016) also mentions how some degree of structure is needed to be able to ask somewhat related questions in research that entails different cases, in order to be able to compare them. Indeed, this method of collecting data could be completed with other types of data collection, like listening to and analysing the podcast in itself. However, additional methods of collecting data were not needed to answer the purpose of the study, and the interviews provided a sufficient amount of data by themselves.

The interviews were conducted in a semi structured manner. According to Bryman (2016) this is suitable for qualitative studies. A low level of structure allows the interviewee to empathize aspects they find crucial without the interviewer interfering more than needed. For all interviews the respondents were given an interview guide that allowed for them to be prepared (see appendix I). A thematic approach was taken to ensure all desirable topics were covered, the questions asked were divided into; *why podcasting*, *content*, *underlying work*, *target audience* and *goals*. The thematic approach assures that questions asked and their answers does not drift away too far from the purpose of the interview. Bryman (2016) also suggests that semi-structured interviews are a good fit to studies that incorporate multiple cases, in order to facilitate comparisons between cases.

The interviews were initially sought out to be completed in person, as this enables a more distinct communication that includes body language and other communicational aspects, in comparison to phone or internet interviews (Bryman & Bell 2015; Collins & Hussey 2014). Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020 and its demand of social distancing, all interviews were instead made through video chat or phone. A backside to face-to-face interviews would however be the demand for travelling, increasing the time and cost demanded to complete it (Collins & Hussey 2014). When possible, video chat was chosen over phone interviews as some body language and other communicational aspects could still be noted, as well as giving a personal feel to the interviews. In two cases the interviews were done over phone as the circumstances did not allow for a video chat.

When creating the interview guide, Bryman's (2016) model was used as it offers an overview of the steps that are included in the process. The model was therefore of great help to make sure that no important parts were missed during the development of the interview guide.

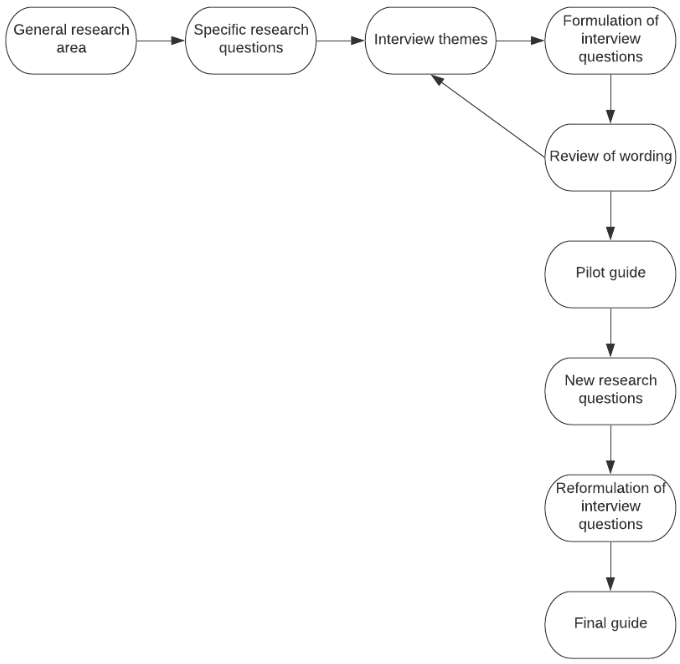

Figure 2. Model of the creation of the interview guide (Bryman 2016).

This process started from the very beginning of the study, as the main area of research was determined. After the initial literature search specific research questions were formulated, followed by the themes that were attained by asking the question: "What has to be asked in order to answer the different research questions?" (Bryman 2016). Based on these themes the initial interview questions were created. By reviewing the wording of the initial questions, we could either confirm or reject themes, as it became clear if they were relevant or not. After this a pilot guide was achieved, and after testing it there were no new or altered research questions found, and the step of reformulation of interview questions were therefore reached instantly which then resulted in the final guide used (see appendix I) .

3.3. Selection

3.3.1 Case companies

As this study is not intending to use statistical analysis to generalize its results on a population, there was no need to make a random sample (Collis & Hussey 2014). Instead a *Snowballing* sample was made, which is used when it is important to find people with knowledge about the phenomenon under study. This was important so as to achieve interviews with people knowledgeable enough within the company's use of podcasts as a marketing tool, in order to answer the study's research questions. Due to the narrow scope of the research the number of suitable case companies found were limited. Several criteria were used to identify appropriate companies.

- The podcast is still up and running to this date
- The company associated operates in a B2B environment
- Based in Sweden

When the first case company was identified the research purpose was not the same as the current one, the same criteria were therefore not used to identify it. After initial discussions with the case company the research purpose was changed towards podcasting. Three of the case companies were then found using a trial and error search method on podcast hub, primarily filtering podcasts using technology [technology], karriär [career] and näringsliv [enterprise]. A number of podcasts was then identified fulfilling all the criteria, the three that were perceived to fit the research purpose were then reached out to. The fifth case company was identified through a friend's recommendation after discussing the research topic.

Table 2. Interviewed companies and their podcasts.

Company	Podcast	Field	Episodes*	First aired
Consid	Digitala Influencer-podden	IT consulting	61	2018-07-10
Ericsson	Talking IoT with Ericsson	Telecom	10	2019-05-10
Exsitec	Exsitecpodden	IT Systems	99	2018-03-02
	Digitalsmart	IT Systems	5	2020-03-09
Pulsen Omsorg	Omsorgspodden	IT Systems	47	2018-02-02
Sogeti	Effekten	IT Consulting	130	2016-11-02

*As of 2020-05-21

3.3.2 Respondents

After the selection of case companies, these were contacted in order to find people that worked with the podcast. The individuals were chosen based on the competencies and knowledge regarding each podcast. At Pulsen and Exsitec three persons were interviewed while at Ericsson, Consid and Sogeti one person was interviewed. All respondents interviewed at the case companies were either hosting the podcast, involved with marketing or both. In the cases of Exsitec and Pulsen multiple interviews were done as the extra angles were important to fully comprehend the cases. In the cases of Ericsson and Consid only one interview was done, since both respondents had the main responsibility of the marketing processes around the podcast it was not believed that another perspective would add value. For Sogeti the marketing department is little involved with the podcast examined, hence the reason why they were not included.

Tomas Tränkner was interviewed to get an external perspective on podcast marketing. He is working full time with producing podcasts and is well experienced within the field having produced around 2000 episodes. One of the podcasts he helps produce is Exsitecpodden, it was in the interview with Johan Kallblad where his name was first brought up. This interview allowed for us to further strengthen our understanding of how businesses could and should use podcasts. This interview was done in order to further strengthen the validity of the thesis.

Table 3. Interviews conducted.

Respondent	Company	Title	Duration
Johan Kallblad	Exsitec	CEO (Chief Executive Officer)	55 minutes
Frida Widesjö	Exsitec	Marketing Communications	35 minutes
Mats Stegemann	Exsitec	HR Manager	44 minutes
Stina Thorell	Pulsen Omsorg	HR Manager	46 minutes
Linda Arousell	Pulsen Omsorg	Client & Partner Manager	46 minutes
Andreas Hallgren	Pulsen AB	CMO (Chief Marketing Officer)	30 minutes
Jonas Jaani	Sogeti	Team Manager & Consultant	37 minutes
Christina Berthelsen	Ericsson BTEB M&C Campaigns & Activation	Social Media Manager	44 minutes
Joakim Andersson	Consid	Content Manager	43 minutes
Tomas Tränkner	External Expert	Podcast Producer	47 minutes

3.4. Analytic methods

The analysing stage within case study methodology is one of its least developed aspects (Yin 2018). There are few fixed formulas or tools for analyzing case data, instead much depends on the author. One consequence of this is that not having to depend on overly restrictive rules allow for some freedom in the analysis. The first step in the analysis process was hence to simply to play around with the data collected, this is a common first step within case methodology (Yin 2018). The cases were compared to each other in an attempt to find patterns, insights and concepts that could help answer questions related to the research purpose. The intent was to first attempt to answer smaller questions, thereafter larger questions and then eventually the research questions. Data was then analysed using a ground up strategy where the analysis tended to start with the empirical findings. This method was suitable as it enables the researcher to let go of previous theoretical propositions and instead pour through the data to find interesting patterns; and as the field of podcasting as a marketing tool in a B2B setting is not explored there was not too much previous theories to build themes on in beforehand. Themes that emerged before the analysis stage were mainly fetched from literature within content marketing, IMC, branding and B2B marketing. However, as the study has taken an iterative approach, the ground-up strategy aided in identifying other themes like employer and personal branding.

From Yin's (2018) analytic strategy the analysis then moved on to the general analytical procedure as described by Collis and Hussey (2014). They state in general there are three main processes when analysing qualitative data: *reducing the data, displaying the data*, and *drawing conclusions* from the data. These three processes are all overlapping and can be conducted at the same time. Reducing the data entails "selecting, discarding, simplifying, summarizing and reorganizing" the data (Collis & Hussey 2014, pp. 157). The process started by using codes to label phrases or sentences in order to bring light to interesting connections or patterns. These codes then constructed themes in which different codes that were connected could be collected. The coding also helped in focusing the analysis of the data, for example employer branding was a theme that was detected after an interview with Exsitec, and it aided in discovering employer branding as a theme in other interviews as well. The data was somewhat placed in categories from the very beginning as there were themes appearing from the literature review, in addition to new categories that appeared in the empirical data. The next step of displaying the data is to present the data in an easy to view way. Collis and Hussey (2014) notes how this is often done by diagrams and graphs, however the data collected was not easily portrayed in such displays. Instead it was displayed by using a summary table to conclude the empirical data and its themes.

3.5. Ethical considerations

This study contains human subjects in the form of interviewees from different businesses, Yin (2018) marks the importance of protecting these people. As such this study will follow the ethical recommendations proposed by Vetenskapsrådets (The Swedish Research Council) (2002) *Research Ethical Principles within humanities-social science research*. Vetenskapsrådet (2002) notes how there is a demand for research in order to deepen knowledge and improve methods across multiple fields. There is however also a right for members of society to receive protection from undue insight into their daily lives and thoughts, which is the base for the individual protection principle that all research should be based on. As such, this study aims to take these ethical standpoints in consideration to ensure that the respondents feel comfortable in their participation.

Vetenskapsrådet (2002) have concluded that the individual protection principle can be concluded to four basic requirements: the requirements of information, consent, confidentiality, and usage. To fulfill the information requirement, the respondents were sent an information letter containing a brief introduction of the authors (Vetenskapsrådet 2002), the field of study and why it's relevant (see appendix II). The information letter also informed the participants of what would be needed from them, that the respondents would be asked if they allowed for the interview to be recorded, as well as what rights they have in accordance with the Vetenskapsrådet's recommendations. Along with the letter they also received the interview guide in order for them to prepare for the interview, as Bryman and Bell (2015) means that this can help strengthen the dependability of the study.

Next criteria that had to be considered is that of consent. Since the respondents have participated in interviews where they talk about their own work and some material might be sensitive it is necessary that all participants consent to the material being used for the thesis (Vetenskapsrådet 2002). As mentioned, the respondents were informed how the material was meant to be used for the study, that all participation is voluntary, and they were asked for permission for the interviews to be recorded. By recording the interviews the interviewers could focus on what the respondents had to say and ask relevant follow up questions instead of having to take notes, this reduces the risk of false interpretations as the exact phrasing can later be found.

In regard to confidentiality only the authors have had access to the recorded material and transcribed material (Vetenskapsrådet 2002). As the respondents are aware that the information gathered from the interviews will be used for the report it will be assumed that it is not sensitive to share. All participants were given the choice to remain anonymous, both their personal identity and their company represented, however no one felt that was necessary. In one case one informant asked to not share any of the company names mentioned without first confirming with them. The authors did not feel that it was necessary to use any of the names mentioned, therefore this criteria has been fulfilled.

In order to fulfil the usage criteria material gathered through interviews will only be used for this study and in research purposes (Vetenskapsrådet 2002). Material will not be used in a personal or commercial intent without approval from the respondents. Respondents will if requested get access to the finished thesis but no recordings or transcriptions from participants other than themselves.

3.6. Quality assurance

To help assure a high level of the quality of the research and in order to increase its relevance aspects of *trustworthiness* and *authenticity* has been taken into account (Guba & Lincoln 1994). Trustworthiness is in turn broken down into four sub criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

3.6.1 Trustworthiness

The first sub criteria is that of credibility. Credibility is achieved by ensuring that research is carried out in the canons of good practice (Guba & Lincoln 1994). This creates a sense of plausibility for the reader. Further confirmability can be achieved by using respondent validation.

The second sub criteria is transferability which is generally a challenge when it comes to qualitative studies as it is often unsure whether the results can be applied in different contexts then the one specifically studied (Guba & Lincoln 1994). Qualitative studies typically achieve depth instead of breadth. Therefore, it has been necessary to describe the contextual uniqueness that has been studied. By incorporating five different companies in the study a certain breadth has been achieved, however the results should not be seen as as transferable in this study as if it would have been a quantitative study.

Dependability is the third sub criteria of trustworthiness. Dependability has parallels to what other research often refers to as reliability (Guba & Lincoln 1994). To ensure dependability it is key to keep records of the different stages in the research process. To ensure this interview guides and guidelines to selection of case companies and participants are presented. This could have been further strengthened by including trancibations of interviews, this was however not done in purpose to fulfil the confidentiality criteria (Vetenskapsrådet 2002). Throughout the work process peers in terms of supervisor Jon Engström and other students in the supervision group have taken part of the research. They have read and evaluated the findings and work processes at seminars and tutoring appointments which further strengthen the dependability of the results.

Confirmability is the last sub criteria. To ensure confirmability it is significant that the authors act in good faith, that is to not allow personal values to sway the research process or let it impact the outcome (Guba & Lincoln 1994). By having two authors a certain degree of confirmability by taking on a somewhat critical approach to one another when discussing the outcomes of the analysis and by taking on a solidary responsibility of the study.

3.6.2 Authenticity

Complementary to trustworthiness the criteria of authenticity further help to assure a certain degree of quality. This is a broader criterion which enlightens what research political effects the study can cause. Therefore, it is important to take different viewpoints into account (Guba & Lincoln 1994). Therefore, multiple respondents with different roles have been interviewed among the case companies in the aim to gather potentially different viewpoints. This enables a deeper understanding of the case and provides a more accurate picture.

4. Empirical findings

In this section, the findings from the interviews are presented. The findings are presented company by company, the reader is first given a brief background and then a timeline to better understand the context of each company and podcast. The same thematic structure is then used; Perceived benefits, Content and production, and Strategy. In section 4.6 the results from the interview with podcast producer Tomas Tränkner is presented. A summary of the empirical findings can be found in 4.7. All interviews were done in Swedish, all quotes have been freely translated to English.

4.1 Exsitec

Exsitec is specialized within enterprise systems and digitalization. They have three sources of income: IT support, software sales and consulting services. Customers are paying a set fee for the access of their IT support while software sales and consulting are offered towards both existing and new customers. Johan Kallblad is the CEO of Exsitec who together with marketing communicator Frida Widesjö is running the podcast Exsitecpodden. Mats Stegemann is working as HR-Manager and running the podcast Digitalsmart.

4.1.1. Timeline

Exsitec is currently operating two podcasts: Exsitecpodden and Digitalsmart. Exsitecpodden being the longest running out of the two was first released in March 2018, the podcast was first launched as an initiative by the CEO. Prior to this two coworkers at Exsitec had together ran a podcast called Mobilpodden, but due to one of the hosts leaving Exsitec the podcast was eventually cancelled. Kallblad says that he had missed that podcast and that he liked the format, hence the creation of Exsitecpodden. Initially the podcast was launched as a side project, as Kallblad did not want to use up the company's resources and hence an external producer was contacted to help out with the recording. The reasoning behind this was that it's often better to isolate a project like this and provide its own resources to let it grow on its own instead of draining resources from the company. As the podcast matures and becomes more established it can then be lifted back into the organization and be handled more internally. The external producer contributed with recording equipment and experience, he helped out with interviews and has occasionally been participating in the podcast himself. As time has passed his role nowadays is mainly recording and editing.

In the early episodes of Exsitecpodden Kallblad was the only host of the podcast, he ran the podcast as a solo project for the first 5-10 episodes. By then the marketing team at Exsitec started to take interest in the podcast and saw its marketing potential. Kallblad and the marketing manager started to discuss the future format, up until this point the podcast had been loosely structured. The podcast was not driven by a deep strategy but rather by his personal interest to have a platform to speak and go more in depth of topics he found interesting. The discussion led to a slightly more structured approach with a more thought out process towards the content. In August 2019 Widesjö who worked at the marketing team and had previously taken part in the podcast was brought along to become the co-host, the intent was that having two hosts offered more dynamic to the podcast.

"Advertisement is often vague as it is meant for a wide audience, you tend to trivialize complex matters. It could have meaning for the wide audience but not mean anything to those truly interested."

- Kallblad (2020)

The second podcast, Digitalsmart, is still in its early days. Digitalsmart is hosted by Stegemann and another co-worker. The duo had previously hosted Mobilpodden and the coworker that left the company was now back and they now saw an opportunity to return to podcasting. There were discussions to launch the podcast under the same old name or to launch it under the Exsitecpodden name, but they eventually went with a new and separate name.

4.1.2. Perceived benefits

Exsitecpodden is a podcast about Exsitec, its employees and how it is to work at the company. The primary focus is to promote Exsitec's work culture and to give the listener a glimpse into what working at Exsitec is about. This serves two functions: to internally create a unity between coworkers and externally to help attract new personnel. Today Exsitec has ten offices in different cities spread across the country, the geographical distance leads to people that seldom meet each other do not get to know each other on a personal level, creating closer ties between staff and strengthening the work culture.

The second purpose is in an employer branding purpose. For a number of years there has been a shortcoming in competence within the IT field, this is causing challenges in regard to recruitment. Exsitec has recognized that there are not enough qualified people to hire resulting in them taking on a different approach. As a result, Exsitec are putting much investment into their trainee program, instead of hiring qualified staff they make them themselves. There is nothing to indicate that someone with much experience is more competent than someone that they train themselves. Instead they put effort in finding newly examined people and let them strive in the company. This is a way to stay updated and not become an old stagnated company. The podcast is used as a marketing tool in this process, when advertised on LinkedIn and Instagram it is set towards students to gain attention as they are the main target group in their recruitment.

Since many employees are guests in Exsitecpodden it is also an important tool not only to gain attention but also to educate potential future colleagues about the work itself. In the recruitment process Stegemann can often use Exsitecpodden by sending one or two episodes where someone in the same position is being interviewed, giving the applicant a better sense of their position and what working at Exsitec would be like. The podcast is much appreciated by new staff, many choose to listen to it both in the initial recruitment process and in the time between being hired and starting. Due to the investments being made in the trainee program and the selection of prospects is crucial. To generate a good return a success factor is to find people that choose to stay in the company for a long time. Therefore, people should not be convinced that they want to work at Exsitec but rather discover themselves that this is a work environment where they enjoy working.

One unexpected occurrence Kallblad faced was when he met with some fund managers that were doing research on different corporations. As it turned out, the fund managers had used Exsitecpodden in his analysis of Exsitec. They wanted to understand the core of the company and the podcast worked for them as a tool to better understand the people behind the company. Kallblad says that that single access can be worth more alone than the total production cost for all episodes they have produced so far.

The incitement of Digitalsmart differs from Exsitecpodden. Digitalsmart is directed more towards current and potential customers. One of the main reasons why someone chooses to partner with Exsitec is trust, especially when it comes to major tasks. They want the customer to feel that they have more to gain then just the service itself through the business relationship. Customers value that they can be inspired and gain knowledge without getting billed the next moment. Digitalsmart is a way to display and spread their expertise within the field of digitalization. The idea is for the listener to in a relaxed way consume knowledge within the area and hopefully learn something that they can apply themselves to their business. When the day comes that a listener is in a position where they are to decide what company that best can help them for example swap their enterprise system Exsitec should pop up as a good alternative.

4.1.3. Content and production

As the name indicates Exsitecpodden is mainly about Exsitec and everything surrounding it. The conversations are often casual and laid back. There are no clear strategies regarding its content, the podcast is mainly used as a forum to talk freely. They often have guests participating, often their own employees but occasionally others. The focus of conversation then lies on the person and their role, not only the actual business practices of Exsitec. The participants are asked questions about themselves, the focus is mainly on what they do at work but also on a more private level. Kallblad describes that the focus point of the conversation is more about the person than content.

Digitalsmart is more content driven than Exsitecpodden. In Digitalsmart the intent is to cover different topics within the world of digitalization each episode. The aim is to talk about the things that Exsitec does great, but without necessarily talking about themselves. According to Stegemann the content is supposed to be 90 percent insights and knowledge within the area of digitalization, 10 percent concrete tips and tricks and 10 percent shenanigans; altogether it is the podcast that gives 110 percent. They talk about digitalization through a broad perspective and how it can be used to change business processes. In their eyes digitalization should be viewed as something concrete that affects our daily routines. The idea is to meet with clients, suppliers and others and discuss digitalization in their business practices. In order to stay relevant innovation is key, those who get stuck in the past will struggle.

"*The more I have worked with podcasting, the better I understand that to make things sound spontaneous you have to prepare.*"

- Stegemann (2020)

The production process varies between the two podcasts. Exsitecpodden is still to this date produced together with an external producer and Digitalsmart is produced in-house. For Exsitecpodden they record a number of episodes at the same time, typically every six weeks. The producer brings audio equipment to the office, helps with the recording and then edits it. This is due to practical reasons, as for Kallblad's busy schedule being CEO it is more convenient to record a number of episodes at a time instead of putting time into it every week. As Exsitecpodden is more person driven instead of content there is less of an issue of having to be timely, although it can occasionally lead to small issues. One example of this was when one participant was talking about a competition that they were to participate in, when the podcast was released the competition had already taken place.

Before recording, Kallblad and Widesjö meetup to discuss, what mood Kallblad is often determining the tone of the podcast. For example, if he is in a philosophical mood that might influence the outcome of the episodes. Typically, when recording, a few coworkers get to take part and possibly some business partner or similar. Widesjö is newer to the organization and therefore it can be more natural for her to ask questions to participants since Kallblad as the CEO is close to most coworkers.

"*It becomes more natural to ask questions to a person when you do not already know everything about them.*"

- Widesjö (2020)

4.1.4. Strategy

The prime focus of the marketing team at Exsitec is to generate leads for the sales department, hence the marketing and sales departments are working close together. Exsitec is using an inbound marketing strategy, this is done by providing content and performing different activities in order for customers to by themselves finding their ways to Exsitec and wanting to get in contact. Widesjö explains that they prefer working with content advertisement, traffic generating posts and value creating content instead of for example email marketing. They use various media in their marketing that serves different purposes. LinkedIn is used advertising their business proposal and Instagram and Facebook is used more often for employer branding.

Exsitecpodden is one source of content they provide. The main purpose is as mentioned in an employer branding purpose, the aim is to promote Exsitec’s work culture. At times they used targeted ads to reach students as they are a crucial group in their recruitment, however their targeting efforts are not necessarily that strict. They at times jokingly say that it is a podcast without a target audience, but rather it is aimed towards anyone who has an interest in Exsitec. The fund managers previously mentioned is a good real-life example of how the podcast can reach without being specifically targeted.

As mentioned, there were some discussions when launching Digitalsmart whether it should be a standalone podcast or incorporated into Exsitecpodden. Exsitec decided on separating the two podcasts due to their two different purposes and different target audiences, they believed it was for the better, so it was clear for the listener to know who does what. Since Digitalsmart is more of a stand-alone podcast it was thought that it was more appropriate to not have the word Exsitec in the title. While the strategic purposes of Exsitecpodden was not as well stated from the get-go but rather developed through time Digitalsmart had more of an underlying purpose from the beginning. A large portion of Exsitec’s income is from current customers, therefore it is often more important to get current customers to continue purchasing rather than finding new ones as that is often more difficult. The podcast is a method of providing content, adding to the relationship towards clients. An ideal scenario would however be for a new customer to listen to the podcast, be inspired and take an interest in Exsitec, however that is more of a secondary purpose.

“*If you cannot measure the effect of a podcast and you are facing challenging times, then there is a large risk that something that costs much will be terminated. Therefore, it is wise to not spend too much money until the concept is proven.*”

- Kallblad (2020)

One challenge Exsitec faces is how to measure the effect of podcasting. The results are not immediate, it takes a long time to see the results of marketing measures. This affects what content is best suited, using the podcast to deliver quick messages might not be ideal. Instead the podcast is more effective when delivering a continuous message.

4.2. Pulsen Omsorg

Pulsen Omsorg is a subsidiary to Pulsen AB, a family owned corporation with core operations in IT, but also with operations in customer service and house manufacturing. Pulsen Omsorg in particular is developing IT-support for social services and offers two products: Combine and Magna Cura. The focus is with Combine, which is a web based application that can be used by all actors that are included in a social service errand, for example citizens, government agencies, or those who perform the decisions taken by the authorities. Pulsen Omsorg is running a podcast named Omsorgspodden, which is described as a podcast for those within the care sector. The podcast is hosted by the duo Stina Thorell and Linda Arousell. CMO Andreas Hallgren is also involved with the podcast and its integration into marketing strategies.

4.2.1. Timeline

Omsorgspodden was first released in early 2018, with the first episode airing in February. Thorell and Arousell both tell how this podcast was created by chance, simply by the newly hired Arousell's wondering if there was a podcast produced by the company. As there was not a podcast being produced, the two decided to initiate one: Omsorgspodden. The two describe the initial process as very quick with a simple purchase of a microphone and brainstorming of what kinds of themes and episodes to record. Hallgren and the Group Marketing function were contacted as the podcast was to be used as a marketing tool. Hallgren and his colleagues saw no issue with the idea and aided Thorell and Arousell in the initial stages, mainly by brainstorming how it should be formatted, packaged, and what kinds of topics and guests to include.

"*How difficult can it be? Of course we will start a podcast.*"

- Thorell (2020)

The effort surrounding the podcast was initiated already in 2017, and Thorell explains how the first episode was planned to air during fall the same year. However, there were some technical issues mainly regarding what medium to publish the podcast on and how to do it. In order to solve this they contacted a colleague working as a developer in the same company, who helped them to publish the podcast on Itunes. This in combination with the upcoming holidays further postponed the podcast until 2018.

Since the start of the podcast 47 episodes have been released, and Hallgren notes that a number of different ways of podcasting has been tested: for example live podcasting at a conference and telephone interviews. Over time he thinks that the podcast has evolved and become more professional sounding, which he relates to Thorell and Arousell's increasing experience and that they've found their "tone". Thorell and Arousell agree to this and state that they have become substantially more confident as a team. They have found their respective roles where Thorell maintains the main theme of the episode and Arousell asking additional questions which results in a more dynamic conversation. The ability to maneuver the guests is an ability that has evolved which has helped reduce eventual feelings of nervousness in all participants. There is also no longer a strive for things to be perfect, in the same way there was at the beginning.

4.2.2. Perceived benefits

The initial incitements for the creation of Omsorgspodden was Arousell's view of it as a good marketing channel to reach many stakeholders, and that it is a good complementary channel to other existing ones. She further states that these additional existing channels are all great ways to reach out but that they do not suit everyone. She further explains how podcasts can be easy to take part of while doing other activities, like commuting to work. Thorell and Arousell further discussed how there weren't many other actors in their sector that uses podcasting as a marketing medium, which posed a possibility for Pulsen Omsorg to create a unique way to communicate to their buyers. For Thorell and Arousell it is also a way to have fun, that gives them a valuable experience as well.

"*We achieve a different kind of visibility.*"

- Hallgren (2020)

Hallgren also mentions that Omsorgspodden offers a different kind of visibility than other marketing tools. He continues with the fact that a podcast like this enables Pulsen Omsorg to communicate with customers or prospects without marketing messages from the company, and how it is a more free media. As an example the title is not called Pulsen Omsorg's Podcast, but Omsorgspodden which removes the apparent connection to a company. Hallgren also notes how they can air episodes where they discuss the state of their business sector, lifting important trends which shows Pulsen Omsorg as knowledgeable without direct selling intentions. Hallgren further explains that podcasting is a "softer" way of communication, and that it brings a personal touch that other mediums cannot mediate, which is especially beneficial in the caring business.

4.2.3. Content and production

The main message that is to be communicated by the podcast is that Pulsen Omsorg is engaged and knowledgeable within their customers' field of work according to Hallgren. He further explains how one thing that seperates Pulsen Omsorg from competitors in the same field, is that there is an almost 50/50 distribution of IT-developers and social workers at the company. This means that Pulsen Omsorg has a great knowledge regarding what works in the field, which enables them to create products that not only look good IT wise, but is also effective for the end users.

"Technical messages are difficult to send, a podcast needs to be personal."

- Hallgren (2020)

Omsorgspodden is not boxed around a certain subject relating to content. Instead they have focused on talking about interesting subjects, that not only relates to Pulsen Omsorg's area of business but is also interesting for their buyers to listen to. This has been the basis of topic creation. They have for example had episodes containing interviews with internal personnel in order to show that part of Pulsen Omsorg to their surroundings, as well as discussing broader topics like Agile System Development. Hallgren states that technical messages are hard to send via podcasts. Covering complex technical issues in a podcast is harder than writing it on a paper which enables you to go into more detail.

“*The guy I met at the fair that I told you about, he was asking, as Stina said before: Where is your podcast studio?*”

- Arousell (2020)

There is no recording studio set for Omsorgspodden. The equipment used is a simple microphone, a computer and the free-to-use audio program Audacity. The episodes are edited by the hosts themselves, and not by a third part actor that specialises in such work. Thorell and Arousell describe it as a challenge to have one microphone to three or more people. This results in an audio file that is on one track, which makes the mastering somewhat harder as the noise level becomes more fluctuating, resulting in the need for listeners to lower and raise their volume at different parts of episodes. However, the company premises offer smaller, soundproof conference rooms that are described as fitting to record in. Thorell and Arousell also mention that there are positive sides from this approach; mainly that they are very portable and can adapt to the needs of those interviewed. It enables them to carry their “studio” in a small tote, to wherever they need to be. It’s also described as a sort of charm with this kind of simplicity.

The podcast is distributed via Soundcloud, but can be found on Acast and Podcaster as well. There is no difference in how the separate platforms are used and there is no perceived difference in performance between them. When a new episode airs, it is marketed mainly via the Pulsen Omsorg website, LinkedIn, a newsletter and Pulsen ABs Instagram account. The different platforms create publicity to slightly different audiences. The newsletter is solely to active buyers, and LinkedIn and the website is to both active and potential buyers. Hallgren mentions an anecdotal fact, when a new episode was released it was not marketed in their social media. After some time when this was discovered they noticed that they had had around 80 listenings either way. They concluded that this means that people are subscribing to the podcast through Soundcloud, or other podcasting apps.

Omsorgspodden is set before a challenge as Arousell is in the midst of changing jobs, which has forced Thorell and Hallgren to plan for a future where Arousell is not present. They both want to keep the podcast going, as it offers benefits of different kinds. However, they note that it is hard to find someone that is willing to join Thorell in the podcast, and that it is important to find someone who is passionate enough that is also right for the medium.

4.2.4. Strategy

Pulsen AB and its Group Marketing unit consists of two employees, Hallgren himself and a Market Communicator. They act as an advisory function to every subsidiary that Pulsen AB actively owns. Each subsidiary in turn doesn’t have employees dedicated to marketing, but the companies’ CEOs and often Sales Managers are working with Group Marketing to identify needs and action plans. Thereafter Group marketing does the operative tasks regarding these marketing needs. Pulsen AB has a set overarching communications perspective, rather than an exact marketing strategy, as it is the parent company of many different companies with different niches. According to Hallgren this overarching perspective is applicable to every company, but that each company has their own specializations depending on what nische they’re operating in. The communications perspective is founded in three parts; *Value towards customers*, *news* and *lifting internal knowledge.* Value towards customers is based on customer cases where Pulsen AB’s companies have delivered value, whereas the news part handles things like business news, mergers, cooperations, new businesses and so on. Lifting internal knowledge is about showing the competence that resides in the comapnies’ employees. Hallgren stresses that everything Pulsen AB and its subsidiaries do; services, products and software is made by themselves, and that if employees walk there would be nothing left. Therefore he finds it important to lift the knowledge the company and its employees have, both to show current and potential customers, and to potential coworkers. Content Marketing is also lifted as a marketing perspective that is utilized as they frequently produce articles and moving media and testing different channels to reach their customers.

Group Marketing were initially contacted to aid in the design of the podcast logotype and a dedicated web page. Of course, they also had a say in how the format would be formed, what kind of guests that should be invited and similar productional questions. One key criteria from group marketing was that there had to be a continuity in the podcast and that it was not to be abandoned too soon, as this could cause an image of non-professionality as they do not care for channels that are left untouched for a long period of time.

Pulsen AB does not have set strategies and goals for Omsorgspodden, which Hallgren considers as somewhat embarrassing as that is something that should be developed. Pulsen AB has not considered the podcast in that strategic way, but instead considers it as another tool in their toolbox of marketing methods. Thorell and Arousell however discuss how this is beneficial to them as they do the podcast for fun, in addition to the business benefits it generates. Excessive strategy and control is perceived as something that might suffocate the passion that they have for creating the podcast.

Omsorgspodden is very nisched, as Pulsen Omsorg has a quite limited pool of potential customers in the form of Sweden's 290 municipalities. Pulsen AB therefore doesn't expect the podcast to reach a certain amount of growth in numbers of listenings. Arousell further acknowledges this as saying that even though there are not thousands of people listening to the podcast, the focus rather lies within getting the right people to listen. The main target audience for the podcast is buying customers, mainly because one of the purposes of the podcast according to Hallgren is to maintain good communication with current stakeholders. This is especially important for Pulsen Omsorg because of the limited market mentioned above. Public procurement is often a long process that can take up to two years to be closed, which also means there are long relationships between buyers and sellers. Omsorgspodden is therefore a tool to aid in such relationship maintenance.

Even though the main focus is towards buying customers the podcast can also be valuable to potential customers. As mentioned before Pulsen Omsorg aims to create content that is interesting regarding their area of operations, and to buyers, which means that they create content that is also utilizable by potential customers. Again, Agile System Development is brought up as an example of a topic that is broad and enables many to take part of its message, regardless if they're current buyers or not. As work progressed they also noticed that new employees have often reported that they had listened to the podcast during the recruitment process. Thorell sees the podcast as valuable as it is a way for them to show Pulsen Omsorg, who they are, what they stand for and what they are doing. Therefore the target audience has extended to potential employees as well.

A probable cause to why there is no set strategy, or measuring of certain goals like number of listeners, listener growth and similar, is accredited to the side project status of Omsorgspodden. The planning, production, and distribution of the podcast is a task that lies on top of the daily work responsibilities of Thorell and Arousell. They state that there is little time actually put on the podcast, and that most parts except for the recording is made during their spare time. If more resources were to be put on the podcast and it's production, there is a belief that there would be greater possibilities to track and measure the effects of the initiative; to see who listens, and when, how and where they listen. Thorell states how they could probably work full time with the podcast and spend more money on analysing tools to measure effects.

This lack of strategy is also attributed to the fact that it doesn't demand any substantial resources. According to Hallgren, there is not a large investment in the podcast, and a demand for return on investment is therefore not present. As of this, he doesn't see the inability to measure the effects as an issue, as long as they get feedback from customers. Feedback can be from listeners who contact the company based on an episode, and they've also been approached on fairs and similar.

4.3. Sogeti

Sogeti is an IT consulting company that offers solutions within Digital Assurance & Testing, Cloud and Cybersecurity. They are part of the Capgemini group that are operating in multiple countries. In Sweden they are located in 21 different locations and have 1200 associates. Jonas Jaani has worked at Sogeti for six years. For the last year and a half he has been team manager over a number of consultants as well as doing consulting work himself. Prior to that his role has been as a project leader within ECM, intranet and digital work solutions. He has run the podcast Effekten together with Michael Norbäck since 2016.

4.3.1. Timeline

The journey of Effekten can be said to have started long before its own beginning when Jaani was working with commercial radio. He was involved with building radio stations and has been hosting shows himself. Having worked with audio for eleven years professionally before working at Sogeti the step into podcasting came naturally. A few years into his career at Sogeti he launched Effekten together with his coworker and friend Norbäck that is the cohost of the podcast. Jaani describes Norbäck as a creative person with a willingness to try new things, he was curious to see how the podcast could benefit him and was also passionate about the area.

> “*Being a creative person is about saying yes more often than you say no*.”
>
> - Jaani (2020)

The podcast was started mainly because they both felt very passionate about what they were doing and had a will to share their knowledge. The podcast was initially started as a private initiative in 2016, back then not many companies were prepared to include podcasting in their marketing strategy. It was not a proven marketing tool and it was unclear what impact it had. Keeping it private also allowed for Jaani and Norbäck to remain in full control of the content. As the journey has continued Sogeti has been getting involved on the side, their role has mainly been to help with distribution and not so much about the content itself.

The core processes of the podcasts still remain the same to this date, but some learnings have been picked up along the way. One of them is having continuity while at the same time being manageable. The podcast should never become a burden to bear, one lesson they have learnt is to not always strive for more but to sometimes hold back.

4.3.2. Content and production

Effekten reliseas one episode every ten days. Jaani does all the editing and recording by himself, given his background in the media business he knows his way around and can do it with speed and ease. He believes the production could be better to an extent with an external party but does not find that necessary since he takes joy in what he is doing. Somewhere there has to be a balance between time spent and the high ambitions of quality as most of time spent on the podcast is done on Jaani and Norbäck’s spare time. Podcasting is what they do on top of everything else.

"It should not feel like a burden to bear, it is important to manage your regular job and feel like this is enjoyable to do in your spare time."

- Jaani (2020)

The preparations that go into each episode are to decide on what topic to cover and possibly identify a guest. There are no clear strategies towards producing content, it is more of a continuous thought process. They often draw inspiration from news and current trends, what is the listener interested in at the moment. Other times it can be something related to what occurs at their work. Sometimes they would get topic ideas from others but most often it is themselves. What is important is that the topic is interesting, they do not want to appear too overly commercial towards themselves or any other brand.

4.3.3. Perceived benefits

Apart from being something Jaani enjoys doing, personal branding is the primary purpose of Effekten. As consultants it is important to profile themselves and Sogeti. Indirectly they want the listener to think "*Who is Jonas and who is Micke? Where are they employed?".* The target group of the podcast are therefore consultants, clients and those who just have an interest in digitalization, where the first two have a primary focus and the third a more secondary focus. As team manager Jaani is involved in recruiting new consultants, since the importance of targeting them. The idea is that if the topic is interesting enough it will then serve its purpose as personal branding. When having guests to focus still lies on the topic of the episode, and to show interest and knowledge towards it both from the host and the guest. His philosophy is to provide value and to do so constantly. If the topic for example is a digital workplace, the goal is to start a thought process among the listeners. How can they incorporate this into their own work?

The podcast is one of multiple tools Jaani uses along with movies, webinars, content on LinkedIn and blog posts in his personal branding. Altogether the purpose is to promote both himself and Sogeti. Jaani has a close dialogue with both the marketing manager and social media manager regarding both his personal brand and other subjects. He describes the podcast as a part of Sogeti's overall marketing mixture, although it is a small part of it.

4.3.4 Strategy

Jaani describes podcasting being three steps: there is prior work, there is the recording and then there is distribution. A lot of time is spent on the initial two phases, that is where Jaani's background in commercial media comes into play. How he sets up an interview, the way he chooses to express himselfs, how to take time into account are all learnings from his past. When asked how much his past experience influences his work today he answers maybe 80 percent of what he is doing, which he views as both a good and a bad thing because perhaps you would want an even higher amount to be new and fresh ideas.. Radio is meant for a broader audience which affects the way you communicate. Podcasting is more of a two way communication, it is more of a dialogue with the listeners. An analogy he uses is that podcasting is like using a sniper rifle and radio is like using a shotgun. This is something he keeps in mind in his daily through process surrounding the podcast.

In the future he wishes to put even more efforts towards distribution. Distribution is a challenge, but there is also potential for improvement in regards to how to distribute the podcast in social media, who to reach, how to adress episodes to the right person and so on. Sogeti plays an important role in today's distribution. They share it in their social media and through their web page to attract traffic. Much of the inspiration for the podcast derives from work at Sogeti and their involvement open up possibilities with interviewees. The aim is however to remain Sogeti's brand separated from Effekten. The podcast started as a private initiative and is important for it to remain in Jaani and Norbäcks control even though Sogeti's involvement. Keeping the brand name out of the podcast is a way to strengthen its own integrity and trustworthiness. They would often have colleagues as guests in the podcast, but the aim is to keep it business neutral. Sogeti has another newly launched podcast named WOW focusing on innovation where the name is more closely tied up. Even if Effekten had initially been launched by Sogeti it is likely that they still would have kept the brand out of it, different podcasts have different intents.

4.4. Ericsson

Ericsson is one of the world leaders within information and communication technology, ICT. One of their business areas is within the Internet of Things (IoT), where they offer solutions to make it easier for businesses to connect and deploy with devices. Christina Berthelsen has worked at Ericsson for two years as Social Media Manager, she is part of the Campaigns and Activations teams at their IoT department. One of her work tasks is the production of the podcast *Talking IoT with Ericsson*, and she handles everything that has to do with it other than actually hosting it.

4.4.1 Timeline

Ericsson Business Area Technologies and Emerging Business (BTEB) started the podcast *Talking IoT with Ericsson* after Berthelsen noticed that her unit was missing some content in a certain part of the customer funnel. The funnel starts with *Awareness*, and narrows down through the funnel until a purchase decision is made. It started with the fact that IoT is a very broad subject, and Berthelsen had noticed that when one was talking about IoT it was frequently about future visions about what state the technology would be in five years, or ten years, or even twenty years. She further explains how marketers cannot really use these visions in marketing right now, and that she wanted to focus their efforts in talking to those who work with IoT now; what is the state of the technology, what are the ones working with it doing today, how far have they come etcetera. A second aspect leading up to the decision to use a podcast was that it would be beneficial to elevate Ericsson's partners, as Ericsson in the position of a very large international company has many buyers, suppliers and partners that participates in and lead this development. These needs made Berth elsen's team start to brainstorm regarding how to fulfill it. Using video was one alternative, but the threshold to such an initiative was deemed too high, as the cost of production is high and that it is really hard to make stakeholders actively watch a 40 minute video. All in all this led to the decision to initiate a podcast: Talking IoT with Ericsson.

Before launching the podcast in May 2019, Berthelsen and her team had a two month period where many aspects of the podcast were planned out; how should it be done? What kind of podcast should it be? What format, ten minutes or one hour? Should there be guests or no guests? In addition, Berthelsen had a colleague in another division that was already running a podcast, from which knowledge regarding mainly production was retrieved. The colleague was able to give tips regarding sound quality, platform and distribution.

"*We were not ready at all to begin with the first episode.*"

- Berthelsen 2020

Despite the planning Berthelsen states that they were still not ready to begin the first episode. A substantial part to this was the fact that it was more of a spontaneous interview at a conference, where they got the chance to talk to Ivo Rook, Senior VP for IoT at Sprint. They were given 20 minutes with Mr. Rook, and Berthelsen describes how they had to get ready in a small amount of time. However, processes have now gotten in place, and after a start full of testing different approaches they have deemed podcasts to be a fitting marketing tool. In the future Berthelsen would like for Talking IoT with Ericsson to be recorded before a live audience and make sure that it is even more integrated to other marketing practises.

4.4.2. Perceived benefits

"Podcasts at the moment are like Facebook pages were in 2012; everyone has to have one, because everyone else has one. It's not everyone that has a thought out strategy, but rather say they have to because everyone else does."

- Berthelsen (2020)

There were initially two goals with the podcast, creating awareness and demand generation. As previously mentioned Berthelsen noticed that there was a lack of content that fitted the early stage of the sales funnel. The podcast was therefore created as a media to deliver this content and make Ericsson visible in the IoT arena, as Berthelsen stated that it isn't obvious to everyone that Ericsson is operating in that business. The other goal was to initiate demand generation. Ericsson wants stakeholders to get in touch and ask what Ericsson is doing within the field of IoT. The purpose is to have these conversations, as this shows that Ericsson is knowledgeable enough to have the conversation. Podcasting was suggested as it's somewhat easier to make people listen.

"It is an investment, but not a large investment."

- Berthelsen (2020)

In addition the podcast is not seen as a big investment, especially when considering the sheer size of Ericsson as a company. Had it been a smaller company Berthelsen would probably have done the editing and similar by herself. At the moment the podcast episodes are sent to a third part bureau that add sounds and edit the soundtrack. Despite this the largest part of the investment is in time, rather than production.

4.4.3. Content and production

Talking IoT with Ericsson has one major message that is to be sent: Ericsson knows IoT, contact us. This is done by reaching out to not only current buyers or partners, but also *Key Industry Leaders* outside of Ericssons immediate network, and talk IoT with them. Every episode might have different messages mainly because of the many different guests they have participated, for example an episode with Audi was about automated factories, whereas an episode with Telia was centered around how they can use IoT in their products. The main message is not one that is actively promoted in episodes, but rather a consequence of being able to have the discussion.

The preparations are different for every episode, depending on what guest is participating. Berthelsen puts about five hours into preparations for episodes with known guests. As an example she mentions Grundfos, a company which Ericsson has a strong relationship with. The groundwork mainly consists of researching what current news, processes or projects that the guest is involved in, in order to create relevant and good questions. This is performed by reading annual reports. For customers that Berthelsen has not worked with before, the research takes longer, as she has to research what solutions Ericsson supplies or could supply to these buyers. When the questions are set, they are sent to Behdad Banian, the podcast host and CMO of Ericsson BTEB, who then puts his personal tone to them as they want the interview or discussion to be natural to him. Berthelsen then sends the questionnaire to the guest in order for them to prepare. Other than this there is no preparation other than a 10 minute talk before the recording. Berthelsen had not expected that it would be as much production entailed that it showed to be. In order to produce a podcast that binds listener interest for 40-60 minutes, there has to be a good quality of sound, a smooth flow and other parts that makes it enjoyable to listen to.

In Talking IoT with Ericsson there is no desire to actively market Ericsson or its products and services, instead they take on a more indirect approach. They have a set requirement that this media is not to be “reeking” of marketing, in the same way that Facebook pages might do. The podcast is meant to engage the listeners in a different way, and for listeners to not feel like what they are listening to is marketing, but valuable information. By extension this will promote Ericssons’ knowledge of the subject rather than having direct sales messages.

4.4.4. Strategy

Ericsson is described as a very structured organisation, where there are multiple Business Areas, Divisions, and Teams. The company is working with an Outside-in strategy. This means that instead of pushing products to customers who might not be interested, they rather ask what the customers who actively find Ericsson themselves are interested in. Each Business Area has their own marketing function that is dedicated to solve such marketing needs. The global and more overarching areas are the ones who are responsible for more general marketing communications regarding people, stories and other softer, broader foundations. Their strategy funnel is described as starting quite broad at a group level, and then narrowing down to specific marketing strategies in each Business Area, which in turn gets narrowed down to channel strategies at the operative level. As IoT is a field that has many utilizations it is important to Berthelsen and her team to have a synchronized strategy in place to reduce the risk of running in different directions. As previously mentioned, awareness and demand generation are the main goals to achieve via the podcast. These goals were set in the early stage of planning the podcast before it first aired, and has remained since then.

The podcast is used to communicate valuable content regarding IoT, and that Ericsson is knowledgeable in the sector. Berthelsen is very careful not to include any direct marketing or selling messages in the podcast, as there is a risk for people to stop listening. She compares it to how when you visit a company Facebook page, you know that every post and comment made by the company is marketing. There is a perception that the same is yet not applicable to podcasts, and it's therefore a good medium to communicate value without selling. This is also due to, and fitting to the outside-in strategy that Ericsson has incorporated. As such, Berthelsen argues that Talking IoT with Ericsson is not fitting to promote products and services, which is left to other channels.

Current buyers are the primary audience for Talking IoT with Ericsson. These include telecom operators and others. As one of the goals of the podcast is demand generation and the creation of demand bottom-up, the current buyers customers is a secondary audience. Berthelsen reasons that it doesn’t help the secondary audience that Ericsson only try to sell to the operators, but demand should also come from downstream customers. Best case scenario, if the secondary audience hears that factories can be digitalized and save so and so much fiscal resources, they might reach out to their operator or Ericsson in order to know more. In order to measure the performance of the podcast, Ericsson uses Google Analytics. There is a strive to be as data driven as possible, but there are some challenges with this when it comes to podcasting. One is that they have to send the listeners to an external platform to stream the content, which means that Ericsson loses the ability to track the activity. When promoting the podcast, it's always linked to Ericssons web page, enabling them to see how many that continue to navigate to the podcast, but as soon as the listener clicks the external link that tracking ceases. Soundcloud keeps track of how many listens the episodes have gotten, but there is no way to track if they came from Ericsson or any other way. It’s described as problematic, especially when they want to track investments. It makes it hard to measure the effect of investments, like paid LinkedIn ads that have been used to promote the podcast. During 2020 the development of an in-house playback function on ericsson.com will commence, which will help combat this problem by capturing the online traffic. There will also be “Contact me” function on this page, further helping Ericsson to track interested listeners.

Berthelsen and Ericsson BTEB have also started to create spin off content from the podcast. This means that content from the podcast, i.e. learning points or similar, is also introduced to other channels enabling other stakeholders to take part of the information and at the same time create interest in the podcast. A new, overarching strategy that will incorporate all of Ericsson’s podcast is also to be launched. Ericsson currently have three ongoing shows, and this strategy is meant to structure these podcasts in the same way as their blogs. At the same time, work is already ongoing to integrate the podcast to the company's other marketing efforts. Despite this, Berthelsen's perception is that Talking IoT with Ericsson has been more and more integrated over time and is already sufficiently integrated to the current marketing activities. This is mainly because of the small team that she's a part of. They are good at communicating upcoming marketing activities and what actions are needed amongst each other.

"In my team, Campaigns and Activations, we are pretty good at saying: 'Alright, we've got this upcoming marketing effort, what can we do with it? Do we need blog posts or infographics?' And then we'll check what kind of content is needed. Quite often the podcast fits right in."

- Berthelsen (2020)

4.5. Consid

Consid is a consulting firm offering services within IT, management and digital marketing. They have more than 1000 associates in Sweden and have offices in 20 different cities. Joakim Andersson has worked at Consid for over two year, during the last year he has had the title Content Manager. As the title suggests he is responsible for creating content in various forms where production of podcasts is a big part. The podcast Digitala Influencer-podden will be the focus point, however he is also involved in production of Consid's other podcast Utveckla.

4.5.1. Timeline

One can say that Digitala Influencer- podden was created when Consid launched the award *Digital Influencer of the year*, an award that the company since 2016 awards a person or company that promotes digitalization and its prosperity within their area of business.

"*And somewhere there we noticed that these digital role models are sensible and people we want to be seen with.*"

- Andersson (2020)

After sharing these awards they noticed that these digital role models were people that Consid as a company also wanted to be seen with. With these thoughts they created a

Youtube series, where they had interviews with influential public figures that in some way worked with digitalization. It was noticed that this was appreciated by the target audience, that the guests were interesting people that had interesting insights. From this, the initiative to create a podcast was taken from the marketing department, and hence Digitala Influencer-podden was created as an extension to the Youtube series. Since late 2018, the podcast has released more than 50 episodes. Recently they made an investment in audio equipment to improve the sound quality as well as making some graphical changes.

4.5.2. Perceived benefits

The initial benefits that were expected by starting the podcast was branding, and getting PR from talking to famous or successful people who work with or in IT. It was also meant to be a part of building a corporate, and personal network for the CEO who hosts the show. By having influential people from many different companies over, Consid would not only gather listeners but also end up on the radar of the interviewed corporations and people. This is also contributing to driving traffic to the website. Other than that podcast is also perceived as a media that is gaining popularity, and is a good way to get more visibility. It is also considered as a more personal media, that can more accurately show CEO Peter Hellgren, who he is and how he interacts. Andersson describes that no matter how many discussion articles they write, no one will truly understand who the sender is, how the CEO founded the company 20 years ago and how it has grown since.

"It's not that strenuous, compared to the space it gets in our channels and that it still spreads, and that it builds close relationships with our listeners and clients."

- Andersson (2020)

The podcast is also a fairly cheap tool to use, given the amount of space and spread it gets in social channels. The only costs, except for time usage which Andersson estimates to 10 hours per episode, is basically for microphones and a Libsyn-account. This in combination with the closer relationship that they get with listeners and customers make the podcast worth its while. Another benefit to the podcast is the networking effects it has. The guests that Digitala Influencer-podden brings in are high profile, having them associated with Consid serves a branding purpose. Many of the guests can also be seen as potential new clients adding to the benefits of having guests.

4.5.3. Content and production

Consid invites people that are very skilled in digitalization, most often entrepreneurs or CEOs that are digital. The purpose is then for these interviewees to tell their stories, and insights to what digitalization is to them and tips in how to incorporate it. Digitala Influencer-podden is very corporate focused, and mainly revolves around how corporations can be digitalized, how it affects society and to highlight the talent behind it.

The production is mainly planned by Andersson, who invites and book guests, and thereafter creates an interview guideline. During this part of the process both his team and the host have some input as well, but Andersson is responsible. Usually there are 25-40 questions relating to two or three themes that are created. The themes are often regarding who the interviewed person is, as the podcast is profiled to interview relative and skillful people, and the organisation which the interviewee represents. This is in order to offer advice, and learning points to the listeners. Another theme that is commonly handled is what effect the trend or phenomena that is treated in the episode affect society as a whole. The episodes are usually recorded at Consid’s Stockholm office, with Andersson, the host, the guest, and a photographer/technician present. They do not use a third party producer who aids in recording and editing the podcast, as they have an inhouse focus. Previously Andersson did the editing, but after having an intern who took responsibility for that, they hired him to continue on a part time basis. After recording an episode Andersson sends the file to the editor, who then sends it back to Andersson. He does a few edits if needed, and then sends it to the guest for approval, along with the cameraman's photo files. This is both to make sure that the guest is happy with the outcome, and to synchronize future communication after publishing.

The balance between creating educational content, which at the same time is entertaining is considered a challenge. Andersson notes how he has made different tests regarding the questionnaire, and how it's posted. For example, they have tried focusing solely on the guest in the beginning of episodes, which has shown different results based on who the guest is. If the guest is an IT-manager of a lesser known company, people lose interest and stop listening to the episode faster than when those who are more famous visit. This has made them realize that the questions have to be tweaked somewhat depending on who is joining them. Balancing the informational part with entertainment is a difficult task, which is managed by for example using a segment in which they ask five quick, a bit more informal question. This segment also has its own introductional jingle.

4.5.4. Strategy

“Traditionally we’ve worked really, really much with PR and what’s called earned media instead of paid media /.../ Recently we’ve started to aim our focus a little more towards digital marketing.”

- Andersson (2020)

Consid AB has historically used a more traditional approach to marketing, where the focus lied with using local papers for PR. Using press releases and discussion articles they meant to reach out to the local populace. They have 21 offices spread out across Sweden, which have resulted in this more local approach. Recently the focus has shifted toward digital marketing, where they release white papers and similar. Andersson mentions that there is a difference between B2C and B2B, and that their work as a B2B company mostly revolves around making blog posts and other competence developing material. To measure these activities Google Ads is used. Consid has three main target audiences, the first being potential buyers: IT-project leaders, CMOs, CEOs and people in similar positions. The second is potential employees, as there is a large lack of workforce in the IT-sector. Therefore, Consid have to convince mainly junior and senior developers that they should choose to come work for Consid, instead of the other 7-8 companies per day that are leaving job offerings to these developers. Because of this, employer branding is one of the main points. The third target audience is the general public. Consid wants to build their general brand, by extending to the public. The goal here is to create a word of mouth that benefits the company. As a part of the newer digital marketing focus, their two podcasts are a tool to reach primarily buyers and developers. They also work in a similar fashion with the website, and frequently arrange events that are meant to engage these target audiences. Some of these events are angled towards CSR-work, as Consid is working towards an IT-business that's equal, and also towards educating and inspiring young people to learn code and programming. Many events are developed to support these issues.

The podcast is promoted in many different media outlets, and LinkedIn is one of the larger ones to reach the main target audience of buyers. Consid also uses Facebook as this is a forum that Boomers are still very active on, and as most of the target audience is on Chief-level this generation is often the one they want to reach. The company also has a sales team of 40 people that continuously work with these individuals, which leads to Consid having a lot of data surrounding the audience. They also use a newsletter that is sent to both current and potential customers. In this newsletter the podcast is sometimes pushed as well.

Using the company name in the podcast is avoided, even though it has happened at times. One can track the podcast back to Consid by a small logo in a lower corner, as well as the publisher name. The reason for avoiding to talk about Consid in the podcast is that there is a perceived risk that people will think that they just want to sell, and consequently stop listening. The podcast is therefore aimed to be stand-alone.

"Rather half the amount of listeners, if double the amount buys from us."

- Andersson (2020)

Digitala Influencer-podden do have set goals to achieve in the form of number of followers and amount of listeners. The goals are however acting more as a pointer, as they're not actively monitored. Most often they are reviewed during a semi-annual conference with the marketing division. Even though a certain number of listeners is a set goal, Andersson means that having a big reach is not necessarily important, if you do not reach your target audience. A good penetration of the target audience and having fewer listeners is still better than having a substantial number of non-interested people listening.

Measuring the effects of the podcast is somewhat troublesome, as there is data on the number of listenings and followers, as well as demographic data. There is however not any way to measure why, and when people stop listening, which is the kind of data that would be most beneficial. As a result of this, Consid mainly considers the engagement as a testament that they reach the right people. Engagement often comes in the form of listeners who request certain guests or give some kind of feedback.

4.6. Tomas Tränkner

Since 2017 Tomas Tränkner has been self-employed and is running Slipsten Marknadskommunikation AB. He helps businesses with digital communication and exposure and is today specialized towards podcast production, podcasting takes up about 80-90 percent of his time. He also runs the podcast Entrepenörsdriv since 2015 which has been fundamental for his success as a business owner. Through his career he has produced about 2000 podcast episodes, he is on average producing about 300 episodes a year for various organizations. Before starting the podcast he worked as a marketing manager for 15 years.

4.6.1. Timeline

Tränkner started to take an interest in the podcasting format in 2013, he was then working as the marketing manager under his previous employer. He wanted to launch the podcast together with the company, but there were no takers. Podcasting was still not proven as a marketing concept and it was perceived more of a hassle instead of a promising marketing tool. The organization had more of an inside out focus where the products and brand were more important than the people behind it. Two years later he started Entrepenörliv together with Magnus Johansson where they cover topics within entrepreneurship. They thought of a few topics that they wanted to cover, and their intent was to do a couple of episodes covering those topics. What started off as just an idea to try out the podcasting format has turned into a big success, today they have released more than 400 episodes and have a big audience.

Eventually podcasting led to Tränkner starting his own business and becoming self-employed. He was approached by an organization wanting help with producing their own podcast which eventually led to him starting his own business Slipsten Marknadskommunikation AB in 2017. The company started off offering multiple services within marketing and communication but has now narrowed to focus mainly on producing podcasts for businesses. Tränkner offers services covering everything from production to hosting the shows. The concept proved successful and business started to take off.

4.6.2. Content and production

Much of the knowledge Tränkner possesses and uses in his own podcast is also valid for most podcasts. A good place to start when doing a podcast is to address basic questions like what should we talk about, who should we talk with, how long should each episode be, a considerable amount of thought has to go towards this. What to talk about depends heavily on the company itself and has to go in line with their business. It is also important to know towards who you are aiming the podcast towards and adjust your content based on that. You can never decide fully who will listen to the podcast, but to always bear in mind who you are target will help with reaching the right people. The aim is for the listener to feel like this is something meant for me.

"*Success is dependent on two things; the first is to have good content and the second is how good you are at promoting it.*"

- Tränkner (2020)

Having guests in podcasts is a common practice for most podcasts. One challenge to making a good episode with a guest is to make them talk in a relaxed and casual manner. The goal is to forget the mics are there, this is when a podcast becomes the most enjoyable to listen to. If the host can manage that chances are the guest would share things they rarely ever talk about. This requires a certain level of interview technique and is something that comes with practice and experience, sticking to the thread and the ability to push the conversation forward are skills that come into play. Actively listening to what the person has to say and to show with all senses that you are involved in what they are saying is crucial for the guest to feel comfortable and enjoy talking, and is also important when asking follow up questions. Sometimes you also may have to be thorough, let the person talk but also help them find the balance between talking enough and not talking too much and off topic.

4.6.3. Perceived benefits

Podcasting is a very scaled down and personal form of communication. The focus often lies on the persons, not the company or their product offering. As a listener you get to connect on a more personal level, you get a presence that you would not with other media forms. It is not a text, it is not a movie, it is not an image. It has also served a networking purpose for Tränkner, through the podcast he has had the opportunity to meet with people that he never would have imagined getting in contact with, both well known and not so well known. Another benefit is the cost and time aspect, from his previous experience as a marketing manager he knows that many marketing efforts are very consuming both in regards to time and money. Podcasts on the other hand are not draining much resources in neither aspect. This is one of the reasons why he views the entry barriers to podcasting as low.

Many of the companies that reach out to Tränkner want to launch a podcast primarily for employer branding purposes. A podcast is a great way to display who you are, Tränkner describes it as a self portrait. By listening to the podcast a potential new employee can sit in peace and quiet take in what the company has to offer. If only one or two persons that have listened to the podcast get a liking for the company and end up working for them that would potentially singlehandedly make the whole podcast series worth producing. Showcasing who you are can also provide support for sales functions. Podcasting has a similar effect in this regard, it draws traffic and potential buyers can get further into the purchasing process by listening to certain episodes.

4.6.3. Strategy

When asked about the importance of reach he describes it is reaching the right people rather than reaching a large audience. Tränkner describes it as if there are only 70 people listening to one episode but those are the right 70 people that is excellent. Most client Tränkner work has a very specific niche, it is often easier to reach out when having a specific niche than to aim wide.

"I'm not very interested in gaining large amounts of listeners, what matters is what happens to those who listen and those who participate."

- Tränkner (2020)

A success factor is continuity and patience, it takes a long time to gain results. The people behind the podcast are therefore very important, passionate people are like the engine that keeps the podcast going. Many organizations launch a podcast and are keeping up for a couple of months and what then often happens is they lose track and they forget their original purpose. They are not willing to put in the amount of time that it takes. One potential reason why many choose to give up on podcasting is the lack of measures of effect. Those with a financial incentive want to know the outcome of the podcast, but the problem is there are not always an answer to that. Tränkner thinks this short-term reasoning is wrong and proposes other terms of measurement instead of attempting to measure effect with financial numbers. What is important is to have a periodicity and a continuous and constant process, having the ability to do so can turn into a competitive advantage. Instead listening to the recipients and to yourself are important indicators. What feedback are you receiving from the listeners and what feeling do you have yourself?

Episodes can be divided into two categories: evergreens and current episodes. Evergreens are episodes in which content remains relevant through time whereas current episodes rely on current events. Evergreens are beneficial in the sense that they remain relevant and can attract traffic for longer periods of time, the effect occurs over longer time which makes it more difficult to measure its reach. Contrary, the effects are more immediate with a current podcast but are not likely to draw traffic over time. Being current relies on publishing soon after recording, which is not necessary with the evergreen episodes.

4.7 Summary of empirical findings

Table 4. Summary of empirical findings.

	Consid	**Ericsson**	**Exsitec**	**Pulsen Omsorg**	**Sogeti**
Perceived benefits	Branding, employer branding and networking. Cost efficiency.	Awareness and demand generation. Cost efficiency.	Employer branding and relationship building. Cost efficiency.	Visibility and branding. Cost efficiency.	Personal branding. Cost efficiency.
Production	Entirely in-house	3rd party involved	3rd party involved	Entirely in-house	Entirely in-house
Strategy	Distinct strategies	Distinct strategies	Semi strategic	Semi strategic	Semi strategic

5. Analysis

In this section, the empirical findings have been integrated with theory and analyzed in the order of to answer the research questions. The analysis follows the same thematic structure as the empirical presentation; Perceived benefits; Content and production, and Strategy. Each theme is in turn divided into several subcategories.

5.1 Perceived Benefits

5.1.1. Time and cost efficiency

An important aspect to consider in your marketing is making the most out of the money spent and should affect what communication channels to use (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2016). The relatively cheap cost of producing podcasts is an appealing benefit among the case companies. The small investment makes the entry barrier low and the podcast is not seen as a big financial risk. For instance, Widesjö did not perceive money as an obstacle when first launching Exsitecpodden, what was instead needed was instead enthusiasm and somebody to run in. Having low operational costs are also important when evaluating the marketing effect that podcasting has. If the podcast cannot prove its success in financial figures it can be seen as unsuccessful, however having low costs associated with it puts less pressure on it. Arousell mentions that the expected outcome has to be weighted in relation to its cost. If Omsorgspodden were demanding loads of money to put out it would likely have more strict requirements to fulfill. This perception is also shared by Kallblad who believes it is wise to not spend too much on a concept before it has proven it worth, otherwise there is a risk of it being terminated.

As Andersson mentions, the investment is more in regard to time and what that time could have been used towards instead of podcasting. This appears to be a common perception as Exsitec are also facing the same problem with Exsitecpodden, one way for them to handle this is by recording a number of episodes every six weeks and then releasing one at a time to consume as little of Kallblad's time as possible. This method has been fairly troubleless for them that have a podcast not dependent on being current. Using this method is dependent on the type of content produced, for podcasts relying on being current in time it is not likely possible as the content could already be irrelevant before published. This is one benefit that an evergreen episode has over a current episode.

Similar to Andersson, Tränkner also believes the essence of time has to be compared to what the time else could have been spent on. However, when comparing to other popular content strategies, like for example blog posting, his perception is that podcasting is more time efficient. The time essence might not always be an issue however as many of the respondents put in the hours to podcasting outside of business hours. For Effekten and Omsorgspodden this is the case, the hosts seem to view podcasting just as much as a hobby as they see it as a marketing tool. From a business standpoint this is ideal in regard to both cost and time and show that having passionate people involved is a great success factor.

Keller (2016) mentions that cost and coverage should be put against each other in order to determine success, however the empirical finding indicates that coverage in terms of a large audience may not be an ideal measurement when it comes to podcasting. Instead a more appropriate measure could be accurate targeting, this is covered further in chapter 5.3.3.

5.1.2. Active listening

Content marketing has been a response among many companies towards consumers' changed approach to traditional marketing (Matteo & Dal Zotto 2015). Consumers today expect to decide themselves when to absorb information (Court et al. 2009 in Batra & Keller 2016). Podcasting can therefore be part of a broader content strategy in order to counter consumers' more and more critical reception of traditional marketing. As Kallblad mentions people choose themselves when they want to listen to podcasts, this in itself is an identification that they are paying attention. This aspect is highly important as consumers are more receptive towards information in their active phase (Court et al. 2009 in Batra & Keller 2016), increasing the likeliness that the target is receiving and comprehending the message from a podcast compared to other more disturbive marketing means. The consumer can then be said to be earned instead of borrowed (Hollebeek & Macky 2019).

It is a difficulty for the case companies to know precisely how close attention the listener is paying, the podcast platforms offering analysis tools are limited. Although it is difficult for the case companies to evaluate this, previous research suggests that podcast listeners are typically well engaged, as much as 80-90 percent of content usually gets through (Katz 2018). The positive feedback that many of the respondents mention could be one sign that supports this.

Just like Rowles and Rodgers suggest (2019) podcasting can also be an answer to break through the existing content saturation that is online. Podcasting tends to go deeper into topics than other mediums, Kallblad explains that since podcasting is meant for a niche target audience rather than the masses, they do not have to trivialise complexe topics. By going further in-depth podcasts can then potentially break through the marketing noise by reaching the most engaged consumers that are seeking rich content. Another benefit that helps separate podcast marketing from other strategies is its ease of consumption, the fact that you can listen to podcasts almost whenever and while doing other things gives it an edge compared to reading or watching (Rowles & Rogers 2019).

5.1.3. Building relationships

Managing customer relationships tends to be increasingly important in a B2B setting, business is often a continuous process hence relationships tend to go deeper (Popovici & Muhcină 2018). By distributing and sharing data and knowledge, which all researched podcasts do, stronger buyer-seller relationships can be achieved (Mora Cortez & Johnston 2019). This goes well in line with Stegemann's beliefs; he thinks the reason why a client chooses them is because they feel trust and that they view Exsitec as something more than just a company. They strive for long relationships where the client feels they get more out of the partnership than just the service provided. The podcast is one tool they use to create added value. Pulsen Omsorg's Omsorgpodden is also seen as a tool to develop relationships with their buyers. Something they find extra important due to the lengthy processes that public procurement entails.

One thing shared between typical B2B relationships and podcasting is the longoity. As Tränkner mentions podcasting is a long going commitment and not something rewarding quick success. This perception is shared by Hallgren, in order for them to initiate a new project the long-term aspect is important. Launching a project and not finishing it does not look good. Widesjö also shares the belief that podcasting is a platform best suited for a continuous message.

Building trust is challenging in a digital environment (Li, Pienkowski, Van Moorsel & Smith 2014), but as it is highly important in B2B it should not be neglected. Physical cues such as body language are typically lacking in digital contexts, with podcasting some physical cues are brought back, such as hearing the voice and how people express themselves which can have a positive impact that the listener gets from the hosts and since also the company behind. Listening to someone talk feels more intimate than reading (Rowles & Rogers 2019), that podcasting adds a personal touch that is lacking in other marketing outlets is a perception shared among the respondents. This is much thanks to the human elements portrayed and also because people typically interact with podcasts over long periods of time (Rowles & Rogers 2019). The hosts in the podcasts are therefore important, Hallgren mentions how Arousell and Thorell being happy, positive and energetic persons are key factors for creating the personal atmosphere. The personal touch in podcasting helps strengthen the trustworthiness, which in turn helps building a strong relationship (Li, Pienkowski, Van Moorsel & Smith 2014).

Many of the podcasts bring guests from their clients and suppliers. Mora Cortez and Johnston (2019) bring up mutual entanglements as a value creating process toward buyer-seller relationships. Podcasts are a great platform for doing so as partners can be brought as guests to discuss business and other topics in a more casual manner then they usually might. Podcasting is not only a tool to maintain and strengthen relationships, it is also a potential to create new ones. Tränkner mentions how podcasting opens up opportunities to meet with people that the companies elsewise would never have encountered. Andersson mentions the networking possibilities, many of their guests are both current and potential new clients. The networking effects are not something that all case companies actively mention, but it is likely that most benefit from them as bringing in guests is common among all podcasts. Many tend to focus on their own employees and existing partners, the possibility of establishing new contacts through the podcast is an opportunity that should be highlighted more.

5.1.4. Branding

The interviewed companies all view their podcasts as valuable to branding. Hallgren for example mentions how it increases visibility of the brand, and is an additional, personal and soft, way to connect to Pulsen Omsorg. Berthelson and Talking IoT with Ericsson is using the podcast to brand Ericsson as a knowledgeable partner. Andersson too is stressing the podcast's importance in brand building, and how it is a way for Consid to be seen with successful people which strengthens their brand. Through Simmons' (2007) Four Pillars of i-Branding every company is also, either deliberately or indeliberately, following the criterias for successful i-Branding. Podcast as a digital medium is not entirely interactive, as it does not enable a continuous dialogue with the listener. However, the interviewed companies have clear contact information where listeners can give feedback or make contact for other reasons. In addition, websites and social media presence facilitate a continuous dialogue with listeners even though it is not through the podcast itself, which still aids in the strengthening of brands. As such, podcasts can act as a complement to other internet tools to achieve an interactivity that promotes the brand.

One of the most important steps to create valuable content in a podcast is understanding the target audience. As Tränkner stated, one can never choose who is going to listen to your podcast, but one can design the content to attract the desired audience. This is also highlighted by Simmons (2007) who argues that without knowing your customer, there is a risk for discrepancy between the produced content and the needs of the customer. By having a sound customer intelligence there is not only a larger chance of producing valuable content, but also interactive content that engages listeners. The creation of valuable content that is interesting to listeners is coherent through every company interviewed. Actually, stating what is valuable content is highly contextual, and is therefore to be decided by every creator. Therefore, the ability to know or anticipate what the customer wants to hear is of importance for these customers. However, Widesjö stated that the content of Exsitecpodden is not based on what they think listeners want to hear, but rather aimed at anyone that is interested in Exsitec. The focus is therefore not to adapt the content, but rather talk about Exsitec, its employees and processes. Of course, to some it is still valuable, but the content is not based on customer knowledge. According to Simmons' (2007) pillars of i-Branding this might be a mistake and affect the brand negatively. But from a DCM and relationship perspective, this sort of transparency of the company can create trust and in extension strong relationships with different stakeholders. The concept also seemed to have created value not only for Exsitec, but also for the fund analysts that had used the podcast in their research, meaning that even though the podcast is not based on what stakeholders want, it still offers value and can have a beneficial effect on the brand.

The podcasts of the companies interviewed were all seen as complementary in their marketing communications. By offering a different type of content delivery it is seen as a medium that customers can use while on the move or doing other tasks, which they wouldn't necessarily be able to by reading a blog post. Arousell also mentioned how it can be a suitable medium for those who perhaps do not like to read or view specific content. By including the podcast in marketing communications, it is therefore seen as a way to broaden the potential reach. The podcasts are also marketed through a variety of different tools, for example websites, newsletters and social media posts, creating synergetic effects that together improves the branding process. As Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2016) explained, digital contexts offer less physical cues, and are quite intangible which makes branding very important in today's marketplace. Podcasts might aid in this process as it is perceived as a more personal and soft way of making contact with stakeholders. By having the company represented by employees that together talk about interesting topics there is a larger chance to show the personality of the company, which might help increase the perceived brand value.

5.1.5. Employer branding

Both Exsitec and Consid use their podcasting with a clear intent of employer branding. For Pulsen Omsorg employer branding was not an intended purpose, but as they would sometimes send an episode to someone during a recruitment process it appears that it also serves them in an employer branding perspective. It appears to be a common incentive as Tränkner a large proportion of his clients wishes to use podcasting for the same purpose. Both Exsitec and Consid mention the shortage of staff within their field and that podcasting is one of the tools they use to attract new personnel. This in combination with the increased competitiveness in recruitment that Gulati (2019) describes put pressure on businesses to differentiate themselves and more actively pursue talent.

Recruiting the right people is fundamental to any business (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, Parment, Dyhre & Lutz 2017). Podcasting appears to serve three functions in the recruitment process; to draw attention from new prospects, to aid in an ongoing recruitment process and to receive a better match between the company and employee. The case companies use podcasts to showcase who they are, as Tränkner describes it a podcast is a sort of self-portrait. Allowing employees to express their own personal opinions of what work is like typically leaves positive impressions among the receiver (Gulati 2009). This allows for the listener to get a deeper insight into what working at the company could be like and actually listen to some potential future colleagues and their perception of working there. Second, during the recruitment process the company can point towards certain podcast episodes relevant to the field of the applicant, giving them a much better understanding of their role. This can either make the position seem more attractive, increasing the likeliness of the applicant accepting a job offer, or it can have the opposite effect that they realize it is not a perfect fit. Kallblad mentions how they put much effort into their recruitment process, it is therefull important to attract the right people that end up working for hopefully a long time. A podcast could be a tool to avoid recruiting people that would not fit into the work environment by allowing the listener to witness a glimpse of it before working there, something that is otherwise difficult.

5.2 Content and production

5.2.1. Content

A fundamental part of DCM is the shift of the marketing approach from selling to helping, this requires other methods of providing content compared to traditional marketing efforts (Holliman & Rowley 2014). The content of podcasts is therefore of utmost importance. Of course, every podcast may have different goals and topics but the core has to be content that is valuable to the listeners. Changing markets with buyers who to a larger degree ignore selling channels (Jefferson & Tanton 2015), have forced companies like the ones interviewed to change focus. Tränkner stresses that you can never choose who is going to listen to a podcast, but you can always design your content to attract a certain group of people. However, there is also a great information clutter to break through in order to reach those you want to reach (Jefferson & Tanton 2015; Opereana & Vineran 2015). Thus, developing such content can be challenging and heavily put pressure on companies to know their buyers in order to design content that offers value. Every company investigated during this study had a clear picture of their target audience, and a focus on distributing valuable and interesting content to said audience.

As reported by Internetstiftelsen (2019) and Newman et al. (2019), many listeners are searching for entertainment in podcasts. This might create an issue as many B2B-podcasts are nisched into certain more informational subjects, such as Consid's digitalization and Pulsen Omsorg's focus on digitalization in the municipalital care sector. Both Consid and Pulsen Omsorg try to tackle this by introducing more entertaining elements, such as *Five quick favourite questions* and *Five quick either-ors* respectively. The purpose of this is to relieve often formal subjects, which could enable them to somewhat compete with entertainment podcasts. To Berthelsen, the content that is published is listened to by those that are interested in the subject, thus finding it entertaining to listen to and therefore these aspects are not opposites that need to be managed. This is more similar to Widesjö and Exsitecpodden's reasoning, that since the podcast is directed towards employer branding, it's mostly employees or potential employees that might be interested, and also entertained by the podcast. However, Exsitec's Digitalsmart and it's focus on covering topics related to digitalization is demanding more knowledge of what the listeners are interested in, and designing the content from that. The content is therefore not only designed in the same way for either podcast, even though they are both from the same company.

While Andersson, Hallgren, and Berthelsen stress the need to keep podcasts free of marketing messages, other than those that are passively mediating that the distributor is knowledgeable in their field of work; Tränkner finds it suitable to actually do so. The reasoning behind not using these kinds of messages is related to the fact that it might scare people away. Basically, by having clear selling intentions in a podcast people might stop listening, which correlates to current literature on content marketing and inbound strategies (Jefferson & Tanton 2015; Operana & Vineran 2015). Tränkner on the other hand argues that podcasts actually can be a great way to communicate promotions or other messages, like call-to-actions to rate the podcast or write comments to create engagement. Creating engagement is one of the main antecedents for DCM (Hollebeek & Macky 2019; Järvinen & Taiminen 2016), and calls to action like liking or sharing the podcast might be an applicable technique to drive such engagement. Such calls to actions might not be perceived as direct marketing messages, as they are more adapted to increase the spread and awareness of the podcast itself, rather than services or products offered by the company behind the podcast. However, including promotions of upcoming events is likely to be perceived as direct marketing messages, and it is therefore essential for companies to have set guidelines whether or not such communication is to be used. Even though it might cause a drop in listeners, it is also a way to achieve awareness of such events, and as such it is up to each company to decide what route to take, based on their own goals.

A recurring theme from the interviews is that of passion. Tränkner, Hallgren, Jaani and Kallblad all mention the importance of passion when running a podcast. The importance of it seems to be stemming from a need for continuity, and a need for people involved to be driven to develop the podcasts. Since the hardship of measuring efficiency of podcasts, personal passion and fire seems to be one of the factors that can keep a podcast going. This could mean that even though you know your customers, and you have perfected the content produced, a lack of passion might hold you back. As such, the most important part might not be what you talk about, but how passionate you are about it. Kallblad mentions how Exsitec had Mobilpodden as a podcast before the introduction of Exsitecpodden. Like most other companies interviewed, Mobilpodden was also run by employees that had a passion or interest for the medium. Mobilpodden was however discontinued when one of these employees left the workplace. The same might happen to Omsorgspodden as Arousell is leaving, even though there is an interest to continue its production. When compared to other tasks or positions that exist in companies, they are most often filled by a new person, however this does not seem to be the case with podcasts. This signals that the driveforce of individuals might be one of the most important parts of producing a podcast. Many of the podcasts are also produced on top of the employees' other responsibilities, and have a side project status, further complicating filling lost positions, as it might be hard to convince others to take on such a challenge.

5.2.2. Production

The production methods vary heavily between the case companies. Pulsen Omsorg has an entirely in-house production, where Thorell and Arousell manage all planning, producing, editing and publishing, whereas both Ericsson and Exsitec uses a third part actor to help with audio, editing and such. The reasoning behind this is different and closely tied to the status of the podcast internally. At Pulsen Omsorg the podcast is run as a side project where time is taken out of the hosts leisure time, and production gear is minimal. However, this also means that the organisation doesn't have any larger investments that put additional pressure on efficiency and goal setting, which also suits the two hosts as they are engaged in this on an entertaining level as well. Hallgren states that they get a different kind of visibility, and in combination with the low cost of production this small amount of resources might be just right for this organisation. In contrast, Ericsson is however more structured and goal oriented in their podcast and uses a third part producer to manage sound and editing. This can lead to a more pleasant listening experience where risk for issues like audio imbalance, like Pulsen Omsorg has experienced, is reduced. The importance of sound quality is also highlighted by Tränkner's experience of the returning buyer that couldn't manage to keep the sound quality high when trying to produce it by themselves.

5.3. Strategy

5.3.1. Entry barriers and maturity

Rowles & Rogers (2019) mention perceived high entry barriers as one reason why podcasting has not been much utilized previously. The empirical findings suggest this is a misconception among businesses. As multiple of the respondents tell, there is not much needed other than a pair of microphones and someone willing to do it. All companies seem to have some thoughts in regards to format and content before launch, but these ideas often continue to develop after the launch. While the entry barriers are low there appears to be a learning curve regarding audio quality, time efficiency and communication skills. These skills can be improved over time, much by learning by doing. This is the most noticeable when the involved has no previous experience. Having many parties involved can be one strategy to counter this, as many companies run multiple podcasts there are in some cases the possibility to take help from others in the company that are experienced. Another option is having an external producer, could be a way to skip the learning curve as they help out with many of the aspects that many might struggle with initially.

The learning curve appears to be a continuous process. Even the more mature podcasts appear to have ideas of how to improve and take new steps, both in regards to content and strategy. Some of these ideas being podcast farms, live podcasts, better integration with other marketing practices and distribution. These ideas show that podcasting is still a new marketing tool and the case companies are still finding new and innovative ways to improve. The data analysis tools offered by podcast platforms have been lacking in the past, and some of the respondents are still disappointed in the tools offered. If podcast marketing continues to flourish, it would be likely that the podcast platforms would find ways to innovate to attract producers. Having better tools for analysis would help businesses in further developing their podcast strategies.

5.3.2 Strategic intent

The case companies have a various degree of strategic intent towards their podcasting. While Consid and Ericsson havemore clear cut strategic incentives Exsitec and Pulsen Omsorg appear to use podcasting as much for enjoyment as for they do in strategic purposes. This is noticeable as Consid and Ericsson have more distinct goals and clear structures, which is likely to be beneficial when the aim is to maximize the effect by having the best coverage in relation to cost (Keller 2016). On the flip side, having a less strategic and more casual approach can put less pressure on outcome. With less time, effort and money invested there is also less emphasis on return of investment, just like Hallgren mentions is the case for Omsorgspodden.

Perhaps it is that not being very strategic can be a strategy in itself. The benefits of building a strong and personal relationship within B2B has previously been discussed (Popovici & Muhcină 2018, Rowles & Rogers 2019). It could be that not thinking strategy is the best approach towards this, as Kallblad said; by allowing themselves to do podcasts that do not talk about anything in particular they expose who they truly are, the people behind the company are exposed. Excessive strategy and control can also be perceived as something that might suffocate the passion that is often much needed according to Arousell and Thorell.

One possibility for companies is to use multiple podcasts with different intents. Exsitec, Consid, Ericsson and Sogeti all also have different podcasts for different purposes. Exsitec for example have Exsitecpodden for employer branding and Digitalsmart for relationship building, this allows for them to send different messages through different podcasts while staying true to each podcasts purpose. Like Kallblad mentions, this is favorable in order to stay coherent and not confuse the listener of the message.

5.3.3. Measuring success

One common challenge the companies seem to face is how to measure success. First of all what goals the companies set varies, second of all many of these goals are difficult to evaluate. In terms of listeners some are paying attention more closely than others. For Pulsen Omsorg they do not have any goals but are thinking that they maybe should, for Exsitec they do not either but are thinking about setting some and for Consid they do have goals regarding number of listeners but are not very strict regarding follow up. Keller (2016) suggests coverage should be measured by the number of target consumers reached and how much overlap there are between different marketing tools. This goes against Tränkners beliefs that accurate targeting is better than reaching wide. The empirical findings indicate that businesses do not use podcasting to reach out to large demographics, but rather to a niche audience. The metaphor Jaani uses is well suited, podcasting is more of a sniper rifle than a shotgun. As 45 percent of the Swedish population do not listen to podcasts (Internetstiftelsen 2019), this makes sense. Instead of aiming to reach the masses, podcasts are more well suited for example building strong relationships and delivering a continuous message to a smaller but more dedicated crowd.

As suggested an indicator of success could be what feedback that is received rather than the amount of listeners. One example of this was when Kallblad got in touch with the group of fund investors, another being when Pulsen Omsorg got the opportunity to do a live podcast at an exhibition (although it is currently being postponed due to the Corona pandemic). Both prove as excellent examples that reaching the right person can be very valuable, leading to business opportunities they might not have had if it was not because of the podcasts. Therefore, an appropriate change to Keller's question "*How many target market consumers are reached by the communication options?*" would be "*What proportion of the target market consumers are reached by the communication options?*".

6. Conclusion

The reason why B2B companies choose to incorporate podcasting in their marketing mix differs somewhat from company to company. There are some benefits to podcasting that many of the case companies have mutually in common, the five main ones being identified as cost & time efficiency, active listening, building relationships, branding and employer branding. The resources in terms of both time and costs are perceived as small compared to other marketing means, this leads to companies putting less constraints on podcasting. A second benefit podcast has to other marketing means is in the way it is consumed, podcasts can be listened to at almost all times and while doing other things, as the listener also chooses to listen to the podcast themselves they have an active consumption approach. The consumer is earned rather than borrowed. Third, podcasts also play a role in building and maintaining relationships as it is a personal form of communication, this in which is of high importance within a B2B environment. Fourth, podcasts is a media that aids in branding efforts. It enables a different kind of visibility that is more personal and softer in touch. Additionally, it is also a good medium to promote the producing company's knowledge in their field, instilling trust to their brand. In combination with other marketing channels it is also seen as a way to broaden the reach of the marketing communications programme and the ability to strengthen brand perceptions. Fifth, podcast are used in employer branding purposes to help attract prospects, aid in the recruitment process and ensure better fits between employer and employee,

How companies choose to produce podcasts varies in the sense that some choose to do it entirely on their own while some use external help. Both options offer different advantages and disadvantages. Doing it internally might result in reduced quality of sound and flow of the podcast, while it still offers less costs and more flexibility. Hiring an external expert on the other hand increases the chance of good sound quality and flow of conversation, in trade for higher costs and lower flexibility. In regard to content, the companies tend to focus on creating meaning and value for the listeners and/or having a casual approach to showcase who the persons are. There are some challenges in how to balance the need for entertainment and distributing knowledge, but some companies reason that their podcasts are designed to distribute knowledge and attract those who are entertained by said knowledge. Therefore, the balance is also depending on what target audience one is trying to reach. If you are trying to reach the masses, there might have to be influences of general entertainment in order to appeal to many listeners and compete with entertainment podcasts. If there is a specific audience that is to be addressed with specific information, the need for such entertainment is not as big. The businesses producing the B2B podcasts investigated are also hesitant to include marketing messages in the podcasts as it might deter the audience from listening, as the DCM literature also suggests.

Some view podcasting in a strategic sense first, while others seem to use podcasting just as much for their own enjoyment as they do for strategic purposes. There are challenges in regard to measuring success. However, those challenges do not appear to be very problematic. As the costs are low with podcasting the companies can have a fairly casual attitude towards measuring its success, this is especially apparent with the companies taking on a less strategic approach. Reaching the right people are more important that reaching the masses, feedback and outcome can therefore be more appropriate measures than amount of listeners

6.1 Further research

This thesis has taken on a qualitative approach where all the empirical findings derive from the perspective of the businesses. It would be interesting to use a qualitative approach focusing on the other end, the listeners, to see how they view podcast marketing. It would also be of interest to investigate podcasts through Keller's (2016) 7Cs in its entirety. This study was solely focused on the first two Cs since the framework in full demands a greater insight to each company's full marketing strategies. This was not applicable due to this study's purpose but would be of significance to further deepen our understanding of podcasts within B2B marketing.

Podcasting is still a new marketing concept; it appears that many companies are still discovering and reviewing the medium. Since there is little research done within the field this thesis has taken on an explorative approach to understand the basics of podcast marketing within B2B. Going into the future, it would be of interest to go further in depth regarding the strategic approaches. As podcasting platforms eventually start to offer better tools for data analysis and podcasting get more established as a marketing tool it would be of interest to go further in depth on the strategic processes.

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Appendix I
Interview Guide*

Varför podcasting?
Hur ser er marknadsföringsstrategi ut i stort? Vilka andra verktyg använder ni förutom podcasts?
Hur är er podcast integrerad med övriga marknadsföringsinsatser? (Olika målgrupper/information för olika medier)
Ni driver podden/poddarna ___, hur kommer det sig att ni startade den? Berätta om resan?
Känner ni att ni får ut något med er podcast som ni inte får ut med andra marknadsföringsstrategier?
Vice versa, vad får ni inte ut med er podcast?

Innehållet i podcasten
Med era egna ord, vad handlar podcasten om?
Vilka budskap vill ni få ut med podden?
Hur resonerar ni kring skapandet av innehåll, har ni några tydliga strategier?
Hur ser ni på balansen mellan vikten av att skapa underhållande innehåll, samt att få ut ert budskap/kunskap? Anser ni det vara samma sak?

Bakomliggande arbete
Hur fungerar produktionen av podcasten? Vilka personer/roller är involverade?
Via vilka plattformar distribuerar ni podcasten? (Acast, Spotify osv.)
Hur har ert arbete med podcast utvecklats med tiden? Vilka lärdomar har ni dragit?
Vilka framtida möjligheter ser ni? Har ni några tankar på hur podcasten ska utvecklas?
Hur resurskrävande är det att driva podcast för er?

Målgrupp
Vilken målgrupp vill ni nå med er podcast?
Hur marknadsför ni och lockar lyssnare till er podcast?
Vilka når ni ut till för tillfället? Hur håller ni koll på vilka ni når ut till?
Hur tar era mottagare emot er podcast? Vad får ni för feedback?

Mätning och uppföljning
Hade ni vid införandet tydliga mål med vad ni ville få ut av podcasten?
Har ni nått dessa mål?
Har dessa mål förändrats under tidens gång? Hur ser de ut idag?
Hur mäter ni de mål ni satt upp?

* For some interviews a number of questions were changed/added/removed to better fit the case company. The interview with Tomas Tränkner did not follow the same guide as he had a separate role.

Appendix II

Information letter

Hej!

Vi heter Arvid Lögdberg och Oscar Wahlqvist och vi är båda civilekonomstudenter vid Linköpings Universitet. Du får detta brev eftersom du gått med på att delta i vår studie, och i brevet kommer det framgå vad studien syftar till och vad det innebär att delta.

Det övergripande syftet med studien är att undersöka podcastens roll inom marknadsföring i en B2B-kontext. Podcasts har stigit snabbt i användande sedan begreppet myntades 2004. Svenska internetstiftelsen visar att 55 % av Sveriges internetanvändare lyssnade på podcasts år 2019, en fördubbling mot år 2015. Trots detta saknas det i stor utsträckning forskning om hur detta medium kan användas inom marknadsföring och då främst content marketing. Dessutom använder en mängd B2B-företag podcasts som en kommunikationskanal. Denna studie vill därför belysa området för att se vilka incitament det finns till att använda sig av en podcast, hur man arbetar med dessa rent strategiskt, samt hur den integreras med övriga marknadsstrategier.

Ditt deltagande i studien kommer att innehålla en intervju som kommer ta ca. 45 minuter att genomföra. En semistrukturerad intervjuguide kommer att användas där du som deltagare kommer få svara öppet utefter fasta teman, såsom Varför podcast, Strategiskt arbete och liknande. Intervjun genomförs via överenskommet media. Deltagandet är helt frivilligt och kan avbrytas närsomhelst. Informationen som insamlas kommer heller inte användas till annat än forskning, och förvaras på ett sätt så att endast vi har åtkomst till denna. Företagen och intervjupersonerna har möjlighet att vara anonyma ifall så önskas. Ni kommer att tillfrågas ifall det är okej att samtalet spelas in.

Studien kommer att genomföras med Vetenskapsrådets forskningsetiska principer inom humanistisk-samhällsvetenskaplig forskning som ramverk. Vi kommer därför förhålla oss till informationskravet, samtyckeskravet, konfidentialitetskravet och nyttjandekravet.

Vänligen

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