



The Effects of Having a Presence in Social Media

Swedish advertising agencies' awareness of social
media and its contributing opportunities and risks

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Subject: Communication

Level and semester: Bachelor's Thesis,
Spring 2013

Abstract

Emerging from traditional marketing platforms in the early millennium is a brand new marketing form called social media. Having a presence in social media is a growing part of marketing communication and it gives companies a voice and a means to converse with their existing and prospective customers. Social media is starting to become a great tool for businesses to develop and maintain strong relationships with customers and is therefore a vital platform for organizations to communicate with their customers. Having a presence in social media will require businesses to be aware of the opportunities and risks that come with using the medium. Not knowing how to use the new channels and the accompanying technique while launching different social media channels can be highly unsuccessful for the business. Learning how to communicate with customers when using social media channels is therefore crucial for a business' success in that area.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of having a presence in social media for business-to-business companies, by focusing on the opportunities and risks. Three research questions are developed, based on the literature review. A deductive approach has been applied followed by a qualitative research with a semi-structured form, focusing on the advertising industry. Furthermore, a case study strategy has been carried out with four different advertising agencies located in Sweden.

This study reveals that industry professionals believe that social media is a vital platform for brands to be present in because it allows them to keep contact with current and potential customers. They believe in the magnitude of being able to communicate and interact with people online and how that interaction can lead to new strong relationships. Furthermore, the research shows that advertising agencies have a deep understanding of what a social media can bring them in terms of creating prosperity for their businesses and generate awareness towards their brands and their work.

Finally, the study terminates that having a presence in social media can provide the agencies with more positive than negative effects by gaining a great deal of success and resulting in greater campaign and brand awareness.

Keywords: Business-to-Business, Social media, Social presence, Opportunities, Risks

Acknowledgements

This dissertation was executed as our bachelor thesis during our last semester at the Marketing program in the spring of 2013. The process of writing the thesis has been exceedingly knowledgeable and educational due to the subject matter being new and unexplored for us. The experience has been significant and has provided us with a deeper understanding of marketing and more specifically within the field of social media. The choice of conducting a qualitative research approach has provided us with a deeper understanding of the opportunities and risks with having a presence in social media for business-to-business companies. The semi-structured interviews facilitated the aim to acquire an insight from the perspective of industry professionals. Overall, the process of writing the thesis has been enlightening and has strengthened our confidence to work within the field of marketing in the future. The opportunity to be engaged in a large project has also given us practical experience in how to manage the development of a plan with a limited amount of time.

The process of managing this project could not have been achievable without the support from a number of people. We would like to thank our tutor Dan Halvarsson who has directed and guided us onto the right path during the process of developing and creating a structure to the thesis. We would also like to thank our examiner Dr. Rana Mostaghel who has supported us throughout the research process and encouraged us to improve and grow the quality of our work. Thanks to Dr. Magnus Hultman for important feedback and advice, and the participants in the pre-testing phase as well. We also appreciate the help from all our fellow students during the process of writing the dissertation. And last but not least, we like to thank all four advertising agencies who made the study possible by sharing their knowledge and professional experience with us.

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May 2013

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1. Introduction

The first chapter depicts the emergence of a new marketing medium, namely social media. This chapter argues the opportunities business-to-business companies can gain in utilizing social media. Thereafter, it discusses the potential risks for companies in having a presence in social media. Finally, the purpose of the study is presented and the chapter concludes with a justification for the delimitations and an outline of the thesis.

1.1 Having a Presence in Social Media

Managing a brand and being able to promote and market it successfully is clearly vital to the prosperity of the business (Campbell et al. 2011). The amount of platforms existing today can seem overwhelming and the choice of which ones to use when deciding to have a social presence should be well thought out (ibid). Emerging from traditional marketing platforms in the early millennium was a brand new marketing platform called social media (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; Mangold and Faulds 2009; Ramsay 2010). The social media platform contains several channels that are associated with user generated content and web 2.0, the founding blocks of the social media platform (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010).

Having a presence in social media is a growing part of marketing communication (Trainor 2012). It gives companies a voice and a means to converse with their existing and prospective customers (Nair and Subramaniam 2011). Social media is starting to become a great tool for businesses to develop and maintain strong relationships with customers (Trainor 2012) and according to Picazo-Vela et al. (2012), all types of organizations use social media as a platform to communicate with their customers.

Being present on social media can give companies a greater sense of control of their brands (Nair and Subramaniam 2011; Ramsay 2010). The amount of consumers using social media, while avoiding traditional sources of advertising such as TV, newspapers and radio, are growing in numbers – which indicates the relevancy social media has in today’s technology entrenched world (Campbell et al. 2011; Nair and Subramaniam 2011). According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), users of social media need to be aware of the opportunities and risks the medium brings in order to fully understand the power and the potential barriers the platform holds. Understanding the different social media channels and what their purposes are is

crucial for the company in order to successfully adapt and tailor its marketing efforts to the chosen channels (Kietzmann et al. 2011).

The amount of business-to-business companies using social media has exponentially grown over the years (Solis and Breakenridge 2009). For instance, the advertising industry is making the practitioners within the industry use the influential medium (ibid). Having a presence in social media is still in the early stages for business-to-business companies, even though it can generate a greater prosperity for their businesses (Brennan and Croft 2012). The focus of this research will thus be on advertising agencies in Sweden that are present in social media. The research will further examine the effects a presence in social media can bring, from the advertising agencies' point of view.

1.2 Problem Discussion

As discussed earlier, social media is a powerful marketing tool that brings both opportunities and risks (Ramsay 2010; Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; Mangold and Faulds 2009). Having a presence in social media will require businesses to be aware of the risks that come with using the medium (Aula 2010; Moorman 2011). Not knowing how to use the channels and the accompanying technique can be highly unsuccessful for the business (Ramsay 2010). Learning how to communicate with customers when using social media channels is therefore crucial for a business' success in that area (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010).

The fact that customers have a voice on different channels combined with fast paced Internet accessibility makes them powerful to companies and their accompanying brands (Mangold and Faulds 2009). As the Internet is here to stay and the social media channels likewise, companies need to be aware of the consumers' interests in the medium and realize that they can either enforce or damage their brands by what they say (Patni 2012; Yeo 2012). Negative word of mouth regarding a company can be devastating to a business, which is why having a presence on social media and using the presence the right way is important (Bughin et al. 2010; Court et al. 2012; Kozinets et al. 2010). Companies can have their voices heard and oppose any negativity regarding their brands (Bruhn et al. 2012; Ramsay 2010; Van Doorn et al. 2010).

Companies that understand the social media channels can contribute to knowing how to handle debates and discussions being held by social media users and consumers (Van Doorn et al. 2010). However, companies that do not have a presence in social media what so ever might be completely unaware of what consumers are saying or writing about the organization (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). A company takes a risk in not being able to defend and counter negative claims about the organization made by consumers and can as a result weaken the brand (ibid).

Having a presence in social media is synonymous with business-to-consumer companies as a tool to strengthen their brands (Brennan and Croft 2012; Mangold and Faulds 2009; Raggio and Leone 2007). On the other hand, the use of social media within business-to-business companies has a positive influence on the organizations' ability to form and manage relationships (Rodriguez et al. 2012). It is also recognized that because of the competitive business setting and more well-informed business buyers, business-to-business companies need to implement the new technology and learn how to use social media in order to build deeper relationships with existing and prospective customers (ibid). However, the amount of business-to-business companies using social media as part of the promotion mix is greatly constricted, even though the benefits of using the medium are valid for these types of companies (Brennan and Croft 2012; Kho 2008; Rodriguez et al. 2012).

Social media usage as part of the promotion mix in business-to-business companies differ in its importance from industry to industry. For instance, the use of social media in the manufacturing industry is not of great significance (Alikilic and Atabek 2012; Verhoeven et al. 2012). However, the advertising industry has implemented social media as part of their marketing ventures, although the utilization of social media is very new in these types of companies (Brennan and Croft 2012). There are studies on social media presence in advertising agencies made in the USA as well as European countries (Alikilic and Atabek 2012; Verhoeven et al. 2012). An interesting aspect for this investigation was to see if Sweden was part of the research. Countries in northern Europe included Latvia, Norway and the United Kingdom. Yet the existing research regarding social media usage in Swedish advertising agencies are minimal, as well as the opportunities and risks that comes with having a presence in social media from the industry professionals' point of view (Alikilic and Atabek 2012; Verhoeven et al. 2012). Thus, the authors identify a research gap in terms of examining Swedish advertising agencies and their presence in social media, because it is an

under researched area (ibid). Furthermore, the authors identify another research gap that could be of importance to fill. It could be significant to study the effects of having a presence in social media, from the industry professionals' perspective.

In order to form an understanding for what purpose social media has in business-to-business companies, the intent of the study is to:

Investigate the effects of having a presence in social media for business-to-business companies, by focusing on the opportunities and risks.

1.3 Delimitations

The following delimitations are taken into account when studying the social media presence in the advertising industry. The research will examine the effects that come with having a presence in the social media, by focusing on the opportunities and risks. The authors aim to conduct a qualitative research study with the intention to gain a deeper and more complete understanding of the advertising agencies' view on social media presence, therefore there is no need to draw general conclusions in a quantitative matter regards to the study's findings. A cross-case study will center around four advertising agencies in the work of fulfilling the purpose of the research.

This qualitative study will only center on investigating Swedish advertising agencies. The Internet access rate is exceedingly high in Sweden with 92, 5 % of the Swedish populace having Internet access, which makes it relevant to study social media in Sweden (Internetworldstats 2010). Dominant studies are about American companies and there are limited empirical studies specifically on Swedish advertising agencies (Alikilic and Atabek 2012; Verhoeven et al. 2012) which further motivate this study to focus on companies situated in Sweden. An additional reason is ease of access, as the authors and the agencies being studied are both located in Sweden.

1.4 Outline of Thesis

The intent of the study is to investigate the effects of having a presence in social media for business-to-business companies, by focusing on the opportunities and risks. The study will achieve this through the decomposition of the purpose into three parts. Firstly, by investigating how the effects of having a presence in social media are perceived by industry professionals in advertising agencies. Secondly, by examining what industry professionals perceive being the opportunities with having a presence in social media. And finally, by studying what the industry professionals in advertising agencies believe are the risks with having a presence in social media.

To accomplish the abovementioned intentions, the study is planned and structured into seven chapters as described in *Figure 1*. *Chapter one* presents a background of the thesis' main subject, which is followed by a problem discussion and delimitations. Thus chapter one establishes the fundamental reason of the research. *Chapter two* depicts a review of significant literature that will provide discovery of the research gap. It expresses the theoretical groundwork of the study. *Chapter three* presents the research questions and frame of reference. It further includes the proposed research model for this study. *Chapter four* discusses and justifies the intentions behind the dissertation design including a validation of the research purpose, research approach, the data collection method, sample selection, data analysis methods, and matters regarding reliability and validity are also attended. *Chapter five* depicts the empirical data presentation, collected for this qualitative study. *Chapter six* discusses the data analysis process, which is underlined with the use of tables illustrating the data. *Chapter seven* presents and describes the conclusions by answering the purpose and research questions of the study. It also confers the theoretical and managerial implications, the limitations of the dissertation, and ends with the suggestions for future research.

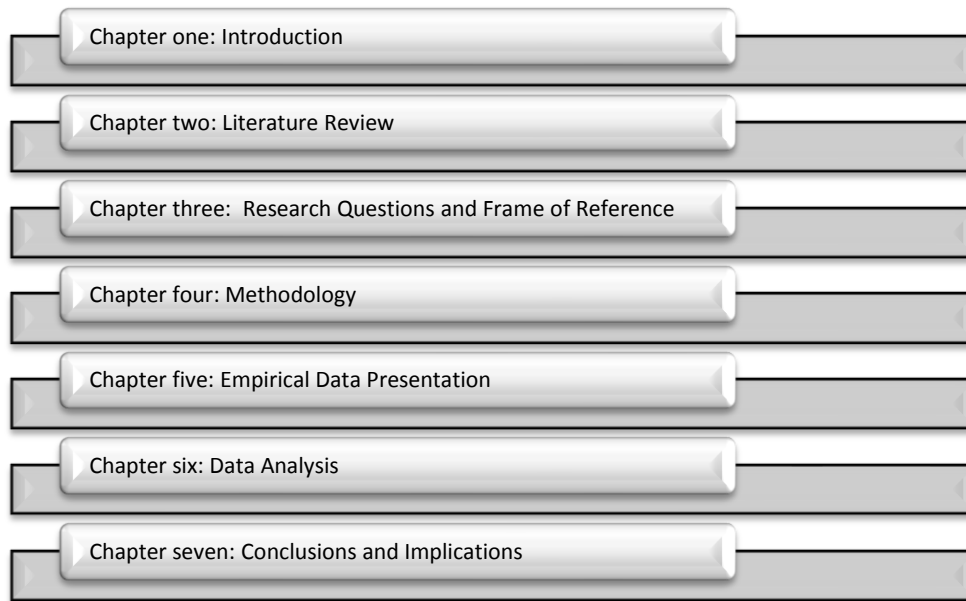


Figure 1 - Outline of Thesis

1.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter began with an introduction of the chosen topic and thereafter continued with discussing the encountered research gaps, which then led to the research problem. Moreover, the purpose of the study was developed in order to investigate the effects of having a presence in social media for business-to-business companies, by focusing on the opportunities and risks. Ultimately, the delimitations were clarified and this chapter ended with the outline of thesis.

2. Literature Review

This chapter presents the background of social media and is followed by a discussion of the social media phenomenon from several authors. A theory section is presented, based on the three key concepts of this research, which are; social presence, opportunities, and risks. Furthermore, the literature review will identify the research gaps in the aforementioned areas to be further investigated.

2.1 The Background of Social Media

2.1.1 Web 2.0

Social media derives from the term of Web 2.0 – a two-way communication in the online public sites – coined by Tim O’Reilly in the year of 2004. It was also explained as the second generation of the World Wide Web (Cormode and Krishnamurthy 2008; Warschauer and Grimes 2007). Handsfield et al. (2009) described Web 2.0 as a tool that makes it possible for users to manipulate, edit, create, and collaborate online. Web 2.0 was also explained as a space where customers can become producers, meaning that they can contribute to the resources and to the development of the medium and not just consume it (Handsfield et al. 2009). Web 2.0’s social networks are websites that incorporate a strong social component, where it involves user profiles and also encourage user-generated content in the form of text, video, and photo postings along with comments and tags (Cormode and Krishnamurthy 2008). Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, MySpace, wikis, and blogs are illustrated as prototypical examples of Web 2.0 (Barassi and Trere 2012; Cormode and Krishnamurthy 2008; Postigo 2011). The development of Web 2.0 has led to a facilitation of communication and has enhanced creativity, information sharing, and collaboration amongst users (Tu et al. 2008; Wang and Vasquez 2012; Warschauer and Grimes 2007).

2.1.2 Web 1.0

The concept of Web 2.0 originated from Web 1.0 in the form of e-mail newsletters and websites (Cormode and Krishnamurthy 2008). Handsfield et al. (2009) elucidate that Web 1.0 tools only allows the owners and not the users of the website to collaborate or manipulate the information or text displayed, whereas Web 2.0 enables the opposite – users can create, edit, manipulate, and collaborate online. Berthon et al. (2012) elevate contrasting differences

between Web 2.0 and Web 1.0, declaring an enabled shift in focus from companies to consumers, individuals to communities, publishing to participation, intrusion to invitation, and nodes to networks. Again, Handsfield et al. (2009) stated that Web 1.0 tools are not really designed for collaboration or manipulation of text in ways that Web 2.0 tools are. The development from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 has been remarkable, leading to a two-way communication (Wang and Vasquez 2012).

2.2 Social Media

While there are researchers that may describe social media as the most influential platform and as the medium where companies communicate with their customers, Miller and Lammas (2010) and Andzulis et al. (2012) argue how social media presents potential opportunities for new forms of communication and business between companies, marketers, and consumers. Andzulis et al. (2012) explains the medium as an instrument for individual or personal interaction. However, Uitz (2012) express social media as a social space that makes it possible for individuals to network and communicate around the world, where these individuals continuously participate in the development of content and emergence of the medium. The use of the medium within business-to-business companies has improved with the help of the development of social media and the Internet (Rodriguez et al. 2012). The utilization has gone from a simple function used for linking with friends to an imperative platform for contacting new businesses, buyers, as well as developing deeper relationships with the existing and future customers (ibid). The use of social media can influence advertising, individuals' privacy, and communication between commercial actors and consumers, both positively and negatively (Johnson 2010). Rodriguez et al. (2012) imply that sharing content and creating a network of contacts are the main benefits behind social media. The utilization of the medium is however a relatively new trend when it comes to reaching business-to-business clients (ibid). Miller and Lammas (2010) claims that traditional and social media has made a drastic turn. Social media has grown in terms of design and user adoption rates (Jürgens 2012). The medium have as well become a platform for rich expression (ibid). Nowadays consumers are developing platforms – such as content sharing sites, social networking sites, and blogs – to distribute, change, produce, and talk about Internet content (Kietzmann et al. 2011). This means that consumers now have a voice and wish to be heard, which leads to the important issue that companies ought to do more than just listen (Corstjens and Umblijs 2012).

Some researchers imply that social media presents a unique opportunity for companies to encourage their relationships with customers and other partners, while other researchers believe the opposite (Laroche et al. 2013). Even though the use of social media for companies can affect the brand, reputation, and sales; many companies avoid or ignore the medium because of a lack of understanding it, the various forms it exists in, and how to engage with the medium (Kietzmann et al. 2011). While there are researchers who believe that social media is a perfect platform for businesses to build relationships with their customers, other researchers argue the possibility that the medium can do more harm than good (Neti 2011). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) and Laroche et al. (2013) however discuss the implication that brands intrude on the atmosphere believed to be for people and their friends.

2.3 Theories

2.3.1 Social presence theory

The theory of social presence was illustrated by Short, William, and Christie in 1976 (Cobb 2009; Sallnas et al. 2000; Wang and Wang 2012). Social presence was developed to examine the social interaction in telecommunication based media (Wang and Wang 2012). The theory grew through researches on efficiency as well as satisfaction in the utilization of different telecommunication media (Sallnas et al. 2000). The concept was defined by Short, William, and Christie as “the degree of salience of the other person in the interaction and the consequent salience of the interpersonal relationships” (Short et al. 1976, p. 65).

The notion of social presence was observed as a quality of the communications medium itself and it was also theorized that the communicative media show a difference in its degree of social presence (Cobb 2009; Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; Wang and Wang 2012). These differences play a significant part in verifying the way people interact (Cobb 2009). Sallnas et al. (2000) articulate that an individual’s social presence can differ among a variation of media. Sallnas et al. (2000) also stated that social presence “affects the nature of the interaction, and it interacts with the purpose of the interaction to influence the medium chosen by the individual who wishes to communicate” (p. 462 and 463). However, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) further assert the higher the social presence, the bigger the influence communication partners have on affecting each other’s behavior. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), the media-related part of social media, social presence theory, states that *media* vary in the

degree of “social presence”. Social presence is defined as the auditory, visual, and physical contact that can be achieved (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). These allow the emerging and connecting of two communication partners (ibid). A mediums’ ability to send out verbal and non-verbal messages decides on the degree of social presence of a specific medium (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; Wang and Wang 2012). However, Cobb (2009) elucidates that physical distance has a significant impact on the intimacy in a communication medium. The choice of a specific medium is based on what purpose or task is given, meaning what the users recognize to be suitable for the given reason (Sallnas et al. 2000). Tu (2000) explain three additional dimensions of social presence: social context, online communication, and interactivity. In the first dimension of social context, Tu (2000) describes that depending on what work tasks one has, the level of social presence will be affected. Sallnas et al. (2000) elevated more factors that influence social presence in different communication mediums’ such as the ability to send out information regarding gestures, facial expression, and direction of looking. This is by means a significant part to why people choose to interact through different communication mediums’ (Sallnas et al. 2000). Wang and Wang (2012) continued with the concept as being determined by the awareness of users, meaning it is the level to which an individual is perceived as a real person in the communication process. Users of a communication medium wish to be connected with other human beings; social presence is therefore decided by mediums’ and communicators (ibid).

2.3.2 Opportunities

Social media is a hybrid component of the marketing promotion mix with its traditional and nontraditional elements (Mangold and Faulds 2009). When discussing the traditional element of the promotion mix, social media as a hybrid component allows companies to communicate with their customers (ibid). When discussing the nontraditional element of the hybrid component, social media enables customers to communicate directly with one another (ibid). However, Edosomwan et al. (2011) claim that social media provides an internal opportunity for a company, which is the possibility of allowing an open conversation between management and employees. Mangold and Faulds (2009) emphasize that social media can provide great opportunities for companies. While Edosomwan et al. (2011) believe that the main aspect for a company to be successful in social media is communication, Mangold and Faulds (2009) believe that in order for a company to be successful, it is important to also have an understanding of the medium’s effects. For instance, companies need to be able to defend

themselves against negative reviews or reputation (Mangold and Faulds 2009). It is also important to be able to control the content related to the companies while promoting the brands associated to the company (ibid). Because social media has a variety of channels for communicating, the medium has become a great facet when influencing different aspects of consumer behavior (ibid). These aspects are namely; opinions, attitudes, awareness, purchase behaviors, information acquisition, post-purchase communication, and evaluation (ibid).

2.3.2.1 Media Richness

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) relied on a number of theories in media research, which contain social presence, media richness, and social processes. Social processes further contain self-presentation and self-disclosure (ibid). Social presence and media richness theory is depended on the suggestion that any communication is the affirmation of uncertainty and the decrease of ambiguity (ibid). According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), media vary in the extent of richness they own, meaning the amount of information they agree to be conveyed in a given time interval and therefore some media are more thriving than others in settling uncertainty and ambiguity. Social processes are practices engrossing the arrangement of a collection of persons (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010):

- *Self-presentation* is the act of conducting and expressing oneself in manners that convey an impression that correlates to an individual's principles and morals. A person's self-presentation can be viewed as a process of striving to manage the impressions the public shape of the person and it is planned to produce a favorable impression (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010).
- *Self-disclosure* can be described as the process by which there is deliberate sharing of information that is of personal nature of oneself to another individual. It can subsequently be viewed as the subconscious and conscious deed of disclosing a person's private information, such as thoughts and emotions, to other people (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010).

2.3.2.2 Brand Experience

According to Brakus et al. (2009), brand experience is "conceptualized as sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's

design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments” (p. 52). Before the emerging of social media, devoted brand supporters could only assume the identity of a brand through advertisement or spokespeople representing a specific brand (Naylor et al. 2012). Social media has developed a greater possibility for consumers to obtain brand experience (ibid). According to Edosomwan et al. (2011), companies committing to social media can develop a stronger brand experience and also be perceived as more attractive to the customers by developing a well-built brand name. However, Naylor et al. (2012) state that companies implementing the medium in their marketing endeavors allows the possibility to promote the identity of their brands, which creates a familiarity between the consumer and brand. Naylor et al. (2012) further assert that when a brand is divulged in social networking sites, the consumers’ brand experience increases as they get acquainted with the brand. Furthermore, it is essential for companies’ marketing practitioners to understand how consumers experience their brands when developing marketing strategies for their products and services (Brakus et al. 2009).

2.3.3 Risks

In order for the use of social media to be less challenging, it is important to understand two related concepts to the medium; Web 2.0 and User Generated Content (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). Web 2.0 stands for the technological and ideological base of social media (ibid). User generated content can be seen as the summation of all ways in which people use social media (ibid). The word user generated content is characteristically practical to explain the different types of media content that are usually offered and produced by end-users (ibid). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) argues that social media is a set of Internet-based applications that are put together based on the technological and ideological foundations of Web 2.0, which allow the creation and trade of user generated content. Therefore, being able to manage social media is of great importance for companies thinking about using the medium as a part of the marketing endeavors (ibid). Having no social media presence at all is a risk in itself that companies face in protecting their brands from the threat of consumer conversations on different social media platforms (Ramsay 2010). Ramsay (2010) continues explaining the reason that organizations experience challenges in their social media usage is because of a deficiency of information on how to communicate with consumers. This contributes to an absence of control in steering conversations about companies in a positive direction (ibid).

2.3.3.1 Communication Strategy

Companies ought to develop a communication strategy that allows them to communicate with consumers (Ramsay 2010). This can consequently make it easier to have control over the content and also the conversations companies are keen on having with consumers (ibid). Ramsay (2010) asserts that it is incorrect to believe that all social media channels work the same. There are different channels which all should be used in diverse ways and it is important to recognize when and what channel is suitable for what purpose (ibid). This can differ depending on what social media channel is used (ibid). However, Ramsay (2010) stresses that a regularity running through the channels is valuable.

2.3.3.2 The Seven Functional Building Blocks

Kietzmann et al. (2011) asserts that the appearance of social media has democratized business communication with the shift of power going from the public relations and marketing employees to the people that use and consume the content of social media channels. Because of the aforementioned statement, companies have a hard time controlling their business content and brand image (ibid). Social media is a powerful tool and needs to be used in a proper way, with suitable strategies, to connect in a successful way (ibid). Kietzmann et al. (2011) explains that companies usually ignore or misuse the opportunities and threats that social media consumers hold because they do not understand the power the medium holds.

Using ideas motivated by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) as inspiration for comprehending social media, Kietzmann et al. (2011) accordingly presents a theoretical structure containing seven functional building blocks that explain the medium. These blocks are divided into identity, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, conversations, and groups (ibid). Kietzmann et al. (2011) clarify the conjectures that these building blocks can have for how companies should connect with social media. The seven functional building blocks contain:

- *Identity* signifies the degree to which social media users disclose their identities in social media surroundings for example, revealing information such as location, gender, name, age, and further information that represents users in certain ways. For instance, sites and users of social media have dissimilar inclinations. Because identity is a central part to several social media channels, this characterizes various vital suggestions for companies looking to build up their own social media sites or strategies for using other social networking sites. Privacy is a main implication and it

is important for companies to create a vigilant balance between protecting privacy and sharing identities when choosing social media channels (Kietzmann et al. 2011).

- *Conversations* stand for the amount of communication that happens between users in a social media setting. Several social media sites are intended mainly to aid conversations between users and groups of users. The diversity and amount of conversations that can happen in a social media setting implies that there are procedure and arrangement implications for companies looking to host these conversations or to track them. A social media channel such as twitter is built on users delivering short messages that are for the most part status updates in real-time in order to create an “ambient awareness” of matters (Kietzmann et al. 2011).
- *Sharing* depicts the amount to which users distribute, exchange, and obtain content. The word “social” frequently means that exchanges between users are vital and sharing is a way of participating in social media. Kietzmann et al. (2011) proposes that there are two vital suggestions that the sharing block has for all companies with aspiration to get involved in social media. It is the need to estimate what objects of sociality their users share, or to recognize new objects that can reconcile their shared interests. A sharing network will not have anything connecting people together without these objects (Kietzmann et al. 2011).
- *Presence* symbolizes the degree to which users can know if other users are available and accessible. Companies should be aware of user availability and user location. Firms should know that having a presence in social media is affected by the familiarity and closeness of the relationship medium. Higher levels of social presence are also likely to make conversations more influential, thus a connection between presence, conversations, and relationships is created (Kietzmann et al. 2011).
- *Relationships* characterize the degree to which users can be related to other users, meaning that two or more social media users have some sort of relationship that leads them to communicate. Companies should be aware of the fact that social media presence is affected by the closeness and immediacy of the relationship medium. High levels of social presence are also expected to make conversations more powerful (Kietzmann et al. 2011).

- *Reputation* is the degree to which users can recognize the status of other users in a social media setting. Reputation can have dissimilar meanings on social media platforms. However, it is majorly connected to trust. Social media sites depend on tools that routinely collect user-generated information to establish trustworthiness and reliability (Kietzmann et al. 2011).
- *Groups* stand for the degree to which users can create communities. The more “social” a network is, the greater the group of contacts and followers (Kietzmann et al. 2011).

2.3.3.3 The Four C’s

Given the risks of using social media, Kietzmann et al. (2011) presents the four C’s as a strategic communication plan for companies using social media. The four C’s contain:

- *Cognize*: a company should first distinguish and have an understanding of its social media setting by using the seven functional building blocks presented above (Kietzmann et al. 2011).
- *Congruity*: a business needs to create strategies that are harmonious with various social media functionalities and the objectives of the company (Kietzmann et al. 2011).
- *Curate*: a company must act as a guardian of social media content and relations. This involves developing an understanding of how and when a company should get involved in conversations on a social media channel and who should be the person communicating online (Kietzmann et al. 2011).
- *Chase*: companies have to observe their environments to know the pace of conversations that could influence or have an impact on the current or future position on the market (Kietzmann et al. 2011).

To investigate the changing environment of social media it is important to understand the seven building blocks and what they offer (Kietzmann et al. 2011). The four C’s can help companies examine how other social media channels are developing and can approximate

how competitors are reacting (ibid). Because social media is hard to define, companies have a hard time understanding how to use the medium to their advantage (Edosomwan et al. 2011). Companies keen to be part of social media without knowing what the outcome may be, can face immense challenges (ibid).

2.3.3.4 Word-of-Mouth

With the growth of Internet-based social media it is now possible for people all around the world to talk to each other about services and products as well as companies, in a negative or positive way (Mangold and Faulds 2009). The power of communication between consumers has therefore increased enormously in the marketplace (ibid). Brown et al. (2007) describes the concept of word-of-mouth as “a consumer-dominated channel of marketing communication where the sender is independent of the market” (p. 4). Due to the description, the concept is therefore perceived as more credible and reliable by consumers as well as more trustworthy compared to the messages initiated by companies (Brown et al. 2007). Mangold and Faulds (2009) explain that companies considering using social media as part of their promotion mix risk being talked about in a negative way, as the medium allows a variety of Internet-forums where everyone can talk and write freely, such as blogs and social networking sites (ibid). Brown et al. (2007) further illustrates such theory as word-of-mouth can reach and influence many receivers as it has a dominant influence on behavior, such as consumers’ information search, evaluation and their decision making. The outcome of the exchanged messages is a condition of consumption-related information that holds an amount of informational value over the advertising messages provided by the company, which further holds influence over the individual’s decision making (Brown et al. 2007).

2.3.3.5 Brand Reputation

An organization’s brand reputation is stated to be an indicator of an organization’s success; the more an organization is admired and well-regarded, the more it is assumed to be successful (Kuenzel and Halliday 2010). However, Jurisic and Azevedo (2011) articulates another definition of brand reputation; describing the concept as “an accumulated attitude towards the company” (p. 352). Ramsay (2010) implies that companies need to take control and communicate with their viewers in order for them to know how their brands are perceived. If not, the companies will not be able to change negative reviews and perceptions;

also, if failing to follow social media protocol, companies can be sure of the negative influence it will have on the brand (ibid). Kuenzel and Halliday (2010) further argues that if an organization's brand reputation is well-recognized and perceived as successful by consumers, it may enable the consumers to identify with a brand that has good reputation.

Kietzmann et al. (2011) claims the social media trend can affect a company's sales, reputation and survival, depending on how and in what extent it is used. However, Kuenzel and Halliday (2010) declare that brand reputation can moreover derive from word-of-mouth information or reports in the media. Although, it is further claimed that managers who do not use social media has a lack of understanding regarding what this form of media can do, what its purpose is, how it works and how to apply it (Kietzmann et al. 2011). If these aspects are not taken into consideration, the outcome of using social media for companies can do more harm than good (ibid). For instance, when service attributes are slightly difficult to evaluate, the reputation of a brand will have a great amount of impact on the customers' choice of organization (Jurisic and Azevedo 2011). Therefore, it is highly important to maintain a great brand reputation (ibid).

2.4 Need for Further Investigation

The literature review on social presence showed that there is a research gap subsisting in the part of managing the opportunities and risks that comes with having a presence in social media. The literature lacks empirical studies investigating the aspects that contribute to having a presence in social media in terms of industry professionals' perspectives. The literature does not elaborate on the practitioners' performances in regards to the establishment of social media as a part of their marketing endeavors from an internal perspective. Hence, the need for further investigation from an internal angle is vital.

Another research gap is emphasized in the literature in regards to the geographical areas for carrying out the research. There is a need for establishing studies targeted in the area of Scandinavia, more specifically in Sweden because it is an under researched area (Alikilic and Atabek 2012; Verhoeven et al. 2012). The literature highlights factors contributing to being successful in social media and the perils the medium subsequently bring. However, it establishes facts from the viewpoint of a researcher. Thus, a research gap is identified in terms of focusing on the industry professionals' viewpoint of having a presence in social media. The literature also does not provide information about how to measure social media presence and

how much of a presence a company should have in order for it to create an impact. Other essential aspects lacking clarification is the tangible and intangible benefits of having a presence in social media from a practical perspective. It therefore creates a need for further investigation.

The focal point of research in the literature is mainly focused on the perspective of consumer business-to-consumer. A need to contribute to the research from the perspective of companies existing in the business-to-business sector consequently becomes apparent. Mangold and Faulds (2009) established that social media is an important hybrid element of the promotion mix for a company, however the authors highlight the need for the medium to be further investigated, as does Ramsay (2010) and Kaplan and Haenlein (2010). The authors declare the reason for further investigation being the newness and the ever evolvement of the medium.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter began with introducing the background of social media, including Web 2.0 and Web 1.0. Thereafter, depictions of social media through the perspectives of different authors were presented. This chapter continued with a theory section based on the three key concepts of this research, which are; social presence, opportunities, and risks. The section of opportunities included media richness and brand experience, whereas risks contained communication strategy, the seven functional building blocks, the four C's, word-of-mouth, and brand reputation.

The literature review showed three main research gaps within the area of social media. First, a research gap subsisting in the part of managing the opportunities and risks that comes with having a presence in social media. Second, the literature showed a need for establishing studies in Sweden due to being an under researched area. Third, a research gap is identified in terms of focusing on the industry professionals' perspective of having a presence in social media.

3. Research Questions and Frame of Reference

In the previous chapter, the literature review showed that there is a research gap subsisting in the part of managing the opportunities and risks that comes with having a presence in social media. It also showed that there is a need for establishing studies in Sweden because it is an under researched area. Finally, a research gap is identified in terms of focusing on the industry professionals' perspective of having a presence in social media. In this chapter, a proposed research model is illustrated and the developed research questions are presented.

3.1 Proposed Research Model

The aim of this research is to form an understanding and gain a greater knowledge for what purpose social media has in business-to-business companies, thus the intent of the study is to investigate the effects of having a presence in social media for business-to-business companies, by focusing on the opportunities and risks. The connection between the opportunities and risks with social media in relation to having a presence in social media that is advantageous was highlighted in the previous chapter.

The proposed research model (*See Figure 2*) illustrates the basic premise that opportunities and risks are factors affecting the level of success of having a presence in social media for business-to-business companies.

The model (*See Figure 2*) shows the different aspects underlining each factor highlighted in the previous chapter. The yellow box above the two factors (*See Figure 2*) emphasizes the main concept of this research, namely: social presence. When it comes to the two factors, media richness and brand experience appeared to be the main aspects for *opportunities*. Moreover, communication strategy, the seven functional building blocks, the four C's, word-of-mouth, and brand reputation show to be the main aspects for *risks*.

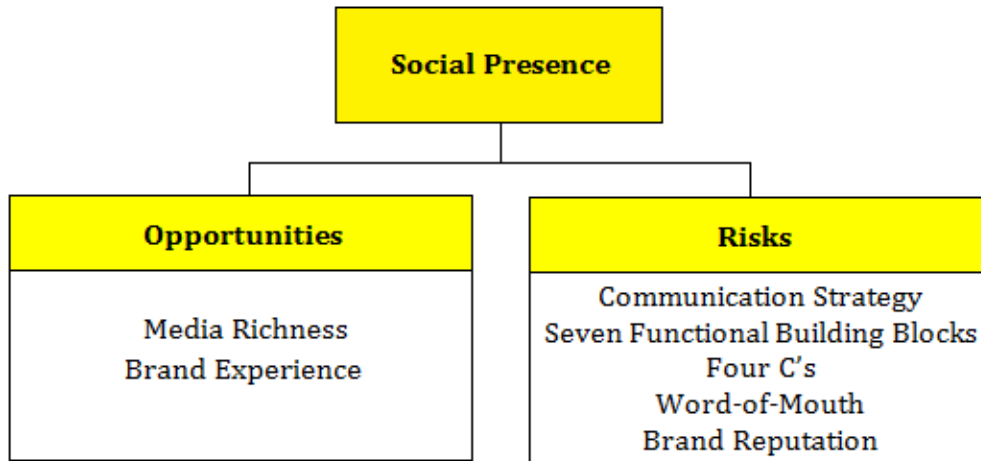


Figure 2 - Proposed Research Model

3.2 Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the effects of having a presence in social media for business-to-business companies, based on two features; the opportunities and risks social media brings a company. Therefore, the questions were formulated through the literature review in order to represent these features, which are illustrated in the proposed research model.

1. How are the effects of having a presence in social media perceived by industry professionals in business-to-business companies?
2. What do industry professionals perceive being the opportunities with having a presence in social media?
3. What do industry professionals perceive being the risks with having a presence in social media?

3.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a suggested research model developed from the literature review in the previous chapter. Using the proposed research model as a base, three research questions were produced. These research questions facilitate the following research study and therefore allowed for the research purpose to be attained.

4. Methodology

This chapter depicts diverse methodological research approaches which can be utilized in the purpose of contributing to scientific researches. It continues with discussing and justifying the selected research methodology applied in this thesis. Furthermore, it presents concepts that have been translated into measurable variables in an operationalization table, in order to enable gathering of pertinent data for the purpose of this dissertation. Finally, the chapter concludes with a description of the validity and reliability of the measurements used.

4.1 Research Approach

According to Bryman and Bell (2011) a research approach is the way in which a researcher chooses to approach the research problem. The choice of research approach contains different methodical activities to be carried out in order to solve the research problem (Bryman and Bell 2011). Therefore, the choice of approach is of imminence to meet the intention of the study (ibid).

4.1.1 Inductive vs. Deductive research

The origin of a new theory is founded upon research, thus the relationship between research and theory can be inductive (Bryman and Bell 2011). The induction process entails being able to depict common inferences out of observations (Malhotra 2010). The researcher starts with observing a specific phenomenon such as studying a particular business issue, thereafter uses diverse research methods to be able to collect data (ibid). When the data collection is concluded, the researcher uses the gathered data to distinguish connections and patterns which then will be subjected to the testing of hypotheses (Bryman and Bell 2011). Thereafter, the findings are used in order to draw general conclusions that result in the outcome of a new theory (ibid). The objective is thus to create a theory from the research being carried out (Bryman and Bell 2011; Malhotra 2010).

However, viewing the relationship between research and theory from the opposite direction is called having a deductive approach to research (Bryman and Bell 2011; Cohen et al. 2011). Deductive theory signifies the most frequent perspective of the relation between theory and research (Bryman and Bell 2011). The deduction process starts with the researcher deducing a

hypothesis (or several) based on what is common knowledge about a specific theory that is relevant to the phenomenon being studied (ibid). The researcher then subjects this hypothesis to empirical analysis (ibid). There will be concepts within this hypothesis that the researcher will have to transform into units that can be examined, meaning that the construed hypothesis must be translated into operational words (Bryman and Bell 2011; Cohen et al. 2011; Malhotra 2010). Thus, the researcher is required to indicate how data can be gathered in connection to the theoretical concepts the hypothesis is founded on (Bryman and Bell 2011). The hypothesis and the theory that is deduced is the first step in the deduction process, which will drive the data collection process (ibid). Thereafter, an analysis and examination of the gathered data will lead to findings that will either confirm or disprove the hypothesis (ibid). Depending on which of these alternatives the findings indicate a modification or revision of the theory is possible, which is the last step in the process of deduction (ibid).

This research is founded on theories deducted from literature relevant to the specific research problem and aim, more specifically about social presence in advertising agencies. For that reason, a deductive research approach is implemented in this research.

4.1.2 Qualitative vs. Quantitative research

Bryman and Bell (2011) claim that many authors writing about methodological matters like to differentiate between qualitative and quantitative research. When it comes to differentiations between the two research approaches, many writers assert that the only distinction is that quantitative research utilizes measurement while qualitative research does not (ibid). However, this assumption has not been agreed upon by writers given the argument that the dissimilarities between the two approaches are greater than the surface matter of the deficiency or existence of quantification (ibid).

Qualitative and quantitative research can be seen as two distinguishing clusters of research strategy, meaning a common direction to the carrying out of business research (Zikmund et al. 2010). Therefore, quantitative research can be interpreted as a research strategy that highlights and stresses quantification in the data gathering and analysis of data (ibid). A quantitative research necessitates a deductive research approach when it comes to the connection between theory and research, where the focus is on the examinations of theories (Bryman and Bell 2011; Zikmund et al. 2010). Quantitative research also integrates the practices and standards

of the natural scientific model (positivism) and represents a perspective of social reality as an objective and exterior reality (Bryman and Bell 2011). Qualitative research, on the other hand, can be seen as a research strategy that commonly accentuates words instead of quantification in the process of gathering data and analyzing the data (Bryman and Bell 2011; Denzin and Lincoln 2011; Zikmund et al. 2010). Qualitative research also principally underlines an inductive approach to the relation between theory and research, where the accentuation is put on the creation of theories (Bryman and Bell 2011). However, even though qualitative research is normally connected to the generation of theories, the research can also be used for testing them (ibid). Although qualitative and quantitative research embodies dissimilar research strategies, the difference between the two strategies is not mutually exclusive (ibid). The differences between the two research approaches are illustrated in *Table 1*.

Table 1 - Comparison between quantitative and qualitative research

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Quantitative</u>	<u>Qualitative</u>
Objective	To quantify data and generalize the results to the population of interest	To gain an understanding of underlying reasons and motives
Type of research	Descriptive research design Causal research design	Exploratory research design
Flexibility	Low (Standardized and structured questionnaires)	High (Two-way communication)
Sample size	Large	Small
Choice of respondents	A representative sample of population	Persons with knowledge and experience of research problem
Information per respondent	Low	High
Data analysis	Statistical summary	Subjective interpretative
Ability to replicate	High	Low
Interviewer requirements	No special skills	Special skills
Time consumption	High during design phase; Low during analysis phase	Low during design phase; High during analysis phase

(Summarized from Bryman and Bell 2011)

Keeping in mind the two research approaches and their features, the research approach that is appropriate and well suited for this research dissertation is the qualitative approach. The motivation to use this approach is rooted in being the most fitting method in connection to the research aim and objectives. The aim of the research dissertation is to attain a deeper and complete understanding of the research problem including varying opinions, beliefs and perceptions of the studied phenomenon through distinctive depictions. Thus, inferences about the data collection will not be in the appearance of numerical. The data will instead take the form of transcripts of text. The aforementioned reasons therefore discard the quantitative research approach as the method to use.

4.2 Research Design

An empirical research is in need of a research design (Yin 2009). A research design is simply a plan for the research being investigated, namely; a rational progression that connects the data collected for the empirical part of the research to its research questions (ibid). According to Bryman and Bell (2011), a research design “provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data” (p. 40). However, Yin (2009) describes a research design as “a logical plan for getting from *here* to *there*, where *here* may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and *there* is some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions (p. 26).

There are five different types of research designs: exploratory, descriptive, causal, cross-sectional and longitudinal research design (Malhotra and Birks 2007; Gray 2009).

This research will mainly be followed by a descriptive research design with some exploratory elements. The reason is because this research will describe a phenomenon that will be compared with existing theories, such as social presence. However, the motivation for exploratory elements is the subject matter of this research, whereby the research phenomenon social media, is a relatively new subject that may not provide available theories for all the aspects needed.

4.2.1 Descriptive research design

A descriptive design is a form of scientific method that involves describing and observing of a subject without changing the environment in any way (Malhotra and Birks 2007; Malhotra

2010). Therefore, this design does not involve experiments and manipulations and cannot describe what has caused something specific in any situation (Malhotra and Birks 2007). The main objective of this design is to explain the studied characteristics and the collected data (ibid).

The problem being studied in a descriptive research design is at all times structured and the researcher often has an understanding of the problem being studied (Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005). This design also answers questions such as who, what, when, where, and how – it may also study more than one variable (Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005; Malhotra and Birks 2007).

4.2.2 Exploratory research design

An exploratory research design is aimed and determined to research the nature of the problem (Malhotra and Birks 2007). This type of design is fact finding research that is normally adopted at the early stages of a research project in order to clarify the research direction and research problem (Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005; Malhotra and Birks 2007; Phophalia 2010). It helps to form a better and deeper understanding of the problem being investigated (Malhotra and Birks 2007). According to Malhotra and Birks (2007), the objectives of an exploratory design are to “provide insights and understanding of the nature of marketing phenomena” (p. 63). Depending on what the researcher is trying to form an understanding about, some phenomena cannot be measured from the respondent’s perspective in quantitative manners (Malhotra and Birks 2007; Phophalia 2010). Exploratory research designs are beneficial in the circumstances of where the researcher does not have a complete and sufficient understanding of a problem in order to proceed with the research (Malhotra and Birks 2007; Phophalia 2010). Malhotra and Birks (2007) elucidate an exploratory research as being more likely applicable in cases where there are research questions rather than specific hypotheses. Also, this type of research design has the characteristics of being flexible and less structured, which makes it more appropriate for a qualitative research (ibid).

4.3 Data Sources

There are two types of data sources: primary data and secondary data (Bryman and Bell 2011; Malhotra and Birks 2007). Secondary data are data that are collected for some other purpose rather than help solving the problem at hand (Bryman and Bell 2011). This research will be

treated by primary data. The main reason for this is because the data collection will be pursued with case studies in the form of semi-structured interviews.

4.3.1 Primary data

The appropriate source of data collection for this research; primary data, is a form of data source where personal documents such as diaries and letters are mentioned as examples within a qualitative study (Bryman and Bell 2011). A primary data source contains information that is collected instantly from first-hand experience; the data is generated by original research made to measure specific research questions (Bryman and Bell 2011; Malhotra and Birks 2007). According to Bryman and Bell (2011), it is also generated for the specific aim of dealing with the problem at hand. Original research is accomplished through different data collection methods such as interviews, focus groups, and surveys (ibid).

In contrast to secondary data, Malhotra and Birks (2007) mentions that primary data involves “higher costs and a longer time frame in collecting and analyzing the data” (p. 85). However, primary research has several advantages as well as disadvantages (Bryman and Bell 2011; Malhotra and Birks 2007). The advantages and disadvantages are presented in *Table 2* (Malhotra and Birks 2007):

<u>Advantages</u>	<u>Disadvantages</u>
Tailor-made information The researcher adopts the questions to the needed information	High costs Collecting the desired data can resolve in high costs
Up-to-date information The information is not available and collected from old sources	Time consuming The information is often collected through focus groups, interviews, and surveys
Specific information This information involves collected data, possibly from an interview, which is adapted to the questions being asked	Risk for non-response There is a risk of not being able to collect the needed information from the desired respondent

Table 2 - Advantages and disadvantages with primary data

4.4 Research Strategy

When the research design is determined, the next step is to choose a research strategy; which is a general direction and approach to the performance of business research (Bryman and Bell 2011). Since a qualitative approach is to be applied, the research strategy is dependent on that approach (ibid). Bryman and Bell (2011) describes different types of research strategies:

- *Experiment*: most researchers employing an experimental design use quantitative comparisons between experimental and control groups with consideration to the dependent variable. This form is usually not conducted in a qualitative study (Bryman and Bell 2011).
- *Survey*: include sampling of individuals from a chosen population with the intention of turning the result into numbers or statistical conclusions about the studied population (Bryman and Bell 2011).
- *Archival*: when employing this form of research strategy, the focus is on an observational method, meaning that the researcher studies the gathered data, also called archives, to establish an analysis (Bryman and Bell 2011).
- *History*: the researcher studies historical documents, such as papers and credentials, for further analysis (Bryman and Bell 2011).
- *Case studies*: can be used when employing either a qualitative or quantitative research method. It is an intensive research on a case with the purpose of enlightening important features about the studied area. The analysis is based on an individual unit such as a person, group or event (Bryman and Bell 2011; Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005).

When choosing a method, there are three factors to consider: (1) the type of research question asked, (2) the degree of control a researcher has over concrete behavioral events, and (3) the degree of focus on modern as opposed to historical events (Yin 2009). The following table (See Table 3) shows how the three aforementioned factors are related to the five different research strategies discussed earlier (ibid).

Table 3 - Relevant situations for different research methods

	Form of research question	Requires control of behavioral events?	Focuses on contemporary events?
Experiment	How, why?	Yes	Yes
Survey	Who, what, where, how many, how much?	No	Yes
Archival analysis	Who, what, where, how many, how much?	No	Yes/No
History	How, why?	No	No
Case study	How, why?	No	Yes

(Adapted from Yin 2009, p. 8)

Table 3 illustrates five different methods focusing on diverse questions. Therefore, it is vital to choose the most appropriate method form for the specific study (Yin 2009).

A case study is a form of descriptive research strategy, common in social sciences, with the focus on basing the study on individuals, groups, or events (Bryman and Bell 2011; Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005). This form of study is often used when the purpose is to answer questions like “how” or “why”, as well as if the purpose is to receive an in-depth understanding of the studied phenomenon (Yin 2009). There are two different types of case studies: single case studies and multiple case studies (Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005). A case study can include a quantitative and a qualitative research (Bryman and Bell 2011; Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005; Yin 2009). However, the focus in this study is on multiple case studies in a qualitative research, due to the purpose of this thesis (Yin 2009).

4.5 Data Collection Method

When deciding a data collection method, the important matter is to choose the method that is most likely suitable for the purpose of the study (Bryman and Bell 2011; Ritchie and Lewis 2003). There are several alternatives and the process of determining the method is crucial, as it has a great impact on the final result of the research (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). The following methods are the most commonly used in case studies (Bryman and Bell 2011):

- *In-depth interview*: there are two types of interviews. *Unstructured interviews* allow the interviewer to ask questions freely based on the respondent's answers. This method can lead to wide conversations and it has little reliability due to the lack of precision when interviewing different respondents. *Semi-structured interviews* creates an open conversation and allows follow up questions during the interview, which is vital if the purpose is to gain a deeper understanding (Bryman and Bell 2011).
- *Focus group*: the purpose when using this method is to gather a small group of individuals and gain an understanding of their beliefs, opinions or attitudes towards a product, service or idea. The typical group size is six to ten people, in addition to the moderator (Bryman and Bell 2011).
- *Content analysis*: this method is used to analyze documents and texts that seek to quantify content in terms of determined categories and in an organized way (Bryman and Bell 2011).
- *Survey*: when using this method the purpose is to study the sampling of individuals from a population, chosen specifically for the study, with the goal of making statistical inferences about the population using constructed measures such as questionnaires (Bryman and Bell 2011).

The semi-structured interview form is, as prior mentioned, a more “open” type of method where the interviewer has the opportunity to ask follow up questions (Bryman and Bell 2011). The questions are specifically formed to cover the studied area and are listed beforehand, thus the guideline in regards to the topic of the interview is set (ibid). However, the interviewer does not have to follow this guide precisely, the questions can be adapted according to how and what the interviewee responds to (ibid). The essential point of using this type of data collection is to understand the respondent's attitudes, beliefs, and opinions on a particular subject or topic (Bryman and Bell 2011; Yin 2009). This allow the researcher to obtain a deeper perceptives of the study (Bryman and Bell 2011; Yin 2009; Ritchie and Lewis 2003).

As the research questions in this research are relevant to a qualitative research method, the most suitable data collection method is considered being semi-structured interviews (Bryman and Bell 2011). A major advantage in using interviews is the ability to choose between a

telephone interview and face-to-face interview (Irvine et al. 2013). Irvine et al. (2013) explains that there are times when geographical distance can hinder a face-to-face interview and therefore leave the telephone interview as an option. Although, one disadvantage is that the interviewer has nothing but the voice of the respondent to analyze during the interview (ibid). This means there is no control over the respondent's facial expressions or body language, which as well can result in unknown reactions (Bryman and Bell 2011; Irvine et al. 2013).

4.6 Data Collection Instrument

4.6.1 Operationalization and measurement of variables

An operationalization is a common process that often occurs in the meaning of research (Yin 2009). The purpose of an operationalization is to turn chosen theory concepts into comprehensive words that later on will be easier to understand and more importantly, potential for measurement (Bryman and Bell 2011; Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005). As the researcher turns the concepts into comprehensive words, it becomes less complicated to use the concepts in the following research (Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005). In this case, a qualitative research followed by an interview guide (Bryman and Bell 2011; Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005; Yin 2009).

The operationalization process (*See Figure 3*) involves the six following steps; 1) the researcher collects theoretical concepts relevant for the research, 2) provides a definition for each concept chosen for the research, 3) provides a description of what the operational definition of the concept will measure, 4) finds different measures that will measure the specific chosen concepts for the research, 5) an advance testing of the concepts, the pretest is carried out by individuals with experience and expertise in the field, and 6) examines how to go about in order to collect all the relevant data for the research (Malhotra and Birks 2007).

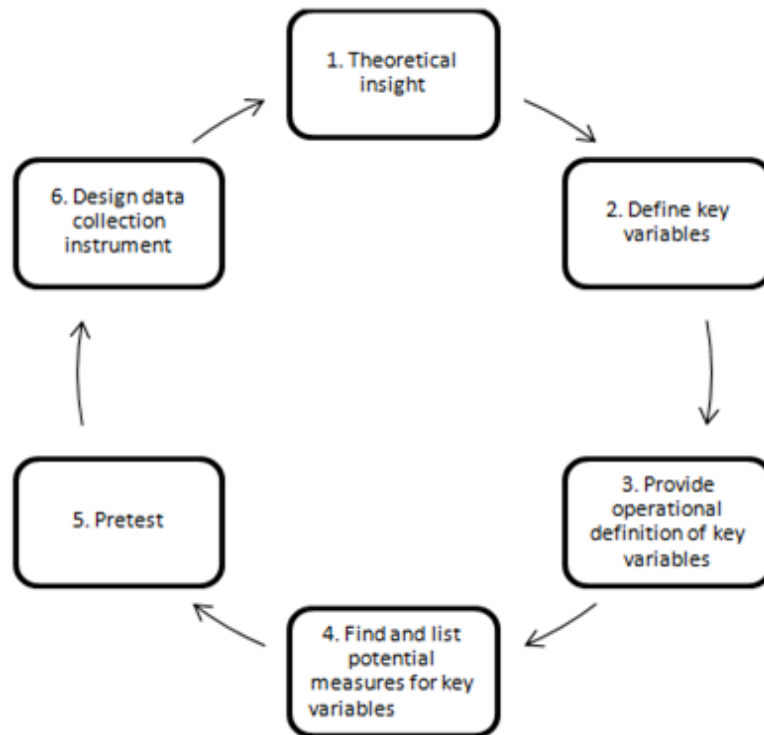


Figure 3 - The Operationalization Process

The aforementioned operationalization process (*See Figure 3*) is taken into consideration when forming an operationalization for each concept. The operationalization table (*See Table 4*) is based on the concepts used in this research. The concepts are followed by a conceptual definition. Thereafter, an operational definition of the concepts is provided, explaining what the concept is supposed to measure as well as the different measures for each concept. Ultimately, each question demonstrated in the interview guide (*See Appendix 1*) is supported by the measures provided in *Table 4*.

Table 4 - Operationalization

Concept	Conceptual Definition	Operational Definition	Measure	Questions (See Appendix 1)
Social Presence	The degree of salience of the other person in the interaction and the consequent salience of the interpersonal relationship (Short et al. 1976)	A measure that reflects the presence business-to-business companies have in social media	Interaction (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; Wang and Wang 2012) Satisfaction (Sallnas et al. 2000) Efficiency (Sallnas et al. 2000) Communication (Edosomwan et al. 2011; Mangold and Faulds 2009; Tu 2000)	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 1.3.1, 1.5, 1.8, 1.9 1.6, 1.7 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4
Opportunities	When understanding the medium and its effects, and the result is success (Mangold and Faulds 2009)	A measure that reflects the opportunities for business-to-business companies using social media	Success (Edosomwan et al. 2011; Mangold and Faulds 2009) Awareness (Mangold and Faulds 2009) Word-of-Mouth (Brown et al. 2007; Mangold and Faulds 2009; Ramsay 2010) Relationships (Tu 2000)	2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.6 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 2.3 2.2, 2.4, 2.6
Risks	The possibility for people to talk to each other about services and products, in a negative way (Mangold and Faulds 2009)	A measure that reflects the risks for business-to-business companies using social media	Word-of-Mouth (Brown et al. 2007; Mangold and Faulds 2009; Ramsay 2010) Challenges (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; Ramsay 2010) Brand protection (Kietzmann et al. 2011; Ramsay 2010) Influence (Ramsay 2010) Reputation (Mangold and Faulds 2009)	3.1.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.7 3.1, 3.1.1, 3.2, 3.6, 3.7 3.1.1, 3.3, 3.5, 3.7 3.1.1, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7 3.1.1, 3.3, 3.5, 3.7

4.6.2 Interview guide

For the interview to fulfill the intended purpose of the research, it is significant to establish an interview guide (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). An interview guide is a direction or map in order for the subject being studied to be clarified (ibid). The guide is used to help obtaining reliability and also to make sure that the researchers include all central features and issues that

cover the subject matter during the interview (Punch 2005; Ritchie and Lewis 2003). As discussed prior, there are two main types of interviews (Bryman and Bell 2011):

- *Unstructured interview* does not have a determined structure (Bryman and Bell 2011; Yin 2009). The focus stands in asking questions that are open-ended (Bryman and Bell 2011). As the interviewer has the opportunity to ask questions based on the interviewee's responses, the path of the interview might lead elsewhere than first intended (ibid). According to Kumar (2010), an unstructured interview method is often used for studies that are more about the way individuals think, what attitudes, and perceptions they have. Because the method discusses open-ended questions, no concrete list of specifically formulated questions is established (Kumar 2010).
- *Semi-structured interview*, also called focused interview, sets more weight on the preparation of conducting and formulating questions (Yin 2009). While the researchers conduct interview questions relevant to the study, the interviewer has the opportunity to ask follow up questions (Bryman and Bell 2011). This allows the respondent to answer the questions without restrain as well as it allows the interviewer to develop any questions in order to explore a given response in greater depth (Kumar 2010). It is important that the interviewer is unbiased during the interview in order for the result to be reliable and valid (Bryman and Bell 2011).

This research will be followed by semi-structured interviews for the data collection method, due to the set of research questions and the aim of the study. Given that the purpose is to gain a deeper understanding of the respondent's attitudes and opinions (Bryman and Bell 2011; Black 1994) the chosen data collection method is considered appropriate. The development of the semi-structured interview guide (*See Appendix 1*) is based on the three main keywords of this research, namely; social presence, opportunities, and risks.

4.6.3 Pre-testing

Pre-testing is the fifth step of the operationalization process (*See Figure 3*). Pre-testing concerns the measures of the concepts presented in *Table 4*. It is essential to prepare and carry out a pre-test before the main data collection begins (Bryman and Bell 2011). A pre-test is established with individuals obtaining experience or expertise in the field of the research

(ibid). According to Ghauri and Grønhaug (2005), the reliability and construct validity of the measures provided in an operationalization should be evaluated as well as pre-tested. The researchers of this study decided to test the established interview guide for potential improvement. Four individuals were chosen for the pre-testing in order to give the researchers advice and input regarding the questions. Although none of the chosen individuals were experts within the field of social media, they were all researchers at Linnaeus University and Leeds University. They all had basic knowledge about the subject matter and the research at hand. Therefore, the researchers' experience and cognition concerning the interview guide was found to be important for the study. The main objective of the pre-testing was to receive a clear view of whether the questions are understandable and relevant in terms of using the theory and operationalization. Another important factor was to see if the language being used is preferable. The researchers concluded the pre-testing in order to find out if any questions should be eliminated, changed, or improved in any way. The pre-testing is an important step in improving the interview guide before performing the actual interviews.

4.6.4 Data collection procedure

The first step before the actual interview was to send an email to each company being interviewed. The email consisted of a short presentation of the researchers and an introduction of the study in order to clarify the importance of the thesis for the respondents. When the four chosen agencies agreed to act as respondents, a document was sent consisting of the questions established in the interview guide. The researchers found it important for the respondents to have time to reflect over the questions a few days prior to the interview.

When the interview took place, it was important to ask the respondents for their permission to record the interview. All respondents authorized the researchers to record the interview; however they asked to remain anonymous. The respondents were informed that the recordings would only be used to facilitate the data collection for the empirical chapter. Thereafter, the researchers, once again, provided a brief introduction to make sure that no misinterpretations would occur. If the respondent felt uncertain during the interview regarding the questions being asked, the interviewer had the opportunity to clarify and explain in order to avoid any misunderstandings. As the questions in the semi-structured interview guide were open ended, it gave the respondent the possibility to freely discuss the subject as well as it gave the interviewer the option to ask follow up questions, also called probing.

4.7 Sampling

Sampling is the act of deciding which entities should represent a population from which specific data will be gathered from (Bryman and Bell 2011). The most efficient manner of gaining deeper knowledge regarding a subject is to employ a qualitative approach of sampling (Marshall 1996). Sampling contains three steps (Malhotra and Birks 2007): the first step is to define the population. A population is all entities that subsists in the same geographical region or that fit in the same grouping. The second step is to classify the sampling frame. A sampling frame consists of a list of characteristics of the population from where the sample will be chosen from. The final step in the sampling process is deciding what the size of the sample will be, meaning how many entities that will be incorporated in the research (Bryman and Bell 2011; Malhotra and Birks 2007; Marshall 1996).

4.7.1 Sampling frame

The sampling frame for this research is the advertising industry, specifically advertising agencies in Sweden. The reason for this choice of population is because these agencies belong to the same grouping in regards to the research aim of this study, which is concerning the effects of social media presence perceived by industry professionals from the advertising industry. The sampling frame was made through the use of commercial list providers, offering listings of large sized advertising agencies in the advertising industry that have adopted social media into their marketing promotion mix.

4.7.2 Sample selection

This research includes four case studies and the sample organizations are four advertising agencies, whereas one agency is located in Gothenburg and the remaining three agencies are from the region of Stockholm. The sample selection for these particular advertising agencies was influenced by their social media implementation and organizational scope, meaning that they are classified as the largest advertising agencies in Sweden. The motivation for choosing these agencies was in association to how the effects of having a presence in social media are perceived by industry professionals in regards to the research aim in this study.

4.8 Data Analysis Method

Qualitative analysis encompasses examining, categorizing, tabulating, and recombining the gathered qualitative data (Bryman and Bell 2011). A feature that defines qualitative research is the engulfing amount of gathered data, which creates the necessity to categorize and structure the data so that meaningful inferences can be drawn from it (Bryman and Bell 2011; Yin 2009). The choice of data analysis method in this dissertation is therefore a data reduction and pattern matching approach. It is the most suitable methodology in regards to the study being of a qualitative nature based on multiple case studies.

There are three steps involved in regards to data reduction and pattern matching in a qualitative research study (Miles and Huberman 1994). These steps entail the following:

- *Data reduction and Crystallization* is the method of selecting, centering, shortening, abstracting and lastly transforming (coding) the collected data. This process is ever evolving and a continuous element of the qualitative analysis which organizes and tabulates the data so that inferences can be depicted and validated (Miles and Huberman 1994).
- *Data display* is the course of action of where the data is presented in a condensed and classified gathering. In regards to organizing the data, it is recommended using graphs, charts, and matrices instead of only having a lengthened transcript of text. These tools can contribute to the data being presented in a condensed way (Miles and Huberman 1994).
- The last step is *Conclusion Drawing and Pattern matching*. This process entails deciding what things mean by noting irregularities, regularities and patterns as well as recognizing causal flows in order to draw inferences (Miles and Huberman 1994).

This qualitative data analysis approach is useful in this multiple case study because of the research aim of the study. The social presence as a research subject is rooted in theory; therefore the qualitative analysis is depending on theoretical suggestions. The theoretical suggestions in relation to social presence will for that reason be used as assistance in the data analysis (Yin 2009).

Another qualitative data analysis method that will be utilized in the dissertation is of a comparative nature through the carrying of a cross-sectional case study analysis. The use of a cross-sectional case study and analyzing data from several cases can add to a deeper understanding and contribute to comparative inferences (Black 1994; Miles and Huberman 1994; Yin 2009). Thus, clarifications of the research problem can be made (Yin 2009).

The data gathered from the in-depth interviews with the cooperating companies will be translated word for word which will represent the empirical material in the dissertation. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the interview transcripts should be indexed and indicated in accordance with the theoretical key words in order to contribute to reducing the text so that it is potent. The data will be easier to identify if it is placed in accordance with the theoretical key words used in this multiple case study (Miles and Huberman 1994; Yin 2009). An operationalization of the collected interview data can help connect it with the theoretical constructs so that conclusions can easier be drawn (Bryman and Bell 2011; Yin 2009).

Following the recommendations by Miles and Huberman (1994) and Yin (2009), the transcribed interview data will be categorized, centered, tabulated, and condensed in order to be put into matrices and tables so that a comparative analysis of the four case studies can be made. Thereafter, the empirical data will be connected to the theoretical constructs presented in this dissertation and patterns, regularities, and occurring topics can be identified by displaying the data in tables and matrices (Miles and Huberman 1994; Yin 2009). This can facilitate the ability to draw inferences from the data in order to solve the research problem in this dissertation (Yin 2009).

4.9 Quality Criteria

A study never gets better than the amount of quality spent when conducting it, which represents the rigor of the research (Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005). Therefore, it is essential to ensure that the research study contains validity and reliability, which are concepts that represents the quality criteria of the research (Mays and Pope 1995; Silverman 2009). Validity and reliability aspires to identify the amount of trustworthiness, integrity and strength the research study contains (Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005; Yin 2009). The concept of validity evaluates the extent to which the measurement instrument used in the study examines what is supposed to examine (Bryman and Bell 2011). Reliability, on the other hand, refers to how

stable the measurement instrument is (ibid). In order for a research project to be credible it is necessary that the results of the research are rooted in valid and reliable sources (Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005; Mays and Pope 1995; Silverman 2009). Because this dissertation is of a qualitative nature, the concepts of content, construct, and external validity is employed as well as reliability in order to meet the criteria of quality of the thesis (Bryman and Bell 2011).

4.9.1 Content validity

This type of validity, also called face validity, characterizes how well a measurement construct's components actually represent that construct (Bryman and Bell 2011). The content (face) validity can be strengthened by allowing experts and potential respondents judge how well the measurement instrument represents that measure, prior to starting the main data gathering (Bryman and Bell 2011; Yin 2009). Concretely elevating the content validity can be made through exposing the interview guide to potential respondents and experts in the field of business research (Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005). In order to meet this part of the validity criteria, the interview guide was sent by e-mail to four researchers at the university. Thus, the content (face) validity of the dissertation can be elevated.

4.9.2 Construct validity

Construct validity is the degree to which an operationalization specifically measures the concept it is expected to measure (Bryman and Bell 2011; Yin 2009). This type of validity is assessed by using multiple sources of evidence, for instance through the use of triangulation (Bryman and Bell 2011). It is essential to establish a chain of evidence through correctly referenced sources, the inclusion of recording the interview guide, and by saving the original interview transcripts that make up the empirical data (Bryman and Bell 2011; Silverman 2009). Letting key informants evaluate outlines of the case study can also contribute to elevating the level of construct validity in the study (ibid). In order to accomplish significant and translatable research discoveries that can be evaluated in different ways, the construct validity is a necessary aspect (Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005).

The construct validity of this dissertation was raised through testing the interview guide by letting four researchers at Linnaeus University and Leeds University evaluate it prior to the data collection takes place. The interview questions were sent to the respondents and they were given a comfortable time frame to read the questions before the day of the interview.

This gives the respondents time to think about the questions that will be asked as well as ensuring that the interviewees are not caught off guard during the actual interview. The authors wanted to be able to study the interview answers in detail beyond examining the interview transcripts, which is why the interviews were also recorded.

4.9.3 External validity

External validity refers to the establishment of a domain to which the dissertation's discoveries can be generalized (Bryman and Bell 2011; Yin 2009). This type of validity thus stands for measuring the result of the study's ability to be assessed and extrapolated in another situation or with a different grouping of the chosen population (Yin 2009). It is of importance to stress that the findings in this qualitative study do not need to be generalized (ibid).

However, the case study needs to be replicated several times in order for it to be generalized (Yin 2009). The external validity of a study is through the use of replication logic in multiple-case studies and highlighting possibilities for where generalizations can be made (Bryman and Bell 2011; Yin 2009). The cross case-analysis is an approach that can add to the generalized factor of a case study (Miles and Huberman 1994).

An aspect that reinforces the external validity of the findings in this study is the carrying out of a cross-case analysis and having multiple case studies as a foundation for the empirical material (Yin 2009). The external validity will also be strengthened by using the same interview guide for all four in-depth interviews which will contribute to the replication logic needed to enforce generalizations and external validity in the study (ibid).

4.9.4 Reliability

Reliability is referring to the consistency of a measure of a concept which can be measured and assessed through repetition of the study at a later point in time (Bryman and Bell 2011; Yin 2009). This strengthens the repeatability of the study (Yin 2009). By doing so, another investigator can replicate the same study again at another point in time and receive the same result as the study conducted prior (Bryman and Bell 2011). Reliability can be facilitated through the carrying out of multiple case studies, interviews, and focus groups (Bryman and Bell 2011). It can also be facilitated through the use of case study protocols with a detailed classification and justification of the different steps in the data gathering and analysis process

(Bryman and Bell 2011; Yin 2009). Reliability can also be enforced by maintaining a case study database where the case study data is gathered and can be reviewed (Bryman and Bell 2011). The intention of making certain that a study has reliability is the elimination of biased and forged answers (Yin 2009). The aforementioned methods must be filed to give a researcher the means to recreate the same study at another point in time, therefore ensuring that a study is reliable (Bryman and Bell 2011; Yin 2009).

In terms of this particular case study, justifications for the choices that have been made are argued for extensively throughout the study and the methodology chapter in particular (Yin 2009). The actual interviews are intended to be written down as well as recorded and the interview guide along with interview questions will be made accessible for readers of this research (ibid). The researchers of this multiple case study therefore believe that replicating this study at another point in time will be achievable (ibid).

4.10 Chapter Summary

To summarize the methodology chapter provided in this research, the researchers has illustrated a table (*See Table 5*) consisting of the structured parts of this chapter. The presented parts has clearly been defined and motivated. First, the thesis has a deductive and qualitative research approach. Second, the four case studies being examined are mainly followed by a descriptive research design with some exploratory elements. Third, the data will be collected throughout in-depth interviews being semi-structured. Finally, the data analysis methods used for this research are data reduction and crystallization, data display, conclusion drawing and pattern matching.

It was highly significant to give an input of all the procedures undertaken for this research given that the methodology chapter provides credibility and the overall degree of reliability to the study. In conclusion, the objective of this methodology chapter was the desire to inform the reader of how well the research process has flowed and to what degree it is reliable.

Table 5 - Chapter Summary: Methodology

Research Methodology	
Research Approach	Deductive Qualitative
Research Design	Descriptive Exploratory
Data Sources	Primary data
Research Strategy	Case studies
Data Collection Method	In-depth interviews Semi-structured interviews
Sampling	Advertising industry Advertising agencies Four case studies
Data Analysis Method	Data reduction and crystallization Data display Conclusion drawing and pattern matching
Quality Criteria	Content validity External validity Reliability

5. Empirical Data Presentation

The empirical data from the four investigated cases is presented in this chapter. The chapter begins with a brief introduction of the examined organizations. Thereafter, a presentation of the data for each case study is included. The presentation of the data will be demonstrated in unity with the theoretical structure in this research, namely; social presence, opportunities, and risks.

5.1 Case One (Company A)

The first case study is based on one of Sweden's largest advertising companies with its base in Gothenburg and with a purpose to create world-class communication. This advertising company has worked with both consumer advertising and with clients in the business-to-business sector. The company, described as Company A, has contributed with knowledge and industry information in regards to its choice of having a presence in social media and the subsequent opportunities and risks that follows. The representative of the agency is one of the most prominent art directors with fifteen years of experience in the business and six years within the field of social media, which the following empirical data is based on.

5.1.1 Social Presence

Company A considers social media as incredibly hard to define and states that it would be of relevance to talk about digital media rather than social media. The agency regards social media as a conversion of social interaction, which is a characteristic of common human behavior. Company A thus affirms that social interaction is associated with social media. It is an incredibly important place for brands to exist in because it is where the majority of their customers spend their time online. For Company A, the social medium is a great platform and a tool in the process of building relations rather than projecting a message to the user.

The agency only uses the social media channels relevant to its vision of creating world-class information and in the purpose of advertising its clients. The agency invests the majority of their time being present on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. These channels provide a great range and scope of users. The specific reasoning behind these channels is in accordance with which users they want to reach and what the particular choice of channels can do for the

agency that other channels cannot. It is imperative for the organization to use social media because of the prospect of communication. The agency uses all opportunities to communicate with people and social media provides one of those opportunities. The clients have a presence in social media; therefore it is imminent that they also have a one. “Where the receivers of our clients’ messages are is where we want to be”. – Art director.

The agency has plans on expanding its presence in social media in accordance with the channels that fit its forthcoming objectives. The use of social media in the company continuously develops in an organic way and the presence in social media will continuously increase. The medium is also used as a tool for internal communication within the organization, specifically through Instagram. The agency is continuously working with being active in social media and exploring new developments within the channels that are currently being used. In terms of the organizational preparations revolving the use of social media, it comes down to simple insights and having an understanding of human behavior. “It is simply based in how we as human beings act and reason”. – Art director, Company A.

The use of the medium has contributed to the organization being able to communicate and advertise endeavors. These possibilities would not have been in reach were it not for the emerging of social media. The agency’s way of thinking is based on the perspective of its clients and the customers of the agency expect Company A to have a presence in social media. Given that the commissioning bodies’ customers are online, it is important for them to also have a presence online, as well as being part of the digital development. It is important to stay up-to-date, which is what having a presence in social media gives the agency.

5.1.2 Opportunities

The type of beneficial differences the use of social media has made for the organization is foremost a greater opportunity to be creative and express creativity. Social media usage as a tool also provides a velocity to the process of realizing an idea to the point of activation. The medium provides a rapidness which makes it a very powerful and effective marketing communication tool. Brand recognition, greater exposure as well as cultivating a community are strengthened with the use of social media. Positive word of mouth is influenced by users in social media, which emphasizes the power it has, according to Company A. Several of the company’s commissioning bodies have ordered advertising campaigns where social media

has been the core of the campaigns. These types of campaigns are also some of their most successful. Other benefits the organization can gain from using social media are that it can be a means for creating a competitive advantage if they are effective in their social media usage in comparison to their competitors. That way they have a chance to stand out as well as keeping their audience. Social media is moreover an effective marketing medium that does not require a great amount of recourses in comparison to what the benefits are, if used successfully and to the medium's fullest capacity. Company A uses social media to influence the perception of the company in order for it to be positive, by being less formal in their advertising. This contributes to the company's commissioning bodies being positively perceived as well.

5.1.3 Risks

According to the company, the rapidness of social media could lead to miscalculated actions and unconsidered decisions. Although social media can give companies an opportunity to create a dialog, it also brings a risk in the form of losing control of what is being said about them. Nevertheless, there are no specific problems the organization has faced since adapting social media. The company observes what is being said about it in the chosen channels by regularly having meetings with the largest actors in social media, such as Facebook, in addition to being active in the medium itself.

The company has certainly been subjected to negative word of mouth in relation to certain advertisements they have created, which has been unavoidable to some degree. Company A has furthermore reached a great deal of success, both in terms of business results and by creating an awareness of the company in their industry. The success has manifested itself in the shape of decorations and awards in advertising events. The company contributes the success to being early in adapting and using digital social media in their advertising endeavors.

Internal challenges as well as external challenges the agency has experienced in relation to the use of social media are in the form of unconsidered decisions and actions that can give a negative view of the company to the outside world. Thus, a consequence in using social media can be the creation of internal conflicts as a result of having to deal with external challenges.

5.2 Case Two (Company B)

The second case in this empirical chapter is based on one of the successful and well-known advertising agencies located in Stockholm, Sweden. The agency, referred to as Company B, has been in the advertising industry for almost seventeen years and is now one of the most prominent firms in Sweden. The organization believes that business- and brand development are two central factors for success within the advertising industry. The respondent representing Company B is an account director with an experience in the organization for ten years as well as an experience within the field of social media for six years.

5.2.1 Social Presence

Social media is described with the words: communication, openness, globalization, and democracy. The account director further describes social media as a place for people and corporations to socialize, share, engage, and as a place for people to be a part of. The agency use social media in order to interact with other companies, customers, users but also to share the campaigns they provide as well as to create invitations for different events and activities. The social media channels used by Company B are: Twitter, Vimeo, Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Company B is working with their plan to expand their social media presence, however it all depends on the development of social media and how it will be used in the future. The reason behind the choices of channels is because the channels are the best and the easiest, according to the agency. They are also the most used channels and the first choice for the user, which answers to Company B's needs.

Company B finds social media to be highly important for the organization. It is essential to share the work because as an advertising agency it is significant to understand and use social media, as it is one of the ways the agency help their commissioning bodies to communicate with the customers. The respondent perceives the platform to be the space where the organization can show what kind of personality they have. The purpose of the utilization is to share trends rather than using the platform for internal communication, which is why the agency do not have any plans to implement social media in their communication internally. Regarding the preparations revolving social media, Company B has employees responsible for the updating of posts and for managing the channels. Social media has made several differences for the organization. It has mainly made it possible for the agency to share what they do in order to create a "buzz" about them. Other differences social media has made for

the agency is namely the openness it has created and the feeling of having a presence online. By having a presence in social media, Company B expects to obtain involvement and distribution in return. Although, it is moreover vital to attain feedback on their work and campaigns as well as ‘likes’ which can also be viewed as feedback. Last but not least, another expectation of having a social presence is online users sharing their creations.

5.2.2 Opportunities

Social media has clearly facilitated the process of sharing the agency’s campaigns. The opportunities of using social media have been the process of building the organization’s brand with an attitude, features, and a personality of their own. Once again, sharing their creations is also mentioned. Because of their presence in social media and the subsequent sharing of the agency’s work, Company B has been subjected to positive word of mouth over the years. The agency can benefit from social media by simply being part of it. The respondent for Company B mentions that it is possible to influence the perception of their agency in a positive way, with the help of social media, by building the brand in a way where it has its own personality, its own unique attitude, and its own great features. This can, according to the account director, help Company B influence the perception of their organization. The most profitable opportunity gained since using social media has been their development of projects with customers. The account director perceives that social media is truly a great platform for the agency to have a presence in, in order to create and promote campaigns, and other type of communication.

5.2.3 Risks

According to Company B, there is always a risk for an organization using social media because it is difficult to control what people say or do, or even how people use it. The account director further explains: “This is something that is hard to manage; sometimes true as well as false reputation spread quickly. Another aspect is that some businesses lead towards being less personal, which is both a positive and negative thing”. The one risk mentioned during the interview, specifically for the organization, is the risk of being subjected with negative word of mouth regarding their campaigns. However, Company B has not dealt with any problems or downsides so far and has not been subjected to negative word of mouth since using social media.

The agency uses “Lissly”, a measurement tool, in order to gather everything being said about them, everything that has been shared by users, and everything that has been talked about. Social media has only affected the agency’s reputation and brand in a positive way. However, an internal challenge perceived by the respondent is “to regularly share valuable content that strengthens our brand”. When it comes to the perceived internal and external challenges, the respondent answered “we have not experienced any external challenges in our organization so far. Hopefully, we never will”.

5.3 Case Three (Company C)

The data gathering from this particular case is from one of the advertising agencies located in Stockholm, Sweden which will be referred to as Company C. The agency has been in the advertising industry since the year of 1998 and has been appointed for being one of the best advertising agencies in Sweden. Company C is a top advertising agency that strives for the ambition to build strong relationships with clients that share the same beliefs regarding the power of communication. The researchers had the pleasure of interviewing a project planner with an employment of two years in the agency as well as having approximately two years of experience within the field of social media.

5.3.1 Social Presence

Company C has a clear and defined perception of social media. The medium is described as a part of the digital world where discussions are being held and where there is interaction between users as well as between people and brands. The interaction is not only expressed with words but also through photos and videos. Social media is perceived to be an extremely significant space for brands to be present in, as many customers nowadays spend most of their time being online. The project planner perceives the platform to be of great utilization when it comes to relationship building instead of merely communication a message. Company C is mainly active on Twitter and LinkedIn. The reason behind these choices of channels depend on the brand and campaign the agency is working with, meaning that Company C only use channels appropriate for each brand and each campaign. The use of traditional social media can sometimes be more suitable than the use of innovative social media and vice versa, depending on the clients’ wants and needs.

Company C constantly observes mediums that can be of interest to use in order to strengthen a certain campaign or the social media presence of a specific brand. According to the agency, people's skepticism regarding commercials on television is increasing, which leads to social media getting more interesting as it enhances the peoples' will to receive a message. The will to receive a message becomes more powerful if it comes from someone within their surrounding rather than directly from the brand. Using social media for internal communication is not current in Company C, although it is definitely something the organization is considering with the intention to strengthen the campaigns made internally for their customers. When it comes to the preparations revolving social media, it depends on who the target group is, how the campaign is designed, and what the intention of the campaign is. The targeted audience determines which channel should be used as well as which channel is highly interesting in order to reach out to as many as possible. Subsequently, the design and intention of the campaign decides upon the most attractive channels.

The use of social media has made some differences for Company C. The project planner mentions that social media has influenced how the agency designs their campaigns, how they collect data regarding the behavior, and opinions of different target groups. It has also made an effect on how they measure the value of their campaigns. The use of social media has come to affect the whole business of Company C. However, the expected return of having a presence in social media can vary depending on the campaign. The objective is sometimes to gain more followers or getting more people to recommend a certain product. In the end, the objective is to always strengthen the relationship between the consumer and the brand.

5.3.2 Opportunities

The presence in social media has made it easier for the agency to obtain a greater success rate on their campaigns, as the users share and spread the campaigns posted on the channels being used. Company C perceives that social media is more about delivering profit and value, and building a relationship through a two-way communication. It is no longer about shouting out a message, because no one will listen. The great opportunity with social media is the path to better communication, which makes it more interesting, relevant, and powerful. Several customers of Company C have been subjected to positive word of mouth because of the different campaigns provided by the organization. How the actual positive word of mouth occurs is different for each campaign. A campaign can for instance be seen by people through

a commercial break on the television, an ad, event, or a press release revolving the campaign. It is about creating commercials that move people and evokes a feeling of wanting to be involved. Furthermore, the use of social media could be beneficial for the agency as it can lead to: building new relationships, obtaining greater brand recognition, acquire recommendations, and strengthen existing relationships.

As the organization's creations are frequently judged based on how efficient their campaigns are, it is important for them to use social media in a decent and civilized way. The project planner for Company C further mentions: "If we manage to continuously succeed in this, the sharing of our posts will likely increase and we will obtain more success on our campaigns, making our creations more efficient". With the emerging of social media, a vast possibility for Company C is the opportunity to develop campaigns using a reduced financial capital, which saves the company resources whilst still enabling the opportunity to attain significant success. This possibility has made it more interesting and also made it possible for being more innovative when designing a campaign.

5.3.3 Risks

From a communicative perspective, the only risk with having a presence in social media was that as soon as a campaign is out, the control over it is lost. Company C could control when and to what extent their creations were shown before using social media. The agency observes what is being said about their organization in the social media channels by using a measurement tool named "Lissly", which is used in a way for the organization to actually track their customers' digital and social media presence. Moreover, the agency has been subjected to negative word-of-mouth. There are campaigns that move the audience and the reason is simply because it has an inherent conflict. That is why it is always going to be positive and negative word of mouth concerning a campaign. The project planner perceives this to be a necessary evil rather than a bad thing in order for a discussion to start. The important proficiency is to make sure that the impact of positive word of mouth is significantly higher than the negative word of mouth.

Having a presence in social media has, for Company C, affected the agency in a way where it has influenced the way they design their campaigns. It has also strengthened the organization's business model, where the purpose is to be more innovative. When it comes to

the internal challenges, the project planner mentions that everything new being used in an organization is like an uphill battle in the beginning until it becomes a natural part of the work process. However, most of the employees in Company C operates and think in a way that is integrating and social media has now become a natural part of their work process. An external challenge is the resistance from the customers' side. With resistance, the respondent mean that the customers may not see the value of having a social media presence as well as working with social media in the same way as Company C does. This is nevertheless beginning to change and the resistance is continuously decreasing.

5.4 Case Four (Company D)

The fourth case study is based on one of Sweden's most prominent advertising companies. Founded in Stockholm in the late 90's, this company is part of six firms located in Scandinavia, offering services within advertising, strategy, PR, design, production, and brand identity. This agency has played an important role in defining how its industry motivates and understands consumers in an ever evolving communication environment. The agency's philosophy is to unify strategy with creativity through a result concentrated idea. The interviewed respondent is an Art Director with five years of experience working in the company and five years of practice within the field of social media, which the following empirical data is based on.

5.4.1 Social Presence

Social media is described with the words "interaction with customers" and "marketing". In order to be successful, it is important to have good relationships with the customers, mainly through interaction. Company D perceives social media being vital to build new customer relationships but also to interact with existing ones. The agency often uses social media when marketing new campaigns and events. It is extremely important for the company to be seen in social media. The social media channels being used on a regular basis by the agency are Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, and LinkedIn. The main reason for choosing the abovementioned channels is primarily because of the high user traffic they adhere. They result in great exposure, rapid marketing, and according to the agency the channels are the most popular ones.

Company D finds it crucial for the agency to be seen and interact online. It is important to develop and grow along with the platform as it holds great future possibilities. According to the Art Director, social media seems to grow and develop continuously, which is why it is important for the agency to adapt in accordance with the developments of social media. The use of social media for internal communication is nothing Company D has been planning on for now. However, it might be relevant in the future. When it comes to the preparations revolving social media, the agency first and foremost strives to have a well-mannered and well-monitored presence on social media. Company D has employees responsible for different channels, as well as for the preparations; it can vary depending on different projects.

Social media has provided remarkable differences for the agency, where it has specifically provided Company D with recognition and connected the agency with the online world. Recognition and sharing is what the agency expects in return when having a presence in social media. Recognition also becomes possible with the help of spreading the agency's posts and work on the social media channels.

5.4.2 Opportunities

The presence in social media has given the agency the opportunity to share their work which has made it possible to directly attain feedback. It has also made the organization obtain new contacts and has expanded their network. For the agency to have a viral identity is one of the perceived opportunities. Using social media makes it possible for everyone to feel involved and included with Company D. When people are involved and are interacting with the organization, it can result in a positive attitude towards the agency as well as lead to positive word of mouth.

As the agency has been subjected to positive word of mouth, they regularly strive towards attaining constructive criticism and positive word of mouth. This has contributed to Company D receiving awards throughout the years being in the business. Their latest campaign was, for instance, posted on Facebook where thousands of people pressed the button 'like' and shared the post and they also gained a great amount of comments from users, giving wonderful responses. The use of social media has made it possible to expand the marketing of different campaigns as well as marketing the brand. It has greatly helped the organization with brand exposure and given the agency the opportunity to create and strengthen new and valuable

relationships. It is important for the agency to be seen and behave in a respectable manner, as it is easy to be perceived in a negative way. The art director says “you cannot control everyone’s thoughts and feelings but you can control your presence”. The overall opportunities gained from having a presence in social media is the growth of success, the development of creativeness and artistic power as well as creating openness for the organization’s campaigns.

5.4.3 Risks

The main risk with having a presence in social media is not being able to control what people write and say about the organization. Although according to the Art Director, it is definitely a risk worth taking seeing as the opportunities outweigh the risks. There are tools such as “tags” that can help in the context of observing what is being said and what people are posting about the agency. Company D has been subjected to negative word of mouth, as it is a risk of being part of the media. The art director mentions that “not everyone like and agree with the commercials we provide, so my answer is certainly”. Social media has affected Company D’s brand as well as reputation in a very positive way, as it has lead the agency towards more success apparent in the form of awards and it has also provided the organization with a connection to the online world. Having a presence in social media has furthermore influenced the way the organization operates, specifically in creating awareness among employees in how they, as part of the agency, should present themselves in the social media atmosphere.

Company D do not believe that the organization has experienced any internal challenges when using social media, as it has rather been beneficial than challenging for the agency. When it comes to the external challenges when using social media, a common challenge the art director came to think of was how a message can be perceived. It is often the case that a message is misinterpreted. In other words, it is possible and very common that a message might not be perceived the way it was intended to be and once the message is out, it is beyond the agency’s control.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the gathered empirical data from the four interviews significant to the study. The empirical data from the examined case studies were presented separately, case by case and interview per interview, in order to provide a structure for the empirical chapter. The gathered data were as well presented in accord with the theoretical concepts concluded from the literature review in chapter two. To facilitate the data analysis in the following chapter, the characteristics presented in this chapter have been outlined and summarized in the illustrated table provided by the researchers (*See Table 6*).

Table 6 - Chapter Summary: Characteristics of each case

Facts	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Position of respondent	Art Director	Account Director	Project Planner	Art Director
Employment in the agency	15 years	10 years	2 years	5 years
Experience in social media	6 years	6 years	2 years	5 years
Year of establishment	1986	1997	1998	1998
Geographical area	Gothenburg	Stockholm	Stockholm	Stockholm

6. Data Analysis

This chapter presents a cross-case analysis of the empirical data in the preceding chapter. The data analysis is grounded in three key concepts established in the theoretical structure of this dissertation, specifically; social presence, opportunities, and risks. The analysis depicts data comparisons across the cases. Furthermore, the analysis discusses the empirical data with the elements of the theoretical structure as well as it matches the data with the elements of the theoretical structure. In conclusion, the analysis in this chapter is the foundation for the research questions being answered.

6.1 Social Presence

Social presence “affects the nature of the interaction, and it interacts with the purpose of the interaction to influence the medium chosen by the individual who wishes to communicate” (Sallnas et al. 2000, p. 462 and 463). However, the meaning of social media was, according to the advertising agencies, broad and difficult to define. The general perception of social media included: socialization, interaction, communication, and sharing. The medium does not only include communication with words or writing, but also photos and videos.

One organization clarified the main motive for why it is essential for them to have a presence in social media was to establish good relationships with the customers. Edosomwan et al. (2011) argues that having a presence in social media can strengthen the brand experience and thus be more attractive to the customers. The studied agencies explicated the interaction with their customers as the main reason for having a social presence. The theory states that communication with customers through social media is a great opportunity for organizations, due to the relationship building and nurturing of current customer relationships. By having a presence in social media the desire is to be connected with other human beings for the purpose of interaction and communication (Wang and Wang 2012). All four agencies pointed out the importance of interaction and how social media is a place for people to be part of.

Table 7 - Summary of empirical data: Question 1.1

Aspects	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Defining Social Media	- Digital media - Social interaction	- Communication - Openness - Globalization - Democracy	- Digital world - Interaction	- Interaction - Marketing

Table 7 presents what comes to mind when thinking of social media

One agency explained that social media is an incredibly important place for brands to exist in because it is where the majority of their customers spend their time online. When analyzing the gathered data it becomes clear that all the agencies had the same perception regarding the power of social media. Social media allows companies to communicate with their customers; however it also allows customers to communicate directly with one another (Mangold and Faulds 2009). The four cases articulated the magnitude of being able to communicate and interact with current and potential customers, and how that interaction can lead to the facilitation of new relationships.

A similarity between all four agencies relates to how they all use social media channels to share and promote their own activities and events. They believed it to be a significant marketing platform where they can receive direct feedback and reach a lot of people at the same time. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) talk about how social presence theory states that “media” in social media vary in the degree of “social presence”, which is defined as the auditory, visual, and physical contact that can be attained. When studying the four cases, it is emphasized that their social presence is based on a visual contact. The four agencies highlighted how they first and foremost wanted to attain a physical contact with their current and potential customers through the platform of social media, thus the theory that Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) discuss is applicable in these four cases.

Table 8 - Summary of empirical data: Question 1.2

Aspects	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Use of Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The majority of our customers spend their time online - Build relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interact with companies, customers, and users - Share campaigns - Event invitations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customers spend most of their time being online. - Relationship building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build new customer relationships - Interact with existing customers - Marketing new campaigns and events

Table 8 presents why social media is being used

According to Sallnas et al. (2000), the choice of a specific channel is based on what purpose or task is given, meaning what the users recognize to be suitable for the given reason. There is a strong connection between the statements of Sallnas et al. (2000) and the four agencies. The data presentation shows that all four agencies used similar channels, however Company B and Company D have expanded their use of social media channels. The organizations explained that the choices are based on the relevance in relation to the purpose and vision of the usage. The reason behind choosing channels was the scope of users because the user traffic these channels provide is tremendous. Sallnas et al. (2000) explain that it is fundamental for the company to have a clear objective with the usage and to base the decision making regarding social media usage upon that goal. The agencies used channels which they consider being most suitable for their brand and vision.

All agencies are working on expanding their presence in social media. However, it depends on the development of social media and how it will be used in the future. This is in accordance with Tu's (2000) theory regarding the three dimensions of social presence, one of them being social context. Tu (2000) explains that depending on what tasks are given, the level of social presence will be affected. The agencies adapt their presence in social media based on what the goal of the task is. This depends on what kind of recognition they want to adhere to, how they want to communicate, and to what extent.

Table 9 - Summary of empirical data: Question 1.3

Aspects	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Social Media Channels	- Facebook - Instagram - Twitter	- Twitter - Vimeo - Facebook - LinkedIn - YouTube	- Twitter - LinkedIn	- Twitter - YouTube - Facebook - LinkedIn

Table 9 presents the social media channels being used

One organization argued that it is imperative for them to use social media because of the prospect of communication, while another organization discussed the significant value that comes with understanding, and using social media to communicate with customers. However, one similarity all the agencies had in common was how relationship building often is the result of communication. The seven functional building blocks stated by Kietzmann et al. (2011) contains: sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, conversations, and groups. The empirical data showed that these blocks are important to consider when developing and sustaining a presence in social media. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) argue that social presence is affected by the intimacy of social media. According to one of the agencies, there is always a risk for an organization using social media because it is difficult to control what people say or do, or even how people use it. This has lead businesses towards being less personal. The agencies choose channels that are entirely open for anyone to participate in, which affects the intimacy aspect.

One of the organizations revealed how social media is a platform that allows the agency to disclose what kind of brand personality they have which is presented as self-disclosure (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). Self-disclosure can be described as the process by which there is conscious sharing of information that is of personal nature of oneself to another person, usually as thoughts and emotions. All four agencies found it important for them to share their brand personality through social media with the aim to involve current and potential customers in their organization.

Table 10 - Summary of empirical data: Question 1.4

Aspects	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Importance of Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prospect of communication - Being present where clients' have a presence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share campaigns - Help customers to communicate - Expose brand personality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customers spend most of their time being online - Relationship building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development - Growth - Future possibilities

Table 10 presents why the use of social media is important for the agencies

The unremitting growth of social media is a motive for the agencies to develop and consider future expansion. Miller and Lammas (2010) argue that social media has made a tremendous turn in terms of improvement and growth. The platform that was once used as a one way communication form has today expanded into an online world where consumers are developing platforms – such as content sharing sites, social networking sites, and blogs – to distribute, change, produce, and talk about Internet content (Kietzmann et al. 2011). All four organizations continuously observe the development of social media channels, which can be seen as them being prepared for future changes and modifications of the medium. Committing to social media can lead to increased growth in customer loyalty and can as well be brand strengthening (Edosomwan et al. 2011), which is a statement all four advertising agencies agreed upon. One of the agencies highlighted the importance of adapting the organization's future plans in accordance to the expansion of social media.

Rodriguez et al. (2012) argue that with the development of social media the use within the business-to-business environment has improved from a simple function used for interacting with friends to a vital platform for contacting new buyers, businesses and developing deeper relationships with existing and future customers. This theory can be seen supported by all four agencies, specifically in regards to their acquisition of new commissioning bodies.

Table 11 - Summary of empirical data: Question 1.5

Aspects	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Expanding Social Media	- Yes	- Yes	- Yes	- Yes

Table 11 presents whether the agencies consider expanding their use of social media

One of the agencies discussed how social media can be used as a tool for internal communication within the agency and specifies Instagram as a useful channel. The main motivation for using Instagram as a channel for internal communication was based on the ability to intermingle with the colleges in real time. Edosomwan et al. (2011) claims that the opportunity social media offer a company internally is allowing an open conversation between management and employees. However, only one of the four agencies described that social media is an important tool for good communication within their organization. The agency stated that it allows them to keep contact with each other and exchange everyday events. This includes every division in the organizational hierarchy, from management to staff. However, three agencies did not believe in using social media internally. According to them, social media will benefit the communication externally with customers and not have any evident effects within the organization. The main aspect for being successful in social media is conversation (Edosomwan et al. 2011). Given that all communication forms are fundamental, both external and internal, three out of four agencies did not have any future plans to implement social media in their communication internally.

Table 12 - Summary of empirical data: Question 1.6

Aspects	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Social Media for Internal Communication	- Yes	- No	- No	- No

Table 12 presents whether social media is used as a means for internal communication

One agency stressed that understanding human behavior can benefit the company in their practice of social media. The same agency asserted that they are consciously being ethically and morally correct when dealing with social media. This can be connected to what Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) refer to this as “self-presentation”, which is the act of conducting oneself and expressing oneself in manners that convey an impression that correlates to a person’s principles and morals.

Two of the advertising agencies asserted that their organizations have employees responsible for updating their social media channels and also managing events and posts on those channels. The preparation revolving the use of social media is dependent on who the target group is, how the campaign is designed, and what the goal of that campaign is. This is explained in the theory mentioned by Sallnas et al. (2000) where it is apparent that a company should choose a platform or channel based on what the goal or purpose of the event or campaign is.

Table 13 - Summary of empirical data: Question 1.7

Aspects	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Preparations Revolving Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exploring possibilities - Exploring new developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employees responsible for updating of posts - Employees responsible for managing the channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depends on; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the target group - how the campaigns are designed - the intention of the campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employees responsible for different channels - Preparations can vary depending on different projects

Table 13 presents the preparations for the use of social media

The use of social media has made several differences within the organizations. Considering their ability to communicate with current and new customers, the presence in social media has strengthened their brands through positive word-of-mouth. As their work circulates online and people can share and talk about the agencies, Mangold and Faulds (2009) elucidate that companies using social media risk being talked about in a positive or negative way, as the

medium allows a variety of Internet-forums where everyone can talk and write freely. Social media has provided the opportunity to communicate with a broader audience. The majority of cases in this research have created relationships with other companies as well as built new customer relationships, through social media. The agencies share information about their work, campaigns, and organization so that it creates an intimacy relationship with their customers (Mangold and Faulds 2009).

The use of social media has given the agencies the ability to share their campaigns, create invitations, and share information with all those using the platform. This contributes to making the communication form richer according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) when discussing that media vary in the extent of richness the company own, meaning which the quantity of information they agree to be conveyed.

Table 14 - Summary of empirical data: Question 1.8

Aspects	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Organizational Differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further possibilities - Communication - Advertising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possibilities for sharing - More 'buzz' - Openness - Feeling of social presence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design of campaigns - Data collection - Measurement of campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater opportunities - Connection with the online world - Acknowledged

Table 14 presents the organizational differences social media has provided

Social media is continuously growing, expanding, changing, and developing its features and for companies to follow the growth they have to stay active, which the agencies were aware of. Involvement from customers and companies can come in different forms such as feedback, positive word-of-mouth or sharing, and recommending the agency. This is partly the reason behind using social media and can fortify the brand experience (Brakus et al. 2009; Edosomwan et al. 2011; Naylor et al. 2012). An accurate and active presence in social media can strengthen the relationship between the consumer and the brand.

Table 15 - Summary of empirical data: Question 1.9

Aspects	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Tangible- and Intangible Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prospects - Clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obtain involvement and distribution - Feedback - Likes - Sharing from online users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gain more followers - Obtain recommendations - Strengthened relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition - Sharing

Table 15 presents the return that is expected with having a social presence

6.2 Opportunities

The benefits that come with using social media as part of advertising agencies' marketing endeavors are according to advertising industry professionals, a valuable opportunity to express and promote creativity. All four agencies were ardent in defending the artistic power social media brings them in the form of being digitally creative in their work. According to the agencies, social media brings about a sense of visibility in terms of providing a platform for their customers' campaigns to be viewed by their accompanying customers.

Moreover, the medium provides the agencies with a powerful platform that grants brand conspicuity as well as allowing them to have a form of brand image control. Pursuant to the industry professionals, these benefits are a great foundation for attaining success, which is what Mangold and Faulds (2009) were devotedly stating in regards to companies deciding to be part of the social media phenomenon. Social media provided one of the agencies with the facilitation of the process of sharing campaigns, which the agency contributed to marketing the brand on social media platforms, something that was not available prior to the development of the medium.

Social media brings about a capability strengthening benefit in using it, which is an opportunity Corstjens and Umblijs (2012) specified as the outcome of a company in realizing the impact social media can have on a company's brand. The agencies were unanimous in

asserting that the prospects the medium provided their field of work was the creation of a groundwork that made it easier to attain success, through the exposure and attention the medium gave their campaigns. This was done through the employment of specific social media channels where sharing the content with users created an awareness towards the agencies and their services.

Mangold and Faulds (2009) claim that social media should be considered a hybrid element of the promotion mix in a company, which in relation to the advertising industry appear to be accurate in terms of fusing marketing activities together. These activities are in the field of digital marketing, which endows advertising agencies with an opportunity to make the platform users conscious of them as well as their prospecting taskmasters. The third agency was eager in declaring that the medium of social media, specifically the social aspect, has provided the company with the opportunity to obtain a greater spectrum of contacts and made an expansion of their network an option. This is what Tu (2000) communicated in regards to the facilitation of new relationships.

Table 16 - Summary of empirical data: Question 2.1

Aspects	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Beneficial Differences	- More creative - Express creativity	- Facilitated the process of sharing the campaigns	- Greater success - Acknowledgement	- Share campaigns - Great response - Expanded network

Table 16 presents the beneficial differences social media has provided to the agencies

According to all four agencies, viewing social media as a marketing instrument provides them with attainment of efficiency and rapidness in their work, specifically by offering them a velocity to the process of realizing an idea to the point of activation. The fast paced movement of the medium supplies them with an incredibly useful marketing communication means, not unlike what Mangold and Faulds (2009) underline extensively in their research. A propos to opportunities to widen the spectrum of publicity, all four agencies mentioned infusing their

brands with a unique sense of different personality traits as a representation of their brands, and cultivating a community of characteristics that only social media could present them with. This is something that Ramsay (2010) also highlights when discussing how brands should consider positioning and presenting themselves in a way that correlates with how they want to be viewed and recognized by the public.

One agency in particular specified that social media is about delivering profit and value, and creating a relationship through a two-way communication. The agency emphasized that it is no longer simply about projecting a message, because no one will listen. Furthermore, this agency stressed relationship building as a prospect derived from its use of social media as opposed to using it purely as the voice of a brand, a statement that Tu (2000) could not stress enough. Moreover, the same agency stated that social media affords the company with a communication toolkit which is essential to its services, thus making the medium more interesting, relevant, and powerful to them.

Company B divulged that adopting social media and being present in it has provided the agency with a digital identity. This is a matter that Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) discuss in the conditions of identity being connected to the need to create an expression that is correlating with one's identity. In relation to what Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) claim, this can give a strong indication of the medium's relevance to the agency. The same company further discusses social media as a tool in creating a feeling of involvement and inclusion amongst employees and colleagues as well as customers alike. The feeling of involvement and interaction through social media, both externally and internally, in the agency can contribute to it being viewed as approachable and likable in attitude. The feeling can as well lead to positive word of mouth, which Mangold and Faulds (2009) underscore as qualities that are of significance to create the feeling of involvement.

Table 17 - Summary of empirical data: Question 2.2

Aspects	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Social Media Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rapidness - Marketing - Communication - Brand recognition - Exposure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Process of building the organization's brand with an attitude, features, and personality - Sharing campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Viral identity - Involvement

Table 17 presents the opportunities of using social media

One of the agencies clarified that word of mouth is influenced by people using social media to share content. Mangold and Faulds (2009) also highlight this notion when specifically speaking about the users in social media. Furthermore, Mangold and Faulds (2009) stress that it is difficult for companies to try to affect how users should think or feel about something. It is a concept companies can find difficult to grasp when trying to have full control or leverage negative word of mouth, for instance.

All four agencies stated that positive word of mouth in social media is a great stepping board for attaining new customers and exposure. Company A described positive word of mouth in social media as the reason their campaigns are some of the most successful and has lead to several of their commissioning bodies ordering advertising campaigns. Company B stated that the subjection of positive word of mouth has been because of users' content sharing specifically in regards to sharing the agency's campaigns. Content sharing amongst users is what Kietzmann et al. (2011) state as consumers wanting to use their voices to be heard along with other users, which is also what Company B elucidated when discussing positive reactions to its campaigns. Company C was quick to make clear that how the actual positive word of mouth occurs is different for each campaign. However, there is one constant correlating with positive word of mouth, which is when the targeted user feels involved in the campaigns and not narrowed down to just being a viewer (Brown et al. 2007).

In order to receive the same amount of value in comparison to what the company delivers to consumers, it is important to be conscious of which social media channels are most pertinent and suitable for a company to use. It is of great imminence in being able to understand the worth of social media (Ramsay 2010). Company D indicated this awareness when explaining that its latest campaign for one of the agency’s commissioning bodies was posted on Facebook where thousands of users pressed the “like” button and shared the post. This gave the agency a great amount of brand exposure and positive feedback. Being part of this social network thus proves both valuable and strategic for advertising agencies.

Table 18 - Summary of empirical data: Question 2.3

Aspects	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Positive Word of-Mouth	- Yes	- Yes	- Yes	- Yes

Table 18 presents whether the agencies have been subjected to positive word of mouth when using social media

Social media does not only bring about corporal opportunities that can be prospective and lucrative to the agencies, the medium also create beneficial possibilities in the form of reaching a competitive edge that can further separate one advertising agency from that of its competitor. According to Kietzmann et al. (2011), the emergence of social media has democratized business communication with the shift of power going from the public relations and marketing employees to the people that use and consume the content in social media channels. This can be further highlighted in regards to the users affecting the power and influence the advertising campaigns have in social media. It is imminent that the advertising industry and its agencies embrace the users existing in the medium. Company A were fully aware of this shift as the employees are consciously working to keep their audience by being innovative and separating their work from what has been done prior. In stating that social media is an effective marketing medium that does not require a great amount of recourses in comparison to what the benefits are, Company A understands how to use the medium fruitfully. This can be a make or break prospect in trying to control the brand image and quality of business content. Company B stated that social media is a means for agencies to communicate; arguing that it is difficult for a advertising agency to create campaigns for

themselves, there needs to be someone demanding the work from the other end of the spectrum.

Allowing an open conversation between management and employees through social media can ease the communication aspect revolving staff as well as contribute immensely to being successful in it. This can be a supposition regarding the opportunity to create conversation as Edosomwan et al. (2011) argues being one of the greatest benefits social media usage can bring to a company. All agencies agreed that the medium has contributed to them building new and current relationships and strengthening old ones because of the communication aspect being the core factor. This collective understanding indicates that the agencies seemed to have actually grasped the value social media can bring to their businesses and line of work.

Table 19 - Summary of empirical data: Question 2.4

Aspects	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Social Media Benefits	- Create competitive advantages	- By being part of social media	- Building new and current relationships - Obtain greater recognition - Recommendation - Strengthen relationships	- Marketing different campaigns - Create and strengthen new and valuable relationships - Exposure

Table 19 presents how social media usage can benefit the agencies

Being perceived in a way that is approachable and relatable was of great importance to the brand, according to Company A. Customers, both of the agency and customers of the agency's commissioning bodies, relate to a brand containing those types of characteristics, because they are positive characteristics according Kaplan and Haenlein (2010). The agency uses social media in a quest to influence how others should perceive the brand by creating the discernment of being less formal in their advertising, which then contributes to their commissioning bodies being perceived as having those qualities. Company B developed a brand with different character traits which are infused into the brand in order to convey the

corporal values of the brand and thus present the agency in the best shape and form to its commissioning bodies. This can be viewed as what Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) explain as a calculated self-presentation, being that the agency act as an entity conducting itself in a manner that conveys an impression which corresponds to its values and morals. The agency uses social media as the medium for this self-presentation as a means for striving to manage and control the impressions its customers receive of the brand. The goal is to create a lasting positive impression. By building and promoting the brand with a personality, unique attitude, and great features, Company B enhances the audiences’ brand experience (Brakus et al. 2009). This contributes to the opportunity of marketing the unique identity of Company B’s brand, which creates greater awareness amongst users (Brakus et al. 2009; Edosomwan et al. 2011; Naylor et al. 2012).

All four agencies stated that it is of great significance that one should conduct oneself in a respectable manner when being present in social media, both in terms of keeping customers in the highest regard but also being conscious about the brand when socializing in the medium. Furthermore, the agencies were unanimous in stating that it is important to consider the notion one cannot have full control over perceptions of oneself, specifically if deeply rooted in public opinions that are hard to sway. However, the agencies felt there is a responsibility towards their commissioning bodies and to their subsequent customers to be aware of the image that is projected onto them. Pursuant to all four agencies, they can control the amount and extent of their presence in the medium and in what channels to place that presence. The agencies asserted that it is a significant decision to make after deciding why it is important to include social media as part of the marketing endeavors in the first place.

Table 20 - Summary of empirical data: Question 2.5

Aspects	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Influence Perception of Agency	- Quick and less formal in advertising	- Building the brand with a personality, unique attitude, and great features	- Use social media in a decent and civilized way	- Be seen and behave in a respectable manner

Table 20 presents how the perception of the agencies can be influenced in a positive way, with the help of social media

The most profitable opportunity social media usage has brought to each of the four agencies is varied. Company A stated that it is difficult to answer specifics regarding intangible benefits the medium has brought to the agency. The agency simply takes notice that having a presence in social media contributes to more people being aware of the brand than prior to existing in social media, which is up to par with what Kietzmann et al. (2011) conclude when discussing the intangible benefits. Company B stated that the communication with its customers has strengthened and the creation of projects with customers has improved thanks to social media. The agency affirmed that the medium is in fact a great platform for the organization to create innovative campaigns and other type of communication. This is also what Mangold and Faulds (2009) discuss in terms of social media's wide range of different communication channels. Thus, becoming a valuable facet for affecting diverse aspects of consumer behavior, in this case in the form of expressive and creative campaigns marketed through the medium. The consumer behavior aspects that can be influenced are for instance the commissioning bodies' opinions, attitudes, awareness, purchase behaviors, information acquisition, post-purchase communication, and evaluation.

Company C revealed that its greatest opportunity made attainable through social media usage is developing digital campaigns and using a smaller capital for funding the marketing of these projects. From the industry professional's point of view, this was an interesting concept to consider and according to the agency; it has created a space for being more innovative when designing a campaign. Being present in social media demands very little resources in comparison to the monetary rewards it enables, it can contribute to significant success according to Mangold and Faulds (2009).

Company D had an array of profitable opportunities provided after adopting social media into the agency. These opportunities manifested themselves by the growth of success, the developed creativeness and openness for the agency's campaigns, and the exposure it gave the brand. These harvested opportunities can be associated to the agency having a solid corporal foundation of clear objectives regarding the inclusion of the medium as a component of the marketing communication endeavors, owing to an understanding of the power social media generates. Ramsay (2010) speaks about the value and significance of companies containing this knowledge, which can be said about all four advertising agencies as well.

Table 21 - Summary of empirical data: Question 2.6

Aspects	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Profitable Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creativity - Express creativity - Competitive advantage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of campaigns - Creation of communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing campaigns through small capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growth of success - Developed creativeness and openness - Exposure

Table 21 presents the most profitable opportunities since using social media

6.3 Risks

One of the agencies felt the rapidness of social media to be a cause for making unconsidered and imprudent decisions. Three out of four advertising agencies stated that a risk of using social media is the difficulty to control what is being said about the agencies and their campaigns. The risk was mostly concerning the apprehension of being subjected with negative comments and word of mouth about their creations, which is also a risk stated by Mangold and Faulds (2009). This risk can be greatly damaging for an organization’s reputation. Furthermore, this particular risk can, according to the respondents, not be managed; given that it is not achievable to control how people use the medium. However, this contradicts Ramsay’s (2010) statement. Ramsay (2010) claims that a company can affect the level of risk by acquiring knowledge of how to communicate with consumers, which can guide consumer conversations about companies in a positive direction. One of the agencies elucidated that the risk is worth being taken because the opportunities of having a presence in social media outweigh the potential risks involved.

Regardless of the exemplified contradiction between the stated theory by Ramsay (2010) and the industry professionals, a correlation was found in another context. When one of the agencies mentioned the risk being worth taken, the respondent supported Ramsay’s (2010) statement, specifically when highlighting the risk of not having a presence in social media. Ramsay (2010) believes that having no presence what so ever in social media is a risk in itself that companies face in protecting their brands from the threat of consumer conversations.

Taken the aforementioned statement into consideration, the agencies need their presence in the social media channels being used in order to protect their brands from inflammatory conversations by various users.

Table 22 - Summary of empirical data: Question 3.1

Aspects	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Risks with Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rapidness can lead to unconsidered decisions - Losing control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hard to control users - False reputation - Less personal - Negative word of mouth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changes in interaction - Losing control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ability to control what people write and say about the organization

Table 22 presents what the agencies believe are the risks with using social media

Regarding problems the organizations have dealt with after using social media, three out of four agencies did not reveal any specific information. However, one of the agencies declared that a downside is the loss of control over a campaign as soon as it is released into the social media channel. Prior to having a presence in social media, the agency had a greater sense of control in regards to what extent their created campaigns would be shown. According to Ramsay (2010), there is a need for companies to communicate with their audience to study how their brands are reviewed and perceived by users in order to create self-awareness. This can lead to attaining the ability to leverage negative perceptions.

In relation to the agencies losing control of when and to what extent the campaigns are shown as well as the apprehension of being subjected with negative comments about their creations, this can however be managed. According to Ramsay (2010), companies are in need of developing a communication strategy that allows them to communicate with consumers, which can make it less difficult to have control over the content shared on the social media channels and also the conversations companies wish to have with consumers. The aforementioned statements by Ramsay (2010) are to be seen as a contradiction to the respondents, being slightly determined in believing that it is not possible to take control over

the conversations flowing in the social media channels. When it comes to how the agencies observe what is being said about them, the seven functional building blocks describing the social media phenomenon contains a block named *Conversations*, which stands for the amount of communication that occurs between users in social media. Kietzmann et al. (2011) supports the responses stating that companies seek to track the conversations revolving them, as there is a variety of conversations occurring in a social media setting.

Two of the agencies use a measurement tool in order to gather everything being said about the organization, everything that has been shared, and everything that has been talked about. This, as well, supports the social media protocol stated by Ramsay (2010), where it is important for organizations to be aware of reviews and perceptions. Companies can influence reviews and perceptions in a positive direction by being conscious about them. Mangold and Faulds (2009) believe that it is crucial for companies to be able to defend themselves against negative reviews or reputations. However, it is also as important for them to have the ability to control the conversations revolving the organizations. The other two remaining companies have meetings with Facebook and also observe what is being said by using tags. All four agencies are involved in observing conversations. In addition to the discussion, Kietzmann et al. (2011) further presents one of the four C's that is strongly associated with the responses from the agencies, namely *Chase*; which illustrated that companies have to observe their environments to know the pace of conversations. Not being observant of conversations about one's organization can with great possibilities influence or have an impact on an organization's current position on the market. The agencies had applied *Chase* in observing conversations about their organizations. When observing conversations in social media, they did not take the three remaining C's into consideration, which was *Cognize*, *Congruity*, and *Curate*.

Table 23 - Summary of empirical data: Question 3.3

Aspects	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Observation of Conversations	- Meetings with Facebook	- Lissly	- Lissly	- Tags

Table 23 presents how the agencies observe what is being said about their organization

According to Mangold and Faulds (2009), as social media enables a variety of Internet-forums where everyone can talk and write freely; being subjected to negative word of mouth is somewhat unavoidable, at least in three out of four cases. This supports the theory of word-of-mouth provided by Brown et al. (2007), where the authors describe the concept as a consumer-dominated channel of marketing communication where the sender is independent of the market. Because word-of-mouth is perceived as more credible and reliable by consumers compared to the firm-initiated communications, it is necessary for companies to monitor what is being said about them. This was seen more as a necessary evil rather than a negative aspect. The important proficiency was to make sure that the positive word of mouth is significantly higher than the negative word of mouth. However, Brown et al. (2007) implications about word-of-mouth contradict to one of the agencies. Brown et al. (2007) stated that word-of-mouth has a dominant influence on behavior, meaning that one individual's words can without difficulty influence another individual's behavior. Viewing this from the industry professionals' perspective, the respondent from Company C believed that the fundamental reason of being subjected with negative word-of-mouth is because of the aforementioned inherent conflicts. A campaign will always affect an individual, positively or negatively. However, Mangold and Faulds (2009) argue that because the power of communication between consumers has increased, negative word of mouth cannot be avoided.

Table 24 - Summary of empirical data: Question 3.4

Aspects	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Negative Word-of-Mouth	- Yes	- No	- Yes	- Yes

Table 24 presents whether the agencies have been subjected to negative word of mouth when using social media

Kietzmann et al. (2011) argues that companies usually ignore or misuse the opportunities and threats that social media consumers hold because they do not understand the power the medium holds. However, this was not the case for the agencies, given that having a presence in social media has provided all four organizations with more positive than negative effects. While Mangold and Faulds (2009) believe that social media can surely provide great

opportunities for companies, it is fundamental to have an understanding of the potential negative effects that social media can bring.

It is moreover important for an organization to have a positive brand image and reputation in order for customers to identify with that image. Kuenzel and Halliday (2010) stated that an organization’s brand reputation is assumed to be an indication of an organization’s success. The four agencies revealed that social media has provided them with more positive than negative effects, such as gaining a great deal of success, resulting in greater awareness as well as leading to winning awards. This supports the theory of brand reputation provided by Kuenzel and Halliday (2010) and Jurisic and Azevedo (2011), describing the concept as an accumulated attitude towards the company. In regards to the beneficial effects of social media, there is a strong correlation between the agencies’ brand reputation and the aforementioned theories.

Table 25 - Summary of empirical data: Question 3.5

Aspects	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Brand and Reputation	- Success; business results and awareness	- Positive	- Strengthened business model - Influenced the designing process of campaigns	- Awards - Connection to the online world - The way the organization operates

Table 25 presents the effects social media has had on the agencies’ reputation or brand

Regarding the internal and external challenges with using social media, Company D and Company B did not believe that the use of social media has caused any internal or external challenges for their organization. The reason may be because the two agencies have actually understood the effects and value that social media can bring them (Mangold and Faulds 2009). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) suggests that in order for the use of social media to be less challenging, it is important to understand two related concepts to the medium, namely; Web 2.0 – which stands for the technological and ideological base of social media, and; User

generated content – which can be seen as the summation of all ways in which people use social media. An internal challenge for one of the agencies was to regularly share valuable content that strengthens their brand, meaning that it is slightly difficult to continuously share posts that are valuable for the audience, in order to enhance a stronger brand. Firstly, having this internal challenge might depend on the belief that all social media channels work in the same way. Ramsay (2010) asserts that all channels should be utilized in different ways. Also, it is important to acknowledge what channel is suitable for what purpose. By taking this into consideration, the agency may be able to lead their process into delivering valuable content with less difficulty. Secondly, as the agency feel that the preparation of providing valuable content to its audience is regarded as an internal challenge, the agency may need to develop an improved communication strategy, in order to decrease this challenge and make it less difficult to have control over the content (Ramsay 2010).

This can be connected to one of the agencies asserting that a message can be perceived in various ways. It is often the case that a message is misinterpreted. It is common that a message might not be perceived the way it was intended to be. The agency further mentioned that once the message is out, it is beyond the organization's control. However, Ramsay (2010) states the opposite. Companies can take control by developing a strategy that allows the agency to communicate with their viewers in a way in order for the message to be perceived the way it is intended. Company C claimed that everything new being used in an organization can be viewed as an uphill battle in the beginning until it comes to be a natural part of the work process. However, it is imperative to embrace the internal change of adapting social media and being able to manage the medium in a way that is integrating in order for it to become a natural part of an organization's work process. It is essential for any organization to embrace the internal change when thinking about using the medium as a part of their marketing endeavors (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010).

One of the four agencies has experienced an external challenge when using social media. The agency experienced resistance from the customer's side as the customer did not see the value of having a presence in social media. When connecting the theoretical framework with the empirical data presentation, it is of great importance to be on equal terms with ones customers. In relation to the aforementioned statement, how an organization is perceived will have a great amount of impact on the customers' choice of company (Jurisic and Azevedo 2011).

Table 26 - Summary of empirical data: Questions 3.6 and 3.7

Aspects	Organizations			
	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Internal and External Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unconsidered decisions - Negative view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share valuable content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adapting social media is like an uphill in the beginning - Resistance from customers' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Misinterpreted messages

Table 26 presents the internal and external challenges the agencies has experienced when using social media

6.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented a cross-case analysis of the empirical data presentation including the four investigated cases. As analyzing data is a process of examining data with the goal of delineating the useful information found in the empirical data; the collected data from the previous chapter was analyzed and compared to the theoretical framework presented in *Chapter 2*. This chapter included the three illustrated key concepts in this research, namely; social presence, opportunities, and risks. Each question belonging to the three key concepts in this research is followed by tables summarizing the collected data from each one of the questions that has been analyzed. The next chapter will include a discussion from the researchers with the intention of communicating the results, in order to achieve the purpose of this research.

7. Conclusions and Implications

The core conclusions and findings from the data analysis in the previous chapter are presented in this concluding chapter and three research questions are separately answered. This chapter concludes with a presentation of the theoretical and managerial implications, in addition to a discussion in terms of the limitations of the study. Finally, suggestions for future research are presented.

7.1 Conclusions

This research has been centered on forming an understanding for what purpose social media has in advertising agencies, therefore the purpose of this research was to: Investigate the effects of having a presence in social media for business-to-business companies by focusing on the opportunities and risks.

Having a foundation of existing research to build on in regards to advertising agencies' presence in social media, the following three research questions were devised:

1. How are the effects of having a presence in social media perceived by industry professionals in business-to-business companies?
2. What do industry professionals perceive being the opportunities with having a presence in social media?
3. What do industry professionals perceive being the risks with having a presence in social media?

7.1.1 Social Presence

This study shows that industry professionals in Swedish advertising agencies are attentive and aware of the effects of having a presence in social media. They strive to continuously comprehend and grasp the mediums' power to influence organizations, customers, and users. The research shows that industry professionals believe that social media is a vital platform for brands to be present in, because it allows them to keep contact with current and prospective customers as well as creating new relationships. They believe in the magnitude of being able to communicate and interact with people online and how that interaction can lead to the formulation of new relationships. The advertising agencies choose social media channels

based on their marketing objectives. One major reason in regards to the choice of channels is that it can provide a great array of users and high traffic, so that the exposure is maximized.

Furthermore, the agencies find social media to be of great value for their brands to have a presence on, due to the opportunity to communicate with a broader audience. An effect of having a presence in social media is the creation of a two-way communication between brands and users. Moreover, the study reveals awareness amongst the agencies in regards to the importance of involvement. With this awareness as a foundation, the agencies plan on expanding their presence in social media, in accordance with the mediums' continuous growth. By observing the developments of social media, the agencies feel prepared in making future changes and modifications. As social media is continuously growing, expanding, changing, and developing its features, the agencies feel that it is imperative to be part of the digital development and staying up-to-date because their commissioning bodies expect them to be.

7.1.2 Opportunities

The findings of this research shows there are numerous attainable opportunities for advertising agencies when having a presence in social media. The advertising agencies have a deep understanding of what a social media presence can bring them in terms of creating prosperity for their businesses and generate awareness towards their brands and their work. Prior to social media becoming an integral part of their marketing endeavors, employees in the companies worked hard to generate awareness to create value for commissioning bodies. Nowadays, the reality is that the emerging of social media has contributed to the advertising agencies having to learn to adapt and change along with the digital development that social media has contributed to. Therefore, there is a need for the advertising agencies to create value in order to generate awareness. Creating value is one of the immense opportunities social media has supplied the agencies. Using social media as part of the promotion mix has offered the advertising agencies the possibility to fulfill organizational and corporal objectives and has brought a new meaning to the realization of creative purposes.

Another finding is that the medium has made it possible for the agencies to express and promote creativity by using it as a powerful platform to exist on. The medium thus creates their corporal voice and provides them with imaginative and innovative ways to deliver their

messages through social media channels. The medium has also facilitated a way for the advertising agencies to have a sense of image and brand control through careful content management and thus grants them with brand conspicuity. The communication amongst employees and colleagues has improved, with the use of social media. This opportunity has created a level of comfort and common ground for staff, from top to bottom in the corporal hierarchy, to express and communicate ideas with each other. Allowing an open conversation between management and employees is a valuable aspect of what social media can bring.

Other findings in regards to the realization of opportunities are; widening the spectrum of spectators and prospective consumers through the sharing of advertising campaigns in different social media channels. The agencies use the medium as a vessel for facilitating and nurturing new relationships which aid the agencies' objectives of expanding their social and business network. The research shows that being perceived as approachable is of great importance to the agencies. Social media has provided an opportunity to establish an approachable image through a two-way communication between agencies and their commissioning bodies.

The research shows that the agencies benefit greatly from having a presence in social media. The medium can generate a great amount of success and prosperity for advertising agencies, principally by providing them with the possibility to attain efficiency and rapidness in their work. Social media usage offers a velocity to the process of realizing an idea to the point of activation, thus it improves the realization process significantly. In conclusion, as delivering valuable communication is a core objective in the advertising agencies' work, the most gainful opportunity the medium makes available is the strengthening of communication and therefore the ability to reach the agencies' business purposes.

7.1.3 Risks

Having a presence in social media presents several risks, thus it is fundamental to have an understanding of what these potential risks contain. The use of social media has provided the agencies with more positive than negative effects. The medium has allowed the agencies to reach a great deal of success in terms of greater campaign and brand awareness. On the other hand, this research showed that having a presence in social media is a risk in itself for the advertising agencies. As the agencies continuously strive to share valuable content, the

promptness of social media can lead to unconsidered decision making. These decisions can give the agencies an external negative view, which in addition becomes an internal challenge for them to manage.

Another finding was that a message can be perceived in various ways. When a message is misinterpreted, the probability of the agencies being subjected to negative word-of-mouth becomes high in the form of users' comments and statements which can lead to their brand reputation being harmed. This study also shows a downside after adapting social media as a use in their marketing endeavors. An experienced downside was the subjection of negative word of mouth. However, the research shows that by observing what is being said about them, the agencies can be aware of conversations and influence the perception of their agency in a positive direction. This enables the agencies to control conversations revolving the advertising agencies.

More importantly, this research revealed that the advertising agencies are aware of the power social media holds and they are conscious of the risks that come with having a presence in social media. The agencies found that the most complex risk of having a presence in social media to be the difficulty to control the statements of users on social networking sites. This risk was shown to be an apprehension of being subjected to negative word-of-mouth, which further generates a negative reputation towards the agencies. The ultimate finding was that the opportunities of having a presence in social media outweighed the risks, thus it is worth the agencies of having a presence in social media.

7.2 Theoretical Implications

The purpose of this study is to form an understanding for what purpose social media has in regards to its use for advertising agencies in Sweden. There are three aspects of social media that has been taken into consideration in particular, namely; social presence, opportunities, and risks. This increased knowledge has been achieved by having a foundation of theories suggested by preceding studies. However, our study contributes and complements prior theories on the subject by testing them in an under researched area, through a previously untested framework and from the perspective of industry professionals. Many of the theories presented in the literature review are established to connect greatly with the outcome of our research, which can be viewed in the analysis chapter of our study. These suppositions

include the theoretical proposals concerning the risks with social media, which are found to be valid and appropriate to be applied on advertising agencies' social media presence in Sweden. Ramsay's (2010) statements about the perils of social media from a business perspective and how a company should conduct itself in order to avoid these perils is a theory this dissertation finds associating well with the area being studied. Also, Mangold and Faulds's (2009) statements as regards to the management and monitoring of social presence in media being of significance to the opportunity of success versus failure in the medium is a theory this dissertation finds correlating greatly with the area being investigated. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), and Kietzmann's et al. (2011) declarations concerning the fact that companies should treat their social presence in social media as their digital identity. Therefore, being selective in what to disclose and present about themselves being vital to the image they project and the viewers they attract are also theories this study finds connecting well with the investigated situation.

Nevertheless, some of the theories presented in previous studies are not fully applicable with the area being researched. The major contribution of such is that the functional building blocks of social media presented by Kietzmann et al. (2011) is not fully pertinent to the advertising agencies in their reasoning of having social media presence. In addition, Mangold and Faulds (2009) proposed methods for consumer to consumer communications is found not to be greatly relevant for advertising agencies. Finally, Ramsay's (2010) theory in regards to the fact that social media should not be used in corporate communications is found to not pertain to advertising agencies.

7.3 Managerial Implications

This research has provided several managerial recommendations, based on the findings illustrated in this study. The following recommendations are proposed specifically for the four examined advertising agencies. In order to improve their presence in social media, minimize the risks that follows with the medium, and increase the opportunities; these recommendations below should be taken into consideration.

- Initially, having a presence in social media affects the nature of interaction. The advertising agencies are directed to fully be aware of and not underestimate the power that social media holds, since the medium is needed and crucial for the agencies.

Social media ought to be used as a use for the agencies' marketing endeavors, as it will strengthen their brand experience and construct an attraction to customers.

- Moreover, the advertising agencies are advised to expand their use of social media by using more channels and being more active. Since the medium keeps for growth and in addition is used by countless potential customers, and as the advertising agencies' current customers spend most of their time being online, being active and expanding the use of the channels will lead to an enhancement of current relationships and a foundation to create new relationships. Also, by expanding the use of social media, the users will provide the agencies with a great amount of brand exposure; such as sharing and obtaining 'likes' for their campaigns. Therefore, the advertising agencies ought to be fully aware of the development of social media, in order to follow the expansion of the medium.
- The advertising agencies are recommended to create more interaction with the users of social media instead of simply being present. The agencies must take advantage of their presence in social media by creating more interaction which will resolve in greater involvement. In order for the agencies to enhance their brand reputation, word-of-mouth, and share their brand personality, the involvement, from the users' perspective, will potentially lead to identification with the agencies' brand which further results in positive word-of-mouth. Finally, involvement from users comes in different forms such as feedback, sharing, and 'likes', which was the main reason the agencies found social media to be crucial as a means for utilization.
- Another recommendation is to utilize social media in an accurate and valuable manner. Since the use of social media for organizations' has become more about delivering value and creating relationships through a two-way communication, it is more important for the agencies to deliver valuable content for the users of the medium. As it was found that social media is no longer about stressing a message, however to communicate something valuable that will attract the attention of users. The use of social media can, in this case, become advantageous as it will provide the agencies with a communication toolkit which is essential to its services, thus making the medium more interesting, relevant, and powerful to them.

- Furthermore, the agencies can enhance their opportunities and benefit from the use of social media in a way of being more innovative and separating their work from what has been done prior. This will create higher interest from their audience. The agencies should as well take into consideration that the use of social media can enhance the opportunity to create unique brand recognition, by focusing on the process of building the agencies brand with a personality whereas the attitude and character traits will create additional brand recognition and exposure. Also, to focus on creating positive characteristics in order to influence the perception of the brand.
- Finally, since social media has made it possible for people to express themselves freely about products, services, or brands in a negative or positive way, it is significant to develop a good communication strategy. The advertising agencies felt an apprehension of being subjected to negative word-of-mouth as well the difficulty to control negative word-of-mouth. Therefore, an important recommendation is that the agencies should not only observe conversations, but also develop a communication strategy which will, firstly, make it less difficult to have control over the content shared on the social media channels, and also guide the consumer conversations about the agencies in a positive direction. A good communication strategy will influence the subjection of word-of-mouth in a way where the agencies will be perceived and mentioned in a positive way.

7.4 Limitations

The limitations in regards to this investigation are in connection to the qualitative nature of the study, specifically in regards to a limited timeframe and difficulties during the empirical data gathering. Because of these difficulties, the amount of respondents from the four cases is small. A diminutive number of employees within the chosen agencies were viewed as appropriate respondents for our study with only one or two respondents deemed fitting to provide us with the knowledge needed. In addition to the small number of suitable respondents, they were hard to establish contact with. Other limitations connected to this investigation are in relation to the theoretical framework. Using the theoretical framework as the backbone of this study, it only studies two aspects of having a presence in social media, namely; the opportunities and risks. The study being limited to those two aspects has naturally had an impact on the result. Because this investigation has focused on the industry

professionals' perspective when it comes to being present on social media, other viewpoints are excluded. The newness of the area being investigated can be seen as a reason for the qualitative research approach instead of having a quantitative research approach. This can be viewed as a limitation in the sense that the results from this study are not applicable to companies in similar situations. In addition, the deficiency of existing research regarding the investigated aspects chosen for this study from the perspective of industry professionals may be seen as a limitation.

There were several precautions taken into account when communicating with the respondents to avoid misunderstandings from occurring. A comprehensive operationalization, in addition to pre-testing the questions, was made in order to avoid misunderstandings during the interviews. However, the formulation of the questions sent in advance to the respondents during the data collection process was in English. This might have had an effect on the respondents not being able to fully answer the questions as naturally as if they were written in Swedish. This can be seen as a limitation that might have affected the result of the empirical data gathering and thus affect the outcome of the investigation.

7.5 Suggestions for Future Research

For future investigation on the effects of having a social media presence as part of business-to-business companies' marketing communications, a presentation of a small number of suggestions should be taken into consideration:

- Social media and its effects on businesses is a fairly new concept for companies to understand and because the medium is ever evolving, we suggest that a similar research is carried out at a later point in time. A comparison between this study's findings with that of a future investigation could thus contribute to the existing research. In addition, a similar investigation should be carried out at a later point in time in order to challenge the accuracy of this study's findings.
- Because this study is based on large sized companies, it might be interesting to study small and mid-sized companies. It could possibly add to and complement the study's findings. Furthermore, more respondents from each company are a suggestion in order to enhance the opportunity of concluding more dynamic findings.

- Moreover, when social media has become more commonly used by business-to-business companies, we propose that the findings of this investigation are reformulated using a quantitative research approach. By establishing a hypothesis, which will be subjected to scrutiny and tested in a quantitative manner, the results could be generalized and applied to companies in similar situations.
- This investigation has focused on the opportunities and risks an agency's social media presence subsequently brings. However, these factors could possibly be divided into several sub-factors to be studied on further, such as a company's return on investment in social media as a representative of the risks a company faces. Thus, we recommend that the investigated areas to be divided into sub-factors and to be investigated with a related qualitative research approach in order to contribute to a deeper understanding of how having a social media presence affects companies.
- As a final point, this investigation is based on the perspective of industry professionals which has consequently affected the outcome. Nevertheless, since the opportunities and risks with having a social media presence affects the business as well as the people working in the company, it would be of interest to investigate if the opinions of staff differ from those of management in regards to the importance of companies having a social media presence and the opportunities and subsequent risks the medium brings. To study the effects of social media on companies from their viewpoint would possibly bring a deeper understanding of the effects the medium has on their companies.

7.6 Chapter Summary

As the conclusion of a research briefly explain the whole study, this chapter has initially aimed to answer the research questions sectioned into the three key concepts of this dissertation; social presence, opportunities, and risks. The theoretical implications address the contributions this dissertation has added to the literature review, by explaining the gaps it has fulfilled. Thereafter, this chapter has contributed to managerial implications as a means for how managers can benefit from the findings, which further shows the recommendations illustrated by the researchers. Finally, suggestions for future research were provided.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Interview guide

General information

Position of the respondent:

Years of employment:

Years of experience within the field of social media:

Keyword 1: Social Presence	
1.1	What comes to your mind when I say social media?
1.2	Why do you use social media?
1.3	What social media channels does your organization use today and to what extent?
1.3.1	What is the reason behind these choices?
1.4	Why is it important for your organization to use social media?
1.5	Will you expand the organization's use of social media?
1.6	What do you think of social media as a means for internal communication within your organization?
1.7	How do you work when it comes to the preparations revolving social media?
1.8	What type of differences has the use of social media made for your organization?
1.9	What do you expect of getting in return when having a presence on social media?

Keyword 2: Opportunities

2.1 What type of beneficial differences has the use of social media made for your organization?

2.2 What do you believe are the opportunities of using social media?

2.3 Have your organization been subjected to positive word of mouth and in that case how?

2.4 How can your organization benefit from using social media?

2.5 How can you influence the perception of your company in a positive way with the help of social media?

2.6 What is or has been the most profitable opportunity since using social media, for your organization?

Keyword 3: Risks
3.1 What general risks do you think social media can bring?
3.1.1 What are the risks of using social media specifically for your organization?
3.2 What problems or downsides have your organization dealt with after using social media?
3.3 How does your organization observe what is being said about it in the social media channels being used?
3.4 Have your organization been subjected to negative word of mouth and in that case how?
3.5 What effects has social media had on your organization's reputation or brand?
3.6 What internal challenges have your organization experienced when using social media?
3.7 What external challenges have your organization experienced when using social media?

Appendix 2 – Cover letter

Hej,

Vi är tre marknadsföringsstudenter vid Linnéuniversitetet i Växjö som skriver vår kandidatuppsats om svenska reklambyråers användning av sociala medier. Studien handlar om sociala mediers påverkan på stora svenska reklambyråer med fokusering på möjligheter och risker med att ha en närvaro i sociala medier.

Då ert företag är en av Sveriges största och mest framgångsrika ber vi er ställa upp på en intervju där ni som representant för ert företag svarar på frågor gällande er närvaro i sociala medier. Vårt syfte är att få en djup förståelse för de möjligheter och risker reklambyråer upplever att användningen av sociala medier har medfört.

Denna typ av studie har inte utförts på svenska reklambyråer tidigare, varför er medverkan kommer att bidra till etablerad forskning om ämnet och användas i lärosyfte. Självklart kommer dina svar användas anonymt och kommer endast behandlas i vetenskapligt syfte.

Tack på förhand för er medverkan i denna studie.

Vänliga hälsningar,

Adissa Asmar, Walita Yaro och Heidi Von Jahf

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