Social media marketing in B2B companies: An evaluation framework

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Abstract
With social media increasing the amount of users each year it is important for Business-to-Business (B2B) companies to invest in a comprehensive social media strategy, seeing as a vast majority of their target audience are on some sort of social media. However, there is still little research on social media marketing within the business market, compared to the consumer market. This study presents an evaluation framework for B2B companies, which is developed from previous research and the findings from this study.

By studying two Swedish B2B companies, with varied degrees of successfully developed social media strategies, it was concluded that the existing evaluation frameworks are insufficient for evaluating social media efforts. There is a clear linkage between perceived usefulness of social media efforts and improper evaluation techniques. Improper evaluation steps lead to the perception of social media techniques not being useful.

A new framework is presented which consists of an existing evaluation framework and adds a pre-assessment stage where the usefulness has to be evaluated before implementing a social media strategy.

Sociala media marknadsföring inom B2B företag: Ett ramverk för utvärdering

Sammanfattning


Ett nytt ramverk presenteras, bestående av det existerande ramverket med ett adderat steg. I detta steg utvärderar man användbarheten innan man implementerar en sociala media strategi.
Social media marketing in B2B companies: An evaluation framework

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ABSTRACT
With social media increasing the amount of users each year it is important for Business-to-business (B2B) companies to invest in a comprehensive social media strategy, seeing as a vast majority of their target audience are on some sort of social media. However, there is still little research on social media marketing within the business market, compared to the consumer market. This study presents an evaluation framework for B2B companies, which is developed from previous research and the findings from this study. By studying two Swedish B2B companies, with varied degrees of successfully developed social media strategies, it was concluded that the existing evaluation frameworks are insufficient for evaluating social media efforts. There is a clear linkage between perceived usefulness of social media efforts and improper evaluation techniques. Improper evaluation steps lead to the perception of social media techniques not being useful. A new framework is presented, which consists of an existing evaluation framework and adds a pre-assessment stage where the usefulness has to be evaluated before implementing a social media strategy.

Author Keywords
Social media; B2B; Evaluation; Social media strategy;

ACM Classification Keywords
H.5.m. Information interfaces and presentation (e.g., HCI): Miscellaneous;

INTRODUCTION
With the digital transformation that has been undergoing, we are seeing entire industries being affected by the digitalization and one of those shifting and threatened markets is the media industry. According to a report[19], Facebook reports having 800 million users, Twitter 300 million and LinkedIn 116 million. There have rarely been other platforms that amount to these number of users being gathered in one institution. Despite this, only 45% of marketers believe that their Facebook efforts are effective [19], despite the fact that 74% of people say that they use Facebook for professional purposes [19]. This points to the failure to capture social media in an effective way from a marketing standpoint.

The traditional way of doing advertising is being more and more immersed with social media, but in contrast to other media, social media is much more dynamic and interconnected which means that it can not be easily controlled by any organization and thus has to be managed and maintained creatively and strategically [13,19]. This makes it harder to still rely on the traditionally used marketing strategies.

Business-to-consumer (B2C) firms have been successful in adopting social media as a strategic tool, whereas Business-to-business (B2B) firms often find it difficult to identify and integrate the social media platforms into their digital marketing mix[6]. There are some significant differences in these two business models, which makes the research on social media marketing for the consumers market not directly applicable for the business market. These differences mainly stem from the decision-making processes and product offering characteristics[15].

There is a difference in the success of social media in these two different business areas, B2B and B2C. B2C firms have been much more successful in their sales growth amongst other things. Which makes the case for social media marketing in B2B being valuable and having successful potential. Even though many B2B firms employ people to work with social media, many fail to measure the outcome of the strategy, which therefore discourages many firms to continue investing in social media marketing. It takes time to develop relationships that lead to sales meanwhile, more than half of marketers who've been using social media for at least 2 years report it helped them improve sales[10].

Generally B2B customers have used social media as a source of information and are more likely to engage if it is informational brand content such as technical cut sheets, white papers, news articles, and new product information in their social media communications[15].

The lack of success in adopting and evaluating social media into the overall marketing strategy in the business market could be due to the larger amount being spent and the
extended decision-making process. This shows that the existing evaluation methods are not appropriate for these more complex processes.

This study is a study of how a B2B company practically implements and evaluates their social media strategy. I will be answering this research question:

- What evaluation methods are appropriate for a social media strategy at a B2B company?

**THEORY**

**Social Media Definition**

It is clear that the definition of social media can vary and there are a few different definitions for it. The term, “social media”, is in itself a construct from two areas of research, communication science and sociology. A plethora of social media has emerged in the last several years and Kaplan and Haenlein describe them as a group of Internet-based applications allowing the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (UGC). Specifically, “a group of Internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated [content]”[7].

An important part of this definition is the allowing of creation and exchange of user-generated content. This speaks to the idea that the users choose what to engage in and demonstrates the difference in traditional media and social media, where social media represents a two-way communication and traditional media stands for the one-way communication with no interaction between company and customer[2]. This interpretation of the definition of social media will be applied in the paper when discussing social media and how it can be used in B2B companies.

**Social Media adoption**

In order to adopt social media in a marketing strategy it is important to understand how customers interact with it. A study by Kevin Trinor[16] concluded that customers want to interact with companies on their terms, using the tools that they choose and companies need to deploy technologies and develop capabilities that can meet these changing relationship expectations[16]. In a study describing the determinants of B2B organizations social media adoption the authors developed a conceptual model drawing on the technology acceptance model and resource - based theory and they found that adoption of social media is significantly affected by organizational innovativeness and perceived usefulness. A survey was conducted with a sample of 5000 organizations in the UK and nine post hoc qualitative interviews were conducted that further validated the results[14].

This paper will use the Technology Acceptance Model to identify how the company’s employees adopt and use social media technology.

**Technology Acceptance Model**

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a theory on information systems. It models how users accept a technology and how they use it. The two main factors that affect the users decision of how and when they will use it:

- Perceived usefulness, “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance”[4]
- Perceived ease-of-use, “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free from effort”[4]

**Social Media Evaluation**

In a paper that presents an evaluation framework for social media, the authors established that practitioners view the social media marketing evaluation process to have six stages as shown in Figure 1[8].

![Figure 1. Evaluation framework](image)

Which can also be summed in the following definition for social media marketing evaluation: Social media marketing evaluation is a strategic management process that needs to start with the identification of social media marketing objectives and then selecting the appropriate KPIs and metrics. This goes on to the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, to populate metrics and generate insights, which are distilled into report format and concludes with management decision-making that influences future campaign objectives and strategies[8].

In the above mentioned paper about social media evaluation, they mention that due to the complex nature of social media and the different needs and business models in firms there is no clear one size fits all in social media marketing evaluation. It rather has to be seen as a strategic management process that commences with the identification of objectives, selection of appropriate KPIs and metrics, collection of data to populate metrics and generate insights,
which are distilled into a report and concludes with management decision making that affects future strategies[8].

Social media metrics

Social media offers a unique opportunity to develop programs that tackle awareness, engagement and word-of-mouth objectives but in order to fulfill these objectives you have to have the appropriate set of metrics that depends on the objective, according to Hoffman & Fodor[5]. Social media marketing does require a long nurturing process in order to gain concrete ROI(Return-of-Investment) therefore it is valuable for firms to determine the key metrics before launching a strategy. The different platforms produce different outcomes and if not handled properly can seem like they do not have positive outcomes[17]. Table 1 shows examples of the diversity of metrics that can be extracted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social media application</th>
<th>Brand awareness</th>
<th>Brand engagement</th>
<th>Word of mouth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Networks (e.g., Bebo, Facebook, LinkedIn)</td>
<td>• Number of members/fan</td>
<td>• Number of comments</td>
<td>• Frequency of appearances in timeline of friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Number of installs of applications</td>
<td>• Number of active users</td>
<td>• Number of “likes” on friends’ feeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Number of impressions</td>
<td>• Number of user-generated items</td>
<td>• Number of reps on wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Number of bookmarks</td>
<td>• Usage metrics of applications/ widgets</td>
<td>• Number of responses to friend referral invites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Number of reviews/rating s and valence +/-</td>
<td>• Impressions-to-interactions ratio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Social media objectives with appropriate metrics[17]

Lead Generation is a common metric for social media marketing which refers to an initiation of a customer’s interest commonly in the form of contact information[11]. It includes anything that has some type of interaction with an audience, for instance a download of whitepaper, signing up for a newsletter or a direct sale, which means buying a product/service. Lead Generation is commonly managed by using marketing automation which is an online based software tool that is a way of warming up leads until it can be handed over to a sales department[12].

Social media and B2B sales

While there is a big gap in research between business and consumer markets with regards to social media marketing, studies have shown that social media addressed lead generation, which is a significant issue for B2B marketers[10].

There is a challenge in measuring social media ROI but it’s not impossible if you are willing to think further in your digital marketing strategy. Key metrics include activity engagement, revenue and business development, cost savings, awareness and value, sentiment trends. While the world of social media ROI is still evolving, in most cases companies have to figure out traditional metrics to include what ways people interact with social media[8].

“Social media, at every step of the sales process requires a strategy and a framework for implementation and transformation as it grows with the customer. Absent that, social media will likely become another unharnessed element of strategic drift as countless practitioner tactics are employed with no clear direction in mind.”[3]

DATA

In this study I chose to investigate how a B2B company evaluates their social media marketing strategies. I looked at two different companies social media strategy, company Y was deemed as more experienced in social media marketing and company X was less experienced. The reason for this was to be able to compare a perceived successful social media strategy (Company Y) with a not-yet-successful social media strategy (Company X) and analyze differences.

Company Y is a B2B (Business-to-Business) product company. They offer a number of products within financial software solutions for small and medium businesses. One person was interviewed at this company:

- The social media manager

Company X is a B2B (Business-to-Business) product company. They offer unified purchasing power, which means that if you join one of the three package deals: Basic, professional and Premium, you get already negotiated prices for various purchases that are common for businesses resulting in saving money on yours corporate purchases. Four people were interviewed at this company:

- The marketing manager
- The social media manager
- The marketing automation manager
- The data analyst

METHOD

In order to investigate how the companies practically implement and evaluate their social media strategy, semi-structured interviews were held on in total of five
interviews[1]. The reason for choosing semi-structured interviews was so I could guide the interview along the lines with research question and my focus points while also being able to ask the interviewees to expand on thoughts I deemed interesting to the research. The transcribed interviews were analyzed by looking for keywords and later analyzed by using a sentence concentration method, described by Kvale[9] where focus is on categorizing material, and shortening it down and extract the important information. The data was analyzed and categorized according one model and one framework: The technology acceptance model and the evaluation framework, both described in the theory section above. The data was categorized based on the six stages presented in the evaluation framework and the two categories in the technology acceptance model.

A semi-structured interview was conducted with a content manager/Social media manager at Company Y in order to gain further understanding in social media marketing (SMM). This was recommended to me from my supervisor from company X, the reason for choosing this company is because they had made a comprehensive strategy for social media and investing in SMM has been a big part of their marketing strategies. The interview was intended to serve as a benchmark, seeing as the content manager in question worked for a company with a similar target audience which is small to medium businesses. This interview was used to compare company X with another company.

At company X semi-structured interviews were conducted with four employees which I deemed relevant because they had some type of role that relates to social media marketing. The interviews were recorded and after transcribed. The interviewees were informed about the recording and gave consent to the interview being used in the report.

I had the role of a masters thesis student at the company and observations were made by working at company X and attending meetings during a two month period. This gave me deeper knowledge about the company culture and the routines.

RESULT
In this section I will present the results from the interview conducted with the social media manager at Company Y, the results from the interviews with the employees at company X and the observations.

Interview with Company Y
Social Media Objectives
In the interview that was conducted, the social media manager had a clear objective on what to achieve with their social media strategy. They wanted to brand themselves towards their target audience and increase sales. Their definition of sales with regards to social media was not only restricted to landing a customer but also engagement such as downloading a whitepaper or signing up for a newsletter.

“Of course, the goal is always to land a business deal with the client but we view our communication as much more than that”

Groundwork and Implementation
The results from the 1st interview clearly showed that a significant effort has been made to locate the target audience and therefore they had a clearer view of what their audience wants to hear. The social media manager put a lot of emphasis on that it is generally not valuable to talk to the audience from an inside out perspective, meaning talking about your company and how great it is, seeing as that does not create any engagement on social media. Instead, s/he said they focus on providing value for their customers in terms of creating content that can be used for other purposes, such as white papers or other informational content. The interviewee said that their company identified their target audience by using the information in their customer-relationship-management system collected through for instance their client support, and that they had an apprehensive research phase where they collected information from research agencies and gained information through their own surveys. They found that it is important to create content that is fitted for those who are “in a rush” meaning it has to spark interest immediately. By doing this phase properly, which can be seen as their target analysis, s/he claimed they were properly able to decide which platforms to be visible on: Facebook, Instagram and Youtube which is where their target group is mostly present. S/he said that this this communication has to be in alignment with their basic values which are: “trustworthy” and “welcoming”. S/he goes on to explain that they view their target group as individuals even though they offer services to small and medium business owners. In her/his opinion, LinkedIn is more commonly used for B2B but in the case of small and medium businesses they have chosen to view their target as individuals and study them as individuals. They create social media content for business owners but they address their target group as individuals.

S/he also claimed that the company made a competitor analysis, so that they could analyse on how position themselves on the market, where they found that the normal regarding content on social media is to state information about the company and self praising.

“Maybe that is something you want to do too, but it is important to remember to think about who you are talking to and what their needs are. Focus on that target group”

S/he goes on to say that Social Media should not be considered as its own entity but rather as part of the entire marketing strategy. Common mistakes include aiming directly towards trying to sell their product, which might work for parts of the consumer markets but in the case of
B2B it is important to put the client in the center focus, said the interviewee.

Social Media Evaluation
Company Y don’t specifically work with predefined ROI(Return-of-investment) but rather see their social media in a larger perspective as a big part of their digital marketing. Currently, they are focusing on measuring the reach on their social media posts and plan on measuring traffic and conversion in the future. It is important to explore new content and measure what you do and analyze what works and what does not, said the social media manager.

Acceptance and adoption of social media within the company
When asked about the motivation to spend money on social media the reply was:

“The discussion has never been about whether we should invest in social media, it is always about that we should do more.”

The attitude towards social media was very transparent in the interview. An apparent willingness to adopt the technology into their overall strategy was visible.

Interviews with Company X
At company X there is a somewhat consensus on the objective of their social media presence which is generating leads. When asked about their strategy, all four interviewees gave the same answer which is that they do not have a concrete strategy but rather use social media to generate leads.

Social Media Objectives
Emphasis is put on generating leads and closing a deal which is the ultimate goal but they also view downloading a whitepaper for instance as being one objective. There are some split views on what the idea behind being on social media is and the employees were aware of this and stated so in the interview.

“There is some type of basic idea behind what we want to convey but I struggle to believe that it is always used that way. I think there are a lot of ad hoc stuff. Kind of testing.”
- Marketing Automation manager

They have an idea of there being some type of strategy that the social media manager knows about but it was clear in the interview with the social media manager that there is no particular strategy in place currently. the marketing automation manager said in the interview when asked about room for improvement that:

“We have not had a lot of conversions, which is something we need to be better at. What do we post in order to get conversions? The goal is for a lead to be converted to a sale”

There seemed to be some differences in the idea of what the objectives are with social media. The social media manager said at one point:

“We do social media mostly for branding and to create awareness regarding corporate discounts.”

In that same interview s/he talks about social media not being successful since it does not generate enough leads although you reach many. The contradiction being that if branding and awareness is the goal then a high reach is something you would want to achieve.

Groundwork and implementation
Since there is no clear strategy in place at company X there was no idea in asking questions about the groundwork or implementation for it. Rather I tried to ask how they work with the content and their target analysis. When the SM manager was asked about the target analysis the answer was that there has been a target analysis by working with the sales department. They, being the marketing department, have together with sales and using their client service database located who their target audience is, so there could be some type on conclusion on who buys their product.

The social media manager said s/he works closely with the content team to create valuable content to publish on social media and focus on different things on different months. For instance, they try to focus on seasonally relevant material to provide with informational and useful content. If they are successful in getting new leads from social media by for instance downloading a whitepaper of some sort they are pushed into a marketing automation flow. Which means that they get into an automatic process of marketing tasks where they have put up different content in order to put them through a buying journey.

Social Media Metrics
There are split tasks when it comes to social media metrics. the data analyst says: “What we do is that we look at a few key performance indicators and follow them which are: how big of a reach we really have, how many react on our different types of posts, how many posts do we do, is it organic or is it bought. But we have not yet focused on how we can optimize, improve and develop the content.”

Social Media Evaluation
When asked about how the evaluation is done, the social media manager answered: “We don’t have a process for going back and evaluating our campaigns, we are standing on treadmill and just creating the next and the next and the next and don’t look at what worked and what didn’t. We can see at the end that we for instance did not get 30 leads this month as we calculated we would and then we just go on with our daily work”

Even though the data analyst and the social media manager
present how their social media posts have performed there is no analyzing and evaluating the performance iteratively. The data analyst mentions that they do not have large amounts of data seeing as it requires manual extraction of data through the different social platforms. Meaning that they do not have a strategy for collecting data on their social media activities but rather they have to go to the different social media platforms and extract it manually. With LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter there is usually some type of common content that goes out on all of the above mentioned platforms and the data analyst needs to separately go into the analytics parts of those platforms and analyze them separately and add up the impressions on all of them together. He claims to struggle with this and would like to integrate these better so he can dashboard it.

“You can go and look at it in depth. What kind of customers engaged in this type of posts, new or old. Did we get a new customer thanks to this and dive in it a little bit. With that said, I wouldn’t claim that we are really good at valuing what everything leads to. It’s kind of the tendency of running and just making it up to the water surface and then running onto the next thing.”

In the case of this being successful and more data being available and easily retained, it would be easier to create a structured rapport and dashboard it so that the activities can be easily analyzed according to the data analyst.

Acceptance and adoption of social media within the company

In the company I observed that there are very split views between the interviewees on social media and its implication for sales and marketing. The social media marketer was clear about the perception that social media is not something that their company should invest in since it does not work for them. Although three of the interviewees have a positive attitude towards social media and believe there is value in investing in it they have not yet to witness the value from it. The marketing manager said in the interview that s/he wanted to try more creative things with social media such as videos, meaning s/he wants to invest more into it. But the social media manager said the following about their social media strategy:

“We don’t have a strategy simply, I am the first one. I have been doing this for almost a year. I have been working with social media for six months. What we have seen is that it does not give us as much as we hoped. A lot of clicks but not a purchase in the end. We might get four or five every month meanwhile we have published ads to almost several hundred thousand and still it has generated so little. I would sum it up by saying social media does not work for us. It’s not our target group. We should do it in a way that works better.”

The data analyst explained that social media requires more work due to the previous mentioned manual extraction needed from all of the platforms. This creates a perception of enhanced effort compared to other data collection.

When asked about objectives, previous statements suggest that the objective is branding and awareness which contradicts the above quote. Seeing as, if the objective is branding and awareness then reaching several hundred thousands should be seen as a positive metric.

The social media manager had a visible distrust towards the data being generated from social media:

“I feel like the people who built Facebook and the algorithms, tell you that the audience is this big and this many have clicked but if you go into Google Analytics then the information on who has entered the site is totally different. Facebook says 69 but Google Analytics says 14, that’s a big difference. It could be that the people that have clicked didn’t get through, for instance if the page does not load they might close it down which makes these clicks not real clicks since they don’t see the page.”

When talking about room for improvement, the social media manager said that the company is new to social media and as mentioned in the method section, s/he is the first person to work with social media and has only done it for nine months at the moment of writing this article. S/he goes on to say that there needs to be some consideration for the entirety, meaning that there needs to be more processes in place.

This part of the interview led to presenting details missing because of the absence of strategy, namely:

- “The messaging is not consistent on social media with the landing pages, different messaging.”
- Some absence of processes
- Some lack of communication internally and externally

In summary, what is visible through this table is that there is a disconnect between the objectives and the data collection. In figure 2, the framework is presented with the corresponding data extracted from the interviews and observations. Each of the six steps are accounted for in the figure, where the data is presented for both companies interviewed.

As seen in the table on identifying metrics for company X, the metrics are collected based on their availability which relates to the challenge identified in the framework. Metric overload and reliance of social media platform statistics leading to lack of transparency and instability.

Data collection and analysis, is missing the analysis part of it, since they do collect data from the different social media platforms but iterative analysis is missing. With this step
not being done properly, the rest of the framework stages: Report generation and management decision making, were missing proper handling.

**Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to explore a framework for implementation and evaluation of B2B companies social media marketing, by looking at two different Swedish companies. By interviewing employees and observing these companies, I intended to answer the question: What evaluation methods are appropriate for a social media strategy at a B2B company?

**Social Media Objectives**

Results showed that in the case of evaluation objectives, company X had objectives but they were not consistent all the way through the interviews and amongst all interviewees. There was a consensus on the ultimate goal being lead generation, but the social media manager said that the goal is branding and increasing brand awareness then in that same interview s/he said that social media does not work for their company since it only generates a high number of reach but not as many leads. This is in direct contradiction with the previous mentioned objective since a high reach is a positive outcome if the objective is brand awareness. This corresponds to the challenge that is mentioned in the framework(see Fig 2, cell C2). When clear objectives are missing the evaluation easily becomes ad- or post hoc. Company Y had made an extensive target analysis where they identified who their clients are and treated them as consumers instead of businesses when it comes to social media targeting and they had a clear idea of what messaging they wanted to put out. Informative and client focused in order to increase brand awareness which are consistent with the appropriate metrics presented in table 1. The employees at company X were aware that they were not being reflective enough on their metrics and evaluation which is what can come from not having a clear direction in mind[3][18]. Which can be seen in Fig 2, cell C3.

**Technology acceptance model**

Observations showed that there was an effort to evaluate social media marketing efforts by manually collecting data from the different social media platforms but this was something that showed to generate a perception of increased effort which has shown to affect the way a user will accept and use a technology, in this case social media technologies[4]. If there is a perception of increased effort in adopting the technology, this might be a reason for social media being harder to incorporate in their overall marketing efforts. The users might get a sense of there being a steep learning curve or it being more time consuming for them to
learn without that great of a reward. The results also showed that the employees had yet to see the rewards from social media. The social media manager talked about social media not being something that works for their company which shows that the perceived usefulness of social media is low and is one of the two main factors of the technology acceptance model[4]. This is confirmed by Siamagka et al.[14] where they quantitatively and qualitatively found that perceived usefulness significantly affects social media adoption. Comparing company X and Y also adds on to these theories about perceived usefulness being one of the factors differentiating the two companies where they have a similar amount of effort being put into social media but the perception that it is useful is significantly higher in company Y, who deemed social media to be useful. Along with perceived ease-of-use, being the other factor in the technology acceptance model, which I discussed above. This was also in contrast with company Y, which had a much clearer perceived usefulness of social media technologies which might be a factor of their acceptance and perceived success. Research show that social media addressed lead generation[10], which was a desired objective that company X expressed meaning that social media could be useful if handled properly. Again showing that if managed properly, social media can serve as a good complement to the overall marketing strategy. It is meant to serve as an iterative process that produces insights in how to handle your target audience on what social media platforms[8].

Identifying KPIs/Collecting metrics
Identifying KPIs, identifying metrics and data collection and analysis, three of the stages in the evaluation framework, were missing strategic purpose and were vague at Company X. And as discussed in the evaluation framework[8], which is presented in table 1, the challenges to these three areas include metric overload, vagueness regarding specific KPIs and the need to use several tools or to develop tailored dashboards. Several of these challenges were expressed, which points to the lack of a strategic evaluation process. All of these framework stages are so inherently dependent on each other and there is not much room to skip steps in order to have a successful strategy. The framework is a good starting point, although being an observer at company X it is clear that this is practically hard to implement. A smaller company rarely has the resources to iterate all of these steps but rather need to find a way to integrate these steps into their daily work. Which makes the evaluation framework not directly applicable to all companies, meaning that the framework needs more steps and research in order to be universal. As Keegan & Rowley so clearly state in the paper, there is no standard practice and that there needs to be a clear objective before implementing a social media marketing strategy with a comprehensive understanding of the target audience[8].

The statistics on the success of social media marketing are clear, the more analytical and data driven you are the clearer the gains are[18].

Ultimately, results show that there needs to be a perceived usefulness amongst the employees in order to adopt social media into your overall marketing strategy. This both adds on and confirms the research done by Siamagka et al.[14] who validate that one of the most important factors in social media adoption is perceived usefulness. This factor is in direct link to the evaluation not being done properly. The objective setting was not persistent with the metrics and KPI setting which led the social media manager at company X to the perception of social media not being something that works for their company that is in contrast to the social media manager at company Y who had an apparent perception of social media as useful. S/he even went on to say that even though social media does not always show good results, it is important to view social media as a complement to traditional marketing.

Data collection & Analysis/Social Media metrics
When asked about the groundwork being done for the implementation there were differences in the answers from the two companies, which are significant and points to the need for processes and regular meetings. Social media, if handled properly, has many benefits that can complement the overall marketing strategy but what is at risk is efforts being wasted because of lack of insight and this research shows clearly that what has happened is that KPIs and metrics are not being handled analytically. This is apparent when discussing the technology acceptance model, seeing as if you had the appropriate metrics and to measure the objective being met, the perception of usefulness would be greater thus leading to better adoption. Since metrics are easily accessible on the different platforms and the appropriate metrics are easily researched as seen in table 1[17], it is apparent that the major issue is diving into social media without this consideration and proper pre assessment.

Understanding Social Media
The findings validate the conclusion that today’s social media consumers feel empowered and will not engage unless they feel like co-creators of the content. Based on the applied definition of social media in this paper, where the consumer has the power to control what they want from their companies, a major part of social media marketing is getting to know your target audience and providing them with a perceived value so that they want to engage with the provided content. Therefore there is a significant need to understand how the consumers want to interact with you on social media[16], which is also backed up by Keegan & Rowley[8]. Even though company X has tried to be present on social media it has not generated as much perceived value and consumer interaction as they desired, meanwhile company Y who made an extensive research on their
consumers and what they respond to has had a better perceived success of social media marketing.

The existing framework is based on the assumption that the work that is done before starting the evaluation of the social media strategy does not require re-evaluating. What this means, is that the evaluation can fail due to other factors that are not accounted for in the framework stages.

A new framework is developed for social media implementation and evaluation, since the existing evaluation framework is clearly flawed and incomplete. The framework developed from this study (see fig 3, “Social media adoption framework”), combines previous research, which can be found under the theory chapter and the results from this study. It consists of seven steps whereas six of them are from the evaluation framework, see figure 1. A new step is added, that suggests that companies need to evaluate and determine where and if social media are useful to them before implementing a strategy or entering social media.

Method criticism
There is a clear lack of understanding the consumer in this research. One of the major problems expressed from company X was that they had trouble locating their target

the results since other employees might not have the same perception as the person being interviewed. Comparisons between the companies were restricted to the two interviewees that had the same position in the company.

Future research
Future research should contain an extensive research of the different types of businesses on social media, meaning how business owners operate on social media. This research lacks the overall picture of social media where the consumers point of view is not researched.

Future research should also involve the differences of adoption and usage of social media in small, medium and large businesses. Since smaller businesses do not usually have the same resources as larger companies, there is a difference internal processes, which should be investigated. A more quantitative look at how small businesses should operate would be valuable insight in the field and was expressed in the interviews being done at company X.

Conclusion
The initial research question was: “What evaluation methods are appropriate for a social media strategy at a B2B company? This study found that there is a direct

Figure 3. Social media adoption framework

audience since small and medium business owners do not operate on LinkedIn the same way as larger corporations. An understanding of small and medium business owners would complement the research that was done and given a broader understanding. Also, it needs to be highlighted that the interviews were held in Swedish and transcribed in Swedish but written in English which can cause minor differences in the translation.

Two different companies were interviewed but only one person was interviewed at company Y which might affect

 linkage between improper evaluation and objective setting and perceived usefulness of social media marketing in B2B companies. It was found that one of the most important factors of social media adoption is perceived usefulness and one of the factors influencing this is lack of transparency in the gained metrics and data through social media.

This suggests that a new framework could be implemented based on the same stages as Keegan & Rowley[8] suggest in their evaluation framework and adds a pre assessment stage, where you include that there needs to be a predetermined reason for being on social media and an
apparent perception of usefulness before choosing to implement a strategy. This would eliminate the apparent loop that arises while not evaluating properly and perceiving social media as not being useful.

This new framework, see figure 3, suggests that usefulness is determined before entering into social media. If no apparent usefulness is found then this pre assessment stage needs to be iterated and evaluated so that social media can be integrated into the overall marketing strategy with a clear objective and purpose. By adding on evaluation of usefulness to the framework as a pre-assessment stage, it increases the chance of having a perceived successful social media strategy and gives the companies and its employees a clearer purpose.
