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Is there more to it than posting a status update? Customer relationships in social media; context of Finnish art museums

Marketing

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Summary

The present research takes part in the relationship marketing discourse, focusing on the customer relationships of Finnish art museums. A special angle to the subject is taken in the implementation of the relationship marketing, as the research is centered on what museums do for their customer relationships in the online environment of social media. Unlike some of the previous literature on non-profit organizations, the present research argues that also for a non-profit organization the most important stakeholder group is its customers.

Museum marketing in general is in a change towards more professional way of marketing and management. This is due to the increasing pressure they are under, as governmental grants are diminishing while expectations are increasing. Museums, as many other cultural organizations, are expected to outperform themselves unlike ever before in attracting more visitors and collecting more funds for their operations. In order to do these things museums are embracing customer orientation, and looking for new ways for communicating with their existing, and potential, customers.

Social media offers a new setting for organizations to reach individual customers and create long-term and interactive relationships. However, it is not simple to create a lively social media presence for an organization, but a genuine communication and co-creation of value requires strategy, skillful execution, and measuring of the results for further development.

The research was conducted via interviews with the staff members of Finnish art museums. The informants all either worked with the creation of the museum's social media presence, or decided on matters affecting it. The research introduces a theoretical framework for relationship marketing in art museums, within the social media setting. The framework is divided into three parts; the prerequisites for creating customer relationships, the building of customer relationships, and the maintaining of customer relationships. It is through these three stages of relationship marketing that the social media characteristics are further discussed.

Tiivistelmä

Tämä tutkimus osallistuu suhdemarkkinoinnin (relationship marketing) diskurssiin, keskittyen suomalaisten taidemuseoiden asiakassuhteiden hoitamiseen. Tutkimukselle valittu erityinen näkökulma tulee suhdemarkkinoinnin käytännön toteutuksesta, sillä tutkimus syventyy siihen mitä suomalaiset museot tekevät asiakassuhteilleen sosiaalisessa mediassa. Toisin kuin aiemmassa kirjallisuudessa, tässä tutkimuksessa esitetään, että asiakkaat ovat myös voittoa tavoittelemattomille organisaatioille tärkein sidosryhmä.

Museot ovat muutoksessa kohti ammattimaisempaa markkinointi- ja johtamistapaa. Tämä johtuu pitkälti niihin kohdistuvista paineista julkisten tukien vähetessä ja odotusten kasvaessa. Museoiden, kuten monien muidenkin kulttuurialan organisaatioiden, odotetaan ylittävän itsensä uusien asiakkaiden houkuttelemisessa ja rahankeräyksessä. Toteuttaakseen tavoitteensa, museoiden tuleekin ajatella asiakaslähtöisesti ja löytää uusia keinoja asiakkaiden tavoittamiseen.

Sosiaalinen media tarjoaa organisaatioille mahdollisuuden tavoittaa asiakkaita yksilötasolla, ja kehittää pitkäaikaisia, interaktiivisia asiakassuhteita. Aktiivisen läsnäolon ja aidon keskusteluyhteyden rakentaminen sosiaalisessa mediassa vaatii organisaatioilta kuitenkin strategista suunnittelua, taidokasta toteutusta ja tulosten aktiivista mittaamista.

Tämän tutkimuksen haastateltavina toimivat suomalaisten taidemuseoiden työntekijät, jotka vastaavat omassa organisaatiossaan sosiaalisen median toiminnoista, tai tekevät niihin liittyviä päätöksiä. Tutkimuksessa esitellään teoreettinen viitekehys museoiden suhdemarkkinoinnille sosiaalisessa mediassa. Viitekehys jakautuu kolmeen osaan; suhdemarkkinoinnin edellytykset, asiakassuhteiden rakentaminen, sekä asiakassuhteiden ylläpitäminen. Sosiaalisen median tunnusmerkkejä tutkitaankin näiden kolmen suhdemarkkinoinnin vaiheen läpi.

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1 INTRODUCTION

> *"Winning and keeping customers is harder than ever. The online world undoubtedly presents massive opportunities for brands, however it is only through deploying precisely tailored marketing strategies that they will be able to realize this potential. Choosing the wrong channel, or simply adding to the cacophony of online noise, risks alienating potential customers and impacting business growth." (TNS Digital Life, 2011: Froggatt, Matthew, Chief Development Officer of TNS Global, market research information services)*

As summarized in the quote by Mr. Froggatt, Chief Development Officer of TNS Global market research information services, the contemporary internet gives unlimited possibilities for organizations to reach their existing, and also potential, customers. Also cultural organizations, such as museums, have stepped into the online world to ease the task of reaching their customers. However, a genuine communication with the customers in an online environment takes planning of a strategy, skillful execution, and measuring of the results for further development.

The research in question focuses on Finnish art museums and their relationships with their customers. A special angle to the subject is taken in the implementation of the relationship marketing, as the present research focuses on what museums do for their customer relationships in the online environment of social media.

Museums operate in a multidimensional environment, as usually they include a physical venue (Rentschler & Gilmore, 2002), but the product of a museum is characterized as the aesthetic experience a visitor goes through. Thus, the product entails tangible dimensions, as well as intangible. Museums are service providers who need to consider some basic features of service marketing, such as the intangibility, inseparability, perishability, and heterogeneity of services (Gilmore 2003, 10-11). Museums also have many stakeholder groups, such as the regular visitors, funders, local residence, and tourists, all of whom need to be attended simultaneously. Museums are non-profit organizations funded directly and indirectly by consumers, government, private corporations and foundations. Their reason for existence varies from preserving art works to educating the people (The International Council of Museums, The Finnish National Committee, 2001) and even entertainment.

Museum marketing is in transition towards an even more professionalized style of marketing. The driving force for the change seems to be their diminishing funding, ever-increasing competition of people's spare time (e.g. Passebois & Aurier 2004), and intensification of the demands from the funders (see Arhinmäki, 2011; Sundström, 2010; Gilmore 2003, 83). In today's cultural policy statements of Finland there are issues that sound much like the corporate world:

> *"The cultural grants emphasize content creation and <u>efficient</u> distribution of art and culture"*
>
> -
>
> *"The export of culture and the <u>marketing abilities</u> of the creative industries will be further advanced.*
>
> *(Free translations from Ministry of Education and Culture, 2011 a).*

These statements are an indication of the change that is happening in the cultural industries; it is not enough for museums to simply apply for grants and run with those anymore, but instead they are expected to succeed in gathering more ticket sales, creating and hosting events, evaluating their own actions professionally, and reaching beyond the traditional channels to market themselves. The former Minister of Culture, Mr. Wallin, started a reformation discussion concerning the grants to Finnish cultural organizations in 2010. According to him, it was time to start thinking about quality, diversity, and productivity in allocating the governmental grants. (Sundström, 2010). A working group, set by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture in 2010, noted that a share of the governmental grants could be allocated to cultural organizations according to different indicators, having to do with, for example: the staff and the economic situation, visitor amount and productions, exhibition activity, audience development, and different kinds of collaboration projects taken on by the organization. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2010).

During the year 2011 the Finnish government has been forced to save from anywhere possible, due to the global economic situation. According to the current Minister of Culture, Mr. Arhinmäki, cultural organizations received almost 80 percent more governmental funding in 2010 than in 2007, and during 2011 the grants will diminish. Furthermore, Mr. Arhinmäki has repeatedly questionned and critisized the grant system in the Finnish cultural industry for mainly supporting the biggest and oldest forms of culture, such as museums, opera, and orchestras. (Arhinmäki, 2011). Consequently, the cultural organizations in Finland, especially museums, are expected to outperform themselves unlike before. Improvements are awaited in customer relationships and communications to name a few. This is not current reality only for the Finnish context. The global phenomenon of the transition in museums is put forward by the lack of funding and a willingness to stay in the competition of people's spare time (see e.g. (Roodhouse, 2008; Dewey, 2004; McNicholas, 2004; Colbert, 2003). All of this means, that museums need to, for example, *attract more and diverse visitors*, in other words customers, and *maintain a relationship with them in order for them to visit the museum again* (Gilmore 2003, 84). In order to do these things a museum needs to shift their orientation from a traditional product orientation to customer orientation, and look for new ways of reaching their audience.

With the orientation to customers, the management of an organization may apply relationship marketing (RM). The importance of both acquiring new customers (Gummesson, 1997) and retaining the already existing customers (Grönroos, 1997, Passebois & Aurier, 2004) are emphasized in relationship marketing, and it has been said to be extremely well suited for the non-profit organizations (NPOs) (e.g. Sargeant, 1999). Relationship marketing includes all kinds of relationships, for example the ones between an organization and its suppliers, or its owners (e.g. Mitussis et al., 2006). Most of the literature on non-profit organizations and relationship marketing concentrate on the relationship between the organization and its funder(s). This relationship has been seen as particularly important, as funders have traditionally been the group that has most influence on the cash flow of a non-profit organization (see e.g. Avner & Benedetto, 1993).

However, the relationship between a non-profit organization and the key interest group of a for-profit organization - the customers - has not been discussed in the same depth as the one with the funder(s), leaving a gap in the research. Sorjonen (2004, 12) notes that marketing research of cultural organizations, which are mostly non-profit organizations, could benefit from a customer viewpoint. When simplified, what ultimately separates non-profit from for-profit organizations is the distribution of profits. Non-profit organizations do not distribute excess revenues to their owners like for-profit companies do. In other respects their operations are indeed comparable, as also non-profit organizations need to strive for some revenue making in order to cover the expenses of their operations (see e.g. Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Kotler & Levy, 1969). In this respect it seems peculiar that customers, being the most important interest group of for-profit companies, are not in fact discussed in the context of non-profit organizations. The present research claims that it is not the relationship with the funder(s) that is the most crucial one for the non-profit organizations, but the one with its customers.

Along with the change to customer orientation, new tools of reaching consumers need to be considered. Gummesson (1998, 61) proposed a question in 1998 whether it is possible for an organization to create a relationship with thousands or even millions of consumers. According to him mass marketing was the only solution for this kind of relationship building. Gummesson (1998, 61) also stated that mass marketing, however, is not 'real communication' as it is always one-way, impersonal, and indirect. Technology has taken remarkable leaps forward since then and many things are possible today that were not even thought about in the 1990's.

In the beginning of the so-called internet age in the 1990's, webpages were the most common way for different organizations to join the technological revolution of the internet. Webpages, however, represent the old way of communication, which is by far one-way, impersonal and indirect (Balm & Dogerlioglu, 2011; O'Reilly, 2005 b). Today, the terms web 2.0 and social media are used to describe online actions of either organizations or individuals, as the online behavior of people has drastically changed. Social media refers to a new, uncontrollable environment, for sharing experiences in a real-time online surrounding, the social communication with one's network of friends (Balm & Dogerlioglu, 2011; Isokangas & Vassinen, 2010, 84; Mitussis et al., 2006).

The appeal of social media is undeniable. The users of Facebook, for example, spend an average of 6 hours per day logged in to the application, and a total of hundreds of millions of people are using social media daily. (see Machlis, 2011). People like to attend to activities their friends are also attending, they listen to what their friends are listening, and they like the same things their friends like. For an organization, social media offers various tools for the so-called "viral effect", where people share the content like a virus; rapidly and extensively. The activity of people online makes it an interesting surrounding for organizations (Kozinets, 2002, 61-62). Yet, as more and more organizations are entering social media, content becomes more important than ever. People are interested in learning about the processes behind the actual service they use (Simon, 2009) which create a possibility for organizations to post current content instead of simply advertisements.

1.1 Research questions and structure of the research

The present research focuses on Finnish art museums and their customer relationships. A special angle to the managing of the customer relationships is taken on the tools for building and maintaining the relationships; social media applications. Consequently the main research question for the present research is:

"*What are the specific characteristics of building customer relationships utilizing social media*?"

The main research question is further explored with the help of two supporting questions:

"*Why would a cultural organization, such as a museum, focus on building customer relationships?*"

"*How do art museums utilize social media in their marketing actions?*".

These supporting questions assist in understanding firstly the reasons behind the possible fostering of customer relationship in museums, and secondly the utilization of the social media applications. The first supporting question investigates the issues that are relevant in marketing of museums in general, and more specifically if building customer relationships is something museums might gain from. The issues of marketing a museum will be discussed in Chapter 2, *Background; Marketing a non-profit museum* and the possibilities of relationship marketing are explored in Chapter 3, *Theory; Relationship with the customers.*

The second supporting question examines whether museums in Finland utilize the possibilities of social media, and if they do, it further explains the way they are currently utilized. The second supporting question also aims at finding out what do the museums expect from their social media presence, and in case they do not utilize social media, why do they feel it is not suitable for them. These questions are answered in Chapter 5, *Findings*, after Chapter 4, *Methodology*. Towards the end of the research, the findings are further discussed in Chapter 6, *Discussion*. Finally, conclusions and comparisons between the presented literature and the findings of the present research are presented in the final chapter, *7, Conclusions.*

1.2 Definitions

The important, most used terminology of the present research is clarified in this section. Some terms will be discussed later on in the research, thus they will not be clarified here. The term ‘relationship marketing (RM)’ will be defined in chapter 3, section 3; and the term ‘social media’ will be discussed in chapter 3, section 5.

A museum

Museums are often considered traditional organizations, institutions that preserve pieces of cultural history, natural history, or artworks in order for them to be investigated sometime in the future. Their tasks, however, also include the creation of new knowledge and educating the people (The International Council of Museums, The Finnish National Committee, 2001). In the present research the focus is on art museums, thus museums that host exhibitions on artworks on either one type of art (for example contemporary art) or multiple types of art from different eras of cultural history. Art museums collect mainly aesthetical, unique works of art (museot.fi, 2011 c). The word used in the research is simply ‘museum’, instead of ‘art museum’ for tehnical reasons.

A non-profit organization

Powell and Steinberg (2006, 1) define a non-profit organization (NPO) as one that is precluded from distributing profits to those who regulate the assets of the organization, by external regulation or its own governance structure. Non-profit boards have ownership rights, so that they can steer the functions of the organization by directing the use of resources, but they cannot profit from those rights, nor sell them onwards. (See Powell & Steinberg, 2006, 1). Some also define non-profit organizations as ones with a concern for the disadvantaged, or with wide issues in the society having to do with the well being of people (e.g. Sargeant, 1999).

The performance of a non-profit organization is not measured the same way as in a for-profit organization. The performance of a for-profit organization would be measured according to its profitability or market share, but that of a non-profit organization is measured according to its expenditure, efficiency targets, and most of all by the need for the service they are providing. (Hannagan, 1992, 9). In the present research the term non-profit organization is used as Kotler

& Levy (1969) defined it, it is just as any other organization, the only differences are that they do not divide profit to the owners, and that they have other reasons for existance, than simply to make revenue. Nevertheless, also NPO’s need to make enough profit to keep their operations going.

A Customer

In the context of cultural organizations, it is accustomed to talk about visitors (see e.g. Burton & Scott, 2003), or audience (see Dewey, 2004). When talking about their marketing, also the word ‘consumers’ is used (see Mejón, Fransi & Thorsson Johansson, 2004). In the present research the terms, ‘visitor’, ‘customer’, and ‘consumer’ are all used to mean the same thing, the customer of the museum. However, there are nuances. When talked about ‘visitor’, the people that visit the actual museum building on site are meant, and when talked about ‘consumers’, the large pool of people in general is meant. This is why ‘customer’ is the most utilized word in the present research, meaning the individual customer of a specific organization. Also, the word ‘clientele’ is used, this refers to the specific customers of one organization.

2 BACKGROUND: MARKETING A NON-PROFIT MUSEUM

This chapter is an introduction to the marketing of a non-profit organization (NPO), such as a museum. There are specific characteristics that describe the non-profit organizations that need to be considered in their marketing. Further, it has been questioned in previous literature whether a non-profit organization should market themselves to begin with, which is why this topic is introduced separately.

Overall, the number of non-profit organizations has exploded during the past years, perhaps due to the increased awareness of issues concerning e.g. the environment, national debts, change in political structures, and still ongoing armed conflicts (Sargeant, 1999, 8). The increase in awareness is also seen in the social media setting, as more and more so called responsible social media companies have emerged. The idea of these companies is something in between a non-profit organization and a for-profit company, as they act like for-profit companies but they operate for the same causes as non-profit organizations. Examples of these are the Finnish Greenriders (looking for people to share rides through social media), Sharewood (users klick online advertisements and the money received from the advertisers goes to various charities) and Mindo (cooking recipes that also show the ecological footprint the dish creates). (Vassinen, 2011, E1).

The reason for existence of for-profit companies, according to the Finnish law, is to generate profit and distribute it to the owners, unless something else would be settled in the corporate by-laws (Limited Liability Companies Act, Finland 2006). Then again, the reasons for existing for non-profit organizations vary greatly; this is what separates them from for-profit organizations. As mentioned in the Introduction chapter; also non-profit organizations need to strive for making some revenue in order to keep their operations going. Their sole purpose, however, is not revenue-making, but also something else, such as lobbying, educating, preserving, charity etc. which they concern their main task(s). According to Powell and Steinberg (2006, 1) non-profit organizations are ubiquitous. Many people are born in a hospital, they attend schools and universities, have their kids in day-care, go to exhibitions in a museum, go to family counseling, and line up for organizations promoting human rights or economic development –all of which can be produced by non-profit organizations.

But why are non-profit organization needed, why aren't they like for-profit organizations? Powell and Steinberg (2006, 2) introduce the concept of *trichotomy of sectors*; *non-profit, for-*

profit, and *governmental*. Each of these sectors is responsible for delivering the appropriate quality and quantity of services to the appropriate constituencies. A theory, known as the *three-failures theory* explains why non-profit organizations are needed to begin with, and why there are not non-profit organizations in every field of business, but merely on certain industries (like health care, arts, social security etc.). Non-profit organizations are needed, when the two other service providers, for-profit organizations and the government are expected to fail. For-profit organizations are good at meeting the needs of the consumers in so far as two conditions are fulfilled: 1) consumers need to be informed about the quality and quantity of their purchase, and 2) purchases are individually, not collectively, consumed. Yet, in case of violation of the first condition (*contract failure*) the market is inefficient and non-profit organizations are considered more trustworthy than for-profit organizations, as the profit distribution motive is unfounded. Violations of the second condition are used to justify the governmental expenditures, but the majority of the people need to stand behind a cause for it to go through. The minority, who does not get what they wish for, sees the governmental actions as failure (*government failure*) and they will thus choose to support the non-profit organizations, providing what the minority wishes for, instead. Resulting from this, non-profit organizations can suffer from philanthropic insufficiency, amateurism, paternalism, and particularism (*voluntary failure*). (Powell & Steinberg, 2006, 1; Steinberg, 2006, 119).

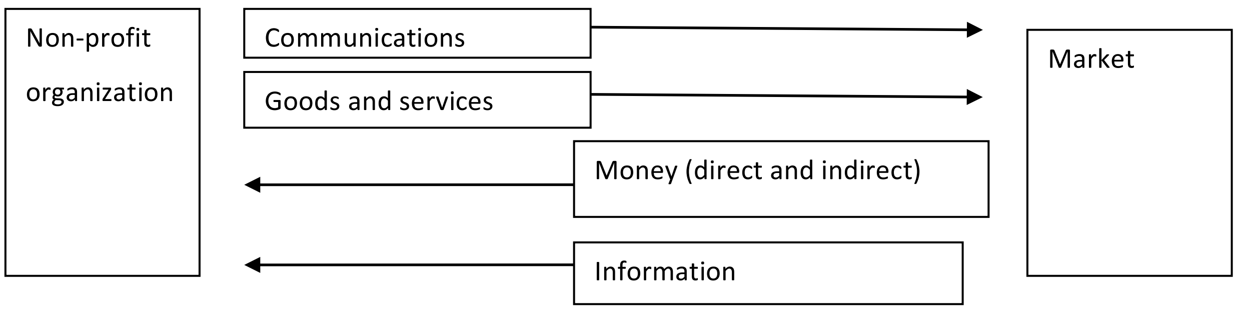
However, non-profit organizations can no longer be considered as something less than the other two sectors. Non-profit organizations work on various areas of business and their actions cannot be called fringe or of poor quality. For example in the Finnish context of museums, the annual expenditure in 2009 was approximately 196,2 million euros, the museums employed 1 859 full-time employees, and they were open in total for 64 318 days only in 2009, leaving an astonishing amount of 200 days open that year per museum. (National Board of Antiquities, 2009).

There have been several arguments for and against marketing the non-profit organizations. The early against arguments highlight the vague definition of marketing (e.g. by Kotler & Levy, 1969) and raise the question of competition in the field. For the opponents of marketing in non-profit organizations, the market should not be seen as a competitive forum but as an opportunity for collaboration between the different non-profit organizations. However, this collaboration would not abolish the competition; only this time it would actualize between the non-profit organizations and the for-profit organizations as groups, instead of between individual organizations. Competition in the marketplace, no matter how it is understood, is not something that would make non-profit organizations' functions somehow of less value than without the competition. The term 'competition' can be understood in multiple ways. For example, museums compete; not only against each other, but also against all the other cultural organizations such as the opera, theatre, cinema et cetera, not to mention also against everything else people could do on their leisure time. It does not help museums to ignore the competition and satisfy to the ideology that non-profit organizations would not have competitors, as they do not exist in a vacuum, but in a market surrounded with all kinds of distractions for the public. Non-profit organizations do act in the same environment as for-profit organizations, so they need to market themselves in order to stay in the overall competition. This does not mean that they could not still collaborate, in fact, collaboration between the different cultural organizations is highly recommendable, as they do often have more scarce resources than for-profit organizations and by joining their efforts they could possibly create economies of scale.

More recently it has been acknowledged that also non-profit organizations need to embrace *customer orientation* (discussed later in chapter 3 subsection 3.2.1) but some changes are made due to the uniqueness of the sector. First, maintaining a high number of relationships is considered vital because the assignment of resources and attraction are two different tasks. Second, the organizational objectives vary greatly, as the reason for existence is not as straightforward as to distribute profit to the owners.

The non-profit sector in general has become more accountable for its use of money and for the quality of the services they provide. *Public accountability* means that the organizations function under a scrutiny of a parliamentary committee or a public body, and where a 10 percent market share could be sufficient for a for-profit company, a non-profit organization can't function if 90 percent of their existing customers, potential customers, or constituents, are against their functioning overall (Hannagan 1992, 9). This accountability manifests, for museums, in terms of performance indicators or by public reaction, rather than profits (Hannagan 1992, 18-19). Thus, NPO's, such as museums, need to do Public Relations and communicate about what they are doing in order to spread information that could affect the public opinion about their necessity.

In addition to the public accountability, museums are indeed under pressure to attract wider audiences in order to make more revenue. Gummesson (1998, 167) notes that often the payer and the consumer of a service are two different facets, and even if they would be one and the same, the payment usually comes at a different time than the actual consuming. For example, when a museum visit is payed by the actual visitors through their tax money; the payer and the consumer are the same, but the timing is different and indirect. Museums represent a somewhat traditional form of non-profit organization; and people do not even think that a museum might also have to make a profit. This is chancing as museums face increasing expectations from their stakeholders in order to receive grants. This does not mean that the reason for existence of the museums would change into moneymaking, only that their operations need to be revised in terms of their overall orientation towards also creating revenue while still pursuing their ultimate goals of educating the people and preserving the cultural artifacts. The following reduced picture reflects the functioning of a non-profit organization in the market.



Picture 2: Functioning of the non-profit organization in the market (Hannagan, 1992, 19)

As showed in Picture 1, the non-profit organizations communicate about societally important issues and deliver services and goods to the marketplace. The marketplace, then again, funds the operations of the organizations indirectly or directly and offers the organizations information.

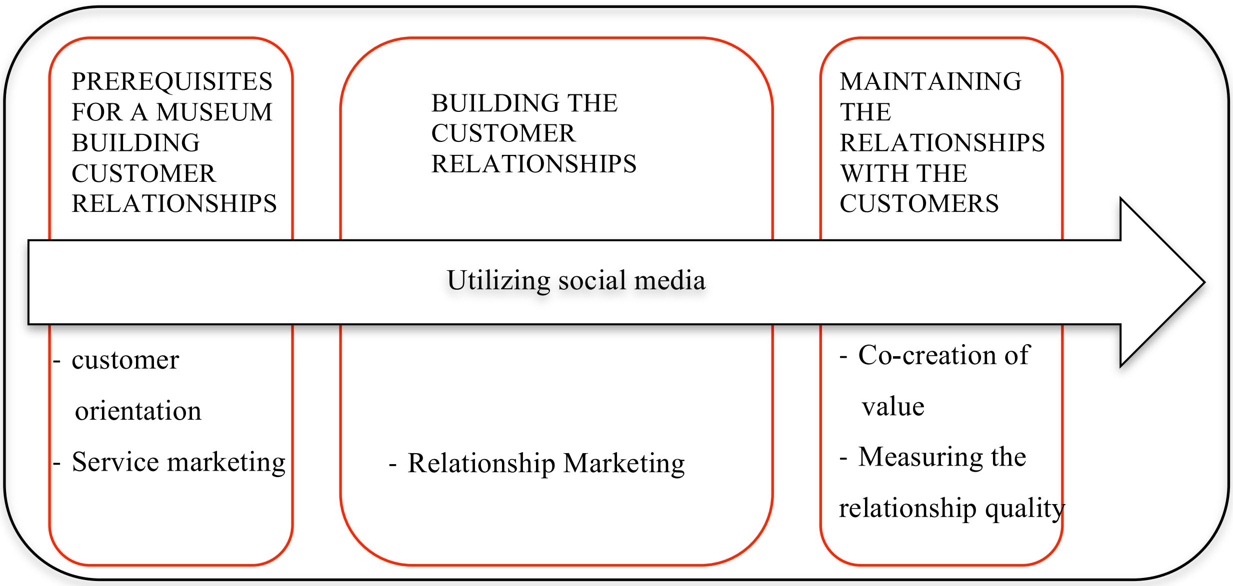
The need for marketing non-profit organizations comes from the quality of their services, and communicating that to the public, while also attracting wider audiences. A service of high quality is likely to attract customers, as people will likely perceive it to be useful, efficient, and worthy of attracting continued funding. (Hannagan 1992, 29). Also, marketing in non-profit organizations is needed, because people need information about the services available to them. Marketing is not only advertising, but it is customer orientation, organizational integrity and cohesion, and mutually beneficial exchange between the customer and the organization (Hannagan, 1992, 30). From the perspective of the present research, the most apparent argument supporting marketing in non-profit organizations seems to be the one about the definition of a non-profit organization. Even though non-profit organizations do not distribute profit to the owners, as for-profit companies do, they need to gain more revenues than expenses in order to survive, and thus they are profit-oriented and need to market themselves, in order to stay in the overall competition.

3 THEORY: RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CUSTOMERS

This chapter focuses on the theoretical discourses the present research takes part in. The frame of reference is presented in the beginning, in the first section of the chapter. The frame of reference explicates the way the research approaches the chosen theories. The following sections present the parts of the frame of reference, the different stages of customer relationships, and also the new forum for the relationship building; social media. Finally, the theoretical framework is presented. The chapter addresses the issues on a theoretical level, yet the characteristics of a cultural organization, such as a museum, are taken into consideration in every section.

3.1 THE FRAME OF REFERENCE

The frame of reference is formed out of three parts: first, the prerequisites for a museum to create relationships with its customers is reviewed, then the ideologies and applications to achieve that goal are further explored, and finally the end result of having the relationship is presented. In Picture 2 the three stages of the frame of reference are presented.



Picture 3: The Frame of reference

As shown in the simplified Picture 2, the prerequisites need to be in order to get to the second part, building the customer relationships. Yet, the prerequisites are only the starting point, and thus it is presented as a smaller section also in the picture. Also, the final section, maintaining a relationship with the customers is a smaller one, as it is considerably easer to maintain an existing relationship, than it is to build a new one. This is why the middle section; building the customer relationships, is presented as the largest part of the Frame of reference.

The three sections are discussed in a theoretical manner, connecting them into the previous literature. However, the idea of utilizing social media to the different stages of the relationships, represented by the three sections, is brought out. The characteristics of social media are further clarified in the fifth section of this chapter. In the next sections; prerequisites for a relationship, building the relationships, and maintaining the relationships, are investigated and further clarified.

3.2 PREREQUISITES FOR A MUSEUM BUILDING CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

A transition in the way an organization sees itself and its customers has occurred in many industries during the past 50 years, not least of all in the service sector (Bruhn 2003, 2), that also museums represent. Museum marketing is becoming more professional (see e.g. Dewey, 2004; McNicholas, 2004; Colbert, 2003). There are multiple strategy alternatives for an organization to choose from; product, competitor or customer orientation (Camarero & Garrido, 2008) as the traditional division. Product orientation focuses more in the production process(-es) than the customers of the organization (Hannagan, 1992, 2). This way the customers need to adapt to the product, whereas in customer orientation, the main task of an organization is seen to be the uncovering of the needs and wants of the customers and satisfying those (Hannagan 1992, 3). This section elucidates the prerequisites for customer relationships from the cultural organization’s point of view. The attitudes towards customer relationships and the clarification of the role of the cultural organization are taken into consideration.

3.2.1 A mindset for customer relationships: customer orientation

Hannagan (1992, 6) describes how, in particular, in the public and non-profit sector a transitional period is going on. In most cases the transition happens from product orientation to customer orientation. As museums are non-profit organization, the change applies to them as well. Embracing a customer orientation and following the market trends, and ever changing needs and wants of the customers, is indeed, something every cultural organization should do, according to Finley et al. (2006). By identifying and responding to any of those changes a cultural organization can ensure their relevance and longevity in the community (Finley, Gralen & Fichtner, 2006). Understanding the needs and wants of the customer, and actually using that information to improve the offered services, is essential for customer satisfaction (Camarero & Garrido, 2008). As the very reason of existance of any service organization are the customers (Youker, 2010), it is only natural to lean towards the customer orientation. Naturally, the customers need to be defined widely, for as mentioned, museums need to please multiple audiences; for example visitors, potential visitors, funders, artists, competitors et cetera.

When simplified, the main tasks of a museum have to do with the preserving of the cultural historical artifacts, and the creation of new knowledge utilizing the information museums have and by educating the people (The International Council of Museums, The Finnish National Committee, 2001). Thus, it is not straightforwadly only a service organization producing services for the customers. Further, it has been noted that the customers do not always know what they want, but the artistic organizations offer them something they cannot expect or put into words in beforehand. Customers need the artistic organization to inform and challenge them. (Voss & Voss, 2000). In fact, Voss and Voss (2000) found that a strict customer orientation is negatively associated with organizational performance in an artistic context. The alternatives would, thus, be competitor and product orientations.

In the competitor orientation an organization follows closely its current and potential competitors, and acts every time one of them makes a move (Camarero & Garrido, 2008). Even though it is crucial for any organization to recognize their competitors and know what they are doing, in a museum context the competitor orientation is not the most efficient one, as it focuses too much on the competition and not the main tasks of a museum; preserving a cultural heritage, educating the people and fostering a positive attitude towards culture in general. Also, museums seem to be less agile in their actions as some for-profit organizations, which would make it impossible to change the operations every time a competitor does something new.

In order to understand the product orientation, a museum first needs to define what their product is, and the concept of a ‘product’ is essentially challenging in a museum context. What are they selling to the customers? This can be defined through the service and the experience a customer obtains during a visit. It is more of a service than a tangible product, but naturally some tangible parts are included into the process. The definition of a museum product is further discussed in the following subsection. If a museum embraces the product orientation, it means that they have a custodial approach to their functions and they assume their customers appreciate, more than anything else, the artistic quality of the art works presented (Camarero and Garrido, 2008). However, as mentioned earlier, in order to survive in the market and the competition today, it is not enough for a museum to maintan the cultural historical artifacts in good condition, but museums are increasingly asked for marketing activities, fundraising and communicating with the customers (Arhinmäki, 2011; Sundström, 2010; Gilmore 2003, 83; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2011 a).

Customer orientation and competitor orientation can also be bundled together, adding also interfunctional coordination. The interfunctional coordination comprises the organization’s different activities in order to offer superior value. This alternative is called *’market orientation’* and it directs an organization to look out, instead of in, to find new trends, knowledge on consumers, on competitors and on the environment they operate in. By comparison, organizations operating on product orientation look inward and thus know little or nothing of the consumers, but sell what they think is best. Sorjonen (2004, 181) defines market orientation as something that comprises the accumulation, distribution, and responsiveness of knowledge on an organization’s customers, competitors, and other stakeholders. According to Grönroos (2000, 18), market orientation does not, however, fit marketing in the service business in the best possible way, as the term ‘market’ puts too much stress on acquiring new customers, instead of maintaining and developing the customer relationships an organization already has. Then again, according to Camarero and Garrido (2008) market orientation is the most appropriate orientation for a cultural organization, such as a museum, as it considers not only the economic but also the social attributes of organizational success. Voss and Voss (2000) note that the relationship between performance and each different orientation presented (customer, competitor and product orientation) depends on the customer and industry characteristics, and the type of performance measurements used.

It is difficult to find one suitable orientation for a cultural non-profit organization like a museum, thus they need to embrace bits of different orientations. The market orientation presented here, is quite the opposite of the traditional custodial approach (see e.g. Sorjonen 2004, 181; Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002) museums have taken on before, but it is a very wide concept, and the strategic stress within the market orientation may still vary from listening to the customers to following competitors' every move. Due to the vagueness and the wide scope of the market orientation, the present research finds *customer orientation* the most suitable strategic guideline for a cultural organization. Nevertheless, the term 'customer orientation' is not utilized to refer to an approach where the customers are the only concern in the strategic planning of an organization, or that customers would take part in the creative or artistic decision-making processes of a museum, simply that customers are considered a vital part of the organization and without them the entire service processes would not be possible.

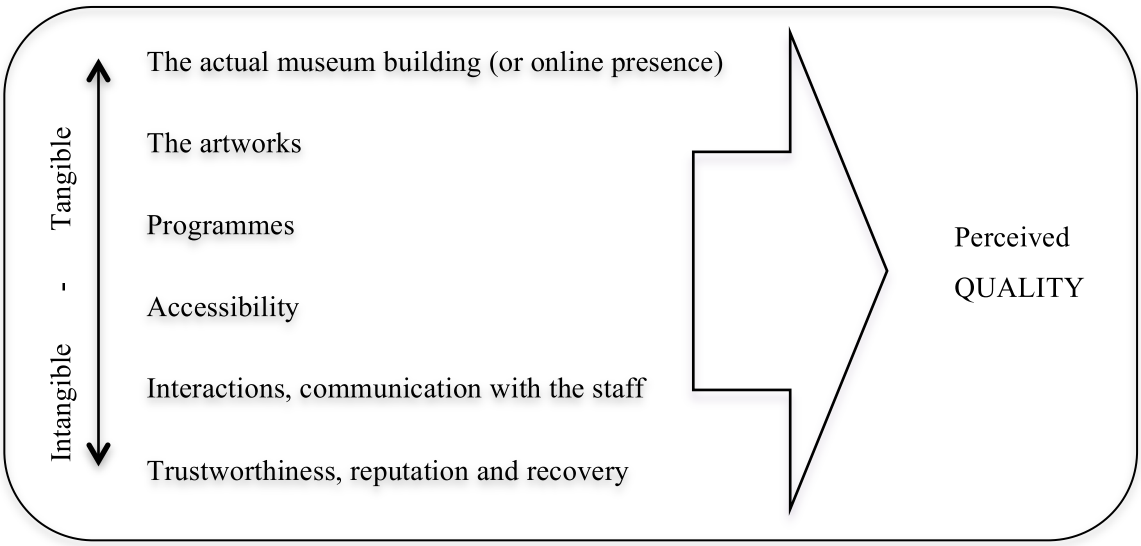
3.2.2 Marketing of the museum 'product': service marketing

In today's society the importance of services is undeniable, (see e.g. Gilmore 2003, 3) and also tangible products are sold increasingly by adding services to the core product. The core product of a museum is rather difficult to define, but it can be said to have both tangible and intangible dimensions to it, and the customer is highly involved in the production process of the *experience* that usually is pointed out as the 'core product' of a museum.

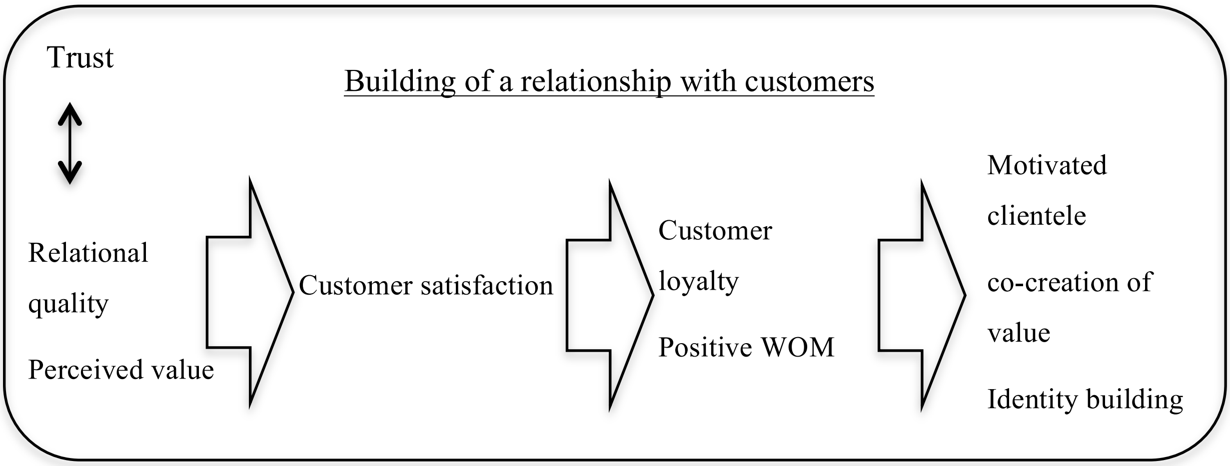
The museum 'product', the experience, is usually provided within a physical context, for example, a museum building. It includes lighting and shapes, and certain means for guiding the customer (see e.g. Rentschler & Gilmore, 2002). Museums often operate in the public sector environment, and as non-profit organizations museums need to strive for two goals; fullfilling their overall mission and creating enough revenue in order to keep the museum operations going (Camarero & Garrido, 2008). Thus, the overall conceptualization of the museum service requires multi-dimensional criteria (Gilmore 2003, 84). Gilmore (2003, 85–87), lists three categories of criteria: 1) the collections (core and changing collections), 2) accessibility or availability (physical facilities, accessibility of core product, range of offerings, and availability of the museum service) and 3) communication (nature and scope, attracting customers, interaction, entertainment, interpretation, guidance, and education). All of the criteria are interlinked.

The success of a service encounter is difficult to measure, as services are ambiguous. The concept of a "performance gap" is important in defining the 'product' of any service organization. The original Gaps Model, created in the 1980's by Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry (1985), presents multiple possible gaps in the customer-provider relatioship in the service process. When simplified, customers have certain expectations and individual opinions of the service process, influenced by, for example, advertising, sales people, word-of-mouth (WOM), and pricing. Customers also have perceptions prior to the service process influenced by actual previous experiences and also shared experiences heard from other customers. Today these prior expectations and opinions are also created in social media. The online presence of the museums creates a certain image of them to customers that have not yet visited the actual museum, and hopefully strengthen the image of the museum to the customers that have visited the actual museum building. Comments of other users and the content posted by the museum create a story about the museum. Any mismatch between the previous expectations or perceptions and the actual service process will lead to a performance gap, thus letting the customer down. (see e.g. Gilmore 2003, 22; Bendapudi & Berry, 1997; Grönroos, 1988). The possibility of the performance gaps highlights the importance of communication, before, during, and also after the service encounter. Social media offers an appropriate surrounding for this communication. The entire museum experience may occur in an online surrounding with the help of new applications such as the Google Art project (see Google Art Project, 2011), or then social media can be added to a visit to a museum to enhance the experience into a more cohesive entity.

Customers review the relational quality of services, before, during and after a service encounter. Most services are difficult to evaluate in before hand, and some are difficult to evaluate even after the service (Berry, 1995; Grönroos, 1988), which highlights the importance of *trust*. In a service process such as visiting a museum, or communicating with a museum online, a customer might not be able to assess the artistic quality of the exhibition, or the information validity, even after experiencing it. This is why customers need to trust the museum to present them with only relevant artworks or information, for example. Customers that trust their service providers have good reasons to remain in the relationship with the provider, as relationships reduce uncertainty and vulnerability (Berry, 1995). What is crucial to understand in service organizations, is that the interactions customers experience with the staff, and the organization as a whole, in the service encounter affect how they perceive the quality of the service, at least as much as the service itself (Gummesson, 1987). Customers are likely to asses the quality of a museum in, at least, three ways: 1) the perceived quality of the artworks themselves, 2) the quality of interactions with the staff of the organization, and 3) the quality of the physical environment (Passebois & Aurier, 2004). Rentschler and Gilmore (2002) added Programmes and Accessibility to the list of museum service dimensions, which naturally also are assessed by customers. With programmes they refer to research, conservation of the artworks, sholarships and for example management of the collections in general. Accessibility incorporates the availability of the 'product', the museum premises, and the 'story' the museum is communicating to the customers. Grönroos (1988) created a somewhat different list of service quality criteria. It entailes the same issues than the other lists, merely under different names, but according to that also trustworhiness, recovery, and reputation affect the perceived quality. Trustworthiness in this case refers to customers knowing that the organization keeps the promises they have made and strives to perform as well as possible. Recovery means that in case something unexpected should happen in the service process, the organization providing the service would immediately take action to correct the situation. Reputation, logcally, means that an organization can be trusted to stand for good values that the customers can also share. (Grönroos, 1988). Picture 3 combines the above listed dimensions affecting perceived quality by the customers in a museum context. The dimensions in Picture 3 are arranged in a continuum of intangible to tangible issues.



Picture 4: Perceived quality (based on Passebois & Aurier, 2004; Rentschler and Gilmore 2002; and Grönroos 1988).



Picture 5: Building a relationship with the customers (based on Passebois & Aurier, 2004)

The value of something can be understood as simply the economic costs to benefits ratio, or it can be seen through a more holistic view integrating affective elements into the process of evaluation. Nevertheless, quality is considered an antecedent for value. (Passebois & Aurier, 2004). Passebois and Aurier (2004) conclude that customer satisfaction all together, in a museum context, is formed out of the perceived value and quality. In addition, customer satisfaction plays an active role in customer loyalty and positive WOM (Passebois & Aurier, 2004), which both are crucial for a service organization like a museum. We present this in Picture 4.

In Picture 4 the arrows reflect a possible following from the previous issue. For example, a customer might also be dissatisfied in the quality and/or value of the museum experience, and thus the loyalty and WOM prerequisite, consumer satisfaction, is not fulfilled and the end result is not a motivated client or co-creation of value. Satisfied customers, however, become loyal customers and advocates of the organization creating positive WOM (see Passebois & Aurier, 2004; Bendapudi & Berry, 1997). In the end the organization obtains a motivated clientele that cooperates with the organization and builds the organizations identity by lending a piece of their own identities, and vice versa (see e.g. Goulding, 1999; Fournier, 1998). The modeling is simplified, and many other things can also affect the building of the relationship.

The four characteristics of services are *intangibility*, *inseparability*, *perishability*, and *heterogeneity* (Zeithaml et al., 1985). All of these apply in both online communication, as well as offline encounters. Intangilibility refers to the experience dimension of services, unlike tangible products, services cannot be for example touched. Inseparability refers to the fact that a service is created at the same moment when it is consumed, the production and the consumption processes cannot be separated. Heterogeneity, on its turn, alludes to the variation in services. A service encounter, and thus also the quality of the service, is always different. Finally, perishability means that services cannot be saved or stored in any way, causing some problems for service providers; they need to estimate the demand of services carefully, as an empty seat at a museum auditorium, for example, cannot be reused. (see Grönroos, 1988; Zeithaml et al., 1985). Communicating with the customers before an event, for example in social media, can help estimate the amount of partisipants, and thus ease the planning.

There are some counter arguments, to the validity of these four dimensions. For example, many services have been standardized over the years and even digitalized (example: ATM's for withrdawing money) which makes the ”service” homogeneous to everyone, everytime (Lovelock, 2004). Yet visiting an art museum cannot be the same for everyone and it cannot be ”standardized” because the experience has so much to do with the personal attitudes, prior knowledge, and charasteristics of the customer, and the encounters with the museum staff. There are attemps to digitalize the entire museum visit, a great example of this is provided by Google Art project where a customer can see inside many large museums thorughout the world, by using digitalized images and video of those museums (Google Art Project, 2011). Nevertheless, the present research claims that also the digital experience is different for every customer depending on, for example, their internet connection speed and other tehcnical issues related to their computers, and again due to their different background information and expectations. Also, the experience is not the same for those people browsing the museum space online than it is for the people actually entering the physical museum building.

Inseparability has been critisized because it is possible to outsource some services in today's society (example: insurance, repair services) (see Lovelock, 2004). Again, for a museum visit outsourcing is simply not possible, but the customer needs to experience it personally. Perishability has been criticized for a lack of precision in the definition, as according to Lovelock (2004), there is perishability of productive capacity, of customer experience, and of output, and that for example many info-based services can be recorded, stored in electronic media, and reproduced on demand. These might be accurate for a line of services, but for a service such as the museum visit they don't apply, as it does not make a difference if a visit is recorded or not. The aesthetic experience of seeing, for example, an impressive painting for the first time cannot be reproduced in the similar way again.

3.3 BUILDING THE CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

This section focuses on relationship marketing (RM), which is one of the key discourses this research takes part in. An unambiguous definition on the term 'relationship marketing' is unlikely to be found, but some unified features can be enumerated from previous literature. The first subsection begins by defining the term relationship marketing, after which the benefits, and briefly also the risks, of RM are discussed separately. The second subsection discusses the difference between RM and customer relationship management (CRM).

3.3.1 The basis of it all: relationship marketing (RM)

In the late 1980's Gummesson (1988, 20) noted that an organization could function and even gain prosperity, without ever fully adopting marketing models or theories of the time. According to Gummesson (1988, 20) this contradiction resulted from different stance towards relationships; as the organizations that were successful valued their contacts and relationships more than the other organizations. The traditional view of marketing is that an organization should investigate the needs and wants of the marketplace, segment the consumers, create a product according to those needs and wants, and make sure there are enough resources for the production and administration of these processes (Gummesson, 1987). A change in the marketing concept occurred when Gummesson (1987) and Grönroos (1988) wrote about "the new concept for marketing". The earlier concept needed to be changed in order for it to be more applicable to the developments in the market overall, and particularly to be more suitable also to the ever growing service industry (Gummesson 1987).

The *new concept of marketing*, according to Gummesson (1987), includes three keywords that differ from the previous concept: 'relationship', 'interactive', and 'long-term'. Put together, these words form the basic idea of RM; *long-term interactive relationship*. This change of the late 1980's thus turned the attention of organizations from merely acquiring new customers into also maintaining and further developing their relationships with the customers (Berry, 1995; Gummesson, 1987). Interactivity meant moving away from mass-mediated messages towards a more personalized way of communicating with the clientele, by for example using their names in the messages. The longer span in the relationships brought on new challenges in the form of treating the customers as a strategic part of the organization, instead of singular visits or purchases. Today, the individual communication may be taken even further, as social media allows organizations to communicate straight with their "fans".

RM, however, is not a new phenomenon, only the concept of it is moderately young (Bruhn 2003, 12; Berry 1995). According to Gummesson (1988, 395) the phenomenon has been around since the beginning of all trade, but the term was modified starting only from the 1970's. Also Bruhn (2003, 12) notes that RM is not a new definition of marketing, but rather an extension of traditional marketing. Terms like network model, interaction model, long term interaction relationships, interactive marketing, and database marketing have all meant something similar to relationship marketing, but perhaps with a different angle to the phenomenon. No extensive definition of the term seems to exist; different writers understand it in a different way. (Gummesson, 1988, 395). Nevertheless, it seems that authors agree on the fact that RM is something that *cannot be "added" to the marketing mix*, but it is a comprehensive way of seeing the business of an organization as dependent on the networks and relationships it holds. (Passebois & Aurier 2004). Also, consensus seems to exist on that *RM consists of both creating new relationships and maintaining the ones that already exist* (Passebois & Aurier 2004; Bruhn, 2003; Bendapudi & Berry 1997, Berry 1995, 236; Gummesson, 1987, 11). Bruhn (2003, 12) ads reactivation to the list of the stages in RM. Consequently the four stages of RM are: *initiation of relationships*, *subsequent stabilization of relationships*, their *intensification*, and *reactivation* in case the customer terminates the relationship (Bruhn 2003, 12). Theoretically, the present research agrees on the definition of Bruhn (2003, 12), but it utilizes terms of *building a relationship* (instead of initiation and stabilization), *maintaining a relationship* (instead of intensification) and the *reactivation* of the relationship. The building of a relationship refers to the idea that actual work needs to be done to build the connection with a customer. Maintaining then again refers to holding on to the relationship, but it may intensify or weaken in between touch points, as long as it is still ongoing and maintained.

Passebois and Aurier (2004) point out why RM fits museums so well: art is usually seen as difficult to access, it is not a simple purchase decision, but a process. The customer needs to commit to the process in order to be able to receive, and contribute to, the co-creation of value in the service process. Thus, the entire service process of museums needs to be viewed from a relational, not transactional, perspective. Also, people are more likely to form relationships with the staff of a service provider, or with the attributes the service provider represents, than with tangible items (Bendapudi & Berry 1997) which makes RM more fitted and even easier for service providers than for other organizations.

In order to create, stabilize, intensify and possibly also reactivate relationships with foremost customers, in other words to operate well on the outside and make the service encounters with the customers work as well as possible, an organization needs to function seamlessly in the inside. This has been called different names by different authors, but they do seem to mean the same thing; the role of the staff on an organization is highlighted in RM. Grönroos (1990, 138) writes about 'nonconsumer partnerships' referring to the relationships an organization has, for example, with its staff. Gummesson (1987, 16) then again talks about the staff as 'part-time marketers'. He means that everyone in an organization does marketing, no matter what the job description holds, as they are in direct contact with the customers affecting the way customers experience the entire organization. Berry (1995, 242) talks about a means-end logic, according to which, an organization must establish relationships with their staff, (means) in order to establish relationships with customers (end). Rentschler and Gilmore (2002) also talk about the importance of staff-visitor interaction in the communication of a museum and its story.

Benefits of RM

RM covers all of the relationships that an organization holds; for example with suppliers, employees, regulators and buyers, yet *the focus in RM is on customer relationships* (Bendapudi & Berry, 1997). In order to build and maintain relationships with the customers, it is crucial to understand the different benefits a customer, and on the other hand the organization, might gain from RM. The customers' benefits from RM, however, are far less researched than those of an organization. Berry (1995) and Bendapudi and Berry (1997) argue that *social benefits* and *reducing risks* are the main motivations for RM for customers. RM also offers customers *customized service delivery* and *a proactive service attitude* to help diminish perceived risks (Berry, 1995). For organizations, the benefits of RM highlight improving the service processes, and so doing, satisfying customers. Also the economical reasons are widely talked about: it is less expensive to hold on to an existing customer than it is to create a new relationship from the beginning (Bendapudi & Berry 1997; Berry 1995). These benefits are now further investigated, after which the risks of RM are briefly examined.

Benefit 1) Dependence and trust for reducing risks

Relationships are always complex, interdependent, and multidimensional (informal, social, financial, legal and so on). This is why willingness to participate in a relationship is the first step to creating a relationship. Willingness, then again, requires trust, shared values, intimacy, and mutual goals. (Mitussis et al., 2006).

Bendapudi and Berry (1997) divide the motivations of customers to maintaining a relationship with an organization in two rather extreme categories that, however, are not mutually exclusive: *dedication-based* and *constraint-based relationship maintenance*. According to the dedication-based maintenance, a customer wants to maintain the relationship, whereas in the constraint-based approach a customer might feel they have no other choice than to stay in the relationship (Bendapudi & Berry 1997). Bendapudi and Berry (1997) propose that the constraints only determine whether the relationship will remain or not, as opposed to dedication that determines whether the relationship will in fact grow. Roberts et al. (2003), talk about commitment, customers, as well as employees, commit to an organization if they feel satisfied with the service received. An interesting feature about social media is that the customers self-imposedly "like" an organization. They have no obligations to the organizations, but rather they express their interest freely. This is what makes the relationship dedication-based on their side.

As relationships are complicated, and services ambiguous, trust is a crucial part of building any relationships (Roberts et al., 2003; Fournier, 1998; Berry 1995). Trust, in a way, is the opposite of perceived risks in relationships, thus it could be said that *the idea – for a customer – of RM is to diminish the perceived risks by building trust.* Consequently, it is ambiguous whether a relationship is considered positive or negative by a customer, as the result seems to depend on *dependence* and *trust*; whether the lack of them or their presence.

Trust and dependence are influenced by, for example, the *quality of the partner, social aspects*, and *interaction* (Bendapudi & Berry 1997). Trust can be created even in a changing environment, such as social media, by communicating to the customers what is going to happen next, helping them to prepare for the change. The interest in maintaining a relationship is greatly affected by the (perceived) expertise and similarity of the partner, as well as the relationship specific investments the parties are making (mainly time and effort). The way an organization manages their expertise can affect the way customers perceive them. An organization needs to reassure the customer that they are the experts, but if the gap between the expertise of the organization and that of the customer becomes too wide, the customer will most likely feel vulnerable instead of being reassured.

For an organization, applying RM means they could obtain a loyal clientele, who will choose the organization over others, if they feel it's worth trusting and offers good quality. Museums need to raise the amount of visitors (e.g. Burton & Scott, 2003; Museo 2000, 1999, 47) and this can be done either by attracting new customers, or making the existing customers come again, in other words creating *long-term* relationships with *loyal* customers (Passebois & Aurier 2004; Gilmore 2003, 83). As services are intangible, service providers need credibility in the eyes of the customer in order for the customer to *trust* the organization. This level of trust can only be created through a relationship (Bendapudi & Berry 1997), it does not happen on its own no matter how satisfied the customer would be with a singular encounter with the organization. Berry (1995) lists three things for an organization to prove their trustworthiness: 1) regular and open two-way communication with the clientele 2) guaranteeing the service, giving the customers the possibility of invoking the guarantee in case the service doesn't measure up to the expectations, and 3) a higher standard of conduct, meaning that what is required of them by law is not enough, but an organization would need to be fair in all aspects of its operations. Once the trust and the relationship have been built, an organization has, not only an active clientele, but also a competitive edge against others offering similar services; as relationships are something that can not be animated or duplicated by competitors. (Roberts, Varki & Brodie, 2003).

Benefit 2) Social aspects of the relationship

The variables affecting customer receptivity to relationship maintenance include expertise, social bonding and relationship specific investments. Expertise here refers to that of the customer's; it helps a customer separate expert service providers from the others. Social bonding is further divided in two: intra- and extra-roles. The intra-role social interactions are mediate encounters, and for example giveaway items. The extra-role, then again, is social interaction that happens outside the "professional" relationship, for example meeting the organization staff members in other settings such as hobbies. Social bonding is important in the creation and maintenance of a relationship, as most relationships are based on series of decisions made by emotional grounds (Fournier, 1998). Social bonding may increase the (positive) dependence of the customer to the service provider, as it increases the uniqueness of the relationship, making it more difficult to change the provider. Also, social bonding enhances the feelings of trust, as personal encounters are involved. (Bendapudi & Berry 1997, 25). When the clientele of an organization is motivated and committed to an organization, they are also more likely to engage in positive WOM (Roberts et al., 2003).

Social bonding means rather the same thing as the feeling of belonging. People like to feel they belong to a certain group or social setting. It increases their feelings of trust of comfort. Some museums have created “friend schemes” in order to make their customers feel they belong to some social setting that has to do with the museum. Not all museums, however, have these schemes. Again, social media can provide some answers. In the online environment, people are forming “tribes” and communities to communicate with like-minded people. Some communities are built and maintained by the customers themselves, and some are supported by the organization in question. These groups are affiliated with enthusiasm and knowledge about a specific consumption activity or group of activities. (Kozinets, 2006).

Benefit 3) Financial gain for both parties

For an organization RM needs to be affordable and practical, but maintaining individual relationships to every customer sounds quite the opposite. Nevertheless, the benefits of RM for an organization mostly have to do with *financial arguments*, as it is more cost-effective to keep the existing customers than to acquire new ones (Bendapudi & Berry, 1997; Berry, 1995; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). Also, loyal customers, who use the services provided numerous times, bring an organization a steady flow of revenue for multiple years, instead of occasional income from single purchases. (Berry, 1995).

For a cultural organization, such as a museum, most revenue from visitors will be distributed unevenly in the budget period accumulating into holiday seasons. Regular visits from loyal customers are important in spreading the demand throughout the year. (Passebois & Aurier, 2004). Also, there is indirect financial gain for an organization from sustaining relationships with their customers: customers are less sensitive to pricing if they already have co-created the relationship with a service provider (Roberts et al., 2003; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). This means that a customer is less likely to switch to another provider, even if they would offer the same service for a smaller price, because the customer is already accustomed to dealing with the service provider in question.

It is far less expensive to maintain a relationship with a customer, than it is to build a new relationship (Bendapudi & Berry, 1997; Berry, 1995; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). Naturally there are advertising costs and the like to find new customers. Also, customers bring increasingly more profits to an organization each year they stay with that service provider. The longer the organization keeps the customer, the more visits they get and the more money they receive. (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). A museum might not gain much money from the increased ticket sales, as usually the ticket prices are partly compensated by, for example, the government because the ticket prices as they would really be would be too high for visitors. However, it is positive for museums to receive more visits, as that is one of the indicators they receive funding from their stakeholders. It is also less expensive for a consumer to stay loyal to one service provider than to look for another one. They will need to waste time, money and effort in finding a new provider, whereas using the one they already know is easier and less stressfull.

The risks or RM

As the financial investment is higher in building a new relationship than maintaining an existing one, an organization needs to carefully target their RM actions in order not to waist efforts on the customers that will most likely not be interested in a long-term relationship. (Bendapudi & Berry 1997). Nevertheless, this does not mean that they should forget about customers who don't wish to create a relationship. Berry (1995) divides customers in two categories; they are either loyalty-prone seeking for the service provider who can effectively deliver the required service, or deal-prone always looking for the best offer (financially). Even though it might be easy to think that an organization should only focus on the loyalty-prone customers, this is not the case. Some customers are profitable as relationship builders, but others might be more profitable as simply transactional customers only using the service occasionally. An organization can create *multiple relationships-strategy* meaning that they can have different kinds of relationships with different kinds of customers. An organization may target only a certain segment of their clientele for long-term relationship building purposes, and reach the others via mass media for unattached single visits or purchases.

Technology helps organizations move from segmenting markets to targeting individual households. Further, today it can help organizations target individual people and offer them services. Targeting individual customers instead of large segments or even households multiplies the amount of potential customers for an organization. Technology helps organizations collect data, conduct two-way communication, address their customers on an individual level, and minimize costs (Berry 1995). However, technology is not the answer to all problems, for example, also in social media content is still king, not the tool. Organizations might trip on the fascination of the new and ever changing applications and tools technology brings them, thus forgetting about the actual meaning of the tool; the communication with the customers.

3.3.2 Technology as an enabler: RM versus CRM

Customer relationship management (CRM), in many ways seems very similar to relationship marketing (RM); the customers are in the focus of an organization's functions and strategic planning. Both CRM and RM highlight the relationship an organization holds to its customers. The ideology of RM has never really been criticized, but in the 1990's, when mainstream marketing started implementing the RM ideology, something went wrong (see Newell, 2003, 4). The focus was too much on the end result of RM instead of the processes involved in the production. In order to build relationships with the customers, a great deal of information on the customers is needed. For this purpose, technology was put into use, creating what we know as CRM.

The implementation of RM is always context-specific, but it requires opportunities for interpersonal communication, intimacy, and willingness, in addition to the already mentioned trust, perceived quality and value. What happened in the 1990's, was that the distance between a service provider and a customer was easily too wide, resulting in a situation where the interpersonal two-way communication was diminished into a one-way computer-customer communication, sucking away the entire idea of RM. (Mitussis et al., 2006).

In fact, in the early years of CRM implementation some organizations pushed their customers even further away with forced and factitious relationships (Fournier, Dobscha & Mick, 1998). CRM for a long time was seen only as the technical tools to collect data from customers, but the data was rarely actually put into use (Newell Frederick, 2003, 4), which differentiates it from the original RM logic. It is said, that the reason CRM was destined to fail from the beginning is that in mass markets there has not been a proper way of communicating with the customers. Organizations failed at an attempt to utilize the technology of the 1990's to create the feeling of sincerity, as interaction between an organization and its customers had to be automated, making the processes inflexible and frustrating to the customers (Mitussis et al., 2006). When the interactions were out of reach of the staff actually facing the customers, the result was far from RM ideology.

A part of researchers even today think of CRM as only the technical tools for reaching customers, but a majority discusses CRM as a considerably larger issue, relating to a certain management style (see e.g. Buttle 2004, 12; Newell, 2003, 4, 10; Grönroos 2000, 18). CRM today can refer to all of the touch points an organization has with its customers; from marketing communication to interaction among the staff and the customers. When understood this widely CRM can thus mean almost the same as relationship marketing (Grönroos 2000, 18). In relationship marketing, however, both the importance of both acquiring new customers (Gummesson, 1988) and retaining the already existing customers (Grönroos, 1997; Passebois & Aurier, 2004) are emphasized. Relationship marketing, unlike CRM, also includes all kinds of relationships, for example the ones between on organization and its suppliers, its owners, its staff and so forth. Furthermore, a distinction is made between CRM and RM by the acknowledgement of complexity of relationships. In RM it is noted that the relationship between an organization and the customers is always complicated and many things affect it (see e.g. Zeithaml, 2000). CRM presumes that customers (and organizations) function rationally and straightforwardly, when on the other hand the entire RM logic is based on individuals being different and creating interpersonal relationships either with the staff of an organization, or the things an organization represents to them (Mitussis et al., 2006).

Even though CRM is sometimes said to be closer to the customers than RM, perhaps because of the practicality of CRM vs. the theoretical logic of RM, CRM does trip into the data collection, thus not seeing the bigger picture behind the practical implementation models. RM, concentrating on the processes, takes on a more holistic approach to creating a relationship with the customers, even though technology can play a crucial role in the implementation of the customer-organization relationship. In RM this is seen as an important part of an entire network of relationships. RM logic can also understand the customers better, as it is not restricted into data gathering, but an attempt to actually take use of the information.

3.4 MAINTAINING A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CUSTOMERS

As described in the preceding sections, the museum environment is multidimensional, and largely in a transition towards more professionalized marketing and management of the entire organizations. The increasing competition over customers’ spare time and increasing pressure from funders mean that a change is needed in the way museums are marketed and managed.

Traditionally customers have seen to be the last link in the organization, especially for a non-profit culture organization such as a museum, but when relationship marketing is applied, the customer is seen as an important part of the organization. The strategic focus is shifting from the custodial product orientation to a customer orientation, understanding the need for further communication and co-creation of value with the clientele.

3.4.1 Co-creation of value

In the traditional marketing model customers were not included into the processes of an organization, but merely held as informants, according to whose wants and needs products could be produced. However, since the production and consumption (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1985), not to mention delivery, marketing and product development, of services happen in direct interaction with the customers, it would be difficult not to include customers into the processes. In fact, if the customer does not interact, the service cannot be carried out. (Gummesson, 1987). Consequently the importance of RM has been highlighted especially for organizations that produce services (Bendapudi & Berry 1997; Berry 1995).

The earlier mentioned increased expectations on museums, has driven museums to contemplate on the experience dimension of a museum visit. The visit needs to be made into something else than simply viewing art, it is made into a cohesive experience. This experience may begin in the internet, where people increasingly look for information on what to do and where to go (Official Statistics of Finland (OSF) 2., 2010). The experience can then either take a turn into visiting the actual museum, or further engaging with it online. After the visit or the online engagement, the customer might need some interaction with the organization, to make the experience complete. This can, for example, be the “liking” or “following” of the organization in social media, and thus receiving their updates also after the first experience. Further, for many visitors, the reason for going into a museum has to do with either doing something nice with a friend, doing something ”involving culture”, or doing something to educate oneself. It might not have anything to do with going into a museum to view art, but it be the experience the customers are looking for (Hannagan 1992, 13). Co-creation of value means that the visitors, or customers, create a remarkable part of the museum ‘product’ themselves by taking an active role in the creation and consumption of the museum experience.

Consumers today are co-creating more content than ever. Also, one of the most constitutive thoughts in social media, is user generated content (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008; von Campenhausen & Lübben, 2002). In a way, consumers have become producers, and the relationship between an organization and an individual has gotten complex. Customers are not satisfied with simply buying a product or service anymore, they want something more; they want to take part in the creation of the service, and make it into an experience. (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004 a; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004 b; Gilmore & Pine, 2002).

With the constant flow of information from every direction, people have become immune to different kinds of message and pictures; they need new stimuli in order to react. It, for example, might not be enough to see a framed picture in a museum, as people do not necessarily understand the difference between that picture, and the millions of other pictures attacking them through TV, billboards, magazines, the internet et cetera. It seems that people need information about the artists and the museum in beforehand as well as after the visit, as these actions create trust in the organization. Gilmore and Pine (2002) also introduce ways of convincing the customers of the excellence of a brand. For example, extravagant flagship stores and events created around a brand can help the customers decide whether something is trustworthy or not (Gilmore & Pine, 2002). In a museum context the flagship location of a museum can be a beautiful historical building or an imposing contemporary architecture building hosting the artworks, thus, the aesthetic experience of entering the museum, or seeing what the location looks like online, can help the customers decide that the organization is trustworthy. Events, created around the museum brand, can be the opening festivities of exhibitions, or pedagogical events having to do with the exhibitions. However, creating an experience for the customers might not always require immense events, but a chat with a museum employee could be enough for certain types of customers. It would seem that whenever the customer feels they have been taken into consideration in the service process they feel the social bonding and feeling of belonging to that organization and its employees.

The experience of watching a performance, reading a book, or looking at a piece of art is always dependent on the context and the person – the viewer. As mentioned earlier, the museum “product” is mostly intangible, and it is consumed at the same time as it is produced. This means that art, or at least the consumption of art, always needs an audience of some sort, in other words people who make the experience unique every time. This is why the co-creation of value and creating experiences seems to fit the cultural organizations so well. The entire process of co-creation of value appears to be about taking the audience into the experience and making it into something different each time.

The biggest challenge of all, in this kind of experience thinking, is to be authentic, as consumers today want transparency. Staging experiences for the sake of experiences will show through to the customers and thus fail. In case the process starts from the mindset of the employees in the organizations applying these ideas, they have a chance at co-creating something unique, generating extra value for the customers. (see e.g. Goulding, 2000). The present research proposes that in social media the challenge to be genuine is even greater, as usually organizations communicate under an organization profile, instead of individual employees' profiles. When the other party of a relationship is an impersonal organization, and the other party is an individual person, the style of communication needs to be carefully thought. Consequently, a museum perhaps should not focus only on the delivery of the exhibitions, events et cetera, but it could benefit them to think about who the services are created for, and with. Additionally, when thinking about the educational mission of museums, a long-term, loyal relationship with the customers could indeed support the learning of the customers, as learning does take time and accumulation of knowledge.

3.4.2 Measuring the relationship with the customers

Services are multidimensional and complex, yet they need to be measured in some ways in order to know what has been successful and what needs re-thinking. The measurements of a service need to: 1) take into account the entire process of service, 2) measure both tangible and intangible aspects of the service process, and 3) be relevant for different service contexts. (Gilmore 2003, 35).

According to Roberts et al. (2003), high level of trust and satisfaction, as well as minimal opportunism distinguish good quality relationships from the so called non-quality relationships. These apply for both parties, the museum and the customer. The satisfaction of the customer is affected by, as described earlier, the previous knowledge they have gained and the expectations they thus have, as well as the cognitive evaluation of the perceived value and relational quality (Passebois & Aurier, 2004). The more knowledge the customers have on the organization, the more satisfied they usually are (Roberts et al., 2003). Naturally, also the willingness for the relationship, commitmet, defines the quality of the relationship. If both parties are truly committed to a relationship, they have the wilingness to also solve any possible problematic situations (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), thus also commitment measures the relationship quality. It has been researched that customers commit to brands, organizations' employees, and favored institutions, such as art museums (Roberts et al., 2003).

As mentioned by Roberts et al. (2003), service quality is a necessary but not sufficient condition for relationship quality. This means that in order to have a good quality relationship, service quality is always required, but it alone does not guarantee good relationship quality. Also the not so good service encouters are important to measure and address, as they point the organizations into noticing what went wrong (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). However, service quality measures these issues from the customers' viewpoint, whereas relationship quality should measure the entire process of the relationship, from both sides. Also, relationships are ongoing and services can be oneoff tansaction like insidents (Roberts et al., 2003).

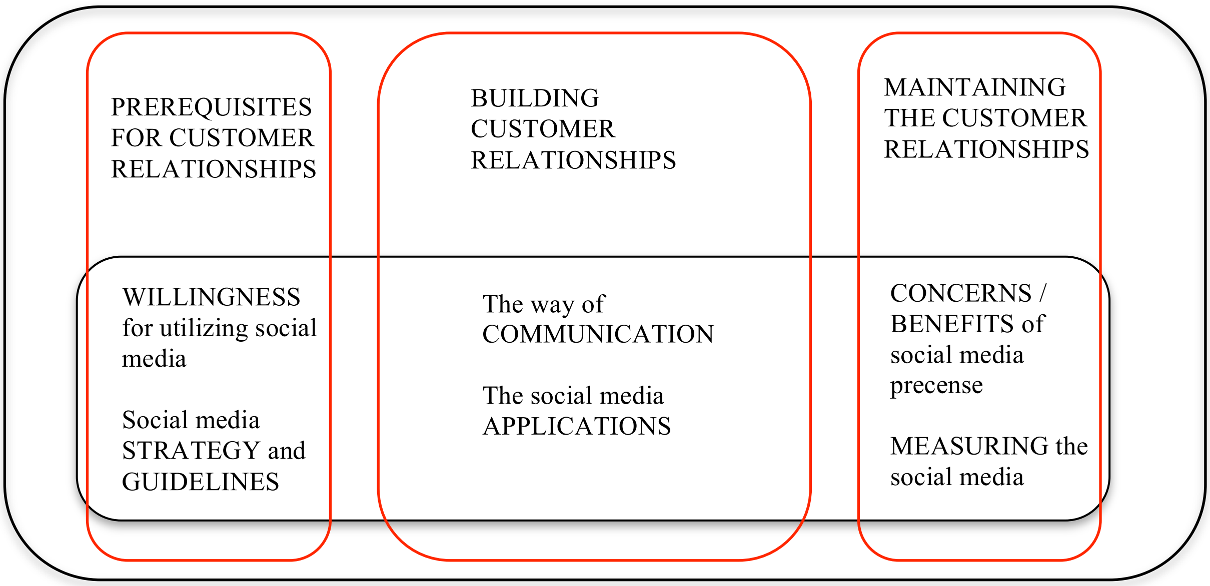
Youker (2010) notes that the logic of evaluating something requires a set of criteria, standards, measurements, and synthesis. Thus, organizations need to set the issues they want to measure, create a the criteria throguh which they are evaluated, think of the measurements and finally put all of these together. It is important to remeber, whenever measuring something, that it is not the measuring itself that is vital, it is what is done with the found results that count.

3.5 RELATIONSHIP MARKETING IN SOCIAL MEDIA

The reasons for an organization and an individual to take part in RM were discussed in the previous subsections of this chapter. This subsection focuses on the technological innovations of the modern internet that allows the actions needed for different stages of RM online. In the beginning a framework for conducting relationship marketing in social media setting is presented.

Even though it was proved that the utilization of technology in the 1990's could not result to real interpersonal communication between an organization and its customers, perhaps it was not the technology by itself that was the problem, but the way it was utilized. (see Mitussis et al., 2006). Technology was seen as an end instead of means in the building of customer relationships for organizations. When looked at in retrospect, it is rather self-evident that no technology in itself can create a relationship with the clientele. When, for example, the messages received by the customers are all automatized and there is no feeling of real people behind the messages, it is no wonder it makes the customers rather turn away than create a personal feeling of belonging, as those kinds of messages are still one-way, informative in nature and thus unappealing to most customers (Mitussis et.al., 2006).

In Picture 5 the present research suggests how relationship marketing can be conducted in an environment of social media. The division into three parts is the same as in Picture 2; The frame of reference, in the beginning of chapter 3: prerequisites for customer relationships, building customer relationships, and maintaining the customer relationships. The prerequisites of customer relationships in social media are suggested to include a strategy and guidelines for how to act, as well as willingness for the social media presence. Goals and clarification on the reasons of the social media presence are included in the strategy. Organizations are also suggested to need willingness for trial and error in social media, and of course the willingness to participate in social media overall. For the building of customer relationships in social media, the present research suggests that an organization should focus on the way they communicate, and the applications they utilize. Finally, the research suggests that the relationships online are measured, as it provides knowledge on what has been done correctly and what needs improving. The risks and benefits of utilizing social media actualize when an organization has the relationships and the "fans" to hold on to. In this section all of these parts are further clarified, after the term 'social media' is separated from 'web 2.0'.



Picture 6: Relationship marketing in social media

From web 2.0 to social media

In 2004, after the dot-com bubble of the 1990's had already bursted, O'Reilly and MediaLive International hosted a conference about 'web 2.0' (O'Reilly, 2005 a). The term has become established over the years, and even though there still seems to be discussion on it's true definition, it refers to a second wave in the development of the internet. In fact, it might be the third, or even the eight, wave of the internet in technical development terms, but for the public it is seen as the second (O'Reilly, 2005 b). Even with the lack of an extensive definition of the term 'web 2.0', companies seem to embrace it (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008). Today it's even been modified into 'Enterprice 2.0' (see e.g. Balm & Dogerlioglu, 2011) and on the other hand 'social CRM' (e.g. Heller Baird, 2011; Safron, 2010) meaning the organizations that utilize web 2.0 applications in their CRM.

The most crucial issue, separating web 1.0 form web 2.0, is the function to which internet is utilized for. In web 1.0 organizations created web pages for one-way communication to the consumers (Balm & Dogerlioglu, 2011). Companies "went online" mainly because everyone else did as well. In the web 2.0 the main idea is the social, two-way communication, between customers and an organization, between individuals, or between organizations. In web 2.0 it is not the internet itself that allures people anymore, nor the software, but it is about the services that are offered through internet that counts. Web 2.0 really puts an emphasis on the content, not the surrounding as such. (O'Reilly, 2005 b).

Constantinides and Fountain (2008) describe web 2.0 as focusing on service-based simple solutions in the form of online applications, as being under continuous development that requires participation of users, and as a new opportunity for reaching individual customers with low-volume products. These also apply to what we refer to as 'social media'. The term 'social media' has occurred perhaps later on, but it has been utilized as substitutable with the term 'web 2.0'. According to some definitions, web 2.0 refers to the online applications, whereas social media constitutes for the social nature of those applications. Descriptions like *collective user value*, *community sharing*, *positive network effect, participation* (Balm & Dogerlioglu, 2011), *openness*, *conversation*, *connectedness*, *user generated content* (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008), *realtime interaction* (Mitussis et al., 2006), *uncontrollability* and *unpredictability* (Isokangas & Vassinen, 2010, 84) are used to describe social media. In this research we use the term 'social media' to describe the entire phenomena of the social web: the applications and the social interaction online, as we find it is not confused with the technology behind the applications, as web 2.0, but *it desbribes the ideology of sharing experiences online*.

The viral effect seems work due to the personal nature of the communication, as the originator of the “virus” knows that their network of friends and family would be interested in the same kinds of issues they themselves are (Conway & Leighton 2011). People ”follow” each other in different online forums, they are ”friends” with each other, and they ”like” material or ”status updates” that others ”share” online. Also universal user login information for different applications and online payment systems are a part of social media. (Ilola, 2011). Universal login information means that a user can login to a service or a web site using verification they have created for another service provider, for example a user can login to picture service Flikr by using their Facebook login information. Different payment systems, such as Paypal, are already everyday to people using social media applications. Users can transfer small amounts of money safely and easily to, for example, pay for a digital greeting card sent to a friend on their birthday, or to buy extra credits to play online games on different game sites.

Some might still be skeptical about social media, about whether it is only a second version of the 1990’s IT bubble, something that will soon be forgotten as people move onto the next ”it” thing (e.g. Ilola, 2011). However, social media shows no signs of fading away, they are not a passing fad but are here to stay. The number of people using social media is increasing daily. (e.g. Heller Baird, 2011; Smith et al., 2011 a; Murugesan, 2007). In case an organization wants to be where their customers are, they need to consider social media (Heller Baird, 2011; Leppäniemi, 2011).

3.5.1 Willingness of a museum for utilizing social media

As noted earlier, NPO’s, such as museums, do suffer from scarce resources, but they still need to market themselves. Therefore, they need to carefully think about the measures of communication or advertising in order to stay within the budget, but still be able to reach the target audience. As the new target audience for many museums at the moment is the still unreached potential in consumers who are not yet their customers, social media steps into the plate. Younger generations use social media without even thinking about it as a new medium, but as a natural part of their everyday lives (see e.g. Official Statistics of Finland (OSF) 2., 2010). Efficient utilization of social media, or online advertising in general, is not cheap

(Bourdeaux, 2011 b, 17), but it is in many cases a lot more cost-efficient than the more traditional channels, such as advertising in magazines, radio or television.

According to Gilmore (2003, 84), museums need to, for example, *attract more and diverse customers*, and *maintain a relationship with them in order for them to visit the museum again*. The present research suggests that the important issues of relationship marketing; building new customer relationships, maintaining the relationships with the existing customers, and also reactivating the relationships in case it ends can, at least partially, be conducted in an online environment. The level of digitalization of customer encounters depends, for example, on the context of the organization, the industry in question, and the nature of the services. It would seem that museums as service providers need to answer to the ever changing needs of the customers and market themselves in an environment where their potential and actual customers already are – the internet.

There is a common understanding in the cultural field about digitalization of cultural contents, such as museum artifacts, as the talk about an information society has not bypassed Finland, on the contrary. In the Museum Political Programme (Museo 2000, 1999, 59) it is mentioned that in an information society knowledge and capabilities are seen as the most important resource for the society as a whole. All national treasures, according to the Museum Political Programme, need to be digitalized and thus delivered equally available to all interested parties. The programme also mentiones that the possibilities of distributing information worldwide about the national cultural heritage are tremendous, not to mention the utilization of internet-based applications for teaching purposes. (Museo 2000, 1999, 59). In fact, it is listed as one of the main services of museums to ensure that everyone has an access to the primary collections of the museum (The International Council of Museums, The Finnish National Committee, 2001). This is something social media can help the museums with, after the content is digitalized.

Even though the number of social media users is increasing all the time, people still have some concerns about privacy and spam, which can make them reluctant for building relationships online with organizations. People still focus on keeping in touch with merely friends and family in online environments. Also, two thirds out of those customers that do engage with organizations in social media, do it because they already feel passionate about the brand offline. (Heller Baird, 2011). Nonetheless, in the museum context this is not necessarily as exclusive as it might be for other industries. The passion a customer feels, in order to engage with the organization in social media, can simply be for the arts, not for a specific organization or a brand. If a cultural organization, such as a museum, communicates their values, incentives and motives for their social media presence well enough, the passion for the arts and supporting cultural organizations may well be enough for customers to want to ”like”, ”follow” or be ”friends” with a cultural organization. Yet, every organization needs to clarify firstly to themselves and secondly to their stakeholders what are they doing in social media, and why, which is why they need a strategy for connecting their actions online to their organizational strategy offline.

3.5.2 Guidelines and strategy for a social media presence

Organizations need not rush into having a social media presence, simply because everyone else does, but they need to carefully consider what they want from that presence and how they feel it could best benefit their core actions whether offline or online (Ilola, 2011; Isokangas & Vassinen, 2010). It is good to have a social media strategy and guidelines to ensure the motives and goals of the social media precense are thought through.

In social media the role of the staff gets emphsized as people spend time in online environments on and off duty. Organizations have began to restrict the way their employees conduct in social media, with sometimes fatal outcomes. There are at least two reasons why an organization really cannot restrict their employees’ online presence. Firstly, those kinds of restrictions are impossible to control, people can access social media from their portable devices (mobile phones, tablets, laptops), if some sites would be restricted on the organization’s computers. Secondly, employees can, and most likely will, use social media outside working hours. (Bourdeaux, 2011, 277). Thus, it is better to give the employees guidelines on how to act in social media as positive (or neutral) messengers, instead of trying to control the uncontrollable. An organization that prohibits its employees to use social media might be exposing itself to brand hijacking, as someone else can use their name and brand without anyone noticing.

Organizations are creating guidelines for their employees on how to conduct in social media, as people easily confuse their working and private online presence. Organizations need to balance with empowerment and accountability when it comes to their employees and their online presence. Trusting the employees to interact with customers in social media can at best lead to great results. (Bourdeaux, 2011, 283). Having employees communicating with each other and with customers in social media can be a solution to the problem with answering a vast amount of customer feedback and discussions going on in the social media applications (Wagner, 2011, 171).

Guidelines for how to conduct in social media have thus far mostly concerned with restrictions, copyrights and trying to protect the organization from external disruptions. However, educating the employees of an organization to use social media in a positive manner can create a competitive advantage by having a presence that no other organization yet has. (Bourdeaux, 2011, 274-275). There can be two sets of guidelines within an organization. Firstly, for those who work in the organization but do not use social media in their actual work, and secondly for those whose job requirements include interactions in social media. The one for employees not actually using social media in their work can be more abstract, whereas the one for employees utilizing social media in their work can include much more concrete issues like expected response times for, and different ways of communicating to, different kinds of audiences through the applications. (Bourdeaux, 2011, 276). Further, it is important to think about the way of communication, for example, and create the guidelines especially for the people who have social media communication in their job descriptions, because not all employees utilize social media as private people, thus they might not understand the nature of social media, nor the way it is meant to function. For these people, it is at most important to have a guideline for the communication, as the organization should always communicate under the terms of the social media application, and not try and bend it to their own style, for example (Isokangas & Vassinen, 2010, 106).

Isokangas and Vassinen (2010, 151) notes that social media guidelines should be as clear as possible and answer questions like what kinds of issues can be commented on, what can be written about, which applications to use, and what is the utilized style of writing. They should also be inspiring, not restricting, and answer to questions such as why are we in social media, what difference does it make if an employee for example writes a blog, why is social media important for the organization. (Isokangas & Vassinen, 2010, 151).

The need for a social media strategy can emerge when a small part of an organization begins to utilize the social media applications, and soon realize they need the co-operation of other departments in the processes as well. For example, the PR department begins utilizing social media, but they soon realize they need to also incorporate customer service department in the process as they need answers to questions online. Another way for spreading the use os social media in an organization, and thus requiring a social media strategy, is when other departments realize that one department is already utilizing the applications, and they want to try to use them as well. (Bourdeaux, 2011 b, 16).

Wilson et al. (2011) identifies four social media strategies for organizations: *the predictive practitioner, the creative experimenter, the social media champion,* and *the social media transformer*. The predictive practitioner restricts the usage of social media to a certain group of people in the organization. They seek to avoid uncertainty and they try to measure everything. The second possibility, the creative experimenter, learns by listening to the customers and by trying different things in order to find the most appropriate ways of conducting in social media. The third, socia media champion, requires large initiatives and designed outcomes. This depends on cross-departmental thinking in the organization involving people from most, if not all, funtion areas not to mention external parties. The final, social media transformer, enables large-scale interactions with external stakeholders allowing organizations to do the unexpected in order to improve their operations. (Wilson et al., 2011)

3.5.3 Communication in social media

One of the most important issues in social media is communication, the building block of any relationship (see e.g. Mitussis et al., 2006, 575). Also an essential feature of social media is the fact that the communication happens in real-time (Mitussis et al., 2006, 576) and that it is mainly informal and user generated (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008; von Campenhausen & Lübben, 2002) that onwards creates a collective intelligence (Murugesan, 2007).

Gummesson (1987, 11), pointed out already in 1980’s that mass communication is not the most desirable form of communication, but person-to-person communication is something that an organization should strive after. Gummesson (1987, 11) states that interactivity means bilateral and multilateral activities of the supplier and the customer aiming at producing and delivering goods and/or services to customers. Yet one-to-one conversations are highly expensive, if not impossible, to organize for every customer of a large organization. If an organization lets their employees to act as messengers in social media, they will catch more of the conversations and comments regarding their operations, and in a best-case scenario even resolve problematic situations through utilizing the information gathered by the employees. Further, employees (Bernoff & Li, 2008), as well as customers (Sadowski, 2011, 145), can turn out to communicate with, and help each other in social media. One example of this is Apple and communities their customers have co-created with Apple, or even totally separately from Apple. In those communities, such as the Finnish “Hopeinen omena” (Engl. The Silver Apple) customers ask questions and other customers, who are using the same products, may provide answers (Hopeinen omena, 2011) after all, the idea of social media is based on user generated content.

Because services have the special nature of being e.g. produced and delivered in the same moment, every encounter with a customer is a ”moment of truth”. Every encounter with a customer is, thus, a possibility to either deepen or even destroy the relationship built with the customer. (Bendapudi & Berry 1997; Gummesson 1987). Customers do not always react the way organizations would expect them to react. According to Smith and Wollan (2011, 4), social media is not just a new communication channel, but it fundamentally changes the business model of any organization. An organization, thus, needs to carefully think about the way they address their customers, especially in a surrounding, such as the social media, that is characterised by change and the freedom of communicating in real-time about the positive, but also the negative, experiences. (Leppäniemi, 2011).

According to Isokangas and Vassinen (2010, 114) social media utilization should be unique, meaningful, goal oriented, imperfect and contradictory. A unique campaign, for example, can only be created once around a certain topic, people will not be interested in sharing the same thing twice. The communication should be meaningful, and engage in present issues in the world. It needs to be interesting and context and time dependent. The imperfectness of social media utilization means that it does not have to “ready”, but different things can be tried, and those trials should be learnt from. Communication in social media can, and should be contradictory, one cannot please everyone at once, and risky moves will stir commenting and sharing online.

Social media communication is based on one-to-one interactions, which can make it problematic for an organization, as they are “faceless” and impersonal. The status updates and posts are usually posted under the organization logo and name, without the recipients knowing who in the organization is actually talking. This “facelessness” might indeed feel strange to the “fans” or “followers” as the entire surrounding is based on individuals communicating with each other.

3.5.1 Social media applications

Social media applications offer a possibility for anyone to produce and publish content such as texts, photos, videos or music. A part of this is organized into entities (such as the Wikipedia) and a part of it depends on individual publishers (such as blogs). On the other hand a part of the content creation occurs in communities and publishing sites (such ad YouTube and Flikr) that function as mediums as long as they have users, but that rely on advertising income like traditional mediums.

There seems to be as many ways to categorize the different applications of social media, as there are writers. For example, Isokangas and Vassinen (2010, 182) divide them into: publishing (blogs, micro blogs, picture and video sharing), sharing (social bookmarks, social watching and listening), recommending (product and service reviews), peer support (chat forums, setting goals) dating (matchmaking services, virtual worlds), gaming (role play, entertainment games), helping others (wikis, charity sites), and trading (social buying, group buying, virtual gifts). There are thousands, if not more, of social media applications. There is an application for anything one could possibly seek, be it travelling, work, relationships, entertainment or anything else. What makes the applications “social” is the interactive, real-time exchange between people; the sharing of information, recommending things, supporting other posts by liking them, and commenting on content.

Yet, no matter how the applications are categorized, there are a few that seem to be above others in their popularity. *Facebook* is, by far, the most commonly used social media application at the moment (Banks, 2011). The second most utilized, according to different listings, are Twitter, LinkedIn, Flikr, YouTube, Wikipedia, Del.icio.us, MySpace, Ning, Google+, and Slideshare (SEOmoz, 2011; Wikipedia, 2011; eBiz MBA, 2011). Next, some numbers and basic information on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flikr and YouTube are further clarified. A summary of the amount of users in these most popular social media applications is presented in Table 1.

Facebook has more than 800 000 000 active users, out of whom more than half log in every day (Facebook, 2011). According to Facebook, ”*The company develops technologies that facilitate the sharing of information through the social graph, the digital mapping of people's real-world social connections.*” (Facebook, 2011 a). LinkedIn, launched in 2003, is a networking site for professionals, mainly meant for seeking job opportunities, or on the other hand promoting organizations as employers. According to LinkedIn, they have 135 000 000 users, but according to Wikipedia, they have 120 000 000 (LinkedIn, 2011; Wikipedia 2011). Also LinkedIn has groups, events, recommendations, and discussions, to name a few. Twitter, then again, has more than 175 000 000 users, according to Wikipedia (Wikipedia, 2011). Twitter is a micro blog, through which users "tweet" short messages that may include links. These messages are maximum of 140 characters long. According their own site, "*Twitter is a real-time information network that connects you to the latest information about what you find interesting. Simply find the public streams you find most compelling and follow the conversations.*" (Twitter, 2011).

Flikr and YouTube both are meant for uploading lens-based content and sharing that. Flikr, launched in 2004, is a picture sharing service that, according to Wikipedia, has 32 000 000 users (Wikipedia 2011). Also Flikr has groups and communities to follow. YouTube is very similar to Flikr, but it is meant for video sharing. In Flikr and YouTube people can "like" or "dislike" content. What separates YouTube from the other mentioned applications, is that people can watch the videos without logging in or creating a profile. For example, in May 2011, 48 hours of video was uploaded to YouTube every minute, and more than 3 billion videos were watched through it daily (Gigaom, 2011).

Application	**Amount of users etc.**	**Launched in**
Facebook	800 million	2004
LinkedIn	135 million	2003
Twitter	175 million	2006
Flikr	32 million	2004
YouTube	3 billion videos watched daily	2005

Table 2: Summary of users of the most popular social media applications (data from Wikipedia, 2011; Gigaom, 2011)

Blogs are an important part of social media, as they encapsulate many of the social media characteristics, such as user generated content, sharing of information, uploading photos, videos, texts and sounds, and following others. Some organizational blogs are created for steering traffic to the organization's internet page, or towards gaining market intelligence on what is being said about products, services, or competitors. Then again some organizations create blogs in order to communicate and create a relationship with the customers. (Conway

& Leighton 2011). Kozinets et al. (2010), divides the success of blogs into four factors. First, the personal stories, the so called character narratives, of the bloggers affect their success. Second, the forum, the context of the blog affects the success. Third, communal norms, for example the followrs' lifestyles, experiences and how they receive messages, have an affect on the blog success. Finally, in an blog where there are campaigns (marketing a product or a service) the idea behind the campaign, in other words promotional characteristics, affect the success of the blog.

An interesting observation about the social media applications is their interconnectedness. As mentioned earlier, they might have universal login information to access one application with another one's login information. Also friend listings can be "pulled" for example into Facebook from an email account or a smart phone contact list, or from other social media applications. Further, the content can be shared from, for example, Flikr to both Flikr and Facebook, or from Facebook to Twitter and Facebook. All of the mentioned services are free of charge to the users, but some might have an upgraded version of the service with more possibilities for personification for premium members who pay for the service.

3.5.2 Concerns about social media

There seems to be one risk above others, about social media for organizations, that emerges from the literature and discussions: the loss of control (e.g. Ilola, 2011; Smith & Wollan, 2011, 5; Quiring, 2011, 41; Bernoff & Li, 2008; Constantinides & Fountain, 2008), as uncontrollability and unpredictability are characteristics of social media (Isokangas & Vassinen, 2010, 84). Organizations are afraid of loosing their control over what is being written and said about them in different media.

The risk is undeniably valid; there is no regulation on what people talk about in social media, it can not be restrained. The things that seem to awaken lively discussions and rapid viral effect, however, have to do with issues that appeal to people's emotions (Conway & Leighton, 2011; Smith & Wollan, 2011, 5). This means that people will talk about these issues, whether the organizations involved are in social media themselves or not. If not for other reasons, an organization might want to have a social media precense in order to participate in the discussions and perhaps steer the converstaions into a positive direction. Customers want to be engaged in an organization's processes in earlier stages than before (Smith & Wollan, 2011, 6) which gives the organizations a possibility to earn advocates by co-creating the contents and the experiences with the consumers from the beginning. Organizations might turn the new situation from a threat to a possibility by participating, instead of avoiding, in the online communication.

Many organizations may think they do not need a social media presence if they, for example, do not have an online store. That is, however, outdated as people go to social media to look for information on every kind of product or service, not only for the things they can buy online. Ignoring social media will not make it disappear (Smith & Wollan, 2011, 11). Nevertheless, having an online presence requires real commitment to the building of the customer experience and relationships. Organizations may think it is easy and free of charge to create, for example, a page on a social networking site, but what they do not recognize is the amount of work it takes to actively create content and truly be present. Using social media applications in an organization requires investments in knowledgeable and skilled employees and applications in order to deliver the promises of good quality (Bourdeaux, 2011 b, 17). Investing a lot of time, effort and money to social media may still be risky, as the technology available changes and develops all the time, and people move from one social media application to another. This is why it is important to know which services the customers or target audience are using (Roytman & Hughes, 2011, 206) and to be agile in the decision making.

Constantinides and Fountain (2008) note a large-scale concern that has to do with how social media and its utilization is affecting the present culture. Having all possible knowledge at hand, any time of the day, and the possibility to share experiences about everything can contribute to public frustration, where people have difficulties in separating reality form fiction or advertisements. (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008). Yet, the amount of knowledge around people is not simply a phenomena caused by the social media, but gobalization and sophistication of technology in general. Media literacy is something that is alredy being taught in schools. It helps people to understand who is trying to say what, and to whom despite all the media noice. People are getting used to dividing credible sources from less credible and being critical about what they read or hear. (see YLE, Yleisradio Oy, 2011).

Finally, the abuse of intellectual property rights is of concern in social media, when people share things like videos, music, picures or quotes, without thinking about the copyright issues (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008). Here it is perhaps good to remember, that in social media approximately 30 percent of the users share 90 percent of the links (Safron, 2010), consequently, not everyone shares everything.

3.5.3 Benefits of social media

Despite the concerns an organization may have about social media, many companies are already making significant benefits with social media (Murugesan, 2007). It is simply a matter of trying out new ways of thinking and then acting on those. For succeeding in any environment, however, an organization needs to recognize the touch points with the customers and make those as personalized and pleasent as possible. Social media gives all the tools for reaching individuals in a way that has not been possible earlier. The younger the audience, the more they are used to social media applications and organizations being present there (see Official Statistics of Finland (OSF) 2. 2010; Facinelli, 2009). But not all customers can be reached through the same applications even online, though, different people use different services (e.g. Leppäniemi, 2011) and an organization needs to consider which services to offer in which surroundings. They need to consider who is ”on the other end” receiving the messages and how will it affect their thinking. Perhaps the most significant change that social media has brought is already seen in the spallation of the service offerings. Customers now expect more individual service, and a ”one-size-fits-all” model needs to be reconcidered. Further, the same information does not need to be repeated in every channel or message. The messages in social media can have other content than, for example, a printed brochure. (see Smith & Wollan, 2011, 7; Sadowski, 2011, 145).

Recognising the effect of social media in consumer decision making process is important for organizations to realize. Identifying the sources of customer value and the motives behind customers’ desire to connect with an organization in an online environment (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008) are vital for success in creating a relationship with the customers online. A mere connection between a customer and an organization in social media will not heighten customer loyalty (Heller Baird, 2011). If an organization manages to offer people real value through social media, such as discounts or extra information on the service provider, they will most likely turn the passive “followers” into active participants. Organizations have vast amoutns of people “liking” of “following” them in social media. If they could activate even a small part of them into a real relationship and communication, they would have an incredible straight access to their most valuable stakeholder group; their customers. The possibilities for future utlization of this group can only be speculated at this point, bu surely surveys and other customer research will get easier and more sophisticated in the realtime interactive communication of social media.

Bourdeaux (2011 b, 30) introduces different benefits for different parts of an organization. Product development can benefit from social media by receiving new ideas through crowd sourcing, by accessing qualified test subjects and researching their opinions, and by increasing their ability to leverage expertise and find ideas across the entire organization. Customer service and support, on their behalf, can benefit from social media by finding new opportunities for self-service and lower costs of maintaining knowledge bases through integrated internal and external media, and by greater personalization as they get more access to customer behaviors and preferences. Hiring and professional development may benefit by increased access to the best candidates, decreased costs per hire, increased collaboration and access to internal experts, and decreased time to competence with social knowledge management applications. Finaly, marketing and sales can benefit from social media by improved targeting through self-selected social media users, decreased costs through free applications, and through increased acquisition efficiency and penetration rates through viral mechanisms. (Bourdeaux, 2011 b, 30).

3.5.4 Measuring the social media success

The online advertising industry has standardized a few key metrics and tools, but the measuring of social media success is still in its infancy, without any standardizations. However, a new possibility that social media has brought is the listening to the voice of the customer. (Zinner & Zhou, 2011, 70). Social media provides organizations with hunderds, thousands, or even millions of hits every day. These are signs of what their customers are thinking and doing, having to do with the operations of the organization. This information is highly valuable in understanding the needs and wants of the customers and potential customers, not to mention in predicting the future trends. Positive aspects about this information is that it is free of charge and already in a digital format. The downside then again is that someone needs to interpret the masses of data before it can be turned into valuable information. The style of social media feedback is more emotinal than feedback on, for exaple, traditional questionnaires. Also the amount of data is much higher than ever before, and it cannot easily be predicted when customers react passionately and when nothing happens. The feedback is complex and an organization needs to decide when to react and when to simply ignore something. (Zinner & Zhou, 2011, 88-89). There are technologies developed for the function of filtering the data and analysing it into more comprehensible form. These technologies, however, are not solid as they can not always separate the tone of some individual message, as a person could. These robots can, for example, look for hits in any online content with specific key words and try to categorize the messages into either positive, neutral, or negative. (Zinner & Zhou, 2011, 78).

There are various tools for analyzing online data. Some tools, like the widely used Google Analytics, have gained a strong foothold in the market, but there is a countless amount of other tools available online as well. The vast amount of different tools can make their comparison tricky. (Xun & Reynolds, 2010, 19). These tools are used for example for following the visitor amount of a certain site, blog, application et cetera, the trail of how a person found to that site (through search engines, for example), the length they stay at the site, the activity they show on the site, how they share content from that site, how much people are talking about a certain subject online, et cetera, the list is endless, and there are different services for finding all of the information needed.

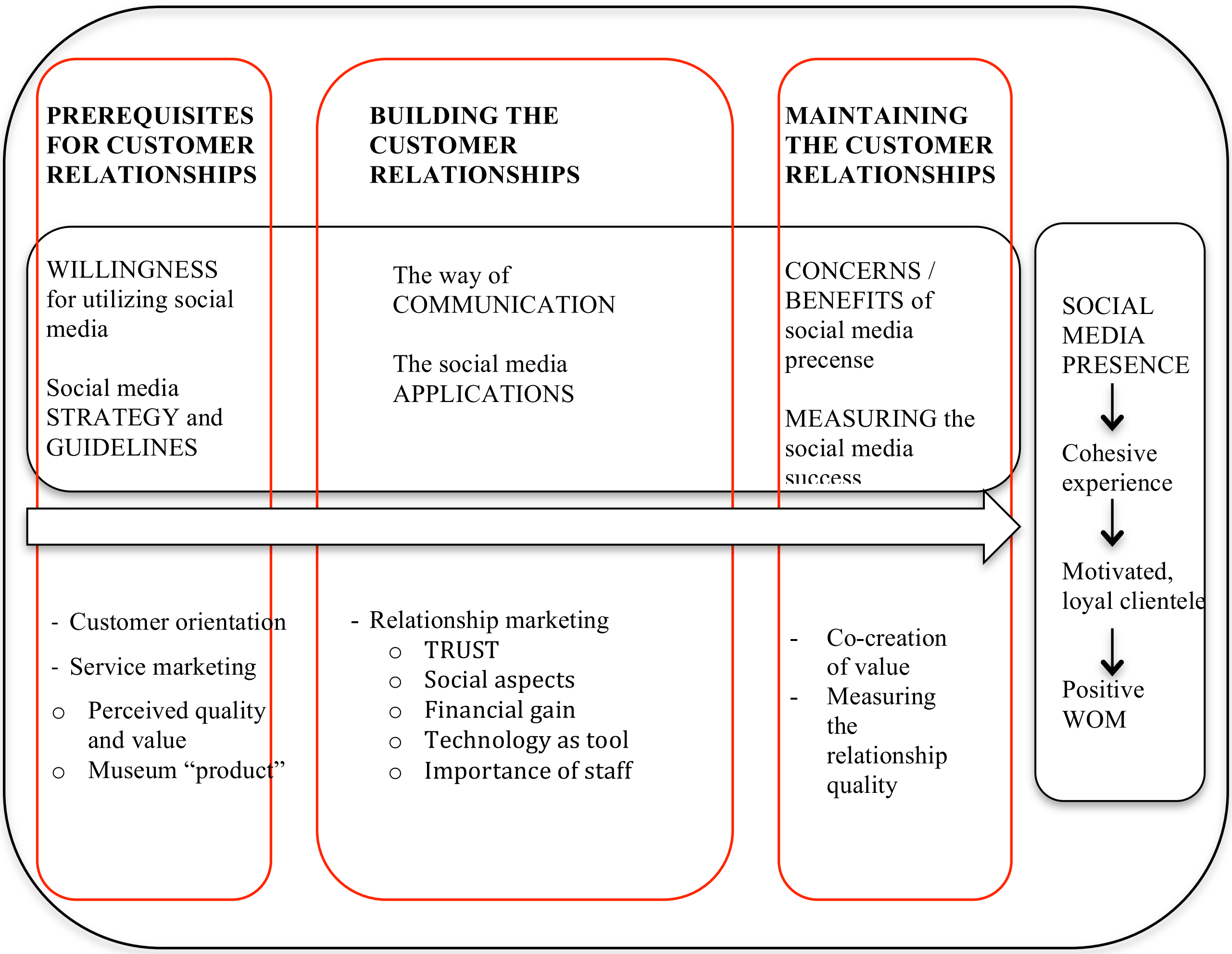
According McDaniel (2011) there are three simple metrics to be utilized when measuring social media success of an organization. First, Total Online Community Size (sCRM) can be calculated by adding together all of the different application followers an organization might have (fans in Facebook, Followers in Twitter or blog et cetera). This information needs to be manually collected by saving the weekly or monthly key figures. The second measure is Monthly Referred Social Traffic to Site (sTraffic) that tracks social media link clicks, content pass-along, and other deeper metrics. The third metric is Social Monthly Impressions (sMI) that estimates the social monthly impressions using free alerts tools, such as Google Alerts. (McDaniel, 2011).

The challenge to organizations here becomes the one of choosing which information to gather and what to do with it ones it is available to them. Organizations would thus need to modify their aspirations into a numeral format and then follow those numbers also from the online activities of customers and potential customers. After the data is gathered, an organization needs to analyze it and make adjustments according to the received feedback in the data. (DiViA, 2011).

3.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section the theoretical framework is presented. The following picture, Picture 6, sums up the issues dealt in chapter 3. It combines two pictures presented earlier; Picture 2, "The frame of reference" from chapter 3 and Picture 5, "Relationship marketing in social media", also from chapter 3. The Picture 6 presents the essential parts of relationship marketing, from the organization's point of view.

The three upright rectangles are the same as were presented earlier, the prerequisites for customer relationships, the building of the customer relationships, and finally the maintaining of the customer relationships. The horizontal rectangle represents the social media considerations of the different stages of the relationship building, presented in section 3.5. A prerequisite for utilizing social media in relationship marketing in museums, or in any other organization, there needs be *willingness* to investigate the new possibilities of social media, to try and learn from the trials. A common understanding on why a social media presence is



Picture 6: Theoretical framework of the present research

important, what will it give to the organization, what are the goals of the actions online and how will they be reached, in other words *a strategy and guidelines* are important enablers of the relationship marketing in social media surrounding. For the building of the customer relationships, it is not enough to simply create a page or a profile in a social media application, but the *applications* need to be carefully considered, compared, and then decided on which one would be the most suited for the organization's goals. As social media is what the name states, social, the *communication* between organizations, individuals, and organizations and individuals, is a remarkable part in the creation of a social media presence. Maintaining the relationships include many things from the emerging *concerns* to the *benefits* possibly gained from the social media utilization. Also, *measuring* the success of the social media activities done is an important part of the actions, in order to improve.

Finally, if a museum manages to create an active social media presence, their customers may participate in the *co-creation of added value* before, even during, and after the visit to the museum or the online engagement. In this way the customers will have a *cohesive experience* and feel they belong to a certain setting. This further motivates them and makes them spread the *positive WOM* information on the experience.

A customer is likely to asses the online behavior of a museum, just as the physical site on a visit to the museum, on multiple grounds, affected also by their previous knowledge and experiences. If their expectations are high, and they do not feel those expectations were met, a gap in the performance of the museums occurs. The perceived value and quality also affect trust of the customers, one of the most important issues in relationship marketing. If the staff of an organization succeeds in communicating with the customers, creating trust, the customers might feel a sense of belonging into the community. The social aspects of the relationship also affect the loyalty of the customers, as they will feel they want to stay with that service provider. For an organization, the maintaining of a customer is much more cost efficient than finding a new customer, but it is important to measure the relationship quality, not to waste efforts on relationships that are not in any way desirable for the organization.

An organization could get influences to their own brand identity by creating common experiences and relationships with their customers. They can "loan" the customers' identities for molding their own. The expertise of a museum, communicated at least partly through social media, may affect the customers in a way that makes them want to build a relationship with the organization. With the relationships the organization obtains a loyal fan base in an online environment, which makes them look more approachable to other customers. These online fans are also offline customers that might visit the actual museum.

4 METHODOLOGY

In order to find out what Finnish art museums do in social media, with respect to their customer relationships, in-depth interviews with the museum staff are required. The aim is to find out also the underling thoughts behind the actions of the museums, which requires *qualitative methods*. Qualitative methods allow a more thorough investigation of the topic, separately with each informant. (see e.g. Rasmussen, Östergaard & Beckmann, 2006, 94).

Previous literature creates the frame of reference for the present research, offering a context for the findings. Primary data, then again, is compiled from in-depth interviews. The unit of analysis for the present research is an art museum in Finland. The aim of the research is to find out the current state of affairs in utilizing social media in the Finnish art museums, thus the context of the research is Finnish art museums. The present research does not strive for comparisons of the different units of analysis, as the comparison of different quantitative data can be tricky (see e.g. Pöntinen, 2004, 42). Rather, the aim is at forming a general idea on how social media is utilized in the museum field. The study design of the present research is deductive, instead of inductive. In an inductive research general conclusions are drawn from empirical observations. Then again in deduction, a research already has a setting; a frame of theoretical reference. (Ghauri, Grönhaug & Kristianslund, 1995, 9).

4.1 Units of analysis

According to the museot.fi service (Museoliitto, 2011) there are 68 museums, listed as art museums, in Finland (see Appendix 1). In the election of the museums to be studied, the 68 organizations were divided according to two factors: their geographical location, and their size. The first factor, the geographical location of the museum, was included into the criteria of which museums to include into the research, in order to get as wide range of different units of analysis as possible. Only one museum per town in Finland was included into the research. The second factor, the size of the museum, in this research is based on the number of visitors within the year 2009, the most visited museums being the largest ones. The ones chosen to the research, however, are not only the largest museums, but all sizes; large, medium and small museums. The different sized museums were elected to the sample in order to get a more comprehensive take on the subject, and not to distort the results only from the perspective of larger museums.

Museum number	Museum size	Town size	Categorizations	Number of informants
1	Large	Big	A large museum in a big town	2
2	Large	Big	A large museum in a big town 2.	1
3	Medium	Medium	A medium sized museum in a medium sized town	1
4	Medium	Small	A medium sized museum in a small town	2
5	Small	Medium	A small museum in a medium sized town	1
6	Small	Small	A small museum in a small town	2

Table 3: Categorization of museums interviewed

In Table 2 the studied museums, are presented and categorized. They are given a number and a category to ease the reading of the "Findings" chapter. Also the number of informants per museum is presented in Table 2. The sizes of the museums and the towns were defined as follows. A museum categorized in this research as small, had less than 10 000 visitors, medium sized had 10 000 – 50 000 visitors, and large museums had over 50 000 visitors in the year 2009, according to the National Board of Antiquities in Finland (National Board of Antiquities, 2011). The towns categorized in this research as small had under 100 000 inhabitants, medium sized 100 000 – 200 000 inhabitants, and big town more than 200 000 inhabitants in the turn of 2010, according to the Population Register Centre in Finland (Population Register Centre, 2011). As some of the museums wish to stay anonymous, these categorizations are used to define what kind of museum is in question.

4.2 In-depth interviews

The different approaches to an in-depth interview (later on simply 'interview') can be categorized into *objective* and *active* as the two extremes of a continuum. In the objective approach the goal of the interview is to find out pieces of information. This usually produces an answer to questions like how things are. The active approach then again considers the interview as a dialog. This way one gets an answer to questions like how the informants see their reality. (Holstein, 1997) Within the present research, the style of interviewing is a somewhat a mixture of the two mentioned styles.

There are different types of interviews based on how fixed the questions are, when the situation begins. This research takes on the rather wide approach of *semi-structured* *interviews*, instead of *unstructured interviews*, where the interviewer has only prepared the topics they want to discuss but no formal questions, or a *structured interview* where the posed questions need to be exactly the same for all informants. A semi-structured interview means the interviewer has some questions laid out that help him/her to have some control over the topics of the interview, but they can change the order of the questions as best suits the situation, and they can pose new questions of something the interviewee has said. (Bryman, 2008, 699-700; Arksey & Knight 1999, 7). The semi-structured interview is the most commonly used form in qualitative research.

Interviews, or focus groups, are an appropriate way of learning about an unfamiliar subject (Rasmussen et el., 2006, 99). When there is no ready literature or statistic on a topic, as was the case within the present research, the knowledge needs to be acquired from the people who work with the topic (in this case the informants at the museums). This kind of information is then coloured during face-to-face contact with expressions, body language, stressing of certain words, and the level of excitement towards the topic, for example (see Gordon, 1999, 138). All the interviews for the present research were conducted in a face-to-face situation, not, for example, through email or phone calls. The questions for the interviews were composed through the themes occurring in the relevant previous literature, creating a level of credibility, and information gathered from the museums' own webpages and social media profiles and pages.

Face-to-face interviews, which are relevant for the present research, can have different forms; there can be multiple interviewees or multiple interviewers in one interview. (Arksey & Knight 1999, chapter 6). In the present research the interviews were conducted either with one or two informants at the time to make the best out of the situation. In three of the interview situations there were two, instead of only one, informant present, either partially or throughout the interview. Pair interviews are a common way of interviewing for qualitative research (Eriksson, 1986, 21; Gordon, 1999, 88). In total six (plus one) interviews were conducted for the present research. In addition to the six interviews conducted with the museum employees, one interview was done in order to get a better view of the title and the research area. This interview was conducted with a senior researcher and the research director from the Foundation for Cultural Policy Research, Cupore, in Helsinki (see Cupore, 2011). This interview was done in the beginning of the research project in the late 2010 in order to hear whether the topic would be currant and interesting for the actual arts community in

Finland. Encouraged by this first interview the actual interviews for the research were conducted in the summer and early fall of 2011.

All of the informant interviews were conducted within the physical space of each art museum in question. Usually it was either in the office of the interviewee, a conference room, or a public cafeteria located in the museum premises. The length of the interviews varied from a minimum of approximately 25 minutes to a little less than an hour, placing an average of 39 minutes 54 seconds per interview, as is quite suitable for qualitative interviews in general (see e.g. Gordon, 1999, 83). The person interviewed, in every museum, was the one actually creating their social media presence, or deciding on issues related to it. The idea was to reach the people who are indeed behind the updates and posts of that museum, as their view tell the most up-to-date reality of the utilization of social media in the museums. The issue was approached from a practical level, which led to the communications managers, project planners, customer services managers, curators, et cetera. In one smaller organization, where there is not a communications manager, we interviewed the general manager. In Table 3 the titles of the informants are presented, as some of them wished to maintain anonymous.

No.	Titles of informants	Interview date	Museum number	Lenght of interview	Inteview date
1	Public Relations Manager (Asiakkuuspäällikkö)	A large museum in a big town	Museum 1	39:10	30.6.2011
2	Communications Manager (Tiedotuspäällikkö)	A large museum in a big town	Museum 1	39:10	30.6.2011
3	Communications Manager (Viestintäpäällikkö)	A large museum in a big town 2.	Museum 2	25:30	21.6.2011
4	Service manager / Educational Curator (Asiakaspalveluvastaava / amanuenssi)	A medium sized museum in a medium sized town	Museum 3	38:19	26.9.2011
5	Project Planner (Projektisuunnittelija)	A medium sized museum in a small town	Museum 4	49:01	12.9.2011
6	Museum Director (Museonjohtaja)	A medium sized museum in a small town	Museum 4	49:01	12.9.2011
7	Museum Exhibitions and Communications Curator (Museoamanuenssi, näyttelyt, tiedotus)	A small museum in a medium sized town	Museum 5	34:37	19.9.2011
8	Museum Director (Museonjohtaja)	A small museum in a small town	Museum 6	53:00	26.9.2011
9	Archeologist (Arkeologi)	A small museum in a small town	Museum 6	53:00	26.9.2011

Table 4: Titles of informants of the present research

The methods used for data collection are appropriate for this line of study, as there was no information available on how Finnish museums act in social media, nor the reasons behind their actions, when the research began. One-to-one interviews were selected due to practical reasons; for example group interviews were not possible, as most of the museums interviewed have scarce resources, and it was difficult enough to even reach one person at the time. Also some of the museums interviewed only haw a few employees, so a group interview would have been impossible. Theoretically, though, group interviews could have provided the same information as one-to-one interviews did.

4.3 Analyzing the data

One of the things that distinguishe qualitative from quantitative analysis, is the evaluation of the data collected. In qualitative research the analysis of the data begins already while the data is still being gathered. When something interesting was discovered in one interview, that was utilized in the next one, as is usual for qualitative research (Rasmussen et al., 2006, 110). In qualitative research process, where the analysis is ongoing, also the research questions may change along the way (Ghauri et al., 1995, 96). The present research started from the idea of investigating the strategy of museums in Finland and comparing those to their online behaviour. However, within the process the research problem was narrowed down into its present form.

All the interviews, except for the first directional interview with Cupore staff, were recorded. After the interviews the recordings were listened to at least two times in order to form an accurate picture on the attitudes and ideas of the informants. After this the interviews were all transcribed into a written format. The written interviews were further studyed by reading them through and analysing also the possible hidden meanings behind the actual words.

Alasuutari (2001, 71), notes that there are at least two possible ways for analyzing interviews; the fact and the sample approaches. The fact approach considers what the informants say to be a fact, and tries to categorize what the informants have said, thus looking for regularities in the data. The sample approach, then again, looks for irregularities in the data and tries to interpret what is behind the interviewee's answers. However, these two approaches often are so intertwined that it's difficult to see the difference (Alasuutari 2001, 71), which is why also in this research both of the approaches are used.

The findings of the present research were written as a total "sum" of the interviews, not so much comparing them against each other, but rather finding similarities and also deviations. First, the initial findings were written down according to what arose from the data. Important issues, as well as entities that were repeated were listed as the primary findings. The primary findings were then further investigated through the frame of reference and a straightforward connection was found to the categorization in Picture 5: Relationship marketing in social media, through which the findings were re-written and re-organized into their final form.

4.4 Trustworthiness of the research

There is no standardized conceptual scheme for assessing the quality of a qualitative research. *Validity* and *reliability*, which are used in quantitative methods, do not really have a certain meaning in qualitative research, which is why it is more appropriate in this case to talk about the trustworthiness of the study (Rasmussen et al., 2006, 117).

There are always risks in a research project conducted via interviews; for example time constraints, financial constraints, reaching the appropriate population, and access to research sites (Arksey & Knight, 1999, chapter 5). Within the present research project, not all contacted cultural organizations were willing to take the time to discuss the topic at hand with the researcher. Yet, the informants of the research represent an appropriate sample of the desired group; Finnish arts museums. The people interviewed were the ones who actually work with the social media issues in the organizations in question, thus they have the first hand experience on the state of matters relating to social media and arts museums. The style of interviewing, semi-structured interviews, is common for qualitative research. On the other hand, one does not have to stick to only one method of interviewing, but various kinds of interviews can be utilized for obtaining different kind of knowledge from different kinds of informants. This is called triangulation; having two landmarks and with the help of those determining a third one. (Arksey & Knight 1999, 21, Ghauri et al., 1995, 93). This makes it possible to draw conclusions while interviewing and creating new questions.

The selected organizations represent not only large institutions, but also smaller players on the field. The prerequisite of only choosing one arts museums per town makes sure the sample is not distorted due to geographical issues. The sample could have been more comprehensive with regard to the number of organizations involved, but due to the financial and time related constraints, that was not possible within this research. Gummesson (1988, 79) notes, however, that it is not only quantitative research that can make generalizations, but also a smaller sample may well be enough.

The formulation of the research question is precise, and with the help of the supporting questions, it makes the aim of the research clear. The frame of reference includes the theories that are relevant for a satisfactory examination of the issue; there is a fit between the selected theories, the research questions, and the findings of the research. The quality of the data analysis is rather complicated in qualitative research. As mentioned earlier, the data is already being analyzed at the same time it is gathered. This makes it difficult to separate the analysis into a phase of its own, as it is an ongoing process. However, the transcriptions of the data help in the validation of the research findings.

An issue that is worth mentioning here is the fact that only one person created the questions for the interviews, conducted the interviews, and also analyzed the interviews. A level of subjectivity might occur, even unwillingly. In the situation of an interview, the interviewer can have an enormous effect on the person being interviewed and their answers. The interviewer needs to be careful not to steer the situation into the direction that might be either suitable for them or in their premonitions. The steering can easily happen with wrong kind of questions, charged with a presupposition of the answer or things relating to the answer. In this research the questions were presented to the informants as neutrally as possible, in order not to steer them into any certain direction. Also the analysis was been made as impartially as possible.

5 FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

In this chapter we go through the findings found in the interviews of the study. Further conclusions will be presented in the next chapter. First, some background information on the statistics of the Finnish museum sphere, and on the other hand the utilization of social media in Finland, is clarified. Then the findings of the present research are presented.

5.1 Background for the research findings

The National Board of Antiquities collects information on museums operating in Finland, as well as the Finnish Museums Association and the Ministry of Education and Culture. In the first part of this section, these statistics are explored. After the statistics on the museum field, some numbers, collected by the Official Statistics of Finland, on the utilization of internet and social media in Finland are presented.

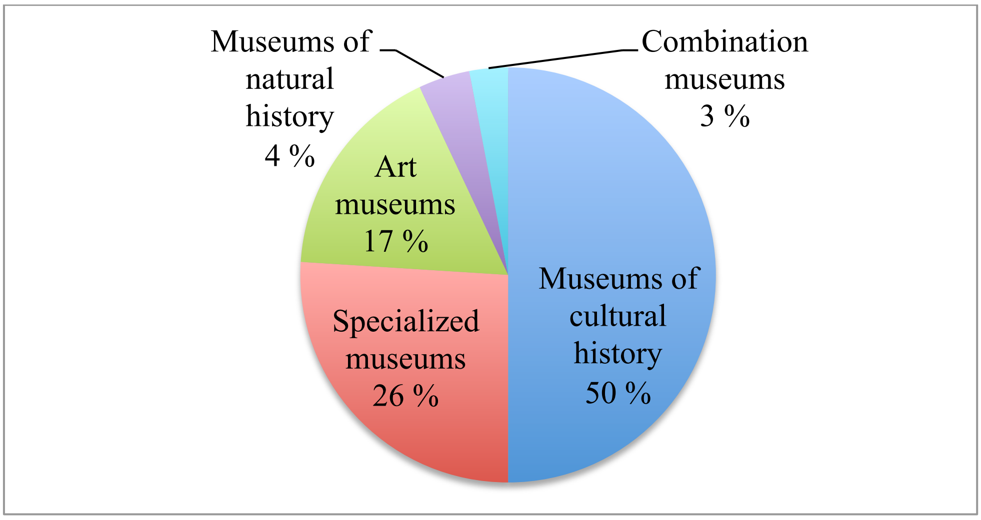
5.1.1 The Finnish museum sphere in numbers

There are some contradictory numbers on how many museums there are in Finland. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (2011) there are more than 900 museums in Finland, out which about 160 are full-time museums. Then again according to the Finnish Museums Association (museot.fi, 2011) there are more than 1000 museums, out of which professional museum workers run a third. Yet, there are 68 museums listed as *art museums* in Finland (museot.fi, 2011).

In 2004 the Finnish museums employed 1 700 full-time employees half of them possessing a professional education (for example researcher, conservator, photographer etc.) (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2011). In 2009 the number of full-time employees was already 1 859 in the museums of Finland. There were 1 235 exhibitions, out of which 1 145 were changing exhibitions, 59 circumforaneous, and 31 exhibitions were produced for outside Finland only in 2009. The museums were open in total 64 318 days in 2009 when summarized, leaving an average of 200 days open per museum. (National Board of Antiquities, 2009).

The Finnish museums entailed 5,5 million cultural historical objects in their collections, 319 000 art works, 23 million natural historical objects by the end of 2009. To accumulate their collections, the museums spent 2,8 million euros in 2009. The level of digitalization of the collections, in 2009, was 14 percent digitalized of the collections in cultural historical museums, 56,8 percent in art museums, and 8,6 percent in natural historical museums. (National Board of Antiquities, 2009). (National Board of Antiquities, 2009).

Museums in Finland are mainly funded by public grants. In 2009 the government funded the museums with 84,2 million euros, which is a little bit more than 40 percent out of the total budgets of the museums (National Board of Antiquities, 2009), the rest of the budget came from other sources, such as corporate sponsors (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2011). The museums gathered an amount of 15 percent of their total budgets themselves, out of which 40 percent came from ticket revenues (National Board of Antiquities, 2009). The percentage of the government grant in the total budgets of the museums has increased during the past years. In 2007 it amounted to 38 % of the budgets, in 2008 40,3 % and in 2009 42,9 %. Foundations and associations funded museums in Finland with an amount of 5,2 percent, leaving 2,4 percent from other sources. The annual expenditure of museums in 2009 was approximately 196,2 million euros. (National Board of Antiquities, 2009).



Picture 7: Museums run by professional museum workers (data from museot.fi, 2011)

In Picture 7 the Finnish museum field is divided into the different categories of museums. The museums of cultural history conduct research, document and create exhibitions, as well as promote and guide museum activities in the cities or towns they are located in. They also participate in the preservation of buildings and export of cultural items. The specialized museums also conduct research, documentation and create exhibitions in their own fields. Additionally they coordinate museum co-operation in their fields. Examples of specialized museums are Design Museum in Helsinki, Forum Marinum in Turku, and Finnish Aviation Museum in Vantaa. Also art museums conduct research, and documenting and create exhibitions while promoting and guiding the art museum activities in the cities or towns they are located in. The Finnish Museum of Natural History is an independent research institution connected to the University of Helsinki. Their collections include botanical, zoological, geological and paleontological specimens that serve biological and geological research and education.

5.1.2 The utilization of internet and social media in Finland

As can be seen from Table 4, social media and different online communities are well known and utilized in Finland. In 2010, 42 percent out of 16–74-year old people used in Finland utilized some online community, such as Facebook or Twitter. Two out of three young or young adults follow these services daily. Also the older age groups are active in using the internet; in the 65–74-year old group an increase of 10 percent happened in the utilization of the internet in only one year, resulting in 43 percent of this group utilizing the internet in 2010. Not only are more people

	Has used the internet during past 3 months	Uses the internet multiple times per day	Has searched for information on services or products during past 3 months	Has registered as a user in a social network service	Follows a social network service daily
16-24v	99	76	80	83	67
25-34v	100	78	94	76	60
35-44v	96	65	84	44	25
45-54v	92	53	80	29	12
55-64v	75	43	60	15	5
65-74v	43	19	32	5	2
Men	87	59	76	40	25
Women	85	54	70	43	30
Total	86	56	73	42	28

Table 4: The utilization of internet and social media in Finland (Modified from Official Statistics of Finland (OSF), 2010)

using the internet, but also they are using it more often. 72 percent out of all Finnish people utilize the internet daily or almost daily. The growth in the usage is most rapid in the older age groups, as in the younger age groups almost everyone already actively uses the internet. (Official Statistics of Finland (OSF), 2010).

Following different mass mediums is one of the most common activities for internet users, together with email services and participating in social media. Traditional news services, such as TV and newspapers have started using internet as one of their communications medium. Often there is a small group of people gathering and producing the news professionally for online purposes. The news often include chat possibilities, commenting, links to different conversations, blogs, sites, columns et cetera. All of this information is then shared in social media platforms. As shown in Table 5, there are no remarkable differences in how men and women behave in the internet when it comes to following mediums, but in general men seem to be more active than women in daily following of blogs and online magazines. (Official Statistics of Finland (OSF) 2., 2010).

	Men past 3 months	Women past 3 months	Total past 3 months	Everyone at least weekly	Everyone daily or almost daily
Read online newspapers	76	73	74	62	44
Read blogs	41	39	40	21	9

Table 5: Reading content online in Finland in 2010, percentage of 16-74-year olds. (Modified from Official Statistics of Finland (OSF) 2., 2010)

Table 6, lookes at participating in social media content creation by writing, commenting or downloading content. The activity rates of creating content are naturally smaller than of those who follow content posted by others. Yet, more than four out of ten Finnish people write content online (email not included). Most of the content creation occurs in social networking sites, such as Facebook or Twitter, or discussion forums. Writing to blogs, or mediums published in a professional matter, is less common. Out of the 16–74-year old Finnish people already a third follows a social networking site at least weekly. Out of these people 37 percent characterizes themselves as “followers”, 46 percent as “occasional commentators” and 16 percent as “active agents”.

	Men past 3 months	Women past 3 months	Everyone past 3 months
Written content online (chat forums, blogs, social networking sites or elsewhere)	41	44	42
Written to chat forums	24	17	21
Uploaded self produced content to a site (doesn't include chat forums, dating services, or online sales forums)	16	15	15
Commented on someone else's blog	13	11	12
Signed an online petition	7	11	9
Discussed on open chat forums	10	5	7
Commented on a news on online newspaper or TV site	8	3	6
Hosted a blog	3	4	3

Table 6: Writing content online in Finland in 2010, percentage of 16-74-year olds. (Modified from Official Statistics of Finland (OSF) 2., 2010)

Following different mediums and blogs, not to mention active participation in content creation, is rather age dependent, as Table 7 shows. The youngest audience (16–24-year olds) are most active ones in all of the different online actions. The social networking services are especially appealing to teenagers and young adults, as 85 percent of 16–24-year olds, and 76 percent of 25–34-year olds are registered as users in these services. Younger audiences feel that social media and its services are a natural part of their daily lives, almost fifth of them follow a service multiple times per day. In the older age groups the interest towards social networking services is limited. In all age groups women tend to utilize the social networking services more than men. (Official Statistics of Finland (OSF) 2., 2010).

	Registered as a user in a social networking service	Follows a social networking service at least weekly	Follows a social networking service daily	Follows a social networking service in realtime or multiple times per day	Uses a social networking service to contact a family member or friend abroad
16-24v	83	76	67	23	49
25-34v	76	67	60	16	46
35-44v	44	35	25	7	23
45-54v	29	19	11	2	14
55-64v	15	9	5	1	6
65-74v	5	4	2	0	2
Student	81	78	67	21	49
Working	43	35	27	7	23
Retired	9	6	3	1	4
Helsinki area	58	48	38	11	38
Big cities	45	40	30	10	26
Other city like towns	40	35	28	8	21
Towns	30	25	19	5	14
Total	**42**	**34**	**28**	**8**	**23**
Men	40	34	26	6	22
Women	43	37	30	10	24

Table 7: Utilization of social networking services in Finland in 2010, percentage of population according to age. (Modified from Official Statistics of Finland (OSF) 2., 2010).

5.2 Social media utilization in Finnish art museums

In this section the findings of the present research are presented. The findings are viewed through the dimensions of relationship marketing in social media, enumerated in chapter 3: Guidelines and Strategy for social media, Communication in social media, Social media applications, Concerns about social media, Benefits of social media, Measuring the social media success, and Willingness for social media utilization. The findings on the willingness for social media utilization is presented last, instead of first as was in chapter 3, as the willingness reflects on other issues emerging from the findings.

5.2.1 Guidelines and Strategy for social media

Surprisingly, no museum interviewed, have a social media strategy, and only one had internal guidelines for the staff. It would seem that decisions on how to behave and how to communicate are done case by case, post by post, or on the grounds of personal preferences. It seems surprising, as everything else in the museum world is so well planned and justified, if not for other reasons than for receiving grants and funds, which makes it mandatory to plan the activities well ahead. According to the informants, the people in their organizations that do not use social media in their private lives think it is a lot of work to utilize social media. They also think that strategies, for example, need to be carefully planned and executed. Then again, the opinions of the people who do utilize social media in their private lives seem to be divided in two; as some still feel a strategy would be important even though they do not have one at the moment, but others do not feel they would need a strategy for social media actions in the organization. The following quotes are from informants who both utilize social media in their private lives and in their work in the museums.

> *...It (social media) needs its own strategy and budgeting, at the moment it's just kind of a communication channel that is not really thought about... (Informant 1, Museum 1, A large museum in a big town).*
>
> -
>
> *...It (social media) doesn't require any strategies to determine how to be in it. (Informant 4, Museum 3, A medium sized museum in a medium sized town).*

Also, there seems to be no general guidelines for employees; not for the employees whose job descriptions include social media participation, nor for those whose tasks do not include communication, PR or other marketing tasks. The employees working with communicating in social media in the organizations feel that some instructions on social media behavior could be a good idea, but none have written them down. Some informants mentioned they had gotten some guidelines from the town they are located in, but none of these kinds of general guidelines actually are used, as they are too wide or far from the actual practices. Most on the informants, however, felt that they do have a common, unwritten, understanding of how to act in social media while communicating as the museum. They feel it is easy to agree on who does what, at least almost on case by case principal, as there are only a few people updating the content from the organization.

> *…We always shout to each other "should I post it or will you?"… (Informant 4, Museum 3, A medium sized museum in a medium sized town).*
>
> -
>
> *…Well, we post when we have something to say. (Informant 2, Museum 1, A large museum in a big town)*

Social media are in constant flux and modified, by far, by its users. Thus, it was seen difficult to estimate how much time and effort one should put into which application.

> *…Maybe Fb is the "it" thing now but how about in 5 years, who knows?*

Perhaps it is impossible to predict which applications will be popular in a few years time, but some of the museums do conduct informal research on applications used today and utilize the information found to be present where their potential customers are. A social media strategy should not make the actions of an organization less agile, but rather provide them with aswers to questions such as what kind of applications should we have a presence in, or what is needed to enter or leave an application. Some benchmarking is done in the museums, as more than half of the informants told they follow what other cultural institutions, for example, do in social media and online in general by "liking" them on Facebook. This kind of benchmarking has not always provided them with concrete ideas on how to upgrade their own museum's social media presence, but at least it has inspired and challenged them.

> *I "like" MoMa or other museums even if I would never be able go and see the actual museum, I think it's fun to know what they are up to… (Informant 1, Museum 1, A large museum in a big town).*

It is not only the question of which applications to take part in that a social media strategy could answer, it could also make it easier to evaluate some of the daily decisions the employees need to make. Some mentioned the fact that they need to decide on who to create a relationship with in social media. Not only individual customers, but also other organizations wish to "friend" the museum, and friends can affect how the museum in question looks like to others. One of the outcomes of having a relationship with customers in social media, according to the informants, is that the people, and other organizations, may affect the museum brand. It was also mentioned that it is, in fact, a statement affecting a brand image not to be in Facebook as well.

> *It's also a statement not be in Facebook… You almost feel like you have to be there. (Informant 4, Museum 3, A medium sized museum in a medium sized town).*
>
> -
>
> *I'm sure it would be a good idea to think about which organizations we want to be "friends" with (in social media)… (Informant 5, Museum 4, A medium sized museum in a small town).*
>
> -
>
> *…It's, in a way, how we build our brand and what kind of image are we sharing about ourselves. (Informant 1, Museum 1, A large museum in a big town).*

5.2.2 Communication in social media

According to the findings of the present research, there are from one to five people in a museum utilizing the social media applications of that organization. Usually these people are responsible for other communications as well, or for creating events for the museum pedagogy department. The updated or posted content is usually invitations to events, such as exhibition openings and pedagogical events, or some major news about the museum in general (donations received, being involved in projects et cetera).

The overall atmosphere in the museums interviewed seems to be that they would like their communication with the customers on social media to be two-way, and to actually build the relationships on a personal level. However, they all, the ones that are using the social media applications, admit that their communication at the moment is still a long way from the two-way communication goal; it is one-way and informative by nature, rather than conversational.

> *Perhaps it's a bit of wishful thinking (that the communication would be two-way), at least on our current page. Surely, I would like it to be so (two-way). Only I feel that it would take a lot of work to really make it more conversational… (Informant 4, Museum 3, A medium sized museum in a medium sized town).*

When asked about the style of writing, for example in Facebook, we received some contradictory answers. Mostly the informants felt that in social media the style can be more relaxed than, for example, in press releases or the museum internet pages, and that it would be wise to consider the style of writing according to each specific medium separately. Yet, many of them still use very neutral style of writing, so that it would suit more people.

> *It's appropriate and in a way neutral… (Informant 4, Museum 3, A medium sized museum in a medium sized town).*
>
> -
>
> *…there is a possibility to write a bit more lighter in some situations… …As long as it's still in line with the museum policies. (Informant 5, Museum 4, A medium sized museum in a small town).*

The style of writing, as there are no guidelines, depends on the individual employees. It was noted that some of the employees have a rather defensive attitude towards their neutral style of writing. It was said that the neutral style represents the organization best, and it is what is wanted, but then again it was noticeable that some do not feel it would be the most suited style for social media; it simply is their personal style of writing in general.

> *…So that if a press release is news, then in Facebook we could let loose a bit… That could be done a lot more! To be all "huh hah hei" and a lot more fun, mut well, this is my style of writing (neutral). So that if one wishes to get another style, then it imply isn't me. (Informant 2, Museum 1, A large museum in a big town)*

None of the informants utilized the different stages of the relationships with the customers when writing to social media. They had not even thought that they could specify some messages to people who, for example, have not yet visited the museum, or to those who visit every time the museum has a new opening. So the content is not directed to any specific groups of people, but neither is the style of writing. One of the informants said that they had never thought about the recipients, in the sense that they would somehow direct the messages to some sort of people by utilizing different kind of language.

> *No, we haven't really thought about that. When I now think about it, I don't myself... I don't try to target the messages with the language used. …As neutral as possible… (Informant 7, Museum 5, A small museum in a medium sized town) .*

When asked about the activeness of their fans, the informants noted something interesting. They had not thought that their customers or fans are not the only ones, for example, not asking any questions on their Facebook pages; most had never asked questions from their fans themselves. This represents well the lack of two-way communication. The informants, however, seemed to believe that the content that a museum posts is something that could have a viral effect. They believe that people would like to share the posts onwards to their friends, even though it comes from a “faceless” organization, as the content always has something to do with the arts and not, for example, selling a certain item to people. When asked what could further help in the activation of the customers a few informants mentioned the amount of fans (the more fans the more opportunities that someone will react) and the change in style of communication overall.

> *I don’t remember anyone ever just coming and writing something to our wall. …It would already help to have more fans. …But also something is needed that the fans can grab onto. (Informant 7, Museum 5, A small museum in a medium sized town).*
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> -
>
> *It would take time to improve, and perhaps also some ”juicy bites” there that would provoke conversations… (Informant 4, Museum 3, A medium sized museum in a medium sized town).*

In the offline world museums communicate to their customers, and potential customers, through their own magazines (in the larger museums), adds, flyers, posters and invitations to openings. When talking about these some of the informants noticeably relaxed, as it seemed to be more familiar to them than social media. One informant talked about the ease of approaching the museum in this offline context; the material needs to be of certain kind to make it more “approachable”. We thus got a change to ask about the easiness of approaching the museum in an online context as well, and got some interesting answers. The informants felt that a museum can make itself more approachable by conducting in social media. They hoped it would lower the bar for those who don’t really know what to expect, or how to behave in a museum. This was then raised as one of the most important issues as to why a museum would be in social media to begin with.

> *Social media doesn’t change it (the mission of a museum), on the contrary,there we try to find more of the touch points to our customers. Thus, what we do here would become more approachable to people. (Informant 7, Museum 5, A small museum in a medium sized town).*
>
> -
>
> *I think it (social media) allures people to come visit. …There can be a teaser online… …Many times people feel astrainged from museums… …because they don’t know what*

> *there is or how to behave, or what then and what they get out of the visit… …This is material that helps people to get familiar (with the museum). (Informant 5, Museum 4, A medium sized museum in a small town).*

The museums do seem to recognize very strongly that content is king in social media, even though they have not really had time, qualification, or desire to think about how the content is received by different audiences. They feel the way something is said is secondary to the thing that is being said. The different types of content (links, video, slides, photos et cetera) do evoke different kinds of reactions in their fans, and are shared onwards with different levels of activity.

A few informants did deliberate also on how it affects the relationship between a customer and an organization that the organization status updates, posts, or "tweets" appear always under the organization name, facelessly. They found it might be nicer for the individual customer, or fan, to see who is actually behind the post, but at the same time they did not want to subject themselves into that kind of exposure.

> *It is not (name of informant) who is writing to people… Though it could be. …It would be more personal than having an institution (name of museum) telling something… …But then one would need to think to whom it would be personalized into. I don't want it to be me. (Informant 2, Museum 1, A large museum in a big town).*

One informant thought a solution to the facelessness could be a fictional character created by the museum that could give "a face" to the communication. On the contrary, another informant self-imposedly noted that any kind of fictional characters would be a bad idea as it would be too artificial.

> *Is there a high bar (for an individual) to communicate with a faceless institution? …In a way it's good that an institution does not get personified into anyone. …On the other hand perhaps it could be a fictional character? (Informant 7, Museum 5, A small museum in a medium sized town).*
>
> -
>
> *…We don't want it to be a fictional mascot…that's doing the talking…Neither do we want for private people to represent the museum. (Informant 4, Museum 3, A medium sized museum in a medium sized town).*

5.2.3 Social media applications

All, but one, interviewed museums have more or less of a social media presence. An interesting observation is that most of the informants talked about 'social media' but in most cases they actually meant only Facebook. Some also utilize services like Twitter, YouTube and some individual travelling services. The amount of different social media applications utilized, according to the present research, seems to be comparable to the size of the museums; bigger museums are more in multiple applications, whereas smaller ones only utilize one or two applications, if even those. Some museums had just recently created their Facebook page and were still wondering what exactly to do with it, while some had had a Facebook page for years.

Only two of the informants mentioned Google's services, before asked directly about Google, and only a few mentioned anything about blogs. The other applications mentioned were an old MySpace site and plans for SlideShare. No informant mentioned search engine optimization. They did also mention visibility at "non social media" services, such as that they have email lists, and a presence at the internet pages of the towns or cities they are situated in and the museot.fi service by the Finnish Museum Association. In Table 8 we summarize the utilization of social media applications in the museums interviewed. The most popular application, thus, is Facebook, then a blog, You Tube, and Twitter. The marks in the brackets refer to an application that used to be in use, or that is just about to be launched by the organization, while the mark of 'x' refers to an application that is utilized by the organization at the moment of the interview.

Museum number	**Categorizations**	**Facebook**	**Blog**	**YouTube**	**Twitter**	**Google Services**	**Others**
1	A large museum in a big town	x		(x)			
2	A large museum in a big town 2.	x	x	x	x	x	(x)
3	A medium sized museum in a medium sized town	x	(x)	x		x	
4	A medium sized museum in a small town	x	(x)	x			
5	A small museum in a medium sized town	x			x		
6	A small museum in a small town		(x)				(x)

Table 8: Social media applications utilized in the museums interviewed

Even though a few museums seemed to have some plans on how to improve their social media activity, the informants had only a few "wild" or "out of the box" ideas about utilizing the social media applications for the future. Only one museum, in fact the one that is not yet in any social media applications, mentioned virtual worlds. This museum had thought about creating a virtual museum for Second Life (or a corresponding virtual world) for another kind of experience, mainly for teaching purposes. Their idea was that they could be present in the virtual museum on specific hours and answer questions their virtual visitors might have. Their idea in the virtual museum was to build a model of the old town, as it was hundreds of years ago, according to the archeological drawings they have. They also mentioned they could co-operate with schools and invite classes to participate in the virtual museum. Nonetheless, this was only a thought, and it might never actually happen, due to resource issues.

> *We had an idea… …We know a lot about the Iron Age (name of town)… So we could build it as 3D model… It would be very different from something in a museum with the artifacts, you could, in a way, get a whole other idea about it. …It would open a new world and new possibilities. (Informant 9, Museum 6, A small museum in a small town).*

Another, somewhat wild idea, was to hire a rap artist to create a song about the work of their museum technicians, in order to elaborate to the customers and fans what these people do everyday. Also others had thought about offering the fans inside stories and clips "behind the scenes". This kind of material was seen as "something extra" for the people that have showed their interest towards the museum in social media. Some campaigns were already created to treat the fans and to make them participate online.

> *…a young guy that I ordered a rap from. …Then it, of course, gets illustrated and shared in social media. (Informant 3, Museum 2, A large museum in a big town 2.).*
>
> -
>
> *…For example when a new exhibition is mounted…We have already taken some preview pictures, in a way. Perhaps the process will open in another way to the audience. …It's something special for belonging into our Facebook group. (Informant 4, Museum 3, A medium sized museum in a medium sized town).*
>
> -

> *...We could more elaborate on what goes on in the building, be the experts... (Informant 1, Museum 1, A large museum in a big town).*

Also campaigns had been created to spur the conversation on the Facebook pages of the museums. Perhaps the most advanced museum, social media utilization wise, had had a Christmas calendar on their Facebook page related to the exhibition of the time, and some participatory campaigns asking people to take pictures of things related to their exhibitions or other marketing and posting it to their Facebook page. The most active fans were rewarded with small gifts from the museum gift shop.

> *...We have had some campaigns like "spot a Miró" from anywhere in the world and post it to our Facebook page... Also "spot the (name of the museum) bus" and post that to our Facebook page. (Informant 3, Museum 2, A large museum in a big town 2.).*

5.2.4 Concerns about social media

The creation of customer relationships in an organization demands a long-term commitment to the interactive communication with the clientele. In this research we have suggested that communication for building the relationships could be conducted entirely, or partially, online in social media. However, there are many obstacles and issues to clarify, before going online, as was noted in the interviews.

When asked about the concerns the museums might have about social media and conducting in it, some interesting answers were received. As described in chapter 3, in the literature on social media, the loss of control is usually put forward as the main concern or risk for an organization. The present findings, however, suggest that it is not as common as thought, as only two informants mentioned this when asked about possible risks. Even when asked is the loss of control a risk from the other four organizations that did not mention it self-imposedly, they did not see it as a problem. The ones who mentioned this risk were one small museum that is not in social media, and one medium sized museum that is active in social media. For them, the loss of control means not being able to control who writes and what about the organization, on sites that the museum is not even familiar with, and that people post irrelevant things to the museum's profile and they cannot be controlled in what they comment or how they react. One informant even described the entire situation in social media at the moment as "*the wild west*" with no boundaries.

> *…There, in the online world a museum gets profiled through information that is out of our hands… …You find information about your museum that you have not written yourself... …As I've understood the information gets stuck in some "bit sky" and it can be taken advantage of... (Informant No. 8, Museum 6, A small museum in a small town).*

> -

> *…so it is a real "wild west" and so very underdeveloped. …We must be very critical towards this. (Informant 6, Museum 4, A medium sized museum in a small town).*

Another concern that was found was the one about an organization creating the relationship with an individual in social media. There is no problem in relationships with customers when the relationship is formed via personal contacts et cetera in an actual museum surrounding, but when the contact is made online, one interviewee saw this as problematic. The organizations in social media act "facelessly" and the individual consumers or customers through their own personal profiles. This was seen as an unbalanced situation, where the organization is entering a somewhat private area, for example Facebook, but not really giving anything out of themselves, unlike the individual users.

> *It is natural for it (social media) that we act as people, personalities, and individuals, and then an organization tries to act as an individual. …You have your kinds of friends, but we (an organization) should have different kinds of friends. ... Thus it is an unbalanced situation to begin with… (Informant 6, Museum 4, A medium sized museum in a small town).*

It is important to think how the relationship is formed in a new surrounding; everything cannot be the same as in offline surrounding. Nevertheless, the other informants did not see it as a problem that an organization builds relationships with individuals. When asked about this subject, they further contemplated on how the museum employees themselves make a difference between their private person utilization of social media and utilization of social media at work. Only two informants said that their private person profiles and their working selves can get mixed up as they post work-related issues on their private person profiles, and get work-related friend requests to their own private profiles.

> *…The staff's, and my own, working life and free time does really get mixed up efficiently in the world of Facebook. (Informant 3, Museum 2, A large museum in a big town 2.).*

Another concern had to do with content in social media. Some were concerned they would not be able to create enough content to keep their social media presence vital enough. This is an essential concern, as the most active social media users do check their social media applications multiple times per day (see e.g. Official Statistics of Finland (OSF) 2., 2010) and it would be good to be able to offer them fresh content, as the most active social media followers also create the most active viral effect, in other words, they spread the links, texts, posts, et cetera very effectively. Also, the quality of the content seemed to awake some concern with the interviewees. They felt they might not be able to produce content that would interest people enough.

> *I have to admit that it would look rather patethic that there is a new information every other month… (Informant 8, Museum 6, A small museum in a small town)*
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> -
>
> *So we have thought a lot whether it (a blog) would be sensible, required, interesting… …And you need to commit to it, it cannot just be started and written a few posts, it really requires interactivity and answering to the comments, and then we ended up with that it's not necessarily what our customers expect from us… Nor the most effective or reasonable way to develop our brand and image… (Informant 1, Museum 1, A large museum in a big town).*

The final concern found had to do with copyright issues. Two informants noted that an art museum has rather fixed possibilities of sharing content, as copyright restricts them from, for example, taking photographs of their exhibitions and posting those online. Naturally there are, however, different conventions and ways around these issues, such as agreements with the artists or their representatives mentioning the right for publishing press material on the artworks. Yet, not all artists will permit this kind of advertising.

> *One may think that in Facebook we have a lot of material posted, and it's all owned by Facebook. (Informant 5, Museum 4, A medium sized museum in a small town)*
>
> -
>
> *We don't have the type of rights (to the material) that we could forward to someone else. (Informant 6, Museum 4, A medium sized museum in a small town)*
>
> -
>
> *It (distributing material) demands special lisences. (Informant 8, Museum 6, A small museum in a small town)*

Museum employees usually have extensive job descriptions; as there are only a handful of employees, they need to take care of multiple things. For example, one informant in a medium sized museum had, not only customer service as their job description, but also guided tours, museum shop, corporate events, taking care of their art education, taking part in the pedagogic services planning, and strategy work, plus updating the photographic archives. Thus, not only are there concerns about the utilization of social media, but also a lack of resources for actually doing it. All the museums interviewed, no matter if they represent bigger or smaller organizations, referred to their lack of resources. Naturally, the resources for creating a social media presence vary amongst museums, not to mention between museums and for-profit organizations, where the organizations almost without exception have PR people working for them. When asked further which resource the informants were referring to, their answers mostly dealt with money, time and know-how of what to do in social media; how to behave, what kind of campaigns to create, which services to use et cetera.

> *It's a resource question, as it would be great to deploy the entire social media palette… …We are painfully aware of it that we should (utilize more social media), but then we can't as we need to focus… It would require a know-how that we simply do not have. (Informant 2, Museum 1, A large museum in a big town).*
>
> -
>
> *It would be great if we had a PR person to think about marketing and communications, and this social media. It's a bit like a lack in resources. And we're not as clever with it (social media) as we could be… …We have very small marketing and communications resources, people and money wise. (Informant 7, Museum 5, A small museum in a medium sized town).*
>
> -
>
> *We need all of it (know-how, time, want, money). ...So that only, and onely it, (social media) would be appointed to one specific employee (Informant 2, Museum 1, A large museum in a big town).*

Only one informant noted that there is a lack of resources, but it is a matter of prioritizing. They said resources are a matter or prioritizing.

> *Oh well, it is a resource question, so it has to have been taken as a part of the daily routines. (Informant 3, Museum 2, A large museum in a big town 2.).*

Finally, some organizations had run into problems internally about social media usage. Three informants noted that there had been some trouble in convincing their own organization about the utilization of social media. According to these informants, this had to do with the fact that others in that organization represent an older age group, and are not social media users themselves. Naturally, when one does not utilize any social media applications, it is more difficult to see why an organization should either.

> *I feel like some of the employees, if they don't use Facebook privately, perhaps they had some worries in the beginning… (Informant 4, Museum 3, A medium sized museum in a medium sized town).*
>
> -
>
> *Yes, it's an age question, perhaps. ...I do understand, in a way, that if you don't go to Facebook yourself or receive invitations to events, then it doesn't feel so natural. Also, at the moment it might have to do with that there are people, who don't have Facebook running un their veins… (Informant 7, Museum 5, A small museum in a medium sized town).*

5.2.5 Benefits of social media

The policies and ways of acting and communicating in social media vary amongst the interviewed museums, but as a common factor they all seem to agree on the fact that social media can really help a cultural organization to create and sustain a relationship with their customers, and to lower the bar to come and visit the actual museum as well. They also agree on the amount of effort real social media presence demands; it is not enough to create a page in Facebook, for example, but true communication would require real thought and planning. All informants had a positive attitude towards social media in general, even if some had more doubts about it than others.

The reasons behind why museums in Finland join social media vary; some feel it is a good way to contact a new target group, some think it is good for communicating with the existing customers. It is, however, difficult to know whether the customers would first find the museum online, and then perhaps visit the actual location, or whether they start following the museums online only after a visit to the actual museum, or whether the liking of a museum online ever concretizes into a visit to the museum. The informants felts that the customers do look for information on them online, also in social media, already before the first visit. However, according to the informants, most of the fans seem to be people who already like the actual museum and have been to the physical site.

We don't know whether people from Facebook come to our museum, but according to their posts they do. (Informant 4, Museum 3, A medium sized museum in a medium sized town)

-

Measuring it is really challenging, and perhaps the online world is for getting a first feeling of us, it doesn't necessarily lead to direct action, but creates a feeling of us to those who haven't heard of us… (Informant 3, Museum 2, A large museum in a big town 2.)

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I have a feeling that they have first visited an exhibition and then (like us on Facebook). (Informant 7, Museum 5, A small museum in a medium sized town)

The museums interviewed listed the ease of reaching such vast number of people at such low cost as the main reasons for why they are on social media. Social media was also seen as easy to use. The informants noted how social media adds to their visibility and accessibility. Anyone can access the social media application, any time of the day, from anywhere around the world, unlike the actual museum building.

The point (of social media) is to reach customers. …New kinds of ways for communicating with the visitors. (Informant 3, Museum 2, A large museum in a big town 2.).

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It's a handy and affordable way for marketing our functions, especially the events ja (pedagogical) programme we offer. (Informant 7, Museum 5, A small museum in a medium sized town).

-

The visibility and accessibility would in a way be widened (in social media). That one can, without arriving at the physical museum, familiarize with it (the museum) and create new contacts… (Informant 8, Museum 6, A small museum in a small town).

The informants noted that they, indeed, are able to reach a different audience through social media than they already have as customers. This has to do with the fact that their regular customers, as mentioned earlier, are highly educated elderly women, who then again are the smallest group in utilizing social media applications (see Official Statistics of Finland (OSF) 2., 2010).

I think it's a totally different audience (than the active visitors). …Perhaps a bit younger people, and in other ways active people who goes and does thing… (Informant 4, Museum 3, A medium sized museum in a medium sized town).

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…The age distribution of our 2 500 Facebook fans is noticeably yunger than, than the one that's visible in our customer surveys here in the museum. So in a way the younger people have taken Facebook… (Informant 2, Museum 1, A large museum in a big town)

The informants noted, however, that not only young people use social media, or the internet as a whole, but also the elderly can be active in it. Thus, their ambition in requiring new contacts in social media is not only targeted at a younger audience, but everyone in social media. According to the informants it is not so much about age, but more of the type of people that utilize social media applications.

…We can't really say that Facebook would only be utilized by the young people, but all kinds of people… (Informant 3, Museum 2, A large museum in a big town 2.)

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…The significance of the internet is increasing rapidly in every age group all the time. (Informant 1, Museum 1, A large museum in a big town).

The museum product is somewhat difficult to define. When asked from the informants how they see the product today, and how they feel it will evolve in the future, there seemed to exist a consensus on experience thinking. The idea that the actual product of a museum is, indeed, the experience it co-creates with the customer has become more and more popular. The co-creation of value and thinking of the visit as an experience go hand in hand, as the co-creation of value already entails an active participation of the visitor, thus seeing the experiences the customer receives and co-creates as the actual museum product. The present research shows that the museum staffs do think about the entire visit of a customer as co-creating experiences with them, and combining some pre and post marketing activities to make the experience last longer and seem stronger.

…In the museum world there is constantly more and more talk about the audience being there with us to produce it (the experience), and not only receiving. (Informant 5, Museum 4, A medium sized museum in a small town).

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Yes, you could day the experience is the product. (Informant 3, Museum 2, A large museum in a big town 2.)

Yet, at least some of the museums do admit that they have work to do before the co-creation actually happens, and before the entire visit of a customer can truly be called a cohesive experience, even though they feel it would be one of the most important benefits that social media could offer them. For example, one informant noted that their own webpage is built entirely from the museum's own perspective, not thinking about the customer who lands on that page.

I mean, these are not built from the perspective of the audience, but these pages are made in a way from the viewpoint of the museum. (Informant 5, Museum 4, A medium sized museum in a small town).

Another benefit of social media is, that is far more agile than more traditional marketing activities. Some of the museums had already utilized social media for marketing activities that require rapid reacting from both the customers and the organizations. They felt these kinds of possibilities should be utilized much more in the future.

It allows for much quicker reactioning… We can give last minute reminders and such. …If there is an event today that still has tickets left, we can tell that there is still a possibility to come… (Informant 2, Museum 1, A large museum in a big town).

All informants, without exception, saw social media as a natural arena for reaching people in today's, and tomorrow's, world. All of the informants felt that social media would have a key role in their activities in the future. The importance of social media was not questioned, but rather argumented for.

…There is a digital merketing unit… …In the international museums… That is definitely the way we are headed. (Informant 2, Museum 1, A large museum in a big town).

-

I speak for the smaller museums. Especially for the small museums it is the thing; if you have little money, it (social media) is a great opportunity. Or such, I think people want to believe in it and it's possibilities, and they really do. (Informant 7, Museum 5, A small museum in a medium sized town).

It is clear that the informants appreciate the possibilities of social media. Yet, some even felt somewhat embarrassed of their own organization's lack of innovative presence in social media applications. They unanimously saw social media as full of possibilities and potential waiting to be unbleached.

> *We in no way have yet deployed all the potential from social media, at all. …Also we have together thought of which areas our unit wants to further progress, and be educated in… …so it (social media) is a priority for us. (Informant 1, Museum 1, A large museum in a big town).*
>
> -
>
> *…In the future more of the mobile applications… …That it lists all the information… …it would be nice to have (name of the museum) in it as well. …But somehow I feel the idea of a museum not being a traditional building anymore, but more of a contect creator. (Informant 5, Museum 4, A medium sized museum in a small town).*

5.2.6 Measuring the social media success

Another finding that surprises is that none of the informants had thought about setting up goals for their social media presence. They mostly felt they wanted to make the communication two-way and utilize more of the different applications, and also get more out of the applications already utilized, and yet none had set more concrete, for example numerical, goals. This is naturally linked to the fact that they do not collect numerical data from their social media actions, and only half (the largest museums) collect data on their internet pages. Further, the ones that do collect the data do not really know what to do with it, how to analyze it. Most of the museums do, however, look for tags and texts where they would have been mentioned in the internet by others.

> *…We try to follow where our name would be mentioned and what people are writing about us in their blogs… …But it's not like, very systematic. (Informant 1, Museum 1, A large museum in a big town)*
>
> -
>
> *…It's like yes, we do follow it (statistics), but I don't think we really know what to do with it… (Informant 3, Museum 2, A large museum in a big town 2.)*

The informants were also asked about the activity of their fans in Facebook, as that seemed to be the most commonly used application. Almost everyone answered that the fans could be more active, but this level is also satisfactory. When asked what would be a good level, the informants could not specify an indicator or measurements for that. Further, they were inquired on whether different content posted to Facebook makes a difference on the fans' activity, and some conflicting information was received. One of the informants said links to, for example, video material, does not work very well, meaning that they do not accumulate discussion and commenting. Another said that external links (links to news or articles written by a third party) always work well. Some also added that events work the best in Facebook, as one can share it easily and invite friends to join.

> *In fact, I think that the video clips get less comments, maybe it's contrary to what is usually believed in Facebook, but the regular text posts do get the most comments. (Informant 4, Museum 3, A medium sized museum in a medium sized town).*
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> -
>
> *When you post a link to a news… …created by an "outsider"… it works. (Informant 7, Museum 5, A small museum in a medium sized town).*

5.2.7 Willingness for social media participation

According to the informants, having a social media presence is essential for a museum. All but one felt it is absolutely required of them.

> *…Now there is a pressure to join it (social media). (Informant 6, Museum 4, A medium sized museum in a small town).*

This is interesting, as being somewhat traditional organizations museums might have a rather conservative image or brand, and social media represents the ultimate new way of communicating in a social setting that is all but formal and conservative. None of the informants felt there would be any kind of conflict in a museum being in social media, even though the public might see museums as something that preserves something old or prestigious, while social media is a new and young phenomenon mostly for laidback one-to-one communication. On the contrary, it was seen that the brand or image of a museum can benefit from an online presence. Further, the one museum that is not in any social media application saw no problem in joining the social media world in theory, they simply referred to the lack of resources, of not having enough people to actually make things happen. The informants were willing to create a social media presence for their museums, as they thought that having a social media presence could indeed affect their brand in a positive way, it could make it younger and less conservative.

…And then some might consider us as being conservative, so it's nice to change that a bit… (Informant 4, Museum 3, A medium sized museum in a medium sized town).

-

It (the brand) could be affected positively from the social media presence……It should be more tightly budled with into all the other communications and marketing plans and make it more consistent… (Informant 7, Museum 5, A small museum in a medium sized town)

The museums saw the yet unleashed potential of social media as something they should learn more about, and think more about. They seemed eager about it, yet something still hindered them from further developing their social media presence.

It should be thought about and planned, why are we there, so that it doesn't end up as a bulletin board, only that it should be more interactive, challenging, so that we could really share information through it (social media). ...Also to simply try if it works. ... It shouldn't be used only for communication purposes but also for marketing. …Through it (social media) we are able to communicate about our versatility and events… (Informant 1, Museum 1, A large museum in a big town).

6 DISCUSSION

In this chapter the findings of the research are further discussed. The most surprising, or in other ways significant findings are explored and reflected on. Also, some managerial recommendations on how the museums could re-think their social media presence is given in this chapter.

As clarified earlier, the museum product entails parts of tangible and intangible elements. The tangible ones have to do with the actual museum and the artworks, while the intangible ones refer to the experience of the visit. As clear as this division is to the museum employees, they do not think of this, in the online environment. One of the informants noted their museum's entire webpages are built from the museum perspective, instead of the customers'. One can only think what that does to the online experience. Another informant noted that it is not always even the meaning of a museum having a social media presence to make the customer visit the actual museum. In a case like this if the customer, for example lives in another country, but wants to experience that they belong to a certain group of supporters of that museum, they should be able to identify to that museum through the online relationship. As the posts the museums interviewed write mostly have to do with events in the actual museum building, how does it correlate with the idea of not having to come to the actual museum while still being able to be their fan, suppoter or even partner online? The museums were well aware that content is turly important in social media, but it does seem that they do not think about the content as much as the need to be present in social media.

The presented thought that the employees should not represent the museums in social media, is understandable, yet it creates a series of additional questions. Why would the employees not want their name and perhaps profile picture be seen with the post they create for the museum, as their names and contact information are always, for example, seen in the formal press releases they write. People cannot click a press release signature for more information on that person, unlike they could do for example in Facebook, but then again one can block all personal information on oneself also in Facebook, so that only one's friends see it.

Gilmore (2003, 85-87) notes that the overall conceptualization of a museum service requires multi-dimensional criteria, for example, communincation. The biggest problem in the museums interviewed, who have a social media presence, seem to be the way they communicate. It is above all informative instead of conversational. Also the content, to some extent, seems even wrong for social media; in the informative style of posting, there really is nothing for the fans to react to. According to Smith and Wollan (2011, 4), socil media is not just a new medium for communicating the same messages that organizations communicate through other medias. It is a new surrounding for new kind of behaviour, and it changes the way people behave and communicate. As a museum is an organization that has also the purpose of educating the people, their customers, let alone the people who are not yet their customers, might feel like they have nothing to say to such an authority. The barrier for an individual customer or “fan” to spontaneously begin a conversation with such a respected museum authority is really high. What could they have to comment? The museums need to think about the goal of having two-way communication with the customers, and thus creating experiences and building relationships with them. If the museums are motivated to such a goal, they need to change the way they act in social media. It would help the museums to have a larger pool of fans in, for example Facebook, because it could mean that the more fans they have, the more comments they receive. However, in social media it usually is not the quantity but the quality of the fans that make a difference as 30 percent of all social media users are actually sharing 90 percent of all shared content (Safron, 2010). Also, no matter how many fans the museums might have, the communication with them will not change until the museum changes the way they communicate first, because of the mentioned barrier of communicating with an authority such as a museum. The museums could enhance the activity of their own social media presence and the activity of their fans by asking questions, directing the content to a specific group of people (the ones that have never visited the museum, active visitors, et cetera), using a more relaxed and context-related language instead of posting the same content to every media, and posting different kinds of content in different ways, such as links, videos, competitions, external links, et cetera.

Even if the customers of “fans” of a museum in social media might not be that active (yet), it does not mean that they would not be interested in communication with the organization. Some of the museums interviewed had concerns about the content they produce. They were worried that people might not be interested in, for example, reading a blog by the museum. The positive thing about social media is that people follow only those people and organizations they are interested in. In this way the communications is always already targeted to people who are interested in hearing about the museum in question, which makes it easier to talk with them.

Another concern the museums pointed out was copyright, an issue worth thinking when talking about organizations hosting artworks (see also Constantinides & Fountain, 2008). Nonetheless, the content in social media can, and in fact should, be also much more than presenting what can be seen in the museum and when. So called "behind the scenes" material is very popular in social media as it seems to be interesting to people. There are a lot of things going on in the preserving of the artworks, mounting of an exhibition, planning an event, and so forth, that would surely interest the people who "like" a museum. With content like this the museums could become more active, and open, not to mention fulfill their obligations as educating the people about art and the entire field of the arts.

The uncertainty of the applications; which one will be the most popular in five years from now, or next year, or even next month, also raised some concerns. It is true that in social media the applications come and go, as the popularity of them depends on how people receive them and start using them. However, it is no reason not to participate in something new that one does not know where that will lead. Social media in total has not showed any signs of fading, on the contrary (e.g. Heller Baird, 2011; Smith et al., 2011, xii; Murugesan, 2007). Thus, in case an organization wants to be present where their customers already are spending time, they need to consider social media (Heller Baird, 2011; Leppäniemi, 2011). A social media strategy could help the museums in deciding what kinds of applications to utilize. For example, they could set rules for what is needed from an application, for the museum to create a profile in it (how many users globally, locally et ceterea). Also, they could think about setting rules for what is needed for the museum to exit an application, so that no old pages or profiles is left "hanging" after an application has lost its interest, for example.

An interesting contradiction that arose from the discussions is the fact that the museums do feel utilizing social media is one of the easiest and most cost effective ways of communicating with their customers, and yet the biggest reason they feel is hindering them from taking full advantage of social media, is the lack of resources, in other words money. Perhaps this is one the most common dilemma of the moment, in any organization involved in social media. Organizations "went to social media" in web 2.0 just as they "went online" in web 1.0, for as peculiar as it might be, many organizations to this day are in social media, simply because everyone else is as well, and it is considered the "it" thing. Fortunately our research shows, that none of the museums interviewed had this as the reason for their social media presence, but they had actually thought about reaching a new kind of audience, or then they were not in social media at all. Utilizing social media in an organization requires investments in knowledgeable and skilled employees (Bourdeaux, b 2011, 17) that are able to choose and utilize the most appropriate applications. It is easy to set up a Facebook page for an organization, but what happens after the first post requires consideration and devotion to a new way of communication.

Although there really is a lack in resources for many of the museums in Finland, it seems rather odd that all of the interviewed museums, regardless of their size, amount of employees, or geographical location referred to this. Perhaps it is not really a question of resources, but the way things are prioritized; the willingness to include social media actions into the daily routines. Almost all of the informants pointed out that it would be best if someone in the museum had social media as their job description. Naturally, having a person creating a social media presence for the organization, all day everyday, would solve many of their problems, but it is somewhat an interesting way of seeing the issue. First of all, does this mean that the employees cannot overstep their job descriptions, can they not do things that are not set for them specifically, due to some bureaucratic patterns, or perhaps even a spirit of their own? Or could it mean that they do not prioritize social media usage as high up in their list of "to-dos" as they insinuated in the interview situations? It is not likely that the employees would not be able to step out of their job descriptions, as those can be really extensive and vague, and some of the museums do have employees specifically for PR and communications purposes. Also, it is not likely that the informants would have stressed the importance of social media in vain in the discussions. Thus, perhaps this dilemma has to do with the execution of the social media presence. The museums only allow using Facebook, for example, for the one to three people in charge of communications in that museum. Social media, by its nature, is uncontrollable, user generated, open, collective, connecting people and organizations, and totally unpredictable (e.g. Balm & Dogerlioglu, 2011; Constantinides & Fountain, 2008; Murugesan, 2007; Mitussis et al., 2006, 575). Organizations today, not only museums, try to do everything on the contrary; they try to control the uncontrollable. As the idea of social media requires enthusiastic people who want to write, film, record, or take photos of their surrounding and then share these with others, it would be interesting if the organizations could let loose as well.

What the "letting loose" could mean for museums in practice, is that they would need to have a strategy of social media utilization so that, for example goals and missions of social media utilization, would be clear to themselves. Also, they would need guidelines for all of the employees. One set of guidelines could be created for the people, who mostly post to social media, and perhaps another one for the employees whose job descriptions do not even come close to PR, communications, or marketing. The versatility of voices in a social media presence would not destroy the image of the museum, on the contrary. We feel the museums should embrace social media as it is, not try to mold it into a communications channel, just as the old web 1.0, advertisements, or posters. As noted earlier, having employees communicating first of all with each other and second of all with customers in social media can indeed be a solution to the problems with answering a vast amount of customer feedback (Wagner, 2011, 171). The freedom of communicating in real-time in social media spreads not only the positive, but also the negative, experiences (Leppäniemi, 2011), which is why it is crucial to have many active users of the social media applications within an organization, as one or a few people might not be able to tackle it all at once. Also, it would suit the nature of social media of having more and versatile users of it, also making the social media presence of that particular organization, without question, more active.

If social media seem too scary or unsuited to a certain museum's brand, for example, then the museum needs to consider other ways to form relationships with their customers. Yet, as mentioned earlier, there are risks in not having a social media presence as well. Organizations should think about why they have a page in Facebook, for example; is it because the organization wants to create relationships, or is it because others do it as well? If the goal truly is two-way communication leading to a relationship, as it is according to the informants, then the organizations need to pay attention to the way and content of communication, and think of it as a long-term strategic measure. In an organization, social media should not be utilized as another medium for repeating the same messages all over again, but a new kind of environment for creating new kinds of relationships with the stakeholders. If an organization fails to act in social media, they will miss out on the new way of building customer relationships, and on the other hand, if they do engage in social media without proper consideration of the strategy, they will most likely fail to deliver their customer promises of excellent quality in all of their actions (see Smith & Wollan, 2011, 3).

Collecting information on the customers, and actually utilizing that information in improving the service with the help of that information is vital for a service organization. As noted, none of the museums interviewed collect data on how their customers act in social media, and only the biggest ones collect information on the customers online in total. As today the collection of information on one's customers, especially online, is rather effortless, it is relevant to ask why the museums do not do this. Could this be a remain of the product oriented way of thinking that used to be how museums saw their actions? Nevertheless, this is something the museums could easily improve with the help of free or affordable software, analyzing the data collected, and then acting on it.

Further, social media has not been utilized for educative purposes within the museums. The only museum that had planned something that would combine education and online presence was the one museum that is not in social media, at least not yet. Building a historically correct city in a virtual world and inviting students to familiarize themselves with it was one of the most innovative ideas that arose from the discussions with the informants. Social media offers great tools for video sharing, picture sharing, slideshow sharing, and voice record sharing that could be utilized for educational purposes by the pedagogical services of museums.

Overall, the findings, by far, confirmed the proposed issues of relationship marketing in social media (chapter 3 section5). The informants were aware of most of the issues covered in the theory of the present research, but for some reason they do not carry out the listed issues, such as the social media strategy or the appropriate style of communication in the different applications, not to mention the measuring of the effects of their social media activities. It would seem as though they do not really trust their customers, or fans, to be active co-creators of the experiences. The museums appear to be in a stage where their employees realize, at least to some extent, the possibilities of social media, but they are unable to conduct their social media presence, as they would want it to be, referring to their limited resources.

7 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter a discussion on the theory and the findings concludes the present research. In chapter one, Introduction, the following research question was proposed, "*What are the specific characteristics of building customer relationships utilizing social media, in the context of art museums*?" and the following supporting questions: "*Why would a cultural organization, such as a museum, focus on building customer relationships?*" and "*How do art museums utilize social media in their marketing actions?*". These questions are answered in this chapter.

The present research finds, that the characteristics of building and maintaining relationships with the customers, in the special setting of social media, are the selecting of the appropriate applications, the way of communication, context specific content, mutual trust, and perhaps most importantly the willingness for the relationship. It is also important to plan the actions ahead, to create a strategy and guidelines for the online behavior, and also evaluate the actions as they are done in order to know what worked well and what requires rethinking.

The willingness for a relationship, from the organization's viewpoint, has to do with taking the customer into the museum processes. It is embracing the customer orientation, and co-creating value with the customers. It is not something that can be added to the marketing mix; rather it is a philosophy through which the employees of the museum need to understand the entire process of the visit or online engagement. Including the customers does not mean that customers themselves should take part in the strategic decision-making, or have an affect on the artistic processes at the museum, only that the employees of the museum need to think about the services they provide also from the viewpoint of the customers. Co-creation of value means that both sides benefit from the relationship, thus it should not only be giving to the customers, but also expecting them to act together with the museum. In the future, the museums need to really step up their game in the experience thinking, and even more so in actualizing it. The experience thinking may be "popular" in museums at the moment, but it does take years to convince every employee of the organization of the ideas of customer orientation, "part-time marketers" (Gummesson1987, 16), or staff-visitor relationships (Rentschler & Gilmore, 2002).

The selection of the appropriate social media applications is important, as even though social media users are easily described as a homogeneous group, they are in fact a rather versatile group of people. Different people require different tools for communication both online and offline (Bourdeaux, 2011, 276). It is important that the organizations think carefully about what kind of audience they wish to reach and evaluate the different applications. Also, different audiences may be found inside only one application, as the application have huge amounts of users; only Facebook has more than 800 million users globally (Facebook, 2011 b). In order to reach a specific group in, for example Facebook, an organization needs to address them specifically. It is possible to address, for example, the customers that have already visited the museum one day, and the potential customers the next day.

As discussed earlier, in all of the communication the content is important. There is no idea in, for example, spreading the same content in all of the organization's communication channels, but it would be more sensible to think about the context of the messages. If a certain type of content (link, video, music, news et cetera) works in one social media application, it might not work in another, not to mention that the content of a press release might not work in any social media application. Also, the way or style of communication gets highlighted in social media setting. As the nature of social media is uncontrollable, user generated, open, collective, connective, and unpredictable (e.g. Balm & Dogerlioglu, 2011; Constantinides & Fountain, 2008; Murugesan, 2007; Mitussis et al., 2006, 575;), the style of writing in social media is very informal and relaxed. People write to their friends, on their free time, thus they do not want to make the communication too stiff or formal. An organization, stepping into the social media applications, is an outsider by default, as it is a "faceless" actor amongst private people and their profiles, like described in the previous chapters. If, then an organization further underpins their organizational nature by using a very neutral and formal language, they will only alienate themselves from the rest of the users. Thus, an organization needs to blend in into the applications by using a language that everyone else is using; informal, short, conversational, and honest.

It would seem that in most cases the social media communication between a customer and a museum happens in three stages. First, in the beginning of their relationship as people are looking for information, raising their previous knowledge, on the museum and the prestige of the museums physical site or online site. These issues affect how people perceive the expertise of the potential partner, the museum, and how they built trust towards it. Then people communicate with the museum staff, online or offline, as they are visiting the actual museum or as they are creating the experience of the museum visit online. It is good to note, that even when people do arrive into the physical museum building, they might still be communicating with other people through social media, not face-to-face, as all the social media applications are also available for mobile devices. The third time the customer usually communicates with the museum is after a visit to the museum or the online experience. The need for the communication for both during and after the visit or experience comes from wanting to share experiences, create social bonding with others alike, create WOM and leverage trust. Museums have a great opportunity of bettering their accessibility and availability via social media for those customers that cannot attend the actual museum, not to mention to make the visiting experience cohesive for their customers that do visit the museum. What is meant with the accessibility and availability of the experience, is the offering of pre and post marketing actions to the customers that actually visit the museum, and ways to experience, at least parts of the museum, to those who are not able to attend the actual museum building.

Trust, from the organization's viewpoint, is formed out of the willingness to engage with the customers. If an organization truly wants to interact with their customers, there is no reason for them not to trust them. In social media some organizations are afraid of things like loosing control over what is being said about them. However, that should not hinder the organizations from wanting to have a strong network of supporters in social media as well, as they can act as advocates for the organization bringing the positive issues, they like to be identified with, to the fore (see e.g. Passebois & Aurier, 2004; Berry, 1995). Also, as mentioned, the co-creation of value should also provide something positive to the organization, not simply the customers, which is one more reason to trust the customers. For example, the modification of a museum's brand identity through their customer relationships is indeed possible. Further, organizations are able to actually save their resources, such as money, through the relationship maintenance, as mentioned many times. As trust needs to be mutual, also the viewpoint of the customers needs to be taken into consideration in the organizations. Customers base their trust in what they know and hear about the organizations. They use their previous information to form a preliminary idea on the organization, that is then either confirmed or changed by the communication with the organization either online or offline. The perceived quality and thus also value of the experience with the museum then determines whether the customer is satisfied or not, and whether they will trust the organization or not. Also, the transparency of the organization's actions affects how customers feel about trusting the organization.

The characteristics of services; intangibility, inseparability, perishability, and heterogeneity (e.g. Zeithaml et al., 1985) all have an impact on museum marketing. Museums are marketing an intangible, but multidimensional, service and co-creating experiences with customers, the processes of which starts and continues in an online environment, entailing a possibility of the actual visit to the museum in between. The processes are inseparable as they are produced and consumed at the same time. Services and events are perishable, and as mentioned earlier, social media can be utilized in, for example, trying to evaluate the number of participants for an event, and also for distributing or marketing unsold tickets to event on a short notice. Some of the informants had concerns on their own competence of creating a social media presence for their organizations. Yet, services are heterogeneous which means that every experience is, and should be, unique. The idea of creating relationships in social media, for organizations, is to try new things and learn from the experiences, while sharing interesting information with their fans. The experimental nature of social media and the co-creation of experiences should encourage organizations to move beyond their comfort zones and try new ideas in the communication.

Museums in Finland do utilize social media applications, but their actions do not (yet) correspond to their visions and reasons for creating an online presence. It seems as they agree on the importance of social media as a new arena for communication with the customers, but they do not have the resources, or perhaps willingness, to really work for the two-way communication that could lead to long-term interactive relationships with their customers, making their social media actions less than ideal. The essentials of relationship marketing are the building, maintenance, and reactivation of a customer relationship, and the reason a museum should engage in social media, is that all of these steps can be conducted online, either entirely or partially. Ideally, the relationship built is interactive and long-term, both of which are issues mentioned by the informants of the present research. Wilson et al. (2011) identifies four types of social media strategies for organizations. According to the present research, the museums do not really fit any of these, but are somewhere in between. They act as the predictive practitioners in allowing only a restricted amount of people to utilize the social media tools, but they do not collect vast amounts of data, as the predictive practitioners by Wilson et al. (2011) would do. They also have some features of the second group; creative experimenter, as some of the museums do try different things and see how it works, case by case, post by post. The cross-departmental thinking of the social media champion's, nor the large-scale interactions with external stakeholders of the social media transformers, are not something the museums would do at the moment.

Thus, the museums do seem to agree that it is worth investing time and effort to building relationships with their customers; creating new relationships and maintaining the existing ones. However, they do not seem to be sure of their tools or ways of conducting with the customers. It seems as though they are unsure whether their customers, or potential customers, would be interested in the relationship. Museums are used to having a certain kind of group as their customers, which makes it difficult to think about the experience and the co-creation of value from the viewpoint of other kinds of customers. A social media presence, nevertheless, can help them modify their image into more approachable also for new audiences. It is worth noticing that the museums that are in social media have a fan base of hundreds or even thousands of people only in Facebook, who have self-imposedly “liked” the museum, and are thus willing to hear from them. Further, according to the present research, these people are not mainly the museums’ regular customers (the well educated elderly women), but a different, new audience. Thus, there is some self-reflecting for the museums to do at the moment, as they already have interested fans in social media, but the activity of both the organizations and the fans is rather low.

Measuring the social media activities is important, as it provides the organization valuable information on what has worked well, and what has not. The information required for the analysis of the museums’ social media activity could be found through the amounts of fans, followers, likes, shares et cetera, and through comparing those numbers to the weekly actions they have made. Yet, none of the museums interviewed collect the statistics of their actions, or their fans’ actions. Also, measuring the quality of the relationships with the customers could help the museums divide mutually beneficiary relationships from relationships that do not add value to either party.

For further study, research could be conducted on relationship marketing from the viewpoint of the customers. Additionally, further investigation on what organizations have, thus far, managed to do in social media would be interesting. The marketing and managing a cultural organization, such as a museum, has been researched in multiple ways. What has not really been researched is the customer view on RM, not to mention that in a non-profit cultural organization. A paper by Bendapudi & Berry (1997) explores this issue, but a wider perspective could be gained through multiple papers on the topic. Also, the topic of this research, the utilization of social media applications in museum marketing, could benefit from a customer perspective research. Social media is often presented as a possibility for organizations to indeed change their image, or create something new. Whether organizations have truly managed to reinvent themselves, or their customer orientation strategies online, also remains to be studied later on.

The present research dived into exploring the reasons behind cultural organizations, such as museums, to engage in social media. Some interesting findings were found, as mostly the museums have a positive attitude towards social media, but the delivery of their ideals is still in progress. However, as the internet in total is changing into a socially emphasized information environment, it is more important than ever for organizations to be found through the social mechanisms of people's private networks (Simon, 2009). Social media presents countless possibilities for museums to widen their customer base, and to ensure a cohesive experience for their customers.

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APPENDIX 1: List of Finnish art museums in 2011

	Museum	**City / Town**
1	Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova museo	Turku
2	Aineen taidemuseo	Tornio
3	Amos Andersonin taidemuseo	Helsinki
4	Ateneumin taidemuseo	Helsinki
5	Cygnaeuksen galleria	Helsinki
6	Didrichsenin taide- ja kulttuurimuseo	Helsinki
7	Emil Cedercreutzin museo	Harjavalta
8	EMMA - Espoon modernin taiteen museo	Espoo
9	Etelä-Karjalan taidemuseo - Kaakkois-Suomen aluetaidemuseo	Lappeenranta
10	Gallen-Kallelan Museo	Espoo
11	Heinolan taidemuseo	Heinola
12	Helsingin taidemuseo	Helsinki
13	Helsingin taidemuseo, Kluuvin galleria	Helsinki
14	Helsingin taidemuseo, Meilahti	Helsinki
15	Helsingin taidemuseo, Tennispalatsi	Helsinki
16	Hiekan taidemuseo	Tampere
17	Hyvinkään taidemuseo	Hyvinkää
18	Hämeenlinnan taidemuseo	Hämeenlinna
19	Imatran taidemuseo	Imatra
20	Joensuun taidemuseo	Joensuu
21	Jyväskylän taidemuseo	Jyväskylä
22	Järvenpään taidemuseo	Järvenpää
23	K. H. Renlundin museo - Keski-Pohjanmaan maakuntamuseo, Roosin talo	Kokkola
24	K.H.Renlundin museo - Keski-Pohjanmaan maakuntamuseo, Museokortteli	Kokkola
25	Kajaanin taidemuseo	Kajaani
26	Kemin taidemuseo	Kemi
27	Keravan taidemuseo	Kerava
28	Keuruun museo	Keuruu
29	Kouvolan taidemuseo	Kouvola
30	Kuntsi modernin taiteen museo	Vaasa
31	Kuopion taidemuseo	Kuopio
32	Lahden kaupunginmuseo, Taidemuseo/Julistemuseo	Lahti
33	Lapinlahden taidemuseo ja Eemil Halosen museo	Lapinlahti
34	Lapuan Taidemuseo	Lapua

35	Lönnströmin taidemuseo	Rauma
36	Mikkelin kaupungin museot, Mikkelin taidemuseo - Etelä-Savon aluetaidemuseo	Mikkeli
37	Nelimarkka-museo, Etelä-Pohjanmaan aluetaidemuseo ja Nelimarkka-residenssi	Alajärvi
38	Nelin-Cronströmin taidekoti	Vaasa
39	Nykytaiteen museo Kiasma	Helsinki
40	Orimattilan taidemuseo	Orimattila
41	Oulun taidemuseo	Oulu
42	Pohjanmaan museo ja Terranova Merenkurkun luontokeskus	Vaasa
43	Porin taidemuseo	Pori
44	Raision museo Harkko	Raisio
45	Rauman Taidemuseo	Rauma
46	Riihimäen Taidemuseo	Riihimäki
47	Rovaniemen taidemuseo	Rovaniemi
48	Saarijärven museo	Saarijärvi
49	Salon taidemuseo - Veturitalli	Salo
50	Sara Hildénin taidemuseo	Tampere
51	Serlachius-museo Gösta	Mänttä-Vilppula
52	Sinebrychoffin taidemuseo	Helsinki
53	Särestöniemi-museo	Kittilä
54	Taidekeskus Kasarmi, Tuusulan taidemuseo	Tuusula
55	Taidekoti Kirpilä	Helsinki
56	Tampereen nykytaiteen museo	Tampere
57	Tampereen taidemuseo - Pirkanmaan aluetaidemuseo	Tampere
58	Tampereen taidemuseon Muumilaakso	Tampere
59	Tikanojan taidekoti	Vaasa
60	Turun taidemuseo Varsinais-Suomen aluetaidemuseo	Turku
61	Tuusulan museot, Halosenniemi	Tuusula
62	Valtion taidemuseo	Helsinki
63	Vantaan taidemuseo	Vantaa
64	Varkauden taidemuseo	Varkaus
65	Villa Gyllenberg	Helsinki
66	Visavuoren museo	Valkeakoski
67	Wäinö Aaltosen museo	Turku
68	Äänekosken taidemuseo	Äänekoski

Source: museot.fi, 2011