Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

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Bachelor Thesis

Profiles of Selected Companies on Social Networking Sites

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BACHELOR THESIS ASSIGNMENT

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Economics and Management

Thesis title

Profiles of selected companies on social networking sites

Objectives of thesis

Evaluate the impact of social media networks on a company´s marketing strategy and profit.
Propose the ideal marketing method/strategy for using social networking sites to make more profit.

Methodology

The research will be performed on three selected companies (Apple, Samsung, and Microsoft), focusing on their history and use of social media platforms.

Comparison of the three selected companies using qualitative/quantitative methods, such as interviews and questionnaire surveys.

The proposed extent of the thesis

30-40 pages

Keywords

business model, e-commerce, online business, social media platform, social networking, website content

Recommended information sources

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Dean

Prague on 25. 02. 2023

Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my bachelor thesis titled "Profiles of selected companies on social networking sites " by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the bachelor thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on 15.03.2023 _____

Profiles of Selected Companies on Social Networking sites

Abstract

This bachelor's thesis is focused on the selected companies' profiles on social networking sites. And it is worth mentioning that the use of social media in business is now ubiquitous. Using social media platforms to market their brands, communicate with customers, and reach new audiences has become standard practice for businesses. Social media can have a big effect on a company's reputation, both favourably and adversely. One of the primary goals of this thesis is to evaluate how social media platforms can influence on the sales of the three selected companies' namely Apple, Samsung, and Microsoft, and in general how social media can help the companies to grow. The first part of the thesis focuses on analysing the existing literature on social media, three companies, and marketing. The second part of the thesis is concentrated on the practical part of social media, platforms, reviewing the real social media of Apple, Samsung, and Microsoft as well as the customers' preferences and the impact of those social media platforms on the business's profit.

Keywords: Business model, online business, social media platform, e-commerce, social networking, website content.

Profily vybraných společností na stránkách sociálních sítí

Abstrakt

Tato bakalářská práce je zaměřena na profily vybraných společností na sociálních sítích. A stojí za zmínku, že využívání sociálních médií v podnikání je nyní všudypřítomné. Používání platforem sociálních médií k marketingu jejich značek, komunikaci se zákazníky a oslovení nového publika se pro podniky stalo standardní praxí. Sociální média mohou mít velký vliv na pověst společnosti, a to jak příznivě, tak nepříznivě. Jedním z primárních cílů této práce je zhodnotit, jak mohou platformy sociálních médií ovlivnit tržby tří vybraných společností Apple, Samsung a Microsoft a obecně, jak mohou sociální média pomoci společnostem v růstu. První část práce se zaměřuje na analýzu dosavadní literatury sociálních médií, tří společností a marketingu. Druhá část práce je zaměřena na praktickou část sociálních médií, jejich platforem, rekapituluje reálná sociální média Apple, Samsung a Microsoft a také preference zákazníků a vliv těchto platforem sociálních médií na zisk firmy.

Klíčová slova: Obchodní model, online podnikání, platforma sociálních médií, e-commerce, sociální sítě, obsah webových stránek.

Table of Content

1 Introduction

Millions of individuals use social media platforms daily to engage with others, share ideas and information, and keep up with news and events, having a significant impact on interpersonal and social relationships. Social media's ability to link users with others on a worldwide scale is one of its main advantages. People from all around the world may communicate with each other and exchange knowledge, viewpoints, and experiences through social media.

The corporate world has been greatly impacted by social media as well. Businesses can use social media platforms to interact with customers, increase brand recognition, and advertise goods and services. Businesses of all sizes are embracing social media advertising to reach a bigger audience and increase sales. Popular platforms include Facebook and Instagram. Companies may now communicate with customers in real time through social media, giving them the chance to immediately respond to their problems and suggestions. This improves the client experience, fosters client loyalty, and promotes repeat business. Social media offers businesses a cost-effective substitute for traditional advertising. The cost of sponsored advertising is frequently less expensive than conventional techniques, and businesses can generate and post content for free. This implies that businesses can reach more clients for less money, resulting in more profitability.

2 Objectives and Methodology

2.1 Objectives

The main objective of the thesis is to evaluate the impact of social media networking sites on the selected companies' profiles. At the same time, a marketing strategy will be proposed, which will help the companies to gain more audience, which will affect the profit. The issues concerning the audience, how to use social media, and the customers' reviews are also discussed. The theoretical part consists of social media, the three selected companies, their history, and marketing. The second part is devoted to the practical knowledge, which will be gathered through a survey and interviews.

2.2 Methodology

For the practical part of the thesis, both quantitative and qualitative methods of data gathering were used, namely survey and interviews. The first part of the practical section is based on the results of the survey, which was done through Google forms, and 142 respondents participated in the survey. The second part was devoted to the interviews, overall 4 interviewees were presented, with professional backgrounds related to social media, marketing, and internet technologies in general.

After the required data was gathered, a comparison of Apple, Samsung, and Microsoft was conducted, as well as an analysis of how social media can impact the companies' profiles.

3 Literature Review

3.1 Social Media

Social media is an excellent tool for cultivating, nurturing, forging connections with, and growing an audience of potential clients interested in your product or service (Iseli, 2021).

3.1.1 The impact of social media

We 'tweet,' blog, and update our social media platforms daily. Our colleagues invite us to connect with them on LinkedIn, Paxo, and a diversity of other social networks. Social networking has had a significant impact on how we communicate and connect with people throughout the world (Brown, 2012).

And it is unbelievable that in 2000, none of today's social tools persisted. Twitter started its journey in 2006. LinkedIn was created in the living room of one of the company's founders in 2002. And it gained around 150 million users only in 10 years. Twitter grew to 60 million users just in five years. Another amazing example of a social tool's fast achievement can be Google Plus. Google launched its social tool and reached 170 million users just in 10 months. And it is worth mentioning that social media is not just a passive activity like watching television or listening to the radio. Using social media requires time and effort to have excellent social media platforms. For example, if you need to have your LinkedIn active, you are supposed to fill in all the forms and do some certifications suggested by LinkedIn, then post and share some valuable information or connect with friends and colleagues, as LinkedIn is considered a tool which provides a demonstrative resource for businesses and competitive information for the savvy searcher (Brown, 2012).

Social media is more organic and comfortable way to sell than shouting your message from a rock. Social networking allows organizations to establish more enduring, trustworthy relationships that boost word-of-mouth marketing, sales, and customer satisfaction (Safko, 2012).

3.1.1   A brief history of business and competitive information

In some way, business and competitive information have been important to human beings since the beginning of society. There were some frequent questions for this period,

such as: What is the price for particular products in the market, or what were the prices 2 weeks ago, etc.? Before 'personal computing' which was in the 1980s and 1990s, business information was almost paper-based and available only by either gathering the information in person or communicating with people on the streets. At that time people were reading newspapers, listening to the radio and gathering the needed information, or visiting libraries. And then Competitive Intelligence appeared, which was a practice of looking at business competitors to find out what is going on in the markets and businesses and how you could fit into the business competition (Brown, 2012).

3.1.2   The growth of social tools

Social networking tools are called 'social' for some specific purpose. They are about connection. And if you think that way, the concept of social networking goes back to the very beginning of history, as we talk, share our knowledge and experience, and tell some stories. Another level of social tool development can be considered the telegraph, which allowed us to send information electronically worldwide (Brown, 2012).

The initial forms of social networks as we know them today can be objected to as Bulletin Board Systems or BBS in the 1980s. So, they were created to enable people to send only text information from one party to another, using the telephone, a modem, and a computer with BBS software installed. After some certain period, when the Internet became popular and more user-friendly and was transferred to more people, the usage of online networks extended. And there was a significant launch of different social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Google Plus. Due to these developments, more information was available to more people through more channels than ever before. But it is worth mentioning that one of the first social networks was Friendster, created in 2002. It had the same concept as Facebook. These tools make the information to be more available to more people through all the channels (Brown, 2012).

Why do we wish to spread our data? How can people manage to share intimate details of their life on social networking sites despite feeling increasingly afraid of identity theft, spam, phishing, and other forms of online fraud? Many factors contribute to this, including the need for connection, the enjoyment of utilizing many of these tools, and a sense of experimenting. Social media platforms are just an extension of our basic human drive to connect with others in terms of communication and sharing. Even professionals, workers, thought leaders, business executives, and industry pundits are eager to share their knowledge

and skills on LinkedIn, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms (Brown, 2012).

3.1.3   Categories of social tools

Sorting social tools according to functional areas of use is one method to make sense of them. Although these classifications are not exhaustive, they may nevertheless aid in understanding the social tool industry (Catherine O'Sullivan, 2021).

Figure 1 Most popular social networks as of January 2023, ranked by number of monthly active users
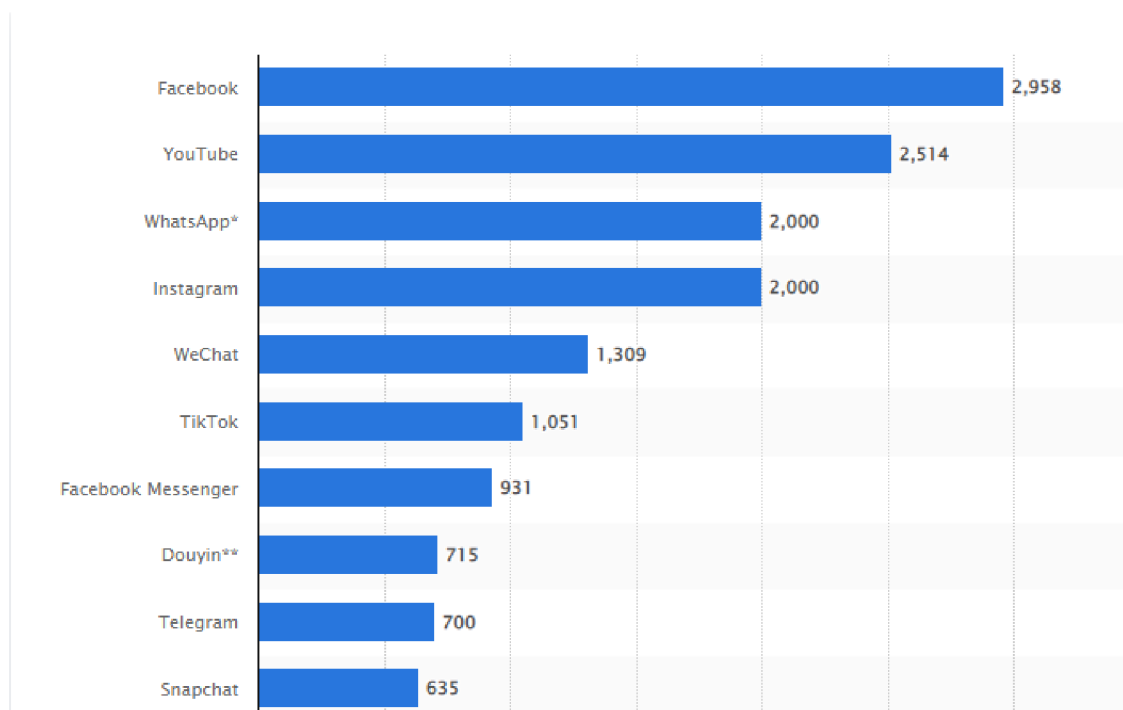
Source: Dixon, Statista, 2023

Figure 1 shows the number of active users of the most used social media platforms for January 2023 in millions.

➢ Networking

These technologies are primarily concerned with social interaction. These social media technologies are the most interpersonal. Examples include Facebook, LinkedIn, Google Plus, Instagram, and TikTok.

In different settings, the phrase "networking" can refer to a variety of things, including formal organizational structures, opportunities for professional or personal growth, or a method of boosting sales. An introduction to maximizing the advantages is timely given that networking is regarded as a key skill for students, business owners, and practitioners. This is because the digital age has created an abundance of opportunities for people and organizations to operate within a large and global network (Catherine O'Sullivan, 2021).

➢ Publishing

With the aid of these instruments, writers can publish their works individually or in groups. Usually, articles are presented in a subjective or analytical style. Here are several examples:

● Blogs

You are free to make entries that are as broad or as brief as you would like. You can frequently link to other websites and blog posts and incorporate videos and pictures in your article. Examples include WordPress, Blogger, and Typepad(O'Sullivan, 2021).

● Microblogs

The length of your entry is often limited on microblogs. Twitter, for instance, has a character restriction of 140. You can think of microblogs as online text messaging because they function similarly to blogs in that you can connect to photos and other websites (because of their briefness). Examples of microblogs can be Twitter and Yammer.

Tools that mix aspects of blogging and microblogging, like Tumblr and Pinterest, are a growing category of publishing tools. Users can publish brief updates in the form of text, photographs, and audio on these sites, giving them characteristics of both blogs and microblogs. While it is frequently challenging to leave comments on posts, it is generally

simple to share or repost the content of others. These technologies also frequently result in more design-focused and visually appealing blogs (O'Sullivan, 2021).

➢ Social search engines

Although the majority of social search engines frequently incorporate content that is not "social," they primarily draw information from social sites. These search engines will gather information from sources such as microblogs, blogs, social networks, and video and image sources. They frequently include links to other papers obtained online, like PDFs and Microsoft documents; see the examples below:

- o SocialMention
- o Addictomatic
- o Samepoint
- o CrowdEye
- o Pipl
- o YoName

➢ RSS and news feeds

The abbreviation RSS is well recognized for 'Really Simple Syndication.' RSS feeds give you a quick and effortless way to acquire the latest news from a website or resource. RSS feeds deliver 'real-time updates on breaking news from websites, blogs, and a variety of other online sources. Creating an RSS feed from a stored search is possible on many websites, allowing you to customize the information you receive and receive automatically updated search results. You may either gather the data via RSS feeds on a website like Net Vibes or have it emailed to you using a feed aggregator like Google Reader. A few examples of RSS feed pages include:

- o New York Times RSS feeds (http://www.nytimes.com/services/xml/rss/index.html)
- o CBC (Canadian news) (http://www.cbc.ca/rss/)
- o NRP (National Public Radio) (http://www.npr.org/rss/)

Examples of RSS aggregator sites and tools include:

- o Net Vibes

- o Google Reader
- o Feed Blitz

➢ Video, audio

These tools mainly offer locations for sharing and finding audio and video. Usually, you may use these websites to look for specific information, individuals, or organizations (Catherine O'Sullivan, 2021). YouTube, Blinkx, or Daily Motion can be considered examples of video. And audio examples can include iTunes podcasts or Podcast Alley.

➢ Communication

Thanks to these features, users can connect via text, voice, or video. Numerous features enable sharing of papers and multimedia assets, and multiple users can frequently communicate simultaneously. Examples of Communication tools are Skype, AOL Instant Messenger, Yahoo! Messenger, or ooVoo (O'Sullivan, 2021).

➢ Games and virtual worlds

These are generally just for entertainment. Games may be integrated into other social media platforms, location-based, accessible through mobile applications, or they may let you play online against players worldwide. Examples of this category can be World of Warcraft or Friendster. The above category is meant to get you thinking about the main functions of each tool so that you can understand them and pick the best ones for your research, not to give you specific categories for each one (Brown, 2012).

3.1.4 Most famous social media

According to a poll conducted in 2022, 31% of consumers worldwide identified Facebook as the social media network offering the greatest social commerce experience. TikTok came in third at 8%, followed by Instagram at 24%. Yet, 23% of respondents said they either didn't know or didn't think any social network was the strongest in this regard (Chevalier, 2022).

3.1.5 Facebook

In February 2004, Harvard University launched Facebook as a campus-based social network. It was developed by college students Edward Saverin and Mark Zuckerberg. It wasn't until 2006 that Facebook became accessible to users 13 and older, at which point it quickly surpassed MySpace to become the most well-known social network on the planet. Although it initially served as a means of staying in touch with or finding long-lost friends, it quickly rose to the top of the list of preferred advertising channels for companies that could target their audiences precisely and send advertisements to those who were most likely to be interested in their goods or services (Nations, What is Facebook?, 2021).

The following are a few of Facebook's most notable characteristics that contribute to its popularity:

- You may customize your privacy settings and your friends list on Facebook to control who can see the content on your profile.
- You can upload images to Facebook and keep photo albums that you can show to your friends.
- To stay in touch, exchange information, or just say "hello," Facebook offers interactive online chat as well as the option to comment on your friends' profile sites.
- Facebook offers group pages, fan pages, and company pages that enable companies to leverage the social media platform for social media marketing (Nations, What is Facebook?, 2021).

Since 2016, 69% of people in the United States (U.S.) have actively used Facebook, with YouTube having 81% of all adult social media users as a close second. Facebook data is used for a variety of purposes, such as analysing a job applicant's employability, political messaging, and targeted marketing. Researchers are increasingly adopting Facebook as a source of data because so much of it is accessible to the public (Jones, 2023).

3.1.6 Instagram

On October 6, 2010, Instagram was made available as an iPhone app, ushering in a new era of mobile photography as contrasted to older desktop Internet photography sites like

Flickr. In 2015, there were reported to be 3.4M smartphone mobile subscribers; this figure is expected to increase to 6.4B in 2021, or 70% of the global population. Instagram stated in a blog post in September 2015 claimed it had 400 million users, 75% of whom were outside of the United States, and that 80 million photographs were shared every day. 90% of the 2.5 trillion images shared or stored online in 2016 were taken using a smartphone, according to one estimate (Manovich, 2015).

Instagram is the most desired social media platform for influencer marketing, according to 90% of surveyed marketers, with over one billion monthly active users globally. Those who frequently discuss a specific issue on social media and have a huge following are known as social media influencers. These influencers often test out things, analyse them, and write product reviews for their followers (Kian Yeik Koay, 2021).

79 percent of respondents indicated they utilized Instagram to promote their businesses, making it the second most popular social media site among marketers in 2022. Even though Instagram offers great marketing and advertising tools, only one-quarter of worldwide marketers chose Instagram as their top social media network, while half chose Facebook (Dixon, Instagram - Statistics & Facts, 2023).

3.1.7   TikTok

The social networking app TikTok, formerly known as Musical.ly, allows users to create and share films up to three minutes long (Osmanksi, 2023).
TikTok was the new name after it was purchased by ByteDance in 2018; its popularity and user base have since increased significantly. 95 minutes a day are spent on TikTok by users worldwide (Geyser, 2022).

The app's worldwide version, which was first released for the Chinese market in 2016 under the name Douyin, soon became viral, gaining millions of users annually. TikTok's stratospheric rise is still going strong, despite the fact that it still trails Facebook and Instagram in terms of popularity. TikTok is one of the most valuable media entertainment brands in the world, growing its brand value at a staggering 215 percent per year. There is no denying the app's success as a business model in light of this. In addition to the hype being recognized by young internet users, advertisers are now investing more time and money in the app. The enormous marketing potential of TikTok is being increasingly embraced by brands and companies. According to a recent survey, over 43% of business

executives expected to utilize TikTok more frequently for marketing initiatives over the next 12 months, even if it still cannot compete with Facebook, Instagram, and other popular social media platforms used by marketers (Department, 2023)

One billion people use TikTok each month. With 3 billion downloads and 383 million installs from January to June of 2021 alone, TikTok was the most popular non-game app in that period (Dean, 2022).

3.1.8 LinkedIn

On May 5, 2003, co-founder Reid Hoffman formally established LinkedIn, which had its origins in Hoffman's living room in 2002. It is the biggest professional network in the world, with more than 900 million members spread over more than 200 nations and territories. Professionals may network, share, and explore on LinkedIn, a social media platform. It is comparable to Facebook for career. On LinkedIn, you can connect with people by adding them as "connections," much like how you might add someone as a friend on Facebook. You communicate with other users via private messages (or other available communication methods), and you have a nicely formatted profile to showcase all of your professional accomplishments (Nations, What Is LinkedIn?, 2020)

Employers, business contacts, and other professionals can all be found on LinkedIn. Users can publish their portfolios and résumé online using LinkedIn. The majority of B2B companies utilize LinkedIn marketing to increase customer awareness of their brand, generate leads, and open up new sales channels. You can access a sizable group of business people. You may use LinkedIn to tailor your advertising based on many factors, like region, firm size, and job title. This implies that you can precisely target your audience and reach them. It's an excellent area to network with possible consumers and clients because it's a platform for professionals (Barker, 2022).

3.1.9 YouTube

San Bruno, California-based YouTube serves as the world's most popular social media and online video-sharing network. Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim debuted it on February 14, 2005 (YouTube, 2023).

YouTube has evolved from a collection of amateur videos to the largest online video platform in the world since its start in 2005 and acquisition by Google a year later. YouTube

keeps up with customer demands by introducing YouTube Shorts, the platform's own short-form vertical video offering. In February 2023, YouTube Shorts, which went live internationally in June 2021, surpassed 50 billion daily views (Ceci, 2023).

In November 2022, there were almost 72 billion visits to the YouTube website from mobile users worldwide, compared to only 8 billion visits from PC users. More than 2.56 billion people worldwide were viewing YouTube in 2022. Given the size of YouTube's global audience, it should come as no surprise that the well-liked video site has developed into not only a launching pad for influencers but also a potent revenue-generating device for Google and its parent company Alphabet. More than 29 billion dollars in global advertising income were made by YouTube in 2022, making up about 11.35 percent of Google's overall yearly revenue. Marketers anticipate a growth in the use of YouTube for advertising in the upcoming years even though it is more expensive to do so than on other social media platforms and it does pay off (Ceci, 2023).

3.1.10 Apple

3.1.11 Introduction

One of the most successful and socially significant businesses ever was the Apple® Corporation. Homes, companies, and entertainment venues all use its products. The most recent high-tech product it released for the consumer electronics sector was the Apple WatchTM. This company was founded more modestly because of a variety of circumstances coming together to construct a special environment. A bunch of enthusiast electronics hobbyists was where it all began. This innovation was made possible by intelligent people, an engineering-focused social atmosphere, business angels eager to invest in a new start-up company, and technological advancements that appeared at the appropriate time and place (Kubilaya, 2015).

3.1.12 History

1976–1980: The early years

To sell the Apple I personal computer kit, Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak, and Ronald Wayne founded Apple on April 1, 1976. Wozniak created these by hand and debuted them to the public at the Homebrew Computer Club. The Apple I was offered for sale as a motherboard (complete with CPU, RAM, and simple textual-video chips), which is less than what is now regarded as a full personal computer. The market price of the Apple I, when it first went on sale in July 1976, was USD 666.66. Wayne, whose portion of the firm he had previously given to Jobs and Wozniak for USD 800, was absent when Apple was founded on January 3, 1977 (Kubilaya, 2015).

On April 16, 1977, during the first West Coast Computer Faire, the Apple II was unveiled. It distinguished itself from its principal competitors, the TRS-80 and Commodore PET, by having colour graphics and an open architecture. Early in the 1980s, Apple had continuous growth partly because of its leadership in the educational space and its implementation of the LOGO programming language, which was utilized in many classrooms alongside the Apple II. California's commitment to education was strengthened by the state's public schools receiving one Apple II and one Apple LOGO software package as gifts (Manovich, 2015).

1986-1993 Rise and fall

After releasing the hefty Macintosh Portable in 1989, Apple learned several harsh lessons and released the PowerBook in 1991, which established the contemporary design and practical layout of the laptop computer. The same year, Apple released System 7, a significant update to the operating system that gave the interface colour and provided new networking features. Up until 2001, it remained the Mac OS architectural foundation. Revenue rose because of PowerBook's and other products' success. For a while, it seemed as though Apple could do no wrong, constantly launching new products and reaping ever-increasing profits. The years 1989 to 1991 were referred to as the "first golden age" and 1991 as the "first golden age" of the Macintosh by the magazine MacAddict (Kubilaya, 2015).

1994-1997 Attempts at reinvention

One of the first PDAs in the market and Apple's entry into the PDA market was Newton. Apple started creating competing Macintosh platforms in the early 1990s, like the A/UX. Developing a new platform to replace the Macintosh or redesign it to run on more potent hardware would be necessary (Kubilaya, 2015).

Apple joined IBM and Motorola in the AIM alliance in 1994. The PowerPC Reference Platform was intended to be a new computing platform that combined Apple software with hardware from IBM and Motorola. To compete with Microsoft, the AIM alliance thought that PReP's performance and Apple's software would significantly outpace the. PC.

The Power Macintosh, the first of several Apple computers, was released by Apple in the same year (Kubilaya, 2015).

1998-2005 New beginnings

Apple unveiled the iMac, a brand-new all-in-one computer, on August 15, 1998. It was similar to the Macintosh 128K. Jonathan Ive, who would later create the iPod and the iPhone, was the team leader for the iMac design. Modern technologies and innovative designs were present in the iMac. In its first five months, it sold nearly 800,000 units, bringing Apple back to profitability for the first time since 1993. During this time, Apple acquired several businesses to build a consumer- and professional-focused digital production software portfolio. Apple announced the acquisition of Final Cut software from Macromedia in 1998, marking the company's entry into the digital video editing industry. Apple released two video editing tools the next year: iMovie for consumers and Final Cut Pro for professionals. The latter program became a prominent video editing tool, with 800,000 registered users in early 2007. Apple acquired Nothing Real in 2002 for their high-end digital compositing program Shake and Emagic for their music productivity program Logic, which sparked the creation of their consumer-oriented GarageBand program. The iLife suite was finished by the release of iPhoto that same year (Kubilaya, 2015).

The first official Apple Retail Stores in Virginia and California went live on May 19, 2001. Apple released the iPod portable digital audio player in the same year. More than 100 million product units were sold in just six years, which was highly successful. The first

iteration of Apple's iTunes Store, which offers online music downloads for US$0.99 per song and iPod integration, debuted in 2003. By June 19, 2008, there had been more than 5 billion downloads from the service, making it the market leader in online music services (Kubilaya, 2015).2011-2012 Steve Jobs' death

In 2011 and 2012, Apple introduced the iPhone 4S and iPhone 5, which had upgraded cameras, Siri, a "smart software assistant," and cloud-sourced data with iCloud; the third and fourth generations of iPads, which had Retina displays; and the iPad Mini, which had a smaller screen than the iPad at 9.7 inches. These launches were successful, with the iPad Mini and fourth generation iPad (launched on November 3, 2012) and the iPhone 5 (issued on September 21, 2012) becoming Apple's most giant iPhone launches with over 2 million pre-orders and sales of 3 million iPads in three days (Kubilaya, 2015).

2005-present The Intel partnership

Apple would start making Mac laptops with Intel processors in 2006, according to Steve Jobs' keynote address at the Worldwide Developers Conference on June 6, 2005. The new MacBook Pro and iMac were the first Apple computers to use the Core Duo CPU on January 10, 2006. Over a year ahead of schedule, on August 7, 2006, Apple switched the entire Mac product line over to Intel processors. Steve Jobs declared that Apple Computer, Inc. would now be known as Apple Inc. during his keynote address at Macworld on January 9, 2007. The iPhone and Apple TV were also introduced at the event (Kubilaya, 2015).

Considering the geographic area, the Apple sector is concentrated mostly in urban areas of the United States and in a global market. Age groups generally between 20 and 45 years old are included in Apple Inc.'s demographic category. Apple products appeal to consumers with considerable purchasing power, whether they are single or married. In addition, it targets customers who are professional executives and are interested in advancing their careers. In the behaviour area, Apple targets devoted customers who will not only continue to purchase Apple goods but also any and all things the company decides to launch. Apple Inc. focuses on the middle and top classes of society in its psychological segment, which is separated into distinct social life (Tien, 2019).

3.1.13 The social media of Apple

In this chapter the social media of Apple, more specifically its Instagram (Figure 2), Facebook, LinkedIn and TikTok pages and the official website will be presented.
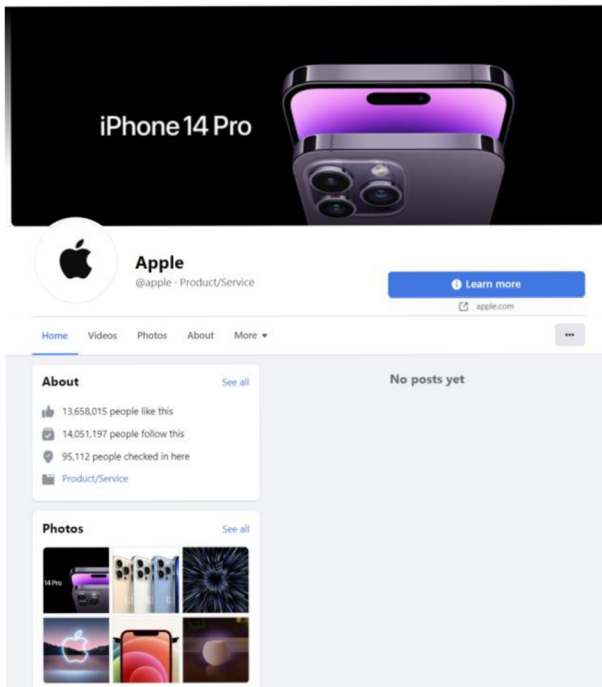
Figure 2 The official Instagram page of Apple
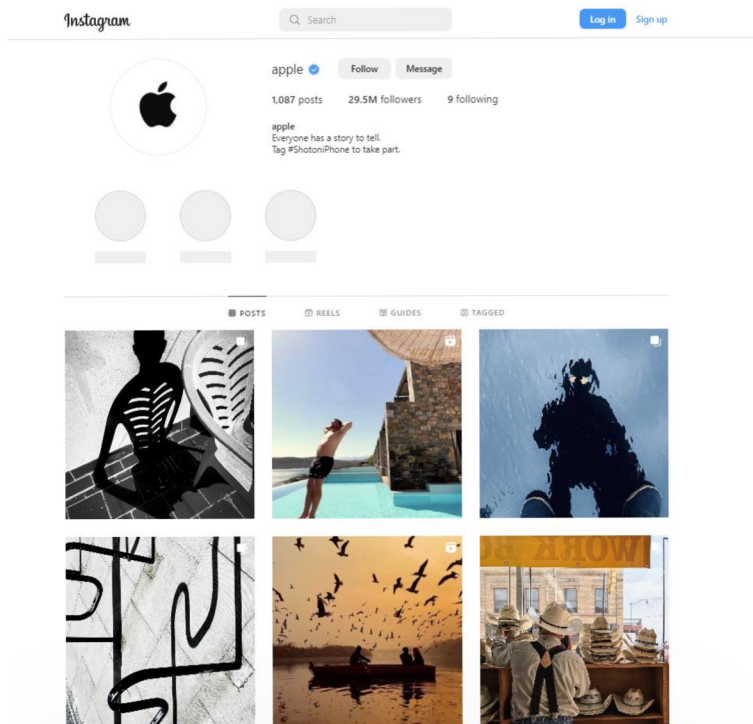
Source: https://www.instagram.com/apple/

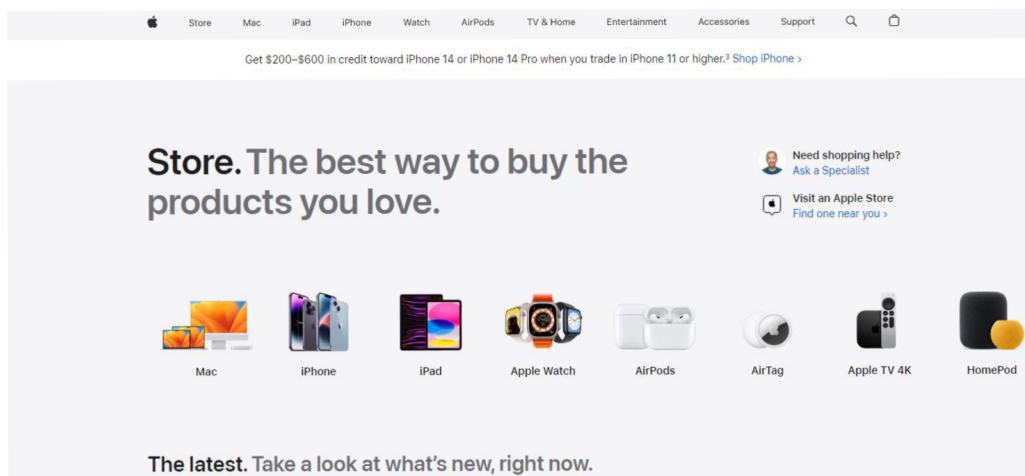Figure 2 shows the official Instagram page of Apple, with twenty-nine and a half million followers.

Figure 0 The official Facebook page of Facebook

Source: https://www.facebook.com/apple/

Figure 3 represents the official page of Apple in Facebook platform.

Figure 4 The official website of Apple

Source: https://www.apple.com/

In the Figure 4 the official website of Apple is shown.

Figure 1 The official LinkedIn profile of Apple
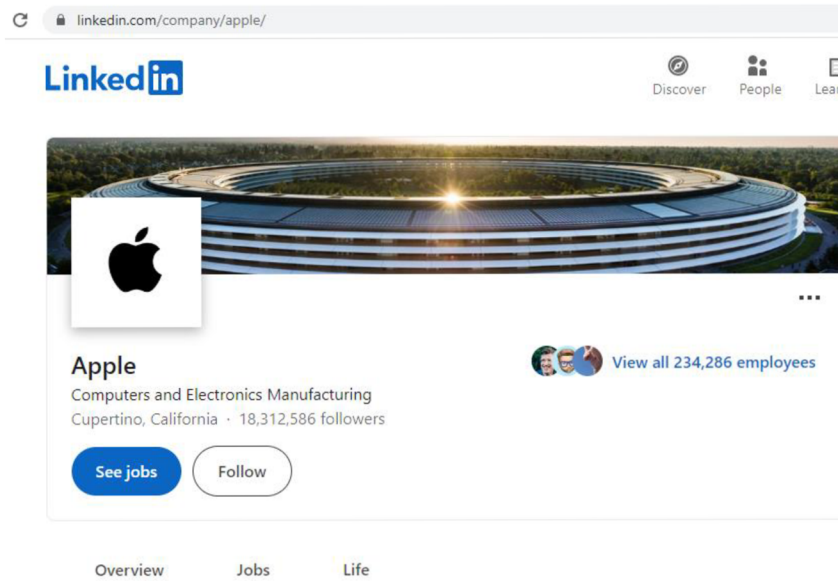
Source: https://www.linkedin.com/company/apple/

The Figure 5 represents the official LinkedIn profile of Apple.

Figure 6 The official TikTok profile of Apple
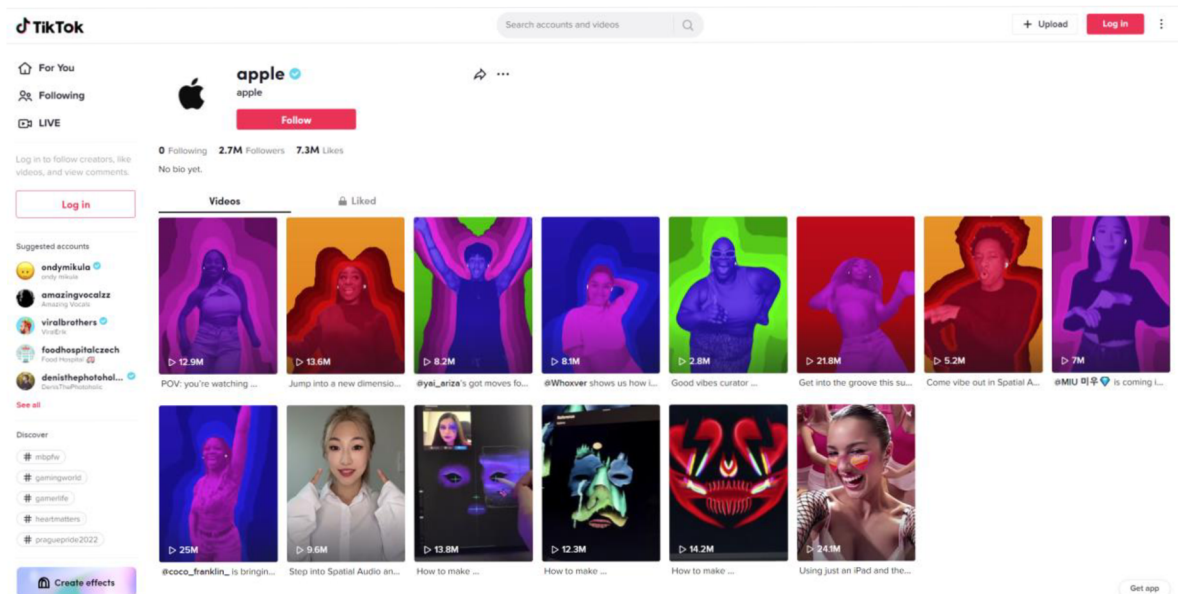
Source: https://www.tiktok.com/@apple

In the Figure 6 there is the TikTok official profile of Apple.

3.1.14 Microsoft Office 365

3.1.15 Introduction

A leading producer of personal computer software systems and applications is Microsoft Corporation. The company also makes its own brand of hybrid tablet computers, provides email services, publishes books and multimedia titles, and sells input/output devices for computers as well as electronic game systems. There are sales locations for it all around the world. In addition to its primary R&D facility at its corporate headquarters in Redmond, Washington, the United States, Microsoft also maintains research facilities in Cambridge, England (founded in 1997), Beijing, China (founded in 1998), Bengaluru, India (founded in 2005), Cambridge, Massachusetts (founded in 2008), New York, New York (2012), and Montreal, Canada (2015) (Mark Hall, 2023).

3.1.16 History

Two childhood friends from Seattle, Bill Gates and Paul G. Allen, adapted the famous mainframe computer programming language BASIC for use on the Altair, an early personal computer (PC), in 1975. A short while later, Gates and Allen established Microsoft, naming it after the phrase's software and microcomputer. They improved BASIC and created other programming languages over the course of the following few years. When the IBM PC, the world's first personal computer, was released in 1980, International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) commissioned Microsoft to provide the necessary operating system. Microsoft changed the MS-DOS operating system after it was purchased from another company (Microsoft Disk Operating System). In 1981, the IBM PC was released alongside MS-DOS. Following that, most personal computer makers obtained the license to use MS-DOS as their operating system, generating enormous profits for Microsoft. By the early 1990s, the program had sold over 100 million copies and beaten out rival operating systems like CP/M, which it had replaced in the early 1980s, and later IBM OS/2 (Mark Hall, 2023).

With Windows, a graphical user interface that debuted in 1990 and quickly attracted a large following, Microsoft strengthened its leadership in the operating system market. One million copies of Windows 3.0 and later versions were sold each month by 1993, and Microsoft's operating system was installed on nearly 90% of all personal computers at that time. Windows 95, which successfully equalled the simplicity of use of Apple Computer's

Mac OS and represented the first full integration of MS-DOS with Windows, was released by the firm in 1995. In the process of outpacing its long-time rivals Lotus and WordPerfect, Microsoft also rose to the top of the productivity software market, including word processors and spreadsheet tools (Mark Hall, 2023).

Microsoft significantly increased the size of its electronic publishing division, which was established in 1985 and was already well-known for the popularity of its multimedia encyclopaedia, Encarta. It also joined the information services and entertainment industries with a variety of goods and services, most notably the Microsoft Network and MSNBC. As a result, Microsoft, which had become a publicly owned corporation in 1986, was among the most influential and successful businesses in American history by the mid-1990s. It maintained an incredible record of making 25 cents in earnings for every dollar of sales. The business's net income exceeded $2 billion for the first time in the fiscal year 1996, and it has continued to exceed that threshold ever since (by the fiscal year 2009, its net income had increased to more than $14 billion). However, the company's quick rise in a fiercely competitive and quickly evolving sector caused rivals to feel resentful and jealous. Some even claimed that the company's actions broke American laws against unfair competition. Microsoft and its supporters replied that, rather than restricting competition and technological innovation, their success had fostered both and that their software had steadily gotten more affordable and helpful. An inquiry by the U.S. Justice Department resulted in a settlement in 1994. Microsoft adjusted some sales practices that the government claimed allowed the corporation to unfairly dissuade OS users from considering alternative applications. The proposed acquisition of Intuit Inc. by Microsoft, at the time the top provider of PC financial software, was successfully contested the year after (Mark Hall, 2023).

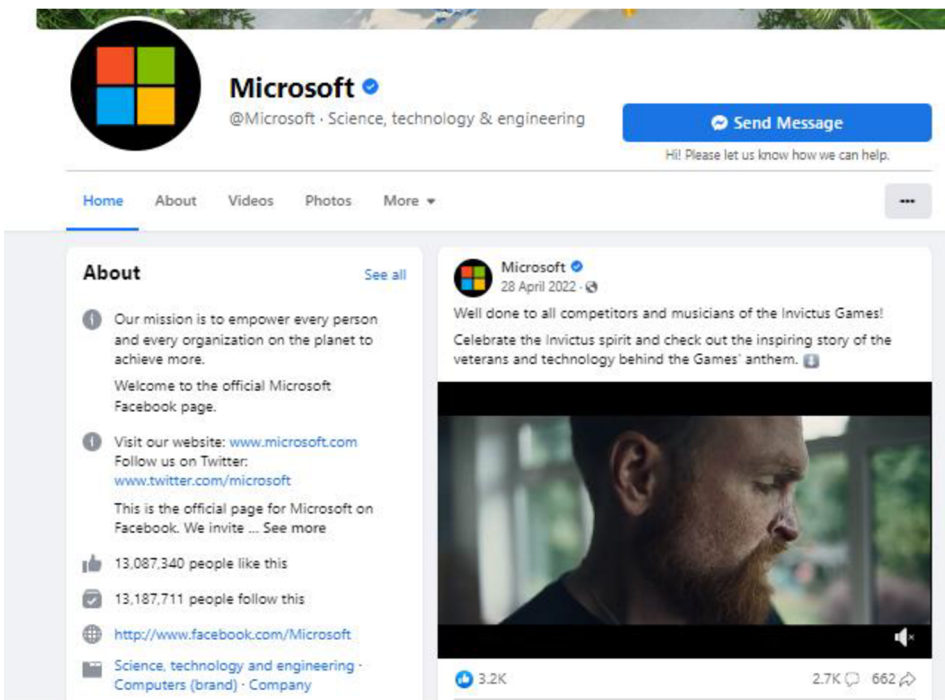### 3.1.17 The social media of Microsoft Office 365

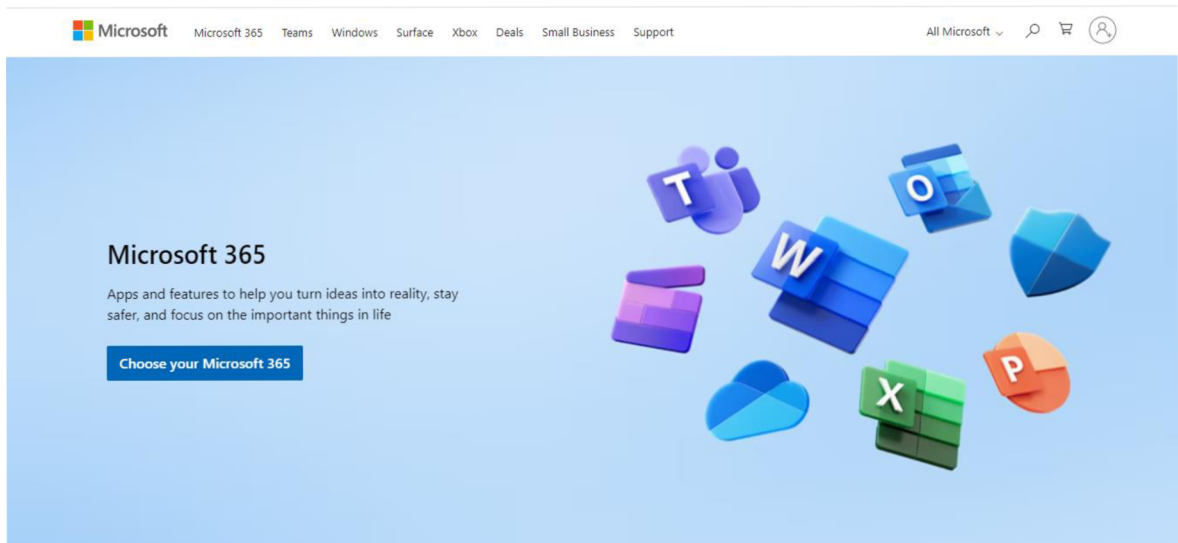Figure 2 The official Instagram page of Microsoft

Source: https://www.instagram.com/microsoft/
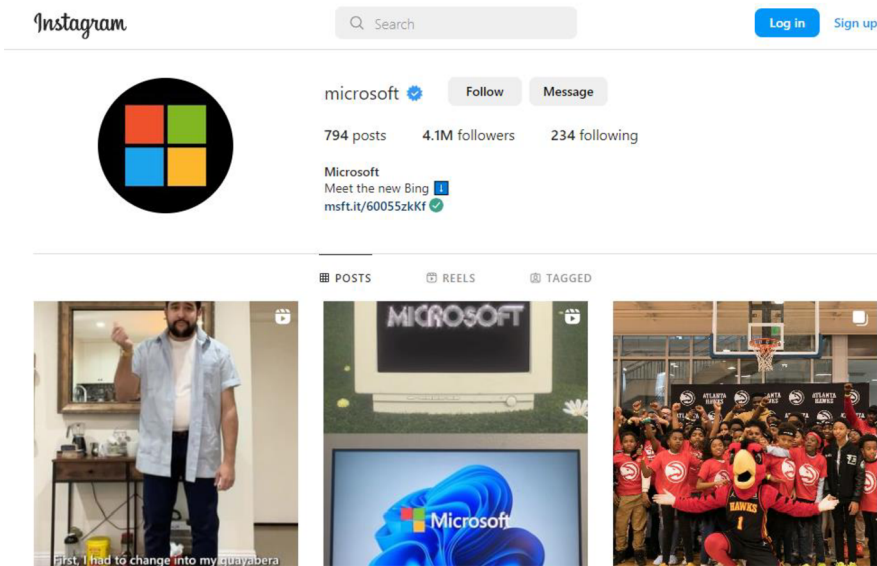
In the Figure 7 the official Instagram profile of Microsoft is shown.

Figure 8 The official Facebook page of Microsoft

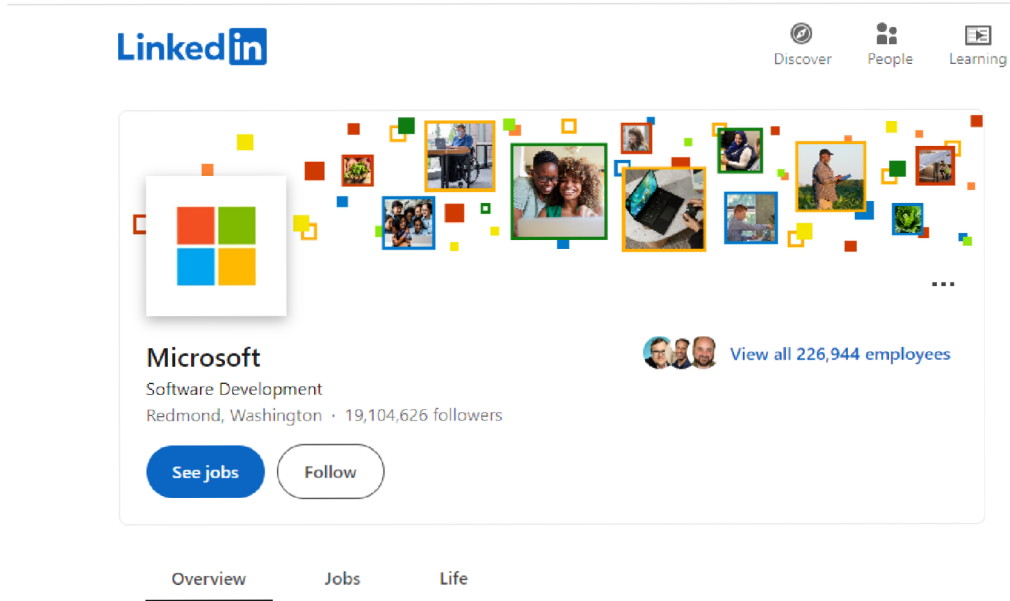Source: https://www.facebook.com/Microsoft/

Figure 9 The official website of Microsoft

Source: https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/

In the Figure 9 there is the official website of Microsoft.

Figure 10 The official LinkedIn profile of Microsoft

Source: https://www.linkedin.com/company/microsoft/

The official LinkedIn profile is shown in the Figure 10.

3.1.18 Samsung

3.1.19 Introduction

Samsung is a South Korean firm that ranks among the top manufacturers of electrical goods. Samsung focuses on producing a wide range of consumer and business electronics, including integrated systems, digital media players, semiconductors, and appliances. It now ranks among the most well-known tech brands and contributes to around one-fifth of South Korea's total exports (Bondarenko, 2022).

3.1.20 History

In South Korea, Samsung Electric Industries was founded in January 1969. Lee Byung-Chul, the company's founder, was a South Korean businessperson. The company was a subsidiary of the Samsung Group, which was best known in South Korea as a fertilizer and sweetener trading firm, vastly different from its current home in the technology industry (Samsung.com, 2023).

The name Samsung, which translates to "three stars," embodies the goals of its founder Lee Byung-Chull. Three symbolizes size, plenty, and strength, while the star symbolizes brightness, elevation, and enduring illumination (Samsung.com, 2023).

On March 1, 1938, Lee Byung-Chull established Samsung as a grocery trade store. He began his enterprise in Taegu, Korea, trading noodles and other products made in the area and shipping them to China and its outlying provinces. Lee expanded his company into textiles after the Korean War and established the biggest woollen mill in Korea. To aid in his nation's post-war development, he strongly emphasized industrialisation. During that time, his company profited from new protectionist measures the Korean government took to help domestically significant companies (chaebol) by sheltering them from the competition and facilitating cheap financing. In addition to several insurance companies, an oil refinery, a nylon manufacturer, and a department store, Samsung bought these businesses in the 1960s. To be more competitive in the textile market, the company expanded its textile manufacturing procedures during the 1970s to include the entire production chain, from raw materials to finished goods. New subsidiaries were founded, including Samsung Heavy Industries, Samsung Shipbuilding, and Samsung Precision Company (Samsung Techwin).

Additionally, the business began investing in the heavy, chemical, and petrochemical industries around this time, giving it a robust growth path (Bondarenko, 2022).

In 1969, Samsung debuted in the electronics sector with many subsidiaries dedicated to the sector. Televisions in black and white were their first offerings. The business started exporting home electronics goods abroad in the 1970s. Samsung had already established itself as a significant Korean manufacturer at the time and had purchased a 50% interest in Korea Semiconductor. According to company lore, one of Samsung's original mobile phones, released in 1995, allegedly had technical issues. When the phone's manufacturer, Samsung's chairperson Kun-Hee Lee, learned of it, he reportedly visited the facility and ordered the inventory to be set on fire (Kovach, 2013).

By the late 1990s, Samsung had recovered from its original error and started actively considering mobile phones. In 1999, it unveiled one of its first mobile devices with Internet access. At some point, Samsung's most lucrative division would be mobile. Samsung continued to improve its televisions in the late 1990s. In 1998, it manufactured the first digital TV that was mass-produced. By 1999, it offered an extensive selection of digital TVs (Kovach, 2013).

The Galaxy smartphone series was introduced by Samsung in the 2000s, and it swiftly rose to prominence as one of the best-selling smartphone lines worldwide, as well as one of the company's most lauded offerings. In addition, Samsung supplied the first iPhone models with its microprocessors. In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, Samsung was one of the major producers of microprocessors worldwide (Bondarenko, 2022).

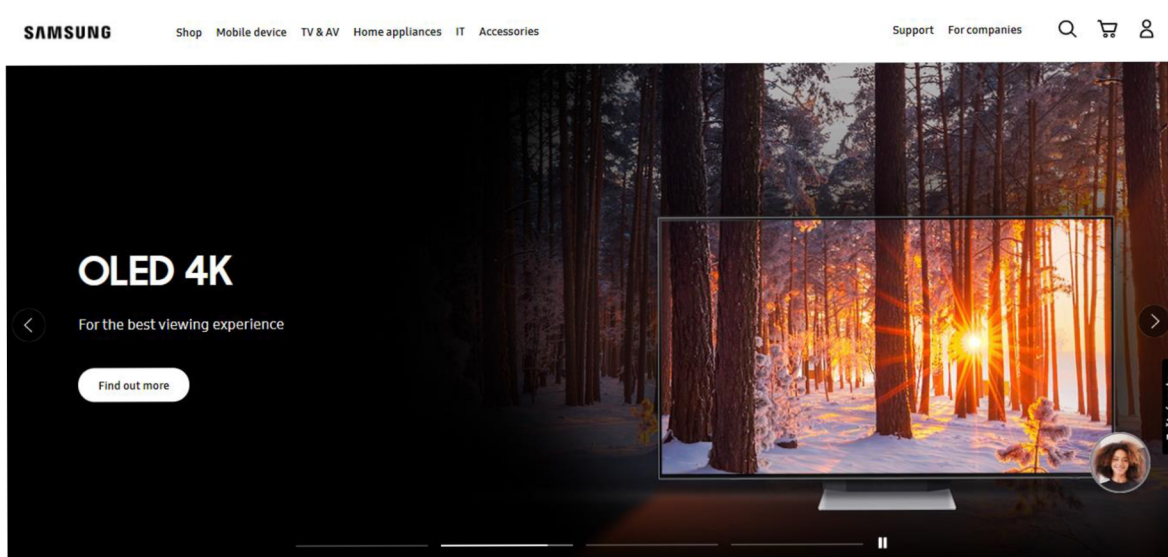### 3.1.21 The social media of Samsung

Figure 3 The official Instagram of Samsung

Source: https://www.instagram.com/samsung/
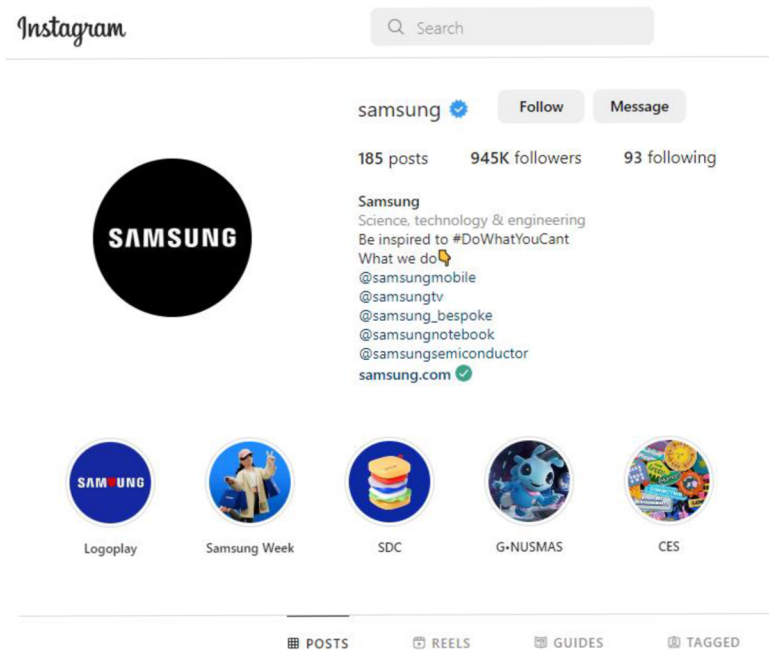
In the Figure 11 the official Instagram profile of Samsung is introduced.

Figure 12 The official website of Samsung

Source: https://www.samsung.com/

In the Figure 12 there is the official website page of Samsung.

Figure 4 The official LinkedIn profile of Samsung

Source: https://www.linkedin.com/company/samsung-electronics
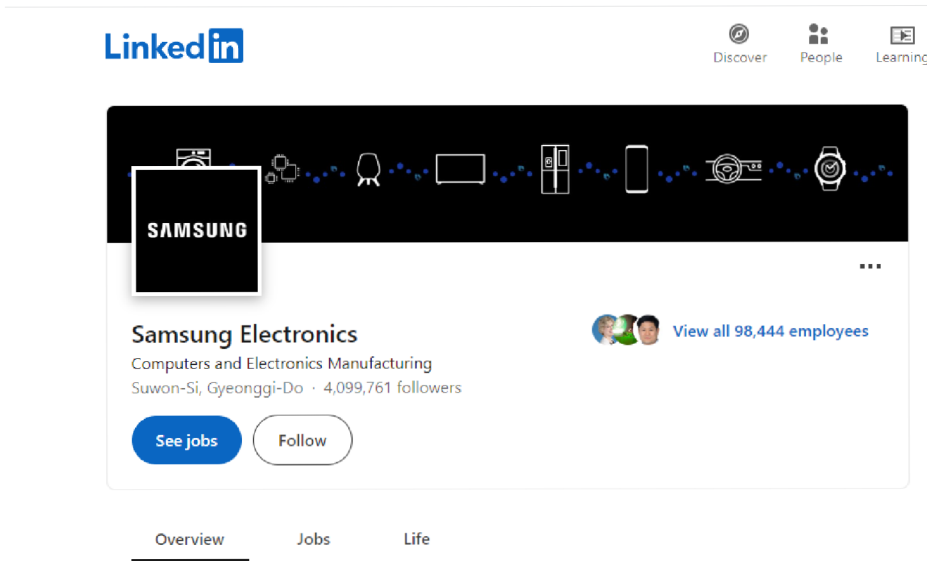
The official LinkedIn profile of Samsung is represented in the Figure 13.

Figure 5 The official Facebook profile of Samsung

Source: https://www.facebook.com/SamsungUS/
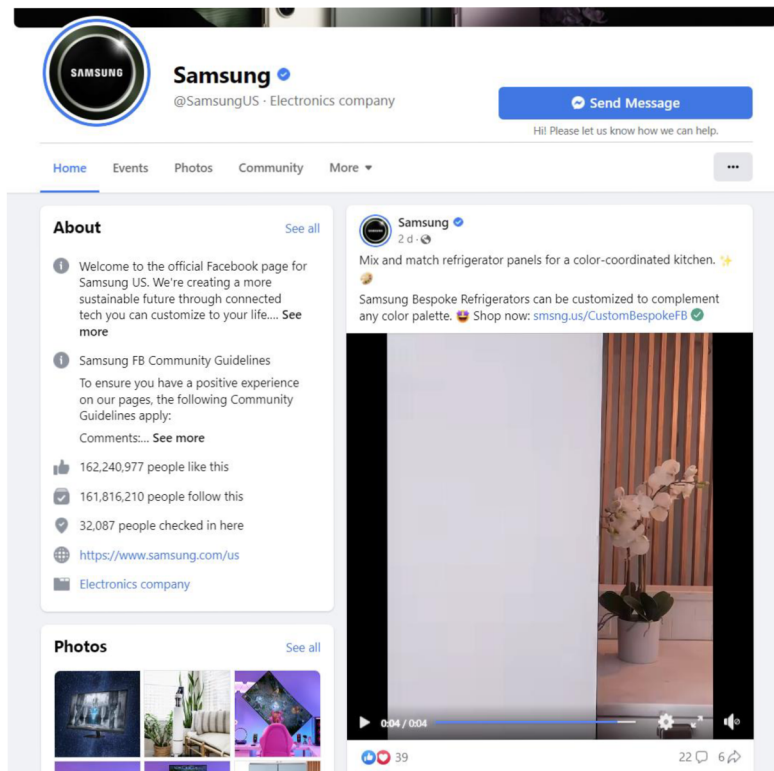
In the Figure 14 the official Facebook page of Samsung is shown.

Figure 15 The official TikTok profile of Samsung

Source: https://www.tiktok.com/@samsung
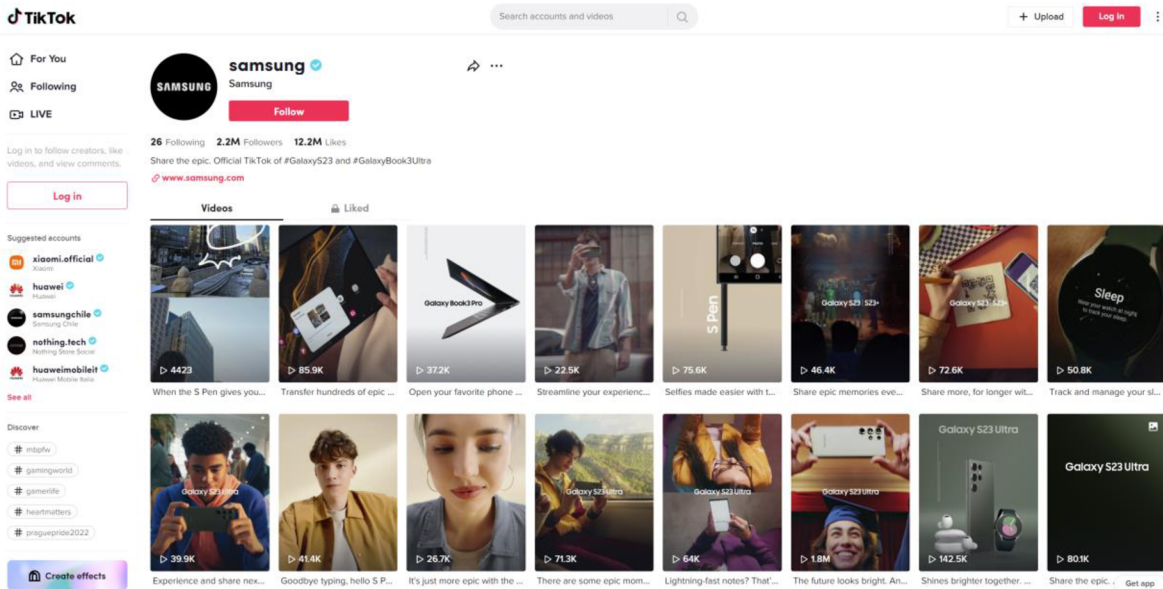
In the Figure 15 the official TikTok profile of Samsung is displayed.

3.2 Marketing

3.2.1   What the marketing is and its types

According to Kotler, marketing is 'The science and art of exploring, creating and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. Marketing identifies unfulfilled needs and desires. It defines, measures and quantifies the size of the identified market and the profit potential' (Kotler P. , 2012).

Excellent marketing is interesting, instructive, and occasionally even fun. The aim of marketing is to draw in more customers, keep them coming back, and encourage them to tell their friends and family about your brand (Iseli, 2021).

Marketing aims to assist business owners in luring the proper customers to their establishment so they may cultivate trust by wooing and charming them (Iseli, 2021).

Mass Marketing

One of the earliest and best-known types of marketing is mass marketing. It occurs when a company broadcasts its marketing messages to all its target customers without first dividing its market into distinct audiences. This method has the drawback of costing a lot of money with little to show for it after you broadcast your message to everyone. This strategy is effective for campaigns with large marketing budgets. Customizing your campaigns to each market niche will increase their effectiveness. This will help your audience connect with your message and feel understood. Your potential clients are more likely to take notice of your business if your marketing is more focused and customized (Iseli, 2021).

Hope Marketing

One widespread fallacy in the hope marketing is the idea that "if you build it, they will come." An example of hope marketing can be described as when a business owner purchases a storefront or makes an expensive online investment in the hope that customers will swarm to their establishment. Sadly, this does not occur very frequently. The owners must take the initiative to invest in creating a marketing machine that draws clients if they want to see their company expand (Iseli, 2021).

Hunting vs. Farming

Hunting is a further highly typical form of marketing. In this strategy, business owners look for clients only when starving—when not enough clients are pouring in through the doors. Hunting frequently entails tasks like cold contacting, scouring the area for the next client, and persuading people to make purchases so that the company can survive the coming season. When they give up looking, the customer flow ends as well (Iseli, 2021).

Relationship-based marketing

Relationship-based marketing, or so-called "farming," is another type of marketing. To succeed with this strategy, businesses should concentrate on developing their prospects

so that when clients are ready to buy, they will pick them over everyone else. With this strategy, you devote resources to nurturing prospects that need a little more time to decide whether to buy rather than just focusing on the high-yielding fruit or customers who are ready to buy. With this strategy, you will establish trust and win over devoted customers and admirers who will promote your brand loudly (Iseli, 2021).

An excellent marketing tool is a website. One of the most crucial digital marketing platforms you can employ to increase traffic or sales is your website, which represents your company online. Every company that wants to be successful online must have a well-defined website marketing plan. For companies that wish to compete in the fiercely competitive online market, this is now a "must-have," not an option (Chris, 2022).

These days, the brand's website is one of the main platforms via which consumers may discover the brand and take activities that directly support the expansion of the company. The digital marketing methods used by inbound companies are funnel-shaped. Customers use search engines, publications, applications, and the internet to find products. The goal of the inbound strategy is to attract visitors to the website so they may read and view the content and, eventually, make a purchase (Santo, 2022)

3.2.2 The customer journeys

Since people now shop and learn in very different ways than they did only a few years ago, marketers must adapt or risk extinction. Online shopping and information gathering are becoming commonplace. Marketers need to fundamentally alter the way they approach marketing in order to capitalize on this new reality (Brian Halligan, 2014)

Each potential consumer follows a slightly different route from when they discover the business until they start purchasing from it. This is referred to as the customer journey, and social media can significantly impact this process. Before deciding to do business with a firm, a prospect might, for instance, find it on Facebook, go over its website, read some of its LinkedIn recommendations, and sign up for its emails. Businesses can prevent having a leaky bucket by putting some online ecosystem in place. Another person might come across

the company via a recommendation, visit the website, click on social media pages, and so forth (Iseli, 2021).

Each client journey is unique, and the length of each varies depending on three factors:

➢ the person's buying behaviour

➢ the urgency of their need

➢ the type of business

Figure 16 The customer journey
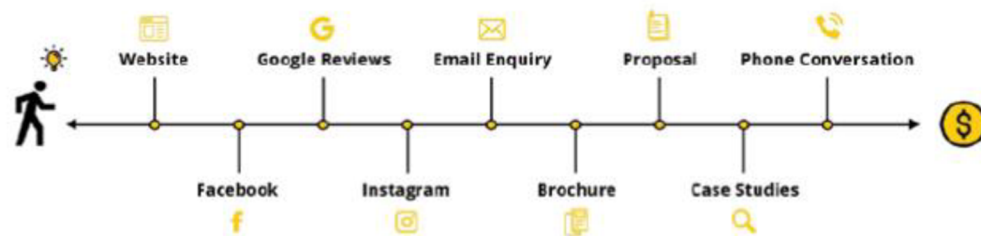
Source: Social Media for Small Business

3.3 Market of one

The market is shifting from being a market of the masses to a market of one. How can we describe what is a market of one? The market of one indicates that a business handles every customer like an individual and that the client feels as though they are getting special treatment in terms of services, goods, encounters, and feelings. In this case, customers may personalize their lives with companies by choosing when to shop, work, relax, spend time with their families, etc. Thanks to already-existing technologies that were immediately built for this aim, the personalization of experiences was disruptively accelerated in 2020 because of COVID-19. Everyone's digital interactions with the world can be customized (Ranfagni, 2021).

The newest aspect of the marketplace is called market space. A marketplace is a real-world location where customers can shop for goods and services. Nonetheless, the industry changed into internet-based platforms that offer goods from numerous vendors throughout the era of e-commerce firms, such as Alibaba and Amazon (Ranfagni, 2021).

But what exactly is market space if physical and digital markets are referred to as marketplaces? Because of the word "space", the name stands out from the marketplace and

is quite descriptive. However, we are aware that we are a part of it even though we cannot touch or hug space. And because there is a word "space", individuals may believe that they can find whatever they seek and that all their needs will be met. Therefore, considering the market space, we can see that it is vast, multifaceted, and constantly changing. And to create that market space, companies should have a direct relationship with their customers; they need to know them to get some good deals (Ranfagni, 2021).

They have outlined 10 measures brands should follow to revaluate their marketspace strategy.

1. Determine whether their mission is still relevant and meets client needs.
2. Specify target audience definition.
3. To draw customers to their brand, companies should research the consumer journey and comprehend the space that consumers occupy.
4. Establish effective conversational spheres for the various touchpoints that correspond to the consumer journey.
5. Develop material for the many touchpoints.
6. Deploy a variety of communication tactics that are consistent and targeted at the consumer and draw attention to issues that are important to them at every stage of their journey.
7. Attention should be paid while welcoming customers into the brand's retail space or product display area.
8. The consumer should be given support and assistance to meet their needs and finish their experience at the buying stage without being coerced.
9. Use data to learn more about customers and interact with them in a way that will make them feel appreciated and satisfied during and after a sale.
10. Continue to engage the consumer with content that presents new options for experiences to keep them as a customer.

Brands are starting to either benefit from or face challenges from the third-party retail or e-tail intermediary. The primary distinction between the old and new marketplace systems is that, in any retail or online context, the brand contacts the client, not the other way around (Ranfagni, 2021).

3.3.1 From individual to social

Today's world of connectedness has made social conformity more crucial than ever. Customers share their comments and create enormous databases of reviews as they show an increasing interest in other people's perspectives. Customers collectively build their own picture of businesses and brands, which is frequently different from what these entities aim to convey. This significant transition was made possible by the Internet, particularly social media, which offered the platform and resources needed (Philip, 2016)

For instance, it is a widespread practice in many countries to conduct in-store research utilizing mobile devices to check reviews and compare pricing. Customers can access the knowledge of the community through mobile connectivity, which helps them make smarter purchasing decisions. Customers are becoming active mediums of communication rather than passive targets from the perspective of marketing communications (Philip, 2016).

Consumers in today's market are no longer only passive recipients of marketing messages from companies. Their level of sophistication and scepticism is rising, and they are becoming more active in their pursuit of the news, ideas, goods, and services that they find interesting (Funk, 2009).

3.3.2 Customer reviews

These days, businesses and organizations offer services that require client feedback. With the swift expansion of business or organization, more services and goods are available online, increasing client satisfaction. Customers that need to utilize items or services will read reviews to voice their opinions on the services, and the provider will also read reviews. Consumer reviews are a growing source of customer feedback for businesses. Unlike polls, which ask customers for specific information, these reviews feature words regarding user experiences with goods and services (Songpan, 2017).

Customers post their thoughts on a business's goods and services in customer reviews for other people to read. Several individuals examine these reviews to discover more about companies and investigate their goods or services before making a purchase. Positive customer feedback can boost a business's reputation and reassure clients who are considering making a purchase. Providing a site where customers can post reviews helps strengthen their relationship with the company and entice potential customers to try their goods and services. By offering suggestions and pointing out methods to make purchasing more enjoyable, consumer evaluations can assist businesses in improving the customer experience. Customer

feedback can enhance brand loyalty and customer interactions, which will result in more favourable reviews and greater consumer satisfaction. Good customer feedback can assist your business's reputation and brand recognition, which can influence potential consumers to learn more about it and consider doing business with you (Eads, 2023).

4 Practical Part

4.1 Introduction

In this research paper, quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were implemented, specifically survey and interviews. The plan was to gather a significant sample of respondents from the survey and have a few interviews as well with professionals in this area. The main goal of gathering data from the participants is to show how social media influence people's purchasing decisions, and find out if people do buy a product based on social media advertisements and how it influences companies' profit. Moreover, by conducting interviews, deeper insights into social media usage and companies' profiles and the connection between them could be obtained. I plan on recruiting Around 100 participants were recruited in the survey and around 3-4 participants for the interviews. It is important to mention that this bachelor thesis was based on the results of the questionnaire survey and interviews.

4.1.1 Participants

In this research, around 100 respondents participated in the survey. It is worth mentioning that the background of the participants is not that significant since almost everyone uses social media nowadays. The survey on different social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and other platforms was organized. This way broad data were received since it was possible to answer the survey questions from all over the world, which gave more broad answers and areas, the way how people from different countries and cultures think and use social media. Also, to be able to know people's personal information. At the beginning of the survey personal questions such as age, sex, education level, and place of living were asked. For the interviews, there were 2 people whose professional experience was related to social media and marketing, and the other 2 participants were the representatives of the young generation and the older generation.

4.1.2 Data collection methods

A survey and an interview are the two main means of data collecting that were used in this plan. Irrespective of their regional or demographic background, all research volunteers were required to complete the survey. To obtain an average viewpoint on social media and networking sites, it is essential to develop a brief and comprehensive data

collection. Hence, it was decided that a survey was the best method for achieving this objective. A professional's opinion was also crucial to obtain, thus an interview seemed to be the right approach.

The information the author of the thesis would like to obtain is how people use social media, how social media influences their purchase decision-making, how these three companies use their social media as a marketing tool, and how people get involved in it, as well as other customers' reviews' impact on their decisions.

Due to its accessibility and convenience, the survey was administered using the online tool "Google Forms." It did not take longer than 7 minutes to complete the survey.
The interviews were held in person as well as online using Telegram or Zoom call. Additionally, since it was important to provide interviewees with an opportunity to interview in the language that they feel most comfortable with, the interviews were held in the most comfortable language for them.

5 Results and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The topic of my bachelor thesis is companies' profiles on social networking sites. And my chosen companies are Apple, Samsung, and Microsoft since they are huge companies and have great histories, and are popular. As social media has become an indivisible part of everyone's life, I need to show that companies and their marketing have a close connection with social media.

To acquire the essential data regarding the subject of the bachelor thesis, a combination of survey questions and interviews was used. This section's objective is to present and analyse all the information gained during the data-gathering process, to discuss the results, and to reach any necessary conclusions.

5.1.1 Survey results

The survey (questionnaire) method was used to compile comprehensive data about the knowledge related to social media and its use in the companies, namely Apple, Samsung, and Microsoft. The survey was conducted online using Google Forms software. I was planning on having around 100 participants, but my expectations were exceeded and I got 142 people from all over the world.

The first general questions were "Where are you from?" and "What is your sex?". Most people who responded were from Armenia, more specifically 50% (71 people) of respondents, on the second place is The Czech Republic with 21.1% (30 people), and in general, there were 45 respondents from Europe, namely 5 from Romania, 2 from Germany, 2 from Italy, 1 from Bulgaria, 1 from Belarus, 2 from Slovakia and 2 from Ukraine. There were 20 participants from Asia, 1 from Nepal, 1 from Vietnam, 1 from Cambodia, 1 from Afghanistan, 1 from Kyrgyzstan, 1 from Pakistan, 4 from Kazakhstan, 4 from Russia, and 6 from India. In addition, one person was from the USA, 1 from Turkey, 1 from Morocco, 1 from Egypt and 1 from Lebanon.

Out of 142 participants 86 were female, 54 were male, and 2 people didn't want to specify their gender.

According to Graph 1, the majority of respondents 54,2 % (77 people) were aged between 21 to 29 years old, and then 21,8 % (31 people) were ranked between 18 to 20 years

old, and 9,9 % (14 people) were aged from 30-39 years old. Additionally, 13 people belong to the age group 17 or younger, 6 people to 40- 49, and 1 person from 50-59.

Graph 1 How old are you?

How old are you ?
142 responses

- 17 or younger
- 18-20
- 21-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 and more
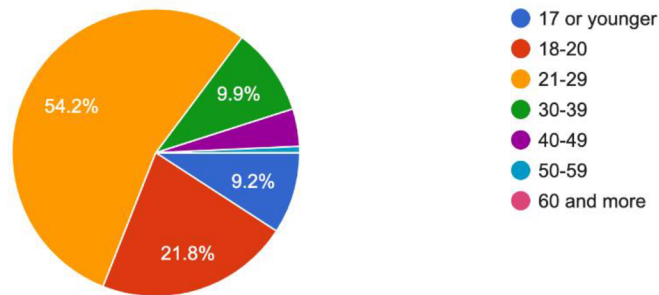
Source: own work

To the question "What is your education level" 93 participants responded having higher education, 35 had secondary education and 14 had primary.

The next question was "What is your employment status?" Respondents had an opportunity to choose among Student, Self-employed, Employed, Unemployed, and Retired. And they could choose multiple since lots of students are also employed. So as a result of this question, I got 53 students and 57 employed people,6 people self-employed, and 6 unemployed respondents. And 22 people were employed and students at the same time.

The following question was "Which one do you prefer?", where they could choose whether they like online or offline shopping or both, and the survey showed that 85 people liked both, and the other half almost equally preferred either online or offline shopping according to Graph 2.

Graph 2Which one do you prefer?

Which one do you prefer?
142 responses

- Online shopping
- Offline shopping
- Both

59.9%
20.4%
19.7%
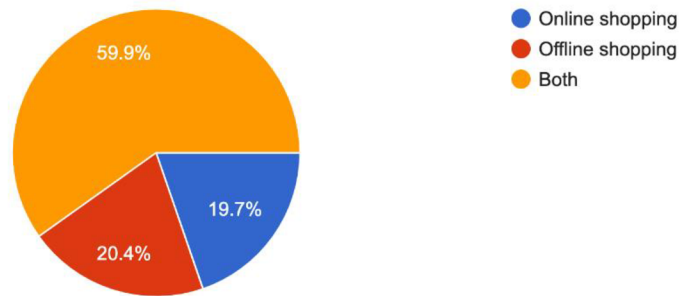
Source: own work

And to the question "Do you use social media?" 99,3 % of respondents answered yes, and only one person answered no. The next question was "How many hours on average per day do you spend on social media" and as you can see in the Figure they had some options, and 63.4%(90people) chose from 1 till 3hours per day, 22,5% (32 people) answered from 4till 7 hours, 6.3% (9people) chose 7 hours and more, and 7.7% (11people) chose the answer less than 1 hour you can see in Graph 3.

Graph 3 How many hours on average per day do you spend on social media?

How many hours on average per day do you spend on social media ?
142 responses

- Less than 1 hour
- 1-3 hours
- 4-7 hours
- 7 and more

22.5%
7.7%
63.4%
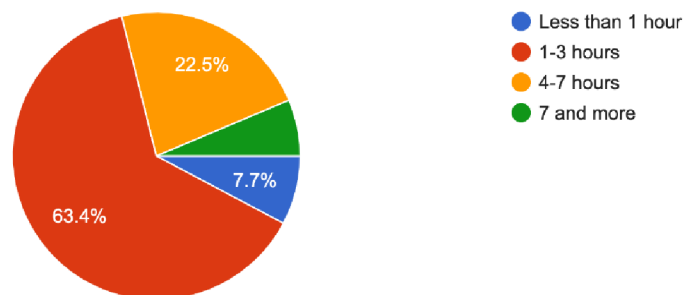
Source: own work

Afterwards, the participants were asked this question "Which social media do you use the most" and Figure showcases that they were given many options but the majority of

47

people chose Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and TikTok. 56.3% chose Instagram, 12.7% chose Facebook and 12% chose YouTube, 8.5% answered TikTok.

The next question was "Do you follow any accounts of Samsung, Apple or Microsoft on any social media platform" 26.8% (38 respondents) answered Apple, 11.3% (16 respondents) chose Facebook, 6.3 % (9 respondents) chose Microsoft and 55.6% (79 respondents) didn't follow any of them.

And the further questions were "What is(are) the reasons(s) that you follow Apple, Samsung or Microsoft on social media platforms?" and "How do these 3 companies get your attention on their social media platforms?" and they had a few options, but, also, they could add their opinion. For the first question 35.9% chose that they follow to get familiar with their new products, to get information promotions and to know about future launches, 8.5 % chose they like the brand(s), and 55.6% didn't follow any of them. For the second question 21.8 % of respondents answered by adding high-quality photos of products, 47.9% answered by being active on social media and doing special offers for their followers, 21.2 % answered by interacting with their followers, 6.3% said that they did not follow these companies, 2.8% answered that they these companies don't get their attention.

Later on, respondents were asked if "Have you inquired about a product from Samsung, Apple or Microsoft based on social media advertisement?". 54.9% (78 respondents) answered no, 45.1% (64 respondents) answered yes.

Afterwards, the repliers were asked "In general how often do you visit a company's official website to buy a product?" and they could choose from the range 1(never) to 5 (always), so 35.9% (51 people) chose 1 and 5.6% (8 respondents) chose 5 as you can see in Graph 4 below.

Graph 4 In general how often do you visit a company's official website to buy a product?

In general how often do you visit a company's official website to buy a product?
142 responses
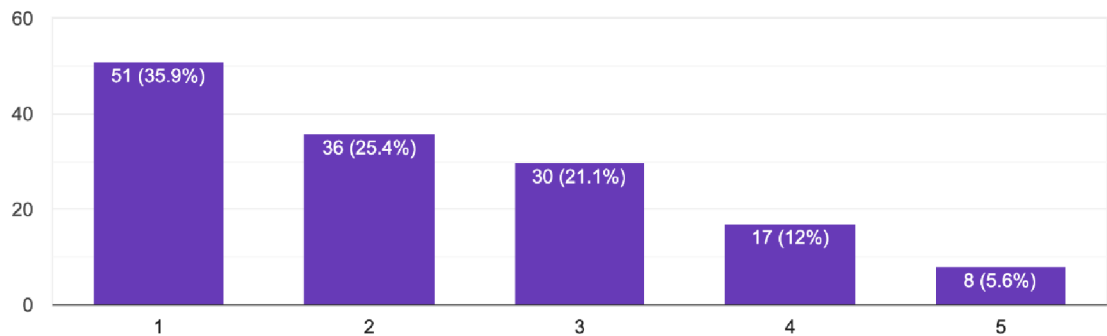
Source: own work

The following questions were "If you have ever bought a product form their website, please specify which of the 3 companies you bought a product from", and "Do you take into consideration other customers' reviews before buying a product?". For the first question, 42.2% of repliers chose Apple, 9.8% chose Samsung, and 2.8% chose Microsoft. But as the respondents could choose multiple, 2 people chose Microsoft and Apple combination, 9 people Samsung and Apple, 3 people Samsung and Microsoft and 2 people Samsung, Microsoft and Apple all together. And, in general, 33.8% (48 respondents) didn't buy from any. According to the Figure 5 the majority of respondents answered yes, 87.3% (124 people), and only 12.7% (18 respondents) answered no (Graph 5).

Graph 5 Do you take into consideration other customers' reviews before buying a product?

Do you take into consideration other customers' reviews before buying a product?

142 responses

- Yes
- No

12.7%

87.3%
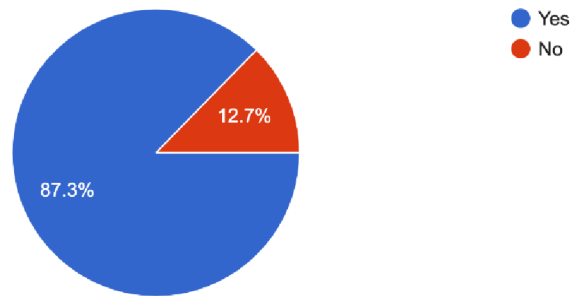
Source: own work

The last two questions were "Would you prefer these companies to be more active on social media, which can mean to post more photos, news about upcoming products and more?" (Graph 6) and "Please rate from 0-10 what is the probability of visiting one of these 3 companies' social web pages to get to know about their new launches and updates?" (Graph 7). 61.3% (87 respondents) agreed by answering yes to the first question and 38.7% (55 respondents) answered no. For the last question 30.3% chose from 0-3, 40.1% chose from 4-7 and 29.6% from 8-10 as shown in the Graph 7.

Graph 6 Would you prefer these companies to be more active on social media?

Would you prefer these companies(Samsung, Apple , Microsoft) to be more active on social media, which can mean to post more photos, news about upcoming products and more?
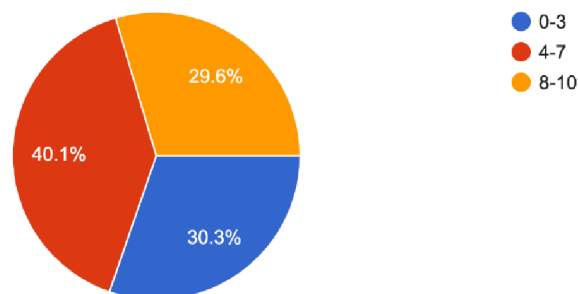
142 responses
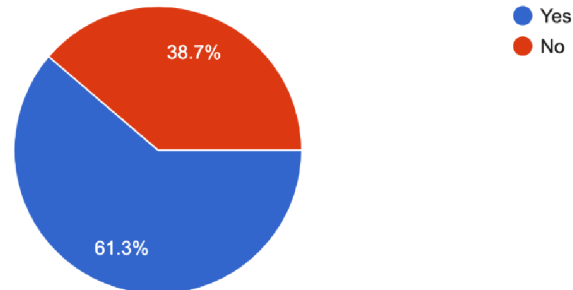
Source: own work

Graph 7 Please rate from 0-10 what is the probability of visiting one pf these 3 companies' social web pages to get to know about their new launches and updates?

Please rate from 0-10 what is the probability of visiting one of these 3 companies' social web pages to get to know about their new launches and updates.

142 responses

Source: own work

5.1.2 Interview results

The interview served as the second way of data gathering. Overall there were 4 participants with who the interviews were conducted and all of the participants considered social media and companies' profiles on social media an important tool for their marketing.

The first interviewee (Interviewee A) is from Armenia and she is a professor of Marketing and Management at one of the Armenia Universities, with 8 years' experience on this area, and she is an Executive Director of a touristic organization in Armenia. The second interviewee (Interviewee B) is from California, U.S.A and he is a professor as well at one of

51

the universities in Prague, with PHD in Management and Digital technologies, and has experience of 10 years in the field of Information Technologies, Business and Social Media. The 3rd interviewee (Interviewee 3) is from Armenia, he has his Masters in Information Technology and he is a digital marketer in one of the IT companies in Armenia. And the 4th interviewee (interviewee 4) is from Romania and he is a Director at one of the major companies related to IT in Romania with 20 years of experience in IT and business.

The interviewees were firstly asked which social media they use in their daily life. According to the responses of all interviewees, the most used social media is Instagram, LinkedIn, then Facebook and TikTok, also 2 interviewees mentioned Telegram and Twitter as well.

The first main finding from the analysis of interview, is that Apple, Microsoft and Samsung can get interviewees' attention by posting about their new launches, spreading information about existing promotions or even by personal invitations to join their social media platforms.

And this finding can correlate with the next question, which is if they consider social media as a good marketing tool or not. The interviewee A answered that "definitely it is a nice tool, around 5 – 10 years ago we wouldn't imagine that social media can have such influence on marketing which it has today, social media is considered as one of the best ways of doing an advertisement, I am using it for my own business as well, and it gives an excellent result." Interviewee B pointed out, that social media is an incredible mechanism to get the attention of larger audiences, to have the brand globally recognized, and to raise the awareness of a company through social media. Interviewee C explained that, social media is an interesting tool for marketing with lots of opportunities for it, since it helps the companies to be more popular, to gain more customers, and he brought this examples: "There are lots of companies who get their audience only through social media, their sales are done through social media and they get customer through it, an example can be a baking cake small business, which has gained its brand name known due to the social media, so I would definitely say social media is one of the popular and excellent tool for marketing."

This leads to the next finding, which regards social media and its impact on company's profit. All the interviewees mentioned that it can be a significant tool for the companies to gain more profit, since people purchase online as well, and they can easily get what they need through social media. The interviewee D stated also that social media can

affect the profit negatively, since people can publish their negative experiences' articles which will hold buyers from acquisitions or sell company's shares/bonds, but definitely it can also have positive influence at the same time. The interviewee A stated that the role of famous influencers is also big there, as they have large audiences and by adverting and introducing a product they spread awareness, and more people get to know about a certain product, which also helps its sales.

After analysing the social media and profit, it was also important to know the opinions of other interviewees regarding other customers' reviews and their importance in their purchase decisions.

As a fact, absolutely all of them do read reviews before making a purchase, especially when the product has a higher value, and when they cannot test or see the product in real life. Interviewee B stated that "Nowadays customer reviews are more important than ever before, and in the era of social media and e-commerce platforms, the customers can easily share their experiences all over the world, which can help the businesses build customer loyalty in case of positive reviews, and negatives ones can have an essential impact on a business's fame." Interviewee C mentioned that he accepts the reviews which are detailed and goal-oriented, not just an opinion of someone that they didn't like the product, but rather explaining the product's features or performances.

And the last question was "How does social media affects your purchasing decisions (especially these 3 companies)?", and the final finding was that these three companies' social media can have a big influence on their purchasing decisions, mainly by the news about some product as shared by others on social media would get their interest. The interviewee C mentioned that, once he bought an air pods from Apple's official website and there was an opportunity to get a special notes or stickers, how he would like. And he said that this kind of approach also helps the customer to feel special and also the bought product will be more individualized.

5.2 Discussion

The analysis of the interviews and survey seems to indicate that social media can have a major impact on a company's profile. According to the finding in 4.2.1 related to the reason(s) people follow these three companies' social media platforms, is that social media

helps them to get information about a certain product, or to be in touch with company, as well as to know about upcoming launches. Another aspect of social media is the review of other customers. As it was stated in the finding 4.2.1 87.3% of respondents agreed that they read the reviews before buying a product, and in the results of interviews reviews had a big portion. So, it is clear that reviews can be considered as one of the biggest parts of the companies either success or failure.

According to the next finding, which was related to inquiring a product from one the companies based on social media advertisement, and as it was mentioned in the finding around 45% of repliers said that they did inquire about a product based on social media advertisement, which can show that social media can impact companies' profit as well.

One of the objectives of the thesis is to propose a marketing strategy that could fit the selected companies and be a part of the growth.

It was mentioned in the survey results that Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok have become the most used social media platforms, and as it was presented in the theoretical part, not all of the three selected companies have many followers on these three platforms. Also, if the companies would like to target professionals, LinkedIn is an excellent platform for that.

The selected companies can concentrate more on content creation, to create more valuable and engaging content, by posting more photos and news on their feeds, by doing more advertisements and personalized offers for their loyal customers. According to the findings from survey, around 62% of respondents would like those three companies to be more active on social media.

Another step in the marketing strategy could be cooperation with popular artists, actors and influencers. Nowadays influencers have great influence on their followers, they have gained the trust of their followers, which means if they promote a product or do an advertisement of a service, there is a big chance that the followers will visit the websites of the advertised product or any other social media platform to get more information about it or even make a purchase. This can lead to increased brand awareness and sales.

As for the comparison of Apple, Samsung, and Microsoft and their social media platforms, according to the survey results and findings, it can be mentioned that Apple is in the first place with the number of people following it, with the number of sales made by customers. Samsung is in the second place, and Microsoft is following.

6 Conclusion

The main research objectives of this paper were to investigate the role of social media in the three selected companies' profiles and sales, to understand how social media can impact their profit. In conclusion, the sales of businesses have recently been significantly impacted by social media. Currently, businesses use social media to advertise their goods and services, connect with their target market, and ultimately boost sales. And as has been mentioned previously, the companies should concentrate on their social media platforms more, social media is an effective way to reach customers in a cost-effective way, which will lead to increased profit.

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8 List of Figures and Graphs

8.1 List of Figures

8.2 List of Graphs

Appendix

Survey questions

1. Where are you from?

  - Armenia
  - Czech Republic
  - Russia
  - India
  - Kazakhstan
  - Other (please specify)

2. How old are you ?
  - 17 or younger
  - 18-20
  - 21-29
  - 30-39
  - 40-49
  - 50-59
  - 60 and more

3. What is your sex?
  - Male
  - Female
  - Unspecified

4. What is your highest achieved educational level?
  - Primary
  - Secondary
  - Higher education

5. What is your current employment status?

- Student
- Self employed
- Employed
- Unemployed
- Retired

6. Which one do you prefer?
- Online shopping
- Offline shopping

7. Do you use social media(Facebook, Instagram, YouTube etc.)?
- Yes
- No

8. How many hours on average per day do you spend on social media ?
- Less than 1hour
- 1-3hours
- 4-7 hours
- 7 and more

9. Which social media do you use the most?
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter

- TikTok
- LinkedIn
- Snapchat
- YouTube
- Other

10. Do you follow any accounts of Samsung, Apple or Microsoft on any social media platform(such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube etc.)?

- I follow Samsung
- I follow Apple
- I follow Microsoft
- I don't follow any of them

11. What is(are) the reason(s) that you follow Apple, Samsung or Microsoft on social media platforms? You can choose multiple
- To get familiar with their new products
- To be in touch with company
- To get information about their promotions
- I like the brand(s)
- To know about future launches of products
- I don't follow
- Other (please specify)

12. How do these 3 companies get your attention on their social media platforms? You can choose multiple
- By adding high quality photos of products
- By doing special offers for their followers
- By interacting with their followers
- By being active on social media
- Other (specify)

13. Have you inquired about a product from Samsung, Apple or Microsoft based on a social media advertisement?

- Yes
- No

14. How often do you visit the company's official website to buy a product?

1 never

2

3

4

5 always

15. If you have ever bought a product from their website please specify which of the 3 companies you bought a product from.

- Samsung
- Microsoft
- Apple
- I didn't buy

16. Do you take into consideration other customers' reviews before buying a product?

- Yes
- No

17. Would you prefer these companies(Samsung, Apple , Microsoft) to be more active on social media, which can mean to post more photos, news about upcoming products and more?

- Yes
- No

18. Please rate from 0-10 what is the probability of visiting one of these 3 companies' social web pages to get to know about their new launches and updates.

- 0-3
- 4-7
- 8-10

Interview questions

1) What kind of social media do you use in your daily life?
2) How do the three selected companies get your attention on social media?
3) Do you think social media is a good tool for marketing?
4) How do you think social media affects company's profit?
5) Before buying a product , will you read reviews ? if yes how do they impact your purchasing decisions ?
6) How does social media affects your purchase decision (specifically these companies)?