Coping with Negative Brand Perception on Social Media

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Abstract

Social media is becoming an increasingly important part of the consumers' lives and the companies way of doing business. Social media engages the consumer so they are online all the time and the consumers use social media to express who they are and what they are doing. The consumers' need for expressing themselves is becoming a problem for companies, as the consumers' not only share content about themselves, but also feelings about how they perceive brands. This is big challenge if the consumers hold a negative brand perception. Social media is part of bigger network society, which mean that negative content is shared within a split second. With this in mind, social media have provided the consumers with a speaking tube, which was not so prevalent prior with other media. The consumers can build on the companies stories and share both negative and positive brand perception whether someone is invited or not to take part in the conversation. The consumers set the stage and decide which content should be available regarding the companies. Hence it is becoming a huge challenge for companies to take control of the brand stories if some consumer perceives the brand in a negative manner. However, the companies use social media as dialogue tool and to some extend they encourage the consumers to speak up to begin with. Many companies have not thought of the consequences when being present on social media or do not know how to deal with negative brand perception on social media.

The companies need to understand that consumers are willing to share everything on social media and thus also whenever they have had a bad experience with a brand. We discuss the companies' struggle with negative brand perception and how they can learn and try to cope with it. For this purpose, we have looked at a case study regarding the biggest shitstorm in Denmark. An analysis of the case and an analysis of social media, the society and the consumers provide us with a framework, which consists of 10 findings, which companies can embrace and learn from. Social media, the network society and the consumer are three factors, which are at stake every time the sharing of negative brand perception is taken place. Four other Danish cases regarding consumers' sharing of negative brand perception has further been used in the development of the 10 findings. It is cases where companies have been good and bad to handle negative brand perception on social media. The challenges is that companies feel they have to be present on social media, but often they are not prepared for negative brand perception and neither the consequences it can leads to.

Table of Context

Chapter 1

1 Introduction

New media has brought one-way communication to an end. New media are diverse, inclusive, and combine different media in a multimedia system (Castells, 2000). Today we see an increasing use of social media (from hereon SoMe). Facebook for instance has over 1.2 billion users (Statista, 2014a) and Instagram has reached 200 million monthly active users (Statista, 2014b). Social networks will continue to play an increasingly important part in many peoples lives (Arno, 2012).

SoMe also has implications for brand managers, as they have lost their pivotal role as the only author of the brands' story (Kuksov et al., 2013). The advertiser is pushing a campaign and as Gulbrandsen & Just (2011, p. 1100) put it "...the one interacts directly with the few, and indirectly with the many." The company can create lots of communication themselves with the help from traditional media to reach the target audience. However, the target audience can also gain information about the messages from other sources e.g. from buzz on SoMe. With this in mind, the company target the broad audience, reach the few and interact indirectly with the majority.

SoMe provides the consumers with many opportunities to build on companies' messages and they can also create new stories or share feelings about the brand in general. But as more branding activity moves to the web, marketers are confronted with the stark realization that SoMe was made for people, not for brands (Fournier & Avery, 2011). Consumers can communicate through platforms, which they have not been able to use before. Today people can share and explore experiences much faster than 5-10 years ago. We see open source branding, where it is possible for the consumer to affect the brands through SoMe. An open-source brand is a brand that is largely controlled by the consumers (Pitt et al., 2006). Therefore it is important for companies to have a clear identity and marketing strategy to communicate and engage with the consumers so the company can retain as much control as possible.

Brands need to be innovative on SoMe and be aware of the consequences when they enter SoMe. Successful brands should earn the right to participate in consumer's social spaces on SoMe. Companies should know that when they enter the SoMe party, they can generally expect a fight (Fournier & Avery, 2011), because they cannot predict the outcome. Therefore the companies need to be aware of how they should react if a fight occurs. A fight in this context could be when a consumer starts sharing his negative opinion about a product / service with help from SoMe. A consumer's opinion can spreads like ripples in the water because of SoMe and electronic word-of-mouth (from hereon eWOM). However, this should not necessarily stop the company's present on social media, but they should see it as a process in which they learn to gain control. It may take awhile to see the benefits of harnessing consumer content, especially when that content seems only remotely related to the brand (Fournier & Avery, 2011).

Brand crises are as old as marketing itself and practitioners have long used tools to manage them (Bruell, 2011), which mean that brands have been aware of the challenges for a long time. The thing is that the challenge today can be more difficult to control because of the use of SoMe, "The traditional PR approach is to issue a statement, apologize and cross your fingers that it goes away. With social media, you need to reach out to who is talking and saying opinions "said Shift Communications President Todd Defren (Bruell, 2011). Especially this can be a challenge for the companies since SoMe often is an open source place and fast moving, therefore the rise of SoMe dramatically challenges the way firms manage their brands (Kuksov, 2013).

1.1 Problem Statement

An understanding of consumers use on SoMe reveals how the consumers perceive different brands. A company needs to understand this brand perception in order to control their brands on SoMe. This lead to the following:

Which factors stimulate the consumers' behaviour on social media that provoke negative brand perception? Furthermore, how can the companies adapt to the factors and learn to deal with negative brand perception?

Brands are built on the product itself, the accompanying marketing activity and the use (or non-use) by customers (Keller et al., 2012). Brands thus reflect the complete experience that customers have with products, and which they are able to make emotions and feelings about. Brands also play an important role in determining the effectiveness of marketing efforts such as advertising and channel placement. But this can also go wrong if the customers undertake a negative brand perception.

Brand perception is a term used to describe the way consumers view and understand a particular brand. It depends on the circumstances, the perception of a given brand and the products marketed under that brand. There are several factors that can influence brand perception, including consumer experience with a brand, the opinions of other consumers, the type of advertising used to promote the brand, and even shifts in the economy (Wisegeek, 2014). One of the key elements which influences brand perception is the experience the consumer feels when they have purchased and used a specific brand. The brand perception depends on how satisfied the consumer is with the brand, based on the product or service. We see a relation between the consumers expectation and brand perception. Negative brand perception arises when the brand doesn't fulfil the consumer's expectations.

1.1.1 Research Questions

1. Why are the consumers willing to share their experiences about a brand with the public?
2. Why should the companies be aware of branding strategies on social media?
3. How should the company communicate to the consumers on social media platforms?
4. Which parameters should the company take into consideration when being present on SoMe?

1.2 Relevance

SoMe allows users to interact and engage with companies and brands in ways that would be unthinkable with any other communications platform (Margaret Bruce and Michael R. Solomon, 2013). The consumers are so involved today since they can provide reviews, search for information, communicate directly with companies and interact by uploading a photo of their favourite piece of a product etc. Technology, the Internet, and SoMe have made it possible to share content with friends, non-friend, and in virtual communities (Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012). But it can also be challenging and make the company lose control of the situation.

Lots of theory have been writing in connection with how companies can gain advantage of dialogue media which SoMe is considered to be. Such theories look at how important it is to engage with the customers and listen to what the customers have to say. E.g: Culnan et al. (2010) argues how companies should engage in online communications to gain further business value because of the engagement from customers and Montgomery and Chester (2009) call it user generated content when the consumers create content on behave of the brands. What we can see is that consumers have gone from a passive role to play an active role in the production of content and content sharing, which also has the term *prosumers* (Toffler, 1970 in Siapera, 2012). This highlights the notion that consumers also act as producers or co-creators. Bruns (2007 in Siapera, 2012) draws on this notion and calls it *produsage*. He argues that content is an extending version of already existing content, meaning content is developing all the time in collaboration with other, which Guldbrandsen and Just (2011, 2013) are paying attention to. We believe there is a lack in the theory as it in a broad manner describes how companies can take advantages of new online media because the dialogue opportunities. However, the existing literature describes *how to*, and is not focusing on the consequences of the output dialogue media might comes with. In the report, we have only investigated negative brand perception, but we are aware that SoMe might as well also foster positive brand perception as the above mentioned theory has stated so far.

1.3 Delimitations

In the report the analysis will solely focus on the Danish market, thus the Danish consumers and the Danish society. In order for us to answer the problem statement we will additionally be looking at five Danish SoMe cases to gain insights to a more practical point of view. We do not look at one specific industry, but various industries in which companies have been exposed to negative brand perception. We are aware that some companies already know how to deal with negative brand perception, which our data analysis also will uncover. But small and medium sized companies would be able to benefit from our findings in how to deal with negative brand perception. This deals with the second part of the problem statement. As we will show, small and medium sized companies are not familiar with negative brand perception until it actually occurs, thus they are really exposed and not prepared. In the report, we have only investigated companies, which already have been exposed to negative brand perception. Hence we have not talked to companies who might believe they are fully prepared and resistant to negative brand perception.

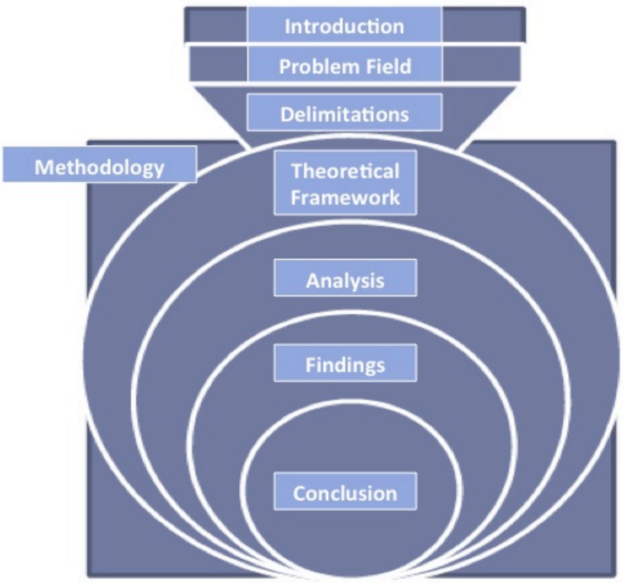
The field of research is SoMe. SoMe is a broad term and covers an endlessness amount of digital media. It is not possible to cover all SoMe and our main focus in this report is Facebook. Everybody is familiar with Facebook and the cases we will elaborate on are rooted in Facebook. When this being said, we will also touch upon a few other SoMe such as Instagram and Twitter (See Appendix 1).

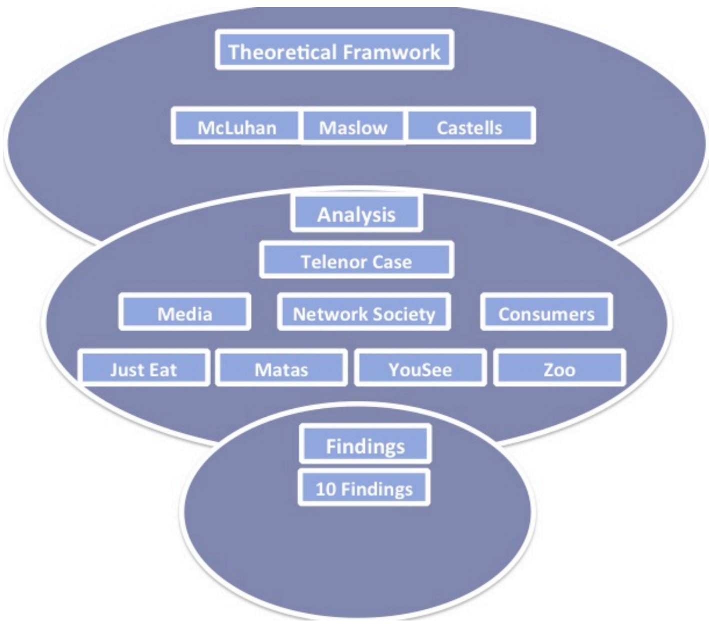
1.4 Structure

After a presentation of the methodology and theoretical framework we will explain a case from 2012. The Danish company Telenor were exposed to a SoMe shitstorm and a huge amount of negative brand perception. Netnography will be used to explain the Telenor case, and afterwards a deeper analysis will be presented. This analysis comprise the factors we believe are most important to highlight from the Telenor case, and which we believe are the underlying reason why the shitstorm could take place. The analysis has been shaped from the methodological approach and is guided by interviews with consumers and experts to gain an understanding of how these parties, each of them, use SoMe for their individual needs and purposes.

The analysis is followed by additional four cases. Two of the cases have a positive output while the other two cases have a negative output. These cases will be analysed on the basis of the above-mentioned analysis. For the purpose netnography is being used again.

To summarize, these analysis parts comes together as we will present 10 findings. This is findings that we believe companies can work with in order to understand negative brand perception.





2 Scientific Methodology

In this paragraph we will pay attention to our scientific approach to the report. We will outline the reports methodological foundations and structure. This will guide the report and make up for implications that will highlight our choices and our limitations according to our focus area. The scientific approach will have a continuous effect on our theoretical choices and the report's analysis parts. In the presentation of the structure, we will also clarify how the report will move from problem statement to conclusion.

Scientific methodology is a term for the practice we chose to undertake when working with how knowledge about the society is being produced. This includes institutions, organization, companies, collective groups and individuals. More specifically, methodology is the guide we use when we collect, use, and bring data together so the result becomes knowledge. Methodology is a systematic approach to explore the reality. With help from various methods we can dig into the reasons behind incidents, opinions behind the actions and social/material structures impact on individuals' opinions and actions (Andersen, 2005).

Our scientific theoretical starting point is the basis for how the results in this report can be understood. We therefore seek to uncover what we epistemological consider to be useful and acceptable knowledge about the object field and how we ontological believe the world or 'reality' in relation to, how the object field can be understood. Ontology refers to the object field in the reality, which is being investigated (Andersen, 2005).

2.1 Social Constructivism

In general, our approach to the thesis will be based on constructivist science, and more specific by social constructivism. The social constructivist approach to science considers observation and knowledge as a result of a construction carried out in a specific social relation (Rasborg, 2009). This is highly relevant for our focus, as we want to discover how consumers share their experiences with a company online. Every time a consumer share an experience, this experience becomes a new truth. With this in mind we can observe how knowledge becomes a result constructed in the social sphere with human interactions.

Social constructivism emphasizes how society in the social occurs, the construction and how it's changed. There is a focus on language and discursive terms, and how they largely maintain and build the society. Social constructivism sees social phenomena as not being eternal and immutable, but created through history and interactions with the social. Thus we see that if a human produces the phenomenon, so it would be changed by human actions (Rasborg, 2009). Knowledge is here historically and culturally dependent. In the social constructivist optics, the reality is embossed and created through the acknowledgement of the reality (Rasborg, 2009). To be able to acknowledge something, and the knowledge production, it requires that there is something to acknowledge. We see that there "...is a subject which acknowledge something, and an object which is knowledgeable." (Rasborg, 2009, p. 350). It should also be pointed out that being able to acknowledge something is synonymous with that one could articulate it linguistically. From here the fundamental issues of social constructivism occurs and "...how we should understand the relationship between thinking and reality, between subject and object, between language and what the language is about." (Rasborg 2009, p. 350).

As with any other scientific approach we must look deeper into epistemological and ontological. In connection with social constructivism, the epistemological version is equal to an understanding of how scientific theories substance more or less is conditioned by social factors which surrounds the actual research process. This means there is a bigger focus on the elements in the research process than the reality, which is the object field in the process (Rasborg, 2009). The ontological version explain how the reality is not independent but determined by the acknowledgement of the reality e.g. we can talk about the reality with words. This means that facts do not arise until people collective have determined them or at least they are consensus and that they can be expressed (Rasborg, 2009).

2.1.1 Modern Sociology

There is not just only one social constructivism approach, but a large number of different variations (Rasborg, 2009). In relation to this, we understand social constructivism respectively in the classical and modern sociology. In addition, we find a number of theorists working in their respective fields. In the following we will refer to theorists who we find relevant to our problem field.

In the modern sociology, we find the knowledge sociologists Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann. They seek to analyse everyday habits, routines and institutions (Rasborg, 2009). Unlike the classical sociology of knowledge, Berger and Luckmann also look at everyday knowledge. This means that phenomen in daily life could be characterized as knowledge. Berger and Luckmann focus on how common sense is produced in social processes that provides an understanding of how society is linked together (Rasborg, 2009). This is relevant to our problem statement, because we believe that the use of SoMe for many consumers have become a part of the routines they undertake during the day. The behaviour the consumers take use on SoMe do not require further considerations.

Methodically, we can use this to see how the consumers seem to have a more powerful voice on SoMe and how this voice is becoming a part of our daily lives. Furthermore, an understanding of this will also investigate that whatever the consumers say on SoMe is believed to be true. As mentioned earlier, it becomes knowledge since it can be expressed with words, thus being knowledgeable. There is an opinion formation concerning how the society is constructed since Berger and Luckmann (Rasborg, 2009), believe that the social consists of interpretations and interpretation patterns. In social situations where humans interact, we work with acts of interpretation. Berger and Luckmann furthermore draw on the notion that the society is a product made by humans, which in a dialectical process train people to become social individuals (Mik-Meyer & Järvinen, 2005). With this in mind, it becomes relevant for us to apply a society diagnosis, which can explain the society we are part of. This can explain the consumer behaviour and the consumer actions, which follow from this. This society diagnosis is presented in paragraph 3.2.

2.2 Deductive vs. Inductive

We want to create knowledge about consumer behaviour on SoMe and for this purpose, the literature has pointed out two types of relationships between theory and research.

2.2.1 Deduction

The first reasoning approach is deduction and is based on evidence thinking. Researchers use deductive reasoning when looking at general principles and draw inferences about an individual event. The researcher has an extensive knowledge that he applies to simple focus areas (Andersen, 2005). The purpose with the deductive reasoning approach is to contribute to the empirical area and will typically make use of hypotheses, which must be subjected to empirical scrutiny. Theory and the hypothesis come first and drive the process of gathering data (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Hence, this means that the researcher initiates a study with already existing theories. Afterwards, the researcher develops a hypothesis, which is subsequently tested by conducting a new study. The presented hypothesis are then either accepted or rejected. The last step in the deductive process is a little deviation from deductive and closer related to the inductive movement, where the researcher infer the implications for his finding for the theory that started the whole process to begin with (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

2.2.2 Induction

The second reasoning approach is induction, which relates to a more experimental way (Andersen, 2005). The researcher starts from a single event and ends with a principle or a general law. Here the researcher begins with the empirical data to infer general knowledge of the theory (Andersen, 2005). The purpose of the inductive reasoning approach is to contribute with new theory, a modification of the already existing theory or new knowledge within the empirical field. Furthermore, it means that the induction process derive overall conclusions based on general observations (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Conclusions are thus drawn from the observation of a case and have helped the researchers to provide new knowledge.

The study in this report is, as far as we know, the first of its kind and we will thus use the inductive reasoning approach. We want to discover how consumers' brand perception on SoMe effect companies, which will include observations of different case. No hypothesis will be developed as if we were to choose the deductive reasoning approach. Basically it means that we observe some trends, which allows consumer to share negative brand perception, and we are wondering how the companies can learn to cope with negative brand perception.

In this report, we will not be working with induction in its pure form, as the thesis also will be guided by already existing theory. We, as researchers, have to some extent alternated between induction and deduction, meaning emphasizing empirical findings and observations, combined with guidance from existing theory. Furthermore, it means that the empirical fieldwork has been structured on the basis of what the researchers already know about the topic. The problem statement has been formulated on the basis of the above and gives rise to an empirical, which eventually will lead to new theory.

2.3 Qualitative Data

The social constructivist approach can be used to examine how the dialog on SoMe can be considered as a socially constructed phenomenon. However, bear in mind that constructivist science does not have a method in the traditional sense, like a set of rules to move forward and thus ensures reality (Hansen, 2004). Therefore, we will look at qualitative data in the form of interviews and other research methods. Meaning and symbols influence the consumer's behaviour and qualitative methods are a great tool in revealing the rich symbolic world of values that underlies needs, desires, meanings, and choices (Levy, 1959).

The problem statement and object field (the part of the reality that are being studied) (Andersen, 2005) are the crucial reasons for the methodological approaches we will serve in this thesis. With this in mind, what seems most relevant in this thesis is a large focus on qualitative data. Qualitative research is a research strategy with the biggest focus on words rather than a quantification of data. The strategy is inductivity, constructionist and interpretivist, but do not always have to be all three of these methods (Bryman & Bell, 2011). These three terms will be described in the following in connection with qualitative data.

1) With qualitative data there is an *inductive* relationship between theory and research and the latter generates the former. In qualitative research, theory is supposed to be an outcome of an investigation rather than something that precedes it. 2) The epistemological position is *interpretivist* meaning that the aim is to understand the social world through an examination of how the world is interpreted by its participants. 3) The ontological position is explained as *constructivist* and implies that social properties are outcomes from the individual's interactions with each other (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The qualitative research method allow for the inductive approach to the data (Bryman & Bell, 2011). When using qualitative data we get insights into how consumers behave on SoMe, their thoughts and feelings. Furthermore, from the company's point of view we get insight into how negative brand perception has affected companies and how they have learned to handle and deal with such perception. Quantitative data would not provide us with such underlying knowledge and would be more useful if our aim was to get a statistically representative sample. Another factor to look at, is that a big part of the world we are surrounded by is socially constructed. It means that we cannot develop explanations and predictions about what will happen next, which correspond to the natural sciences ideal that includes the causally determinant explanations. To put it another way, we cannot find explanations, which will certainly be able to predict what is going to happen in the future (Andersen, 2005). However, this is just the case for our object field and would have been different in relation to another object field.

2.4 Method

In the following, we will present how we will gather our data collection, which will constitute our empirical data. In addition, we will illustrate the methods we use to collect data and present our results given from the data collection. The objective here is to clarify the concepts that are central to the analysis of methods which all exist within the social constructivist framework.

We have chosen to do a multimethod study (Morgan, 1997; Andersen, 2005) consisting of netnography and a list of in-depth interviews. These methods are qualitative research methods, which relate to the previous mention inductive approach to the data. Bear in mind that our aim wasn't to get a statistically representative sample, as would have been the case with quantitative data. We will use the data collection to answer the two-folded problem statement. The data collection will address interviews with experts, interviews with consumers and netnography.

2.4.1 Experts

The first step deals with professionals, meaning companies and experts. This will be our starting point for the empirical data collection. This is done in order for us to get an understanding of the general aspect of how companies and experts deal with consumers' use of SoMe and the consequences thereof.

In relation to this, in-depth interviews with experts will account for the size of the problem field. This will help us to understand how experts are influenced by bad brand perception on SoMe. We use the findings here to determine the size of the problem and to address what is actually at stake at this point.

2.4.1.1 In-depth Interviews Experts

We chose to perform five in-depth interviews with five experts who are specialist within SoMe. These are presented in the following scheme.

Name	Sex	Occupation	Time & Place
Josephine Gram Ludvigsen	Female	Copywriter & Community Manager at MARVELOUS	April 25, 2014 – Josephine's office
Martin Rubæk Jensen	Male	Head of Social Business at Brandhouse	May 14, 2014 – CBS
Morten Jørgensen	Male	Product Manager at Sitecore (Previous Social Media Manager at 3 Mobile)	May 19, 2014 – CBS
Benjamin Rud Elberth	Male	Digital Director at Geelmuyden.Kiese	May 23, 2014 – Benjamin's office
Steffen Trannerup	Male	Senior Digital Consultant at Telenor	July 1, 2014 – Steffen's Place

This method allows us to get a deeper understanding of how bad brand perception is perceived. Interviews are used to give access to other individual's observations. From this, we learn about settings that otherwise wouldn't have been available to us (Weiss, 1994).

We conducted *semi-structured interviews* where the researcher had a list of question on fairly specific topics formed in an interview guide (Appendix 2). The semi-structured interviews were guided by open-ended questions and were prepared prior to the interviews in order to obtain information on the topics that we needed to uncover. All these topics were formulated in order to help answering our research question. See the interview guides used in appendix 2.

The respondents could answer in any way they wanted to. The moderator on the other hand, asked questions listed in the interview guide whilst picking up the respondents answers during the interview. The open-ended and semi-structure interview gave the respondents time and scope to express their opinions on the particular topic of interest relevant for this project (Bryman & Bell, 2011). We are aware of, that it is a flexible process and it has to some extent been controlled by how the moderator interpreted and understood the respondent's answers (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Both researchers attended each interview, and one acted interviewer and the other took notes. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed (Appendix 3-7). The interviews started out with 'facesheet' questions, since such information is useful for contextualizing people's answers and a good way to start the interview in a nice manner. From hereon the interviews were structured in order to make sure we would get our topics fully covered (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The interviews took place at the respondent's office or at Copenhagen Business School, a choice made by the respondent. This ensured a relaxed atmosphere. We used learning's from the first interview and then rewrote some of the questions in the following interviews.

The interview with Steffen Trannerup from Telenor had a different character than the other interviews. In this interview we asked concrete regarding the shitstorm in 2012 in which Telenor largely were exposed to negative brand perception. This is also a case we will work more thoroughly with in the rest of the report.

2.4.1.2 Coding

We used open-ended coding on the transcribed interviews (Ringberg & Gupta, 2003). Coding is part of the grounded theory framework, where the data set is sorted to form categories of meaning (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Our interpretations as researchers shape the emergent codes and the more abstract themes. This has helped us to underpin different topics in the report and have been useful in the progress of the formulated findings in paragraph 16. We used comments in Word to perform the coding. As researchers we turned back and forth between the text and the identified constructs in order to make the deeper layers of meaning apparent (Ringberg & Gupta, 2003).

2.4.2 Consumers

We need to get insights into the deeper underlying consumer behaviour connected to the sharing of brand perception on SoMe. The most essential for a company is to satisfy and meet consumer's needs. In order to accomplish this, the company has to know what consumers want and what they expect from the company. In addition, we need to understand the consumers' behaviour. We will use netnography to take a deeper look at five cases where companies have been exposed to negative brand perception. Our starting point is the case of Telenor, which were exposed for a huge shitstorm in 2012. Later on, four other cases will be presented an analysed; these are Just Eat, Matas & SKØN, Copenhagen Zoo, and YouSee.

These cases will address the problem with negative brand perception in a very practical manner and gives us an opportunity to analyse how the consumers talk and feel about the incidents. Furthermore, we also need to engage in dialogue with consumers to create a better understanding of them. This will include six in-depth interviews. In the following, we will describe how we will use netnography and consumer in-depth interviews in the report.

2.4.2.1 Netnography

The Internet is good for searching for material in connection with the focus area in general. But websites, and not least SoMe, can also be used as objects of analysis. The consumers today spend more and more time online connecting with others, shopping online, working and just passing time in general (Xun & Reynolds, 2009). You can investigate the web as a platform for data collection. This research method is called netnography or digital ethnography. As with traditional ethnography you investigate a culture, just online. Here the study is on the culture and community, which is computer-mediated and available to the publicity (Xun & Reynolds, 2009; Kozinets, 2002).

An ethnographer is normally seen as someone who visits places or locations and observe differences between cultures, societies etc. In connection with online investigations, ethnographers examine online communities and virtual communities. Place and space, which is the research environment, is therefore the Internet and its use, thus the term netnography (Bryman & Bell, 201).

In connection with our report we are dealing with a *communication-based method* (Bryman & Bell, 2011) as we see SoMe as a communication medium from which the data is being gathered. This method is furthermore seen as being *asynchronous* (Bryman & Bell, 2011) meaning that comments, likes, shares etc. might not take place in real time as it would be the case with e.g. a chat room. The web is addressed as a material, which retrieves it and meaning from external factors that determines the production process (Mik-Meyer & Järvinen, 2005). When analysing sites on the web, you can see how meaning and actions are created in interaction between people. Since meaning is created through interactions among human beings, the data analyse will also vary (Mik-Meyer & Järvinen, 2005). The context in which individuals act in should also be seen in the light of the analysis. Here you have to pay attention to the actors' (the individuals') preferences and experiences and how these will affect the studied object. The challenge is that a document lives in many institutions and contextual manners, hence the text material will be perceived in different manners and thus creating different meanings. No matter how the researcher interprets the data, many statements will follow because of this specific interpretation (Mik-Meyer & Järvinen, 2005) it means that we, as researchers, cannot be completely objective in our approach to the data. What we find important might not be as important for other researchers.

Netnography is a nature of a qualitative research method, which offers insights to the virtual sphere and thus insights to the online consumer's behaviour, wants and needs. Furthermore, it allows us to discover the symbolic meaning and the choices it comes with (Xun & Reynolds, 2009). We are not dealing with face-to-face settings and Kozinets (2002) explains that netnography primarily is an observation of the textual discourse, which makes the methods differ from traditional ethnography. One of the great things about netnography is the accessibility and openness which every researcher attend. When doing netnography it deals with all the digital trail the consumer leave behind and can thus strengthen the breadth and depth of a research. Another point to highlight is the fact that netnography is directly dealing with written statements. Before the consumer write anything online, some kind of reflection occurs, which is not the same with e.g. in-depth interview and focus groups. It also means that the researcher will lose the first reaction that comes first. One of the biggest concerns with netnography is the authenticity of the respondents and how relevant they actually are since their motive sometimes can be difficult to explore (Xun & Reynolds, 2009).

We will apply netnography to study the way in which the consumers express their perception of a brand on SoMe. We examine five different Facebook cases, which resulted in negative brand perception. To summarize, these cases are Telenor, Just Eat, Matas & SKØN, Copenhagen Zoo, and YouSee.

Researchers who use the web as the object of analysis must have in mind that it is difficult to determine the universe or population from which they are sampling. Many researchers feel they try to hit a target that is constantly moving (Bryman & Bell, 2011), which SoMe is a clear example of. The researcher should be able to see the opportunities, but must also deal with the limitations. One way to get around it is to employ different materials, which potentially can highlight contrast and make the basis for cross-validating sources (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this case, we are thus combining netnography with in-depth interviews to be able to address the same problem from different angles.

2.4.2.2 In-depth Interviews Consumers

From the respondents in the in-depth interviews we can get the fullest and most detailed description as possible (Weiss, 1994). The consumer interviews could be explained as a cultural analysis of consumption meanings (Thomson & Troester, 2002). Here we sought to uncover layers of cultural meaning that would structure the consumers' actions in a given social context. In other words we wanted to see what shaped consumers interpretations of their experiences in relation to content sharing.

The analysis of these interviews holds the same guidelines as the interview analysis with the experts. We performed six in-depth interviews with women and men, students and fulltime workers in the age from 25 years to 41 years**.**

Name	Sex	Age	Occupation	Time & Place
Lasse	Male	25	Student with job	June 20, 2014 – Marie Louise's office
Nina	Female	25	Student with job	July 2, 2014 – Nina's home
Martin M.	Male	29	Creative Director	June 18, 2014 – Martin M.'s office
Karina	Female	41	PR Director	June 24, 2014 – Karina's home
Christian	Male	38	Managing Director	June18, 2014 – Christian's office
Trolls (anonymous)	Male	35	Anonymous	June 25, 2014 – Marie Louise's office

Here, this method allows us to get a deeper understanding of how consumers feel about content sharing and we could get acquainted with their deeper thoughts. Once again the semi-structured interviews were guided by open-ended questions to make sure all topics would be covered. See the interview guides in appendix 8 and 9**.** One researcher acted as the interviewer and the other one took notes. The interviews were recorded, transcribed (Appendix 10-15) and coded as well as with the experts interviews.

2.4.2.2.1 Laddering

We knew from the beginning that we wanted to get a thorough understanding of why consumers want to share their feelings. This meant that we needed to dig deeper in the respondents' answers in order for us to reach the emotional values we wanted to explore. For this purpose we made use of the laddering technique, which is a qualitative method that can help figure out what is below the surface (Bystedt et al., 2003). When the respondent answered a question, we kept on digging deeper to discover what really is at stake when the consumers share content. The laddering technique could be used to examine the underlying motivators, which affect a certain (or missing) behaviour. The process seeks to touch the inner layer of a problem (Wansink, 2000). According to our problem statement, this is truly important in order to understand what really is at stake at this point. The companies need to improve their present on SoMe and deference to consumers' need. They can only fulfil this when they understand the consumers' inner thoughts. Basically the laddering technique "…is a closely related series of questions that determines product attributes, consequences, and personal values behind a consumer's preferences. These components are closely linked to each other. The objective is to show how their linkages are related…" (Wasink, 2000, p. 30). Laddering is essentially systematic exploration of the links between rational, functional and lastly emotional (Bystedt et al., 2003). In a traditional sense, laddering is used when respondents are asked why or not they purchase a product. Thus their answers are typically related to attributes such as colour, shape, prize etc. In general, when a respondent is asked a question, their answer will typically be shallow and what first comes to mind. From this the interviewer can begin to move forward to the actual reasons and values behind, through probing questions. This will reveal more personal reasons behind the behaviour rather than just an explanation. This begins to reveal more personal reasons, rather than describing the physical characteristics of the product. When asking 'why' to the initial answers the respondent's next answer would be a more thoughtful personal reflection (Wansink, 2000).

3 Theory

In this part we will give a description of the theories we find relevant for the report. Theory can be understood as all the knowledge, which already occurs within the focus area we work with (Andersen, 2005). Our starting point is Marshall McLuhan's media theory (2001 [1964]) concerning what media are capable of. This is followed by Manual Castells' (2000) society diagnosis, which he calls the network society. It illustrates the society surrounded by electronic medias. We will not only pay attention to the media, which operates in the society but also the consumers. Here we use Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1954) in a modern version.

3.1 McLuhan's Media Theory

A medium's content is always rooted in another medium and McLuhan sees new media as new technology. New media mediate our communication and their form and structure affects how we interpret and understand the world around us. The new media is thus to create our understanding of the world. The medium itself selects and angles stories and events. Therefore, the actual content of the message is secondary and the medium itself is the message (McLuhan, 2001 [1964]). With this in mind, SoMe is media followed by the rising of the Internet.

McLuhan believes that "...the personal and social consequences of any medium – that is the, of any extension of ourselves – result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs..." (McLuhan 2001 [1964], p. 7). Thus, two things can be deduced from McLuhan's perspective. Firstly, SoMe is seen as an extension of both companies and the individual. This extension means that you are able to communicate in a much broader sense. Second, it appears that McLuhan seems to believe that the development of a medium is the source of social change. The change which the medium is expressed, is also what McLuhan means by the medium is the message. The important thing is not the medium's contents, but its ability to shape an interaction. Media influence the society as they continuously create and recreate ways in which individuals, society and cultures interpret and understand the world (McLuhan, 2001 [1964]).

The media is the portrait frame that not only serves as a messenger, but the media is embedded in our perception, our bodies, and are an integral part of what we see (psychological). With this, media are similar to our understanding of society. In addition, the media have a pervasive force particular exploited by politicians in order to create a number of frames that supports reliability. We use McLuhan's theory to give an understanding of what SoMe are capable of as a media. It means that SoMe is not just what they first appear. Thus, their content is much wider and has a much greater impact on both consumers and society. McLuhan believes technology determines human activities and the content becomes irrelevant, as the medium is the message.

Followed by McLuhan, Stiegler later on argued for humanity and technology as coeval and inextricably bound together, thus co-determining each other (Siapera, 2012). However, none of these theorists have looked at a sociology aspect. This however, is a task undertaken by Castells in relation to what he calls the network society (2000).

3.2 The Network Society

Castells' network society relates to the social, political, economic and cultural changes caused by the spread of networks, digital information and communications technologies. Castells argues we are in the Information Age, a historical period that replaced the Industrial Age (Castells, 2000). This further means that we live in a new economy, an economy, which is informational, global, and networked (Castells, 2000). We need to understand Castells' network society in order to understand the culture surrounded by electronic media and the consumer behaviour.

The information technology can be understood as a global machine, which gather all the people in the world (Qvortrup, 1998). The Information Age is characterized as new information and communication technologies and that all organizational processes are built upon networks, and more specific, information networks. This new stage has an effect on the relationships of power, production/consumption, and experiences. In relation to *power*, there has been a shift in power from the traditional institution to informational networks (Castells, 2000), where e.g. SoMe (as networks) has power. In relation to *consumption* and *production* we now live in a new economy, which is informational, global and networked, which reflects the way we do business and the great choices for the consumers. In relation to *experience*, Castells believes that the new age has an impact on our families, sexuality and personalities, in the sense that before personality were embedded in a set of values and has now changed into a customized and individualized personality and that this personality is reprogrammed by interaction with the environment consisting of networks.

This new media method is no longer one-way communication or undifferentiated messages through a never ending channel, as we traditionally would understand as mass communication. New media are diverse and push messages to segments. They are inclusive and combine different media in a multimedia system (Castells, 2000) and SoMe is a clear example of this.

Networks are built by the choices and strategies of social actors. The Internet is more than just a tool; it fits with the basic features of the kind of social movements emerging in the Information age (Castells, 2001). The Internet is therefore able to establish social interactions and communication.

3.2.1 The Power to Generate Knowledge

With help from Castells we can see how control of the brand perception could be analysed as a difficult task in the network society. Firstly, we have the power to generate knowledge and manage the information determined by the productivity (Castells, 2000). The advertiser communicates a message e.g. on SoMe for everybody to enter. They act as the sender and spread the message of the campaign. From here on, it is the customers' turn to respond to the message. This provides the advertiser with knowledge about how the customers interpreted the message. It is furthermore knowledge the advertiser can use in upcoming campaigns.

3.2.2 A Global Economy

Secondly, the new economy is global in its core strategic activities. These activities relates to markets, which can work as one unit worldwide, in chosen time or real time. Most jobs are not global, but different economies are under the influence of the movements of their globalized essence. Globalization is highly selective. It proceeds by linking up all which as dominant interests and has value anywhere in the planet. It thus discards anything from people, firms, territories and resources, which has no value or becomes devalued (Castells, 2000). This means that consumers can see friends' interpretation of companies' messages anywhere at any time. With help from social platforms consumers can act immediately. Consumers learn to take this 'instant feeling' for granted as they adapt to the timeless time and the space of flows (Castells, 2000). Consumers are no longer dependent on time and we can communicate even though we neither are in the same place nor country making us geographical independent. This is caused by the social ordering of things, based on the social construction of how we understand the world. Consumers produce content in real time but other people don't have to be present at well. This independence is what the consumers are getting used to and it illustrates their behaviour.

3.2.3 The Economy is Networked

Lastly, the new economy is networked. Networks connect among themselves on specific business projects, and switch to another network as soon as the project is finished. Major corporations work in a strategy of changing alliances and partnerships, specific to a given product, process, time, and space. Furthermore, these co-operations are based increasingly on sharing of information (Castells, 2000). In terms of SoMe it means that communications belongs to bigger networks which connect among themselves, but can switch to other networks immediately. There are several opportunities for how to connect global economies. We understand from this that the whole society is comprised of different networks. This relates to the sharing of information. If consumers e.g. use hashtags (definition of hashtags see Appendix 1) they go worldwide immediately for others to discover.

3.2.4 Social Media has the Power

This growing enclosure of communication in the space of a flexible, interactive, electronic hypertext does not only concern culture. It has a fundamental effect on politics. In almost all countries, media have become the power of politics. To an overwhelming extent people receive their information, on the basis of which they form their political opinion and structure their behaviour, through the media. The most effective political weapons are negative messages. The most effective negative message is character assassination of opponents' personalities, and / or of their supporting organizations (Castells, 2000). We will account for that SoMe has become the power of brand perception and opinions. There is no censorship so consumers believe the messages from other consumers relating to a company.

3.3 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

When we are looking at the consumer behaviour we believe it is interesting to look at the basic needs, which human beings always have had. We see how these need today can be transformed in to our SoMe behaviour. For this purpose we want to take use of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The theory was presented in 1943 and today normally undertakes the shape of a pyramid (Kremer & Hammond, 2013). Maslow have looked at what motivates people's behaviour and found that people are motivated to achieve specific need. Maslow stated that each individual have five sets of needs and when one need is achieved the desire to fulfil the next need kicks in and so on (McLeod, 2014

[2007]). In its purest form, Maslow's Hierarchy of Need is used as a whole to determine what motivates human behaviour. However, in this case, we will only transform these motives and needs so they account for the consumers' SoMe behaviour and what strives the consumers as social human beings.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is relevant in relation to our problem statement because it help us to understand why consumers behave the way they do and underpin the underlying motives behind their actions. In addition, the theory is based upon that science is a human creation, which grounds its own rules. The theory has its origins in human motives, human goals and is maintained, created and renewed by human beings (Maslow, 1954) hence it matches our scientific approach. In this report we will cover the physiological need (the need for food etc.); the need for safety; the need for affection and love relation; the need for respect; and the need for self-actualization (Maslow, 1954).

Consumers have always had these needs. The important thing in relation to the report is that consumers in a much larger extend want to express these needs to the world that surrounds them. With help from Maslow, we can see that this 'need for expression' behaviour is not a new phenomenon. Acknowledgment makes the individual grow, wise, stronger, and more mature. This represents what humans are capable of effortlessly and without any fight and simply just an expression for its own inherent nature (Maslow, 1968). When we take this into account we can in a much larger extend understand why the consumer act the way they do on SoMe.

When we will pay attention to the consumers in our analysis. We must understand them as being organized as a whole. It means that the whole individual is motivated and not just separated parts e.g. it's not just the stomach, which has a hunger, but the whole individual who has hunger and the body is seeking for food (Maslow, 1954).

3.3.1 The Physiological Need

This is a need, which refers to survival, and basically what makes the blood going in our body and what is called *homeostatic.* This covers hunger, the desire for sleep and sexual desire. When looking at the physiological needs it's important to have in mind that these often are channels for all other sorts of needs as well. E.g. when a person is hungry he is more searching for comfort instead of the right vitamins and proteins to get the body going (Maslow, 1954). In the analysis we will describe how we see the consumers of the modern society have become addicted to the notion of being on SoMe. Simply just the access to SoMe is a way for the consumers to express themselves and thus express the other needs in the hierarchy as well. What we see here is also that we cannot completely isolate the needs from each other (Maslow, 1954). For some people the needs may occur in a different order or be absent and some will feel a mix of needs at one time (Kremer & Hammond, 2013).

3.3.2 The Safety Need

With the physical needs relatively gratified a new sets of needs emerge. This is the individual's safety need, which take precedence and dominate behaviour (Maslow, 1954). A human being in our culture today is largely satisfied in his safety needs and will do his best in order to inhibit treats in a peaceful and smoothly running society. They feel safe from criminal assault and murder, extremes temperature and wild animals. In a sense the individual no longer has a safety need acting as a motivator. It can be understood in the same way that when the individual no longer feel hungry he neither feels endangered (Maslow, 1954). These needs become directly and clear to us when looking at threats relating to factors in the economic and social environment. In the absence of safety e.g. due to financial crisis, war, natural disaster, family violence etc. the safety need becomes clear in a preference for a job and the desire for a saving account, insurances etc. It becomes a need where the individual feels it has to protect itself due to the lack of absence (Maslow, 1954).

When transforming this safety need to the SoMe behaviour we cannot look at it isolated. We will account for that this safety need relates closely to the next needs presented by Maslow, the belongingness and love need, which will be explained in the following paragraph. In connection with the belongingness and love need we will account that humans have a need to feel accepted by others. However, when we are looking at the safety need we will argue that we have a need for not feeling left out. This means, that if the consumers don't have Internet access, they will be left out of the society, hence they have to take their precautions and need to be online to maintain their social life. Thus, we differentiate therefore in term of to have a need to be with others and feel accepted (belongingness and love need) and in relation to the need not to feel left out (safety need). According to Maslow we could see that the individual can take precautions e.g. with insurances and savings accounts, in relation to SoMe they assure themselves by being online.

3.3.3 Social Belongingness and Love Need

When the safety needs and physiological needs are fulfilled an interpersonal need emerges (Maslow, 1954). Bear in mind, that since we are not using the theory in its purest sense, all of our needs relating to the SoMe behaviour have an interpersonal character.

At this stage the individual will hunger for affectionate relations in a social group and he will try to find his own place and role in a group. For the individual this becomes a clear goal for him to achieve this place and role and something he wants more than anything in the world. The size of the groups is secondary. Smaller social groups are families, colleagues and intimate partners whilst larger groups are religious groups, sport teams, organizations etc. Sometimes the belongingness need can overcome the two previous mentioned needs depending on peer pressure (Maslow, 1954). SoMe itself more or less refers to social belongingness and we will account that this need is what strives the consumers most on SoMe.

3.3.4 The Esteem Need

This need covers self-respect and self-esteem. Every individual has a desire to feel accepted by others and to feel valued by others. Maslow differentiates between two sets of needs. 1) The desire for strength, for mastery and competence, for achievement for independence and for freedom. 2) The desire for reputation or prestige, status, recognition, importance, attention, appreciation and in general just respect from other people. With this the individuals feel they can contribute with something in the world and bring value (Maslow, 1954). With the theory from Maslow we want to discover what strives the consumers' behaviour on SoMe, and emphasize how easily the consumers can use SoMe as a tool to express themselves and feel self-esteem.

An issues that arise is that thwarting these need may lead to insecurity, a sense of weakness and helplessness and such feelings would thus mean discouragement instead of self-esteem. The most healthy self-esteem should be a deserved respect from others and not an external fame or adulation (Maslow, 1954). This is interesting in this report, because it would make it possible for us to see if the achieved self-esteem is true or phony and whether it instead can end up hurting the consumer.

3.3.4.1 Limitations

In Maslow's purest theory he argues that people with low self-esteem feel they must get respect from others and to some extend they are seeking glory of fame. Nonetheless, respect from others would not help the individual to build self-esteem, but is a process they have to deal with internally (Maslow, 1954). In this case, we believe that none of our respondents lacked confidence. Quite in contrast, they were all very confident. When this being said, all of them acknowledged that they wanted to present themselves under the best conditions, but we do not believe that it had something to do with a lack of self-esteem. This is a limitation in connection with the data collection. Normally in relation to transferability the researchers try to discover a good description of the topic, which provides the researcher with some kind of database in which they can use and hence make judgements and transferability about findings to other *milieux* (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This is not the case here and we, as researchers, could have asked respondents who do not share a lot of content on SoMe to be able to have a more transferability data.

3.3.5 The Need for Self-Actualization

Even though four needs more or less has been fulfilled at this stage, the individual may still feel some kind of discontent and sooner or later the individual will develop a sort of restlessness. This can be avoided if the individual do what he is suited for. Maslow says: "What a man can be, he must be" (1954, p. 91), and he should be the best he can be. This need relates to the man's desire for self-fulfilment and more specific actualization in his potential and the realization of this potential. It promotes the notion that a man desires to become his best, and that he wants to become more and more and achieve what he is capable of. How this need appears is very individual and could e.g. be a desire to be an ideal parent, or expressed in paintings or invention or athletically. Following from this, Maslow explains that the emergent of self-actualization usually rest upon prior satisfaction of the previous mentioned needs (Maslow, 1954).

The moments where the individual feel self-actualization are some of the happiest moments for the individual, and also some of the healthiest moments because of the maturity of the individual. Self-actualization is a sprint or an episode in which the individual gathers all the power in a very effective and pleasant way. It can undertake different characters such as humour, creativity, and even seem ego exceeding (Maslow, 1968). Creativity should not only be understood in the strict traditional sense, and does not exclusively deal with professional or talents working in their field. But it is also about how the individual can unfold in a different way than what was necessarily expected. It is also about to be spontaneous and to do something unexpected. Further, it means that you perform things (e.g. occupational) in a new, different, creative way (Maslow, 1968). We will use it to see how much the consumers use SoMe to express their self-actualization and what they gain from it.

Chapter 2

4 Analysis of Telenor

The case of Telenor goes back to 2012 and is the first of its kind and volume. The case of Telenor is perceived as the biggest and most serious shitstorm ever in Denmark, where a company truly was facing negative brand perception on SoMe. Ever since, we have discovered many shitstorms in Denmark and seen many brands, which have been exposed in the media due to the consumer's negative perception of the brand. Today shitstorms occur more frequently than before and they take upon different characteristics and seem to be very difficult for companies to control. In the following we will present the Telenor case.

The Telenor case was groundbreaking for its time in 2012. In fact the previous Social Media Manager Morten Jørgensen from 3 Mobile told us in an interview that everybody is afraid of an incident like Telenor's (Appendix 4). We find the case's volume and storyline interesting and we will analyse the case as our starting point in the report. The Telenor case is the focal for our report and we found the case to be important, in order to fully understand which factors are at stake when negative brand perception occurs.

4.1 The Telenor Shitstorm in 2012

Telenor is a merger of the companies Sonofon and Cybercity and was thus founded in June 2009. Today Telenor offers broadband and mobile subscriptions and has more than 2,000 employees in Denmark. The whole Telenor Group is located in 14 countries and has more than 40,000 employees (Telenor, 2014a). In Q2 2014 Telenor had 1.8 million mobile customers and 262,000 broadband customers (Telenor, 2014b).

In 2012, Telenor was a victim for a shitstorm, where thousands of users on Facebook criticized Telenor's business. It was the beginning of a nightmare for Telenor. A Telenor customer named Anders Brinkmann, had for long been tired of the level of payment service in Telenor. In his frustration he posted a complaint on Telenor's Facebook page (Appendix 7). The complaint was well founded and was not rude at all. It was just his expression of his frustrations with Telenor.

> This is going to be my last month as a customer. I have never experienced anything like this. The first four month I was in contact with you every time I needed to pay a bill. You

> did not know how to sign me up for a payment service and sent me reminders all the time without even sending me a bill first. That is illegal, but I had mercy every time, cause I seriously got sick of spending hours every month being in contact with your customer service and have since paid 50 DKK every time I had to pay a bill. Besides this, today I was in contact with Helle, because I wanted to have an overview concerning my girlfriend's smart agreement, which should be paid, but which you still demand 184 DKK for every month on payment service (the funny thing is that you actually can manage this). She says that this agreement do not exist […] It is very criticisable that you cannot even find the agreement. Therefore you cannot inform me whether or not I have paid too much or too little. Thus I have decided to shut down my payments as from today and am removing all of the family's agreement with immediate effect. (Appendix 16)

The original post is no longer available on Facebook, thus we cannot see the hundreds of comments related to this specific post. However, what we can see on Telenor's Facebook profile is seven posts made by Telenor afterwards in which they either apologized or keep the users updated. Several comments have been posted to these posts, hence these comments will be our field of research in term of the netnography.

The customer Anders Brinkmann posted his complaint Thursday 2nd August 2012, 16:54. But in 2012, Telenor only had customer service opening hours on Facebook until 17.00. This is Telenor's internal reason why they did not respond until the day after (Appendix 7). When this is being said, it is interesting to hear how the Social Media Manager Morten Jørgensen from 3 Mobile recalled the case in another way. Morten Jørgensen was sure of; the complaint was posted Friday 3rd August 2012 and had the impressions that Telenor did not respond before Monday afternoon (Appendix 4). In addition, an article states, that Telenor were understaffed due to holidays (Bjerre Herdel, 2012), which Steffen Trannerup, Senior Digital Consultant at Telenor, did not indicate in the interview. Nonetheless, it took a day before Telenor answered the customer on Facebook, but at that time, it was already too late and the post had spread like a tsunami on Facebook. Apparently many people found the case interesting and many people could relate to the customer's frustrations. It can be illustrated with comments like: "You have also cheated everyone else", "I more or less call every month and you promise and promise to fix the things, but you continue to send me reminders", "Everyone, stay away from Telenor", "If you want to fix the problems, then close down the company, because it is a piece of crap" and "Anders' case is just a small case, I have tried in 12 month to get my payments signed to payment service and it has not succeeded yet" (Appendix 17). From this we can understand that a huge number of customers have been unsatisfied with Telenor and the service (or the absence of it).

4.1.1 Problems with Telenor's Product and Service

To some extend, this could indicate that the actual problem goes back to Telenor's products and services. In our research we have talked to four experts working with social media. All four mentioned that negative online content is related to the companies' product or service (Appendix 3-6). Furthermore, in an article from 2014 regarding problems with the sharing of negative online content, many users have commented the article and all blame the companies and state that there would be no problem if the company just delivered a good product and service to begin with (Donnely, 2014). According to this, Steffen Trannerup, Senior Digital Consultant at Telenor also explained, "We had an error and in the light of this, we were not aware of it and we were not good enough to identify our mistakes" (Appendix 7). This indicates that Telenor is not better than their own product and that the interviewed experts' statements seem to have some truth in it. In addition, SoMe expert Jan Futtrup Kjær believed that the issue is not whether to get a grip on SoMe, but the brand and product (Bjerre Herdel, 2012). This indicates that SoMe does not make bad products, but companies do, hence negative content is not caused by SoMe, but by the companies. A user on Facebook also highlights the problems with the products and service and wrote, "The problem is that you're not transparent at all in term of your payments" (Appendix 17). There has obviously been a big problem with the payment service, but it appears that Telenor has underestimated the problem and perhaps also their customers, given that Telenor had received lots of complaints of this character before.

4.1.2 The Snowball Effect

In less than a day, the post had received 16,000 likes (Bjerre Herdel, 2012) and a few days later, the post had received more than 32,000 likes and more than 3,200 comments (Kjær & Iversen, 2012). In comparison Telenor's Facebook page had at that time almost 26.000 likes in total (Bjerre Herdel, 2012). The shitstorm truly showed its face when the negative publicity reached the traditional media and was being debated in the news (Appendix 7).

Telenor had a SoMe strategy prior to the shitstorm, but was not aware of the power of SoMe in the modern society. In a personal interview with Steffen Trannerup, Senior Digital Consultant at

Telenor we asked regarding the episode. It was a shock for Telenor, "...there were no staff following our social media platforms after 17.00 [...]. The next morning, on my way to work, my phone rings [...]. He [the colleague] said in the phone, that something is completely wrong" (Appendix 7). Telenor had never seen a crisis of this character. Internally they were not sure of who should be responsible and they wanted to get to the bottom regarding the problems with the payment service instead of responding the customer right away. It meant that nobody dared to answer the customer and the problem raised in the internal hierarchy. Steffen Trannerup told us, that this was a big problem since people working in the top layers in a company do not have the same experience with SoMe, hence they do not know its complications (Appendix 7). Telenor faced the problem, not only the problem on Facebook, but also the problem with the payment service, which caused the incident in the first place. Telenor apologized and resolved the problem according to their Communication Advisor, Tom Lehn-Christiansen, (Wittorff, 2012).

In 2012 SoMe expert Jan Futtrup Kjær acknowledged that a shitstorm like this had a stronger effect on Telenor since the trust to the telecom industry already is broken (Bjerre Herdel, 2012). Both the previous Social Media Manager Morten Jørgensen from 3 Mobile and Steffen Trannerup, Senior Digital Consultant at Telenor, support this argument, and said that everybody is dependent on their phone and Internet (Appendix 4 & 7). This indicates that the whole industry is in a danger zone and maybe takes a higher risk when entering SoMe than other industries. Steffen Trannerup even said that it was just a matter of time, and that Telenor just took the bullet from the competitors (Appendix 7). Neither were all the comments on the post related to Telenor, but also complaints regarding the other telecommunication companies (Bjerre Herdel, 2012). In addition, many satisfied customers also defended Telenor, "I have nothing to complain about regarding Telenor", "We have always been more than happy with Telenor" and "Telenor is the world's best telephone company". Some customers might feel, that when everybody is turning the back against Telenor, they have to defend and justify their choice as a customer.

One could wonder why it was the customers Anders Brinkman's complaint, which suddenly took all the attention. The whole complaint was well written and maybe lots of people shared the same opinion or had experienced something similar.

4.1.3 Telenor's Approach to the Situation

Steffen Trannerup believes the issue was Telenor's approach to the overall situation. The mistake with the payment service was far greater than they had ever imagined and the other users on Facebook just tapped in and started to like, comment and share the post (Appendix 7). Another issue were Telenor's SoMe strategy. There was no one who reacted on the comments on Facebook before the morning after the complaint. Overnight the comments had evolved hour by hour. Telenor was not prepared at all (Appendix 7). This indicates that Telenor did not have any knowledge about which negative factors SoMe can have for a brand. We must look at the modern society, which today is built upon networks because of the many SoMe. The consumers are so well connected through the Internet and therefore everything works faster and is being spread with the speed of light.

When the post came national and reached the traditional media, such as TV and newspapers, that was when Telenor truly realized the size of the problem (Appendix 7). A shitstorm is when a company is placed in a bad case where everyone presses the 'dislike button', a button where everyone perceive the company as stupid and combine the company with bad customer service. "It is like when we see an accident, all of us want to see the ambulance and blood..." (Appendix 6) and it is similar to SoMe which have a huge power of dislike.

4.2 Telenor Today

Today Telenor have a 24-hour customer service in all channels including Facebook. Today a customer like Anders Brinkmann would have got an answer right away according to Steffen Trannerup (Appendix 7). We understand from this that Telenor have learned from the incident and have in addition made many internal reorganisations. Telenor did not have a SoMe strategy in relation to being able to handle negative content. Today however, they feel better prepared and have an emergency crew available 24/7 (Appendix 7).

Today Telenor's customer service on Facebook is big and they have 20 people who handle their Facebook account. This is a huge development since 2012, where they only had four people taking care of SoMe platforms (Appendix 7).

The Telenor case is a good case to learn from and analyse because of its fast development and educational outcome. Telenor have obviously learned from their experience in both a good and bad way. The case indicates that SoMe are very uncontrollable and many companies are inexperienced. We will pay attention to this in the rest of the report. In many ways Telenor is a classic example today because of their lack of the strategy, behaviour during the shitstorm, issues with the product, and unprofessional communication.

Chapter 3

5 Social Media, the Society, and Consumers

In the case of Telenor, we saw that an angry consumer started the debate on SoMe which spread like wildfire in the society for everybody to enter. These three factors; the consumers, SoMe and the society were all present in the development of negative brand perception. These factors will thus be our analysis' pivotal point in the following analysis.

Our analysis will pay attention to how and why the consumers act the way they do on SoMe. Furthermore, we believe that the society is another factor, which we must take into consideration. The analysis will thus have a three-legged character in which we emphasises media, society and consumers. These three factors affect each other and jointly we will explain that they reflect effects in terms of negative brand perception. The factors will be explained individually, but since they influence each other we cannot fully look at them isolated.

6 Social Media

The following is an analysis part which cover SoMe in general and how it can be related to the society and consumers. SoMe can be very useful in the sense that it contains many communication tools that companies can make use of. This part mainly builds on our data collection and empirical finding through our research. We believe that SoMe is an important tool since the companies use it as a branding and marketing platform to establish their brand performance. In addition, consumers use SoMe as a way of expressing themselves which we will elaborate on in the analysis part named 8 Consumers.

6.1 Definition

Basically "Social media is the media we use to be social. That's it" (Safko & Brake, 2010, p. 3). It is digital platforms, where people interact freely, share and discuss information whether it is personal or work related. SoMe is a multimedia mix of pictures, sentences, videos and personal meanings and words. In general people exchange content and engage by using conversations.

We have previously looked at how communication undertakes the form as sender-message-receiver, but it will be necessary to move away from this definition in the modern society. We are no longer only looking at mass communication, but two-way communication where the company has the opportunity to talk with the consumers and vice versa. SoMe has another information flow than traditional media where the consumer also has an active role. It is not just about telling the company's story, it is very much about giving the consumer the tools to tell their stories about the company (Hansen, 2003). SoMe involves the consumer so that they themselves take an active role by using the mouse as an extended arm when they create content.

New possibilities come with SoMe and we have to move away from the old definition. E.g. Steffen Trannerup from Telenor does no longer perceive SoMe as distanced from traditional media, but SoMe as an integrated concept under the category media equal with all other media (Appendix 7). SoMe can be considered as a multimedia and include files, video, images, etc., and is thus a media which brings together other media. Thus the media concept we have previously dealt with must come to an end where a medium was determined by its technology (Hansen, 2006).

6.1.1 Dialogue Media

Previous Social Media Manager Morten Jørgensen from 3 Mobile, explained SoMe as "I think that social media is a dialogue tool rather than a communication tool. It is certainly not a one-way tool that many companies think…" (Appendix 4). Also Community Manager Josephine Gram Ludvigsen from Marvelous and Steffen Trannerup from Telenor define SoMe as a dialogue platform where both the customers and company can create content (Appendix 3 & 7). However, this may also lead to the sharing of negative brand perception, but neither Josephine Gram Ludvigsen or Morten Jørgensen see this as a big problem. They believe that content always is constructive. The negative content can turn into something positive by listening to the customers. And it can improve the company's product (Appendix 3 & 4). The problems that occur are just that many companies do not know how to tackle negative brand perception.

Morten Jørgensen and Josephine Gram Ludvigsen see the potential with the dialogue platform and see how the brand and the consumers can get closer to each other. Josephines Gram Ludvigsen consider the dialogue as a big advantage since the company has all the opportunities to ask the consumers what they want and think, thus gain a bigger understanding of the consumers. Furthermore, she has the notion that it is much better that opinions are in the open instead of consumers spreading negative brand perception where the company do not have a chance to respond (Appendix 3).

We asked previous Social Media Manager Morten Jørgensen from 3 Mobile, if he ever felt like a target on SoMe when everybody freely can complain. But he believed that it was much more important to highlight that it is an opportunity for the company to act more like a human. Morten Jørgensen thus holds the same opinion as Josephine Gram Ludvigsen and said that the negative discussion will take part no matter what, so you might as well be part of the discussion. Morten Jørgensen treasures the dialogue because it allows him to talk to his customers and he can get an idea of their thoughts. He sees it as way for the company to tap into the customers' environment and give an understanding of how they perceive the brand. E.g. if the company sell apples but the customers talk about pears then perhaps the brand should consider pears instead (Appendix 4). Martin Rubæk Jensen from Brandhouse said something similar and points that it takes a lot of time and engagement from the company to blend with the customers (Appendix 5).

6.1.2 Customer Service Channel

When Morten Jørgensen worked at 3 Mobile they mainly used Facebook as a customer service channel. It was a way for 3 Mobile to update their customers in connection with signal breakdowns etc. 3 Mobile had also announced customer service opening hours on Facebook. When having an online customer service, it is important that needs tuning, so customers know when they can expect an answer (Appendix 4).

Telenor is also primarily using Facebook as a customer service channel, which is why the angry customer Anders Brinkmann made his complaint back in 2012 on Facebook. Telenor learned a lot from the shitstorm and mostly how important it is to provide the customers with proper customer service online. Telenor have gone from Facebook opening hours lasting until 17.00 till customer service 24/7, and have increased their Facebook staff from four people to twenty people. Telenor have an average of 2,000 monthly customer service inquiries and each inquiry takes approximately half an hour hence it is very resource demanding. This being said, Telenor did not mind the many resources it takes cause they are very aware of how important customer care is today (Appendix 7). Morten Jørgensen and Steffen Trannerup have obtained an understanding of the customers' needs and expectations. But as the case with Telenor the company gives everybody an opportunity to expose the company. Morten Jørgensen is also aware of the consequences of having a customer service channel that is public on Facebook. There are often very negative content on the SoMe profile and it may scare away new customers (Appendix 4).

6.1.3 Branding Platform

The rising of SoMe have changed the way companies brand themselves. Previously, we have seen that organizations use websites as branding tools, but it has been transmitted to SoMe as well. Different companies use SoMe as a branding platform. When Morten Jørgensen worked at 3 Mobile he quickly observed that somehow they had to remove focus from the negative customer service on Facebook. So they began to communicate different offers, information about events, fun gimmicks, and in general just branding of 3 Mobile. The mind-set was to understand the customers (Appendix 4). To some extent, one must assume that when a customer likes a Facebook page, they also expect to get something back from the company. Steffen Trannerup from Telenor is also a big fan of SoMe as a branding platform (Appendix 7) and Josephine Gram Ludvigsen from Marvelous sees Facebook as a good place to build image and a place where the company can re-direct the customer to a web shop or similar (Appendix 3).

6.1.3.1 The Key to Storytelling

SoMe platforms are tools where consumers can share their opinions and experiences, what the consumers increasingly define narratives (Bruce &Solomon, 2013). Given this, the companies need to be aware of how to react and use communications strategies on SoMe to get advantages of the consumers use of SoMe. Many consumers will share brand stories through SoMe when they have had either a very positive or negative experience with the brand as Telenor were a clear example of. As a result, many academics advocate that before a company even considers entering the SoMe space actively, a company should be certain that it has its branding fundamentals right and is able to deliver the brand promise through all consumer touch points (Barwise & Meehan, 2010).

Storytelling has strength in this vital marketplace for capturing customer hearts and minds (Di Somma, 2014). A neuroscience research backs up the long-held belief that stories are the most powerful means of communicating as a message. Marketers understand this and are moving their customers through powerful brand stories (Di Somma, 2014). SoMe is an open-source environment, meaning that everybody can be a co-creator of a brand's story. Therefore an important point is that the brand owner navigate its brand content through the consumer-generated content to ensure that consumers' brand stories remain as close as possible to the brand owner's desired story (Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012). Stories can help build awareness, comprehension, empathy, recognition, recall, and provide meaning to the brand (Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012), which are important factors in a strong branding strategy and SoMe is and easy channel for the purpose.

With traditional media, the companies are the sender of their own created story about the brand. In terms of SoMe, the company is no longer the only storyteller. SoMe encourage everybody to participate in the discussion whether someone is invited or not. This is a characteristic for SoMe and can be understood as the medium's message (McLuhan, 2001 [1964]). McLuhan further argues"...the personal and social consequences of any medium – that is the, of any extension of ourselves – result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs..." (McLuhan, 2001 [1964], p. 7). Whether the company or an angry consumer sends a message, the story becomes an extension of the brand whether the company likes it or not. If we look at 'the medium is the message' we understand that a medium becomes the source of social changes. It means that the content itself on SoMe is not important, but the form it takes such as interactions and co-creations, and self expression. Everybody is part of the stories and that is how we can see the social changes.

SoMe makes it possible for the consumers to control what they view, what they share and how they view it. Based on this we have seen a swift in the roles and relationship between consumers and marketers. We know social media is about making connections and thereby storytelling would be great to use to build a strong branding strategy, but as we have mention earlier it can also be critical and consist of some risks when using SoMe as a branding tool.

6.2 Are Brands Suited to be on Social Media

The term 'social' refers to consumer behaviour and not company behaviour. Nonetheless, companies are just as much a part of SoMe as consumers. With SoMe it is very easy to reach the consumers with marketing initiatives, but it is still a medium on the consumers' premises and the companies try to mingling according to Martin Rubæk Jensen from Brandhouse (Appendix 5). This also means that the consumers have the power, but it takes on a double effect because the companies are nothing without the consumers and the consumers are nothing without the companies. Previous Social Media Manager Morten Jørgensen from 3 Mobile, also said that SoMe are mostly suited for the private sphere and not necessarily suited as a company tool. Often the companies interfere the display cause the consumers just want to see fun content and pictures of their friends etc. (Appendix 4).

6.2.1 Brand Awareness vs. Sharing of Negative Brand Perception

It will of course always be possible for any company to build brand awareness on SoMe. But we will later on account that smaller companies, as well as big companies may be exposed to negative content where they do not have the right resources to respond. An example is a small florist from Dronninglund in Denmark named Cirkeline & Lille My. A customer made a complaint on Mother's day on the florist's Facebook page because the florist did not deliver the ordered flowers on time. The controversy escalated on Facebook as Cirkeline & Lille My deleted the customer's complaint. The florist did not agree that the flowers were delivered too late and therefore they did not want the negative post on their Facebook page. The florist deleted the customer's complaints and the customer was frustrated. Consequently, the customer took a picture of the complaint and posted it on her own Facebook profile. And from here it took on rapidity when the post was shared more than 350 times. The customer made a new post on Cirkeline & Lille My's Facebook page saying she was outraged because they had deleted her complaint and it gave rise to a respond from the florist with comment like: "You are stopping right now!", "We will not listen to your spam" and "delete your puke!" (Holm, 2014).

The problem is that the florist was not prepared to deal with complaints on Facebook and they did not predict that something like this could happen. Most likely, they are present on Facebook because everybody is on Facebook and the brand awareness is favourable, but they were not aware that a company potentially could become a moving target. Since it is a small local florist, we must assume that they do not have the necessary skills to communicate through a dialogue media and thus with the customers. The owner of the shop did not see it coming and explained afterwards that she did not think young people are aware of how much damage they can do. Further she added that they had received more than 60 bad reviews and hate mails (Holm, 2014). She completely ignores that she as a brand and company, has promised a customer a product that she was not able to deliver. Then she chooses to be mad at the customer rather than meeting the customer and focus on customer care.

When looking at Cirkeline & Lille My's Facebook profile today, they post pictures of their bouquets because Facebook is *nice to have*, but not *need to have.* Cirkeline & Lille My is not the only ones who have tried to do some online damage control. In a British study, 45 per cent of those quizzed said they had failed in the attempt to remove negative posts. Another 12 per cent said they wanted to respond, but they did not know how (Donnely, 2014).

6.2.2 Companies do not Have the Resources to Respond on Social Media

Benjamin Rud Elberth works at Geelmuyden.Kiese as Digital Chief. He often advises companies not to be on SoMe, but sometimes the company should just keep the dialogue with the customer much more simple e.g. with a newsletter. Often lifestyle brands seem to have problems. Many brands find it difficult to receive engagement from their followers until people starts talking bad about them (Appendix 6). The Danish cafe JOE & THE JUICE is an example of this. A female customer posted a post on JOE & THE JUICE's Facebook wall 29th July 2014, about how she while eating her sandwich with her two young daughters, heard the male staff's excesses. These excesses referred to the boys' weekend where they talked about the number of women they had slept with, how they cheated on their girlfriends and how ugly women just needed to be put in place. The female customer did not believe that the service personnel should have such conversation in a café, which also serve children as customers (Appendix 18). The Academy Leader and Partner of JOE & THE JUICE, Simon Nielsen commented on the post from his private Facebook profile (Appendix 18). There was nothing wrong with the actual apology, but the fact that he answers with his personal profile and not with JOE & THE JUICE as the receiver, meant that the apology got lost in the hundreds of other comments and the crowd could not see that JOE & THE JUICE had replied. The problem with such companies are that first of all they have not considered, when acting on an open forum like Facebook they might be met by negative content. The next problem, which occurs, is that they do not have staff to do a proper work of community management and their answers could potentially make the situation even worse, which was the case with the florist.

A British study showed that almost a third of the British companies felt their reputation had been affected by the online activity of existing employees (Donnely, 2014). 14th April 2014, US Airways experienced such a situation. A customer tweeted a complaint regarding a delayed flight. As a response, US Airways tweeted the words: "We welcome feedback, Elle. If your travel is complete, you can detail here for review and follow up." A picture depicting a naked woman in a sexual position with a toy plane followed the tweet. An hour later the tweet was removed and US Airways tweeted an apology for the inappropriate picture (Appendix 19). But in that time, the picture and the tweet was all over the Internet.

The Previous Social Media Manager Morten Jørgensen from 3 Mobile also said that he had noticed many incidents where companies should have stayed quiet. In addition, they do not understand that one cannot discard his personal friends and his corporate communication when communicating on SoMe (Appendix 4). There is no filter and it reaches everybody and the companies tend to forget this. It will also fail when there are many in the company who tries to manage the communication (Appendix 4). The communication must be tuned and come from the staff dealing with this and far from everyone in the company should be able to respond. In the rest of the report we will return to these problems.

6.2.3 Take the Product and Service into Consideration

Benjamin Rud Elberth from Geelmuyden.Kiese said that some companies are not suited to be on SoMe when taking their products into account. Here he mentioned among others political parties, tobacco companies and the challenges for e.g. McDonald's (Appendix 6). And exactly McDonald's is an interesting company to mention. In early 2012, they launched a Twitter campaign with the hashtag #mcstories. The intention was that consumers should share their positive experiences regarding McDonald's. The campaign backfired when the consumers began to share the wrong kind of stories, closer to McHorror Stories. It did not take long before the consumers began to express their many negative experiences about McDonald's. Within two hours, McDonald's had to pull the campaign. But the hashtag made it considerably difficult for McDonald's (Forbes, 2012). We will get back to the effect of hashtags later in the report. With this case, we can see how a global brand like McDonald's really need to take their precautions when communicating. Everybody knows their food, thus everybody has an opinion and it can easily be shared with help from SoMe. Obviously this is a problem which can be related to the product McDonald is serving and probably why Benjamin Rud Elberth was anxious about McDonald's appearance on SoMe in general. Nonetheless, McDonald's as one of the biggest brands in the world has to be present on SoMe. Otherwise the consumers would be asking way too many questions regarding the lack of appearance. And as mentioned earlier, SoMe is really good branding and dialogues platform, which in the specific case just failed big time. Everything must be thought through twice when consumers become co-creators of the communication the company communicates. It may go wrong due to the tools that are available to consumers.

Another point is that companies should not necessarily be present on all of the various SoMe. They must take the service or product into consideration as well as the target group and decide whether or not they are suited. E.g. a clothing brand is much more suited to be on Instagram than an assurance company. Of course it is possible for some companies to be present on many different SoMe, here it is just really important that the content varies as customers may follow a brand on different SoMe.

6.3 Speaking Tube

The interesting thing with SoMe is that everyone have a voice. We are all able to share our experiences and meanings about something; everyone is a publisher and has the rights to have their own opinions. The brand owner and the consumers take multiple roles in SoMe, with playing the director, actor, and spectator roles at various points (Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012). This could be explained in connection with what Guldbrandsen and Just call the collaborative paradigm. Here we see how the consumer can go online to produce content. In this paradigm, communication is an ongoing process with more than one participating actor (Gulbrandsen & Just, 2011). Previous, the communication from a company consisted of mass communication as the main and only source. At this point, the consumers could not engage and interfere further with the brand. Today, however, this is an option for the consumers and they can produce content in new media where they have the power to link, comment, like etc. This is a big challenge for the advertiser, as the company no longer serves as gatekeepers in relation to what is being said about the brand. Companies make use of communication strategies to brand themselves on all media, but today it is much easier for the users to build on these messages with help from SoMe.

SoMe is not only a entertainment media but also a people's court. Everyone has a voice and is able to share their experiences, meanings, and attitudes, as Martin Rubæk Jensen from Brandhouse expresses "...it has become easier to share and for the consumers to take the power" (Appendix 5). SoMe have turned the classical theatre into an improvisational version because they allow much more role diversity for all the players involved in the production (Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012). Both Martin Rubæk Jensen from Brandhouse and previous Social Media Manager Morten Jørgensen from 3 Mobile, explained that even before the rising of SoMe the consumers used different media as a speaking tube e.g. newspaper where it is possible to write a reader's letter or a feature article and different forums. The consumers have in general always had a speaking tube, SoMe is just a channel which makes is much more prevailing for the consumers. But besides that, Steffen Trannerup from Telenor and Martin Rubæk Jensen don't see anything new with SoMe. (Appendix 4, 5 & 7).

6.4 Co-Created Content

Co-created content is only possible because the media allow the consumers to develop content. SoMe simply calls for an active behaviour, participation, and involvement. The consumers are no longer just recipients but both participants and creators of the story. The communication we see today is much more oriented towards consumer involvement, where the receiver participate in the communication. This kind of interaction can also be called a mass-culture. It appears that meaning is created in the meeting between the consumers and the expression and among other consumers (Hansen, 2003). If we take McLuhan into consideration we understand that "…the medium is the message" (McLuhan, 2001 [1964], p. 9) and thereby we should be looking at what SoMe are capable of. In addition three of our experts also mentioned that consumers to a wide extend carries a lot of power (Appendix 3, 5 & 6). The users are producing content in a new medium where they have the power to link, comment, like etc., which is something traditional media do not allow. Now the users set the stage and decide which content should be available.

7 The Network Society

Social change is just as dramatic as the technological and economic transformation. The social changes are significant and environment consciousness permeates the institutions of society. For example, media personalize policies so that the policies also cover personal matters, which affect the actual policy / political system (Castells, 2000 & Deuze, 2006). Castells propose a hypothesis in regards to how major trends of changes represent our new and confusing world. Castells also says that the trends are related and we can make meaning out of the new tendencies and the relationship within. We have to look at the society with a collective, analytical effort aimed at understanding our new world on the basis of the present (Castells, 2000).

Based on the historical and technological development a series of new communication systems has occurred. These systems speak a universal language, and digital and both are integrated globally in the production and distribution of words, sounds and images that reflect our culture. These communication systems are also adapted to the tastes of the identities and moods of individuals. These networks are growing exponentially, creating new forms of communication channels that shape the lives and shaped by life (Castells, 2000). Stiegler argues that technology and humanity are coeval and that humans and technology belong together (in Siapera, 2012). Today SoMe is a part of our lifestyle and is something which belongs to almost all humans, but a sociology of new media and technology can provide detailed and empirically rich information on all areas of life, which can enable us to better understand the present (Siapera, 2012).

SoMe is part of what Castells calls the network society (2000). Castells explains how we see patterns of networks, symbiotic communication and flexibility in the society (Castells, 2000). With SoMe everyone has a voice and communication is no longer one-way communication with just the company as the senders, we are all networked together (Appendix 3 & 6). Castells' main argument is that new technologies are associated with a new form of social organization, which revolves around the idea of the network (Siapera, 2012). Virtual communities emerge from the technological contributions of socialization. Such communities replace the local area, which previously have been an important factor as the basis for socialization. Now socialization extends in a broader spectrum. Of course, there are still local socialization, but not in the same manner. The new forms of social interaction on the Internet are redefining the social communities. Communities are networks, which consist of interpersonal ties that help to produce socialization, support, information, membership, and social identity (Castells, 2003 [2001]). We see a difference between traditional communities and network. Traditional networks were built around common values, while the new networks are built around social actors' choices and strategies. We build the network for what we care about. We have gone from primary relationships such as families and religion to secondary relationships.

7.1 Newsjacking

An example, which truly emphasize these new tenuous and temporary bonds is a case regarding something as simple as a striped vase and deals with the Danish porcelain brand Kähler and the Danish retail chain Imerco. The vase was a limited edition and Imerco was ready to sell it 25th August 2014, 10:00 on their website. But Imerco was not prepared for 16,000 customers waiting behind the screens, ready to add the vase to the basket. It created a tremendous fuzz on Imerco's Facebook page with thousands of angry customers who could not buy the vase because the website broke down or the vase was sold out (Appendix 20). While 16,000 customers were angry, the rest of the society was laughing at the whole situation. Many angry customers had spend seven hours trying to buy the vase and a customer had even made a calculation "16,000 customers x 7 hours = 112,000" and thus meaning that Imerco had wasted the customers' life with 12,8 years (Appendix 20). For the rest of the society, this was just a tragicomic episode. Tragically, in the sense that there is war in the world and people made a big fuss out of a vase they could not get hold of. Many users on Facebook took part in the debate with jokes and called it first world problems with an ironical tone.

In addition, based on this event many companies saw an opportunity to make fun of the situation and redesigned their own products so they looked like the striped vase or launched competitions. This phenomenon is called commercial newsjacking and deals with real time marketing. This was all done with an ironical tone of voice and with the #vasegate. Newsjacking usually takes place when certain events occur in the society. It is typical crises where companies intercept the tendency and sees their opportunity to spin on these events and makes jokes on the matter. As a company you have to be fast to capture these opportunities and be ready with a team of graphic designers who can create something aesthetically with the products. From a company's perspective, there are opportunities for good branding. Suddenly there is much hype and many will be exposed to brands they would not otherwise have seen. Thus, there may be a financial benefit because of saved advertising budget if you can play along the newsjacking wave. It can make even the smallest events big even though there is not much in it and without any major novelty in the case. In this case it completely exploded with lots of hashtags and promotion features. As of 28th August 2014, 343 post were made on Instagram with the #vasegate. These are posts making fun of the situation or people who are willing to sell their vase at overprize of course. On Twitter 558 tweets have been made with the hashtag and 78 hashtags on Facebook. Bear in mind that some of these hashtags overlap as they are shared on different SoMe platforms.

There is nothing that really brings people together in this case. It is just a fun event which people harness. But there are no values or anything that brings people together as in a traditional network, thus it is a different way to be social.

7.2 The Power to Generate Knowledge

Digital communication plays a huge role in our society, which has increased our knowledge sharing (Bordevijk & van Kamm, 2003 [1986]). We have the power to generate knowledge and manage the information determined by the productivity (Castells, 2000). On SoMe the consumers create all the content they want, and thus contribute to create general knowledge in society. Twitter is a great source of knowledge generator. Stories are created on Twitter, stories are found on Twitter, stories are discussed on Twitter and stories are spread on Twitter. It is interesting for companies and professional communicator and not least journalists. It is a whole new field in which journalists have a lots of sources they otherwise would not have had and sources that are not known in advance. It provides them with information and knowledge, which is valueble to them in their research and they no longer need to seek out information to the same extent as before (Elberth, 2013 & Deuze, 2006). Lots of information are already out there, and are just waiting for somebody to grab it. The media landscape has changed and Castells (2000) draws on these notions, and says media have taken upon a political role because they help carrying opinions and beliefs. Furthermore, from an anthropological point of view you could argue that we all act as contributors and take part in the communication surrounding us. The consumers become photographers, journalists and movie producers within SoMe. SoMe combines these roles because consumers have the opportunity to create their own content. This emphasizes that the power of distribution have changed.

SoMe establish great opportunities to have a dialogue with the consumers, furthermore to listen and follow what the consumers are talking about and want (Appendix 4). Castells explain that knowledge is not an object but a series of networks and flows, and that the new knowledge is a process and not a product. It is produced not in the minds of individuals, but in the interactions between people (Castells, 2000). In general we are searching for information's on Google. But today we also use SoMe in the search for information. Bear in mind, that YouTube, as a SoMe, is the world's second biggest search engine (Elliott, 2013). When we go out for dinner, to see a movie etc. the consumers do not visit the website of the restaurant as a start, but check the reviews of the restaurant at Yelp, Trustpilot etc. These reviews are made by real people who share their opinions. They becomes opinion leaders and are much more trustworthy than a company. Furthermore the consumers want to share their experiences, both good and bad, with people who trust them (Safko

& Brake, 2010) and people are searching for information through sources they have a relationship to or can compare with.

We see some new possibilities in our society since it is much easier to share opinions and everything is much faster. We will later on account that the modern consumers could be understood as tribe members. We buy something for ourselves but it also communicates something to others and we search for the acceptance by others. It means that consuming is not only for the individual but it is also social and cultural embedded where we find rituals, traditions and symbolism. The consumer's behaviour should therefore be understood as an act where members of a group interact with an exchange of meanings (Østergaard & Jantzen, 2002). With this in mind the reference group becomes extremely important, because we can better relate to people in our reference group than a company without a face. Interpersonal sources e.g. recommendations from friends have a strong impact on the individual's preferences and choices (Arnould et al. 2005). The knowledge that is created using platforms like Trustpilot and Yelp will therefore have a great impact on the consumer and the company can only watch on the side. Consumers often believe that reference groups have better information than the information that they have themselves, and it does not matter whether they actually know the people or not. It is interesting because it is through communication with others that people develop, cultivate, share, expand, and reshape their ideas and behaviour (Arnould et al., 2005). As mentioned earlier, co-created content is possible in the society because of the SoMe available to us. But negative content provided on the review SoMe could mean a loss of potential new customers. A new study conducted in 2014 show that poor reviews were causing problems for 41 per cent of the asked companies (Donnely, 2014).

Martin Rubæk Jensen from Brandhouse explained that the consumers share everything (Appendix 5). According to this you could argue that our culture and society today allow us to share, collect and produce the relevant data we are looking for on SoMe and the consumers decide for themselves what they will believe in and which data they trust. Benjamin Rud Elberth from Geelmuyden.Kiese describes that the consumers can do whatever they want, since they have become documentaries'. We have seen a change in the society based on the power and roles of companies and consumers (Appendix 6). It can be illustrated when we see how frustrated consumers use SoMe to express themselves. Previous Social Media Manager Morten Jørgensen from 3 Mobile, explained that he sometimes fear the consumers' power (Appendix 4). This all-together means that the consumers take part in the debate and the perception of the brand, thus they contribute with knowledge generation as well, whether it is positive or negative content.

7.3 The Economy is Global

Secondly, the new economy is *global* in its core strategic activities. These activities relates to markets, which can work as one unit worldwide, in chosen time or real time. New information technology integrates the world into global networks. Computer-mediated communication breeder to a wide range of virtual communities (Castells, 2000), as we e.g. see with SoMe. SoMe has enhanced and streamlined opportunities for businesses to communicate with consumers on a global scale, unlike other media, which also transmits images and sound, such as television. The media can thus be seen as an extension of the company. This extension means that you are able to reach out on a global scale. We can communicate with the environment despite of time and place. This change as the medium is expressed, is according to McLuhan, the 'medium is the message' (McLuhan, 2001 [1964]). The important thing is not the medium's content, but its ability to shape an interaction, such as the relationship between business and the society's individuals (McLuhan, 2001 [1964]). The point is that SoMe affects society, and therefore it is not the content of the media that has the greatest impact. According to McLuhan, the important thing is not how SoMe is being used, but the effect SoMe promotes and accelerates (McLuhan, 2001 [1964]). The 'message' on SoMe, is also the interpersonal changes to the society.

When the consumers upload a picture i.e. on Instagram they can share it on other SoMe platforms at the same time. If they use hashtags they go worldwide immediately for others to discover. Furthermore it establish some possibilities, which we have not been able to make use of before. The technology makes it possible to see each other across the countries (Appendix 4). "Globalization is highly selective. It proceeds by linking up all that, according to dominant interests, has value anywhere in the planet, and discarding anything …" (Castells, 2000). SoMe makes it possible to move freely in the global media system and it has become easy and accessible. In our research one of our consumers explained that she gets ideas from her newsfeed on Facebook and use it as a phone book. Furthermore she uses Instagram as an information tool where she can see if her customers are in France for holiday or home in Denmark (Appendix 13). Castells explain that jobs are in fact not global, but all economies influence the movements of their globalized core (Castells, 2000). Like we see how the societies from country to country influence each other and thereby how the globalization affects us all. This can be seen in the development of SoMe like Instagram, which have grown more than 200 million global users. Furthermore, Instagram had become a media where we all can discover a global tendency. In 2013 there was a global problem regarding girls who shared pictures of their anorexia bodies and express it as a lifestyle on Instagram (Lund, 2013). It was a global debate, which indicated how we are affected by the globalization, society and thereby also SoMe.

7.4 The Economy is Networked

Lastly, the new economy is *networked* (Castells, 2000). In terms of SoMe it means that the media is part of something bigger, i.e. networks connect among themselves, but can switch to other networks immediately. This relates to the sharing of information, which also describes SoMe. Steffen Trannerup, Senior Digital Consultant at Telenor explained that it had become a natural part of our society to be online (Appendix 7). Cova and Cova (2002) address the emergence of a reverse movement in today's society – from being characterized by individualism, people are trying to recompose their social universe. "People are increasingly gathering together in multiple and ephemeral groups, and such social proximate grouping have more influence on their behaviour than either modern institutions or other formal cultural authorities." (Cova & Cova, 2002, p. 596-597).

SoMe makes it possible for the society to communicate free for obligations and together with both strong and weak ties. Weak ties are less likely to be socially involved with one another, than strong ties with friends etc. (Granovetter, 1973). Granovetter argues that seen from an individual's point of view, weak ties are an important resource to make possible mobility opportunities (Granovetter, 1973). It makes it uncommitted to have contact with other people, but it can care for all the weak ties you know so you can store everyone in and around your network (Appendix 4). Martin Rubæk Jensen from Brandhouse describes the weak ties as a place where you easily can figure out where people are and be updated on friends (Appendix 5). This clearly underpins how powerful the weak ties we get from SoMe are. With this in mind it is possible to say that we have never been closer to each other before, since it indicates that we live in information society where we are all networked together, (Appendix 3 & 5).

The different SoMe is not just available on its own platform, but can be shared on other social platforms as well, thus being part of a multimedia system. Granovetter argues that weak ties can serve as bridges connecting two friends together, therefore connecting two people or multiple groups of friends.

> It is argued that the degree of overlap of two individuals' friendship networks varies directly with the strength of their tie to one another. The impact of this principle on diffusion of influence and information, mobility opportunity, and community organizations explored (Granovetter, 1973, p. 1360).

All of our experts indicated how availability has become a part of our society (Appendix 3-6) and SoMe is a way for the consumers to be available all the time. To some extent we are determined in getting in contact with people (Appendix 6). Furthermore we see that the availability also establish expectations and possibilities, like the consumers expect an instant service (Appendix 3 & 5). Castells describes that we are a part of the global society because of the development of the technology "...since technology is society and society cannot be understood without its technological tools" (Castells, 2000, p. 5). The SoMe and the technology have made us available all day long.

7.4.1 Instant Feeling

The instance feeling is essential and what everybody learns to expect from SoMe. SoMe allows consumers to act immediately and consumers learn to take this 'instant feeling' for granted, "So even when their customer service is more or less closed... Facebook is not closed and the users expect to get an answer" explains Josephine Gram Ludvigsen from Marvelous' (Appendix 3). A main reason is probably the timeless time and the space of flows (Castells, 2000). Consumers are no longer dependent of time and we can communicate even though we are not in the same place. Consumers produce content in real time but do not have to be present for others to discover it. This independence is what the customers are getting used to and it illustrates their behaviour in many ways. Josephine Gram Ludvigsen continues and says you can compare it with big companies who always have an emergency preparedness ready. E.g. if an airplane crashes late night the company has a crisis team ready 24/7. The same should apply to the handling of SoMe. Today, you do not just wait for the newspaper to publish a story. SoMe spread the story immediately regardless of time (Appendix 3), which is why we greatly see how the information society is expressed.

The link between media technologies and consciousness show the importance of the media and it furthermore justifies Kittler's statement that the media determine our situation (Siapera, 2012). In many ways do both factors influence each other. Josephine Gram Ludvigsen from Marvelous describes that SoMe make us closer connected to each other, since it had become much easier to communicate i.e. on Facebook (Appendix 3) and thereby be a part a network society. Josephine Gram Ludvigsen describes Facebook as a collection of parallel networks where each person is representing a network (Appendix 3) furthermore do previous Social Media Manager Morten Jørgensen from 3 Mobile, explains it as a mouthpiece which makes it possible to come even closer at our friends and people we like to follow like celebrities etc. (Appendix 4).

8 Consumers

In the above we have explained what SoMe is about and how the society is characterized. But we also need to account for the consumers who lives in the society and who use SoMe.

We have seen a change in the consumers' behaviour, as consumers no longer just settle with corporate mass communication messages (Safko & Brake, 2010). Today the consumers want their information from people they know and trust. SoMe is great source to this as we mentioned earlier with the reviews media such as Trustpilot and Yelp. We have seen and extremely development in SoMe and it is becoming increasingly important for consumers' decisions (Bronner & de Hoog, 2012) because various types of brand perception will take place. In addition, the companies need to understand the consumers' behaviour and choices when consumers engage with SoMe.

As mention earlier in the report, we needed to get insights into a deeper lying consumer behaviour connected to the sharing of negative brand perception on SoMe. We have therefore made interviews with some consumers to get a deeper understanding of their behaviour on SoMe. In our interviews we incorporated Maslows Hierarchy of Needs to help guiding us. With this, it was possible to get an understanding of what the consumers really feel and think, and furthermore to understand their fundamental needs and behaviour for the use of SoMe.

With the development of digital technologies in the 1980s (Danmarkshistorien, 2014), we will argument that we live in a society where the consumers can be considered as a part of Østergaard & Jantzen theories concerning consumers (2000). We will take focus in Østergaard and Jantzen's theory concerning *consumption studies* and *consumption research* since we can see similarities in those behaviours and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. This is in regard to the level of social, self-esteem and self-actualization. We are aware of that Østergaard and Jantzen's theory is about understanding the consumer's buying behaviour, but we believe that we can benefit from this to fully understand the consumer's needs and behaviour in general.

8.1 Self-Expressions

If we basically look at consumer behaviour, it is affected by our needs as human beings. A very traditional model, which highlights this, is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. There is nothing new about Maslow and the model in its traditional sense, and we have been familiar with Maslow since he introduced his theory in 1943 (Maslow, 1953). But what we want to highlight is that these needs today can be transmitted and use to understand SoMe.

As described in the methodology, we performed six in-depth interviews with women and men, students and full time workers, in the age from 25 years to 41 years. The respondents: Lasse, Nina, Martin M., Karina, Christian and an anonymous Troll, will all be mentioned and included in the Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and be a part of the Consumers analysis part.

Basically, we know that sharing content is not new, but has always been part of our human nature. In the following, we will explain how different content and the behaviour on SoMe reflects the consumers' basic needs. As we will illustrate, the consumers in the modern society want to express how well they accomplish these need and they do so whenever they post content on SoMe. Self-expression has always been a need for human being. Martin M. is aware of this and explained, "The need has always been there, whether it was way back in prehistoric times, there were just some other ways you did it. But now there is just these really easy media to use. It does not take much for you to do it." (Appendix 12). We have always had this need (Maslow, 1968), now SoMe just makes it very accessible to us.

We must take Maslow's Hierarchy of Need into consideration when we look at the behaviour on SoMe and thus the construction of self. With SoMe we are creating the 'I' we want other to see, like Martin Rubæk Jensen from Brandhouse describes, "It is self made sharing. What you really want others to see. It is interesting with social media that you have a lot of different masks." (Appendix 5). We can be everybody we want to be online and we can construct the self we want others to see. We must understand that identity is constructed on the basis of materials available to us such as

SoMe. The individual claim an identity, which is interpreted by others who claim the identity. This was clear to us when Martin M. said that his SoMe behaviour was a way for him to express his identity (Appendix 12).

8.1.1 Roles on Social Media

Erwing Goffman is a situationist who has investigated the social roles in digital media. He sees how each individual play several roles according to the situation they appear in, and what social stage they act in. Goffman works with what he calls *back stage* and *front stage*. An example is how a servant has two different behaviour patterns whether he is in the kitchen or in the restaurant. In the restaurant he plays the formal role and act in the front stage. He is polite in front of his audience as he tries to please everybody. As soon as he walks into the kitchen, he crosses a line where he suddenly appears in backstage. Here he can be more honest and laid-back (Meyrowitz, 1985).

Martin Rubæk Jensen can also see this and said that consumers undertake different masks on SoMe because then they portray the person they want to be with help from profile accounts, pictures, contents etc. (Appendix 5). People generally think that they are immoral to give themselves a role. Goffman believes, however, that it is naive to believe that you can avoid it. *Impression management* is a way in which people can identify and create expectations for their behaviour and actions. Goffman believes that you can play different roles both honest and dishonest, and it is important to distinguish this. Playing different roles, and to be false are two different things. The longer we play a particular role, the more the role becomes a reality, not only for the audience but also for oneself (Meyrowitz, 1985). According to this, we undertake different roles in different environment. Christian also says that out of his 500 friends on Facebook only 10 of them are his true friends. And every time Christian post something the 490 friends thinks that is who Christian is. The 10 friends know that the post is only a little part of him (Appendix 14). The consumers can undertake a role and behave under the circumstances they want. And based on this the audience makes their own assumptions about the person behind the post.

SoMe is a really good tool for this purpose and makes it easy for the consumer to express who they are (or want to be). This goes back to what SoMe are capable of and allow the consumers to tap into an environment and share content for nobody to double check. Problems arise when there are no censorship and there is no one to check whether details are correct or not, which also is true when negative brand perception is shared.

Since humans have an intrinsic need to be social and therefore need to share ideas, thoughts and experiences we have seen an increase in the use of SoMe because it allows anyone to express themselves. We express the thoughts creatively and artistically using different tools and sources. Publishing a history goes back to before we have recorded the spoken and the written word. At that time it was paintings on the walls and ceilings of caves (Safko & Brake, 2010).

8.1.2 Physiological Need

In the first step of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs we look at the biological and physiological needs like air, food, drinks, shelter, warmth, sex, and sleep. These needs are the most important for a human to live on earth and necessary in our daily lives (Maslow, 1953). We see a tendency and an increasing use of SoMe according to the previously analysis of SoMe. Therefore you could argue that a physiological need compared with SoMe could be the need to be online. When we look at the physiological needs defined by Maslow, bear in mind that these needs are typical a channel, which is necessary to fulfil other needs as well (Maslow 1953). In this case, we will argue that the modern consumers are addicted to SoMe and it have become a truly essential part of their daily life. Nonetheless, the need for being on SoMe is necessary in order for other needs to be fulfilled as the following analysis will show. If the consumers did not have access to SoMe they would not have the chance to express themselves in to the same extend. Or at least not to the same amount of people with such SoMe network.

The physiological needs are very prepotent. Taking it to the extreme, it is said that if a human being is lacking food he neither has an urge for safety, love, and esteem. At this point he would just hunger for food rather than anything else. Dreams and desires would just step in the background (Maslow, 1954). We will not take it this far, but you could argue that without the access to SoMe the consumers would not have the same urge to express who they are all the time. Instead they would be searching for something, which could help them – and with this in mind SoMe is the perfect solution and a helping hand.

8.1.2.1 Addiction

Some of our respondents said that they felt stressed or had the feeling of being sick when they didn't have access to SoMe (Appendix 10 & 13). What we see is that today we cannot live without SoMe and taken it to the extreme, thousands of years ago the biggest concern was that we could not live without food. Lasse, one of the respondents explained that he found it difficult being offline during a vacation, "It was uncomfortable, it was a strange feeling I have not been offline for many years." (Appendix 10). He furthermore explained that it is a habit just like smoking and just at very crucial thing in our lives. Nina explained that, "I feel I am addicted. It is the first thing I do in the morning and the last thing I do in the evenings."(Appendix 11). Martin M. said the exact same thing as Nina. Nonetheless, Martin M. would not describe himself as being addicted (Appendix 12). Besides Martin M., all of the respondents felt they were addicted. However, Christian was a bit more reticent about him being addicted. He defended it by saying that he probably used SoMe just as much as everyone else (Appendix 14). By comparing himself with others, it was his way of defending and legitimizing his behaviour.

An interesting finding was when Karina explained how addictive she was,

> I am frightened that I find it that hard not to be online, at the age of 41 years I have a little bit of anxiety or nauseous when I am traveling abroad and there is no WIFI in the hotel. I actually think it is like having no real values. (Appendix 13)

Furthermore Karina expressed that she felt almost sick without being online, "I feel some kind of discomfort" and stressed when she cannot go online (Appendix 13). What is interesting here is that Karina is highly aware of her behaviour and even think it is a bit scary. Despite this she does not seem to have any intention of changing her behaviour. In addition, Nina finds it a bit strange that she automatically click the index tab of the browser and click Facebook even though she have no purpose of being on Facebook (Appendix 11). It indicates that it has become an embedded and unconscious part of her behaviour.

8.1.3 Safety Need

In this paragraph we will explain how the respondent sometimes feel left out when they are not online. It means that when they do not have access to SoMe they are afraid they will miss out on something whether it is information about trends or social relations. In the following we will argue that our respondent *had to* be online because of the fear of being left out, hence this is what motivate them. According to Maslow we can see that consumers e.g. use insurances to protect themselves from external factors in the society that may affect them. In the same way, the consumers use SoMe so they will not feel left out.

8.1.3.1 Social Media for not Being Left Out

Especially the safety need of being a part of something, or informed about something, are needs the respondents felt that SoMe could support them with. Nina explained that, "...it is some kind of security, the feeling of staying connected to the outside reality." (Appendix 11). Furthermore Nina explained that she was afraid of being left out of the social network, "Overall, I am just afraid to miss something. I am that kind of person that like to be a part of something and make many agreements..." and "...you do not know what you miss when you are not on, but I am probably afraid to miss something when I am not online." (Appendix 11). Josephine Gram Ludvigsen from Marvelous has also paid attention to the fact that consumers are afraid of being left out and that they will miss the dialogue (Appendix 3).

Karina also told us that she miss something when she is not able to be online. When we asked into depth with this she explained, "Well, is very trivial I miss the community." (Appendix 13). Nina also said that she think it is a problem that one of her friends is not on Facebook. Nina thinks it is annoying because then she has to contact him in different ways and she forgets him (Appendix 11). Nina says that we forget those who are not there. This means that if you are not there, you are not part of the community and thereby being left out.

Karina said that SoMe helps her to be updated on trends, "It is the visual. I love colours, moods and beautiful designs... It is a good way to keep me updated on both the trends and just be inspired by stuff." (Appendix 13). For Karina, this means that it is important for her to go with the flow and follow the patterns in the society.

In a world, which is uncontrolled and changing, people tend to regroup around primary identities: religious, ethnic, national, etc. Religious fundamentalism is probably the most formidable force for personal safety and collective mobility in these difficult times. In a world of global wealth and power, the search for identity (collective and individual) is a fundamental source of social meaning. Increasingly, people do not organize around what they are doing, but based on what they are or what they think they are (Castells, 2000). Here, we also see that our society is increasingly structured around the opposition between the network and the self.

8.1.4 Social Belonging

We know that we live in the information age and the network society where we share more content, from more sources, with more people, more often and more quickly. A study from The New York Times Customer Insight Group discovered that sharing is all about relationship. First of all the main factor was to bring valuable and entertaining content to others, then define ourselves to other. The third step was to grow and nourish our relationship, and then this will make self-fulfilment. The last step is to get the word out about causes or brands (Brett, 2014).

On the belonging level we see affections or relationship. First of all, the term SoMe itself refers to this level. SoMe do have a central role here since the consumers are able to reconnect and gain relationships, whether it is in the form of acquaintance, friends, lovers or family. As we saw very clear in the interview with Karina, she felt social and that she was belonging to a community. She explains it like,

> I have a theory that a one-man business (as hers red.) has a need, a need for colleagues. If I had 20 colleagues around me all day I would not have had the same need to sit with this information load (Facebook red.). (Appendix 13)

This explains the need for belonging to a network and the need of being part of something bigger. Such behaviour is also illustrated with Cova and Cova (2002) who argue that we like to gather together and much of our behaviour symbolise a universe for the tribe and not for the individual.

8.1.4.1 Being Part of a Tribe

Nina has been abroad for six month and had a big need for expressing that she was not alone much of the time even though this was the case. This was also a way for Nina to put on one a mask and to create the desired identity she wanted others to see. For her it meant that she made a big deal out of posting content so no one would forget her. She used SoMe to feel connected with people even though she was not (Appendix 11). Just like Karina, Nina said it is a way for her be social just on her own.

This behaviour can be related to what Østergaard and Jantzen (2000) calls consumption studies. Here we see that the individual is no longer seen as an independent self, but as a part of a tribe, which we also recognise in our research. The consumers which make use of SoMe platforms combined it with “being a part of something” and as a tool to keep having friendships and information. Furthermore, the tribe member is searching for the right symbols to be recognized and thereby accepted by the other tribe members (Østergaard & Jantzen, 2000), which also were an indicator we saw in almost all of our interviews with the candidates. An understanding of the individual begins by recognizing that one’s attitudes and behaviours are very much shaped by the individual’s particular social context. Groups are an important aspect of interpersonal influence. Consumers compare themselves to their reference to groups in forming their own perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors (Arnould et al., 2005). The interviewed consumers found acceptance from their network really important and were searching for a reward and approval through likes and comments. We saw that the consumers found it necessary to express their meanings, pictures and ideas to be part of the social environment on SoMe. The consumer’s behaviour should therefore be understood as an act where members of a group interact and exchange meanings (Østergaard & Jantzen, 2000).

An example of this is Telenor’s shitstorm in 2012. Many customers announced that they agreed in the original post that started shitstorm without actually reading the post. But their friends and many other had liked the post so therefore they did just the same (Appendix 7). From this we understand how powerful SoMe and the consumer behaviour can be. We will get back to this later on in the report.

8.1.4.2 Different Social Media Different Friends

Maslow (1954) states that the individual will do anything in the world to achieve goals relating to his specific role and place in a group regardless of the size of the group. Castells (2001) draws on this notion and argues that it does not matter which network you are part of, as long as you belong to *a* network. Lasse is a clear example of this. He feels he belongs to many different communities when he uses the different media. This also means that he posts different content and uses the media for different purposes.

> I am active, that is, most on Twitter as it is very much conversations and topic-specific conversations. It is very dialogue-oriented, so it is subject-oriented in relation to my work, and I also talk a lot about football being one of my interests… (Appendix 10)

And “On Reddit[1], I share many screen shots and my ideas, fun stuff I come across online.”(Appendix 10). Lasse continues and says that Facebook is much more oriented towards his ordinary life and what he does during a day, why he sometimes tells a funny experience or post pictures. The reason for this is on Facebook, “...these are my friends…” Lasse takes part in different communities where he can be social with people in terms of different interests. What we also see is that he adapts to the different media and considers his “friends” in these communities as different. But when he engages with different media it allows him to fulfil his different needs (Appendix 10). Lasse has divided his friends in terms of the different media and his communication varies a lot. E.g. Lasse says that he uses Snapchat[2] with his friend’s sister whom also is a friend of Lasse’s girlfriend. Lasse does not see her often, but she was just of the first to use the Snapchat medium and now it is just a way for Lasse to communicate with her. This is the same with his friends on Twitter and Facebook. Lasse communicates with different media with different content and thus he adapts to the media (Appendix, 10). Benjamin Rud Elberth from Geelmuyden.Kiese explains his own behaviour with SoMe,

> [Social media] is where I drink beer and coffee and socialize with people. And sometimes I also do it in real life. Some of the friends I have, I have had a long interaction with them on Twitter and afterwards we go out to play pool and drink beer together and afterwards we go back and continue our talk on Twitter. It is two worlds that merge. (Appendix 6)

The need for being social and talking to other people is taking place both online and physical. It is a way to meet with people in different communities where you can gather around a specific topic.

Our respondent named Christian is a bit more critical about how social we really are on SoMe. He refers to his 500 friends on Facebook and said that he is only close to 10 of them and whom he actually meets with. Christian continues and said that his 490 peripheral friends only perceive him via Facebook and the content Christian post, whilst his 10 friends know that this is only one part of Christian (Appendix 14).

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[1] Reddit is a source for what's new and popular on the web. Users like you provide all of the content and decide, through voting, what's good and what's junk (Reddit, 2014).

[2] Snapchat is a photo messaging application. Users can take photos, record videos, add text and drawings, and send them to a controlled list of recipients (Snapchat, 2014).

Martin M. also said that maybe you are not that social with you peripheral friends, but the fact that you have SoMe means that after all you have some kind of fellowship (Appendix 12). Another respondent believed that you have few really close friends and many friends, which are not that close. Furthermore she believes that you have many friends on Facebook you do not actually meet with (Appendix 11). However, even though this is true, Christian still believe the peripheral friends are important because they might say something interesting and SoMe is the only chance for him to follow them (Appendix 14). Karina draws on this notion and says that she thinks it is fun that you can follow people without really talking and meeting with them (Appendix 13).

Our youngest female respondent Nina, thinks SoMe makes it easy for us to gather people because of the different options SoMe comes with. She is a big fan of the event option on Facebook so people easily can meet. Another example is that sometimes she posts that she is going out and then some friends comment the post that they might be the same place for them to meet (Appendix 11). Martin M. also thinks SoMe makes it much easier for us to actual catch up with friends. E.g. he has an interest for the paleo diet, and all of the sudden he saw that his hometown friend shared the same interest and Martin M. would contact him concerning this (Appendix 12). Here we see how SoMe allows you to get in touch with people you would not have been in contact with otherwise.

8.1.5 The Esteem Needs

It is not enough just to be online and have a SoMe profile on different media for the consumer. The consumers are online because they feel they can get something out of it, which can boost their self esteem. This also reflects why the consumers want to post so much content. They are searching for approval from others. Lasse told us that when he posts something he sees it as a failure if he receives negative feedback or his friends do not respond the way he wished for (Appendix 10). What we can learn from this is, that it is not enough just express to ourselves who we are, other people in our network should stamp it “approved” like with the like button.

8.1.5.1 A Marketing Tool to Boost Self-Esteem

Nina explained, “I feel I keep my own brand alive” (Appendix 11). To some extend, we see how individuals want to market themselves just like companies have always done it. Since the rising of the Internet, companies have had websites where they can market themselves in terms of what their product/service have to offer. Today’s consumers have the same desire. Now it has been transmitted to the consumers on SoMe. Here the consumers have their own profile and they express themselves as a brand as Nina explains it. Lasse holds the same notion and compares his behaviour directly with the behaviour of companies. He says that like when companies are looking for some specific results, so he seeks certain results related to likes and comments on his posts (Appendix, 10). Nina is not a famous person, but she still see herself as being famous as she argues, “It is a way of communication, but not directly to anyone, but it is like you say to your fans; I am here, see me” (Appendix 11). In this Nina explains that she in some way sees her friends as fans of her, since they show her approval and respect by liking her posts. She even says that if her friends do not appreciate what she is posting, and then there is no need for her to post anyway. Christian believe it has some kind of self-perpetuating effect, meaning that if nobody would care he would not get the approval from others, thus he would probably stop (Appendix 14). Lasse says, “...If I do not get any likes or comments [...] then it feels like my post was a failure and then I get annoyed and unsecure” (Appendix 10). This clearly underlines Maslow’s theory that says that when the acceptance from others is absent the individual will feel shaky and weak (Maslow, 1954).

Findings from the respondents e.g. showed that Martin M. more or less share content because he hope others will think it is funny (Appendix 12). He is truly searching for others to approve what he is doing. Lasse is really honest and says that he has a need for expressing himself, but he actually does not want to be bothered by other people’s posts in his newsfeed on Facebook. This means, he posts something on Facebook himself, but he prefers to look at content from Twitter and Reddit, where he can pick and choose the content (Appendix 10). Martin M. explained in the interview that when he get some reaction from his friends he feels some kind of joy-feeling, furthermore he explained that, “...it depends of what kind of picture it is. If you are proud of or a special situation and there are several who likes it, then I will be extra proud, since it is a form of approval” (Appendix 12). An expression from Nina was that she was happier when she experienced approval, “You know, a feeling of they like me and I think that is exciting” (Appendix 11). Karina is glad when she gets likes because it makes her feel like she was right in connection with what she posted and it gives her a special feeling inside. She explains it as a “rush” or “the new cocaine” (Appendix 13).

It is obvious to see that the respondents highly appreciate the approval they get from their surroundings and it is one of the reasons why they in the first place share content. Nina, Martin M. and Lasse tell how it gives them a “kick” when they feel approved by friends (Appendix 10-12). Christian does not use the word “kick” but says he feels “proud” (Appendix 14). Lasse adds a metaphor to it when he says it is like being at the exam when you are searching for some kind approval. He expect some kind of surprize but it is actual not surprizing, because he knew he had prepared well and perhaps he is just fooling himself (Appendix 10).

Another central part is Karina who told us that she post content with the message "…look at me, hear me or see a cool place I am" and "look at this view, you do not have it, too bad for you" (Appendix 13). This is clearly self-promotion of the cool life. Christian says that it is self-exposure and he wants to show his 500 friends what a fantastic life he has (Appendix 14). Martin M. and Nina holds the same thought and say they only want to post content, which makes them, look good. Martin M. would post that he goes to a high-class restaurant but never when he goes to McDonald's (Appendix 12), and Nina would never post if she felt bummed (Appendix 11). This matches with Østergaard and Jantzen's consumer research theory (2000). Here the consumer is no longer seen as a rational individual, but is assumed to be emotionally and narcissistically determined. This can explain why we see how our respondents create their own stories on SoMe and they can portray themselves in any way they want.

8.1.6 Self-Actualization

Self-actualization consists of creative fulfilment, personal growth seeking and where the individual searches for its maximum potential (Maslow, 1954). Here they want to create meaning in life and reach a higher level. When taking Østergaard & Jantzen into consideration, self-actualization can be related to what they call consumption research. Here the consumer is illustrated as a tourist who is looking for new experiences as they desire to create meaning in life (Østergaard & Jantzen, 2000).

As well as with the analysis of the other needs, we see how the consumers' motives for being on SoMe is driven by their needs. As we mentioned in the social constructivism, it concerns that as long as you express something, then it exists. So when the consumers can express their achievement it becomes more true and thus a stronger reality. Castells (2000) define identity as the process by which a social actor recognizes it and constructs meaning, primarily on the basis of a given cultural property or a set of attributes, to the exclusion of a broader reference to other social structures. Today with help from SoMe, it has become an easy way to gain self-actualization. In general in the society, we can see that people can get famous without them actually having a talent or something to contribute with. Today an appearance in a reality show is more than enough to be famous and a “real” talent is not necessary (Ledertoug, 2014). This is something which reflect the use of SoMe and how everybody has a great need for self-actualization when posting content all the time.

This level accounts for the individual’s full potential and here we see how our respondents express what they can accomplish in order for them to be the best. Martin M. has a desire for expressing his talent in a business context. He wants everybody to know how good he is at doing his job and posts some of the work he has done (Appendix 12). Lasse also expresses what he is capable of in relation to his job, and says it’s a way for him to show how creative he is (Appendix 10). This obviously also reveals that the consumers seek confirmation and confidence. But here the difference is that the consumers will show what they are capable of. It is much more personal. They want to accomplish something deeper. Christian told us that it is cool to show that he has been in the kitchen all day to prepare a five-course dinner for friends (Appendix 14). In addition he explained that the actual feeling of accomplishment lies in the action behind the posted content. SoMe is for him just a way to express his self-actualization and for other to respond to it and thus make it real and more powerful.

Chapter 4

9 Result: Negative Brand Perception

By looking at Telenor and the analysis of SoMe, the network society and the consumers we get an understanding of how negative brand perception can take place. Josephine Gram Ludvigsen from Marvelous told us that some consumers feel enjoyment by criticizing brands. People often see brands as big capitalists and the bad guys in the society (Appendix 3). Some consumers see the relationship between consumers and the companies as the battle between David and Goliath and the small man against the big man. The fact that their peers influence consumers, and that SoMe are so available contribute to that negative brand perception can spread like wildfire. Previous Social Media Manager Morten Jørgensen from 3 Mobile, finds it scary that consumers never know the fully course of action, but still, everybody is shocked even though nobody knows what took place before (Appendix 4). There is no censorship whatsoever, whilst negative brand perception can have a huge impact when just a single consumer is unsatisfied. Steffen Trannerup from Telenor explains how people find themselves amused when companies are exposed in the public and people follow suit (Appendix 7). This can also be related to how much impact the reference group has, even though they do not know who actually made the negative content to begin with.

Josephine Gram Ludvigsen said that SoMe has a power on brands, mostly because companies must take precautions and handle critique in another way than previously (Appendix 3). It is a huge problem and two thirds of UK managers and company owners do not have any idea of how to remedy the situation regarding negative online content (Donnelly, 2014). It seems like many Danish companies neither knows what to do with the negative content, as it was the case with Cirkeline & Lille My, JOE & THE JUICE and Matas & SKØN, which we will get back to later. Previously the consumers wrote a complaint in a letter and the company could peacefully and quiet respond the consumer. Nowadays consumers use SoMe as a direct medium to utter their criticism in relation to a company (Appendix 3) and the consumers expect an answer instantly. This negative content can be very crucial for the company. A study by the Reputation Report found that negative posting had a direct impact on the company and they had an average lost close to 450.000 DKK (Donnelly, 2014).

We have seen in our data collection that some of our respondents do not want to use their public SoMe profile for public complaints. Other respondents found it valuable and useful to use SoMe platforms to protest for a brand which did not lived up to the expectations given in the first place from the brand. Due to the network society and the instant feeling, the consumers have taught that they can easily complaint and they expect an answer right a way. Some consumers hold the attitude that if they shout loud enough, the companies will hear them and they will do anything to silence such consumers. Unfortunately this is just a gap that consumers can take advantage of (Appendix 4). From this we can see what motivates the consumer and highlights why this is a difficult task for the companies to control.

Our consumer Karina explained that she found Facebook to be a place where she could share a bad experience or if she felt unfairly treated. She actually explains that, "It is much easier than calling 15 friends, since it will reach a higher amount of people." (Appendix 13). This clearly explains the power of SoMe.

> An angry customer will tell up to 20 other people about a bad experience. That is face to face. With the use of social media like blogs, Twitter and Facebook, those 20 people can quickly become 20.000 or even 200.000." (Safko & Brake, 2010, p. 6-7)

According to this, Karina did also explain that it is all about revenge to whom have done something bad to you, and the feeling of being one small person, which can talk to 200 people at once (Appendix 13). Karina is an example of a normal consumer who makes use of SoMe to express her feelings, frustration and sometimes complaints. Josephine Gram Ludvigsen from Marvelous says that the angry consumers write a lot of exclamation marks and express their frustrations through the use of both capital and small letters. Sometimes consumers want to be heard and just want to get rid of their frustrations. Josephine Gram Ludvigsen compares it with being in a relationship. Previously an angry consumer complained to her boyfriend, but today the company is under attack (Appendix 3). The consumers have always had opinions about brands, but now SoMe are like a strong speaking tube for the consumers. Benjamin Rud Elberth, who are Digital Leader at Geelmuyden.Kiese explains that SoMe can have many disadvantages for the companies. He explains that one of the biggest disadvantages is that the companies become a moving target. He said "Now the consumer have a gun in their pocket" (Appendix 6).

Josephine Gram Ludvigsen and Morten Jørgensen said that there is a certain type of consumers who like to complain on SoMe. Josephine Gram Ludvigsen characterizes those consumers with a picture of an alcoholic man sitting at the bench shouting. Morten Jørgensen illustrates it as stereotypes that in general are mad and feel that the whole worlds are against them (Appendix 3 & 4).

In our research we experienced another behaviour, where the person was more aggressive and searching for a specific target. This phenomenon is called a troll and will be explained in the following.

9.1 Troll

A troll is a person who starts arguments mostly about brands on SoMe sites and make extraordinary comments in an online community. They are able to provoke and make a debate. We have interviewed a so-called troll, who wished to be anonym. The troll explained that he would file a complaint because of bad service, unwell environment for the company's staff, lie to a consumer, poor treatments etc. (Appendix 9). The interesting thing is that it does not have to be his own experience, it might as well be someone else. The troll has one specific company he focuses a lot on in relation to trolling, which is Just Eat. We will later in the report explain why Just Eat is an interesting case. In March 2014, Just Eat fired an employee after a SoMe shitstorm on Facebook. Based on that the troll explains that he choose to cancel his membership at Just Eat. However, he is still receiving Facebook ads from Just Eat in his newsfeed on Facebook. Every time Just Eat posts an ad on Facebook the troll comments negatively on the ad. He also takes a screenshot of the ad and the comments so he can post it on his own wall (Appendix 9).

This is a good example of negative brand perception and how a consumer can become co-creator of the message the company sent to start with. We stated earlier that the experts loved SoMe because of the dialogue opportunities. But in this case it can take another direction. Previous Social Media Manager Morten Jørgensen from 3 Mobile and Martin Rubæk Jensen from Brandhouse find it very frightening because trolls create negative content as it become a hobby and a sport for them. They only do it to provoke and do not have any other purposes (Appendix 4 & 5). Our troll did actually describe it, "With Just Eat it had become a hobby" (Appendix 9). This indicates that it had become so personal that he now felt it as a part of his life. In general, trolls are emotionally immature users who thrive in any environment where they can be heard. They are able to make public comments, which can harm any company. Therefore we think it is important that the companies are aware of the phenomena and know the different behaviours consumers can have. Martin Rudbæk Jensen furthermore described that it has big consequences as negative brand perception obviously portray the company in a bad manner. Morten Jørgensen ads that people love to see the little man's battle against the big companies knowing that the consumer is an idiot (Appendix 4 & 5).

Our troll explains that he is just expressing his opinion and then shares it with his network, when he founds something unreasonable in general (Appendix 9). Our respondent Karina did something similar. However, she shared her negative brand perception when she felt a company had been unreasonable towards herself (Appendix 13). Martin Rubæk Jensen explains that it is the users, which hold the power. But it is a mutual relationship because the companies are nothing without the consumers and the consumers are nothing without the companies (Appendix 5). It is a long lasting relationship, and you can choose by yourself as a consumer and company if it shall be based on love or hate.

Morten Jørgensen explained that negative brand perception have an negative impact on people, "...much negative feedback is a little frightening when you as a first-time user see that it is a shitty company" (Appendix 4). This does also indicate that the consumer has power, especially a troll. The troll explained that his behaviour was based on injustice and mentioned that he liked to protect the weakest, like Robin Hood (Appendix 9). This can explain a troll's purpose and feelings of their behaviour and decisions on SoMe. They feel to some extent that they get something out of it and have a special mask on when they are online and can undertake a different role.

10 Effects

After an analysis of the three factors, the media, society and consumers, we now move the focus to the output which is accomplished by the factors. Here we will examine the impact that a company may face. In this paragraph we will analyse electronic word of mouth (from hereon eWOM) that shows how consumers' brand perception easily can be spread by the media.

10.1 Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM)

eWOM is frequently used as synonyms for viral or buzz marketing. eWOM is a modified online extension of traditional word-of-mouth and netnography is a highly appropriate research methods when investigating the field of eWOM (Xun & Reynolds, 2010).

eWOM covers consumers' evaluations of a brand or the sharing of brand perception through online reviews. According to Aristotle, we can distinguish between three potential means of persuasion, which could be understood in relation to eWOM. These are *ethos, pathos* and *logos*. We can look at eWOM with the lenses of these concepts and be able to measure the characteristics and effectiveness of eWOM. These concepts are important to understand in the sense that they render informal interpersonal communication in a powerful way (Xun & Reynolds, 2010). "Ethos signifies the projection of the speaker's personal quality (or authority) to the listener, while pathos indicates the emotional appeal of the speaker. Finally, logos is interpreted as the logical discourse employed to get the message across." (Xun & Reynolds, 2010, p. 21). These concepts are at stake whenever a consumer shares his thoughts about a brand online. Other consumers look at how valid the argumentation is based on ethos, logos, pathos, and judge whether or not the statement seem real or not. Brand stories have a strong voice since they contain narratives and drama, which are good as persuasive arguments. They are provoking and real in the sense that it is a witnessed experiences and in general a summary of a consumer's person-to-person and person-to-brand relationship (Gensler et al., 2013).

According to the description above is it relevant to understand the meaning of eWOM. We have previously stated the need for sharing experiences with a brand, we thus also see a huge potential for a big development in eWOM. Consequently it is necessary to understand the relevance of SoMe for brand management and the effect of negative consumers' eWOM. You can have a discussion in a small physical shop, and then one party says sorry and it does not go anywhere from here. When somebody post negative content online it stays forever. Companies will do their best to build reputation and a good brand perception, but it is difficult to take control when posts can be shared within seconds because of the media and the networks we live in. Previously, image crises were something that most often were triggered by the press and authorities, but in the SoMe age, 'the little man' only need a comment field to dig into big businesses (Holle, 2013). Everybody contribute with opinions.

eWOM content has a great impact because it is salient and vivid, and influence the individual because of the social context. Buzz and eWOM lead to explosive, self-generating consumer demands and put a huge pressure on companies. It is important for marketers to know how buzz works and how it shapes markets. Buzz can both promote and hurt a company (Arnould et. al., 2005). This seem to be a difficult task when a British study highlighted that two thirds of the UK companies do not know how to deal with the sharing of a negative reputation. Only one third of the British managers felt they had the right skills to control the online reputation and 10 per cent admitted they do not know how to protect themselves from the online environment. This is why one in ten of the quizzed companies have outsourced the management of their digital profile (Donnely, 2014). Benjamin Rud Elberth from Geelmuyden.Kiese was also in favour of outsourcing the job and hire professional agencies. He even said himself that as a professional, he could sometimes have difficulties knowing how to cope and handle the job (Appendix 6).

10.1.1 The Main Element of Electronic-Word-of-Mouth

A way to understand the process of eWOM is through the Main Element of Electronic-Word-of-Mouth, which consists of five actors (Lindholm, 2009). As we will see, these actors relates to the actors we normally are familiar with in the analysis of a fairytale. 1) Statement: positive, negative or neutral. 2) Communicator: statement creator i.e. potential, actual or former customer. 3) Object: product, service or/and company. 4) Receiver: multitude of people and institutions 5) Environment: the Internet, particularly SoMe.

The statement, author and object are essentially the same as in traditional WOM, but the nature of receiver and environments have changed in consequences of the Internet and SoMe. The receiver in eWOM is not solely a single person – it consists of a multitude of people and institutions (Lindholm, 2009). We have seen a change in the environment from face-to-face communication, meaning traditional WOM. Now with the advent of the Internet and SoMe the consumer can communicate to everybody at once. This shows that it is important for the companies to follow the trend and technology, and understand the development from face-to-face communication to online communication. eWOM spreads much faster than classic WOM, because of SoMe’s fast moving and instant communication on the online platforms, which the companies needs to be aware of.

The sharing of different content will not necessarily result in eWOM, but lots of sharing will mean eWOM, which was the case with Telenor’s shitstorm. Suddenly the incident escalated and was out of control. This means that sharing of content and eWOM are two different things but eWOM is dependent of content sharing. We do therefore recommend the company to understand both eWOM and the development of sharing because it could potentially harm the brand. This is something we will get into details with later on. Furthermore, can the five elements help the companies to understand the power of eWOM and prepare the company to react when it occurs for their products both negative and positive.

eWOM can play a significant role in brand perception. When consumers share positive or negative experiences regarding the use of products marketed under a given brand, this will often have some impact on how others perceive, not only those products, but also the brands themselves (Wisegeek, 2014). From this, we can see how the consumers interact with the companies and generate lots of value to the brand instead of just buying. The consumers adapt to an advertising role and spread their feelings about the brand. The consumers proudly share a purchase and create their own stories about the brand and post them by billions people on Facebook, YouTube etc. SoMe are very informative and full of interactive qualities. This effects how the values of trust, satisfaction, and commitment are interpreted by the consumers, friends, followers, connections etc., and this influence brand loyalty and brand perception. When the perception of a brand is positive, with help from eWOM and SoMe, it can offer the company a great economic value more than traditional media are capable of (Bruce & Solomon, 2013). The downside of it is that user-generated content becomes mainstream and the consumers might as well want to share messages that the stakeholders would like to have avoided (Bruce & Solomon, 2013).

On the downside, when such a radical shift occurs, it injects uncertainties into the system. As the masses gain control of an organization's messages and user-generated content becomes part of the mainstream, consumers may not spread the messages the firm wants stakeholders to receive (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010), and these alternative narratives can diffuse rapidly (Muniz & Schau, 2007). Negative eWOM can have financial consequences. Bad publicity in cyberspace is far from simply a matter of reputation. One in 10 British companies says in a new study (2014) that they have lost between a half and one million DKK because of negative content online. Almost one in four companies says they have lost earnings equivalent to between 100,000 and 500,000 DKK. In general 52 per cent of the companies admitted that they had suffered from negative posts (Donnely, 2014). This more or less kills the original slogan: "all publicity is good publicity".

A thorough understanding of the user-generated brand stories is thus crucial to understand for brand managers. Moreover, it can also provide the brand manager with knowledge about how to stimulate user-generated content, which can benefit the brand. These are changes in the brand landscape that makes the marketers lose the control of the brand. They should not just stand by the side and observe the development, but face the challenge and integrate user-generated content into their communication mix (Gensler et al., 2013). Josephine Gram Ludvigsen from Marvelous explain that you can learn from the complaints, "I love those complaints and that I can help" furthermore Josephine explained, “the more I stuck with it the more I can see that it is not bad thing for [the users] to see the complaint, and that we have taken them seriously” (Appendix 3).

Chapter 5

11 Case: Just Eat

Following we look at two Danish companies who have suffered from a shitstorm. These are Matas & SKØN and Just Eat. Lastly we look at two other Danish companies, YouSee and Copenhagen Zoo, which have handled negative brand perception in a really good way.

Here we will present the case of Just Eat. A post on Just Eat's Facebook page was much of a fight and Just Eat were exposed to lots of negative brand perception. The case has been divided into three steps and is an example of how difficult it is to please every party in a public discussion.

Just Eat is a concept, which offers the Danes the possibility to order take-away food online from more than 1,800 restaurants. The Danish company was launched in August 2001 and today they intermediary more than 900,000 meals each month (Just Eat, 2014a). In 2006 the company began to internalize and is now the world's leading online takeaway ordering service and operates in 13 countries. Globally more than 36,000 takeaway restaurants have signed up at Just Eat (Just Eat, 2014b).

11.1 Step I

A Facebook post published by Just Eat March 14th 2014 was the starting point for a huge debate regarding Just Eat as a brand and what they represented or not represented. March 14th is the international "Beef and Blowjob Day" (from hereon BBJ Day). In connection with this specific day, Just Eat decided to use a humoristic tone to promote their service. With this in mind they posted on their Facebook wall, "Today it is Beef and Blowjoy Day! Girls, are you ready? Just Eat supplies the beef - Can you supply the rest?" (Appendix 21).

Several of the Facebook users were furious about the post and they perceived the post as sexist and offensive. The campaign on Facebook separated the parties. One wing called it good humour and the other considered it sexist and bad taste. Both men and women commented that they were unsatisfied with the message of the post. They felt, that it was offensive and had a sexist look at women that was not prober and that it was not funny at all. They made comments like "who in your marketing department is stupid enough to think that sexism is funny?", "how could you think that this would not offend anyone" and a male user says "It is women repression you are promoting! Is this how the public view on women is? That they are just a living sex toy? Shame on you!" Many of the users, who expressed their view on this, also stated that they no longer would be customers of Just Eat and, "I can only encourage companies who use you as supplier to quit the collaboration" and "That ad has by guaranty ruined your reputation" (Appendix 22).

The other party on the other hand said that it is a shame that there is no humour left in Denmark, and it is a pity that even the smallest things would offend people. They made comments like, "People should really get some humour." Both men and women also say that the offended people should relax a bit and, "You cannot do anything today without offending somebody" and "People is offended about the smallest things. It is really sad." Other users said that "nobody is talking shit about a company who writes about Valentine's Day" and people should just deal with the fact that it just happened to be the international BBJ Day, just like the women had Valentine's Day a month earlier. Further, the users think, "it is a shame that you had to succumb to a bunch of humourless people" (Appendix 23).

A final party that took part in the debate was users who defended Just Eat, and whom can be explained as Just Eat ambassadors. Previous Social Media Manager Morten Jørgensen from 3 Mobile said in the interview, that the best accomplishment for a company is to have gained ambassadors who defend the company when negative content occurs. Morten Jørgensen explained that it is always much more valuable if other customers defend the company, rather than the company has to defend themselves. If the product is good people will start to defend the company (Appendix 4). Many users have indicated that the post was not appropriately, because young girls also would see the post and people should worry about the kids. In relation to this, a user has copied and posted Just Eats' guidelines from Just Eat's website. These guidelines clearly refers to that users who make an order on the website must be legally capable of entering into binding contracts and that they must be over 18 years old (Appendix 24). This user directly defend Just Eat and emphasized that young girls neither is Just Eat's target group. Furthermore, as one user put it, Just Eat did not force any women to actually maintain the theme of the particularly day (Appendix 24).

11.2 Step II

Nonetheless, because of the critique Just Eat decided to withdraw the original post and explained in a new post on Facebook that they had deleted the previous post because some users found it to be offensive, even though it had a humoristic tone (Appendix 25). This was a decision, which everybody was not thrilled about. Now a fourth party interfered in this debate, and was the users who felt it was a mistake of Just Eat withdrawing the post. Many users indicated that they felt insulted due to the fact that Just Eat had withdrawn the post and thus felt that Just Eat was sexist against men because of this. With this decision they felt that Just Eat wanted to satisfy women more than men, and now the users made comments like, "As a man, I feel offended because you think more about women than men. On February 14th you brought roses etc." Based on this the users felt that Just Eat were double-standard and, "Judging from your concept, the biggest part of your customers are probably men, whom you just have pissed on." (Appendix 26). This was also a point that the troll highlighted. The troll felt that when Just Eat chose to withdraw the post, it also meant that Just Eat distanced from the troll as a person, because the troll felt that BBJ Day was a good concept (Appendix 9). As a consequence these customers, and the troll would no longer be customers of Just Eat. The issue is that Just Eat is known for their sense of humour in their marketing initiatives. The customers are used to such tone of voice and it is streamlined with the overall communication. When Just Eat removed the humoristic post, giving in for the many unsatisfied users and the troll, it appears that what Just Eat originally represented was no longer the case.

11.3 Step III

Then late night March 15th 2014, the case takes a new turn. The international CEO David Buttress posted an update from Just Eat. Due to the unacceptable post they felt it was necessary to terminate the two authors of the post immediately. The CEO continued and said the two's actions and comments were not consistent with the company and that he dissociated from the comments (Appendix 27). The reason for this international dissociation could might have been due to a forthcoming stock exchange quotation in London, and the fact that this would not look good to new investors (Berlingske, 2014). Now the focus was on the international CEO and many customers felt that Just Eat had overreacted. The original post is no longer available on Facebook, hence we cannot see all the comments, but on an article relating to the case, the users make the comments, "I really have ZERO respect for a company who announces firings in public. Jesus Christ, how distasteful." (Harder, 2014). Another user thinks that the CEO has done the right thing, as she writes, "Thank you! Good decision. You cannot have employees who are blatant sexist. A blowjob is voluntarily, everything else belongs to another decade." (Harder, 2014). The troll also stated in the interview that he was very disappointed with Just Eat. Based on the firing he terminated his contract with Just Eat. After the incident, the troll and Just Eat have had several discussions forth and back on SoMe because the troll was against the decision. In the statement from the CEO it said that it was a “disgusting” and “inappropriate” behaviour from the two employees and that it not at all belonged to Just Eat’s general opinions (Appendix 27). This was what really upset the troll. Indirectly the troll felt that the CEO was criticizing the troll and his friends and that they were creepy and disgusting. Ever since this incident the troll has commented on updates he received from Just Eat on Facebook (Appendix 15). E.g. in a post from April 4th 2014, Just Eat ask their customers how they will spend their money when they get their tax money back. The troll commented that he would donate the money to the fired employees or buy negative advertising against Just Eat (Appendix 28).

11.4 Summary

This has without doubt been a very difficult situation to handle for Just Eat. The first post created quite a stir and separated the waters among the Facebook users. In an attempt to salvage the situation by withdrawing the post they led down their core target group. Just Eat’s tone of voice is always humoristic and should remain such as the target groups in familiar with this. The damage was done when the post was published and it was a huge challenge for Just Eat trying to take control of the situation. In order not to make the situation worse Just Eat should have paid attention to the many users who actually defended Just Eat. Then Just Eat would have understood that the solution would not be to withdraw the post and dissociate from the situation. The underlying issue could have been that Just Eat’s role is a representative and provider of other companies’ products. It could potentially have been their limitation in this case, hence they regretted the post and could not make use of the satirical tone, which is underlying the BBJ Day’s concept.

The consequences of negative brand perception are difficult really to determine. The troll and many users indicated that they no longer wanted to remain customers of Just Eat, but whether they actually do boy-cut Just Eat in the long run is difficult to tell. Another way of looking at negative brand perception is relating to employer branding. A month after Just Eat fired their employees they were looking for a Social Media Manager. The job post was posted in a group on Facebook where the members are professionals and experts working with SoMe. Some of the users have their concerns regarding the job because, “The way they randomly fire people and publish it on Facebook, I could have my doubts about the company’s work environment”, and “I lost my trust to Just Eat, after the stunt on BBJ Day. They had some employees who did not hesitated and they totally made an overreaction". Other users said that they would pass because they love BBJ Day too much and that the ones who actually want to apply should be careful on BBJ Day (Appendix 29). With this in mind, it could also seem like, that the brand has suffered from an employer brand point of view. In this Facebook community, the SoMe experts do not have much to spare for Just Eat and they are concerned in relation to how Just Eat treat the employees.

12 Case: Matas & SKØN

In the following we will present a case regarding the beauty shop Matas and the magazine SKØN. This case shows how wrong things can go when the brand promise do not meet what the company actually communicates which thus will foster negative brand perception.

Matas is a Danish materialist chain of selling health and beauty products, medicine, herbs and spices, washing powder etc. across Denmark. Matas was founded in 1949 and has today 295 shops in Denmark and two shops in Sweden. In the Matas shops, the customers can have a free magazine called SKØN (meaning beauty). Matas and SKØN have a partnership and Matas is the only distributor of SKØN, hence the magazine also contains many articles, which is related to Matas. Matas is a big Danish brand, and since Matas is distributing SKØN, many customers have the notion that SKØN is sub brand of Matas, thus part of Matas. However, this is not the case and SKØN is edited by Aller Media (SKØN, 2014). But bear in mind that the brand is how the customers perceive the brand. We will illustrate in the following that this notion whether Matas and SKØN belong together have had consequences for Matas.

12.1 Step I

Late night June 25th 2014 a SoMe storm reached Matas and SKØN. In the SKØN June 2014 edition, a choking picture of a thin model was published. A concerned customer had seen the model in the magazine. The customer, named Cecilia Nickelsen, who happened to be a nurse and mother, thus shared her opinion and experience of SKØN the June 25th 2014, 21:05, on her personal Facebook profile and on SKØN's Facebook profile,

> I have today for the first and last time seen your magazine. I quote: “We go all the way in the name of beauty. To become more beautiful and feel good inside. Using healthy diet…” Then on age 47 you see a sick girl (model) who belong to a hospital of stomach pump!!!! I am deeply shocked. I gave the magazine to my daughter below 14 years [...]. But it is definitely taken from her again. Have you no censorship whatsoever! I am a nurse and know with 100% certainty that it is the image of a severely ill girl with an eating disorder. If someone tries to defend this by saying that someone this thin is naturally I will become furious. I myself am one of those who naturally have a BMI of 17, thus meaning that I am underweight [...]. This is what I expect to find in a French fashion magazine, which is why I never buy them. But in a magazine from Matas concerning health and well being, this is outrageous! [...]. Kind regard Cecilia Nickelsen worried nurse and mother. (Appendix 30)

This post was the starting point for a media storm against Matas and SKØN. The debate took place four places on Facebook: Cecilia Nickelsen’s Facebook profile, Club Matas Facebook profile, Matas Webshop Facebook profile and SKØN Facebook profile. Many other users on Facebook were also upset with this picture and shared the same opinions as Cecilia Nickelsen with comments like, “Not OK, Matas”, “What were you thinking publishing a picture of a really sick and anorexia model for your products.??? Disgusting”, “As the mother of a daughter of 14 years, I am shocked with SKØN and Matas”, “Scary”, “You have really made a mistake”, “SHAME on you!!!!”, “I get really sad when I see the picture of the very thin woman in your magazine” (Appendix 31). In general many people were disappointed with Matas and did not expect this from them when they made comments like “thought Matas’ goal regarding health was about healthy models” and “Will the use of your product make me look that sick?”, “Deeply worried, how can you even publish a magazine, it gives many families big trouble” and “as long as the magazine is available in Matas, Matas accept a twisted ideal of beauty” (Appendix 32).

The problem is that SKØN describes themselves as having inspiring articles of beauty, body, wellness and health (SKØN, 2014) and Matas’ mission is “We will help our customers to feel good, look good and be in a good mood – for reasonable money” (Matas, 2014). With this in mind the users are frustrated and do not feel that the description of SKØN and Matas’ mission go well together with the picture of a thin model. The post was shared more than 18,400 times within two days and reached the traditional media such as newspaper and TV. Furthermore Cecilia Nickelsen was in the Danish News to explain her frustrations. On Cecilia Nickelsen’s Facebook wall many people sympathize with Cecilia Nickelsen and shared the same emotions and feelings (Appendix 33). People indicated that they found it cool of Cecilia Nickelsen to share the post and people commented the post with words like; “good work”, “well written”, “totally agree” etc. (Appendix 33). Here we see a classic example of how people together makes a little community based on a negative issue, where they can share the same opinions, which again can reflect in a strong speaking tube and show how powerful the weak ties can be. Also Castells argues that the bonds between the people in the network society are tenuous and temporary and often based on common views and beliefs, uniting people across borders (Siapera, 2012). The people who supported Cecilia Nickelsen most likely did not know her, but they shared the same beliefs in a few seconds. Due to the consumers’ tribe behaviour people begun to follow the wave on Cecilia Nickelsen’s post and it quickly developed into a huge debate.

12.2 Step II

On June 26th 2014 the debate was truly developing with speed and both Matas and SKØN havd acknowledge that it was time for them to take action and make an apology for the picture in SKØN. The same apology was posted on the Matas Web shop Facebook profile, the Matas Club Facebook profile and the Matas website:

> Dear all, we can see that MANY have reacted strongly due to a very thin model in the latest issue of the magazine SKØN. And we understand why! Although we do not own the magazine SKØN, and are not part of its editorial staff, we take distance from using photos of models that obviously are underweight. The editors behind the magazine have the same position as us in this situation, and they apologize for the mistake in the latest issue of the magazine. They have promised to tighten up their procedures to prevent a recurrence of this unfortunate mistake [...]. (Appendix 34)

Many users were not happy with this apology and believed Matas tried to shirk responsibility when the user made comments like “Perhaps the magazine is not owned by Matas, but if the magazines are distributed in the Matas shops, then you Matas, has to take responsibility and make up for the mistake?”, “As long as the magazines are distributed in the Matas shops, Matas is responsible”, “This was really a lame apology”, “You at Matas must have a saying in this? You distribute the magazine and it is packed with ads for Matas???” Furthermore, a user is very straightforward and says, “This is almost as distasteful, the way you are trying to dry your hands here, as the picture you brand becomes part of. Acknowledge your mistake instead of throwing the buck. Of course you have approved the magazine before it was printed” (Appendix 35).

A few hours later the same day SKØN published there apologize,

> Dear readers of SKØN, at the editorial, we are very sad about the criticism that a fashion picture received in the latest edition of our magazine. The comments from you are completely justified, and it is clearly a mistake made by us, that this image was published in the magazine, since it is definitely not an expression of the ideal of beauty we have on the editorial office. SKØN celebrates the natural female body and this model does not represent an ideal beauty, which women of all ages should aim for. We apologize for the image selection and have in a dialogue with Matas taken the consequences of your criticism and removed the magazines, which are left in the stores. In the future we will make sure that something similar could not happen again [...]. (Appendix 34)

The users were neither satisfied with this apology and could not believe that nobody at the editorial office had paid attention to the picture. “Lots of people has approve this picture – You CHOSE to publish a picture of a deadly sick child to sell your shit”, ”You must have had some kind of filter and policy which shields something like this”, “You still need to explain how it is possible that a magazine which ”celebrates the natural woman’s body” choose to publish this picture” and “There must be people who read/approve the magazine before it’s being published?” (Appendix 35).

Furthermore, SKØN responded on their Facebook wall and defended them by arguing that the picture was taken from New York Fashion Week, it was an international model and, “We have made a mistake by using the picture in our magazine, and we very much regret” (Appendix 34).

As we can tell from the netnography, many users reacted in a negative manner after the two apologizes. But some users, including Cecilia Nickelsen, were happy with the apologizes and expressed their meanings like “People is overreacting! Everyone can make mistakes”, “They have said sorry what else do you expect?”, “Who are you to judge Matas like that?”, “I’m sure they feel sorry” and “it is a free magazine, and you choose your self to take it” (Appendix 36). The best thing that could happen in this case is the users who defend Matas and SKØN. Some people are pleased whilst other continues to be upset and do not understand why this picture could be published in the first place.

Previous Social Media Manager Morten Jørgensen from 3 Mobile said that it is important to remember that even though a lot of people are mad there are plenty of other customers who are satisfied and the company should let them have a voice (Appendix 4).

12.3 Summary

Who should take the fully responsibility was an on-going discussion in the case. In our research we experience that people mostly blamed Matas for giving SKØN the responsibility and did not take responsibility themselves. It becamed a problem for Matas, because the users perceive SKØN as part of Matas and most of the comments were directly pointed towards Matas. Most of the users believed that Matas was the sender of the picture. The brand is not what the company tell the consumer it is, it is what consumers tell each other it is (Scott Cook, co-founder, Intuit). Based on this, Matas cannot shirk responsibility. The Matas brand is what the consumers believe it is. You could argue that we have seen the same trend in the Telenor case, where Steffen Trannerup, Senior Digital Consultant at Telenor blamed the payment service instead of focusing at the brand as a whole union, which includes all the suppliers (Appendix 7). According to this it is clear that both brands loss the control and it consist come serious consequences. The consumers understand and perceive the brand and its products based on the touch points where they meet the products, and in this case it was a magazine they found in a Matas shop.

This is a classic example of how a meaning shared by friends on Facebook suddenly can reach a big part of the Danish people. Cecilia Nickelsen only had 174 Friends on Facebook, but suddenly her post was shared more than 18,000 times and reached the national media as well. The companies should really take precautions and never underestimate people's networks, weak ties and the media.

In this case, it is obviously to see that people inspire each other to share the same negative opinion and excites each other. This is also seen by the high number of likes each negative comment received and the number of shares. Another examples is Cecilia Nickelsen who make a "Thank you" post to all who supported her in the situation. "The magazine has now been withdrawn and it would not have happened without you" and "When you fight in groups, even the biggest ones can be defeated" (Appendix 37). Cecilia Nickelsen saw this as her opportunity to fight against a big company and the David and Goliath metaphor becomes relevant again. Karina, one of our respondents, was also aware of this and said that she did not mind posting something negative on SoMe, so she could be heard and have a strong speaking tube (Appendix 13). The more the consumers gather around a cause, the bigger chance they have to be heard and thus have a much more power, which also was the case with Telenor. Just like Castells explained when people have a common view or belief it unites people across borders (Siapera, 2012).

13 Case: YouSee

YouSee is a case where YouSee took control of a complaint and the output was a stronger brand and a positive brand perception.

YouSee has its roots in the Danish company TDC, previously known as Tele Denmark. YouSee YouSee originated from TDC in 2007 and the product portfolio has expanded ever since, hence they today offer TV, broadband, mobile and phone subscriptions and offers movies and series to be watched online (YouSee, 2014).

13.1 Step I

Tuesday October 23rd 2012, 00:21 a customer named Alexander Nicholas Kanto, decided to quit his subscription with his Danish TV operator, YouSee. Therefore he wrote a post on YouSee's Facebook page. The whole post was described as a break-up, and that Alexander Nicholas Kanto no longer felt that the relationship was going that well and that he had found a new girlfriend, which was a better match. He felt he had to break-up, but that it was not YouSee's fault but his, and many others would be thrilled to be their girlfriend

> The latest time, I have walked around and struggled a bit with some things and I am afraid that we two do not fit together anymore [...] and now I have met someone else. Her name is Netflix and we just fit together. I am really sorry, but I have to break up with you. You should know that it is not you, it is me. I know there are plenty out there who would like to watch your TV channels with all the commercials." (Appendix 38)

This "break up" is both humoristic and well formulated. However, YouSee saw this as a great opportunity and they appeared to have the same sense of humor and used this opportunity to communicate in the same manner. This was a brilliant idea and YouSee's idea did not only provide them with a positive attention but also lots of respect. YouSee responded Tuesday October 23rd 2012, 08:26,

> I am sorry that you found someone else. [...] I knew well enough it was coming, because you have been so uncommitted and indifferent lately [...] It was almost only when you and the guys were watching football, you paid attention to me [...] And when I recently found a used Netflix coupon between the sofa cushions, I knew it was over. I am not the first to see a man who falls for a younger model, and probably not the last. I know that I am not 17 anymore, and probably have a wrinkle or two. [...] Goodbye Alexander [...] (Appendix 39)

13.2 Step II

We can see that the users on Facebook loved the response from YouSee when looking closer at the user's comment. The break-up has overall generated 442 comments and close to all of the comments are in favour YouSee. The general tone of voice is how "funny" the situation is, "respect to YouSee", "brilliant", "made my day", "made me laugh", "big applause to the employee who made the response" (Appendix 40). Previous Social Media Manager Morten Jørgensen from 3 Mobile also mentioned that this was a best in class case and received lots of respect because of how they dealt with the customer service (Appendix 4). In addition 10 users indicated that they want to become YouSee customers or that they never want to leave YouSee because of the response. Furthermore 10 users expressed that YouSee is the "winner" in this case or "1-0 to YouSee" (Appendix 41). From the hundreds of positive comments, it is clear to see that the loss of one single customer could be turned around and is a great opportunity for YouSee and their brand. YouSee might lose one customer, but from this case it created awareness for the brand and YouSee was the winning part. The users found it valuable that YouSee dared to stand up and respond with humour and with the same jargon as the customer did with to begin with.

13.3 Summary

In these comments many user expressed that they are pleased with the modern media, which allowed content like this to go viral. In addition the users say that "this is good Facebook communication", "a good example of how to use the social media to marketing", "good understanding of the media", and "whether or not it is a PR stunt it is brilliant". Overall 18 users have given a comment referring to the good marketing of the whole situation (Appendix 42). It is interesting to see that the consumers are aware of the factors in the modern society. They have an understanding of the media and the viral effect it can undertake. They loved the response for the marketing element, which is something other companies can learn from.

Looking at the many thousands of likes, positive and respectful comments from people, it is clear that this is a good case to learn from. YouSee has gained a lot from this case. They showed that they are a humoristic brand and not just boring as traditional customer service could be. They gave the brand a face and the users loved the set-up

14 Case: Copenhagen Zoo

The case of Copenhagen Zoo started with a giraffe, which had to be killed. The decision was not popular on a global level and the Danes were met by much fight from the outside world. At a national level, however, it was a case that reinforced the Zoo brand, as well as the human resources behind the brand.

14.1 Step I

Sunday 9th February 2014, a giraffe named Marius was destroyed at Copenhagen Zoo. According to Copenhagen Zoo, the giraffe had to be killed because the Zoo did not want to risk problems of inbreeding, since Marius genes were already well represented among the other giraffes at the Zoo. It created a stir in the media and the Danish Zoo defended their decision on Facebook 11th February 2014,

> Contraception is not an isolated solution for managing populations, although valuable in a management context. Animals need to breed to maintain healthy populations. It is crucial that a large part of the population breed so that we can conserve genetic diversity. If only a small proportion are allowed to breed the population will quickly lose genetic diversity and risk inbreeding. At the same time it is important to conserve a healthy age distribution in the population. If the animals are not allowed to breed, then the youngest age groups will quickly diminish and the population will risk extinction over time.(Appendix 43)

This also meant, that the giraffe was actually healthy enough. This caused a media fight against the Copenhagen Zoo, and furthermore also against the Danish population. We have experienced this in our research when people from other countries made the comments, “These people are cold. Maybe because of their geological location” (Appendix 43). People were frustrated and found it very barbaric that the Zoo without scruples would kill an animal like this. Especially foreigners from the USA, and the UK were represented in the negative comments on Facebook. Words like “murders”, “cold”, nazis’”, “barbaric country”, “heartless”, “slaughters” etc. were common words in the negative debate on Facebook (Appendix 43).

14.2 Step II

Shortly after Copenhagen Zoo destroyed Marius, the first Twitter and Facebook storm started. Copenhagen Zoo tried to explain the many animal activists the reason for the killing on Twitter. With help from hashtags like #Marius and #Mariusgate everybody could be a part of the debate and the SoMe storm. As mentioned earlier hashtags goes globally. And this was also one of the reasons why the debate not only was national but international. It was a case which spread like wildfire on SoMe like Facebook, Instagram and especially Twitter, since Twitter is heavily used in the UK and the USA.

The debate even reached BBC and CNN who covered the case in a quite dramatic tone. But Bengt Holst, CEO at the Danish Zoo, explained, “All zoos have been considered and there was no suitable place” (BBC News, 2014). The interesting thing is how Copenhagen Zoo’s CEO, Bengt Holst, reacted in the storm of negative comments and the international critic. Bengt Holst was composed and calm the whole way. In the Danish newspaper, Politiken, he used Disney World as a metaphor and explained that it is important to remember that we do not live in Disney World. Nonetheless, he understood the emotions that the situation caused in people. Furthermore he believed that we should respect the scientific data underlying the decisions of Copenhagen Zoo (Holm Petersen, 2014). Throughout the whole tough debate, he did not change his position, but was truly composed.

Benjamin Rud Elberth from Geelmuyden.Kiese did also mention the Copenhagen Zoo case in the interview. Benjamin Rud Elberth explained that Copenhagen Zoo could not give up on their attitude and give an apologize. First of all, the Zoo did not believe that they had done something wrong and had the right arguments to explain the whole situation with how to avoid inbreeding. Copenhagen

Zoo had to stay true to the brand and the course of nature (Appendix 6). Bengt Holst's well argumented presentation and composed attitude did also captured respect and confirmation. The Danish website Euroman.dk paid tribute to Bengt Holst in an online article in February 2014. They explained that he deserved a special award after an interview with the English Channel 4 (Ernst, 2014). Users on Facebook also indicated how satisfied they were with Bengt Holst, "A big applause to the zoo's director for the way he handled it all, great respect" and "Dear Zoo, I really admire your cool and calm way and good will to explain" (Appendix 45). According to the Copenhagen Zoo and Bengt Holst's strong evidence and sharp well-formulated comments, they won respect and acknowledgement. This is also seen in award called "This Years Copenhagener" where Bengt Holst won the price with 5,815 votes (Zoo, 2014).

Furthermore lots of Danish celebrities paid tribute to Bengt Holst. E.g. the Danish TV-host Anders Breinholt wrote that he would like to be adopted by Bengt Holst and the known radio-host Esben Bjerre wrote that he would like to give a big hurray to Bengt (Bjerg, 2014).

Benjamin Rud Elberth explained that according to him, the Copenhagen Zoo could not give any apologize since it could occurs in an even bigger shitstorm. Furthermore they would have been beaten and they would never again have been able to run the business as they should be (Appendix 6).

14.3 Summary

You could argue that if the Copenhagen Zoo had chosen to do it differently and made an apologize, it could have been a case similar to Just Eat. But because of their strong argumentations and stable position it was not the case and the Danish Zoo did not surrender. This is also seen by how people on Facebook protected the Danish Zoo and acted as ambassadors and defended the Copenhagen Zoo (Appendix 44). Furthermore, the Danish Zoo chose to make a post on Facebook after the episode where they made a thank you to all the people, which supported them. This turned out to be a clever strategy, since lots of positive comments were posted. Words like "admire", "you are welcome", "we trust you", "cool", "I support you", "I love Zoo", "respect" etc. were posted in this context (Appendix 45). The Danes stood together and defended the Zoo brand like one strong union where they protect their nationality. No matter what, this must have been the best ambassador for the Zoo. It is also positive to see that the Zoo used the situation as a positive communication tool, where they said thank you to the crowd. It is an important strategy from the Zoo. Morten Jørgensen indicated that it is truly important to appreciate the users (Appendix 4), which definitely is the case here.

Even though the Danish Zoo received lots of critique from an international scale, they did not hesitate and remained true to the way the do business. At some time a Zoo will always have to destroy animals and if they had this time they would neither has the opportunity to destroy an animal another time. This incident could not have been avoided.

Martin Rubæk Jensen from Brandhouse argues that the Danish Zoo has a stronger brand today. He experienced that they had got more likes at their Facebook page after the debate (Appendix 5). This indicates that if you do it well you can actually establish a stronger brand with an incident like this. Furthermore the Copenhagen Zoo did not apologize or change their decision, which indicate that they are liable and completely true to their brand, values and what they represent. According to this, the Copenhagen Zoo is able to win respect and change the situation to a national triumph.

An analysis has shown that around 315,000 posts about Marius were made. These posts were especially made on Twitter. With this, we understand that SoMe were one of the main reasons for the huge protests abroad according to a study from Copenhagen Business School (Sonne, 2014).

15 Analysis of the Cases

There are different findings to take from the cases above. The experts all argued that SoMe are good branding platforms and a dialogue tool (Appendix 3, 4 & 7), but in real life companies are blinded by the consequences which potentially can follow. We see the consumer's frustration and desire of sharing their experiences. This can be a problem for the brands since it can be difficult to control the situation. The cases of Telenor, Just Eat and Matas are clear examples of how critical it could be when using SoMe as a branding tool, and when the expected stories do not fulfil the actual experience.

It is easy to say that Matas & SKØN and Just Eat could have avoided these situations. The incidents happened anyway and the companies should have dealt with the situations in other ways. The Matas & SKØN case is very similar to Telenor. A customer starts by expressing her frustration by using

SoMe and suddenly it is all over. As with Telenor, Matas & SKØN did not respond until the day after. This indicates that Matas & SKØN do not have a strong enough SoMe strategy and have not thought of the consequences when using a SoMe. This also reveals that far from every company have a SoMe strategy, which also was the case with JOE & THE JUICE and Cirkeline & Lille My. They have not thought of the consequences by being present at SoMe and are not suited to deal with the critique.

15.1 The Companies did not Fulfil the Brand Promise

Just Eat overreacted and ended up by disappointing their main target group. In a quick moment Just Eat forgot all what they as a brand represented and succumbed to people's critique. The Copenhagen Zoo did also receive lots of critique, but they did not succumbed to people. They defended themselves by arguing why they did what they did and that they were in their top right to do so. The Zoo had many ambassadors who had their back just as well as Just Eat. Just Eat was just completely blinded by the whole situation and the withdrawing of the post. Just Eat got beaten, whilst Zoo got a triumph.

The case with Matas & SKØN was rooted that they published a picture, which did not represent the values connected to the brand and what the brand is built upon. Companies do their best attempt in building brand equity, but the pretty picture fails unless the companies stay true to it. The customers were promised something, which the company could not fulfil. The same was the case with Telenor. The customer Anders Brinkman had a problem with the payment service and he had been in contact with Telenor several times. This was not the service he had signed up for with his subscription in the first place. The bad story went viral just as well as the good story from YouSee went viral. We can experience from all of the cases that the posts and complaints goes viral whether it is a good thing or bad thing. It also seems like it is out of the companies' control. SoMe has a huge impact on the consumer behaviour in the modern society and SoMe makes it possible to tag along.

Just Eat and the Copenhagen Zoo themselves did an action which caused a debate in the public. Just Eat themselves were to blame for the negative publicity when they wrote a post that did not matches everyone's taste. The Copenhagen Zoo announced that they wanted to destroy the giraffe, which caused bad publicity. But companies have always, and will always do actions, which everybody would not agree with. However, to some extent it is possible to control parts of it. The Copenhagen

Zoo is a great example of this. They defended themselves because they knew they were right in their decisions. Additional they found it valuable to provide information about how nature's time progress and how food ends up on the dinner table. And since they are a company dealing with animals, and they have many children and families as customers, it fit perfectly that the Zoo communicates such things. The Zoo had no choice but had to do what they did.

In Just Eat's case things were slightly different, and they did not have to write the post. Nonetheless they could have handled the situation differently and maybe have turned the situation to positive brand marketing. The reaction from the management and their general decisions turned the situation into a drama. The whole story to begin with was for fun, but ended up as a sad love story where one of the employees got fired.

Telenor, Matas & SKØN and YouSee started with a negative comment relating to the company. But it is difficult to tell what is exactly taken place. Telenor told us in the interview that there were not anything new in the complaint and they had seen similar complaint many times before. Already 14th June 2014 Matas & SKØN had received a negative post regarding the very skinny model in the SKØN magazine, but nothing happened with that post. It did not go viral and it did not create any fuss. Both the Telenor customer and the Matas & SKØN customer had less than 200 friends on Facebook. And with this in mind, it is difficult to tell why their post had such a great volume in reach. Steffen Trannerup from Telenor explained that the complaint they received were very well written (Appendix 7) and Cecilia Nickelsen's post was also well written and she took use of logos, ethos and pathos, hence people could easily understand and relate to her argumentation and frustrations.

15.2 Difficult to Predict the Outcome

Another factor is Facebook algorithms. In the interview with Benjamin Rud Elberth from Geelmuyden.Kiese and Josephine Gram Ludvigsen from Marvelous, they talked about Facebook's algorithms (Appendix 3 & 6). The Facebook algorithm decides what everybody should see on Facebook and if many friends (or friend of friends) begin to tag along with at post, lots of people will be exposed for the content. In average when someone visits their news feed on Facebook they potentially can see 1,500 stories from friends, pages, people and companies they like etc. The intensive user on Facebook has a greater chance to get over loaded and potentially to be exposed to

15,000 stories. The algorithm chances all the time but the factors are interaction with friends, public figures, pages, likes, and how many shares and comments an individual post have received (Dredge, 2014). Josephine Gram Ludvigsen from Marvelous argued that since the algorithm are so tricky it takes a professional team to do some damage control (Appendix 3).

Benjamin Rud Elberth from Geelmuyden.Kiese also said, that many potentially shitstorms does not progress very much and they never reach a high volume. However, many people also see the opportunity to tell their friends or call out on the SoMe networks to get people to share their content. This would at some point reach the Facebook algorithms and the rings in the water will start. Nobody knows the algorithms and they are a secret just like the Coca-Cola recipe (Appendix 6). This is obviously just possible because of the different networks we live in and the media surrounding us. As Steffen Trannerup from Telenor also stated, people see the buzz and tap in whether or not they know what the situation is about (Appendix 7).

15.3 Problems Rooted to the Actual Product

In connection with Telenor it is clear that there has been a major problem with the payment service. Steffen Trannerup indicated in the interview that they were not aware of the problems with payment service (Appendix 7). However, many customers expressed on Telenor's Facebook profile that they had repeatedly time been in contact with customer service, but how pointless it was. The frightening in this case is, therefore, that this could indicate that Telenor actually were aware of the problems with the payment service, but they did nothing to fix it. This gives rise to the consumers thus actual need to have bigger speaking tube which SoMe can help with. Furthermore, you can see that as long it is just a single complaint to customer service, nothing happens. But when the consumers gather in groups, the consumers will finally a power. This indicates that many consumers do not feel that they are being heard when they only have a single voice. E.g. in relation to the JOE & THE JUICE case, a consumer writes that she is aware of that some users might feel that people should not complain in a public forum. But she explains that she has previously herself tried to send a complaint via email to JOE & THE JUICE regarding a similar case. Nobody ever responded her email and she was left with the feeling of being ignored and her complaint was completely meaningless. In the light of this, she says yes, it is a shame that people has to go public with their complaints, but the companies would not listen otherwise if they speak it in a quiet forum (Appendix 18).

When you look at Telenor, Just Eat and Matas & SKØN, you can see that the criticism arises when something is not as it should be. Telenor's product was not optimal, hence the complaint. Matas and SKØN was also directly to blame because they published a picture that was not in accordance with the image they normally portray.

15.4 What about Branding?

Telenor as a brand have a unique and relevant positioning, otherwise the shitstorm would never have gone that big. But back in 2012, Telenor was not able to keep their brand promises and establish a clear and easily understood promise. The promise is so important since it is what the customers learn to expect from the brand. Telenor did not fulfil their promises of the brand experiences, which is one of the most important factors for a strong brand perception. Through years of branding and marketing, the customers were promised something that the actual product could not deliver.

Companies put a huge effort into the work of branding, and the ultimate for a company is to gain brand equity. Brand equity refers to the added value to a brand name. It can be seen as the difference between the price of a product and the value to the customer. It is created by marketing strategies that have managed to position the brand in the consumers mind (Elliott & Percy, 2007). Keller has presented customer-based brand equity (CBBE) and CBBE model. CBBE "...is defined as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumers' response to the marketing of the brand " (Keller, 1993, p.2). The aim is to get a positive CBBE, which means that customers react, favourable to the brand (Keller et al., 2012). But as we have discovered in this cases, the companies cannot fully achieve CBBE because they are disappointing their customers. In the following we will briefly go through the four steps in the CBBE model and point out where the companies are facing some challenge based on the above analysis.

15.4.1 Brand Salience

Brand salience refers to brand awareness and how the consumers think of the brand under different conditions. This means how the consumer recognizes and recalls the brand when they see the product or brand. It could be how the consumer is able to recognize the brand due to previous exposure (Keller et al., 2012). This is not a difficult task to complete and even a few money will do with the advent of SoMe. With SoMe everybody can create free accounts and gather a fan database. When a company choose to use Instagram or Facebook they will create some kind of awareness.

15.4.2 Brand Performance

The brand's performance refers to how well the product or service is able to meet customer's functional needs. Performance is essential because it includes the experiences customers have with the brand. The most important thing is, that the service fulfils the customer's expectations (Keller et al., 2012). In some cases, like Telenor, it could seem like; the companies do a huge effort to recruit new customers. However, existing customers will be overlooked and customer care becomes secondary. It also means that customers will be disappointed once they actual become customers and clearly the customer brand performance fail because of this. Morten Jørgensen, the previous Social Media Manager at 3 Mobile also acknowledged that for 3 Mobile, it was more important to win new customer instead of taking care of the existing customers (Appendix Morten).

We saw in our research that the brand performance was one of the most important factors for the consumers, which had made frustration on SoMe. The whole reason why the consumers shared their bad experiences was because the product or service did not live up to the brand performance. A company can do a great job managing a strong brand, but what we see here is that it fails if the brand cannot fulfil the brand performance. The product itself is at the heart of brand equity since it is the primary influence on what the consumers experience with a brand (Keller et al., 2012). The brand is not stronger than the product.

15.4.3 Brand Imagery

The brand imagery is people's perception of a brand, not what the product or service provides, but more what the brand means for the customer on a psychological level (Keller et al., 2008). As mention earlier branding is an on-going process of influencing, creating and fulfilling consumer's perception. Therefore brand imagery also includes how the consumers view and understand a particular brand of products.

As we have seen in the analysis, it can have huge consequences if consumers hold a negative brand perception. In the modern society, the consumer no longer keep this negative brand perception for themselves, but they share the negative perception on SoMe. This can happen through negative eWOM or in worst-case shitstorms as shown in the cases above. If negative brand perception occurs, and if it only accounts for one single individual, it can damage a brand a lot. This is also something, which relates to the brand performance since it is all about the relation between the consumers expectations towards the product and service and brand perception. Since it is all about what the brands mean for the consumers on a psychological level, it is also a very sensitive aspect. If the consumers really trust the brand and it means a lot to them they can also be very disappointed if their experiences cracks and the brand does not fulfil the expectations. This is another reason of why the consumers found it necessary to express themselves on SoMe and why it can be difficult to control for a company.

15.4.4 Brand Judgement

The judgement of a brand is how the customer evaluates the overall performance and imagery of the brand. Since brand judgement is all about the consumers personal opinions and evaluations (Keller et al., 2012) all the aspects are connected (salience, performance and imagery). Today it is really easy to judge and share the judgement of a brand. With SoMe, the consumers are able to judge the brand by external factors, which we e.g. see on Trustpilot and every time the consumer file a complaint on a SoMe platform. Furthermore they can be affected and reinforced by the (public) reputation and comments, which are visible on SoMe. The overall performance can thus easily evolve because of the networks. This can of course also result in a shitstorm or negative eWOM. In this aspect the companies needs to be aware since the consumers can judge by using other peoples experiences and meanings. We have seen that consumer's symphonizes with the little man.

15.4.5 Brand Feelings

How customers react and respond to a specific brand is called brand feelings. These are feelings that relates to marketing (Keller et al., 2012). When we see how consumers react and respond to the brand on SoMe we can see which feelings are combined. It is clear that when negative eWOM occurs the feelings are unfavourable to the company. The heads and the heart drive the feelings and as Keller et al. explain, what matters is how positive these responses are (Keller et al., 2012). In a traditional sense, Keller et al. look at the positive responses from the consumers, but we have discovered that it is equally important to look at the negative responses. These are truly damaging the companies. We saw this in the case of Kähler and Just Eat where the negative responses started because of promotion on Facebook. Since it is about the head and the heart it can be difficult to change the feelings from negative to positive. E.g. the troll continued to receive different marketing initiatives from Just Eat, and this just made the troll's feelings towards Just Eat worse. At this point, marketing could never be a solution in how Just Eat could make up for the situation.

15.4.6 Brand Resonance

Brand resonance refers to the ultimate relationship that the customer feels for the brand (Keller et al., 2012). The ideal for a company is to have the consumer to engage with the brand. It is not only to buy the products several times and show loyalty, but also to get more involved with activities that are not related to a purchase. This can obviously be achieved on SoMe and it is especially positive when some customers defend the companies in the case we have elaborated on. However, we have also learned that the company needs to take precautions because it allows people to say both negative and positive things about the brand. It is an important aspect for the brand since it is about relationships and loyalty.

15.4.7 Summary

When looking at negative brand perception on SoMe, the CBBE model has showed that if a company wants a strong brand they should focus and pay attention to their customers. Because as Keller et al. argues (2012 p. 55), "...the power of a brand lies in what resides in the minds of customer." This includes what the customers have learned, felt, seen, heard, and experienced. Brand equity is important for the brands since it includes relationship, trust, loyalty, experiences and feelings, but from this we can see that it is a big challenge for the companies. The first step, brand salience is to achieve with SoMe, but the other levels in the model is a challenge for the company. Basically the company needs to show consistency in their brand promise, products/service and marketing initiatives. In order for the companies to regain brand equity the should focus on the following:

- Do not just show it with marketing; show it with the actual product and services.
- Many customers really trust the brand, thus they can be truly disappointed and feeling let down. The companies should not underestimate this, and the loyal customers will share their negative experience if the experience with the brand fails.

- Today the consumers are able to judge in public by sharing their experiences and meanings online, therefore it can be more difficult to take control. Reviews made by peer are the most powerful ones.
- When negative eWOM occurs the feelings shared are unfavourable to the company.
- The brand is adapted in the customer's head and heart; hence it can be difficult to change the feelings from negative to positive.

Chapter 6

16 Findings

In the following part we will present 10 findings, which we have gained throughout the research. We believe that these findings can be valuable for companies to embrace or at least consider to some extend. The findings are able to help companies understanding the consequences of using SoMe and to understand which factors they must be aware of when entering SoMe. The findings will be followed by a question, which the company should consider and be able to answer. The company should perceive this question as a guideline in order to understand the advantages and disadvantages when using SoMe. The questions can help them to better understand if they are well qualified to be able to deal with negative brand perception on SoMe or not.

16.1 Not All Companies are Suited to be on SoMe

In our research we experienced that SoMe are not made for companies. But SoMe is an environment for the consumers to communicate, share emotions, attitudes, images and their lifestyle in general within their network and friends. Companies will always try to be present, and meet the consumers where they are; hence the companies want to be on SoMe.

In our research we experienced that our interviewed experts were not totally agreeing whether all companies should be present SoMe or not. We believe it is because of their knowledge which are based on their clients and it depends on which kind of products or service the client has. However, as deeper we went into the report the more we could see that if entering SoMe a company could expect a fight (Fournier & Avery, 2011). Furthermore companies with skeletons in the closet should not be on SoMe (Appendix 5). Based on that we would recommend the companies to think very carefully and into-depth about which value they get out of SoMe and remember that it consist a risk. It is cheaper tool compared to other marketing alternatives, but if you are not ready or made for it, it can ruin the brand identity and in worse case consist in financial consequences.

Many companies are present on SoMe, but it does not necessarily mean that they are suited to be present on SoMe. It is all about the company and the product/service. Some companies have products or services that many consumers or activists are against. Such companies should take precautions when entering SoMe, because SoMe makes it easy for the opposition to criticize and share negative brand perception. E.g. many consumers have a negative brand perception of McDonald's, and as we saw with #McStorries, SoMe made it very easy to share such negative brand perception. McDonald's is a huge brand and they need to be present on SoMe, but it indicates that similar companies should balance and weigh pros and cons in connection with the branding effect vs. negative brand perception. When a company is present on SoMe there is a potential risk in being a moving target.

The companies should also make of their mind in terms like, what is it they want to gain from SoMe which they cannot get from e.g. their website. E.g. Cirkeline & Lille My has a Facebook profile and they share many bouquets. In addition they also have a very professional looking website including a web shop and lots of other information and inspiration sources. If Cirkeline & Lille My just have had the website they would probably not have been exposed to negative publicity in the same extent. They could have handled the situation in a quiet forum without the complaint got shared all over SoMe.

SoMe is really good for the small and local companies to gain brand awareness. The problems just happen to occur when the customers file a complaint and the small companies do not know how to respond to the complaint. This is a consequence they must have in mind. Compared to this, our cases in the project are good examples. Telenor, JOE & THE JUICE, Cirkeline & Lille My, and Matas & SKØN did obviously not had any clear SoMe strategy in how to react on negative content. They are all good examples of how it can end in a disaster.

On the other hand, SoMe is very attractive for companies because of the easy access in how to communicate with their customers and thereby building a stronger customer relationship. Furthermore SoMe can be used as a brand and marketing tool and companies can get an idea of the brand imagery when the customers shares their feelings about the product on SoMe.

Based on this we can ask question number one:

1. **Have you thought of the consequences of SoMe for your company?**

16.2 It is all About the Resources and Expertise

In our research we experienced that it is all about the right resources and qualifications. It requires more than just a student helper to take care of the work with SoMe (Appendix 3 & 6). In our research we empiricism that if the companies choose to enter SoMe they need to have professional resources to establish a trustful and strong brand promise at SoMe. We therefore recommend the companies to allocate the right resources when entering SoMe platforms. Companies need to have in mind that SoMe never sleeps. Telenor and Matas & SKØN experienced this when nobody answered the complaints until the day after and they were all over SoMe. Consumers do not hesitate and wait for openings hours.

Furthermore, the companies and the employees need to think in a professional manner and cannot compare it to their private use of SoMe. In these cases, they represent the company. It can be easy and funny to post content on Facebook etc. but the employee from US Airways took it too far and ended up hurting the brand. Furthermore, Cirkeline & Lille My should have answered the customer in a professional tone and the Academy Leader and Partner of JOE & THE JUICE, should have responded on behalf of JOE & THE JUICE's profile and not his private profile.

Based on this we can ask question number two:

2. **Do you have the right resources and employees to establish a strong SoMe strategy?**

16.3 To Handle the Debate and Critique

Because of the huge development of SoMe and the power it contains, companies needs to handle critique and negative brand perception with caution. SoMe and the consumers have the power on brands and the consumers do not mind sharing negative brand stories which makes it really difficult for companies to take control. In the consumers called customer service or wrote e-mail, today the consumers have a direct communication tool and they can interact directly and quickly.

If the company are able to handle critique they can gain respect. YouSee and Copenhagen Zoo were good examples of this. Moreover, it is all about to answer the consumers in a cool and well-formulated way and apologize if the company did something wrong. Bear in mind, sometimes the customer just need to get rid of their frustrations. In such cases the company need to be calm and answer in a proper manner. If not, the customer gets more frustrated and starts a fight on SoMe and invite others to take part in the discussion. With the help of SoMe the customer can gather a whole army.

When being exposed to a shitstorm the companies need to surrender. Most of the times the customers are right and there is actual something to be complaint about. Then say sorry! (Appendix 5). It is all about to communicate and handle the critique in a right way. This can change the negative debate into a structured and positive story and the company can gain new insight to how the brand is actually being perceived.

Based on this we can ask question number three:

3. **Are you able to answer the consumers well argumented?**

16.4 The Company is not Stronger than the Product

In our cases and general research we saw connections between the brand, product and the negative sharing of brand perception. In the cases we have investigated, most of the times, the consumers were right in their complaints whether it dealt with problems related to the product or a broken brand promise. In these cases the consumer can undertake the power on SoMe because there was an actual reason for it. This indicates that SoMe does not make bad products, but companies do. Negative content is not caused by SoMe, but is rooted in the companies way of doing business. Telenor were informed several times regarding problems with the payment service and at last it just escalated for the customers. Telenor could have avoided this if they had done something to fix the problem way sooner. Telenor forgot to listen to their customers and they did not have control of the whole value chain. But the whole value chain is at stake when doing business, not just the obvious and easy access touch point. It is all about the product, since the company is not better than that. Therefore we recommend the companies to remember that their product and brand needs to be consistent and they need to stay true to the promised values which Just Eat and Matas & SKØN are bad examples of. If the SoMe strategy is not linked all the way around – from purchasing to sales, from marketing to PR, from SoMe to a shitstorm, then the company might be facing a surprise. E.g. Imerco is an example, when the supplier of the vase, Kähler, only had manufactured a limited amount of vases, hence many customers were led down because of the big hype in advance.

Based on this we can ask question number four:

4. **Do the companies' products live up to its promises?**

16.5 The Company Needs to be Present when Using Socia Media

Shitstorms to some extent developed fast due to the lack of presence by the companies. It is not possible for the companies to take control when the negative debate has started. We furthermore experienced the importance of immediately replies. In the Telenor case it was clear that they could have reduced some of the damages if they were able to make a quicker respond. A reply does also show that the companies want to communicate, take responsibility and establish good service. This indicates that dialogue is important. Furthermore we experienced that the company may never delete own comer nor the customers comment. It can damage the situation and make it even worse like we have experience in the Just Eat case and Cirkeline & Lille My.

When the debate is going, the companies needs to be available and present in order to reduce the damage and to know what is being said about the brand. We have experienced that Telenor and Matas & SKØN did not show their presence soon enough. Based on that we will recommend the companies to be available and presented in any event and supervise SoMe all hours.

The previous Social Media Manager Morten Jørgensen from 3 Mobile, said that they were very precautions when complaints on their Facebook profile began to receive lots of attention e.g. from comments and likes. For this reason Morten Jørgensen often looked up the customers' profiles and tried to discover their number of friends, which industry they worked in etc. He was not afraid if they did not have many friends (Appendix 4). However, as what we have learned from the Telenor case and Matas & SKØN, where the customers had less than 200 friends on Facebook, the companies should not feel safe just because some frustrated customers only have a "few" friends. It is like sitting in a public space where you quietly speak. You do not know who is sitting in the room next hence things can be spread. It does not matter how many friends the customer has, the company need to be present and show they pay attention to what the customers are saying. This is not only traditional good customer service, but also a way for the company to avoid an unfortunate incident. It is impossible for a company to predict how dedicated the friends are in a network, thus they cannot predict the output of a complaint.

Based on this we can ask question number five:

5. **Are your company presented on SoMe all hours?**

16.6 Remove the Focus and keep Customers Informed

We have mentioned a few things in how to avoid and prevent negative brand perception to be shared. But when the negative brand perception is taken place there are a few things the company can do in order to keep it at a minimum.

Steffen Trannerup, Senior Digital Consultant at Telenor explained that during the shitstorm in 2012, they managed to reply everyone in the end. But the interesting thing was how they removed the individual conversation from Facebook to a personal email. Telenor could not ask people to send their personal information in a Facebook comment or in a private message on Facebook, since it would have been one big mess. Therefore they removed the focus to a personal email account (Appendix 7). In general it was a good strategy to establish a clear overview, but it was also a perfect strategy to navigate the negative debate away from SoMe towards closed forums.

When the debate is going it is also a really good idea to keep the users updated. Telenor updated their Facebook users by telling them they were answering as many complaints as possible and they hired new staff to take care of the situation. This is very simple, but it indicates that the company at least is trying to do something with the situation. In addition, Just Eat did something similar when they informed the user that they had fired the employees. In retrospect, this was probably not the best update that many users had hoped for. In general it is all about letting the customers knowing that the company is taking them seriously and they are trying to solve the situation.

Another strategy is to upload new content, since this also help removing the focus. It also prevents new customers to see negative content as the first thing when they visit a SoMe profile of a company. We saw examples of this in the Telenor case and Steffen Trannerup from Telenor and Morten Jørgensen, the previous Social Media Manager from 3 Mobile explained that they consciously posted new content to remove the focus in connection with negative content (Appendix 7). This may seem subtle but it is a quick way to keep the discussion to a minimum. With this being said, we want to underpin that this is not an optimal option and the company should take precautions before they actually reach a real crisis.

Based on this we can ask question number six:

6. **Are you able to remove the focus from the negative content?**

16.7 Understand the Consumers

In our research we could conclude that the brand imagery and performance have a merger part in how the consumers understand a brand. The consumers are able to give the brand some special values and identities. If the brands do not live up to it, the consumers get disappointed and feel they are deceived, which can result in negative brand perception and worst case a shitstorm.

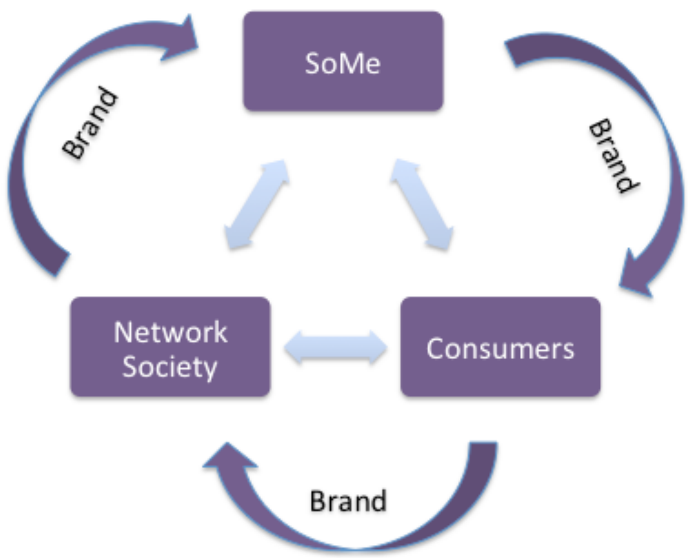
We believe that the companies needs to understand their consumers values and expectation, but even more important their behaviour on SoMe. The society today has developed to be an information society where the consumers find all their information online, hence negative brand perception can be scary for a company. It refers to a society where technology has become a big part of the consumers' daily life. This also explain why the consumers find it so ordinary to be part of SoMe, but also that it is much more common to share opinions and knowledge on SoMe. We found in the analysis that consumers are willing to share and express everything on SoMe and what the reference group says is much more powerful than what the company communicates. This emphasizes their willingness to share negative brand perception on SoMe as well. The consumers' power has developed over time and the consumers are able to use SoMe as a "weapon" to express themselves and fight against the companies. As we have found, the consumers' use SoMe as a speaking tube and to some extend, they feel that it is the only way they truly can get in touch with the companies to be heard. We therefore recommend the companies not to underestimate the power of consumers and SoMe.

Based on this we can ask question number seven:

7. **Do you know your customers' behaviour on SoMe and are aware of their power online?**

16.8 Understand Which Factors are at Stake for the Company

The modern companies must adapt many factors in order to reach the consumers on different levels. The company needs to understand SoMe, consumers and the network society. In our report we have experienced that these factors are related and dependent to each other, and thus very important to deeply understand. The consumers have a huge need for expressing their feelings and thoughts and they use SoMe for this purpose. With the society build on networks, such feelings and thoughts have the potential to spread all over the world. To illustrate this process we have developed a model. In this case, it is important that the company take all of the factors into consideration. They cannot isolated be looking at just one factor but should undertake a holistic approach to the factors.



Based on this we can ask question number eight:

8. **Are you able to understand the process between SoMe, the society and the consumers?**

16.9 Ask the Customers for Help and Thank Them

From a company point of view, we have experienced that dialogue is one of the most important factors on SoMe. SoMe gives access to what the customers feel about a brand and it is very easy to ask the customers about everything regarding the brand. With this strategy, the company encourages dialogue and it is an easy way to become wise to its customers. When companies ask their customers for help and advice it shows that their opinions counts and the customers are being taking seriously. This can establish some kind of relationship and potentially some brand ambassadors, which support the brand and build positive brand position through SoMe. This is an ultimate situation since the ambassadors' act as spokespersons for the brand and establishes some kind of loyal values. Moreover it indicates how strong the relationships are between the ambassador and the brand, which is very valuable and more truth for other customers to discover. The Danish Zoo had many ambassadors and they had without doubt helped reinforced the Zoo's argumentation. We saw that the Copenhagen Zoo chose to thank their customers, which turned out to be a great strategy since people responded and showed respect through positive comments.

Based on the development of the consumers' power and their behaviour on SoMe it would be an advantages to invite the consumers to help find good solutions. It is possible to use the answers to something constructive and show the consumers how they helped have formed the solutions and thank them for being loyal.

Based on this we can ask question number nine:

9. **Are you able to thank your consumers and ask them for constructive help?**

16.10 Search Yourself and Know Yourself

Through the report and our research we experienced an essential point. Lots of the companies did not know what was being said about them. They had become so narrow-minded and they were not able to recognise the problems that the customers were facing. The Telenor case is a good example of this, since many people found the case interesting and many people could relate to the customer, frustrations. We recommend the companies to have a fully understanding and knowledge of how the company are being represented online. The key is to listening to what the audience has to say about the company. This should be analysed and eventually the company can gain SoMe business intelligence, hence insights to the customers and improvement of the marketing strategy. By searching yourself the company are to see the same as what is being said by everyone else. This includes looking at reviews e.g. on Trustpilot and Yelp and on general comments and opinions. A tool, which can help the companies to monitor a full online content ranking, is Google Alerts. It is a tool where you can get email notifications any time Google finds new results on a company you are interested in (Google, 2014).

There are a list of both free and not free products available which offers different SoMe monitor tools. It enables the company to listen to the buzz regarding the brand through SoMe and the company can receive storm alerts on SMS and email, if a storm is brewing. The company can thus easier respond.

Based on this we ask question advice number ten:

10. Do you know how your company is represented online?

Chapter 7

17 Conclusion

Branding is an on-going process of influencing, creating and fulfilling consumer's perception of a brand. We have experienced that brand perception depends on how satisfied the consumers are with the brand. We can thus conclude that there is a relation between the consumers' expectations and brand perception. Brand perception can be understood in both a positive and negative manner. If a company is exposed to negative brand perception it can have crucial consequences for a company. In an analysis of Telenor's shitstorm in 2012, we found that SoMe, the network society, and the consumers were three factors which influenced the sharing of negative brand perception.

17.1 Social Media

Immediately it seems like SoMe comes with many advantages seen from a company point of view. Companies use SoMe to engage, interact with consumers and is generally a dialogue media, which differentiates it from traditional media. The companies want the customers to take part in the brand's stories and today the customers build the brand as much as the companies. SoMe is encouraging the consumers to speak up. The problem, which often occurs, is that companies tend to believe that customers will only share positive content regarding the company. This however, is not the case. With the advent of SoMe, the consumers got equipped with a speaking tube for complaining and for telling how they actually feel about the companies. Companies also use SoMe as a customer channel, but the Telenor case showed that the openness resulted in a huge SoMe shitstorm and damaged the brand. This revealed that many customers were not satisfied with the company.

SoMe is also a really good platform to create awareness and applicable for every companies to undertake and thus use for marketing purposes, with and without money investments. This obviously attracts many companies. Nonetheless, in the report we have experienced that not all brands are suited for SoMe and the companies should be aware of this. In general some companies are more exposed because of the product or service they are selling. Other companies are just not prepared to deal with negative feedback from the consumers and this relates to how the companies react and respond to the customers. SoMe never sleeps and the companies should have SoMe monitored with a team ready to respond in a proper manner at all times. If the company knows what is being said about them, they can to some extend be more prepared and then address potential shitstorm in the bud.

Companies must take the service or product into consideration before entering SoMe. Furthermore the companies need to think of potentially consequences and risk, which are caused by SoMe and then compare it with the expected output. The interaction and brand awareness is really attractive, but that is just one side of the story when being present on SoMe. There might also be a downside if the companies do not know how to cope with negative brand perception. The companies needs to be aware of the development in SoMe since it is not just a entertainment media but also a platform where people are able to express their feelings and meanings. Thereby people are able to affect and even change other people's perception of a brand as well.

17.2 Society

The second factor we discovered in the case of Telenor was the influences by the modern society. Today we live in an information society. The society draws on all the networks, which are around us, and SoMe is a great source of this. SoMe makes it possible for the society to be networked all the time and with everybody. We see how virtual communities have emerged and they foster a new kind of socialization where we no longer just gather around in groups or communities as with religion or other kinds of common values. Now consumers gather around for what they care about. This was one of the challenges for Telenor when more than 32.000 likes indicated that many people were against Telenor. Such group has enormous power all of the sudden, which would not have been possible without the networks. We have experienced that even though consumers only have a small number of friends on Facebook page, it can be spread to thousands of people, if it is communicated the right way.

The information society also means that knowledge is being produced in new ways than seen before. The consumers create just as much knowledge as e.g. journalists do. Stories are created on SoMe and the next new story for a journalist is only a Google search away. Information is being published every minute and the networks allow the media to put new topics on the agenda because they carry opinions and beliefs.

The network society has made us globally connected and the things we do in Denmark are easily shared with the rest of the world. We discovered this in a shitstorm which involved Copenhagen Zoo, and which everybody around the world had an opinion about. This fosters the notion that we are connected due to weak ties and we can communicate with people on the other side of the world. The weak ties on SoMe are powerful and whatever the consumers says is never being said in a quiet forum. Many people are being informed about different incidents and it hard to control for the companies.

We do recommend the companies to understand the network society and the elements of sharing. We have experienced that these elements are essential to deal with the potential threat of negative brand perception.

17.3 Consumers

The third part, which was really important in the Telenor case, was the consumers. Without the unsatisfied consumers, the case would not have taken place to begin with. In the report we found it valuable to deeply understand the emotions and feelings regarding the consumers behaviour on SoMe. Based on this we interviewed consumers in order to understand their underlying motivation for why they share content on SoMe and what triggers them.

The consumers use SoMe as a way of expressing themselves. There is nothing new about this need and it is something, which always have been a part of our inner nature. The big difference now is that it is much more outspoken than before and reinforces the consumers' willingness to share lots of content. Learning from the interviews with the consumers was that the consumers are addicted to be online during a day. Given the fact that consumers want to express themselves all the time and they are surrounded by SoMe, it becomes really easy for them so share a negative incident of a brand because of the availability.

As human beings we have a need for being social. This is also reflected in the consumers' SoMe behaviour. The consumers are social with people on SoMe even though they are not in the same physical place, and they take part in different communities to be with other people since they are afraid of being left out and miss out on something. The social need is also being illustrated that the consumers like to express that they actually have a social life thus they post photos, check-in etc.

for everybody to see that they are not lonely. In general the consumers like to gather together in a universe for a tribe. It means that it is no longer enough to look at the individual as an independent self, but at the individual, which is followed of the behaviour of a tribe. A clear example of this is The Telenor case. This was seen by how people sympathized with each other and how they felt it were important to share their experiences and meanings when looking at the comments. When the consumers gather, they can put of a fight with companies.

To a large extend, the consumers use SoMe to express self-esteem and express self-actualization. The research showed that consumers use SoMe to receive the acceptance from others. Whenever they post something, they hope someone else will love it and give them some credit. The self-actualization is also being more explicit as great accomplishments are being posted for everybody to see. Achievement are not just taking place in closed forums, but is being shared with the world as well. The consumers feel that it becomes much more powerful when they say the things loud and to everybody.

In the report have we have elaborated on five shitstorm from five different companies. Based on the five cases we can conclude that a brand is no longer what the company tell the consumer it is, it is what consumers tell each other it is. We could see similarities in all five cases. One similarity that we really found interesting was how people inspire each other and thus tend to share the same negative brand perception. People with the same negative experiences gathers and support each other. What we discovered was that the consumers shared their negative brand perception when the company had disappointed the customer due to the product or the service.

The company is not stronger than the product. If the product does not fulfil the brand promise there is a potential to a shitstorm. As a starting point the company must take the product into consideration and figure out if it actually fulfil the promise. We have experienced that the expectations was one of the key elements to explain the sharing of negative brand perception. We can conclude that the consumers' expectations can provoke negative brand perception for companies if they do not fulfil the promises. Moreover we can conclude that companies need to understand the consumers' use of SoMe and know what triggers them to share negative content. In the cases we could also see that some of the biggest issues was the lack of communication and respond from the companies. The companies need to take part in the debate if they want to win back the control. In almost every cases we experienced that the brands were not fast enough to answer or realize the size of the problem. When the debate is going, the companies need to be available and present in order to reduce the damage and focus on the brand perception. The consequences of negative brand perception develop exponential, which indicate that quick responses are crucial for an effective damage control.

SoMe can consist problems for the brands, since it can be difficult to control the dialogues and comments online. The companies need to look a SoMe, the network society, and the consumers as a holistic process which trigger negative brand perception. The company must take all these three factors into consideration in order to cope with negative brand perception.

18 Further Research

In this report, we have examined the consequences of negative brand perception from a momentary picture, where we have looked at furious consumers and the frustrations they have. But we have not examined the consequences from a financial perspective. We have seen from the cases that many customers say that they no longer want to be customers of the different companies, which could have financial consequences due to lack of sales. However, our data collection is not adequate enough to be able to explain what and how big such financial consequences might be. We did ask Steffen Trannerup from Telenor concerning the financial consequences in relation to their shitstorm in 2012, but this was something that he did not want to comment on (Appendix 7). In addition, to uncover this purpose we could have supplemented with a major quantitative study regarding companies, which have been exposed to big shitstorms and focused on their sales figures. This would have meant a different scientific approach to the study than used in this report.

As mentioned, did we experience that the customers expressed that they would boycott companies because of the unsatisfied actions, which was a point that the troll also indicated. The troll said that he no longer wanted to be a customer of Just Eat. Moreover had he deleted his "like" at Just Eat page on Facebook (Appendix 15). However, after the interview we continually paid attention to the troll's SoMe behaviour and found that he seems to have forgiven Just Eat, or at least, now he likes Just Eat on Facebook again. This indicates that consumers shout out loud, but it can be difficult to tell if they are 100 per cent true to their statement. A quantitative research could thus have been interesting as it potentially could provide us with insight regarding long-term and short-term financial consequences.

Another research could have been to investigate how many Danish consumers who have expressed negative brand perception or filed a complaint about a company on SoMe. First of all, it could have illustrated the size of the problem and stressed how willing the consumers in general are to express their negative brand perception. Such investigation could also have provided us with demographic information regarding the frustrated consumers. It could be interesting to see if it would be possible to show some tendencies regarding the consumer behaviour and if possible to determine where they might be located in Denmark. In general, it could valuable for a company to gain even more consumer knowledge about the frustrated consumers in order for the companies to take even more precautions to take it in the run. For instance, the previous Social Media Manager Morten Jørgensen from 3 Mobile, indicated that the typical stereotype of angry consumers were located in Jutland (Appendix 4). It could be interesting to investigate whether this stereotype would be true and to see if it is possible to generalize the consumers like that.

In our findings we indicated that not all brands are made for SoMe and based on that it could have been interesting to see if some industries are more fragile than others. We have already touched upon the area and have found some findings in the area, but it could have been interesting to work into depth with different industries and discover similarities and differences. Again it would have meant a different scientific approach to the study and must be based on a more separated data collection.

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20 Appendices