Search, Social and Mobile in marketing strategies.

Student name: Marloes Weerd
Student number: 09007741
Class: ES4-4E
Date: 29 May 2013

Dissertation supervisor: Mr. W.M.J. van Leeuwen

The Hague School of European Studies
The Hague University of Applied Sciences

Executive summary

The ever changing world of Internet has transformed traditional marketing and companies since the start of the World Wide Web. Every day billions of people around the world use the Internet for entertainment, shopping, search, social purposes, and much more. This behaviour is changing the way companies market their products. Online marketing comes in many forms, and there are many different options for marketers to choose from. In this dissertation Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Social Media Marketing (SMM), and Mobile Optimization will be discussed. These forms of online marketing are the most used and applied forms of Online Marketing.

When starting with social media marketing, it may become part of the (existing) marketing communication strategy. It can function as an extra channel to communicate with the target group. According to Forrester Research, a global research firm that researched the consumer data and business transformations by social technologies, the most effective strategy for online marketing is the P.O.S.T. Method. P.O.S.T stands for: People, Objectives, Strategy, and Technology.

SEO is the act of optimizing and improving a website in order to rank higher in a specific search engine. Higher rankings create more visibility and generate more traffic to the website.
Search Engines like Google collect information about every page on the web. Search Engines use a 'recipe' called algorithm to turn all collected info into relevant search results. So the key to rank higher for a specific keyword is to make sure a website contains all the 'ingredients' to the search engines algorithm. Most of the big ingredients are known: Words, Titles, Links, Anchor Text, Reputation and Content. There are multiple requirements the search engine's algorithm is looking for. These requirements can be divided into 2 groups: On-Page and Off-Page.

Because there are two different groups, there are also two different forms of SEO for it. On Page SEO and Off Page SEO. On-Page SEO can also be described as the internal optimization. All the changes and updates are done on the website itself. When the website itself is optimized, the off-page SEO can take place. Off Page SEO is also referred to as linkbuilding. Linkbuilding can be compared to a popularity contest. When receiving many links/votes from other websites, search engines will think it is a popular website. Search engines only trust natural, organic and trustworthy links. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that backlinks to a website should: Come from high quality websites, contain different anchor texts, and come from relevant niche blogs/websites.

Mobile optimized websites are websites that can be viewed on mobile phones.
To optimize a website for mobile users there are multiple options. The first option is creating a totally different website that is specially designed for mobile phones. This website is called a Dedicated Mobile Site (DMS). When DMS is used the website detects the mobile user, and will automatically redirect the user to the mobile site. The most commonly used redirecting subdomains are m.websiteexample.com and mobile.websiteexample.com.

Another option is using RWD, which stands for Responsive Web Design. When using RWD, computer, tablet and smartphone users all go to the same website, but the layout is different. The website detects the device that is used to browse the website, and will adjust the layout and size of the website based on that information.
To conclude, companies that have not made online marketing part of the marketing strategy, have not only been missing out, they still are missing out and will continue to do so in the future. The

The Hague School of European Studies

ever evolving and changing nature of the internet will make it more difficult for companies to adapt to online marketing in the future. To succeed in the years to come, organisations and companies will need online marketing strategies in order to be able to compete with competitors. Competitors might already have implemented online marketing strategies, which makes it even harder for a company to still compete with them on the same level.

Table of Contents

List of abbreviations

M.O.   Mobile Optimization

SEO   Search Engine Optimization

SMM   Social Media Marketing

Explanation of used terms

Algorithm   A formula used by search engines to calculate the significance of a specific website.

Anchor Text   The visible/clickable text used in a link.

Query   All the words a user types into a search engine to find certain information.

The Hague School of European Studies

1. Introduction

The ever changing world of Internet has transformed traditional marketing and companies since the start of the World Wide Web. Every day billions of people around the world use the Internet for entertainment, search, social purposes, and much more. This behaviour is changing the way companies market their products. Multinationals started implementing online marketing a few years ago, and have since then established a successful online marketing strategy. However, many international mid-sized companies have not yet implemented this. The Internet is a medium that reaches out to billions of people around the world, making it the most ideal communication channel for international companies.

Many see online marketing as a whole different form of marketing that cannot be combined with the existing marketing strategy. With so many different forms of communication, some marketers consider online marketing to be like the Wild West. But the Internet keeps growing and evolving every day, and companies that do not yet have an online marketing strategy may miss out in the future. In this dissertation online marketing will be explained to investigate if organisations and companies need online marketing strategies in order to succeed in the future and be able to compete with competitors.

Online marketing comes in many forms, and there are many different options for marketers to choose from. In this dissertation Search Engine Optimization (also referred to as SEO), Social Media Marketing (also referred to as SMM), and Mobile Optimization (also referred to as M.O.) will be discussed. These forms of online marketing are the most used and applied forms of Online Marketing.

In order to research the importance of implementing SEO, SMM and Mobile Optimization in the marketing strategy of international mid-sized companies, this dissertation includes the theoretical explanations of SEO, SMM and Mobile Optimization, together with case studies to support the theory.

The Central question of this dissertation is:
What is the importance of implementing SEO, SMM and Mobile Optimization in the marketing strategy of international mid-sized companies?

The following subtopics are researched in this dissertation in order to answer the central question:
1. What is social media?
2. The emergence of social media.
3. How is social media used for marketing?
4. What are the differences between the different social media platforms?
5. What is SEO?
6. What is On-Page and Off-Page SEO?
7. How do SMM and SEO differ from each other?
8. What is mobile optimization?
9. How are SEO, SMM and M.O. Intertwined?

The subtopics mentioned above have been specifically chosen to answer the central question. It is important to get a good idea of the different topics, definitions and theories. More over, the topics SMM, SEO and Mobile Optimization will also be supported by case studies. These case studies can be found directly after each different chapter. The case studies are positioned here to give a

The Hague School of European Studies

better idea and understanding of the theory. The theoretical explanations will be based on field research and desk research. The desk research is based on books about Online Marketing, information from blogs and websites from Online Marketing Companies, personal blogs of Online Marketers, and research reports of experts in the field of Online Marketing. Furthermore, an interview with Senior Online Marketing Consultant Mr. Verleg is also used to support the theory. This interview is part of the field research. The full interview can be found in the appendix.

The central question will be answered in chapter 13 'Conclusion'. The conclusion is followed by recommendations, a brief chapter with recommendations for marketers who are interested in implementing SEO, SMM and Mobile Optimization into the marketing strategy.

2. What is social media?

Not a day goes by without hearing or reading something about social media. Over the past years it has become immensely popular, and its popularity is still growing. When thinking of the word social media, most people think of Facebook and Twitter. However, social media is more than that. There are many different definitions of the term Social Media. The most common definition of social media is: "the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks" (Ahlqvist, Back, Halonen, Heinonen, 2008, p.13).

Another way to define social media is to simply break down the word. Media is a way of mass communication, through radio, television, newspapers and magazines. Therefore, social media can be seen as a form of communication and a source of information that enables you to interact, while receiving the information. Comparing this to the traditional or 'old' form of media, traditional media is just a one-way street, where you can read or hear the news, but you are not able to directly share your thoughts on the matter. With social media, there are many options to give your opinion, for example by commenting or voting on a specific article. However, social media is not only the news. There are many forms of social media, the most significant similarity being that you are able to interact in some way with the website and with other visitors. This Social Media Prism gives a great overview of all different forms of social media (Sollis, 2008, para 2).

Figure 1. The Social Media Prism

The Hague School of European Studies

This prism shows all 22 forms of social media, however, some forms of social media are more popular than another. The most popular forms of social media websites are:

Blog platforms: Users can express their opinion, write and comment on articles. Most popular websites are: Blogger and Wordpress.

Wikis: A website where users can interact by editing and adding an existing informational article or add a new article. A well-known example of a Wiki is Wikipedia.com

Social Bookmarking: A website where users can add, edit and share bookmarks of web documents. Most popular websites are: StumbleUpon, Pinterest and Buzzfeed.

Social Networking: Websites where users can add, interact and share information, photos and videos with friends. Most popular websites are: Facebook and MySpace.

Social photo and video sharing: An online platform where users can upload, edit and share photos and/or videos, and comment on other users' content. Most popular websites: YouTube, Flickr, Vimeo and the new and upcoming website Keek (Nations, n.d, para. 4).

The Hague School of European Studies

3. The Emergence of social media

To get a better understanding of the emergence of social media, it is important to first look at the history of Internet itself. It all started when the first electronic computer was developed in the 1950's. In the beginning computers were not connected with each other, but in 1969 the University of California developed a connection between 4 major universities in the United States through which they could send small packages of information. Three years later the first electronic mail was send in Cambridge. During the 1980's computer scientists started working on the then so called 'cyberspace', and invented the network addresses such as .com, .org and .edu. After that, during the 1990's, the Internet grew rapidly. The first websites went online and in 6 years time 45 million people were using the Internet. In 1997 the concept of blogging started and Google opened as an Internet search engine. Yahoo launched its' website and Amazon started selling books. Every household wanted to get a PC and go online. During the late 1990's the first social media networks were developed. In 1997 two websites with the same goal went online: classmates.com and sixdegrees.com ("Brief history of Social Media", n.d., section 14). Both websites enabled users to make a profile, and connect to other friends and old classmates. When looking back in the history of internet, many internet and social media experts claim that the first social media network launched in 1997, called Sixdegrees.com, where it was possible to make your own personal profile and make a list of your friends. But, according to computer and internet expert Loek Weerd, the first social network dates back to 1980, when the first Internet discussion system called Usenet was launched. Usenet can be compared to what is now known as an Internet forum. Users could log on to Usenet using their Email system, and could read, post, and comment on posts of other users. Usenet was divided into different categories and was mainly used for discussion and information exchange. Usenet was very revolutional for that time; it enabled users to communicate with multiple users at the same time, sending information to a group of people instead of just 1 single user (Weerd, 2013).

Today Classmates.com is still active, with about 540 million accounts, but Sixdegrees.com went offline at the end of the year 2000. It wasn't until 2002 that social media websites became immensely popular. Friendster.com was a huge hit in the United States, using the technology of the 'circle of friends', where you could only connect to your real friends, and their cycle of friends. This concept was used again when LinkedIn was introduced. LinkedIn took a different approach to the social networking concept. It was not a networking site used for fun and contacting friends, it was, and still is, a networking site for professionals to connect to with other professionals. LinkedIn had a database of more than 175 million members, but was soon outsourced by MySpace. MySpace launched in 2003, and became popular for their innovative and creative profiles, the use of music, music videos and an environment full with special features. But the #1 position of MySpace as the leading social media website did not last long. A year later a Harvard University student, Mark Zuckerberg, developed a website where Harvard students could connect to each other, invite friends to parties and share campus related information with each other. 2 Years later facebook.com was opened to the public; it became the number 1 leading social media website and has been ever since (Mink, n.d, section 2).

Another social media website that is very famous today is Twitter. Twitter was invented in 2006 and became increasingly popular in the beginning of 2007. The main reason for its' popularity is the purpose and the service Twitter offers to its users. Contrary to Facebook, Twitter is not all about being connected to friends. Instead, it is used to send short online text messages (like the SMS), which were open to the public and would show on the newsfeed of people who were

The Hague School of European Studies

interested in you. People can follow a specific person, but this does not mean they are connected to each other. The other person might not be connected back to the other person, which makes it a 'one way street' communication. However, all users are able to send tweets to each other, by using a @, followed by their user name (@Username).

Over the years Internet connections became faster and faster and users were connected to the Internet 24 hours a day. Social media websites kept popping up, one more popular than the other. Social media was not only used to find lost schoolmates, but were used to socialise with family, friends on the other side of the world, share photo's, videos, news, ask questions, express opinions and online support.

In the following chapter the use of social media for businesses and especially for their marketing campaigns will be explained.

4. How is Social Media used for marketing?

Social media was, and sometimes still is, like the Wild West. Many companies do not yet know the possibilities of social media and therefore do not use it. When starting with Social Media Marketing, it may become part of the (existing) marketing communication strategy. It can function as an extra channel to communicate with the target group. However, sometimes SMM is the only communication channel companies use. This can be due to budget, image, as an experiment or a special campaign. Many companies think they should use social media because 'everybody is doing it'. But, if there is no clear strategy and plan behind the social media marketing, it will eventually fail. Therefore it is important to develop a special social media marketing strategy or implement SMM in the existing marketing communication strategy.

Companies can have multiple goals in mind when starting to use social media. It can be used for customer engagement, listening to the opinions of customers, learn from it and eventually use this feedback for further research and development. It can also be used to grow sales. Research has proven that customers buy the brands they like. Social media is a perfect channel to engage with customers, which will eventually lead to more sales. (If done correctly.) Another possibility is using the social media channels for customer service. This means that customers can communicate with the company directly through social media. It can be a great addition to the already existing CRM strategy (Slagter, 2009, para. 2).

According to Forrester Research, a global research firm that researched the consumer data and business transformations by social technologies, the most effective strategy for online marketing is the P.O.S.T. Method. (Petersen, 2010, p. 302) P.O.S.T stands for:
- People: Who do you want to reach, which key-players are of influence within the campaign?
- Objectives: The goals that are set for SMM.
- Strategy: Which path will be taken to reach those goals?
- Technology: Which tools and resources will be used for the campaign?

People
People is the crowd or target group that a company wants to reach through its' social media policy. Choosing the right target group for the social media campaign is important, because this will influence directions chosen for the Objectives, Strategy and especially Technology. For example, students spend most time on social networks, like Twitter and Facebook, but adults tend to spend more time on Comment & Reputation platforms and Niche Networks.

Objectives
The goals of Social Media Marketing can be split into different phases. It starts with listening. Monitoring the important social channels, analysing and researching the dialogues, will give insight to the discussions and the people involved in these discussions. When these insights eventually lead to knowledge about the 'crowd', the company can join the conversation, offer support, provide information and anything else that could steer things in the right direction.
In this stage of the SMM campaign the company can start with online Support and Web-care, as one of the first contributions to their Social Media.

Strategy
The strategy of SMM should be organic, and the execution of the strategy will have to consist of participation, dialogue, discussions and 'seeding'.

The Hague School of European Studies

Seeding means posting a tweet, article on a blog, a video on youtube.com, hoping that somebody will pick it up and spread it, or start a (positive) discussion about it. The big mistake that many companies make is that they start with the technology; they create an account on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter without setting a specific goal for the different channels. It is therefore important to first define a strategy, set goals for the different social media channels, and eventually create official accounts.

Technology
Technology defines the channels, platforms and tools that will be used for the SMM. A Twitter account can be used for customer engagement, direct communication and customer support. A blog can be an informal and interactive source to communicate with the crowd, very different from sending corporate information and news from the company's official webpage.

Even though there is only a short history of social networking sites, it is interesting to see that there is a large number of multinational, medium- and small sized companies that have already successfully used social media as a platform for marketing. Most campaigns were launched through Facebook and Twitter. The following two case studies will give more insight into social media campaigns.

The Hague School of European Studies

4.1 Social Media Marketing done by large multinationals

One of the first and most successful social media campaigns was done by the car manufacturer Ford. The campaign was called the Fiesta Movement, and started in early 2009. Ford had not sold small cars since 1997 and decided to take their campaigns to a different level. Their previous marketing strategy was viral marketing, but they knew that it wasn't working anymore. Instead, Ford decided to select one hundred popular bloggers, that had many visitors, and gave every one of these bloggers a Ford Fiesta for a month. In exchange the bloggers had to make a video about driving the Fiesta, upload it to YouTube and share it on their blog. The campaign became a success. The bloggers made a total of 700 videos, which got a total of 6.5 million views, 40 million twitter impressions, and the pictures of the experience and the car got 650.000 views on photo sharing site Flickr. The campaign went viral and led to 10.000 cars sold in the United States in the first 6 days of the campaign (McCracken, 2010, para. 10).

Since their Fiesta campaign in 2009, Ford has been very serious about their social media presence. According to Scott Monty, Ford's global head of social media, "customers want to engage with personalities, not product features". In order to engage with customers and increase brand loyalty, it is important to understand your customers. What are they interested in and how do they interact on social media? Ford created a digital "spokes puppet" called Doug, a character that is funny, and appeared in several online commercials promoting Ford vehicles. This character is also used on their social media networks, because customers want to interact with an actual person, not with a brand or a company. "Dialogue with people in a way they can understand, not corporate speak" Monty said (Fell, 2013, section 9). Ford is not only using their social media for communication, but it also enables it customers to experience the brand in different ways. Ford has created several Facebook pages, each for a different car, giving customers the opportunity to get a sneak peek of the new model that is coming out. This is done through interviews and videos of the design team and engineers.

In 2014 Ford will launch the Fiesta Movement campaign 2.0, using the same concept as the Fiesta Movement campaign of 2009, but promise they will take this campaign to the 'next' level.

This case is a great example of seeding and organic content. First of all ford took the initiative by giving the bloggers the cars to test. After that, it was all out of their hands. They used other influential social networkers to 'seed' the content, and let their users and contacts do the rest of the work; sharing the content.

4.2 Social Media Marketing done by international mid-sized companies.

Corendon is a tour operator that operates in The Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. With about 280 employees it can be considered a mid-sized international company. Corendon has 31 destinations in 18 different countries.

The business started in 2000 with a small establishment in the city of Haarlem, The Netherlands. In the beginning they only offered vacations to Turkey. Corendon used traditional marketing, which worked effectively. Over the years more people started to book their vacations to Turkey with Corendon, and they started to grow as a tour operator. In August of 2009 Corendon decided to build a social media presence. Their social media was mainly focused on sales and marketing, and was not working effectively. As explained earlier, social media should also be engaging and creative. This was obviously lacking in the Online Marketing strategy of Corendon. In 2012 Corendon decided to start working with online marketing agency Internet Advantage. Together they analysed the social media accounts of Corendon and developed a new strategy. The differences and results are very remarkable. The following data will give a better explanation of the growth of the online platforms of Corendon over the years. For the examples the Facebook of Corendon will be used.

In 2010 and 2011 the marketing department of Corendon was responsible for the social media platforms. The status updates that Corendon posted were very sales focused, and did not include any engagement towards the customer. It resulted in almost no likes, comments or shares (Corendon Vliegvakanties, 2012). The Facebook friends of Corendon were not interested in their content, as can be seen in the following pictures. The bottom of each post contains the numbers of likes, comments, and shares.

‘It's almost here! Christmas is coming and Corendon is giving out Christmas presents. Book your vacation before 26 December and receive a 50 Euro discount! www.corendon.nl’

Figure 2. Facebook update of Corendon before SMM strategy

'Book now and receive a 50 Euro Indian Summer discount! http://www.corendon.nl/aktie'

Figure 3. Facebook update of Corendon before SMM strategy

'Book our new destination for cheap at travelbird.nl! An 8-day vacation to Macedonia http://bit.ly/h1ta7y'

Figure 4. Facebook update of Corendon before SMM strategy

These 3 posts are just a selection of the many status updates that Corendon put on their Facebook page. What is remarkable is that these posts are only focused on selling, asking the customers to book a vacation at their post, luring them in with nice discounts. However, not many people are liking these posts, and they are not interacting with Corendon at all, because there are no comments on the status updates. What a big difference with the following status updates from 2012, when Corendon changed their online marketing strategy to a more engaging strategy:

Figure 5. Facebook update of Corendon after SMM strategy

'And we have more news! Our first flight to Gazipasi (Alanya) Airport with Corendon Airlines landed today'

This post is not an engaging post towards the customer, it is not asking the customer for suggestions or comments, however, it is showing the more human side of the company, making it more approachable for customers. Many people see companies as institutions, and sometimes forget that there are normal people working there, just like they are.
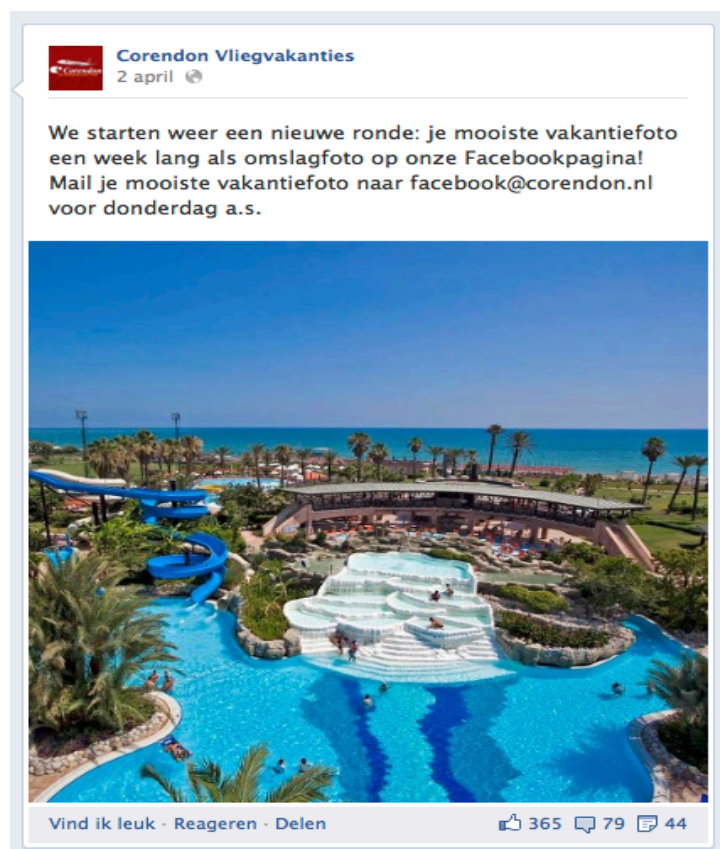

Figure 6. Facebook update of Corendon after SMM strategy

'We are starting a new round: 'Your best holiday picture as our cover photo on Facebook for a week! Mail your best holiday picture to facebook@corendon.nl before this Thursday'

This status update is asking Facebook friends to send their best vacation photo to corendon, and in return, they will pick the best photo and use it as their cover photo for a week. Is this post going to bring in more sales? Not directly. But, Corendon is sending a message to customers that they are curious to see their customers' vacation pictures, showing them that they care about their customers' experience.

Corendon Vliegvakanties
10 mei 2012

We hebben er een nieuwe winterbestemming bij. Weet jij waar deze foto is gemaakt?

Vind ik leuk · Reageren · Delen   67 85 1

Figure 7. Facebook update of Corendon after SMM strategy

'We have a new winter destination. Do you know where this picture was taken?'

These kinds of posts where the company is asking customers a question, normally work very well. Here Corendon is asking their Facebook friends if they know where the picture was taken. 85 People commented on the question, 67 people liked this post and 1 person shared this post on his personal Facebook page.

5. What are the differences between the different social media platforms?

As discussed before there are many different social media platforms. But with so many social media sites out there, it can be difficult to decide where to start and which ones to use. The four most popular social networking sites are Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and LinkedIn. Because they have a user databases that consists of millions of users, these networks are the best social media channels to reach a large audience.

Facebook
With 1.06 billion users, Facebook is the number one social media platform. It is the most commonly social network used among people. 1.06 Billion users comes down to 1 out of 7 people using Facebook. These users create a total 2.2 million status updates per day (Bullas, 2012, section 6).

It is hard to say for how long exactly these status updates, or content, create interaction. In comparison to Twitter, which will be discussed later, content on Facebook has a longer interaction lifespan. Discussions can go on for hours, sometimes even days. It gives companies that share content on Facebook more time to interact and engage with their customers. The interaction that takes place between the company and the consumers is on a more personal level, because the company can communicate with the customers, customers feel like they are actually interacting with a person instead of a company.

Another great feature on Facebook that companies can use to their advantage is the Facebook demographic search. When using a business profile (the official name for a company's Facebook page), the company has the option to promote their profile or specific status updates. This is a paid feature on Facebook, in which companies can give specific descriptions of their target group, and Facebook will make sure that their 'advertisement' appears on the homepages of people that meet the criteria of the target group. The criteria that are available include the audience' location, age, gender, precise interests, broad categories, connections and friends of connections. This enables companies to get a larger database of contacts on Facebook, which will lead to a larger audience and can eventually lead to more sales.

Google+
This year Google+ beat Twitter in the rankings of active users and became the 2nd largest social media platform. However, it is questionable if this a fair win. Yes, Google+ has 250 million users, 50 million more than Twitter has (Hamburger, 2012, section 1). However, these users did not all sign up voluntarily. Google has changed the settings for Gmail accounts, which now forces new users to automatically sign up to Google+. The result of this is that there are 250 million accounts, but many of them are not active Google+ users, only Gmail users. Nevertheless, there still are a lot of people on Google+ who genuinely use it for social networking purposes.

The concept of networking with Google+ is different from Facebook in many ways. Google+ gives its users the possibility to arrange their contacts into groups, called circles. Users can

make different circles for different people, for example a circle for family, a circle for friends, one for colleagues and one for old schoolmates. This makes it easier to share content with only certain people. Personal pictures of a vacation can be shared only with the family- and friends circle, and business related blog post could be viewable for only colleagues. This way users can make sure that the right content gets to the targeted group, and other users who are not part of this target group will not be able to view this content.

Adding people to a circle works exactly like it works at Twitter. It is possible to add other users to a specific circle, but this does not mean that they have included this specific user in their own circles. So, in comparison to Facebook, being friends does not mean that there is a direct connection between two users (Lake, n.d., section 4). One can follow the other but the other one does not per se have to follow the other. If a user adds a person to his or her circle, and is not included in the circles of this specific user, they will only be able to see content that is shared as 'public'.

Because people can be categorized into different circles, Google+ is a great example of a social media platform that can be used for socializing with friends but also for professional purposes.

The other two social media networks that will be discussed, Twitter and LinkedIn, have the same amount of active users. With both a database of 200 million active users, they share the 3rd place in the ranking. Twitter and LinkedIn differ from each other in many, if not all ways, and it is hard to compare them with each other.

Twitter
Twitter is a social media network that can be seen as a micro-blogging website. It enables its users to send quick and short messages, up to 140 characters. These short messages are called Tweets. Every day 175 million tweets are send (Bullas, 2012, section 14). Tweets have a content lifespan of approximately 1 hour. This means that all interaction takes place within the first hour of posting the tweet. Tweets can be retweeted, which means that other people are also sending this message, and it shows on their personal page as well. Retweeting is to Twitter what Sharing is on Facebook.

Content on twitter can be categorized into a category. To get a tweet into a specific topic or category, a hashtag sign (#) is used. So, for example: "This dissertation is about the future of #SEO and# SMM". When users search in the searchbar for topics, and type in SEO, this tweet will appear in the search results because it was categorized with the hashtag. Just like Google+, users on Twitter can 'follow' other people, but these people do not have to follow back.

Interaction on Twitter is quite different than interaction on Facebook or Google+. Whereas users can comment on each other's statuses, view the comments of other users, and reply t those, on twitter there are only 2 possibilities: Retweet or Reply. As explained earlier, retweet a tweet means that you are tweeting the original tweet with your account. Reply is a tweet directly at the person who tweeted to original post. There can be a 'conversation' between two users, but it is not possible for other people to join in this specific discussion. Yes, other users can send a tweet at you, and to the other user, but not directly into the existing conversation.

Twitter is used by companies to link to existing content on the corporate website. Therefore Twitter is a great platform to generate traffic. It is redirecting and or inviting other users to their website by using a short explanation and a URL. More and more companies are starting to use Twitter for customer service and support purposes. Users can tweet to a specific company their problem, question, suggestion or remark, and somebody from customer service will tweet back with an answer. What most users like about this form of customer service is that there is transparency. Everybody can see what users have to say about this company, what the problems are, and how the company is solving these problems.

LinkedIn
LinkedIn is a network for professionals, where users can create there online resume, enrol in groups, and subscribe to specific company's updates. LinkedIn is not used for social networking with friends, most users use this social media platform to stay informed about changes in the corporate and business world, gain more professional connections, and find jobs (Bullas, 2012, section 17).

There is not much conversation on LinkedIn; unlike other social media platforms it is not possible to write a message on another user's profile page. The only possibilities for writing on a page are:
- A recommendation by a colleague or supervisor
- Comment on a discussion within a group.

When a user is linked to another user, they will be able to see each other's connections and use these connections as well. When searching for jobs the page will show exactly what connection a user has to a specific company. So, let's say a user is reading a vacancy from Unilever, and one of his colleagues has a connection to somebody that works at Unilever, the LinkedIn page will show that there is a connection, and suggests that you get introduced to this person.

Even though it seems that LinkedIn is not a good place for businesses, because there is not much conversation, it does have some benefits for companies. If a company is active on LinkedIn, it can connect to other businesses in the same industry, which will link them to all their connections and also possible customers. A company can ask customers to write a review/recommendation on the LinkedIn profile that will be visible for other potential customers. This way LinkedIn is not only used to connect to other businesses and professionals, it can also be used as a place for reviews and recommendations. The company can also use the discussion groups to communicate with other users and start their own discussions to generate interaction.

LinkedIn is also using sponsored Ads on the website. According to a study conducted by the LinkedIn management team, 80% of the users are aware that there are advertisements on LinkedIn, and 60% of these people have clicked on these ads before (Position, 2013, section 3). Companies can use this to their advantage by using advertisements for their business.

6. What is SEO?

Search Engine Optimization, or short SEO, is part of a larger online marketing concept called Search Engine Marketing (SEM). Search Engine Marketing consists of two forms of marketing:
- Search Engine Optimization → Creating traffic from- and visibility on Search Engines
- Search Engine Advertising → Getting front page visibility and traffic by paid advertisements (done through Google Adwords).

In this chapter the concept of SEO will be discussed, while SEO is a relatively low cost marketing investment, and is more ideal for mid sized companies because of the low costs.

SEO is the act of optimizing and improving a website in order to rank higher in a specific search engine. ("What is SEO", 2012, para. 2) Higher rankings create more visibility and generate more traffic to the website. Search Engines like Google collect information about every page on the web. Search Engines use a 'recipe' called algorithm to turn all collected info into relevant search results. So the key to rank higher for a specific keyword is to make sure a website contains all the 'ingredients' to the search engines algorithm. Most of the big ingredients are known: Words, Titles, Links, Anchor Text, Reputation and Content

Words → When search engine collect information from a website, also known as indexing, it is basically reading all the words that are on the website. This way the search engine knows what the website is about and what kind of content it contains. So when somebody types in a certain word in the search engine, it will show the webpages that are relevant, because they have these words on their page. But words on the website are not the only things that matter.

Titles → the title of a website is important. Titles are not always visible, titles are mainly hidden in the code of a website. The importance of the website title can be compared to the title of a book; it has to describe in 1 concrete sentence what the book is about.

Links between websites matter → Search engines love links. Links are seen as a recommendation or a vote of trust from one website to another website, telling their visitors that the other website is good and has relevant information. The more links there are to a certain website, the better it will rank in a search engine. The search engine thinks that this website is recommended very often by other websites and should therefore be considered as a good and relevant website.

Words in links matter too → The amount of links to a website is important, but search engines want to make sure that these links are relevant to the website. That is where anchor texts come into the picture. Anchor text is the text describing the link. The word that is describing the link is very relevant. This way the search engine knows that the website it is linking to, has something to do with this word.

For example: When linking to amazon.com, a link like this could be used: Amazon.com is a great online bookstore. The word online bookstore will contain the link www.amazon.com. Now the search engine knows that the website www.amazon.com is an online bookstore.

Reputation & Content→ The reputation of a website is important. Sites with a consistent record of new and engaging content, and growing numbers of quality links, will be considered

as 'rising stars' and will do great in rankings.

SEO is about making sure a website has great, relevant content, and all other 'ingredients' that search engines want for their algorithm (recipe).

7. What is On-Page and Off-Page SEO?

As described in the previous chapter, there are requirements a website has to meet in order to rank higher. Because most of these requirements are known, it is possible to optimize a website for the search engines. The most popular search engine that websites want to rank for is Google. About 94% of the websites that are working on SEO marketing have Google as their target search engine. The other 6 per cent is ranking for Bing, Yahoo, or other search engines (Petersen, 2010, p. 229) .As discussed before, there are multiple requirements the search engine's algorithm is looking for. These requirements can be divided into 2 groups: On-Page and Off-Page. Because there are two different groups, there are also two different forms of SEO for it. On- Page SEO and Off-Page SEO.

On-Page SEO can also be described as the internal optimization. All the changes and updates are done on the website itself ("Verschil OnPage SEO vs OffPage SEO", n.d, para. 2). Some points that were discussed in the previous chapter can be categorized as part of On-Page SEO. These include: Words, Title and Reputation & Content. So, the overall content of a website, the words it contains and the theme are important. Viewers of a website see only the basic text that was written. But behind this website are very complicated codes that make and shape the website the way it is. This is normally done by IT specialists. It is bad to assume that the code that is behind a website has nothing to do with SEO. The code is the framework behind the website, and it defines what the website looks like. Not only does it include the framework of the website, it also includes the content. This way search engines can see what your website 'looks' like, if it is user friendly, and what it is all about. So, when a search engine indexes the specific webpage, it is important that the website is search engine friendly, which means that the code behind a website is clear, with useful information, and full of descriptions of the website, so that the search engine can categorize it. Websites that are very difficult to use, that have pages which are not working, old and bad content, or with content that is not at all related to the webadress and the title will rank very low in a search engine.

When the website itself is optimized, the Off-page SEO can take place (DiSilvestro, 2011, para. 4). Off-Page SEO is also referred to as linkbuilding. Linkbuilding can be compared to a popularity contest. When receiving many links (votes) from other websites, search engines will think it is a popular website. Most links on the Internet are redirecting visitors to another website that they consider good and relevant for their readers. For example, Elle.com, the website of global fashion magazine Elle, has an article on second-hand fashion. Within the article the writer tells about this great new website, www.find2ndhandstores.com, where you can type in your address and see which second-hand store is near you. Then this link is a recommendation from the writer to the readers, because he or she thinks that this is relevant and useful for the reader. So, not only is Elle.com generating traffic for find2handstores, it is also giving it a vote of 'trust' and popularity.

The relevance of the backlinks is very important. A website of a car dealer in Alaska linking to a local gym in France is very irrelevant. Search Engines notice this, and will therefore eliminate this link. The reason search engines do this is because of so called 'Black hat SEO'. Black hat SEO is the term used for spammy links over the Internet that are not at all relevant. Some websites offer thousands of backlinks for only a couple of dollars. They use software to spread backlinks all over the web. However, search engines are not stupid, they will notice

that overnight a website gained thousands of back links, which is very suspicious. Another downfall of these links is that they will come from poor, low quality, spammy websites. Search engines like Google will eliminate these links and sometimes even eliminate the webpage they are linking to, which will result in an unfindable website.

Search engines only trust natural, organic and trustworthy links ("What is SEO", 2012, para. 4). Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that backlinks to a website should:

- Come from high quality websites.
Google ranks websites based on the age of the domain, the quality of the content, how many times new content is published and traffic. This ranking system is called PageRank. A website's PageRank is a number between 0 to 10, with 10 being the highest rank possible. There are not much websites that have a PageRank 10. The websites that do have PageRank 10 are: The US Government website, Adobe software, Twitter, The US ministry of health and the United Nations. However, it is simply impossible to get backlinks from these websites.

- Use different anchor texts.
Anchor texts are the keywords a website wants to rank for in a search engine. The anchor text is also the word describing the link, as explained earlier. Search engines will make a connection between the anchor text and the link. Therefore, the anchor text should be relevant to the page it is linking to. It is also important to keep in mind that search engines want organic links and content. When all the backlinks spread over the Internet contain the exact same anchor text with the same link, it will get suspicious. A good way to make it more natural is to change the anchor text from time to time. So instead of always using 'online bookstore' for www.amazon.com, 'cheap books online' or 'order books online' can be used.

- Come from similar niche blogs/websites.
As explained before search engines really doubt the trustworthiness of links from one website to another that have absolutely nothing in common. Backlinks from one website to another website that are in the same niche will look more relevant and will be appreciated by search engines, resulting in higher rankings.

7.1 SEO done by multinationals

Zalando

Over the last few years Zalando.com has grown out to be one of the most famous online shops in Europe, active in 14 countries. Zalando started as an online shoe store, but over the years they expanded their collection with clothing, sportswear, accessories and furniture. In a short period of time the online and offline marketing campaign positioned the brand Zalando in multiple countries.

Zalando is most known for their rather 'annoying' and loud commercials. However, in the field of SEO they are highly successful. They rank number 1 for keywords such as 'Shoes' and 'Fashion', and have been in that position for over a year now. According to Robert van Veen, SEO manager at Zalando.nl and Zalando.be (the Dutch and Belgium versions of Zalando), the key to success was "the balance between a user-friendly website (On Page SEO) and Linkbuilding (Off Page SEO)". "The usability and the relevant content was very important, not only for our customers, also for the search engines" (Staats, 2012, para. 3). Most of their SEO work is done internally, at the head office in Berlin. However, when starting in new countries, they collaborate with an Online Marketing agency specialized and familiar to the local market.

To explain the SEO success of Zalando, their SEO campaign will be examined. Besides the fact that there is a lot of conversation going on on Social Media platforms about Zalando, they also implemented SEO gadgets on their website. Zalando gives very detailed explanations about their products. These texts can be found on every page, for every category, with specific words that contain links and other words that are in bold. Not that much customers will actually read this, but searchengines definitely will. Search engines will then think that this website is helping customers with explanations, guiding them through the website with internal links for better usability.

As explained in the SEO chapter, search engines love original content. The mistake that most web-shops make is that they use the standard information on their products that they received from the brands themselves. However, search engines will see that this content is duplicated, and will not reward the website for this. Zalando has a unique description for every single product on their website, for which it will earn points with search engines. Another smart method for creating unique and 'fresh' content that Zalando used are the customer reviews. Customers can write a review for a product that they bought, classifying quality, comfort and looks, and write a comment. This results in constantly new content on the website.

For the Off page SEO Zalando has worked with many fashion bloggers. Search engines value the opinions of bloggers, which means that getting links from a blog is very good. These fashion bloggers wrote a blog on a specific product that they received/'bought' on Zalando.nl, explaining the user friendliness of the website, the fast delivery, the great products they sell, and of course redirecting the readers to the Zalando website through links (Vissers, 2013, para. 2).
This combination of On Page SEO and Off Page SEO has helped Zalando to grow into the largest online web-shop in Europe. This case study is a great example of the importance of combining On Page and Off Page SEO.

Figure 8. An example of a blog post on a fashion blog, trying to make readers enthusiastic about the new campaign on Zalando.com, including the link to the website.

7.2 SEO done by International mid-sized companies

Most travel agencies operate on an international level, due to the vacations they offer abroad, and the hotels and flight carriers they work with. Dutch travel agency Kras.nl is an online travel agency, which offers 1900 different vacations that can all be booked online. Because this travel agency is only operating online, an effective online marketing strategy is a must.

Figure 9. The official logo of Kras.nl

Kras.nl collaborated with Traffic4U, an online marketing company that is specialized in online marketing. Kras.nl decided to mainly focus on SEO.

The first change Kras.nl made was setting up an in-house e-commerce department. A department that solely focuses on the online marketing of Kras.nl. This department worked together with Traffic4U to optimize the website for search engines.

The On-Page optimization of kras.nl was, and still is, a time consuming task. Kras.nl changes the offers and accommodations quite often, which means that every time a page of the website is changed, it has to meet all on-page criteria.

The Off-Page optimization of the website was not easy at all. The travel industry is highly competitive, also in the field of SEO. All travel agencies want to compete on the anchor texts of their destinations, for example: "Vacation Italy", "Holiday Spain" and "Cheap Lastminutes". This makes it very difficult and time consuming to be able to get a good result in the search engines.

However, Kras.nl and Traffic4U were patient, and kept optimizing the website and creating content off-page for months. This organic way of creating content enabled Kras.nl to rank higher within the search engines. For the linkbuilding Kras.nl worked together with bloggers, that wrote blog-posts about destinations that kras.nl is offering, including links that linked back to kras.nl. They also released many articles and press releases on the Internet, about vacations, destinations and special offers, again with links to kras.nl. This natural way of spreading link helped Kras.nl grow in rankings. According to Mr Welten, E-Commerce manager at Kras.nl it is "good to see that we score well in organic search, but competition forces us to constantly stay alert"("Klantencase online marketing", n.d, para. 6). This proves that SEO is not a one-time journey, but a constant challenge that needs time and patience every time.

Kras.nl is now ranking on all competitive search queries in the top 10, some examples including:
- Vakantie (vacation in Dutch), rank 7
- Last Minute, rank 9
- Stedentrip (City trip in Dutch), Rank 4

8. How do SEO and SMM differ from each other?

Over the years SEO and SMM have become increasingly important for marketing strategies. In the previous chapters both concepts of SEO and SMM have been explained. They are very different from each other but are also in many ways intertwined. In this chapter the differences will be explained and later on the similarities and the importance of applying both marketing strategies will be discussed.

According to a research conducted by Econsultancy, 61% of the consumers use search engines to search for a local business, product or service. When a company is ranking high on the results of a search engine, there is a big chance that potential customers will open the websites listed on the first page. So, when ranking higher, there will be more traffic to the website, which can eventually lead to more sales. Recent studies show that 80% of a website's traffic comes from search engines, the other 20% from social media websites (Gulliksen, 2012, section 1). Therefore, we can say that SEO is important in order for customers to find the specific business.

The easiest way to compare SEO and SMM and examine their differences is to take a look at their purposes.

Generate traffic
SEO is used to be found more easily online. If SEO would be offline, in the real world, it can be best compared to making sure the business is located in a street that many people cross. If Off-Page SEO is done effectively, it will give the website a better position online, on a higher rank. It will generate more traffic to the website, bringing in new customers to the business.

Online experience and navigation
On Page optimization will make sure that customers on the website can navigate easily and that the content is clear and engaging. The functionality and layout of the website gives the visiting customer a better experience and better navigation.

Interactivity
Social media is used to interact with existing customers, who can eventually introduce new customers or recommend the business to their personal network. Both can generate new customers, but SMM enables companies to carry out customer service online, communicate with new and existing customers, and promote the business. Social media is also a great platform to launch new campaigns. If SMM is done effectively, and the business has a large database of friends/followers, the campaign can create buzz and go viral.

9. What is Mobile Optimization?

The use of mobile is creating smarter and more price conscious consumers. People have their phones on almost all 24 hours of the day, carry it with them every day, everywhere, and are always connected to the internet. It is used to browse the Internet, search on search engines, shop, connect on social media and watch videos. The changing role of smartphones in consumer shopping habits is increasing. Almost 80% of the smartphone users use their smartphone in a store, to check prices, coupons, sales and read reviews. 75% Of the people who use their smartphone while shopping made a purchase as a result from the information they retrieved from their smartphone (Pham, 2011, para. 1). One of the main searches on smartphones is finding a local business that carries the product the user is looking for. Nearly 90% of those people who look for a local business take action the same day, either visiting the website of this business or visiting the business itself.

These numbers are a sign that many people use their smartphone to find businesses and products online. So, if a business has invested time and money on SEO and SMM, in order to be found more easily and creating an online presence, but smartphone users cant view the website simply because it is not mobile optimized, users will look for a similar business who's website they can view (Falls, 2012, para. 5). That is why mobile optimization is so important.

Mobile optimized websites are websites that can be viewed on mobile phones ("Mobile website vs Standard Website", n.d.). Mobile phones have smaller screens compared to computers, ranging from IPhone's 12 by 6 centimetres to the smaller Blackberry screens (5 by 5 centimetres). Therefore many of the features and content of a website cannot be viewed on a mobile phone, simply because the website is too big for such a small screen. In addition, mobile phones have less memory to handle advanced function of programs, so they need a simplified version of a website.

Figure 10. Mobile website vs. Standard website

The solution to this problem lies in making a business website mobile optimized. There are multiple options for optimizing a mobile website.
The first option is creating a totally different website that is specially designed for mobile phones. This website is called a Dedicated Mobile Site (DMS). When DMS is used the website detects the mobile user, and will automatically redirect the user to the mobile site (Johansson, 2013, para. 7). The most commonly used redirecting subdomains are m.websiteexample.com and mobile.websiteexample.com. Another option is using RWD, which stands for Responsive Web Design (Johansson, 2013, para. 2). When using RWD, computer, tablet and smartphone users all go to the same website, but the layout is different. The website detects the device that is used to browse the website, and will adjust the layout and size of the website based on that information. In the next chapter the different options will be further explained through examples of the mobile optimized websites of multinationals.

9.1 Mobile Optimization done by multinationals

With large budgets for investments, multinationals are always the first ones in line to adapt new technology. They have already implemented SEO and SMM into their existing marketing strategy, and have done so for years. Mobile optimization is growing, but not many small and mid-sized companies have implemented it. Therefore, the websites of well-known multinationals are used for the following examples, to explain and show the different mobile optimization options.

The Word Wildlife Fund, Starbucks and The Boston Globe

The World Wildlife Fund uses responsive web design for their mobile website. The right screen shows the full website as it is displayed on a pc. The middle screen is on a tablet. The design is similar to the one on the pc, the top menu has the same features, but the rest of the page is minimalized. On the left the website as can be seen from mobile phones. When the 3 stripes next to the logo are pressed, the user gets to see the full menu with the same options that are displayed on the tablet and pc website. Furthermore, the front-page article that is displayed on the pc and tablet website is also available on the mobile site. The World Wildlife Fund simplified their website design per device, but the options and features are the same, so visitors can visit the same pages as others on pc's can.
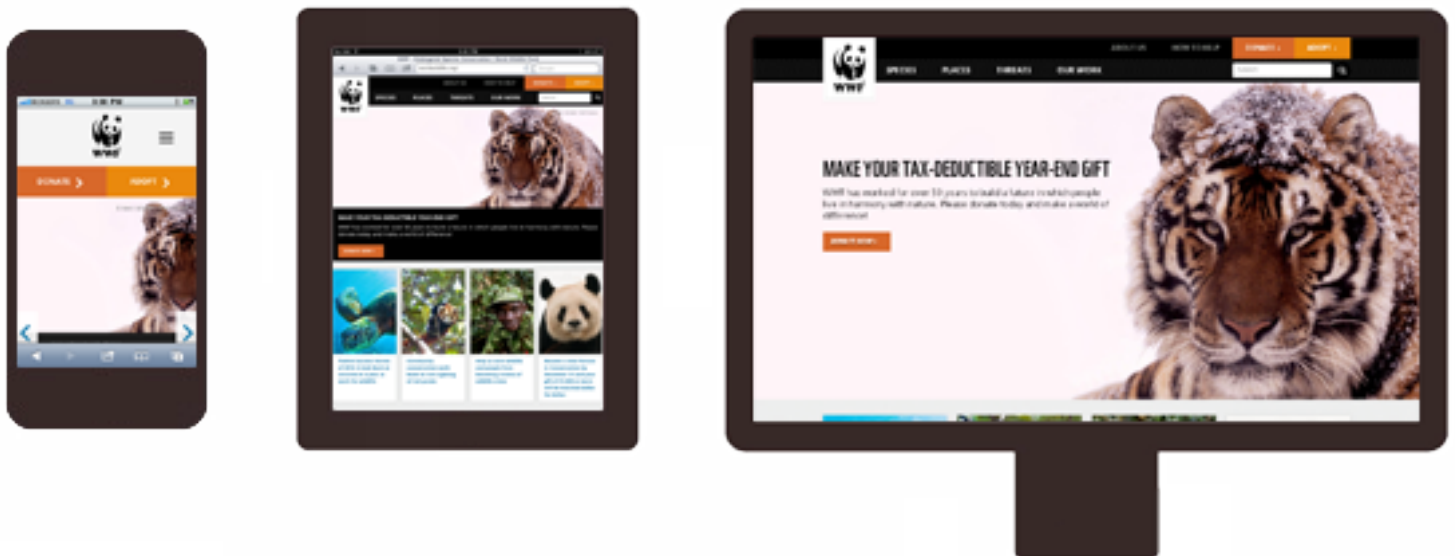

Figure 11. The mobile optmization of The World Wildlife Fund

Worldwide known coffee company Starbucks and American newspaper The Boston Globe both implemented the same mobile optimization system as the World Wildlife Fund. Again, on the right the full website, the tablet with the same features and articles in the middle and on the left the mobile website. Just like the World Wildlife Fund mobile website Starbucks and the Boston Globe hid the menu in the 3 stripes that, when clicked upon, will display the full menu like on the pc website.
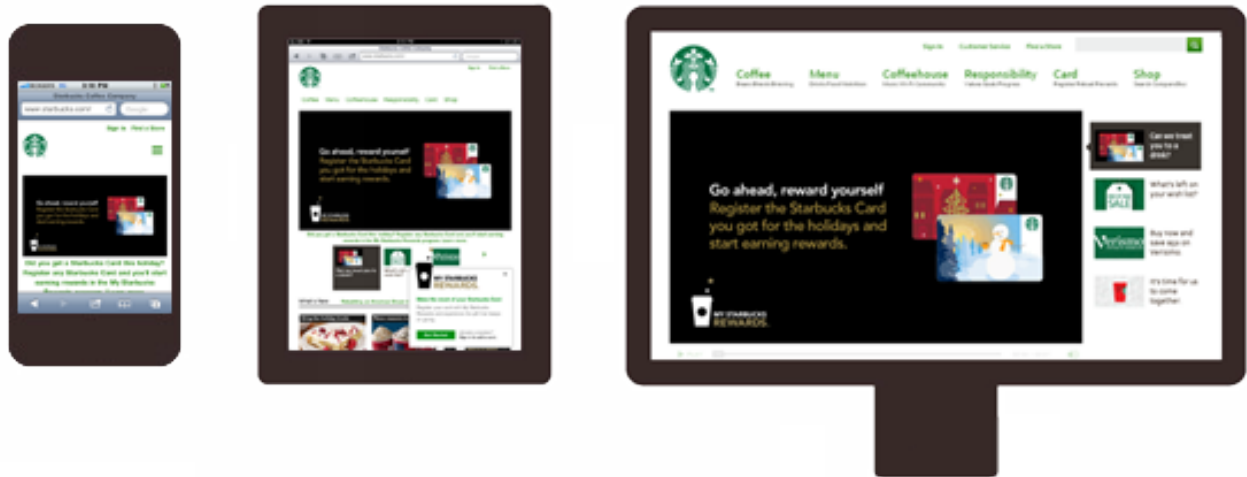

Figure 12. The mobile optimization of Starbucks

Figure 13. The mobile optimization of The Boston Globe

A good example of a dedicated mobile site is Walmart.com (Johansson, 2013, para.10). When using a tablet or smartphone and surfing to walmart.com, the user will be automatically redirected to the mobile website mobile.walmart.com. This website has exactly the same features as Walmart.com has when seen on a pc, such as online shopping, looking up contact details or tracking an order. Most companies that have a dedicated mobile site use the layout of their mobile site for their app. This makes the website and the app perform the same way and people can choose to either use the app or visit the online website.
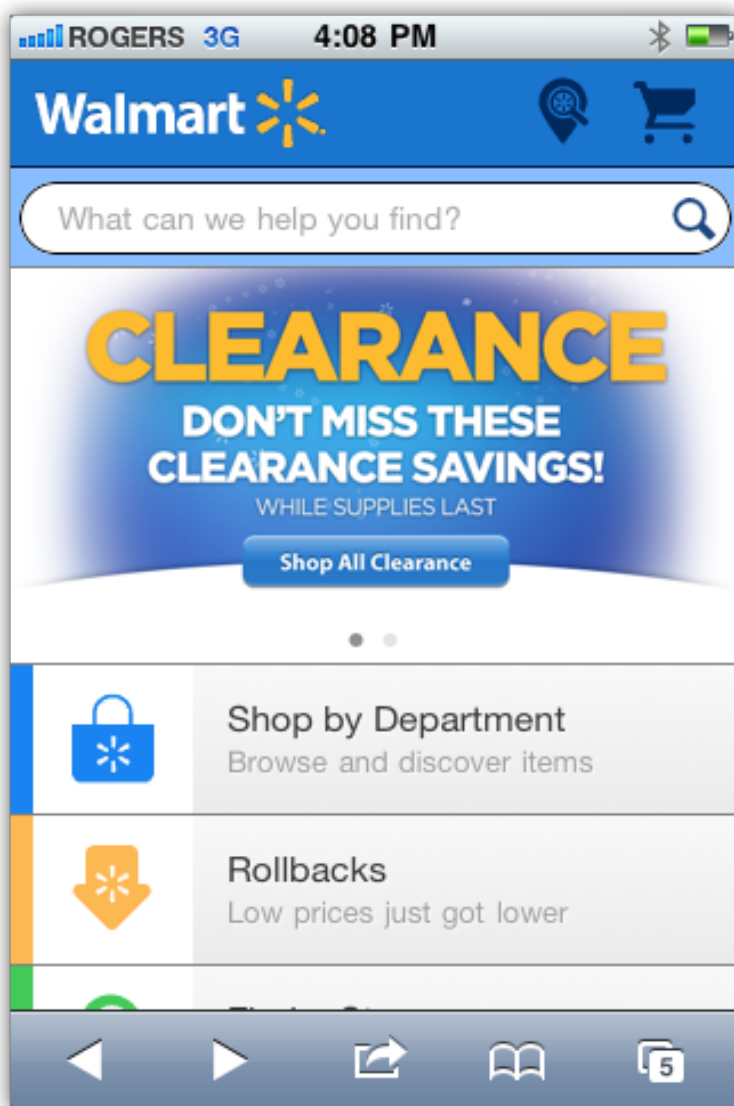

Figure 14. The dedicated mobile site of Walmart.

10. How are SEO, SMM and Mobile Optimization intertwined?

As previously explained, SEO and SMM are both used for different purposes. However, they are intertwined at some levels and when both are implemented correctly, can result in great advantages.

Social Media Platforms and SMM can be used to create an audience that does not yet exist for a product. The campaigns for new or innovative products can be launched from social media. The content is created there, and if it is done in a creative way, people will pick it up, share it, and talk about it. Some people might even share it on their own blog or website, which results in links that are helpful for the SEO. There is no proof of the influence of social media on search engines' ranking factors, because the rules of the algorithms are a big secret. However, there are some rules known, like linkbuilding and on page optimization. Never has anyone been able to prove the fact that a high number of followers or likers on social media influenced search engine rankings. Nevertheless, many SEO and SMM specialists believe that social media presence is a factor in the ranking positions. The most likely possibility is that search engines analyse the number of followers or likers of a company on the social media platforms. They can also analyse how many people are talking about this brand or company. All these factors (might) influence search engine rankings. According to Mr. Verleg, Senior SEO consultant at online marketing agency Internet Advantage, there is a good likeability this will change in the future. Verleg believes that "if they are not doing it yet, they probably will do it in the future" (Verleg, 2013).

Even if social media is not used to rank websites within search engines, it is still an important platform for companies to launch products, interact with customers and receive feedback. Search engines also look at the traffic that is going to a website. If a company has a mobile optimized website it is logical that it has more visitors, because users from all kinds of devices can view the website. If the website is not mobile optimized, the website will lose mobile visitors, which results in a lower number of traffic.

Having a mobile optimized website is also not yet proven to be a factor for the search engine rankings. There is a great possibility that search engines do look at the mobile optimized website, and use this as a factor for the ranking. After all, having a mobile optimized site is only to give visitors a better surfing experience, and that is what search engines are looking for. With a growing number of people surfing the web from mobile devices, many SEO specialists believe that mobile optimization will become part of the ranking factors of search engines (Sterlink, 2012, para. 2).

But Mobile Optimization is not only influencing SEO, it is also a great advantage when used with social media. If a company is building a social media presence, interacting with customers but at the same time also trying to get them to visit the website, it is very important that all of the visitors are able to see the website. People who are using their phone to check Facebook, Twitter, Google+ or other social networks cannot visit the website of the company if it is not mobile optimized. This will result in a loss of potential customers.

11. Conclusion

The Internet is a medium that reaches out to billions of people around the world, making it the most ideal communication channel for international companies. Consumers and the way of communication between consumers and businesses has changed since the growth of the Internet. The flow of information on the Internet is in many aspects different than the information flow of traditional marketing. It is not the marketer informing the customer anymore, it is also one customer informing another customer.

Customers are now consulting others for opinions, information and specification of businesses, products and services. This form of informing others has been made easier through social media platforms. The changing way of communication gives businesses the opportunities to use it to their advantage and communicate with consumers in a different way. Consumers are becoming more critical, and will share their opinion with others on social media. Companies that have a social media presence can pick up negative information and discuss this directly with the customer. This direct way of communication is not only a good way of customer service towards the unsatisfied customer, it also portrays transparency and good customer care to other customers.

Social media can also be used for customer engagement. It is the perfect platform to launch new campaigns, interact with existing customers and new customers, receive feedback and stay up to date with the things that matter to your customers. Building a social media presence and a large database of customers is time consuming, and the longer companies wait to adapt it, the more they are missing out. Furthermore, competitors may already be online on social media, attracting customers from other companies to theirs.

Social media is not the only form of online marketing used to attract more customers. Using a search engine is the most popular way of finding a specific website or business. Search Engine Optimization should be implemented in the marketing strategy in order to get a better position within the search engines. This enables customers to find a business more easily. If SEO is implemented correctly it can give a company a competitive advantage. Research has shown that if people cannot find a relevant website for their search query immediately, they will change their search query instead of going to the next page of the search engine. Therefore it is important for a company to invest time in SEO in order to retrieve a spot on the first page of the search engine. When SEO is implemented correctly and a company has a high ranking within the search engine, more people will click on the website. This means more traffic to the website, which can result in more customers and sales.

More and more people are surfing the web through a mobile device. If SEO and SMM are both executed correctly, and mobile visitors are redirected through a social media platform or search engine to the website, but the website is not mobile optimized, customers might not be able to see all the information. Furthermore, mobile users that cannot see a specific website will then go to another similar website that they can view. Not optimizing a website for mobile users is not only customer unfriendly, it can also result in a loss of visitors and customers.

12. Recommendations

Making the Internet part of the marketing strategy can result in a larger audience around the world for the marketed products and services. The Internet also enables companies to communicate easily with existing and new customers.

Companies that have not made online marketing part of the marketing strategy, have not only been missing out, they still are missing out and will continue to do so in the future. The ever evolving and changing nature of the Internet will make it more difficult for companies to adapt to online marketing in the future. To succeed in the years to come, organisations and companies will need online marketing strategies in order to be able to compete with competitors. Competitors might already have implemented online marketing strategies, which makes it even harder for a company to still compete with them on the same level.

It is important to keep in mind that SEO, SMM as well as Mobile Optimization are all subjects on themselves, but can give negative results when not implemented correctly. Furthermore, if all three aspects are implemented it will give greater advantages and can stimulate one another.

So, to conclude, using SMM, SEO and Mobile Optimization is not only giving a company a competitive advantage, it is also very customer friendly and can result in more customers and eventually more sales.

13. References

Ahlqvist, T., Back, A., Halonen, M. & Heinonen, S. (2008). Social Media Roadmaps: Exploring the futures triggered by social media. Retrieved March 20, 2013. Frp, the VTT Website: http://www.vtt.fi/inf/pdf/tiedotteet/2008/T2454.pdf

Brief history of Social Media (n.d.). Retrieved March 20, 2013 from the University of North Carolina Web Site: http://www.uncp.edu/home/acurtis/NewMedia/SocialMedia/SocialMediaHistory.html

Bullas, J. (2012, April 23). *48 Significant Social Media facts, figures and statistics.* Retrieved March 13, 2013 from the Jeff Bullas Web site: http://www.jeffbullas.com/2012/04/23/48-significant-social-media-facts-figures-and-statistics-plus-7-infographics/

Corendon Vliegvakanties. (ca. 2011). In *Facebook* [Group page]. Retrieved May 2, 2013 from the Corendon Vliegvakanties Facebook Web site: https://nl-nl.facebook.com/corendonvliegvakanties

DiSilvestro, A. (2011, December 29). *OnPage SEO vs OffPage SEO which comes first*? [Weblog entry]. Retrieved March 30, 2013 from DiSilvestro's at the Higher Visibility Web site: http://www.highervisibility.com/blog/on-page-seo-vs-off-page-seo-which-comes-first/

Falls, J. (2012, January 9). *What mobile optimization does for your website* [Weblog entry]. Retrieved April 22, 2013 from Fall's at the Social Media Explorer Web site: http://www.socialmediaexplorer.com/digital-marketing/what-mobile-optimization-does-for-your-website/

Fell, J. (2013, February 19). *3 Social Media lessons from Ford.* Retrieved March 12, 2013 from the Entrepeneur Web site: http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/225861

Gulliksen, C. (2012, November 29). *Social vs Search: Which is the winner?* [Weblog entry]. Retrieved March 3, 2013 from Christian Gulliksen's at the Marketing Profs Web site: http://www.marketingprofs.com/pics/2012/9577/social-vs-search-which-is-the-winner

Hamburger, Ellis. (2012, June 27). *Google announces 250 million Google+ users, 150 million monthly active users.* Retrieved May 3, 2013 from The Verge Web site: http://www.theverge.com/2012/6/27/3121018/google-plus-statistics

Johansson, J. (2013, January 7). *Methods for Mobile websites.* Retrieved April 20, 2013 from the Six Revisions Web site: http://sixrevisions.com/mobile/methods-mobile-websites/

Klantencase Online Marketing (n.d.). Retrieved May 2, 2013 from the Traffic 4 U Web site: http://www.traffic4u.nl/over-traffic4u/referenties/klantencase-online-marketing

Lake, L. (n.d.) *Google vs. Facebook What is the difference?* Retrieved March 10, 2013 from the About Web Site: http://marketing.about.com/od/socialmediamarketing/a/Google-Vs-Facebook-Whats-The-Difference.htm

McCracken, G. (2010, January 7). *How Ford got social marketing right* [Weblog entry].
        Retrieved March 20, 2013 from McCracken's at the Harvard Business Review Web
        site: http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2010/01/ford_recently_wrapped_the_firs.html

Mink, David. (2013, April 15). *The complete history of Social Media* [Weblog entry]
        Retrieved April 22, 2013 from Mink's at the Avalaunch Media Web site:
        http://avalaunchmedia.com/infographics/the-complete-history-of-social-media

Mobile Website vs Standard Website. (n.d.). Retrieved April 20, 2013 from
        the Get Vips Web site:
        http://www.getvips.com/Mobile-Website-vs-Standard-Website-large.gif

Nations, D. (n.d.). *What is Social Media?* Retrieved March 15, 2013 from the About Web
        site: http://webtrends.about.com/od/web20/a/social-media.htm

Petersen, Patrick. (2010). *Handboek Online Marketing. Praktische lessen om een expert te
        worden.* Alphen aan den Rijn: Wolters Kluwer.

Pham, Dai. (2011, April 26). *Smartphone user study shows mobile movement under way.*
        [Weblog Entry]. Retrieved March 20, 2013 from Pham's at the Google Mobile Ads
        Blog Web Site: http://googlemobileads.blogspot.nl/2011/04/smartphone-user-study-
        shows-mobile.html

Position, Team. (2012, October 31). *LinkedIn advertising. How different are they?* [Weblog
        entry]. Retrieved April 20, 2013 from Team Position's at the Position2 Web site:
        http://blogs.position2.com/linkedin-advertising-how-different-are-they

Slagter. (2009, December 1). *Do you need a webcare team?* [Weblog entry]. Retrieved March
        29, 2013 from Slagter's at the Tailorable Web site: http://blog.tailorable.com/do-you-
        need-a-webcare-team/

Sollis, B. (2008, August 7). *Was ist eigentlich Social Media*? [Weblog entry]. Retrieved
        March 18, 2013 from Sollis's at the Ethority Web site:
        http://www.ethority.de/weblog/2008/08/07/was-ist-eigentlich-social-media/

Staats,M. (2012, June 20). *SEO lessen van Zalando.* Retrieved April 9, 2013 from the SEO
        Champ Web site: http://seochamp.nl/seo-lessen-zalando/

Sterlink, G. (2012, April 20). *Mobile to overtake PC for local search by 2015* [Weblog entry].
        Retrieved April 20, 2013 from Sterlink's at the SearchEngineLand Web site:
        http://searchengineland.com/analyst-mobile-to-overtake-pc-for-local-search-by-2015-
        119148

Verleg, K. (2013, April 29). Personal interview.

Verschil OnPage SEO vs OffPage SEO. (n.d.). Retrieved March 30, 2013
        from the SEO Handleiding Web site:
        http://www.seohandleiding.com/index.php/verschil-on-page-seo-off-page-seo/

Vissers, B.M. (2013, 24 March). *Zalando start de lente in het nieuw* [Weblog entry].
        Retrieved April 9, 2013 from Britta Maxime's at the Britta Maxime Web site:
        http://brittamaxime.com/2013/03/24/zalando-start-de-lente-in-het-nieuw/

Weerd, L.G. (2013, March 10). Personal interview.

What is SEO? (2012, October 16). [Weblog entry] Retrieved March 30,
        2013 from the Webdesignerandmore Web Site:
        http://webdesignerandmore.wordpress.com/2012/10/16/seo/

Appendix

Interview

Interview with Kevin Verleg, Senior Online Marketing consultant at Internet Advantage, Utrecht, The Netherlands. Date: 29 April 2013.

1.Question one is: What is the best way to generate traffic? Do you consider SEO better to generate traffic to the website or SMM?
It depends, at first, as an SEO, i would say SEO. I also do some SMM, and in my opinion it is when social behavior is already defined, so when you have for example a product that has already a large lifecycle, so for instance insurances, search behavior is already formed, so you know which keywords to target. In that case I would prefer SEO because the volumes are higher and more targeted. For instance, innovative products, little start-ups with products where social behavior isn't defined at all, then you could create an audience using social media marketing.

2.Do you consider SEO or SMM better to interact with the costumer? You just said you consider SEO better to generate traffic, at some levels, but if you really want to interact with the customers do you think this is better through SMM or SEO?
Definitely SMM. SEO is not really conversation focused. So if conversation is desired, you have to switch to SMM or E-mail.

3.There is not much interaction going on with SEO?
I would say it is a conversation, because you have a fixed set of information that is sent to the customer, and you hope that it will fit their needs/ search queries.

4.Do you think that SEO and SMM are intertwined at some levels, or to put it this way: that they influence eachother?
The combination of SMM with SEO , for instance Outreach. Outreach is a travel agency I am working on right now. There are two different processes. Producing content on their platform, like tips for amazing hotels to visit or new destinations. And what you see is that there is some collateral coming with the stuff we produce on their platform. For instance, they have a Facebook group with 20.000 likers, and the only thing we do is create content, put it on their Facebook, and look at the interaction. The funny part is that when we look at the content a few months later, we can see that other people noticed it, and shared it on their Facebook or their website, and they are producing links to the website. It's not the direct SEO impact, but an indirect SEO impact. So on Social Media you can share content with other people and they might link back to where you want them to link.

5.Does Social Media pressence influence SEO results? So, if a company has a lot of likers on Facebook or followers on Twitter, does Google take this into consideration for their algorhythm, and will this eventually make you link higher?
That is a tricky question. I have never seen actual proof of direct better rankings with a good social presence. For instance if you have a large brand, they usually have a lot of followers. But will that also make you rank higher? I'm not sure. But that is now. But if you look in the

future, you might say that Google will look at social media platforms like their own social media platform Google+.

6.Do you think that good SEO results result in good SMM presence?
No, not directly. Because I know a lot of big brands, that have good rankings and a great website but have not yet invested a lot of time in Social Media Marketing. But once they do start, they get a head start. It is a big brand and they have a large reach, and they can gain a lot of followers in a short time.

7.Have you noticed a growth in Mobile Optimization over the years?
When I did my first M.O. assignment two years ago i assumed that M.O would grow really fast in the future. However, you see that big players are adopting M.O. at a fast pace, but mid-sized and small companies are not yet doing it at all. Unfortunately, I don't see the market adapt really fast.

8.Do you know if M.O. helps SEO results? Do you think Google take the fact that a company has optimized its' website also for mobile users into consideration for the rankings?
I think in the very near future they will. Google is optimizing all their services for mobile users, so what you might expect is that they are increasing the amount of targeting on mobile devices. Google is already offering special advertisements for companies that are solely displayed on mobile search results, different from the pc search results. So if they are doing it for AdWords (Google's advertising program), then why wouldn't they do it for SEO?
There is also a possibility that in the future Google will show different search results on mobile devices than on PC's. It is possible that in those search results they will only show websites that are accessible for mobile devices, so if a website is not m.o. it will not rank high in those search results. Furthermore, it is likely to think that Google will soon use the GPS location data that it gets from your mobile devices to give you personal search results, based on where you are located, showing you only results from companies that are located near you.

9.Do you consider M.O. to be part of On-Page SEO?
In theory i would like that it is standard On-Page SEO. In practice, it is a separate project.

10.Do most companies take a separate mobile website? A dedicated mobile website?
Yes, if i look back at the M.O. projects I did in the last 2 years almost all companies wanted a dedicated mobile site.