Social Media: Evaluation of How Micro SME’s in England use Social Media as a Communication Tool.
Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own independent investigation under the supervision of my tutor. The various sources to which I am indebted are clearly indicated. This dissertation has not been accepted in substance for any other degree, and is not being submitted concurrently for any other degree.

Candidate:

Signature:

Date:
Acknowledgments

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor Hilary Berger for her endless guidance and support throughout this project. I would also like to thank my family for their support both financially and emotionally over the last three years. Finally, I would like to thank all the participants who took part in the research, without them this project would not have been possible.
Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine how micro SME’s based in England use social media as a communication tool.

The literature review allowed for an understanding of the evolution of social media in terms of communication and identified the three main social media platforms used by micro SME’s. The literature review also identified communication features of the three main social media platforms and how they are utilised by micro SME’s as a business tool.

The selected methodology and analysis techniques used in this dissertation allowed for the primary data collected using online questionnaires and interviews.

The results and findings of the research shown in chapter 4 and 5 of this dissertation presents the themes that emerged throughout the analysis, including evidence and codes that allowed the themes to emerge from. Tables are used to present the themes and codes and then further discussed in sections.

The final chapter of this dissertation concludes that social media is a vital part of business and when understood and utilised properly can improve all areas of a micro SME’s. This chapter also allowed for the discussion of original findings found during this dissertation research. With the use of in-depth analysis of literature and primary data collected using online questionnaires and interviews both objectives and aims of this dissertation have been fulfilled.
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**Glossary**

**SME**
SME – Small – Medium sized enterprises, three factors contribute to whether an enterprise is an SME staff headcount, turnover and balance total sheet total.

**Micro SME**
A micro SME has a staff count of 0-9, turnover less than or equal to £1.7 million and a balance sheet total less than or equal to 1.7 million.

**Small (Macro) SME**
A small SME has a staff count of 10-49, turnover less than or equal to £8.2 million and a balance sheet total less than or equal to 8.2 million.

**Social Media**
Social Media is either a website or mobile application that’s content is user based, allowing users to create and share content with other users within their social network.

**Social Networking**
A website that allows users to create and connect with a social network of other users.

**Microblogging**
A website that allows users to post short messages that other microblogging users can view and interact with.

**Photo sharing**
A website that allowed users to post digital images online, these images can be post either privately or publically. If publically is chosen other users can view and interact with the image post.

**Keywords**
SME, Micro SME, Small SME, Social Media, Social Networking, Microblogging, Photo sharing, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram.
Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Micro – Small sized businesses are the largest business type in both the UK and England, the number of Micro (0-9 employees) and Small (10-49 employees) are the largest SME types in UK, whereas medium size enterprises (50-250 employees) only account for 1% of SMEs in the UK (Ward and Rhodes, 2014). The business strategies and tools they use will reflect on how a business performs. To keep a competitive edge, they must be creative in their business strategy and utilize all beneficial external resources. As we live in the digital age, this includes keeping up with the latest trends in internet and technology and making sure their business is accessible through a number of social media platforms, enabling the business to reach a broader audience and communicate in real time.

Over the last decade, there has been a significant development in internet technology, to the point where it can be seen in every area of our lives, especially personal and business. Businesses have adapted themselves to the digital revolution and have become innovative in the way that they utilize it as a business tool. The digital revolution has created social media, a platform which businesses can use to their advantage. There are a number of benefits to integrating business with social media including, low cost advertising and marketing but the most beneficial use is communication.

This dissertation sets out to look at social media use in micro SMEs in England. The rationale behind focusing specifically on England based micro SME’s and social media for communication is grounded on two observations, the first being that micro sized businesses are the largest types of businesses in the UK and England. The second observation being that communication is the most beneficial use of social media for micro SME use.

As this dissertation is focusing on England based micro SME’s and social media as a communication tool, a review of relevant literature will be conducted, it will look at the evolution of social media and how it has advanced over the years and then moving on to look at the different types that are useful for business use.

To meet the aim of this dissertation, the research is required to identify of the types of social media available for business use, leading into a further study into the strengths and
weaknesses of social media platforms in terms of communication. The results obtained during the research will be analysed to produce recommendations for the micro SMEs on how they can improve their social media strategies. Research will be completed through the use of online questionnaires and interviews, data collected will be used contribute to the current knowledge in this domain.

This research study will include both qualitative and quantitative research approaches, using online questionnaires and face-to-face interviews to obtain empirical data needed to address the research aim and objectives. The questionnaires will be completed by 15 micro SMEs allowing for a range of quantitative data. To complement the quantitative data, interviews will be conducted with four chosen micro SMEs to gather qualitative data to present a greater depth of analysis and to validate the findings. The research will be analysed using thematic analysis techniques aimed at identifying patterns and trends within the data pool that will contribute to current knowledge in this domain. It will also allow a detailed discussion to be presented, examination of the use of social media in micro SMEs in England, what types of social media they use, and identify the strengths and weaknesses of their social media strategy. Once the analysis of data is complete, recommendations will be made in relation to the interviewed micro SMEs social media use within their business.

1.1 Research Question
How do micro SME’s in England use Social Media in their business? (Communication)

1.2 Aim
To evaluate the use of social media in micro SME’s in England as a communication tool

1.3 Objectives (all focused on micro SME’s in England)
   1. To identify use of Social Media as a business tool
   2. To evaluate types of Social Media used for communication by micro SME’s in England
   3. To analyse the strengths and weaknesses of identified social media communication
   4. To produce recommendations for social media use as a business tool for micro SME’s
1.4 Summary
This chapter has set out the research context providing the underlining rationale behind choosing to focus this dissertation on Micro SMEs in England and communication as a social media tool for micro SMEs. It further presents the research aims and objectives of the dissertation that will be achieved through the empirical data gathering techniques. Findings obtained from the data analysis, underpinned by the literature and theory reviewed, will enable recommendations to be put forward to aid micro SME’s using social media in England.
Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter defines social media in the context of this research study and describes its evolution. It further sets out to define the main social media that micro SMEs use and what features they provide for micro SMEs.

2.1 Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

Defined by the European Commission (2014), SME’s stands from small and medium-sized enterprises, there are three factors that determine what classification each SME is in. These factors being headcount, turnover and sheet balance, the table below taken from House of Commons (2014) explains each of the SME classification criteria’s.

Table 1. Small & Medium Size Enterprises.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Category</th>
<th>Headcount</th>
<th>Turnover</th>
<th>Sh. Total</th>
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<td>Medium</td>
<td>&lt; 250</td>
<td>£ 41 Million</td>
<td>£ 35.2 Million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>&lt; 50</td>
<td>£ 8.2 Million</td>
<td>£ 8.2 Million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro</td>
<td>&lt; 10</td>
<td>£ 1.7 Million</td>
<td>£ 1.7 Million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.1 Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in the UK

Research conducted by the House of Commons (2014) looking at small businesses and the UK economy found that for 2014 in the UK there were 5.2 million SME’s, which made up over 99% of all businesses”. This statistic shows a 7% increase in SME in UK compared to 2013 statistic of 4.8 Million. House of Commons research (2014) also shows that micro businesses, a company with 0-9 employees make up for 96% of all businesses making this the most popular SME type in the UK for the year 2014. More recent studies conducted by Department of Business Innovation and Skills (2015) found that during 2015 the number of SME’s in the UK increased to 5.4 million, with 5.1 (95%) being micro business providing evidence that the two most popular types of SME business in the UK are micro. House of Commons (2014) furthered their study to look at the number of SME’s in the UK focusing on region, results show that out of the 5.2 million UK SME’s in 2014, 4.6 million of them were based in England.
2.1.2 SME and Social Media

Social Media has grown exponentially over recent years with over one billion people from all over the globe using at least one type of social media platform (Sela, 2013). SME’s have become aware of the growing trend and are now using social media as a business tool (European Commission, 2013). A study fulfilled by Constant Contact (2011) looking into small business usage of social media, found that 81% of the sample used social media to market their business. Social Media provides SME’s with a plethora of benefits including, increased exposure, marketplace insight, increased sales and loyal fans and also reduced marketing expenses (Marketing Donut, 2015). Barnes (2010) states that social media provides SME’s with a platform in which they can communicate with users for low costs and higher levels of efficiency than using traditional methods. This statement is supported by a study looking into why SME’s use social media conducted by Department of Business Innovation and Skills (2014), which found that 81% of SME’s reported to use social media as it allowed them to communicate with their audience through multidimensional conversations.

2.2 Evolution of social media

In 2009 Smith (2009, p.559) put forward the following definition “Over the last few years the web has fundamentally shifted towards user driven technologies such as blogs, social networks and video-sharing platforms. Collectively these social technologies have enabled a revolution in user generated content, global community and the publishing of consumer opinion, now uniformly tagged as social media” Two years later Kietzmann et al. (2011, p.241) extended this perception adding that “Social media employ mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content”. Recently Meske and Stieglitz (2013) suggest that enterprises have increasingly adopted social media and utilize it to their own strategies, social media creates a platform in which enterprises can contact with their customers, support internal communication and collaboration.

Edosomwan et al. (2011, p.2) acknowledges that “Social networks have evolved over the years to the modern-day variety which uses digital media. However, the social media isn’t that new”. Sharib and Page (2015, para 11) support this view and maintain that “The telephone is the original social media phenomenon – it allowed people to become more collaborative, more ambitious and more social than they had ever been before”.

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According to (Borders, 2009) during 1950s phone phreaking also known as the rogue exploration of the telephone network, saw a process in which homemade devices were used to make free calls. Borders stated phreaks were able to hack into corporate unused voice mailboxes to host the first blogs and podcasts. Thus showing the need to communicate and share information has always been around.

Following the phone phreaking era, came Bulletin Board Systems (BBSs). "Originally these were primarily hosted on personal computers and users had to dial in through the host computer’s modem. Only one person at a time could gain access to the BBS. But BBSs were the first type of sites that allowed users to log on and interact with one another, albeit in a much slower fashion than we currently do" (Chapman, 2009, section 3).

Borders (2009) explained how “online services” followed the phone phreaking era, this era saw large businesses attempting to reach the masses and allow them to experience social online interaction. Two of the first of their kind were Prodigy and CompuServe, both large scale attempts to try to bring interactive social online experiences to the masses. During 1980, CompuServe became the first major online service to offer chat and email to customers and by 1984, Prodigy pioneered online portals and online news (Colaiacovo, 2015).

Following this came the dawn of the World Wide Web, “the internet existed since the late 1960s, as a network but the World Wide Web became publically available on August 6th, 1991” (Borers, 2009, section 5).

“The first recognizable social network site launched in 1997. SixDegrees.com allowed users to create profiles, list their Friends and, beginning in 1998, surf the Friends lists. SixDegrees promoted itself as a tool to help people connect with and send messages to others “(Boyd and Ellison, 2007, p.214). Instant messaging was also born in 1997. “This gave users the freedom to create a personal profiles and instant message friends. AOL is known as the precursor to today’s social networking sites, and created the most innovative feature of that time” (Web Design Professionals - 1stWebDesigner, 2012).

According to (Colaiacovo, 2015) 2000-present date marks the golden era of social media. This era saw the creation of the first modern day social media website known as “Friendster” this created a ripple effect of social media websites. Which resulted in the creation of websites like Myspace, Bebo, Twitter and Facebook” (Atkins, 2014).
The golden era (Colaiacovo, 2015) also saw the creation of social media website/applications such as YouTube, the first organized video streaming and video platform. Tumblr a live steaming and microblogging platform. The golden era has also seen the first iOS, android and windows based application for mobile such as WhatsApp a messaging app for personal and group chats, Snapchat new platform for chatting by posting pictures, Tinder a discovery application and Vine a multiple platform video sharing social application.

“Social media on the internet has changed the way the world sees and conducts itself. It has provided a platform for the sharing of ideas and the mobilization of political and philosophical movements” (Hickey, 2012, section 5). Through the evolution of social media, it is clear that the desire to communicate, be social and share information has been there since day one. Now with the help of the internet and technology, social media allows users to communicate, exchange information and interact with each other regardless of distance between them. Today’s technology has created a platform in which the internet and social media is so accessible that is can be accessed on a number of platforms including computer, tablets and mobile devices as long as there is an internet connection whether it be through Wi-Fi or personal data.

2.3 Types of Social Media used by SME’s

“Although social media was originally a tool for friends to connect, communicate and share it has also been adopted as a business tool” (Bughin and Manyika 2007). “Many businesses are now turning to social networks as a worthwhile communication tool and, if used adequately, they can significantly improve their online presence, in the form of effective promotion” (Jagongo and Kinyua, 2013, p.214).

According to Safko and Brake (2009) there are 13 types of social media categories, but this section will focus on the categories that micro SMEs utilities.

2.3.1 Social Networking

Social Networking enables SME’s to create a visual diagram of their social network, these sites allow for the creation of online profiles within a bounded system, where they can share information and communicate with users (Boyd and Ellison 2007). Facebook is the most popular social networking website “with 1, 440,000,000 million monthly active users”
Facebook allows for both public and business profiles, for an micro SME Facebook allows enterprises to create an online profile/business page where they can engage with their audience through status updates, profile comments and messenger. Facebook users can ‘like’ the organizations page and will then automatically receive updates from the page, which creates a social network of people (A guide to Facebook, 2012).

David Moth, an E consultant (Moth, 2012) conducted a study that examined how Facebook is used by SME’s. He found that “36% of UK businesses now use Facebook to attract new customers and 59% use Facebook to post updates about products and services on their Facebook Timeline” Facebook analytics allow the page administrator to view fan activity on their business page, including information on age categories which allows the administrators to see what target market their page is aimed towards, and how they can amend it to fit their business strategy (Gasser, 2009). Even though Facebook provides this performance review feature “(66%) of those whose businesses use Facebook admit to not using any form of analytics either because they don’t have time or it’s too complicated and hard to understand” (Moth, 2012).

Facebook discovered that the biggest problem that micro SMEs face when using Facebook is managing communication with customers. To resolve this Facebook now allows page administrators “to set the average time it takes for them to reply to messages, which gives customers a reasonable expectation of when they can hear back from the Page” (Rawlins, 2015). “People can contact businesses any time and from any device, so we’re offering new tools for Pages to better manage their customer interactions”. Facebook page manager Michael Sharon commented on the new feature cited by Naidu (2015) “Now it’s easier than ever for Pages to address both the public comments and private messages that people send them, in order to build and maintain strong relationships and grow their business”.

2.3.2 Microblogging

“During the last couple of years, micro-blogging a kind of blogging where users publish snippets of information about their daily activities and thoughts has become the newest Internet trend” (Zhang et al., 2010, p.1). “Twitter is currently the best-known microblogging site, its popularity supported by a growing collection of add-on applications that enable different and often more engaging microblog updates stocks” (Microblogging, 2009, p.1). “One of the major reasons why Twitter is such a useful platform is because it allows your SME’s communications to be both targeted and personalised” (The Consultancy Home
Twitter is also very accessible through platforms of web, desktop and through application on mobiles and tablet devices (Mayfield, 2009). As well are being accessible Twitter also provides in-road to new customers, as “57% of people surveyed discovered new businesses on twitter” (Digital Kitbag, 2014).

A blog post written by TCHC (2014) talks about SME use of Twitter and summarized its use and advantages as “Twitter allows you to generate richer relationships with your current client base as part of a vibrant online community, advertise your business cheaply and easily, and to monitor public perceptions of your SME, and as customer’s preferences for digital continue to grow rapidly, it is something that many small business owners can no longer ignore”. This is supported by a blog written by Blog Twitter (2014) stating that over 80% of SME users would recommended using twitter are a business tool. In addition to both statements, IBM (2010) who explain the many functionalities to twitter and how it provides users several techniques they can use to convey information within the 140-character limit. Their research shows the most popular feature being Hashtag(#) this symbol followed by a word or code e.g. #socialmedia, are used to group related posts together. The main business advantage of using this feature is that “A hashtag immediately expands the reach of your tweet beyond just those who follow you, to reach anyone interested in that hashtag phrase or keyword” (Lee, 2015). A survey conducted by Digital Kitbag, (2014) discovered that “60% of respondents said they have purchased something from an SME because of Twitter”. This statistic shows that even with the 140-character limit SME’s are still able to reach their audience and branch out to new customers.

2.3.3 Photo Sharing

Instagram Guide (2013) argues that “the most significant changes to the digital world in the last 20 years has been the exponential increase in the number of photos and videos being uploaded and shared via social media”. Businesses are aware of the increased use and many are now integrating photo sharing into their business strategy through the means of social media. Photo sharing brings many things to an micro SME but the most significant is high quality and low cost exposure to a marketing and communication plan. Its allows micro SME’s to upload product photos for free, and lets their enterprise enter a “highly target, competitively adventurous” area of internet marketing and communication which is free of charge (Safko and Brake, 2009).
Instagram is the most popular photo sharing application, with more than 150 million users and an average of 40 million a day sharing photos. The application, only accessible through mobile devices, was created in 2010 and by 2013 was named the fastest growing application (Schoenfeld, 2013). Instagram offers a variety of features that micro SME’s can use in terms of business, it allows each enterprise to create an online persona where they can explain to users what they sell, the services they can provide and the fundamental values the business is based upon all through the media of photo (Garner, 2015).

A blog written by a social media marketing expert Atkinson (2014) explains how the most important thing a micro SME on Instagram can do is brand awareness, have conversations with their audience, get people engaged with photos and comments, and most importantly get the business name out there. In addition, Miles (2013) provides insight into building communities within Instagram, and how they can help build the company’s branding and online presence. Both Atkinson (2014) and Miles (2013) are supported by a study conducted by Clasen (2015) which found that 70% of 16000 users had visited business Instagram profiles and also that Instagram has a higher engagement rate than another other social media platform, including Facebook and Twitter. Just like twitter, Instagram also has a hashtag feature, acting in the same way expanding the reach of each to any user interesting in the hashtag or keyword.

Instagram for Business a blog created by Instagram provides SME’s and larger business with helpful advice and tips on how to succeed with their business on Instagram. Instagram for Business (2015) have case studies on how Instagram can help a business, Maybelline New York a makeup brand had a 2.4X sales uplift on brow products, McDonalds had a 47-point lift in ad recall to capture summer demand and Channel 4 had more than 750k of 18-34 year olds reached to promote new TV season using Instagram in the UK. Instagram allows micro SMEs to reach audiences through creative content made up of graphics and media, and also the use of advertising on Instagram, allowing users to see a business differently and become highly engaged with a global community that is Instagram (Instagram for Business, 2015).

However, for SMEs Instagram allows a business to track its success through a website called Statigram to track the number of likes their business profile. For example, the highest performing images in terms of engagement, the average number of likes and comments
received per image, the growth of your follower base and much more (The Small Business Owners Guide to Instagram, 2013).
Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explains the chosen research methodology and its underpinning rationale. The Honeycomb of Research Methodology (Wilson, 2013) was chosen because it allows for the examination and exploration of each part of research methods.

![Figure 1. The Honeycomb of Research Methodology](source Wilson, 2013)

3.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is an “overarching term relating to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p600). The chosen philosophy must suit the specific research topic as it provides information on choice of strategy, design and data collection techniques. There are several research philosophies to choose from but this research does not fit into just one, this is the main reasoning for choosing Pragmatism. Pragmatism is a philosophy that does not align itself with any one philosophical stance, as it recognises the importance of both physical and social worlds. It focuses on the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of the research problem (Wilson, 2013; Belk, 2006). “Pragmatism is concerned with action and change and the interplay between knowledge and action. This makes it appropriate as a basis for research approaches intervening into the world and not merely observing the world” (Goldkuhl, 2011, p136). As this research study concerns Social Media and the use in micro SMEs it necessitates examination of both the
physical and social world in order to identify what social media micro SMEs are using and how they use it. This specifically addresses the research aim, the research objectives and the research question.

3.2 Research Approach
Hyde (2000) defined inductive approach as “a theory-building process, starting with observations of specific instances, and seeking to establish generalization about the phenomenon under investigation” (p.83). This approach is known as building a theory as it allows the research to commence as an observation and move into a theory by analysing the data collected during the research (Wilson, 2013; Yin, 2013). Whereas deductive also known as testing a theory, allows the researcher to develop a theory and design a strategy, which helps shape, and develop a theory (Wilson, 2013; Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2012). This research will adopt the inductive approach as the observation of the use of Social Media within SME’s has been established, and through further research and analysis of the results will allow for the comparison of social media use in micro SMEs in England. This will create in a platform in which this dissertation can contribute to the body of knowledge in this current domain.

3.3 Research Strategy
The research strategy will involve both types of research strategy that is available in order to obtain the required data to complete the research, these being qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative research is associated with numerical analysis, and is viewed as an object, which includes data collection methods such as questionnaires (Dawson and Dawson, 2009; Creswell, 2013). Qualitative is the opposite, as it is subjective and involves data collection methods such as focus groups and interviews (Dawson and Dawson, 2009; Ritchie, Lewis, and Nicholls, 2013). Increasingly, researchers are using mixed methods that offer the advantage of overcoming single-method studies, this allows the research to be a more in-depth and ranged (Wilson, 2013; Dagnino and Cinici, 2016). Pragmatism allows for the mix of research strategies, which is needed to complete the research for comparing the use of social media in micro SME’s in England.

3.4 Research Design
“A case study is an in-depth inquiry into a topic or phenomenon within its real-life setting” (Yin 2014). By using case study strategy, it allows the data produced by research to be
thorough and in-depth (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015). As 4 different England based micro SME case studies will be used during the research this design bests fit the research.

3.5 Data Collection

The chosen research philosophy allows for mix strategies (see 3.3), as both quantitative and qualitative strategies have been chosen two different methods of data collection will be used to fulfil the two types of research. The data collection methods will include interviews and questionnaires to collect all the data and information.

Online questionnaires have been chosen, as they are a fast and cheap way of attaining data. The online questionnaire will include open-ended and closed questions. Including both types of questions will allow for a greater depth and diversity of empirical data to be gathered. Open-ended questions allow for in-depth qualitative information by allowing the respondents to express themselves freely (Kumar, 2011; Hancock, Ockleford, and Windridge, 2009). Closed questions allow the quantitative information received by them to be easily analysed, one disadvantage is that they lack depth and variety (Kumar, 2011). This problem is overcome by using both open and closed questions resulting in data that is easy to analyse whilst providing diverse and in-depth varied answers. The questions within the questionnaire have been designed to align with certain research objectives, the main aim of the questionnaire is to find that micro SME’s are using social media as a business tool (objective 1) and to find out which social media they were choosing to utilise as a communication tool (objective 2). The questionnaires will be used to gain a first insight into social media use a business communication tool for micro SME’s and allow for further research during the interviews.

The interviews will be semi-structured as it allows the author to gain valuable information about individual’s experiences (Cohen & Crabtree, 2008; Feinberg, Kinnear, and Taylor, 2012). The pre-determined questions will allow for the research to go in different directions dependent on the answers the interviewee gives, it enables the interview to start off with a general topic and then move into more in-depth questions in response to the answers given during the pre-determined questions. However, this type of collection method has a major flaw, as it is very time consuming (Kumar, 2011). To resolve this, it has been chosen to complete the interview over online video calling using Skype or FaceTime. This also fixes the problem of travelling to the location of interviews, and creates a platform where
interviews can be easily scheduled and rescheduled if problems were to occur. To make sure there is some direction to the interview, there will be open and closed general questions with the option to go more into depth in certain areas where the interviewee responds and answers in a detailed manner. The semi structured interview questions have been designed to align themselves with finding out which social medias are being used as a communication tool for micro SME’s (objective 2) and also to find out the experiences that micro SME’s are having with their chosen social media platforms, both strengths and weaknesses (objective 3).

The questionnaires will be used to establish the use of social media use within micro SME’s, and determine which social media platforms are most popular for use with in micro SME’s this includes the website type and the features they use to communicate with. Once the questionnaires have been completed by the 15 micro SME’s, 4 randomly chosen micro SME’s will be interviewed to gain a greater knowledge of their social media use. This includes their experiences with the social media platforms they are currently implementing within their business plan, and their plan for social media use in the future.

3.6 Data Analysis Technique

Questionnaires and interviews data will be analysed using thematic analysis, using this analysis technique allows for key themes and patterns to be found and allows for further exploration of the empirical data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015). Braun and Clarke (2006) put forth this technique for novice researchers as it allowed for flexibility within the analysis process. This technique allows the researcher to apply ‘codes’ based on reoccurring patterns within the obtained data that facilitate the identification of themes as they begin to emerge relevant to both the research aim and objectives (Bendassolli, 2013). For example, it will allow for rich comprehension of each interview and the development of themes in terms of the use of social media by micro SMEs in England which will contribute to existing knowledge within this domain.

3.7 Sample Population

This dissertation will focus on micro SME’s in England and the use of social media within their business focusing on communication, online questionnaires will be sent out and completed by 15 micro SMEs. Symon and Cassell (2012, p35) put forth that “As a condition of our access, our potential population of research participants may be constrained to a smaller sub group”. In this case the sample population sub category is micro SME’s based in England. The sample population was found by researching into small businesses in England
using Google. The interviews will be obtained by interview 4 random micro SMES for the questionnaires sample, data obtained will be analysed using thematic analysis. The interviews will allow for a richer and more detailed analysis, intended to complement the questionnaire analysis, aimed at achieving the research aims and objectives (Silverman, 2010).

Saunders, Kitzinger and Kitzinger (2014, p617) explains how to keep confidentiality within the research and sets out a vital step to follow “An idealized view of anonymity is that a person will never be traceable from the data presented about them”. To keep anonymity within this research study all SME’s were allocated a number, each questionnaire SME were numbered randomly 1-15, this was based upon the order of the questionnaire results. From this the interviews were conducted, the 4 SME’s were randomly chosen and are shown in this dissertation as Interviewee 1 – 4, this further sustained the anonymity within the research. By choosing to do this no interviewee or SME could be identified or linked back to a specific company.

3.8 Ethical Considerations
Prior to conducting the research and data collection ethical approval was granted by The Ethics Committee of Cardiff School of Management (CSM) of Cardiff Metropolitan University. One approved the data collection process commenced in January 2016 (see Appendix A). The ethics form allowed for the discovery of potential risks for participants and other risks and issues related to the research/study. The ethics application encompassed documents to support the study including participant information sheet, participant consent form, sample online questionnaire, and sample interview questions. The forms provided information for the participants making them aware that all data is confidential and securely stored on a password protected computer, and that they will remain anonymous throughout the research and that they can withdraw at any point without penalty.

3.9 Methodology Summary
The chosen research methodology allows for the research to obtain the required data to complete this report, which will allow for the obtained data to be analysed the further used to act as supporting evidence to form a theory based upon observations made early in this report.
Chapter 4 – Research Analysis and Findings

4.0 Introduction
This chapter will represent the research findings drawn from the analysis of both the questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires and interviews were analysed thematic analysis, reoccurring codes found in the research allowed for key themes to emerge. The themes that developed during the analysis will aligned back the literature reviewed in chapter two to ascertain how they support, or not, existing views and opinions. In this way, the aim is to contribute to the current body knowledge within this domain. Set out on Table 2 below are the themes that emerged during the analysis of both the questionnaires and interviews. These are further discussed in the following sub sections.

Table 2 – Table of Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Discussed in Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SME transformation</td>
<td>Adapting to new social media, had to learn, adapt business, new business aims</td>
<td>“we changed our whole business plan to go with the popularity of social media”</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struggles of adapting</td>
<td>Difficult adapting, separating offline and online, uneducated, little experience, unresponsive</td>
<td>“it can be difficult to be constantly online” Interviewee 1 “even when I’m home, I’m still on the business account. It’s hard to split personal and business time up”</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge impact on performance</td>
<td>Little knowledge, more knowledge better performance,</td>
<td>“I don’t know how to use it” Interviewee 1 “I want to use it but I don’t know how to use it to help my shop” Interviewee 4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths of Social Media</td>
<td>Immediate, user interaction, wider audience, business advantage, competitive edge, faster communication, low cost, accessible, everything one place, new customers</td>
<td>“accessibility and communication is the best feature of social media” “customers can access me any point of the day” “The fast interaction is must easier than ringing customers”</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1. Research sample
The sample of 15 micro SME’s that completed the questionnaire and the 4 micro SME’s who were interviewed were all based in England. The ages of the businesses ranged from 1 – 45 years, all with experience of using social media as a business tool within their micro SME. In addition, it is evident throughout the research that there is a difference in social media use in relation to the maturity of the micro SME, however this is not the focus of this dissertation but could explored in further research studies.

4.2 Social Media use in SME’s
Unsurprisingly, the questionnaire results show that 100% of respondents use social media within their business. This is also supported by all 4 of the interview respondents who also stated they use social media as a business tool. The questionnaire results identified the specific areas that needed deeper examination and it was these ‘themes’ that consequently were explored during the interview sessions.

4.3 SME Transformation
This theme was drawn from the analysis of the questionnaire data where 100% of reported that they use social media as a business tool. This was based upon the fact they either created their business using social media or they adapted and developed their business to create social media strategies. This was then further studied in the interviews, where 1 micro SME started their business on social media and 3 of them had adapted their business to use social media as a communication tool. Results show that older businesses have had to transform their strategies to use social media whereas newer businesses have used social media from

| Weaknesses of Social Media | Time consuming, more work, never offline, customer driven, unresponsive audience | “its time consuming” Interviewee 2 | 4.9 |
| Future plans | Expand, gain knowledge, want to learn | “If I knew how to, I would definitely use it” Interviewee 3 | 4.10 |
| Other uses | Advertising, brand awareness, loyalty | “I can learn about my target audience” “Instagram allows me to reach a younger audience” Interviewee 1 | 4.11 |
the beginning. This statement is supported by Interviewee 2 whose business is 4 years old states that “I’ve known nothing else, my business has always been on social media”, whereas Interviewee 3 whose business is 14 years old states that “we changed our whole business plan to go with the popularity of social media”.

4.4 Struggles of adapting
This theme emerged during the questionnaires when 5 out of the 15 respondents voiced that they had experienced struggles on certain social media platforms, this also reoccurred during the analysis of interview 3 and 4, they are the older micro SME’s which had their businesses running before social media was used as a business tool. These micro SME’s struggled to adapt their strategies to the new technologies and social media. This theme was based upon codes that appeared frequently through both interview 3 and 4, codes include Difficulty adapting, separating offline and online, and unresponsive. Interviewee 4 felt that their micro SME struggled adapting to being constantly available online “even when I’m home, I’m still on the business account. It’s hard to split personal and business time up”. This theme of struggling to adapt is supported by a comment made by interviewee 3, who struggled transitioning from old communication techniques including landline phone to constant online messaging.

4.5 Knowledge impact on Business
This theme emerged in all of the interviews, based upon codes, little knowledge and more knowledge equals better performance. It was apparent that when micro SME’s were uneducated and had little experience with certain social medias, they could not use it to an advantage and struggled to bring it into their business strategy. Interviewee 1 felt as if her business did not have enough knowledge of twitter to utilize it within their business, this was due to the fact that they found “it difficult to post in 140 characters, its too small for me to engage users and I find it difficult to communicate on”. Interviewee 4 also voiced the same issues as the previous statement made by interviewee 1, that “I don’t know how to use it for my business”. This theme was also found in questionnaires respondents when micro SME’s did not experience any strengths of using a certain platform as they felt as if they didn’t know how to use the platform or how to get their audiences interacting with the business online. Throughout the research it is clear there where micro SME’s have little education of certain social medias, they struggle to use it within their business.
4.6 Popularity of Social Medias

The outcome from the analysis of the questionnaires found that Facebook, Twitter and Instagram were the most popular choice of social media for micro SME’s. This finding supports the literature review section 2.3.1 – 2.3.3 pages 7 to 10, which lists establishes social medias used as a business tool. The questionnaire also allowed insight into which social media out for the three mentioned is utilized most by the respondents. 93.3% said to having Facebook, 53% using twitter and 53.3% having an Instagram page. Further research found within the interviews is that 100% use Facebook, 50% use Twitter and 75% use Instagram.

4.6.1 Facebook

With 93.3% of questionnaire respondents and 100% of interviewees stating that their micro SME has a Facebook profile, shows that Facebook is micro SME’s first choice of social media. Reoccurring rationale behind using Facebook as a business tool is that it allows micro SME’s to communicate, share information, reach a wider audience and also free advertising. Interviewee responses repeat the rationale behind Facebook use. Respondents also voice how often they use Facebook, 53.3% through out the day, and 20% once a day showing that they are bringing it as a main social media platform within their business.

4.6.2 Twitter

Questionnaire results show that 53.3% of the 15 questionnaire respondents and 50% of the 4 micro SME’s Interviewed use Twitter as a business tool. Reoccurring comments made by questionnaire respondents for using Twitter as a business tool is that it provides them with advertising and interaction with wider audience. A respondent also voiced that Twitter “appears not to be a significant value to the business”. Interviewee 2 supports this statement by voicing that Twitter doesn’t provide them with anything in terms of communication, and that it is just creating more work and they are not gaining from using it.

This statement connects and supports section 4.5 Knowledge impact on performance theme page 23, micro SME’s who have little knowledge or feel uneducated with a certain social media, in this case Twitter, struggle to employ it as a communication tool between business and twitter audience.

The questionnaires also allowed the micro SME’s to voice how often they spent using Twitter, results show that 33.3% use it throughout the day but 44.4% voiced that they use it
weekly. This illustrates that it is being used but not to the extent of more popular social media platforms such as Facebook.

### 4.6.3 Instagram

Both the questionnaire and interview research allowed insight into Instagram use within micro SME’s, the research found that 53.3% of questionnaires and 75% of interviewed micro SME’s stated they have an Instagram business page. Respondents also voiced that 60% use Instagram throughout the day, 30% once a day, and 10% rarely. This showing that those who do use Instagram as a business tool are constantly utilizing within their business.

### 4.7 Types of Social Media used for Communication

The questionnaires allowed insight into social media features that the 15 micro SME respondents use to communicate with their customers/users.

#### 4.7.1 Facebook

14 out of 15 (93.3%) Questionnaire respondents stated they use Facebook as a business tool, they also allowed insight into which feature they most use to communicate with their audience, shown in Figure 2. The figure shows that 100% of respondent’s experience that photos get users most engagement and interaction, this is also supported by interviewee 1, who experimented with user engagement found that photo vs. status post, the photo got more interaction, voicing that “more visual equals more engagement and communication”.

![Figure 2](image)

**Figure 2** – Questionnaire results showing which Facebook features micro SME’s use to communicate with users.
4.7.2 Twitter
8 out of the 15 (53.3%) micro SME respondents use twitter as a business tool, there are several ways to communicate on twitter, the questionnaire gave insight into what features the sample micro SME’s use within their business. The results show that the micro SME’s favour tweet post feature over other communicate features available on twitter. It also shows that none of the micro SME’s find direct messages effective on twitter, whereas 85.7% of micro SME found that the private message feature on Facebook is an effective way of communication (figure 2, page 24). It is interesting to note that there was a null response for ‘using direct messages’ on twitter, this supports a theme found in Chapter 5 Knowledge impact on performance, during the research it was evident that micro SME’s had little knowledge of twitter use and implementing it into their businesses plans. This resulted in them not being able to use Twitter to its full potential including direct messages. Whereas with Facebook micro SME’s voiced they found Facebook easy to use and used all features for communication throughout the day, this included private message feature which is the same as Twitter direct message feature.

4.7.3 Instagram
53.3% of the 15 micro SME respondents use Instagram within their business figure 3 shows the features the find most useful when communicating on the social media platform. The figure shows that photo comments and photo posts create the most communication between micro SME’s and customers/users.

![Figure 3](image)

**Figure 3** - Questionnaire results showing which Instagram features micro SME’s use to communicate with users.
4.8 Strengths of Social Media (communication)
This theme emerged during the questionnaire analysis as an initial theme, then further expanded to present further codes within the theme as it reoccurred throughout the interviews. The strengths of social media were based upon the advantages it provided the micro SME’s and the features that allowed the micro SME’s to successfully operate it as a communication tool within their businesses. Codes include, immediate, user interaction, wider audience, business advantage, competitive edge, faster communication, low cost, accessible, everything one place, and new customers. Each of the interviewed micro SME’s had experienced strengths when using certain social media platforms. Evidence to support the theme and codes in discussed in the following 3 sub-sections.

4.8.1 Facebook
Interviewee 1 felt as if Facebook facilitated online communication with their audience, voicing that “I can contact customers faster” and that the messenger is the most used communication feature of Facebook as all messages are in one place and can be accessed through mobile and laptop devices. This is also supported by SME 1, 2, 5 and 6 from the questionnaire analysis who agreed that Facebook provides there SME was fast communication. Interviewee 2 supports the statements that interviewee one made and comments that “as my business is mobile, having that constant accessible communication is great”. Interviewee 3 struggled at first when transitioning from offline to online communication, “at first it made it was harder, more work, but learning how to use it for my business helped, then users were commenting and being more engaged with my posts”. Interview 4 notes that the biggest strength of social media for their micro SME is that “its so quick, responses sent in seconds”.

4.8.2 Twitter
2 out of the 4 micro SMEs interviewed use Twitter as a business tool, they both have had different experiences with it. Interviewee 1 voiced that they felt as if they did not have enough experience using the social media platform to comment on the strengths of it, but they did comment on why they chose to create a business twitter account saying that “wanted to reach a wider audience”, although finding it hard to do so when their customers aren’t using Twitter. Interviewee 2 also had difficulty using this social media platform for communication but did feel as that it allowed them to reach a wider audience. Interviewee 4 also argued that Twitter is harder for small business in comparison to larger business who
have a strong following. These feelings were also found during the analysis of the questionnaires with SME 2 voicing that twitter appears not to be of a significant value to the business and SME 5 states that twitter doesn’t provide the business with anything.

4.8.3 Instagram
3 of the 4 interviews micro SME’s use Instagram as a business tool, strengths and experiences vary in each micro SME. Both Interviewee 1 and 3 stated that Instagram has does not provide the business will strengths in terms of communication but does provide them with other uses which they utilize within their business, discussed in 4.11-page 27. This was also supported by the questionnaire respondents which can also be found in 4.11-page 27.

4.8.4 Social Media as a whole
The theme of strengths of social media in terms of communication is evident throughout the interviews, whether is be a website feature that enables the micro SME’s customer communication to improve or the micro SME’s learning how to use it in a way that strengthens business to customer communication. It is apparent that if a micro SME knows how to use the social media and understand their audience it can be used to improve communication between business and customers/social media user.

4.9 Weaknesses of Social Media
This theme was not specifically directed at individual social media, but social media platforms as a whole. The rationale behind this theme was based upon codes including time consuming, more work, never offline, customer driven, unresponsive audience. All interviews state that they have struggled with the time consuming and being constantly available in all social media platforms. Interviewee 1 communicated that “it can be difficult to be constantly available online”, Interviewee 2 also felt this way voicing that social media is “time consuming as users want to see new content everyday”. Where as the questionnaire respondents voiced specific platforms weaknesses, SME 3 voiced that the 140-character limit was too small to work with. This comment could also relate back to the main theme knowledge impact on performance.

4.10 Future Plans
All 4 interviewees voiced the theme of having future strategic plans to expand social media, this theme was based upon codes including expand, gain knowledge, want to learn. For those
micro SME’s struggling to use certain social media their future plans were to gain knowledge and make sure they understand how to use it before creating a business account. Interviewee 2 wants to learn how to use Twitter and then implement it into their business plan. Whereas Interviewee 1 plans to expand her social media to using LinkedIn and network with business and communicate with local businesses. Questionnaire results show that 10 of out the 15 micro SME’s have future plan for social media use within their business, these ranged from expanding into new social medias such as LinkedIn, planning to utilize certain social medias more and having a set business plan for it and gaining knowledge of Instagram as business tool.

4.11 Other Uses
Social media provides micro SME’s with more than just a means of communication, although each micro SME interviews states that communication is the main strength of using social media as a business tool, there are other advantages that were mentioned throughout the interviews and questionnaires. This theme is based upon codes including advertising, brand awareness, loyalty. Where social media such as Instagram were said not to be best for communication, interviewees voiced other advantages of using it. For example, Interviewee 1 commented that “Instagram allows me to reach a younger audience”. Interviewee 2 voiced that “Instagram is great for getting the customers involved, they work with visuals. It gets them interested in the company”. Each social media provides micro SME’s with a plethora of uses to further their business, uses mentioned during interviews and questionnaires are customer engagement, wider audience, customer interaction, business-to-customer relationship, marketing, and new customers. Questionnaire respondents also noted a plethora of other uses for social media they had come across when using social media as a communication tool. SME 4 stated that their business to customer relationships were so much strong since using social media and SME 2 voiced that it allows the business to keep an eye on local competition and keep an eye on their business industry.

4.13 Research Findings Summary
The research allowed for both qualitative and quantitative data to be obtained, the research was analysed using thematic analysis. The 7 themes that emerged from both the interviews and questionnaires were themes that stood out most within the obtained data, these are discussed in the next chapter.
Chapter 5 – Discussion of Findings

5.0 Introduction
The aim of this dissertation is to examine the use of social media in micro SME’s in England, this chapter sets out to discuss and cross examine the findings of research in terms of the literature review, and the dissertation aims and objectives. The cross-examination of all these elements will support and act as a strong evidence base and contribute to the body of knowledge in the current domain. Through the use of interviews and questionnaires data was obtained and then further analysed to produce 7 themes. The themes that developed during the analysis stood out as relevant themes to both the dissertation aim and objectives.

5.1 Review of Literature
The following sections discuss how the research findings can be aligned, either positively or negatively, back to the critical literature review in chapter 2.

5.1.1 Introduction
Chapter 2 defined that micro SME’s are the largest type of business in the UK and England, it also demonstrated that as a result of the up rise in popularity with the internet and social media everyone including micro SME’s have had to adapt themselves and are now bringing it in to their everyday business plans. Constant Contact (2011) acknowledged in the literature review found that 81% of the sample used social media in their business, the findings of this research supports both the previous statement and Constant Contract (2011) showing that 15/15 questionnaire respondents and 4/4 intervieweees voicing that they use social media as a business tool. This finding also supports the first objective of this dissertation to identify social media use as a business tool, this is discussed in section 5.2.1, page 30.

5.1.2 Social Media as a communication tool
The literature review also allowed insight into the use of social media as communication tool and the types of social media platform used for this. Jagongo and Kinyua (2013) voiced that the main use of social media is for communication, this statement is supported by the findings through comments including “Facebook makes communication easy” (Interview, 4) “the fast interaction is much easier than ringing clients” (Interview 3).
5.1.3 Three Main social media platforms
The literature review covered 3 social media platforms that were seen relevant for business use, these include Facebook a social networking site, Twitter a microblogging site and Instagram a photo sharing site. These are the 3 main social medias found in the research that micro SME’s use, the questionnaires found that 93.3% said to having Facebook, 53% using twitter and 53.3% having an Instagram page, interviews also produced some statistics on the social medias they brought into their business, 100% using Facebook, 50% using Twitter and 75% using Instagram, these findings support the literature reviews statement on the most popular and relevant platforms for communication use in micro SME’s. In addition, findings also show that micro SME’s are choosing to experiment with less popular platforms such as Tumblr, LinkedIn. This shows that micro SME’s are becoming more knowledgeable with social media and are using their innovative to venture into new social medias to future their business.

5.1.4 Facebook
A key issue identified in the literature review reflects how micro SME’s struggle to manage effective communication with customers. It was evident that this was an issue of main concern due to the number of times it was voiced in the interviews. All interviewees voiced that even though the constant availability and ease of messaging is a great feature of Facebook, they found it hard to manage, struggling with users sending messages at all hours, and that they would be up all night replying to comments and messages. The literature reviews also covered Facebook monitoring features stating that 66% of businesses using Facebook admit not using any form of monitoring because they consider it to be complicated (Moth, 2012). The rationale argued in the literature review is supported by comments made by micro SME’s during the interviews. Interviewee 2 expressed that “I don’t know how to use it, I can kind of monitor by seeing what gets the most responses in like and comments” where others who knew about Facebook analytics were able to use it to experiment and bring it into their business plans, Interviewee 1 was able to experiment with post types and find out what her audience was most engaged with and what resulted in the most communication and orders for their business.

5.1.5 Twitter
The Consultancy Home Counties (2011) indicated the main rationale for using twitter as a business tool is that it allows micro SME’s communication to be both targeted and
personalised, the research found otherwise, all 2 out of the 4 interviewed micro SME’s commented on how they found it difficult to communicate within the 140-character limit. The two who chose not to felt as if they did not have enough knowledge of the platform to bring it into their business plan. This theme reoccurs throughout the interviews, further discussion of knowledge of social media impacting performance is discussed in section 4.5 page 23.

5.1.6 Instagram

The literature allowed insight into photo sharing social media platforms, and outlined that Instagram is the most popular platform. All though the findings show that Instagram provides micro SME’s with no significant communication advantages when they use it as a business tool, the findings do show that it supports Miles (2013), Clasen (2015) and Atkinson (2014), in that Instagram provides businesses into building online communities, increases user engagement and branding online.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings

Thematic analysis was used to analysis the data obtained during the interviews and the qualitative areas of the questionnaire research. This analysis technique was chosen, as it allowed for themes found to act as evidence for the dissertations aims and objectives. Table 3 presents a summary of the 7 themes found during the analysis and aligns them to the dissertation objectives they relate to.

Table 3 - Objectives in relation to themes found in research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Media as a business tool</td>
<td>• Micro SME Transformation,</td>
<td>Evidence through out questionnaires and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Struggles of Adapting</td>
<td>interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowledge impact on Performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To evaluate types of Social Media used</td>
<td>Evidence in all questionnaires discussed in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication</td>
<td>4.6 and 4.7</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
To analyse the strengths and weaknesses of social media communication

- Strengths of Social Media
- Weaknesses of Social Media

Evidence through out questionnaires and interviews

To produce detailed recommendations for social media

- Future Plans
- Other Uses

Evidence through out questionnaires and interviews

The following sections, will include a discussion on how the findings during the questionnaires and interviews relate to the dissertation objectives.

5.2.1 Objective 1

*To identify use of Social Media as a business tool*

The observation that social media is being used by micro SME’s as a business tool was made during Chapter 2, evidence of the findings supporting this statement and objective 1 is that a 100% of questionnaire respondents and 100% of the interviewed micro SME’s said that they use social media within their business. Having all research respondents say ‘yes’ to using social media within their business allowed for the research to further and allowed insight into their experiences views of social media as a communication business tool. The themes that relate to this objective can be found above in Table 3, these themes and codes emerged during this analysis of both interviews and questionnaires. The interviewed micro SME’s all voiced themes of transforming their business to be able to take their business onto social media, this meant creating new business plan and adapting to the new strategies. This takes us to the next theme, when using social media as a business tool for communication the main struggle founded in the research is that micro SME’s discovered that they had difficult adapting to the constantly availability and the business always being online. The final theme that related to this objective is **knowledge impact on performance**. The interviewed micro SME’s found that when they felt educated in a specific social media they performed better, whereas those who felt unknowledgeable and did not know how to implement social media into their business struggled see any significance into employing it.
5.2.2 Objective 2

*To evaluate types of Social Media used for communication*

Safko and Brake (2009) cited in chapter 2 gave insight into the relevant social media platform that are used by micro SME’s these being, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The findings support this statement, will all interviewees and questionnaire micro SME’s using one or more of the 3 social media platforms. In addition to the 3 social media platforms mentioned, 3 out of the 15 questionnaire respondents voiced that they utilize LinkedIn as a business tool. The objective was met by both interview and questionnaire findings. The questionnaire allowed insight into what features of the social media platforms they found best for communication between business and customer/user. Micro SME’s favoured photo, status and private message feature on Facebook, whereas micro SME’s found posting tweets the most effective feature to communicate with users, lastly micro SME’s voiced that photo comments and photo posts the best way to communicate. The interviews allowed further insight into how the monitor performance of their business on social media, all social media can be monitored either by the social media platform feature or an external website, these were established during chapter by Naidu (2015), Digital Kitbag (2014) and The Small Business Guide to Instagram (2013). The findings established that micro SME’s either understand and used the monitoring features to further their business or micro SME’s did not understand how the features worked and did not implement them with in their business, this also supports theme **knowledge impact on performance**. To conclude this objective, any social media platform can be used as a communication tool as long as the micro SME understand how it works and how to adapt their business to it.

5.2.3 Objective 3

*To analyse the strengths and weaknesses of social media communication*

All research respondents voiced that they had experienced strengths and weaknesses when using social media as a communication tool, the codes that reoccurred allowed for a theme to develop and allow objective 3 to be met. Each micro SME’s has different experiences with using each social media platform, these can be seen in Section 4.8 – 4.9. The main strengths of social media as a communication tool is that it is immediate, accessible, and allows micro SME’s to access a wider audience. Interviewee 2 voiced that for their micro SME it is the main way of business to customer communication, Interviewee 3 also established the significant strengths to using social media as a communication tool, these being that it is all in one place, everything is organised and can be accessed on the move by mobile and tablet
devices. Micro SME’s also experienced weaknesses to using social media as a communication tool, the issue that was repeated throughout the research and covering all social media platforms, is that micro SME’s found it time consuming. Micro SME’s found that as well as working on social media during working hours, they would also have to be using it out of work hours, especially for communication with users. Another issue that micro SME’s experienced is that social media is user driven, micro SME’s could post photos, videos and comments but they could not act upon it until their users had communicated with them. As a result of this Interview 1 learnt that to get users engaged and interacting with the business social media they would have to create enticing posts and learn what their audience wants to see. What has been concluded from the findings of this research, is that micro SME’s experience both advantages and weaknesses of using social media as a communication, but with experience and knowledge micro SME’s can successfully implement social media into their business plans and improve business to customer/user communication.

5.2.4 Objective 4

*To produce recommendations for social media*

This objective is discussed and met in section 6.4-page 42

5.3 Discussion Summary

This chapter has discussed how the findings of the research relate to the literature and meet the objectives of this dissertation.
Chapter 6 – Conclusion

6.1 Introduction
This final chapter of this dissertation will include concluding statements from the findings in relation to the dissertations aim and objectives. The main themes that have emerged from the analysis have aligned with the objective of this dissertation. Recommendations will be made to the micro SME’s; this will also meet objective four. Limitations and areas for improvements for the research will be discussed and an insight how the research from this dissertation can be taken further. Finally, this chapter will end with a reflecting statement reviewing how this dissertation has gone.

6.2 Conclusion
This dissertation has evaluated the use of social media as a communication tool in micro SME’s based in England. Chapter 2 was used to observe the use of social media being used as a communication tool in micro SMEs. The rationale for focusing the study of micro SME’s based in England came from two statistics brought forward in the literature. Micro SME’s are the largest type of business in the UK (House of Commons, 2014). Focusing on regions in the UK, England provided the largest number of micro SME’s compared to other regions in the UK (Department of Business Innovation and Skills, 2015). The literature also covered the evolution of social media and how it has become such a vital part of out every day lives and how it has slowly transitioned its way into being used by micro SME’s. Authors also provided insight into which social media were most relevant to micro SME use, this created a platform in which the study was based upon. It allowed the research to be focus on 3 social media platforms, these being Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. By focusing on these 3 social media the research was designed to meet the aim and objective of this dissertation. The findings of the research supported the authors in the literature and also contributed to he knowledge by finding themes that were not covered in the literature.

The chosen data analysis technique was best suited to this dissertation, as it allowed for the identification of patterns within the obtained data. As discussed in chapter 4 and 5, the discovered themes relate and support to the literature provided in chapter 2. In addition, the themes discovered also align themselves with the objectives set out by the dissertation, this can be seen in Table 3, page 36.
The findings of this study align back to the literature provided in chapter two, it also illustrates a contribution to the current knowledge within this domain. The study found that micro SME’s experience both strengths and weaknesses of social media no matter what platform they are using. Strengths found in study included building business to customer relations through the use of communication on social media, and also allowing micro SME’s to create an online persona in which the users feel as if they can communicate with the business and build strong business to customer relationships. The main weaknesses founded during the study was not social media based, but a weakness of the micro SME’s them self. This also ties in with the main theme found of knowledge impact on performance, the weakness of a micro SME having lack of experience and knowledge of social media platforms seriously affected how the business would perform on social media sites. Overall the study has proven that social media use has become/is becoming a vital part of micro SME’s business plans. When they utilize it properly and have knowledge of making it work for their business they can expect to see a vast improvement in their business to customer communication.

6.3 Contribution to the Body of Knowledge - Original Findings

The originality of this study comes from the findings of the research, more specifically the main theme found, this being knowledge impact on performance. This theme is connected to all the other themes found in the research. The knowledge a micro SME has of a certain social media, reflects the types of social media they chose to use as a communication tool. If a micro SME felt as if they understood a certain social media and knew how to adapt it to their business. The SME would experience strengths of social media for communication, whereas those who felt as if they had little knowledge of a certain social media and tried to implement it within their business plan, would often struggle to adapt and experience the weaknesses of social media. Whether the SME’s has knowledge of social media or not, the study shows that they still experience a plethora of other uses for social media other than just using it as a communication tool. To support the statement that all themes are connected to the main theme of knowledge impact on performance, Micro SME’s who did not use certain social media due to not understanding it or not knowing how to implement it into their business voiced that they would gain more knowledge and then adapt it to their business plan. Whereas those who understood the social media they were using, wanted to expand their social media platforms and venturing into new social media. Thus revealing that all micro SME’s studied have future plans with social media.
6.4 Recommendations
To address the 4th objective of this dissertation some recommendations have been suggested. The main recommendation to come from the study and this dissertation is for micro SME’s to learn and understand a social media before they implement into their business plan. As the study shows knowledge impacts performance. Once a micro SME feels as if they understand and know how to adapt it to their business then they can move forth with implementing it. By failing to prepare, micro SME’s can expect to struggle implement it and also not get the outcomes they want from it. The second recommendation stems for other uses theme, as communication is just one of the uses of social media. SME’s can use social media for advertising, brand awareness, low cost marketing and also reaching a wider audience. Once a micro SME acknowledges the other uses of social media, they can adapt their business plan and expect to see improvements in all areas of their business to customer interaction online.

6.5 Limitations and Areas of Improvements
The findings in the study have met the 4 objectives of this dissertation and has exhibited that social media is being used in micro SME’s as a business tool. A limitation to the study was sample size, 15 questionnaire respondents and 4 were interviewed. A greater sample size would strengthen the validity of the results and theme that emerged during the analysis. Also geographical focus, the study focused on micro SME’s based in England, expanding to other regions of the UK, would allow for further validation of themes and could also produce new data in terms of experiences of social media as a communication tool.

6.6 Further Research
The most prominent areas of further research is by completing the limitations founded in 6.4. As the study has established social media use in micro SME’s it would be interesting to see how it compares to the use of social media in macro SME’s. This would enable both micro and macro SME’s to see how other types of business utilizes and adapt their businesses to social media. Carrying on with the comparison of micro and macro SME, further research into the other uses of social media would provide business insight into how they can use social medias to their full potential. To connect with the findings of the research mentioned in 4.1 page 22, a further study could be completed to look at whether the maturity of an SME affects the rate of social media and the social media platforms they choose to implement into their businesses.
6.7 Reflection
To reflect this dissertation experience, it has run smoothly and has stuck to the initial plan. Problems that arose during the dissertation process were overcome and implications were insignificant. Overall this dissertation has allowed me to gain valuable knowledge of research and allowed insight into understand social media as a communication tool for micro SMEs.
7.0 List of References


Barnes, N. G. (2010). Tweeting and Blogging to the Top How do the most successful companies use social media? Marketing Research, 22(1), Spr, pp. 8-13.


**8.0 Bibliography**


9.0 Appendices

Appendix A – Ethics Application Submission
When undertaking a research or enterprise project, Cardiff Met staff and students are obliged to complete this form in order that the ethics implications of that project may be considered. The document Ethics application guidance notes will help you complete this form. It is available from the Cardiff Met website. The School or Unit in which you are based may also have produced some guidance documents, please consult your supervisor or School Ethics Coordinator.

Once you have completed the form, sign the declaration and forward to the appropriate person(s) in your School or Unit.

PLEASE NOTE:
Participant recruitment or data collection MUST NOT commence until ethics approval has been obtained.

PART ONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of applicant:</th>
<th>Kathryn Agripping</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor (if student project):</td>
<td>Dr. Hilary Berger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School / Unit:</td>
<td>CSM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student number (if applicable):</td>
<td>ST20044093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme enrolled on (if applicable):</td>
<td>BSc (Hons) Business Information Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title:</td>
<td>Social Media: Evaluation of How Micro SME’s in England use Social Media as a Communication Tool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected start date of data collection:</td>
<td>25/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate duration of data collection:</td>
<td>4-5 Weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Body (if applicable):</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other researcher(s) working on the project:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study involve NHS patients or staff?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study involve taking samples of human origin from participants?</td>
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<th>Does your project fall entirely within one of the following categories:</th>
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<td>Paper based, involving only documents in the public domain</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laboratory based, not involving human participants or human tissue samples</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice based not involving human participants (e.g. curatorial, practice audit)</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compulsory projects in professional practice (e.g. Initial Teacher Education)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A project for which external approval has been obtained (e.g., NHS)</td>
<td>No</td>
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If you have answered YES to any of these questions, expand on your answer in the non-technical summary. No further information regarding your project is required.
If you have answered NO to all of these questions, you must complete Part 2 of this form

In no more than 150 words, give a non-technical summary of the project

This project sets out to examine how micro SME’s in England use Social Media, with the focus on communication. It will look at the evolution of Social Media and how communication has evolved with technology and the internet. It will also look at the types of social media used by micro SME’s in England and also analyse the strengths and weakness of Social Media use in micro SME’s. The project will use 4 micro SME’s using interviews and online questionnaires, allowing the examination of social media use in SME’s in England.

**DECLARATION:**

I confirm that this project conforms with the Cardiff Met Research Governance Framework

I confirm that I will abide by the Cardiff Met requirements regarding confidentiality and anonymity when conducting this project.

STUDENTS: I confirm that I will not disseminate any material produced as a result of this project without the prior approval of my supervisor.

Signature of the applicant: K.Agrippa

Date: 27/11/2015

**FOR STUDENT PROJECTS ONLY**

Name of supervisor: 

Signature of supervisor: 

**Research Ethics Committee use only**

<table>
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<th>Decision deferred</th>
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Details of any conditions upon which approval is dependant:

**PART TWO**

A RESEARCH DESIGN

A1 Will you be using an approved protocol in your project? No

A2 If yes, please state the name and code of the approved protocol to be used

A3 Describe the research design to be used in your project

This dissertation uses a pragmatism research philosophy, the research study will involve a multi method strategy utilising both quantitative and qualitative data gathering methods and

1 An Approved Protocol is one which has been approved by Cardiff Met to be used under supervision of designated members of staff; a list of approved protocols can be found on the Cardiff Met website here
an inductive approach the empirical data collected will meet the research objectives. Online questionnaires and Interviews will be used to collect primary data and will be developed from the analysis of current literature within the given domain. Online questionnaires will consist of open and closed questions and the interview will be semi-structured.

The online questionnaire will be distributed to micro SME’s in England to gain quantitative information on how their current and possible use of social media within their business with the focus on communication. They will be distributed through email and aim to receive 15 complete online questionnaires. Participation will be purely optional and should take no longer than 10-15 minutes. All data will be confidential and participants will remain anonymous. In addition, all data will be securely stored in a pass word protected file. Skype Interviews will be conducted with 4 micro SME’s. The interviews will be used to achieve detailed and expand on results of the questionnaires. Each interview will be scheduled in advance and will be semi structured. All data and information received during the interviews will be confidential and participants will remain anonymous. In addition, all data will be securely stored in a pass word protected file.

Data analysis involves a thematic approach where data are organised into common genres and then further analysed to draw out key issues. Interviews and Questionnaires will be coded and themes developed, ensuring that the anonymity of the interviewees is maintained.

A4 Will the project involve deceptive or covert research?  No
A5 If yes, give a rationale for the use of deceptive or covert research
Click here to enter text.
A6 Will the project have security sensitive implications?  No
A7 If yes, please explain what they are and the measures that are proposed to address them
N/A

B PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE
B1 What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project do you have?  None
B2 Student project only
What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project does your supervisor have?  Dr Hilary Berger has over 12 years of research involving human participants

C POTENTIAL RISKS
C1 What potential risks do you foresee?

1) Arranging interviews – causing inconvenience to interviewees during their working day.
2) Participants not involved as much as expected with the questionnaire.
3) Participants not giving honest opinions about the issue presented.
4) Researcher may be short of time and overwhelmed with other projects simultaneously.
5) Project may not be completed in the specific time required.
6) May unintentionally misrepresent Cardiffmet.
7) Interviewees and sample worried about the security of the data they are giving out during the interview and questionnaires.

C2 How will you deal with the potential risks?
1) The interviews will be arranged in advance and as they will be done over the internet they will be easy to reschedule as there is no travel involved.

2) Sending open invitations to participate in the using online questionnaire to reach out as many people as possible.

3) Focused questions with specific answers choices to collect as much detailed answers as possible.

4) Stay focused on studies by giving time to each project.

5) Preparing a Gantt chart to make a time plan for the project several stages.

6) The researcher will conduct herself and behave in a manner that will not bring Cardiffmet into disrepute.

7) All data will be held on a secure password protected external hard drive and paper copies will be kept in a locked cupboard. Access to the data will be restricted to the contributor and supervisor. Questionnaires will have no trace back to the contributor.

When submitting your application, you **MUST** attach a copy of the following:

- All information sheets
- Consent/assent form(s)

An exemplar information sheet and participant consent form are available from the Research section of the Cardiff Met website.
Appendix B – Ethics Approval

Hi Kaye, here is your ethics number.

Hi Kaye, here is your ethics number.

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<td>2014093</td>
<td>Agrippa</td>
<td>Kathryn</td>
<td>ISS</td>
<td>Dr Hilary Berger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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#cardiffmet150

150 years of nurturing talent
150 years of fostering nation

Cardiff University
Appendix C – Participant Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET - FOR INTERVIEWS DATA COLLECTION
Social Media: Evaluation of How Micro SME’s in England use Social Media as a Communication Tool.
Ethics Number: 2015D0575

Project summary
The purpose of this research project is to examine how micro SME’s in England use Social Media as a communication business tool. The research will look at the different types of social media and how they have been adapted into your business strategy. Your participation will enable the collection of data which will form part of a study being undertaken at Cardiff Metropolitan University.

Why have you been asked to participate?
You have been asked to participate in to the research as you fit the profile of the population being studied: you work for a SME in England.
During the interview you will be asked a series of questions in relation to the use of social media in your business. The questions will not target any personal information, although if you feel uncomfortable with the questions asked you can refuse to answer. The questions will be based on finding out the different types of social media used in the business with the focus on communication, and also how you have adapted it to fit your business strategy. The information you provide will help gain insight into the use of social media in businesses in England.
Your participation is entirely voluntary and you withdraw at any time.

Project risks
The research involves the completion of an interview, the data from the interview will be recorded for later analysis. During this research we will not ask for any sensitive data, this study is based on the use of social media in your business, mainly focused on communication and how you’ve adapted social media to your business strategy.
All questions are opinion based and do not ask for personal details and data will be logged anonymously. However, if you find any of the questions inappropriate then you can stop at any time. Furthermore, you can change your mind and withdraw from the study at any time – we will completely respect your decision.

How we protect your privacy
All the information you provide will be held in confidence. We have taken careful steps to make sure that you cannot be directly identified from the questionnaire form; there is no information on these questionnaires that will identify you. Your personal details (e.g. signature on the consent form) and your questionnaire will be kept in secure locations by the research team. When we have finished the study and analysed all the information, all the documentation used to gather the data will be destroyed. The recordings of the focus groups/interview will also be held in a secure and confidential environment during the study and destroyed when it is complete.
YOU WILL BE OFFERED A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET TO KEEP

If you require any further information about this project, then please contact:
Kate Agrippa, Cardiff Metropolitan University, CMU email: st20044093@outlook.cardiffmet.ac.uk or Dr Hilary Burger Supervisor email: Hberger@cardiffmet.ac.uk

Hilary Burger
Supervisor
Hberger@cardiffmet.ac.uk
Appendix D - **Online Questionnaire Consent Form**  
**School of Management, Cardiff Metropolitan University**

**Social Media: Evaluation of How Micro SME’s in England use Social Media as a Communication Tool.**  
*Ethics Number - 2015D0575*

This project has received the approval of Cardiff School of Managements’ Ethics Committee, Cardiff Metropolitan University.

I understand that my participation in this project will involve completing an online application about the use of social media in SME’s in England, which will take approximately 10 minutes of my time.

I understand that participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason or I can discuss my concerns with Kate Agrippa, st20044093@outlook.cardiffmet.ac.uk

I understand that any identifying information provided by me will be held confidentially, such that only Kate Agrippa can trace this information back to me individually.

I understand that my data will be stored on password protected computers, anonymized after completion of the survey and that no one will be able to trace my information back to me. The raw data will be retained for up to three years when it will be deleted/destroyed.

Submission of completed questionnaires will be taken an informed consent.

Thank you very much for contributing towards the project and participating in the research.
Appendix E – Online Questionnaire design

Social Media: Evaluation of How Micro SME’s in England use Social Media as a Communication Tool.

I am a student at the Cardiff School of Management. The aim of my research is to evaluate the use of social media by England based micro SME’s as a communication tool. Please complete each question by either putting your answer in the space provided or circling the appropriate response. At the end of the questionnaire you will be asked to submit your responses. Submission will be taken as voluntary informed consent. All your responses are confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this research. Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey.

Ethics number - 2015D0575

Kate Agrippa
St2044093@outlook.cardiffmet.ac.uk

Cardiff School of Management
Cardiff Metropolitan University
Llandaff Campus, Western Avenue,
Cardiff, CF5 2YB
Tel: +44 (0)29 2041 XXX
Section One: Background questions

1) How many years has the business been running?
________________________

2) Do you use social media as a business tool?
☐ Yes
☐ No

3) If Yes which of the following do you use?
☐ Social Networking – Facebook
☐ Microblogging – Twitter
☐ Photo Sharing – Instagram

If the answer is “None” go to section Four!

1) Do you have a Facebook business page?
☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes please answer the following, if no please go to the next section.

2) How often do you use Facebook as a business tool?
☐ Throughout the day
☐ Once a Day
☐ Weekly
☐ Monthly
☐ Rarely

3) What does Facebook provide your business with? (In terms of communication)
________________________
________________________
________________________

4) Which of the following do you use to communicate with Facebook Users?
☐ Status Posts
☐ Photos
☐ Videos
☐ Comments
☐ Private Messages

5) Which of the following do you find the most effective way to communicate with Facebook Users?
☐ Status Posts
☐ Photos
☐ Videos
1) **Do you have a Twitter business page?**
   - Yes
   - No

   If yes please answer the following, if no please go to the next section.

2) **How often do you use Twitter as a business tool?**
   - Throughout the day
   - Once a Day
   - Weekly
   - Monthly
   - Rarely

3) **What does Twitter provide your business with? (In terms of communication)**
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

4) **Which of the following do you use to communicate with Twitter Users?**
   - Tweets (Posts)
   - Twitter Replies
   - Private Messages

5) **Which of the following do you find the most effective way to communicate with Twitter Users?**
   - Tweets (Posts)
   - Twitter Replies
   - Private Messages

---

**Section Four: Photo Sharing - Instagram**

1) **Do you have an Instagram business page?**
   - Yes
   - No

   If yes please answer the following, if no please go to the next section.

2) **How often do you use Instagram as a business tool?**
   - Throughout the day
3) **What does Instagram provide your business with? (In terms of communication)**

________________________
________________________
________________________

4) **Which of the following do you use to communicate with Instagram Users?**
   - □ Photo Comments
   - □ Replying to Photo Comments
   - □ Photo Posts

5) **Which of the following do you find the most effective way to communicate with Instagram Users?**
   - □ Photo Comments
   - □ Replying to Photo Comments
   - □ Photo Posts

---

Section Five: Social Media

Are there any other social media not mentioned you use are a business tool?

________________________
________________________

2) **Do you have plans to expand your social media use?**

________________________
________________________

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey
Dear XXX
As a final year student at Cardiff Metropolitan University studying a BSc (Hons) Business Information Systems degree I am conducting a research study. The title of my thesis is “Social Media: Evaluation of How Micro SME’s in England use Social Media as a Communication Tool”. Its aim is to examine how SME’s in England have adapted and utilize social media as a communication tool into their business strategy. As part of my research I would like to undertake research with people who are employed in a service industry company at supervisory level and below. I am writing to you because XXX fits the profile of this type of organisation and also employs a sufficient number of employees so as to provide a large enough number of potential participants. This research project has received ethics approval from Cardiff Metropolitan University and all data collection will be in accordance with the university’s ethics code of practice safeguarding the confidentiality and anonymity of the company and its employees.
My purpose in writing is to ask if you would complete the questionnaire attached. Your participation would be entirely voluntary, neither you or the company would be identified in the research and it would only take 10 to 15 minutes for you to complete a questionnaire.
The areas which would be covered by the questionnaire include:
- Types of Social Media used in the business
- How often are they used
- What features of social media do you use
I shall be very happy to make the results of my research available to XXX as a participant in the research when it is complete. If you would like to participate in this project and or are interested in discussing it further, please contact me on St20044093@outlook.cardiffmet.ac.uk or my dissertation supervisor Dr Hilary Berger Hberger@cardiffmet.ac.uk
Thank you in anticipation.
Yours sincerely
Kate Agrippa
Appendix G - Participant Consent Form

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Cardiff Metropolitan University Ethics Reference Number: 2015D0575

Participant name or Study ID Number:


Name of Researcher: Kate Agrippa

Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

3. I agree to take part in the above study.

4. I agree to the interview being written down

5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications

6. I agree to my quotes being attributed to me

______________________________   ___________________
Signature of Participant
Date

______________________________  ___________________
Name of person taking consent
Date

Signature of person taking consent

*When completed, 1 copy for participant & 1 copy for researcher site file
Appendix H – Interview Design

SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order of semi structured Interview</th>
<th>Discussed</th>
<th>Related to question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Ask respondent approval to use recording systems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask respondent to sign and acknowledge consent form</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Ask Background questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Age of the organisation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• respondents position</td>
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<tr>
<td>• years working for the organisation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Level of study</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) Discuss about Experience</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• What types of social media have you used in your business in terms of communication?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is there a specific type of social media you’ve used more frequently?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In your opinion what is the biggest challenge faced when using social media as a communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>business tool?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4) Discuss about Facebook Use</td>
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<tr>
<td>Probes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Do you have a business Facebook page?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What are the main challenges you face when using Facebook as a business tool for communication?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bad Comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What are the main advantages of using Facebook as a business tool for communication ?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Do you use the Facebook activity monitoring tool (discuss what features they use)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5) Discuss about Twitter Use</td>
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<td>• Do you have a business Twitter page?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What are the main challenges you face when using Twitter as a business tool for communication?</td>
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<td>• Reviews</td>
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<td>Bad Comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What are the main advantages of using Twitter as a business tool for communication ?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How do you monitor communication and reviews of the business on twitter?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5) Discuss about Instagram Use</td>
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<td>Probes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Do you have a business Instagram page?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What are the main challenges you face when using Instagram as a business tool for communication?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What are the main advantages of using Instagram as a business tool for communication ?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
• How do you monitor communication and reviews of the business on Instagram?

6) **Discuss Overall Social Media Use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Probes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Are there any social medias you would like to adapt to your business strategy and why?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How has social media affected communication in your business?</td>
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<td>• Do you find it helpful social media as a way of communicating with customers?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Which social media do you find most useful for you and why</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What is a limitation you have experienced on a social media platform? How did you overcome this?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>