THE CORE CONSTRUCTS OF CUSTOMER ENGAGING SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITIES: A NARRATIVE REVIEW OF B2B SOCIAL MEDIA LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to highlight the core constructs of B2B social media activities which can enhance customer engagement by conducting a narrative review of the current B2B social media marketing literature. This study contributes to the existing industrial marketing communication literature by identifying the core constructs of engaging B2B social media activities in two different perspectives: in acquiring new customers and in maintaining existing customer relationships. By reviewing 47 key articles of the subject and conducting content analysis this paper proposes interactivity, content, customization and WOM to be the core constructs of engaging social media activities in B2B settings. However, based on the review, even the core constructs are present at both case in acquiring new customers and enhancing existing ones, any distinctions between these two approaches couldn't be drawn. For the B2B managerial purposes, this article proposes organizational support, understanding the customers, social media goals, resources and skills to be important factors to precede before building customer engaging social media activities among new and existing customers.

Keywords: Social media marketing, business to business, customer engagement, narrative review

INTRODUCTION

In recent years the importance and usage of social media as a channel in business to business (B2B) companies' marketing communication has rapidly increased (Siamagka *et al.,* 2015). 93 % of B2B companies were using social media in 2013 compared to 2011 when only 66 % reported to utilize it (Leek *et al.,* 2016). Social media marketing uses social network activities (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, blogs, etc.) for marketing purposes (Keinänen and Kuivalainen, 2015) and many researches report that B2B companies have started to utilize more and more social media in their marketing communication and customer relationship management (CRM) programs (Siamagka *et.al.,* 2015, Karjaluoto *et al.,* 2015, Broekemier *et al.,* 2015). According to studies customer engagement is an important part of the CRM (Vivek *et al.,* 2012) and social media has been found to increase the customer engagement (Harrigan *et al.,* 2015) leading to successful marketing communication and company profitability (Vivek *et al.,* 2012). Companies have started to move from fighting against social media challenges and barriers to developing their skills in social media marketing and creating customer engaging activities in order to create customer value (Kiron *et al.,* 2013). However, the findings of those researches also suggest that B2B companies have not yet used social media to its full potential in their overall marketing communication (Broekemier *et al.,* 2015), they are still facing many challenges, they do not see the benefits of social media (Keinänen *et al.,* 2015) and B2B companies are falling behind business to consumers (B2C) companies in the usage of social media and engaging customers (Wiersema, 2013). Yet, B2B customers are changing their buying behavior, searching and requiring information from social media (Andzulis *et.al.,* 2012, Wiersema, 2013), increasingly using online activities to support their decisions (Järvinen and Taiminen, 2016) and limiting direct and personal byer-

seller contacts (Schultz *et al.,* 2012 cited from Lacoste, 2016) This puts high pressures to B2B companies to use and exploit social media channels in their customer relationships.

What comes to research, social media marketing is also getting more and more attention. However, social media marketing studies are mainly focused in B2C context (Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011) and only fraction of recent studies are exploring social media in B2B marketing communications (Siamagka *et al.,* 2015). Despite significant investments (Swani *et al.,* 2014) and the apparent use of social media in B2B companies there is a limited understanding of how to utilize social media effectively in B2B companies marketing communication (Karjaluoto *et al.,* 2015; Keinänen *et al.,* 2015; Habibi *et al.,* 2015; Siamagka *et al.,* 2015) B2C and B2B companies have different characteristics which create the need to utilize social media differently and conduct separate researches among these two contexts (Swani *et al.,* 2014). The academic discussion around B2B social media marketing is still very fragmented and unclear (Leek *et al.,* 2011). Narrative review, used in this study, pulls together, characterizes and conceptualizes information in a specific topic taken from heterogeneous literature and presents a broad perspective on the topic (Green *et al.,* 2006). The information received from narrative review is up to date which helps practitioners. The B2B practitioners show growing interest on social media marketing and engaging activities, but the lack of research and guidance to support their decision-making, calls for further research efforts in this field.

The purpose of this study is to review the growing body of research done in the field of B2B companies' social media barriers, challenges, benefits, opportunities and goals. Based on the review and special characteristics of B2B markets this study identifies key elements of engaging B2B social media activities. More precisely, a narrative review of the current B2B social media marketing literature is conducted and the core constructs of B2B social media activities which can enhance customer engagement are identified. Because of the nature of B2B markets the companies' emphasis is on customer relationships management (CRM) which includes the whole customer base, not just acquiring new customers but also keeping the old ones. Social media provides a tool for companies which either try to acquire new customers or retain existing ones with the marketing communication (Malthouse *et al.,* 2013). This paper contributes to the existing industrial marketing communication literature by revealing the core constructs of customer engaging B2B social media activities in these both approaches: core constructs of B2B social media activities which can enhance customer engagement in acquiring new customers and core constructs of B2B social media activities which can enhance customer engagement in maintaining existing customer relationships. For the B2B managerial purposes, this research will propose important factors to precede before building customer engaging social media activities among new and existing customers. In other words, besides highlighting the core constructs of customer engaging social media activities this paper groups together the most important company factors hindering or supporting successful social media activities. Furthermore, this paper contributes to the IMP literature providing new context to the interaction model by Håkanson (1982).

The reminder of this paper is organized as follows. **First** the key concepts of social media marketing and customer engagement are described. **Second** the narrative review of the opportunities and barriers of the use of social media in B2B companies is conducted. Based on the review and special characteristics of B2B markets the core constructs of B2B social media activities which can enhance customer engagement are identified using content analysis and presented from two different perspectives: a) in acquiring new customer perspective and b) in maintaining existing customers' perspective. **Third**, we discuss the core

constructs identified in these two different approaches. **Finally**, the managerial implications are provided.

SOCIAL MEDIA MERKETING, SOCIAL CRM, CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

There are several definitions for **social media** in the literature. Kaplan and Haenlain (2010) define social media as a group of Internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content. Different applications of social media is categorized into 5 categories including social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter), blogs, content communities (e.g., YouTube, Slideshare), collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia) and virtual worlds (e.g., Second Life). The most popular social media channels among B2B companies are LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Google+ and blogs (Siamagka *et al.,* 2015). B2B companies are usually using more than one social media channel at time and the most common combinations are LinkedIn and Facebook or LinkedIn and Twitter. B2B customers are primary using social media in following discussions, participating and reading content. (Broekemier *et al.,* 2015) In B2B context individuals use social media on behalf of both companies instead of either one's own interest (Chompis *et al.,* 2014). **Social media marketing** "involves the use of social media to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange information with organizational value". Information exchange happens between firms and its customers and also from customer to another. Social media marketing enhances customer interactions and engagement. (Tuten and Solomon, 2013 quoted in Broekemier *et al.,* 2015) Singaraju *et al.,* (2016) positions social media platforms as a system resource integrators and intermediary actors that "exposes its modular resources to facilitate higher order resource formations through the active participation of non-intermediary actors". Customers and firms co-create information, which is considered resource, through their active interactions and participations and social media is considered missing value until they receive information.

CRM aims to continuous dialogue and individual treatment with key customers in every buyer-seller contact points, ensuring customer retention and effective marketing efforts (Hutt and Speh, 2010). "CRM is a comprehensive strategy and process that enables an organization to identify, acquire, retain and nurture profitable customers by building and maintaining long-term relationships with them". (Sin *et al.,* 2005 cited in Harrigan *et al.,* 2015) According to the definition CRM includes the whole customer base, not just acquiring new customers but also keeping the old ones. The focus is on keeping existing customers and with managing those relationships firms can gain satisfied and loyal customers with increased purchase intentions (Storbacka *et al.,* 1994). Loyal customers with repeat purchases not only increase sales but also act as advocates, spread positive WOM, refer to new customers and decrease acquisition costs (Payne and Frow, 2005). The closer the buyer-seller relationships are the more collaborative advantages and win-win situations both parties receive from the relationships (Hutt and Speh, 2010). Marketing communication is a central means of reaching customers and the focus on relationship building leads to an interest in emphasizing dialogues and creating content that facilitates dialogues with identified customers (Grönroos, 1994). CRM also emphasis on customer data collection and provides opportunities to use information to understand customers' needs and co-create value with them (Payne and Frow, 2013).

Technology is a key in CRM advancing the two main processes: communication with customers and management of customer data. CRM technologies have expanded to include social media and the resulting **social CRM** is defined (Harrigan *et al.,* 2015) as "A philosophy and a business strategy, supported by a technology platform, business rules,

workflow, processes and social characteristics, designed to engage the customer in a collaborative conversation in order to provide mutually beneficial value in a trusted and transparent business environment. It's the company's programmatic response to the customer's control of the conversation". The central principle in this definition is *customer engagement*. Previous studies have found social CRM to create positive impact to the organization's performance also in B2B context (Wongsansukcharoen *et al.,* 2015). Harrigan's *et al.,* (2015) study suggests that social media facilitate customer engagement and social media technologies are valuable relationship building and maintaining tools. Customer relationships success is depending on two-way communication and engagement instead of the traditional one-way persuasion view. Customers are engaging and co-creating value through social media and engaging, interactive and viral social media campaigns have relationship benefits. Social media enables more effective CRM by improving communication with customers and providing access to customer data.

The study of Vivek *et al.,* (2012) studied **customer engagement** as a vital part of relationship management and define customer engagement as the "intensity of an individual's participation in and connection with an organization's offerings or organizational activities, which either the customer or the organization initiates. The individuals may be current or potential customers. CE may be manifested cognitively, affectively, behaviorally, or socially. The cognitive and affective elements of CE incorporate the experiences and feelings of customers, and the behavioral and social elements capture the participation by current and potential customers, both within and outside of the exchange situations. CE involves the connection that individuals form with organizations, based on their experiences with the offerings and activities of the organization. Potential or current customers build experience-based relationships through intense participation with the brand by way of the unique experiences they have with the offerings and activities of the organization." Participation and involvement are initial stages of customer engagement and value, trust, affective commitment, WOM, loyalty and brand community involvement are potential outcomes of it. The key factors of successful long-term relationships include commitment, trust and loyalty and loyal customers are more likely to spread positive WOM (Payne and Frow, 2013). So in other words, increased customer engagement may lead to successful marketing communication and company profitability.

For marketers social media offers a new channel to build relationships with customers and customer engagement has been an important part of building new relationships and enhancing existing ones (Vivek *et al.,* 2012). According to O'Brien and Toms (2008) engagement with technology is a four stage process including point of engagement, period of engagement, disengagement and reengagement. For each stage in the process the research found specific distinguishable attributes. In the point of engagement aesthetic and informational elements as well as novelty are capturing the participants' attention and awareness and moving them toward the period of engagement. Participants motivation was also found a key attribute at the first stage. In the period of engagement it is important to maintain the participant's attention, interest and positive emotions by providing feedback, interactivity, novelty, challenge, customization, awareness of others and user control in the interaction. Disengagement occurs either due to internal factors or by external factors. Disengagement results either from positive or negative affects. Sometimes there are barriers to engagement and non-engagement exists. Sometimes online experience is not sufficient, there is poor usability, overwhelming content or lack of interest. O'Brien and Toms (2008) define engagement as "a quality of user experiences with technology that is characterized by challenge, aesthetic and sensory appeal, feedback, novelty, interactivity, perceived control

and time, awareness, motivation, interest, and affect." Engagement can vary from low engagement (passive consuming the content or simple FB likes or other simple feedback) to high engagement (active co-creation like writing reviews or creating videos about company products). Customer engagement may also have consequences as likes in Facebook news feed can be noted by other friends and move them towards to company. (Malthouse *et. al,* 2013)

METHODS

For this article, a narrative literature review of existing B2B social media literature was performed using the following databases: ABI Inform Complete (Proquest), ACM Digital Library, Business Source Premier (EBSCO), Emerald Journals, ScienceDirect (Elsevier), Academic Search Elite (EBSCO), Taylor & Francis Social Science & Humanities with Science & Technology. The following search term combinations were used: B2B and social media, business-to-business and social media, industrial marketing and social media, B2B and digital marketing, business-to-business and digital marketing, industrial marketing and digital marketing. 36 articles were selected for this narrative review based on relevance of the topic and the year of publication The articles published during 2010-2016 were accepted and the older articles were removed. In addition 11 articles were searched and found by searching references of the most relevant discovered articles. Total, 47 articles were reviewed for this narrative review. 70% of those articles were published during 2014-2016 which shows growing interest to the topic. Narrative review pulls together, characterize and conceptualize information in a specific topic taken from heterogeneous literature and presents a broad perspective on the topic (Green *et al.,* 2006). A content analysis of the summary of the special characteristics of B2B companies, the challenges and barriers as well as opportunities and goals social media can provide to B2B companies was conducted after the review.

THE CORE CONSTRUCTS OF B2B SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITIES WHICH CAN ENHANCE CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

Marketing communication can be either customer acquisition communication or customer relationships communication (Dwyer and Tanner, 2002). Customer engagement as an important part of CRM is aimed to both new and existing customers. (Vivek *et al.,* 2012) The emphasis in CRM is primarily at maintaining relationships with existing customers while social media activities are concentrating on potential customers (Järvinen *et al.,* 2012). There are significant differences between B2B and B2C marketing and the useful approaches of social media. Especially the external use of social media with customers has important differences due to many special characteristics of B2B markets. Because of these special characteristics it is also common assumption that utilizing social media in B2B context is more difficult than in B2C. (Jussila *et al.,* 2011, 2014) There are 4 categories where the differences between B2B and B2C marketing are falling: 1) the nature of the market, 2) product characteristics, 3) organizational factors and 4) other factors. (Hunt, 2013) This chapter describes the objectives, opportunities and barriers of B2B companies' social media usage as well as ways to overcome these challenges caused by the distinct characteristics of B2B companies. Based on the narrative review the core constructs of B2B social media activities which can enhance customer engagement are identified and presented from two different perspectives: a) in acquiring new customer perspective and b) in maintaining existing customers' perspective.

Acquiring new customers

Many B2B organizations are **large and complex** (Jussila *et al.,* 2014) with separate marketing and sales functions. In order to success in social media, marketing has to cooperate between other functions, especially with sales (Wiersema, 2013). Social media needs an overall strategy (Kiron et al. 2013) which effectively supports personal selling (Hutt and Speh, 2010, p. 385). However, B2B firms often don't know which elements of social media are essential to their business or which marketing communication and social media strategies they should follow (Karjaluoto *et al.,* 2015). Managing B2B marketing communications and social media require setting the communication <u>objectives</u>, defining the target <u>audience</u>, determining the <u>budget</u>, developing <u>message</u>, selecting the <u>media</u> and <u>evaluating</u> the communications effectiveness (Hutt and Speh, 2010, p. 388). Organizational competence (knowledge and expertise) and commitment (training and social media strategy) are reported to be important predictors of the use of social media particularly in sales (Guesalaga, 2016). However, many B2B companies have lack of company management support (Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011) as managers don't see the benefits of social media (Keinänen *et al.,* 2015) and they do things as they have always done with their customers via emails and meetings (Jussila *et al.,* 2014). Business leaders need to see the value in connecting with customers in new ways and they have to actively drive and support social media use in companies and define goals to the use of social media (Kiron *et al.,* 2013).

In acquiring new customers social media can have a supporting role especially when pursuing <u>objectives</u> such as *creating awareness, providing information and uncovering important leads*. In B2B markets the **purchase volumes and value can be significantly high** and purchases involve more risks (Kotler and Keller, 2012, Hutt and Speh, 2010). Gathering knowledge, monitoring comments and feedbacks are examples how social media can help to understand the customers and their concerns (Andzulis *et.al.,* 2012). Social media has the capacity to *communicate vast amount of customized rational content* which can diminish the customers risk perceptions. B2B marketers can use successful sales stories or video interviews of company product experts or satisfied customers in social media channels to reassure customers. (Habibi *et al.,* 2015) B2B audience is smaller than in B2C and many times in social media B2B parties already know personally each other so the endorsements are coming from trusted sources instead of random users, which reduce perceived risk especially in the case of new customers (Brennan and Croft, 2012). B2B companies have also **wide variation of market conditions**, such as big and unique one-time deals, which need more situation specific approaches and business practices which cannot be generalized (Hadjikhani and LaPlaca 2013, Wiersema 2013). Due to the unique business conditions there are limited business cases, inspiring stories or role models B2B companies would need to utilize social media fully and which B2C companies have more (Wiersema 2013, Michaelidou, *et al.,* 2011, Swani, *et al.,* 2014). B2B companies may mistakenly be influenced by B2C counterparts and social media strategies adopted from B2C may not be efficient or appropriate in B2B settings (Swani *et al.,* 2014)

Industrial purchasing is a complex and long-lasting process that in the case of new customers goes through several phases including need identification, product specification, alternative solution identification and evaluation, purchase decision (Hutt and Speh, 2010). Industrial marketing communication moves potential buyers through this decision making process and purchase sequences from unawareness of company or product to awareness, to knowledge, to preference, to conviction, to purchase and to re-purchase (Hutt and Speh, 2010, p. 386, Dahlén et al., 2010, p. 90) The presence in social media channels is helping very cost-effectively to build company's general image, *create awareness* and share

knowledge to reach more prospects and help through the process (Karjaluoto *et al,*. 2015). Social media, for example Twitter, can be used to influence potential customer in the early stage of buying process (Leek et al., 2016) and help prospects quicker through the process and lead to actions like need for more information, visit the trade show booth or telephone call (Hutt and Speh, 2010). Content provided in social media should vary according the stage of the process and engage customers at appropriate points (Holliman and Rowley, 2014). Customers' progress through the buying process funnel must also be recorded at each phases but because of the slow decision making cycle the collection of up-to-date pre-purchase data is troublesome and there is a risks of errors. (Habibi *et al.,* 2015; Valos *et al.,* 2015) There is also uncertainty how B2B companies with their long negotiations could exploit social media and social media still plays supportive role in the process and it is not seen crucial (Järvinen *et al.*, 2012).

One of the B2B companies' significant feature is the need for close, intense and direct **supplier-customer relationships**: customized offerings, targeted marketing communication, rich, continuous and large amount of pre-purchase information and communication, multiple sales calls and face to face meetings (Kotler and Keller, 2012). Studies show that *building awareness* and *attracting new customers* are among the most important goals for B2B organizations using social media (Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011). For companies it is not enough just to be present at social media B2B companies have to be active in there and participate discussions and facilitate conversations around the company and its products (Lipiäinen and Karjaluoto, 2015). To approach the customers B2B companies can e.g. use Facebook promotions, share stories about community involvement or tweet success stories aiming to future sales opportunities (Andzulis *et al.,* 2012). Social media provides novel ways to attract new customers and improve customer engagement (Järvinen *et al.,* 2012) and it is considered one of the growing sources of *lead generation.* 72% of companies plan on linking data from social networks to their customer databases within next year (Baird and Parasnis, 2011). For example initiating conversations or collecting future client list from specific LinkedIn groups or company blogs can help at lead generation (Andzulis *et al.,* 2012). New relationships can be created through participating in professional LinkedIn groups and collaborating or using these groups as a professional problem-solving or idea co-creating forums (Quinton and Wilson, 2016). Social media can further help to qualify leads early and even follow competitors interactions with the same prospect (Agnihotri *et al.,* 2012 cited in Lacoste, 2016) However, B2B organizations are facing challenges how social media can support lead management or generate good quality leads (Lipiäinen, 2015). According to one study for example, only 5 % of the business managers consider that Twitter is effective for generating leads (Swani, 2014). Many B2B deals are often negotiated several years and it is difficult to track the lead to a specific lead campaign. This tracking would be essential in order to identify most successful leads. Collecting this information into a companies' database would then help improve the lead generation process. A recent study of Leek *et al.* (2016) found out that Twitter and YouTube are also used for PR purposes and that PR content especially in YouTube creates significantly more responses, possibly due to the entertaining material used in PR purposes. A potential tool in the area of PR is social media releases, mix of traditional press release and social media, aimed to active and influential bloggers and which B2B companies could also exploit in building company general image and increasing awareness (Steyn *et al.,* 2016).

The complex products, the high-value exchange and the more intense relationship demand more personalized communication and B2B purchasers have traditionally relied on personal selling more than advertising as a source of product information and **other marketing**

communication tools (advertising, direct mail, PR, sales promotions, exhibitions and trade fairs) has had a supportive role (Kotler and Keller 2012, Blythe and Zimmerman, 2005). B2B companies are not the first ones to adopt new marketing communication tools and channels (Karjaluoto *et al.,* 2015). In recent years the importance of marketing communication has arised among B2B companies (Huotari *et al.,* 2015) and social media is one of the fastest growing channel (Brosan, 2012). B2B companies have added basic forms of social media tools into their marketing communication but still rely heavily more traditional tools in their marketing communication (Karjaluoto *et al.,* 2015). B2B companies haven't yet fully integrated social media as a part of their communication tools (Swani *et al.,* 2014). The changing buying behavior has changed the different roles of other marketing communication tools in B2B business. Trade shows are getting less important and there is rebalancing in marketing communications between traditional and electronic media. (Wiersema, 2013) Customers may even push salespeople to adopt new selling and communication tools, limiting face-to-face meetings and interacting in social media (Schultz *et al.,* 2012 cited from Lacoste, 2016). Social media also changes the **role of sales people** in customers' buying process as the information is readily available in social media. Social media enables B2B companies to communicate the rational *information* customers need and automate their functions reducing the customers' reliance on sales force as a source of information. Sales people can then concentrate on more demanding tasks like the emotional needs of different decision makers, customer insights and more complex buying situations were technology can't replace salespeople. (Wiersema, 2013) Study of Agnihotri *et al,.* (2016) show that the use of social media by salespeople influence customer satisfaction. Salespeople communicate relevant information to customers through social media and customers value this new channel through which they can communicate with salespeople and receive timely responses. Social media can also be used to redirect customers to online communities were companies can provide large amounts of information to customers and their customers with shared interest and engage them (Valos *et al.,* 2015) with high-quality content and information (Chompis *et al.,* 2014). Furthermore, studies (Schultz *et al.,* 2012; Rodriguez *et al.,* 2012) have found positive relationship between social media usage and sales performance and Moore *et al.,* (2015) reported B2B managers to use social media tools more for social CRM than other sales representatives or B2C managers. Despite the positive link between technology use and performance the use of technology tools, like social media, is successful with salespeople with high technology self-efficacy (Roman and Rodriguez, 2015) Salesforce's personal commitment and active use of personal social media has a positive effect for their social media use in business purposes and in order to facilitate salesforce's social media usage B2B firms can provide training of the professional, efficient and effective use of social media to salesforce (Guesalaga, 2016).

Even social media has the greatest potential in building awareness and spreading knowledge in cost-effective way it may also be used in *preference, conviction and purchase stages*. Product preference often requires demonstrations or explanations. B2B companies' **product characteristics are more complex** than B2C companies and product specifications need to be more precise as B2B purchasers rely on **more information in their decisions** (Hutt and Speh, 2010). This puts high demands to B2B marketers to provide *lot of logical information to customers* (Habibi *et al.,* 2015). Social media and for example videos are very useful in B2B communications as it enables additional explanations to complex products and can be used to create positive attitudes towards company and its products. (Andzulis *et al.,* 2012). Social media can also help salespeople to close the deals for example to direct customers to sales channels, homepages or landing pages by Facebook or Twitter, chat one-to-one to resolve any deal inhibitors or ask directly the sale, use Blogs or LinkedIn to overcome issues

raised by competitors or dissatisfied customers. (Andzulis *et al.,* 2012) Despite the potential in sales, social media is mainly used in a soft side of marketing like creating awareness and building relationships rather than driving hard sales (Järvinen *et al.,* 2012; Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011; Lacoste, 2016)

The <u>audience</u> of industrial marketing communication differs from B2C markets. B2B purchasers, tend to be more knowledgeable and professionals than B2C buyers and due to the heightened risks (high-value, complex products) B2B purchasers' **decision making criteria** are more rational and they rely on more information. Professional purchasers consider a variety of different criteria before purchase, acquire more information about the product and evaluate different alternatives more objectively. (Hutt and Speh, 2010) Through social media customers have ready access to a huge amount of knowledge about competitors' products or other buyers' experiences. Customers are searching for opinions about products before making the decision. It is easy to compare alternatives and make more informed choices leading to increased customer buying power. (Wiersema, 2013) Social media changes the customer buying behavior and the way customers want to receive the information about the company and its products (Andzulis *et al.*, 2012). This challenges B2B marketers as they have to communicate their products authentically while managing consumer-generated content and opinion-sharing in acquiring new customers (Habibi *et al.,* 2015). Customers are more and more requiring to find out information from interactive media rather than traditional media which leads to diminished need for traditional sources (catalogs, trade fairs, sales people) (Wiersema, 2013). The importance of content in social media is increasing as with the help of online information purchasers are passing several parts of the buying process before contacting seller (Holliman and Rowley, 2012) One of the B2B companies' goals in social media is to create *positive WOM* (word-of-mouth) and get opinion leaders to spread positive word about the company and influence potential customers. B2B companies can become opinion leaders themselves or influence content creation in social media directly by adding new content in their selected channels, participating in relevant discussions and controlling employees' social media behavior or indirectly by performing other traditional marketing communication activities that influence opinion leaders to create favorable content about the company. (Huotari *et al.,* 2015) B2B companies want to be were their customers already are but B2C companies are way ahead in understanding the impact of information access on buying decisions, the engagement practices and the power of opinion leader and WOM in social media. B2B companies are facing challenges of media and message control and difficulties to monitor and influence them. (Wiersema, 2013) For example Facebook Like button is the most popular electronic form of communication, it involves low cognition process and encourages more frequent WOM behavior as liking company messages will appear to users friend's news feed spreading the messages, expressing favorable attitude and engagement toward the content.

B2B companies are large organizations instead of single persons and industrial purchasing involves many people in **decision making unit**: users, influencers, deciders, buyers and gatekeepers. B2B marketers have to be aware of the different forces and motives influencing organizational buying behavior (Hutt and Speh, 2010). Also the motives of using social media may be very different between B2B professional buyers and B2C consumers (Jussila *et al.,* 2014). B2B marketers have to be aware of the motives their customers have for engaging those messages created (Swani *et al.,* 2013). Large number of decision makers means considering different communication channels and different messages for each person involved (Habibi *et al.,* 2015). This creates many challenges for B2B companies using social media especially in acquiring new customers. **First** of all different persons prefer different

channels but companies do not have <u>resources</u> (time, money and workforce) to participate in all possible social media channels (Keinänen and Kuivalainen 2015) and being active in social media requires time, resources and commitment. B2B companies also lack relevant skills, competencies and technological expertise (Järvinen *et al.,* 2012) and they may have difficulties to find the right social media channels which could serve their business purpose and marketing communication targets best and would reach their customers most effectively (Karjaluoto *et al.,* 2015). **Secondly** there is also challenge to communicate different <u>message</u> for each different decision maker as the buyer motives may differ and customer decision making is reshaped by lot of factors (Habibi *et .al.,* 2015). **Thirdly** the message may not reach the target audience or person contacted via social media may not be responsible for making the decisions or the target audience is receiving the message but does not consider the content relevant or doesn't see social media bringing any benefits (Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011). The major challenge is to engage key-decision-makers in social media (Habibi *et al.,* 2015).

B2B companies are using variety of social media tools (Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011) but they shouldn't spend their money into several different tools at once. Companies need to reallocate their resources, assign personnel with direct responsibility for social media (Kiron *et al.,* 2013, Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011), support learning related to social media (Jussila *et al.,* 2014) and acquire human resources with the expertise in the effective use of social media (Järvinen *et al.,* 2012). According to Brennan and Croft (2012) leading B2B companies in social media are using content-rich material (blogs, videos, etc.) across various social media channels maximizing their visibility and presence in these channels. They are also empowering and courage employees to engage with customers and position themselves as experts and building knowledge leadership. Laggards in social media, however, have traditional sales -based approach and they are mainly using social media to supplement participation in trade fairs and control carefully the information being published. Companies should <u>choose right channels</u> and best practices depending their purpose, target audience and message relevant to their business. B2B companies have to figure out which social media channels could serve their marketing communication targets and reach the potential customers best. (Keinänen and Kuivalainen, 2015).

Via social media companies can identify and reach out to decision makers and influencers and build credibility and trusted reputation with meaningful <u>content</u> (Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011). Creating and providing relevant, quality, accurate, interesting, fresh and timely content that meets the customer's requirements and which is easy to share is essential to B2B companies. B2B customers have to value the efforts of marketers and actually use the social media for business purposes. B2B companies have to give their customers a reason to use social media and find out what customers like to hear and value and focus on the benefits audience is seeking. (Keinänen and Kuivalainen, 2015) Providing promotional techniques and relevant content for customer's need is essential to enhance customer's active participation and engagement and eventually sustain interactivity in chosen channels (Adiele, 2011). Still, B2B companies are using product-driven selling messages instead of problem-solving ones (Holliman and Rowley, 2014) According to recent study (Leek *et al.,* 2016), Twitter was found out to be low in creating interactivity in B2B settings probably because followers do not find tweet content beneficial to interact or they don't want to spend their time to engage in dialogue. Companies need to acquire the knowledge what customers want from their relationships and use this information for the <u>selection of proper social media</u>. If customers are seeking only information companies should concentrate on blogs. Using social media irrelevant to customers is waste of resources. Customers shouldn't feel that companies are using social media activities in a way that doesn't add value to them. (Andzulis *et al.,*

2012) Because of the professional byers need to have more rational information and as media credibility plays a more important role in B2B context, B2B companies are adopting content marketing and using educational social media channels like blogging, webinars and LinkedIn instead of Pinterest and Instagram (Habibi *et al.,* 2015). Content needs to vary with the platform and it need understanding of the customer information needs and point in the purchasing process. Content marketing and its emphasis on storytelling and helping the customer instead of selling messages is an approach suitable for social media (Holliman and Rowley, 2014). As B2B buyers are increasingly relying on information from Internet (60 % is even completed before contacting the seller) and social media at the early stages of purchasing process, creating personalized, customer driven content which is based on customer's needs, adds value and solves their problems and aimed to rely customer instead of broad audience is essential. Social media platforms are used to guide purchasers to the company website to find out more information and to generate leads for the company. (Järvinen and Taiminen, 2016)

There are also differences in the B2B <u>messages</u> compared to B2C which tend to be more informal, casual and humorous. The tone and the message in B2B context has to be managed carefully as the message can't signal technical incompetent nor the message cannot be thoughtless. There should be careful balance between using entertaining elements to engage customers and the positioning of the B2B companies (Habibi *et al.,* 2015). Creating messages in B2B context requires determining objectives, analyzing key buying criteria and using most appropriate language, format and style for the audience to catch attention and provide intended interpretation. Technical staff responds more positive to technical messages and nontechnical to nontechnical messages. (Hutt and Speh, 2010) Social media also requires new conversational approaches instead of one-directional marketing messages and B2B companies are facing challenges in proper content creation to facilitate two-way-dialogues (Järvinen *et al.,* 2012). Recent studies (Swani *et al.,* 2013; Swani *et al.,* 2014) points out the distinct feature of social media compared to traditional media as the findings suggest that even B2B companies use functional appeals in their messages more than B2C companies there are more emotional than functional appeals in social media in B2B messages. Functional appeals are more effective in B2B settings but emotional cues are important too especially in social media. Effective B2B communication emphasizes both emotional and functional brand values to gain competitive advantage. B2B companies' use cues, links and hashtags to support information search and, for example in Twitter, the use of several hashtags indicates and directs recipients to find more content elsewhere (Leek *et al.,* 2016). B2B companies use also company brand name appeals to leverage brand image as customers who prefer to be associated with reputable brands are likely to engage and spread positive WOM. Using of corporate brand name along with emotional content is the most effective content strategy for B2B companies to generate WOM. Emotional content encourages engagement as it makes messages more stimulating, communicates more personal story that users can better relate to and is more likely to become viral. Emphasis on social media accounts' fanbases leads to increased WOM activity and catching content encourages content sharing. Social media is affecting to the language used in messages as the language used is more informal and personal with emoji's (Lefebvre, 2011 cited in Mehmet *et al.,* 2016).

Social media is seen as a tool to receive customer feedback and it is used in **sales support to** gather information on sales leads and to create more customer-driven sales material to support marketing. (Karjaluoto *et al.,* 2015) Active listening, customer feedback and social media monitoring are used in creating better content (Järvinen and Taiminen, 2016) Still many B2B firms consider that social media doesn't support their business objectives. There

are more opportunities to collect individualized information from the sales situations in B2B context than in B2C (Habibi *et al.,* 2015) and better possibilities to gain better understanding of what value and impact B2B companies' products can generate to their best customers (Wiersema, 2013). B2B firms often have limited ability to evaluate or <u>measure</u> the benefits of social media or even gain measurable benefits from social media (Jussila *et al.,* 2014). B2B companies also lack the analytical skills and understanding the possibilities and benefits, they don't know how to use social media to create competitive advantage and create customer value (Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011). Study of Lacka and Chong (2016) demonstrates that B2B marketer's perceptions of the usefulness of social media drives the use of these sites. The perceptions of suitability of social media can be improved by training, recruiting new skills or utilizing strong business examples. B2B companies should also link the results to the existing CRM goals (Järvinen *et al.,* 2012). Larger firms are more active in measurement and B2B firms have been able to improve their measurement ability (Jussila *et al.,* 2014), but still the usage is low, opportunities are not fully understood, measurement is not done against the objectives or not even considered important (Järvinen *et al.,* 2012). Also fewer customers and transactions, longer purchase decision cycles make it difficult to demonstrate the relationship between marketing and its results (Jussila *et al.,* 2014). Social media is also in many cases seen a waste of resources; time and money (Matties, 2012). The summary of the above review, key findings and core constructs that can enhance customer engagement in acquiring new customers are presented in Table 1 in Appendix 1.

<center>Retaining existing customers</center>

Successful B2B marketing communication requires regular and proactive communication with existing customers, not just with the new customers. In maintaining existing customer relationships social media can have potential especially when pursuing <u>objectives</u> such as *reminding* the current customers, creating awareness of *new products* or services, having *dialogue* and *interacting* with the customers, *creating value* to them, stimulating *loyalty*, providing *customer service and feedback*, encouraging *referrals* and aiming to *repeat purchase*. (Dwyer and Tanner, 2002, Dahlén *et al.,* 2010, p. 90) B2B marketers have to make the communication with existing customers <u>easy</u>, <u>listen</u> to the customer and with the help of databases <u>respond</u> quickly. Based on the <u>feedback</u> B2B marketers' communication is <u>improved</u> and <u>adapted</u> to fit the customer needs and <u>relationships are strengthened</u>. (Dwyer and Tanner, 2002)

As **personal selling and strong supplier-customer relationships** have significant role in B2B marketing and as technology and the internet are suitable channels for relationship marketing, social media can help in building, strengthening and enhancing customer relationships in a B2B context (Huotari *et al.,* 2015, Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011) Cultivating customer relationships is among the most important goals for B2B organizations using social media (Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011; Brosan 2012), however B2B firms have not fully realized the interactive nature of social media and its opportunities for cultivating customer engagement (Järvinen *et al.,* 2012). Social media is used in *communication in customer relationships*, advancing meaningful *interactions* between a company and its customers and developing those relationships (Karjaluoto *et al.,* 2015). Social media is considered important among B2B companies but it is not understood as a two-way communication channel capable of serving customer relationship building and it is used the same way as other digital channels; as a form of one-way broadcasting while attempting to drive sales (Lipiäinen and Karjaluoto, 2015b). And as the role of traditional marketing communication tools has changed in B2B companies and for example trade shows are less important places to maintain

existing customer relationships social media can provide tools for strengthening those relationships. Changing role of sales people, on the other hand, frees salesforce to concentrate on more demanding tasks and relationship issues than just providing information. Despite the lack of management support B2B managers are getting interested of social media tools like Facebook, Twitter and blogs because of their personal and interactive nature. Companies can build direct relationships with their customers and develop those relationships through communication, interaction and *two-way conversations*. B2B companies can e.g. generate conversations and industry discussion with their customers or build relationships by tweeting about conferences or innovations or even use personal data customers are sharing to add a personal touch to interactions. Social media can also help with *service and follow-up* by e.g. following customers on Twitter, communicating by tweets to present new products, asking customers on Facebook to like corporate profiles or ask referrals in LinkedIn. (Andzulis *et al.,* 2012) However, even social media is seen helpful in communication the decisions and deals are mainly done in face-to-face meetings (Wang *et al.,* 2016). In a recent study (Lacoste 2016) with French key account managers was found out that social media is primarily used at the early phase of relationships and rarely developing and nurturing those relationships. When relationships are deepening managers are switching to the more traditional tools like phone calls and face-to-face meetings. According to Lipiäinen (2015) public social media tools are not the most suitable sources to serve CRM, instead these tools have more to offer in creating awareness and attracting new customers. But the findings of the study acknowledges the possibilities to enhance existing relationships in private social media channels in the future because most of the relevant conversations in B2B settings happen in private.

Deep relationship elements in B2B context raises issues of **commitment and trust** as B2B companies consider social media to have information security and message control problems (Hadjikhani and LaPlaca, 2013, Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011,) that limits the use of social media in B2B companies compared to B2C companies (Jussila *et al.,* 2014, Wang *et al.,* 2016). Companies need to be aware when sending sensitive information to groups of people, carelessness can cause severe damage to the business, information can be easily forwarded and it is beyond business control, social media do not meet the formal reporting requirements for business purposes and it is not safe for confidential information or data storage (Wang *et al.,* 2106). There are also concerns over the content (messages, photos) in social media, the employees' responsibility of wrong messages, overall control of the messages send in social media and the time employees are spending in social media (Matties 2012). B2B managers want to hide their customized offerings from their competitors and even they initiate relationships in social media when the relationships deepen they abandon virtual world for trust issues (Lacoste 2016). Social media enables B2B firms to listen the customer and that way build trust and commitment in an interactive way (Leek *et al.,* 2016; Andzulis *et al.,* 2012). Companies have to set up policies and improve their social media platforms to be align with existing communication platforms (Wang *et al.,* 2016) Participating and creating content in a trusted social media business network can be a base of future business collaboration and act as a referral for third parties (Quinton and Wilson, 2016). In a recent study (Niedermaier and Zhang, 2016) conducted in China social media was reported to be used among Chinese salespeople not just only on operational level but also in building relationships based on trust and commitment.

Because of the more **complex product characteristics** the development of new products in B2B companies can be time-consuming (Jussila *et al.,* 2014) and many B2B products also need ongoing adjustments and developments after the purchase (Dwyer and Tanner, 2002). New product specifications need also to be more precise for the B2B buyer's decision making

as they need more rational knowledge. Customers are important source of new product ideas in B2B context (Dwyer and Tanner, 2002) and besides not just to spread product related information to the customers social media provides a channel for direct interaction with the customers (Andzulis *et al.,* 2012) to *introduce new products and innovations*, crowdsource ideas, collect feedback, improve product features and spot market demands and trends (Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011; Jussila *et al.,* 2011). On social media the knowledge of customer's needs can be acquired and identified more comprehensively than in traditional situations and used in product innovations and adjustments (Nguyen *et al.,* 2015). On the other hand, because of the open nature of social media there may be information security problems for example in innovation and idea creation, and social media could be used at the later development stages of new product ideas (Jussila *et al.,* 2011).

Business markets are the **largest markets** of all as the **value and amount of purchases** are **high** and even there are **fewer buyers** they are larger and needed to be treated individually. A single customer can construe a large amount of purchases in business markets and buyers have increased risk perception. (Kotler and Keller, 2012, Hutt and Speh, 2010) Social media has the capacity to communicate vast amount of customized rational content to the needs of each existing customers (Habibi *et al.,* 2015). But because of the smaller amount of buyers B2B companies have fewer customers who could be influenced to share WOM or endorse the company to other potential customers in social media (Järvinen *et al.,* 2012). However, B2B companies can initiate positive WOM creation, become opinion leader or get opinion leaders to spread positive word about the company and its products by adding relevant content in their selected channels, participating in relevant discussions and training employees' social media behavior (Huotari *et al.,* 2015).

B2B purchasing involves many people in **decision making unit** but in the case of existing customers B2B companies can be more familiar with them and their **decision making criteria** because repeated business. Large number of decision makers means considering different communication channels and different messages for each person involved (Habibi *et al.,* 2015) B2B companies may be already aware of the channels their customers are using and whether they are using social media for business purposes. B2B companies can provide to their existing customers ready and fast access to relevant information for example building communities (Valos et al., 2015), they can target their messages more properly to the right decision makers, they can use relevant <u>content</u> that meets accurately the customer's requirements, they can communicate what customers want to hear and *create value and positive WOM*. Content created can be more customer-driven responding to customers' needs and offering solutions to them (Järvinen *et al.,* 2012). Via social media companies can reach out to key decision makers and influencers and develop existing relationships, build credibility and trusted reputation with meaningful content (Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011). For example by using Facebook ads B2B marketers can provide links to relevant content, direct traffic to their websites and target existing members of their customer's decision making unit (Singaraju et al., 2016). Professionals can share interesting content in social media and these tools provide faster and more personalized interactions between seller and buyer deepening their relationship. (Huotari *et al.,* 2015, Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011). The data can be broadcasted in real time to a group of people and marketers are even receiving confirmation that the messages have been read (Wang et al., 2016). Furthermore, the content is available when customers are willing to receive it, not when companies want to communicate it (Järvinen *et al.,* 2012). However, despite all this they may have problems to find the right social media channels which could serve their business purpose and marketing communication targets best while reaching their customers most effectively or the target

audience is receiving the message but doesn't see social media bringing any benefits (Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011). According to recent study about content orientations in Facebook (Kim et al., 2015) photos get more responses than texts and videos in all industries, also in B2B sector. Most frequently posted content in B2B companies is interaction oriented content (51 %, e.g. information, stories, casual talk, posts that are not directly related to brand sales or engagement that requested actions, entertainment, weather/season, personal statements, opinion, celebrating days/events/persons) but task-oriented content (persuasive messages, new product/service announcements, sales promotions, contests) generates most responses and only 4 % B2B content is task-oriented. This could be caused because marketers and customers have different motives for utilizing social media. B2B marketers foster long-term relationships by posting interaction oriented content, however, customers follow brands mainly to receive promotional deals and information about sales promotions which are task-oriented. Customers have different reasons to follow industrial brands than B2C brands and B2B marketers must understand the motive of their customers, post personalized and customized content to maximize engagement. Also in the case of existing customers media credibility has important role and the tone and the message must be considered carefully. Hard sales appeals are considered to be less appropriate in social media and can affect trust and company image. Even B2B companies use more functional appeals more than B2C companies they also use emotional appeals with company brand name to foster customer relationships (Swani *et al.,* 2013; Swani *et al.,* 2014). Content created for social media can be written and checked before sending to decrease mistakes (Wang *et al.,* 2016).

When dealing with existing customers the complex and long-lasting **purchasing process** can also be shortened because the fact that byer and the seller already know each other's processes and customers may need only moderate amount of information search and analysis (Hutt and Speh, 2010). Social media can be used to *remind* old customers with relevant, compelling and timely content (Holliman and Rowley, 204) and to communicate and interact with customers quickly moving them more smoothly through purchasing process and purchase sequences toward *repeat purchase*. Marketers have also better possibility to measure the effectiveness of their marketing activities in social media in shorter decision cycles (Järvinen *et al.,* 2102).

The **demand of business goods** is ultimately derived from consumer goods and changes in consumer purchasing patterns will affect the business markets (Hutt and Speh, 2010). Through social media a deeper customer engagement and collaboration at multiple levels can be gained to get a better understanding of customers' latent needs and their buying decisions. Some B2B companies deal in both business and consumer markets but others operate never directly with the end customers. B2B companies need deepening insights what affects their direct customers' success by understanding better customers' customers driving forces. B2B companies can gain competitive advantage by using social media to influence not only to direct customers but also customers' customers and differentiate themselves from their competitors that focus only on direct customers by collecting knowledge from the end users (B2B2C). (Wiersema 2013) I addition efforts in social media can attract unintentionally the attention of the end customers and create positive attention with like-minded customers (Singaraju *et al.,* 2016)

For not losing existing customers to competitors regular communication with current customers is essential. B2B companies have to make it easy to customers to communicate with them and companies have to respond to customers' *feedback* (Dwyer and Tanner, 2002)**.** Social media can provide easy and quick channel for that and for example emojis provide fast

way to response and present reactions (Wang et al., 2016). Based on feedback companies are receiving from their customers CRM-driven B2B companies aim to optimization, efficiency and customer *loyalty* by better adjusting and **targeting marketing communication** and customer offerings to respond customers' needs (Möller, 2013). Companies use social monitoring and analytics tools to improve its own communication with existing customers and to create more customer-driven sales material (Lipiäinen and Karjaluoto, 2015) By gathering knowledge, monitoring discussions and collecting information and feedbacks from customers companies can *listen* and deeply understand and analyze customer's needs, opinions and attitudes about company itself, its products, specific marketing campaigns, message perception and relevance, competitors or an industry, to spot major trends and weak signals, provide customer service and support, create communities with customer specific content, share knowledge, refine product features and identify buying situations (Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011; Karjaluoto *et al.,* 2015, Andzulis *et al.,* 2012). Recent study (Leek *et al.,* 2016) found out that social media is very often used for problem-solving and that YouTube and LinkedIn are mainly used for this. Same study also pointed out that Twitter may not be suitable for individual problem-solving because the public accessibility and the lack of personal feedback. LinkedIn professional groups, however, can be used to market serives and products and monitor and listen to customer conversations and solve their problems (Singaraju *et al.,* 2016) The marketing insight helps companies to develop their company in a more customer-oriented direction (Lipiäinen and Karjaluoto, 2015). Marketing in social media is more measurable as companies can access, collect and process data on marketing activities, but often B2B firms lack the knowledge, relevant skills, technological expertise and resources (time, money and workforce) to take advantage of the information received from social (Van Dam *et al.,* 2015) media and B2B companies (57%) are not actively measuring the effectiveness of the social media or measurement is not considered important (Järvinen *et al,.* 2012; Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011, Siamagka *et al.,* 2015). Accurately measuring communication effects or collecting data of each parties values at various points of decision making is challenging and leads to complexity in marketing communication (Habibi *et al.,* 2015). B2B companies lack proper metrics (Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011) as the right metrics depends on the social media platforms used by the company, metrics must be customized and measure the performance against the company goals and data must be used for strategic purposes (Järvinen *et al.,* 2012). Social media needs an overall strategy (Kiron *et al.,* 2013) which effectively supports personal selling (Hutt and Speh, 2010, p. 385). To benefit most of social media the received information needs to be integrated into companies' strategies and processes (Kiron *et al.,* 2013). B2B companies need to first design a manageable metrics linked to their priority marketing objectives, second create a process that drives effective use of those metrics and third organizational context (company management support, relevant skills and resources) has to support the use of metrics (Järvinen and Karjaluoto, 2015) The findings of Leeflang *et al.,* (2014) also suggest that the major challenges digitalization and social media is causing are data related (gaining customer insights, developing digital metrics and recruiting talent with analytical capabilities). According to Lipiäinen (2015) public social media channels are not seen as a relevant platform to collect information, the data gathered via is irrelevant, and the little relevant information that is available is too time consuming to collect in relation to its value. Typical for B2B companies are also too many competing priorities (Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011), schedules and overcommitted staff, near-term, cost-obsessed and efficiency-driven orientation (Wiersema, 2013) which leads to the fact that other projects are more important than putting effort to social media. Social media is not considered to give sufficient ROI (Matties 2012) The summary of the above review, key findings and core constructs that can

enhance customer engagement in maintaining existing customer relationships are presented in Table 2 in Appendix 2.

DISCUSSION

Four different core constructs were identified from previous studies on B2B companies' special characteristics and social media barriers, challenges objectives and goals they are facing and from social CRM and social media marketing literature. The core constructs are interactivity, content, customization and WOM. No clear distinctions couldn't be drawn between the two different approaches. All of the core constructs were present in both cases but some differences and emphasis could be drawn from the literature.

Interactivity refers to the activities which encourages communication, dialogue, information sharing and opinion exchange. Besides creating awareness and communicating to customers in one-way manner, interactivity means two-way communication, facilitating customer engaging conversations, managing those dialogues and listening to the customer to improve further companies' marketing communication (Brodie *et al.,* 2007 cited in Lipiäinen, 2014). The role of feedback is essential and it refers to the activities which initiate conversation and especially provides customer opinions. Studies show that B2B companies are mainly using social media to one-way broadcasting and as a traditional media instead of interactive two-way communication channel with the capability to listen the customers (Järvinen *et al.,* 2012). Social media is considered to be used in its full potential if it used equally in both ways, to communication and to listening customers (Lipiäinen, 2014). B2B companies are using social media mainly in acquiring new customers even B2B context and CRM emphasis enhancing existing customer relationships. This can be due to the fact that B2B companies are lacking the interactivity feature in their social media approaches. Social media is used in broadcasting company message, creating awareness and communicating to customers in a very traditional marketing communication way. When it comes to the point of deepening customer relationships B2B managers don't know how to exploit social media and they turn into a more traditional communication tools like phone calls, emails and face-to-face meetings. However, customers are more and more requiring new communication tools, changing their buying behaviors, searching information from Internet, cutting down the meetings and increasing their online communications which creates pressure for B2B companies to put effort for these new creative communication tools like social media. In order to use social media in its full potential and to exploit it more in enhancing existing customer relationships social media needs to be used in an interactive way. Social media activities need to create conversations which B2B customers value, in which customers can engage and which provide important customer feedback to deepen the relationships. B2B markets need to manage those dialogues and further use the information received from these conversations to understand customer's needs. Conversations and dialogues are central in relationship building. In sum, the core construct of interactivity was present at both approaches but in different ways. In acquiring new customers interactivity was used to create interest, engage potential customers to conversations, generate leads, resolve problems and diminish concerns. In the case of existing customers interactivity was emphasized and used to deepen relationships in conversations, listening customers, collecting information and feedback, providing service, solving problems, deeply understanding the customers and analyzing their needs. Social media brings a new context to the IMP interaction discussion. B2B companies are not yet handling very well the interactions process in social media and are struggling with dialogues and listening of the customer who is already empowered with social media.

Content refers to the quality and quantity of the content added to social media channels. Creating and providing relevant, quality, accurate, interesting, fresh and timely content that meets the customer's requirements and which is easy to share is essential to B2B companies and is one of the engaging activities in both cases. Interactive communication sets different criteria for the content and messages created for social media compared to traditional media and in social media people expect real stories instead of marketing messages (Fournier and Avery 2011, cited in Lipiäinen, 2014). Customers, new and existing, has to find the content relevant, content should meet their needs and bring them benefits in order them to engage with it. B2B content is traditionally seen rational and making functional appeals, but many researches notice that the content in social media is more effective if it is emotional and storytelling type also in B2B context. This is mainly due to the interactive and other special features of social media. Social media activities also needs to have the ability to create interest, awareness and attention as well as to be novel or innovative. B2B companies are struggling in customer engaging content creation their customer's value (Järvinen *et al.,* 2012). Content marketing's main objective is lead generation so it is about acquiring new customers (Holliman and Rowley, 2014). On the other hand major part of leads are existing customers who become active again (Järvinen and Taiminen, 2016) so content marketing is suitable also in enhancing existing relationships. Järvinen and Taiminen (2016) also noticed that even company is successfully using content marketing in their digital marketing efforts, they are lacking the interactive nature of social media, using social media only to broadcast content instead of managing dialogue and exploiting the interactive feature of social media. Conversational approaches and creating content that facilitates two-way-dialogues is essential in social media, especially in building relationships. I sum, the core construct of content was present at both approaches by spreading and providing the relevant customer-driven information both approaches require and value, catching the attention of potential buyers and creating awareness, and also reminding existing ones, presenting new information to them, speeding up the buying process and providing fast access to information. Related to the IMP interaction literature social media, as a new context, brings new discussion also to the content of information and changes the type and formality of the content.

Customization refers to providing customized information or content *to targeted customers*. Social media information needs to be tailored and customized depending on the stage of the purchasing process and also depending of the member of the buyer decision unit. B2B companies has to match the social media **channel** (credible channel that their customers prefer) and **message** (relevant information, stage of the product life-cycle, tone of the message) with the **key-decision makers** (users, influencers, deciders, buyers and gatekeepers) and the **forces** influencing organizational buying behavior (environmental, organizational, group and individual, including perceived risks and decision making criteria: product performance, delivery, price, references, etc.). This must be then combined with the **sales funnel stage** (understand, approach, needs, presentation, closing, service and follow-up) allowing each DMU members access different information depending their **buyer readiness stage** (awareness, knowledge, interest, alternatives, conviction, purchase), **decision making process** (need identification, alternative solution identification and evaluation, purchase decision), **type of customer** (new, existing), **type of purchase** (new, modified rebuy, straight rebuy), **receptivity to information types** and **customers' customers driving forces**. (Habibi *et al.,* 2015) Customer buying behavior is not the same in these various types of situations and B2B marketers need understanding of these situations in their own context and social media's impact on buying behavior (Wiersema 2013). The degree of engagement can also vary from low engagement to high engagement. Companies can promote or provide

information in social media to create awareness and change attitudes among prospective customers, but these actions do not actively engage customers and are considered low customer engagement. Companies can also try to retain existing customers, for example trying to get customers to like the brand pages, but still these kinds of efforts require only low customer engagement. If customers are more engaged with a company in social media, customers distribute and share company promotions to wider audience. Companies can't control the messages their customers are exposed and it is difficult to them to separate actions aiming to acquire customers from maintaining relationships. Companies should carefully select the audience who receive the messages in the first place and target to customers with high number of social contacts or financially attractive. (Malthouse *et al.,* 2013) Social media activities need to meet customer requirements, co-create value, and offer solutions not only for direct customers but also in end user level. In sum, the core construct of customization was present at both approaches, targeting messages to potential customers, key-decision makers of new and existing customers and also to end users as well as creating customer-driven sales material. Unique business conditions, multiple decision-makers and complex buying processes requires customization in both approaches. Related to the IMP interaction literature social media brings a new context to the discussion of adaptation and modification of information in a new digital environment.

WOM refers to the information that customers pass along and the kind of content B2B companies need to create or get opinion leaders to spread about the company. Customers are more and more seeking information and opinions from B2B companies existing customers and from trusted sources about company performance. Loyal customers are considered to be advocates of the company and to spread positive WOM to potential customers. Creating engagement (e.g. likes in Facebook) can have consequences as friends of company followers can note the actions taken, spread the message and move potential customers closer to the company. In sum, the core construct of WOM was present at both approaches but in different ways. In a changing communication landscape it is evident that potential customers are seeking references from companies existing customers and relying this information from trusted sources. B2B managers need to use social media to build credibility and trust and also to drive existing customers to create and spread positive buzz around the company and its products. Related to the IMP interaction literature social media brings a new context to the discussion of building trust and commitment in a new digital environment.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The narrative literature review suggest managerial implications not just in the form of core constructs of customer engaging social media activities but also proposing important precedes before building those activities. *Organizational support*, including managerial support, overall social media strategy and training, is important factor in exploiting social media successfully. *Understanding the customer*, including their decision making criteria, needs, values, purchase process stages and key-decision makers, is also essential in selecting right social media channels and messages. Social media also needs to drive the business objectives, B2B companies have to see the benefits it's bringing and companies must define *goals* for the use of social media. Social media is requiring new set of *skills*, competencies and technological expertise to create relevant content and manage customer dialogues as well as monitor, measure and analyze the information received. And finally, B2B companies has to address resources (time, money and workforce) for active participation in social media in order to exploit it fully. Once these precedes are in order B2B companies can move to actively building their social media activities by using the core constructs this narrative

literature is highlighting. Even clear distinction between the two approaches of new and existing customers couldn't be drawn, B2B managers should consider the different emphasis among the constructs when acquiring new customers compared to building relationships with the old ones. But they should still be aware the fact that because of the nature of social media companies can't control the messages their customers are exposed and it is difficult to separate actions aiming to acquire customers from maintaining relationships.

FUTURE RESEARCH AND LIMITATIONS

This research strived to reveal the core constructs of engaging B2B social media activities through a thorough literature research. One limitation typical to narrative review, however, is the possibility to overlook studies or present opinion oriented articles (Green *et al.,* 2006). This bias was reduced by using sufficient amount of sources to find the literature about the topic and also using explicit article acceptance criteria to avoid biased review. Another limitation is the grouping of the different characteristics, barriers and objectives into four general core constructs. Future research may benefit to from examining the general core constructs from more detailed level. This study was conducted purely from the current literature and it calls for more empirical research in the future. Finally, the core constructs highlighted are only a subset of the potential constructs of engaging social media activities in B2B sector. This study was limited to the barriers and opportunities of social media that were examined at some cases in both B2C and B2B companies. The future empirical research should focus on B2B companies to empirically prove the findings of this study.

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APPENDIX 1

Differences between B2B-B2C	Special characters of B2B	Challenges of social media in B2B	Opportunities and goals of social media in B2B	Examples and ways to overcome challenges	Proposed core constructs
Organizational factors	Large and complex organizations with separate marketing and sales functions	Need for an overall strategy to support sales, uncertainty of social media strategies to follow, lack of management support	Understand the value in connecting with customers in new ways, drive and support actively social media use and define social media goals, development of social media strategy	Organizational support and training	Interactivity
The nature of the market	High purchase value and volume, purchase involve more risks, wide variation of business contexts	Unique deals, which need situation specific approaches, no generalizations and limited business cases and inspiring stories, influenced by B2C and may not be efficient/appropriate in B2B, B2B audience is small and parties many times know each other	Ability to provide vast amount of customized rational content which can diminish risk perceptions, endorsements from trusted sources instead of random users reduce perceived risk	Gather knowledge, monitor comments and feedbacks to understand concerns, successful sales stories via LinkedIn or Facebook, video interviews of company product experts or satisfied customers to reassure customers	Content, WOM, customization
The product characteristics	Complex and long-lasting purchasing process with several phases	Collection of pre-purchase data and communication effects at each stage is difficult, uncertainty how to exploit social media during the long negotiations, supportive role, not seen crucial	Build company's general image, create awareness, provide information, lead generation, influences at early stage on the process and helps prospects quicker through the process, leads to actions, monitor progress at every stage	Drive customers to actions like requiring more information, visit trade show booth or phone call, use Twitter to influence in early stage of the buying process, vary and provide content depending the customers stage of the buying process	Content, customization
Organizational factors	Intense and direct supplier-customer relationships	Primarily concentrating on attracting new customers, difficulties in content creation, lead management support and tracking the leads	Building awareness cost-effectively, novel ways to attract new customers and improve customer engagement, generate and qualify quality sales leads early, follow competitors interactions with same prospects, use for PR	Actively participate discussions, facilitate conversations, to approach the customer use Facebook promotions, share stories about community involvement or tweet success stories aiming to future sales opportunities or collect future client list from LinkedIn or blogs, use LinkedIn groups for problem-solving and idea generation, YouTube effective channel for PR purposes, PR material more entertaining, social media releases	Content, customization, interactivity
Other factors	Rely on personal selling and other marketing communication tools supportive, more personalized communication and media strategy	Basic forms of social media tools added into marketing communication, but still rely on more traditional tools, social media changes the roles of sales people and other marketing communication tools, not integrated among other communication tools, customers requiring	Ready access to information, sales people can concentrate on more demanding tasks	Most popular LinkedIn, Twitter, FB, YouTube, Google+ and blogs, more than one channel at time, the most common combination LinkedIn+FB or LinkedIn+Twitter, primary use follow discussions, participate and read content, redirect traffic to online communities and webpages	Content, customization
The product characteristics	Complex products, precise product specificatons	High demand for rational information	Capacity to spread huge amount of product related information, possibilities in preference, conviction and purchase stages, branding	Videos enable additional explanations to comple products and create positive attitudes, close deals directing customers to sales channels by Facebook or Twitter, chat and resolve concerns, use blogs to overcome issues raised by dissatisfied customers,	Content, interactivity
The product characteristics	Multiple, rational and objective buyer decision criteria, knowledgeable and professional purchasers, high need for rational information	Ready access to knowledge about competitors and others opinions, changes in buying behavior, communicate authentically while manage customer-generated content, media and message control problems	Ready access to information, create positive WOM, find out customer motives to engage and spread WOM in social media and use those message strategies	Add new content, participate in relevant discussions, train employees' social media behavior or perform traditional marketing activities that influence opinion leaders, FB Liking button most popular tool to encourage WOM	Content, WOM
The product characteristics	Involves many people in **decision making unit** with different forces influencing them and different motives of using social media than B2C consumers	Different channels and messages for each person, right channels relevant to business purpose, message may not reach the target audience or right decision-maker or the message is not relevant, engaging key decision-makers, lack of resources and skills	Choose right channels depending purpose, target audience and message, identify and engage key decision makers, create relevant, quality, accurate, interesting, fresh and timely content that meets the customer's requirements and which is easy to share, find out what customers value and their motives for use, acquire skills, reallocate resources, content has increasingly important role	If customers are seeking only information companies should concentrate on blogs. use educational social media channels like blogging and Linkedin, vary content depending the channel, use content that solves customer's problems, use media-rich content in a variety of channels to maximize visibility and presence, direct to company webpages, empower staff, build expertise, lead generation with relevant and personalized content	Customization, content, interactivity
Other factors	Professional marketing communication	The tone and the message more professional, challenges in content creation and managing conversations and dialogues	Use key buying criteria and knowledge of the audience to catch attention and create valued content, conversational approaches, use different content strategies in B2B than B2C: use of cues, links and hashtags to support information search, company brand name appeals to leverage brand image as customers who prefer to be associated with reputable brands are likely to engage and spread positive WOM, emotional messages with company brand name effective message strategies	Add social media fanbases to increase WOM and besides rational content use also catching, entertaining and storytelling content to encourage engagement to messages, use links and hashtags in Twitter to redirect users to find out more information, informal, personal language, emojis	Interactivity, content, customization, WOM
Organizational factors	Technology, management of customer data	Doesn't support the business objects, poor usability, lack of measurement, metrics and analytical skills, lack of understanding the possibilities and benefits, it is considered waste of resources (time and money)	Use in sales support, gather information and create customer-driven sales material	Listen, collect customer feedback and monitor,	Customization, interactivity
Key references	Hutt and Speh, 2010, Habibi *et al.,* 2015, Hadjikhani and LaPlaca, 2013, Jussila *et al.,* 2015, Kotler and Keller, 2012, Blythe and Zimmerman 2005	Hutt and Speh, 2010, Wiersema, 2013, Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011, Habibi *et al.,* 2015, Andzulis *et al.,* 2012, Järvinen *et al.,* 2012, Karjaluoto *et al.,* 2015, Swani *et al.,* 2014, Keinänen and Kuivalainen, 2015; Jusila *et al.,* 2014, Matties, 2012, Brennan and Croft, 2012; Schultz *et al.* , 2012 cited in Lacoste, 2016	Wiersema, 2013, Andzulis *et al.,* 2012, Karjaluoto *et al.,* 2015, Michaelidou *et al.,* 2011, Huotari *et al.,* 2015, Keinänen and Kuivalainen, 2015, Kiron *et al.,* 2013, Järvinen *et al.,* 2012, Habibi *et al.,* 2015, Swani *et al.,* 2014, Valos *et al.,* 2015, Swani *et al.,* 2013, Brennan and Croft, 2012; Agnihotri *et al.,* 2012 cited in Lacoste, 2016; Holliman and Rowley, 2014, Guesalaga, 2016	Habibi *et al.,* 2015, Andzulis *et al.,* 2012, Hutt and Speh, 2010, Lipäinen and Karjaluoto, 2015, Valos *et al.,* 2015, Swani *et al.,* 2103, Leek *et al.,* 2016, Brennan and Croft, 2012; Järvinen and Taiminen, 2016; Holliman and Rowley, 2014; Mehmet *et al.,* 2016, Steyn *et al.,* 2016; Guesalaga, 2016	

Table 1. Key findings and core constructs that can enhance customer engagement in acquiring new customers

APPENDIX 2

Differences between B2B-B2C	Special characters of B2B	Challenges of social media in B2B	Opportunities and goals of social media in B2B	Examples and ways to overcome challenges	Proposed core constructs
Organizational factors	Close, intense and direct supplier-customer relationships and personal selling	Not fully realized the opportunities for cultivating existing customer engagement or managing dialogues, lack of management support, changing role of sales people and other marketing communication tools, helpful but deals are finalized with face-to-face meetings	Building, strengthening and enhancing customer relationships, communicate personalized and interactive way with customers, provide service and follow-up	Listen customer, use blogs to generate conversations and industry discussions with customers, build relationships by tweeting about conferences or innovations, follow customers on social media channels, ask referrals in Linkedin, use personal data customers are sharing to add a personal thouch to interactions	Customization, interactivity, content
Organizational factors	Commitment and trust	Information security and message control problems hinder the use, be aware when sending sensitive information to groups of people, carelessness, information can be easily forwarded, beyond business control, not meet the formal reporting requirements for business, not safe for confidential information or data storage, who controls the content, responsibility of wrong messages	Listen the customer and build trust and commitment in an interactive way, build credibility and trusted reputation with meaningful content, create policies, improve social media platform to be align with existing communication platforms	Enhance two-way communication, use meningful content and build trust by tweeting, responding to comments and drawing customers to own networks, participate in trusted professional LinkedIn groups	Interactivity, content
The product characteristics	Complex products, lenghty new product development, precise product specifications, ongoing adjustments after purchase	High demand to provide lot of logical information, how to exploit social media during the legthy product development processes, information security in idea generation	Spread product related information, channel for direct interaction to introduce new products and innovations, crowdsource ideas, collect feedback, improve product features and spot market demands and trends, branding	Videos or tweets to present complex new products, crowdsourcing, to discover customer needs request customer product and service ideas,	Content, interactivity, customization
The nature of the market	The largest markets, high purchase volume and value, a single customer can construe a large amount of purchases, small amount of large buyers which needed to be treated individually	Fewer customers who could share WOM or create viral effects	Communicate vast amount of customized rational content, create WOM	Add relevant content, participate relevant discussions	Content, customization, interactivity, WOM
The product characteristics	Involves many people in **decision making unit** with different forces influencing them and different motives of using social media than B2C consumers	Difficulties to find the right channels for business purposes and goals, no benefits for customers	Provide ready access to information, reach out key decison makers, develop relationships with meaningful content, fast delivery of data to groups of people, confirmation of message been read	Provide value and communicate content meaningful to customers, build communities for like-minded customers and target messages specifically, Facebook ads targeted to specific memebers of decision making unit	Customization, content, interactivity
The product characteristics	Multiple, rational and objective buyer decision criteria, knowledgeable purchasers, professional communication, high need for information	Access to knowledge about competitors and other customers opinions, tone and message problems, challenges in content creation, marketers and customers have different motives for utilizing social media, B2B marketers foster long-term relationships by posting interaction oriented content, however, customers prefer task-oriented content, customers have different reasons to follow industrial brands than B2C brands	Ready access to information, create positive WOM, share interesting content and use personalized interactions, content available at any time, understand the motive of customers and then post personalized and customized content, write and check messages before sending	Create trusted reputation with meaningful and competent content, influence customers to create WOM, use company brand names and emotional appeals in content creation, hard sales appeals inappropriate, use in Twitter number of links and hashtags to direct recipients to search more content	Content, WOM, interactivity
The product characteristics	Complex and long-lasting purchasing **process** with several phases	Uncertainty how to exploit social media	Remind old customers, communicate and interact with customers to move them more quickly toward repurchase, possibilities to measure the effectiveness	Two-way communications with customers, use relevant, compelling and timely content	Interactivity, content, customization
The nature of the market	Derived demand, some deal with both business and consumer markets but others never operate with the end users	Need for deep insights what affects direct customers' success by understanding better customers' customers driving forces	Deeper customer engagement and collaboration can be gained to get a better understanding of not only the direct customers but also customers' customers and end users (B2B2C)	Gathering knowledge, monitoring comments from specific LinkedIn groups or company blogs can help to understand the customers, add content aimed specific to end users	WOM, interactivity, customization, content
Organizational factors	Technology, management of customer data	Lack of knowledge, skills, technological expertise and resources, lack of proper metrics, no active measurement, measurement not considered important, lack of goals, strategy and integration to processes, opportunities not fully understood, other projects more important than social media, not enough ROI, data is not used for strategic purposes	Use social monitoring and analytics tools to improve communication and to listen and deeply understand and analyze customer's needs, attitudes and opinions and refine products, provide customer service and support, listen discussions, spot trends, analyze needs, collect information and feedback, solve customer problems, create communities, share knowledge, create customer-oriented content based on insights, marketing more measurable, acquire skills, reallocate resources, define goals, generate information and integrate into strategies	Listen customer, generate conversations and industry discussions with customers, collect feedback, respond to feedback eg. Using fast emojis to present reactions, use YouTube and LinkedIn groups for problem-solving and listening	Customization, interactivity
Key references	Hutt and Speh, 2010, Habibi et al., 2015, Hadjikhani and LaPlaca, 2013, Jussila et al., 2015, Kotler and Keller, 2012, Blythe and Zimmerman, 2005, Dwyer and Tanner, 2002, Wiersema, 2013	Andzulis et al., 2012, Järvinen et al., 2012, Karjaluoto et al., 2015, Michaelidou et al., 2011, Jussila et al., 2011; 2014, Habibi et al., 2015, Wiersema, 2013, Kiron et al., 2013, Kim et al., 2015, Wang et al., 2016, Matties 2012	Wiersema, 2013, Andzulis et al., 2012, Michaelidou et al., 2011, Jussila et al., 2011; Huotari et al., 2015, Järvinen et al., 2012, Habibi et al., 2015, Karjaluoto et al., 2015, Lipiäinen and Karjaluoto, 2015, Swani et al., 2014, Kim et al., 2015, Wang et al., 2016; Leek et al., 2016	Andzulis et al., 2012, Huotari et al., 2015, Wang et al., 2016, Valos et al., 2015, Leek et al., 2016; Agnihotri et al., 2012 cited in Lacoste, 2016, Holliman and Rowley, 2014, Quinton and Wilson, 2016, Singaraju, et al., 2016	

Table 2. Key findings and core constructs that can enhance customer engagement in maintaining existing customer relationship