

AN ANALYSIS OF DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES  
ON INSTAGRAM: COMPARING STORYTELLING AND  
INFORMATIONAL CREATIVE STRATEGIES AMONGST OTHER  
CREATIVE TACTICS

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Dissertation submitted as partial requirement for the conferral of Master in Marketing

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July 2019



## **Acknowledgement**

First, I would like to thank my research advisor, Professor Daniela Langaro at ISCTE University for her time and guidance, which helped me to successfully accomplish this master dissertation. She consistently allowed this dissertation to be my own work, but steered me in the right direction when needed.

Moreover, I would like to thank all the participants who spent their time to help me with my interviews. Without their passionate participation and input, the interviews could not have been successfully conducted. I would also like to thank everyone who spent time helping me with my dissertation and especially Joana Barata and Emily Drain for their valuable advice and guidance throughout this process.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my parents for giving me the possibility to an outstanding education, while providing me with unconditional support and continuous encouragement throughout my years of study and through the process of researching and writing this dissertation. This accomplishment would not have been possible without them. Thank you.

Margaux Müller

## **Abstract**

In a competition-based economy, organizations use various factors to influence advertisement and brand engagement effectiveness. Companies strive to implement social media, as this form of brand communication is increasingly powerful in terms of reach and still quite inexpensive compared to other media tools. This dissertation compares storytelling versus informational content formats in Instagram brand posts and explores their impact on users' brand engagement.

This study employed qualitative and quantitative research methods, conducting eight in-depth interviews and a content analysis using a sample of 1000 Instagram brand posts from four different industries (beauty, technology, apparel and fast food industry). A total of 9 hypotheses were proposed to analyze brand engagement activities in view of content post characteristics (i.e. vividness, level of interactivity, content type, publication timing).

Results reveal that storytelling strategy in posts increase the number of comments, however it does not impact the engagement or number of likes. Using highly vivid content instead of photos on Instagram does not benefit the engagement. Highly interactive posts and posts with additional information about the product have no impact on the number of likes and comments. Posting on weekends results in significantly higher engagement regardless of storytelling or informational post strategy, whereas weekdays indicate overall less engagement.

Several conclusions and implications for marketing practitioners are derived from the study findings, while several aspects of this study corroborate with previous research. This dissertation can be a guide to marketers for best practices on social media and ways to enhance engagement across industries on Instagram.

**Keywords:** Digital Marketing; Social Media; Storytelling and Informational Strategy; Creative Tactics

**JEL Classification:** M310 Marketing & M370 Advertising

## **Resumo**

Numa economia baseada na concorrência, organizações usam vários fatores para influenciar publicidade e a eficácia do engajamento de marca. As empresas esforçam-se para implementar redes sociais, pois esta forma de comunicação é cada vez mais poderosa em termos de alcance e mais barata comparando com outras ferramentas. Esta dissertação compara e contrasta narrativa versus apelos informativos nas publicações de marca no Instagram e tenta explorar o impacto destes no engajamento.

Este estudo utilizou métodos qualitativos e quantitativos, realizando oito entrevistas e analisando o conteúdo de 1000 publicações de marca no Instagram de quatro indústrias diferentes. Um total de 9 hipóteses foram propostas para analisar o engajamento da marca em função das características do conteúdo partilhado.

Resultados revelam que a narrativa em publicações aumenta o número de comentários, porém não impacta no engajamento ou no número de gostos. Usar conteúdo de fotos em vez de vídeos altamente vívidos no Instagram beneficiará o engajamento. Mensagens altamente interativas e publicações com informações adicionais sobre o produto não têm impacto sobre o número de gostos e comentários. Publicar nos fins-de-semana resulta num engajamento significativamente maior, independentemente da narrativa ou da estratégia de informação, enquanto os dias de semana indicam um engajamento significativamente menor.

Conclusões e implicações para os profissionais de marketing são derivadas dos resultados do estudo, enquanto vários aspetos deste estudo corroboram com pesquisas anteriores. Esta dissertação pode ser um guia para os profissionais de marketing para as melhores práticas nas redes sociais e maneiras de melhorar o engajamento entre indústrias no Instagram.

**Palavras-chave:** Marketing Digital; Redes Sociais; Estratégia de Narrativa e Informação; Táticas Criativas

**JEL Classification:** M310 Marketing & M370 Advertising

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Acknowledgement.....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>Resumo.....</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.2 Research Problem and Question .....	2
1.3 Objective.....	3
1.4 Overview of the chapters .....	4
<b>2. Literature Review .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Marketing Strategy and Integrated Marketing Communications.....	5
2.2 Advertising.....	7
2.3 Digital Marketing.....	8
2.3.1 Social Media Marketing.....	10
2.3.2 Brand Engagement.....	11
2.4 Storytelling and Informational Creative Strategies.....	13
2.4.1 Comparison of Storytelling and Informational Creative Strategies.....	15
2.4.2 Storytelling and Brand Engagement .....	17
2.5 Creative Tactics .....	17
2.6 Hypotheses Formulation .....	20
2.7 Literature Review Summary .....	23
<b>3. Methodology .....</b>	<b>24</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	24
3.2 Research Technique .....	24
3.3 Study 1 – Qualitative Research.....	25
3.3.1 Research Design.....	25
3.3.2 Data Collection Method.....	25
3.3.3 Research Guide Design.....	26
3.3.4 In-depth Research Guide Design .....	26
3.4 Study 2 – Quantitative Research.....	28
3.4.1 Research Design.....	28
3.4.2 Data Collection Method.....	29

3.4.3 Variables Collected.....	30
3.4.4 Manipulation Check.....	32
3.4.5 Data Analysis.....	32
3.5 Methodology Summary .....	35
<b>4. Results .....</b>	<b>36</b>
4.1 Qualitative Research - Interview Analysis .....	36
4.1.2 Summary of Interview Results.....	41
4.2 Quantitative Research .....	43
4.2.1 Descriptive Analysis .....	43
4.2.2. Hypothesis Testing.....	44
4.2.3 Overview of Hypotheses Results .....	53
<b>5. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>55</b>
5.1 Discussion.....	55
5.2 Implications for Theory .....	57
5.3 Practical Implications.....	58
5.4 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research.....	59
<b>6. Bibliography .....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>66</b>
Appendix 1: Respondents .....	66
Appendix 2: Interview Research Guide.....	66
Appendix 3: Interview Transcripts .....	70
Appendix 4: Manipulation Check – Independent Classification of Instagram Posts .....	83
Appendix 5: Brands Discovered by Respondents on Instagram.....	92
Appendix 6: Advertisements Mentioned by Respondents.....	92
Appendix 7: Characteristics of Informational and Storytelling Instagram Posts (identified by respondents during the interviews) .....	93
Appendix 8: Number of Posts per Industry .....	93
Appendix 9: Number of Posts per Strategy (Storytelling/Informational).....	94
Appendix 10: Vivid Posts .....	95
Appendix 11: Interactive Posts .....	95
Appendix 12: Number of Posts Published During the Weekend.....	95
Appendix 13: Posts with Additional Product Information .....	96

## Tables

Table 1: Impact on Engagement .....	22
Table 2: Impact on Comments .....	22
Table 3: Impact on Likes .....	23
Table 4: Interview Guide Sections.....	28
Table 5: Industry Brands analyzed .....	29
Table 6: Characteristics of Creative Strategies (Informational and Storytelling).....	30
Table 7: Hypotheses and Methodology Summary Table.....	34
Table 8: Independent samples test: The impact of storytelling strategy on engagement .....	45
Table 9: Independent samples test: The impact of storytelling strategy on the number of likes .....	46
Table 10: Independent samples test: The impact of storytelling strategy on the number of comments .....	47
Table 11: Independent samples test: The impact of vividness on the number of comments...	48
Table 12: Independent samples test: The impact of interactivity on the number of comments .....	49
Table 13: Independent samples test: The impact of questions in storytelling posts on the number of comments.....	50
Table 14: Independent samples test: The impact of additional information about the product on the number of likes.....	51
Table 15: Independent samples test: The impact of the timing of posts (weekend) on the engagement .....	52
Table 16: Independent samples test: The impact of the timing of posts (weekend) on the engagement .....	53
Table 17: Results of Hypotheses.....	53



# 1. Introduction

The rapid change in information technology development and the increased use of the internet has changed the consumer culture drastically over the last decade. Especially in this current era, sharing information online and access to social media platforms are crucial. The ease of access to the internet all over the world makes it a tool used privately and professionally as well. This transformation is highly relevant for companies as they are shifting from traditional to online marketing and media. Statista (2018) states, that the overall worldwide social media users are expected to reach over 3 billion monthly active social media users by 2021, which is almost a third of the Earth's population. Since social media is such a powerful outlet worldwide, many companies are using it to position themselves online and to create effective promotional strategies, which has been proven to be beneficial for businesses across industries. There are many different social media platforms, which each reach a distinctive set of people that perceive given information differently. This is due to different demographics that each social media platform targets, age and gender (Chan - Olmsted, Cho, & Lee, 2013).

A noticeable phenomenon in the social media world are the exchanges of information and communication in imagery form, which has put social media platforms such as Instagram and Pinterest on the map (Lim & Childs, 2016). As stated by Martinus & Chaniago (2017), Instagram is the social media platform that is currently often used for private and business activities equally, especially when pioneering and building a brand. Nowadays, companies have to evaluate how they present themselves online and what strategies they implement to effectively use the various social media communication tools to their advantage. Strategies following different creative tactics, such as storytelling or informational creative strategy are ways one can advertise or position a brand on Instagram, as both strategies can be communicated in pictorial form. Several studies have been conducted to analyze which creative strategy is most effective but have not yet directed its full attention solely on Instagram (Stubb, 2018; Martinus & Chaniago, 2017; Lim & Childs, 2016). This study is meant to unveil whether a storytelling or informational creative strategy is most effective for companies on Instagram.

## **1.2 Research Problem and Question**

Companies all over the world are bringing their brands into the digital space. Both entire industries and brands are increasingly present online. Especially on social media platforms such as Instagram, brands are increasingly active with the rise of information exchange in pictorial form (Lim & Childs, 2016). Nowadays, many brands use Instagram as a communication outlet, making it possible for companies to target their audience precisely. Furthermore, the number of active business profiles on Instagram as of November 2017 was 25 million, which is an increase of 10 million from July 2017 (Statista, 2018). As stated by Chan–Olmsted et al. (2013), there is a need to differentiate communication campaigns according to the various target audiences. Advertising is most effective by providing tailored content on Instagram that attracts the audience towards the brand and the content created.

To ensure an effective and successful social media marketing strategy, several factors can be implemented and key metrics can help measure its effectiveness. Brand engagement is a key metric that can be used to measure advertising effectiveness on social media. Users on social media engage with brands through “likes”, “comments” and “shares” of posts (Hoffman and Fodor, 2010). When focusing on creative strategies, there are many studies that either speak for storytelling (emotional) or informational (rational) strategy. Lee et al. (2014) found that emotional and persuasive content has a positive impact on social media engagement. On the other hand, researchers found that emotional creative appeals attract less consumers than rational appeals (Grigaliunaite & Pileliene, 2016). Academic literature has been researching on the topic of creative strategies, in particular rational or emotional appeals, for many years (Escalas, 2006; Cutler, 2000; Lim & Childs, 2016; Muñoz & Towner, 2017) and conducted research for traditional media and new online mediums such as blogs (Stubb, 2018). Which leads to the question: Can these findings for effective creative strategies be translated to the social media network Instagram? Therefore, the key research problem of this dissertation is:

***To evaluate whether storytelling is more effective than informational creative strategies on social media.***

### **1.3 Objective**

The objective of this dissertation is to explore whether a storytelling or informational creative strategy is most effective for brands on social media, especially Instagram. Since Instagram is a social media platform for mainly visual content such as photos and videos, it is difficult to know which creative strategy works better – do informational facts or an emotional story have the best effects for brands on Instagram?

To ensure that the research problem will be addressed, research questions have been designed as a research guideline to conduct this dissertation.

**RQ1:** *What is the effect of storytelling and informational strategies on consumers' brand engagement on social media?*

**RQ2:** *Under what conditions do social media users tend to engage with Instagram posts?*

As marketing is a part of the business structure, any activities need measurement of effectiveness. This dissertation has for its objective to consider the aspects of measurement in relation to both storytelling and informational creative strategies. Therefore, the objective of this dissertation is:

- *To examine the perceived brand engagement towards storytelling posts on Instagram.*
- *To examine the perceived brand engagement towards informational posts on Instagram.*

This topic is relevant on a managerial level, as a certainty of effectiveness of one strategy over another can impact a company's overall marketing strategy, content creation and budget allocation. Currently this topic is of relevance as Instagram has been and is raising to be a main tool of communication for brands. On an academic level, studies have been conducted on the topic of effectiveness between storytelling and informational creative strategies, but lack research with the point of view of companies and brands on Instagram. This study can fill a gap of knowledge for brands on a marketing level on Instagram that, in the knowledge of the author, has not been done yet.

## **1.4 Overview of the chapters**

As mentioned above, the purpose of this dissertation is to examine the effectiveness of informational and storytelling creative strategy on social media. Therefore, the dissertation is divided into four main chapters including the literature review, methodology, results and lastly the conclusion.

The second chapter focuses on secondary research, in which the literature review is derived from academic literature on the research topic. An overview of digital marketing and integrated marketing strategies are given, followed by definitions of storytelling and informational creative strategies. Along the literature review, social media and the social media platform Instagram are described, as well as the definition of brand engagement and its measurement of effectiveness. Moreover, best practices for advertising and marketing strategies for social media are described.

The third chapter focuses on the methodology of this research dissertation and the steps followed throughout the research process, in order to examine which creative strategy is the most effective on social media for brands. Furthermore, the method to collect relevant primary data is described. The choice of in-depth, one-on-one interviews with an interview guideline are explained and more details on the interview content are given.

The fourth chapter of this dissertation includes primary data collection and a thorough analysis. The results will clarify the research questions and the proposed hypotheses will be either accepted or rejected.

Lastly, the conclusion, practical implications and limitations of the study as well as future research will be stated.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Marketing Strategy and Integrated Marketing Communications**

The American Marketing Association defines the term Marketing as “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (American Marketing Association, 2013). Overall, marketing can be seen to target and stimulate buyers in a favorable way for the firm. It can involve product development, a marketing mix (product, price, place and promotion), as well as the distribution around the product. Some firms also pay attention to how customers’ needs and wants are changing and are adapting to it. But most often, marketing is viewed as a business activity (Kotler & Levy, 1969). One must remember that marketing does not only mean pushing products onto buyers but fundraising, political candidates or university recruitment also use marketing in their favor (Kotler & Levy, 1969).

Marketing is usually practiced with a strategy behind it, which is crucial for a company and is often the cornerstone of a firm’s marketing activities (Leppäniemi & Karjaluo, 2008). It is made up of decisions and actions that are focused around building a sustainable competitive advantage in the minds of the customers, which also creates value for stakeholders (Palmatier & Sridhar, 2017). As most topics in the academic literature, marketing strategy has diverse and contradictory definitions. Varadarajan (2009) effectively summarized that there is a distinction between the concepts of marketing strategy and marketing tactics, as well as marketing strategy and marketing management. To differentiate marketing strategy and marketing tactics, which are relevant in this dissertation, Varadarajan (2009) points out that there are additionally three marketing dimensions. Those include marketing as culture, marketing as strategy and marketing as tactics. Marketing as a strategy places emphasis on small businesses that focus to compete with other businesses by selecting market segmentation, targeting, and positioning. Operationally, marketing managers must focus on marketing tactics with the elements of the marketing mix, which includes the 4 P’s: product, price, promotion, and place/distribution (Varadarajan, 2009).

In the past decades, the concept of integrated marketing communications has gained momentum and importance, as it was heavily researched by many scholars (Finne and Grönroos, 2009; Kitchen et al., 2004; Henninger et al., 2017). An integrated marketing

communication, also called IMC, is linked closely to the marketing strategy. Throughout literature, IMC has a variety of definitions. IMC tries to coordinate and integrate all elements of the marketing communication tools and promotional mix into a consumer-focused message, designed to achieve various goals (Mangold, & Faulds, 2009). IMC can cover all of a firm's communication from B2B, market channel, customer-focused, to internally directed communications. Another important definition of IMC is described by Kotler, as he defines IMC as a concept in which the main goal is to convey a clear, consistent and convincing message about the company and products (Duralia, 2018).

IMC attempts to combine a multitude of elements in the communication mix to achieve the most effective result. It is suggested that within IMC, publicity and advertising combined can have greater impact and be more cost-effective. Overall an IMC approach considers many aspects and forms of communication, from the message delivery, to the customer contact points and the customers themselves (Kitchen et al., 2004). Leppäniemi & Karjaluoto (2008) found, that when developing an effective (mobile) strategy, it is suggested to follow Kotler's definition of IMC, and bearing in mind all communication tools a firm uses in order to convey a clear, consistent and convincing message. To obtain a final definition for IMC is difficult, as it is both a concept and a process at the same time. Each firm will integrate the dimensions very differently; One organization will only adapt the philosophy, while another one will physically integrate two departments together (Duncan & Everett, 1993).

However, some researchers discovered gaps in the existing literature of IMC. Finne and Grönroos (2009) point out that IMC is mostly defined as outside-in, in other words, it focuses on outgoing messages from the sender. The traditional approach has always focused on how companies are the active ones and the consumer (receiver) has a passive role in the communication process. Furthermore, Finne and Grönroos (2009) explain that in relationship marketing the concept of the two parties being fairly equal is important, and relevant in terms of online marketing.

Nonetheless, literature describes steps to take when planning an IMC strategy. Leppäniemi & Karjaluoto (2008) state, that in order to develop an IMC strategy it is advised to start with an overall analysis of the brand/company situation, among competitors, the market consumers and its various products. Based on this analysis a firm can determine an IMC strategy for its target audience. They also state that the importance lies in the identification of the right target audience, since this aspect determines further actions and the overall

communication strategy. In terms of using specific marketing strategies to achieve a certain business goal, there is no ‘one fit for all’ technique. Furthermore, there are many different strategic approaches in the development of marketing communications. Many academics that proposed a variety of strategies – Patti and Frazer, Aaker and Shansby or Ries and Trout are amongst them (Leppäniemi & Karjaluoto, 2008). However, most people tend to rely on the two basic models by Kotler – the push and pull strategies.

In terms of IMC strategy for social media, many factors are similar to a traditional IMC strategy. However, since the emergence of social media, also called consumer-generated media, some aspects of IMC have changed (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). It is known that a successful IMC strategy contains a clear message strategy, which contributes to the achievement of an overall performance objective. In traditional IMC, messages are coordinated across the various IMC elements to convey a consistent message across all platforms, which is also the case for IMC on social media (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). But in their research article, Mangold & Faulds (2009) point out that compared to traditional marketing, consumers can directly respond and react to companies’ messages. Due to social media, the control of firms over the content, timing and frequency of information is certainly lower than with traditional IMC strategies. In conclusion, IMC is a variety of marketing communication tools (traditional and new communications) that are integrated to achieve to the marketing communication objectives for a certain brand or product.

## **2.2 Advertising**

Over the years, advertisement has been defined by various academics in many ways. The American Marketing Association (2018) describes the term advertising as a placement of announcement and persuasive messages in a time or space which are purchased in any of the mass media. Kotler defines advertising as: “(...) any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services through mass media such as newspapers, magazines, television or radio by an identified sponsor” (Kotler, 2010, p.762). Advertising is done by business firms, non-profit organizations, government agencies and individuals who want to inform or persuade other people of a specific target market about their products, services, organizations, or ideas (Zubiel-Kasprowicz, 2016). Furthermore, Kotler classifies advertising into three main purposes: Informative, persuasive and reminder. *Informative* advertising is to inform consumers about a new product or feature, while *persuasive* advertising is used to persuade consumers of a certain benefit and shows that the product or service is the best quality

for their money. Lastly, *reminder* advertisement is to keep consumers up-to-date with a product in order for them to keep thinking about the product (Kotler & Armstrong 2010).

### **2.3 Digital Marketing**

One of the major changes in human interaction and how business is conducted, is the emergence of digital technologies. Especially the internet has drastically changed ways of communication in business, which are noteworthy in areas of marketing practices (Dahiya & Gayatri 2018). Yasmin, Tasneem, & Fatema (2015) define a marketing practice as digital if its function is dependent on a digital medium. Digital marketing is a sub-branch of traditional marketing and is often used as a modern channel to place products or brands (Yasmin, Tasneem, & Fatema, 2015). As Kannan (2017) put it, the term and definition of digital marketing has evolved over time and is now used as an umbrella term to describe the process of using any form of digital technologies to reach and retain new customers, as well as to promote brands and products amongst others with the objective to increase sales (Kannan, 2017). Digital technologies and especially digital marketing have gained momentum, as it offers abilities of measurement, customer engagement, interactivity between the brand and consumers as well as the ability to manage large informative sources (Dahiya & Gayatri 2018). A targeted, personalized and interactive communication through digital channels stands at the core of digital marketing. Therefore, a shift by marketers to digital marketing has been happening as the unique features to deliver personalized content to individual consumers in real-time prove to be an attractive alternative to traditional marketing (Dahiya & Gayatri 2018).

Digital marketing is made up of several elements and differ depending on literature. In this dissertation, the most relevant elements are online advertising, social media marketing, email marketing, affiliate marketing, search engine marketing (SEM), search engine optimization (SEO) and pay per click (PPC) (Yasmin, Tasneem, & Fatema, 2015). Online marketing is internet advertising in which a company can deliver a message about their brand, product or service. The definition for online marketing by the American Marketing Association (2018) is: “(...) a type of marketing that combines traditional marketing principles and practices with the interactive features of the Internet, for the purpose of delivering need-satisfying products and services to consumers; organizations conducting marketing by communication with consumers on the Internet.” It can refer to the internet-based aspects of a marketing campaign. Therefore, it can include banner ads, e-mail marketing, SEO or e-commerce amongst other tools. Social media marketing is a form of marketing that happens



in social media networks, online and is a unique marketing category as it enables two-way communication. It is usually in form of text, photo or video that can be easily shared amongst interconnected groups of people online. E-mail marketing is a direct marketing technique that requires a recipient list of people (Yasmin, Tasneem, & Fatema, 2015). According to Key (2017), e-mail marketing is a blend of informative, promotional and customer relationship management that can be effectively used to target a specific segment of customers. Affiliate marketing is a form of performance-based, business reward system that pairs brands and affiliates. Brands then pay the affiliate a commission for every lead or purchase made to the company's website (Yasmin, Tasneem, & Fatema, 2015). SEM combines both SEO and PPC campaigns. The aim of SEO is to optimize online search results long-term and to ultimately rank as high as possible on search engine result pages. SEO is heavily dependent on algorithms used by search engines such as Google and Bing. These algorithms decide on what to show based on search results according to relevance, performance and paid advertisements (Key, 2017). PPC is based on user keyword-searches online that lead to a website or similar online platform, on which the advertiser only pays when a user actually clicks on the ad. PPC is a form of advertising in which the route from initial offering to final conversion is often direct (Key, 2017).

Digital marketing has not only shifted traditional marketing but also sparked a change in consumer behaviour. The everyday use and influence of the internet has changed the traditional consumer to be a more informed and selective customer that tends to be in control (Racolta-Paina & Luca, 2010). A study by Yasmin, Tasneem, & Fatema (2015), points out eight different advantages digital marketing offers to customers: The possibility to stay updated, have more and clear information as well as a comparison between products and services is of advantage for customers. Furthermore, customers are able to engage with the brand, shop 24/7 and make purchases instantly, obtain a certain transparency of prices and lastly the ability to share content of products and services with others. Tucker (2014) found that when people have the possibility to choose how their personal information is shared and used, there tends to be no negative effect on the advertising performance. Dinner et al. (2013) states, that digital advertisements are more effective in driving online behavior than offline advertisements do. And most importantly, digital channels have affected how consumers search and look for information (Dahiya & Gayatri 2018). Recent studies have also shown that more than 75% of consumers search online before actually making a purchase (Dahiya & Gayatri 2018).

Digital marketing offers a wide range of benefits and advantages for both the consumer and the brand. According to Tiago & Veríssimo (2014), it is crucial for firms to adopt social media channels and provide useful information to customers and communicating with stakeholders in order to generate sales. Through digital technologies, consumers have access to more information, a wider variety of products and services and therefore competitive prices (Tiago, & Veríssimo, 2014). Notably, social networks seem to enhance those benefits for consumers, as communication is easier and more proactive (Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014).

### **2.3.1 Social Media Marketing**

The American Marketing Association (2018) defines social media as “sites where users actively participate to determine what is popular”. As with many terms, social media has various definitions. Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) refer to social media as a combination of two terms: Web 2.0, which they see as the ideological and technological foundation of social media, and secondly, user generated content (UGC) which can be understood of as the many ways consumers use social media. UGC as a term can be applied to describe the numerous forms of media content that are created by users and are publicly accessible (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). As previously mentioned, digital marketing offers interactivity and two-way communication between the brand and the consumer (Dahiya & Gayatri 2018). Social media has become an increasingly important medium for marketers and brands, as they can easily communicate with attractive audience segments (Murdough, 2009). According to an eMarketer report from 2013, social media is part of marketers’ strategies to achieve certain marketing objectives, such as branding, customer relationship management, sales promotions, service or research. Many marketers value social media most for their branding purposes (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). However, only considering the benefit for the brand itself, does not result in a successful social media marketing strategy. It is highly important to consider motivations for consumers using social media. Hutton & Fosdick (2012) believe social networks cut across all motivations consumers have in different social media. While video platforms are good entertainment, message boards are great for opinion and blogs for self-expression and self-promotion, social networks combine many of these motivators that drive consumers to engage on the social platform.

This dissertation focuses on creative strategies on social media, especially on one significant social media platform called Instagram, which is used by millions of people.

Instagram is a free image and video sharing social media platform that people can access over the internet by downloading the Instagram application on their phones. Users can share photos and videos on their profiles and with followers. The platform allows users to comment, like and share posts on Instagram. MacInnis and Price (1987) state, that imagery encompasses ideas, feelings and memories that help to remember past experiences. As Instagram is based on sharing imagery content in various forms, this insight is significant as companies can use this platform to reach consumers through imagery that can express ideas, feelings and memories, which consumers can relate to.

Over the last year, Instagram has gained 200 million additional active users, accounting for a total of 1000 million users as of June 2018 (Statista, 2018). It is important to note, that the Millennial age group (18-34) is the largest Instagram user group, with 31% of all Instagram users aged between 18-24 and 30% of users between 25-34 years old (Statista, 2018). Statista (2018) informs that as of 2016, 58 percent of internet users aged 18 to 32 years old have an Instagram account, up from 44 percent in the preceding year. This is valuable and relevant information for this dissertation and the following methodology, as this proves that Millennials are the most relevant user group on Instagram and need to be focused on when analyzing the effectiveness of different creative strategies in this research. Instagram is also a tool used by marketers in multiple ways to determine the success of social media campaigns or singular posts. Marketers use the number of comments, likes and shares and turn them into engagement metrics to determine the popularity of a post. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that all social media engagement forms are not the same (Muñoz & Towner 2017). Hoffman & Fodor (2010) describe an effective social media strategy in which a brand is put to work for the customers. This means, that the brand satisfies the consumers' needs on the social platform to consume, create, connect and control. There are various definitions and examples on how to measure social media effectiveness (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010; Yang, et al., 2016). For the purpose of this dissertation, effectiveness of social media strategies and tactics is measured by brand engagement.

### **2.3.2 Brand Engagement**

Brand engagement represents a two-way communication between the customer and the brand as an emotional connection (Farook & Abeysekera, 2016). Engagement comprises of three dimensions including cognitive, affective and behavioural (Dessart, 2017; Hollebeek,

2011). The *cognitive* engagement is described as a state of mental activity that requires attention and absorption, or in the case of social media an interaction between the consumer and the brand. Furthermore, the *affective* engagement is stated as a feeling of enthusiasm and joy toward an engagement object or positive feelings towards a brand. And lastly, the *behavioural* engagement is described by Dessart (2017) as the active act of sharing, learning and endorsing behaviours. Or as Hollebeek (2011) states, behavioural engagement can be referred to as the time and effort given from the consumer to the brand. In general, consumer engagement relates to involvement and interactivity and is differentiated between social and conventional consumer engagement (Oh et al., 2017). Social engagement is the engagement facilitated by social media websites and platforms. Evans (2010) describes brand engagement as the willingness of customers to participate, which defines what engagement on social platforms is. The difference lies in the engagement of the customers as they switch from viewers to participants on social media. On social media, the focus of brand engagement is on the behavioural demonstrations of the consumer, as an engaged consumer shares and participates. Engagement can vary by the definition given by each marketer on how they define their customer engagement behaviours (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Therefore, social media engagement can be seen through a passive-to-active lens as described by Hutton & Fosdick (2012). While passive activities such as reading online or looking at pictures take less involvement, cognitive processing are active behaviours and include writing a comment or creating a video. Therefore, consumers are more likely to participate passively rather than actively as it demands less effort. Interestingly, social media today is taking the role of an entertainment source for consumers, as much as traditional mass media does (Hutton & Fosdick, 2012).

A key element in brand engagement is the sharing of information and knowledge, which online communication technologies facilitate. One study based engagement on social media as a concept known as *social currency*, which is how much people share brand-related content with others in their everyday social lives (Zinnbauer & Honer, 2011). For instance, social currency is the engagement of a user with a brand on social media - giving a “like” on a brands post, being a follower of a brands Instagram account or commenting on a post. These are different demonstrations of interactions on social media through likes, comments and shares (Hollebeek, 2011). On social media, brand engagement can be measured by the number of comments, active users, likes, shares or user-generated items (photos, replies) (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). As Hoffman and Fodor (2010) describe, highly engaging social media campaigns or even user-generated content can attract customer participation, and therefore enhance the

brand engagement. The motivation for customers and social media users to engage can be varied. Shang et al. (2006) state, that information seeking is the main purpose for users to engage. Furthermore, it was found that engagement online (i.e. in forums) and the possibility to access additional information about a product or service enhanced the likelihood of purchase intention (Bickart & Schindler, 2001).

## **2.4 Storytelling and Informational Creative Strategies**

Storytelling has been used as a form of communication between individuals and groups for thousands of years successfully to this day. Storytelling can be divided into internal and external communication. *Internal* storytelling exists as a cultural manifestation or can be used as sense-making of processes. On the other hand, *external* storytelling may be used as a strategic marketing tool to infuse a brand with values and emotion (Gill, 2011). Therefore, storytelling can be used by individuals and also by large corporations effectively, conveying values, knowledge and explanations. Storytelling is a way of describing real or fictional events with the use of words, photos, videos and audio and can transcend various different age groups, cultures and genders (Gill, 2011; Escalas, 1998). Storytelling advertisements, also called narrative or transformational ads, is an advertising method or strategy that conveys a commercial message through a story (Escalas, 1998). This often entices that a story includes an emotional appeal and feelings that are subjective from the storyteller. Storytelling advertisement can transform the acceptance of a product or service with the receiver and establishing a positive selling climate with the consumer (Stubb, 2018). In marketing, the storytelling creative strategy is a form of narrative, and is supposed to make people remember information better when it is presented in a story form, rather than a list of informational facts (Zubiel-Kasprovicz, 2016; Martinus & Chaniago, 2017).

The actual story of a storytelling advertisement is the appealing part that captivates the audience and makes them want to engage mentally with the advertisement shown. The goal of marketers is that the presented advertisement is imprinted in the memory of the consumer. This, as mentioned earlier, can be achieved through storytelling in the form of a narrative. A narrative reaches a consumer of those advertisements with mental simulation. Usually, mental simulations are in the form of a story or narrative and can be described as a *cognitive construction of hypothetical scenarios* (Escalas, 2004). When an event is simulated, people tend to think of their own behaviours and stories, creating a behavioral scenario in which they are the main characters. Mental simulation is highly important for people when they are preparing for future events and interpreting past events, as they can project themselves in future and past

situations (Escalas, 2004). Paired with the notion of mental simulation is the notion of narrative transportation. Escalas (2004) argues, that as mental simulation has a narrative structure, people that are engaged in simulating themselves into a story may be also transported by their self-generated stories. Hence, proposing that the ability of stories to involve consumers, is called *narrative transportation* (Stubb, 2018). When people are captivated in a story, both cognitively and emotionally and are almost in a daydreaming state, one can talk about narrative transportation (Stubb, 2018). The value of stories added to mental simulation can be substantial, as a personal component is paired to the story for understanding and connection. In the world of business, storytelling is already used to benefit companies in terms of marketing, loyalty or trust with an organization (Gill, 2011). For the purpose of this dissertation, storytelling is defined as a creative strategy that conveys a message with an emotional appeal.

Informational creative strategies convey messages through facts, arguments and explanations (Kim et al., 2017), while often using objective presentation which can be instrumental or rational in its communication (Stubb, 2018). Rational-based appeals in advertisements usually attempt to convince the recipient of the ad, that the product or service shown has beneficial attributes that provide satisfaction of their needs (Grigaliunaite & Pileliene 2016). Often, informational ads are used to provide valuable facts to recipients (Cutler et al., 2000), giving them greater confidence to assess a product or service (Cui et al., 2013). Keshari & Jain (2014) consider a rational advertisement as such, if it contains one of the following information factors: product price, quality, function, material, purchasing time and place, also any research data about the product and lastly the packaging. Previous research has shown that non-narrative ads are less persuasive, since narrative ads generate more positive feeling and cognitive responses (Escalas, 2006). On the other hand, when comparing the purchase intentions between storytelling and informational ads, the result of purchase intention is higher for hard-sell, informational ads (Golden & Johnson, 1983; Stubb, 2018). It is said, that one reason for people to look at an advertisement is to gain useful information (Aaker & Norris, 1982). Cui et al. (2013) state that informational ads can activate analytical processing which encourages more cognitive responses than transformational ads. For the purpose of this dissertation, we define informational appeal as a creative strategy that conveys a message through hard facts about a product or service.

### **2.4.1 Comparison of Storytelling and Informational Creative Strategies**

Storytelling and informational creative strategies are strategies that can be used to advertise brands, products or services. Generally, the motivation to generate advertisement is to generate attention (Aaker & Norris, 1982).

Informational ads usually provide objective data and facts, while storytelling convinces the receiver with the emotions and nonverbal elements in the ad (Puto & Wells, 1984). As stated earlier, storytelling creative strategy is a method of advertisement or content appeal in the form of narrative and is supposed to make people remember information better when it is presented in a story form. Puto and Wells (1984) add, that transformational ads have the effect of associating personal experiences of using the advertised brand or product. This would not happen if the individual had not been exposed to the advertisement beforehand. Storytelling advertisement seeks to bring out emotions and a feeling in response to the ad shown. This agrees with findings from Leonidou & Leonidou (2009) in their study about rational and emotional appeals in newspaper advertising, that advertisements with emotional appeals are often photographs or illustrations that try to realistically show the emotions of the people in the ad. Furthermore, these emotional ads in newspapers often included emotion-arousing presenters in the form of celebrities, models or entire lifestyle groups.

Comparatively, informational creative strategy conveys information with facts, arguments and explanations rather than emotionally. Shen (2012) states, that informational advertisement with facts and relevant brand data, displayed in a clear and logical manner can encourage the viewer of the ad to greater confidence in assessing of the product, service or brand after seeing the advertisement. Furthermore, Leonidou & Leonidou (2009) found that rational appeal advertisements focus mainly on the utilitarian aspects of the product. Therefore, the advertisement mainly shows the product. Moreover, there have been several studies that show different results in purchase intention or persuasiveness, for example, of each advertising method appeal. A higher result in purchase intention and overall belief can be found when using informational appeals with facts about the product or service, rather than emotional appeals. Additionally, researchers have found that rational advertisements have greater recall and memory (Keshari & Jain, 2014).

As Shen (2012) states in his study, the choice of informational or storytelling creative strategy is often dependent on the degree of involvement. The degree of involvement can be described as the level at which a consumer views a focal object (i.e., advertising, products,

services) as a central part of their life (O'Casey, 2004). This means that the method of creative strategy is dependent on the involvement of the viewer. Since involvement is a rather important factor when choosing a creative strategy method, one should take into consideration that it is believed that high involvement is associated with large information search and therefore informational appeal. However, low involvement with an advertisement can imply less information search and therefore a transformational/storytelling advertisement (Swaminathan et al., 1996). Further research on this topic shows that the involvement is in correlation with the brand familiarity. When people are familiar with a brand, they tend to search less for information and facts as they already know them. On the other hand, when people are unfamiliar with a brand, they conduct more research and look for informational advertising (Shen, 2012). It needs to be mentioned, that informational and transformational advertisements are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but can vary. As Cui et al. (2013) describe, there are four different categories informational and transformational ads can be intertwined: “(1) high transformation/ low information, (2) low transformation/ high information, (3) high transformation/ high information or the integrated approach, and (4) low transformation/ low information” (Cui et al., 2013, p.21).

Alongside the different types of involvement, the theory of information processing and in particular the elaboration likelihood model by Petty & Cacioppo (1984) is touched upon. The elaboration likelihood model (ELM) describes the different changes in attitude towards a message, which is a form of dual process theory. The ELM by Petty & Cacioppo (1984) proposes two different types of persuasion: the central route and the peripheral route. One of the most influential factors of the ELM is the motivation of the message recipient to process or understand the message. The motivation can therefore be affected by several factors such as the personal relevance of the message or the amount of cognition needed (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). The central route is the more cognitive route, in which the persuasion of a person will result through consideration of information given.

On the other hand, the peripheral route only needs small cognitive effort as the recipient of information does not examine the information in detail, has less interest in the object or information presented. The recipient relies on the credibility of the source or information searches (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). It can be said that the persuasion of a person in the ELM peripheral route relies on impressions - the recipients' mood or positive and negative cues. In other words, the recipient relies on message attractiveness or even involvement with the message or product (Kitchen et al., 2014). In ELM, it is differentiated if the elaboration



likelihood is high or low. When elaboration likelihood is high, the information processing of the recipient is taken via the central route and on the contrary, when elaboration likelihood is low, less cognitive effort is needed and therefore the peripheral route is used to process information (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984).

#### **2.4.2 Storytelling and Brand Engagement**

Many marketers measure their marketing campaign successes on social media using brand engagement metrics. The amounts of likes, comments and shares are a crucial part in order to measure achievements on social media (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). Therefore, any insight on how to generate desired outcomes is an advantage for marketers. Storytelling creative strategy is based on narratives that entice an emotional response from the receiver. The narrative, which produces feelings and emotions, is used to engage the viewer mentally (Stubb, 2018). As stated earlier, Escalas (2004) found that non-narrative ads are less persuasive, since narrative ads generate more positive feeling and cognitive responses. In a large-scale study, researchers found that content strategy has a significant impact on engagement measured by likes and comments. They found that emotional and persuasive content had a positive impact on engagement in social media. In contrast, informative content had a negative impact on engagement (Lee et al., 2014). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

*H1a: Storytelling posts have a more positive impact on engagement than informational posts.*

*H1b: Storytelling posts have a more positive impact on likes than informational posts.*

*H1c: Storytelling posts have a more positive impact on comments than informational posts.*

#### **2.5 Creative Tactics**

Within a marketing strategy are various stages of planning, one of which is the creative strategy. This is often a technique which determines the most effective creative tactic or approach in order to reach the desired target audience (Laskey et al., 1989). Creative tactics are message strategies that are implemented by marketers which combine what marketers want to say and what the consumers' need to hear. The overall goal of a creative strategy is to design communications in order for the message content and implementation to reach the target audience as desired (Laskey et al., 1989). The creative strategy can entail various aspects of marketing, psychology and business. One should consider that even in creative strategies, psychological engagement is key as the consumers are participants of creative tactics and do

not only receive the messages passively (Schmitt, 2012). At the most basic, creative strategies can be differentiated between emotional/transformational or functional/informational strategies and appeals (Aaker & Norris, 1982). Furthermore, information about the product and the perceived benefits for the user need to be mentioned. Creative strategies can focus on other beneficial aspects, such as having a unique selling proposition, being preemptive, comparative or simply being generic (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Adding to this, creative strategies can also focus on reflecting the brand and match consumer aspirations, experiences or feelings (i.e. emotional, joy) (Ashley & Tuten, 2015).

An effective marketing or creative strategy depends on several factors, one of which is also engagement as mentioned in section 2.4.2. As described by Sheehan and Morrison (2009), engagement can be seen as a consumer relationship. Since people are social by nature, marketers should consider people to be social with brands as well. Therefore, message strategies should not only contain information about the product or service, but also facilitate a possibility of connection between individuals and the brand. Creative tactics that work in traditional marketing settings, can also be translated to the digital world and apply to social media as well (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Therefore, there are several elements for an effective creative strategy suggested by many different scholars (Ashely and Tuten, 2015; De Vries et al., 2012; Fortin & Dholakia, 2005). For instance, using social media as a tool for engagement can have a positive impact (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010).

Visual communication is an important factor in social media. Especially since the majority of social media platforms have functions that enable users to share visuals such as photos and videos (i.e. Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, Blogs). With the terms visual communication and imagery, visual appeal needs to be mentioned. An (2007) summed up, that visual appeal is a crucial part of the communication process as it is used to gain attention and stimulate curiosity. Advertising can be displayed in different forms, some of which are imagery, paintings, or symbols. These visual advertisements are used to show different product features and benefits, which establish a personality for the product. Therefore, the product might be associated with certain symbols and lifestyles (An, 2007), or used to enforce the brand identity or message about the product and brand. Additionally, it is said that a visual may enhance the meaning and therefore a positive response to something neutral (the product) (An, 2007). In his research, Schmitt (2012) identifies different brand-related processes the consumers come in touch with; one of which is the process of *experiencing* and refers to different experiences a

person can have with a brand (i.e. sensory, affective, participatory experiences). Brands provide consumers various touchpoints (multi-sensory stimulations) through sight, smell, sound, touch and taste. When it comes to objects, a consumer might pick up different multi-sensory stimulus from a brand such as the logo or slogan, which is often the case in TV and print ads, or in-store (Schmitt, 2012) and nowadays on social media.

As previously mentioned, brand engagement is measured by the number of likes and comments. De Vries et al. (2012) developed a framework which studies six different factors that determine brand post popularity. For this dissertation, the literature focuses on four relevant factors of De Vries et al. (2012) study: vividness, interactivity, informational content and entertaining content, as well as several control variable factors presented in the study. They found that highly vivid or medium interactive posts can enhance the number of likes. Vividness is described as the form in which a brand post stimulates the senses, such as sight and sound through color and music (Coyle & Thorson, 2001). Therefore, a video is more stimulating as it encompasses sight and also hearing (De Vries et al., 2012). Furthermore, previous studies have shown that images can be more memorable and evoke more attention and emotional responses than text (Muñoz & Towner, 2017). On one hand, a study by Cvijikj & Michahelles (2013) found, that content with a higher level of vividness is less attractive than content with lower vividness. On the other hand, De Vries et al. (2012) found that a high degree of vividness is positively related to the number of likes. This leads to the following hypothesis:

*H2: A high level of vividness has a positive impact on the number of likes.*

The second important element in De Vries et al. (2012) study, is the use of highly interactive posts (questions), which shows to enhance the number of comments on posts. Interactivity is described as a form of two-way communication between a company and customers, as well as between customers themselves (Goldfarb & Tucker, 2011). Fortin & Dholakia (2005) describe that certain communication (brand posts) with only text is not interactive, while a question is highly interactive, as it demands an answer. Hence, is proposed that:

*H3a: Highly interactive posts, have a positive impact on the number of comments.*

*H3b: Highly interactive storytelling posts result in a positive impact on comments*

The content of brand posts is moreover a relevant factor. As Muntinga et al. (2011) state in their research, people tend to consume brand-related content because they are looking for information. Therefore, people tend to engage or consume brand content if the brand post contains information about the product, service or brand. Furthermore, since people participate in social media brand pages to gain information, they usually have a positive attitude towards informative ads (Taylor et al., 2011). On the other hand, De Vries et al. (2012) found that adding information to a post has no significant impact in regard to likes. In this dissertation, it is proposed that when a post contains additional information about the product or brand, it is beneficial for the number of likes.

*H4: Additional information about the product on posts has an impact on the number of likes*

Lastly, additional factors have been studied that influence success on Instagram. One factor is the posting time on social media, which showed that there is a significant difference between engagement on posts that were published on the weekend versus weekdays. The study by Rutz & Bucklin (2011) shows, that post search activity online is lower on weekends than on weekdays but also that there is no difference found in click-through rates. Furthermore, the highest activity was measured on Mondays and declines onwards, as activity on social media (Facebook) is the highest on workdays (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013). On the other hand, De Vries et al. (2012) suggest that brand fan pages might be visited more during weekends, which results in more popularity of brand posts published during weekends. The literature shows to be inconclusive, therefore the direction of hypotheses is open to the results. Considering the given literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

*H5a: Posts on weekends have a positive impact on engagement*

*H5b: Storytelling posts on weekends result in a positive impact on engagement*

## **2.6 Hypotheses Formulation**

The following tables refer to practices and research studies in the literature, which were used to formulate the proposed hypotheses. The impact on engagement, comments and likes on several variables can be found in the tables.

The first table refers to hypotheses testing the impact on engagement, which is the cumulated amount of number of likes and number of comments, resulting in the amount of

engagement. As discussed in the literature, the impact on engagement is evaluated to be positive in the hypotheses formulated in *Table 1*. As the engagement tests both the number of likes and comments, it allows an inclusive view of the impact of storytelling and informational strategies on the collected posts. The creative strategy of storytelling in posts is tested to generally conclude its impact on engagement (H1). Lastly, as taken from the literature review, hypothesis H5a is proposed, which states that posts on weekends have a positive impact on engagement, as well as H5b which considers storytelling posts on weekends to have a positive engagement.

The second table refers to hypotheses tested with an impact on comments only. As researched in the literature, these hypotheses proposed have an impact on comments rather than likes or engagement in general. The impact of storytelling creative strategy in posts is tested to explore its impact on comments (H1c). Hypotheses H3a-b test the impact of the interactivity variable on comments. Academics describe highly interactive posts as posts with a question, therefore H3a proposes that high interactivity, with the variable of “Call to action (question)” has a positive impact on comments. Furthermore, it is proposed that high interactivity, which again is the variable of “Call to action (question)”, has a positive impact on comments when used on storytelling posts.

Finally, the third table refers to hypotheses proposed that have an impact on likes. The hypothesis H1b tests the impact of storytelling strategy on the number of likes. Hypothesis H2 is proposed to test the impact of high vividness on the number of likes. In the literature, highly vivid posts are described as posts that contain video content, therefore the variable used for high vividness is “Video”. As one can conclude from the table, academics have different viewpoints on the impact of highly vivid posts on likes. Therefore, H2 is proposed to test De Vries et al. (2012) statement, in which they found that highly vivid posts to have a positive impact on likes. Hypothesis H4 is proposed to measure the impact of additional information about the product with the variable “Caption with product information or name”, on the number of likes. Again, this hypothesis is based on literature found by Muntinga et al. (2011), who state people tend to look for information in brand-related content.

Thereafter, the hypotheses are tested with the data collected on Instagram for this dissertation, to generate a conclusion which agrees or disagrees with the authors mentioned in the literature review.

*Table 1: Impact on Engagement*

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Creative Strategy and Tactics</b>	<b>Impact on Engagement</b>	<b>Author</b>
<b>H1a</b>	Storytelling	positive	Lee et al. (2014), Escalas (2004),
<b>H5a</b>	Weekends	positive	De Vries et al. (2012)
<b>H5b</b>	Storytelling - Weekends	positive	De Vries et al. (2012)

*Table 2: Impact on Comments*

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Creative Strategy and Tactics</b>	<b>Impact on Comments</b>	<b>Author</b>
<b>H1c</b>	Storytelling	positive	Lee et al. (2014), Escalas (2004)
<b>H3a</b>	Interactivity (high)	positive	Fortin & Dholakia (2005), De Vries et al. (2012)
<b>H3b</b>	Interactivity (high) Storytelling	positive	De Vries et al. (2012)

*Table 3: Impact on Likes*

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Creative Strategy and Tactics</b>	<b>Impact on Likes</b>	<b>Author</b>
<b>H1b</b>	Storytelling	positive	Lee & Nair (2014), Escalas (2004)
<b>H2</b>	Vividness (high)	positive	De Vries et al. (2012)
		negative	Cvijikj & Michahelles (2013)
<b>H4</b>	Additional information	Impact present	Muntinga et al. (2011)

## 2.7 Literature Review Summary

Through the literature review, the concepts of storytelling and informational creative strategies have been specified. The relevant shift from traditional media to social media and therefore its changes in digital marketing that nowadays come with highly informed customers have been mentioned. Furthermore, the literature review has found relevance of including different creative tactics in the social media effectiveness for brands. But can all of these conclusions retrieved from the literature apply to social media, specifically Instagram? Do creative strategies and tactics affect the brand engagement on social media? In the following chapters an answer to these questions will try to be provided as primary research is conducted.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The main goal of this chapter is to identify the research method that will be followed, as well as the data collection methods. In the previous chapter, a set of hypotheses were formulated that will be examined and the reasoning for the sample choice will be explained. The research conducted will include three steps: secondary data collection, primary data collection through qualitative and quantitative research. First, secondary data will be collected based on academic literature. Based on existing theories and research highlighted through the literature review, a primary data collection in form of qualitative and quantitative research will be conducted. Throughout the methodology chapter, the method used to collect primary data will be analyzed. The analysis of this digital marketing dissertation is focused on the social media platform Instagram, a photo-sharing application, as it is the sixth-ranked most popular social network worldwide (Statista, 2019).

### **3.2 Research Technique**

According to Saunders et al. (2019), there are three main approaches to research techniques. Amongst the three different approaches are the *deductive*, *inductive* and *abductive* approach. A *deductive* approach is defined by use of theory and data. Therefore, in a deductive approach the main goal is to verify or falsify an already existing theory by collecting data and evaluating the propositions or hypotheses. An inductive approach entails generating or building new theory by collecting data to explore new phenomenon and themes to create a conceptual framework. Lastly, the abductive approach entails theory modification or generation by using already existing theory to build new theory upon it (Saunders et al., 2019).

Information in this dissertation was firstly gathered through secondary research in the literature. The hypotheses proposed are built upon the literature review, therefore this dissertation will evaluate existing hypotheses and theory with additional data collection. From the aforementioned definitions of research techniques, it is assumed that this research is *deductive*.



### **3.3 Study 1 – Qualitative Research**

#### **3.3.1 Research Design**

First, secondary data is collected based on academic literature to give an overview of the research topic, which is the base for study 1, a *qualitative data collection*, in form of interviews. The purpose of *study 1* is to act as a form of pilot study, to obtain an overview over the Instagram usage and behaviour of respondents. Furthermore, this stage of research is conducted to identify how respondents react to different creative strategies on social media, as well as how respondents define each individual creative strategy, in order to conduct *study 2* - the quantitative data collection. Morrison et al. (2011) state, that qualitative research refers to a variety of things such as meaning, definitions, concepts and descriptions. The methods can be various as it can involve an interpretive and naturalistic approach to the study. Furthermore, qualitative research is helpful to discover underlying meanings and complex consumer insights (Morrison et al., 2011). Using *study 1* as a first base of information is helpful to develop a second larger and more definitive study, in this case *study 2* (Clow & James, 2014).

#### **3.3.2 Data Collection Method**

Selecting the right data collection method is a crucial step in research studies. Primary data is used in two stages in this dissertation, to respond to both the research questions and the hypotheses. The primary *qualitative* data collection, study 1, is conducted through in-depth, one-on-one interviews. The goal of an in-depth interview is that the thoughts and ideas of the individual can be better understood and explored (Clow & James, 2014). Furthermore, the data gathered through an in-depth, one-on-one interview can be richer compared to focus groups, as individuals often feel more comfortable (Clow & James, 2014).

The interviews are held in order to understand the reactions of respondents to different creative strategies. Moreover, the interview answers are used as base information for the second step in the research process - the quantitative data collection. A research guide is designed to be used during interviews, which can be modified during the interview in order for the interviewer to explore more useful details. Each interview is set for a duration of 20 to 30 minutes each, ensuring that all necessary details are captured. All interviews are recorded and later transcribed in order to analyze the collected data afterwards, which is gathered by sets of questions to find relevant conclusions.

The target population chosen to conduct the interviews are male and females, aged between 18 and 32 years old, who actively use social media and have an Instagram account (Appendix 1). This specific target group, Millennials, is chosen as this age group is the largest Instagram user group and 58 percent of all Millennial internet users have an Instagram account (Statista, 2018). Moreover, other socio-demographic variables are considered, such as the occupation, level of education and level of social media use. The respondents are chosen among the researchers' network, considering the criteria mentioned. Eight interviews are conducted, with four male and four female respondents, each owning an Instagram account. Each respondent fit into the target population criteria and has an academic education.

### **3.3.3 Research Guide Design**

The research guide is created beforehand in order to act as a guide throughout the interviews (Appendix 2). The research guide is designed to evaluate the hypotheses proposed with the main research questions in mind. As Clow & James (2014) state, the quality of the overall data obtained from the interviews is directly linked to the quality of the research guide and therefore highly important. In study 1, *qualitative data collection* is conducted through a research guide with open-ended questions. This type of interview questions allows individuals to respond in their own words, while simultaneously preventing from producing bias answers (Clow & James, 2014). The research guide is adapted throughout the interview, in order for questions already answered by the respondent or irrelevant questions, not to repeat themselves. All interviews are complemented by an introduction which describes the purpose of the research and why participants are asked to respond to interview questions. Therefore, the interviewer gives a short verbal introduction about the goal and topic of the interview, reassuring participants that their responses will be kept confidential.

### **3.3.4 In-depth Research Guide Design**

The research guide includes three main stages. First, the respondents answer a specific set of behavioral questions, then they are exposed to two different types of content (an informational and a storytelling advertisement) in order to answer a second set of questions after they view each advertisement. The order of advertisement with creative strategy shown to the respondents varies, as to exclude bias. Lastly, the respondents categorize a set of five Instagram posts in form of screenshots, as either informational or storytelling posts. The respondents are informed upfront about the concepts of informational and storytelling creative

strategies.

The questions designed are carefully created and the language used for the interview is English. The purpose of the in-depth interview is to understand the different reactions, behaviors and intentions of respondents regarding each type of content, in order to conclude a comparison between both creative strategies.

The research guide includes open-ended questions in order to obtain the richest data possible. The interview guide consists of questions divided into six sections. In section three, the respondent watches two videos. After each video, the respondent is asked a set of questions.

- *Section 1: Demographics*

The first section of the research guide contains demographic questions, such as gender, age, nationality, education and occupation. These questions are necessary to ensure the data collected is from the desired target population.

- *Section 2: Behaviours*

The second section of the research guide contains a set of behavioural questions towards the use of Instagram. This section is useful to make general conclusions about the respondents' Instagram usage and behaviour and also to understand the respondents' answers to later questions.

Before section 3 and 4 of questions are asked, the respondent watches an advertisement video which contains one creative strategy. Then, questions from section 3 and 4 are asked. As a second step, the respondent watches a second video advertisement which contains the opposite creative strategy. Then questions from section 3 and 4 are asked again, leading to a direct comparison.

- *Section 3: Attitudes - Brand Engagement on Instagram*

The third section of the research guide contains attitudinal questions directly based on the video the respondent watched before. This section measures the brand engagement on Instagram. Respondents are asked a set of questions that they answer and are asked to elaborate why they answered that way.

- *Attitudes - Brand Awareness on Instagram*

This next section of the research guide contains attitudinal questions directly based on the video the respondent watched before. This section addresses brand awareness on Instagram.

Respondents are asked a set of questions that they answer and are asked to elaborate their responses.

- *Section 4: Purchase Intention*

The fourth section of the research guide contains questions directly based on both videos the respondent watched before. This section explores the possibility of purchase intention, which is only used for additional insight in this dissertation.

- *Section 5: Knowledge/Behaviour – General Questions*

Section 5 of the research guide contains general questions about the respondents' knowledge of the brand and general purchase behaviour. This section is useful to further understand how the respondents are using Instagram.

- *Section 6: Categorization – Informational vs. Storytelling Creative Strategy*

In the last section of the research guide, the respondent is asked to categorize five Instagram posts shown as screenshots, as either informational or storytelling posts. Before section 6 starts, the respondent is informed of the concepts of informational and storytelling creative strategy. This section is important, as the answers set the criteria for informational and storytelling creative strategy for further primary quantitative data collection.

*Table 4: Interview Guide Sections*

<b>Interview Question Topic / Section</b>	<b>Number of Question</b>
1. Demographic	1
2. Instagram Usage Behaviour	2 to 10
3. Engagement	11 to 19
4. Purchase Intention	20 to 22
5. Knowledge Questions	23 to 26
6. Categorization	27 +

### **3.4 Study 2 – Quantitative Research**

#### **3.4.1 Research Design**

Subsequent, *study 2*, a quantitative research for primary data collection is conducted. The data collection is based on a content audit of brand posts from various industries on Instagram. Study 2 is a follow up study that is based on information gathered in the literature review and in study 1.

Content analysis entails the examination of artifacts that are used as a medium for communication, which can include songs, newspaper articles, films, pictures and much more (Fallon, 2016). Furthermore, quantitative content analysis according to Fallon (2016), entails counting the occurrence of a social or behavioural phenomenon within a given media; in this case Instagram.

### **3.4.2 Data Collection Method**

The purpose of the content audit, is to further gather quantitative data to test the hypotheses proposed. Study 2 follows a quantitative method by producing a quantitative data set on Microsoft Excel using a sample of 1000 Instagram posts. The content audit on Instagram is conducted between the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2019 and the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2019. Following study 1, data on Instagram is collected in form of screenshots of posts and transferred into a data sheet on Microsoft Excel. A total of 1000 post is gathered on Instagram, creating a sample size of 1000. The samples are collected in Microsoft Excel in order to use in SPSS.

Four different industries are analyzed: beauty, technology, apparel and fast food. In each industry three different brands on Instagram are analyzed. Each company is chosen by the researcher as to ensure an equal amount of storytelling and informational posts in total, posted within the last 12 months. The Instagram posts chosen were screened by the researcher to identify whether posts have an informational or storytelling creative strategy, which is based on characteristics defined in the previous study 1 and the literature review (Table 6). Companies chosen have a B2C component to their business model, which sells a tangible product to consumers. Furthermore, all companies analyzed on Instagram, post in English language and have a minimum of 100.000 followers on their company Instagram account.

*Table 5: Industry Brands analyzed*

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Company / Brand</b>
Beauty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dove</li> <li>• Glossier</li> <li>• Bobbi Brown</li> </ul>
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Microsoft</li> <li>• Dell</li> <li>• Lenovo</li> </ul>

Apparel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toms</li> <li>• TenTree</li> <li>• PrivacyPls</li> </ul>
Fast Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jimmy Johns</li> <li>• Five Guys</li> <li>• Whataburger</li> </ul>

Following study 1, a set of criteria was established to define the terms storytelling and informational posts. These criteria are also consistent with studies conducted by several researchers (Grigaliunaite & Pileliene, 2016; Keshari, & Jain, 2014; Panda et al., 2013). Grigaliunaite & Pileliene (2016) state, that rational appeals provide clear and product-relevant information. They usually emphasize product related facts and have an informative message, which can include the price, quality, function, data about the product, material or packaging about the product or service (Keshari, & Jain, 2014). The characteristics of informational posts are very specific and therefore lead to the establishment of criteria. As the criteria from study 1 and literature are consistent, some basic criteria is established for this research, seen in the table below (Table 6). These criteria are applied throughout study 2, the content audit and data collection, in order to gather data continuously without bias.

*Table 6: Characteristics of Creative Strategies (Informational and Storytelling)*

<b>Informational characteristics</b>	<b>Storytelling characteristics</b>
Product is seen in photo	No product is seen in photo
Facts and features of product in caption or photo	No product facts or features in photo or caption

### **3.4.3 Variables Collected**

In order to test each hypothesis proposed, a set of variables is used. The variables are created from gathered information in the literature review and from study 1 and designed to help answer the research question and hypotheses proposed. Each Instagram post gathered is analyzed using the following variables, which are collected on Microsoft Excel and used in SPSS to conduct hypotheses tests.

1. “Brand Name”
2. “Brand Industry”
3. “#Total Posts”: Number of total posts on the Instagram account
4. “#Followers”: Number of followers of the Instagram account
5. “Informational”: The Instagram post is categorized as informational following the criteria in *table 6* – a tangible product is seen in the Instagram post
6. “Storytelling”: The Instagram post is categorized as storytelling following the criteria in *table 6* –no tangible product is seen in the Instagram post or mentioned in the caption
7. “#Likes”: Number of likes
8. “#Comments”: Number of comments
9. “Engagement”: Number of “#Likes” AND Number of “#Comments” added
10. “Photo”: The Instagram post is a photo/picture
11. “Video”: The Instagram post is a video
12. “Image with face”: The Instagram post contains a human face
13. “Images with product”: The Instagram post contains a tangible product
14. “Images with text”: The Instagram post (excluding the caption) contains text
15. “Caption”: The Instagram post has a caption
16. “Caption with product information or name”: The Instagram post has a caption which includes a written product information or the name of the product itself
17. “Caption with quote”: The Instagram post has a caption which includes a written quote
18. “Call to action (like or comment)”: The Instagram post has a caption which includes a written call to action for followers to like or comment the published post
19. “Call to action (question)”: The Instagram post has a caption which includes a written question
20. “Tags (people/brands)”: The Instagram post has a caption which includes a written tag - @ to another Instagram account
21. “Hashtags”: The Instagram post has a caption which includes a written hashtag (#)
22. “Campaign Hashtags”: The Instagram post has a caption which includes a written hashtag (#), which is part of a campaign and is used several times on Instagram posts
23. “Monday”: Day of the week
24. “Tuesday”: Day of the week
25. “Wednesday”: Day of the week
26. “Thursday”: Day of the week
27. “Friday”: Day of the week

- 28. “Saturday”: Day of the week
- 29. “Sunday”: Day of the week
- 30. “# Months of Analysis”: Number of months of posts analysed on an Instagram account
- 31. “WeekEndLONG”: Friday + Saturday + Sunday
- 32. “Vividness (high)”: The Instagram post is a Video, includes variable “Video”
- 33. “Interactivity (high)”: The Instagram post includes variable “Call to action (question)”

Variable 1 and 2 are used to describe the sample with text. Variables 5, 6 and 9 to 29 are dummy variables which were coded with 0 and 1. 0 stands for “no” when the variable is not recorded and 1 stands for “yes” when it is recorded. Furthermore, variables 3, 4, 7, 8 and 30 have a nominal value. Therefore, when analysing numbers such as the amount of likes or comments, the numbers recorded during the content audit are used. Variables between 31 and 33 are also dummy variables that represent different groups, which include one or several variables. The variables collected for this research were based on studies by De Vries et al. (2012) and Cvijikj & Michahelles (2013).

#### **3.4.4 Manipulation Check**

A pre-test was conducted in order to test if the given criteria for storytelling and informational posts are measuring the correct information type when used on Instagram or collected and later analyzed. Therefore, a third person, non-related to the research, was given the criteria which differentiates storytelling posts on Instagram from informational posts. The participant categorized 17 individual Instagram post screenshots as either storytelling or informational, based on given criteria (Appendix 4). The participant successfully identified each Instagram post with the correct strategy. Hence, the created criteria can be safely used for data collection on Instagram and further analysis, ensuring correct coding of post strategy by the researcher.

#### **3.4.5 Data Analysis**

The primary data collection from study 1 and study 2 is followed by data analysis. In study 1 the interviews are transcribed and analyzed manually, to form a cohesive conclusion to benefit the next step in data collection – study 2.

Study 2 includes collecting data in order to be analyzed with SPSS, which is a statistic computer program that helps analyze and interpret results. The data analysis will show whether the



proposed hypotheses for this dissertation will be rejected or accepted, in order to make useful conclusions. A total of 1000 posts were gathered on Instagram, creating a sample size of 1000 posts for testing the proposed hypotheses. All hypotheses are tested with SPSS using an independent sample test, in order to measure whether there is a statistically significant difference between the means of two independent groups. The proposed hypotheses are the following:

*H1: Storytelling posts have a more positive impact on engagement than informational posts.*

*H1b: Storytelling posts have a positive impact on likes than informational posts.*

*H1c: Storytelling posts have a positive impact on comments than informational posts.*

*H2: A high the level of vividness has a positive impact on the number of likes.*

*H3a: Highly interactive posts, have a positive impact on the number of comments.*

*H3b: Highly interactive storytelling posts result in a positive impact on comments*

*H4: Additional information about the product on posts has an impact on the number of likes*

*H5a: Posts on weekends have a positive impact on engagement*

*H5b: Storytelling posts on weekends have a positive impact on engagement*

In the hypotheses test, there are two different strategies (storytelling and informational) that have to be tested on different variables. As mentioned before, “storytelling” and “informational” are categorical variables and cannot be measured on a quantitative scale. Hence, a dummy variable is constructed with the value 1 for “yes” and 0 for “no”. Therefore, posts that are collected and identified as storytelling posts obtained the value 1 and informational 0. The dummy variable is highly important as the two strategies, along with many variables, are not quantitative and therefore need a numerical representation to help distinguish different effects. Many proposed hypotheses include a creative strategy and are combined with another dependent and/or independent variable to test the hypotheses.

The sample was analyzed using descriptive statistics to gain an understanding of the data collected throughout the content audit.

The variables that are measured are the following 6 variables: storytelling strategy, informational strategy, vividness, interactivity, “information about the product or name” and weekends. All hypotheses H1-H5 are tested using an independent samples t-test. These analyses are conducted to test if the independent variable has an impact, or any impact on the dependent variable tested in each hypothesis.

*Table 7: Hypotheses and Methodology Summary Table*

<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>Dependant Variable</b>	<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b>Method</b>
H1a: Storytelling posts have a more positive impact on engagement than informational posts.	engagement	Storytelling posts	Independent-Samples t-Test
H1b: Storytelling posts have a positive impact on likes than informational posts.	likes	Storytelling posts	Independent-Samples t-Test
H1c: Storytelling posts have a positive impact on comments than informational posts.	comments	Storytelling posts	Independent-Samples t-Test
H2: A high the level of vividness has a positive impact on the number of likes.	likes	Vividness	Independent-Samples t-Test
H3a: Highly interactive posts, have a positive impact on the number of comments.	comments	Interactivity (high)	Independent-Samples t-Test
H3b: Highly interactive storytelling posts result in a positive impact on comments.	comments	Interactivity (high) Storytelling posts	Independent-Samples t-Test
H4: Additional information about the product on posts has an impact on the number of likes.	likes	Additional information	Independent-Samples t-Test
H5a: Posts on weekends have a positive impact on engagement.	engagement	Weekend	Independent-Samples t-Test
H5b: Storytelling posts on weekends result in positive engagement.	engagement	Weekend Storytelling posts	Independent-Samples t-Test

### **3.5 Methodology Summary**

In the methodology chapter, the research methods and techniques for the qualitative and quantitative studies 1 and 2 were explained. The reasoning behind the choice for a deductive approach was clarified, the choice for the qualitative study 1 with interviews, followed by the quantitative study and analysis were also described. Built on the deductive approach, several hypotheses were formulated based on the previous literature, which will be tested and analysed in the following chapter. Furthermore, in this chapter the chosen sample for study 1 and 2 and its argumentation were highlighted and the data collection method stated.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Qualitative Research - Interview Analysis

The analysis of interviews is based on eight interviews (P1-P8) conducted with respondents aged 24 to 26 years old, who all fulfil the age requirement of Millennials and requisite of using and owning an Instagram account. A detailed profile of respondents can be found in Appendix 1, as well as the transcripts from the interviews in Appendix 3. All interviews were based on the research guide previously described in the Methodology section, and were conducted as in-depth interviews with open-ended questions, in order to explore six different sections of the research guide. All of the interviewed people were asked demographic questions, followed by questions about their Instagram usage behaviour and lastly questions to analyse their engagement, purchase intention and opinion on different creative strategies. Every interviewee has an academic background, but not necessarily Marketing knowledge or experience.

All of the interviewees state that they use Instagram daily, sometimes even multiple times a day. Instagram is mainly used to stay updated with friends and people they personally know, but also be up to date with pop culture and celebrities (P1, P2 and P6). P5 uses Instagram mostly as a source of inspiration and to discover new recipes, while also staying up to date with friends. P4 and P7 mention, that Instagram is mainly a source of distraction and used to procrastinate.

To focus on which type of media is preferred by respondents on Instagram, they were asked whether they prefer photos or videos on Instagram. The answers were varied, indicating that most respondents say it depends on the situation they are in when scrolling through Instagram. Many respondents prefer photos on Instagram as they are quicker to look at and just don't take as much time to watch – P1 states *“I don't necessarily take the time to watch a video”*. At the same time, P2, P4, P5 and P8 state, that they don't always like videos because of the sound in videos. The sound in videos mostly bothers them when they use Instagram in public spaces (i.e. on the train or bus). P4 states that he really likes videos with subtitles, so he can watch it and know what is being said without needing the sound. Lastly, P5 adds that videos often take more time to load than photos, so she just scrolls past videos that do not start right away.

To further analyse the Instagram usage behaviour, respondents were asked if they follow brands on Instagram. Overall, the common answer is that everyone follows a few brands but mostly friends, family or famous people on Instagram. Brands were described as companies, excluding celebrities even though they often act as a brand themselves. Female respondents follow fashion and lifestyle brands focused on clothing and accessories, for example Lululemon, Hermes or Zaful (P1, P2 and P3). Furthermore, P5 states that she follows interior architects and design brands (i.e. Mr&Mrs Panda and Magnolia) to get inspiration and new ideas, which is also related to her current occupation as an interior architect student. Male respondents follow a somewhat larger variety of industries, including car brands, technical, outdoor, lifestyle and sports brands. P7 follows companies and brands that are in his field of interest and current studies regarding aeronautical engineering, whereas P8 only follows a handful of brands that focus on specific wooden watches. Across genders, respondents follow a handful of brands in different industries to mainly stay updated, get relevant information on topics they are interested in and to get inspired. P2 follows, besides fashion and lifestyle brands, also various airlines, a local radio station and a streaming website to know the most current happenings or deals in each industry. A lot of respondents mention that they follow brands to stay informed, see new products releases but also for the purpose of inspiration (P2, P3, P5 and P6). P3 follows the fashion brand Hermes, because they manage to capture her attention on posts in a very creative way *“The colors capture your eye and have an esthetic ... which is unusual”*.

Moreover, the respondents were asked if they have discovered new brands through Instagram (Appendix 5). All of the eight respondents have discovered new brands or products in different industries through Instagram and Instagram advertisements. The respondents found new brands that fit their areas of interest - the female interviewees in particular discovered fashion and beauty brands and male interviewees discovered a variety of brands including fashion brands, technical products and art brands. Three of the respondents proceeded to buy a product from the brands they discovered on Instagram (P1, P2, P5) and others have purchase intentions (P3, P4 and P8).

Respondents were asked if they use Instagram as a research tool for product reviews or new products. Overall none of the respondents tend to use Instagram for direct information search. P1 and P4 state, that they have never searched for product information but certainly found new products through Instagram. Interestingly, several respondents use Instagram when they are looking for new restaurants (P3, P5 and P8). Additionally, respondents named

advertisements they remembered or impressed them. It is apparent that only very few respondents were able to come up with advertisements that impressed them. A list of brands mentioned by respondents can be found in Appendix 6. Overall, advertisements were remembered that were esthetically pleasing (P3 and P4), humorous (P2), and inspirational or aspirational (P3 and P6).

In general, engagement on social media and Instagram can be measured through the number of likes and comments on a post (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). Therefore, the interviews included several questions asking when and what type of Instagram posts respondents usually tend to “like” or “comment”. All eight respondents said that they mostly “like” posts from friends or from people that they personally know and want to support. P3 and P4 mention that they tend to “like” Instagram brand posts when it has a message they stand behind or want to support. P4 says, *“I only like Instagram posts {...} when it’s a really great cause or because I stand behind the message”*. P2 said that she might “like” a brand post, if it is a nice picture and has attractive colors. When it comes to “comment” on Instagram, respondents rarely “comment” and if they do, they “comment” on friends posts to show their support. Two respondents state that the only time they “comment” on a brand post is purely for the reason of a contest (P2 and P5). Interestingly, some respondents say that they did only “comment” on a brand post to tag a friend, so they can see the post as well (P1, P6 and P7), which again reinforces that the respondents mostly “comment” in relation to people they personally know on Instagram.

Focusing on the effect the different creative strategies have on interviewees and their interest in the product, the respondents were asked to watch two different video advertisements of the same Volkswagen Arteon car. Each video had a different creative strategy, storytelling and informational. The advertisements were shown in different order to each person, to ensure not to create bias. All respondents knew the brand previously and were highly aware of the brand's existence, but were not necessarily familiar with the product itself. The brand Volkswagen is a German brand and therefore well known in Germany but in foreign countries as well.

It becomes clear that respondents are very hesitant to “like” a brand post or even advertisement on social media, especially on Instagram. Most do not even pay much attention to advertisements on Instagram. One respondent says that she doesn't watch sponsored videos on Instagram in general (P2), while P4 states, *“I think brands don't really need my support”*. Three

interviewees said, that they would consider to “like” the storytelling advertisement due to the compelling message and interesting concept of the advertisement (P3, P5 and P6). None of the respondents would consider to “comment” on any of the shown advertisements if these were presented on Instagram, because they do not know what to comment or they see no benefit (P2, P3 and P4). To understand more of what elements make an ad interesting to viewers, respondents were asked what they liked or disliked about each video advertisement. In the storytelling advertisement, several respondents liked the emotional aspect of the story, as well as the visual images (P3, P5 and P6). Respondents P3 and P7 state that even though they like the storytelling advertisement, they do not think the concept of the story and the car commercial go together well. None of the interviewees would share any of the ads with friends or family unless they knew someone is looking to buy a car of similar type, or from this brand. It becomes apparent, that there is a strong hesitation of interacting with Instagram advertisements and brand posts in the form of “comment” or “share”.

Furthermore, when asked which of the two advertisements respondents would share with people looking to buy a car, all eight respondents would share the informational advertisement, as it contains more valuable content. The same was also said about commenting the informational video; They would only “comment”, if there is personal interest in buying a car. The informational ad is the one that interviewees responded to when wanting to know more about the brand, as the ad contained a lot of information about the product (P2, P4, P7 and P8). Respondent P6 says “{...} *now I wonder what else the car could do, since they kind of showed a preview of it*”. Additionally, one respondent says that the product itself was better placed in the informational advertisement, since one was able to see the car from many different angles (P2). The visual aspect of both advertisements is important as well, as respondents mentioned that they liked the visual or colors in both the videos. Respondent P2 says that she would share the informational ad, as it looked nice, and P4 says that the ad was “*visually very pleasing*”. The storytelling advertisement on the other hand, touched the respondents on an emotional level, but did not necessarily wake their interest in the product – if so, more in the brand itself. Interviewee P3 states, that the storytelling advertisement had a well-balanced rhythm of music, words and visual images.

To determine whether an Instagram post is coded as storytelling or informational, the respondents were asked to define five different posts from two brands, Dove and GoPro, as either informational or storytelling. Additionally, they were asked to explain how they

categorized each post. Each respondent was given a short explanation of the topic and had information about the characteristics of each creative strategy.

Naturally, the respondents first looked at the photo and afterwards read the caption, when they were unsure or felt that the caption reinforced their initial thought. When analyzing the posts whether they are informational or storytelling, the respondents focused their attention on the content of the photo. If the product is shown in the photo or there is factual information about the product, respondents quickly define the post as informational due to specific information given. One respondent says about the first Instagram post showed from Dove, that *“it’s informational because the caption says it’s for delicate skin and also hypoallergenic. Because it gives information”* (P2). When there is no product in the picture, many say that it is a big indicator for a storytelling post (P5, P6, P7 and P8). All respondents tend to say the post is storytelling, if: (1) people are depicted in the post, (2) there is no product shown and (3) a quote in the caption does not contain a (brand) message. This agrees with the study by Leonidou & Leonidou (2009), who found that newspaper advertisements with emotional appeals often picture people and their emotions. Furthermore, they found that presenters of emotional appeal ads are often in the form of celebrities, models or entire lifestyle groups.

Respondent P8 says, that only seeing people in the post without any information about the product, shows the outcome or impact when using the product. Relating this to the Dove Instagram post (post 2) in which women are generally happy, could indicate the impact of using the product or brand. Furthermore, without hesitation every respondent said that the fourth post shown by GoPro is storytelling, as it shows a certain lifestyle and the picture feels like a story. Interestingly, several respondents say that they can even picture themselves in the story shown through the post - P5 states *“The picture is like a story, I mean you look at this and you could think you are the person sitting there”*. Another respondent (P6) adds, *“That’s GoPro but it doesn’t show a camera, so it focuses on the things you could do with a camera, so it focuses on the story”*. Instagram posts that contain both characteristics of informational and storytelling creative strategies are confusing to respondents. Respondents look for certain clues, such as information in the caption or the product itself in the post, to know what kind of strategy it is. The third post from Dove contained information, the product, a quote and a person, which left all respondents indecisive.



To understand more about respondents' engagement with a post, the respondents were asked to state which of the five posts shown they would personally "like". Both female and male respondents state that they would "like" one of the GoPro Instagram posts (mainly the fourth post), as they are aspirational and would like to travel to this destination themselves. Additionally, P2 and P5 say they would also "like" the first two Dove pictures, because of the message behind it and the nice visual of the photo. All of the respondents chose to "like" Instagram posts with a storytelling strategy. Overall it can be said that the respondents tend to "like" pictures that are visually pleasing and of high quality and act as a source of inspiration or aspiration. A list of characteristics of storytelling and informational creative strategies by respondents can be found in Appendix 7.

#### **4.1.2 Summary of Interview Results**

Through the analysis of interviews conducted, several indications can be found on how respondents differentiate storytelling and informational creative strategies and which strategy is more relevant.

It was found, that generally respondents prefer content in form of photos rather than videos as they can easily look at them without being disturbed by the sound. Furthermore, the engagement behaviour of respondents towards brands was found to be significantly lower than the engagement towards content of people from their personal connections. Respondents tend to engage more on Instagram with content posted by people they personally know. When categorizing the Instagram posts shown, the respondents quickly developed intuitive characteristics to decide whether a post has a storytelling or informational creative strategy (Appendix 7).

When asked, all eight respondents would choose to "like" a post with a storytelling strategy. Many respondents stated that the aspirational factor or visual aspect of the picture weighed into their decision. This can be linked to the elaboration likelihood model or the involvement theory. As discussed in the literature review earlier, low ELM can indicate little motivation to process the information and recipients might rely more on general impressions or positive and negative cues.

An interesting indicator for the preference of either storytelling or informational creative strategy can be found in relation to the product category. In the interview analysis, it was found that respondents are more likely to engage with the informational video advertisement shown of the automobile. This finding can be closely linked to the elaboration likelihood model and

the level of involvement. The involvement theory states that categories of higher involvement are associated with high information search, therefore cognitive effort. This in this case, the automobile as shown in the advertisement, is linked to high involvement and indicates high elaboration likelihood. As the ELM specifies, one of the main factors for persuasion is the personal motivation to process the information given. Here, the interview respondents were asked which advertisement (storytelling or informational) they would share with others if they knew they were looking for a new car. Unsurprisingly, the majority of respondents stated they would share the informational ad. As discussed in the model by Petty & Cacioppo (1984), people whose elaboration likelihood is high take the central route of information processing. This means that they will consider the information given with more cognitive effort. Interestingly, the ELM is somehow consistent with the involvement theory.

The personal motivation needs to be considered in the conclusion of the effect of ELM and involvement. As respondents were asked which post they would personally “like” and chose the storytelling post, their personal motivation could have been lower, than when asked which video advertisement they would share if they knew someone who needed a new car. In the question about which video advertisement they would share and therefore help someone make a decision, the personal motivation is likely to be higher. Through the interview analysis, it can be observed that the respondents generally have different interests. Some respondents are interested by the visual aspect and beauty of a picture and others are information driven, depending on the product category. Therefore, a solid conclusion on the involvement can only be linked to the elaboration likelihood, if there is knowledge about the person’s personal motivation.

It needs to be acknowledged, that there are limitations imposed by the methodology as there was no further research done on personal motivation and interest in product category, in relation to the video advertisement or Instagram posts shown during the interview.

## 4.2 Quantitative Research

### Hypotheses tested:

*H1: Storytelling posts have a more positive impact on engagement than informational posts.*

*H1b: Storytelling posts have a positive impact on likes than informational posts.*

*H1c: Storytelling posts have a positive impact on comments than informational posts.*

*H2: A high the level of vividness has a positive impact on the number of likes.*

*H3a: Highly interactive posts, have a positive impact on the number of comments.*

*H3b: Highly interactive storytelling posts result in a positive impact on comments*

*H4: Additional information about the product on posts has an impact on the number of likes*

*H5a: Posts on weekends have a positive impact on engagement*

*H5b: Storytelling posts on weekends have a positive impact on engagement*

### 4.2.1 Descriptive Analysis

The data analysis and hypotheses testing are done to gain an insight to the sample collected and studied throughout the content audit.

The content audit on Instagram was conducted between the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2019 and the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2019. A total sample of 1000 post was gathered on Instagram, creating a sample size of 1000. Companies selected have a minimum of 100.000 followers on their company Instagram account while having a B2C component to their business model, which sell a tangible product to consumers. All companies and industries were selected by the researcher following the criteria formed from previous interviews conducted. Furthermore, all companies analyzed post in English language.

The sample includes a total of 12 different companies studied from four different industries, in order to obtain diverse results that offer a cross-industry conclusion. The content audit was conducted on the following industries: The beauty (24.6%), technology (18.9%), apparel (29.8%) and fast food (26.7%) industry (Appendix 8). Each company is chosen by the researcher as to ensure there are both storytelling and informational posts published within the last 12 months by each brand. Furthermore, 500 (50%) posts were storytelling posts and 500 (50%) posts were informational posts (Appendix 9), adding up to a total sample size of 1000 posts collected on Instagram.

In regard to vividness in posts from the sample collected on Instagram, vividness (high) is measured with the variable “Video”. 60 posts contained high vividness and 940 posts were images (Appendix 10). Furthermore, focusing on post interactivity 108 posts were highly interactive as they included a question using the variable “Call to action (question)” (Appendix 11). Moreover, from the total sample of 1000 posts, 647 posts (64.7%) were posted on weekdays and 353 posts (35.3%) were posted on weekends (Appendix 12).

Lastly, an additional variable was tested. From the total sample, 431 posts have additional information about the product using the variable “additional information about the product or name” (Appendix 13).

## **4.2.2. Hypothesis Testing**

### ***4.2.2.1 H1a: Storytelling posts have a positive impact on engagement than informational posts.***

Hypothesis 1 was proposed to understand the overall impact of creative strategies on engagement. Engagement is measured with the variable “Engagement” and is an accumulation of the amount of likes and the amount of comments. An independent samples t-test analyses the impact an independent variable has on a dependent variable. The independent samples test was conducted to compare the engagement for storytelling and informational posts.  $0$  stand for informational posts under analysis and  $1$  for the amount of storytelling under analysis.

The results are shown in Table 8. There is no significant difference on engagement with storytelling or informational posts,  $t(915) = 1.44, p = 0.15 (p > 0.1)$ . This says, that the mean of engagement in storytelling posts ( $M = 12383.6, SD = 22655.5$ ) is not significantly different than in informational posts ( $M = 10572.6, SD = 16630.5$ ). Therefore, **hypothesis 1 is not accepted**. Hence there is no impact of storytelling posts on higher engagement.

The  $p$ -value indicates that there is no impact of storytelling posts on the amount of engagement, as the initial 5% ( $p > 0.05$ ) level is not met, which is used throughout the analysis. Regarding the relatively large sample size of 500 posts per group,  $p$  value below 10% is interpreted as an indicator for a relation, such as in the research conducted by Leonidou & Leonidou (2009). Therefore, ( $p > 0.1$ ) shows a level of significance.

Table 8: Independent samples test: The impact of storytelling strategy on engagement

```
T-TEST GROUPS=Storytelling(0 1)
/MISSING=ANALYSIS
/VARIABLES=Engagement
/CRITERIA=CI(.95).
```

**T-Test**

Group Statistics					
	Storytelling	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Engagement	0	500	10572,6240	16630,5336	743,74007
	1	500	12383,6560	22655,5202	1013,18567

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Engagement	Equal variances assumed	15,494	,000	-1,441	998	,150	-1811,0320	1256,85898	-4277,4215	655,35748
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,441	915,760	,150	-1811,0320	1256,85898	-4277,6904	655,62645

**4.2.2.2 H1b: Storytelling posts have a positive impact on likes than informational posts.**

In order to understand the insights of engagement on storytelling posts, an independent samples test was conducted with the variable of #Likes. The test revealed that there is no significant difference of impact on the number of likes between storytelling and informational posts. 0 stands for the posts under analysis that are informational, and 1 for the posts that are storytelling. As illustrated in Table 9, there is no significant difference on the number of likes with storytelling or informational posts,  $t(916) = 1.42, p = 0.155 (p > 0.1)$ . This says, that the mean of likes in storytelling posts ( $M = 12238.1, SD = 22386.9$ ) is not significantly different than in informational posts ( $M = 10470.2, SD = 16463.2$ ). Therefore, **hypothesis 1b is not accepted**, as there is no relation impact on likes for storytelling posts.

*Table 9: Independent samples test: The impact of storytelling strategy on the number of likes*

```
T-TEST GROUPS=Storytelling(0 1)
/MISSING=ANALYSIS
/VARIABLES=@#Likes
/CRITERIA=CI(.95).
```

**T-Test**

Group Statistics										
	Storytelling	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean					
# Likes	0	500	10470,18	16463,166	736,255					
	1	500	12238,07	22386,884	1001,172					

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
# Likes	Equal variances assumed	15,222	,000	-1,423	998	,155	-1767,896	1242,746	-4206,590	670,798
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,423	916,590	,155	-1767,896	1242,746	-4206,853	671,061

#### **4.2.2.3 H1c: Storytelling posts have a positive impact on comments than informational posts.**

Building upon hypotheses 1 and 1b, this hypothesis is formulated to test the impact of storytelling posts on comments. An independent samples test was conducted to test hypothesis 1c. As there are only two types of content, *I* stands for the all posts that are storytelling. The results in Table 10 revealed that there is a significant difference of impact on comments between storytelling and informational posts,  $t(831) = 2.32, p = 0.020 (p > 0.05)$ . This says, that the mean of likes in storytelling posts ( $M = 145.6, SD = 353.3$ ) is significantly different than in informational posts ( $M = 102.4, SD = 218.2$ ). Therefore, **hypothesis 1c is accepted**, as there is a significant positive impact of storytelling posts on the number of comments.

*Table 10: Independent samples test: The impact of storytelling strategy on the number of comments*

T-TEST GROUPS=Storytelling(0 1)  
 /MISSING=ANALYSIS  
 /VARIABLES=@#Comments  
 /CRITERIA=CI(.95).

**T-Test**

Group Statistics										
		Storytelling	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean				
# Comments	0		500	102,45	218,240	9,760				
	1		500	145,58	353,262	15,798				

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
# Comments	Equal variances assumed	24,719	,000	-2,323	998	,020	-43,136	18,570	-79,577	-6,695
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,323	831,468	,020	-43,136	18,570	-79,586	-6,686

**4.2.2.4 H2: A high the level of vividness has a positive impact on the number of likes.**

Hypothesis 2 was formulated to understand if there is an impact on likes by the type of posts. It is tested if the level of vividness in the form of videos result in a positive impact on the number of likes compared to posts with photos. For this test, an independent samples test was conducted. The results are shown in Table 11. The t-test indicated no significant differences between the number of likes on posts with video or photo,  $t(998) = 1.25$ ,  $p = 0.21$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). The average performance score of posts with videos ( $M = 8265.1$ ,  $SD = 16941.1$ ) showed no significant difference from posts with photos ( $M = 11551.3$ ,  $SD = 19811.9$ ). **Hypothesis 2 is not accepted**, therefore rejected and vividness has no impact on the number of likes.

**Table 11: Independent samples test: The impact of vividness on the number of comments**

T-TEST GROUPS=Video(0 1)  
 /MISSING=ANALYSIS  
 /VARIABLES=@#Likes  
 /CRITERIA=CI(.95).

**T-Test**

Group Statistics					
	Video	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
# Likes	0	940	11551,30	19811,979	646,196
	1	60	8265,07	16941,143	2187,092

Independent Samples Test											
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
# Likes	Equal variances assumed	3,150	,076	1,256	998	,210	3286,231	2617,036	-1849,294	8421,757	
	Equal variances not assumed			1,441	69,717	,154	3286,231	2280,557	-1262,521	7834,983	

**4.2.2.5 H3a: Highly interactive posts, have a positive impact on the number of comments.**

Hypothesis 3a was formulated to understand if there is an impact on comments by the type of caption on posts. In this case, if the level of interactivity (questions) result in a positive impact on the number of comments compared to posts without questions. Therefore, the level of interactivity is tested by posts with questions versus without questions. For this test, an independent samples test was conducted. A filter was used to only consider posts with a caption. Results in Table 12 show that the t-test indicated no significant difference between the number of comments on posts with or without questions,  $t(996) = 1.24$ ,  $p = 0.216$  ( $p < 0.1$ ). The average performance score of posts with questions in the caption ( $M = 157.2$ ,  $SD = 354.7$ ) was not significantly different from posts without questions ( $M = 120.1$ ,  $SD = 286.3$ ). Therefore, **hypothesis 3a is not accepted** as high interactivity has no impact on the number of comments.



Table 12: Independent samples test: The impact of interactivity on the number of comments

```
USE ALL.
FILTER BY Caption.
EXECUTE.
T-TEST GROUPS=Calltoactionquestion(0 1)
/MISSING=ANALYSIS
/VARIABLES=@#Comments
/CRITERIA=CI(.95).
```

**T-Test**

Group Statistics					
	Call to action (question)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
# Comments	0	890	120,08	286,357	9,599
	1	108	157,25	354,741	34,135

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
# Comments	Equal variances assumed	1,327	,250	-1,239	996	,216	-37,175	30,005	-96,055	21,705
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,048	124,497	,296	-37,175	35,459	-107,355	33,006

**4.2.2.6 3b: Highly interactive storytelling posts result in a positive impact on comments**

Hypothesis 3b was formulated to explore if a question on a storytelling post has a positive impact on the number of comments. Therefore, an independent samples test was conducted using a filter to only consider storytelling posts in this test. *0* stands for storytelling posts without a question and *1* stands for the amount of storytelling posts that do have a question. The results are illustrated in Table 13. The t-test indicates no significant differences on the amount of comments of storytelling posts,  $t(498) = 1,40$ ,  $p = 0.161$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). This implies that storytelling posts with questions ( $M = 202.9$ ,  $SD = 448.7$ ) are not significantly different than storytelling posts without questions ( $M = 137$ ,  $SD = 336.5$ ). Therefore, **hypothesis 3b is not accepted**. Hence, questions on storytelling posts do not have a significant impact on comments.

*Table 13: Independent samples test: The impact of questions in storytelling posts on the number of comments*

```
USE ALL.
FILTER BY Storytelling.
EXECUTE.
T-TEST GROUPS=Calltoactionquestion(0 1)
/MISSING=ANALYSIS
/VARIABLES=@#Comments
/CRITERIA=CI(.95).
```

**T-Test**

Group Statistics					
	Call to action (question)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
# Comments	0	435	137,02	336,494	16,134
	1	65	202,88	448,711	55,656

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
# Comments	Equal variances assumed	3,096	,079	-1,403	498	,161	-65,854	46,931	-158,061	26,353
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,136	75,130	,259	-65,854	57,947	-181,287	49,579

**4.2.2.7 H4: Additional information about the product on posts has an impact on the number of likes**

Hypothesis 4 was created to understand if additional information about the product in posts have an impact on the number of likes. Therefore, the variable “Caption with product information or name” and the dependent variable “#Likes” was tested with an independent samples test. *I* indicates the amount of posts that do have additional product information. Table 14 shows that the t-test indicates a significant difference on the amount of engagement on informational posts with additional information about the product,  $t(945) = -3.02$ ,  $p = 0.003$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the average performance score of posts with additional information about the product ( $M = 9343.1$ ,  $SD = 13610.4$ ) is significantly different than posts without additional information ( $M = 12877.3$ ,  $SD = 23111.6$ ). Therefore, **hypothesis 4 is accepted**, as additional information about the product has an impact on likes, but it has a **negative impact on likes**.

*Table 14: Independent samples test: The impact of additional information about the product on the number of likes*

T-TEST GROUPS=Captionwithproductinformationorname(0 1)  
 /MISSING=ANALYSIS  
 /VARIABLES=@#Likes  
 /CRITERIA=CI(.95).

**T-Test**

Group Statistics					
	Caption with product information or name	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
# Likes	0	569	12877,37	23111,624	968,890
	1	431	9343,15	13610,406	655,590

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
# Likes		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
# Likes	Equal variances assumed	40,499	,000	2,825	998	,005	3534,219	1251,030	1079,268	5989,171
	Equal variances not assumed			3,021	945,399	,003	3534,219	1169,849	1238,419	5830,020

**4.2.2.8 H5a: Posts on weekends have a positive impact on engagement**

Hypothesis 5a was formulated to obtain an insight on the impact the timing of posts has on engagement. It is tested to see if posts on weekends results in positive engagement. Therefore, an independent samples test was conducted with the variable “WeekEndLONG” which includes three days of the week (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) and the dependent variable “Engagement”. *I* stands for the number of posts published during the weekend. The results are shown in Table 15. The t-test revealed a significant difference in the engagement of weekdays and weekends,  $t(575) = 2.61$ ,  $p = 0.009$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). Considering the mean of engagement on weekends ( $M = 13882.2$ ,  $SD = 23308.4$ ) is significantly different than on weekdays ( $M = 10166.4$ ,  $SD = 17620.2$ ), it can be said that there is a positive significant impact on engagement of posts on weekends. Therefore, **hypothesis 5a is accepted**.

*Table 15: Independent samples test: The impact of the timing of posts (weekend) on the engagement*

T-TEST GROUPS=WeekEndLONG(0 1)  
 /MISSING=ANALYSIS  
 /VARIABLES=Engagement  
 /CRITERIA=CI(.95).

**T-Test**

Group Statistics					
	WeekEndLONG	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Engagement	,00	647	10166,4915	17620,2212	692,72237
	1,00	353	13882,2096	23308,4189	1240,58196

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Engagement	Equal variances assumed	13,150	,000	-2,834	998	,005	-3715,7181	1311,07548	-6288,4990	-1142,9372
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,615	575,251	,009	-3715,7181	1420,88279	-6506,4689	-924,96734

**4.2.2.9 H5b.: Storytelling Posts on weekends results in positive engagement**

Lastly, hypothesis 5b was created to further explore the impact of post timing. Here, an independent samples test was conducted to understand if post timing combined with storytelling strategy has a positive impact on engagement. Therefore, a filter was used to only consider posts on weekends (“WeekEndLONG”) and the group tested was storytelling posts with the dependent variable of “Engagement”. *0* stands for informational posts and *1* indicates the amount of storytelling posts. The results are illustrated in Table 16. The t-test revealed a significant difference on the impact of engagement between storytelling and informational posts on weekends,  $t(298) = 1.78$ ,  $p = 0.075$  ( $p > 0.1$ ). The mean indicates a significant difference between storytelling posts ( $M = 15975.6$ ,  $SD = 28080.9$ ) and informational posts ( $M = 11628.64$ ,  $SD = 16508.2$ ), which states that the timing of posts (weekends) in combination with the storytelling creative strategy has a significantly positive impact on engagement. Therefore, **hypothesis 5b is accepted**.

*Table 16: Independent samples test: The impact of the timing of posts (weekend) on the engagement*

```

FILTER BY WeekEndLONG.
EXECUTE.
T-TEST GROUPS=Storytelling(0 1)
/MISSING=ANALYSIS
/VARIABLES=Engagement
/CRITERIA=CI(.95).

```

**T-Test**

Group Statistics					
	Storytelling	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Engagement	0	170	11628,6647	16508,2139	1266,12221
	1	183	15975,6667	28080,9255	2075,80174

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Engagement	Equal variances assumed	14,780	,000	-1,756	351	,080	-4347,0020	2475,53264	-9215,7448	521,74087
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,788	298,167	,075	-4347,0020	2431,46423	-9132,0069	438,00300

**4.2.3 Overview of Hypotheses Results***Table 17: Results of Hypotheses*

Hypotheses	Dependant Variable	Independent Variable	Accepted/ Not Accepted
H1a: Storytelling posts have a more positive impact on engagement than informational posts.	engagement	Storytelling posts	Not accepted
H1b: Storytelling posts have a positive impact on likes than informational posts.	likes	Storytelling posts	Not accepted
H1c: Storytelling posts have a positive impact on comments than informational posts.	comments	Storytelling posts	Accepted
H2: A high the level of vividness has a positive impact on the number of likes.	likes	Vividness	Not accepted

H3a: The higher the interactivity, the higher the level of comments.	comments	Interactivity	Not accepted
H3b: Highly interactive storytelling posts result in a positive impact on comments.	comments	Interactivity Storytelling posts	Not accepted
H4: Additional information about the product on posts has an impact on the number of likes.	likes	Additional information	Accepted
H5a: Posts on weekends have a positive impact on engagement.	engagement	Weekend	Accepted
H5b: Storytelling posts on weekends result in positive engagement.	engagement	Weekend Storytelling posts	Accepted

## **5. Conclusion**

The final chapter of this dissertation will briefly discuss what was explored in the previous chapters, as well as the theoretical and practical implications the findings could potentially have. Finally, recommendations for future research are given.

### **5.1 Discussion**

The ease of access to the internet worldwide has created a shift for businesses from traditional to online marketing and communications, making social media and especially Instagram a popular tool for online brand communication. With the importance of social media, the aim of this dissertation was to examine the effects of two different creative strategies, storytelling and informational, on the brand engagement of users on Instagram. Social media represents a two-way communication between consumers and brands. The participation of consumers and brands on social media is called engagement and can be measured through comments, active users, likes, shares or user-generated items (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). To understand how brands on Instagram can increase their social media engagement, this dissertation focused on creative strategies and tactics, which enhance overall engagement through likes and comments.

This dissertation was structured and analyzed using qualitative and quantitative research methods. Over the course of this research, nine hypotheses were developed based on existing literature. A qualitative study comprised of eight in-depth interviews was conducted to obtain an overview of the research topic. Furthermore, a content analysis of 1000 Instagram posts was conducted to test the proposed hypotheses.

The results of the research indicate that brand engagement on social media can benefit from using a combination of creative strategy and creative tactic. In line with the literature, the quantitative study found a positive impact of using storytelling strategy on the number of comments (Lee et al., 2014; Escalas, 2004). Contrary, storytelling strategy was found to have no impact on the number of likes and overall engagement, which disagrees with the literature (Lee et al., 2014; Escalas, 2004). A rationale for this result can be the personal motivation of the Instagram user. Furthermore, a “like” tends to take less time than to write a comment, therefore users might “like” both storytelling and informational posts equally as it does not require much effort. However, users might feel the need to “comment” on storytelling posts

due to the mental simulation effect described by Escalas (2004). A storytelling post can transport people to think of their own behaviours and stories, creating a behavioral scenario in which they are the main characters. Hence, users could be drawn to “comment” on storytelling posts they have personal interest or motivation in.

Furthermore, this dissertation explored creative tactics that are used to improve effectiveness based on the literature. Videos did not show a positive effect compared to photos in terms of likes on Instagram, which disagrees with De Vries et al. (2012), but agrees with Cvijikj & Michahelles (2013). One factor which can explain that videos have less likes, is that videos combine image and sound and take longer to watch than a photo. During the interviews in study 1, it was found that respondents preferred Instagram photos over videos as the sound was perceived to be an inconvenience and take longer to watch. Moreover, high interactivity in posts does not have an impact on comments. This contradicts with the literature (Fortin & Dholakia, 2005; De Vries et al., 2012). A possible explanation for high interactivity (call to action – question) to have no impact, is that “liking” a brand post demands less effort and time than “commenting” on an Instagram post. As study 1 indicates, respondents are less likely to engage with or “comment” on brand content. Therefore, even though a question often elicits an answer, users might not be as likely to “comment” on a brand post as they are on a post by a friend. Furthermore, the results show that there is a significantly negative impact on the number of likes when including additional information about the product in an Instagram post. This does not align with Muntinga et al. (2011) or De Vries et al. (2012), who found no impact at all. A rationale for this result could be the initial intent of people using Instagram. Users might not use Instagram as an informational source but for entertainment purposes (Hutton & Fosdick, 2012). This aligns with the findings from study 1, in which respondents do not tend to search for product information but mostly use Instagram to stay updated and procrastinate. On the other hand, the interview analysis indicates that when the personal motivation is high, informational strategy can be more effective. Storytelling strategy can be of advantage when an emotional connection to the product or brand is pursued. Therefore, the type of post analyzed, its industry and users’ personal motivation plays a significant role in the effectiveness of using additional information about the product in a post.

Lastly, the results showed that posts published on weekends (Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays) have a significantly positive impact on engagement. Similarly, storytelling posts published during the weekend also have a positive impact on engagement. This finding



contradicts the finding of Rutz & Bucklin (2011) and Cvijikj & Michahelles (2013), as both emphasize more activity during weekdays. However, the result agrees with De Vries et al. (2012), who suggests that due to more brand page visits during the weekends, the popularity of brand posts is likely to be higher on weekends.

## **5.2 Implications for Theory**

Reflecting against the literature presented, some statements have been proven to support or contradict previous research findings during this research.

Users are drawn to Instagram because of the visually pleasing and inspirational content that is shared on the platform regularly. But marketers should be aware of the effect of creative tactics, as higher vividness in posts does not improve the number of likes, which does not align with literature (De Vries et al., 2012). Instead, this finding agrees with literature by Cvijikj & Michahelles (2013), who found a negative impact when using highly vivid posts. A possible reasoning is that videos often include both image and sound which take longer to watch than a photo and may be inconvenient due to the sound. Likewise, using additional information about the product in a brand post result in a negative impact on likes. This does not align with literature by Muntinga et al. (2011) who found enhanced brand engagement when using additional information about the product, or with De Vries et al. (2012) who found neither impact nor difference. This can be explained by the personal motivation of the Instagram user. A user might not be interested in additional product information as he uses Instagram for entertainment purposes instead and therefore does not tend to “like” a post when product information is added.

The overall number of comments can be enhanced using storytelling strategy on Instagram posts, which agrees with the literature (De Vries et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2014). Furthermore, highly interactive content has no impact on the number of comments, which contradicts with the literature (Fortin & Dholakia, 2005; De Vries et al.,2012). Asking a question on a post does not necessarily mean that it enhances the comments, as people might not take the time to answer the question. In comparison, “liking” a post is less time consuming but cannot answer a specific question.

To increase the overall engagement, it is advised to publish posts during the weekend as it was found to be highly beneficial. This supports the literature by De Vries et al. (2012) but contradicts with literature by Cvijikj & Michahelles (2013) and Rutz & Bucklin (2011). A rationale for this finding is that due to more brand page visits and time spent on social media during the weekends, the popularity of brand posts is likely to be higher on weekends.

### **5.3 Practical Implications**

The main aim of this research was to study the effect of storytelling and informational creative strategies on Instagram and analyze what creative tactics are useful to increase user engagement. This dissertation can be a guide to marketers for best practices on social media and ways to enhance engagement across industries on Instagram.

Social Media is a popular tool for advertisement, whether for small, medium or large and international companies. Companies strive to implement effective social media, as it reaches people across the globe and is an inexpensive tool amongst other benefits. Managers should be aware of their goals, target group and main brand message they want to convey, in order to choose the appropriate strategy. The use of social media for a brand has a variety of benefits, which include obtaining direct feedback from customers, trend forecasting or researching a desired target market. While some studies heavily promote using storytelling strategies, others indicate the power of using fact-based informational strategies to reach the highest amount of engagement. Regarding the use of creative strategies, when and which one to use, often depends on the type of organization and product or service promoted.

Social media and especially Instagram is a platform which many brands already use to enhance their chances of increased brand awareness and ultimate brand engagement. With increased brand engagement on Instagram the brand awareness is prone to be heightened as well. As brands share content on Instagram, marketers measure its success by engagement numbers in the form of likes and comments. Marketers can benefit from implementing storytelling strategies for enhanced success of the number of comments, paired with creative tactics such as publishing posts during weekends.

By understanding the effects of the creative strategies and tactics analyzed in this master dissertation, marketers can use the results when developing and implementing a social media strategy for Instagram.

## **5.4 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

With every research conducted, comes a set of limitations. In this research study, Instagram is the only social media platform examined and results can therefore not be generalized with other social media platforms. This research focused on two creative strategies, which are storytelling and informational and their effect on brand engagement. Therefore, the study serves results only in regard to those two strategies. In future research, additional social media platforms could be analyzed to measure and compare the creative strategy effectiveness.

This dissertation combined both qualitative and quantitative primary research. The time frame and the sample size of respondents of the qualitative research conducted, were limited. Interviews were conducted with eight respondents over a time span of one month. This sample size cannot represent the entire population of Instagram users. Furthermore, most of the interview respondents were from Germany (75%), which may not be representative for general Instagram user behaviour, as German users might not display similar behaviour to users in other parts of the world. The sample of interview respondents mainly consisted of students or recent graduates. Further research could be conducted investigating Instagram user behaviour from a larger, international group of respondents.

Another limitation of this research is the measurement of brand engagement. Brand engagement can be measured by the number of comments, active users, likes, shares and/or user-generated items online, which differs from offline brand engagement (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). However, this dissertation measures online brand engagement on Instagram by the number of likes and comments. Further research may include all types of brand engagement measurements; the number of active users, shares and user-generated items, as Hoffman & Fodor (2010) define in their study.

In the quantitative study, a sample size of 1000 Instagram posts were collected and analyzed, which meets the amount of data for a valid investigation. However, this research focused on four different industries which each included three brands chosen by the researcher. It is recommended to investigate the relationship between the involvement theory, creative strategy and different industries in particular. Besides, further research can be conducted using a larger sample size of brands, analyzing their brand message and followers, to obtain indicators of the effect of creative strategies paired with the elaboration likelihood model. This finding could therefore influence the brand engagement.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1: Respondents

Data	Age	Education	Occupation	Nationality	Gender
P1	24	Bachelor in Business Administration	Business Development Coordinator	Canadian	F
P2	25	Master in Marketing	Student	Portuguese	F
P3	24	Bachelor in Hospitality	Student	German	F
P4	24	Bachelor in Economics	Student	German	M
P5	26	Bachelor in Interior Design	Student	German	F
P6	24	Bachelor in Biology	Student	German	M
P7	25	Bachelor in Mechanical Engineering	Student	German	M
P8	25	Master in Engineering	Engineer	German	M

### Appendix 2: Interview Research Guide

1. Please share your age, occupation, education and nationality with me.
2. Do you have an Instagram account?
3. (please finish the sentence) - To me Instagram is ...
4. How often do you use Instagram? (i.e. daily, weekly, monthly, from time to time)
5. What do you use Instagram for?  
(i.e. chat with friends, stay updated, find new brands, follow brands, help me make purchase decision)
6. Do you prefer photos or videos on Instagram? (and why?)
7. Which kind of brands do you follow on Instagram? (industry)
8. I follow brands to ... (i.e. stay updated, discounts, entertainment, interact)
9. When do you tend to “like” an Instagram post?  
(i.e. because it’s from a friend, I liked the picture/video, I liked the content, I wanted to show support, I liked the product shown...)
10. Have you ever commented on a brand post and when do you tend to “comment” on an Instagram post?

**Now you will watch an advertisement**

Ad

1: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERuONiY5Gz0&list=PL8YnSZD5H0qJdgNinkNtywOtRzZ9Y\\_qc3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERuONiY5Gz0&list=PL8YnSZD5H0qJdgNinkNtywOtRzZ9Y_qc3)

11. Would you “like” this post on Instagram?
12. Would you “comment” on this post?
13. Would you share it with friends on Instagram and why?
14. Would you consider it to be a good advertisement, and why?
15. What do you like / dislike about this advertisement?
16. Does this advertisement make you want to research more about the product/brand?
17. Before you watched the advertisement, were you familiar with the product or brand?
18. Through which source have you known about the brand? (online, TV, friends)
19. Do you follow the brand on social media?
20. If you needed a similar product, would you consider buying the product shown? And why?
21. Would you then consider this brand as your first choice?
22. Would you recommend this product to friends/family?

**Now you will watch an advertisement**

Ad 2: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Wy0ho-qRW4&list=PL8YnSZD5H0qJdgNinkNtywOtRzZ9Y\\_qc3&index=9](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Wy0ho-qRW4&list=PL8YnSZD5H0qJdgNinkNtywOtRzZ9Y_qc3&index=9)

23. Do you use Instagram to search for product reviews/new products?
24. Can you share a brand you discovered through Instagram advertising?
25. Can you recall an advertisement that impressed you?
26. Give me three examples of brands that do great advertising in your opinion.

*Finally*, please tell me if you think this is an **informational** type of advertisement or **storytelling** type of advertisement.

Storytelling advertisement: has a narrative and story behind it

Informational: contains information about the product (could be price, benefits, features etc.)

1)



**Dove** dove • Folgen

dove Designed with the needs of delicate skin in mind, Dove Sensitive Skin Unscented Body Wash is our best body wash for sensitive skin 🙌 Hypoallergenic and dermatologist recommended, it's earned its place in @thecityismineto's bathroom 🏠  
 #Dove #DoveBodyWash #SensitiveSkin #Regram #Unscented

Weitere Kommentare laden

dove @claireright1975 we hope so too, but until then, we can't think of anything better to fill your suitcase with 🧳

lisatiller34 Great for quick cleanup. I like this one for a grab and go cleanup. It gets the dirt and oil off the neck area.

dove @lisatiller34 that's what we love to hear 🙌

m5fal89 Is this gentle enough to use on

👍 🗨️ 📌

**Gefällt 1.707 Mal**

4. JULI 2018

Kommentar hinzufügen ...

2)



**Dove** dove • Folgen

dove Bold, iconic and – most importantly – real: photographer Christian Weber's style was perfect for capturing our message 📸 He says: "Dove has no single definition of human beauty. It seeks a celebration of humanity in all its diversity of forms." Thanks Christian! We couldn't have put it better ourselves 🙌  
 #Dove #RealBeauty #Photography #Beauty

Weitere Kommentare laden

doctor.v.cares.md Love this

dove We love it too @doctor.v.cares.md

888makai ❤️❤️❤️

👍 🗨️ 📌

**Gefällt 896 Mal**

7. JANUAR

Kommentar hinzufügen ...

3)



**dove** • Folgen

dove "If you take care of the little things - the big things will take care of themselves," - agreed, @amothersedit. For Ashley, that means keeping fresh, moisturized and aluminum-free with our 0% Aluminum Deodorants 🍌 How do you take care of the little things?

#Dove #RealBeauty #LittleThings #Deodorant #NoAluminum #AluminumFree #Care #Fresh #FeelingFresh #WordsOfWisdom

Weitere Kommentare laden

dove Hi @morgan\_annalise, thanks for your question. Let us know what country you're from, we can help you find our Dermaspa Body Oils 🍌

morgan\_annalise @dove UK 🍌

Gefällt 1.122 Mal

5. FEBRUAR

Kommentar hinzufügen ...

4)



**gopro** • Abonniert  
Italian Dolomites

gopro Photo of the Day: #GoProFamily member @simonearmanni rowed into the scenery of Lake Braies with @robertascotti + the all-new #GoProHERO7 Black. 🏆

@GoProIT #GoProIT #GoProTravel #WeekendWarriors

Weitere Kommentare laden

Gefällt 189.163 Mal

6. OKTOBER 2018

Kommentar hinzufügen ...

5)



**gopro** • Abonniert  
French Polynesia

gopro Photo of the Day: Welcome to the family, #GoProHERO7 Black. 🏆 Whether you're shooting sunsets or wandering wild, capture, share + engage on a whole new level, from anywhere. 🏆 Click the 🔗 in our bio to learn more.

#GoPro #Hypersmooth #TimeWarp

Gefällt bondiharvest und 273.414 weitere Personen

20. SEPTEMBER 2018

Kommentar hinzufügen ...

Optional: Which of these Instagram posts shown would you personally "like"?

**Appendix 3: Interview Transcripts***(additional interview transcripts available upon request)***Interview #2**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Education</b>
24	Portuguese	Master in Marketing Student	Bachelor in Economics and Master in Marketing

**2. Do you have an Instagram account?**

- Yes

**3. (please finish the sentence) - To me Instagram is ...**

Instagram is a place where I post some pictures about my friends, places I visit and about things I do and like and are attractive to see. For example, when I go get a coffee that looks nice and I like, I will probably share it on Instagram.

**4. How often do you use Instagram? (i.e. daily, weekly, monthly, from time to time)**

- I check Instagram everyday, multiple times. When it comes to posting I would say I post about six times a month.

**5. What do you use Instagram for?**

- *(i.e. chat with friends, stay updated, find new brands, follow brands, help me make purchase decision)*
- I check Instagram to see new photos and stories, especially when I'm bored. If there is an event a lot of my friends are attending, I will check Instagram to see how it is. But I mostly check Instagram to see new pictures of friends and a couple of celebrities.

**6. Do you prefer photos or videos on Instagram? (and why?)**

- I think that videos are attractive, but I prefer photos because most of the times I'm in public spaces and I don't listen to the audio of the video. So, I mostly skip videos as it annoys me to watch videos without the audio.

**7. Which kind of brands do you follow on Instagram? (industry)**

- I don't follow many brands but I follow a few companies for work purposes. For example, I follow a tourism account and a marketing agency account in Gent. I follow Netflix Portugal to keep updated with new series and movies are coming out in the future. Then I also follow companies such as Insider and enews to keep up to date about

the world. Then I follow a local radio station, because they are funny and they do actually post a lot of videos but I think that they are really nice and share some news. Then I also follow the Portuguese airline TAP, as they have nice images and sometimes they have some promotions. In this industry I also follow Ryanair, mostly for promotions and great content such as “best places to visit” for inspiration.

**8. When do you tend to “like” an Instagram post?**

(i.e. because it’s from a friend, I liked the picture/video, I liked the content, I wanted to show support, I liked the product shown...)

- It depends, if it is a close person or someone I barely know. If it is someone I barely know I will only like the picture if I really like it. And when it’s a close friend I will like it most of the times. If it is a brand, depends on the post/picture itself such as nice and attractive colors.

**9. Have you ever commented on a brand post and when do you tend to “comment” on an Instagram post?**

- I only comment on brand photos if it is a contest. Or if it is a good friend I will comment something nice on their photo.

**Now you will watch an advertisement**

Ad 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNI6bcQ9qyw&t=51s>

**10. Can you tell me if you think the video is a storytelling or informational type of advertisement?**

- I think it’s storytelling.

**11. Would you “like” this post on Instagram?**

- It is tricky. Most of the sponsored videos I don’t watch, because I just don’t watch videos on Instagram. In general, I would like this post because of the story told. It is a well-done ad explaining the sense of touching and not seeing with nice pictures and simple. A lot of car advertisement tends to be a little messy and too fast, so this one quite clean.

**12. Would you “comment” on or share this post?**

- No, because I wouldn’t know what to share or comment. I would only share or comment if I would look for a car myself.

**13. Would you consider it to be a good advertisement, and why?**

- Yes.

**14. What do you like / dislike about this advertisement?**

- I like that it's structures and tells a story. It is not an "ad-y" commercial. It has no call to action which I think is nice, so you keep the story in mind but not in a negative advertisement way.

**15. Before you watched the advertisement, were you familiar with the product or brand?**

- The brand yes, the car no.

**16. Through which source have you known about the brand? (online, TV, friends)**

- I've always known about this brand.

**17. Do you follow the brand on social media?**

- No I don't.

**18. If you needed a similar product, would you consider buying the product shown? And why?**

- If I needed I similar product or car I would want to have more information. The first ad is nice to see but if I you are considering to buy a car you need to make an effort to better understand features and other details of the car. I would need some more information before considering buying it.

**19. Would you then consider this brand as your first choice after watching the ad?**

- By the looks of the ad and the car yes.

**Now you will watch an advertisement**

Ad 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFRJZokiZdo>

**20. Would you "like" this post on Instagram?**

- Probably yes, because I really like the type of storytelling ad but if you are looking to buy something the information is more useful. I liked the video in itself and I think it is well done.

**21. Would you "comment" on this post?**

- Only if I would be looking for a car.

**22. Would you consider it to be a good advertisement, and why?**

- Yes because it has information that can be useful for the buyer.

**23. What do you like / dislike about this advertisement?**



- It could have had more information but not enough for someone who is looking to buy a car.

**24. Does this advertisement make you want to research more about the product/brand?**

- I think so yes. This ad would make me want to research more as I have already some info. The other ad was interesting but I didn't get any information from it.

**25. Would you share this post with someone?**

- Yes because it looks nice and has information at the same time. Also in this ad you see the car in an environment which I like.

**26. Do you use Instagram to search for product reviews/new products?**

- No.

**27. Can you share a brand you discovered through Instagram advertising?**

- I found the brand Zaful through social media ads. They have a lot of ads in the summertime with bikinis. So I ended up buying something from there because I liked the looks (bikinis) and it was very cheap.

**28. Can you recall an advertisement that impressed you?**

- I can recall ads from the superbowl, especially the one from Pepsi as it was really relatable. I could see myself in the same situation so it was really relatable.

**29. Give me three examples of brands that do great advertising in your opinion.**

- Coca Cola do good ads. Also, Vodaphone Portugal because they have lots of ads with storytelling and they have always the same, real couple in their ads which I like. There is also the soft drink company called Small that I like, because they have a lot of images about the summer, beach and sea side. It is really nice for teenagers and makes you want to have fun in the summer.

**30. Finally, please tell me if you think this is an **informational** type of advertisement or **storytelling** type of advertisement. There are several advertisements from two brands, Dove and GoPro.**

- 1) I think it's informational because the caption says it's for delicate skin and also hypoallergenic. Because it gives information.
- 2) Storytelling because there is no information about the product and it is describing the three girls in the picture.

- 3) Informational, because it says the part of keeping fresh and all the other information in the caption. It could be a bit of storytelling also, because it had both a persons story and information about the product.
- 4) Storytelling. It doesn't say much else, so I would say Storytelling.
- 5) Also storytelling.

**31. If you could give a “like” to any of these posts, which one would you like?**

I would like number 4, because it is a place that I would really like to go to. And this image gives me aspirations to go there. If I could like another picture I would like the first one, because of the esthetic – all the white and nice-looking photo.

**Interview #3**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Education</b>
24	German	Bachelor in Hospitality	Bachelor in Hospitality

**2. Do you have an Instagram account?**

- Yes I do.

**3. (please finish the sentence) - To me Instagram is ...**

entertainment.

**4. How often do you use Instagram? (i.e. daily, weekly, monthly, from time to time)**

- I use Instagram daily.

**5. What do you use Instagram for?**

- (i.e. chat with friends, stay updated, find new brands, follow brands, help me make purchase decision)
- Usually just to see what are people are up to and to get visual inspiration.

**6. Do you prefer photos or videos on Instagram? (and why?)**

- I don't think I have a preference but I prefer photos, because it doesn't take as long to see it and put a message across. I don't necessarily take the time to watch a video.

**7. Which kind of brands do you follow on Instagram? (industry)**

- I follow car and fashion brands. I follow Hermes for example because I think they have quite inspiring content, which displays creativity and how to combine various aspects.

**8. I follow brands to ... (i.e. stay updated, discounts, entertainment, interact)**

- Because I think they manage to create a certain vision within one picture with various elements and they manage to capture your attention. The way they depict a certain bag

they do it in a very, very creative way. The colors capture your eyes and esthetics that capture your eye which is unusual. And I mostly follow brands for inspiration. I don't really follow influencers or many brands, because I don't really care about people I don't know. I follow people that I am close to or whose life I'm interested in.

**9. When do you tend to “like” an Instagram post?**

(i.e. because it's from a friend, I liked the picture/video, I liked the content, I wanted to show support, I liked the product shown...)

- Usually I tend to like people posts that I'm close to. Then it depends if I'm close to the person or if I just like a picture and therefor give a like when I'm not super close to them. Then I also like posts when I think there is a good message behind it or the visual is interesting.

**10. Have you ever commented on a brand post and when do you tend to “comment” on an Instagram post?**

- No I haven't.

Now you will watch an advertisement

Ad 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNI6bcQ9qyw&t=51s>

**11. Can you tell me if you think it is a storytelling or informational type of advertisement?**

- I think it's storytelling.

**12. Would you “like” this post on Instagram?**

- Yes I might. Because I think the message that is shared is nice and I share their view. I thought it was interesting how they showed the product through visual and senses.

**13. Would you “comment” on or share this post?**

- No, because there is no outcome for me.

**14. Would you consider it to be a good advertisement, and why?**

- I think so. Because the choice of music is well balanced with the visual image and with the words chosen. So, the ad has a nice and peaceful rhythm to it.

**15. What do you like / dislike about this advertisement?**

- At first, I wasn't sure about the message about it. The story about the blind photographer didn't go together at first in my opinion.

**16. Before you watched the advertisement, were you familiar with the product or brand?**

- I haven't seen this ad before but I know the brand. I've known the brand all my life.

**17. Through which source have you known about the brand? (online, TV, friends)**

- I've always known about this brand.

**18. Do you follow the brand on social media?**

- No.

**19. If you needed a similar product, would you consider buying the product shown? And why?**

- If someone I know needed a similar product I would share it. I would also share it with friends if I knew they needed inspiration, because I like how it visually looks.

**20. Would you then consider this brand as your first choice after watching the ad?**

- I don't think it would be my first choice, not necessarily.

**Now you will watch an advertisement**

Ad 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFRJZokiZdo>

**21. Would you “like” this post on Instagram?**

- I don't think so. I'm not really interested in the market and the technical aspect or the functions. For me personally it's too long, considering that the essence of the ad comes through really quickly.

**22. Would you “comment” on this post?**

- No.

**23. Would you consider it to be a good advertisement, and why?**

- Yes because it shows the features of the car. So it's good to catch a persons' attention if they're interested in buying a car with the various features.

**24. What do you like / dislike about this advertisement?**

- It could have had more information but not enough for someone who is looking to buy a car.

**25. Do you use Instagram to search for product reviews/new products?**

Yes, sometimes. I usually look for restaurants, bars, hotels on Instagram. More service related.

**26. Can you share a brand you discovered through Instagram advertising?**

Yes there is a shoe brand called Aloha, which I really like but never bought anything from them. It was in my advertisement feed on my Instagram account. I really liked the picture shown, I liked it visually and the design of the shoes. I would even say that I would be considering to buy something from this brand.

**27. Can you recall an advertisement that impressed you?**

Well, generally on Instagram if I see Stories I know right away which one is an advertisement so I skip it. If the ad is in the feed and looks really nice I would look at it.

**28. Give me three examples of brands that do great advertising in your opinion.**

I think Google does good ad, Apple in general and Hermes. Because they showcase what people actually want. The pictures are esthetically pleasing and they show how people feel about the brand, i.e. with flash mobs. I think Redbull makes really good advertising as well, because they incorporate sports into their branding and I really like sports. They manage to create very interesting ads.

**29. Finally,** please tell me if you think this is an **informational** type of advertisement or **storytelling** type of advertisement. There are several advertisements from two brands, Dove and GoPro.

- 1) I would say more informational. Because of the caption and it tells you what the product does to you.
- 2) I would say definitely storytelling. Within the caption they have a quote so it showcases that they verbally want to get a message across. Because you see three different human beings and their personalities. So, I would say it's more related to the brand itself than to the product. They can tell you a story as its not related to a product.
- 3) That's also storytelling because they use persona. They explain how she explains it and they share the point of view of the users. Well, at the same time it could also be informational because it says some

features about the product. But overall I would consider it to be storytelling.

- 4) I would also say its storytelling, as it shows a certain lifestyle and a certain moment.
- 5) I would say its storytelling even though it showcases the direct product. But if I look at the picture in the first moment, I would think its storytelling because it shows a certain lifestyle.

#### **Interview #4**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Education</b>
25	German	Engineer	Master in Engineering

#### **2. Do you have an Instagram account?**

Yes. I'm relatively new to Instagram though, I've had it maybe for one year now.

#### **3. (please finish the sentence) - To me Instagram is ...**

a platform that keeps me updated about my friends lives.

#### **4. How often do you use Instagram? (i.e. daily, weekly, monthly, from time to time)**

Daily.

#### **5. What do you use Instagram for?**

*(i.e. chat with friends, stay updated, find new brands, follow brands, help me make purchase decision)*

I would say mostly for my friends, to keep updated with them. To see if they are travelling or things I'm interested in.

#### **6. Do you prefer photos or videos on Instagram? (and why?)**

Well it depends. If I have time I would watch videos, because you can see more, there is more behind it. On a daily basis, I like pictures more because you can just scroll through.

#### **7. Which kind of brands do you follow on Instagram? (industry)**

I only have watch brands. That's two brands that make wooden watches. And I just picked them up from an Instagram ad and I liked the design.

#### **8. I follow brands to ... (i.e. stay updated, discounts, entertainment, interact)**

I follow brands to see new products and get some inspiration. I like watches and one day if I have the money I will buy a nice watch. And in this specific case it's wooden watches and I just like to see new products in this area.

**9. When do you tend to “like” an Instagram post? When for friends and when for brand posts?**

(i.e. because it’s from a friend, I liked the picture/video, I liked the content, I wanted to show support, I liked the product shown...)

I like pictures of friends, mostly. Or usually when they stand out to me, for example a group of friends I know or beautiful travel destinations. For brands, it’s more rare I would say, nothing that I would do everyday. Although, I would say I did it a couple of times, for example with those watches. If there is a design I particularly like I would push that like button. And I would do it faster than on Facebook I would say, because on Facebook I had the feeling that your friends can track what you do and like. And on Instagram I feel like it’s not like that.

**10. Have you ever commented on a brand post and when do you tend to “comment” on an Instagram post?**

No I don’t.

**11. And do you comment on friends’ pictures, or is that pretty rare as well?**

Rarely, but I do it from time to time.

**Now you will watch an advertisement**

Ad 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNI6bcQ9qyw&t=51s>

**12. Would you “like” this post on Instagram?**

Usually I don’t like advertisement on Instagram, but I would say I like the clip as such. It would be hard for me to like it, because it would be hard for the clip to catch my attention. That has to happen in the first three seconds.

**13. Would you “comment” on or share this post?**

I wouldn’t.

**14. Would you consider this ad to be a good advertisement?**

I think it’s pretty original. But I wouldn’t particularly share it, but maybe if I have a friend around I would say ‘look at this guy he’s a photographer but he’s blind’. So maybe they would see the ad as well; I think it’s an original post.

**15. What do you like / dislike about this advertisement?**

I like that it’s pretty original and that it catches your feelings I guess.

**16. Does this advertisement make you want to research more about the product/brand?**

That's a hard question. I think the car is good for Volkswagen but I don't necessarily think I would want to research more about it after seeing this ad.

**17. Before you watched the advertisement, were you familiar with the product or brand?**

I know the car and the brand, but I haven't seen this particular ad.

**18. Do you follow the brand on social media or would you be interested to follow it?**

No but I might be interested yes. I think I already follow Mercedes and BMW, so in the same industry.

**19. If you needed a similar product, would you consider buying the product shown? And why?**

I like the design, so if I'm about to buy a car of a similar type, I would maybe consider it. So if I would catch the ad in that moment, of course I would look into it, cause it's a beautiful car.

**20. And if you knew one of your friends or family was looking for a car. Would you send them this advertisement?**

I guess I wouldn't do it through the advertisement. I would probably send them a link to the car directly but not through the ad. The ad and the product are very separated for e actually. The idea of the photographer and then the product itself.

**Now you will watch an advertisement**

Ad 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFRJZokiZdo>

**10. Would you say you like this one more than the first one? And would you "like" this post on Instagram?**

It's kind of hard to say. The first one (story) had more the potential of going viral I guess, cause it had an original taste to it. And the second one contained more information. So from that point of view, if I was looking for a car, the second one would be more interesting for me.

I generally wouldn't like it because I just don't usually like Instagram advertisement?

**11. So if you needed a car, would you be more interested in looking into the car after seeing the informational ad than the story ad?**

I guess yes, because now you get more information and more stats.



**12. If you could “share” one of the two ads shown, which one would you share?**

I would want to show them the car, I would definitely show them the second advertisement (info), because you can actually see the car.

**13. Do you use Instagram to search for product reviews/new products/restaurants?**

Sometimes I use it for restaurants, but more to double check. To see some pictures about it. So, I sometimes go and see the restaurants pictures or what people have posted from the restaurant. I wouldn't “search” for something on Instagram.

**14. Can you share a brand you discovered through Instagram advertising?**

I found the wooden watches brand on Instagram called Holzkern, which I follow now. And then I maybe saw some clothing ads for outdoor clothing, some beautiful shirt and stuff. I saw the ad on Instagram and after seeing the really nice picture I went on their account and followed them, so I can maintain the brand for me and see what kind of products are new.

**15. Can you recall an advertisement that impressed you?**

Not a particular one.

**16. Give me three examples of brands that do great advertising in your opinion.**

I think the last one I genuinely liked and remember is Edeka actually. What the singing man in a supermarket. They have a lot of advertisements that are cool and the ads are just different.

*Finally*, please tell me if you think this is an **informational** type of advertisement or **storytelling** type of advertisement. There are several advertisements from two brands, Dove and GoPro.

1) It definitely looks like informational, because you just see the product and I guess they state some information.

2) That has to be storytelling, you don't even see the product. You just see the impact of the product I guess.

3) That seems like kind of both of it. You see the product, get some information and you see someone smiling.

4) Well I don't know. You don't see the camera by itself but you see the picture that it takes, so you have that relation to the product. But yes storytelling because of course you see beautiful destination and stuff.

5) Kind of the same, but this time you see the product. So, again it's a tricky one I guess.

**If you could like any of these pictures on Instagram which one would you like?**

I would definitely like the last two ones from GoPro. Because I like travelling and those are beautiful pictures and beautiful destinations.

### Appendix 4: Manipulation Check – Independent Classification of Instagram Posts

Please consider the criteria below and classify each post by writing underneath if you think it is a storytelling post or informational post. Thank you!

Criteria:

Informational	Storytelling
Product is visible in post <b>AND/OR</b>	No visible product (physical product, i.e. packaging)
Information (features or product name or where to buy it) is in the caption	No information about the product in caption (excluding hashtags #)

1. 

The image shows an Instagram post from the account 'glossier'. The main visual is a white lip gloss tube with 'Glossier' written on it, standing upright in a white, shell-shaped dish with iridescent, rainbow-like patterns. The background is a white, wrinkled fabric. To the right of the image is the Instagram post interface, showing the profile name 'glossier', the caption in French, several comments, and the number of likes (53,337).

**Informational**



2.

### Storytelling

**glossier** • Follow  
Glossier

**glossier 123 Lafayette St ✨**  
Load more comments

**farastenberg @ahhleeyaa yasssssss** ❤️  
**d.eneee @gael.diab 🤔** ❤️  
**gael.diab @d.eneee my favorite place** ❤️  
**estherplaster Best visit to NYC ever! Thank you @glossier the experience exceeded my expectations!!!!** ❤️

Liked by hanherbertrobertson and 22,346 others  
FEBRUARY 5  
Add a comment...

**Tweet**

**Glossier** @glossier

What's the best thing you learned about beauty this year? 💧 💄

3:01 PM · 12/31/18 ·

5 Retweets 116 Likes

3.

### Storytelling

**glossier** • Follow

**glossier** ✨  
Load more comments

**meatowich سلام دوست عزیز، فرصت تجدید خاطره خوشمزه ترین غذای عمرتان آنهم #ارگانیک #ایتجا محیاست** ❤️  
**opiflakka the best thing I learned about beauty this year has definitely got to be learning about Glossier. duhh** ❤️  
**boner\_queen Less is more** ❤️

45,929 likes  
DECEMBER 31, 2018  
Add a comment...



**glossier** • Follow

**glossier** 🙄  
Load more comments

**imhashmi** @shambaleen ❤️  
**katieaflynn** @its\_ananas me going home for Christmas ❤️  
**its\_ananas** @katieaflynn hahahaha I can't 🤔❤️  
**its\_ananas** @katieaflynn me taking all my liquids out in the Irish airport security 🤔❤️

Liked by **adelinesterner** and **140,634 others**  
DECEMBER 21, 2018

Add a comment... ⋮

4.

**Storytelling**



**BOBBI BROWN** **bobbibrown** • Follow

**bobbibrown** The best way to spend Valentine's Day - appreciating rose-hued looks from a few of our favorite #bbgirlcrush(es). Happy #valentines Day from all of us at #bobbibrown

Load more comments

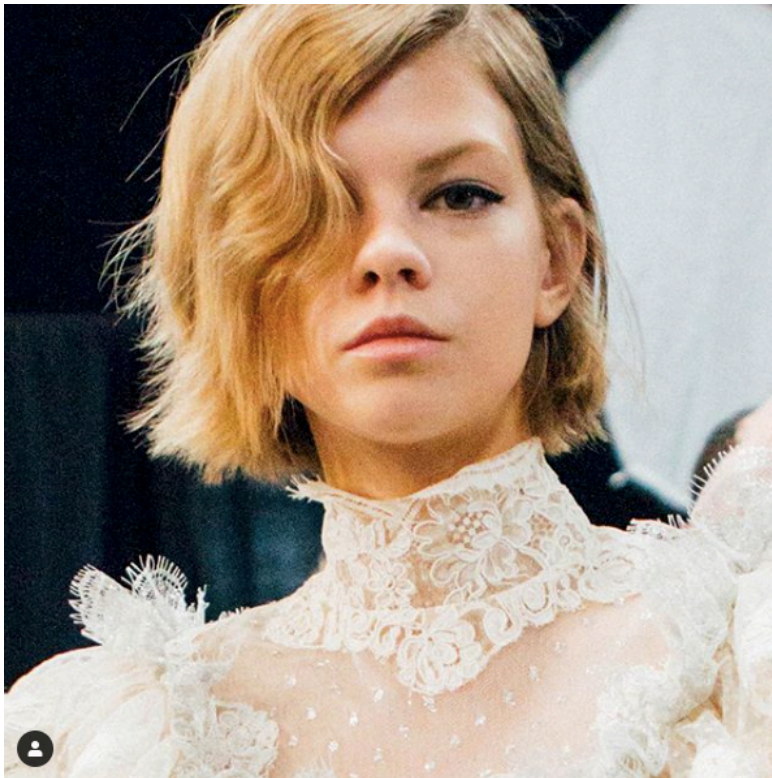
**kingsbeauty\_cosmetic** 🥰❤️❤️ ❤️  
**bbpro\_amyconway** ❤️❤️❤️ ❤️  
**bobbibrown** @icabenitez XOXO ❤️  
**picture.oa** @millybobbybrownofficial ❤️

3,168 likes  
FEBRUARY 14

Add a comment... ⋮

5.

**Storytelling**



**bobbibrown** • Follow

bobbibrown "We did a mysterious, romantic, feminine look with a triangular wing instead of your traditional cat-eye." – @jodieboland, Lead Makeup Artist for @zimmermann

View all 21 comments

jessicamlorenz @abbiecoobb show 😂😂

shopmylooktv

chrisseypl Triangular wing looks amazing how would I do this ... much prefer this to the flick , because of the shape of my eyes . Love love this look ❤️❤️❤️❤️ could you advise if possible thanks x

2,776 likes

FEBRUARY 13

Add a comment...

6.

**Informational**



**bobbibrown** • Follow

bobbibrown The perfect holiday pairing - a sultry red lip and a touch of highlighting powder. | pc @thelipstickmafiaaa

Load more comments

eshopefy Hi!! }Like

angeattoni @bobbibrown this looks brown on me 😂

tracyfuller Such a beautiful look!!

swetha\_y Can u lemme know the compact shade she used?

10,881 likes

DECEMBER 27, 2018

Add a comment...

7.

**Informational**



8.

**Informational**

**bobbibrown** • Follow

bobbibrown Make your Sunday a #spaday. The Jasmine Flower Extract in our Soothing Cleansing Oil makes makeup removal a relaxing retreat. Photo by @ashleys\_edit

Load more comments

assoma\_makeup اسرع واسهل تتوريال حياكم السناب للعيون للدوامات لايطوفكم تشوفونه خطوة بخطوة

meganmellee @bobbibrown Do you know the pH of this product?

bachl\_julia ❤️❤️

mommyffm2 Is there still mineral oil in it? Tks for the Info.

8,246 likes

DECEMBER 9, 2018

Add a comment...



9.

**Storytelling**

**microsoft** • Follow

microsoft You can learn a lot by simply listening. Researchers with The Elephant Listening Project are pairing acoustic monitors in the grasslands with the latest AI technologies to learn more about endangered African elephants. Click the link in our bio for more. 🐘 📡: WWF @Bea Binka

Load more comments

m\_u\_aya good 🐘

electronics\_col Estas a la Vanguardia con la Tecnología! Encuentras los Mejores Accesorios Tecnologicos! 📡

richerthangates Being rich and famous has never been my goal at all. But now that Instagram is a thing, we are seeing if it is possible - but we

16,112 likes

AUGUST 11, 2018

Add a comment...



10.

**Informational**

 microsoft • Follow

microsoft @King5Seattle is creating a new approach to storytelling with Power BI. "Data can enrich and authenticate a story to make sure you know the news is legitimate," says anchor/reporter Jake Whittenberg.

Load more comments

st0nedot 🙄

888makai ❤️❤️❤️



11,514 likes


NOVEMBER 17, 2018

Add a comment...



11.

**Informational**

 microsoft • Follow

microsoft Dr. Moses Owoicho Enokela is tackling maternal mortality, seeking to give pregnant women the information and diagnoses they need to deliver their babies safely. His #Insiders4Good fellowship helps him do more to save lives in his community.

Load more comments

ricardomarquezofficial 🙌

m.mojaddady عالی بود لایک داره

teamgits nice one

richerthangates Bill Gates is a very rich man today...and do you want to know why? One word: versions. We want to catch up to him. How? Three words: Instagram and you.




11,368 likes

MAY 22, 2018

Add a comment...





 microsoft • Follow

microsoft Game on. The new @Xbox Adaptive Controller will make gaming more accessible for a wide range of people. #GAAD

Load more comments

remarkablemusic I hope these work better than the traditional Xbox controllers, since I have been unable to get a working one since I've bought my X1X @microsoft

riley\_anders.n\_ @thewyattbostock ahem. Games you don't play

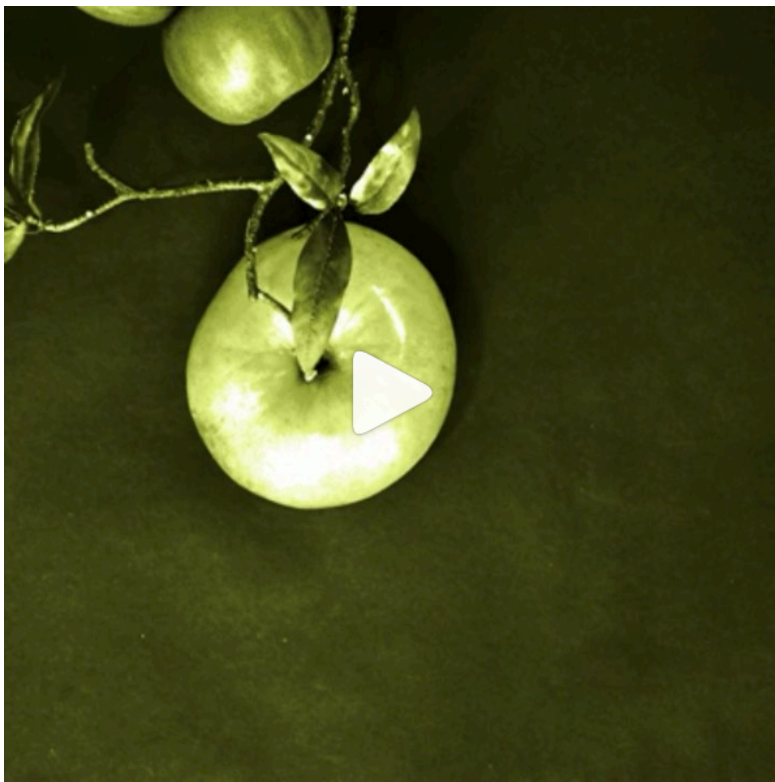
17,612 likes


MAY 17, 2018

Add a comment...

12.

**Informational**



 dell • Follow

dell The journey from farm to table is undergoing a transformation. One that focuses on making #food healthier, safer and able to feed the expected 10 billion people we'll share this planet with in 2050. The Trailblazers #podcast explores the story of how smart people, big money and the latest technologies have united to feed the world. Link in bio. #agriculture #robotics

View all 16 comments

artchaban #summer\_heat\_

theiphonegurl @lost\_in\_fi1m MacBook ftw

brenboy503 Yee yee!!

1,124 likes

9,537 views

JULY 17, 2018

Add a comment...

13.

**Storytelling**



dell • Follow

dell #HappyFathersDay! To celebrate, we asked our fans to tell us what makes the Dad in their life a hero. After numerous submissions, we chose winners to illustrate as the ultimate gaming heroes. Check out these results as we release the remaining winners this week. #DellHeroDadContest

Load more comments



2,520 likes

JUNE 17, 2018

Add a comment...

14.

Storytelling



dell • Follow  
CES

dell Meet our #CES2019 Innovation Awards Honoree: A brilliant 49-inch dual QHD monitor. Check out our link in bio to see the bigger picture. #DellExperience

View all 9 comments

fashinny Incredible! I'm search for a new desktop

888makai ❤️❤️❤️



1,640 likes

JANUARY 10

Add a comment...

15.

Informational

16.

**lenovo** • Follow

lenovo Happy Birthday, Pablo Picasso. #art #design #tech #birthday #happybirthday

View all 17 comments

sam.odt Oh god i be so sad i want this laptop but i can't have it, omg il bouta cry 🥹❤️❤️

nico\_co10 @paulwallpaper I think it is the ThinkPad X1 Tablet (3rd generation).

dani\_wid 🥰

atlmaverick Why does the website not have any of these Lenovo Tablet 10 10.1 in stock? Not only are they not in stock, you can't even buy one of the Lenovo Tablet 10 Travel keyboards

3,248 likes

OCTOBER 25, 2018

Add a comment...

**Informational**

17.

**Canon** canonusa • Follow

canonusa "Missing those long summer evenings traveling along the coast and feeling freedom for just a second." #MyCanonStory

Photo Credit: @imagenicaphoto  
 Camera: #Canon EOS 5D Mark III  
 Lens: EF 85mm f/1.2L II USM  
 Aperture: f/1.4  
 ISO: 100  
 Shutter Speed: 1/8000  
 Focal Length: 85mm

Load more comments

thomasbeaujoin Love the lighting!

garryheathphotography @canonusa

an\_dooni فوق العاده!

adharsh\_m\_g Awesome pic

19,271 likes

MARCH 15

Add a comment...

**Informational**

**Appendix 5: Brands Discovered by Respondents on Instagram**

<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>
Aloha shoes	Walltones (art)
Laneige (beauty)	Holz Kern (watches)
Zaful (fashion)	Technical product for better posture
Brand for water bottles	Technical product – models of planets

**Appendix 6: Advertisements Mentioned by Respondents**

<b>Brand</b>	<b>Reason for good advertisement</b>
Coca Cola / Pepsi	- fun
Vodafone Portugal	- Storytelling, real-life couple
Apple	- What people actually want (to achieve) / status, visually pleasing, “What life could be “
Hermes	- Esthetically pleasing, nice pictures
Red Bull	- Sport in their branding, interesting ads
Magnum	- Esthetically pleasing, looks delicious, want to eat it now
Car commercials in general	- Well done, nice scenery / images
Eis.de	- Jingle stays in the head, Fun, pretty colors
Snickers	- Funny
North Face “Questioning Madness”	- Inspirational, great message, videography and message fit well, “more like a tiny film”
Edeka (supermarket chain)	- Funny
Fabletics	- Use of influencers and celebrity

**Appendix 7: Characteristics of Informational and Storytelling Instagram Posts**  
(identified by respondents during the interviews)

<b>Informational characteristics</b>	<b>Storytelling characteristics</b>
Product is seen in photo	Person is in photo / video
Facts and features of product in caption or photo	Quote or statement is in caption
	No product is in photo / mentioned caption
	No facts or features in photo
	Post can be about the brand rather than a product
	Aspirational – you can be the person in the photo/video

**Appendix 8: Number of Posts per Industry**  
**Frequency Table**

		<b>Industry</b>			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	246	24,6	24,6	24,6
	2	189	18,9	18,9	43,5
	3	298	29,8	29,8	73,3
	4	267	26,7	26,7	100,0
	Total	1000	100,0	100,0	

**Beauty**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	754	75,4	75,4	75,4
	1	246	24,6	24,6	100,0
	Total	1000	100,0	100,0	

**Technology**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	811	81,1	81,1	81,1
	2	189	18,9	18,9	100,0
	Total	1000	100,0	100,0	

**Apparel**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	702	70,2	70,2	70,2
	3	298	29,8	29,8	100,0
	Total	1000	100,0	100,0	

**Fast Food**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	733	73,3	73,3	73,3
	4	267	26,7	26,7	100,0
	Total	1000	100,0	100,0	

### Appendix 9: Number of Posts per Strategy (Storytelling/Informational) Frequency Table

**Informational**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	500	50,0	50,0	50,0
	1	500	50,0	50,0	100,0
	Total	1000	100,0	100,0	

**Storytelling**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	500	50,0	50,0	50,0
	1	500	50,0	50,0	100,0
	Total	1000	100,0	100,0	

## Appendix 10: Vivid Posts Frequency Table

Photo					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	60	6,0	6,0	6,0
	1	940	94,0	94,0	100,0
	Total	1000	100,0	100,0	

Video					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	940	94,0	94,0	94,0
	1	60	6,0	6,0	100,0
	Total	1000	100,0	100,0	

## Appendix 11: Interactive Posts Frequencies

### Statistics

Call to action (question)

N	Valid	1000
	Missing	0

Call to action (question)					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	892	89,2	89,2	89,2
	1	108	10,8	10,8	100,0
	Total	1000	100,0	100,0	

## Appendix 12: Number of Posts Published During the Weekend

### Statistics

WeekEndLONG

N	Valid	1000
	Missing	0

WeekEndLONG					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	,00	647	64,7	64,7	64,7
	1,00	353	35,3	35,3	100,0
	Total	1000	100,0	100,0	

**Appendix 13: Posts with Additional Product Information****Statistics**

Caption with product information or name

N	Valid	1000
	Missing	0

**Caption with product information or name**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	569	56,9	56,9	56,9
	1	431	43,1	43,1	100,0
	Total	1000	100,0	100,0	