**1. Introduction**

Within the everyday lives of many families, leading a healthy lifestyle has become an important issue. Families are focusing on healthy diets and fun and active activities that engage the whole family (Dansk Erhverv). We see this trend as more people enter the fitness centres and organic food has gained more and more focus (livsstil.guide.dk; TV2 – Krop). The reason for this trend is, according to Lise Lyck, professor at the Center of Tourism and Culture Management on CBS, that people are focusing more and more on being healthy and this is something that the tourists wish to transfer to their holiday (Politiken). Thus the element of being active has also gained importance when going on holiday, meaning that many families wish and seek to maintain their everyday lifestyle while going on holiday. This trend and new initiatives is also recognised by the chief executive for PepsiCo, Indra Nooyi who states that: *“[…] consumers change preferences in record time and more healthy products are necessary”* [Translated from Danish] (Business.dk - Sundhedsbølgen). In relation to this, the demand for specific concepts that involve an active and healthy holiday is increasing (MT – Report; Politiken) and this need has been recognised by the tourism industry (Appendix 1). In terms of the Danish market, many destinations are now focusing on active holidays and tourism. For instance, the region of Southern Denmark has made a project called WellCome. This project was established in order to help improve the tourism industry in that area with focus on health and well-being (Southern Denmark). This, among other initiatives in terms of active holidays and tourism, triggered our interest and we found it interesting to examine the products or services that are offered by the tourism industry that comply with this trend of an active holiday. In our search, we came across the concept “Sjovt, Sundt Sommerhus” (SSS) developed by Midtjysk Turisme, Holstebro Municipality and Feriehusudlejning I/S. ‘Sjovt, Sundt Sommerhus’ is a holiday house concept that focuses on providing local, healthy food and fun, energetic activities for the whole family. The idea is that:

“In a Sjovt, Sundt Sommerhus is should be easy for the guest to have a happy and healthy holiday together with friends and family. Therefore, these holiday houses are geared with many different activities and equipment that appeal to the physical activities, happy time together and a healthier lifestyle for the whole family” [Translated from Danish] (Appendix 11)

What triggered our interest in the concept was that we believe it to be well-constructed in the sense that it reflects the current trend of focusing on being healthy and active. Through the available material in the holiday houses i.e. the equipment, a recipe book and a book with suggestions as to activities to engage in, families are provided with an easy approach of being on holiday. Many families nowadays lead hectic and scheduled lives and the simplicity of the SSS concept may thus prove to be a nice break from the everyday situation. The concept has been communicated on Feriehusudlejning I/S’s homepage and has been advertised in catalogues (Appendix 2). The extent of the promotion is thus not wide and this has been due to financial issues (Appendix 2). Therefore, we find it interesting to find another low-cost way to communicate this concept to the target group. In relation to this, the influence of user-generated content and social media triggered our interest as communicating via social media is a low-cost process (Agresta & Bough, 2011: 14). Social media and user-generated content reflect a new development in terms of the way organisations communicate with their consumers and the way in which the consumers communicate with each other. Before 2001, the web was known as Web 1.0 and was characterised as static and non-interactive websites (Benson & Brack, 2010: 25), but with the entrance of Web 2.0, the web has become all about interaction and the creation of content (Benson & Brack, 2010: 35). Due to the high level of user-generated content, information about products and services appear online without the influence of the organisation as consumers have blogs and other social media sites where they can discuss and share experiences.

All in all, Web 2.0 has meant that social media sites have gained more and more focus and are now playing an important role in terms of information sources for tourists (Xiang & Gretzel, 2009: 179). This has resulted in people planning and consuming their travel differently and has also resulted in the emergence of the digital tourist. The digital tourist represents a self-sufficient tourist that make many of their holiday choices without contacting e.g. a travel agency: *“Over time many have become so conversant with the internet that they prefer conducting their own research on the computer instead of turning to a travel agency and seek their advice*” [Translated from Danish] (NyVIDEN, 2009: 7). Thus the consumers are able to make choices regarding their travels not only based on company-controlled information, but via social media they are also able to obtain information regarding destinations from other sources e.g. other consumers. In relation to this, social media reflect an opportunity to reach the consumers with both company-controlled content and user-generated content and this is what triggered our interest. In relation to this, we find it interesting to find ways to communicate with the tourists via social media.

As a communicational means we have chosen the social networking site ‘facebook’. The applicability of facebook was e.g. found in the sense that it is the most used social media in Denmark (Danmarks Statistik – It vaner) and moreover facebook makes it possible for the organisation to communicate with their consumers and the consumers to communicate with each other, which correspond well with the consumers wishes for both non-professional and professional information in terms of user-generated content and information via company-controlled information, as mentioned above. This is an interesting opportunity for organisations in terms of creating close relationship with the consumers. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, marketing of the concept have been limited due to financial issues and the applicability of facebook has therefore been found based on being a low-cost medium.

Based on the articulations above, in relation to ‘Sjovt, Sundt Sommerhus’ and facebook, we find it interesting to investigate how the concept can be communicated via facebook to the target group. As mentioned, social media is a different way of communicating with a target audience than with regards to traditional efforts and therefore we find it interesting to consider the communication in between an organisation and its consumers, i.e. SSS and their target group. Therefore, we have chosen to make a communications strategy as it emphasises this communication between organisation and its consumers.

On the basis of our initial thoughts above, we arrive at the following problem formulation:

**In order to create awareness of the concept ‘Sjovt, Sundt Sommerhus’, what will a possible communications strategy entail when executed via facebook?**

In relation to answering the problem formulation, different issues will be analysed. These issues will be concerned with characteristics of the target group, our choice of medium and issues in relation to communication between the target group and the concept. The target group needs to be analysed and characteristics of the target group needs to be drawn as it is an important aspect to consider in order to be able to adjust the communications strategy to the target group, i.e. to ensure that what is communicated complies with the target group’s wants and needs. Therefore, it is important to know how and where they search for information and be familiar with the stages they go through when deciding to go on a holiday. Moreover, considerations in terms of how the target group create meaning in terms of creating relationship are useful information as it will enable us to see how the concept create and also maintain and grow this relationship with the target group. In relation to our choice of medium, we will be focusing on the challenges and opportunities in using facebook as a communication medium. Moreover, issues in relation to the using such a medium in terms of for instance connections and communication needs to be clarified. The communication between the target group and the concept are equally important to consider as it is important to be aware of the traits of the target group and how the concept can engage the target group.

The overall strategy for the concept is an integrated communications approach as it takes issues as consistency into consideration which is important in order to deliver an effective and consistence message to the consumers.

From the abovementioned issues, a communications strategy for SSS will be made.

**2. Methodology**

In this chapter, the approach to our study will be discussed. More precisely, the choice of theories, data and methods of collecting data will be elaborated.

**2.1. Approach to Research**

In this paragraph, we will discuss our approach to research.

*2.1.1. Epistemological and Ontological Approaches to Research*

We adhere to the perspectivist position of epistemology. The perspectivist position within epistemology refers to the notion that how and what knowledge of the world is, is always seen from one’s own perspective and therefore can always be discussed (Perspectivism). The perspectivist notion manifests itself in this thesis in relation to the application of the qualitative interviews with the target group. These interviews reflect the target group’s different desires and wishes, i.e. their different understandings of the world and these differentiating world understandings are to be considered into the construction of the communications strategy for SSS. Moreover, the theoretical aspects also reflect the perspectivist notion. For instance, ‘relationship communication’ reflects a consumer-centric perspective that underlines the importance of considering the consumer’s different world views as it states that the integration of messages is to be performed solely by the consumer. Finally, the perspectivist notion also influences the concepts of reliability and validity however this will be discussed later on in chapter 22.

The ontological position to which we adhere is the social constructivist. *“[…][ It] asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors. It implies that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in constant state of revision”* (Bryman, 2008: 19).This position implies that there is no unitary truth that knowledge can be measured against, which means that knowledge of the world is created in an ongoing negotiation of meaning between social actors. The constructivist position of ontology thus emphasises a subjective understanding of the world i.e. we need to be aware of our own and the research’s *“subjective standpoints or perspectives”* (Marvasti, 2004: 5). This perspective of the world can be related to the hermeneutic notion of pre-understandings (forthcoming), as these pre-understandings are acquired through life experiences i.e. from various negotiations of meanings with several actors which the individual has encountered (physically or non-physically) through life. The ontological notion is expressed in this thesis e.g. via the theories that are applied. For instance, the decision-making model will provide a nuanced perspective of the target group of SSS, as it will present a context in which the information about the target group will be defined according the consumers’ varying contexts. What this means is that the consumers stem from different social backgrounds and contexts in which they operate and the decision-making process reflects a perspective that incorporates and takes into consideration these various social realities (cf. Social factors, self-image). The theory on relationship communication also reflects the social constructivist notion of ontology as the meaning creation perspective of the theory emphasises that the creation of meaning is an ongoing process where new meaning is constantly generated. This element is also apparent in the use of facebook as the social medium. Through a facebook page the consumers will be able to interact with SSS and engage in ongoing communication thereby constantly creating and recreating meaning.

*2.1.2. The Hermeneutic Circle*

In the quest of answering our problem formulation, we work within the scientific frame that is the hermeneutic circle where it is understood that it is not possible to gain access to any individual’s subjective emotions without any influence from the surrounding society and us (Kvale, 1996: 47). In other words, the researcher analyses and interprets on the object as an individual element of a larger whole which the researcher is also a part of (Esterberg, 2002: 119). Thus when analysing an object, the researcher has to be aware that he or she is not only analysing or investigating this object but also be aware of any pre-understandings that he or she has of this object (Kvale, 2007: 21). By pre-understandings, we are referring to the experiences one accumulates through experiences in life. Therefore, the researcher is never freed completely of pre-understandings as one will always be situated within a given social and historical context (Bryman, 2006: 533). However, these pre-understandings are not necessarily negative: *“It [the pre-understanding] signifies the initial application of a tentative working assumption to set understanding going and on its journey toward a fuller appreciation of all that this might entail”* (Thiselton, 2009: 13). Thus our pre-understandings are what awoke our interest in the subject and what furthermore developed the problem formulation. In our case, it would be pre-understandings concerning how to communicate this concept from a theoretical perspective, and possible pre-understandings of SSS, Midtjysk Turisme, Feriehusudlejning I/S and the target group.

In relation to interpreting ones material, the hermeneutic circle refers to the individual elements and the whole situation always being in a dialectic relationship where they influence each other and create new commitments, understandings and knowledge (Bryman, 2008: 533, Kvale, 1996: 57). In relation to this thesis, it means that in order to make a communications strategy for SSS via facebook, i.e. the whole, it is important to understand the SSS concept in itself, the target group i.e. Danish children’s families (forthcoming), what social media is, what making a communications strategy includes and how social media can be applied in a marketing communications strategy, i.e. the individual elements. Hence, we first have an understanding of creating a communications strategy for the concept of SSS, i.e. the whole and then we broaden our understanding of the whole through the individual elements i.e. the empirical data and the theoretical aspects. Through the understanding of the individual parts, we obtain a new understanding of the whole i.e. the communications strategy and when applying the individual parts in relation to the whole, we also gain a new understanding of the individual parts i.e. the empirical material and the theories. Thus a dialectical relationship exists in between the individual elements and the whole.

**2. 2. Model of Thesis**

The following model indicated the structure of this thesis:

**Marketing**

**Marketing Communication**

**Integrated Marketing Communication**

Relationship Communication

Communications Strategy for the concept ’Sjovt, Sundt Sommerhus’

Decision-Making Process

The 7 Cs Framework

Applying Social Media

Consumer Review

As is evident from the model, we are working within the overall frame of marketing. Marketing refers to the way organisations sell their products or services and all efforts this involves and moreover marketing deals with the overall frame of satisfying customer needs (Armstrong et. al, 2009: 7). In order to deal with the latter example, i.e. satisfying customer needs, a communication need to be established between the organisation and its consumers which is also a focal point in relation to this thesis. Therefore, we have chosen to focus on the communicative aspect of marketing i.e. marketing communication. This focus is chosen based on the communicative possibilities that are brought on by social media i.e. the possibility of engaging in close contact with the consumers. In relation to marketing communication, we have chosen an integrated approach to marketing communication, i.e. integrated marketing communication. Integrated marketing communication focuses on managing the relationship with the consumer through one of more communication efforts and centres the communication on the consumers with the purpose of displaying a cohesive message (Jobber & Fahy, 2006, Smith & Zook, 2011). In relation to this thesis, the focus on communication with the consumers is important and therefore it is important that what is communicated is cohesive with potential other marketing efforts from the organisation. Within the integrated marketing communication frame, we are focusing on the theories as is visible in the abovementioned model. These theories will enable us to answer our problem formulation in terms of creating a communications strategy for the concept SSS. The theories will be elaborated on later in this chapter.

**2.3. Qualitative Research Method**

In the following, we will be elaborating on our choice of research method i.e. qualitative research method. The qualitative research method refers to a method where empirical material is gathered with a focus on words (Bryman, 2008: 366), meaning that focus is on gathering content that is in-depth and elaborate and not content that is measurable (Kvale, 2007: 11; Mason, 2004: 1) (as the quantitative research method prescribes). The applicability of the qualitative research method in relation to our problem formulation is found in the sense that the theories and the approach to and understanding of the research, reflects the epistemological and ontological positions that are characteristic for the qualitative research method (as mentioned in relation to epistemological and ontological approaches). Moreover, the qualitative research method will allow for collecting more in-depth data in relation to obtaining information concerning SSS’s target group and the general information about SSS (obtained via interviews with Midtjysk Turisme and Ferieudlejning I/S). This in-depth level is to be found in the sense that the qualitative method through face-to-face interviews provides the possibility of acquiring more elaborate answers which may have been more scarce if having been had to be written down by the individual interviewee (Kvale, 1996: 32) (if a quantitative investigation had been made). Finally, the qualitative research method was also chosen due to the focus the method has in relation to interviewees i.e. that there is emphasis on the interviewee’s point of view (Bryman, 2008: 437, Kvale, 2008: 12).

The qualitative research method has been criticised by quantitative researchers for being too subjective in the sense that the findings of the qualitative material rely too much on what the researcher deems is important (Bryman, 2008: 391). In relation to this, the subjectiveness of the qualitative research method is argued to make the process of replicating the material difficult thereby influencing the reliability of the research (Bryman, 2008: 391). Moreover, it is argued that the qualitative research method is problematic in relation to generalisability as the sample segments from which the results derive small in scale, thus making it difficult to generalise the results to other settings (Bryman, 2008: 391). Finally, the qualitative research method is criticised for lacking transparency in the sense that the approach to the research and how conclusions were arrived at is not clarified within a qualitative research method (Bryman, 2008:392). The issues that are expressed above refer to the credibility of the qualitative research method and can be related to the concepts of reliability, validity and generalisation. These concepts will be discussed in chapter 22.

When conducting interviews, there is always a risk of ambiguous answers. However, when conducting a qualitative interview, ambiguous answers may be diminished as it is possible to rephrase our questions and acquire more elaborate answers from the interviewee.

**2.4. Choice of Theory**

As mentioned in the introduction, the purpose of this thesis is to create a communication strategy. In order to be able to do this, we have chosen to apply an integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategy. IMC enables us to consider the different elements of a communications strategy in relation to communicating SSS to the target group. The applicability of IMC was found in the sense that an integrated marketing approach takes all the activities made by the organisation into consideration and can lead to improved consistency and clarity in the consumers mind (Belch & Belch, 2008: 10). The researchers realise that in the original sense, an integrated marketing approach involves the inclusion of several communication tools, e.g. a combination of offline and online material. However, the focus of the thesis is solely on the concept of SSS communicated via facebook and therefore other communication tools have not been applied. The integrated marketing aspect in relation to SSS is therefore applied in the sense that previous marketing efforts have been recognised and considered when making the communications strategy. All in all, we argue that the integrated approach will be an aid in the sense that it allows for attempting to ensure consistency between the previous marketing activities performed, i.e. a webpage, announces in brochures, and the potential facebook page. This will provide us with the tools for constructing a more coordinated and integrated strategy for maximising the impact on consumers.

As is evident from the model of thesis on page 7, different theories have been applied. These theories all operate within the IMC frame. IMC deals with many issues, among others the relationship with the target group. In relation to understanding and defining the target group, the decision-making process has been included. The decision-making process enables us to get to know the target group which is important in order to make a persuasive communication message (Jobber & Fahy, 2006: 59). The decision-making process involves considering the target group’s buying habits, where and how they seek information and evaluations of alternatives and this is an important aspect in relation to creating a communications strategy for SSS. In relation to this decision-making process, another decision-making process is used that focus on decision-making in an online environment. The online decision-making process takes issues as what might affect the consumer’s decision when operating in an online environment. As we are using facebook as our medium, this is an important aspect to consider. In relation to the decision-making process and obtaining knowledge about the consumers, theory on relationship communication has been chosen as it adds another element to the understanding of the target group i.e. how consumers create meaning in relation to the organisational marketing activities they are portrayed with. The relationship communication model is useful in relation to tell how the consumers create meaning in relation to a message and then the decision-making process explains the consumers buying process, thereby covering two important aspects in terms of characteristics of the target group. Moreover, as building relationships is at the core of social media communication (Agresta & Bough, 2011:53), relationship communication has been included in order to understand the relationship between the target group and the service and what the important elements in these relationships are. The relationship communication model has been chosen as it takes an inside-out stance in relation to communicating with consumers. The concept of relationship communication reflects a consumer-centric perspective (Finne and Grönroos, 2009:185) and this complies well with our choice of communication tool i.e. facebook. As social media revolves around consumer-generated content and communicating via this involves the establishment of relationships, the consumer-centric aspect of the relationship communication model will be an aid in understanding and attempting to establish relationships with consumers.

In relation to the abovementioned, when the target group has been established, the communication between the consumer and service is important to consider in terms of reaching the consumer. This communication will be considered in relation to our choice of medium, target group, mode of conduct on a social medium etc. Moreover, different ways in which consumers can be engaged in participation will be considered. We find this important as when operating on a social medium, as engaging consumers will keep them active on a potential facebook page and will moreover help to establish a relationship with the consumers. Therefore, it is important to find ways to influence the consumer conversation in order to establish a relationship between the consumers and the product. All in all, the abovementioned aspects will be an aid in relation to considering how to reach and engage the consumer. This is also a part of the IMC approach in which we are operating (Jobber & Fahy, 2006: 226).

In relation to the above mentioned in terms of characteristics of the target group and the communication between the target group and the product, it is moreover important to consider what form of review the consumer’s prefer. As mentioned in the introduction, user-generated content is very used among consumers. Therefore, we find it important to consider whether user-generated content is always preferred among the consumers or other forms of review is preferred.

The last theory we will be focusing on is the 7 Cs. Within the realm of IMC, we find the 7 Cs which provides us with specific articulations of what needs to be considered when using the online environment to communicate through. The 7 Cs offers different steps that should be accounted for when using the internet as a communication tool. We find the 7 Cs important as they enable us to create a communication message that correlates with the target group and the organisations values. It moreover, through the differences Cs, describes how a website should both attract ones target group and discourage others.

All in all, we believe that these different theories will provide us with considerations of different aspect that together will provide us with a communications strategy for the concept of SSS.

**2. 5. The Applicability of facebook**

The focus of this thesis is to make a communications strategy for the concept SSS via social media and in relation to this, we have chosen the social networking site facebook to be the specific social medium to be applied, as mentioned in the introduction. The applicability of facebook was found in the sense that we believe that this medium will be effective in terms of promoting this concept. One reason for this is that by using facebook as medium, relatively small services or products can be visible for many people. The reason for this is as also mentioned in the introduction, that facebook is a low-cost medium that therefore everyone has an equal chance of entering facebook. Small organisations can now compete with large organisations as everyone has the opportunity to enter the web as it is a low-cost medium. This is also the case for the concept SSS. Moreover, during the interview with Feriehusudlejning I/S, it was expressed that they did not believe the concept to be viable enough to be marketed via facebook. However, we argue that facebook will be a useful tool as it is a cost-effective medium. This is also argued by Weber who states that: *“Using the Web, you can reach more people – and reach highly targeted markets – more quickly and more cost-effectively than through traditional broadcast and print media”* (Weber, 2009: 25). Moreover, facebook is useful as is may create more awareness of this concept-despite it being a small concept, for instance via the possibilities of online WOM, as mentioned in the introduction. In order to ensure a more viable concept i.e. the inclusion of more holiday houses, facebook could prove to be an aid in the process of becoming more sustainable. A facebook page could serve as an indicator to possible house owners that efforts are being made as to creating awareness of the concept. If house owners know that efforts are being made in relation to attracting house guests, they may be more prone to invest in the concepts. Moreover, a facebook page will also create more awareness in relation to their target group.

We are aware that the online environment offers many different opportunities for promoting different products and services both in terms of different networking sites and websites. Depending on what you seek, these sites have different purposes and goals. Some of the most popular social networking sites are facebook, twitter and LinkedIn. The social networking sites twitter and facebook are much alike; however, you have more opportunities on Facebook. Twitter makes it quite simple by only allowing members to have 140 characters for their updates which are public and searchable (Shih, 2011: 18). On twitter you are able to follow, for instance, a famous singer or football player without actually being ‘friends’ with this person. Also twitter is used by different organisation to make other aware of any changes in their organisation or products. In terms of promoting the concept SSS, we do not believe that twitter is the right medium. The reason for this is that Twitter is not as used in Denmark as facebook and we therefore believe it will not receive enough attention. Moreover, a facebook allows for more communication between the consumers in terms of for instance chat. Both facebook and twitter are mostly based on C2C communication. LinkedIn, on the other hand, is only based B2B (Shih, 2011: 18). LinkedIn can be used to find new employees, looking for new jobs and/or for internal interaction between employees. For instance, employees at a particular organisation or destination are able to interact and discuss new ideas among each other as well as the organisation is able to look for new partners in order to start a cooperation with other organisations or destinations. This site is not relevant in our case due to the fact that it is a B2B site and our focus is on B2C.

We believe facebook is the right choice due to the abovementioned reasons. The applicability of facebook will be clarified further in our analysis.

**2.6. Sampling**The sampling method applied in this thesis is purposive sampling meaning that the interview subjects have been sampled purposely according to objectives to be investigated (Singleton, Jr & Straits, 2010: 173) i.e. SSS’s target group. This purposive sampling has elements of snowball sampling. Snowball sampling implies that we have contacted a small group of interview subjects who are relevant in relation to the target group of SSS and this group has been used to establish contact with other relevant people (Bryman, 2008:184).   
We have conducted eight interviews with Danish children’s families. These families were chosen based on different demands. First of all, it had to be children’s families as they represent the concept’s target group (MT – SSS). Second of all, it had to be Danish families due to the fact that the concept is relatively new and only marketed in Denmark and we therefore found it important to first of all increase awareness of the concept in Denmark. Moreover, as we have chosen facebook as a medium, it was important that one or both parents had a facebook account. Lastly, it should be families that were interested in being active on their holiday. The frame of context in relation to this was not that the families were to engage in specific activities and or putting a time-line on the activities, however, it was emphasised that the families engaged in activities together. The interviews have been transcribed and included in appendices 3 to 10.

The interviewed families were a mix of interview subjects, who the researchers were acquainted with and some were strangers. The interviewing of acquaintances is by some researchers considered inappropriate as they believe this will interferes with the quality of the gathered empirical evidence as the objectivity of the material is lost (Blichfeldt & Heldbjerg, 2011). In our process of obtaining knowledge about the target group, our aim is first and foremost to ensure objectivity in relation to how the information is obtained and delivered. However, as we adhere to the perspectivist position of epistemology where it is understood that obtaining knowledge is a subjective matter, obtaining knowledge completely objectively is not possible and therefore the interviewing of acquaintances does not prove to be inappropriate. On the basis of the abovementioned, there is no need to focus on interview subjects which the researchers are unacquainted with (Blichfeldt & Heldbjerg, 2011: 6), and therefore we do not believe there to be any limitation in relation to this.

**2.7. Data Collection**

Our analysis will be based on the abovementioned theories and based on interviews with several parties. Two interviews with respectively MT and Feriehusudlejning I/S (Appendices 1 and 2) were conducted in order to get a more thorough understanding of the concept and 8 interviews were conducted with our target group in order to obtain a description and understanding of that group.

Throughout all the interviews, we made use of mainly open-ended questions. Open-ended questions may prevent leading questions being posed and in relation to this allows for the interviewees to respond more freely and according to their own persuasion (Bryman, 2008: 232, Singleton, Jr. & Straits, 2010:282). We also made use of close-ended question to a limited degree. The close-ended questions were applied due to the data that we needed to obtain i.e. whether or not they (Midtjysk Turisme and Feriehusudlejning I/S) have considered to use social media and in order to obtain specific information on whether the interviewee had knowledge of the concept of SSS and if the target group liked to be active. Within this frame of context, there was no need for elaboration on behalf of the interviewee.

The interviews with MT and Feriehusudlejning I/S in combination were included with respect to obtaining a thorough understanding of the concept of SSS i.e. the idea behind the concept, the concept in itself and how the need for the concept arose. The interview with MT, who is the concept owner, was conducted with two people; one person who was part of the project group and the other had background knowledge in terms of the use of social media and was also familiar with the project. When preparing for the interview, we focused on questions that would cover different aspects in order to answer our problem formulation i.e. the section of questions were thematised in accordance with our theoretical material (the particular themes can be seen in the interview guides under data collection).

The interviews were of the character semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2008: 196). This type of interview was applied as we from the beginning of our investigation of the problem formulation have had a clear focus of direction and the semi-structured interview allows for the construction of a frame in which our specific issues could be addressed (Bryman, 2008: 439, Kvale, 2007: 51). Moreover, the semi-structured interview was chosen as the interviews were carried out by both researchers separately and through a interview guide (forthcoming), the semi-structured interview can function as a means of ensuring compatibility in relation to interviewing style (Bryman, 2008: 439).

In relation to the semi-structured interviews, an interview guide was constructed for the interview with Midtjysk Turisme. The guide was constructed according to a topic-divided framework (Bryman, 2008: 438). The interview guide was characterised by a series of questions framed within the particular context of social media, the promotion of the concept and the concept SSS. Dependent upon the received answers, the sequence of questions was variable and further questions were reposed in relation to what could be deemed significant replies. The purpose of this interview was to obtain information about the concept SSS i.e. general information concerning the concept, how marketing had been performed, MT’s organisation and the questions were therefore framed within these contexts. The interview guide is as follows:

**Spørgsmål til Midtjysk Turisme**

**Generelt**

Hvad var ideen bag konceptet/ hvordan opstod behovet?

Hvad indeholder produktet?

Hvor længe har det kørt?

Hvad gør dette koncept unikt?

Har i haft tilbagemeldinger fra Thomas (Jørgen) – hvad deres oplevelser har været med konceptet?

Hvor mange sommerhuse har implementeret dette koncept?

Målgruppen – har i kun fokuseret på sommerhus udlejerne og ikke på slutbrugeren?

Hvorfor er det ikke blevet mere kendt?

**Markedsføring**

Hvad er der gjort markedsføringsmæssigt?

Hvad har i prioriteret i forhold til markedsføring?

Hvilke kommunikationsmidler har i taget i brug?

**Sociale medier**

Har i haft nogen erfaring med sociale medier? Hvilke?

Har i overvejet brugen af sociale medier?

Hvorfor valgt i at bruge det/hvorfor valgte i ikke at bruge det?

**Deres organisation**

Hvem er i?

Jeres mission, vision og værdier?

As mentioned, a short interview was also made with Feriehusudlejning I/S. The interview with Feriehusudlejning I/S became of relevance as MT had not been in charge of marketing SSS. This was performed by Feriehusudlejning I/S and therefore we contacted them. Due to long distance and unavailability to meet, this interview was conducted telephonically. The researchers realise that a telephone interview has implications in the sense that in this type of interview situation, the possibility of relying on body language in terms of how the interviewee responded to the questions is eliminated (Bryman, 2008: 198). Moreover, the interviewer looses the ability to influence the interview ambience i.e. it becomes more difficult to ensure a good and positive frame for interviewing (Qualitative) and thereby it becomes more difficult to establish *“[…] trust and rapport”* with the interviewed subjects (Singleton Jr. & Straits, 2010:286). However, the researchers felt that these issues would not prove to be problematic as the body language of the interviewees were not of immediate interest to the researchers. The researchers were only interested in what was said and not body language, inhalations etc. Moreover, the purpose of this interview was to obtain general knowledge and therefore focus on the milieu of the interview setting was not of the same importance as e.g. when interviewing families (i.e. the information that was to be obtained from the families was more personal, e.g. information concerning what was important to them when on holiday, and thus in relation to engaging in this more personal type of conversation, the milieu of the setting was more important).

This interview was conducted in order to obtain information on which effort had been made in terms of marketing the SSS houses. The questions were therefore only in relation to what had been done in terms of marketing, which communication medium had been chosen and if they have considered the use of social media (See Appendix 2 for answers). The interview guide is as follows:

**Spørgsmål til Feriehusudlejning I/S**

**Markedsføring**

Hvad er der blevet gjort noget rent markedsføringsmæssigt for at promovere konceptet?

Hvad har i prioriteret i forhold til markedsføring?

Hvilke kommunikationsmidler har i taget i brug?

Hvem er jeres målgruppe i forhold til dette koncept?

**Sociale medier**

Har i haft nogen erfaring med sociale medier?

Har i overvejet brugen af sociale medier?

Hvorfor valgte i at bruge det/hvorfor valgte i ikke at bruge det?

The last interviews were with our chosen target group. Before conducting these interviews, we were conscious to ask questions that would provide us with relevant information in terms of our theories. The questions were also asked in different themes, i.e. a topic-divided framework as was also seen in the two other interviews. The topic was concerned with: how they search for information, what their thought was in terms of social media and what is important for them when going on holiday. In terms of the questions concerning how they search for information, we made sure to ask question that covered their whole information search experience, meaning we asked questions in relation to what they search for, who they preferred to receive information from, what they wanted to hear etc. (See questions below). As in the interview with MT, dependent upon the received answers, the sequence of questions was variable and further questions were reposed in relation to what could be deemed significant replies.

For the interviews with Danish children’s families, the interview guide is as follows:

**Spørgsmål til Danske Børnefamilier**

**Konceptet:**

Kender i Sjovt, Sundt Sommerhus?

Hvis ja, hvad kender i til det?

Kender i feriehusudlejning I/S?

Hvis ja, hvordan?

**Informationssøgning:**

Hvad er det første i gør når i har bestemt i skal på ferie? (snakke sammen som familie, hører venner og familie, starte med at søge informationer, etc.)

Hvor søger i informationer når i skal på ferie?

Hvilke informationer finder i brugbare når i finder ferier? (produktinfo, pris, vejviser, billeder, chat, detaljeret beskrivelser, basis beskrivelser)

Hvor lang tid bruge i på at finde informationer?

Hvem foretrækker i at få informationen fra? (venner, familier, reklamer, jer selv, firma)

Har i før læst andre forbrugeres vurderinger af feriedestinationer?

Har i gjort det i anden sammenhæng?

Kunne i finde på at gøre det?

Hvis i stod mellem to eller tre/fire valg, hvad er så med til at afgøre det?

Økonomi, hvad i bedst kan se jer selv i, afhænger andre af det?

**Facebook:**

Hvilke sociale medier bruger i?

Hvorfor bruger i de sociale medier? (fordele, ulemper)

Har i fundet information omkring et produkt på en social medie side?

Hvis ja, hvilke

Kunne i finde på at følge et ferieprodukt på Facebook?

Hvis i finder et produkt interessant, deler du/i det så med andre?

**Aktiv ferie:**

Kan i lide at være aktive her i familien?

Hvilken forms for aktivitet dyrker i?

Hvad er vigtigt for jer når i er på ferie?

Tager i ting med på ferie ifht at underholde jer selv og børn?

Hvilke ting?

Hvilke aktiviteter kan i lide at lave når i er på ferie?

Hvad ville jeres forventninger være i forhold til tage på aktiv ferie i sommerhus?

In terms of the transcription of the interviews, we have only transcribed what is said. We are not focusing on body language, abruptions, inhalations etc. as we are interested in the content of the information and not how it is delivered. The transcription of the interviews can be seen in appendices 1-10. When using examples from the interviews in this thesis, we have translated it from Danish into English and will therefore not mention this each time. Moreover, when conducting the interviews, we were sometimes interrupted by for instance another person entering the room and another conversation started. This conversation was irrelevant in terms of the information we need and we have therefore not transcribed it. We have marked these interruptions with [XXX] in the transcriptions.

**2.8. Approach to Analysis**

Our approach to analysis involves an approach that is dictated by the applied theories. This means that what the theories prescribe in relation to a particular aspect, will set the direction in relation to what aspects of the empirical material will be deemed applicable (this also relates to the interview guides where the questions were thematised in accordance with the theories). Thus, the theories are the determining factors when it comes to the applied aspects of the empirical material. As our purpose is to make a communications strategy for SSS, we have chosen a communications strategy model to be the frame of our analysis. This means that we will be conducting a thematic analysis (Bryman, 2006:554) i.e. our analysis will be thematised according to the steps that this model includes e.g. SSS’s positioning statement and the communication between SSS and the target group (See chapter 12).

**3. Case Description**

The concept “Sjovt, Sundt Sommerhus” is a theme concept created for Danish holiday houses. The concept was initiated by Feriehusudlejning I/S, Holstebro municipality and Midtjysk Turisme as a part of an overall working frame entitled *“Healthy tourism - New business possibilities for tourism in the healthy Region of Central Jutland”* [Translated from Danish] (SSS - Background).

The concept was launched in May 2009 as a project process and continued for the following year. About four holiday houses implemented the concept during the project process and after the project process around, eight houses offered the SSS concept (Appendix 1).

The emphasis of the concept is to *“[...] increase the quality of the traditional holiday house product and in an innovative manner create the perfect setting for fun family experiences for the holiday house guest- all year and outside as well as inside” [Translated from Danish]* (MT – SSS Forside). The core values of the concept are:

* Quality and variation in the possibilities of experience
* It has to be fun to be healthy
* Child-friendliness and being together with loved ones
* Healthy lifestyle as the easy choice
* Simple concept med great value

[Translated from Danish] (Appendix 11)

The concept of SSS attempts to create the setting for a simple and easy way for the guests to experience a fun and healthy holiday and this is performed through equipping the holiday house with different activity possibilities and gear that *“[…] appeals to physical activity, fun times together and a healthy lifestyle for the whole family”* [Translated from Danish] (Appendix 11). When staying in a SSS holiday house, besides being provided with different equipment for activity, the guests are presented with two pamphlets i.e. an activity book and a recipe book. These have been constructed in relation to inspiring the guests to be active and prepare healthy food and moreover, in relation to maintaining the simplicity of the concept (Appendix 1).

After the project process, confusion arose as to who was to manage the concept further on (Appendix 1). Midtjysk Turisme took out the patent on the concept, however as they are a regional development organisation, it is not within their domain to market the concept (Appendix 1). Feriehusudlejning I/S is the supplier of the Sjovt, Sundt Sommerhus houses and is therefore also in charge of the marketing of these houses. The marketing initiatives as of now are marketing on the Feriehusudlejning I/S webpage and in catalogues (Appendix 2, lines 22-23). Both Midtjysk Turisme and Feriehusudlejning I/S agrees that this concept has potential, however they are in a position where they try to work on a model for how the concept can dissipate.

**4. Integrated Marketing Communication**

In this chapter we will be dealing with integrated marketing communication. IMC will enable us to create a communications strategy for the concept SSS to be carried out via facebook. IMC can be applied when promoting a product or service as it provides clarity among an organisation’s different messages in order to give the consumers a consistence picture of that organisation (Kotler, 2003: 583). We have chosen to use an IMC approach, as we believe it will enable us to create a more coordinated and cohesive communications strategy. However, before elaborating on IMC, we find it important to elaborate on the change that has occurred in communication due to social media as this has resulted in a change in communication between the consumers and the organisation.

**4.1. The new Communications Paradigm**

Traditional marketing communication was dictated by the organisation in terms of content, timing, frequency and also medium (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 359). The flow of information that happens outside the traditional communications paradigm is known as word-of-mouth (WOM) communication and had little impact on the dynamics of the marketplace due to its limited dissemination (Mayzlin, 2006). However, the communication has changed due to social media and user-generated content (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 357). Due to the high level of user-generated content, information about products and services appear online without the influence of the organisation as consumers use blogs and other social media sites where they discuss and share experiences. Traditionally, a message goes through an agency or the marketing department who develop and send the message through the traditional promotion mix to the consumers (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 359). This is still the case today, however, where changes have occurred is in the marketplace. A new paradigm has emerged due to social media and information is no longer controlled by the marketing managers. Social media makes it possible for consumers to interact with each other, as mentioned, which thereby challenges the traditional marketing communication model (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 360). Information can now arise within the marketplace without the influence of the organisation and afterwards be communicated to the organisation. As consumers are able to interact within the social media frame, the information shared among the consumers is then communicated back to the organisation in terms of e.g. rumours, WOM etc. This means that the consumers are given more power than earlier. Mulhern states that the high level of consumer power is due to two things: ‘the digital codifying of information’ and ‘the networking of that digital content’ (Mulhern, 2009: 87). These two changes, both technological, is what Benkler calls *the networked information economy* (Benkler, 2006: 87). *The networked information economy* deals with the sharing and reproduction of information. Unlike TV and newspaper, where you have to be present in front of a screen or have it physically in your hand, media in the digital world can be shared among each other without any cost or any loss in quality (Mulhern, 2009: 87). This also makes it possible to sell a specific piece without the whole package, which we believe is an advantage for many organisations, especially because many barriers of entry will disappear (Mulhern, 2009: 87).

This online environment is a very used communication forum, as mentioned above, and this also means that the consumer turn away from traditional sources of advertising and is at the same time demanding more control in terms of receiving the information they need, when they need it (Rashtchy Et. All., 2007 and Vollmer & Palmer, 2008 in Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 360). This means, as mentioned above, that information can arise outside the organisations reach (i.e. user-generated content) which is a result of the power consumers have been given by social media. This is important to bear in mind when creating a communications strategy for SSS via the social medium facebook.

**4.2. What is Integrated Marketing Communication?**

Marketing communication is also known as the promotional mix, which is one of the 4 P’s (Kimmel, 2005: 1).When selling a product or service, it is not enough to have a useful product or service that is attractive in terms of price and accessibility, i.e. the Price, Product and Place of the marketing mix (The Marketing Mix). It is also important to make sure that the product or service is communicated to the consumers, i.e. the Promotion of the marketing mix (Kimmel, 2005: 1). IMC coordinates and controls the different elements of the promotion mix, i.e. advertising, sales promotion, public relation, personal selling and direct marketing, in order to create a unified message to the consumers. According to Mangold and Faulds, IMC is *“[…] the guided principles organizations follow to communicate with their target markets”* (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 357). The American Association of Advertising Agencies’ (AAAA) also made a definition which is as follows:

“ [IMC is] a concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communications disciplines, e.g. general advertising, direct response, sales promotion and public relations—and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communications impact” (Duncan & Caywood, 1996:18)

The quote has identical features with Mangold and Faulds’ definition, but AAAA’s definition puts more emphasis on combining the different messages an organisation communicates to its consumers and make these messages clear and consistence. Compared to Mangold and Faulds’ definition, this definition does not mention consumers. We believe that it is important to emphasise the relationship between the consumers and the organisation, as it is an important part of selling any product or service. This is also recognised by Duncan and Moriarty who state that IMC is *“a cross-functional process for creating and nourishing profitable relationships with customers and other stakeholders by strategically controlling or influencing all messages sent to these groups and encouraging purposeful dialogue with them”* (Duncan & Moriarty in Kimmel, 2005: 178). Duncan and Moriarty moreover believe that organisations do not see the importance in creating relationships with their consumers:

“What is needed now is a management tool [...] that can be used to make improvement on the “intangible” side of business by managing the brand relationship with customers and other key stakeholders driving brand equity. That new tool is integrated marketing” (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997: 5).

Duncan and Moriarty put more focus on the importance of building a relationship with consumers as this is the reason for the organisations’ existence compared to Duncan and Caywood, mentioned above.

However, not everyone agree on these definitions. Drawing on Reitman, Sheehan and Doherty argue that it is not possible to make one unique definition because it all depends on the individual person or the organisation’s perspective (Sheehan & Doherty, 2001: 48). This is to some extend true, as it all depends on the overall framework in which an organisation operates. However, we do believe that there will always be some identical issues that need to be accounted for. For instance, creating close contact with the consumers or potential consumers is important in any industry because it is the livelihood for the organisation, as mentioned. Therefore, our understanding of IMC is as Duncan and Moriarty put it that IMC creates an important relationship with the consumers in terms of controlling and influencing the different messages sent out by the organisation into consideration. The focus on creating a relationship with the customers together with making a persuasive message is what we see as IMC.

**4.3. Developing an Integrated Communications Strategy**

As is evident from our problem formulation, we will create a communications strategy for the concept SSS. In order to do so, a model for such a strategy needs to be elaborated on. Jobber and Fahy have made a model that demonstrates different stages for developing an integrated communications campaign (Jobber and Fahy, 2006: 228). However, in order to answer our problem formulation, we have only taken starting point in this model and created our own model. This we have done as Jobber and Fahy entitle many steps that we believe to be relevant in creating a communications strategy, however, in order to answer our problem formulation not all of these step is relevant. For instance, we have precluded the promotional budget from Jobber and Fahy’s original model, as this does not correlate with our problem formulation. Therefore, we have made our own model for implementing an integrating marketing communications strategy, based on Jobber and Fahy model. Our model is as follows:

**Overall Marketing Strategy**

**Positioning Statement**

**Communication Decisions**

* Characteristics of the Target Group
* Communication Objectives
* Choice of Medium
* Communication between the Consumers and the Product

This first step of the model is to outline the organisations overall marketing strategy. The reason for elaborating on this is that in order to make an integrated communications strategy, it is important to take the overall strategy of the organisation into consideration. The overall marketing strategy involves what the organisation wants to achieve in the marketplace. For instance, a travel agency might want to be the leading agency in the market for active holidays. Positioning statement deals with how the organisation wants to position themselves in the consumer’s minds, i.e. what makes you different from your competitors. For instance, a fun park might want to position them as a different fun park to all children families compared to their competitors. The next step deals with different communication decisions. First of all, characteristics of the target group are important to elaborate on. Identifying the target group is an important part of a communications strategy however, as we have already identified the target group, we will focus on ‘getting to know’ the target group. Therefore, the first step is to elaborate on characteristics of the target group. Setting communication objectives deals with what we want to achieve from this strategy, for instance how they want to create awareness, how to create more knowledge, how they make their product preferable and/or how they make the target group buy the product (Kotler, 2003: 569). Thereafter, the choice of medium is important to take into consideration in order to choice an efficient channel. Issues in relation to the communication between the product and the target group are also what we find important to elaborate on in order to be aware of issues in relation to this.

The abovementioned model will enable us to create a communications strategy for the concept SSS. As mentioned in our introduction and problem formulation, we have chosen facebook as the medium to reach the target group. Therefore, we find it relevant to elaborate on social media, under which facebook belongs, and take aspect in relation to this into consideration. This will be elaborated on in the following chapter.

**5. Social Media**

This chapter will entail a clarification and discussion of social media in relation to what the concept social media embodies.

**5.1. Defining Social Media**

Social media has experienced massive growth in relation to users[[1]](#footnote-1) and within the communications paradigm (mentioned in chapter 4), social media have become a recommended marketing tool (Quinton & Harridge-March, 2010; Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 364). Social media refers to a variety of forums: blogs, company-sponsored discussions boards, chat rooms, consumer-to-consumer email, consumer product or service rating websites and forums, internet discussion boards and forums, moblogs (sites containing digital audio, images, movies, or photographs), and social networking sites (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 358). Although different types of social media exist, they can be considered to reflect five similar characteristics: participation, openness, conversation, community and connectedness (Mayfield, 2008: 5). These will be elaborated in the following:

* Participation refers to social media encouraging everyone to being able to participate and provide feedback which as a consequence blurs the line between media and audience.
* Openness refers to the abovementioned of everyone being able to participate and provide feedback. There are for the most part no restrictions as to accessing content or usage of published content.
* Conversation refers to social media providing two-way communication as opposed to traditional media (one-way communication).
* Community refers to the way in which social media allows for communities to come into existence quickly, creating forums for people to engage and connect in relation to subjects of personal interest.
* Connectedness refers to the way in which social media allows for the use of links to other sites, resources and people.

(Mayfield, 2008: 5)

As is evident from the abovementioned characteristics, social media provide forums that allow people to share information and engage in numerous of activities. It is an open forum in which there are no restrictions as to the shared content and people are able to engage in close relationships.

As a concept, social media is attributed differentiating definitions and in the following, we will consider some of the articulated definitions in order to clarify our understanding of the concept.

We will commence with a definition of social media that reflects a more technical angle (as compared to the definition by Blackshaw & Nazzarro; forthcoming). The technicality of Kaplan & Haenlein’s definition of social media is found in the sense that they define social media through the term Web 2.0. and the aspect of user-generated content. Within this definition, Web 2.0 is drawn upon as it represents the platform from which social media springs and moreover, it represents the new way that content is published i.e. that content is added to the internet and continuously modified by other users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010:61). As Web 2.0 refers to the platform from where social media springs, user-generated content in compliance with this is the *“[…] sum of all ways in which people make use if Social Media*” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010:61). This refers to the various forms of media content that are publicly available and created by users. Through the articulations of Web 2.0. and user-generated content, Kaplan & Haenlein arrive at the clarification of what constitutes social media: *“Social Media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content”* (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010:61).This definition of social media complies well with our understanding of the overall definition of social media, as it encompasses an understanding that regards social media in relation to a physical frame i.e. web 2.0, the particular content and finally the relations that spring from it. However, due to the technicality of the definition, we find it relevant to consider a definition that embodies the complexity and broadness of social media. This is found in relation to Blackshaw and Nazzarro’s definition of social media. They express social media to be: “[…] *a variety of new sources of online information that are created, initiated, circulated and used by consumers intent on educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities, and issues”* (Blackshaw & Nazzarro, 2004: 2). This definition articulated by Blackshaw and Nazzarro represents well the complexity and broadness of social media as it underpins how information via social media is in constant revision and circulates in between many different sources with many differentiating purposes. In combination, the two definitions of social media considered above provide a thorough understanding of what social media is as they consider the concept both in relation to a technical aspect, but also in relation to a more complex aspect. However, we argue that within our frame of context i.e. making a communications strategy for SSS via facebook, we have not yet reached the full extent of the meaning of social media. The reason for this is that the two definitions mentioned above pinpoint social media usage only in relation to consumers i.e. user-generated content created by non-professionals. Within our context, focus is on communicating via facebook from a professional standpoint and the content can from starting point not be considered user-generated material. Weber articulates that social media involves content that is created by both individuals and enterprises (Weber, 2009: 4) and this is the aspect that we find important to incorporate into our social media definition as our understanding of social media reflects the aspect that we are working with the joining of professional and non-professional content. In the following, we will express our precise definition of social media.  
First of all, our definition of social media is aligned with the articulations set forth by Kaplan & Haenlein and also Blackshaw and Nazzarro i.e. social media has occurs due to Web 2.0. technicalities and entails user-generated content that allows for people to connect with one another and share information. Moreover, our definition involves the inclusion of the element of both professional and non-professional content i.e. head and tail content (forthcoming – see chapter 8).

As we have now defined our understanding of social media, we will in the following elaborate on what facebook is.

*5.1.1. What is facebook?*

As was mentioned above, there are several types of social media. Within this thesis, we have chosen to apply a social networking site i.e. facebook. As a concept, facebook centres on the idea of creating relationships and maintaining them either with *‘existing members of a social circle or connecting with other people with similar or shared interests’* (Dunne, Lawlor &Rowley, 2010: 48)*.*

Being on facebook involves the creation of a personal profile where the user decides the level of content that is to be available to others (Awl, 2009: 5). On facebook users can post messages, updates, photos and videos; enter and create groups and follow and comment on other friends’ activities (Awl, 2009: 5). What is particularly interesting about facebook, and other social networking sites as well, is that people are showing their private life and who they are within their ‘social circle’ (Awl, 2009: 6). Even though facebook has most of all been a site for personal use, more and more products and services are realising the potential of using facebook actively (Olin). Facebook allows for the creation of ‘pages’ where specific content can be published, people can connect to the site and follow the content (Awl, 2009) and this is what companies are tapping into in relation to facebook (Olin). As we have now expressed what facebook is, we will move on to considering challenges of social media.

**5.2 Challenges of Social Media**

Communicating via social media is very different from traditional one-way communication (as mentioned in chapter 4) and therefore there are some challenges to be aware of when applying social media in a communications strategy. First of all, the use of social media facilitates the consumer with more power in the sense that they are able to control the absorption of information themselves i.e. they are able to consume information on their own given time and moreover able to decide how much of the information they are willing to absorb (Weber, 2009: 22). Thus, the interaction between e.g. an organisation and its consumers is in the control of the consumers (Weber, 2009). Moreover, as social media allows for consumers to contribute content and comment content, this also poses a challenge as e.g. negative reviews of products will be publicly available information (Weber, 2009: 5). Another aspect that can pose a challenge in relation to social media relates to the way social media can influence content on sites e.g. in relation to wikis (sites that allow consumers to *‘add, remove and change text-based content’* (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 61). The fact that content on these sites can be altered by all users, information concerning ones organisation can surface and whether the information being true or not, users may believe it (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 62). In relation to the abovementioned, Weber expresses that negative aspects concerning products will be expressed regardless of allowing user-generated content on a page (Weber, 2009: 52), thus indicating that criticisms in relation to a product will circle around regardless of applying user-generated content. With respect to accommodating situations where criticisms have been articulated, it is important for the organisation to be receptive towards the information and act upon- otherwise the repercussions may be great (e.g. due to the way content can be distributed quickly via social media) (Weber, 2009).   
As we have now expressed challenges of social media, we will move on to the subject of defining the target group which in the first chapter will be considered within the context of relationship communication.

**6. Relationship Communication**

When communicating via social media, the process is concerned with building relationships with consumers (Drury, 2008: 275) and the concept of relationship communication has therefore been included as it incorporates a consumer-centric perspective in relation to communicating (Finne and Grönroos, 2009: 185). This element moreover complies well with our choice of communication medium i.e. facebook. As a social medium, facebook revolves around consumer-generated content and communicating via this medium involves the establishment of relationships, the consumer-centric aspect of the relationship communication model will be an aid in understanding and attempting to make a communications strategy for SSS via facebook.

In the following, we will be explaining the concept of relationship communication.

**6.1. What is Relationship Communication?**

Relationship communication is based on the concepts of IMC (mentioned in chapter 4) and relationship marketing (Duncan and Moriarty 1997; Lindberg-Repo

and Groönroos 1999; Lindberg-Repo 2001 in Finne & Grönroos, 2009: 179). Duncan and Moriarty argue that the creation of value is no longer deemed in relation to products but instead in relation to relationships (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997: 41). This means that the way companies manage their relationships with customers is more important than their particular products and focus should therefore be on *“[…] how companies not only create, but retain and grow their relationships”* (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997: XI). The stance taken by Duncan and Moriarty however, reflects a traditional inside-out view of the concept of relationship communication (Finne & Grönroos, 2009: 179). However, nowadays consumers have much more knowledge as to obtaining information concerning different products (as mentioned in the introduction) and they obtain this knowledge through various sources (e.g. company produced content and user-generated content (Drury, 2008: 275)) and in relation to this, the process of integrating various messages has become an element that is much more in the control of consumers (Finne & Grönroos, 2009: 180, Weber, 2009: 22). Due to this, the need for a stance on relationship communication with a more consumer-centric perspective has been expressed (Mick & Buhl, 1992: 317, Finne & Grönroos, 2009: 179). Relationship communication offers a new perspective in relation to communicating according to the new tendencies of consumer behaviour. More elaborately put, relationship communication offers an outside-in view of the consumer where the consumer is the main focal point (Finne & Grönroos, 2009: 180). As the integration of content is attributed a performance solely performed by the consumers, it becomes paramount to consider how consumers understand the messages they are portrayed with and how they create meaning from the particular messages (Finne & Grönroos, 2009: 180). On the basis of the abovementioned, relationship communication can be defined according to the following:

Relationship communication is any type of marketing communication that influences the receiver’s long-term commitment to the sender by facilitating meaning creation through integration with the receiver’s time and situational context. The time context refers to the receiver’s perceptions of the history and envisioned future of his/her relationship with the sender. The situational context refers to other elements internal or external to the receiver (Finne & Grönroos, 2009: pp 180-181)

The quotation above expresses that relationship communication involves a process that incorporates the consumer’s meaning making in relation to two dimensions i.e. situational and time dimensions. Relationship communication refers to a process where the contact and co-operation between the consumer and organisation is perpetual and in relation to this, the time dimension is important. What this means is that previous contact with an organisation influences the consumer in a current interaction and this may moreover influence future interactions (Edvarsson & Strandvik, 2000: 82, Finne & Grönoos, 2009: 182). The situational context is furthermore paramount as the situational factors may influence the consumer when creating meaning from the organisation’s message. All in all, relationship communication, as articulated by Finne and Grönroos, advocates a process where the consumer is in focus and where the communication is to be performed with regards to factors that influence the consumers’ meaning creation.

**6.2. Determining the Consumers’ Meaning Creation**

The process of attempting to determine the meaning creation of consumers entails investigating the meaning creation in relation to a time frame and also in relation to a situational context including both internal and external factors (Finne & Grönroos, 2009: 183). In relation to determining the meaning creation on behalf of the consumers, Finne and Grönroos have constructed the Relationship Communication Model. The two dimensions of time and situational context will be elaborated further in the following explanation of the Relationship Communication Model.

*The Relationship Communication Model*

External factors

Internal factors

The creation of meaning

Future factors

Historical factors

Situational context

Time Frame

The Relationship Communication Model is a combination and elaboration of two prior models i.e. the meaning-based model by Mick and Buhl[[2]](#footnote-2) and the CIRC model by Edvarsson and Strandvik[[3]](#footnote-3). These two models consider respectively the individual aspect (the meaning-based model) and the relationship perspective (The CIRC model). The relationship communication model is constructed around the time dimension and the situational dimension. The historical factors of the time dimension refer to all types of messages from the past that influence the consumer’s meaning making. These factors refer to both the personal history of the consumer both in relation to non-commercial issues (Mick and Buhl, 1992 in Finne and Grönroos, 2009: 184) and also in relation to information obtained via a commercial relationship-based history (Edvarsson and Strandvik, 2000 in Finne and Grönroos, 2009: 184). Future factors refer to elements that can be embedded into the expected future of the relationship or in the consumer’s life themes. The elements that are embedded into the expected future of the relationship are commercially related while the factors embedded in the consumer’s life themes *“[…] are broader in scope, but may include commercially related aspects as well”* (Finne and Grönroos, 2009: 184). Examples of future factors are expectations, goals, hopes or visions. In combination, these future factors create a continuum from the past to the envisioned future (Finne and Grönroos, 2009: 184). This means that the time dimension incorporates the way in which a relationship is constructed over time and the fact that it is constantly changing as meaning is constantly created and recreated.

The situational dimension consists, as mentioned, of internal and external factors. Internal factors refer to life projects related to the self (Mick and Buhl, 1992 in Finne and Grönroos, 2009: 185) or the internal context (Edvarsson & Strandvik, 2000 in Finne & Grönroos, 2009: 185). More elaborate, these internal factors refer to attitudes, capabilities, identity or personal interests (Finne and Grönroos, 2009: 185). The external factors refer to culturally situated factors (Mick & Buhl, 1992 in Finne & Grönroos, 2009: 184-185) or the personal context of the individual (Edvarsson & Strandvik, 2000 in Finne & Grönroos, 2009: 185). More elaborately, the external factors are *“[…]trends, traditions, economic situation, the family and alternative choices, including advertising from competing companies and other communications in the surrounding society perceived by the individual”* (Finne and Grönroos, 2009: 185).

In relation to the process of meaning creation on behalf of the consumer, it is argued that some or all of the abovementioned factors influence this element. In relation to this, it is the time dimension and the situational dimension in combination that create the foundation for understanding the meaning creation in a relationship. The relationship communication model represents a consumer-centric perspective on relationship communication meaning that focus is both on the messages portrayed by the particular company and also on the meaning creation process of the consumer and how they integrate and make sense of the messages they are portrayed with. The integration on behalf of the consumer may take place on varying levels which means that the meaning creation of consumers can be perceived as a meaning creation continuum where at one end of the continuum, the communicated message is taken at face value and at the other end of the continuum, the consumer integrates the communicated message via all time and situational factors (Finne and Grönroos, 2009: 185). When moving from one end of the continuum to the other, more and more aspects of each factor are influencing the consumer’s meaning-making process. In relation to our problem formulation, we are investigating communicating a product that has not received much attention by consumers yet and therefore we are not able to conduct an investigation as to whether a relationship has been established with the consumers of SSS. However, the meaning-creation continuum is applicable in the sense that it can provide general guidelines as to what is important in relation to attempting to establish a relationship with consumers. These guidelines recommend that multiple factors are included in the communication process as to ensure a relationship becomes established and the guidelines also exemplify that in order to attempt relationship communication, it is important to have a clear message and ensuring that the message is constructed with regards to the target group so that they do not dislike it. (Finne, 2004; Finne & Grönroos, 2006 in Finne & Grönroos, 2009: 187). This also relates to the fact that we have chosen an integrated approach i.e. that an integrated approach focuses on ensuring clarity in between communicational efforts (see chapter 4). All in all, the more factors that are included in the meaning-making process, the more likely it is that dynamic multi-dimensional communication will occur (Finne & Grönroos, 2009: 187).

**6.3. Investigating the Time and Situational Dimensions**

In relation to investigating the time and situational dimensions, the relationship communication model can be applied in two differentiating ways. First of all, it can be applied as a means of analysing meaning creation from communication messages (Finne & Grönroos, 2009: 189). Secondly, the model can be applied in relation to creating a framework for operative management: *“By using the model as a framework for sorting data and knowledge about customers in the company database, marketers can identify factors that influence consumer’s meaning creation”* (Finne & Grönroos, 2009: 190). As we are working within the context of creating a communications strategy via facebook for a concept that is relatively unknown, the latter opportunity will be of importance to us, i.e. our focus will be to identify factors that can be considered to influence the target group’s meaning creation in relation SSS.

In sum, what is to be investigated in relation to time and situational factors are:

[…] historical, future, external and/or internal factors, such as earlier experiences, memories, ongoing strong relationships, expectations or visions, importance of the firm in the surrounding society, a personal project in the family, positive or negative attitudes to the firm or the communication message, the sender or the brand or difficulties in understanding a message (Finne & Grönroos, 2009: 189)

In order to investigate the time and situational factors, Finne and Grönroos express performing this thorough various means:

Information about historical factors can be found in customer databases and loyalty programmes, but also from frontline personnel and elsewhere in the organization. Information about external factors can be found in reports about economic cycles, technology developments, fashion trends and in competitor analyses. Marketers can contribute top-of-the-mind surveys. Internal factors can be found in studies about consumer attitudes, satisfactions surveys, data from complaint handling and customer response marketing. Information on possible future factors can be detected among expectations and visions on several levels: customers, personnel and shareholders, as well as consumers’ envisioned future prospects (Finne and Grönroos, 2009: 190)

As can be seen from the quotation above, Finne and Grönroos express applying the relationship communication model through both quantitative and qualitative means. Within our frame of context, as mentioned, we are working with a relatively unknown concept and therefore it has not been possible to obtain quantitative information or information in general from SSS regarding the target group and visits up until now. Thus, our analysis of the target group in relation to relationship communication will be performed through qualitatively gathered material i.e. through qualitative interviews with the target group (as mentioned in chapter 2).

In this chapter, we have been covering relationship communication and what this concept entitles. We have established that focus of relationship communication within this thesis is on the consumers and how they create meaning in relation to a product. In relation to this, it was established that the meaning creation was be understood within a time dimension and situational context i.e. historical, future, internal and external factors. With respect to attempting to establish a relationship communication, it was articulated that the more factors that are included in the meaning creation process, the more likely the possibility of establishing relationships with consumers becomes. All in all, relationship communication will provide the opportunity to obtain a thorough knowledge of the target group that can be an aid in relation to making the communications strategy for SSS i.e. the thorough knowledge of the target group can contribute specific information of how to reach the target group (i.e. characteristics of the target group in the model in chapter 12). This thorough knowledge of the target group will also made through the aspects of the decision-making process. This will be elaborated in the following.

**7. The Decision-Making Process**

As mentioned, relationship communication provides a consumer-centric perspective on the relationship between the product and the consumers. In this chapter, we will be dealing with the decision-making process which will help us characterise the consumers in terms of their buying habits. The decision-making process will provide us the knowledge in terms of understanding the consumer’s buying habits and the steps involved in this whereas relationship communication enables us with knowledge in terms of the consumers meaning creation in relation to a specific product.

We have chosen to incorporate Jobber and Fahy’s decision-making model (See model below). However, beside this model, many others can be found but many of these models are based on the five steps (Peter & Olson, 2010: 163) that are also visible in Jobber and Fahy’s model. Beside these steps, other versions of the decision-making process have been made involving more steps. For instance, Carroll and Johnson and others have made a seven stage decision-making model that involved issues as recognition, formulation of goals and objectives, chose alternatives from these objectives, search for information, choice among many alternatives, act upon decision and provide feedback (Carrol & Johnson et. Al. (1990) in Sirakaya & Woodside, 2003: 815). In relation to this particular model, we find many similarities between it and Jobber and Fahy’s model. For instance, both models involves need recognition and information search and moreover involves some sort of feedback after the purchase. The reason for choosing Jobber and Fahy’s model is because it is a generic model that provides a simple, though important picture of the stages the consumers goes through. However, some argues that the model do not take the specific product or service into consideration. In relation to this critique, Jobber and Fahy mention this and states that depending on the buying situation, the stages will be omitted (Jobber and Fahy, 2006: 60) and therefore making aware that different product can lead to different buying situations. Moreover, it is also argued by Peter and Olson that consumers seldom go identical through these stages (Peter & Olson, 2010: 164). For instance, the information search stage will most likely be skipped in a routine repurchase situation. We have chosen Jobber and Fahy’s version due to its generic features and as it identifies important issues involved in consumers problem solving situations and allow for changes in relation to the specific buying situation.

As mentioned, the decision-making process shows different stages that consumers typically go through when buying a product or service. The decision-making process is useful in terms of obtain knowledge about the consumers and learn about their buying habits. In order to answer our problem formulation, we are only interested in the first three stages, i.e. Need recognition, Information search and Evaluation of alternatives (see model below). As can be seen in the model, two more stages exist. These finial two stages are purchase and post-purchase evaluation of the decision which deals with the actual purchase and whether the purchase has been successful or not (Jobber and Fahy, 2006: 63). These two stages will not be dealt with further as this is not in line with our problem formulation. The reason for this is that, as mentioned, it is our intension is to make a communications strategy for the concept and issues in term the actual purchase and evaluations of that purchases is not the intention of such a strategy. However, issues in terms of, for instance, where consumers search for information and what factors can influent their decision are relevant information and this is what the decision-making process focuses on. The decision-making process is as follows:

Need Recognition/Problem Awareness

Information Search

Evaluation of Alternatives

Purchase

Post-purchase evaluation of decision

(Jobber & Fahy, 2006: 61)

According to Jobber and Fahy, there are five stages in the decision-making process. The first stage is *Need recognition/Problem awareness* and is the stage where consumers experience a certain need or problem. This could for instance be a need for a holiday that enables the whole family to be active. The next stage is *Information Search*. According to Jobber and Fahy, this is the stage where consumers gather information internally or externally or both (Jobber and Fahy, 2006: 62). Internal search would be a review of relevant information from ones memory as for instance potential solutions, personal experiences and where to search for product information. If the internal search did not solve the specific problem or fulfil their need recognition, they turn to external search. External search deals with personal sources as for instance friends and family or commercial sources as for instance advertising or salespeople. It is important to be aware of where to reach the consumers when creating a communications strategy and by elaborating on internal and external information search, this information can be applied. The next stage is *Evaluation of Alternatives*. Often, a small group of possibilities are chosen by the consumer and from this group of possibilities, one of them will be the final choice. In order to choose the right one, the level of involvement is crucial (Jobber & Fahy, 2006: 62). In relation to this, Laurent & Kapferer have made four factors that affect the involvement rate: self-image, perceived risk, social factors and hedonistic influences (Laurent & Kapferer in Jobber and Fahy, 2006: 62-63). *Self-image* is when a consumer can see oneself in relation to the product or service. For instance, clothing or make-up invokes more involvement compared to, for instance, detergent or oil. Therefore, the more a person sees oneself in the product or service, the higher involvement. *Perceived risk* is that if the risk of making a mistake is high, the involvement is high. E.g. there is a difference in buying the wrong butter and buying the wrong holiday. With *Social factors* the involvement is high if the purchase is dependent on social acceptance. For instance, an active holiday might, for some consumers, be seen as more accepted as it shows that the family is healthy and active and this is an important image for them to show. The last factor is *hedonistic influences* (Jobber & Fahy, 2006: 63). If there is a high degree of pleasure involved, the involvement is usually high. E.g., a bad choice of restaurant on a holiday can affect the overall holiday experience.

We have now elaborated on different factors that can lead to high involvement. If involvement is high, providing as much information about the positive consequences of buying the product or service is a useful tool according to Jobber and Fahy. An example of this could be to provide information in terms of special feature, placement and quality when staying at a hotel. Moreover, to make the consumer aware of any attributions involved with buying the product is also important to a high involvement situation (Jobber & Fahy, 2006: 63). For instance, by making the consumers aware of any renovation of the hotel that might lead to the hotel being messy. This results in less unpleasant surprises.

As mentioned in our introduction, we will be using facebook as a communication medium. In relation to the decision-making process, there are some different factors that can affect the process in an online environment. This will be dealt with in the following.

**7.1. Decision-Making Process and Social Media**

As mentioned, the decision-making process describes the stages consumers typically go through when solving a problem. In terms of using facebook as the marketplace, there are other factors that can influence the decision-making process. These factors are visible in the model below. In comparison with the traditional decision-making process model above, the decision-making model in an online environment below takes issues as for instance controlled and uncontrolled online web experiences into consideration. These issues are important in terms of our choice of medium as they determine what may affect the consumers decision in a social media context and because these issues are not considered in the abovementioned model. The two models also have identical features as for the different factors that can determine the level of involvement (See paragraph above), however, we believe that abovementioned model will enable us with issues in relation to different stages a consumers goes through when solving a problem and the following model will enable us with factors that may affect these stages, which all in all gives a more through picture of issues in relation to how a consumer solves a problem.

With the traditional decision-making process, there are two factors that influent the process. These are conventional marketing influences (A) and uncontrolled personal influences (B) (Kotler, 2003: 184). The first factor deals with the any promotion sent from the organisation. The second factor can be related to the abovementioned model in terms of evaluation of alternatives. Evaluation of alternatives focuses on, as mentioned in earlier, different factors that could influence the decision in terms of social factors, perceived risk etc. As facebook is our marketplace, two new dimensions are added. These are the online marketing mix (C) and the Web 2.0. influences (D). The following model illustrates the factors that influence the decision-making process in an information-based marketplace, c.f. the networked information economy chapter 4 (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008: 240):



(Constantinides & Fountain, 2008: 240)

The two new factors (C and D) deal with the online environment and the abovementioned issues that have emerged due to this as for instance that information is no longer controlled by the marketing managers (As mentioned in chapter 4). The online controlled marketing factors (C) deals with the online activities that are controlled by the organisation and how these can influence the consumer’s decision. This could for instance be how the consumers can be influenced by the corporate website or from other activities as for instance corporate blogs etc. Online uncontrolled marketing factors, i.e. Web 2.0 influences (D) are the online activities that are not controlled by the organisation. An example of this could be how the consumers can be influenced when using social networking sites, chat forums, blogs and so on and so forth in terms of other user’s experiences. After the potential influences of these factors (A, B, C and D), the consumer moves to the black box where s/he evaluates the different influences s/he has received. Hereafter, the consumer decide whether to purchase the service or product or not and depending on the decision the consumer may share his or she experience with other consumers and tell why they should or should not buy this product or service. This is known as feedback in the model and will lead back to online uncontrolled marketing factors, i.e. D in the model above.

This model is useful in the sense that it emphasises how using social media as a communications medium can affect the decision-making process.

All in all, we have in this chapter elaborated on the traditional decision-making process as it helps us to understand the consumers buying habits. The decision-making process determined different steps consumers goes through when solving a problem. For instance, there were two types of information search, internal and external. Internal dealt with information search in terms of e.g. personal experience and external search dealt with e.g. WOM, advertising or sales people. Moreover, the model established four different factors that can determine whether involvement is high or low in a particular buying situation. Beside this model, another decision-making model was presented that added new elements to the process, i.e. factors that can influence the consumers buying process in an online environment. However, it is not only important to understand the consumers buying habits, it is also important consider the choice of medium, which will be elaborated on in the following chapter.

**8. Applying Social Media**

When communicating via a social medium, there are several aspects to take into account. These aspects refer to considerations as to using media and the general functionalities of communicating via a social medium. Thus in order to apply facebook in our communications strategy, it is important to consider what communicating via a social medium involves. This will be elaborated in the following.

**8.1. Considerations when using Media**

When using media, it is first of all important to carefully consider the choice of media to be applied (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 65) The social medium first and foremost must be chosen based on the established target group (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 65). If you e.g. are targeting tourists, it would make more sense to choose a social medium e.g. where travellers share their travel experiences. In relation to choosing the applicable social medium, it is moreover important to consider whether to join an existing social medium or whether to create ones own (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 65). The appropriateness of a social medium may differ in relation to the product that is to be communicated. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to join an already existing social medium, as the advantage here is that a user-base from which benefits can be drawn already exists. However, it is important to evaluate whether the social media can provide the necessary elements to ensure a successful campaign and in some cases it may be more beneficial to create one’s own social media platform (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 65; Weber, 2009: 28). In the process of applying social media, it is important to ensure activity alignment (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 65). In some cases, several social media may be applied in a communications strategy and in relation to this, it is important to ensure that the activities via social media are all aligned as to ensure that consumers are portrayed with a consistent message across all media channels. In relation to this, it is important to consider whether applying several social media is preferable. It can provide a profitable result, however only if the messages conveyed via the different social media are consistent and in sync (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 65). Another aspect that is important to consider is media plan integration. Media plan integration refers to the relationship between traditional marketing and social media and the importance of integrating these two. The integration of traditional media and social media is important as they in combination aid in the establishment of the corporate image (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 65). When having decided upon applying social media, it is of importance to consider the employee’s accessibility to the social medium in the workplace (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 66). Access should be available to all employees, however, in order to avoid additions of content randomly posted, establishing a group with main responsibility of handling social media elements could be established (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 66). In relation to the content published by the company, some general guidelines for conduct should be articulated (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 66). It is e.g. important that when a company issues statements or ads content to a social medium, they identify themselves as being representatives of the company (Weber, 2009: 17). Otherwise end-users may perceive anonymous contributions of content as the company’s way of trying to influence their consumers and this could be damaging for the credibility of the social media campaign (Weber, 2009).

In relation to the content contributed by the organisation, it should not focus on overly-professional content:

Instead try to blend in with other users and don’t be afraid to make mistakes […] Social Media users are people like you, who understand that things do not always run smoothly. And, if you’re nice to them, they may even give you free advice on how to do it better the next time (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 67)

Drury also argues that content on a social medium should not be solely professional content. Social media allows for the accessibility of ‘head and tail content’ i.e. content that is professionally produced but where material added by consumers is also available (Drury, 2008: 275). Head and tail content thereby provides the consumers with an interactive experience as they are able to receive and contribute content at the same time (Drury, 2008: 275).

In this chapter, we have been considering different aspects to take into consideration in relation to using media. In relation to this, it was first of all important that the choice of medium was considered- both in relation to the target group and the message to be delivered. Moreover, it was important to consider the communicational efforts made-both in relation to social media but also in relation to previous traditional marketing. Lastly, it was important to clarify guidelines for company conduct on a social medium. Finally, it was expressed that the content should not be solely professional i.e. a combination of head and tail content was preferable. In the following, we will be considering ways of engaging consumers.

**9. Engaging Consumers**

Applying a social medium in a communications strategy involves building relationships with users (as mentioned in chapter 8) and in relation to this, it is important to engage users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, Drury, 2008: 275, Weber, 2009: 25). Thus in order to consider how SSS can attempt to engage their target group, we will in the following, be considering how engaging consumers can be performed.

When applying social media, the focus of the communication process becomes the consumers and what their wants and desires are. A social medium also allows for consumers to comment and critique on products and this means that a company loses some of the control as to the content that is distributed concerning their particular product (as discussed in chapter 4). However, there are ways to shape and influence consumer conversations in accordance with the organisation’s mission and performance goals (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 36). These ways of shaping and influencing consumer conversations also reflect ways of engaging consumers which was also what Kaplan & Haenlein and Drury called for (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, Drury, 2008).

Providing networking platforms is a way of engaging consumers: *“Consumers like to network with people who have interests and desires that are similar to their own”* (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 361). Businesses can accommodate this desire e.g. through creating a forum where people who love to travel could come together and share their experiences in general or in relation to travels with the particular destination offering the forum. Consumer conversations can also be influenced through the use of blogs and other social media tools. Via these, consumers are likely to become more engaged in relation to products and organisations as they are enabled to submit feedback (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 361). As the feedback is visible to all consumers and contains both criticisms, praises or suggestions of improvements, it will enhance the consumer engagement (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 361). Another way of influencing consumer conversations is through the use of both traditional and internet-based promotional tools in order to engage customers (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 362). Consumers who are engaged in products or services are more likely to communicate about the product e.g. through a social media. This could e.g. be a status update on facebook letting people know how great a newly acquired product is. Thus, some consumers may have a natural engagement towards a product if they e.g. swearing to the particular product, however, some consumers are not naturally engaged in a product (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 361), but may become engaged if they are stimulated by the companies through creative means. This could e.g. be if visitors of a holiday destination were encouraged to enter e.g. a contest on the destinations website or facebook page. The next way of influencing conversation content is through the availability of information. When consumers have access to information, they are more likely to engage in conversations about products and services and therefore it should be of attention to an organisation to ensure that as much information as possible is accessible. Moreover, customers like to feel special and therefore it is important to provide exclusivity (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 363). This can be performed through e.g. offering products or special deals to a particular group of people e.g. people who subscribe to a newsletter. Customer conversations can also be influenced through the product designs. What this entails is that products should be designed as to stimulate e.g. social media conversations. In order to stimulate conversations, it is important for the products to be *“[…] fun, intriguing, highly visible, easy to use, and […] engage the emotions […]”)* (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 363). All in all, it is important that products stimulate all senses of the customer in order to stimulate conversations. The design of the product should also be constructed with the thought of the desired self-images of the target group (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 363-364). People are more likely to talk about products which support their desired self-images (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 364). Finally, making use of power stories is a way of influencing consumer conversations (Mangold & Faulds, 2009: 364). Through memorable stories consumers can become engaged in the product or service as they hear about them form others and possible pass the stories further on.

In this chapter, we have been considering ways of engaging consumers in conversation. In relation to this, it was argued to consumers can become engaged through means of e.g. power stories, social media tools as e.g. blogs, the opportunity of networking, through the use of both traditional and social media efforts and lastly through appealing to the consumers’ senses. In the following, we will be elaborating on the 7 Cs, which will provide insight into further considerations in relation to choice of medium.

**10. The 7 Cs Framework**

As was stated in chapter 4, creating a communications strategy involved different stages. One of them was choice of media, which is what this chapter will be dealing with together with the previous chapter. In relation to this, the 7 Cs can be used as a guideline to follow in relation to choosing the internet as a communication medium, as these involve considerations to what to say, how to say it and who should say it. When searching for the 7 Cs, we find different versions of it. We find the 7 Cs of knowledge leadership (Knowledge Innovation), the 7 Cs framework for customer interface (see below), the 7 C model for organisational knowledge creation (Yang et. all, 2008: 6). Moreover, an 8 C model exists which deals with online brand experience (Yang et. al., 2008: 6). Depending on the context, the Cs can vary.

We have chosen the 7 Cs framework for customer interface as it focuses on the various decisions that needs to be considered regarding how to reach the consumers on a digital page. This is an important element as this framework for instance takes issues on IMC into account (Kimmel, 2006: 185), which is also our approach to this thesis. Rayport and Jaworski developed such a model in order attempt to create consistency among the different messages an organisation send out via the internet (Rayport & Jaworski, 2003: 151). This 7Cs framework involves context, content, community, customisation, communication, connection and commerce (Rayport & Jaworski, 2003: 151). Even though our choice of medium is facebook and not a website, we still argue that the same model can be applied. The reason for this is that in many cases, social media and a website share the same features. For instance, both sites contain information about a certain concept, they can both involve a chat forum for visitors to interact with each other or interact with the concept and both intent to inform a particular target group about certain issues. Moreover, the fifth C, communication, prescribes the communication between the target group and the site which is relevant in terms of our choice of medium. Furthermore, the third C, community, also prescribes that if there is any reason for the user to interact with each other, they should have that chance. This is also in line with our choice of facebook, as this enables SSS’s target group to interact with each other and share experiences. This is not to say that a website and a social media site are identical; they just have some of the same features which is the reason for applying 7 Cs model.

We have not chosen to focus on all the 7 Cs as the two first Cs involve issues in relation to creating a particular site and the last C deals with the actual transaction and as our intension is to bring forward a communications strategy for the concept of SSS, these three Cs will not be of relevance. Therefore, we will only use the four other Cs in our analysis, though elaborate on all of them in this chapter. The seven elements will be elaborated on in the following.

**10.1. C1 and C2: Context and Content**

The context deals with the overall look of the facebook page. The context includes elements such as colours, graphics and the design of the page. It is important that the context is right as this is the C that has to capture consumer from other competitors (Rayport & Jaworski, 2003: 151-152).

The content then is the planned message, i.e. the message that is controlled and part of the IMC, that an organisation wants to deliver to its consumers (Gruen in Kimmel, 2005: 186). Overall, the content deals with what should be present on the site in terms of text, video, model, pictures and so on and so forth. As the content might be the same for two sports organisation, it is the context that will separate those (Rayport & Jaworski, 2003: 152).

These first two Cs are not relevant in order to answer our problem formulation and will therefore not be elaborated further on in this thesis.

**10.2. C3: Community**

A community infuses a feeling of being part of the same group due to a common interest. This is where consumer creates value to one another and this value creation *“[...] occurs outside the traditional exchange between the organisation and its customers”* (Gruen in Kimmel, 2005: 187). There are two dimensions of communities: *interactive communication* and *non-interactive communication* (Yang et. al., 2008: 7). The first deals with being able to communicate in real time via different communication tools and the latter deal with static information in terms of one-way communication. A community is a part of Web 2.0. and has become a key decision regarding organisation’s site so in general, if there is any reason why consumers should interact with each other, it is a good idea to make this possible through the organisations site (Kimmel, 2006: 187).

**10.3. C 4: Customisation**

This deals with how the site is able to adapt itself to the individual user. In relation to this, there are two kinds of customisations; *tailoring*, which is customisation by the firm, and *personalisation*, which is customisation by the individual (Rayport & Jaworski, 2003: 152). Personalisation would be if the page took the individual person into consideration and for instance made it possible for the individual to only see information of his or her interest or modify the information on the page. Personalisation is also where the users manage and initiate it. This could be performed with a personal log-in. Tailoring then is when the organisation manages and initiates the customisation and the page is addresses to specific users and is based on past behaviours of these users or other similar pages (Rayport & Jaworski, 2003: 152). Some pages contain both forms of customisation.

**10.4. C 5: Communication**

The fifth C is communication and is the dialog between the users and the site (Rayport & Jaworski, 2003: 152). A two-way communication is one of the major aspects of IMC which is possible when using facebook. There are three forms, which are as follows: 1. *Site-to-user communication*, which is a one-way communication channel from the organisation to the user. This can for instance be e-mail, broadcast events, content update etc. 2. *User-to-site communication*, is a two-way communication and happens via customer service, user input and e-commerce dialog and 3. *Two-way communication*, which is instant messaging (Rayport & Jaworski, 2003: 152).

**10.5. C 6: Connection**

Connection deals with how the website refers to other sites and vice versa (Rayport & Jaworski, 2003: 152). From an IMC point of view, there can be many advantages in doing so. Posting interesting links from other sites on the facebook page can be a way to make it more interesting for the consumer. Moreover, cooperation with other organisations or services can also be seen as a way to create awareness and raise productivity.

Due to social media and user-generated content, there is also the chance that connections can happen via chat, without the organisation being involved. This can be useful in relation to the consumers sharing relevant links or connection among each other however, it can also result in consumers sharing links or connections on the organisation’s page that is inappropriate in relation to the particular organisation. This cannot be prevented.

**10.6. C 7: Commerce**

The last C deals with the actual transaction with the consumers and all the elements that fall under this category. Security and the security of commerce capabilities is information that needs to be available for the consumers (Rayport & Jaworski, 2003: 153). Moreover, all the information about transaction, i.e. shipping time, information cost, availability and so on and so forth, must be available so that the consumer has no doubt about the accuracy of the site and when and how they will receive the product or service.

The 7 Cs has now been clarified and was a guideline for different consideration to take when choosing an online medium. For instance, it is important to consider whether or not the consumers should be able to communicate with each other is important and how the organisation want to communicate with its consumer.

In the following, we will clarify the source of information which deals with how consumers prefer information in different situations.

**11. The Source of Information**

In relation to the communication between the consumer and the product, the source of information is relevant to elaborate on as, due to Web 2.0., consumers are seems to favour consumers review (Chan & Xie, 2008: 478). Therefore, as we are using an online medium to communicate with and to the consumers, it is important to know then and how the consumers prefer information. According to Chen and Xie, consumer review is important for many consumers when deciding to buy a product or service (Chen & Xie, 2008: 477). Consumer review is a new information channel that has gained more and more power (Chen & Xie, 2008: 478). There are two types of information: consumer review and seller-created product information. Seller-created product information is often based on the technicalities of the product, whereas consumer review is often based on attributes in terms of the usage situation (Chen and Xie, 2008: 479). What can determine whether consumers prefer consumer review or seller-created product information is the consumers level of expertise. An expert on a certain product might rely more on seller information than consumer review and opposite, consumers with little knowledge on a certain product might rely more on consumer review in terms of matching products or services (Chen and Xie, 2008: 479). Why consumers sometimes favour consumer review can be due to trust as the credibility of information is often linked to the trustworthiness of sources (Wilson and Scherrell 1993 in Chen and Xie, 2008: 478). Consumers tend to trust information they receive from friends and family, or other consumers with same interest, more compared to the information they receive from organisations or salespersons. If this is the case, consumer review can work as a free ‘sales assistant’ for a product or concept (Chen & Xie, 2008: 479). Thus, such a sale assistant also allows free information about an organisation’s product or service to flow online, as mentioned earlier in chapter 4, and this is something an organisation needs to take into consideration.

In relation to the two types of information, a third form of information is determined i.e. Third-party product review. This is based on lab testing or expert evaluation (Chen and Xie, 2008: 480). An example of this is the Danish organisation TÆNK, which is a consumer council that tests different products in order to secure the consumer’s rights and make the consumers more powerful on the market (TÆNK). Third-party product review can be used by consumers to get a more professional and objective view on a particular product or service.

All in all, there were three forms of review present which were consumer review, seller-created product information and third-party product review and depending on the consumer’s expertise, the different form of review would be recommended.

As we have now clarified the theoretical aspect of this thesis, we will apply these theoretical aspects to the communications strategy model which will be presented in the following chapter.

**12. Analysis: Framework for SSS’s Communications Strategy**

As was evident in chapter 4, we have made a communications strategy model. The different element of this model has been presented as our theoretical aspects elaborated on in chapter 4 to 10. In order to provide an overview of the steps in the communications strategy and via the theories how this will be clarified, the model is a follows:

**Overall Marketing Strategy**

(Case Description and Midtjysk Turisme’s Strategy)

**Positioning Statement**

(Case Description and Interview with Midtjysk Turisme)

**Communication Decisions**

* Communication Objectives (Midtjysk Turisme and Feriehusudlejning I/S)
* Characteristics of the Target Group (Relationship Communication and Decision-Making Process)
* Choice of Medium (Applying social media and the 7 Cs Framework)
* Communication between Target Group and SSS

(Engaging Consumers and Source of Information)

The first two stages of the model, overall marketing strategy and positioning statement, will be dealt with based on the case description in chapter 3 and Midtjysk Turisme’s strategy. Communication objectivities will be based on MT’s own strategy and also on what we believe would be realistic and relevant objectives for this concept. The next stage, characteristics of the target group, will be dealt with in terms of the decision-making process and relationship communication. ‘Applying social media’ and the 7 Cs framework will enable us to locate the issues relevant in terms of our choice of medium, i.e. facebook. Furthermore, engaging consumers and the consumers’ source of information will consider issues in relation to communication between the target group and SSS.

Our analysis with be thematised in relation to this model, which will result in a communications strategy for SSS as mentioned in our problem formulation, and this is what the following chapter will be dealing with. In the following chapters, we will via our theoretical and empirical data be analysing different aspect that needs to be considered in order to create a communications strategy for the concept SSS.

**13. Overall Marketing Strategy and SSS’s Positioning Statement**

We are in the following chapter going to analyse different element in order to create a communications strategy for SSS. This chapter will be focusing on the first two boxes, i.e. the overall marketing strategy and positioning statement.

**13.1. Overall Marketing Strategy**

An overall marketing strategy deals with what the organisation want to achieve in the marketplace, i.e. the overall business goal. It is how the organisation wants to communicate with the world and how this is to be carried out, as mentioned in chapter 4. Even though there are different partners involved in the SSS concept, the concept owner is MT, as mentioned in the case description, and we will therefore take starting point in MT’s overall marketing strategy. Feriehusudlejning I/S was the ones marketing the concept but the reason for choosing to focus on MT is because they are the concept owner. Moreover, MT expressed in the interview that if they were to offer this concept to their target group (Holiday house agencies), it needs to be someone that MT trusts and who is credible so that this person does not change the element in the concept (Appendix 1). MT expressed that they would not offer this concept to anyone but that it should be someone who values the concept as it is (Appendix 1). This is the reason together with the fact that they are the concept owner for choosing to focus on MT’s overall marketing strategy.

MT has a strategy outlined which is present on their homepage (MT - Strategy). MT’s overall goal is to develop the tourism industry in the region which will be achieved through cooperating with the tourism industries in Central Jutland in order to actively contribute to the development of tourism and the experience economy (MT- Om os). In relation to this, they are focusing on three lines of businesses. These are ‘strong holiday destinations’, business tourism’ and ‘additional sales’ [Translated from Danish] (MT – Strategy). In relation to our case, ‘strong holiday destination’ is relevant and it is from this line of business, that SSS arose. ‘Strong holiday destinations’ focus on the holiday houses near the coast where the intention was to make these houses stronger, more quality conscious and there needed to be created more awareness about them (MT – Strategy). As mentioned, the SSS concept came as a respond to this where the overall goal was to try to turn the tourism industry in Central Jutland (MT – SSS Forside). What is moreover part of MT’s overall marketing strategy is a focus on specific value chains. One of these value chains is “*relaxation and pampering”* [Translated from Danish](MT- Ny Strategi: 8). Within this particular value chain, the focus is on the traditional holiday house along the coast. The particular target group in relation to this value chains and these holiday houses is a target group that is interested in learning, having fun and playing games but at the same a need for recreation and new energy (MT – Ny Strategy: 8). In relation to these abovementioned overall marketing strategy goals, a project group was to make a project under the headlines ‘health and tourism’ (Appendix 1). From this, the concept SSS arose where the goal is to make holiday houses even more attractive in order to attract more tourists to the West Coast (Appendix 12). As is evident, the concept SSS, arose as a result of one of the abovementioned lines of businesses, i.e. the ‘strong holiday destinations’ together with the focus on relaxation and pampering. There is consistency between MTs overall marketing gals and the concept of SSS. This can be seen in the sense that the concept of SSS is also focusing on having fun, games and leaning (See case description). Fun is, among others, present, in the name of the concept, *Happy, Healthy Holiday House* [Translated from Danish] (See case description). Games and leaning is more visible in the concept in the sense of the different activities that are present at the SSS holiday houses. Furthermore, relaxation is also part the SSS concept (See case description).

All in all, SSS is based on this overall strategy and is visible in the SSS concept.

When creating a communications strategy, it is also important to deal with how the concept wants to position themselves in the consumers mind. This will be dealt with in the following paragraph.

**13.2. SSS’s Positioning Statement**

As MT’s overall marketing strategy has been pointed out, the positioning statement can be made for the concept SSS. Positioning is, as mentioned, how an organisation want to position themselves in the consumers mind (Chapter 4). SSS has no positioning statement and therefore we will make a positioning statement based on the case description (Chapter 3) and the interview with MT (Appendix 1).

In order to make a positioning statement, we first need to clarify what the concept has to offer. In our interview with MT, they said that when going on holiday people also want to be healthy. They said: *“And then it has to be health oriented in the sense that well of course there has to be some opportunities to do some activities, some physical activities where you use your body and it has to be easy”* (Appendix 1, lines 48-51). Moreover, the concept also states that it should be easy for the guest to have a healthy holiday (See Case description). In relation to these statements, the concept offers a holiday that can enable the target group to active. Moreover, the concept offers a holiday where a family can be together and enjoy each other (This will be analysed further in the analysis). This is visible in the sense that the concept focus on ‘Child-friendliness and being together with loved ones’ (See case description chapter 3). In relation to this, the concept offers a child friendly place that involves different activities for the children all year around. All this should be present in a way that makes it easy for the target group to have an active holiday, as also mentioned in the case description.

We believe that the concept should position themselves as a different from the traditional holiday houses. What is meant by different is that it is a theme concept that focuses on healthy holiday in an easy way. This theme on healthy holiday arose from the trends that tourist also wants to be health on their holiday, as mentioned in the introduction. The concept should position itself as inspiring in terms of the different activities present and moreover in terms of the recipe book present where different healthy recipes are presented. The activity book and the recipe book as well also goes in line with making it easy for the target group to have a healthy holiday. Furthermore, the concept focus on being together as a family and this should moreover be part of their positioning statement. As was mentioned above, it is a concept where you can spend time with loved ones. This is not to say that the concept should only position itself as only concerning health and activity together with the whole family, even though these are the main values of SSS. There should also be room for some family members to do activities and there should also be room for the family to relax. This is also emphasis by MT (Appendix 1).

All in all, the concept of SSS should position itself as a concept that makes it simple and easy for the target group to be active, also on holiday.

In this chapter, we have analysed the overall marketing strategy and related it to SSS. SSS came as a respond to one of the three lines of businesses, i.e. ‘strong holiday destination’ and is moreover based on value chain that focuses on e.g. the values fun, games, learning. This means that the overall frame of this concept is terms of these initiatives and therefore the focus is on being healthy and active on holiday, with the goal of making holiday houses near the coast more attractive. Based on the different element of the concept, we believe that the concept should position itself as a concept that focus on being together with the family and be active and healthy and that it should be easy to be active and healthy – also on holiday, all year around.

As we have now clarified the overall marketing strategy and SSS’s positioning statement, we will move on to establishing the communication objectives of this communications strategy.

**14. Communication Objectives**

Communication objectives deal with the objectives for the concept, i.e. what is to be achieved from this communications strategy as mentioned in chapter 4. One of the objectives of this communications strategy is to create more awareness around the concept. This is based on the limited promotion of the concept, mentioned in the introduction, and moreover because we believe that concept is well-constructed and interesting and therefore deserves more awareness. Awareness is important to create as this may lead to more of the target group visiting these holiday houses. This objective will be fulfilled by making a facebook page where the target group can get knowledge about the concept and use WOM to spread the concept to others.

The second objective of the communications strategy is to create a relationship with the target group. This will also be done via the facebook page and the different tools it provide in terms WOM and communication with the target group and via different initiatives that will enhance the relationship between the target group and the concept.

These objectives are important to clarify in order to be aware of the goal with making this communications strategy. In the following, we will now move on to the target group and find characteristic about this particular target group. This will be dealt with in the two following chapters.

**15. Characteristics of the Target Group: Relationship Communication**

In the following chapter, via theory on relationship communication, we will be analysing on the factors that are of importance in relation to the target groups’ meaning creation. Determining the factors influencing the target group’s meaning creation will be an aid in relation to how a relationship can be attempted to be established with the target group of SSS. As was clarified in chapter 6, establishing relationships with consumers is be to attempted by considering factors of both a situational context and also with regards to factors of a time dimension and in our case these two dimensions will be established through qualitative interviews . Thus, qualitative interviews (interviews with the target group) will be aligned with the relationship communication model and thus an overall picture of the meaning creation of SSS’s target group will be made. This overall picture of the meaning creation of SSS’s target group will create impetus for considering which factors are important in relation to understanding and reaching the target group and thus incorporate them into the communications strategy. To illustrate the focus of this chapter, the model will be displayed again:

External factors

Internal factors

The creation of meaning

Future factors

Historical factors

Situational context

Time Frame

**15.1. The Time Dimension - Historical Factors**We will commence with considering the historical factors of the time dimension i.e. the encounters which the target group have had with either SSS or Ferieudlejning I/S. The qualitative interviews revealed that none of the respondents had prior knowledge of SSS (See Appendices 3-10). One family expresses having knowledge about a rental service company of the name Feriehusudlejning, however whether it is particularly Feriehusudlejning I/S is unclear (Appendix 4, lines 9-10). In relation to this, it has been estimated that the knowledge that this family expresses in relation to Feriehusudlejning I/S is not a knowledge that pinpoints the family having any relations to the service. Thus, with regards to SSS, historical factors of the time dimension are argued to offer no prior relationship or encounters to build upon and it is therefore a relationship with target group can be attempted from scratch. This implies that introducing the concept of SSS can be performed completely freely and without regards to dealing with previous experiences and the introduction of the concept on facebook can therefore be performed without any restrictions – that is without regarding the restrictions that come into existence in relation to the expectations from the target group (forthcoming in relation to future factors). The fact that no prior relationships have been established in relation to SSS can be considered both a positive aspect and a more demanding aspect. The positive aspect can be considered e.g. in light of no negative attitudes being present and therefore there are no reservations to be considered in relation to e.g. unfortunate incidents when introducing the SSS concept on facebook. When people have no pre-obtained considerations based on e.g. negative prior experiences or WOM, they may be more open and eager to choose the concept or interested in looking into the concept. However, as many of the interviewed families expressed that they relied a great deal on consumer reviews or recommendations from family or friends (see e.g. Appendix 10) (this will be discussed further in chapter 11), it may prove a challenge to persuade consumers to choose the concept as they do not have information from other consumers to rely on. In relation to this, it would therefore be beneficial for SSS to seek to create a number of consumer reviews that would allow for the target group to obtain information concerning the concept from others who have tried it. Feriehusudlejning I/S who is in charge of offering the SSS concept, have had referred families visiting the holiday houses (Appendix 2) and this could be the way for ensuring blog entries about SSS. Families where at least one parent owned a blog could be invited to stay in a SSS under the condition that they were to blog about the experience afterwards and that SSS were allowed to make use of the entry and refer to it on the facebook page (Applying blogs will be discussed further in chapter 19).   
As we have now accounted for the historical factors of the time dimension, we will move on to considering future factors.

**15.2. The Time Dimension - Future Factors**   
In relation to the time dimension, there was also the aspect of future factors that would influence the possible relationship in between consumers and concept. As was articulated above, the interviewed target group expressed having no knowledge about neither SSS nor Feriehusudlejning I/S. Thus, there are no historical factors present that will transcend and thus influence the future factors of the relationship. This means that future factors take on a different expression with regards to SSS. Instead of focusing on future factors that are based on previous experiences with the concept, future factors will embody expressions of what the target group would expect in relation to visiting SSS.

The future factors of the time dimension included expectations, hopes or visions (see chapter 6). In the following, we will be considering the families’ expectations.

*15.2.1. Expectations of the Target Group*

In relation to expectations, the interviewed families listed differentiating expectations in relation to SSS, however, they can all be considered different variations of the same expectations i.e. expectations of SSS fostering an active holiday. One family expressed their expectations to be: *“[…] if you go to a place like that then there are also some expectations to that you… expect that there may be arranged some things, that you can sign up for some different activities”* (Appendix 10, lines 135-137). Another family expressed their expectations to be:

R1: Well then the three words tell me that there should be a hobby room in which some activities would be. […]  
R2: basically that there was something to do whether it..   
R1: good weather or bad weather […]  
R2: but also there was an area when it says, then I’m also thinking kind of primitive, that there was, there was an opportunity to sleep in a tent or a fireplace or something down-to-earth like bow and arrow. To challenge yourself in the nature.

[…]  
R2: yes yes for instance, I’m thinking really that it’s in an area where there might be holiday houses and then there was an area where there could be e.g. like Fårup Sommerland, Tarzan land-ish or something else  
[…]

R1: Healthy, fun, that’s where you challenge yourself, test yourself and make some competitions in different shapes. (Appendix 4, lines 216-239)

Drawing on the quotations above, many of the families’ expectations lie in relation to SSS offers in relation to being active (see also appendix 3, 5, 6, 7). It is important to the families that there is material available in order for them to engage in activities and they moreover emphasise that it should be activities that can be performed regardless of the weather situation. In sum, the families put great emphasis on the active part of the concept – to some even to the point of challenging themselves. In relation to the challenging aspect, one family expressed that they would expect some type activities where they could challenge themselves. This could e.g. happen through an online site (forthcoming)-if the families would like to challenge other families. An element that could be tapped into in relation to challenges which the families could embark on, is *geocaching*. Within recent years, geocaching has become a popular activity (Geocaching). Geocaching refers to a modern day treasure hunt (Samvirke) where people through the means of GPS hide and find caches (usually a plastic box containing a log book and stuff you can exchange for things you have brought yourself (Geocaching). The target group of the holiday houses could be encouraged to try out geocaching and SSS could initiate it by placing caches in the area of the holiday houses and the target groups could be encouraged to find the caches or create new caches. Geocaching could also be considered in relation to fostering the engagement levels of the target group- this will be discussed further in chapter 19. Geocaching can also be related to another expectation as articulated by family 8. They express that if visiting a SSS holiday house, they would expect that activities being arranged or the possibility of being able to sign up for different activities (Appendix 10, lines 136-137). Geocaching is not an activity that is signed up for, however, it provides the possibility of an external activity that the families can engage in. Geocaching could thus function as such an activity as the family expresses. However, this expectation could also be accommodated through the corporation with surrounding sights and SSS could e.g. via pamphlets provide the families with information of activities in the surrounding area taking place during they stay.

When it comes to being active, the families reflect focuses on differentiating aspects. Some families express expectations of a holiday destination embodying activities that every family member can engage in:

It’s important to us eh that we’re somewhere where we all like to be. Where there‘s something for us all. We leap from 7 to 18 years here in this family, [...], so it’s important there’s something for she that’s 18 but it’s also important that there’s something for Anton on 7 (Appendix 3, lines 152-154)

The abovementioned is representative of the fact that the families not only expect that random activities can be performed, but that the activities also need to be directed with the purpose of engaging people of all ages. This is definitely an aspect to consider in relation to the communication of SSS. In relation to providing information for the families, it should be clarified that the activities that can be engaged in in a SSS holiday house is for all family member-big and small. Another expectation that is aligned with what was mentioned in relation to the families expecting activities for all age groups is present within the families. In relation to this, specific expectations in relation to how the activities can be performed when on holiday are expressed. One family expresses that: *“Because we know well if it’s going to be something that is successful, it has to be something everyone can participate in in one way or another so that one doesn’t end up sitting feeling left out*” (Appendix 5, lines 66-67). Within the same frame of context, another family expresses that:*”[…] it’s important that it’s something that we can have some kind of union around. It doesn’t need to be all 5 of us at once, it can also be two and two. But something that appeals to us all, that’s about what I think is important.”* (Appendix 5, lines 120-122)*.* As can be seen from the quotations, it varies what the families expect in relation to the activities to engage in when on holiday. Some emphasise that it has to be activities that include all family members so that no one feels left out, while others focus on activities that should appeal to and create a sense of union, but it does not necessarily need to be activities that every member of the family needs to engage in. In relation to the different expectations concerning being active, this information should be applied as to the description of the SSS concept on the facebook page. The information should thus be directed at the target group through the underlining of the different activities that can be engage in, in a SSS holiday house and moreover, it should articulated as to underlining that the activities range from activities that some family members can engage in to all family members. Lastly, the different activities should underline that there is something for every age group.

An expectation in relation to relatively the recipe book and the pamphlet on activities to engage in is also expressed. Family 3 expresses: *“Now you mentioned that with cook books, I actually think that’s a really good idea. That something I’d definitely use and think aah, something new, what can I try and what are the possibilities in it”* (Appendix 5, lines 143-145). Family 1 expresses the recipe book and pamphlet on activities to engage in to inspire the family in different directions (Appendix 5, lines 202-203). As can be seen from the two quotations, expectations exist in relation to the content of recipe book and pamphlet on activities i.e. that they should be inspiring and reflect e.g. new and different elements.

Another expectation relating to the concept of SSS is with respect to the equipment available within the holiday houses. Family 1 expresses that they would expect that visiting a SSS holiday house would mean that they did not have to bring as much with them as usual (Appendix 3, lines 187-188). Thus, in order to accommodate this expectation, it is important that the communication of SSS on facebook emphasises specifically which activities are possible to engage in.

As we have now established the target groups’ expectations in relation to the SSS concept, we will move on to visions and hopes.

*15.2.2. Visions and Hopes of the Target Group*

In relation to visions, many of the families also expressed visions of being together as a family (See appendix 3-10). Several of the families articulated that it was important to them simply to be together and enjoy that there were no restrictions as to everyday tasks: *“Well that’s doing things together yes, the things you don’t have time for in your everyday lives*” (Appendix 7, lines 134-135).The vision of the families thus is that going on holiday means that it is an opportunity to relinquish the reins and just be together. Thus the SSS concept could utilize this information in the sense that all the available material for activities and the level of activities is entirely up to the individual families and moreover utilise the fact that the families are seeking to get away from their strict everyday lives and want to be together with no schedule deciding their day. In relation to this vision of the target group, SSS should apply this information in e.g. their description of the concept. It should be brought to the reader’s attention that SSS allows for just being together.

A hope of the families is expressed in relation to networking possibilities of the children. Two of the families mention the importance of the children being able to be with others: *“[…] and there you might get chatting with others, the children, they may get to know others […]and play with them and maybe gain a network from it […]”* (Appendix 10, lines 116-119). The other family expressed that: *“and then I would think in relation to the fact that it would be really good with some large holiday houses, also where several [people] could be. Maybe some more families together or something. Because that’s just really good for our children to travel with others. If they’re not placed together or something link that, that there’s then like that there is plenty of space in them”* (Appendix 3, lines 205-210). As can be seen from the two quotations, a vision/hope is expressed in relation to the families or at least the children to be able to network with others. The SSS holiday houses are large vacation houses that can room more than one family and this is an aspect that the information concerning SSS should reflect. The information should thus be directed with the purpose of explaining that the holiday houses can be enjoyed by one family but also by several families, thereby making it possible for people to travel in groups. This way the networking preferences of the target group could be accommodated. The networking preferences could moreover be accommodated via e.g. wireless internet in the holiday houses. Thus the target group could e.g. log on to the facebook page and see who was visiting other houses and people could post messages expressing if they wanted to meet.

All in all, the families reflect many of the same expectations and visions in relation to SSS. They expect that the concept will provide the material for engaging in different activities and these activities extent from activities that some or all of the family members can engage in to challenging activities. Moreover, expectations of the recipe book and activity book providing inspiration and the opportunity of trying new things were articulated. Many of the families reflected visions of being together as a family and enjoying this element without being influenced by busy schedules and moreover, they reflected hopes of the possibility of the children to be able to network. In relation to SSS, it was articulated that the information published on the facebook page was to be directed at the target group’s preferences in relation to activities to perform and in relation to challenging activities geocaching was suggested. Moreover, accommodating the networking preference was argued to be performed through providing information and also through e.g. the possibility of connecting with other SSS visitors on the facebook page (via internet in the particular houses). Finally, it was expressed that in terms of information, SSS should utilise the aspect of the families viewing their holidays as an opportunity to escape the strict everyday lives and emphasise how SSS allows for this.

As we have now analysed on the time dimension of the model, we will move on to analysing the situational context i.e. internal and external factors.

**15.3. The Situational Dimension - Internal Factors**

In relation to the situational context, we will commence with internal factors and analyse how these are manifested in relation to the target group. As was mentioned in chapter 6, internal factors refers to attitudes, capabilities, identity and personal interests. In the following, we will be considering personal interests.

*15.3.1. Personal Interests of the Target Group*

In relation to personal interests, several interests are expressed by the target group. One family expresses being healthy as a personal interest:

[…] well the ground’s prepared for it being a healthy and fun holiday and today it’s also even more important that you’re active because the children even though they’re in school right, well they’re also sitting still and just like that also if you have a sedentary job right, well that it’s important today to keep going and be active and exercise also because otherwise.. then it results in becoming too fat if you don’t exercise.. so definitely it would be something we would do as a family. Definitely. (Appendix 7, lines 151-156)

As can be seen from the quotation above, this family articulates that being active as an important aspect for them in terms of their health. Thus, they express having a personal interest in staying healthy.   
A personal interest that many of the families reflect is playing games: *“Yes, we bring eh.. lots of games so we can have a nice time with that […]”* (Appendix 10, line 125) (Playing games is also expressed in appendix 10, 9, 4, 5 and 3). As can be seen from the quote (and drawing on the other referenced appendices) most of the families share the personal interest of playing games. If we consider the quotation mentioned above, another personal interest becomes apparent. In correlation with expressing that they bring games with them when on holiday, the family expresses that they bring these games in order to have a nice time. This can be aligned with what was mentioned previously of being together as a family (in relation to expectations) and thus a personal interest becomes to be together as a family, enjoying themselves and enjoying having the time to be together. This is also expressed by family 1 who enjoys the ability to: *“[…] sit and play the games e.g. you don’t manage to play in your everyday because you’re little too busy and give the children the attention that you sometimes may also be too busy to give them”* (Appendix 3, lines 181-183).As is illustrated in the quotation above, the family emphasises being able to sit down with their children and direct full attention at the children.

Personal interests are also reflected in terms of being active i.e. the families mention many different activities which they like to engage in. The personal interests listed the families are playing miniature golf, playing WII (Appendix 9), playing volleyball- both outside and indoors, running, going to the gym, bicycling, long walks, dancing (Appendix 4), handball, tennis (Appendix 6), bathing/ swimming, water gymnastics, gymnastics (Appendix 5). As is illustrated via the listings above, the families reflect many different personal interests in relation to being active.

All in all, the personal interests reflect that the target group interested in staying healthy, in engaging in all types of different activities, including playing games. Finally, a personal interest was expressed in relation to being together as a family. In the following, we will be considering attitudes and identity of the target group.

*15.3.2. Attitudes and Identity of the Target Group*

In relation to the latter quote in the abovementioned paragraph (family 1), the family reflects holidays providing them with the opportunity of giving their children the attention they may have been too busy to give them in their everyday lives. This aspect can be considered in relation to the attitudes of the target group (another internal factor-see chapter 6). That the family expresses being too busy to sometimes pay attention to their children, implicitly indicates a guilty conscience on behalf of the parents. Thus, based on the aforementioned interview and the fact that all families emphasise being together when on holiday, it can be considered to be an attitude within the families that going on holiday means that the family is in focus and where you ‘make up for lost time’ i.e. do things together that their everyday lives does not allow for.

What was articulated in relation attitudes above can be aligned with the identity of the target group (another internal factor) i.e. that being a children’s family is a part of their identity. That being a children’s family is part of the families’ identity can be seen in the sense that the children are the main focus in relation to a holiday i.e. the children influence the choice of holiday (forthcoming under external factors) and that it is of importance what activities are available in relation to the children and that there is something for all age groups (as mentioned under future factors). Moreover, the identity of being a children’s family can be seen in the way that all families underline being together as an important aspect of their holidays and moreover how the holiday is a way to give the children the attention that may be missing in their everyday lives.

All in all, the attitudes and the identity of the target group reflect the aspect of being children’s families and this underlines that this aspect is an element that should be considered in relation to reaching the target group. In the communication of SSS, it should be emphasised how the concept can accommodate the families in relation to identity and attitudes. In the following, we will consider the last internal factor i.e. capabilities.

*15.3.3. Capabilities of the Target Group*

In relation the target group of SSS, a capability can be considered in relation to how the SSS concept is appropriate for the families. This relates to what the families articulate in relation to how the activities to engage in in a SSS holiday house have to be within the frame of accommodating all age groups (discussed under expectations in this chapter). In relation to this, the capability of the families becomes whether they can make use of the particular initiatives of the concept that and this is an aspect that should be considered in relation to reaching the target group.

As we have now, covered the internal factors of the situational context, we will move on to external factors.

**15.4. The Situational Dimension - External Factors**In chapter 6, external factors were listed to be trends, economic situation, the family and alternative choices. In the following, we will be considering family.

*15.4.1. The family*

As listed above (and in chapter 6), the family is an external factor that may influence the meaning creation. This factor is also prevalent from the interviewed families many of whom express that it is very much the children who are considered when deciding on a destination:

Well, our kids are 7 and 10 years old, so it’s mainly them we eh.. like if there’s anything for them well eh..so that it’ll also be.. that we also go away as a family on holiday and we also weigh their needs […]  
It’s a high priority?  
yes

(Appendix 7, lines 66-70)

Another family also expresses that it is the children who ‘dictate’ the travel destinations and moreover, they express a dilemma in relation choosing a destination that will please all children:

[…] It also changes very much in relation to children, almost every year. That I also think also here after, with two slightly older children and Jacob, he’s smaller. It’s not quite sure that it’s the same they want. But that’s then a new problem, what it is we will consider the most he he” (Appendix 6, lines 87-81)

Drawing on the two quotes, it is evident that children are an important decisive factor in relation to choosing where to go on holiday (More families express this, see Appendix 4, 3, and 5). Thus it is important to consider this aspect and incorporate the major influence that children have into the communication of the product, i.e. make sure that information about activities is available. The family in the quote also reflect the way in which meaning creation is a process that always changes (see chapter 6). This is seen in the sense that they express that their choice of holiday changes every year according to the children meaning that what is expressed to be the preferences now may not be the same next year. This is also an important aspect to consider in relation to reaching the target group of SSS i.e. it is constantly important to be aware of the tendencies and preferences of the target group as they continue to change. In relation to this, the applicability of facebook is further underlined as it is possible to obtain thorough information about the target group via different tools (forthcoming - see chapter 19).

All in all, the family is a decisive factor as the holidays are chosen based on the children in the family and moreover this external factor was expressed to reflect how meaning creation constantly changes i.e. that the preferences of the children may change from holiday to holiday. As we have now considered how the family is an external factor, we will move on to economic situation and trends.

*15.4.2. Economic Situation and Trends*

Another external factor, that many of the families list, is economic situation. Even though the children’s wishes are of the essence, the families’ economic situation is also a deciding matter in relation to choosing a destination: *“Well definitely yes, we also look at that because we also have an amount reserved right and then there’s a plus /minus margin also hehe”* (Appendix 7, lines 73-74). (Families also express the price being of the essence in appendix 9, 4, 10, 8, 5, and 6). As the concept has been implemented and is running, the price of staying in a SSS holiday house is already determined, however, as most of the families price as a decisive factor, the price of the holiday houses should reflect a price range that is possible for the families to accommodate.

Trends were listed as an external factor that would be of influence in relation to the meaning creation of the consumer. In relation to this, it was expressed that a trend that is apparent these days is the trend of being leading a healthy and active life (see chapter 1). This trend is also articulated by one of the families, who in relation to leading an everyday life that can very sedentary (office work and children sitting down most of the time in school) stress the importance of being active in order to avoid overweight (Appendix 7, lines 152-156). Another trend that has been expressed in relation to being active is geocaching which was mentioned under expectations in relation to future factors. As the concept of SSS was created based on the trend of being healthy and active, this trend is already well-incorporated in to concept. However, this should also be an aspect that is communicated into the communication of the product i.e. how the concept is in line with the demands of this trend.

As we have now analysed the target group in relation to economic situation and trends, we will move on to considering alternative choices.

*15.4.3. Alternative Choices*

As has been established, the target group of have no prior knowledge of SSS (discussed under historical factors) and thus the impetus for e.g. choosing alternative choices as opposed to SSS cannot be considered. Instead the alternative choices will be considered in relation to the families’ expressions of the importance of surrounding sights being available to them. This can be seen in the following quotation: *“Well, I like to know what’s in the area […]well whether there’s something interesting for me or for the children or so that you think that that was a place you’d like to go”* (Appendix 9, lines 35-38). Another family expresses that it is important there are *“[…] some bigger things in the area where you could go and then spend a single day […] [and that there’s] also something indoors the place we’re going in case that it’s pouring down rain, that there might be a water world indoor gym or something”* (Appendix 10, lines 57-59).

As can be seen from the quotations above, some of the families find it important to obtain information of what type of activity possibilities that are in the surrounding area. In relation to the emphasis the target group places on surrounding sights, it is important that the communication of SSS is performed with regards to informing the target group of these sights. In relation to this, it would be beneficial to included links to surrounding sights on the facebook page (this will be discussed further in chapter 18).

As we have now analysed all factors that influence the target group’s meaning creation, we will in the following adapt it to the relationship communication model.

**15.5. Influent Factors on the Meaning Creation of the Target Group**

In the model below, the different factors that influence target group’s meaning creation in relation to SSS have been adapted.

**External factors:**

Children deciding factor when choosing a holiday

Economic situation

Trend on being healthy and active on holiday

Surrounding sights

Situational context

**Historical factors:**

No prior relationships

**Future factors:**

*Expectations:*

SSS fostering an active holiday

Challenges activeties/many activities to engage in

Activities to sign up for

Activities for some or whole family

Activities for all age groups

Recipe book and activity book providing inspiration

Wide range of equipment available

*Vision:*

Being together as a family

*Hopes:*

Hope of networking possibilities for children

The creation of meaning

**Internal factors:**

*Personal interest:*

Being healthy

Playing games

Being together

Being active through various activities

*Identity:*

Being a children’s family

*Attitudes:*

Family in focus on holiday

*Capabilities:*

Whether they can make use of SSS

Time Frame

In sum, via the relationship communication model it has been argued that in terms of establishing a relationship with the target group, the concept of SSS has no prior relations to consider (in relation to historical factors) and there are thus no historical factors that influence the target group’s meaning creation i.e. the relationship with the target group can be attempted from scratch. In relation to future factors, the target group’s meaning creation is influenced through e.g. expectations of being active and visions of being together. Internal factors of the situational context were argued to be e.g. playing games, capability in relation to ‘fitting into’ the SSS concept and the identity of family being that they are a children’s family. External factors of the situational context were argued to be e.g. the family i.e. the children’s influence on the choice of holiday, economic situation and the importance of surrounding sights to visit.

As was mentioned in the theory, in order to achieve relationship communication it is important to ensure that as many of the factors as possible are accommodated. In terms of applying this in relation to the communications strategy, it is important that the information from all four factors is applied when constructing content on the facebook page. This is e.g. in relation to the target group’s expectations e.g. in relation to the activities that are available i.e. that some prefer challenging activities and others prefer activities that bring the family together. Moreover, it is e.g. in relation to addressing the identity and the attitudes of the families i.e. to address their sense of being a family and moreover to e.g. create awareness of surrounding sites of the concept. Recommendations in relation to additions to the concept have also been made. For instance, it was recommended to via the facebook page to provide the target group with the means of obtaining contact with others visiting the holiday houses (with the purpose of networking). Another recommendation in terms of an addition to the concept was in relation to the activity geocaching were it was recommended to introduce this activity in relation to challenging activities.

It was mentioned in chapter 6, that in order to establish relationships, it is emphasised that as many factors as possible are appealed to, however as SSS is a relatively unknown concept and no relationships have been argued to exist, considering pre-established relationships with the target group has not been possible (also mentioned in chapter 6). Thus, the theory of relationship communication has been applied in relation to creating a database of factors that influence target group’s meaning creation process. This database provides an overview of factors to consider in the communication of SSS

As we have now established which factors influence the target group’s meaning creation in relation to SSS, we will move on to the decision-making process which considers important factors in relation to the target group’s buying habits.

**16. Characteristics of the Target Group: The Decision-Making Process**

This chapter is the second part of characteristics of the target group and will be dealing with the decision-making process. The decision-making process will enable us to get a better understanding of the Danish children’s families and how they solve a problem in terms of buying the concept of SSS. This understanding will be obtained by analysing the interviews and relating these interviews to the theory on decision-making process.

As mentioned in theory, three steps were elaborated on. The three first steps were as follows: Need recognition, Information search and Evaluation of alternatives and will be analysed in the following.

**16.1. The Target Group’s Need Recognition/Problem Awareness**

The first step is the need recognition or problem awareness. In relation to our target group, the need to get away from everyday life and be together with family was agreed upon by all the families (See appendices 3-10). Some of the families expressed that they wanted to get away and do the things they did not have the time for in everyday life, which is why a need for a holiday emerged as this would give them the time to do this. For instance, one family said when asked what was important for them in terms of holiday: *“Well it’s that of doing things together well, things you don’t have time for for in everyday life, sit down and play games right, walk in nightclothes all day and well, it is things you don’t have time to do in everyday life”* (Appendix 7, lines 134-136). Family 1 said almost the same:

[...] so it is really important to me that you can sit down and relax and breath all the way down in the stomach and look at each other and be a little bit get bored and sit and play the games e.g. you don’t manage to play in your everyday because you’re little too busy and give the children the attention that you sometimes may also be too busy to give them” get to play those games for instance that you can’t make in everyday life cos you are a bit too busy and give the children the attention that you might sometimes be too busy to give them (Appendix 3, lines 180-183)

Even though the families to not express directly that they have *need* to get away and be with the family, both families emphasise the need to get away from everyday life and get to do the things with their children that there is no time for during the everyday lives. This was moreover expressed by all families (Appendices 3-10).

From the interviews, we moreover find examples of families that emphasise other important needs in relation to get away and be together as a family. All of the families emphasise that it was important to do different activities on their holiday where some families wished for more activity than others. Some families mentioned different active games that they would play when on holiday whereas others mentioned less active activities, as for instance board games and cards (Ex. appendix 9). Therefore, we believe that there is moreover a need for an active holiday with the family. Moreover, family 3 said that it was important there was something the family could do together but also emphases that: “*[...] it doesn’t have to be the five of us at once, it can also be two and two. But something that appeals to everyone, that I actually think is important”* (Appendix 5, lines 120-122). Thus, there should also be room for only some family members to interact with each others. So all in all, a need to get away from everyday life and be with the family and do different activities together was emphasised.

Even though all the families like to be active, some of them express a different most of them also have another need: Family 1 states: *“[...] well it’s again to, we need to be active. But it is also to relax, there need to be room for that because our everyday life is just so busy”* (Appendix 3, lines 178-179). Moreover, family 5 states: *“Yes we are [active] but we do also like to relax on holiday hehe”* (Appendix 6, line 137). These two families, and others, also have a need to relax as is also why many people go on holiday. The relax element was also emphasised as mentioned in the chapter on positioning (Chapter 13).

As we are now aware of the target group’s needs, we find it relevant to see if these needs are something the concept of SSS can fulfil. As was stated in the chapter 13, in the paragraph of Positioning Statement, the concept positioned itself as concept where the family can be together and enjoy each other, where the family can be active together or separately, where they can relax and where is it made easy for the family to fulfil these needs. If we compare the concepts positioning statement with the target group’s needs (abovementioned), we see many similarities. First of all, the need to get away from everyday life and do different activities together was mentioned by all families and which we therefore believe to be the main need the families have. In relation to being active, it was mentioned by some of the families that they needed a holiday where they could do different activities together as a family but there should also be room for only some family member to do activities together. This is also part of the concept, to be able to do things both together and but also activities for only some family members. As MT said: *“Of course there are many activities that are for the whole family but there are also activities that mom can do or dad can do alone [...]. So you can do activities together or alone”* (Appendix 1, lines 206-209). Therefore, we find consistency between the target group’s needs and the concept of SSS. The need to get away and be together with the family, as mentioned earlier, and we therefore see it as at relevant factor for the target group and this, according to SSS’s positioning statement, fit well with the target groups need.

We now know that most of these families need to get away from everyday life and do things together that there is no time for during everyday life. This was also seen in terms of the vision the target group has, that the concept of SSS can give them the time they need to be together with their family, which was analysed will be analysed in chapter 15. Moreover, they need a holiday that is not dictated down to every detail but where there is room for them to be together and enjoy each other.

All in all, the abovementioned needs and what the concept can offers, seems to correlates well. In relation to these needs, it is important that the concept take these needs into consideration when trying to reach the target group. For instance, the need to get away from everyday life and be with the family, must be visible in terms of the information that is present on facebook. I.e. to make it clear for the target group that these needs can be fulfilled by this concept.

As the needs have been outlined, the next stage in the decision-making process is to clarify how the target group search for information. This will be dealt with in the following.

**16.2. The Target Group’s Information Search**

We are now aware of the target group’s needs. The next stage to analyse then is how they search for information in terms of finding solutions for these needs. As mentioned, there are two types of information search: internal information search and external information search. These will be analysed in the following.

*16.2.1. Internal Information Search*

Internal information search dealt with information from ones memory in terms of personal experiences, potential solutions and/or where to search for other information (See chapter 7). According to some of the interviewed families, the first they did when the need arose was to talk to the children and talk together as a family about a potential solution. For instance, family 2 says: *“well, we probably talk a lot in the family then with what we would like to do. Eh, well in our heads we probably already have decided that we are going south and then it like that we talk about it […]”* (Appendix 4, lines 16-17). Another family said: *“[…] so it’s really the children we listen to first and foremost and if its too expensive we make the decision”* (Appendix 8, line 15-16). These are examples of internal search and beside these two, one family more uses this form of internal search (Appendix 6). This means that internal search in terms of possible solutions for how to fulfil the need to get away was used by almost half of the families. Another element of internal search is personal experiences which were also used by some of the families. Family 1 said: *“eh our destination the last couple of years has actually be to the same place, Italy, […] [and] then we have actually kind of stuck around […]“* (Appendix 3, lines 13-18). Family 2 says: *“Among others, here this year our children really wanted to go back to the same lake where we have been before”* (Appendix 4, lines 17-18). This is a clear example of personal experience that leads this family back to the same destination. This is also seen in Family 2 and 5 who used personal experience to choice a holiday destination.

These were the examples we found in relation to internal search. In relation to the concept of SSS, as none of the families have any knowledge of the concept, this is not something the concept can benefit from. However, when the target group get familiar with the concept, the internal search can be a strong factor as the families might choose this place based on previous experience they have had with this concept. However, for now the concept cannot benefit from internal search. Therefore, the concept of SSS must first and foremost focus on the external information search until the target group get familiar with the concept. External information search will be analysed in the following.

*16.2.2. External Information Search*

External search deals with e.g. personal sources and commercial sources, as mentioned in chapter 7. As is evident from the interviews, all families used the internet as an information search channel for information about where to go and what to see (See Appendices 3-10). In terms of searching on a particular site, some of the families said that they used Google for information search (Appendix 7, line 20; Appendix 8, line 45). One family said that they would search on the different travel agencies’ homepages (Appendix 8). The rest of the families did not mention a specific place except ‘the internet’, which may also involve Google and/or travel agencies’ homepages. As all the interviewed families use the internet for information search only indicates the relevance for the concept to be present online in order to make be as visible as possible for the target group.

Seven of the interviewed families had at some point gained their information via friends and family, which is also an external search. Moreover, six families had read other user’s experiences on certain destinations which were an influencing factor on their choice of holiday. As one family said: *“When we were going to London for instance, we checked it in relation to hotels and so on [...] what people had written about them. You don’t wanna go and then it just sucks”* (Appendix 3, lines 53-55). Of the two remaining families who had not read other user experiences, one of them said that they would probably do it (Appendix 10). This therefore means, that all the families use external search in terms of information from other user’s experiences. This form of external search, information search in terms of friends and family and in terms of other user’s experiences, can be referred to as WOM (As mentioned in chapter 4). WOM had a strong influences on consumers and in relation to the concept of SSS, it was visible that this is very used among the target group and therefore also seen as a strong influencing factor among them.

Except information in terms of WOM and via the internet, two families mentioned that they would order catalogues in some cases (Appendix 3 and 6). In relation to this, the concept of SSS is present in the catalogues from Feriehusudlejning I/S (See Appendix 2). This means that the marketing effort that has been done in terms of catalogues is used by some target groups. This of course depends on where the target group orders the catalogue. Furthermore, this is not as used by the target group as for instance the internet, as mentioned, and therefore the internet is where the concept should be more present, which fits well in relation to our choice of medium. Moreover, one family says they do not search for information and if they needed it they would ask the hotel staff (Appendix 8). However, this particular family did not search for information before holidays which therefore makes them a bit different from the rest of the target group.

If we compare internal with external, both forms of information search seem of importance for the families. In general, many of the families search for information in the same way, i.e. by past experiences as well as friends and family and information search online. External information search, in terms of information from friends and family, is expressed as very strong and reliable among the interviewed families. Only one family, as mentioned above, did not prefer information from any particular source. In relation to the concept of SSS, this form of information is important as they now know how the target group search for information and therefore are able to be present where the target group search for information. This was for instance evident in terms of external search as most of the families preferred the internet and also other user’s experiences in terms of information search. Therefore, facebook seems as a useful medium as it is both present online and is also a place where the target group can share experiences with each other’s. As the concept is not so well known yet, it is the target group’s external information search they need to focus on. This is because the target group is not families with the concept at the moment and therefore the concept cannot benefit from internal search, as mentioned earlier. In order to make use of the internal information search, they need to create awareness around the concept for the target group. This could for instance be done by getting some of the families in the houses for a cheaper price and make them tell about this concept on the facebook page, as also recommended in the previous chapter. However, first and foremost, the concept of SSS needs to benefit from the external search.

As we have now analysed the target groups different ways of searching for information, we will move on to analyse other factors that can influence the final decision.

**16.3. The Target Group’s Evaluation of Alternatives**

The next stage is the evaluation of alternatives. This deals with the level of involvement in the particular decision. As none of the families interviewed have visited the SSS houses or had any knowledge of these houses (as also mentioned in the previous chapter), we will give our estimate to their level of involvement, based on the eight interviews. This will be done in the following.

*16.3.1. Self-image*

The first involvement was self-image. In relation to a holiday, self-image is likely to be high in most cases. This is, among others, because a holiday is very joyful for most people and is at the same time important in terms of self-image as a holiday tells something about who they are as a person (See chapter 7). In relation to the interviews, all the families expressed that they like to do activities when on holiday. For instance, one family said when asked what kind of information they found useful when seeking for a holiday:

*R1: we also checked a bit about the beach ,[...] about beachvolly tracks, cos that we like to play all of us. [...].*

*R2: and we distinctively went after beachvolly tracks […]* (Appendix 4, lines 34-38)

This family values beachvolly very much which and therefore their self-image can be seen to be active. The self-images of being active is expressed by more families (See appendices 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10). Another family mentioned: *“[...] and that it is warm, that has actually become important as well, more than it used to be. And in time we have become a bit more luxury […]”* (Appendix 6, lines 145-146). Both this family and family 1 (Appendix 3) express the preference in going south where there is guarantee for nice and warm weather. This may also be an example of self-image in terms of that these families may want to present themselves as international or as a family that can afford to go abroad. According to family 2, they have a different self-image: *“[…] but somewhere it’s also an incredible satisfaction to find a place on your own, right,[...] to find something instead of going to places where everyone else have been”* (Appendix 4, lines 55-58). They find it satisfying to find new places and see it as cool to be the first (with their social network) to visit this destination. This means that their self-image is to be different and not want to be like others.

Moreover, another family said: *“well, it is to be together [...]. And it doesn’t matter if it’s in Denmark or Italy or where it is, it is that you have time for each other”* (Appendix 9, lines 149-154). This is also exemplified by this family: *“But well it is important that we are together and we can do things together”* (Appendix 6, lines 174-175). These statements are agreed upon by all the families (See appendices 3-10). This may related to the fact that this target group is children’s families and part of their self-image may then be seen as them being family people. This means that for these families, it is important to go on a holiday that reflects this self-image and gives the children many opportunities in terms of entertainment. As self-image is present in this target group’s choice of holiday, this also means that involvement is high. This can be seen as for instance all the families expressed that being active was part of their self-image. As being active is part of their self-image, choosing a holiday where it is possible to be active is important and therefore involvement is high.

All in all, the families reflect both similarities and disparities in terms of self-image. Similarities were seen in terms of being active and being a family person. Disparities were seen in terms of being international. In relation to the concept of SSS, the information present in terms of the concept must reflect the target group’s self-image. In relation to being an active family and family people, this correlated well with the concept of SSS. As mentioned in the chapter of the overall marketing strategy and the positioning statement of SSS (Chapter 13), the concept focuses on being active together with the whole family. In relation to this, involvement is high. What this means, will be dealt with later in this chapter. In the following we will analyse another factor that may influence the final decision, which is perceived risk.

*16.3.2. Perceived Risk*

The second involvement is perceived risk and deals with whether the risk of making a mistake is high or low (Chapter 7). In relation to this, we also argue that involvement is high. The main reason for this is the money involved in terms of the expenses for a holiday which therefore makes the mistake of choosing the wrong holiday more consequences which then leads to high involvement. This is of course different from family to family but most of families indicated that price matters when it comes to deciding on where to go on holiday. This is for instance exemplified by family 6: *“Well it [the price] has a lot to say because we do not want to use too much money on a holiday [...]”* (Appendix 8, line 65). This was also mentioned by another family, family 4: “*The price is not the only matter in our situation but it should not cost completely [the holiday should not cost that much]*“ (Appendix 6, lines 85-87). This is also mentioned by other four families (See appendices 9, 4, 10, 8, 5, and 6). As is evident from the quotes, price is an important factor for many families. This could be due to what was mentioned above, that the change of making a mistake can have more consequences. For instance, one family says: *“It is always nice to hear when others have been to a place and can recommend a place. Cos the pictures can raise doubt, we’ve tried that”* (Appendix 6, line 48). This may also be the reason for the external information search in terms of other user’s experiences is so used among the target group, as mentioned above. The target group may use this form of information in order to be sure that what they choose are in line with what the pay for, so the risk of making a mistake is not high. If the target group experiences a bad holiday, it may feel as a wait of money. Therefore, involvement in high due to the risk of making a mistake is high in terms of the money involved.

Another reason for high involvement in terms of perceived risk is because this concept is different from other Danish holiday houses. Most families have been to a holiday house in Denmark or heard of it and is therefore familiar with the Danish holiday house idea. However, the SSS concept is different from these regular holiday houses as it is a theme holiday house. The SSS concept promise that the holiday house is filled with many different forms of activities and that an activity book and recipe book is present. Therefore, expectation may be higher. Things can turn up unexpected in many ways, as for instance the condition of the holiday houses, things that was promised that was not fulfilled and so on and so forth. This again leads back to the risk of making a mistake has more consequences and therefore involvement is high.

A third example of perceived risk is found in appendix 10. Family 8 said: *“It is nice to get a mix [of information] but ehh I think it’s nice if you get a recommendation from someone cos then you can be sure that it is a nice place. Cos those who own the place will probably also speak positive about the place yes”* (Appendix 10, lines 41-43). The perceived risk is present in the sense that the family are not sure what to expect and therefore recommendations from others is preferred. Moreover, family 4 says: *“It is always nice to hear when others have been to a place and can recommend a place. Cos the pictures can raise doubt, we have tried that”* (Appendix 6, lines 48-49). These are two example of how perceive risk in terms of not being sure that what they are told via picture or by a sales person is the unitary truth. Therefore, the risk of making a mistake is higher and therefore involvement is higher. This is also seen in terms of the fact that none of these families are familiar with the concept and therefore involvement is high.

In relation to this, it is important, as was also expressed by the families, to incorporate other user experiences in the concept as this seems more reliable to the target group. This will further be dealt with later in this chapter. In the following the third risk will be analysed which deals with

*16.3.3. Social Factors*

In terms of social acceptance, which is the third involvement, this is very hard to measure form the interviews. The reason for this is that none of the families expressed directly that their choice would affect how they stand in a social context. However, from different contexts we will bring forward a few examples of this.

Many of families relay on experiences from friends and family because they feel safe by doing this in the sense that they feel in the same social situation as them. However, this is only based on the fact that many seem to travel to destinations that have been recommended by friends and family. It could also be that this has nothing to do with social acceptance but just because the target group use other user’s experiences in terms of information search.

In relation to being a parent, there might be a social acceptance involved in terms of the children. What this means is that even though most families talked together as a family about the destination of their holiday, as mentioned earlier, it is most likely the parents who make the final decision and this decision may children’s experiences. The reason for this is that the children’s needs are very important in a children family and if the children are not pleased, is may lead to a negative holiday. Therefore, the parents’ decision may be depended on social acceptance in relation to the children. However, this was not mentioned or referred to by and of the interviewed families and neither was the first mentioned example. Therefore, social factors were not expressed by the families as a factor that would affect their choice of holiday, we therefore believe that the involvement is low.

In relation to find information about the target group and their social factors, facebook is a useful medium. The reason for this is that as the users on facebook write quite a lot information about themselves and facebook can be seen a way to find information about the target group and their social factors. This could be a way of receiving information in terms of the target group and their social stand.

The fourth and last factor that can determine the level of involvement is hedonistic influences and is what the following paragraph will be dealing with.

*16.3.4. Hedonistic Influences*

The last factor that can influence the purchase, is hedonistic influences. In relation to this, we argue that there is a high degree of pleasure involved when purchasing a holiday, for any person. Holidays are about the experience, pleasure and it is about doing the things you love. We do not find any clear examples of this among the families, in the sense that they do not mentioned directly that they have a high degree of pleasure involved when they go on holiday. However, one family says when asked what was the overall factor when choosing a destination: *“[...] but but but I will always consider what would we as a family enjoy the most ehh”* (Appendix 5, lines 62-63). This quote expresses that this family chooses a holiday in terms of what they will enjoy the most. In relation to the rest of the interviewed families, it is implicitly expressed that these families focus on being together and doing different activities together which most likely also involve pleasure. As there is a certain amount of pleasure involved in terms of the concept of SSS, it means that involvement is high.

It is important for the families to have a nice holiday where they can do the things they like. Some people have tried to go on a holiday that did not live up to their expectations or heard about it. As for instance this family, as mentioned earlier: *“It is always nice to hear when others have been to a place and can recommend a place. Cos the pictures can raise doubt, we’ve tried that”* (Appendix 6, lines 48-49). This family expresses that there can be doubt among the pictures of the destination as was also mentioned in the paragraph on perceived risk, as seeing picture of a destination might be one thing and the actual destination might be another, as this family has experienced. This doubt might only occur due to high level of pleasure and enjoyment. Therefore, as the involvement is high in order to create as pleasant a holiday as possible, more information search is also done.

In relation to the concept, it is important to make it visible for the target group the high degree of pleasure involved in buying this concept. For instance, this could be done by posting pictures of a happy family or present information that appeal to the pleasure element. Moreover, as mentioned before, the target group make use of user-generated content, making other consumer to post their happy holiday on the facebook page. This will seem more trustworthy for the target group, as some mentioned that pictures could be misguiding, as mentioned.

As we have now clarified the four different factors that might influent the level of involvement, we will in the following outline what this then means to the concept of SSS.

*16.3.5. High Involvement in relation to the Target Group*

As was evident from the abovementioned factors that can help evaluate different alternations and influence the decision, involvement was high in most cases. It is important to be aware of how involved the target group is in terms of the amount of information they need and in order to be clear about what issues do the target group emphasises when buying a holiday. By knowing this information, it will be easier to make a more targeted strategy to the target group as we then know what factors the target group was influenced by. In terms of self-image, perceived risk and hedonistic factors, involvement was high. When involvement is high, it is important to provide as much information as possible available for the target group as they will spend more time on search on this particular service. In terms of self-image, it is important that the concept emphasis the active part and the family part of the concept, as this is what the target group will search for. As this is already a huge part of the concept, this is already present. In relation to perceived risk, it is important to focus on factors of self-image and hedonistic influences as this will help the target group in terms of not only seeing the money involved in this and the potential of choosing the wrong holiday. In relation to this, it is moreover important to communicate all the advantages the target group will receive when buying concept of SSS. The reason for this is that as the target group use time on information search as involvement is high, they need to know that they are taking the right choice and why they are doing this. Therefore, by making all the activities the SSS house contain available to the target group so that the target group are aware that this concept will fulfil their needs in terms of being active and being with their family, which was mentioned as one of their needs, and this also show the high degree of pleasure involved in a SSS holiday house. This means that it is important to show all the positive consequences of buying this concept. In this case, positive consequences could for instance be to inform the target group that in this holiday house there is always something to do for all ages and if you are out of ideas, an activity book is present in order to inspire you. A professional or a sales person is important in high-involvement situations, as mentioned in the theory on high involvement situations chapter 7. In relation to this, that consumer with little knowledge on a particular service has a tendency to rely more on user-generated content in terms of other user’s experiences then on salespeople (This will be analysed further in chapter 20). Therefore, a combination of the two would be the best solution (which will also be dealt with in chapter 17). Information from other users experience is very important for this target group as it seem more loyal, as mentioned but at the same time, as it is a high involvement situation, the target group also need much information in terms of more practical issues as price of the service and the availability of the service which can be received from a salesperson.

In relation to the abovementioned, it is important to use a medium that can hold a certain amount of information as this is necessary in high-involvement situations and that can hold a certain amount of user experience as this is preferred by the target group. This is possible with our choice of medium, facebook. A facebook page allows you to inform about the more practical and technical issues relation to the concept and at the same time past guests are able to post their experiences of their stay in a SSS house. This is important information in terms of creating a communications strategy as these abovementioned factors will influence the target group’s evaluations of a holiday.

All in all, as involvement is high in most cases, it is important to provide information both in terms of a sales person but it is equally important, if not more, to make user-generated content present for the target group as there is tendency towards this in an online environment.

As we have now gone through the traditional decision-making process and analysed the factors that can influence this, we will now focus on other factors that can influence it in relation to our choice of medium, i.e. facebook. Thus, we will in the following analyse the factors that can influence the decision-making process in an online environment.

**16.2. The Decision-Making Process in an Online Environment**

According to the model on page 43, there are four factors that can influence the decision-making process. The first is traditional marketing, the A in the model which is also known as part of the external information search analysed above, namely a sales person and advertising which can be controlled from the organisations side. The second factor is the uncontrolled factors, the B in the model, which was also analysed above. This was both internal and external information search as self-image, social factors, WOM etc. However, as we are operating in an online environment, other factors can affect the decision-making process which is the two last factors of the model.

The first factor is online controlled marketing factors. This deals with the marketing mix that is controlled by the organisation as for instance the activities that are present the SSS’s homepage. In relation to the concept, none of the families had any knowledge of the concept and therefore none of the families had visited the SSS homepage. This means that they have not had any web experience in terms of this particular concept. However, many of the families said, as mentioned under external information search, that they did search online for holidays. One family mentioned that they would search information of travel agencies’ homepage and other families mentioned they would search on destinations homepages (As mentioned earlier). Even though none of the families had any knowledge for the concept, the target group still seems to search on a destinations homepage. This means that the concept of SSS have a chance in reaching the target group via their facebook page. Even though the concept SSS would be able to control some part of the information on such a facebook page, the uncontrolled factors can have a huge influence on the controlled factors.

The online uncontrolled marketing factors, involves blogs, social networks, communities etc. This would also be reading other consumers evaluations of destinations. As is evident from the interviews, six families have made use of different forms online information sources. Family 3 says: *“Yes, I do that usually [read evaluation of places] if I can see it for a certain area and I think that sounds exciting, then I read the reviews on that certain area”* (Appendix 5, line 51-52). Family 1 also says: *“well if they are online then yes. When we were going to London for instance, we checked it in relation to hotels and so on [...] what people had written about them. You don’t wanna go and then it just sucks”* (Appendix 3, lines 53-55). Moreover, family 5 says: *“[…] and I would also check out others [blogs], I use a lot of the information others, what the other write […]”* (Appendix 7, lines 77-78). So reading others experiences about a destination is very used among the target group. This can be both positive and challenges for the concept in terms of the comment that has been given by other. Negative if the information given about the concept is negative and good if the information is positive. As many of the families seem to be affected by these evaluations, this is a strong tool that the organisation must be aware of in the sense that the controlled element becomes less effective in an online environment. For instance, if pictures are present on the facebook page of the holiday house and a former visitor comment of these picture saying for instance, that these picture does not live up to the expectations, the target group may believe that former visitors more, as he or she has been there, then the concept, as they are only interesting in selling the concept.

We have chosen a medium to communicate with the target group that is both controlled and uncontrolled. The reason for this, as just stated, is that user-generated content is very used among the target group and therefore we find it important to make sure that this is form of information is present for this target group. The concept needs to enter this environment in order to be present where the target group is. Of course, information about SSS will appear outside the facebook page however the concept will have an easier time responding to the information posted by users of the holiday house.

All in all, the online environment can be a difficult place in terms of user-generated content as uncontrolled information. However, it is also the place where the target group are present and therefore should the concept SSS also in order to create awareness.

We have now analysed the target group in relation to their buying process. We saw that the target group had e need for a holiday to get away from everyday life and be together with their family. We moreover saw that the families used both internal information search, in terms of talking together as a family, and external information search in terms of for instance WOM. In relation to this, it is the external search that the concept of SSS needs to focus on, as none of the families is familiar with the concept. Furthermore, we saw that self-image, in terms of e.g. being active and a family person, perceived risk, in terms of the amount of money involved in a holiday, and hedonistic influences, in terms of the level of pleasure involved in the holiday, was all seen as factors that lead to high involvement among the target group. This means that the concept of SSS must focus on the positive consequences of buying their service. Lastly, we clarified that there can be some factors that can influence the target group when using facebook as a medium. This is first and foremost due to user-generated content that the target group uses.

As we have now analysed in target group’s decision-making process, we will in the following analyse our choice of medium, i.e. facebook, and different issues in relation to this.

**17. Choice of Medium: Applying facebook**

The two following chapters will entail considerations in relation to applying media in a communications strategy. This will serve as an establishment of relevant information concerning facebook and the general functionalities of communicating via facebook. We will commence with choice of medium.

**17.1. Choice of facebook**In relation to using media, the first aspect to consider was choice of medium in relation to the target group. The applicability of facebook was first of all found due to the growth of the site and thus the number of people that can be reached on facebook. An analysis conducted by Danmarks Statistik shows that 94% of the Danish population who are active on a social networking site have a facebook account (Danmarks Statistik – It vaner). In relation to this, Facebook is by far the largest networking site (Shih, 2011; Danmarks Statistik –It vaner). Moreover, numbers show that 76% of the population in the ages between 20-39 and 42% of the population between the ages 40-59 are using Facebook (Danmarks Statistik-It vaner). This means that the established target group of SSS is represented on facebook, making facebook an appropriate communication channel. The applicability of facebook was also found in the sense that a consumer database already exists here and target group thus is familiar with the facebook mode of conduct, and therefore reaching the target group will be easier as they are not presented with a new forum where they do not know how to act. They are familiar with the pages phenomenon and a smoother start is possible. Moreover, as mentioned consumers want to have influence in relation to the products they consume and a facebook campaign allows for them to feel as an integral part of the company’s products (see chapter 4). Furthermore, the applicability of facebook was found in relation to the fact that facebook is mostly a personal site and as the target group on facebook is among friends and family, there is a chance they are more open to new things (Shih, 2011: 110). What this means is that the target group may be more open to click on links about products and services they receive from friends or groups they themselves find on facebook. Lastly, the applicability of facebook was found in relation to the freedom in provides the target group with i.e. that it is possible to obtain information according to own premises. This is also mentioned by family 5 who expresses that:

The advantage in that you can eh.. e.g. if you are using facebook rather than other things, it is that you can do it when you have time, it’s kinda like, of course you can also be with friends and family and all that right, but today your whole day just..everything is planned, the schedule has been made, the kids have activities to go to and then therefore it is when you have the time, then you can go sit by the computer (Appendix 7, lines 87-88)

All in all, facebook was decided to represent the appropriate medium for communicating SSS as it represents the target group in terms of users on facebook and it allows for attempting to establish relationships with consumers due to advanced communication possibilities i.e. to create content as a mix in between corporate content and user-generated content (forthcoming). Moreover, the feedback that is possible to conduct provides a better opportunity of becoming acquainted with one’s target group, thereby making the process of establishing relationships easier. The target group can obtain information about SSS their own terms i.e. they can do it whenever they want to and they are in charge of how much of the information on the page they wish to obtain.

As we have now accounted for our choice of facebook, we will move on to media plan integration.

**17.2. Media Plan Integration**In chapter 8, it was expressed that media plan integration was important in order to consider as takes into account the integration of the traditional marketing efforts and social media efforts. In relation to SSS, it means taking into account e.g. the pamphlets that have been produced that are available to the users in the holiday houses. The information that is published in these needs to be aligned with the information that is to be published on the facebook. This also relates e.g. to the logo and colour schemes that have been applied so far. All in all, communication efforts made prior to the facebook campaign need to be aligned with the facebook page in order to ensure that consumers who come across both offline and online material are not confused by the content of the offline and online initiatives. As mentioned in the theory, the element of aligning offline and online activities also relates to how the corporate image is perceived and this furthermore underlines the importance of ensuring a clear message and content across all communication efforts as this will provide the target group with a cohesive image of SSS.

**17.3. SSS Guidelines for Conduct on facebook**Guidelines for communicating on a social medium was articulated to be preferable (chapter 8). As SSS is still a small concept in size and only communicated via Feriehusudlejnig I/S, there probably are not many employees that are able to post content on a possible facebook page. However, ensuring that the content of the site is in sync is still important as the focus, regardless of number of employees, is to capture the target group. In relation to ensuring that the content is of similar context, it is also important to consider the tone of the site i.e. should it be only a corporate voice expressed or maybe a more personal voice? As has been articulated, we believe the content of a possible SSS facebook page should be head and tail content i.e. both professional and user-generated content (see chapter 8). Our recommendation for the tone of the site will be aligned with the content type i.e. both professional and personal. The professional content would shine through e.g. in commercial offers or in cases where it be necessary to respond to negative comments etc. however, a more personal tone may be preferable in relation to engaging consumers and as we are focusing on establishing relationship with consumers and engaging them in order to establish this relationship, we find it more appropriate to engage consumers via a personal voice. This could e.g. be a status update where SSS expresses a favourite holiday activity and then enquires their followers to enter their favourite activities. This may elevate the engagement from the target group to the site (this will be elaborated forthcoming).

Another aspect that was important in relation to company guidelines was to ensure that whenever posting content on the page e.g. comments, that the person commenting identified themselves as being representative of SSS. In relation to this, one of the interviewed families expressed distrust in relation to when companies contributed content about their services: *“[…] because those who own the place will probably always talk positively about the place, yes* (Appendix 10, lines 42-43). The statement from this family furthermore underlines that it is important with clarity in relation to publishing content as some people may be more suspicious towards company content.

In this chapter, we have been establishing the applicability of facebook and established that this medium is appropriate in relation to SSS as it first represents the appropriate target group of users and secondly, facebook provides the opportunity of the establishment of relationships through different engaging features that will help enhance the commitment level of consumers. Moreover, we have argued that the traditional communications efforts made concerning SSS should be considered in relation to the content on a facebook page i.e. to ensure a consistent message. Finally, we have recommended guidelines in relation to SSS’s conduct on facebook i.e. that they should identify themselves as representatives of the organisation and that the inclusion of head and tail content will be an optimal way of reaching a wide range of the target group who prefer obtaining information concerning their holiday destinations differently. In the following, we will be considering choice of medium in relation to the 7 Cs.

**18. Choice of Medium: The 7 Cs Framework**

In chapter 10, the 7 Cs were elaborated on and showed different issues that need to be taken into consideration when creating a facebook page. As mentioned in that chapter (chapter 10), the first two stages will not be analysed here due to the reason mentioned earlier. Therefore, the first step to be analysed is community.

**18.1. Community**

Many people have become members of one or more online communities, as mentioned earlier, which is one of the reasons for choosing a facebook. As we have previously stated, most of the interviewed families prefer information from friends and family or other consumers. Some of the interviewed families also said that a mix of both professional and non-professional would be ideal, as mentioned. In relation to this, our chosen community, facebook, is an already existing community and this can involve positive and negative issues. The positive deals with, as mentioned, that facebook is an already established and well-functional community and is a medium that most people trust due to it being a personal medium. This means that the target group will feel safer communicating with each other on facebook as their as surrounded by people they know. By using facebook, the target group are able to communicate with each other on the SSS facebook page and they are able to send each other facebook e-mails about their experience, if they feel that this is not something others should be a part of. Sending e-mails to each other is communication through a one-to-one interaction. Moreover, the target group are able to communicate among many others via chat on the corporate facebook page and also via their own status. This form of communication is called one-to-many. These two forms are both present on facebook. This community is useful as it makes the target group able to communicate with each other which is important as they thereby create values to each other which is important as user-generated content is a used and important way for the target group. Creating value to each other is important as most of the target group rely on other consumer’s experiences, as mentioned earlier. In relation to the ways the target group can communicate with each other, it called interactive communication, as was mentioned in the theory section. By using interactive communication, it will enable the target group to communicate in real time with each other. What is meant by communication in real time, is that on facebook you are able to post a message and others will be able to see it right aware and are able to comment on it or answer back right away. This may make the communication more real to the target group and thereby more loyal. In relation to the interviewed families and interactive communication on this community, 6 of the families mentioned information from friends and family or other users was preferred, as mentioned in the chapter on the source of information among the target group, and as the internet is where most people search for information, as mentioned in relation to external search in chapter 16, the interactive communication facebook offers is useful.

A negative issue in relation to this community is that there is always the risk of misunderstandings and miscommunication between the target group. However, this is what can occur in a community where communication happens through the written word. This was also mentioned by some of the families, as one of the downfall with this community (ex. Appendix 4). However, we do not see this issues a determine factor due to the many positives features of using facebook, as mentioned in chapter 17.

All in all, facebook is a useful community in order for the target group to interact with each other. In relation to our choice of medium, it is moreover relevant to clarify customisation which the following will be dealing with.

**18.2. Customisation**

As mentioned above, interactive communication was used in the faecbook community. In relation to this, issues concerning customisation need to be clarified. As mentioned in the chapter concerning the 7 Cs (chapter 10), there are two types of customisation which are tailoring and personalisation. As mentioned above, we have entered an already established community, facebook, and therefore there is already a certain layout to follow. This layout is tailoring. Tailoring means that the customisation is managed by the organisation, which means that SSS is managing the facebook page. In relation to facebook, tailoring enables the concept to base their facebook page on the interest and needs of a specific target group, as for instance the one analysed in this thesis. If our target group were to be the specific target group tailoring is based on, the information should for instance be in line with what this target group needs, e.g. to get away from everyday life and be together with the family, and based on the information find important.

In relation to using tailoring and choosing a specific target group to base the facebook page on, facebook opens up for more opportunities. Even though the target group have many identical features they are also different in many ways. This is a difficult part for the concept to handle as on a facebook page, the concept can post different information to different target groups as the target group can then chose to see the information they chose and use the time the feel necessary one it. In terms of how long they search for information, this was very different. One family said that they used very little time in terms of information search (Appendix 8) whereas another family said that they used much time on information search (Appendix 6 etc.). This information is relevant in terms of our choice of medium, as it is important to choice a medium that can contain different content that makes it possible for the families to use a lot of time on searching for information and also makes it possible for the families that do not want to spend much time on information search to get a quick overview of the basic information.

On facebook, the target group also have a personal profile. In relation to these personal profiles the target group have, is also something that the concept can use. The concept can use the information available on the target group’s personal profile to tailor site content in terms of interest and other useful information. For instance, the concept could see if the target group have other interest that be common with the concept. They might moreover be able to see, via e.g. status updates, what the target group likes to talk about and also what interest them. This information can be used in relation to the concepts facebook page

All in all, tailoring is used on facebook. However, not all content needs to be controlled by the concept. It is also important to be able to communicate with their target group and make the target group communicate with the facebook page. This will be analysed in the following paragraph.

**18.3. Communication**

Communication between the user and the site is crucial, as mentioned earlier. Therefore, interactive communication is present on facebook, as mentioned above. The interactive element gives both the target group and the concept the possibility to ask questions to one another. This is called a two-way communication and is an important element in terms of creating a strong relationship with the target group. With a two-way communication, the target group is for instance able to give the concept a say in terms of any possible changes of the concept. This also relates to what was mentioned earlier, in chapter 4, that consumers would like to influence the products and services they buy. Via facebook, a user-to-site communication is moreover possible. A user-to-site communication enables the user to provide feedback on the facebook page in term updates on the page.

There is also a negative part involved in these forms of communication. There is always the chance that the target group is posting negative experiences or unwanted content on the facebook page. This can result in creating a negative image for the concept, depending on the level of negative information. Negative rumours or experiences cannot be prevented when operating within an online environment. However, we believe that if the concept SSS relates to the critique they are given and listening to the critique and then show the target group that they are taken this critique into consideration and make them feel heard. In relation to what was mentioned above, that the target group would like to have influence, is also a way for the concept to handle negative issues. Showing this to the target group might even increase the relationship between the concept and the target group as it show that the concept listen to the target group and is willing to find a solution for the ‘problem’.

All in all, a two-way communication and a user-to-site communication are important in order to get loyal consumers. In the following, we will be dealing with connection as it is also important take this into consideration.

**18.4. Connection**

As mentioned under the description of the 7 Cs, connection deals with how a website refers to other sites and vice versa. It is in our opinion that it is important that destinations, attraction etc. work together as collaborators in order to give the tourist an good holiday experience. This is especially the case in terms of a holiday house, as there is a tendency that the visitors would also use a day or more to visit places in the area. This is also exemplified by some of the families. One family said: *“Cos I’m thinking if you’re in Denmark, you simply can’t be sure of the good weather and then it’s just really important that there is something else nearby, or well there just has to be something”* (Appendix 3, lines 159-161). Another family said: *“And.. as long as there are some things you can do.[...]. Also some bigger things nearby where you maybe can.. Zoo or something, there is [needs to be] some larger things nearby you can visit and use one day”* (Appendix 10, lines 121-122). Beside these two examples, three other families mentioned that there needed to be some other of attraction or things to see in the area (Appendix 4, 6 and 8). In relation to this, it could be an advantage to post interesting links on the facebook page in terms of nearby attraction or entertainments so that it is visible for the target group that there are different forms of entertainment in the area. Moreover, from an organisational point of view, i.e. the concept of SSS, this will both promote the area in general but also create a close network with other tourists industries with is a crucial aspect. An example of this could for instance be to link up to Legoland which is one most well-known and visited fun parks in Denmark (Dk’s Tourist Attractions). It could also be a connection with a local restaurant that serves healthy and local food or to visit a local farm that sells it own products. This would still be in line with the concept of these holiday houses, i.e. eating healthy food. Moreover, a link to feriehusudlejning I/S’s homepage is also necessary as this is where they can book the concept of SSS.

Connection with other attractions is important as the target group expressed they would like to see the area as well.

All in all, setting up such a facebook page involves different consideration, as the ones mentioned above. As we have chosen an integrated approach throughout this thesis, it is important that there is consistency between each of the Cs. We saw that our choice of community involved interactive communication that made it possible for the target group to communicate with each others as this is preferred among the target group. This goes hand in hand with communication as the target group also likes to communicate with the concept and is also possible on facebook. In relation to customisation, tailoring is present on facebook where the concept takes a specific target group and creates the page in relation to what this target group would prefer. As the target group would also like to see the area when visiting a holiday house, it is important to link to other interesting sites for the target group so that the target group gets an overall good experience.

In the following, we will analyse the different aspects that can be an important factor when communicating with the target group.

**19. Communication between the Target Group and the Concept: Engaging the Target Group**In this chapter, we will be considering ways of engaging the target group in relation to SSS. As argued in theory section (chapter 9), establishing relationships with target group involves engaging them in relation to ones product and this will therefore be the focus of this chapter.

**19.1. Providing Networking Platforms**Providing networking platforms was mentioned to be a way of engaging consumers (chapter 9) and a page on facebook allows for the creation of a networking platform where the target group can come together and share their thoughts, ideas and experiences. Creating a page where the target group can come together and discuss the concept of SSS, experiences with the concept and possible suggestions as to enhancing the product, would be a starting point for raising awareness of the concept. Another aspect that relates to the networking effect is the way content can be distributed on facebook i.e. it can be sent around via facebook mail and shared on a user’s individual page. In relation to this, most of the families (Family 3, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10) expressed that if they found a product interesting, they would share it with their facebook friends. Thus, as the target group is willing to share content, this online WOM becomes another that aspect may help raise awareness of SSS as the information through the online WOM quickly can disseminate through a large amount of users.

Another reason of choosing a social networking site such as facebook, is that it allows for gathering information concerning the SSS target group i.e. information that creates a better understanding of the target group and how to reach them and moreover, the information that can be obtained can be aligned with the relationship communication model with the purpose of evaluating the relationships that hopefully will be established via the SSS facebook page. Thus, the facebook page provides the initial starting point in relation to attempting to engage the target group as it allows for the target group to communicate with each other and the concept (as mentioned).

As we have now expressed the network effects of SSS, we will move on to engagement through social media tools.

**19.2. Engagement through Social Media Tools**

Engaging the target group can be performed through different social media tools (as mentioned in chapter 9). Within this context, we will be considering engaging through blogs, polls and status updates. We will begin with engagement trough blogs.

*19.2.1. Engagement through Blogs*  
In relation to engaging, a more active approach of attempting this through the use of different social media tools e.g. blogs. With regards to blogs, it was also mentioned under relationship communication analysis (Chapter 15) how blogs were a way of providing information in the form of consumer review which was preferable to some in the target group (consumer review and the preferred type of information by the target group is discussed in chapter 20). The mother in one of the interviewed families (Appendix 7) expressed that she had a blog where she blogged about her life in general. This also included travelling and when asked if she would blog about SSS (if they visited a house) she responded that that would definitely be something that she would do:

Eeh, well I have a blog e.g., and well there I also .. there I also use a lot what the others..what they write’n stuff.   
[…] Would you e.g. use your blog then to write about if you had gone to this SSS[…]  
Yes definitely, I would do that because that eh.. you write about all kinds of stuff in there so..(Appendix 7, lines 78-85)

Thus, SSS could attempt to engage the target group with blogs where people express their experiences with the concept. In relation to finding people within the target group who would be willing to blog about their SSS experience and allow SSS to link to their blogs, the bloggers could be presented with different offerings in relation to the concept e.g. tickets for surrounding sights or discounts. Moreover, as mentioned under Relationship Communication Analysis (chapter 15), SSS could refer a few families to visit the holiday houses and in return they would have to blog about their stay. All in all, applying blogs would be an obvious choice to include on the facebook page as a way to engage the target group as a blog provides insight into what the concept can offer –seen from a consumer’s perspective. It should be mentioned that with the inclusion of blogs (in general concerning using social media) and thus the inclusion of user-generated content, the concept is open to both negative and positive reviews. This will be discussed further in chapter 20. In the following, we will be considering engagement through polls.

*19.2.2. Engagement trough Polls*  
As mentioned above, blogs were one social media tool that could help induce engagement from the target group. Another social media tool that could be applied is the feature of creating polls. Through polls, the target group can be encouraged to engage and participate and vote in on different issues regarding SSS e.g. how many members are in the family, preferences when on holiday or what new equipment they would prefer in the holiday houses. It was mentioned earlier, that facebook would allow for collecting thorough data about the target group and the feature of making polls would provide a beneficial tool as the company through this feature could attempt to obtain more knowledge about their target group and how to reach them best. Moreover, a poll allows for the target group to comment and possibly elaborate on their answers i.e. engage with the concept, but it allows for the target group to do so on their own terms and own chosen time which relates well to the wish that many in the target group have and one of their preferred benefits of facebook i.e. that they are able to contribute and participate on their own terms (mentioned in chapter 17).

In the following, we will be considering engagement through status updates.

*19.2.3. Engagement through Status Updates*  
A third way of engaging the target group could e.g. be through the simple feature of posting status updates where people are able to comment on the published content (and ‘like’ it and share it with others). In terms of function, the status update resembles the poll, but a status update allows for people to comment more freely and with their own words and may thus also be considered a feature that induces engagement as people may feel more compelled to contribute as they can do that completely in their own words .It may be a way of making the target group participate and express themselves. If we e.g. consider the facebook page Spies, they constantly publish status updates and get great responses (Spies). This may also be an element that can be considered to appeal to the senses of the target group (forthcoming) e.g. when people read about other families’ holidays it may spark memories from their own holidays and thus spark their own emotions. In relation to this, posting pictures could also be a way of engaging the target group and moreover be an element that appeals to the senses. Spies e.g. posted pictures of holiday sites and the target group commenting start to reminisce their own holidays (Spies). SSS could e.g. do this posting pictures of a family in the holiday house doing some sort of activity, the surrounding nature etc.

As we have now considered engaging the target group through blogs, polls and status updates, we will move on to considering how to engage via traditional and internet-based tools.

**19.3. Combining Traditional and Internet-based Tools**It was mentioned in the theory section that it would be beneficial to combine traditional marketing tools and internet-based tools. In relation to this, it was expressed that some people were more engaged in products based on personal interests while others needed encouragement (chapter 9). In relation to a SSS facebook page, some people of the target group may make an update either on the particular site (visible to both their friends but also followers of the site) or on their own site (visible to all their friends) when having visited a SSS holiday house, but some might need to be encouraged to make an update. Encouraging to make an update could e.g. be performed via the pamphlets available in the holiday houses (i.e. the traditional marketing tool) (See chapter 3). An addition could be made to the pamphlets, stating that if the visitors make an update about their visit to SSS they would get e.g. free tickets for a family fun park. The information on the pamphlets could also be a recommendation of visiting the facebook page where they would be able to find e.g. ‘exciting new information’ about the concept or recommendations to join an ongoing contest or e.g. follow up on the geocaching game connected to the concept (if that initiative is used). This way the target group could possibly become more engaged in the product and if they publish the content on their private facebook pages, other friends may comment and have enquiries in relation to the stay and thereby other people may also become acquainted with and moreover become engaged in the product. As has been mentioned (chapter 4), WOM is one of the benefits of social media and engaging people like this is also a way of attempting to spread the word of SSS.   
Encouraging the target group to visit the facebook page when returning home from the holiday, can also be a way of providing the basis for prolonging the SSS experience. When the target group arrive home from their holidays, they can enter the page and e.g. publish content about their holiday, post photos or watch photos of the place where they have just been. Moreover, they could (as mentioned) follow up on geocaching and see if someone else has found the cache they have placed (or some other activity). The experience of the visiting a SSS would thus be prolonged as the target group would be able to engage in activities concerning SSS after arriving home.   
As we have now considered combining traditional and internet-based tools in relation to SSS, we will move on to consider engaging the target group through exclusivity.

**19.4. Providing Exclusivity**The appeal of exclusivity can be seen in relation to the target group where two families express preferences for exclusivity. The first family expresses the following:

“[…] but we were going to Legoland here last week and there I was told that you could look up under a group called free tickets to Legoland and other sites, hehe. It was very interesting to see everything that popped up in there [...] It was then something I was told right so there we got entrance for half price just because you happen to know there was a page you could go and print something out. […] Maybe, actually, now that one with free tickets, I’ll probably look into that some other time” (Appendix 6, lines 138-141 and 157-158).

In terms of exclusivity, the family in the quotation above reflects how a page may be intriguing to join because of the benefits that may be gained from it. The mother in the interview moreover expresses that she will visit the page again which furthermore underlines how exclusivity can encourage to engagement in a product. We do realise that as the woman in the interview expresses that she will ‘probably look into’ the page again another time, she do not express a profound engagement towards the page, however, we still argue that exclusivity can engage people. Providing exclusivity can e.g. be considered to be an initial step to make the target group aware of a product and when the interest from the target group has been raised, attempting to establish a relationship with them begins.   
As mentioned, another family expresses preferences in relation to exclusivity:

R1:[…] now we’ve received such a monthly offer in relation to a stay at a winery, we get that on our mail. And that I think is a nice way of just saying oh by the way let’s just go in and study it. But that’s the way we like go in and study it then.  
R2:[…] but then it’s the money that controls it, that’s then a 70 % [off] e.g. offer here in down town Holstebro, yes […]  
R2: Sweet deal (Appendix 4, lines 141-148)

The quotation above also reflects that exclusivity is an engaging factor i.e. the family express that it is the fact that the offer is 70 per cent off and moreover, it is articulated that the offer is from sweet deal, which is an internet site you can sign up to and gain offerings at a discounts to e.g. shops and sights in your surrounding neighbourhood. The family thus reflects being interested in exclusivity and in that sense articulates that this is why they receive these mails. Moreover, the family in the quotation expresses how exclusivity is an element they value and that they value having offers sent to them for them to check out. This articulation represents a part of the target group that thus can be considered to prefer (or who at least do not mind) having mails and other material sent to them. In relation to SSS and providing their target group with exclusivity, they could e.g. provide their target group with exclusivity in terms of letting people who follow their page be the first to hear about special offerings, contests or e.g. a discount (due to the membership of the facebook page) when purchasing a stay or new initiatives being made. The special offerings could e.g. be presented on the facebook page or sent out as facebook emails. As was articulated in this above, one family expresses no reservations in relation to receiving mails and other information from a product, however another family expresses having reservations in relation to that (Appendix 9). A critical issue for an SSS thus is to decide how much they wish to pursue their target group i.e. how much information they wish to send to their followers and how much they wish to contact them. The concern of the family in appendix 9 was how much information and emails etc. would be sent to her account and that sometimes made her reluctant in relation to whether she should like an application (Appendix 9, line 99). This is an important aspect to consider as sending the followers of a page too much information may result in them leaving the page. Even though the target group is able to obtain information on their own time and premises, they do not wish to be bombarded with information all the time. The task for SSS is thus to be reach out and be engaging and not importunate. As we have now considered providing exclusivity in relation to SSS, we will move on considering how SSS can appeal to the target group’s senses.

**19.5. Appeal to all Senses**In the theory section, it was explicated that it was important for products to appeal to all senses of consumers e.g. by being fun, intriguing and engage the emotions (Chapter 9). In relation to this, we argue that the concept of SSS possesses a slight advantage in the sense that it deals with more intangible elements i.e. experiences which naturally engages emotions (e.g. the thought of travelling somewhere or being together as a family may spark joyful emotions). Travelling is, as mentioned, about experiences that are made and experiences naturally appeal to people through the engagement of emotions. In relation to SSS, attempting to appeal to the target group’s senses could be performed through the inclusion of pictures on the facebook page and through status updates e.g. asking the target group to express their favourite holiday memories (as mentioned under ‘Engagement through Status Updates’).

As has been illustrated under Relationship Communication Analysis in chapter 15, the interviewed families first and foremost express that when being on holiday it is important for them to be together as a family and that they have the time to be together, doing whatever they want without the strict schedules of their everyday lives. Moreover, the families express to value networking possibilities in relation to the children and the families also express the need for engaging in activities that will foster a sense of union (See chapter 15) All these listed examples represent information that SSS can apply in relation to appealing to the target group’s senses. Via this information, the setup of e.g. the facebook page can be performed with a direction towards the preferences of the target group and thereby may become more compelling to appeal to the senses of the target group. Appealing to all senses of the consumers was also mentioned to be performed with regards to people’s desired self-images. In chapter 16, the self-images of the target group were articulated to be self-images of being a family, being active and being different from others i.e. doing things others do not do. Along with the articulations above, the expressions of the target group’s self-images can thus be applied in relation to attempting to appeal to the target group’s senses and engaging them though this.

As we have now considered how SSS can appeal to the target group’s senses, we will move on to considering engagement through power stories.

**19.6. Engagement through Power Stories**Engaging consumers through power stories was also expressed (Chapter 9). Power stories may enhance the target group’s engagement as they through the memorable reproduction of another person’s holiday experience may become interested in the particular product and moreover, may also pass on the story (Chapter 9). A power story written by another consumer may also lead the way for tapping into the emotions of the target group as was prescribed to be a way of engaging consumers (mentioned in the paragraph above). When reading a holiday description, it may spark personal memories for the reader of the description and they may thereby become even more intrigued to try out SSS. This also underlines the benefits that may come from including user-generated/ personal content on the facebook page as it may make it more appealing to the target group because it speaks to their emotions. In line with this, as it was articulated in the paragraph above, the content on a page should be crafted with the target groups’ desired self-images in mind. These power stories may be considered a way of addressing the desired self-image’s of the target group. If people e.g. are able to picture themselves in the scenery of the description, they may become more engaged in the product. In relation to SSS, they already have a power story in the form of an article (Berlingske). The article is an interview with a family that has visited one of the holiday houses. Applying this article as a power story on the facebook page would be a good idea as it would provide the page with consumer review which was important to many in the target group (see chapter 20). However, several power stories would be better as to attempt to reach the overall target group and their specific desires. Moreover, as the power story from the paper as in article produced by a journalist, it could be argued that the article does not reflect strictly user-generated content as the end-user i.e. the interviewed family has not been the primary producers of text.

In relation to the use of power stories, another type of power story can be applied. For instance, travel agencies have begun applying video blogs where people enter a video sequence talking about the particular destination they have visited. This would be a great and personal way of attempting to reach the target group and if we e.g. consider FDM Travel’s website where the video blogs are represented, many people comment on the videos and asks questions and ads information (FDM). Thus this could also be considered a way to engage the target group of SSS. Videos, that e.g. were filmed in a holiday house or the surrounding area, could be posted e.g. by families who have tried a SSS holiday house (a family could e.g. be encouraged to film small sequences of their stay). Thus it would be possible to obtain information concerning a visit in a SSS from a consumer perspective and moreover, it would be possible to get a glimpse of a SSS holiday house and what it entails. Such a video blog can also be seen as a way of appealing to the target group’s senses as the video may spark e.g. memories of a previous holiday or e.g. the desire to try the concept based on the imagery portrayed in the video. Furthermore, others may be inspired to create their own videos and finally, people who may prefer not having to do a lot of reading may enjoy and prefer the video material.

In this chapter, we have been considering various ways of engaging the target group on facebook and thus considering elements that can be an aid in relation to establishing relationships with the target group. Some of the methods of engaging were articulated to perhaps only creating the initial foundation for establishing a relationship with the target group. What this refers to is that at the starting point of the relationship a may be a vague engagement level on behalf of the target group and thus it becomes necessary to continuously build the relationships with SSS’s target group via the various engagement techniques. With regard to specific ways of engaging the target group of SSS, we have suggested that they can be attempted to be engaged e.g. via providing them with exclusive offers when following the facebook page, through blogs expressing their visits to the holiday houses, through status updates or polls, through power stories and moreover also engaging through e.g. the concept of ‘Geocaching’.

In the following, we will be considering the type of information preferred by the target group.

**20. Communication between the Target Group and the Concept: The Target Group’s Source of Information**

As mentioned in chapter 11, the source of information is crucial when trying to communicate with the target group. There are three forms of information sources which are consumer review, seller-created product information and third-party product review (See chapter 11). As mentioned in the paragraph on information search in the chapter 16, the interviewed families search information from different sources. The answers from the interviews were different as some preferred a mix of both corporate and user-generated content (Appendices 3, 4, 6, 7 and 10), others were indifferent (Appendix 8 and 9) while others preferred information solely from other users (Appendix 5). The fact that most of the interviewed families values information from friends and family, reflects well with the trend of user-generated content (As mentioned in chapter 4). It states that consumers with little knowledge on a particular service or product have a tendency to rely more on other consumer’s experiences. As none of the families have tried these holiday houses or had heard of the concept of SSS, the families may rely more on other users’ experiences. The reason for this is that via other users’ experiences, the target group will receive the attributions of that experience and not the technicalities. This was also emphasised by family 3, who states: *“Yes, I usually do that [read evaluation of places] if I can see that it’s for a certain area and I like think oh that sounds exciting, then I also go in and see the reviews that certain area right. Often also if I can see it’s families who have review them, well then I can see well it’s children in about the same age as ours, well what have did been able to use there and is that something that we also would be able to use there, right”* (Appendix 5, lines 51-55).This is also expressed by more families. This means that this family would choose a destination based on, among others, what others have made use of in relation to, in this case, if the children in the family are in the same age group. This source of information can moreover be related to trust. One family expressed that an organisation is always interested in sharing the positive sides of its concept (Appendix 10). This could be an example of this family saying that they do not trust the information from the organisation as they would do anything to sell their products or services. Therefore, the target group may trust other users or friends and family more and is therefore using consumer review to decide where to go.

Even though, the target group is not an expert in terms of SSS, many of the interviewed families also prefer information from a corporate source, as mentioned above. In the interviews, the families expressed different information they found useful when they were searching for a holiday. Many of the families mentioned the price (Appendices 3, 5, 7, and 8) and activities for the children and/or attractions in the nearby area (Appendices 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, and 10) as important information. These are examples of information that the concept can give, as these are information that are more practical related, as for instance price. Therefore, the seller-created product information is also preferred among the interviewed families in relation to the more technical and practical issues of SSS.

All in all, even though the target group uses consumer review and this reflects well with the theory, they also use seller-created product information. Information in terms of consumer review is preferred in situations where the target group search for the attributes of the concept, as for instance what did others do on this holiday, and seller-created product information is used in terms of the more practical issues relation to the concept, as for instance price. SSS should be aware of this and be able to provide the target group with both consumer review and seller-generated product information.

As we have now analysed the different aspects of the communications strategy model on page 55, we will sum up our findings in a finial communications strategy for the concept SSS. This will be done in the following chapter.

**21. SSS’s Communications Strategy**

In the previous chapters (Chapters 12-20), we have analysed different aspects in order to create a communications strategy for the concept ‘Sjovt, Sundt Sommerhus’. This communications strategy was made on the basic of the model on page 55. In this chapter, we will bring forward that communications strategy. In the analysis we elaborated thorough the different aspect in the communications strategy. In this chapter we will make a simple and clear version of those chapters and thereby describe the communications strategy for SSS via lists.

**Overall Marketing Strategy**: The concept of SSS came as an initiative based on the overall marketing strategy ‘Strong holiday destinations’. Thus ‘strong holiday destination’ and the theme ‘health and tourism’ is the overall frame of the concept that focuses on being healthy and active on holiday, with the goal of making holiday houses near the coast more attractive.

**SSS’s Positioning Statement**: SSS should position itself as holiday that can provide the opportunity for the target group to be together with the family and engage in activities that the target group’s everyday lives do not allow for. Moreover, the concept of SSS should position itself as a holiday that can accommodate the trend on being healthy and active – also on holiday and all year around. Finally, the concept of SSS should position itself as different from other holiday houses, due to the theme of making it easy for the guest to have an active and healthy holiday.

**Communication Decisions:**

*Characteristics of the Target Group*:

Relationship Communication:

* Time Dimensions
  + Historical factors:
    - No prior relationship with SSS
  + Future factors:
    - Expectations:
      * Expectation of SSS fostering an active holiday
      * Available equipment-for all types of weather
      * Challenging activities
      * Activities for some or all family members and all age groups
      * Expectations in relation to recipe book and activity book
    - Visions/Hopes:
      * Visions of being together as a family
      * Visions/hope of networking possibilities for the children
* Situational Context:
  + Internal Factors:
    - Being healthy
    - Playing games
    - Being together
    - Being active
    - Attitude: family being in focus when on holiday
    - Identity: being a children’s family
    - Capability: whether the families can make use of the particular initiatives of SSS
  + External factors
    - The family i.e. the children being a deciding factor in relation to choosing a holiday
    - Economic situation: price is an influent factor in relation to choosing a holiday
    - Trend of being healthy and active when on holiday
    - Alternative choices: surrounding sights are important

Decision-Making Process:

* Need recognition/problem awareness:
  + A holiday to get away from everyday life and be together as a family
  + A holiday where they is room for everyone
  + A holiday where they can relax
  + A holiday where they can be active
* Internal information search:
  + Talk together as a family
  + Uses past experiences
* External information search:
  + Information via friends and family
  + The internet (Google and destinations’ homepage)
  + User-generated content
  + Catalogues, if they saw the need for it
* Evaluations of alternatives:
  + Self-image – High involvement:
    - Family people
    - Active people
    - Different from others
  + Perceived risk – High involvement:
    - The money involved in a holiday
    - The concept being different
  + Social factors – Low involvement:
    - Not expressed
  + Hedonistic influences – High involvement:
    - High degree of pleasure
* Online decision-making process:
  + Controlled marketing factors:
    - Corporate webpages
  + Uncontrolled marketing factors:
    - User-generated content

**Communication Objectives**: There are two objectives for the concept of SSS. This first is to create awareness about the concept and the second is to establish a relationship with the target group. These two objectives will be fulfilled via a facebook page as this may, in terms of the possibilities that online WOM offers, provide more awareness and at the same time establish a relationship with the target group, through various tools of engaging in relation to use a social medium.

**Choice of Medium**:

* Choice of facebook
  + Low cost
  + Best suitable networking site (Compared with LinkedIn and twitter)
  + Largest social networking site in Denmark
  + Target group represented
  + Pre-existing consumer database
  + A personal medium (may make the users more open to new things)
  + Possibilities for the target group to obtain information on own premises
* Media Plan Integration:
  + Aligning pamphlet content with facebook content
  + Transferring logo and colour schemes
* Guidelines:
  + Professional and user-generated content, i.e. professional and personal voice
  + Clarity, i.e. identification of being representative of SSS
* The 7 Cs Framework
  + Community: Interactive communication in terms of one-to-one communication (facebook e-mails and chat) and one-to-many communication (status updates and also facebook e-mails)
  + Customisation: Tailoring
  + Communication: via user-to-site communication and also via two-way communication
  + Connection: Different links to nearby attractions and/or local attractions

**Communication between the Target Group and the Concept:**

* Engaging the Target group
  + Provide networking platform, i.e. facebook
  + Engagement through blogs, polls and status updates
  + Via the pamphlets encourage the target group to make an update on facebook
  + Discount in the holiday house when following the SSS on facebook
  + Appeal to all senses through pictures and/or status updates
  + Power stories, e.g. blog by target group
* The Target Group’s Source of Information:
  + A mix of consumer review and seller-created product information

The information above represents our take on a possible communications strategy for the concept SSS. Through the communications strategy model (See chapter 12), we hope to have provided a clear overview of what we believe a communications strategy for SSS to contain. In relation to providing a clear overview, the listings above have been kept short however a detailed description of this overview has been presented from chapter 12 to chapter 20.

**22. Credibility of Research**

This paragraph will entail a discussion of the credibility of research within this thesis. This discussion also relates to the credibility issues that were raised in relation to the qualitative research method (as mentioned in chapter 2). When conducting research, there are various elements that are of influence when it comes to the quality of research. These elements can be related to the concepts of reliability, validity and generalisation as these concepts consider the way in which we have arrived at our results. The credibility of research will therefore be considered in light of these three concepts.

Reliability refers to the replicability of the research and: “*[...] the question of whether or not some future researches could repeat the research project and come up with the same results, interpretations and claims”* (Silverman, 2006: 282). In relation to our thesis and our use of qualitative research method, it can be argued that reliability is not attainable. This is to be understood in light of our constructionist world-view that emphasises that knowledge is obtained through social contexts and varies according to the different perspectives people hold. As people are always situated within their own situational context, their understandings of the world may differ and thus obtaining reliability is difficult. However, there are ways of attempting to achieve reliability through non-quantitative work (Silverman, 2006: 282). Through a detailed description of the research strategy and the data analysis collection, reliability can be obtained (Silverman, 2006: 282). In relation to our thesis, we have attempted to ensure reliability first of all through our methodology section e.g. data collection and approach to analysis. Moreover, we have attempted to ensure reliability through the communications strategy model (chapter 12) through which the coherence of the thesis has been articulated. The detailed description of approach to research is also an aid in relation to attempting transparency of the research. As was mentioned in chapter 2, the qualitative research method has been criticised for lacking transparency in the sense that the approach to the research and how conclusions are arrived at is not clarified within the qualitative research method. However, through the detailed description of our approach to research e.g. the interview guides, the paragraph ‘approach to analysis’ and the communications strategy model (see chapter 2), we hope to have provided transparency in relation to how the process of the research within this thesis has evolved. Furthermore, with respect to reliability, the qualitative research method has been criticised for being too subjective (as mentioned in chapter 2). In relation to this, as we are social constructionists and thereby adhere to the notion that the world is to be comprehended subjectively and people construct their own realities, reliability in the form of replicability is not possible. Even though the material may not be replicable, it is our hope that the information gathered within this thesis will provide a contribution to the body of research concerning social media marketing and that it may provide impetus for further research on the subject.

Reliability is closely related to the concept of validity i.e. how valid the researcher’s findings are (Davies, 2007: 243). There are different ways to attempt validity in a study. In order to create validity, it is important that the researchers critically question their findings and at the same time to check the findings throughout the whole research process (Kvale, 1996: 242-243). In relation to this, we argue that our methodology provides an overview of the overall thesis in relation to all considerations and decisions that have been made in the process of conducting the research. Through the methodology, we hope to have provided the frame for understanding the development of the research and thereby understanding how and why the conclusions were arrived at.

The final concept in relation to the quality of research is generalisation. Generalisation refers whether or not the research is generalisable to the point that it can be transferred to another situation (Kvale, 1996: 233). In relation to our research, as we are making a communications strategy for SSS and the findings are thus based within a specific context (e.g., the communications strategy is based on SSS and representative features of this concept, for instance the positioning statement), the overall research findings cannot be generalised. this is based on specific information in terms of However, we argue that the research may represent *moderatum* generalisations i.e. that the research may represent ‘recognisable set of features’ (Williams, 2000: 115). In relation to our research, we argue that aspects of communicating a product or service via facebook is generalisable in the sense that many of the same features need to be accounted for as for instance how to engage the consumers.

This chapter has focused on the credibility of research through the concepts of reliability, validity and generalisation. It was argued that within our constructionist world-view reliability was difficult to achieve, however, through the detailed description of our approach to research e.g. the interview guides, the paragraph ‘approach to analysis’ and the communications strategy model, we hope to have provided transparency in relation to how the process of the research within this thesis has evolved. Validity was considered in relation to our articulations and considerations in the methodology and through this we hope to have provided the frame for understanding the development of the research and why the conclusions were arrived at.

Lastly, we argued that the research may represent moderatum generalisations i.e. that parts of our thesis are generalisable, as for instance issues in relation to communicating a product or service via facebook, and that the overall research is not generalisable as we have made use of a specific case, i.e. the concept of SSS.

**23. Conclusion**

Within this thesis, we have made a possible communications strategy for the concept ’Sjovt, Sundt Sommerhus’. The strategy is made within an integrated marketing communications context as this emphasises an integrated approach in order to create a clear and consistent strategy. This approach was chosen as it takes the different communication efforts made by an organisation into consideration as for instance offline and online activities. Within our context, we are only focusing on communicating via facebook and thus there is not focus on several communicative efforts and how to integrate these. However, the integrative aspect is reflected in relation to the fact that former communicative activities are considered in the communications strategy.

The communications strategy is based on aspects of the overall marketing strategy of MT, SSS’s positioning statement, characteristics of the target group, communication objectives, choice of medium and the communication between the target group and the concept. In relation to the overall marketing strategy, SSS operates within the overall frame of ‘health and tourism’ which focuses on being healthy and active when on holiday. Based on this, SSS should position itself as a concept that offers a holiday where the target group can be together and enjoy each other. Moreover, it should position itself as a holiday that makes it easy for the target group to be active and healthy on holiday-all year round. In relation to the communications strategy, the objectives of this strategy are to create awareness of the concept and to establish relationship with the target group.

‘Characteristics of the target group’ is established via relationship communication and the decision-making process. Through relationship communication different factors that influence the target group’s meaning creation are established as for instance expectations of SSS fostering an active holiday, visions of being together as a family, playing games, family being in focus when on holiday, identity of being a children’s family, surrounding sights. In order to establish relationships, it is emphasised that as many factors as possible are appealed to, however as SSS is a relatively unknown concept and no relationships have been argued to exist, considering pre-established relationships with the target group has not been possible. Thus, the theory of relationship communication has been applied in relation to creating a database of factors that influence target group’s meaning creation process. This database provides an overview of factors to consider in the communication of SSS (cf. the examples above). In relation to the decision-making process, different factors were established in relation to the target group’s buying process. The target group’s needs are visible terms of e.g. a need to get away from everyday life and be together with the family. Information search is used in terms of both internal, e.g. personal experience, and external, e.g. user-generated content and friends and family, among the target group. Furthermore, involvement is high in terms of self-image (e.g. being active), perceived risk (e.g. the money involved), and hedonistic influences (e.g. high degree of pleasure). In relation to online decision-making process, factors as user-generated content is very used among the target group and can influence the overall decision-making process.

In relation to the characteristics of the target group, it is important that SSS take these characteristics into consideration in order to make the concept appealing in relation to the target group’s preferences. For instance, in terms of expectations of activities that involves some or all family members and all age groups, SSS should emphasise how they can accommodate this. Moreover, with regard to information search and SSS, the focus should be on the external search as internal search cannot consider this aspect in relation to SSS as it is an unknown concept. As the target group represents high-involvement e.g. in relation to self-image, they will emphasise information from both the concept and user-generated content and therefore it is important to choose a medium that can hole a certain amount of information.

As SSS is relatively unknown, this has implied that some elements of respectively relationship communication and the decision-making process have not been possible to analyse. However, it has been argued that facebook provides the opportunity of obtaining thorough information about the target group and if the facebook page for SSS is realised, SSS can apply the information in terms of relationship communication i.e. evaluate the relationships that hopefully are established. Moreover, the thorough information about the target group can be applied in relation the target group’s internal information search in the sense that knowledge of previous experiences is available.

In terms of reaching the target group, the social networking site facebook was chosen due to e.g. the fact that the target group is represented on facebook, it is a low cost medium, it allows for information from several sources and the possibility of establishing relationships with the target group. Moreover, facebook allows for the target group to communicate with each other and for the concept to communicate with the target group and vice versa. Furthermore, it was established that in order to ensure a coherent message, aligning pamphlet content with facebook content and transferring logo and colour schemes is important. Guidelines for SSS’s conduct on facebook emphasised that communication should be performed through a professional and personal voice and moreover emphasised that it is important to ensure clarity in terms of employees identifying themselves as being representatives of SSS.

The communication between the target group and the concept involves engaging the target group (as to attempt to establish relationship). Engaging the target group of SSS is suggested to be performed e.g. via providing them with exclusive offers when following the facebook page, through blogs expressing their visits to the holiday houses, through status updates or polls, through power stories and moreover also engaging through e.g. the concept of ‘Geocaching’. In relation to these engagement methods, they may from starting point reflect a vague level of engagement on behalf of the target group and thus it is necessary to continuously ensure engaging content via the various engagement techniques. In relation to the target group’s source of information, due to the target group’s level of expertise and knowledge on this concept, user-generated content is an important source for the target group. However, seller-created product information is also used by the target group in terms of the more practical issues. This means that when communicating with this target group, it is important that both consumer review and seller-created product is available on the facebook page. In relation to engaging the target group and the target group’s source of information, it is important to be critical in relation to how much information SSS should send to the target group. Thus, it is important to be engaging and not importunate.

Creating awareness of the concept and establishing relationships with the target group were the objectives of this communications strategy. In relation to this, we believe that facebook will be a way of achieving awareness and establishing relationships due to the opportunities facebook provides in terms of e.g. creating contact with the target group and WOM.

All in all, the communications strategy represented in this thesis has a clear focus on the consumer. This is expressed in the sense that we trough the concepts of relationship communication and the decision-making process have provided a thorough image of the target group and their characteristics. This extensive knowledge has moreover been considered in combination with specific tools for reaching and engaging the target group. Consumers nowadays are much more in control in relation to obtaining information i.e. they are able to obtain information on their own premises and thus it is important to make them want to engage in a product or service. In relation to this, we believe that the communications strategy made in this thesis provides the basis for engaging the target group in the concept. This is reflected through the thorough knowledge of the target group, the technicalities of communicating via facebook (e.g. 7 Cs) and through the focus of appealing to the target group’s senses (E.g. via pictures or stories). Thus, we believe that this communications strategy for SSS may provide impetus for the target group becoming engaged in relation to concept.

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1. According to Danmarks Statistik, 76% of the Danish population between the ages of 20-39 and 42% of the Danish population between the ages 40-59 have a facebook profile (Danmarks Statistik- It-vaner) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The meaning-based model reflects a meaning-based persepctive of consumers’ advertising experiences within the contexts of life themes (people structuring their goals and means in order to create coherence in their lives) and life projects (how the self and the extended self is understood) (Mick & Buhl, 1992:pp317-318). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The critical incidents in a relational context (CIRC) model considers critical incidents in customer relationships. This consideration is made in relation to a time (history, present time and future of the relationship) and situational dimension (internal and external conditions of the relationship) (Edvarsson & Strandvik, 2000: pp 85-86). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)