Branding in social media

A qualitative study of three Swedish municipalities

Hiba Charkas, Anne Beth Eltun
Acknowledgement

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this thesis with information, help, advice and critics. Especially we would like to thank the interviewees from each municipality; Anna-Charlotta Pettersson (Halmstad), Mattias Skoog (Falkenberg), Jessica Krantz (Ängelholm) and Daniel Franzén (Ängelholm), our fellow students and opposition groups and our supervisor Navid Ghannad. Finally we would also like to thank our families for their support in the course of writing the thesis.

Halmstad, June 4th 2014

Hiba Charkas
Anne Beth Eltun
Abstract

Research show that social media are effective channels to use in branding, at the same time Swedish municipalities are increasingly starting to see the importance of branding and reports show that they are using social media channels for branding purposes. Even though reports show that the municipalities are using social media channels in branding there is a lack of studies done on how they are using social media in branding. To examine this two research questions is developed; (1) What is branding for a municipality and (2) How are municipalities using social media in branding. To examine the research questions different theories are applied and a conceptual framework is developed based on theories from branding, social media and branding in social media. To collect data for the research a qualitative study with three case studies (three Swedish municipalities) is conducted. The primary data from the three cases is collected through face to face interviews with employees responsible for the social media channels. Secondary information is gathered through observations of the municipalities social media channels examined in this thesis, and documents found on internet concerning the municipalities’ use of social media. The analysis of the data is done based on the conceptual framework presented in the theoretical chapter and consists of both within case studies and cross case studies in order to identify similarities and differences among the cases. The findings from this study show that both corporate, employee, and place branding is applied in the municipalities overall branding goals and strategies. Even though the municipalities are examined as organizations in this study employee and place branding goals are identified in order for the municipalities to reach their overall wanted position and image. A further conclusion is that social media has been effective in branding. Social media has enabled the municipalities to reach their branding goals through being transparent, informing, engaging and creating dialogues with their inhabitants and other publics. Through social media the municipalities have managed to establish, influence and create perceptions that have positively influenced their position and image. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have shown to be efficient social media channels to use in branding and has enabled the studied municipalities to change their perceived image from being unknown organizations to becoming more personal, transparent and increasing the public’s knowledge about the municipalities.

Keywords; Social media; Social media strategies: Social media in municipalities; Facebook; Twitter; Instagram; Branding
Table of contents

Acknowledgement ................................................................................................................................. i

Abstract ................................................................................................................................................... ii

1. Introduction ........................................................................................................................................ 1

   1.1 Background .................................................................................................................................. 1

   1.2 Problem discussion ....................................................................................................................... 1

   1.3 Purpose and research questions ................................................................................................... 3

   1.4 Delimitations ............................................................................................................................... 3

   1.5 Thesis layout ................................................................................................................................. 3

2. Theoretical framework ....................................................................................................................... 4

   2.1 Branding ....................................................................................................................................... 4

       2.1.1 Brand image, position and identity ....................................................................................... 4

       2.1.2 Defining branding ................................................................................................................. 4

       2.1.3 Corporate, place and employee branding ............................................................................. 5

       2.1.4 Branding communication strategies ...................................................................................... 6

   2.2 Social media .................................................................................................................................. 6

   2.3 Branding in social media ............................................................................................................... 7

       2.3.1 Today ....................................................................................................................................... 7

       2.3.2 Platform ................................................................................................................................. 8

       2.3.3 Strategy ................................................................................................................................... 8

       2.3.4 Program ................................................................................................................................... 11

       2.3.5 Anchoring ............................................................................................................................. 11

       2.3.6 Evaluate .................................................................................................................................. 11

   2.4 Conceptual framework ................................................................................................................... 11

3. Methodology ...................................................................................................................................... 13

   3.1 Research approach ....................................................................................................................... 13

       3.1.1 A qualitative research ........................................................................................................... 13

       3.1.2 A deductive approach ........................................................................................................... 14

   3.2 Research strategy ......................................................................................................................... 14

       3.2.1 Multiple case studies ............................................................................................................. 14

       3.2.2 Case selections ...................................................................................................................... 15

3.3 Data collection ................................................................................................................................ 16

   3.3.1 Primary data ............................................................................................................................ 16

   3.3.2 Secondary data ......................................................................................................................... 17
3.4 Data analysis .................................................................................................................. 18
3.5 Research criteria ........................................................................................................... 18

4. Empirical data .................................................................................................................. 20
  4.1 Halmstad ....................................................................................................................... 20
  4.2 Falkenberg .................................................................................................................. 24
  4.3 Ängelholm .................................................................................................................... 29

5. Analysis ............................................................................................................................ 33
  5.1 Today - perceived image ......................................................................................... 33
  5.2 Platform - branding goals ....................................................................................... 34
  5.3 Strategy - branding strategies .................................................................................. 37
  5.4 Program - written guidelines ................................................................................... 48
  5.5 Anchoring - common understanding ...................................................................... 50
  5.6 Evaluating branding strategies ................................................................................. 52
  5.7 Cross-case analysis .................................................................................................... 54
  5.8 Outcomes of the analysis .......................................................................................... 55

6. Conclusion ....................................................................................................................... 57
  6.1 Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 57
  6.2 Implications ................................................................................................................ 60
  6.3 Limitations .................................................................................................................. 60
  6.4 Further research ......................................................................................................... 60

References ............................................................................................................................ 61
  Electronic sources ............................................................................................................ 63
  Observations ..................................................................................................................... 65

Appendix A - Interview guide (English) ........................................................................... 66
Appendix B - Interview guide (Swedish) .......................................................................... 68
Appendix C - Halmstad ..................................................................................................... 70
Appendix D - Falkenberg .................................................................................................. 75
Appendix E - Ängelholm .................................................................................................... 80
1. Introduction

This chapter starts with the background for the chosen topic in this thesis, further the problem discussion is presented which leads to the explanation and presentation of the research questions. In the end of the chapter delimitations and thesis layout is presented.

1.1 Background
With the emerge of social media, tools and communication strategies have changed (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). The 21st century is characterized by the development of social media, which has changed how managers view their marketing strategies (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Parsons (2013) argues that due to the increased usage of social media among consumers, discussions about marketing strategies are incomplete if social media is not included. Consequently, this provides organizations with new opportunities in their marketing (Dong-Hun, 2010). Social media has influenced several aspects of consumer behavior, awareness, information gathering, purchase behavior and communication with organizations and other consumers (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Both small and large organizations have recognized the expansion of social media and are trying to understand the usefulness of incorporating it in their strategies (Weinberg & Pehlivan, 2011). A study done by Montalvo (2011) suggests that the use of social media has a great impact on brand awareness and on a brand’s reputation. Due to the spread use of social media and its users, organizations using social media can ensure the visibility of their brands (Montalvo, 2011).

The revolution of social media has changed the communication landscape and marketing communication. Due to this, consumers spend more time in the social media landscape and the majority of communication occurs within this landscape (Hutter, Hautz, Dennhardt & Füller, 2013). The increased use of electronic devices has also increased the use and simplified the access to social media sites (Parsons, 2013). In 2013 Facebook had nearly one billion users (Social Media Today, 2013), and 751 million of these had access to Facebook through their mobile devices and 23 percent of all users check their account more than five times a day (Digital Insights, 2013). Twitter is also showing a high user rate with 288 million monthly active users. 60 percent of all users have access to this network from mobile devices. Overall, 4.2 billion people now have access to social media sites from their mobile devices. As a result, brand related interactions and marketing campaigns are increasing in social media (Hutter et al., 2013).

Consumers have thus become an active creator and influencer over brands, giving them the control. The emergence of the new marketing communication has created new opportunities and challenges for companies since consumers rely more on their social networks and are influenced by the interactions created in social media. Hence, social media platforms have an important role in brand activities (Hutter et al., 2013).

1.2 Problem discussion
As presented in the background social media platforms have an important role in brand activities (Hutter et al., 2013), researchers have found that social media amongst other influence brand awareness, purchasing behavior, information gathering and brand reputation (Mangold & Faulds, 2009), but reports also show that social media has a great impact on branding (Yan, 2011; Carlsson, 2009; Carlsson, 2011).
The social media platforms allow organizations the opportunity to listen to their customers, their feedback, encourage dialogues with their consumers and establish relations (Parsons, 2013). Social media also creates the opportunity for consumers to interact with organizations and brands, and through sharing opinions with other consumers influence the brands reputation, which is important in branding (Carlsson, 2011). Parsons (2013) writes that it is essential to have a communication strategy for every social media channel used to find the right communicative style for each channel, and Carlsson (2011) and Yan (2011) argue that own strategies should be made for branding in social media. It is not enough for organizations to establish a presence in social media if they do not and cannot nurture it. Organizations need to understand how to attract consumers and how to interact with them, rather than talking to them in a traditional manner (Parsons, 2013).

Branding is important not only for consumer brands, recent literature show that branding is also important for whole organizations (Byrkjeflot, 2010; Carlsson, 2011), and especially the public sector is increasingly starting to work with branding and understand the importance of implementing branding strategies (Dahlqvist & Melin, 2010; Byrkjeflot, 2010). Swedish municipalities\(^1\) are amongst others struggling with their image due to the negative picture created by media (Dahlqvist & Melin, 2010). Dahlqvist and Melin (2010) argue that this problem has arisen because the municipalities have not been active in branding. The municipalities have not tried to disprove this negative image, but this is starting to change and many municipalities are now working with branding (Dahlqvist & Melin, 2010, SKL & TNS Sifo, 2012).

Reports from Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL) show that 80 percent of the municipalities in Sweden are using one or more social media channels in their communication work and the municipalities’ states that branding is one of their main goals by using social media channels, together with inhabitant communication and crisis communication (SKL & TNS Sifo, 2012). The municipalities try to keep up with the development of social media since these channels are inexpensive and make it easy to communicate with the citizens. Social media is today used by many different groups in the society and gives municipalities the possibility to reach many and new citizens and increase transparency and city participation in the public sector (Klang & Nolin, 2011; SKL & TNS Sifo, 2012; Bonsón, Torres, Royo & Flores, 2012).

As presented in the problem discussion social media is shown to be effective for branding, at the same time municipalities are increasingly starting to work with branding and see social media as effective channels for branding, but there is a lack of research done on how the municipalities use social media in branding, both on which strategies they use and specific tactics in the different social media channels.

---

\(^1\) A municipality in Sweden is a geographically defined administrative region with its own (politically selected) local authority. Each county is divided into a number of municipalities, and in Sweden there are 290 municipalities (Folkets-lexicon, 2014; Regeringen, 2014). The municipal local authority is responsible for important public services, amongst others schools, social care, environment (statutory) and tourism, business development and cultural events (voluntary) (regeringen.se, 2014).
1.3 Purpose and research questions
Based on the problem discussion the purpose of this study is to examine how Swedish municipalities use social media in branding, more specific which strategies they use to reach their branding goals.

In order to fulfill the purpose of this thesis two research questions have been formulated:

Q1: What is branding for a municipality?
Q2: How are municipalities using social media to reach their branding goals?

1.4 Delimitations
Branding is a broad field that influences many aspects of an organization (Carlsson, 2011), the focus of this thesis will be on the external branding social media strategies.

Further the focus of this thesis will be on branding in the municipality organization and not the municipality as a geographical place.

This thesis will only examine the social media channels Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Facebook and Twitter was chosen because they are the most used social media channels amongst Swedish municipalities (SKL & TNS Sifo, 2012). Instagram was chosen based on a pre-study of the three case municipalities in this thesis, as they all three were actively using this channel or had future plans for this channel in terms of branding.

Further the thesis will only focus on municipalities’ use of social media towards the public sector and not the business sector. This study will examine the municipalities’ point of view and not the public's point of view.

1.5 Thesis layout
The following parts of this thesis is built up in this order; Theoretical framework, Methodology, Empirical data, Analysis and Conclusion with Implications and Further research. The theoretical framework describes the theories and presents the conceptual framework that will be used to analyze the empirical data. The methodology chapter describes the methodological characteristics of this thesis. The empirical chapter presents the relevant information gathered through primary and secondary data sources, this information is presented case by case. In the analysis all the cases are analyzed as within case studies and cross case studies under each theme from the conceptual framework to find similarities and differences. In the end a summarized cross case table is presented where the results are implemented in the conceptual framework. In the conclusion the most important findings from the thesis is presented and the research questions are answered. Implications, limitations and further research in this field are also presented in this chapter.
2. Theoretical framework

This chapter presents the theoretical framework for the thesis. Branding is defined before describing social media in general. Further social media in branding is presented based on different theories in the field. At the end a conceptual framework is developed.

2.1 Branding

2.1.1 Brand image, position and identity

Brand identity, brand position and brand image are the building blocks of branding (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). Brand identity refers to what the brand is (Carlsson, 2009) and how an organization wants a brand to be perceived. Brand identity is differentiation of a product (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005) and includes both tangible and intangible aspects such as product design, traits and history (Carlsson, 2009). Brand image is the “perception of the brand in the minds of people...it is what people believe about a brand - their thoughts, feelings, expectations” (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005, pp. 509). Brand positioning is a brands relationship to competing products (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005) and how a brand wants to be compared to competitors, for example “the exclusive” or “the safe choice” (Carlsson, 2009), which becomes the positioning when it is communicated to the target group. The relation between these three aspects has been presented in an article by Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005) showed in Exhibit 1:

Exhibit 1: The relation between brand identity, brand positioning and brand image, Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005, pp. 508

2.1.2 Defining branding

Defining brand identity and position (strengths) is the first step in the branding process (Dent, 1990) where the goal of branding is to work strategically so the brand image is consistent with the brand identity, how the organization wants the brand to be perceived (Dahlqvist & Melin, 2010). Dahlqvist and Melin (2010) states that branding can be described as a well-considered strategy to establish, enhance or change people’s perceptions.

Dolak (2003) describes branding as an ongoing communication process with an organization's market. Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005) also describe branding as a communication process. Dolak (2003) writes that branding creates trust and emotional attachments to a product or a company, a feeling of involvement and a sense of higher quality. To succeed with branding, organizations need to communicate their distinctive attributes, strengths, in a short and simple way (Dolak, 2003; Dent, 1990). It is not about whether a brand exists; it is about how well a brand is managed (Dolak, 2003). A properly built brand with quality, value and reliability can reduce marketing work and generate high returns and profit margins over a long period of time (Dent, 1990).
As defined by many authors, branding is about communicating with the target market (Dolak, 2003; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005; Dent, 1990) to establish, enhance or change people’s perceptions, so that brand image is consistent with brand identity (Dahlqvist & Melin, 2010).

2.1.3 Corporate, place and employee branding
In recent literature authors describe branding as important and applicable for other aspects than just consumer goods (product branding), and three of these are corporate branding, place branding and employee branding (Carlsson, 2011; Kavaratzis, 2004; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005; Byrkjeflot, 2010).

Corporate branding
Byrkjeflot (2010) writes that the focus on organizations as a brand and the importance of branding has increased and this has resulted in more research in the field of corporate branding, that looks at the importance of marketing the whole organization and catching the environments attention. The term corporate branding was introduced in the 1990s but has since then been developed further. Byrkjeflot (2010) writes that the term has been developed in different directions where one of them looks at the importance of including reputation management in corporate branding. Byrkjeflot (2010) writes that the idea behind reputation management is to always be aware of how the environment sees an organization, their perceptions, and actively try to influence these perceptions. If the environment does not have the positive perception the organization wants them to have then it is necessary for that organization to change these perceptions, and this is done through corporate branding (Byrkjeflot, 2010). Byrkjeflot (20120) writes that “corporate branding and reputation management aims at influencing perceptions amongst stakeholders in terms of what and who the organization is, what their mission is and what the organization stands for” (Byrkjeflot, 2010, pp. 6). Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005) explain that corporate branding is a development of traditional product branding, but the corporate brand is “attached to more universal values, such as social responsibility, environmental care, sustainability, progressiveness, innovation, trust, quality etc” (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005, pp. 70).

Place branding
As defined by Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005) place branding is merely about changing the way places are perceived by a target market. Kavaratzis (2004) defined goals with place branding which are (1) place branding has the goal to achieve “competitive advantage in order to increase inward investment and tourism, and (2) the goal of achieving “community development, reinforcing local identity and identification of the citizens with their city and activating all social forces to avoid social exclusion and unrest” (Kavaratzis, 2004, pp. 70).

Employee branding
Employee branding is about making strategies so an organization can be perceived as a desirable workplace to attract the most competent employees, and these strategies aims at both current and potential employees (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). It is important that employees are satisfied with a workplace as this in turn leads to more new competent potential employees wanting to work for the organization (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Dyhre and Parment (2012) describe employee branding as branding the desired organization image to attract, recruit and keep the right employees.
2.1.4 Branding communication strategies

As mentioned in the first chapter communication is an important part of a branding strategy, it is through the communication with the market one gets a position and influences the perceptions of a brand in the market (Carlsson, 2009; Lagergren, 1998). When making the branding communication strategies an organization have to decide how they are going to communicate, the content of the communication and to whom in order to reach their branding goals (Carlsson, 2011; Lagergren, 1998). Throughout the thesis social media will be examined as communication channels in branding strategies.

2.2 Social media

Social media can be described as “mobile and web-based technologies that are being used to create highly interactive platforms where both individuals and communities can share, co-create, discuss and modify user generated content” (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011, pp. abstract). These new social platforms have changed the way people communicate as one-way communication has changed to two-way communication (Dong-Hun, 2010). Companies can with social media build relations, open up for dialogue and establish a relationship on a whole new level with its customers. Social media also makes it easier to listen to the customers and to follow trends in the environment (Carlsson, 2009). Also the two-way communication between consumers and organizations reduces misunderstandings that can have negative effects on a brand (Dong-Hun, 2010). Social media can be used for many different purposes, both private and work related (Yan, 2011). There are also a wide range of different social media platforms, with both common and different functionalities (Carlsson, 2009).

Facebook

Facebook is a social network where people can communicate, both private and work related. The network was originally aimed at connecting friends and contacts, but has in recent years changed to also including functions for organizations wanting to advertise and to reach more and new markets (Yan, 2011). Today Facebook has over 400 million users, and if Facebook was a country it would be the third most populated country in the world (Digitaltrends, 2013). There are a diverse range of functions on Facebook for communicating, amongst others in groups, following sites, events and talking directly to others on “the wall” or in chats (Ström, 2010; Carlsson, 2009). For companies using Facebook they can establish own company fan sites and groups (Ström, 2010). As Facebook is frequently adding new functions the possibilities for companies using this social network is constantly changing, but as of today companies can amongst others publish text, links and photos, connect the facebook site to their homepage and gather valuable statistics about existing and potential markets (Ström, 2010; Carlsson, 2009; Carlsson 2011).

Twitter

Twitter is a microblog and Ström (2010) defines it as something in between a blog and a chat forum. Users on Twitter can publish texts of a maximum 140 signs called “tweets” to their “followers” and can reach out to even more people by “re-tweeting” or using hashtags (#) (Twitter, 2014; Weber, 2009). “Followers” are people who actively have chosen to get “tweets” from a person in their “feed”. The “feed” is where the user sees all the “tweets” from the ones he/she is following. The # symbol (called hashtag) is used to mark keywords or topics in a Tweet. This is a way to categorize messages, and clicking on a hashtagged word will show all other written Tweets marked with that keyword hashtag (Twitter, 2014; Weber, 2009). On Twitter it is also possible to retweet. To retweet is to share someone else’s tweet
with your own followers on Twitter (Twitter, 2014; Weber, 2009). Just as Facebook both private persons and companies can use Twitter to communicate (Ström, 2010).

**Instagram**

Instagram is a media-sharing applicative for mobile phones with iOS and Android platforms (Miles, 2014). Here users can share pictures and short videos with “followers”, people that one have connected with on Instagram (Miles, 2014). One of the important functions on Instagram is the possibility to hashtag (#), when hashtagging a photo or video on Instagram one can connect photos with other people who have used the same hashtag in their photo or video, “it allows simple categorization to be applied to an image” (Miles, 2014). Instagram is growing rapidly and 5 million pictures are shared worldwide every day (Miles, 2014). Organizations are increasingly starting to use Instagram for marketing and branding purposes (Miles, 2014).

2.3 Branding in social media

The thesis has so far looked at branding and social media separately. The following section focuses on how social media can be used in branding.

As presented in the first chapter branding is strategies to establish, enhance or change people’s perceptions (Dahlqvist & Melin, 2010) so the public’s perceptions of a brand (brand image) matches how an organization wants to be perceived (brand identity) (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). This is done through an ongoing process of communicating with the publics in the market (Dolak, 2003; Dent, 1990) and monitoring the environment to look at the perceived image (reputation management) (Byrkjeflot, 2010). Carlsson (2011) has developed a model that looks at how branding is done most effectively in social media, the model developed by Carlsson (2011) is presented in Exhibit 2.

Each step of the model will be explained, in addition other theories concerning branding and social media will be added to the different stages in order to develop a conceptual framework.

![Exhibit 2: Branding in social media channels in six steps (translated from Swedish to English), Lena Carlsson, 2011](image)

### 2.3.1 Today

Today is about getting insights about how the organization is being perceived, an organization’s current brand image (Carlsson, 2011). As mentioned in chapter 2.1.1 brand image is the “perception of the brand in the minds of people...it is what people believe about
a brand - their thoughts, feelings, expectations” (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005, pp. 509) It is based on this knowledge that an organization can see what they eventually have to establish, enhance or change in people’s perceptions (Dahlqvist & Melin, 2010). Yan (2011) suggests that there are opportunities with using social media in branding when it comes to looking at an organization's brand image. Social media is valuable for an organization in terms of having the opportunity to monitor the environment and get information about trends, people’s opinions in general and specific opinions they have about the organization. This information is important in making strategies and evaluating the organization's image (Carlsson, 2011). If the image is not the same as the identity that the organization wants to communicate then it is necessary to try and change the perceptions (Byrkjeflot, 2010).

2.3.2 Platform

The platform phase can be visualized using the model developed by Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005) presented in chapter 2.1.1, where the red circle represent the aim of the platform phase (Exhibit 3). As Carlsson (2011) defines it, platform is the phase where one sets the branding goals. It is in this phase that the organization defines how they want to be perceived, the brand identity (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). It is about choosing the position (Carlsson, 2011; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005) one wants to communicate, which is also mentioned in Dent (1990) as the third step of a branding process.

Exhibit 3: Relation between brand identity, brand positioning and brand image, Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005, pp. 508

2.3.3 Strategy

The aim with this stage of the model is to make strategies on how the organization is going to establish, enhance or change people’s perceptions through communicating in social media channels in order to reach the goals made in the “platform” stage (Carlsson, 2011). As mentioned under chapter 2.1.4 communication is an important part of the branding strategy, as it is through communication with the market one gets a position and have the possibility to influence the perceptions of the brand (Carlsson, 2009, Lagergren, 1998). The organization needs to find out what they want to communicate and how this is going to be communicated (Carlsson, 2011). Dent (1990) has also developed guidelines for branding and emphasizes the importance of communicating with the publics in order to create brand recognition and communicate a brand's strength.

Yan (2011) has developed different goals when making strategies for branding and explains that an organization should aim at building a membership between the market and the organization, communicate the brand values and encourage the market to engage in dialogue and promoting the brand to others. By doing this Yan (2011) means that the organization will manage to influence perceptions, build differentiation, build positive brand associations, get a
competitive advantage and build the perceived quality of the brand (Yan, 2011). Dong-Hun (2010) suggests that engagement and dialogue in social media can be created through word-of-mouth, which is when consumers recommend a brand to other persons in their social media network (Weber, 2009). Holmström and Wikberg (2010) explain that only 14 percent of people trust marketing campaigns in social media. However, 78 percent trust people they know and the recommendation they give through word of mouth. Independent information from similar people is therefore the most valuable for consumers (Holmström & Wikberg, 2010).

Social media also gives new opportunities on how to communicate to facilitate for branding, both in terms of who should communicate and in which tonality. Carlsson (2011) argues that the responsibility of the social media channels can be given to someone else than just the communication department, and the tonality in social media should be less managerial. Carlsson (2011) suggest to use a more personal and humoristic tone to increase engagement and to create a relationship with the publics.

Consumer power is growing, demanding organizations to be transparent, and this is important for organizations to think about when using social media for branding (Holmström & Wikberg, 2010). Transparency creates credibility and stronger relations between an organization and its consumers (Holmström & Wikberg, 2010). Relations on social media are powerful as it creates credibility and an organization can create relations with its audience on social media through interactions (Dong-Hun, 2010).

Another important aspect to consider that might influence the strategies is that organizations communicating on social media mostly reaches people that are following them on their social media channels, by following them they have already shown some interest in the organization and are therefore probably more willing to engage and influence (Holmström & Wikberg, 2010).

**Branding in Facebook, Twitter & Instagram**

**Facebook**

Some of the most valuable functions for a company on Facebook are the possibility to like, share and comment updates as this is affecting the viral spread (Carlsson, 2009). Posts that get many likes, comments and shares show up more often in the “news feed” on Facebook and are then seen by more people (Facebook, 2014). In average a Facebook user has 190 friends, this means that if an organization post an update on Facebook and one of their followers share this than the possible reach suddenly increases to 190 more people (Facebook, 2011). One of the most effective functions of social media for branding is the possibility for viral spread (Carlsson, 2009). Carlsson (2009) has presented seven points on how to achieve viral spread, these are; (1) build on emotions, (2) do something unexpected, (3) traditional marketing does not work, (4) repeat a success, (5) make it easy to share, (6) make it possible to comment, (7) never restrict the access.

When communicating on Facebook, information can be spread fast and to wider groups than in traditional media, leading to word of mouth which has great effect on branding (Holmström & Wikberg, 2010). Further, Facebook facilitates an effective two-way communication. Organizations can on Facebook communicate directly with their consumers and close the gap between them and their consumers (Yan, 2011). Organizations can through Facebook build relationships with their publics and communicate their brand values with the aim that these people will engage and promote it to others (Carlsson, 2009). Consumers become active
respondents by creating contents, spreading it and becoming ambassadors of the brand by promoting it to others and increasing the exposure of a brand (Holmström & Wikberg, 2010).

Facebook facilitates for organizations to use a more personal tone in their communication which allows organizations to be more responsive to their customers and their demands (Yan, 2011). Using a different tonality makes it easier to engage with consumers and encourage them to engage and promote information to their audiences (Carlsson, 2009). Facebook is also a preferred channel to use in crisis communication and Carlsson (2011) argues that crisis communication is a part of branding. Crisis management is an important part of reputation management which again is a part of corporate branding as presented earlier in the theoretical framework (Byrkjeflot, 2010). Being able to handle crisis in an effective way influences credibility and perceived perceptions of an organization (Carlsson, 2011).

Effective customer service can also be performed on Facebook. Carlsson (2011) explain that high quality customer service with quick and helpful response is positive for branding, both in terms of credibility in answering quickly and giving the customer the right information (Carlsson, 2011).

**Instagram**

Companies are using Instagram as a tool for marketing, leading to more followers, likes and comments (Goor, 2012). It increases the brand awareness and the interactivity with the brand-user whereas it also strengthens the brand (Goor, 2012). According to Bergström and Bäckman (2013) Instagram is commonly used by companies to share content related to their products, events and new releases, but these kinds of usage has low interaction with the customer. However, the interaction with the customer increases when companies utilize Instagram’s co-creative features, as an example Bergström and Bäckman (2013) commented about encouraging users to use company specific hashtags. Hashtags allows an organization to expand the reach of an image beyond their list of followers, so anyone that is interested in that specific topic can see the image uploaded from the organization by searching for that hashtag (Miles, 2014). This is again enhancing word of mouth through the viral spread (Carlsson, 2009; Miles, 2014). As pointed out by Goor (2012) interactiveness increases through raffles or contests with users. Through engagement, consumers help create the content of an organization’s social media platform and they increase the exposure of the brand (Holmström & Wikberg, 2010).

**Twitter**

Organizations can also achieve enhanced word of mouth and viral spread on Twitter (Carlsson, 2009, Ström, 2010). Information published on Twitter can be spread fast and reach a wide target group through the use of hashtags and re-tweets (Twitter, 2014; Ström, 2010; Weber, 2009). As mentioned in chapter 2.2 to re-tweet is to share someone else’s tweet with your own followers on Twitter (Twitter, 2014; Weber, 2009), and hashtags is used to mark keywords or topics in a Tweet. This is a way to categorize messages, and clicking on a hashtagged word will show all other written Tweets marked with that keyword hashtag (Twitter, 2014; Weber, 2009). Communication on Twitter is a two-way communication due to the use of hashtags, re-tweets and tweets (Yan, 2011; Weber, 2009). It also allows organizations to be more responsive to their consumers and their demands (Yan, 2011). The aim is to encourage the consumers to engage and promote the published content on Twitter to others (Carlsson, 2009; Ström, 2010), which can be achieved with the use of hashtags. Through engagement, consumers help create the content of organisations platform and they increase the exposure of the brand (Holmström & Wikberg, 2010). Twitter is also effective to
use for crisis communication as information can be spread fast and reach a wide range of publics (Carlsson, 2009, Carlsson, 2011).

2.3.4 Program
After strategies are made, Carlsson (2011) enhance the importance of writing down guiding documents when the strategies are decided. This will make it easier to actually go through with the strategies. Carlsson (2011) writes that “things happen fast in social media and some guidelines help to make fast responses and actions” (Carlsson, 2011, pp. 85). Writing down guidelines also enhances consistency in the communication which again influences credibility positively (Carlsson, 2011). The program should amongst others set goals for tonality, in order to maintain credibility an organization should use a consistent tonality (Carlsson, 2011). Program should also include specific regulations and guidelines (Carlsson, 2011).

2.3.5 Anchoring
After that strategies and guidelines are made, it is important that everyone that is going to operate with social media in the organization are aware of the guidelines and strategies and which tonality to use, there needs to be a common understanding (Carlsson, 2011). This is important in order to maintain credibility and some degree of consistency in the communication (Carlsson, 2011).

2.3.6 Evaluate
To know if the strategies and tactics in social media are effective in reaching the branding goals it is important to evaluate the results. Carlsson (2011) suggest looking at awareness, loyalty and experienced quality to measure the effects of branding strategies, this can be done both through qualitative and quantitative studies. Another way to evaluate is to conduct brand recognition surveys to evaluate the process (Dent, 1990).

2.4 Conceptual framework
A conceptual framework is developed (Exhibit 4) based on the theories presented above concerning branding, social media and branding in social media. The framework is based on the six step model developed by Carlsson (2011), where additional theories in the field are added to the different stages of the model. As the model does not examine Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in particular, theories concerning these channels are added to the “Strategy” stage of the model.

To make the empirical data and analysis chapter easier for the reader to follow, and to better explain the aim of each stage in the model, additional names are given to the different stages in the model; Today - perceived image; Platform - branding goals; Strategy - branding strategies; Program - written guidelines; Anchoring - common understanding; Evaluating branding strategies.

The lines around the model are to show that branding is a process that consists of all the stages in the model.
Exhibit 4: Conceptual framework developed by the authors of the thesis
3. Methodology

The methodology chapter presents the methodological framework for this thesis and justifies the author’s choices. The chapter begins with an argumentation for the research approach; a qualitative study with a deductive approach. Further follows an explanation for the use of case studies and the case selections of this study. The primary and secondary data will then be discussed, and their contribution to the empirical chapter. Continuing the authors argument for the relevance of doing a within case and a cross-case analysis and explain how these will be presented in the analysis. Finally a discussion about the research criteria for this study is presented.

3.1 Research approach

In the following section the research approaches used in this study are explained. This section starts with an explanation of what kind of study this is, qualitative or quantitative and the authors’ argumentation for their choice. This is followed by a section discussing the research approach of this study, the deductive approach, and why the authors find this approach appropriate.

3.1.1 A qualitative research

There are two research studies that will result in different outcomes depending on the data the researcher aims to collect (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). In a qualitative research, collected data is non-numerical, meaning that it cannot be measured in numbers and be quantified. While in a quantitative research the data collection is numerical and can be measured in quantitative measures (Saunders et al., 2007; Bryman & Bell, 2011). The research questions in this thesis could be answered by both qualitative and quantitative research since the thesis aim to examine how municipalities use social media in branding.

A qualitative approach will facilitate the understanding of how municipalities use social media in branding. Jacobsen (2002) argue that a qualitative research increases the understanding of the topic studied. Further, in-depth interviews will lead to a deeper understanding of the strategic thinking of municipalities when developing their social media strategies. A generalization of the results would be made possible with a quantitative research because of the high number of participants involved. Having a qualitative research, that is not possible. However, the aim is to generalize the results. The research questions can therefore not be measured in numbers and cannot be quantified. The emphasis is on the words of the respondents and the interpretation of them (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Jacobsen, 2002).

The qualitative research is associated with interpretivism in the epistemological position, meaning that the researcher aims at understanding the social world by doing an interpretation of the social world of participants. The research is also associated with construction in the ontological position. This suggests that social properties are outcomes of interaction between individuals and not outcomes of existing phenomena (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The researchers choose the qualitative approach to understand and interpret the interviews with the aim to get in-depth insights on how social media is used and which factors municipalities’ emphasis in their strategies. This is possible with qualitative approach to get access to deep insights (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). Bryman and Bell (2011) write that an inductive approach is associated with a qualitative research. However, they argue that that is not always the case, meaning that having another approach in a qualitative research is possible. The following
section will describe the approach used in this study, having in mind that other approaches than the inductive approach is possible to use in a qualitative research.

3.1.2 A deductive approach

There exist two research approaches; deductive and inductive. In deductive approaches, theoretical framework generates the empirical data collected while in an inductive, the theory is generated from the empirical data collected (Dubois & Gadde, 2002; Bryman, 2011). Bryman and Bell (2013) explain that the deductive approach is the most common perception of the relationship between theory and empirical data. The deductive approach implies that a study begins with a theoretical understanding which is tested through the empirical data. A deductive approach then means that the researcher begins with developing a theoretical framework which then influences direction of the data collection process (Bryman & Bell, 2013). The deductive approach is the most appropriate approach for this study. Research in the area of social media and branding was done to better understand the concept and develop the interview guide. In order to secure that the data collection and theory corresponds the authors of this thesis first developed an understanding and a theoretical framework. This pre-understanding formed the interview guide for the data collection.

The deductive approach is usually a linear process; one step follows the other. However, that is not always the case. A researcher’s view on theory can change due to empirical findings or results in the analysis, for example that the findings did not correspond with the theory or the importance of a theory is only understood after the data collection (Bryman & Bell, 2013). Still, the use of deductivism is to test a theory in findings, and then decide the relevance of the theory developed. In a deductive approach, the theory is the result of research. However, Bryman and Bell (2013) argue that there is a degree of inductivism in a deductive approach, when a researcher goes back from empirical data to evaluate the theory, for example when a researcher needs to complement the theory with additional literature. The theoretical framework needed to be changed and further developed after conducting the interviews. The original purpose was to examine social media and brand awareness, but after collecting the data it became clear that brand awareness in the theoretical framework would not be applicable. Therefore, based on the data, the authors of this thesis changed the theory to branding and developed the existing framework. Hence, there is a degree of inductivism in the deductive approach.

3.2 Research strategy

This following section will focus on the design of this study. This section starts with an explanation for the use of multiple case studies. Following is a section about case selection where the cases will be presented.

3.2.1 Multiple case studies

Within the qualitative research approach there are many different strategies of how to gather information, such as case studies, ethnography and grounded theory (Dayman & Halloway, 2011). When having questions about “how” and “why” a qualitative case study is often most applicable, because it provides the researcher with rich and detailed information from “a wide range of dimensions about one particular case or a small number of cases” (Dayman & Halloway, 2011, pp. 115). A case study is also suitable if a researcher is “interested in examining an issue or a problem within a particular context” (Dayman & Halloway, 2011, pp. 115), which is done in this study.
Based on the nature of the research questions, a case study is the most appropriate one. Yin (2014) argues that case studies aim to investigate a phenomenon within a content by using multiple sources of evidence to achieve triangulation. Since the aim is to investigate how municipalities use social media in branding, a case study with triangulation is an appropriate design to answer the research questions. Multiple sources are one of the strengths of case studies (Yin, 2014). Accordingly, there are several sources of evidence in this study. This study is based on a multi case design to investigate which strategies several municipalities use in their social media. Yin (2014) writes that multiple case studies consist of single cases which are presented as separate sections. These are also presented in a cross-case table where the individual cases are presented as set of appendices. The three cases are presented under separate sections in chapter 4, empirical findings, and in chapter 5, the analysis. A cross-case table will also be presented in chapter 5 to get an overview of the similarities and differences between the cases.

Yin (2007) argues that triangulation is a strength in a case study since it provides the researcher with multiple sources of information and deep insights. Since the study is based on multiple sources that strengthen each other, conclusions become more convincing. To achieve triangulation, the authors of this thesis conducted interviews, observations of social media channels and document analysis. Access to deeper insight on how municipalities work with their social media platforms was achieved through interviews and looking at the results of their work through observations by adopting triangulation. The reason for this is to enhance validity and trustworthiness of the findings from the data collection. “Triangulation can improve validity and overcome the biases inherent in one perspective” (Dayman & Holloway, 2011, pp. 365). The triangulation process will be highlighted under chapter 3.3, Data Collection.

### 3.2.2 Case selections

The case selection process is divided in choosing the cases itself and also choosing the informants or participants (Dayman & Holloway, 2011). When it comes to the number of cases in a qualitative case study there should not be too many cases, as this will reduce the depth of each case and the “overall analysis will be diluted” Dayman & Holloway, 2011, pp. 119. It is not usual to study more than four cases in a case study (Dayman & Holloway, 2011). Originally, it was planned to have seven cases in the study, however such a study is more quantitative than qualitative. The focus of this study is quality, which will be achieved with fewer cases.

As the aim of this study is to examine how municipalities in Sweden use social media in branding, municipalities active in social media were of interest. A requirement was that that the municipalities were interested in cooperating over a period of time in case more information was needed in addition to the information gathered in the interviews. Another requirement was the possibility to meet with the respondents in person in order to create a dialog with them and get deeper insights. Therefore municipalities located near Halmstad were of interest. Additionally it depended on which social media channels the municipalities had a presence in and how active they were in these channels. Based on these requirements Halmstad, Falkenberg and Ängelholm were selected as cases. Further, to get relevant information and deep insights the respondents needed to be employees who work with social media and external communication. The first contact with the municipalities was done by emailing with the customer services in each municipality, which sent the emails further to the
communication departments. All interviews were conducted in April 2014 and were face to face. Face to face interviews made it possible to ask follow up questions and get access to new information and insights.

3.3 Data collection
In the following section, the primary and secondary data is presented. Bryman and Bell (2011) argue that primary and secondary data are associated with a qualitative research. The primary and secondary data is presented in the following sections.

3.3.1 Primary data
The primary data consist of three interviews. The answers in this study can therefore only be measured in qualitative terms and not in quantitative terms (Kvale, 1997). This study aims to access in-depth information and knowledge on how social media can be used in branding. Therefore primary data measured in quantitative terms is not of interest. The primary data consist of semi structured interviews. When conducting a semi structured interview, the researcher follows a list of themes with questions. However, the respondents have freedom to formulate their answers as they want. Also, the questions do not need to be asked in the same order as in the interview guide (Bryman & Bell, 2013). Semi structured interviews allows follow-up questions even if they are not included in the guide. This structure allows the respondent to freely answer the questions without following a specific order (Bryman, 2011). The purpose with this is to get in-depth information to what the respondents mean. Further, semi structured interviews make it possible to create a discussion with the respondents (Ryen, 2004; Bryman & Bell, 2013). Semi structured interviews are associated with deep interviews, allowing access to interpretations and opinions (Kvale, 1997; Bryman, 2011) which is the primary data of this study. Bryman (2011) argues that information of this kind leads to unexpected knowledge and aspects that could lead to a deeper analysis.

An interview guide enables the researcher to get access to information about how the respondents view their surroundings. A semi structured interview guide means that the guide follows themes that the researchers aim to have answered. This guide allows a flexible interview process meaning that the questions in the guide do not need to be followed word by word (Bryman & Bell, 2013). The interview guide is therefore created with this in mind. The interview guide used in this thesis is developed based on research done about the topic and from the theoretical framework, even though the framework was not complete when the interviews were conducted. The interview guide is divided into four themes, (1) social media, (2) the use of social media, (3) strategies in social media and (4) social media in brand awareness (Appendix A). As explained above in chapter 3.1.2 the aim of this study changed after conducting the interviews, from looking at brand awareness to looking at branding. The interviews were held in Swedish, and when talking about brand awareness, the Swedish word used was “varumärkesbyggande” which translated to English is branding. The researchers therefore argue that the contexts of the interviews are not changed or manipulated with the change of direction from brand awareness to branding. Both the Swedish and the English interview guides are presented at the end of this study for credibility reasons and transparency (Appendix A & B).

The interview guide enabled the researchers to focus on each theme at a time. Further, it simplified the writing process of the empirical chapter and the analysis. Each interview started with an introduction of the study and an explanation of the structure of the interview. Having
semi structured interviews the content of each interview is different due to the different discussions created in each interview (Bryman & Bell, 2013). However, each interview is based on the same interview guide. Before conducting the interviews, the respondents were asked for their approval to record the interviews and whether they wanted to be anonymous. All respondents chose not to be anonymous.

The primary data consists of in depth interviews with Halmstad, Falkenberg and Ängelholm municipalities. The interviews where held 15/4-14 in Halmstad, 16/4-14 in Ängelholm and 28/4-14 in Falkenberg. In Halmstad and Falkenberg, the interviews were held with one person at a time. In Ängelholm however, the interview was held with two persons at the same time. The interviews were conducted in each municipality’s office, due to two reasons, (1) for the comfort of the respondents and (2) to conduct the interviews in a familiar environment. The respondents in this thesis are Anna-Charlotta Pettersson, head of communication in Halmstad; Mattias Skoog, web strategist in Falkenberg; and Jessica Krantz, head of communication in Ängelholm, and Daniel Franzén, communicator, in Ängelholm.

3.3.2 Secondary data
To achieve triangulation to enhance the validity and reliability, the primary data is complemented with observations, document analysis and literature as secondary data.

The secondary data consists of observations of the municipalities’ social media channels examined in this thesis, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Observations of their social media channels complemented the information gathered from the primary data. By observing their social media channels it was possible to analyze the results of their work with the social media channels Facebook, Instagram and Twitter in terms of number of likes, shares and engagement in discussions. This provided a holistic view of a municipality’s work with social media in branding.

Another source of secondary data in this thesis is document analysis of information concerning social media by examining the websites of each municipality. According to Yin (2007) when conducting case studies documents confirm, elaborate and strengthen data collected from other resources. However one should be critical since documents are developed for a certain purpose and for a specific target group (Yin, 2007). Further, information gathered on Internet should be consider according to its authenticity and credibility by critically examining who, when, and for what purpose the document was published (Bryman & Bell, 2013), this was done by the authors of this thesis. Further documents written about social media usage in each municipality was examined. This lead to an increased understanding of how the municipalities work with social media. This information complemented or enhanced the information gathered from interviews by further explaining topics, for example strategies for social media.

The last secondary source of data used in this thesis is the literature. The literature was gathered through Google Scholar, Libris, LubSearch and Diva. The search words used were social media; social media strategies, branding through social media; social media; and branding. These searches either led to relevant theories or helped the researchers further to find the literature relevant for this study. Other literature gathering was done by looking at the source page of written articles and thesis in Diva.
3.4 Data analysis

All interviews were recorded to simplify the data analysis, to have access to all information gathered from the interviews and to focus on the respondents and the interview processes rather than on taking detailed notes. Bryman (2011) argues that recording of interviews may lead to respondents holding back in their answers. For this study, the advantages of recordings are greater than the disadvantage. Recording the interview lead to more focus on the respondent, the environment, make observations and create a discussion with the respondents. Bryman (2011) argues that taking notes can lead to lesser focus while Ryen (2004) claims that notes should always be taken, even though the interview is recorded. The authors of this study share the same view as the latter, and notes of new emerging topics were taken.

The authors of this study had an internal discussion about whether the interviews should be conducted in English or Swedish. English interviews would limit the dialog with respondents due to different language skills and comfortability. Since the respondents are Swedish, the researchers decided to conduct the interviews in Swedish. Having it in Swedish simplified the communication and created a dialog with the respondents. The transcripts are therefore also in Swedish. The information gathered and quotes are translated into English in the empirical chapter and analysis. Xian (2008) suggests that “the translation process constitutes a (re)construction of the social reality of a culture in different language, in which the translator interact with the data, actively interpreting social concepts and meanings” (2008, pp. 233 as cited in Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 488). Xian (2008) argues that translation is a sense-making process that is influenced by the translator’s social background, personal experience and knowledge (as cited in Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Bryman (2011) argues that transcriptions facilitate a detailed analysis and it could lead to new theoretical understandings. However, transcription is a time consuming process where the author has a lot of information that needs to be structured (Bryman, 2011; Bryman & Bell, 2013). Even though the process was time consuming, the matching process of empirical data and theory was effective. The most valuable and relevant information which will be analyzed in chapter 5 are presented under chapter 4, the empirical findings. To make it more illustrative, the most important answers are presented as quotes in the empirical chapter.

In the empirical chapter (chapter 4), all cases are presented as separate sections with information from primary and secondary data. The same structure is used in the analysis, chapter 5. Finally, a cross case table is presented in the analysis to identify similarities and differences in how municipalities use social media in branding.

3.5 Research criteria

When assessing a quantitative study, a researcher assesses the study by looking at the validity and reliability of a study. Validity is about really measuring what one wants to measure and reliability is concerned with how the results can be measured in terms of dependability (Bryman & Bell, 2013). In a qualitative study, however, there are four criteria’s for assessing a study. Guba and Lincoln (1994; 1985) argue that these criteria are not appropriate to use in a qualitative study because they assume that each social reality is the same, which is not the case in a qualitative study (as cited in in Bryman & Bell, 2013). They highlight four criteria’s for assessing a qualitative study. The four criteria’s are credibility; transferability; dependability; and conformability. Together these increase the trustworthiness of the study (Bryman & Bell, 2013).
Since there are many descriptions of a social reality, the description a researcher formulates creates the credibility of a study. This can be determined by confirming the social reality collected through interviews, by sending the empirical material to the respondents so that they can confirm that the researcher understood their social reality in a right way (Bryman & Bell, 2013). The information gathered from the interviews is not sensitive, meaning that is was not about personal interpretation or opinions about a subject. In the contrary, the information gathered concerned the use of social media and strategies used in that channel. Therefore, the transcriptions were not sent back to the respondents for confirmation. Transferability is concerned with to what extent one can generalize the results to other social situations. In a qualitative study, researcher should give detailed statements of the situation being studied. This creates a database that can help estimate whether the information can be transferred to other situations (Bryman & Bell, 2013). The results cannot be generalized but they can be transferred to other municipalities to understand how they use social media in branding.

The third criterion is dependability that corresponds to reliability in a quantitative study, meaning that there is complete and available information about each step in the process of the study (Bryman & Bell, 2013). Dependability is achieved with transparency and detailed descriptions of the problem discussion, method, data collection, empirical data and the structure of the analysis. Further, the authors of this thesis give detailed statements of the empirical data and the gathering process. This will create a database that increases the transferability and dependability of the study. The last criterion is conformability which implies that the researcher should be objective in this interpretations and social understandings. Thus, personal values and theoretical understanding should not affect the conclusions of a study (Bryman & Bell, 2013). The transcription was detailed to make sure that the empirical data consists of what the respondents really said, this was done to make sure that no subjective information is presented.
4. Empirical data

In this empirical chapter the relevant primary and secondary information collected is presented. The chapter is structured case by case where both primary and secondary data is combined and presented under each case. The primary data is collected from face to face interviews with respondents from each municipality. Secondary data is gathered through observations of the municipalities social media channels examined in this thesis, and documents found on internet concerning the municipalities’ use of social media.

4.1 Halmstad

Halmstad is the 19th largest municipality in Sweden with 94,000 inhabitants, and is one of Sweden’s biggest tourist cities. Recently, Halmstad has become one of the country’s most expanding municipalities. Halmstad is located in the county of Halland, on the west coast, between two of Sweden’s largest cities, Gothenburg and Malmö. Halmstad University is located in the municipality, which attract both local and international students. The tourism industry is an important part of Halmstad’s economy. The interview was conducted with Anna-Charlotta Pettersson, head of communication in Halmstad municipality.

Today - perceived image

Pettersson explains that they are aware of some perceptions the publics have about the municipality. They have identified that they need to work on being more humane, as they are perceived as an unknown organization, just an authority that the public’s know very little about, both in terms of who works there and what they work with for the community. For Halmstad social media has been an effective channel for monitoring their perceived image because of feedback and increased communication on the social media platforms. The feedback from the public’s provides the municipality with valuable information on how they are perceived and what they need to work on in order to change the perceptions of the publics.

Platform - branding goals

There are four branding goals identified in Halmstad, (1) to be an attractive employer, (2) to give a positive perception of the municipality and their work, (3) to be seen as an attractive destination and (4) to be seen as an attractive place to establish a business. According to Pettersson, the importance of branding for the municipality depends on the purpose of it. Each division of the municipality has different branding goals (divisions are the schools, libraries e.g.). Pettersson explains that for Destination Halmstad (division for tourism) the purpose of branding is to enhance tourism, which in turn leads to the development of the city and the creation of more work opportunities. This in turn, does integrate with one of the goals of Halmstad municipality, which is to be an attractive employer. Then the aim of branding is to attract people so that they choose Halmstad municipality over other companies to work and other municipalities to live in.

By working with their brand, they can position themselves to secure their organization and their competence. If Pettersson were to give some common goal for the whole municipality in branding it would be: “A common branding goal would be for people to feel secure, wanting to live in this municipality, and want to stay here”. According to Pettersson, it is more difficult for municipalities to work with branding compared to companies because a municipality is more complex and consist of many divisions, therefore, the work with branding is spread among the divisions.
**Strategy - branding strategies**

The webpage is the main communication channel for Halmstad where they update detailed information. Social media channels are used for short and instant updates, as a complement to the web page. According to Pettersson they post short updates on social media and then post a link to the web page where people can get more information. Social media enables Halmstad to use a more human tone and inform about “softer” information, information that would not be posted on the web page. What engages people is not always information that is considered important for the municipality. Sometimes they inform about subjects they believe are important but that does not engage the publics. However, updates that they feel are funny or unserious creates more engagement. These updates are particularly posted for branding purposes. Updates about maintenance work in the municipality, such as street work or putting up the Christmas tree at the city square and pictures of flowers or pictures of a sunny Halmstad creates a lot of engagement on Facebook.

What engages the publics are updates concerning everyday life, which contribute to engagement and high number of likes and shares from followers in their social media channels. Observations of Halmstad’s Facebook page show that the number of likes and shares varies depending on the content. An example that created engagement, in terms of share, likes and comments is when Halmstad wished their inhabitant a pleasant Valborg, which is a Swedish holiday. That post got 744 likes and 67 shares, compared to when Halmstad published a link about the architecture of Halmstad which got 25 likes and 1 shares (Appendix C, picture C.1 & C2). Some posts can arouse both positive and negative comments, which Pettersson encourages since it allows the municipality to become more transparent. However, they still publish information they know will not create a lot of engagement but that the municipality feel is important to inform about. Social media is also a great channel for the public to get easy access to information from and about the municipality. Here they also can find answers to questions they have about the municipality, Pettersson explains: “By reading other peoples questions and our answers this conversation becomes available for all the other people who follows us on that social media channel, then suddenly many, and not only one person, gets an answer on that question”.

The goal with social media is to provide the community with information and to communicate with them. Pettersson explains that social media is a more transparent channel that gives a complete insight to the municipality where people can ask questions and get answers, and everybody can take part of this information. It can be viewed as a customer service. Pettersson explains about their plans for social media: “// to develop, to become better and to listen to our followers. Also, to keep up with the shifts (in social media) because there is nothing that says that Facebook will be the largest channel in the future. Now Instagram is growing.//”

In addition, Halmstad wants to attract more followers in order to reach out to more people. Halmstad municipality does not represent all the municipal divisions (e.g. school division, library division, Destination Halmstad) on Facebook. Instead, each division has established their own presence. Looking at the web page, there is information about where the municipality can be found in social media. It is written that it is possible to find information about the municipality, engage, contribute and get the latest news by following them in the different channels. Following this information is a list of the divisions that have a presence on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. This allows people to follow divisions they are interested in and thus receiving information they want to take part of and engage in. The number of followers is therefore divided among all divisions.
There is information on the municipality’s web page concerning what purposes the different social media channels have. The most used social media channel in Halmstad is Facebook, followed by Twitter and Instagram. The purposes of these channels are amongst others to show who the municipality is and what they work with. Pettersson explain that there are four goals with social media, (1) to provide the community with information, (2) branding, (3) create a dialog with inhabitants and (4) ease communication in crisis situations. Social media is a transparent channel that allows inhabitants to get a complete view of Halmstad municipality by asking questions and getting answers. The plan is to become better and be more responsive to followers. Even though Facebook is the most used channel at the moment does not imply that it will remain so in the future, especially with the growth of Instagram. Therefore, being updated on the developments in social media is an important part of their work, to be where the people are.

For Halmstad municipality social media channels have been an effective for branding the organization. Social media allows a wider spread on what they communicate unlike traditional marketing channels. One example presented by Pettersson, is when Halmstad was among top 10 destinations to visit in Sweden, a list created by Trip Advisor. If Halmstad wanted to promote this by traditional channels such as newspapers, it would be costly and the spread would be low. However, posting this information on Facebook they could reach more people as their followers shared the information with their friends. Overall, the use of social media has been positive for Halmstad. Pettersson explains that social media makes it easier to respond to both positive and negative feedback, being able to answer on negative feedback fast and get the opportunity to solve issues in social media has been positive for transparency. Pettersson further elaborates: “Social media has changed the public’s perception of Halmstad as a municipality. The brand image has changed. Halmstad has become more of an individual, a human, instead of an unknown organization”. By becoming more human and eliminating the authority perception of them, their brand grows and people get an understanding of what the municipality can do and what they cannot do.

**Branding on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram**

**Facebook**

Pettersson explains that Facebook is their main channel in social media. On the web page, it is stated that Facebook “is updated with news, jobs available for over 70 different professional groups and other exciting events in the municipality”. The aim with Facebook is to be where the people are and in order to achieve this they need to search for them in their arenas instead of relying on them to search for Halmstad in its arenas. The reason Facebook is the most important social media channel for Halmstad is because many of their publics are there and they enter Facebook several times a day. Facebook has become a part of peoples’ everyday life. Halmstad’s social media policy states that an answer or feedback should be given within three days. However, there is an unspoken policy on Facebook, to answer within 24 hours. There is another kind of expectation when asking questions on Facebook which is why the department has created this unspoken policy.

**Twitter**

Halmstad also have an official Twitter account, but most of the posts there are auto posted from other channels such as Facebook, or the municipality web page. On the web page, it is stated that Twitter “is updated with news, jobs available for over 70 different professional groups and other exciting events in the municipality”. Most of the contents published on Twitter is about available work in the municipality (Appendix C, picture C.3). There are also
different kinds of stakeholders on Twitter, such as lobbyist, politicians, journalists and people working in media. Twitter is used to network with others and to be updated on developments in social media. They do reply on tweets but not as fast as on Facebook. On Twitter they have three days to tweet back, the unspoken 24 hour policy is mostly applied on Facebook.

**Instagram**

Pettersson explain that since Instagram is dominated by a younger audience, it is used to attract future potential co-workers and to provide people with knowledge about what the municipality does. On the web page, it is stated: “A new employee every week! Follow us to get an insight into our daily work, our organization and our many different professions”. Hence, Instagram is used to show Halmstad as an attractive municipality to work in, both for new and existing co-workers. The results of the observations show that the use of hashtags on Instagram depends on the employee of the week (Appendix C, picture C.5 & C.6). Also, observations further show that Halmstad uses hashtags to highlight specific events such as when they had the bicycle campaign in 2014. In the last weeks Halmstad has promoted a new bicycle campaign on Instagram where the aim is to show the publics that the municipality is working towards being a green city and that the municipality is facilitating for this as they now amongst others have upgraded many bicycle lanes in the municipality (Appendix C, picture C.4). On Instagram, Halmstad municipality developed the concept “employee of the week”, where an employee uploads pictures from his/her work day every day for a week. The communication department manages Instagram. It is their job to find an employee to upload pictures for a week and each employee decides what he/she wants to upload from his/her day. However, there are guidelines to make sure that nothing impropriate is uploaded.

**Program - written guidelines**

There are not any written strategies for social media, however, Halmstad has developed guidelines for the communication within the municipality. This guideline is available at Halmstad’s web page. It is stated that the purpose with the communication is to provide inhabitants with the possibility to participate and engage; give inhabitants access to knowledge about the municipality’s services; and strengthen the brand of the municipality. In order to achieve this, the information should be clear and provide answers instead of creating new questions. The information should also be honest by having an open communication. Finally, the communication should be easy and understandable. The aim with this communication is to create a possibility for the inhabitants to discuss and give their opinions; create an understanding for what the municipality does; provide them with information about news and events; and establish Halmstad as an attractive destination and employer. Halmstad has further developed guidelines for the use of social media. These guidelines state that information on social media should be clear, honest and easy to access. Two-way communication and creating a dialog are highlighted. It is further stated that the answering-process should be fast since this is demanded by the social media users. It is also stated that engagement from their followers should also be encouraged in social media and the tonality in their communication should be personal. These guidelines were created by the communication department and were influenced by SKL (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions)². It is mainly the web strategist responsibility to keep updated on the developments

²SKL - Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions has developed social media guidelines that all municipalities in Sweden have to follow. These guidelines amongst others address laws and regulations that they have to consider and follow when communicating in the social media channels.
in social media and the release of new features than can benefit Halmstad in their communication.

**Anchoring - common understanding**

Today, there are 20 people who have access to the municipality's Facebook page. However, only 10 of these are actively working with it. People who have access are from the communication department, which Pettersson argues does not always have to be the case. Halmstad chose to leave this responsibility for the communication department because they feel that it is important that people working with social media know how to write and how to respond. The department makes weekly plans of what to inform about although they can be altered due to unexpected situations. Nevertheless, a plan is made to secure that there are continuous updates. It is mainly the web strategist responsibility to keep updates on the development of social media and the release of new features that can benefit Halmstad in their communication.

**Evaluating branding strategies**

Measuring engagement is easier in digital channels stated by Pettersson. On Facebook there are statistics available showing number of unique followers, visibility, comments, likes and the overall engagement of all posts. Further, it allows Halmstad to find statistics for each post on who is engaged, the spread and visibility. Halmstad could improve in this area and use statistics often to evaluate the activities on social media. Additional, on Facebook one can get access to who the target group is and how many of the followers who live in Halmstad. However, Pettersson explains that they are aware of that people might not have stated real information about themselves on Facebook and other social media channels, and this makes it difficult to get accurate numbers for evaluation. Halmstad states that the evaluation part of their social media usage is something they want to develop and be better on.

**4.2 Falkenberg**

Falkenberg municipality is located in Halland county, on the western coast of Sweden, and has today approximately 41 500 inhabitants, and is situated between the municipalities Halmstad and Varberg. As Halmstad, Falkenberg is also close to some of Sweden’s largest cities, Gothenburg and Malmö. About 2800 people are employed at the municipality, and some more hundred is working in companies financially supported by municipality tax money. On the municipality web page they write that the municipality is there for its inhabitants, and to make sure that schools, healthcare, streets, sport-arenas and much more is working as it should in the municipality. The municipality’s vision is: «We are growing for a sustainable future» and this vision is supported by five guiding words; Sustainability, growing, closeness, experiences and possibilities. By this they want to show that Falkenberg is a municipality that is aiming at growing and developing and at the same time focusing on taking care of the environment. The interview was conducted with Mattias Skoog, web strategist at Falkenberg municipality.

**Today - perceived image**

Under the interview it was brought up that Falkenberg has identified how the municipality is being perceived by the publics. Skoog amongst other bring up that they have a picture of that the inhabitants only see the municipality as “a grey building in the middle of the city center”. By this he means that the inhabitants have little knowledge about what the municipality is really working with and who works there. Falkenberg also feel that the municipality has an image of being gray and boring.
Platform - branding goals
Falkenberg wants to work with branding in order to change the perception of them as being boring, grey and “just a grey building in the middle of the city center”. They need to work with providing the publics with more knowledge and information about what the municipality works with. The municipality also has a main goal of increasing citizen interactions, they want it to be easier for the inhabitants to communicate with the municipality and get all their questions answered. It is important to be open and transparent, they want to show the public’s how the municipality is working, where the inhabitants’ tax money is going and how they are putting it in to use. Branding is about creating credibility through being honest and transparent in their communication. The municipality wants to open up and show who is working in the municipality and what they are working with.

Talking about branding Skoog explains that it is important for Falkenberg municipality to be perceived as a fun place to work, with nice employees and with a high knowledge level. One of the municipalities many goals is to recruit the best people for the jobs, both amongst local inhabitants and people living outside Falkenberg, to enhance the quality of the municipality as an organization. Branding is also about creating credibility.

Skoog explains that more tourism is also a branding goal, but it is “Destination Falkenberg” (municipal division that works primarily with tourism) who is primarily working with tourism, even though there is some cooperation between the two. He continues to say that they usually separate the place from the municipality as an organization. Another goal by branding is also making sure that the inhabitants are proud to live in Frankenberg, that they are happy and talk about this to friends, family and other networks, all this is important to lift the whole region.

Strategy - branding strategies
Falkenberg municipality is using the social media channels; Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, and they promote these channels on their official web site, but it is Facebook they are currently focusing on. Skoog saw social media and especially Facebook as a possibility and started to publish information and updates. Their strategies for social media is to constantly make better content and also to improve the use of pictures, pictures are very important in social media to create engagement Falkenberg has noticed, both in terms of commenting and sharing. Skoog explains that they actively answer feedback they get on their social media channels. Social media has also made it easier to get access to information from the municipality, Skoog says that one of the aims of social media is to reach out and discuss. Skoog emphasizes the importance of combining the social media channels with existing channels, if for example the web site is updated, than this will also be published on the Facebook page and on Twitter.

It is all about creating credibility so people believe what they are posting in the social media channels, this is especially important when they use the social media channels for crisis communication. Skoog also emphasizes the importance of using social media in crisis communication because they can reach many people in these channels quickly. So to keep up the credibility it is important to maintain the quality of the social media channels. They create credibility also by being honest and transparent in their communication, Skoog elaborates: “We also communicate issues that might not be beneficial for us, for example if we have done some mistakes, which is very important for credibility”.

25
Social media has opened up for the municipality to have a more personal tone in their communication, to be nicer and as a channel to bring up “lighter” information that does not necessarily have to be of any political matter, Skoog says:

“Now we write “Good morning Falkenberg” and post a nice picture from the beach (Appendix D, picture D.1), we never did this before social media, then we mostly communicated “heavier” information in our other channels. In social media we have a more personal tone, and we have a goal by this, we want to show that we are humans working in the municipality, it is not only a grey building in the middle of the city center”.

Skoog explains that they use social media to promote parts of the municipality work that the media does not cover, such as publishing pictures and information about the popular park division that is responsible for decorating in the city. These updates engage many of the municipality’s followers on Facebook, and Falkenberg get very positive feedback (Appendix D, picture D.2). In addition, their presence in social media show that the municipality is active in modern channels, they stay up to date and explain that they have to be there (on social media), or else they will be viewed as unmodern. These are also new channels that make it easier to get feedback and listen to the public. It is new channels to get in contact with the municipality, another option than calling, mailing or faxing. Skoog elaborates: “It is important for us to be in the arenas where the publics are most active, our task is to listen and keep up with the use of new developments (meaning the development of social media)”. Social media has opened up for the municipality to show who they are, and change the perception of being something gray and boring, now they also can show that they can be more personal and “rounder in the shape”. The municipality has an overall goal of increasing citizen interaction, and social media is facilitating for this.

**Branding on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram**

**Facebook**

As of today Falkenberg sees Facebook as the most important social media channel for branding as it is where they have most audience, and where they believe they can reach most people. Their page on Facebook is named “Falkenberg Municipality” and is only representing the main municipal division and not all sub divisions (such as, schools, the library e.g). Skoog explains that on Facebook they do not focus on covering the whole municipality: “A municipality organization is very broad and includes many different faculties”. This is a choice they have made based on keeping a better quality on each page, targeted to the right audiences. As mentioned above the municipality separates the place and the municipality as an organization, and that is why Destination Falkenberg has their own Facebook-page, and they have the tourism focus.

Falkenberg is using an older version of Facebook pages for companies, so they are restricted in terms of tactics they can use to increase interactions. Falkenberg does not actively try to push the ones who “Like” them on Facebook to share content with other friends on Facebook, they believe that if the ones who follow them on Facebook find something interesting and important they will share it either way. They do not have any “Applications” either and has not tested sponsored stories or advertising on Facebook. Falkenberg does not use Facebook for contests, they say that they do not try to be too populistic. They do not either promote “Free positions”. Skoog explains that they are not good at promoting free positions at Falkenberg, but they do not feel that an Application on Facebook will solve this problem for them either.
On Facebook their goal is to reach people in their everyday life, this is a channel where they can have a nicer tone and show their human side, a different side than they show in other channels. Skoog explains further:

“Facebook is a channel we can use to update information that is not so “heavy”, it does not have to be political decisions or complicated reports, no here on Facebook we can share a happy picture from the city and write something like “see, now we are putting up the Christmas tree on the city square” easier and simpler information. And the reason for this is to build trust, credibility and a relation with the public” (Appendix D, picture D.3).

Falkenberg are also using Facebook to increase the public's knowledge about their values and what they work with, as mentioned above they amongst others publish pictures of the popular park division. If we look at their Facebook page we also find other posts showing how they develop the city, for example that they are setting up pump stations for bicycles (Appendix D, picture D.4). This is in accordance with showing the municipality’s value of being environmental, as they write on their homepage: «We are growing for a sustainable future». Another example is how they work with city and industry development in Falkenberg (Appendix D, picture D.5). This update tells about the development of a new summer restaurant in Falkenberg, which created great engagement on Facebook. Falkenberg also use Facebook to promote events that are happening in the city and to get feedback on the events. Skoog explains that last summer when the car show “Wheels & Wings” was arranged in Falkenberg they promoted this on Facebook and got great response and engagement (Appendix D, picture D.6).

Twitter
Falkenberg have also started to use Twitter, but this is not as much used and focused on as Facebook. Here they post what they feel are the most important news and answer questions, but they do not actively start debates or promote this channel much today. By looking at Falkenbergs Twitter-profile one can see that the updates are mostly about events happening in the municipality, links to their live sending’s from meetings in the municipality, and what the municipality is working with. The links to the live sending’s has engaged many viewers and allows anyone to watch and see how decisions are made in the municipality and which areas the municipality are working with, these live sending’s are also promoted at some occasions on Facebook. They are also using this channel to get feedback, an example of this is a post where they asked for the inhabitants opinion in a matter of transparency of the municipality work (Appendix D, picture D.7). They are also using Twitter for crisis communication as information here is spread fast, they do this by posting links from their web site where people can find more relevant information. Skoog says that they want Twitter to be more actively used in the communication department, now Skoog is the only one operating in the channel, but the plan is to have more people from the communication department using this channel actively.

Instagram
Falkenberg has as Twitter only started to use Instagram in a small. As of today they are not quite sure how they are going to use this channel, they have not made any concrete plans, but they have thought about the possibility to use it for tourism purposes, or as a channel to show who they are, the people working in the municipality and how they work. They bring in Halmstad and @Sweden as an example, they give employees access to the Instagram account to publish information about themselves and their work task through “employee of the week”.
Program - written guidelines
When Falkenberg work with social media they “try and fail” and do not focus on writing down strategies or reports, Skoog says that one reason for this is that social media changes quickly and he does not feel that it is effective use of resources to write down big strategy documents. But they do have written guidelines on how to use social media channels, made based on guidelines from SKL on how municipalities are to use and behave in social media channels. These guidelines also makes it easier for other sub divisions in the municipality to create social media sites, as these guidelines will help them in setting up the accounts, how to communicate and which regulations they have to follow. Guidelines are also made to make sure that the social media channels maintain a certain quality. As of today all sub divisions who wants to create social media channels have to be approved by Skoog and they have to follow the written guidelines. Skoog elaborates that as of today the municipality does not have control over the quality of all the social media sites made by sub divisions in the municipality.

Anchoring - common understanding
At Falkenberg it is only Skoog that is responsible for publishing updates in the social media channels. They do not have any plans of having one employee responsible for only working with social media, it is going to be a tool that all in the communication department can work with. Other divisions that want to start their own social media sites (e.g. the library division) have to be approved by Skoog, and they have to follow the same guidelines that the main municipal division has developed.

When Falkenberg gets questions in their social media channels these questions are not answered by the communication department (Mattias Skoog), but they are sent to the employee that is responsible for the work area the question is about. As of today Skoog is the only one who is responsible for publishing in the social media channels, but there are a wide range of employees who answer questions that the municipality gets on the social media channels. The guidelines that these employees have to follow when answering are the social media guidelines developed by the municipality influenced by SKL. Skoog explains that the plan is to open a new contact center at the municipality and they will be given much of the responsibility of answering questions that they receive on their social media sites.

Evaluating branding strategies
Falkenberg evaluate every update they do on social media, for example on Facebook they look at number of likes and shares, on Twitter they look at how many times their published links have been clicked at. On Facebook they also use the Facebook analytics application that makes it possible to see when people are most active, which post engages the most and so on. Their goals of evaluating are to keep up the relevance and try to see what engages (share, comment, likes). When it comes to goals in social media Falkenberg do not have anything that is directly measurable, for example goals of having a certain amount of followers, the most important aspect for them is that they are making themselves available. Skoog explains that their goals are not to get as many “Likes” as possible, what is important for them is that they reach people with relevant information. For example last summer they reached 30 000 unique users on Facebook with relevant information. When it comes to evaluating the effects of what they do in the social media channels they are considering giving this responsibility to one employee.
4.3 Ängelholm

Ängelholm municipality has about 40,000 inhabitants and is located on the west coast in southern Sweden, and is as Halmstad and Falkenberg situated in between the big cities Gothenburg and Malmö. Ängelholm describes themselves as a municipality with culture, recreation, pulse, shopping and entertainment. The municipality has a rich culture with artists and fairs and offers a variety of activities and events. The interview was conducted with Jessica Krantz, head of communications and Daniel Franzén, communicator.

Today - perceived image

Ängelholm do have some ideas of how they are being perceived by the publics, and mentions that the inhabitants know too little about the municipality and what they are working with. Another perception of the municipality is that they are slow in responding to questions from the publics. By looking at the municipality’s webpage one can see that the municipality is working actively with being more open, transparent and increasing inhabitant dialogue.

Platform - branding goals

Ängelholm have various branding goals, amongst others they want to improve the knowledge the inhabitants have about the municipality, what the organization does and the people behind it. They want to communicate their values and strengthen the image of the municipality by being transparent, open for conversations and improve the knowledge flow among the inhabitants. The purpose is to show the breadth of the organization, making all the different tasks they work with for the community visible. With increased knowledge about the organization, inhabitants will be proud of their municipality. Krantz explains: “We want the inhabitants to feel that this is a good municipality to live in, a modern municipality that is striving forward”. Krantz explain that they also want the inhabitants to be proud of the work of the municipality. Another branding goal is to make the inhabitants proud to live in Ängelholm so that they become good ambassadors of the municipality, recommending others to come to the municipality, as visitors or new inhabitants. Overall they want to strengthen the picture of Ängelholm, both as a physical place and the way the municipality is working for the community. Further Ängelholm wants to be perceived as an attractive workplace.

Strategy - branding strategies

Ängelholm started using social media to have a direct channel with its inhabitants to communicate with them and manage questions that arise. Ängelholm has with social media shown the breadth of the organization and they have been able to reach out faster to their inhabitants. Further, social media has made them more transparent, allowing them to show their inhabitants what the organization does. The communication with their inhabitants has been facilitated with social media. Franzén explains: «It is becoming harder and harder to attract people to a web page. It is easier to communicate with them on channels they already are in”. The tonality Ängelholm uses in their communication on social media is “lighter” and they feel that this is a channel where they can bring up “softer” information and not only political matters.

There is a report available on Ängelholm’s web page about the purpose of social media and the existing guidelines for how to use the different channels they use. According to this report, the purposes of social media are to be open, encourage a dialog with the public; provide accessible information; increase the possibility for the public to communicate with the municipality, and to use more channels to reach even more target groups. It is stated in the interview that the value of Ängelholm is integrated in their use of social media. The value is to be open, to increase knowledge and communicate, which is also communicated in the
written report presented on the web page. Additional, social media is used to complement the information on the web page since the web page and social media turns to different target groups. On Ångelholm’s web page, there is a description of the social media channels the municipality is active on. It is explained that the web page is the main channel, however they are active on social media to give inhabitants more arenas to meet the municipality in for asking questions, giving opinions and to be updated on the news of the municipality. It is stated that they are active on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn and Blogs. However, the focus is on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Each division in the municipality does have their own presence on social media, giving the people the chance to follow the division they are interested in.

The customer service monitors Facebook daily during work hours and the communication department monitors during night times and weekends to be able to answer important questions on time. The main responsibility for answering questions is on the customer center. Krantz explains that this is more effective since they have information and knowledge to answer questions that arise on Facebook, she elaborates: “There is a picture of the municipality being slow in responding. Here (on social media) we can show a different side of us and show that we give fast answers”. Making the customer center responsible for answering questions leads to a fast answering process. She means that it will be time consuming if they, the communication department, are responsible for answering these questions. The reason the customer center is involved is because people contact them daily through phone and mail with questions so they have answers to most of the questions. Krantz explains: “It has improved (answering questions on social media) a lot since the customer centre was involved. //.. they can answer all possible questions because they have the information and knowledge to answer questions directly”. She explains that it did take longer to answer when they were responsible since they did not have the same access to knowledge as the customer center. The customer center can either answer the questions by themselves or pass the answer forward to someone who can.

By experience, they know that an update with a picture leads to bigger spread and engagement than just updates with text. Observations shows that what engages people are pictures of Ångelholm’s nature, for example flowers and spring. These posts get a higher number of likes and shares compared to posts concerning the organization (Appendix E, picture E.1 & E.2). The reason they post this kind of information is to highlight the human side of the municipality and to strengthen the brand. Further, creating this relationship with the inhabitants makes them more cooperative when it is needed. They are more willing to help the municipality to pass forward important information.

Further Franzén explains that pictures of a beautiful Ångelholm does lead to shares because people are proud to present their municipality to others. Krantz further explains that it is about inhabitants being so proud over their municipality that they recommend the city for others to come and visit or move there. She adds that it is about feeling that Ångelholm is a good, modern and attractive municipality that strives forward. Social media has contributed with strengthening the image of Ångelholm and for people to be proud of their municipality, both as a destination but also as an employer. Being active on social media channels creates the perception of the municipality being modern and staying up to date. It is mainly the web strategic who is responsible for being updated about news on social media along with the communication department. This is done through SKL web conferences and networks.
Branding in Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

Facebook
Ängelholm has focused on working with its Facebook page. Currently, Facebook is used in crisis situations but also to be more transparent and to open up the organizations for its inhabitants. On the web page, it is stated that “Facebook is a social network where the purpose is to socialize with others over the internet”. With Facebook, Ängelholm can reach out to more people compared to their web page, showing that there is potential on reaching out to more people with information on Facebook than on the web page, and highlighting the importance of being in the arenas where people are. Further, people enter Facebook more often than the web page which increases the possibility of them seeing updates and information. Ängelholm’s presence on Facebook also aims at making people aware of Ängelholm’s values and encourages open conversations with people to improve the knowledge flow among inhabitants. Krantz explains that it is also important for them to handle or post information that might not be positive for the municipality. It is still of importance that the inhabitants get this kind of information.

Twitter
Twitter is used to create a dialog with people, not only the inhabitants but also people living outside Ängelholm. Franzén explain that there was once a person wanting to visit Ängelholm and he tweeted asking what he could do in Ängelholm and hashtagged the municipality (#engelholm). Ängelholm could then see that he tagged them, and were able to give him recommendation for what to do in Ängelholm when visiting. Twitter is also used to provide people with information about the municipality for example to inform about new projects in the municipality, such as when they built a new playground. Observations show that Ängelholm frequently uses hashtags to highlight the content of their posts but also to highlight the municipality (Appendix E, picture E.3). Additional, Twitter is used in crisis communication to provide the public and inhabitants with information and to answer their questions.

Instagram
Earlier, Instagram was mainly used to show Ängelholm’s environment to followers. Multiple co-workers had access to this channel, mainly park workers since they worked outside the physical organization. However, Franzén explains that these pictures often were very similar because the moving patterns of these workers were the same. Today, Ängelhom has implemented the concept “the employee of the week”, where one employee has access to the channel and updates it with pictures from his or hers work day for a week. The aim is to increase awareness by showing the municipal organization and the people behind it. The use of hashtags differs depending on the employee of the week. Observations show that some employees only hashtags the municipality (Appendix E, picture E.4). However, there are employees who also hashtags their division to highlight the position of this particular employee (Appendix E, picture E.5). The observations also show that some co-workers chose to hashtag words that are not related to the municipality (Appendix E, picture E.6). Even before implementing the “employee of the week”, the park workers used hashtags when they published pictures (Appendix E, picture E.7).

Program - written guidelines
Franzén explains that they are in a process of making their social media strategies written and printed. The strategies are developed by the communication department, the web strategic and people from the customer service center. There are discussions held within the communication department about social media such as guidelines, questions that arise,
problems they have met and how to manage different kind of posts. During internal meetings the channels and their usefulness for the municipality is discussed. Even though there are not any written strategies yet, there are rules for establishing a presence on social media. Since each division can establish a presence, they are responsible for their accounts. The rules are; the content of information should be objective; opinions and comments should be answered fast, correct with a personal tone; and it should be easy to contact the responsible person for each channel. Monitoring the web page and channels is included in working hours, Monday to Friday. There are also advices in this report; answer posts and comments within 24 hours to show good service and enhance the brand of Ängelholm municipality; use common sense; and save important discussions.

Anchoring - common understanding

As presented above, there are written guidelines for how to use social media in Ängellholm. Both co-workers and external stakeholders can take part of these guidelines, since it is accessible on the web page, which is in accordance with their value to be open as an municipality. The guidelines are also communicated within the organization, especially to them working with social media; the divisions, communication department and the customer service.

Evaluating branding strategies

Franzén explains that one difficulty with social media was to know how to communicate, which kind of news that would engage, how to post and how to achieve high spread in the different channels. He elaborates that they learned by doing while at the same time studying the statistics provided by for example Facebook. They measure statistic provided by social media sites where they can see number of views, shares, likes and comments of the information they post. They also examine where they are positioned compared to other municipalities e.g. by looking at statistics made by the communication agency Kreafon.
5. Analysis

This chapter analyzes the empirical findings based on the conceptual framework presented in the theoretical chapter. Each section starts with a within case analysis and ends with a cross-case analysis to identify similarities and differences. A summarized cross case table is then presented. A discussion of the outcomes is presented at the end.

5.1 Today - perceived image

Halmstad

Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2004) explain that brand image focuses on how the organization is being perceived. According to Dahlqvist & Melin (2010), it is based on this knowledge that an organization understands what they have to establish, enhance or change in people’s perceptions. With branding, Halmstad aims to influence how their target markets perceive them, both as an organization and a place. Byrkjeflot (2010) writes that with reputation management one can be aware of how the environment sees an organization, their perceptions, and actively try to influence these perceptions. Halmstad has identified some perceptions amongst the publics and one of them is that the public have little knowledge about the municipality and what they work with. However, due to social media this perception is changing. Halmstad states that because of social media Halmstad has become more of an individual, a human, instead of an unknown organization, which implies that the municipality has been struggling with an image where they have been perceived as impersonal and an organization that people do not know much about.

Falkenberg

The first step of a branding process is for an organization to get insights about their current brand image to get an understanding of how the organization is being perceived in the market (Carlsson, 2011; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). It is based on this information an organization can set branding goals, as branding is to establish, enhance or change people’s perceptions (Dahlqvist & Melin, 2010) in order to achieve that the brand image is consistent with the brand identity or the positioning that organization wants to have (Dahlqvist & Melin, 2010; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). Falkenberg has identified some perceptions amongst the publics and one of them are that the municipality is seen as “a grey building in the middle of the city center”, meaning that the public has little information about what the municipality is working with. Falkenberg also have the perception that the inhabitants see them as gray and boring. It is also brought up that Falkenberg wants to improve their communication to be perceived as more personal and “rounder” in the shape. The municipality also mentions that the inhabitant’s perceptions might be influenced by the picture created in media, as mentioned in the introduction of this thesis municipalities are struggling with a negative image due to how the media often presents them in a negative context (Dahlqvist & Melin, 2010).

Ängelholm

As mentioned earlier, having knowledge about perceived image is important in a branding process for an organization to know what they have to work with in order to reach desired image (Carlsson, 2011; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). Ängelholm have identified some perceptions amongst the public’s, first they state that the public’s know too little about the municipality organization, who works there and what they work with. They do not know the breadth of the organization. Ängelholm also knows that the public’s think they are slow, and that it takes long time to get answers when questions are raised to the municipality.
Cross case comparison
The analysis shows that all three municipalities have identified perceptions about their current image amongst the publics. The common perception in all the three cases is that there is little knowledge about the municipal organization amongst the publics, particularly in terms of what they work with. This in turn is influencing other perceptions of the municipalities. For Falkenberg this insufficient knowledge is leading to the perception of them just being perceived as a grey and boring building, while for Ängelholm they are perceived as being slow in responding. Further, both Halmstad and Falkenberg were perceived as impersonal which could be because of their previous communication strategies. With social media, communication has changed from one-way to two-way, allowing individuals and organizations to share, and co-create contents through discussions (Kietzmann et. al., 2011), changing the perception of organizations being impersonal.

Table 1 - Cross case table for the stage “Today” (made by the authors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Halmstad</th>
<th>Falkenberg</th>
<th>Ängelholm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Today</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An unknown organization</td>
<td>• Boring</td>
<td>• Too little knowledge about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Impersonal</td>
<td>• “Just a grey building”</td>
<td>the municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Little knowledge about the</td>
<td>• Impersonal</td>
<td>• Slow in response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>municipality</td>
<td>• Too little knowledge about</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the municipality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Platform - branding goals

Halmstad
Dolak (2003) has defined branding as an ongoing process of communicating with a market, creating trust and emotional attachment to a product or an organization with a higher sense of quality. Further, it creates a feeling of involvement to the brand. For Halmstad, the importance of branding depends on the purpose of it. There are four branding purposes identified in Halmstad; (1) to be an attractive employer, (2) to give a positive perception of the municipality and their work (3) to be seen as an attractive destination and (4) to be seen as an attractive place to establish a business in. This means that there are three aspects of branding in Halmstad; corporate branding, place branding and employee branding.

Kavaratzis (2004) explain that corporate branding brands a city as an organization (the municipal governance) and Ambler and Barrow (1996) explain that employee branding is concerned with making strategies to make an organization a desirable workplace, both for current and new employees. For Halmstad one goal in branding is to brand the municipal organization as an attractive workplace, Halmstad wants to attract people so that they choose Halmstad municipality over other companies and other municipalities. By working with the brand, Halmstad positions itself to secure the organization and its competence.

Another branding goal is to be perceived as an attractive destination. Place branding is concerned with branding a city as a place (Kavaratzis, 2004). When promoting Halmstad as a place (in cooperation with Destination Halmstad) the tourism increases which in turn leads to the development of the city and the creation of more work opportunities. This in turn integrates with the branding goal of being perceived as an attractive employee. Hence, a municipality is both viewed as an organization and a place, meaning that these two are branded in parallel with each other. This implies that the overall purpose of branding is to
develop a brand image that is in accordance with the municipality’s brand identity, which is to be an attractive municipality both as an organization and a place.

**Falkenberg**

After an organization has identified their perceived image they are better equipped to make their branding goals (Carlsson, 2011) as they now have information about what they need to establish, influence or change in the public’s perceptions (Dahlqvist & Melin, 2010) in order to get the desired image. An important branding goal for Falkenberg is to increase the level of what the public’s know about the municipality, they want to show how they are working for the inhabitants, how their tax money is used. This is doing corporate branding, where the aim is to influence perceptions about what and who an organization is, what their mission is and what the organization stands for (Byrkjeflot, 2010). As presented in the previous chapter Falkenberg knows that they are perceived as boring, grey and people know little about them, but as they are aware of this they have made corporate branding goals of changing these perceptions. Further Falkenberg explain that to create credibility is a goal in branding, to create credibility is important for an organization in terms of building an desired image amongst the publics, as explained by Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005) branding is about building desired image. Also being perceived as more transparent and open are important branding goals for enhancing the public’s perceptions about the municipality. The municipality also has a main goal of increasing citizen interactions, they want it to be easier for the inhabitants to communicate with the municipality and get all their questions answered.

Falkenberg have many goals by branding and explain that branding for them is amongst others to be perceived as a good and fun place to work, with nice employees and with a high knowledge level. The municipality wants to recruit the best people for the jobs to raise the quality of the municipality, both local inhabitants and people coming from outside Falkenberg. This shows that Falkenberg work with employee branding, as this aspect of branding aims at attracting new employees and keeping the right competent employees as explained by Dyreh and Parment (2012) through showing that they are a desirable workplace (Ambler & Barrow, 1996).

Also branding goals for place branding are identified. The municipality’s goal with branding is to show what happens in the municipality (events e.g) and to “show up” the municipality with the aim to attract tourism. It is not the main municipality division who has this as their primary work area, that is the municipal division “Destination Falkenberg” (tourism division), but the main municipality division are also focusing on this to some degree. This is also affecting corporate branding by showing what the municipality work with, which events and happenings they are working with. Falkenberg also talk about the importance of making all inhabitants proud to live in the municipality, so they are happy and speak well about the municipality, both the organization and the place Falkenberg. This is corporate branding, and place branding goals, corporate branding meaning that the inhabitants are proud of the work that is being done by the municipality, as this will positively influence the municipality’s image (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005) and place branding in terms of attracting tourism and increase inward investments (Kavaratzis, 2004).

**Ångelholm**

Ångelholm also have different goals for branding. First of all they want to improve the knowledge amongst the inhabitants so they are aware of what the municipality does and their values. They want to strengthen the image of the municipality, which is in accordance with
the aim of corporate branding, influencing perceptions amongst stakeholders in terms of what an organization is, what they are working with and what they stand for (Byrkjeflot, 2010). Further, Byrkjeflot (2010) writes that reputation management is used to change the perception of the environment about the organization. Hence, with corporate branding, Ängelholm increases the knowledge in the organization and changes the perception of them. Ängelholm wants to show the breadth of the organization, so that everyone can see what they work with and what they do. The municipality wants the inhabitants to feel that it is a good and modern municipality that is striving forward. Another branding goal is to strengthen the municipality as an attractive workplace, which is in accordance with employee branding to position the organization so their perceived image leads to satisfied employees and more competent people wanting to work there (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Branding in Ängelholm is also about strengthening the municipality and making the inhabitants proud to live in the municipality, so that they become good ambassadors for the municipality. The branding goal aims at attracting tourist directly and also making inhabitants proud to live there so they recommend and attract more tourists and new inhabitants to Ängelholm. As Explained by Kavaratzis (2004), increasing tourism, community development and inward investments are a part of place branding. Hence, Ängelholm wants to be perceived as an attractive destination for inhabitants and tourists.

Cross case comparison
Due to the perceived images earlier analyzed, all three municipalities wants to increase the knowledge level about the municipality amongst the publics with branding. With increased knowledge amongst the publics they can achieve their additional branding goals as this new knowledge might establish, influence or change perceptions as explained by Dahlqvist and Melin (2010) in order to reach desired image (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). Even though the municipalities are viewed as organizations in this study, the analysis show that place branding and employee branding are integrated in the branding goals of municipalities. Besides increasing knowledge about the organization, all three municipalities want to brand their municipalities as attractive destinations. Falkenberg and Ängelholm further want their inhabitants to be proud of their municipality, making them ambassadors in their place branding. All three municipalities want to be perceived as attractive employers, employee branding. However, Halmstad also aims at becoming an attractive place to establish a business with their branding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Halmstad</th>
<th>Falkenberg</th>
<th>Ängelholm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Be an attractive employer</td>
<td>• Be an attractive employer</td>
<td>• Be an attractive employer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increase knowledge about the municipality</td>
<td>• Increase knowledge about the municipality</td>
<td>• Increase knowledge about the municipality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To give a positive perception of the municipality and their work</td>
<td>• Increase credibility</td>
<td>• Making inhabitants proud to live in Ängelholm to attract tourism or new inhabitants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To be seen as an attractive destination</td>
<td>• Making inhabitants proud to live in Falkenberg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To be an attractive place to establish a business</td>
<td>• To be seen as an attractive destination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 Strategy - branding strategies

Halmstad

Strategies are the phase where an organization decides how they are going to establish, change or enhance people’s perceptions (Carlsson, 2011). As mentioned earlier, the branding goals for Halmstad are; to increase the knowledge about the organization; to be an attractive employer; to be seen as an attractive destination; and to be an attractive place to establish a business. This is achieved by using the social media channels Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

The first goal is to increase knowledge about the municipal organization which is related to corporate branding, as corporate branding aims at influencing perceptions and marketing the whole organization (Byrkjeflot, 2010). By increasing the knowledge about the municipal organization they have the possibility to establish, enhance or change the public’s perceptions, as explained by Dahlenqvist and Melin (2010). Facebook is the main channel for Halmstad since Facebook is a part of people’s everyday life. Therefore, Halmstad needs to be responsive to their demands, which Yan (2011) argue can be made possible by adopting a personal tone. Halmstad have changed their tonality on Facebook which has allowed them to publish softer information creating a dialog with their consumers. Yan (2011) explains that organizations establish a presence on Facebook to reach out to more people in their communication. Halmstad established a presence to exist in the arena of their publics in order to communicate with them and provide them with fast information. As explained by Yan (2011) organizations can use a more personal tone in their communication on Facebook, using a different tonality make it easier to engage with consumers (Carlsson, 2009). By becoming more human and eliminating the authority perception of them, their brand grows and people get an understanding of what the municipality can do and what they cannot do. Facebook is also viewed as a customer service. There is an unspoken policy which states that answers on Facebook should be given within 24 hours, compared to the spoken policy of 3 days. This is because people have different expectations on Facebook, and therefore Halmstad needs to respond fast. This is to achieve the goal of being able to provide information, answer questions and be transparent. Carlsson (2011) explain that quick and helpful response from an organization in social media is positive for branding.

Twitter is also used to increase knowledge. Most of the posts on Twitter are auto-posted from Facebook or the web page. It is used to communicate news, jobs, networking. Halmstad uses both Facebook and Twitter in crisis communication to reach out with fast information. Carlsson (2011) argues that crisis communication is a part of branding as crisis can damage a reputation and an image. However, when Halmstad informs their audiences about crisis on Twitter it allows them to reach out fast to their publics and to respond to their concerns. As explained by Byrkjeflot (2010) handling crisis well is important for reputation management and corporate branding, but also for place branding, for maintaining the reputation of the city.

Instagram allows Halmstad to increase knowledge and change the perception of them as an organization. It has enabled them to show what the organization does and the people behind it. Further, with the use of hashtags, they attract new followers and reach out to more publics, as Bergström and Bäckman (2013) write that organizations can increase interaction with consumers by using company specific hashtags, which will be elaborated later in the analysis.

The second branding goal is to be perceived as an attractive employer, to achieve this Halmstad works with employee branding to be perceived as an attractive organization to work in. As mentioned earlier, employee branding is concerned with branding the desired
organization image to attract employees (Dyhre & Parment, 2012). This is done in different ways, depending on the channel. Besides updating Facebook and Twitter with information, pictures and to do crisis communication, the channels are also used to promote jobs (Appendix C, picture C.3).

Goor (2012) writes that organizations can strengthen their brand by using Instagram. Since Instagram is dominated by a younger audience it is used to attract future potential co-workers and to provide people with knowledge about what the municipality does. Halmstad municipality developed the concept “employee of the week” to show their followers the people behind the organizations and what the municipal organization does. This employee decides what to publish from his or hers work day, as long as the guidelines for social media are followed. Halmstad visualizes their organization with Instagram by uploading pictures of what the organization does and the people behind it. This in turns creates transparency which as explained by Holmström and Wikberg (2012) creates credibility.

Further, they increase awareness and interactions as explained by Goor (2012), by using hashtags when uploading pictures. However, there is not a frequent use of hashtags in Halmstad. The results from the observation shows that the use of hashtags depends on the employee of the week, in some weeks there are more hashtags used compared to other weeks. Which kinds of hashtags that are used also differ, depending on the context. The most common hashtag used is #halmstad (Appendix C, picture C.5 & C.6). However, the use of hashtags increases if there is an event. This could be to increase awareness and viral spread since all pictures tagged with a specific word will be sorted together (Miles, 2014). Also, as mentioned by Bergström and Bäckman (2013), by frequently using hashtags specific for Halmstad, they encourage their publics to use these hashtags also. This increases the interaction between Halmstad and their publics. By doing this, the pictures collected under a hashtag will be both from Halmstad, but also from their publics. Hence, viral spread as explained by Carlsson (2009) is achieved since the pictures can be spread faster and to a wider target group.

The third branding goal is to become an attractive destination. The goal concerning branding Halmstad as an attractive destination is place branding as defined by Kavaratzis (2004). Even though the municipality focuses on corporate branding, place branding becomes a part of the process. This is because branding Halmstad municipality as a city has positive effects on corporate branding. As explained earlier under the platform stage, branding the municipality as a place is an integrated part of branding the municipality as an organization.

The Facebook page is primarily used for corporate branding, but Halmstad does publish pictures of Halmstad’s nature and contents that they know engages their followers. When promoting Halmstad as a place by publishing pictures of Halmstad, in cooperation with Destination Halmstad and by promoting events, the attractiveness of Halmstad as a destination increases. Further, Yan (2011) writes that engaging audiences to promote the brand will help the organization to find and maintain its competitive advantage. Promotion by Halmstad’s publics is created when people like, comment and share content posted by Halmstad in their social media channels. Posts that get many likes, comments and shares show up more often in the “news feed” on Facebook and are then seen by more people (Facebook.com, 2014). Yan (2011) writes that organizations can use social media to build positive brand associations. Halmstad inform their inhabitants of both important information but they also post contents about everyday life because they know it creates engagement. Even though this information is not of importance for the municipality, for example uploading
a picture of a sunny Halmstad, they still upload it for branding purposes, to show the attractive attributes of Halmstad and thus creating positive associations. The number of likes and shares varies depending on the content. An update from Halmstad wishing their inhabitants a pleasant Valborg, creates engagement in terms of likes, shares and comments. That post got up to 744 likes and 67 shares, compared to when Halmstad published a link about the architecture of Halmstad which got 25 likes and 1 shares (Appendix C, picture C.1 C.2). This also facilitates the corporate branding since positive association changes the perception the people previously had about the municipality as an organization, but also as place. One could say that Instagram is also used, to some extent, for place branding. This channel is mainly used for employee branding and corporate branding, but there are some employees who post pictures of Halmstad’s environment.

Besides employee of the week, Halmstad use Instagram to inform about current happenings that the municipalities engages in, such as promoting Halmstad as a green city through a new bicycle campaign. In the last weeks Halmstad has promoted a new bicycle campaign on Instagram where the aim is to show the publics that the municipality is working towards being a green city and the municipality is facilitating for this as they now amongst others have upgraded many bicycle lanes in the municipality. To increase awareness and increase viral spread (Goor, 2012; Carlsson, 2009) they used hashtags in each post, i.e. #superherohalmstad (translated), #halmstad and #bikecity (translated) (Appendix C, picture C.4).

**Falkenberg**

As defined under “platform” Falkenberg’s branding goals are to be seen as an attractive organization to work in, increase the knowledge about the municipality, increase credibility and making inhabitants proud to live in Falkenberg to attract tourism and to strengthen the image of the municipality as an organization. To achieve all these goals an organization has to make strategies on how to communicate (Carlsson, 2011). When making the strategies one have to decide how they are going to communicate and what they want to communicate in order to reach their branding goals (Carlsson, 2011; Lagergren, 1998). Falkenberg are mainly using Facebook, but also Twitter as channels in branding, but they have also developed plans for their Instagram account.

Falkenberg is currently mainly using social media channels for corporate branding purposes, where the aim is to increase inhabitants knowledge about the municipality, who they are, what they work with, what they stand for and how they are working for the good of the whole municipality. As defined by Byrkjeflot (2010) corporate branding is about marketing the whole organization and influencing perceptions amongst the publics, by increasing knowledge Falkenberg has the possibility to influence perceptions. On Facebook they have had great effects with posting photos that show what they are working with, one example is publishing photos of the work done by the park division, they are responsible for all the parks and green areas in Falkenberg to make sure they are well taken care of (Appendix D, picture D.2), the feedback on these posts show a very high number of likes, comments and shares. For Falkenberg this is positive for branding in more than one way; posts like this show what they are working with, present the people working in the municipality and because of the features of Facebook this information is spread to a wide range of people, as the engagement of the post increases the post is also exposed to more of Falkenberg’s followers on Facebook (Facebook, 2014). The tonality of a post like this is very different than the more managerial tone the municipality have on for example their webpage, here the tonality is more trivial which Carlsson (2011) describe is effective to increase engagement and create relationships with the publics. This makes it possible for Falkenberg to diminish the perception that they
are boring and impersonal. On Facebook, Falkenberg can reach the publics in their everyday life, and they feel that this is a channel where they can show their human side. They feel that they have the possibility to show that it is real people working in the perceived “grey house in the middle of the city center”. By posting updates like this Falkenberg also show the inhabitants where their tax money is going, which was one of Falkenberg’s aims in branding. This is an important part of corporate branding, to show what the municipality is working with in order to influence perceptions (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005), communicating this also creates credibility through being transparent (Carlsson, 2009). Facebook is a channel Falkenberg use to provide the publics with information and be open and transparent.

Corporate branding is also about communicating an organization’s more universal values, such as social responsibility (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005) their mission and what they stand for (Byrkjeflot, 2010). According to Falkenberg municipality’s web page their mission is to grow and develop and at the same time focus on taking care of the environment. Falkenberg are communicating this on Facebook by for example posting a photo and information about new bicycle pumping stations in the city center (Appendix D, picture D.4). By publishing posts like this they are showing the inhabitants that they are encouraging a “green city”, influencing their perceptions and providing the inhabitants with information about what the municipality is working with and their goals of being environmental. Again the features of Facebook are increasing the effect of these posts. Likes, shares and comments are increasing the viral spread and word of mouth enhances the municipality’s image as positive comments in the post from followers are spread to friends they have in their network, when they see all the positive comments from people on the post this will positively affect the perceptions about the municipality as word of mouth from one's network is considered trustworthy (Holmström & Wikberg, 2010). One could say that posts like this is also effective for employee branding, where the goal is to communicate the desired organization image (Dyhr & Parment, 2012), Falkenberg wants to be perceived as environmental as this is one of their values, communicating this influences possible future employees knowledge about the municipality's values that might be important when choosing between jobs.

Falkenberg has had great success with live sending’s from meetings at the municipality on web- TV and promoting this on Twitter and Facebook. By letting the public’s see the meetings the transparency and knowledge about the municipality is increasing, influencing the perceived image of the municipality (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). Promoting the meetings on Facebook and Twitter increases viral spread and word of mouth (Dong-Hun, 2010; Yan, 2011).

Being present in social media channels has helped Falkenberg with their corporate branding. They believe that being present in these channels helps their image in terms of being perceived as modern and staying up to date. Using social media channels also shows the inhabitants and other publics that Falkenberg is a transparent municipality that cares about the publics’ opinions and feedback. By being on social media they have opened up new channels to create two-way communication and dialogue (Yan, 2011). One example of this is from Twitter where they have posted a tweet asking for the inhabitants feedback in a matter of municipality transparency (see appendix D, picture D.7). With this post they are showing that they want to be transparent, they want the inhabitants feedback, which is important in corporate branding to help reach their goal of being perceived as a transparent municipality with a high focus on inhabitant dialogue. Another aspect influencing Falkenberg being transparent is that they answer all feedback they get in the social media channels, also negative feedback. Social media facilitates for two-way communication so Falkenberg have
the possibility to answer, both positive and negative feedback, which influences transparency and credibility, which again is affecting the perception of the municipality’s image (Carlsson, 2009; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005; Byrkjeflot, 2010).

Their handling of crisis communication on Facebook and Twitter is also influencing corporate branding as Carlsson (2011) argues that well-handled crisis communication in social media affects brand image positively. Falkenberg is actively using both Facebook and Twitter in crisis communication, and Falkenberg enhance the importance of creating credibility in the social media channels to increase the effect of crisis communication in these channels. As analyzed above Falkenberg create credibility through being open and transparent in their communication. Doing crisis communication in social media channels is effective because of the fast viral spread (Carlsson, 2009, Carlsson, 2011)

Falkenberg wants to be perceived as a good and fun place to work in, where one can find nice employees with high competence and the aim is to attract new employees and to keep the right employees, which again will raise the quality of the municipality. To achieve this Falkenberg are currently using Facebook, but they also have plans for Instagram.

When it comes to being perceived as an attractive place to work in, the aim is to show that Falkenberg is a desirable workplace, as explained by Ambler and Barrow (1996) is employee branding. As identified under “2.3.1 today” Falkenberg is perceived by some as boring and grey and people know too little about the municipality and in addition media has created a negative picture of the municipality. To change these perceptions, Falkenberg publish pictures and information about their work to help build the image on Facebook, one example shows how the municipality is working with business and city development by opening a new summer restaurant in the city center (Appendix D, picture D.5). An update like this is valuable because it shows the followers what the municipality is working with and the engagement is high which again is positive for Falkenberg. High numbers of likes, comments and shares increases the viral spread, and exposes the update to more people, it might even reach people that is not following them on Facebook yet. The high number of positive comments might also affect perceptions amongst the publics and change the image of Falkenberg as being boring and grey.

Falkenberg also emphasize that the tonality they have in social media is used with the aim of being perceived as humans, demolishing the picture of them being unknown and just a grey building in the city square. On Facebook, Falkenberg can publish information that is not so “heavy” (e.g. political cases) and rather use a less managerial tone to show their human side. One example of this is publishing nice pictures from the municipality with just as simple text as “Good morning Falkenberg” (see appendix D, picture D.1). These updates create a lot of engagement and are posted with the aim to influence perceptions amongst the public’s so the municipality is perceived as more human, rounder in the shape. This is influencing employee branding, showing what they work with is important for increasing knowledge, Facebook is facilitating for this and also increase the viral spread of the information. The tonality is affecting how the public’s perceive the municipality, with the aim to be perceived as real humans and not just an unknown organization.

When it comes to Instagram Falkenberg explain that they have considered starting to use this channel to brand the municipality as an attractive workplace through “employee of the week” where each week one employee are responsible for posting pictures and writing about what they work with. By doing this, they are able to be more transparent and the public will see
what the municipality is working with, transparency creates credibility and stronger relations between an organization and its publics (Holmström & Wikberg, 2010). By being transparent, Falkenberg might have the opportunity to change perceptions the publics have about them to achieve their wanted image as a good and fun place to work in.

Finally Falkenberg also have a branding goal of making the inhabitants proud to live in the municipality, so they are happy and speak well about the municipality. They want the inhabitants to become ambassadors of the municipality and promoting it to others with the aim of more tourism, which is by Kavaratzis & Ashworth (2005) explained as place branding. To reach this goal they amongst others use Facebook to post pictures from the municipality which creates a lot of engagement, as explained by Carlsson (2011) updates that plays on emotions creates great viral spread, and this is shown to be the case in Falkenberg. Again one can look at the post from the beach with the simple text “Good morning Falkenberg” (Appendix D, picture D.1). Posts like this show that it touches the emotions of the publics and especially the inhabitants, comments under these updates show that they are proud to live in their municipality.

Falkenberg also have plans for using Instagram for reaching their place branding goals, by having contests on Instagram where people can upload pictures from Falkenberg and in that way spread pictures that plays on emotions, makes the inhabitants proud and good ambassadors of the municipality with the aim to increase tourism. The viral spread of the pictures can also reach new publics and potential tourists through hashtags, as pointed by Goor (2012) interactiveness on Instagram increases through contest and encouraging the use of company specific hashtags (Bergström & Bäckman, 2013).

Another part of the municipality’s goal of place branding is to show what happens in the municipality (events e.g) and to “show up” the municipality with the aim to attract tourism. An example was when the municipality decided to arrange the car event “Wheels and Wings” in Falkenberg last summer and promoted this on Facebook (Appendix D, picture D.6). The post got great feedback in terms of likes, shares and comments, increasing the viral spread and word of mouth which again enhances the municipalities image as positive comments in the post from followers are spread to friends they have in their network, when they see all the positive comments from people on the post this will positively affect the perceptions about the municipality as word of mouth from one’s network is considered trustworthy (Holmström & Wikberg, 2010). This is also affecting corporate branding by showing what the municipality work with (Byrkjeflot, 2010), which events and happenings they are working with, making the inhabitants proud of the work the municipality is doing.

Ängelholm

As mentioned earlier, organizations can establish, change or enhance peoples’ perception with branding goals and strategies to reach these goals (Carlsson, 2011). The branding goals of Ängelholm are to increase knowledge about the municipality; be an attractive employer; and to make inhabitants proud of Ängelholm to attract tourism and new inhabitants. Ängelholm uses Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to achieve their branding goals.

The first branding goal is to increase knowledge about the municipality, to reach this goal Ängelholm uses Facebook to make people aware of Ängelholm’s values by being transparent and encourage open conversation with the inhabitants to improve the knowledge flow amongst them. This goal is corporate branding, when organizations are aware of the environment and actively try to influence the existing perceptions (Byrkjeflot, 2010). With
corporate branding they can influence the perceptions of the municipal organization, what it does and its values (Byrkjeflot, 2010). This implies that Ängelholm provides its inhabitants with information that is not always positive, but also negative in order to be transparent. The purpose is to show their audience the breadth of the organization to make people aware of what they do and actually work with.

Other ways to increase knowledge is by socializing with their audience, enabling them to provide with information and communicate. Ängelholm uses a softer tonality to socialize with their audience on Facebook. As explained by Carlsson (2009) viral spread is an effective function of social media in branding, meaning that communication spread faster and to a wider group than traditional media. This also corresponds with Dong-Hun (2010) who argues that information on social media is faster, has longer durability and reaches out to wider target groups. Ängelholm has statistics showing that they can reach out to more people on social media compared to the web page. Ängelholm argues that due to this potential, it is important for them to be active in their audience’s arena. Viral spread is also achieved through word of mouth, which has a positive effect on branding because information coming from friends has shown to have a higher credibility than information coming directly from organizations (Carlsson, 2009; Holmström & Wikberg, 2010). Also, information on Facebook is spread further by shares from their audience to their networks. Further, people enter Facebook more often than the web page which increases the possibility of them seeing updates and information, and sharing this information with their networks to achieve viral spread and word-of-mouth.

To increase knowledge, Facebook is also used as a customer service. The customer service allows Ängelholm to responds fast to their audience’s demands and answers. It is explained by Ängelholm that there is a perceived picture of the municipality being slow to respond. However, by using Facebook as a customer service they change this perception by answering questions fast. Carlsson (2011) explain that quick and helpful response from an organization in social media is positive for branding, explaining why social media can be viewed as a customer service. The municipality's customer service is responsible for answering questions for a strategical reason; the customer service has more knowledge since they interact with inhabitants daily through phone or email. Carlsson (2011) explain that quick response is positive for branding, both in terms of credibility in answering quick and giving the consumer the right information. Thus, by having competent people responsible of this customer service, Ängelholm makes sure that the consumers get right and quick responds to their questions. Including this in their corporate branding, as explained by Dahlqvist and Melin (2010) they can change the publics’ perception by answering quick with the right information.

Twitter is also used to increase knowledge about the municipality amongst the publics. Through creating a dialog, Ängelholm can increase the knowledge by answering questions from the inhabitants, but also external followers such as other public sectors and media. Twitter is also used to provide information about what is happening in Ängelholm. The use of hashtags is frequent in Ängelholm, leading to viral spread as explained by Carlsson (2009) (Appendix E, picture E.3). The possibility of their posts reaching more publics increases with the use of hashtags (Ström, 2010). Twitter and Facebook are also used in crisis communication. As explained by Carlsson (2009) crisis management is a part of branding, since handling crisis is important for maintaining the reputation of an organization.

Instagram is used to show what the organization works with and the people behind it. With the concept “employee of the week” Ängelholm strengthens its brand with corporate
branding. Ängelholm uses hashtags in their communication on Instagram, increasing awareness and interactions as explained by Goor (2012). Further, with the use of hashtags, Ängelholm achieves viral spread and reaches out to more publics as explained by Carlsson (2009). Ängelholm changes the perception of them by increasing their knowledge with the “employee of the week”-concept, by being transparent.

The second branding goal is to be an attractive employer, which is employee branding, which as explained by Ambler and Barrow (1996) is about making strategies so an organization can be perceived as a desirable workplace which attracts competent employees. Additional, Dyhre and Parment (2012) describe employee branding as branding a desired organization to attract the right employees. Hence, with social media, Ängelholm aims to create a positive association of the municipality as an employer.

According to Bergström and Bäckman (2013), Instagram is used by organizations to share content related to their products and events. On Instagram branding is about creating awareness about the environment, the nature of Ängelholm, the organization and the people behind it. The concept is further developed in order for them to achieve their branding goals. Ängelholm implementing the “employee of the week” concept, where one co-worker has access to the account and publishes pictures from his or hers work days. The purpose with it is to show what the organization does and the people behind it. Ängelholm achieve viral spread, as explained by Carlsson (2009), by using hashtags. Bergström and Bäckman (2013) argue that organization can increase interactions with users by using company specific hashtags. The use of hashtags, both in number and words, differ depending on the person uploading the pictures. Observations show that the most common hashtag used are #ängelholm and #employeeoftheweek (translated) (Appendix E, picture E.4). Other hashtags are used to highlight the position of the employee e.g. #iktsamordnare (Appendix E, picture E.5). The observations of Ängelholm’s Instagram account also show that some employees use hashtags that are not work related, e.g. one employee got a parking ticket and that employee used the hashtags #parkingticket (translated) and #lesson (translated) (Appendix E, picture E.6). Ängelholm increases interactions with the use of hashtags, which in turn leads to viral spread. With hashtags, pictures are made visible in public pages and are grouped with other pictures using the same hashtags (Miles, 2014). Hence, the more hashtag they use, the more visible the picture will be, leading to viral spread as explained by Carlsson (2009). The pictures will be visible among pictures of Ängelholm when they use the hashtag #engelholm, but they will also be visible in other groups not related to Ängelholm when they use hashtags such as #customerservice, which increases the spread of their published pictures. Finally, Ängelholm works with corporate branding in Instagram by increasing the knowledge of what the organization is and what it does.

The third branding goal is to make inhabitants proud of Ängelholm in order for them to promote the municipality to others. This is place branding. As explained by Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005), place branding is about changing how places are being perceived. With social media, Ängelholm has been able to influence the perception of the municipality making inhabitants proud of Ängelholm, as an employer but also as a destination.

What engages inhabitants to like, comment and share on Facebook is for example to publish pictures of beautiful weather in Ängelholm (Appendix E, picture E.1). As explained by Carlsson (2011) organizations build relationships with their consumers to communicate their values so that these consumers are engaged enough to promote information to others. Holmström and Wikberg (2010) explain that through engagement, consumers help create the
contents, spreading it to others and becoming ambassadors of the brand, thus achieving viral spread as explained by Carlsson (2009). Therefore, continuous updates on Facebook of pictures of Ängelholm make the inhabitants aware and proud of Ängelholm. And when they are proud, they recommend the city to their networks, to visit or to move to Ängelholm. Dong-Hun (2010) explains that consumers use social media to share information, which organizations can take advantage of. Besides, they can also highlight the human side of the municipality and change the perception in order to strengthen the brand. With Facebook, inhabitants feel that Ängelholm is a good, modern and attractive municipality that strives forward.

Twitter is also used for place branding. As identified in the interview Twitter has enabled Ängelholm to answer questions from people who live outside the municipality. This allows Ängelholm to increase awareness among people living outside the municipality and is effective in place branding. This also highlights the importance of using hashtags on Twitter. Ängelholm was able to answer this persons tweet and recommend him activities to do in Ängelholm because that person hashtagged Ängelholm in his tweet (#engelholm). Hence, viral spread as explained by Carlsson (2009) can be achieved with the use of hashtags.

Instagram is also used for place branding, to some extent. Before implementing “the employee of the week”, Instagram was used to show up the nature in Ängelholm, promoting Ängelholm as a place and not as an organization. Even then, Ängelholm used the hashtags #engelholm and #ängelholm when publishing their pictures (Appendix E, picture E.7). This continuous use of these hashtags lead to bigger awareness and viral spread as explained by Goor (2012) and Carlsson (2009). Hence, when clicking on the word #engelholm, one sees pictures of Ängelholm both as an organization but also as a place.

Cross case comparison
As the above analysis shows there are both similarities and differences identified in the three municipalities in connection with their social media branding strategies. They are all using Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, but there are some differences in which channels they use for corporate, employee and place branding goals. For corporate branding goals it was identified in all of the cases that this is a channel they can provide the publics with information fast, here they can be transparent and encourage dialogue. Through using a more human tonality and publishing “softer” information they create more engagement and credibility, they all focus on this in Facebook in particular. By providing the publics with information, being transparent, using two-way communication and a human tonality the aim is to establish, enhance or change people’s perceptions in terms of (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005) marketing the whole organization (Byrkjeflot, 2010). In Falkenberg it was identified that using pictures and publishing “lighter” information on Facebook increased engagement, and they felt that this had a positive effect on branding the municipal organization, making them more human, increasing knowledge and influencing perceptions. In Twitter the municipalities publish different kinds of information, but all with the aim to strengthen the image of the organization, increase transparency, viral spread and word of mouth. Halmstad and Ängelholm also use Instagram for corporate branding with the concept “employee of the week” as this increases transparency and knowledge about the organization with the aim to influence perceptions and perceived image as explained by Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005). Falkenberg also have plans to start with “employee of the week”. In all of the three cases it was found that they use both Facebook and Twitter for crisis communication which Carlsson (2011) and Byrkjeflot (2012) mean are a part of branding, in this case corporate branding as it is the image of the organization that will be affected considering how they manage a crisis.
They use these channels because of the possibility to publish information fast and reach many publics.

When it comes to employee branding it was found that Falkenberg focus on Facebook by publishing pictures about the municipality and what they work with in order to influence perceived employee image, her they also use the human tonality to create engagement, viral spread and word of mouth. For Halmstad and Ängelholm they focus on Instagram for employee branding. As described above they have the concept “employee of the week”, in addition to effect corporate branding this also affects employee branding in terms of building their perceived image as an employee through being transparent and positioning them to be perceived as an desirable workplace, as explained by Ambler and Barrow (1996). The uses of hashtags in Halmstad and Ängelholm on the updates in Instagram are enhancing the viral spread and word of mouth.

All the municipalities have also identified place branding goals, even though none of the three municipal organizations have the overall responsibility for working with tourism. They all mention that they are working with place branding to some degree because this is a part of their other branding goals. In Halmstad for example place branding influences employee branding in terms of increased business opportunities. In Falkenberg and Ängelholm it is identified that place branding might influence inhabitant’s perceptions about both the municipal organization and the physical place, with the aim to attract tourism and new inhabitants. They want the inhabitants to be proud of both the work done by the municipality (corporate branding) and the physical place (place branding). To reach their place branding goals all three municipalities are focusing on using Facebook, and here they publish pictures of the environment, everyday life themes and events. These updates have created engagement, viral spread and word of mouth. As identified by Carlsson (2009) updates that plays on emotions creates viral spread, and one possibility to why the pictures published by the municipalities creates viral spread may be due to that these pictures showing the municipality environment and what happens in the municipality plays on their emotions as inhabitants. Halmstad and Ängelholm also use Instagram to publish pictures and use hashtags to effect place branding through viral spread and word of mouth. Ängelholm also mention the importance of Twitter in place branding as they can monitor when others hashtags the municipality and respond to that.

All the municipalities use social media to have new channels to communicate with the publics, provide them with fast information, answer questions and be open and transparent. Social media facilitates for a two-way communication with publics that positively influences citizen dialogue. The functions of the social media channels; likes, shares, comments, re-tweets and hashtags are facilitating for increased viral spread and word-of-mouth which all three of the municipalities are aware of and work on enhancing this. Holmström and Wikberg (2010) explain that only 14 percent of people trust marketing campaigns in social media. However, 78 percent trust people they know and the recommendation they give through word-of-mouth. Independent information from similar people is therefore the most valuable for consumers (Holmström & Wikberg, 2010). To increase the viral spread all three municipalities have identified the importance of publishing pictures, using a human tonality and publishing “softer” information as this is effective for increasing engagement, transparency and dialogue. All of this is affecting their corporate, employee and place branding goals.

Table 3 - Cross case table for the stage “Strategy” (made by the authors)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HALMSTAD</th>
<th>FALKENBERG</th>
<th>ÄNGELHOLM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CORPORATE BRANDING</strong></td>
<td>Increase knowledge about the municipality</td>
<td>Increase knowledge about the municipality</td>
<td>Increase knowledge about the municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change the perception of the municipality</td>
<td>Change the perception of the municipality</td>
<td>Change the perception of being slow at responding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FACEBOOK</strong></td>
<td>Reach the publics in their arena with information; Personal tonality; softer information → engagement; create dialogue; reach out with information to the publics; makes them human</td>
<td>Reach the public with information; Personal tonality → engagement; create dialogue and relationships; transparency</td>
<td>Reach the publics in their arena with information and encourage open conversations; personal tonality → transparency; engagement; viral spread; WOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Customer service → answer questions fast; be transparent</td>
<td>Pictures of what they work with and who works there → engagement; WOM; Viral spread; transparency; credibility</td>
<td>Customer service → answer questions fast; be transparent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crisis communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TWITTER</strong></td>
<td>Communicate news and events and promote jobs</td>
<td>Posting links to the live sending’s from municipal meetings → transparency; viral spread; WOM</td>
<td>Publish information about news and events; frequent use of hashtags → viral spread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instagram</strong></td>
<td>Employee of the week; increase awareness; hashtags</td>
<td>Does not use</td>
<td>Employee of the week; increase awareness; hashtags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be perceived as an attractive employer and workplace</td>
<td>Be perceived as a good and fun place to work</td>
<td>Be perceived as an attractive workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change the perception of being boring and gray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facebook</strong></td>
<td>Promotes vacancies</td>
<td>Pictures of what they work with and who works there → engagement; WOM; Viral spread; transparency; credibility</td>
<td>No focus in this channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 5.4 Program - written guidelines

**Halmstad**

Writing down the strategies makes it easier to go through with them, due the fact that things happen fast in social media having written guidelines leads to faster response and actions (Carlsson, 2011). There are no written strategy-documents for the use of social media in Halmstad, however there are guidelines for how the communication in Halmstad should be conducted. These guidelines states that information should be clear, honest and create engagement. Additional, the tonality of the communication should be personal, in order to create a dialog. These guidelines corresponds with Halmstad’s branding goals, since it is stated that the aim with the communication is to make Halmstad attractive as an organization but also as a place; provide information about what the organization does and enable their audience to participate and engage in discussions. There are also guidelines developed for social media in particular, influenced by SKL, these guidelines also enhance the importance of being honest, open, create engagement and increase viral spread. These guidelines also address legal issues that the municipalities have to follow when using social media. It is clear that even though Halmstad does not have written strategies for branding some of the written guidelines are in accordance with the goals they have in branding; clear, honest, create engagement, tonality, increase viral spread. Having these guidelines creates consistency and credibility in the social media channels as explained by Carlsson (2011).
Based on the analysis under “Strategy” for Halmstad it is identified areas that show the importance of written strategies. As many of the employees are not working with communication, and does not have as much knowledge about social media it is important to have written strategies so everyone can take part of knowledge on how to most effectively use the social media channels to reach the branding goals. As identified under “Strategy” Halmstad are using Instagram and “employee of the week” to work with corporate and employee branding, but as there are no written strategies for the employees on how to use Instagram most effective for branding the use of hashtags are differing and creating inconsistency, which may influence credibility and then branding negatively (Carlsson, 2011).

**Falkenberg**

Even though Carlsson (2011) enhance the importance of writing down the strategies because things happens fast in social media Skoog contradicts this and states that because social media changes so fast it is not effective use of resources to use time to write down the strategies in documents. As Halmstad Falkenberg have written guidelines for how to use the social media channels, based on the guidelines made by SKL. These guidelines make it easier to enhance the quality and then the credibility of all the municipality's social media channels (Carlsson, 2011). As of today Skoog is the only one who work with the social media channels and publish information, but other employees answers questions they get and the future plan is to open a new contact center that will be more involved in the social media channels. Falkenberg also explain that the plan is to involve more employees from the communications department in the use of social media, this makes it important to have guidelines as explained above, since this will influence quality and credibility of the social media channels (Carlsson, 2011).

**Ängelholm**

As mentioned Carlsson (2011) enhance the importance of written strategy documents to make the use of social media as effective as possible. Written strategies make it easier to act fast in the social media channels. Ängelholm is currently working on formulating written strategies for social media. The existence of written strategies would make work with social media more effective and create consistency and credibility (Carlsson, 2011), which is extra important when many people are working with the social media channels as in Ängelholm. Ängelholm does have guidelines for their use of social media, these guidelines says that Ängelholms communication in social media should be transparent, increase dialogue, give inhabitants information and spread knowledge about the municipality. Even though these guidelines are not directly connected to branding strategies they are in accordance with the branding goals of Ängelholm, so they can be used to some extent as guidelines for branding in order to create consistency and quality in the social media channels (Carlsson, 2011). These guidelines also include legal aspects they have to consider.

As identified under Halmstad the use of written strategies is important when many people are involved in updating the social media channels, and the example of Instagram and “employee of the week” is the same case for Ängelholm. As they have many different employees updating on Instagram, written strategies could increase the branding effect if the employees had more knowledge on how to use Instagram most effectively for branding. Consistency in the use of hashtags would also create credibility as Carlsson (2011) explains that consistency in communication creates credibility that might influence the public’s perceptions of Halmstad.
Cross case comparison
The analysis shows that none of the three municipalities have written strategies for branding, but they all have written guidelines. The guidelines for Halmstad and Ängelholm include more information to guide the tonality and aim of the communication in social media that can help the strategies for branding. Falkenberg’s guidelines are more focused on regulations one have to follow when operating in the social media channels, regulations from SKL and regulations made by the municipality. The guidelines of Halmstad and Ängelholm also include regulations, both from SKL and regulations they have made themselves. As Carlsson (2011) argues strategies and guidelines are important in order to be able to respond fast and maintain consistency and credibility in the social media channels. The reason for why Falkenberg does not have as developed guidelines as the other two municipalities might be due to the fact that in Falkenberg only one person is updating the social media channels, this might become an issue for them as they now have plans to include more employees in the social media channels.

Further, the analyses show that written strategies become important when many employees with different knowledge of social media are operating in the social media channels. In both Halmstad and Ängelholm it was identified that “employee of the week” on Instagram showed differences in the usage of hashtags, which might influence consistency and then branding negatively (Carlsson, 2011), this might be avoided if written strategies on how to use Instagram most effectively for branding was written and available for all employees.

Table 4 - Cross case table for the stage “Program” (made by the authors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Halmstad</th>
<th>Falkenberg</th>
<th>Ängelholm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>• No written strategies • Guidelines exists</td>
<td>• No written strategies • Guidelines exist</td>
<td>• No written strategies • Guidelines exists</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5 Anchoring - common understanding

Halmstad
Carlsson (2011) explains that it is important that everybody knows how to operate the social media channels to maintain credibility and consistency in the communication. As mentioned above, there are no written strategies for everybody to take part of, but there are guidelines for how to use social media and how to communicate. These are internally communicated but are also available on the municipality’s web page. There are 20 employees, mostly from the communication department, that have access to Halmstad’s Facebook page. However, 10 of them are actively working with. There are weekly plans for what to publish in Facebook, but they are aware of that these plans can change due to unexpected situations. But having these plans ensures that there are frequent updates on Facebook and that they are actively working with this channel.

On Instagram, different people have access from week to week due to their “employee of the week”-concept. This highlights the importance that everybody knows how to operate in social media to maintain credibility and consistency in the communication, as explained by (Carlsson, 2011). Since there are several people who have access to the accounts, it is important that the guidelines are communicated and available, for employees and divisions.
**Falkenberg**

Since there is one responsible, the web strategic, for publishing content on social media, Falkenberg does not face problems with anchoring strategies, in the extent that is explained by Carlsson (2011). This is due to the fact that the responsibility is not distributed in the organization. However, Falkenberg do need to focus on anchoring their guidelines when the new contact center is operational, since the ones working there will be more active on social media channels but also because the responsibility will then be distributed. This will be important in order to maintain the quality and keep consistency (Carlsson, 2011) in the social media communication. The web strategic is responsible for publishing contents, but is not responsible for answering questions. Instead he passes the questions forward to co-workers who can answer the questions with right information. These co-workers also have to follow the guidelines made by the municipality and SKL.

**Ängelholm**

As mentioned by Carlsson (2011), it is necessary that guidelines and strategies are made explicit. Everybody working with social media need to have the same knowledge and understanding of how to use the different channels and how to communicate in them. As explained earlier, there are no written strategies that the employees can take part of. However, there are written guidelines, both in the organization and also on the web page available for divisions who want to establish a presence on social media. As previously showed in the analysis concerning Ängelholm, it is not only the communication department who has access to the accounts. Therefore, anchoring is important; the communication department, the customer service and the employees of the week need to understand the guidelines for social media and which tonality to use in their communication. Carlsson (2011) argues that anchoring is important to maintain credibility and consistency in their communication.

**Cross case comparison**

The importance of anchoring differs in Halmstad, Falkenberg and Ängelholm. In Halmstad, the communication department is responsible for Facebook and different employees have access to Instagram every week. Anchoring guidelines is then important to maintain consistency in their communication in these channels. In Falkenberg, the web strategic is responsible for social media, including publishing contents. Anchoring is therefore not as relevant for this municipality as in the others. However, the importance of anchoring will increase when the contact center is operational, since they will be actively working with social media also. As in Halmstad, anchoring is important for Ängelholm to create consistency in their communication. The communication department, customer center and co-workers work actively with social media, highlighting the importance of anchoring.

**Table 5 - Cross case table for the stage “Anchoring” (made by the authors)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Halmstad</th>
<th>Falkenberg</th>
<th>Ängelholm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anchoring</td>
<td>• Guidelines communicated internally</td>
<td>• Guidelines partly communicated internally</td>
<td>• Guidelines communicated internally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Written guidelines available on the web page</td>
<td>• Written guidelines available on the web page</td>
<td>• Written guidelines available on the web page</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.6 Evaluating branding strategies

**Halmstad**
In Halmstad, they conduct both qualitative and quantitative studies. To see if the branding strategies are working Carlsson (2011) emphasize the importance of evaluating the results. The evaluating process is easier with social media since there is statistics already provided for each channel, e.g. Halmstad can on Facebook find statistics showing number of unique followers, visibility, comments, likes and the overall engagement of all posts. Other evaluating measurements can be to look at the awareness and the experienced quality. These kinds of measurements are identified in Halmstad in what kind of information they look at when analyzing the statistics. They look at which kind of posts engage, who is engaged and which target group. By evaluating this, they can estimate the spread and visibility of their posts. It could be said that looking at the spread and visibility of their posts can determine the quality of their posts; how the audiences interacted with the information posted and which posts engages them spread the information to others. Further, the level of awareness can also be determined by the spread and visibility of the brand by the engagement of their audience by sharing, commenting and liking information. This strengthens Carlsson (2011) argument for the importance of conducting evaluation of the strategies and tactics.

However, Halmstad does not prioritize the evaluation phase compared to the other stages in the model. Pettersson does explain that Halmstad could improve in this area and use statistics more often to evaluate the activities on social media. Improving their work in this stage could lead to the development of more efficient branding strategies. Integrating this in their work process can lead to improvements of both branding strategies and tactics.

**Falkenberg**
As explained by Carlsson (2011), organizations can evaluate their social media use in quantitative and qualitative terms. Falkenberg conduct quantitative evaluations to keep up the relevance and get an understanding of what engages. To achieve this; they evaluate statistics provided by social media to see the number of likes, shares and comments they get. However, Falkenberg focuses on quality rather than quantity, meaning that they look beyond the number of followers, likes and shares. It is more important for Falkenberg that relevant information is communicated to their public through social media and that they have seen it, rather than the number of likes they get on their posts. This mean that they evaluate viral spread by evaluating how many people have read the information they publish and the quality of this information. This implies that important information that creates low engagements but that has reached their inhabitants, is more important than information concerning everyday life that creates engagement. Hence, evaluation is not only done on number of likes, shares and comments but on the quality of their published contents. As explained by Carlsson (2011) organizations can measure the results of social media by looking at awareness and loyalty. This implies that Falkenberg measures the results by evaluating awareness, but not in number of likes but in how many people they can reach out to with relevant information. It is about evaluating how loyal their followers are to information that is of importance. Through, this they evaluate the results of their strategies and tactics in order to know if it is effective or not, as explained by Carlsson (2011).

**Ängelholm**
Ängelholm conduct both quantitative and qualitative evaluations of their social media use. Carlsson (2011) writes that evaluations are important to know if the strategies used are effective. Ängelholm evaluate statistics provided by social media. These statistics show the number of views, shares, likes and comments different posts get. This analysis allows them to
see the extent of their viral spread, as explained by Carlsson (2009); how many they reach out to and which information engages their followers to share with their friends, increasing viral spread. Carlsson (2009) explain that one can measure the results by measuring awareness, which can be done by doing a qualitative evaluation. Evaluating statistics is quantitative, but they can evaluate the quality of their posts by examining which kind of information is engaging and reaching out to people. With this, they can evaluate awareness and loyalty of their followers to promote the brand to their networks.

Other evaluation done is to examine where Ängelholm is positioned compared to other municipalities, which is done by examining statistics made by Kreafon. The variables of these statistics provided by Kreafon can differ, e.g. number of likes or number of followers. Nevertheless, Ängelholm can measure the results of their social media and its effect on corporate branding by comparing and evaluating their position. This can create the base for the future use of social media in branding, as explained by Carlsson (2011), to either change a position or maintain it.

Cross case comparison
All three municipalities conduct both qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the results in social media. Halmstad, Falkenberg and Ängelholm evaluate statistics provided from social media channels. These statistics show the number of likes, shares and comments their published contents get. Hence, these statistics provide them information about viral spread and engagement as explained by Carlsson (2009). Ängelholm also examines statistics provided by Kreafon, to analyze their position compared to other municipalities in Sweden, evaluating and comparing their strategies with how other municipalities do. Ängelholm and Halmstad focus more on evaluating engagement than Falkenberg. Falkenberg focuses more on the relevance of the information posted than on the number of likes. Hence, they look at how many people they have been able to reach to with important information. This implies that the municipalities having different perspective on the importance of likes, comments and shares. Halmstad and Ängelholm evaluates viral spread by looking at likes and shares, while Falkenberg focuses on reaching out with important information even if this information creates low engagement.

Table 6 - Cross case table for the stage “Evaluating” (made by the authors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Halmstad</th>
<th>Falkenberg</th>
<th>Ängelholm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluating</strong></td>
<td>• Examines statistics provided by social media channels</td>
<td>• Evaluates statistics provided by social media channels</td>
<td>• Evaluates statistics provided by social media channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Aims to become better with evaluations</td>
<td>• Higher focus on the quality of their information, rather than number of likes, shares and comments</td>
<td>• Evaluates the position by examining statistics provided by Kreafon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

53
## 5.7 Cross-case analysis

Table 7 - Summary of all the important findings from each stage of the conceptual framework (made by the authors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Halmstad</th>
<th>Falkenberg</th>
<th>Ängelholm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Today - perceived image** | • An unknown organization  
• Impersonal  
• Little knowledge about the municipality | • Boring  
• “Just a grey building”  
• Impersonal  
• Too little knowledge about the municipality | • Little knowledge about the municipality  
• Slow in response |
| **Platform - branding goals** | • Be an attractive employer  
• Increase knowledge about the municipality  
• To give a positive perception of the municipality and their work  
• To be seen as an attractive destination  
• To be an attractive place to establish a business | • Be an attractive employer  
• Increase knowledge about the municipality  
• Increase credibility  
• Making inhabitants proud to live in Falkenberg  
• To be seen as an attractive destination | • Be an attractive employer  
• Increase knowledge about the municipality  
• Making inhabitants proud to live in Ängelholm to attract tourism or new inhabitants |
| **Strategies** | **Corporate branding**  
Facebook; Twitter; Instagram | Facebook; Twitter | Facebook; Twitter; Instagram |
|                  | **Employee branding**  
Facebook; Twitter; Instagram | Facebook | Instagram |
|                  | **Place branding**  
Facebook; Instagram | Facebook | Facebook; Twitter; Instagram |
| **Program** | • No written strategies  
• Guidelines exists | • No written strategies  
• Guidelines exists | • No written strategies  
• Guidelines exists |
| **Anchor** | • Guidelines communicated internally  
• Written guidelines available on the web page | • Guidelines partly communicated internally  
• Written guidelines available on the web page | • Guidelines communicated internally  
• Written guidelines available on the web page |
| **Evaluation** | • Examines statistics provided by social media channels  
• Aims to become better with evaluations | • Evaluates statistics provided by social media channels  
• Higher focus on the quality of their information, rather than number of likes, shares and comments | • Evaluates statistics provided by social media channels  
• Evaluates the position by examining statistics provided by Kreafon |
5.8 Outcomes of the analysis
The outcome of the analysis is presented in “Exhibit 5”. The model is based on the conceptual framework presented in the theoretical chapter, with the findings presented in the model. The outcomes from the analysis are marked with red color in the model.

Exhibit 5 - outcomes of the analysis, made by the authors of the thesis

In the first stage of the model “Today - perceived image” it was identified that all of the municipalities had some insights to their perceived image amongst the publics. In all three the cases, the publics have too little knowledge about the municipality organization, in particularly what they work with.

Based on the insights about their perceived image all three municipalities have developed branding goals to increase the knowledge level about the municipal organization amongst the publics through corporate branding. It was also identified in all of the cases that the municipal organizations have also incorporated employee and place branding goals. This outcome is presented in the red box connected to the “Platform- branding goals” stage.

In order to reach their branding goals the three municipalities communicate through the social media channels Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The analysis shows that the municipalities use these channels to achieve their branding goals and similarities and differences are identified. There are mostly similarities between Halmstad and Ängelholm. Both municipalities use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in branding. Falkenberg, however, has more focus on Facebook than on the other channels. The findings in this stage of the model
show that Facebook is an effective communication tool to increase knowledge among inhabitants and that Instagram is effective in employee branding.

Another finding in this analysis is that there are no written strategies for how to communicate in social media in all three municipalities. This is visualized with the red box “implicit strategies”. Implicit strategies imply that the strategies are not written. There is an understanding of what engages, but these are not written down. Further, implicit strategies imply that personal experience with social media affects how the different users in each municipality communicate. This creates inconsistency, which was particularly identified in Instagram where the tonality and the use of hashtags differed depending on the employee of the week.

Having implicit strategies can lead to different communication styles which can have a negative impact on the perceived image, since different communication styles might influence consistency, credibility and in the end perceived image. This is why the box “implicit strategies” are connected to the box “Today – perceived image”. However, all three municipalities have written guidelines for how the communication in social media should be conducted and what to consider when communicating as a municipality in social media channels. These guidelines state that the communication should be transparent, accessible, honest and understandable. The purposes of these guidelines are to create consistency in the communication, create credibility and increase the effect of branding. The guidelines in all three cases also consisted of regulations that the public sectors have to follow when communicating in social media channels created by SKL. This outcome is visualized by the red box “explicit guidelines”.

The importance of the stage “Anchoring – common understanding” depends on the number of people working with social media. Anchoring showed to be more important in Halmstad and Ängelholm than in Falkenberg, since the communication department, customer service, and employees on Instagram need to be aware of the guidelines and strategies to create consistency in their communication (Halmstad and Ängelholm). There is only one person working with social media in Falkenberg, decreasing the importance of anchoring. However, if Falkenberg increases the number of people working with social media, anchoring becomes important.

A final outcome is that the municipalities measure viral spread and engagement when they evaluate their strategies in social media. By evaluating the number of likes, shares and comments, municipalities develop an understanding of what interests the public’s. This provides them with information about which perception is being developed about the municipality. Additional, evaluating viral spread, they can estimate the reach of the information they post which is valuable in branding, but also when they want to provide their inhabitants with important information. With engagement, they also evaluate to which extent their inhabitants are ambassadors of the brand by looking at the number of shares. This outcome is visualized in the red box under the stage “Evaluating branding strategies”.

56
6. Conclusion

In this chapter the final conclusions from the analysis are presented and the two research questions are answered. This chapter also includes implications, recommendations and further research.

6.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to examine how Swedish municipalities use social media in branding, more specific which strategies they use to reach their branding goals. Two research questions are formulated in order to fulfill the purpose of the thesis. This study has examined how municipalities use social media in branding based on a conceptual framework developed from a model by Carlsson (2011) and additional theories about branding and social media. The analysis is structured according to the conceptual framework and Halmstad, Falkenberg and Ängelholm are analyzed separately as within case studies. To analyze the differences and similarities between the municipalities, several cross-case analyses are made. Finally, the outcome of the analysis is presented.

The first research question is; What is branding for a municipality? This question is related to the stages Today and Platform in the conceptual framework and analysis. The analysis shows that there is more than one branding term applicable for a municipality. When the branding goals of each municipality was identified, the analysis showed that there are three branding terms relevant when examining what branding is for a municipality, and these are corporate, employee and place branding. In order to discuss the relevance of applying more than one branding term, the relationship between these terms and the common branding goals of Halmstad, Falkenberg and Ängelholm will be presented.

There are three common goals in all three municipalities related to corporate, employee and place branding. These three goals further explain what branding for a municipality is. All three municipalities want to increase knowledge about the municipality to change or enhance the perception of them. The analysis shows that due to the low knowledge about the municipalities amongst the public’s in all three municipalities, the perceived image of them is that they are impersonal and is seen as an unknown organization. With corporate branding, the municipalities aim to change this perception. The municipalities achieve this by increasing the knowledge about what they work with and presenting the people working in the municipal organization. The second common goal is to be perceived as an attractive employer. When talking about branding, all municipalities include branding the organization as an attractive employer. Securing the competence of the organization and being perceived as an attractive workplace is of importance for all three municipalities. Finally, promoting the municipalities as attractive destinations, place branding, is also of importance for Halmstad, Falkenberg and Ängelholm.

The analysis shows that corporate branding goals influences the other branding goals, since increased knowledge about the municipalities will also influence the perceptions of them being attractive destinations and attractive employers. This discussion emphasizes that only examining a municipality from one branding point of view is difficult since a municipality is complex, consists of many sub-divisions and have a broad variety of work tasks. Compared to a company, a municipality is more complex with a different structure, purpose and functionality. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the fact that several branding perspectives are integrated when branding a municipality. The conclusion is that corporate, employee and
place branding are relevant when examining what branding is for a municipality. This is because a municipality is not only a place, but also an organization. This means that the image of a municipality as an organization, will also affect the image of the municipality as a place and the opposite.

The second research question is; *How are municipalities using social media to reach their branding goals?* This is related to the parts *Strategy, Program, Anchoring and Evaluation* in from the conceptual framework. The analysis shows that although all municipalities use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in their communication, not all channels are equally effective for achieving branding goals. As discussed earlier, there are three common branding goals. The analysis further shows that there are similarities and differences in how the municipalities use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in their branding to achieve their goals.

Facebook has shown to be the most effective social media channel to increase the knowledge about the municipality in order to change or enhance the perception of them. All three municipalities use Facebook to communicate, inform and answer questions. Twitter is also used for this purpose. Instagram has shown to be the most effective and useful tool in branding the municipalities as attractive employers. Both Halmstad and Ängelholm use Instagram to show their followers what the organization does and the people behind it. They aim to create transparency and increase knowledge about the organization with Instagram, by showing what the different functions in the municipalities do. Hence, with Instagram they achieve their branding goal of being an attractive employer, which also changes the perception of the municipalities as organizations. Finally, all three channels are used in place branding, to promote the municipality as an attractive destination so that the inhabitants are proud enough to promote the municipality to others.

All the municipalities use social media to have new channels to communicate with the publics, provide them with fast information, answer questions and be open and transparent. Social media facilitates for a two-way communication with publics that positively influences citizen dialogue. The functions of the social media channels; likes, shares, comments, re-tweets and hashtags are facilitating for increased viral spread and word-of-mouth which all three of the municipalities are aware of and work on enhancing this. To increase the viral spread all three municipalities have identified the importance of publishing pictures, using a human tonality and publishing “softer” information as this is effective for increasing engagement, transparency and dialogue. All of this is affecting their corporate, employee and place branding goals. The analysis further shows that all three municipalities lack written strategies for the use of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. There are guidelines, both communicated in the organization and written, but this should not be confused with strategies. The current guidelines explain how the communication should be, for example accessible, understandable and honest. What these guidelines do not mention is how to communicate in the different channels. This does not imply that there are no strategies in the municipalities. The strategies are implicit, meaning that there is a personal understanding of how to communicate but this is not made explicit. These implicit strategies are to publish pictures with information since it creates engagement, which kind of pictures and information engages, use of hashtags and which words to hashtag. The analysis particularly shows that there is inconsistency in the use of hashtags in Halmstad and Ängelholm. It is showed that the use of hashtags depends on the employee of the week, and the words tagged also depend on the employee. Hence, the communication is not consisted and the potential for viral spread varies, since the potential to reach out to more on Instagram depends on hashtags. The same analysis is made on Twitter.

The discussion above emphasizes the importance of having written strategies in the organization to secure the quality and consistency in the communication. The analysis shows
that the municipalities prioritize formulating guidelines for formulating strategies. However, the municipalities aim to formulate strategies. The need to have written strategies is further affected by the number of people working with social media. The more people are involved in this work, the more important it becomes to anchor strategies and guidelines in the organization. Having implicit strategies can lead to different communication styles which can have a negative impact on the perceived image, since different communication styles might influence consistency, credibility and in the end perceived image. Hence, written strategies can ensure the wanted perceived image of the municipalities.

The analysis shows that social media has been effective in branding. Social media has enabled the municipalities to be transparent, inform and communicate with their inhabitants changing and creating a positive perception of the municipalities. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have shown to be efficient tools in the three branding terms presented in this study. There is a synergy effect between social media and branding: the guidelines developed for social media will determine how it is used, which in turn affect their branding and what they communicate to their audience. Social media is about showing their inhabitants the breadth of the municipality, both positive and negative aspects in order to be transparent and create a relationship with them. This communication tool has enabled municipalities to change from being unknown organizations to becoming more personal, transparent and increasing the people’s knowledge about what municipalities does as organizations.

A recommendation for Halmstad is to formulate strategies for how to communicate in social media and write them down. There are several parties involved in the work with social media which increases the importance of having written strategies and anchoring them. This study shows that there is inconsistency in the communication on Instagram. The use of hashtags varies, both in terms of which words are used and how often they are used. As this study has showed inconsistency in the communication might have negative effects on the perceived. It is stated that Instagram is used to attract employees since a younger audience is active there. This highlights the importance of having consistency in the use of hashtags, since it is something the younger audience use. Having the strategies implicit at the moment, leads to different communication style depending on personal experience. Making them explicit increases the quality and consistency in the communication.

A recommendation for Falkenberg is to implement Instagram in their communication, to increase knowledge about the municipality, but also to show the public what the organization does and the people behind it. This study has shown that Instagram is an effective tool in branding, particularly in employee branding, to be transparent and increase credibility. Falkenberg does currently not use Instagram as much as Facebook, which they should to more efficiently achieve their branding goals. As discussed above, Instagram can also be used in place branding to highlight the environment of a municipality. Another recommendation is to develop strategies for how to communicate in the social media channels. At the moment, there is one employee working with social media but when the customer service is established and Instagram is implemented, written strategies becomes important to create consistency in their communication. A third recommendation is to focus more on creating engagement with their published content. It is stated in this study that Falkenberg focuses more on that important information is communicated rather than getting likes, comments and shares. However, this study has showed that engagement is both important to achieve their branding goals, achieve viral spread and for evaluation in order to understand what the audience is interested of.
A recommendation for Ängelholm is to formulate strategies for social media and write them down. There are several parties involved, the communication department, the customer center and the employees of the week on Instagram. This study has showed that the hashtag used in Ängelholm differs depending on the user, which creates inconsistency in their communication. This in turn affects their work with branding since different tonalities communicate different images and effects credibility that might influence the public’s perceptions. They cannot rely all employees knows how to use social media most effectively for branding. Therefore, strategies need to be developed, written down and communicated to everyone who is going to operate in the social media channels.

6.2 Implications
An implication is the theoretical model presented (Exhibit 5). The social media platforms Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are added to Carlsson’s (2011) model to highlight their role as communication channels in branding and which strategies to use. An additional implication is the model presented at the end of the analysis, the outcomes of this thesis. This model shows how a municipality works with branding when using social media as a communication channel, more specific the channels Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The model shows the different branding perspective applicable in municipalities, and that explicit guidelines are more common than explicit strategies. This study also shows the importance of also formulating written strategies for how to use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in order to utilize the purposes of these channels in branding. This study can provide readers with an understanding of what branding is for a municipality and how a municipality can use social media in its branding. Finally, this study can be used by other municipalities in Sweden to compare their branding strategies with, or to evaluate how they use social media in branding by using the theoretical model.

6.3 Limitations
The results of this study cannot be generalized due to its qualitative nature. Since the results are based on three cases, the results cannot be generalized for all municipalities in Sweden. A quantitative study would enable a generalization of the results. A multiple case study of more than three cases would create a higher validity and hence enable the authors to generalize their results to be applicable on municipalities in Sweden. An additional limitation is that these results cannot either be generalized to municipalities in other countries other than Sweden. This is because the structure, purpose and functionality of municipalities differ depending on the country. Municipalities outside Sweden can take part of these results, however, these may not be applicable without being adapted to the municipality’s situation. Finally, a limitation is the interview guide of this study. As explained earlier, the original aim was to examine brand awareness but this purpose changed to branding after conducting the interviews. Hence, developing an interview guide with branding in focus could lead to deeper insights and increased validity.

6.4 Further research
Suggestion for future research is to conduct a quantitative study of how municipalities in Sweden use social media in branding. A quantitative study will increase the validity of the results and enable the researcher to generalize the results to municipalities in Sweden. An additional suggestion is to examine whether municipalities outside of Sweden use social media in branding in the same way and to examine whether there are similarities and differences. A third suggestion for future research is to examine whether it is possible to only brand a municipality as a place without considering the municipality as an organization and vice versa.
References


**Electronic sources**


Observations

Falkenberg’s Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/Falkenbergskommun?ref=br_tf
Falkenberg’s Twitter account: https://twitter.com/Falkenberg_se
Falkenberg’s Instagram account: @ENGELSHOLMKOMMUN
Halmstad’s Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/Falkenbergskommun?ref=br_tf
Halmstad’s Twitter account: https://twitter.com/halmstadskommun
Halmstad’s Instagram account: @HALMSTADSKOMMUN
Ångelholm’s Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/angelholm
Ångelholm’s Twitter account: https://twitter.com/engelholm
Ångelholm’s Instagram account: @FALKENBERGSKOMMUN
Appendix A - Interview guide (English)

General information
Name:
Position:
Work tasks:
Years in position:
Education:
Experience/education focused on social media:

Theme 1: Social media in general
Q1: When did the municipality start using social media?
Q2: Why did the municipality start using social media?
Q3: What are the municipality's goals by using social media?
Q4: Has the goals changed for why the municipality use social media?
Q6: What are the municipality's plans for social media?
Q7: Do you believe social media are effective channels for the municipality, and in which ways?
Q8: How important is social media for the municipality?

Theme 2: Working with social media
Q1: How many works with social media in the municipality?
Q2: How much time do they (the one who work with social media) spend on working with social media for the municipality?
Q3: How does the municipality work with social media?
Q4: How does the municipality stay up to date on social media?
Q5: What are the greatest difficulties with using social media in the municipality?

Theme 3: Strategies for social media
Q1: Which social media platforms do you believe are most important for municipalities and why?
Q2: What is the municipality's social media strategy (ies)?
(Do they have different strategies for different platforms?)
Q3: How are the strategy (ies) made?
Follow up question: Who is involved? Where do you get inspiration and knowledge to make strategies?)
Q4: Do you cooperate with other municipalities in social media
Q5: Have you asked (questionnaire) the inhabitants about your use of social media to get feedback?
Q6: How do you measure results in social media?
Q7: Do you have insights to what engages your publics on social media (social media tactics)?

Theme 4: Brand Awareness
Q1: What is your definition of brand awareness for a municipality and your municipality in particular?
Q2: In what way is brand awareness important for municipalities?
Q3: How do you consider the importance of brand awareness using social media?
Q4: How do you believe that social media can be used to enhance brand awareness?
Q5: Do you have specific strategies for brand awareness in social media?
Q5: In which other channels do you focus on brand awareness?
Q6: Which social media channels do you believe are most effective to enhance brand awareness for a municipality?
Q7: How has the brand awareness of the municipality changed after you started using social media?
Appendix B - Interview guide (Swedish)

Generell information
Namn: 
Position: 
Arbetsuppgifter: 
Antal år som anställd: 
Utbildning: 
Erfarenhet/utbildning inom sociala medier:

Tema 1: Generellt om sociala medier
Q1: När började kommunen använda sociala medier? 
Q2: Varför började kommunen använda sociala medier? 
Q3: Vad är kommunens mål med sociala medier? 
Q4: Har målen för användandet av sociala medier förändrats i kommunen? 
Q6: Vad är kommunens planer med sociala medier? 
Q7: Anser du att kanaler inom sociala medier är effektiva för kommunen? På vilket sätt? 
Q8: Hur viktigt är sociala medier för kommunen?

Tema 2: Arbetet med sociala medier
Q1: Hur många arbetar med sociala medier i kommunen? 
Q2: Hur mycket tid spenderas på att arbeta med sociala medier i kommunen? 
Q3: Hur arbetar kommunen med sociala medier? 
Q4: Hur håller kommunen sig uppdaterad inom sociala medier? 
Q5: Vilka är de största svårigheterna med sociala medier för en kommun?

Tema 3: Strategier i sociala medier
Q1: Vilka kanaler inom sociala medier anser du är viktigast för en kommun? Varför? 
Q2: Vilka är kommunens strategier med sociala medier? Finns det olika strategier för de olika kanalerna? 
Q3: Hur är strategin (strategierna) formulerad(e)? Vem är involverade? Var tar ni inspiration and kunskap ifrån? 
Q4: Samarbetar ni med andra kommuner med sociala medier? 
Q5: Har ni gjort en undersökning för att få feedback från invånare angående ert arbetet med sociala medier? 
Q6: Hur mäter ni resultaten i sociala medier? 
Q7: Har ni en överblick på vad som engagerar era följare i sociala medier? Taktiker?

Tema 4: Varumärkesbyggande
Q1: Vilken är er definition av varumärkesbyggande? Specifikt för er kommun? 
Q2: På vilket sätt är varumärkesbyggande viktigt för en kommun? 
Q3: Hur viktigt anser ni att varumärkesbyggande genom sociala medier är? 
Q4: Hur kan sociala medier användas av en kommun i varumärkesbyggandet? 
På Facebook: 
På Twitter: 
På Instagram: 
Q5: Har ni specifika strategier för varumärkesbyggandet inom sociala medier? 
På Facebook: 
På Twitter: 
På Instagram:
Q5: Vilka andra kanaler fokuserar ni på i varumärkesbyggandet?
Q6: Vilka kanaler inom sociala medier anser du är viktigast för varumärkesbyggandet i en kommun?
Q7: Hur har arbetet med varumärkesbyggandet förändrats med sociala medier?
Appendix C - Halmstad

Picture C.1

Ha en fin Valborg!

Picture C.2


Projektet ska ha slutförts under året eller under förra året. Förra året gick priset till Söndrumsskolans lärarprogram.

Läs mer på halmstad.se

Nominera till byggnadsnämndens arkitekturpris 2014 – Halmstads kommun
www.halmstad.se

Halmstads kommun @halmstadskommun · 21 maj
Jobb: Lärare i mat/natur i 4-9 Östergärdsskolan. Vi söker lärare i ämnet mat/natur 4-9 till Östergärdsskolan. bit.ly/R81kAa lnmytjobb
Visa  ♦ Swara  tä Rethvesta  Favoritmarkera  ▾ Mer

Halmstads kommun @halmstadskommun · 29 maj
I kväll har kommunfullmäktige möte. Från kl. 15 diskuteras ledamöterna bland annat ett kontaktcentrum för... fb.me/1fCd87aLY
Visa  ♦ Swara  tä Rethvesta  Favoritmarkera  ▾ Mer

Halmstads kommun @halmstadskommun · 29 maj
Jobb: Specialpedagog Gelifeskolan F-9: Tillsammans med rektor och elevkårdorealitet arbetar du för ett... bit.ly/R2tln2q lnmytjobb
Visa  ♦ Swara  tä Rethvesta  Favoritmarkera  ▾ Mer

Halmstads kommun @halmstadskommun · 19 maj
Såg hej till Halmstads nya konstverk! ”Non Violence” – Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd. berömda revoler med knut på.... fb.me/tqDKGhG0y
Visa  ♦ Swara  tä Rethvesta  Favoritmarkera  ▾ Mer

Halmstads kommun @halmstadskommun · 19 maj
Viket byggeproekt i Halmstad tycker du utmärker sig lite extra i sin arkitektur? Nominera det projekt som du.... fb.me/1a70Qmv3
Visa  ♦ Swara  tä Rethvesta  Favoritmarkera  ▾ Mer

Halmstads kommun @halmstadskommun · 19 maj
Jobb: Kock inom skolområdet söker. Arbetsuppgifterna som kock består av att förbereda frukost, tillag... bit.ly/1DO20 lnmytjobb
Visa  ♦ Swara  tä Rethvesta  Favoritmarkera  ▾ Mer

Pictures C.3

Pictures C.4
Picture C.5
Employee of the week 1
Picture C.6
Employee 2
Appendix D - Falkenberg

Picture D.1
Fliiga fingrar utanför Stadshuset. Nu planterar Parkavdelningen blommor till ett nytt arrangemang som sedan färdigställs vid Päsk.

Kunde vara bra om ni behöll varje gren och växa också noni.

Arangemanget blir så vakri. Stäm blir belydigt vackrare och mystägre.

Superjobb. 

Allt så fint!...en före för

Göta

Skulle vara roligt att se detta. Stort Eloge till Parkavdelningen för alla superfinall plantningar.

Write a comment...
Picture D.3

Falkenbergs kommun
Likad - November 20, 2012

Nu är årets julgran på plats på Rådhustorget, rak och grann är den. Lite extra pynt har den fått också. Utöver belysningen / BO

Like · Comment · Share

71 people like this.

*View 1 more comment*

Jättefin gran är det i år. November 20, 2012 at 11:59pm · Like

Söt liten gran ni har i Fb! Här i Borås drog de på extra mikt år, den kom faktiskt nära emellanhusen när den skulle köras till torget. November 20, 2012 at 12:45pm · Like

Köpegran, jag tigger den kunde varit rätt! Men fin är den. November 20, 2012 at 4:24pm · Like

Antingen så rättigt, rättigt fin gran. November 20, 2012 at 6:37pm · Like

Picture D.4

Falkenbergs kommun
Likad - May 9

Godmorgon Falkenberg! Funderar du på att ta cykeln in till stan i helgen så kan vi tipsa om att det finns en luftpump på Stortorget. Ha en härlig helg!

Like · Comment · Share

183 people like this.

*View 4 more comments*

Falkenbergs kommun
Hej Anneli, vi har kollat med Gata & Trafik och de harsar att pumpen bör funka nu igen. Tyvärr har vi haft stora problem med skadan inför. Tveklös helg!
May 9 at 5:33pm · Like

Era Falkenberg! Hörde på radion igår att Falkenberg ligger före Varberg när det gäller cykelsystem, Det villar vi!!!
May 9 at 7:16pm · Like · @1

Gott grepp!
May 9 at 7:36pm · Like

Jipp - bra!
May 9 at 7:56pm · Like

Hoppas att man kan använda den förvarade pumpen jag har enkelt!
Picture D.5

Det blir ett lokalt nytt restaurangkoncept som tar den nya mötesplatsen vid Tullhuvudet vid Åtran i sommar. Låt oss presentera Annas Trädgård!

"Vi vill genom Annas Trädgård skapa en självklar plats att gå till när man vill njuta av god mat och dryck med Falkenbergs väckta önsken över vidsträtt. Annas Trädgård ska bli en berättligad oas med mycket grönska och blommor och vi kommer jobba med ett fokus på lokala delikatesser, säger Anna Spång-Lyng, verksamhetsansvarig för Annas Trädgård."


Like Comment Share

130 people like this.
12 shares
View 21 more comments

Picture D.6

Ja, det har blivit många bilder på Facebook de senaste dagarna. Nu är vi nyfikna: Vad tyckte ni om att evenemanget Wheels and Wraps hölls i Falkenberg i år?

Like Comment Share

1,365 people like this.
49 shares
View previous comments 6 of 270

Tapet var nästan bli att det blir i Falkenberg nästa år även (och många år till)
August 13, 2013 at 7:58am • Like: 3

Så framt emot nästa år, det va helt ovanligt bra, så mycket bättre nu i Falkenberg än det var i Västerå. En stor eloppe till arrangören, helt kunnat.
August 13, 2013 at 8:07am • Like: 3

From Falkenberg
August 13, 2013 at 8:39am • Like

Jallaurt, det behöver
August 14, 2013 at 8:31pm • Like
ÖppnaData Falkenberg @OppnaFalkenberg  ·  Mar 18
Lämna förslag på vilka data du vill se att Falkenbergs kommun gör tillgänglig: falkenberg.se/psidata #oppanadata

Retweeted by Falkenbergs kommun
Appendix E - Ängelholm

Picture E.1

Inte för ångesten vill vi passa på och önska er alla en nödvändig glad påsk!

Picture E.2

Picture E.3

Angelholms kommun @engelholm · 23 maj
Skolekutsumphandling ger säkrare, miljövänligare och billigare resor.
http://is.gd/seDMtV #Angelholm

Picture E.4

Angelholms kommun @engelholm · 21 maj
Nu berättar vi mer om lokalprogrammet för Kulturstråket och visar visionsbilder. is.gd/c7qYh0

Angelholms kommun @engelholm · 20 maj
Enligt lekplacesplanen kommer upprustning ske vid grönområdet på S. Utmarken och i Valhallsparken. goo.gl/1OU6Ym #lekplats

Angelholms kommun @engelholm · 16 maj
#Angelholm har fått sina första #Smileys. Lättare att hitta matställen med utmärkt livsmedelsshantering. is.gd/Yy9pt

Angelholms kommun @engelholm · 14 maj
Ta del av beslutet som fattades under kommunstyrelsens sammanträde idag engelholm.se/Nyhetslista/Ko... #politis #kommun #kommunstyrelse #angelholm

Picture E.4
Picture E.5
Kontrollavgift
Arenda nr: Utfärdat av:
Reg. nr: Fabrikat:
Från: 2014-05-14 05
Till: 2014-05-14 09
Plats: Stadshuset
Belopp: 400 kr
Hiba Charkas, Strategic Management and Leadership

Anne Beth Eltun, International Marketing