

# MARKETING PLAN FOR TASSUKLAANI OY



Bachelor's thesis

International Business

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#### TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä kandidaattitutkinnon opinnäytetyö teetettiin lemmikkitarvikeliike Tassuklaanille, joka sijaitsee Turussa, Suomessa. Start-up-yhtiönä se on yrittänyt löytää sopivat markkinointikanavat sekä lisätä brändin tunnettuutta. Yrityksen brändäys voi olla haastavaa sillä se vaatii aikaa ja oikeaa markkinointisuunnitelmaa.

Tärkein saavutus oli löytää oikeat välineet lisäämään yrityksen brändin tunnettuutta. Opinnäytetyö sisältää markkinointisuunnitelman, jossa kirjoittaja on käsitellyt ongelmaa. Markkinointisuunnitelma sisältää markkinointitutkimuksen, strategiat sekä suositukset, joiden avulla yritys voi lisätä brändin tunnettuutta. Tulosten keskipisteenä ovat sosiaalisen median markkinointisuunnitelma sekä yrityksen brändäys. Kirjoittajan tekemä markkinointitutkimus on keskeinen osa markkinointisuunnitelmaa.

Markkinointitutkimuksen mukaan yrityksen potentiaaliset asiakkaat toivovat siltä mieleenpainuvaa brändiä sekä vankkaa kanta-asiakasohjelmaa. Nämä voidaan saavuttaa tehokkaan sosiaalisen median markkinoinnin sekä selkeän brändäysstrategian avulla. Tunnistettava logo sekä johdonmukaisuus brändäyksessä ja markkinoinnissa tulevat lisäämään yrityksen brändin tunnettuutta.

**Avainsanat** Brändäys, Brändin tunnettuus, Markkinointisuunnitelma, Markkinointitutkimus, Sosiaalinen Media

**Sivut** 39 sivua, joista liitteitä 3 sivua

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ABSTRACT

This Bachelor Thesis was commissioned by a pet supply store Tassuklaani, located in Turku, Finland. As a start-up company, they have been trying to discover the right ways of conducting their marketing and increasing the awareness of the brand. Branding a company can be challenging since it requires time and a right marketing plan.

The main goal of the thesis was to discover the right ways for the case company to increase its brand awareness. The thesis will include the marketing plan part where the author has addressed the issue. The marketing plan includes the marketing research, the strategies and the recommendations for the company in order to increase the brand awareness. The main focus of the results is on the importance of social media marketing and branding of the company. The marketing research conducted by the author plays an important role in the marketing plan.

According to the marketing research, the potential customers are wishing for a memorable brand and a strong loyalty program from the case company. These can be achieved through effective social media marketing and with clear branding strategy. Recognizable logo and consistency in the branding and marketing will increase the brand awareness of the case company.

**Keywords** Branding, Brand awareness, Marketing plan, Marketing research, Social Media

**Pages** 39 pages including appendices 3 pages.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Starting a new business and making it work takes time. Start-ups are struggling with different aspects of their businesses and they are trying to make the business flow. The money and time can be tight. Creating a marketing plan can help the company from right at the beginning.

Companies can be struggling with the marketing and branding at any point in their life-cycle. Discovering the right methods to increase the brand awareness can be difficult in a world where everything is about social media and how many followers one has. On the other hand, the digital world gives the companies new ways of conducting the marketing. The main issue is to find the right marketing channels to increase the brand awareness.

The digital world gives the company new ways of conducting their marketing and reaching out for the potential customers and interact with the current customers. Social media is cost-effective platform to conduct the marketing and at the same time to increase the awareness of the brand. Companies have to consider carefully what to post and what not to post on their accounts. Then again, if the company is not in the social media, it is harder for the potential and current customers to find information about the company and whether or not they should become loyal customers.

The thesis consists of five parts. The first part is the introduction which will introduce the case company and the research question, objectives and methods. The second part is the theory which is conducted as a base for the research. The third part is the research which in this thesis is the marketing plan for the case company. The marketing plan will include all the aspects of the research. The fourth part is the recommendations for the case company and the last part is the conclusion of the thesis.

### 1.1. The Case Company

Tassuklaani is a limited liability company that was founded in March 2017 by three local women in Turku, Finland. It is a start-up which sells pet supplies and foods for dogs, cats and other small pets. The idea of Tassuklaani was born after one of the biggest retail stores in Finland called 'Stockmann' stepped down from the pet supply business in the center of Turku. The company is managed by its three founders: Mervi Raappana-Pekkala who is the chairman of the board, Anniina Vehovaara who is the chief executive officer and the member of the board and Sofia Aronen-Ketola who is the member of the board. The store is located in Yliopistonkatu 28 and it opened 10th of April 2017. (Vehovaara, 2018)

Tassuklaani sells supplies, foods and treats for dogs and cats. They also have basic food selection for birds, rodents and other small pets. The most popular products are treats and toys, especially domestic leather toys for dogs. For cats the most purchased products are wet and dry foods and litter. The typical customers of Tassuklaani are the owners of dogs and cats and mainly women, aged 20-75. The biggest age groups are 20-25 and 55-60 years. The store also organizes weekly an event called "Pentutreffit" ("puppy date"). The founders are planning on organizing more events in the future and also having their own home delivery. (Vehovaara, 2018)

At the moment, from the marketing channels Tassuklaani is using actively Facebook and Instagram. They also have their own website and the online store which opened in Spring 2018. They have also used newspaper marketing and two newspapers have done an article about them: 'Turun Sanomat' and 'Aamuset'. The biggest challenges the company has faced during its first year are successful marketing and low human resources. (Vehovaara, 2018)

## **1.2. Purpose of the Thesis**

As a start-up company, Tassuklaani is not yet well-known in the pet supply store field. They have been struggling to find the right marketing channels and also creating a brand for the store. As the competition is tough it is essential to find the right channels to communicate with the potential customers and to create a known brand for the store. The purpose of this thesis is to help the case company to improve their marketing and branding and also make the potential customers more aware of the company and the products it sells. The main goal is to increase the brand awareness of the case company by helping them to create effective and efficient marketing plan and a brand. The expected outcome of the thesis is to give out ideas for the case company which they can utilize in their marketing plan.

## **1.3 Research Question and Objectives**

The research question of the thesis is the following: "How can the brand awareness of Tassuklaani Oy be increased?"

The research question is supported by the research objectives which are the following:

- 1) Study the theory which is necessary for creating an effective marketing plan and a brand. The goal is to get familiar with the basics of marketing, branding and social media;
- 2) Analyze the case company and its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The goal is to find out the areas where they

are performing well and the improvements they should take into consideration;

- 3) Analyze the competition. The goal is to get familiar with the case company's main competitors in domestic and online markets, the strengths they have and compare their performance to the case company's performance;
- 4) Analyze the target market and discover the ways of how to increase the brand awareness of the case company;
- 5) Create an effective marketing plan for the case company. At this stage, the goal is to answer to the research question. The objective will include the recommendations for the marketing and branding.

These objectives will guide the structure of the thesis.

#### **1.4. Research Methods**

The methods used in order to achieve the objectives of the thesis are the following:

- 1) Utilize the theoretical framework in the research process, especially in the marketing plan part.
- 2) Conduct a SWOT analysis of the case company in order to achieve the research objective 2.
- 3) Utilize the internet to analyze the competition and the target market.
- 4) Use quantitative research by creating a questionnaire in order to analyze the target market and discover the right ways to increase the brand awareness of the case company among the target market.
- 5) Utilize all the gathered data of the thesis to create a comprehensive marketing plan proposal for the case company.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. Marketing

Marketing is a way for the company to engage customers and to build a strong and profitable relationship with them. It is also a communication tool between a company and the customers: a company creates the customer value and customers give value for the company and its products in return. In a broad way, it is managerial and social process of needs and wants of organizations and individuals where both of them create and give value for each other. The goal of marketing is to satisfy the customer needs and to keep the current customers and also to gain new ones. Marketing includes many aspects such as advertising and selling and it has become a worldwide phenomenon because of smart devices. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018, 28-29.)

Marketing is a process. When creating the customer value and relationship, companies should follow five-step model. The first step is to understand the marketplace and needs and wants of the customers. In the second step companies should create a marketing strategy which is customer-driven. The third step is to create a marketing program in order to receive superior value. The fourth step is engaging customers and building relationships with them. In the last step, companies should be able to capture the value from the customers and to create profits. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018, 30,)

Besides defining the market, it is also essential for a company to determine its marketing mix. Marketing mix is used to achieve the company's goals and marketing objectives. It is a mix of tools which a company determines in order to respond to customer needs in the target market. It consists of the four Ps which are product, price, promotion and place. Products are the goods and services the company delivers to the target market. Price is the amount of money the customer has to pay in order to purchase the product. Promotion is the ways of marketing that are used in order to communicate with the potential customers. Lastly, place refers to the places and channels where the product is available for the potential customers. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018, 77-78.)

In the year 2018, marketing will have new Business to Consumers (B2C) trends such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), personalization and Big Data. Artificial Intelligence, meaning machine learning, will be included in core marketing applications giving marketers more time to focus on applying their knowledge to create competitive advantages for their companies. Machine learning will also give time for the marketers to study more about the customer needs and wants and what makes them loyal to the brand. Personalization will have even bigger role. The data will be collected from the customer's every channel, device and platform. When the amount of data rises, AI comes in hand. It will sort out the necessary data from customers to marketers. A big amount of data will also help marketers to

analyze customer behavior from their first click to purchasing and to the brand loyalty. (Gally 2018.)

### 2.1.1. Marketing Plan

A marketing plan indicates the company's plan for marketing its products and/or services. It can be used to reform an old product's marketing or prepare and introduce a new product to the market. Marketing plan can be created for international, national and regional markets. (Westwood, 1990, 19.) It is evaluated each year regardless whether the plan is for short-term or long-term goals. Marketing plan reflects company's business plan as it contains same elements. (Moriarty, Mitchell & Wellsm 2009, 241.) It should include historical data, objectives and methods, strategies used to achieve the objectives and future predictions. (Westwood, 1990, 22.)

The length and the requirements of a marketing plan can differ from company to company. Small start-up company may not need as detailed marketing plan as a larger and older company. However, the structure of the plan is mainly similar for each company. Before writing a marketing plan a company should follow the marketing planning process. First of all, company has to set corporate objectives. Secondly, they should conduct a marketing research and SWOT analysis. (Westwood, 1990, 27-28.) SWOT analysis is an analysis of company's internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats. It can include the reasons for company's weak or good performance. SWOT analysis should at least answer to the following questions: What are the opportunities and threats? What are the customer needs and how do they buy? How well is the company performing and how are the competitors performing? (McDonald, 2002, 43.) After conducting a marketing research and SWOT analysis company should make assumptions about the different factors such as the competition. Next follows a phase where companies set marketing objectives and estimate their expected results. By using marketing strategies and action plans companies are trying to achieve these objectives. In the next phases programs are defined and budgets are set. After these follow the phase where companies should write the actual marketing plan. After the written plan comes the follow-up: the company needs to communicate the plan forward in the company, control it, review and update it when necessary. (Westwood, 1990, 28-30.)

The comprehensive and complete marketing plan should include introduction and summary in the beginning followed by situation analysis. Next ones in the content are marketing objectives and strategies followed by budgets, profit and loss account and in the end controls and update procedures. The written document should be easy to read, concise and clear regardless of its length. It is essential for the company to have a marketing plan in order to compete in the markets and increase the sales. (Westwood, 1990, 189-190).

### 2.1.2. Marketing Research

Markets and customer needs are continuously changing. By focusing on one market only, a company might miss a potential chance in another market. (Westwood, 1990, 34.) A marketing research is not only an analysis of the markets but also a collection, design and reporting of relevant data of a situation in marketing that is facing the company.

A marketing research helps marketers to understand the customer needs and wants and their purchase behavior. It also helps them to define the market potential and share and the effectiveness of a marketing mix. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018, 130.) The wrong decisions in marketing can lead the company into trouble. The main goal of a marketing research is to help the marketers to make the right decisions and support the company's performance. (Burns & Bush, 2014, 30.)

Marketing research is a process. When conducting it, marketers need to decide what type of information is needed and measured, which consumers to engage in the data collection process and how to evaluate the collected data. Marketing research has eleven steps that need to be followed. The first step is to confirm the company's need for a marketing research. Next two steps are defining the current problem and establishing the objectives. The step four is to determine research design and the step five is to identify the types and sources of the information. The next steps are to define the methods that are used to access the data, designing data collection forms and defining the size and plan of the sample. Last three steps are collecting and analyzing the data and presenting the final report. (Burns & Bush, 2014, 67-69.)

There are different ways for the company to collect the data. First of all, there are two types of data, secondary and primary data. Secondary data can be collected from the company's internal database or external information sources such as buying data from outside the company. It is the data that already exists. Primary data on the other hand is the data that doesn't exist until the company collects it for their use. There are different ways of collecting primary data. First one is an observational research which means observing the people and their actions in different situations. The second way is an ethnographic research which is also observing the consumers but the research is done in their natural environment and it is more psychological than observation research. A survey research is the most popular form of collecting primary data. In a survey research company approaches consumers directly by asking them questions they want to have answers to. The last way of collecting primary data is an experimental research which tries to explain the relation between cause and effect by gathering selected group of people, giving them different treatments and monitoring the effects and different responses. There are also different contact methods in order to collect the information. These methods are 1) phone, email and personal interviewing, 2) interviewing a focus group, 3) an online marketing

research and 4) social targeting, tracking and online behavior. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018, 132-137.)

### 2.1.3. Advertising

Advertising is one form of marketing. It is creating and sending out a message and hoping that consumers react to it. Advertising occurs mainly in media and it can be for example commercial in television or Internet ad. (Moriarty, Mitchell & Wells, 2009, 53.) Even though advertising is generally expensive for the company, when it is done right it can be highly beneficial. Advertising doesn't only make consumers aware of the brand but it also helps the company to create brand image and maximize its value. The most desired outcome of advertising is turning the potential buyers into the loyal customers. When it is done wrong, the sales will decrease, the brand image will suffer and the marketers have to look for the new jobs. (Burns & Bush, 2014, 66.)

Advertising has five factors that define it. First of all, advertiser usually pays for the advertising and secondly, advertising identifies the sponsor. Thirdly, the main goal of advertising is to reach and to gain as many potential new customers as possible. Advertising informs the potential customers and introduces them the product. It also tries to persuade consumers to buy the product. Last factor of advertising is the fact that it usually appears in mass media and it is not directed to any single person. (Moriarty, Mitchell & Wells, 2009, 55.)

There are also different forms of advertising. Most visible one is brand advertising which main function is to raise the awareness of the brand and the company. Retail and local advertising expresses the places the products are available such as local stores and the geographic area. In direct-response advertising a customer can purchase the product directly from the Internet or via email and telephone and the it will be delivered straight to the customer. Business-to-business advertising is a form where one business sends a direct message to another business. Institutional advertising on the other hand is mainly used by Tobacco companies since it sends out the organization's point of view and tries to win over the public. Last two types of advertising are nonprofit advertising and public service advertising. Nonprofit is done by nonprofit organizations such as charities, hospitals and churches and public service advertising is done for the good cause such as helping to stop drink and driving. (Moriarty, Mitchell & Wells, 2009, 59-60.)

### 2.1.4. Internet Marketing

Internet marketing is rapidly growing form of marketing. It means that digital media such as Internet is used as a marketing tool for company's brand, products and services. In Internet marketing the marketing objectives are achieved by using digital sources. Digital marketing is a

similar form and term as Internet marketing. It is a form of marketing where electronic media is used to support the company's marketing. In digital marketing companies use online channels to build relationships with the customers. It is the way of communicating with the current customers and gaining new customers. Digital marketing is most effective when it is used to support the traditional media and other marketing and communication channels. (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, Mayer & Johnston, 2006, 8-10.)

There are four types of online presence. The first is transactional e-commerce site which allows customers to purchase the products online. The second is services-oriented relationship-building website. The main function is to stimulate the purchases but also build relationships between the company and the customers. Usually products are not available to purchase online but the main goal is to raise awareness and information and gain possible new customers. Third online presence is brand-building site which promotes the brand itself. Usually the products are not available for purchase. Last type of online presence is portal or media site which is used to provide information about different topics and news. (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, Mayer & Johnston, 2006, 14-16.)

Balanced scorecard can be used to determine the objectives of Internet marketing. It is a framework which is used to define and monitor company's marketing objectives. Balanced scorecard turns company's vision and strategy into objectives and measures the success of the implementation. It has four sectors which are financial results, customer value, operational processes and innovation and learning. Companies use specific performance metrics to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of each sector. The overall performance can be evaluated with key performance indicators (KPIs) which are special performance metrics. (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, Mayer & Johnston, 2006, 172-173.)

Digital marketing is a direct form of marketing. In direct marketing customers are directly engaged and a company will immediately respond to the customers' needs and wants. There are many benefits of digital and direct marketing for the buyers and the sellers. First of all, for the buyers it is an easy, private and convenient way of marketing. The buyers can access the information anywhere and at any time. With direct marketing, the buyers can interact with the sellers in their website or by phone in order to purchase the product. For the sellers the main benefit is the fact that direct marketing is a low-cost, flexible, fast and efficient way of communicating with the customers. It allows the sellers to personalize the marketing and provide individual and customized marketing for the customers. Digital and direct marketing offer the customers real-time marketing by providing current information straight to the smart devices. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018, 514.)

### 2.1.5. Channels and Communication Tools

Marketing channels are organizations that help the companies to make consumers aware of their products and services. The channels the company decides to use impacts directly to a company's marketing decisions. The price of the product can vary in different marketing channels depending on whether a product is sold directly online or in special stores. The decision of marketing channels is important for the companies and choosing wrong channels can be crucial. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018, 359.)

There are many different marketing channels and forms of marketing. One form is direct digital marketing which includes online marketing (websites, ads, emails, blogs, videos, etc.), mobile marketing and social media marketing (Facebook, Instagram, etc.). There are also direct traditional marketing forms. These forms are direct-mail marketing, catalog marketing, telemarketing, direct-response television marketing and kiosk marketing. Traditional forms also include face-to-face selling. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018, 512-531.)

Print advertising is a form of marketing where the products are advertised in printed media such as magazines, newspapers, posters and brochures. Print media can also be out-of-home media such as outdoor boards. Usually it offers longer and more detailed advertisement of the product than a broadcast. Broadcast media is a form of media that can transmit images, videos and sounds electronically. It includes television, radio, video forms, mobile phones, advertisements before the movies and product placements. (Moriarty, Mitchell & Wells, 2009, 279-302.)

Marketing channels can also be divided into offline and online promotion techniques. Offline promotion includes the use of traditional and broadcast media. Benefit of using offline promotion is the visual experience which creates emotional connection between the product and the consumers. Nowadays offline promotion has also many online forms since most of the magazines are turned into the online form. Online promotion techniques include different tools such as search engine marketing, email and online advertising and other methods used in order to gain consumers to the websites. When trying to find the right marketing channels, the companies should evaluate carefully which channels are the most profitable for them. (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, Mayer & Johnston, 2006, 370-373.)

## 2.2. Brand Management

Unlike products, a brand is hard to copy which makes it unique. It is the image consumers get when they are thinking about the specific product or service. Brand defines the product or service and it can be a feature which separates the product from other products. A brand is not only the actual product or logo but also the feeling the consumers have towards the

product. Branding is the process where the brand is created or changed. It is the way to engage the customers to choose the product time after time and clarify the features of the brand - what it is and what it is not. There are different ways of providing branding for example through advertising, packaging design and visual identity (logo, colors etc.). (Marion, 2015.)

Brands shape the markets and the people. They impact on consumers purchase decisions and behavior and company's different management decisions. Brands stimulate consumer's wants and needs and they can reach the customers globally. Brands are also status symbols for people. They can address a specific lifestyle of a user and create class boundaries. The strong brands can express and cause powerful feelings and strong impressions in the consumers. They also show the economic performance of the company since the stronger the brand, the stronger the economic performance. (Perrey, Freundt & Spillecke, 2015, 19-21 & 26-27.)

The brand is a source of a promise from the company to the customers. It is the main element in company's marketing strategy and part of company's business plan. Brands should motivate the consumers to buy the product, clarify the delivered message, connect customers in emotional level and add trust to the product and the company. The strong brand doesn't only gain loyal customers but also loyal employees by giving them strong values and something to believe in. (Lake, 2018.)

### 2.2.1. Building a Brand

Brand identity is the foundation of brand building. Brand has to be clear and well communicated to everyone in the company in order to avoid the conflicts and confusions in the marketing process. Brand identity should support company's vision, mission, values and culture. It should be clear and simple and not contain too many elements. Brand identity is linked to brand visibility which effects on customers' perception of the brand. The more visible and known the brand, the more consumers tend to like it. (Joachimsthaler & Aaker, 1999, 5-6 & 10.)

In order to build a strong brand there are three elements that need to be taken into consideration. The first one is the promise. The company has to determine what they are promising and offering to the customers through the brand. The second element is the personality of the brand. The personality of the brand creates the emotional connection between it and the potential customers. The last element is the unique selling proposition (USP) which defines the factors that make the product unique and different from other products. Every brand needs to have at least one USP in order to compete in the markets. (Miletsky & Smith, 2009, 4.)

There are also three main elements that are required when building the brand. First one is time. It tells how long the company wants it to take to create a brand and how long it actually takes. Building a brand is time consuming work. It includes different presentations, researches, testing,

writings and designing. Second element is the money. Building a brand can be expensive and companies have to budget it right. If the outside agency is creating the brand, it can be even more expensive since it requires specific skills. The last element is the reason. There has to be a reason to rebuild or create a brand. In rebuilding the brand, the reason has to be compelling, for example it has to respond to a specific need. (Miletsky & Smith, 2009, 51-52.)

Maintaining the consistency, such as the same color all the time, is vital when building the brand. The lack of consistency can lead to the lack of the customers since it can confuse them and make them think that the brand is not well established. A brand guide can help the company to maintain the consistency since it includes all the main elements of the brand. The brand guide helps to design all the marketing elements that are created and related in the brand such as the website. The guide should include at least the colors, font styles, how the logo should be used, image types and other special rules concerning the usage of the brand. Once the brand guide is established, it needs to be introduced to the employees and communicated to the customers through marketing. After this comes the 'hands-on' work which means creating the material that is used for the branding such as the marketing materials. (Miletsky & Smith, 2009, 26-28 & 37-38).

The brand strategy has four main functions. The first one is the brand positioning which is the way the potential customers see the product and the brand. The first level of positioning is product attributes such as style and quality. The second level is the benefits. This level shows all the benefits the product has and it delivers to the customers. The third level is the strongest positioning level. This is beliefs and values which connects the customers emotionally to the product. The second function in brand strategy the selection of the brand's name. A name can have a great deal in the product's success. This is one of the hardest parts in a brand strategy and it requires a lot of effort and time. It is also essential to protect the brand name after it has been chosen. After choosing the name comes choosing the brand sponsorship. There are few different options which are the following: a national brand, a private brand, a co-brand and licensing. A national brand is a product which includes the name of the company, such as Samsung Galaxy tablet. A private brand is owned and created by the reseller. In licensing the company may use some well-known name or logo created by other companies or celebrates. Co-branding on the other hand comes into question when two brand names are used in the same product. Lastly, the fourth strategy function is the brand development which indicates the way the company is developing the brand. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018, 265-270.)

### 2.2.2. Brand Approaches

According to Heding, Knudtzen & Bjerre, there are seven types of brand approaches:

1) *The economic approach*: In order to increase and optimize the sales, the company has to create a right marketing mix (4P's). The economic approach assumes that the right marketing mix will guarantee strong and successful brand. It measures how in the long run the marketing mix influences brand equity.

2) *The identity approach*: The brand is behavioral, unified and visual identity and the consumers base their assumptions of the company based on the brand image. It uses the identity of the corporation in order to build a brand.

3) *The consumer-based approach*: Marketer is controlling the creation of brand value but the brand itself is in the minds of the consumers. This is a psychological brand approach which sees the brand is a cognitive construal.

4) *The personality approach*: The brand has a personality and it is build to be 'human-like character'. Strong brand personality is the emotional connection between the consumer and the brand. The consumers buy the brand not only because of its functional and physical characteristics but also because of the symbolic needs.

5) *The relational approach*: The brand is seen as a phenomenon which has an impact on consumer's life. The main idea is to build a strong brand loyalty and make the consumers choose the brand time after time.

6) *The community approach*: It sees the brand relationship as a 'triangular communication' meaning that the brand connects the brand community and the consumers to other consumers.

7) *The cultural approach*: The culture has an impact on the brand and it can shape it in the way the culture demands. On the other hand, the brands can affect the same way to the culture and create its own brand icons to the culture. (Heding, Knudtzen & Bjerre, 2016, 27-29, 45-48, 85-87, 120-123, 158-161, 194-196, 227-229.)

### 2.3. Social Media

Social Media is a connection of social networks that are either independent or commercial. In social media people socialize by sharing different content such as pictures, comments and videos with each other. It consists of a huge number of different platforms and channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018, 521.) Social media is a platform for online conversations and many people can use it at the same time. Companies use it for two reasons: networking with other companies and customers and for building brand awareness. (Coles, 2015, 2-4.)

There are many benefits for companies for using social media. In social media the companies can get positive and negative feedback at any time. Even the negative feedback can be valuable for the businesses in order to improve their performance and customer service. Companies can answer to the feedback immediately and show the customers that they take them seriously and they will fix the problem immediately. In social media the companies will have a huge audience and they can communicate and

engage with the customers more easily. (Coles, 2015, 2 & 4.) It is also personal and targeted and it allows the companies to share and create different content to different channels and customers. The companies can reach the customers around the world at any time which makes it real-time marketing. The use of social media is mainly free and the costs only raise from paid advertising. Compared to traditional media, social media is cost-effective and it doesn't require much investment from the company. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018, 523-524.)

Besides the benefits of using social media, the companies might face some challenges. It can be difficult for a company to measure the success and effectiveness of social media in the marketing point of view. It can also be challenging to engage the customers and make them a part of the company's social media community. However, the hardest challenge is to know what to post and what not. The content has to be well thought or even the harmless post can cause harm for the company and its image. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018, 524.)

### 2.3.1. Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing plan is a company's plan of how it is going to use the social media as a marketing tool and what it hopes to achieve through its social media channels. The more specific the plan is, the more effective it can be. Social media marketing plan guides a company's usage of social media and it also measures the success or the failure. The plan can be divided into six steps. In the first step the company establishes its objectives and goals. The step two is to determine the company's current usage of social media by conducting a social media audit. In this step the company can create a mission state for each platform it uses. The third and the most important step is choosing the most relevant platforms for the company. The company has to decide whether to use the existing platforms or create its own. When choosing to use the existing ones, it is important to determine the right platforms in order to reach the right customers. The next step is to take a look at the competitors' and the industry leaders' online behavior and learn from it. The last two steps are conducting a right content and time plan and also test, adjust, release and monitor the plan. (Hollensen, Kotler & Opresnik, 2017, 4-10.) Social media marketing plan can also include SWOT analysis and definition of company's target market. (Coles, 2015, 15-16.)

To get the most out of the social media marketing, companies should create social media teams. The team should be specialized in social media and marketing and it can also include functional managers and copywriters. The team's responsibility inside the company is to take care of the company's different social media platforms including the overall strategy, content and approaches. The team makes sure that the company's social media posts are following the guidelines the company has set. (Hollensen, Kotler & Opresnik, 2017, 66.)

Smartphone marketing or so-called 'M-marketing' is a new form of social media marketing. With the new technology, mobile phones have become essential tool for advertising the brand. With smartphones, the consumers can access the internet anywhere at any time. As the owners of smartphones are downloading apps to their phones, the mobile app industry has experienced a rapid growth creating the concept of App Marketing. In the next few years advertising and in-app purchases are expected to grow which will decline the downloading of apps that are not free of charge. (Hollensen, Kotler & Opresnik, 2017, 44 & 47.)

Companies have to focus on the fact that everything they do in social media should have a purpose. Even though every click and view doesn't lead to a sale, it makes a consumer to take a closer look at the company's social media platform. Every post is communication between the company and the customers and the posts the company makes creates its online reputation. The messages the company delivers via social media and traditional media should be consistent. The main features of the brand such as the logo and the colors should be the same in every platform. If the features differ, the customers may get confused and not recognize and trust the brand. The only thing a company can change is the content of the message. A company should pay attention to the audience it is trying to reach with the message. They can send out two different messages, one for the current customers and one for the potential customers. The people who are using social media are used to filtering out of the posts and messages which are not interesting for them which is why the company should pay careful attention to its posts on social media. (Browne, 2012, 106-107 & 62.)

### 2.3.2. Social Platforms

The social media marketing is all about choosing the right platforms. The companies have to determine the channels their target customers are using the most and the goals they are trying to reach with social media. Social media platforms can be divided into four zones which are social community, publishing, entertainment and commerce. This division is based on Tuten's and Solomon's *four zones of social media* and it helps the companies to find and focus on the right function of social media. The first zone, *Social Community*, focuses on relationships between the social media users. These channels are created for sharing, networking and socializing. Examples of social community platforms are Facebook, Snapchat, LinkedIn and Twitter. The second zone, *Social Publishing*, focuses on delivering a content for the users. These platforms are for example YouTube (video sharing), Internet forums, blogs and also Instagram and Snapchat (photo sharing). The third zone, *Social Entertainment*, includes the games and other entertainment in the social media for example e-sports and Pokemon Go. The last zone, *Social Commerce*, is used for selling and buying and also for CRM and retailing in social media. These platforms are for example Tripadvisor, booking.com and Airbnb. (Hollensen, Kotler & Opresnik, 2017, 56-57, 95 & 151)

Different platforms have different rules that the company needs to take into consideration when they are conducting a contest or give-away in social media. Facebook's rules are listed in its *Promotion Guidelines* and it prohibits for example contest where the users have to like the page in order to participate winning the prize. Google+ prohibits all kinds of contests. On the other hand, Twitter has only guidelines in order to avoid spamming. Simple contest can be the best way of reaching the customers and gain more visibility. (Browne, 2012, 98.)

According to statista.com, the most popular social network in April 2018 was Facebook with 2234 million users worldwide. The second were YouTube and WhatsApp with 1500 million users. Instagram had 813 million, Twitter 330 million, LinkedIn 260 million and Snapchat 255 million users worldwide. (Statista, 2018.)

### 2.3.2.1. Facebook

Facebook is a social networking service. It was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and his college friends. Its headquarter is in California. Facebook is a global network and one of the biggest social media platforms which makes it essential marketing tool for the companies. The companies can create either a profile, a page or a group to Facebook. The profiles are mainly used for personal and private life and the groups are for people who are interested in the same things and sharing their thoughts with others. The pages are designed especially for businesses and they work almost in the same way than profiles. Facebook users can like the company's page and become a fan. (Hollensen, Kotler & Opresnik, 2017, 57-59.)

Setting up a company's Facebook page works in a similar way than creating a marketing plan. The first three steps are establishing the objectives, the overall strategy and the content strategy. The fourth step is promoting the Facebook page inside and outside Facebook. The fifth step is engaging and monitoring the plan and the sixth step is turning the potential customers into the loyal customers. Setting up a Facebook page for the company is an easy and free of charge way of marketing. (Hollensen, Kotler & Opresnik, 2017, 62)

In order to guarantee the success of the Facebook page, companies should take into consideration the following:

- 1) The profile photo should be the logo of the company and the cover photo should be something that is related to the company.
- 2) 'About' sections should include the main information about the company and it should be written in informal and casual way.
- 3) Posts should be relevant to the company and its customers and they should be powerful. The companies should avoid spamming and posting many times from the same topic.

4) Engaging the customers is important. Companies should create competitions and ask questions from their customers in Facebook.

5) Studying the results and statistics is crucial in order to gain the most from social media. Companies can find the information about the success of their page from Facebook. In order to improve the performance, the company should take the results into consideration. (Hollensen, Kotler & Opresnik, 2017, 63-64)

Target marketing is done easily in Facebook. The companies can get different information of the users from their profiles. They can choose to target the specific users for example based on their location or demographics such as education, workplace and relationship status or the people who have recently move to the area. Companies can also target users based on their interests and this way find the right users for their products and services. They can create ads that lead the users to the company's website or to their Facebook page. Companies can also create ads to promote their upcoming events in order to gain more visitors. (Hollensen, Kotler & Opresnik, 2017, 67-68.)

### *2.3.2.2 YouTube*

YouTube is a video-sharing platform which Google acquired in 2006. Its headquarter is in California and its one of Google's subsidiaries. YouTube allows individuals and companies to download their videos such as TV clips, music videos, documentary films, movie trailers, video blogs and other content online. Most of the videos are free to watch for everyone. As YouTube being one of the most popular social media platforms, it has a huge number of videos from educational clips to entertainment. YouTube has created a new form of celebrities called 'YouTubers' who are members of YouTube's partner program. YouTubers earn money depending on how many views the ads that come before their videoclips get. (Hollensen, Kotler & Opresnik, 2017, 125-126.)

Running a successful YouTube channel takes time and commitment. First the company should create channel icon and art. These are the profile pictures of the YouTube channel. The next step is to create a channel trailer. It shows the new visitors a glimpse of your channel and what it offers. Lastly, companies should successfully manage the channel and gain viewers. Marketing in YouTube is done in the same way than in other social media platforms. The content has to be relevant, regularly produced and raise curiosity. The company should do research about the target users, use the right keywords and cooperate with the influencers if possible. (Hollensen, Kotler & Opresnik, 2017, 131-136.)

### *2.3.2.3. Twitter*

Twitter is one form of a microblogging which lets its users to write posts that are maximum 140 characters. It was founded in 2006 and its headquarter is in San Francisco. Twitter is used as a networking channel where the users communicate with tweets. For the companies it is an easy

and effective marketing channel. Setting up a Twitter account doesn't require much time and it is easy to maintain. In Twitter users can tweet their posts, retweet or reply to someone else's tweet and send direct private messages. Many companies use Twitter to promote new products and upcoming events, to post news and stories about the topics related to the company and to keep in touch with the target audience. (Hollensen, Kotler & Opresnik, 2017,68-73.)

As a marketing channel, Twitter should mainly be used to communicate and engage the customers rather than advertising the products or services. Since the customers use social media mainly to interact with their friends and family, they are not interested in reading only posts about different products and how they work. The companies should also do more sharing and engaging in social media and in this way gain loyal customers who will start following company's every tweet and post. Twitter is an effective tool for the marketer to monitor users' opinions about the company and its products. Twitter has client applications which will give the companies information and will allow them to monitor the keywords the users use. (Hollensen, Kotler & Opresnik, 2017, 74 & 76.)

#### ***2.3.2.4. Instagram***

Instagram is a photo-sharing platform which was founded in 2010. In 2012 it became a subsidiary for Facebook. In Instagram the users can share videos and photos either to their account or privately to other users. The photos and videos can be added to Facebook, Tumblr and Twitter at the same time when they are uploaded to Instagram. Instagram is an effective tool for promoting the brand and creating its identity. Instagram marketing strategy is created in the same way than the other marketing strategies. The main focus is on the content. The companies should create a style guide which outlines the main features of the posts. Hashtags are effective way to gain new followers and likes for the posts. The companies can use already created hashtags or they can come up with their own hashtags. The results and success of the posts can be measured by the likes and comments they receive and the engagement rate. Other ways to analyze the success are hashtag mentions, follower amount on the account and location tags. (Hollensen, Kotler & Opresnik, 2017, 96 & 99-100 & 103.)

#### ***2.3.2.5. LinkedIn***

LinkedIn is a professional networking platform which headquarter is in California. It was founded in 2002 and it became a part of Microsoft in December 2016. LinkedIn is a communication channel between the employees and the employers. The employees who are looking for a job can post their CV's to LinkedIn for the employers to see and the employers on the other hand can post open jobs for the employees to apply to. LinkedIn is one of the strictest social media platform since it doesn't allow messages between users who are not in straight contact or videos and extra photos in users account. The companies mainly hire people via LinkedIn and individuals mainly show their work history, skills and other

factors related to their work experience. It allows the companies to post details about their business and products that may interest potential and current employees, stakeholders and other users. They can post to LinkedIn professional news and updates about the company. LinkedIn profiles are open for everyone to see, not only for the registered users. (Hollensen, Kotler & Opresnik, 2017, 77-78 & 80.)

#### *2.3.2.6. Snapchat*

Snapchat is a platform which gives an opportunity for its users to combine photos and texts. It was founded in 2011 and its headquarter is in California. Snapchat is mainly used for sending photos and videos to other users. 'Snaps' can be send privately to specific users or to users own story which is available for everyone to see. Snapchat has also a filtering function and users can add captions to the snaps. (Hollensen, Kotler & Opresnik, 2017, 83-84)

Snapchat can be a tricky to use as a marketing tool. The photos and videos disappear within 24 hours from user's story and the private snaps will disappear after the receiver has opened them. Snapchat is mainly used for casual interaction and not for professional communication. However, when used as a marketing tool, companies should focus on few main aspects. First of all, in Snapchat companies can offer exclusive content which can be for example 'behind the scenes' videos. It is also a good channel to share promo codes and real-time videos. Partnering with influencers who have many followers can be effective way of gaining new customers. Lastly, Snapchat can be used to promote the company's new products and services in an innovative way. (Hollensen, Kotler & Opresnik, 2017, 84& 88-89.)

#### *2.3.2.7. Website*

Company's own website is important platform in raising the awareness of the company and the brand. As most of the social media platforms direct the users into company's own website, it is essential to pay attention to the design and the content of the website. Websites are usually created by a professional web developer and designed by professional designer. The content is provided by the owner of the company or the marketer. The website has to be visually attractive for the customers in order to make them look its every function. A website's home page should have clear and nice photos, company's contact information, clear and concise text and also a headline that draws attention. (Coles, 2015, 171-173.)

### **3. THE MARKETING PLAN**

This marketing plan consists of six parts. The first part are the objectives the marketing plan is trying to achieve. The second part is defining the target market of Tassuklaani. The third part is the SWOT analysis of the company in order to discover their internal strengths and weaknesses and also the external opportunities and threats. The fourth part is the competition analysis where the major competitors are introduced and then analyzed. The fifth part is the marketing research which was conducted in June 2018 to discover more about the target market and the most effective ways of increasing the brand awareness. The last part will introduce the marketing and branding strategies for Tassuklaani. This marketing plan doesn't include any financial data or planning.

#### **3.1. The Objectives**

This marketing plan has the following objectives:

- 1) To analyze the case company and discover its strengths and weaknesses and opportunities and threats;
- 2) To analyze the competitors in order to compete in the markets;
- 3) Conduct a marketing research to analyze the target market and discover the effective ways for Tassuklaani to increase their brand awareness;
- 4) Conduct effective and efficient strategies for Tassuklaani in order to achieve the overall objectives of the Thesis.

#### **3.2. The Target Market**

The customers of Tassuklaani are pet owners, especially cat and dog owners. This is based on their product range which mainly consist of supplies and food for cats, dogs and other small pets. Secondly, according to the owner Vehovaara Anniina, the main customers are women between the ages 20-75 with the biggest customer groups of 20-25 and 55– 60-year-olds. Since Tassuklaani is located in the center of Turku, it is ideal for the people who live there. With the home delivery service, Tassuklaani targets to board their target customer group with the older and disabled customers.

#### **3.3. SWOT Analysis**

The SWOT analysis indicates the internal strengths and weaknesses Tassuklaani possesses and the external opportunities and threats it might face.

### 3.3.1. Internal

#### **Strengths**

One of the main strengths Tassuklaani has is its location. Tassuklaani is located in Yliopistonkatu which is one of the main streets in the center of Turku. There are also not many pet supply stores in the center which makes it easy and a good option for the people who live there. The owners of the shop have the know-how of pet supplies since they have owned pets for many years and they have also worked in the similar positions before. The customer service is one of the key elements of the store since the owners are the sellers and their main function is to help the customers to find the right products and to gain good shopping experience in the store. The customer service also includes home delivery which is one of the main competitive advantages Tassuklaani has compared to other smaller stores. A customer who lives in the center of Turku can order products online or by visiting the store and have them delivered home for free if the amount exceeds 75 euros in total. Tassuklaani also has events in their store such as 'Pentutreffit' ('puppy date') where the customers can meet other pet owners. The pets are also always welcome to visit the store.

Tassuklaani favors products which are ecological and pure. Most of the pet foods don't include wheat or sugar which are bad for pet's health. They have also frozen foods which are purely raw meat. They favor domestic products for example *Rauh!* brand which products are made out of Finnish ingredients. Tassuklaani takes into account the seasons in the product range for example by selling rain coats for dogs during the spring and the fall seasons.

Tassuklaani opened an online shop beginning of May 2018 which is open 24/7. Online shop has a board range of products and after purchasing customers can follow their order's status via the website. The store also has five stars in Google and 4,9 stars in Facebook by 15th of May 2018.

#### **Weaknesses**

As a start-up company, Tassuklaani is not well-known which makes its brand unknown to the customers. It is also a small store which has a small product range with the main focus on cats and dogs. The store is open only until 6pm on Tuesdays to Thursdays and 5pm on Fridays which may reduce the amount of customers who have to work late during the weekdays. It is also open only until 3pm on Saturdays and closed on Sundays which may impact on the customers' decision to purchase the products from somewhere else. Tassuklaani is also not near to any bigger grocery store which forces the customers to do their own grocery shopping at the different time than shopping the food for the pets.

The marketing of Tassuklaani is still in the basic level since they only have Facebook page, Instagram account and their website. When googled "Lemmikkitarvikeliike Turku" ("pet supply store Turku") Tassuklaani doesn't appear on the first page. This can affect to a new potential customer who doesn't know the stores in Turku and who will use Google to find a place to purchase pet supplies. However, when googled "Lemmikkiliike Turku" ("Pet store Turku") Tassuklaani appears in the first page. This shows the importance in choosing the right words. The ideal

situation would be the one where Tassuklaani appears in the first page in both of the situations.

Tassuklaani's main color is green which is almost the same green than Musti ja Mirri store has which can confuse the customers when they are looking at Tassuklaani's Facebook page or the website. Since the marketing is mainly done in Facebook and Instagram and it is in the basic level, the potential customers might not be aware of the store.

### 3.3.2. External

#### **Opportunities**

One of the major opportunity Tassuklaani faces is increasing and improving its social media usage. They have only Facebook, Instagram and website in active use. Social media campaign and advertising could increase their visibility. By improving their accounts and creating new social media accounts they can create a strong brand, maintain their customer relationships and gain new customers.

Since Tassuklaani is a start-up company, it has the opportunity to broaden its business in the future and access new markets. Now they are only focusing on the small pets and their owners but in the future including some products for example for horses and horse owners could be taken into consideration. Tassuklaani could do cooperation and to have partnerships with other small businesses in the center of Turku. They could benefit from each other by creating events or having campaigns together. When the sales increase the store could have wider opening hours especially during the weekends.

Tassuklaani has the opportunity to create its own loyal customer program for the customers who use their services often.

Finding new pet supply suppliers from domestic markets and also from foreign markets could give competitive advantage to Tassuklaani. By increasing the amount of pure foods and treats can increase the interest of health-conscious pet owners. Tassuklaani could utilize the Finnish products in its product range since they are still quite rare compared to the foreign products. The domestic products are increasing their popularity among the Finnish pet owners.

Lastly, one opportunity Tassuklaani will face in the future are the new customers. The city of Turku has decided to renew the center of Turku. The reason behind the renewing is the fact that the center has regressed after the major shopping centers have been built outside the center. Now the City of Turku is trying to gain more visitors by renewing the market square and building a car park under it. They are also trying to gain more customers to the businesses in the center of Turku.

#### **Threats**

The main threats are the competitors. It is easy for the customers to order products online from foreign or domestic online shops. Customers don't have to make time for going to the store when they can pick all the products from the internet and have them home delivered. Some online stores might even sell the products cheaper than the physical stores. Other

stores in the center or near Turku are also threats to Tassuklaani since they already have their client base and Tassuklaani as a start-up has to compete to gain their customers. Other big names such as Musti ja Mirri have a board client base already and Tassuklaani has to compete with them of the customers.

The threat that can also rise is the lack of the customers. Since Tassuklaani is not near to any supermarket where people usually do their grocery shopping, it might decrease the number of the customers. It is usually convenient for the customers to do their own and their pets' grocery shopping at the same time.

### 3.4. Competitor Analysis

The competitor analysis compares Tassuklaani's strengths and weaknesses to its major competitors in domestic and online markets. The main function is to point out the differences between the rivals and the case company. The chosen competitors are the major companies in Finnish market and their product range is similar to Tassuklaani's product range. The first two domestic competitors are the biggest pet supply store chains in Finland and the next two are one of the most well-known stores in Turku area. The last competitor is one of the biggest online competitor in Finland. The last part of the competitor analysis is the analysis of Tassuklaani's strengths and weaknesses compared to the competitors.

#### 3.4.1. The Competitors

##### **Musti ja Mirri Oy.**

Musti ja Mirri is the biggest pet supply store chain in Scandinavia and Finland. It was founded 1988 and currently they have over one hundred stores around Finland. Musti ja Mirri mainly sells products for cats and dogs but also for other small pets such as birds and rabbits. They have a broad product range from foods to other daily products to products for pet owners. Musti ja Mirri also has an online shop with free delivery to the chosen store and free home delivery when purchased products with over 50 euros. In the online shop a product search can be done in detail. There is also a section '*we recommend*' where they have gathered different products and foods they recommend. Musti ja Mirri has special products for example to allergic animals. They also have a discount offers and campaigns such as '*Haukutut hinnat*'.

Musti ja Mirri has '*Kaveri-ohjelma*' which is their own program for the loyal customers. They have also '*Kasvattajakerho*' which is a club for Finnish dog and cat breeders.

Musti ja Mirri is sponsoring different pet events early. They also have their own services such as cutting the nails from the pets, puppy dates, insurances, weight controlling, Tahko pet hotel, recycling of food bags, pet spa and camper.

Musti ja Mirri is using many social media platforms. It has its own website, Facebook page, Instagram account, Twitter and YouTube channel. The main colors are green and white. (Musti ja Mirri, 2018.)

### **Faunatar Oy.**

Faunatar Oy was founded in 1980. It has almost 30 stores in Finland which are mainly located in South and Central Finland. The products are mainly for dogs, cats, rodents and other small pets. The feature which makes Faunatar different from other pet stores is that they sell small animals such as rabbits, guinea pigs and hamsters. Also, all the staff members of Faunatar are animal attendants by their profession. Faunatar has an online shop and free home delivery when the amount of purchased products exceeds 99 euros and free delivery to the nearest post office from over 49 euros purchase. They also have some discount offers.

Faunatar has its own club for the loyal customers called '*Faunatar klubi*'. The members of the club can download an app to their phone and check for example the points they currently have.

Faunatar donates money for the charities and it does cooperation with the different amateur associations. They are also part of "*Eettisen Eläinkaupan Sertifiointiprojekti*" which is a project that monitors the ethical behavior of the pet stores. The services Faunatar offers are cutting the nails from the pets, all-inclusive care of the specific pets and testing the waters of aquariums. From social media accounts they are using Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter. The main colors of Faunatar brand are lilac and green. (Faunatar, 2018.)

### **Turun Lemmikkiasema Oy.**

Turun Lemmikkiasema Oy is a pet store in Turku. It is not directly located in the center and they have only one physical store. Turun Lemmikkiasema doesn't have an online shop. They sell products mainly for cats and dogs and also for other small pets. The services they offer are home delivery, cutting the nails from the pets and trimming. They also have their own program for the loyal customers and Finnish breeders. From social media, Turun Lemmikkiasema uses Facebook and Instagram. The main colors are white and red. (Turun Lemmikkiasema, 2018.)

### **Tassuputiikki**

Tassuputiikki is one of the closest competitors Tassuklaani has. It is located in the center of Turku and it sells products for cats and dogs. Tassuputiikki is part of Pet Team Oy. It merged with online shop called Dog Gallery and they operate under the name Tassuputiikki. The product range in the online shop is small with only few main products. They sell mainly European products. When purchased the products, customer can follow the status of the order with the order number in the website. Tassuputiikki also has its own loyal customer program. Other services they offer are trimming, massage, pet homeopath and dog cafe. Tassuputiikki has at least Facebook page and Instagram account but they are not linked to their website. The main colors are grey, black and burgundy. (Tassuputiikki, 2018.)

### Zooplus AG

Zooplus is one of the biggest pet supply online shop in Europe. Founded in 1999, it currently operates in over 28 European countries. Zooplus has a broad range of foreign products for cats, dogs and other small pets and also for horses. Besides the regular products, they have discount offers, seasonal products and 'saving packages' etc. Zooplus also offers free home delivery or delivery to the closest post office when customer's purchase exceeds 49 euros. Even though Zooplus is only an online shop, it offers different benefits for its customers. These benefits include reward program, friend request program, charity discount, Breeder's club, discount coupons, affiliate advertising and animal protection. From social media platforms Zooplus uses at least Facebook, Google+ and Instagram. The main colors of Zooplus are green and white. (Zooplus, 2018.)

#### 3.4.2. The Analysis

When compared to Musti ja Mirri and Faunatar, Tassuklaani has few strengths. First of all, it is a locally owned business with owners as sellers. Because the sellers don't change daily, the customers can actually get to know to them and vice versa. Tassuklaani has a store in the center of Turku which Musti ja Mirri and Faunatar doesn't have. Tassuklaani also sells ecological and pure Finnish products whereas Musti ja Mirri and Faunatar focus on foreign products. However, as a start-up company Tassuklaani's marketing is not in the same level than Musti ja Mirri's and Faunatar's. Especially Musti ja Mirri has an efficient social media marketing plan with many channels and their active usage. When it comes to gaining more customers, Tassuklaani should be able to gain more visibility in social media and in different events. They have the same knowledge and experience of the pets but they are lacking the time and knowledge of creating a solid and effective plan for the marketing and the brand. Musti ja Mirri's home website is full of different information and their online shop has a broad range of different products. As for the location, on the other hand Musti ja Mirri and Faunatar have stores in shopping centers which is beneficial for them since the customers can do their cloth and grocery shopping at the same time than their pet's supply shopping. Then again, when compared to two companies in the center of Turku, Tassuputiikki and Turun Lemmikkiasema, Tassuklaani has already many strengths. It is strategically located better, it has a similar social media marketing plan with the same channels, it has an online shop with different products and it sells domestic products. The weakness it possesses is that it is not as known as Turun Lemmikkiasema. When compared to the online shop Zooplus, Tassuklaani's strength is its physical store with face-to-face customer service. On the other hand, Zooplus sells the products quite cheap and it is easy for the customers to purchase everything online and get the order delivered to the home or to the nearest post office. The main colors Tassuklaani has are also the same than Zooplus' and Musti ja Mirri's with green and white. When taken into consideration the brand this can be problematic since customers may confuse the brands with each other.

As Tassuklaani's business grows, it should pay attention to its main competitors in the market and how their websites and social media channels look like in order to compete with them.

### 3.5. The Marketing Research

The marketing research questionnaire was conducted in order to discover the ways of how to improve the brand awareness of Tassuklaani. The goal was also to discover how known Tassuklaani currently is, how the potential customers see it and how it could improve in the future.

The questionnaire was conducted for the target market of the case company, the pet owners in Finland. It was conducted in Finnish and distributed in the case company's and author's Facebook pages in the summer 2018. The questionnaire was open for the respondents for two weeks and all in all it got 181 answers.

#### 3.5.1. The Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of 16 questions which were the following:

- 1) What pets do you own/have owned?
- 2) Which pet store's services do you use currently?
- 3) Why do you use the service of that store?
- 4) Have you heard about Tassuklaani before? If yes, from where?
- 5) Would you be interested in visiting Tassuklaani?
- 6) If you answered "no" to the previous question, why not?
- 7) Have you seen advertisements by Tassuklaani? If yes, from where?
- 8) Would you be interested in participating to the events Tassuklaani organizes?
- 9) How important do you find the following factors for the ideal pet store? (5 = the most important, 1 = not important at all)
- 10) Answer to the next question only if you know Tassuklaani. How well do you think the following factors fit to Tassuklaani? (5 = fits perfectly, 1 = doesn't fit at all)
- 11) What would you wish from Tassuklaani in the future?
- 12) What social media channels do you use?
- 13) What traditional media channels do you use?
- 14) Your gender?
- 15) Your age?
- 16) Your monthly income?

#### 3.5.2. The Gathered Data (the answers)

The first question "*What pets do you own/have owned?*" had the following options to choose from: *a dog, a cat, a guinea pig, a hamster, a bird and a bunny*. The last option was to write the pet yourself. All in all, 181 answered to the first question. The answers were divided as the following: 158 has owned a dog, 89 a cat, 40 a bunny, 33 a hamster, 26 a guinea pig,

14 a bird, 12 a horse, nine a rat, six a mouse, six fishes/aquarium, five a gerbil, four a lizard, three a snake, two a reindeer, two a ferret, two a frog, one a chicken, two an agate snail, two a sheep, two a tarantella, two a turtle, one a polecat, one a hedgehog, one a degu, one a 'shawn's jirdi' and one reptiles. Many of the respondents chose many pets.

The second question "*Which pet store's services do you use currently?*" had the following options to choose from: *Tassuklaani, Musti ja Mirri, Faunatar* and *Zooplus*. In this question the last option was also to write the store the respondent goes to. The answers were divided as the following: Tassuklaani got 14 votes, Musti ja Mirri 100, Faunatar 10 and Zooplus 9. Other answers were the following: 14 answered using Lemmikkiasema, 10 Petola, 6 Peten Koiratarvike, 5 Zoojatar, 3 Karvakorvat, 2 Hankkija, 3 Tassuputiikki. The following stores got one vote each: Tmi Zanniskan, Koiravaruste, Jetsani, Riemu, Akvaariopiste, Hööks, [verkkokauppa.com](http://verkkokauppa.com), IceMice, Vauhti-Raksu, Koiraurheilu.fi, Wuff, Hoidoggi, Agrimarket, Pupilo, Voimaeläin, Jälki and Lemmikin Valinta. Other answers were: "*nothing, I don't own a pet currently*", "*local small*", "*grocery stores*", "*many different*", "*all the above*", "*all the above except Faunatar*" and "*what suits me the best at the time*". Many of the respondents chose and listed many of the stores.

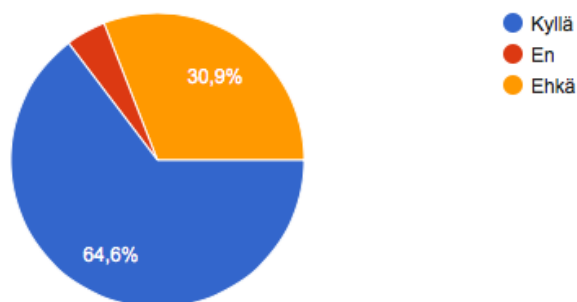
The third question was a follow-up question for the second one asking why the respondent uses the services of the pet store. The question also had option of to choose from: *the location, the products, the prices, the loyalty program* and *the customer service*. This question also gave an option for the respondent to answer some other factor why she/he is using the store. The answers were the following: 138 answered the location, 105 the products, 67 the prices, 62 the loyalty program, 59 the customer service, two the home delivery, one the easiness, one the habbit, one the puppy date. Other responds were: "*wife uses it*", "*I can get near with the car*", "*I work there*", "*I want to support the town's own entrepreneur*", "*I want to support independent pet stores*", "*The world's best and friendliest pet store*" and "*I've know the place for years now*". The respondents were able to answer many factors which they founded the best.

The fourth question was about the case company; "*Have you heard about Tassuklaani before? If yes, from where?*". This question was similar than the previous one with few options to choose from to answer: "*from a friend*", "*from Internet*", "*from the newspaper/magazine*" and "*no, I haven't heard*" or writing their own answer. The respondents were able to choose many options. The answers were the following: 44 respondents answered that they have heard about Tassuklaani before from a friend, 66 have heard about it from the Internet, seven from the magazine, 72 haven't heard about Tassuklaani before, nine had seen it or walked passed it, one lives nearby, one got a present card to Tassuklaani, one is a loyal customer, one has visited it sometimes and one has heard about it in Stockmann, Turku.

The fifth question was a close-ended question *"Would you be interested in visiting Tassuklaani?"* where the options to answer were *"yes"*, *"no"* and *"maybe"*. The answers were divided as the following: *"yes"* answered 117 respondents which was 64,4%, *"no"* answered eight which was 4,4% and *"maybe"* 56 which was 30,9%.

### 5. Olisitko kiinnostunut käymään Tassuklaanissa?

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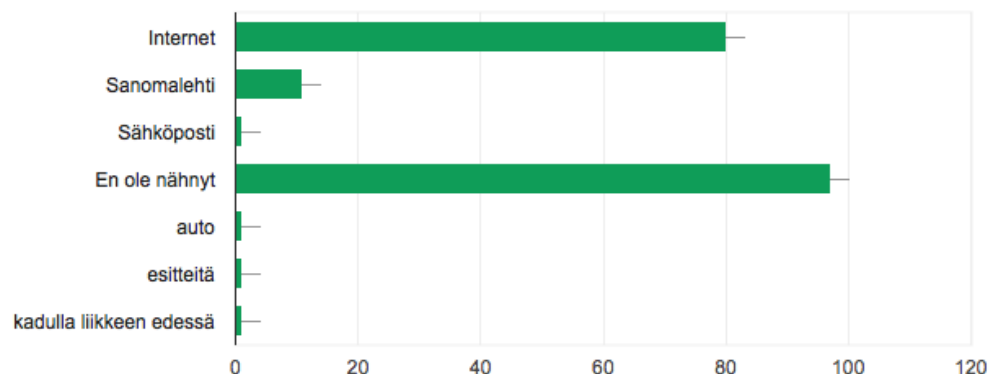


The sixth question was the follow-up question for the fifth question asking why exactly the respondents who answered *"no"* wouldn't visit the store. The eight respondents were answering the following: *"I don't feel like there's anything special in Tassuklaani"*, *"Location"*, *"When I visited the store I felt like the shop assistant was too pushy"*, *"Doesn't arise any interest"*, *"No need"*, *"Location is difficult"*, *"Not cozy, too narrow store"* and *"I don't visit Turku often"*.

The seventh question was about the advertisements of Tassuklaani and if the respondents have seen them and where they had seen them. The options to choose from were *"Internet"*, *"Newspaper"*, *"Email"*, *"No, I haven't seen"* and also to write yourself the place. The respondents were able to choose as many options as suited for them. The answers were the following: 80 answered seeing them in the Internet, 11 in the newspapers, one via email, one has seen Tassuklaani's car, one has seen their flyers and one has seen their advertisements in front of Tassuklaani's store. 97 also answered not seeing Tassuklaani's advertisements.

## 7. Oletko nähnyt Tassuklaanin mainoksia? Jos kyllä, missä?

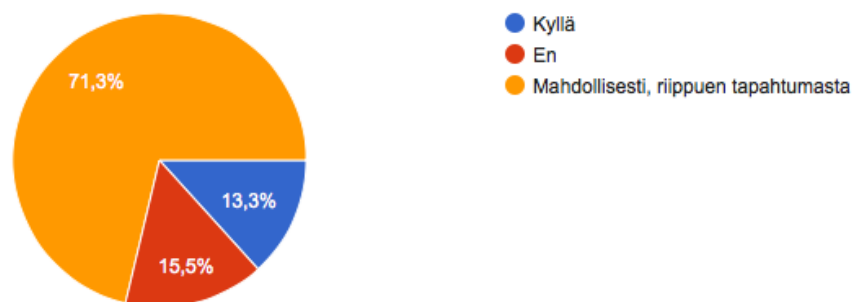
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The eighth question was close-ended question asking if the respondent would be interested in participating the events organized by Tassuklaani. The options to answer were "yes", "no" and "Possibly, depending on the event". The answers were divided as the following: "yes" answered 24 which was 13,3% of the respondents, "no" answered 28 which was 15,5% and "Possibly" answered 129 which was 71,3%.

## 8. Olisitko kiinnostunut käymään Tassuklaanissa järjestettävissä tapahtumissa? (pentutreffit yms.)

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The ninth question was "How important do you find the following factors for the ideal pet store?" The question had the scale from 1 to 5, one being not important at all and five being one of the most important factor. The factors to evaluate were "professional and friendly customer service", "domesticity", "the products", "low prices", "loyal customer program", "the location" and "other services for example the events". The factors got the following votes:

- 1) *Professional and friendly customer service*: 141 answered 5, 19 answered 4, 15 answered 3, two answered 2 and four answered 1.
- 2) *Domesticity*: 45 answered 5, 59 answered 4, 47 answered 3, 23 answered 2 and seven answered 1.

- 3) *The products*: 110 answered 5, 49 answered 4, 15 answered 3, six answered 2 and one answered 1.
- 4) *Low prices*: 37 answered 5, 67 answered 4, 58 answered 3, 16 answered 2 and three answered 1.
- 5) *Loyal customer program*: 35 answered 5, 38 answered 4, 55 answered 3, 29 answered 2 and 24 answered 1.
- 6) *The location*: 87 answered 5, 49 answered 4, 29 answered 3, 12 answered 2 and four answered 1
- 7) *Other services such as events*: eight answered 5, 29 answered 4, 59 answered 3, 53 answered 2 and 32 answered 1.

The tenth question was also a scale question with 1-5 scale, one being "doesn't fit at all" and five being "fits perfectly". The question was only for the respondents who already knew Tassuklaani and were able to evaluate it; "How well do you think the following factors fit to Tassuklaani?". From 181 respondents 52 answered. The factors to evaluate were the following: "domestic", "ecologic", "pet friendly", "professional and friendly customer service", "good product range", "good location" and "decent prices". The factors got the following votes:

- 1) *Domestic*: 25 answered 5, 10 answered 4, 12 answered 3, five answered 2 and no one answered 1.
- 2) *Ecologic*: nine answered 5, 20 answered 4, 18 answered 3, four answered 2 and one answered 1.
- 3) *Pet friendly*: 35 answered 5, 14 answered 4, one answered 3, one answered 2 and two answered 1.
- 4) *Professional and friendly customer service*: 35 answered 5, 15 answered 4 and three answered 1.
- 5) *Good product range*: 12 answered 5, 29 answered 4, nine answered 3, one answered 2 and one answered 1
- 6) *Good location*: 21 answered 5, 15 answered 4, 10 answered 3, one answered 2 and five answered 1.
- 7) *Decent prices*: nine answered 5, 27 answered 4, 15 answered 3, one answered 2 and one answered 1.

The eleventh question was open-ended question which asked if there was something the respondents were wishing from Tassuklaani in the future. The question got 25 answers which were the following:

- 1) *"More visibility, memorable logo, I haven't heard anything from this."*
- 2) *"Loyal customer discounts."*
- 3) *"Personal collars and leashes."*
- 4) *"Frozen rats"*
- 5) *"Cat themed events/days etc."*
- 6) *"More professional and expert service, not just telling about the products."*
- 7) *"I don't drive to the center often, but that could be arranged too if there would be for example big amounts of pee underlays with competitive prices."*
- 8) *"Some events, not just puppy dates."*
- 9) *"Something for the cat owners."*

- 10) *"Lectures for example of troubled dogs or from allergies."*
- 11) *"That they would move closer to me."*
- 12) *"I can't really come up with anything."*
- 13) *"More visibility and domestic options for example chicken fillets."*
- 14) *"More foods to allergic dogs."*
- 15) *"Raw food, toys that reward the dogs and especially domestic products."*
- 16) *"Dog-related lectures for example related to the feeding."*
- 17) *"More different types of products."*
- 18) *"Better location when it comes to me."*
- 19) *"Quality clothes and accessories for dogs."*
- 20) *"It would be nice if there would be more events related to the other pets too, not just dogs. Something organized with Turku's animal protection association/dew and that the store would receive donations for the animal protection association."*
- 21) *"I can't say."*
- 22) *"Get-to-know different types of hobbies with the dogs -day and tip-days for organizing brain activities."*
- 23) *"Hobby instruments for the dogs."*
- 24) *"That I could visit the shop with my pet."*
- 25) *"More discount sales!:) The pet store's products are so expensive and for example Musti ja Mirri organizes garage sales when you can buy a lot for example food for the whole year!"*

The twelfth question and the thirteenth question were about the social media and traditional media channels the respondents use. The respondents were able to choose many options and add their own channels.

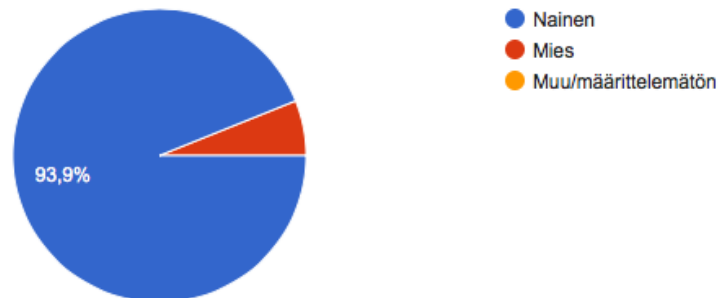
From the social media, all the respondents answered using Facebook, 134 Instagram, 90 YouTube, 29 LinkedIn, 16 Twitter, 72 Snapchat, one Pinterest and two added that they also use WhatsApp.

From traditional media, 153 answered using television, 127 radio, 82 newspapers, 48 magazines and seven answered that they don't use traditional media. One also added using literature and one billboards.

Last three questions were the demographical information about the respondents. First one was about the gender of the respondents where 170 were women (93,9%) and 11 men (6,1%).

## 14. Sukupuolesi?

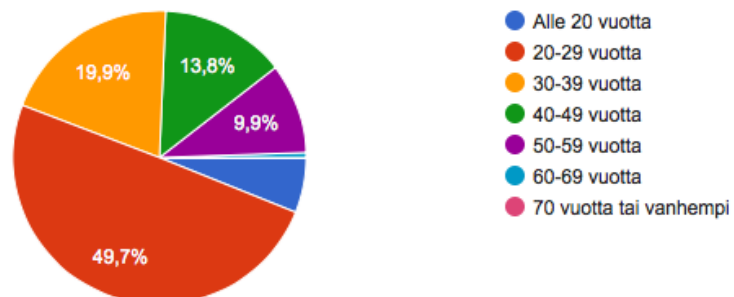
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The second one asked the age of the respondents. The answers were divided as the following: 90 respondents (49,7%) were 20-29 years old, 36 respondents (19,9%) were 30-39 years old, 25 respondents (13,8%) were 40-49 years old, 18 respondents (9,9%) were 50-59 years old, 11 respondents (6,1%) were under 20 and one respondent was 60-69-years-old.

## 15. Ikäsi?

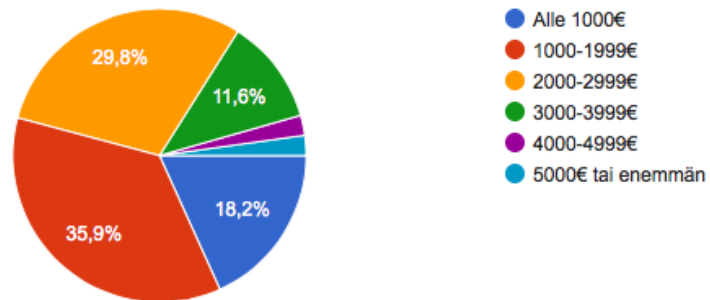
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The last question of the questionnaire was about the monthly income of the respondent. The responses were divided as the following: 65 respondents (35,9%) answered 1000-1999€, 54 respondents (29,8%) answered 2000-2999€, 33 respondents (18,2%) answered under 1000€, 21 respondents (11,6%) answered 3000-3999€, four respondents (2,2%) answered 4000-4999€ and four respondents (2,2%) answered 5000€ or more.

## 16. Kuukausittainen palkkasi?

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### 3.5.3. Analysis of the Gathered Data

The gathered data shows that with 181 respondents the scale of different pets owned is large. The first question determines the customer base which could most likely to become Tassuklaani's customers. Dog and cat owners were the biggest groups to answer to the questionnaire and they are also already the main customers Tassuklaani has. The questionnaire also shows that many respondents have owned different types of rodents and birds.

The second question shows the most popular pet store among the respondents which is Musti ja Mirri with 100 votes. This can be linked to the question three. In this question, the respondents chose the reasons why they use the services and why they buy from the store they chose in question two. The location became the most important reason. Musti ja Mirri has stores almost everywhere, especially in the biggest shopping centers which makes the shopping for the pets more convenient. Other major reasons were the products, prices, the loyalty program and the customer service. Musti ja Mirri offers large product range with reasonable prices, the loyalty program with discounts and benefits and also professional and helpful customer service. Other popular stores among the respondents were Tassuklaani, Faunatar, Zooplus, Lemmikkiasema and Petola which are all, excluding Tassuklaani, big pet stores and/or known in the same regional area than Tassuklaani.

Most of the respondents have heard about Tassuklaani from the Internet. Therefore, the Internet advertising is crucial for the company. Many of the respondents had also heard from it from their friends which shows the importance of word of mouth. Thus, 72 answered that they haven't heard about Tassuklaani before which highlights the importance of the solid and effective marketing plan Tassuklaani needs.

Out of 181 respondents 117 would be interested in visiting Tassuklaani and also 56 respondents would consider visiting Tassuklaani. Only eight respondents wouldn't consider visiting the store. The main reason not to visit the store was the location or the feeling that there's no need for the visit. All in all, the answers were a positive sign towards the company from the customers.

From the advertisements the Internet was the channel where most of the respondents had seen Tassuklaani's ads. The amount of respondents who had not seen any advertisements was considerably high, with 97 responds. This shows the importance of finding the right marketing channels in order to reach the target customers. When compared to the newspaper advertising which got 11 responds the internet marketing and advertising can be considered to be the main channel for Tassuklaani to reach and connect with the customers.

The purpose of the question eight was to find out whether the respondents would be interested in participating to the events Tassuklaani organizes. Most respondents (129) answered "Possibly". This leads to the importance of organizing interesting and different events which could increase the interest of the target customers.

The next question was about the factors the ideal pet store possesses. From the seven factors *professional and friendly customer service*, *the products* and *the location* were clearly the most important factors. *Domesticity*, *low prices* and *loyal customer program* were kept as a quite important factor. Only *Other services such as events* were not considered to be important factor for an ideal pet store. Therefore, Tassuklaani should at least focus more on their customer service and the product range.

Similar factors were used to evaluate Tassuklaani. From the factors *domestic*, *pet friendly* and *professional and friendly customer service* were most linked to Tassuklaani's image. The respondents also considered *the location* to be quite good. Comparing to the answers *decent prices*, *good product range* and *ecologic* were only partly linked to Tassuklaani's image. This highlights the importance of the ecologic products and also customer-friendly prices and broad product range in the future.

The eleventh question was set to discover any future wishes the respondents have from Tassuklaani. Most of the wishes were linked to the different types of products and foods Tassuklaani could sell. Many respondents also wished for events for cat owners or lectures related to the pets they own. Discounts were also wished from the store.

From the social media Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube were most used among the respondents which shows the most potential marketing channels for Tassuklaani in the Internet. From traditional media TV, radio, newspapers and magazines were most used ones which shows the most potential traditional media channels for Tassuklaani.

Lastly, most of the respondents were women, 20-29 years old and earning 1000-1999€ or 2000-2999€ monthly. This is already considered to be one of the most important customer groups of Tassuklaani.

### 3.6. The Strategies

#### 3.6.1. Social Media

Based on the marketing research, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Snapchat are most used by the case company's target market and therefore the most crucial for them.

Facebook and Instagram advertising can be effective and cost-efficient. It can also increase the brand awareness of Tassuklaani. There are different ways for Tassuklaani to conduct its Facebook marketing. One way is to use so-called '*dynamic advertisements*' which will lead the potential customers that have already expressed an interest towards the company to find out more about the company. The company just needs to download their product catalogue to the service and define their campaign and then the service will automatically continue the marketing behalf of the company. (Facebook business, 2018)

Tassuklaani should use '*link advertising*' which will direct the potential customers straight to their website. Link advertising can be done in Instagram and Facebook. The advantage is that the company can use its own images and videos which will lead the users straight to the company's own website with just one click. Link advertising can increase the sales of online selling since the company can also add buttons such as '*Buy now*', '*Register*' and '*Read More*' to the advertisement. (Facebook Business, 2018)

In Facebook and Instagram the company can use a marketing method which reaches out for the local people. This method is so-called '*coverage marketing*' which main function is to market the company in its region and to reach and create a connection with the locals. With coverage marketing the Tassuklaani could optimize its marketing budget to the right customers and to find customers based on their demographic information, the area of interests and by their behavior. (Facebook Business, 2018)

Facebook and Instagram competitions are good ways to engage people with the business. When the questionnaire of this Thesis was released, the case company shared it in their Facebook page with the competition and the questionnaire got 181 responses. This is a way of showing what one competition can do - it can give you the new followers and more awareness to your brand. Tassuklaani should organize competitions monthly where for example by tagging a friend they could win identical products. Tassuklaani could also organize a competition where the best

reason for why she/he should win would win the prize. Tagging a friend to a competition gives the company new potential customers when the tagged users have to check where they have been tagged in. In Instagram the competitions can be conducted in a similar manner.

The content of Instagram is important. Many artistic accounts have many followers because the accounts are nice to look at. It's also important to publish photos often and to use hashtags that are related to the subject. Tassuklaani should use its own hashtags in every photo such as #tassuklaani. This can make the customers to use the same hashtag in their photos. The potential customers who are looking for an information about Tassuklaani could find it by searching with the hashtag #tassuklaani.

To YouTube Tassuklaani should download some videos of their days and events. Besides YouTube, Snapchat could be one good way of conducting the marketing. Tassuklaani should set up their own Snapchat account and post many photos and videos of their days at the store. In Snapchat the content can be more relaxed and not as official as in Facebook and Instagram which could also show to the customers what is happening in the store daily. The stories don't only have to be about the products and events, they can also be photos and videos about what is happening behind the scenes such as inventory, meetings etc. With snapchat Tassuklaani could inform the customers about the discounts or they could even handout some discount codes in order to reward their followers. Snapchat is also a good channel to briefly introduce some products and services in a video.

### 3.6.2. Traditional Media

Based on the marketing research, TV, radio and newspapers are the most used traditional media channels among the target market. Even though TV is the most used, it is expensive marketing channel and therefore not the most suitable for a start-up company. Many people listen to the radio while they are driving or working and at that time they will hear the advertisements. Radio advertising is not the easiest way of marketing and it can be costly for a start-up. The company would also have to choose the radio channel they want to run their advertisement in - whether it is a local radio channel or a national channel. Therefore, TV and Radio advertising are not relevant for Tassuklaani at this point in their life cycle.

Then again, many people still read newspapers and most of the newspapers also have their own websites. Tassuklaani has already done some newspaper advertising. Even though it is not the cheapest way to advertise either, Tassuklaani could launch some advertisements in Turun Sanomat and Turkulainen when they are having some special prices or days coming up. Advertising in the newspaper's website could be an option for Tassuklaani in the future also.

### 3.6.3. Branding

Colors are important part of branding. Different colors create different imagines and feelings. A company needs to choose a color that fits into their image and to what they are selling. (Ciotti, 2016). Most of the pet stores, such as Tassuklaani, have green and white colors. The reason behind the usage of green color is that it is a peaceful color which symbolizes growth and health. (Ciotti, 2016). It also symbolizes the balance and creates positive feelings such as harmony, peace and equilibrium. Green is also the color of the environment which suits for an environmentally conscious pet store. Downside of using green is that it can be considered to be bland. White is a color of purity, sophistication and cleanliness but it can also be considered to be too bland. (Wright, A. 2008-2018). If Tassuklaani wants to really stand out from the competition, it should rethink its colors. From the colors orange which represents friendliness and blue which represents trust could be good colors for a start-up pet store. The problem with the color orange is that according to the studies, it's one of the least favorite color of women and men whereas blue is one of the most favorite color among the both genders. (Ciotti, 2016)

Besides the colors the effective way of branding a company is a logo. It is a way of connecting customers' minds to the specific company without seeing the name of the company. Great examples are Apple with the logo of apple with a bite or Nike "swoosh". (Shadbolt, 2015). A logo is usually the first thing the potential customers see and it is the way they will recognize the company in the future. It helps the customers to identify the company from the competitors. (Shadbolt, 2015). Based on the marketing research, the potential customers are wishing to see more recognizable brand from Tassuklaani. Since most of the pet store companies in Finland don't have 'image' logo, it could be potential for Tassuklaani to create a logo. Nowadays internet is full of free logo designer apps and platforms. There are also many logo designer businesses in Finland such as [helppologo.fi](http://helppologo.fi) which charges 149€ from a logo or [verkkotaikurit.fi](http://verkkotaikurit.fi) which charges 190€ + value added tax from a logo. With a logo Tassuklaani could stay longer in the minds of the potential customers.

Building a brand takes time. Tassuklaani should focus on the consistency and the promise they want to deliver for the customers, whether it is the domesticity of the products or the locality or something else. By creating a clearer message of the promise Tassuklaani could reach more potential customers who are wishing for the things Tassuklaani is promising. Based on the website, the unique selling proposition Tassuklaani now has is the fact that it is located straight in the center of Turku whereas most of the pet store are outside of the city center, leaving Tassuklaani being one of the closest pet store for people living in the center of Turku. Tassuklaani should utilize its location by advertising more in the center and attracting more local customers into the store.

One factor Tassuklaani should also focus on is its target customers. They are now selling products and food for dogs and cats and at the same time they are struggling of whether or not to sell them for rodents. According to marketing research the cat owners are wishing for more cat related theme days. When most of the pet stores are focusing on dogs, Tassuklaani could turn its equal focus on cats. Cat and dog owners can be struggling with the same issues which makes it ideal situation for Tassuklaani to organize something for both of the parties. One important factor is also a loyal customer program which Tassuklaani should create. The customers want to know what they are gaining by joining to the program and what Tassuklaani has to offer to them. By creating a strong loyal customer program Tassuklaani could gain more customers and more brand awareness.

## **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1. Marketing and Branding**

Tassuklaani should conduct more Facebook and Instagram advertising. With these advertisements, they could get more visibility in users 'walls' and reach the potential customers. Tassuklaani should also create a Snapchat account where it would show how the store is running on a daily basis and have 'behind the scenes' material.

As traditional media marketing can be expensive for a start-up company, the suggestion is that Tassuklaani focuses on marketing in a social media. When Tassuklaani is having some special days or discounts, it could conduct newspaper advertising by advertising in Turun Sanomat or in Turkulainen.

Tassuklaani should also focus on creating their own loyal customer program which they could advertise in social media. They should clearly explain what the loyal customers will gain by joining the program. Most important factor is to reward the loyal customers from time to time and make everyone aware of how what benefits they will get.

Where Tassuklaani is most likely keeping its colors as green and white, the recommendation is that they would create a recognizable logo. Paying from a logo would be a small price to pay if it would help the customers to recognize the brand easier. The image with the company's name would stay in the customer's mind longer than only a name. The recommendation is also to focus on dog and cat owners on equal amount and also to first focus on the 'locality' in the city center of Turku as a store which serves the citizens of Turku. After gaining the consistency in the branding, Tassuklaani could board its customer base.

## 4.2. Marketing Research

The marketing research made for Tassuklaani shows the interest among the target customers towards Tassuklaani. When considering the answers to the factors the respondents wish from the future, Tassuklaani should organize cat themed days. Most of the pet stores in Finland are focusing on dog themed days which can make it an ideal situation for Tassuklaani to also focus on cat owners. Whereas many pet stores have puppy dates for dogs, cats don't have similar events. Lectures about cat's behavior could also interest the cat owners. The dog owners also wished for other types of events, not only puppy dates. Different lectures which Tassuklaani could organize came up also. It became clear that Tassuklaani is not yet very known among its target customers which highlights the importance of creating a memorable brand.

In the future Tassuklaani could conduct other types of questionnaires from some specific areas such as the products or events. They could also conduct a customer satisfaction survey which would give them a deeper understanding of their current customers and also of their business and where they should be heading in the future.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the Thesis was to discover the ways of how the brand awareness of Tassuklaani can be increased. In this case, social media plays the most important role. Increasing the amount of advertising in Facebook and Instagram Tassuklaani could reach more potential customers. Also creating new social media accounts is a good plan when reaching out for the new customers. When the company wants to increase the brand awareness, they should also take a look at their current brand. Tassuklaani hasn't got a clear brand yet which makes it more difficult to increase its awareness. With the right marketing plan and a new logo, the brand awareness could be increased.

As a marketing plan being associated with the success of the company, with the right marketing plan Tassuklaani can become more known brand and reach its target customers faster and more effectively. While there is still a long way to go, Tassuklaani has a good start with its 1071 followers in Facebook and 517 followers in Instagram. The questionnaire conducted for this thesis plays an important role when the company is thinking about their future. It shows the opinions of the target customers, what they are finding important and what they are wishing from the pet store.

All in all, the following functions could help Tassuklaani to increase the brand awareness:

- 1) Discovering ones' own strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities;
- 2) Discovering the competitors' strengths and weaknesses and trying to implement to Tassuklaani the functions the competitors are lacking;
- 3) Clearly stating the target customer group and discovering their wants and needs via customer satisfaction survey;
- 4) Increase social media marketing by creating new accounts and improving the current ones, conducting some traditional media marketing and focus on the branding of the business;
- 5) Conducting different contest and competitions in the social media;
- 6) Creating a concise and memorable brand with a logo, unique selling proposition and the promise;
- 7) Focusing on the cat and dog owners equally and organizing different events for both of them
- 8) Focusing on the locality of the brand

The main goal of the thesis was to help Tassuklaani to get started with the branding of the business and its marketing.

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## 7. APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. The questionnaire in Finnish

1. Mitä lemmikkejä omistat/olet omistanut?
  - Koira
  - Kissa
  - Marsu
  - Hamsteri
  - Lintu
  - Kani
  - Muu (avoin vastaus)
2. Minkä eläinkaupan palveluita käytät?
  - Tassuklaani
  - Musti ja Mirri
  - Faunatar
  - Zooplus
  - Muu (avoin vastaus)
3. Miksi käytät kyseisen kaupan palveluita?
  - Sijainti
  - Tuotteet
  - Hinnat
  - Kanta-asiakasohjelma
  - Asiakaspalvelu
  - Muu (avoin vastaus)
4. Oletko kuullut Tassuklaanista aiemmin? Jos kyllä, mistä?
  - Ystävältä
  - Internetistä
  - Lehdestä
  - En ole kuullut
5. Olisitko kiinnostunut käymään Tassuklaanissa?
  - Kyllä
  - En
  - Ehkä
6. Jos vastasit edeltävään kysymykseen ”En”, miksi et?
7. Oletko nähnyt Tassuklaanin mainoksia? Jos kyllä, missä?
  - Internet
  - Sanomalehti
  - Sähköposti
  - En ole nähnyt
  - Muu (avoin vastaus)

8. Olisitko kiinnostunut käymään Tassuklaanissa järjestettävissä tapahtumissa?
  - Kyllä
  - En
  - Mahdollisesti, riippuen tapahtumasta
  
9. Kuinka tärkeänä pidät seuraavia asioita ihanteelliselle eläinkaupalle?  
(1= en pidä tärkeänä, 5 = pidän hyvin tärkeänä)
  - Asiantunteva ja ystävällinen asiakaspalvelu
  - Kotimaisuus
  - Tuotteet
  - Alhaiset hinnat
  - Kanta-asiakasohjelma
  - Sijainti
  - Oheispalvelut, esim. tapahtumat
  
10. Vastaa seuraavaan kysymykseen VAIN JOS TUNNET Tassuklaanin entuudestaan. Mitä seuraavista asioista pidät sopivina Tassuklaanin?  
(1 = en pidä lainkaan sopivana, 5 = pidän täydellisesti sopivana)
  - Kotimainen
  - Ekologinen
  - Eläinystävällinen
  - Asiantunteva ja ystävällinen asiakaspalvelu
  - Hyvä tuotevalikoima
  - Hyvä sijainti
  - Hyvät hinnat
  
11. Mitä toivoisit Tassuklaanilta tulevaisuudessa? (tapahtumia, tuotteita tms.)
  
12. Mitä sosiaalisen median kanavia käytät?
  - Facebook
  - Instagram
  - Youtube
  - LinkedIn
  - Twitter
  - Snapchat
  - En käytä sosiaalista mediaa
  - Muu (avoin vastaus)
  
13. Mitä perinteistä mediaa käytät?
  - TV
  - Radio
  - Sanomalehti
  - Aikakausilehti
  - En käytä perinteistä mediaa
  - Muu (avoin vastaus)

## 14. Sukupuolesi ?

- Nainen
- Mies
- Muu/määrittelemätön

## 15. Ikäsi?

- Alle 20 vuotta
- 20-29 vuotta
- 30-39 vuotta
- 40-49 vuotta
- 50-59 vuotta
- 60-69 vuotta
- 70 vuotta tai vanhempi

## 16. Kuukausittainen palkkasi?

- Alle 1000€
- 1000-1999€
- 2000-2999€
- 3000-3999€
- 4000-4999€
- 5000€ tai enemmän