

Building Brand Identity for a B2B Company through Digital Marketing - Case: Chimera Industries Oy

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<p>This bachelor's thesis examines the role of digital marketing in the creation of an online brand identity. The overall purpose of the study is to create a digital marketing strategy for Chimera Industries Oy, a business consulting firm based in Porvoo, Finland.</p> <p>The thesis consists of an introduction, a theory section, a strategy development section, and final discussion. The introduction presents the general idea of the study, background information on the case company and the objectives of this project. The theoretical part discusses the key elements of brand identity, specifically for B2B companies, the practices of a competitor, the potential success factors of a brand identity and digital marketing channel uses. The strategy development section describes the process of development and the results of the strategy creation process. The discussion part evaluates the process and the overall usefulness of the study for the company and the thesis author.</p> <p>This thesis provides theoretical and practical insights into components that could improve the success of a B2B brand identity, namely value proposition, organisational attribute, brand personality, symbols, emotional connections, target market customisation, and educational aspects. Furthermore, it establishes the most efficient digital channels for B2B online marketing: search engine marketing, website marketing, social media marketing, content marketing, and email marketing.</p> <p>Due to the scope limitations of a thesis, the strategy implementation phase is not included in this thesis. However, the marketing strategy was created based on practical information provided by the case company, and the detailed action plans ensure a smooth implementation. The success factors in this study were drawn from one company's practices. Thus, they should not be taken as indicative of any general trend in digital marketing and branding.</p>	
Keywords Digital marketing, marketing strategy development, brand identity	

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1. Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a background of the chosen topic, thus, the relevance of this thesis in the current academic environment. As this is a product-based thesis, outlined in the next pages are the project objective and specific project tasks (PT), along with a theoretical framework, project management methods and output of each task. Next, this chapter introduces the project scope to define topics included in this thesis and ones that have been left out due to complexity issues. The thesis writer also presents the international aspect and anticipated benefits involved with this project, followed by the definition of key concepts and possible risks and risk management methods. Lastly, a brief introduction of the case company's operation concludes the first chapter.

1.1. Background

Branding is a continuous process that lasts throughout a company's existence. Therefore, developing a successful branding strategy is vital to any company aiming towards long-term growth. In this digital age, where approximately 54% of the world population have access to the internet (Internet World Stats 2017.), virtual presence plays a vital role in brand building.

Since the first website went live in 1991, the Internet and digital media have substantially transformed marketing and business. According to a Smart Insight's survey, the most significant amount of marketers (20%) believe Content Marketing to be the most impactful activity for businesses in 2018, followed by Big Data and Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning (both 14%) (Chaffrey 2018.) Digital transformation is predicted to happen as companies need tools for data integration and marketing automation. However, while adopting modern methods, proven traditional marketing models and concepts are still continually being applied to develop successful digital marketing strategies.

Digital marketing can be defined as the process of applying digital technologies to achieve marketing objectives. In order to stay competitive, companies need to embrace digital marketing, and B2B - Business to Business companies are not an exception to this. The B2B sales cycle is much longer and more involved than that of B2C - Business to Consumers businesses. Furthermore, reaching a business customer and influencing them to make a decision requires a far different approach. Nonetheless, online presence is just as essential to B2B companies as it is to B2C companies, and digital marketing is slowly proving its importance in the B2B market. 52% of B2B brands say blogs are the strategy most critical to their marketing success (Geek Chicago 2017.) Moreover, 80% of B2B decision makers visit vendor-independent communities, vendor-sponsored forums, and LinkedIn at least monthly for business purposes, according to Gerry Moran for Marketing Think (2014.)

As for the case company, since Chimera Industries is a relatively young B2B company, it lacks a defined digital marketing strategy. A project with the outcome of a marketing plan could benefit the company considerably. At the moment, the business consulting company operates solely on generating leads through personal connections. The importance of creating a successful digital marketing strategy which can later be implemented lies in the core of the potential future growth of the brand. A digital marketing strategy can aid in building the company's online presence and communicate what it stands for, thus increase brand awareness and gain more customers.

The research of this topic correlates directly with the development of the thesis author's future career as a marketing specialist. As an active social media user, it is easy to see how B2C companies are using digital marketing to strengthen their brands, but this is not the case for B2B firms. The thesis writer is driven by the enthusiasm to create an appropriate digital marketing strategy for a B2B company and further advance their professional skills.

Finally, as the company has given the thesis writer the chance to implement the marketing strategy in a full-time position, the outcome of this project will contribute to both their academic and professional success.

1.2. Project Objective

This thesis aims to develop a deeper understanding of how to effectively use digital marketing to build brand identity in the B2B space, specifically, for the case company - Chimera Industries.

The project objective (PO) can be specified as "Using digital marketing channels to build brand identity and an online presence for Chimera Industries Oy". PO is divided into project tasks (PT) as follows:

- PT 1. To establish a theoretical framework
- PT 2. To research a successful competitor
- PT 3. To determine success factors based on PT1 & PT2
- PT 4. To produce a digital marketing strategy
 - PT4.1. Progress
 - PT4.2. Results
- PT 5. To evaluate the project management and outcomes

Table 1 demonstrates an overlay matrix with the theoretical framework, project management methods and output of each project task.

Table 1. Overlay matrix

Project Task	Theoretical Framework	Project Management Methods	Outcomes
PT 1. To establish a theoretical framework	B2B Branding and Digital marketing	Secondary research	Theoretical framework
PT 2. To research a successful competitor	Digital marketing	Competitor benchmarking	Success factors
PT 3. To determine success factors based on PT1 & PT2	Digital marketing	Success factors research	Success factors of digital marketing channels for B2B businesses
PT 4. To produce a digital marketing strategy PT4.1. Progress PT4.2. Results	Marketing strategy development theory	Analysis, goal setting, formulation	Marketing plan
PT 5. To evaluate the project management and outcomes	Task outcomes of PT1, PT2, PT3, PT4	Review of the project's process	Analysis of success and failure

1.3. Project Scope

The primary focus of this thesis is to produce a functional one-year digital marketing strategy for the company to implement in the Finnish market in the upcoming year. The marketing plan consists of the most appropriate digital marketing channels determined beforehand by success factors. Figure 1 further demonstrates the project scope.

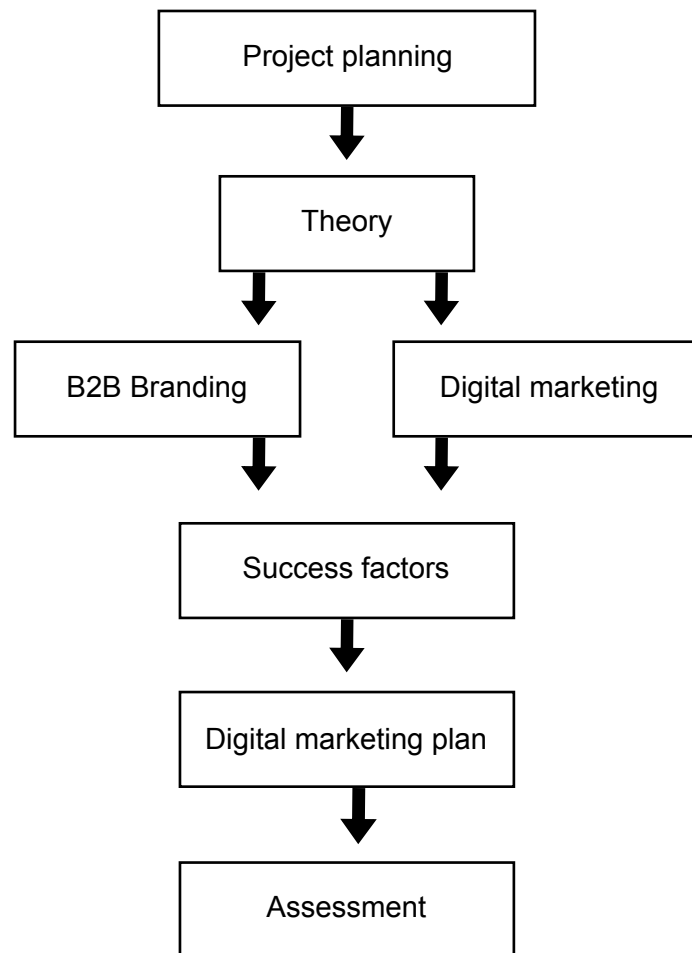


Figure 1. Project Scope

The collected result from the theory research will get put into practice by identifying the most profitable digital marketing channels for the case company and creating a strategy for each of these channels. Even though this project does not include an implementation phase or financial specifications, it provides the company with a set of goals to assess the outcomes and a well-researched marketing plan which the thesis writer will carry out later if given a professional opportunity.

1.4 International Aspects

Chimera Industries Oy, founded by Curtis Pollard - an Australian expat, is operating mainly in Finland. The thesis author and intern at the company is a Vietnamese student. An essential part of the company's operations is to connect and consult Finnish business owners, hence, the given topic is international by nature.

1.5 Anticipated Benefits

The company will receive several benefits from this project, specifically:

- a well-researched one-year digital marketing plan ready for implementation;
- theoretical and practical knowledge which is useful for further development of their marketing practices;

- potential guideline for future digital marketing strategy.

Moreover, this thesis aims to contribute to the marketing community by being a useful source of information regarding B2B digital marketing. As digital marketing is still a growing field in the B2B space, this project could bring more visibility to the subject, and future researchers could benefit from the research carried out in this paper.

Speaking of the thesis author, the knowledge gained while creating a B2B marketing strategy will undoubtedly benefit their future career as a marketing specialist. As the importance of this subject grows, so will the demand for a particular skill set, and this thesis could act as a portfolio piece for the thesis writer.

1.6 Key Concepts

Certain concepts and terminologies act as building blocks for the topic of this thesis paper.

Branding: What started as a noun has gradually become a verb. Nowadays, the word “branding” is used to refer to the act of adding value to a product or service. Branding is not the same as trademarking, since a brand exists mainly in people’s minds (Gad 2001, 21.)

Brand identity, according to David A. Aaker, provides directions and purposes for the brand. Brand identity is a set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain. These associations communicate what the brand stands for and imply a promise from the organisation to customers. Brand identity is the primary driver in establishing a relationship between the brand and the customer by generating a value proposition involving functional, emotional or self-expressive benefits (Aaker 2010, 68.)

Business marketing, or business to business (B2B) marketing is marketing of products and services brought by businesses or organisations for incorporation, for consumption or for reselling (Hutt & Speh 2010, 4.)

Digital marketing is applying a digital approach to achieve marketing objectives. It includes managing different forms of online company presence, such as company website and social media pages, all working towards acquiring customers and maintaining excellent customer relationships (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2012, 10.)

1.7 Risk and Risk Management

Risk management is the process of identification and evaluation of risks followed by coordinated effort to minimise and monitor the probability or impact of adverse events. As with

any projects, this project involves uncertainties that could affect the progress and outcome negatively.

After identifying specific risks, the location, probability, consequences, and risk management methods should be specified to ensure the risks would not become an issue in the project course. Risk location in this project refers to the project tasks (PT) in chapter 1.2 at which the risk would likely occur. Probability - likelihood to occur of the risk and severity of the consequences is classified as high, medium, or low. Risk management includes methods that will minimise the consequences or prevent the risk from actualising (see table 2).

Table 2. Risk management matrix

Risk	Location	Likelihood	Consequences	Management
The marketing strategy is not in line with the company's desired brand identity	PT4	Low	High	Regular meeting and updates with the company
Lack of time to complete the project	All PTs	Medium	High	Personal deadlines and schedules
Lack of information to analyse competitors	PT2	Medium	Medium	Choosing competitors with accessible information and/or visible strategy

As seen in the risk management matrix (see table 2), it is clear that the risk of lacking time to complete the project is the most likely to happen and bears the most significant consequences, which will be the delayed submission of the thesis, and in turn affect the thesis writer's graduation date. However, the actualisation of this risk can be prevented by a strict schedule following the GANT chart (see appendix 1) and personal deadlines.

1.8 Case Company

Curtis Pollard - an Australian expat and experienced operational manager founded Chimera Industries Oy in September 2017 as a business consulting agency based in Porvoo. The company's goals are to bring the best out of businesses and guide them to a secure future. The company offers management consultation, strategic planning, business image building and marketing through three service packages, which vary by the depth of services included, but all in three-month blocks. (Chimera Industries Oy 2017.)

Chimera Industries has been serving clients mostly in the Uusimaa region but has prospects all over Finland. As of now, the commissioning company has a website (blog included), a LinkedIn, and a Facebook account. These seem to be the channels they are invested in and want to grow larger. However, all profiles are under-developed and hardly have a following. The company expects to establish their position in the Finnish market during the next fiscal year (2019), which leads to the belief that it is steadily seeking new ways of improvement.

2. Digital Marketing in the B2B Space

The purpose of this chapter is to elaborate on the theoretical knowledge and theories relevant to the topic of brand identity and digital marketing, specifically in the B2B space. The critical phenomenon discussed in this study is digital marketing, which in short is the technique of spreading marketing materials through digital channels instead of physical ones. A framework for developing a B2B digital marketing strategy concludes the chapter, on which the product of this thesis is based.

2.1. Building Brand Identity for a B2B Business

This chapter starts with presenting a few key concepts. The first concept appeared is brand identity, which is all the elements related to a product, service, company, person (Lake 2018.) Every person has their own brand identity that they have built with their clothing, makeup, actions, manners of speech, to express and communicate how they want to be perceived. Similarly, brand identity goes further than just an eye-catching logo; it is a set of brand associations that the branding specialist aspire to create, maintain, and deliver to consumers. Essentially, brand identity represents what the brand stands for and imply a promise from the company to the customers.

Business-to-business (B2B) is a form of transaction between businesses rather than business and individual customers (Investopedia 2018.) This study focuses on branding for companies conducting these transactions as the primary operation.

2.1.1 Brand Identity

Branding has evolved from the simple act of marking one's cattle to the billion-dollar industry of today. Global advertising spending reached \$584,1 billion in 2017, among which \$228,4 billion were attributed to digital marketing (Plunkett Research 2018.) As the industry grows, a strong brand identity proved to be more and more critical.

A strong brand identity makes a brand more memorable, which in turn leads to greater brand recognition and furthermore, brand recalling. A large percentage of consumers make their decisions to buy based on what they recognise. Brand recognition creates a perception of established products and services, thus creating an innate trust in customers' mind. Strong branding helps to communicate with the right potential customers. For instance, if the company offers premium skincare products, it is beneficial to build a brand identity that attracts people who can afford the products and who consider skincare a worthy investment. Businesses with established brand identity also have the credibility to support new product launches or market expansion. Consistent brand identity with a meaningful story forms a powerful brand-consumer relationship (Gwilliam 2018.)

Consumers now belong to the most marketing savvy and advertising critical generation ever, and their standards for whom they choose to buy from are no longer just about products. In the book "How cool brands stay hot: Branding to generations Y & Z", Van den Bergh and Behrer (2016) argue that NextGeneration consumers want brands that take a stand. In a world where 500 million tweets, 4.3 billion Facebook messages and 500 million hours of YouTube footage are sent, posted and uploaded everyday, the brands that will prosper are those that can form meaningful relationships with their customers. In fact, research has revealed that people would not mind if 74% of the brands they use every day would cease to exist (Havas Media Group 2017.)

Brand identity, if communicated efficiently, could set a firm apart from its competitors and provide direction, purpose, and meaning for the brand. According to David A. Aaker (2002), brand identity is constructed around four perspectives: the brand-as-product, brand-as-organisation, brand-as-person, and brand-as-symbol. The brand identity consists of core and extended identity. The core identity is the central, timeless essence of the brand that is most likely to stay the same through changing times. On the other hand, the extended identity includes groupings of elements that provide textures and completeness for the brand (Aaker 2002, 68.)

The brand identity framework in this thesis is based on that of David A. Aaker (2002) 's brand identity planning model; in which the first step is a strategic brand analysis, including a customer, competitor, and self-analysis. Following the analysis is the brand identity system, which as aforementioned, involved four perspectives: brand-as-product, brand-as-organisation, brand-as-person, and brand-as-symbol. More specifically, there are twelve dimensions organised around those perspectives. Figure 2 demonstrates the relationships between the brand identity's perspectives and dimensions.

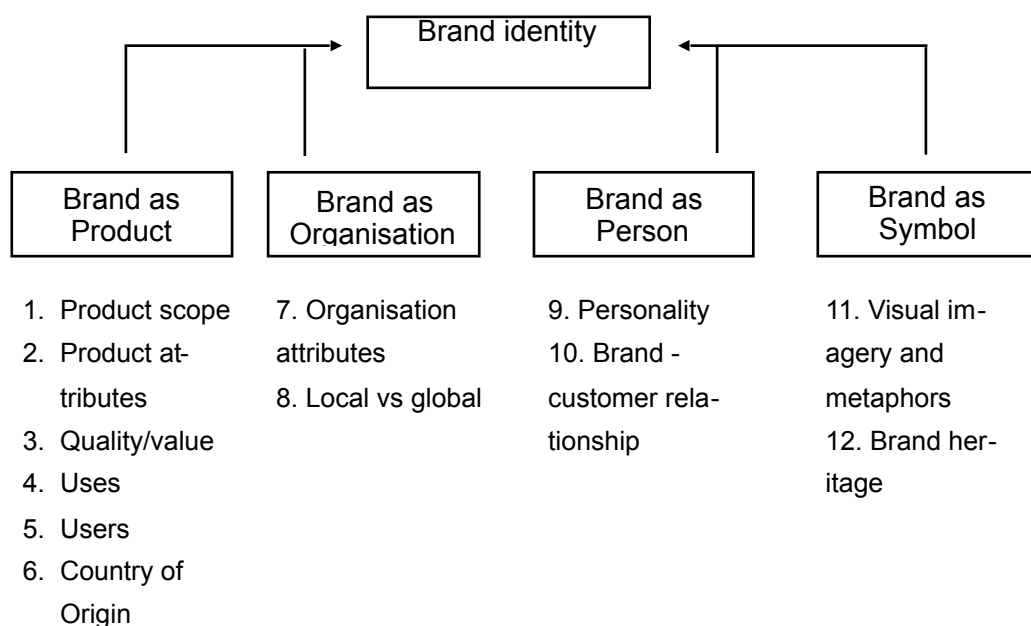


Figure 2. Perspectives and dimensions of a brand identity (Aaker 2002)

It is essential to consider all perspective when planning a brand identity, even though not all brand will necessarily have a use for every perspective. In fact, for some brands, only one might be viable and appropriate. To further explain and later determine the proper directions for the case company's brand, the four brand dimensions will be described following this paragraph.

Firstly, the brand-as-product perspective covers product-related associations, which is almost always a critical part of the brand identity since they are directly linked to brand choices and user experiences. A great product creates values, and great branding communicates that value to customers. A strong link between a brand and a product class guarantees that the brand will be recalled when a particular product class is mentioned. Brand recall is much more influential than brand recognition in generating sales. For example, when talking about premium automobiles, coming to everyone's minds is BMW, Mercedes, or Audi. When customers are looking for sweetened carbonated beverages, they are usually thinking of Pepsi or Coca-Cola. These brands belong to the top-tier of the brands with strong brand-product links, leading to excellent brand recalling.

Another essential part of this perspective is the product-related attributes that add functional or emotional benefits for the consumers, thus creating a value proposition. Fashion retailer ASOS offers free shipping and free returns on all orders, next-day delivery in the UK, making the online shopping process much smoother and more efficient (Asos 2018.) However, it is vital that the product-related attributes do not become the focus of identity efforts to the point of exclusion of other useful perspectives.

Next, the quality/value element belongs to the category of product-related attributes but is important enough to be considered on its own. Perceived-value provides either a minimum level of quality to survive in the market or the competition of which brand has the highest quality. Many companies brand themselves by affirming its quality as a core identity element, such as Gillette with the slogan "The best a man can get." Value adds the price dimension to the quality aspect, as it is what customers consider when choosing a brand. McDonald, for instance, is a fast-food chain growing worldwide because its name is synonymous with consistent product quality and inexpensive prices.

Products can also be associated with uses and users. Febreze is a brand of household odour eliminators which has built a market for themselves by integrating their products into the cleaning habits of families worldwide. It is common now for people to spray Febreze after cleaning to ensure fresh scent, even though their space might not have offensive odours in the first place. An example brand that chose to include user associations in its identity is Luhta - a Finnish sportswear company offering modern Nordic design for people with active lifestyles (Luhta 2018.)

Final perspective in the brand-as-product dimension is the link to a country or region view. A strong connection to a product's country of origin might imply quality or credibility. Some brands such as Aviation American Gin includes their country of origin in the name and considers it their unique brand identity.

Secondly, portraying a brand identity might include communicating the organisational attributes in the Brand-as-Organisation dimension. Organisation-related attributes are created by the people, cultures, and values of the company. It is essential to create and address organisational attributes since they are more difficult for the competitor to copy, evaluate or communicate than product-related attributes. Brands that are good examples of identity built on company values include Adidas, whose core values are "Performance, Passion, Integrity, Diversity" (Adidas Group 2008.) Another company with well-established brand identity is Adobe, with award-winning company culture, with four core values: Genuine, Exceptional, Innovative, and Involved (Tilt 2018.) Organisational attributes such as environmental awareness, consumer focus, innovation, localisation, can contribute to value proposition and brand credibility. These values are usually communicated in the company's corporate social responsibilities statement.

Next, the Brand-as-Person aspect covers brand personality perspectives. Creating a brand personality is much like putting on a Halloween costume. To convince people of the character's authenticity, one not only needs to put on the right costume but also learns the signature lines and act according to the character's distinct personality. For instance, Harley Davidson has portrayed themselves as a rebel from the start. The promotional campaigns naming motorcycles as mean machines, the logo, and use of bright and dynamic colours has helped them build this personality (Pahwa 2018.) On the other hand, music and reality TV channel MTV tried to position itself as a trend-setter of the entertainment industry. The concept of VJ's followed by cool tagline and programs like "EmTV" (which was hosted by Eminem) helped them built a young, exciting and up-to-date personality. Customers are more likely to choose a brand whose personality resonates with theirs. Through a psychological effect called "mirroring," a strong bond could develop between a brand and its customers. Strong relationships, in turn, promote brand loyalty (Upham 2016.)

Last but not least, the Brand-as-Symbol aspect involves anything that represents the brand. As figure 2 indicated, typical types of symbols include visual imagery, metaphors, and brand heritage. Among iconic brand symbols, the Michelin Man is one of the most distinguishable and memorable. In 1898, André Michelin had an idea of a man made of a pile of tires and holding a cup filled with nails and broken glass. The Latin quotation from Horace, "Nunc est Bibendum" (now it is time to drink) was also used as a metaphor: "Cheers, the Michelin tire drinks up obstacles!". Since then, the Michelin Man started playing a significant role in the company, presenting the products, advising and assisting motorists, becoming the brand's worldwide ambassador (Logo Design Love 2012.)

Brand identity, unless ones with the only role of providing credibility to other brands, needs to provide a value proposition to customers. A value proposition is the promise of a brand about functional, emotional, and self-expressive benefits delivered to its consumers. When purchasing from a brand, customers' expectations include not only the functional aspect of the product but also the positive feelings associated with using the product. Furthermore, the purchase and use of a product could also fulfill the customers' need for self-expression. For example, a person may define themselves as competent by using Adobe software or sophisticated by using Estée Lauder makeup. Credibility-providing brands are brands that play the endorser role in another brand identity, such as the whole Apple brand as an endorser for the quality for the iWatch, iPhone, or MacBook (Aaker 2002.)

"Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity" - this quote, attributed to Roman philosopher Seneca, serves as a reminder that one makes their own luck. The same could be said about branding. It is undeniable that selling the right products at the right time matters the most in marketing. However, good marketers ensure that consumers are aware of the product and persuade them to choose it among other alternatives through effective branding (Hague 2018.) The question that arose after hearing about the benefits of enforcing a strong brand identity and a brand identity's components: How to communicate a brand identity efficiently in the digital age? How different is it to create an identity for B2B companies than it is for B2C companies? Could B2B companies maintain a strong brand identity through digital marketing? The next chapter discusses further into B2B branding and its influence on industrial buying decisions.

2.1.2 Branding for B2B Companies

B2B companies can benefit considerably from having a strong brand identity. An analysis by McKinsey&Company (2013) shows a 20% gap in performance between B2B companies with strong brands and ones with weak brands. A brand identity generates added value for the products and communicates useful information to consumers.

Conventional B2B wisdom has been that business-decision-makers are relentlessly rational since there is an extremely narrow emotional bandwidth in the workplace. However, all humans, even the calculating corporate buyers, seek emotional connections and growths (Lloyd 2016.) This emotional connection is one of the main factors leading to industrial firms having the same suppliers for years and years with no second thought. A strong brand identity could bring significant benefits to a B2B brand as it does to a B2C brand. Nevertheless, components that make up an industrial brand is different from that of a consumer one. In the process of creating a strong brand identity for a B2B company, it is crucial first to understand the difference between B2B and B2C branding.

The main differences between B2B and B2C branding lay, unmistakably, on the customers' characteristics. Needs drive the B2B customers because business purchasing decisions are made to solve a problem or improve an existing method, the buyer often set a budget and see this purchase as an investment. The B2B purchasing process is long and involves many levels of approvals; therefore the products or services need to interest a range of stakeholders in the customer's company. The goal of B2B branding is to build trust and emotional connections throughout the sale cycle. On the other hand, the purpose of B2C branding is to communicate emotional or self-expressive benefits that encourage patrons to buy, and most sale process is short and somewhat transactional. B2C customers are more likely to make individual decisions based on wants or impulses; thus B2C companies often need to create a healthy market size by building brand awareness among as many potential customers as possible. B2B companies, however, serve a more niche market size, and brands need to be tailored to appeal to that limited number of target customers. A B2B customer persona typically includes their professional roles and responsibilities, expertise, motivators, and challenges. Meanwhile, a B2C customer profile goes deeper into personal backgrounds such as habits, financial situation, hobbies, influence factors, and brand affinities. B2C branding focuses on the benefits of the products or services, while B2B customers seek the educational context of the offered solution. Longer-form of content marketing thus is more popular in the B2B branding industry (Score Association 2016.)

Some of the world's greatest brands belong to companies whose main operation is in the B2B space: Microsoft, IBM, General Electric, Intel, FedEx, Boeing. Federal Express (FedEx) started with 14 small jets, is now the top cargo carrier with a fleet size of 670 (Air Cargo News 2018.) In 1973, Frederick W. Smith invented the concept of overnight delivery, therefore created a whole new market for FedEx. After identifying an unidentified need, FedEx keeps building out its core competencies through the years with its hub-and-spoke distribution system and effective integration between ground and air traffic. The focus of the brand, however, stays on its express network, which in turn create powerful associations such as security and reliability. Overtime, FedEx became a common terminology for "sending an overnight shipment." Having gone through multiple rebranding, FedEx refers to its operation as the best channel of brand communication, and maintaining its reputation and brand image is the top concern of the company. Qualities such as speed, teamwork, and precisions are integrated into its branding and especially sponsorships. For instances, the company extended the sponsorships for the National Football League for three years, and it also sponsored the #11 FedEx Chevrolet during the 2005 Nascar season (Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006.)

Despite belonging to an organisation, individuals are still affected by personal, non-task variables, in addition to professional objectives. If individuals are comparable to cells in the human body that is the organisation, to affect the organisational buying behaviours, one needs to understand and influence the cells that are the individual determinants.

The matrix of the key components in a strong B2B company's brand identity in table 3 concludes this chapter. It describes essential features presented in a strong B2B brand, as well as the reasoning behind choosing those particular factors.

Table 3. Brand identity matrix for B2B companies

Component	Reasoning
Value proposition	Communicate functional, emotional, and self-expressive benefits of the products to the customers
Organisational attributes	Create uniqueness , add to value proposition
Personality	Form brand-customers relationships
Symbols	Increase brand recognition and consistency
Emotional connections	Build trust with customers
Tailored to target market	Appealing to target customers
Educational aspect of the products or services	Provide information about the solutions and communicate expertise

The success of a brand identity cannot be based only on these components; however, including these features could lead to overall better performance.

2.2 Digital Marketing as a Tool for B2B Brand-building

In the 1900s, traditional marketing channels such as print media (newspaper, direct mail, magazine), yellow page, billboard, TV, and fax ads were the main and only available tools. In the 1970s and 1980s, newspaper revenue peaked at \$18 billion and \$17 billion respectively. Marketing budgets were high across the board, by 1994, television advertising claimed a whopping \$34 billion of \$150 billion U.S advertising market. At the same time, in 1994, to run an ad for 12 weeks on the new internet site Hotwired, a company would have to spend \$30.000. Despite the steep price, marketing was still locally focused, and niche companies could not compete with big brands. There were not many channels suitable for B2B marketing; therefore, B2B companies mostly relied on trade magazine and during golf tournaments, a few TV ads (Technology Advice 2017.)

As time changes, the tools used in creating and communicating brand identity also change. Nowadays, as consumers have gone digital, marketers have too. B2C companies have been using digital marketing to their advantages and create a personalised journey for consumers. On the other hand, B2B companies have been relatively slow in adopting this new way of marketing. Marketers in the B2B market have been relying mostly on

sales formed by established connections and direct mail campaign. However, in 2018, it is proven that 84% of C-level and VP-level buyers are influenced by social media when purchasing. 83% of marketers use social media, and with just six hours a week, 66% of marketers found that social media bought new leads (Collins 2018.) Along with the fact that 70% of B2B invested more in content marketing in 2017 (Geek Chicago 2017), it is easy to see how B2B companies are stepping up and adopting digital marketing to stay competitive.

Evidently, digital marketing in the B2B space is different from that in the B2C market, as the nature of their target customers is widely different. In the following sub-chapters, this study looks further into channels of digital marketing and their suitability for B2B marketing and later, for the case company.

2.2.1 Search Engine Marketing

Search engine marketing (SEM) is the practice of promoting a business through search engines by providing relevant information in the search listings. Two critical techniques of SEM are search engine optimisation (SEO) and paid-search marketing. SEM is potentially the most influential channel for B2B digital marketing. A Bright Edge's research from 2018 shows that 50,1% of traffic on both B2B and B2C sites come from organic search (Bright Edge 2018.) This statistic is easily explainable since everyone turns to search engines when they look for new products or services. Therefore, a company's website serves not only as a home base but also as a vehicle which drives potential customers in via search engines. However, the average web user does not go past the first five listing on a search engine result page; in fact, a study shows that 95% of web traffic goes to sites appearing on page 1 of Google result page (Chitika 2013.)

SEO is the technique of optimising your website content so that it is attractive to search engines. Google - the most popular search engine - stated that it uses more than 200 factors or signals within its search ranking algorithms to either boost positions or remove spams from the result pages (Dean 2018.) The two most important factors for good rankings in most search engines are: Matching web page copy to the key phrases used in searches and Inbound or backlinks into the web page. To optimise the match between the company's website and keywords, marketers have to improve keyword density, formatting, and the document meta-data (website's title and description). Inbound or backlinks are the links to a company's website from another page, and the more external links a site gets, the better its ranking will be on the search result list (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2012, 490-501.)

The success of an SEO strategy could be measured by the website's domain authority (DA), which is a search engine ranking score developed by Moz, Inc. DA predicts how well a website will rank on the search engine result pages on a scale from one to 100 (Moz

2018.) The decisive factors of gaining domain authority depend on the quality of published information, the number of total links, level of interconnectedness with the domain's community, and website traffic. The website's prestige and the level of competition are also taken into consideration (Scholten 2015.)

Successful SEO implementation promises significant traffic to the company's website, and as the visitors came from searches related to the business, they most likely belong to the target population. Since search results are organic, this traffic is free to acquire with an excellent conversion rate, which is particularly suitable for small B2B companies in the competition against industry's giants. However, it is essential to consider the disadvantages of SEO, one of which can be attributed to many marketers employing SEO producing a more competitive playing field. The result is only visible after a long period of continuous implementation, and it is difficult to measure the return on investment (ROI) for SEO. Even though it is known that search engines take hundreds of factors into account, less is known about the specifics. SEO also offers less regarding developing brand awareness because most people search for a product or company they already know.

Paid search marketing (or pay-per-click) is a tool useful for counteracting the weaknesses of SEO. PPC is the practice of paying the search engine to display an ad to the company's website when a key phrase is typed in. The search engine company charges a fee for each time the link is clicked through. In a competitive market, PPC is particularly important to ensure visibility, with the same benefits of targeted marketing of SEO but more predictable. On the flip side, PPC can get extremely expensive and time-consuming. It also creates a problem of customers finding the company untrustworthy.

2.2.2 Display Advertising

In display advertising, advertisers pay for their ad to be displayed on third-party websites or social networks. This ad usually leads to a landing page to encourage further actions. Advertisements can help reach buyers who did not find the company via search or reinforce the organic search results. The average consumers, however, find paid ads less trustworthy than organic search results. The best display ads and landing pages are attractive and informative but at the same time convey sincerity.

Display advertising helps deliver content through a simple click and build brand awareness to targeted customers. It is easy to track the ROI of display advertising through built-in tools from service-providers. This type of display advertising, nevertheless, produces a low click-through rate. Consumers have been shown not to favour online advertising, as 615 million devices now use AdBlock - an advertisement blocking extension for browsers (Cortland 2017.) Marketers also have to monitor which site their ads are placed on since the brand image could be damaged if they are associated with offensive contents.

2.2.3 Website Marketing

The website of a company has been compared to a digital shopfront, much of the time, it can decide if customers want to walk in and buy. Having a well-design website optimised for search engines helps customers find and interact with the business. A website is a low-cost investment which can be an around-the-clock salesperson providing information to potential customers, and in some cases, conduct transactions. Good B2B websites are simple, easy to navigate, with a design that follows the brand identity consistently. Key components on the site include an About us section, financial information for investors, privacy statement, and contact info (Miller 2012, 102-122.)

Nowadays, websites should be designed as compatible with multiple devices and not just a desktop, since more than half the world now uses a smartphone (We Are Social 2017) and 84% of millennial and 76% of gen X B2B buyers deem mobile essential for work (Cayless 2017.)

2.2.4 Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing involves encouraging customer communication on social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter or in specialist publisher sites and forums (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2012, 535.) Social media marketing can often be assisted by another practice called viral marketing, which includes creating content that is likely to get shared across Internet platforms. Social networking is one of the best channels to build relationships with customers and develop a personal voice.

There's an ongoing misconception that B2B companies often trail B2C when it comes to social media. Research shows the opposite. The number of B2B organisations with profiles on social networks (75%) outweighs the number of B2C organisations with social profiles (68%) (Marketing Sherpa 2009.) The reality is that social media is just as important, if not more, to B2B business as their B2C counterparts. Successful social media strategy spreads brand awareness across a broad network while remaining cost-effective. The Internet has been used by business professionals to share product information, and B2B buyers often seek third-party feedback before conducting a purchase. A developed presence on social media channels not only increase business exposure but also improve credibility. For instance, considering two business with equal product and service quality, the company with an established social media profile will be deemed more trustworthy.

However, social media marketing is a high-risk technique, since it requires an initial investment at the beginning for promotions and no set recipe guarantees a viral campaign. Finding the right kind of content to engage customers is, therefore, a complicated process. For instance, it is worthwhile to consider that posts with images have a 650% higher engagement than text-only posts (Kim 2015.) A great social media campaign needs creative

content, seeding (a technique of sending content to key influencers), and close process monitoring.

2.2.5 Content Marketing

Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach of creating and publishing valuable and informational content which does not always explicitly promote the business. This practice is, most of the time, tied in with website marketing since most content is shown on the company's website or blog. Additionally, content can be published on social media channels or through third-party sites by a method called guest-blogging. In 2015, 86% of B2B marketers reported that their organisations are using content marketing (Harris 2015) and this is for a good reason: content marketing has been proven to generate a conversion rate six times higher than that of other methods (McCoy 2017.)

In this age where consumers are bombarded with thousands of ads per day, content marketing stands out because it provides value to people's lives without being intrusive and pressuring them to buy. Quality content is at the core of every marketing methods; it drives customers to the company's social media profiles, generates keywords and inbound links which leads to better SEO and PPC. As B2B consumers often seek educational contexts of the products or service they are considering, long-form of content marketing such as blog posts are especially useful. Blogging strengthens brand identity and demonstrates expertise to the consumers. , B2B marketers who use blogs generate 67% more leads per month than those who do not (Edgecomb 2016.)

Successful content marketing establishes a public face for the brand, thus humanise the company. Posting engaging content allows marketers to build personal relationships with customers, which is precisely what B2B buyers seek. This relationship provides valuable insights and enables the feedback flow from the customer side to pass more smoothly. Marketers can also use this channel to communicate news about upcoming projects or changes in the company.

Content marketing is an inexpensive tool that could be used for consumers reach, acquisition, and retention. The greatest challenge in content marketing is measuring ROI, as the three common objectives are lead generations, thought leadership, and brand awareness. The effectiveness of content marketing in turns could be measured by conversion rate, website traffic, or SEO ranking.

2.2.6 Email Marketing

Email marketing is a crucial component in a B2B digital marketing strategy since it allows contacts with existing and potential customers at a relatively low cost. Email marketing includes the managing of both inbound and outbound marketing, which are the flow of email from and to customers, respectively. Customers' permission allows companies to

send opt-in emails which can range from campaign promoting the company itself or a partnership with another brand. Emails are used in both the customer acquisition and retention stage since it is a useful tool for building brand-customer relationships.

Direct marketing encourages communication and actions from customers; therefore, the lead acquisition takes less time than that in other media. On the other hand, companies might have trouble optimising emails for different browsers and devices. Despite the effectiveness, customers' engagement often wears off over time leading to a decrease in response rate. Additional personnel is also required to manage and create email content (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2012, 529-531.)

2.3 Digital Marketing Strategy Process Model

A strategy process model is a framework for strategy development, which includes all key activities of strategy development and implementation. Among various marketing models, SOSTAC - developed by PR Smith - is one that has stood the test of time. In a Smart Insight survey by Dave Chaffey (2018), the framework was voted as the third popular model out of fifteen contestants. SOSTAC stands for Situation, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, and Control. The model and its components are depicted in figure 3.

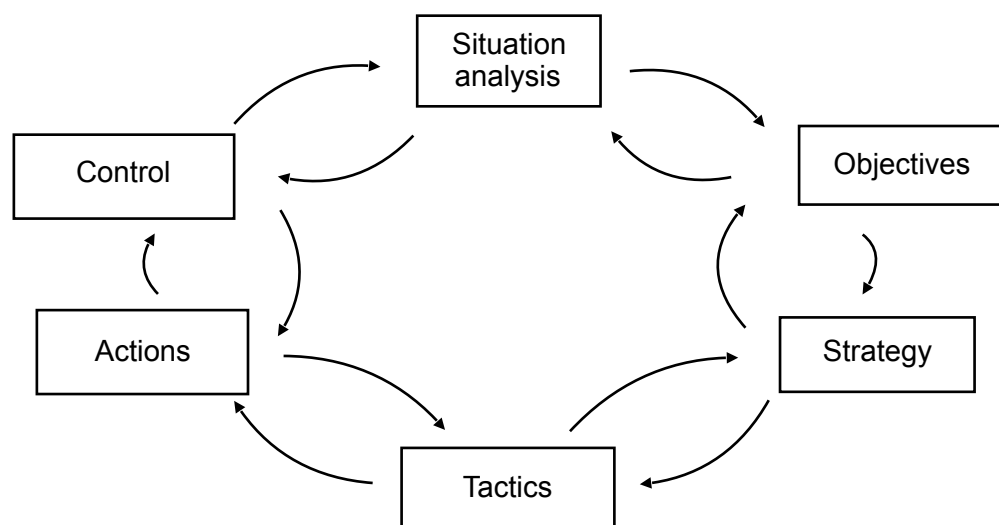


Figure 3. The SOSTAC planning framework (Chaffey & Smith 2008)

The situation analysis answers the “where are we now?” question. Planning activities involved at this stage include performing analysis such as SWOT on the environment and the company, its product or services, current goal performance, and brand perception. A situation analysis identifies the company's capability and resources, thus provide insights for the next steps in the strategy development process (Lake 2017.)

The objectives should answer the question "where do we want to be?". A model for setting appropriate goals is the SMART model. This means setting Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely. Often times, it takes 6-12 months to see results from a digital

marketing strategy; therefore, it is essential to set objectives focusing on long-term outcomes (Non-profit Source 2018.)

The strategy stage describes general solutions regarding segmentation, targeting and proposition development to achieve the set objectives (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2012, 199.) The company's online value proposition is also included in this stage. The next stage - Tactic - includes detailed usage of the digital communication tools and a campaign initiative schedule, which provide the tools needed for the following stage - Action. The action stage involves the specific daily goals that contribute to the long-term objectives. This goes into details of how to use the tools specified in the previous stage, individual responsibilities and required resources. Last but not least, the control stage provides tools to monitor the strategy's performance. These insights are then used in new situation analysis, thus creating a feedback loop to keep the strategy updated and appropriate.

2.4 Competitor's Practices

One of the primary brand building activities is conducting research on competition. In this study, research is carried out on a competitor regarding its branding efforts through digital marketing strategies in different channels. There are two approaches to identifying competitors: the customer-based approach and the strategic group approach. The first one helps to identify competitors by looking at them from the perspective of customers, and the latter one examines competitors in the same group on the basis of their strategy and objectives (Aaker & McLoughlin 2010.)

In this project, the competitor's practices will be identified according to the strategic group approach. This approach ensures the identification of a competitor in the same industry with similar assets and competencies.

2.4.1 Competitor Introduction

The analysed competitor in this project is Gemic Oy - one of the top management consulting firms in Finland. The name of the firm is based on the anthropology term "emic," which refers to the studying of something specific to a certain culture, seen from the perspective of someone within that culture. The company then takes this knowledge and compress it into a "gem", and this is what the company offers to its customers (Salomäki 2016.)

Fonecta (2018) reported 3,4 million euro in the company's gross revenue in December 2017, a 54% increase from that of 2016. Gemic is an international firm offering solutions for growth, brand vision, human insight, and future casting with offices in Helsinki, New York, and Toronto. Founded in 2008, Gemic is a relatively young company in the consulting industry, but it has helped well-known clients such as Braun, Marimekko, Nikon, Microsoft, P&G to overcome growth challenges (Gemic 2018.) Despite having similar offerings of operation management and branding strategy, Chimera Industries Oy is still in the

developing phase of brand identity with clients acquired mostly through personal connections. It is clear that Gemic and Chimera Industries are two firms of different sizes, but analysing Gemic Oy's digital marketing performance could give insights into what could be done regarding brand identity communication for Chimera Industries.

2.4.2 Digital Marketing Channels Analysis

First of all, Gemic has a well-developed website with a sharp, professional look and aesthetically pleasing colours. A Google search of the term "business consulting agency in Finland" shows Gemic as one of the top results, and there is no result from PPC. A quick domain authority check with the tool on Small SEO Tools reveals the score of 17/100 for www.gemic.com. This score is relatively high considering the number of management consultant sites worldwide. Gemic defines itself as a global growth strategy firm, with a mission to reimagine markets from a human perspective, and this is communicated aloud at the top of the site. In the "Offering" section on their website, above the details of services provided is a statement about their value proposition: "Our work translates into industry-transforming strategies and offerings that feel right, spark enthusiasm, and create a sense of purpose." The statement is typed in a bigger font to ensure its visibility and communicate its importance. Adding to this value proposition is their organisational culture, in which team members see themselves as a group of inspired thinkers unrestricted by dogma. Each of the twenty-seven team members then introduces themselves and their skills, experiences, and passion (Gemic 2018.)

By introducing each team members, Gemic humanised the brand, created an emotional connection with customers and gave the company a personality. Brands typically position themselves in one or more dimensions of brand personality: Sincere, Exciting, Competent, Sophisticated, or Rugged (Jennifer 2017.) So far, it is easy to see that the Gemic brand conveys both sincerity and competency through the website's simple aesthetics and content. The competency of the brand could be seen in the website's "Thinking" section, with twenty articles called "white paper," each investigates deep into different aspects of brands, innovation, cultures, lifestyles. This amount of quality content explains a large number of external backlinks to the website (100) shown in an analysis carried out by the tool on Check Page Rank. External backlinks are links on other sites that take readers to Gemic's website. These links help increase a site's credibility, especially if they are posted by high-quality sources (Impossible Marketing 2014.)

The company's logo and aesthetic are integrated everywhere from its website to its social media channels. The company only has profiles on LinkedIn and Twitter; therefore it can be assumed that Gemic considers those two channels most relevant to its operation. Gemic has 1668 followers on LinkedIn and 421 followers on Twitter as of when this study is conducted. Gemic also retweeted and participated in conversations on their social media profiles. Their LinkedIn profile is updated at least every month, with new opening posi-

tions or publications. Their Twitter page, however, was last updated in August 2016, mostly on events, relevant articles and open positions. This ties into their content marketing and seems to link back to the website - their main channel.

Their email addresses for press, inquiries and job applicants are all listed clearly on the website. This implies Gemic has an email system to reply to different matters and furthermore, follow up with leads. However, the company does not have a subscription system to send out promotional email or notifications about campaign or news.

Gemic's target customers are global companies present in different markets. To communicate their expertise in creating added value from a human perspective, they acquire talent with multidisciplinary backgrounds from all over the world. In an interview with Good News from Finland, Gemic co-founder Sakari Tamminen expresses the consultants' willingness to walk in customers' shoes to find out what they care about and what creates value propositions in their lives (Salomäki 2016.) Interviews with other blogs, websites, and news sources are also methods in content marketing, particularly if the interviews provide insights into the markets or industries.

2.5 Success Factors Based on Competitor's Practices and Theories

As previously mentioned, there is no set recipe that guarantees the success of a brand identity. Nevertheless, the most common factors have been outlined and described (see table 4.)

Table 4. Success factors of a brand identity

Success Factors	Effect	Theory	Prac- tice
Value proposition	Communicate functional, emotional, and self-expressive benefits of the products to the customers	x	x
Organisational at- tributes	Create uniqueness , add to value proposi- tion	x	x
Personality	Form brand-customers relationships	x	x
Symbols	Increase brand recognition and consistency	x	x
Emotional connec- tions	Build trust with customers	x	x
Tailored to target market	Appealing to target customers	x	x
Educational aspect of the products or services	Provide information about the solutions and communicate expertise	x	x

The first success factor of a brand identity found through theoretical research and competitor analysis is the value proposition. Any products and services need to not only provide customers with functional benefits but also emotional and self-expressive benefits. The need for expression exists in every human's mind, and the products they use need to line up with their own identity.

The organisational attributes are evidently necessary, and they relate to aspects of brand personality and emotional connections. By communicating core values, an organisation gives itself a voice and in turn, a personality. Emotional connections are also created through this process, in addition to introducing the people behind the company.

Next, a brand symbol needs to be integrated consistently into every channel to help increase brand recognition and consistency across channels. A symbol's aesthetic can further communicate brand personality. Brand identity also needs to be tailored to appeal to target customers, from its design to its values and competency.

Finally, the importance of educational context has become clear after analysis of the competitor's practices. High quality, industry-focused content drives traffic by providing information and present the company's expertise.

Furthermore, since this study's objectives is to create a digital marketing strategy, the efficiency of different digital marketing channels are also examined, and their suitability for a B2B company is outlined in table 5.

Table 5. Digital marketing channels' uses for B2B brands

Channels	Use	Theory	Prac- tice
SEM	Increase brand awareness through higher rankings on search engines page results	x	x (no PPC)
Display advertising	Spread brand awareness	x	
Website marketing	Communicate brand identity and provide indformation	x	x
Social media market- ing	Increase brand awareness, encourage communication and promote other chan- nels	x	x
Content marketing	Show expertise and add values	x	x
Email marketing	Aid in customer acquisition and humanise the brand	x	x

The first channel explored in this study through theory and competitor analysis is Search Engine Marketing (SEM), which includes Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and Pay-per-click (PPC). SEO involves optimising the website's content to improve ranking on search engine result pages. This tool is useful both in theory and practice since it is more likely for customers to click on a link if it appears at the top of the result pages. PPC was studied in theory but was not present in the competitor's practices. This could be explained by the assumptions that people often do not trust paid advertisement for companies; therefore, it could be used as a tool to increase brand awareness but is not as useful at creating leads.

Display advertising is the second channel that was researched. This practice shown in the theoretical part includes paying for advertisement to be put on a third-party website or social networks. However, the competitor in this study does not use this marketing channel, which could be attributed to the same reason as the dismissal of PPC in their strategy.

Next, the importance of website marketing was shown in both theory and practice. A well-designed website is easy to navigate, tailored to customers, and able to communicate essential information. The competitor has a website optimised for search engines with relevant terms and keywords. Their website includes different sections, and each has a clear purpose.

Social media marketing, even though has long been misunderstood as inefficient for B2B marketing, has been proven essential in the digital marketing strategy through both theory and practice. Interacting with customers on social networks does not only aid in increasing brand awareness but also encourages customer communication. Linking back to the company's website on social media helps further promote the website. The competitor applied two social media channels into practice: LinkedIn and Twitter, which leads to the assumption that they deem these two networks most appropriate for their business.

Content marketing is present in all other marketing channels since it is the method of creating quality content that encourages interactions and indirectly promotes the company's expertise. This practice builds personal, meaningful relationships with customers, thus produce better-quality leads. Content marketing is proven to be the way of the future, both in theory and practice. The studied competitor applies this method by publishing articles with industry insights on their website, conducting interviews with other blogs, posting about new publications and educational event on social media.

Lastly, another method aiding in humanising the brand and lead follow-up is email marketing, where a company interacts with customers through inbound and outbound email. Opt-in emails are often used to notify customers on campaigns and news. The competitor's analysis shows that an email system with different addresses dedicated to separated matters is necessary. However, they do not have a subscription system that customers can sign up to receive promotional emails.

2.6 Summary

The secondhand research and the study of one competition helped draw the mind map for the marketing strategy creation project (see figure 4).



Figure 4. Mindmap

Value propositions, organisational attributes, brand personality, emotional connections, symbols, target market customisation, and educational aspects are all necessary components of a B2B brand identity. These features will be communicated through five digital marketing channels: SEM, website, social media, content, and email. Each component will be examined and included when applicable in every marketing channels.

3. Digital Marketing Strategy Development

Digital marketing possesses an increasingly important part in any marketing strategy, especially in this digital age. Therefore, the thesis writer has initially planned to create a digital marketing strategy for the company, after some quick assessment. An interview with Curtis Pollard - founder and CEO of Chimera Industries provided the qualitative data needed to create a digital marketing strategy suitable for the company. Feedbacks from the CEO shows that the company also need to communicate their brand identity better. These components combined into the final topic for the thesis: Building a brand identity through digital marketing.

After this interview and theoretical research, the digital marketing channels was agreed on was SEM, Website, Social media (LinkedIn and Twitter), Content marketing, and Emails. Since content marketing is a method integrated into other channels, it will be included in other channels' strategy instead of its own chapter. This chapter describes the process of creating a one-year digital marketing strategy for Chimera Industries Oy, which include the Progress and its Results.

3.1 Progress

After short conversations, a meeting was set up in April 2018 with Chimera Industries' CEO. In this meeting, the CEO signed the commissioning contract and answered questions relevant to the company's current situation. The company also gave a monthly budget for promotions and strategy implementation, such as the budget for pay-per-click and content promotions on social media. Throughout the whole thesis process, the writer stayed in close contacts with the company should any question arises.

The purpose of the digital marketing plan was defined as to create an online brand identity for Chimera Industries Oy. In the process, the online presence will also increase brand awareness and in turn, attract new prospects.

The secondhand research was then carried out on brand identity and different digital marketing channels. Essential elements of a B2B brand identity was identified, and the company's brand is examined according to this framework. Furthermore, an analysis of a competitor of the company brings valuable insights into this process. After the theoretical research was finished, it was sent to Chimera Industries' CEO for approvals and feedbacks. Following the theory, the development of the marketing strategy started based on the frameworks established, including measurement methods for each digital channels. The plan's structure follows the SOSTAC framework (see figure 3).

In the situational analysis stage, an audit of the company's resources, values, and goals were carried out. A brand analysis for Chimera Industries with all its components is includ-

ed in the marketing plan. Each existing digital marketing channel was studied separately, and a SWOT analysis (see figure 5) reviewed current overall digital marketing efforts.

	Helpful to achieving the objectives	Harmful to achieving the objectives
Internal origin	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
External origin	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

Figure 5. SWOT analysis framework

Strengths concern Chimera Industries brand's current capabilities to perform well in the digital space and in the general market. Weaknesses are characteristics of the company's existing digital marketing channels that prevent the brand identity to be communicated to the customers. Opportunities describe the trends and forces in favour of the company because of its resources and capabilities. Finally, threats are the possible external forces interfering with Chimera Industries' ability to perform on different marketing channels.

Taking the situation into consideration, objectives are set in the next step with the SMART tool (see figure 6) for achievable and measurable goals. Since the changes in the market and available technology are unforeseeable, this marketing plan is designed for the term of one year; therefore the objectives are set to be measured after the one year term has ended.



Figure 6. SMART goals criteria

It is essential that objectives be set for any marketing strategy to be effective. The goals set in the marketing plan for Chimera Industries should specify the accomplishments regarding brand identity and awareness. The reasons for choosing this goal, the people responsible, and the resources involved are also mentioned. The objectives are further de-

defined with standards that are measurable and trackable, to help Chimera Industries team monitor the progress of the implemented strategy. The situation analysis also gave insights into what is achievable for the company regarding its resource and time limit. While setting the goals, the end purpose to build an online identity is always taken into consideration so that the objectives are relevant to the company. Lastly, in addition to the one-year deadlines, specific goals for shorter terms such as six months, monthly, daily are also identified. This ensures that the strategy stays time-bound and daily tasks do not take priority over the long-term goals.

The following step discussed a general strategy to achieve these objectives, which involves segmentation, targeting, and proposition development. This helps create a successful marketing strategy that focuses on delivering personalised experiences that resonate with target customers (Betts 2018.) Furthermore, the company needs to communicate what unique added value it can bring to the market. Chimera Industries' value proposition and intent brand identity were discussed between the company's CEO and the thesis author in this stage. Other brand identity elements were also included. A strategy focusing on the company's key strengths will be created from this brand vision and the objectives set in the previous steps.

Further strategy details are discussed in the tactics stage, which includes the digital channels of communication and their uses. Each brand identity elements are examined and applied to these channels. The digital marketing mixes have been identified in the beginning through interviews and research as SEM, Website, Social media (LinkedIn and Twitter), Content marketing, and Emails. The tactics stage describe the usage of these channels and an initiative schedule of the e-campaign. To deliver personally relevant communications to the Chimera Industries' B2B customers, a contact strategy should be specified in this stage. Figure 7 demonstrates the areas of a contact plan.

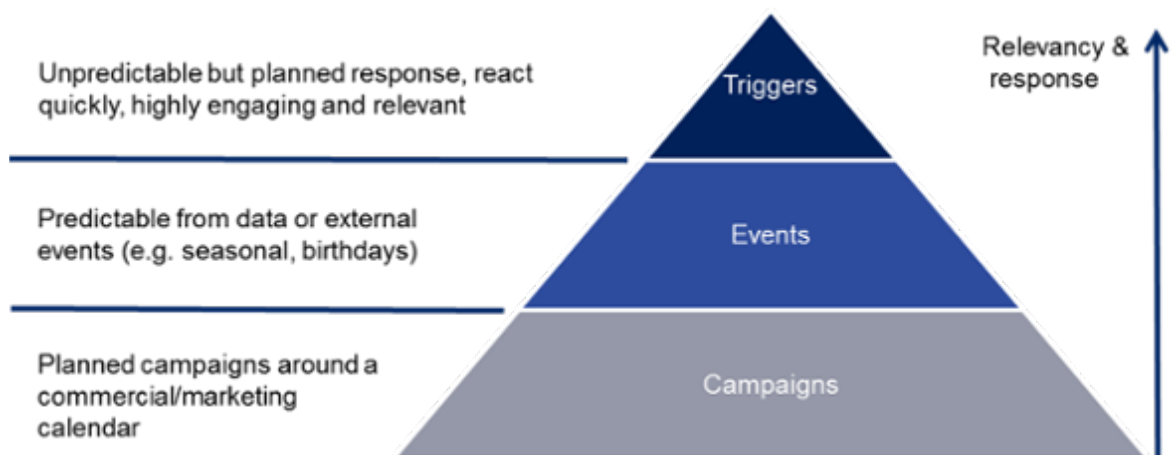


Figure 7. A contact plan's areas of activities (Spyer 2014)

The contact plan includes a company's campaign calendar, special events relevant to the customers such as birthdays or anniversary, and business rules regarding unplanned triggers.

Another essential component of the tactics stage is the content plan. As proven by theory and practice, quality content is critical to any marketing plan. When Chimera Industries reaches out for contact with customers, it needs to provide relevant content that communicates the brand identity and adds value to the customers' professional lives. The content strategy in this stage includes the overall theme of information that will be included in the marketing implementation for the company. This content will be distributed through the decided e-marketing mix.

The actions stage involves planning the detailed schedule of each digital marketing channels and the people responsible for project management. The marketing plan at this step consists of Checklists and Guidelines, System and Processes, Responsibility and Structure, Additional training if needed (Stephenson 2017.) The action phase also provides project management tools suggestions that could be suitable for Chimera Industries.

Finally, the control phase provides Chimera Industries measurement tools to assess the outcomes of strategy based on set objectives and possible improvement on the strategy. These tools include Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and web analytics.

This marketing plan was then discussed with the CEO of Chimera Industries for any further development and after receiving approvals, attached to the thesis as an appendix. Last but not least, the whole thesis process was evaluated to reflect on the author's professional growth and practical experiences.

3.2 Results

The purpose of this thesis is to create an applicable digital marketing strategy for Chimera Industries - a B2B company offering business consulting services in Finland. The result satisfied this purpose. The thesis produced a digital marketing strategy across multiple channels: SEM, Website, Social Media (LinkedIn and Twitter), Emails, with content marketing integrated into all of the channels.

During the span of the project, relevant theories and a competitor's practices were studied and taken into consideration in the strategy development phase. From the acquired knowledge, the strategy was established based on the SOSTAC marketing planning model and divided into six phases: Situation analysis, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Actions, and Control. This developed marketing strategy is useful for further development of the company's marketing practices and able to act as a guideline for their future digital marketing strategy.

The final strategy will be sent to Chimera Industries at the beginning of November 2018. Additional meetings are possible for assistance with the tools and platforms introduced in the plan. Since Chimera Industries is a start-up and only has one employee/CEO, it is recommended that the company employ a specialist to put the marketing strategy into practice. Marketing is an operational process requiring proper attention and efforts to carry out and monitor, therefore, it is difficult for the CEO to implement the strategy by himself. Thus, the writer will discuss a professional opportunity to implement this strategy in the company.

4. Discussion

The development of the digital marketing strategy started after theoretical research and evaluation of a competitor's practices. Success factors were then drawn from the collected data. This process has proven useful to outline the main components of brand identity and the appropriate digital marketing channels.

The purpose of this strategy is to build an online brand identity for Chimera Industries, whose online presence is not established. Through the success factors and close contacts with the company's CEO, the important specific brand identity elements of the company were outlined. After that, the digital marketing strategy was created based on the SOSTAC model. Once all the components of the strategy were developed, the strategy was discussed between the writer and the company's CEO.

This thesis provided theoretical and practical insights into components that could improve the success of a B2B brand identity, which are: value proposition, organisational attribute, brand personality, symbols, emotional connections, target market customisation, and educational aspects. Furthermore, it established the most efficient digital channels for B2B online marketing: SEM, Website marketing, Social media marketing, Content marketing, and Email marketing.

Due to the scope limitation of a thesis, the strategy implementation phase is not included in this thesis. However, the marketing strategy was created based on practical information provided by the companies, and the detailed action plans ensure a smooth implementation. Measurement tools are also provided to monitor the progress.

As for the thesis writer, the subject of the thesis was ideal for professional growth, as the opportunity for a full-time job in the company became more and more feasible. One of the significant benefits of this project was the theoretical and practical knowledge acquired in the process. The research has given numerous insights to implement in a digital marketing strategy for B2B companies, which is especially useful as the thesis writer plans to embark on this career path. Another skill polished in this process was information gathering. As digital marketing is still considered a new practice, data sources could be too out-of-date and not applicable or too new, unstudied and also not applicable. Skills in reading comprehension and writing were improved since this thesis is written in English and not the writer's mother tongue.

On the other hand, one of the major challenges was time management. The initial plan was to write the thesis from March until the end of October; however, as the writer's full-time internship took place at the same time, the thesis did not follow the expected schedule. As there was a deadline agreed with Chimera Industries and a graduation deadline,

the thesis writer maintained the motivation to carry on with the thesis with updated schedules. The interesting topic also kept the writer motivated.

The process and its results produce not only valuable lessons for the company but also other researchers. Future researchers could put the findings into use and improve any existing drawbacks. The learning process leading to the end product is an asset useful for future practices.

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Appendix 1. Digital Marketing Plan

1. Situation Analysis

Chimera Industries Oy currently has a website as their primary channel, and profiles on Twitter on LinkedIn; however, they are both not frequently updated. The purpose of using digital channels is to create an online presence for the company, yet this presence is not strategised. As a young B2B company, it is especially crucial for Chimera Industries to have a clear strategy to build its online brand identity and in turn, attract new prospects. First of all, a situation analysis is conducted on each current digital marketing channels and a SWOT analysis of the current digital marketing efforts.

1.1 Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

When typing the term "business consultant in Finland" into the Google search bar, no result related to Chimera Industries shows up in the first ten pages. A quick domain authority check on the company's website produced the explanation to that result. Domain authority for <http://www.chimerafinland.com> is 2/100, and the amount of backlinks is 0 (zero). These are the most critical factors in the ranking of a website on the search engine result pages. There is currently no strategy set for SEM, either organic or paid.

1.2 Website Marketing

The website <http://www.chimerafinland.com> is the main channel of operation for Chimera Industries at the moment; thus it is quite well-designed and easy to navigate, it is also mobile-friendly. The website consists of an about us section, services provided, testimonials, and contacts. The website is also the home for a blog which is updated once every two months.

The website's colours follow the theme of the company's logo closely. However, the colour of some paragraph makes them moderately tricky to read. The services provided do not have a detailed explanation about their value propositions, and the description in the About Us section was written in a casual format and voice, which could be deemed unprofessional in the B2B industry.

The company publishes quality blog posts on the site, but not at a good frequency, the last article was in August 2018. This inactivity could lead customers into thinking the company is not in operation.

Chimera Industries has not yet started tracking the website traffic or visitor analytics, which makes it difficult to monitor the progress of website marketing.

1.3 Social Media Marketing

Currently, Chimera Industries has profiles on Twitter and LinkedIn, which are two useful social networks for B2B companies. However, they do not have a clear strategy and are not active on both of the channels.

The Twitter profile @ChimeraFinland has the name of the CEO and his picture instead of the company's logo. The profile has two followers and is following two other profiles. The page shows the profile was created in October 2017 but has not posted anything. An active profile on Twitter could encourage customers interaction and drive traffic to the main channel - their website.

On LinkedIn, the company's profile posted six updates, and it has seven followers. The content posted mostly links to blog posts on the website, and some contain information regarding the company's services. The company's logo is set as the profile picture and the header, which is a good practice since it maintains the brand consistency.

LinkedIn has the potential to create business connections; therefore it is an essential social network for B2B companies. LinkedIn also offers a tracking tool for audience analytics that should be taken in use.

1.4 Email Marketing

The company has two email systems for customers inquiries and job application, and these are listed on the company's website. Customer communications are done mostly through emails.

When clicking on the Blog section of the site, a pop-up also appears to ask for permission for opt-in emails. However, no email has been sent to the thesis writer since signing up five months prior. It is apparent that the subscriptions email system needs to be put in to use.

1.5 SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is the tool that can be used to study the internal and external environment of the organisation. This analysis is done as seen in table 1.

Table 1. SWOT analysis of Chimera Industries' digital marketing efforts

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing brand • Willingness to improve • Fairly well-designed website • International insights 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a digital strategy • Inactivity on social medias • Unclear brand identity • Limited customer contacts
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of social media presences in the Finnish consulting industry • Business buyers' usage of digital channels • Tracking tools on the Web 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large established international competitors with well-designed websites

The strengths of Chimera Industries lay on the company's existing brand. The company has established a theme across channels in accordance with the brand symbols, with a reasonably well-designed website. Furthermore, the CEO is an Australian experienced in operation management, thus could bring unique international insights into the Finnish business environment, especially for businesses looking to operate globally. The company's CEO also expresses a strong willingness to improve the firm's digital marketing channels.

The most notable weakness is the lack of a digital marketing strategy, leading to inactivity and inefficient use of digital channels. At the moment, the digital channels do not communicate the brand identity to their full potential. The company also does not have a large clientele to engage in communications.

There are great opportunities for Chimera Industries' digital marketing since most management consulting businesses in Finland do not have established social media presences, despite the heavy usage of digital channels from business buyers. Social networks' tracking tools will also provide valuable insights into conversion rate for ROI measurements.

The apparent threat at the moment for Chimera Industries comes from large international corporations with offices in Helsinki. Most of these companies have well-designed websites, social media presences, and therefore, established brand identity and credibility.

2. Objectives

The primary purpose of Chimera Industries' digital marketing strategy is to create an on-line brand identity for the company. With the help of different analytics tools, Chimera Industries could measure the different indicators of a successful digital branding strategy. Since the company currently do not employ any analytics tools, it is not possible to create specific numerical objectives in this strategy. However, the data could be collected in the first week and compared to the week later while implementing the strategy. The measurable objectives will be created using the SMART model, which stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely.

Specific goals answer the questions of what, where and how. Chimera Industries' final objective is to build brand identity through digital marketing channels, this, in turn, increase brand awareness and drive up the engagement rate. The marketing strategy should lead to a more active online presence. To achieve this, a marketing specialist is required to implement and monitor this strategy, updating the company's social media, website, and emails as scheduled. Analytics are done monthly to monitor the progress of all the digital marketing channels and to implement changes if required.

Goals should be measurable to let the company know when the phase is completed. Objectives could be based on the engagement rate, web traffic, search engine ranking, domain authority, number of email subscriptions. These measuring tools will be discussed in the control chapter.

Achievable goals refer to realistic objectives for the time period taking the company's resources into consideration. The strategy took into account the lack of personnel at the moment. In the period of one year, the goal regarding social media engagement rate should be set so that it is attainable and could keep staff motivated. The goals should always be relevant to the final purpose of building the brand identity and convey the brand elements in the content published.

Finally, the last letter in SMART stands for Timely, which means the goals should have a deadline as to when they should be achieved. Chimera Industries could take this strategy into practice by the beginning of 2019 and constantly evaluate the monthly goals to monitor the progress.

The suggested set of objectives are:

Objective 1: Engagement: Achieve an engagement rate of 10% by 2020

Objective 2: Acquisition: Increase brand visibility measured by website traffic by 100% in 2020

Objective 3: Activity: Increase email frequency to twice per month from June 2019 to December 2019.

3. Strategy and Tactics

The strategy stage discussed the general plan to achieve the set of suggested objectives, keeping the final goal of creating an online brand identity for the company in mind. Combining with the tactics stage, this chapter explain the general strategy for the e-marketing mix.

3.1 Search Engine Marketing

Search engine optimisation starts with quality content. Since the target audience of the company is businesses looking to achieve further growth, it is essential that the content be of interest of the said audience, offering extra educational contexts. Topics potential customers are likely to be searching for involve management consulting, business development, growth management, branding, innovation.

The website then needs to be redesigned to include these keywords; this way search engines could recognise the company's offerings and match it up with certain searches. Descriptions of the websites should be added to include these words. Keywords research needs to be conducted regularly for the SEO strategy to stay up-to-date with current business trends. The number of backlinks could be improved by posting quality content frequently, linking back to website in other channels' post, doing interviews on other blogs or sites. Google Analytics is used to assess website traffic growth.

Even though paid ads do not receive as big of an interaction rate as organic listings, a small budget could be used on Pay-per-click to put the website in the first page of search engines results pages in the beginning to boost brand visibility.

3.2 Website Marketing

As with SEM, the target audience of the website is business buyers actively looking for business consulting services or for Chimera Industries itself. Every other digital channels direct customer back to the company's website. With that in mind, the website should be designed to provide:

- Value proposition regarding the functional, emotional and self-expressive benefits of the services.
- Core values and visions of the organisation and introduction of the team members' backgrounds, written in a personal voice.
- A blog with quality industry-related knowledge from international viewpoints that encourages sharing.
- A mechanism to collect contact information through a subscription email system.

Everything that helps customers make a purchasing decision, such as professional portfolios or white papers, needs to be shown on the website. Additionally, beautiful, informative

presentations could elevate the look of the site. To form solid connections with customers, the more information available, the better.

Blog posts should be updated more often, with content such as industry trends, new products, and services, team members' stories. The posts should not be explicitly promotional; instead, they should focus on providing valuable knowledge to potential customers and communicating expertise.

3.3 Social Media Marketing

Social media is ideal for establishing two-way communication with customers, and Twitter and LinkedIn have been identified as the best suited social networks for the company's B2B audience. Having active social media profiles communicates the brand's personality and increases brand credibility.

LinkedIn is the social network for professionals and business people; thus, the audience is quite small but affluent. This medium should be used to connect with existing and potential customers in the network and to share professional knowledge. The first step of the LinkedIn strategy is to connect with people in the industry and follow relevant organisations. LinkedIn's groups and hashtags are where Chimera Industries could participate in valuable conversations. The most active groups vary in sizes from 200-1000 members and could be related to business consulting, innovation, branding. Engaging in conversations with connections is required to build relationships and increase the engagement rate. LinkedIn success could be measured by the platform's built-in analytics tool.

Twitter is a form a microblogging that could reach a specific targeted audience. This social network is good for customer communication through tweets, retweets, and direct messaging. Chimera Industries should start by branding the profile with the company's logo and following current and potential customers. Large organisations or publications also provide information worth following. After that, the company should start providing assistance or valuable content to the community free-of-charge. Twitter should be used to share links back to other platforms, exciting events and articles, small business tips. The trending hashtags on the platform is an excellent way to participate in the conversation.

3.4 Email Marketing

Email marketing is an effective form of direct marketing, aimed at existing or prospective customers. The email subscription systems and follow-up emails should be used more frequently.

The emails should be short with content that offers value and involves a certain level of personalisation, such as including the writer's and the readers' name in the message. An attractive subject line is required to encourage receivers to open the emails. Visual con-

Content is not usually suited as emails with embedded pictures are most likely to be seen as spam.

Content sent through emails could include marketing materials and responses to specific inquiries. Since the company currently has a short list of contacts, it is possible to manage email conversation personally. Follow-up emails to existing customers should be on a regular schedule based on specific customers' behaviours.

4. Actions

Stage five of the digital marketing strategy is focused on actionable measures that bring the plan to life. The action stage answers the question : "Who does what and when?"

4.1 Search Engine Marketing

Keyword analysis conducted through Google Trends could provide knowledge about search trends change over time. Typing the term "business Finland" in Google Trends and setting the location to Finland provide the visualisation of the popularity of the term in the past 12 months (see image 1.)

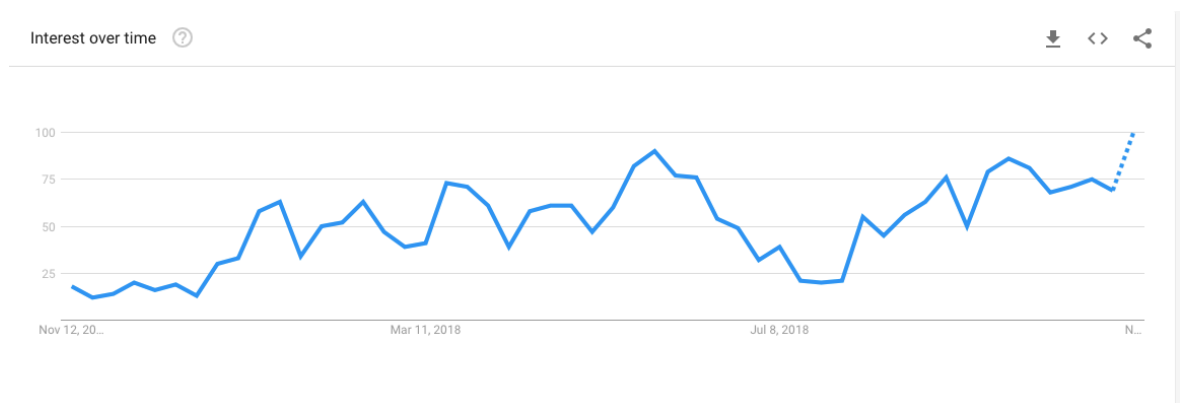


Image 1. Interest in the term "business Finland" the past 12 month (Google Trends 2018)

As seen in figure 1, interest in "business Finland" has been on the rise in the past year and is projected to reach the highest point this November. The tools also provide related topics and queries that could be used as keywords, such as business ethics or business analytics. Google Adwords also provides a similar tool but for a subscription fee.

A keyword analysis should be done monthly and thus, website optimisation should be done accordingly. Reaching out to websites with similar keywords with high authority is also a priority. Partnerships with these sites through guest blogging once every three months can increase Chimera Industries's domain authority.

Similar keywords could be applied also to PPC. A Google Adwords budget has been set at 100€ per month, based on the average cost-per-click, that would pay for 20 visits.

4.2 Website Marketing

The first step in the website marketing plan implementation is to redesign the website to include all information regarding value propositions and keywords. The website texts should be uniformed and easy to read while following the brand's theme and voice. It is good to create a button for each component on the site, which could include: Home, Services (including value propositions), About us, Blog, Privacy statement, Contacts.

Content on the sites should be updated to reflect changes in the organisations as soon as they happen. Quality blog posts should be posted every month (suggestion: every first Monday of the month) and encourage comments from readers. Since the company is currently using Wix to manage the website, it will receive notifications every time a comment is posted, therefore, the comments should be replied to as soon as possible.

4.3 Social Media Marketing

A schedule should be published for social media posts. On LinkedIn, the company's page should be updated once per week with digital presentations, articles, news pieces, or links to the website's blog posts. The profile, however, should be checked daily for opportunities to communicate. For Twitter, the number of tweets per day could vary from 1-4, communication through messages in retweet and chat could amount to 50 daily. Visual content is encouraged.

The company could dedicate thirty minutes a day in total to update and engage in conversation on both Twitter and LinkedIn. A decision should be made as to whether the company would use social media on weekends. There are multiple tools that could be used to manage and schedule posts such as HootSuite or TweetDeck. TweetDeck is the free choice of the two. A screenshot from TweetDeck is shown in image 2.

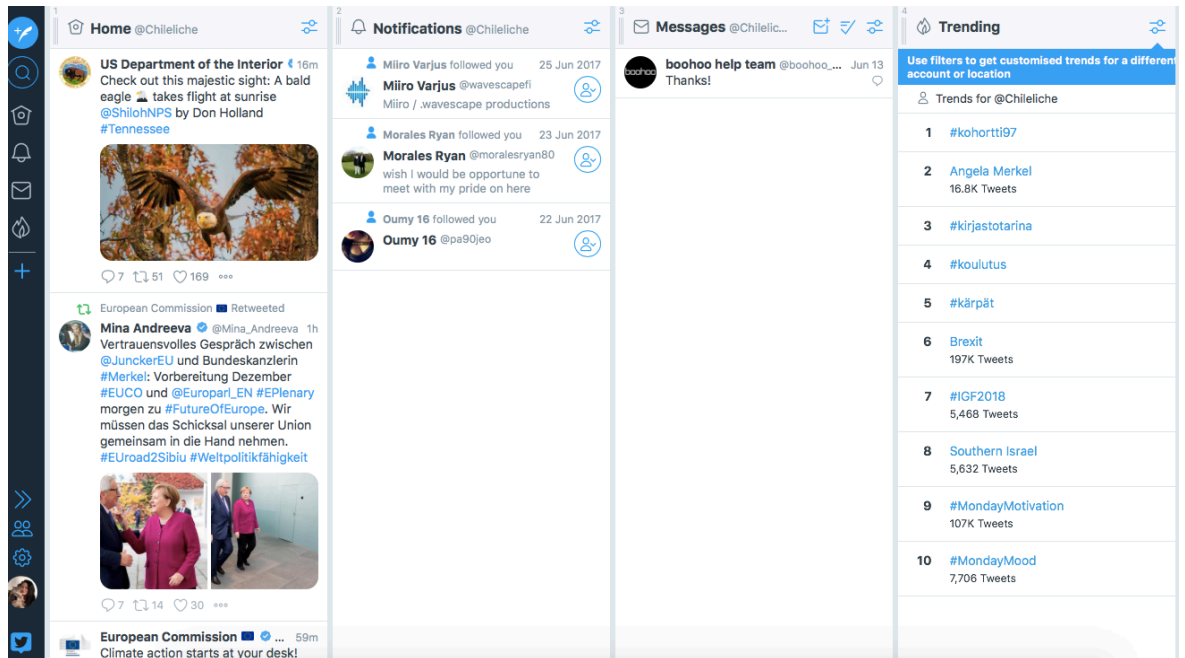


Image 2. TweetDeck user interface (TweetDeck 2018)

TweetDeck allows scheduling of tweets and easy notification and message management, especially for useful for weekends and holidays.

To start implementing the strategy, Chimera Industries should change their profile picture into the company's logo and find at least 200 users to follow, followed by around ten more each week. The accounts that the company follow should belong to the industry, particularly existing and potential customers. Public accounts such as the city's profile page should also be followed. Daily routines for Twitter include:

- Check for comments, notifications, messages and new follower. Engage by retweeting or answering direct messages.
- Go through Twitter feeds and comment, like, or retweet on relevant and interesting posts.
- The number of tweets to aim for is 4 per day, which can include retweets, link to website, photo updates, questions such as: "Do you think AI could replace human in the workforce by 2050?" to engage followers.
- Check and engage in industry chats by searching for relevant hashtags, for example: #businessconsultants #b2b

It is sufficient to update LinkedIn once per week, but replying to messages as soon as possible is encouraged. Sharing interesting industry news is a way to get engagement, which could be creating videos, presentations, or articles. Weekly routine on LinkedIn include:

- Reply to comments and messages
- Post content and encourage comments

4.4 Email Marketing

Email marketing could be used for customer acquisition, conversion, or retention. The emails should stay on brand and communicate in the same voice as in other channels. Email signatures should include the brand logo to communicate professionalism.

For potential customers who sign up for newsletters, emails regarding new blog posts or marketing materials such as presentation and videos could be sent once or twice per month depending on the amount of news from the company. The attachment must not exceed 2MB since it will then be uploaded as a Google Drive file, and people will be less likely to click on and read.

Regarding customers with inquiries, it is important that the responses are sent out as soon as possible, therefore, email inbox should be checked daily, preferably in the morning. Messages should be written in a personal voice and addressed to the specific person.

Data from customers could be acquired when given permission. Keeping a calendar of holidays and special events for each existing customers is an excellent practice, and emailing to them on the special day will create a personal connections and build solid relationships.

5. Control

It is essential that the progress on each marketing channels is tracked by using suitable tools. Multiple platform offer tracking service such as SproutSocial, HootSuite, MailChimp, but these require a subscription fee. The tools offered here have been researched and tested and deemed most suitable by the thesis writer.

5.1 Search Engine Marketing

Monitor Backlinks is a tool with a built in feature that shows a company's keywords ranking, this information lets the company know if they are targeting the right keywords and if their site is actually growing in the ranking. Domain authority score and backlinks should also be checked monthly by any free domain authority checker on the internet.

GoogleAnalytics is a tool to use for measuring the organic traffic and mobile traffic of the website and its bounce rate. Having a high bounce rate mean that the viewers click on the site then immediately click away.

If PPC is taken into use, it is crucial to track search engine marketing ad impression and the number of clicks from the Ads. A low number of impressions and high number of clicks imply a relevant SEM campaign. Google Adwords provide these data for any PPC campaigns.

5.2 Website Marketing

Organic traffic data from SEM marketing is also useful in measuring the success of website marketing. Furthermore, GoogleAnalytics also provides Time spent on page and Returning visitors information. A high proportion of returning visitors mean that the readers like the content Chimera Industries provided.

5.3 Social Media Marketing

Sprout Social is a good tool to provide necessary information such as engagement rate, best tweets, follower counts to measure a profile's success on Twitter. The tool also allows integration of other platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, in case the company is interested in expanding their online presence in the future.

For LinkedIn, the built-in system is a great tool for analysing statistics, especially for companies' pages. The tool provides data about Reach and Engagement rate, which are essential for the measuring of the profile.

5.4 Email Marketing

The performance of email marketing could be measure by the email list growth rate, which is how many new people are signing up for email subscriptions. This data is available through Wix and should be measured every month.

Further data could be collected through the email service provider about email open rate and clickthrough rate, which is telling as to if customers find the emails attractive enough to read and click on the links included.

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