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MARKETING COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES
CASE COMPANY: VERKOTAN OY

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ABSTRACT

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This bachelor thesis work aims at the improvement of marketing communication guidelines and the research of the theory behind it for business-to-business company Verkotan Oy. The company locates in Oulu, Finland and operates in the wireless industry, providing high-quality testing and certification services for the wireless devices worldwide.

The primary purposes were to improve and develop practical marketing communication guidelines, which can be further used by the company to create an annual marketing communication plan and marketing plan in general. The objectives were to learn what features marketing communications have and why they are vital for business-to-business companies.

The report comprises two main parts: theoretical research on marketing communications and contemporary theory, and practical study of the case company and further development work on its marketing communications.

The practical part of the work is based on the theory studied, the present reliable information about the company, company's analysis, the author's and employees experience, and individual discussions.

The whole practical part is the achievement of this thesis work since it contains valuable information which can be used by the company in the future. More, precisely, the main result of the work is the enhancement of marketing communications and suggestions for further development.

Keywords: marketing, marketing communications, business-to-business company

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1 INTRODUCTION

This bachelor thesis work focuses on improvement and development of marketing communications and studying the theory behind it for business-to-business company Verkotan Oy. The company locates in Oulu, Finland and operates in the wireless industry, providing high-quality testing and certification services for wireless devices worldwide.

Marketing communications itself is a composition of methods, tools, and tactics to convey a message about a product or service to the target customers. A company needs to have a marketing communication plan, which is a strategy of informing company's target audience about its product or service. However, in this work, the focus is on the improvement and development of the guidelines instead; because the plan requires more in-depth study compared to guidelines, and more aspects need be considered and worked out. The case company does not have a marketing communications plan or guidelines at the moment; therefore, to develop one will be a great advantage for the company. Mastering these guidelines is essential as it helps the company connect with customers, promote services, convert visitors to customers, and keep them using different marketing tools.

Purposes of this bachelor's thesis work are to improve the current marketing communications and develop them, so it can be further used by the company to create an annual marketing communication plan. These guidelines aim to give a realistic approach to improving the current situation as well as effective planning for the future.

The research was conducted with objectives to learn what features marketing communications have and what they mean for business-to-business company.

The theoretical framework of the thesis focuses on marketing, business-to-business marketing, marketing communications, and what considerations and specifics they have.

The practical part of the work is based on the theory studied in the theoretical framework, the present reliable information about the company and its current situation analysis, the author's and employees work experience and individual discussion conducted by the author face-to-face. The

discussions were held with the company's employees, namely, with the CEO, technical sales manager, and sales managers.

The practical part of the thesis focuses on the current situation analysis of the company, development of marketing communication guidelines, suggestions for the company, evaluation of the work, and discussion on how well the theory and practice worked together. This part has a few limitations described further. Practical part of this work comprises two main parts which are Current Situation Analysis and Marketing Communication Guidelines Development For the Case Company. It is essential to inform the reader that during the working process, the author concluded that content marketing and digital marketing would be two best choices as a marketing approach for this specific case company. That is why, in the theoretical part, these types of marketing are examined in detail.

Digital marketing is a vital part of a company's process and a complex of different marketing tools that are referred to in this work. As for such tools as search engine optimizations, pay-per-click, and website conversion, these moments will be studied superficially, as they include many details and require a separate approach and research.

Plenty of theory and practice in this work is based on existing information about the company and the experience of reliable employees. The author completed her professional training at the company as a sales and marketing trainee and then worked there for more than six months, focusing mainly on marketing. Thus, specific points of work will also be based on the author's personal experience gained at the workplace, having the opportunity to look inside the company.

The findings of this work are the improvement of the marketing communications and development suggestion for the company. The improvement implies a detailed review of each marketing communication tool the company currently uses and subsequent work with it - for example, schedule creation, and suggestions on the composition of information that will reach the customers.

The Verkotan Oy company supported this thesis work. This work will also benefit the author and gives more knowledge and understanding of what role marketing communications play for the company. The case company is a business-to-business company; therefore, the value and characteristics of only such companies will be studied in the theoretical part of the work.

2 BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING PLANNING

This chapter covers the theoretical background for essential concepts of this work – marketing concepts, marketing communications, and marketing tools. It is crucial to study these concepts to acquire ideas and knowledge on the chosen topic.

Marketing concept is widespread in our daily life and influences individual needs, companies, and society as a whole. Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large (Kotler & Keller 2016, 27). Overall marketing is about identifying and meeting human and social needs.

2.1 Marketing planning process

Markets nowadays are diverse and competitive. Thus strategies of each business need to be tailored to individual demands, customer needs, and expectations. To create an individual, specific strategy companies use the business unit strategic planning. The business unit strategic planning process consists of 7 main elements considered to be the most important in the developing of an effective and durable marketing plan (see figure 1).

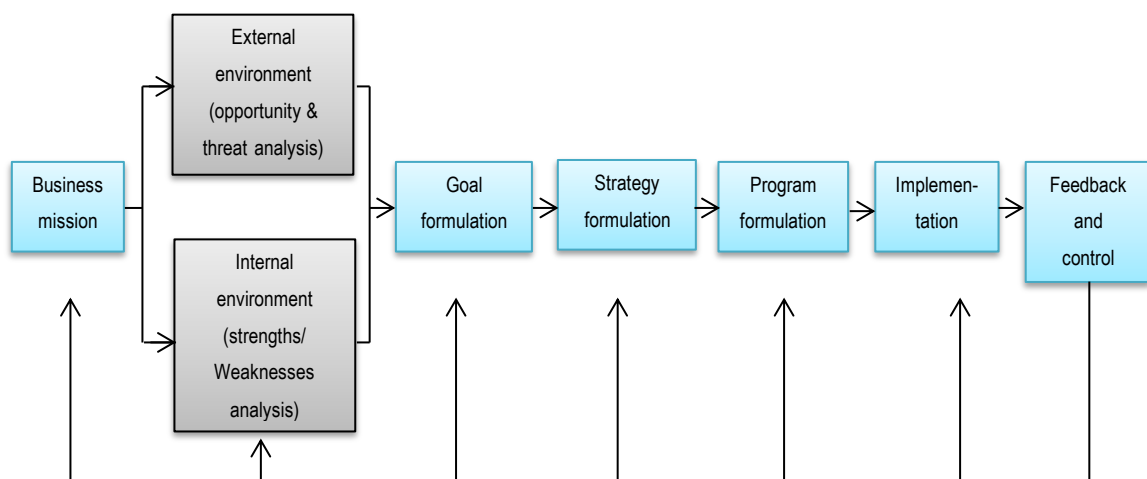


FIGURE 1. The Business Unit Strategic-Planning process (Kotler & Keller 2016, 70)

Further below, each of the seven steps is examined as follows.

- Business mission – is a specific mission each company needs to define.
- SWOT analysis – is the overall evaluation of a company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It includes internal and external environments. The SWOT analysis will be explained in details further in this work (see subchapter 2.3).
- Goal formulation – is a process of developing specific goals for the planning period. Goals are objectives that are specific for magnitude and time. Usually, companies use a mix of objectives that may include profitability, sales growth, market share improvement, risk control, innovation, and reputation.
- Strategy formulation – is a process of designing a strategy for achieving goals that the company sets.
- Program formulation and implementation. Once the strategy and marketing programs are formulated, it is essential to implement this right. Seven elements allow companies to be more successful at strategy implementations – strategy, structure, systems, style, skills, staff, and shared values.
- Feedback and control. As the environment is continuously changing, companies might remain efficient and be ready to respond to a changing environment, adapt new goals and behaviours. (Keller et al. 2016, 70-77.)

Following these steps of the business unit strategic-planning process allows the company to recognize its goals, opportunities and weaknesses, create unique and valuable content for its audience, choose the best way to implement it, and become competitive in the market.

2.2 Marketing mix

Marketing is an integral part of any business and is responsible for all interactions that occur between departments of the company and between customers. According to Dibb and Simkin (2004, 3) marketing aims to satisfy customers profitably, understand their requirements and differentiate a product or services from competitors' offerings. According to Chaffey (2011, 387) marketing is the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating, and satisfying customer requirements profitably. To achieve this, the company needs to promote its brand, product, or services in the market. All the features of the product or services need to be understood, the unique selling propositions need to be studied beforehand, and the potential

target consumers need to be identified. Kotler & Keller (2016, 47) refer to McCarthy, who classified various marketing activities into a universally known marketing mix – the four Ps, that is used for these actions. The 4Ps of marketing are price, product, promotion, and place. Each of 4Ps is further discussed in detail.

- Price. It refers to the value that is put on the product considering the costs of production, target audience, supply, demand, and many other direct and indirect factors. It usually includes price strategy, pricing, discounts, payment terms, and allowances.
- Product. It refers to the actual item that is sold. The product itself must deliver a minimum level of performance. Otherwise, the remaining elements will not have the desired value, if at all. It usually includes features, quality, branding, packaging, services, and warranties.
- Promotion. It refers to all the actions and activities taken to make the product prominent and well known in the market. It usually includes sales promotion, advertising, public relations, and direct marketing.
- Place. It refers to the point of sales and the place strategy. It is imperative to get the right location for the product so that it will be easy and quick access for the incoming customer. It usually includes channels, assortment, location, inventory, and transport.

With markets development and growth opportunities, it is useful and desirable to use the extended 8Ps or Modern Marketing Management 4Ps, as Kotler and Keller (2016, 48) stated. This adds four more Ps – people, programs, processes, and performance (see figure 2).

- People. It is considered to be the most critical element of any service and experience. Company's employees, customers, other people in the service environment – these are some examples of people that are part of every business and the key to successful sales and revenue. It usually includes recruitment, training, culture, interactions.
- Programs. It refers to all consumer-directed activities in the company.
- Process. It refers to the communication process and interface between the business and the consumer. (Booms & Bitners 1981, 47-52.)
- Performance. It refers to the productivity of the business in the marketplace.

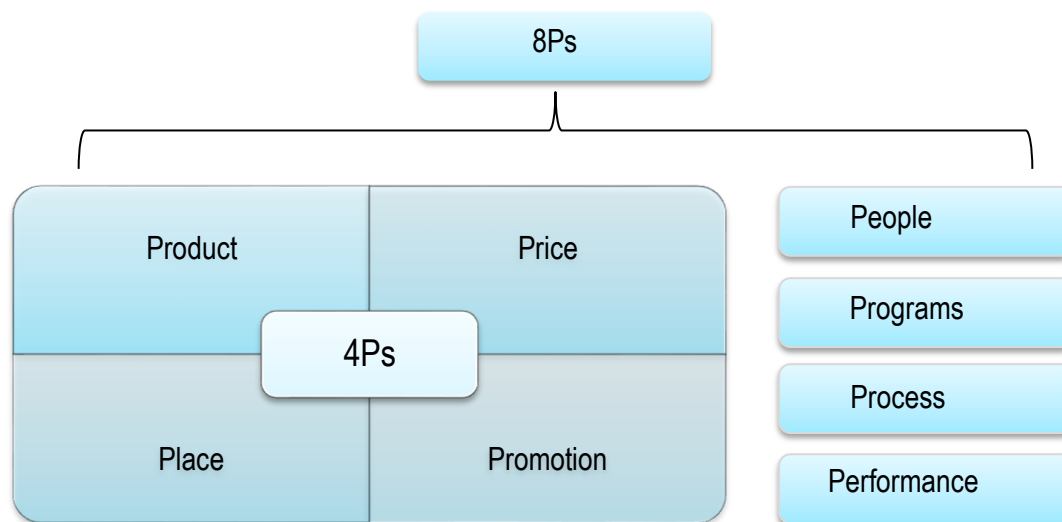


FIGURE 2. Marketing Mix 8Ps

Thereby, in order to achieve the set result, to influence the target audience and to get response in the target market it is substantial to think through every step of company's marketing building process – marketing mix.

2.3 Customer relationship management

“Customer relationship management (CRM) is the process of carefully managing information about individual customers and customer touch-points to maximize loyalty” (Kotler et al. 2016, 168). A touch-point refers to any interaction that affects the way a customer feels about the product, brand, company, business or services.

CRM enables companies to provide quality customer services through the proper use of personal customer information. Based on the information company has about a particular customer, the company can customize products, services, market offerings and campaigns. (Kotler et al. 2016, 168.)

Any business and company need to get educated in the area of customer relationship management in order to attract and retain the right customers and meet the individual needs of valued customers (Kotler et al. 2016, 174).

2.4 SWOT analysis as a part of the marketing process

A success of any business is always built on the company's core competences. The SWOT analysis stands for overall evaluation of a company's strengths-S, weaknesses-W, opportunities-O and threats-T. It includes all internal and external factors that influence the company. It can include internal operations, marketing mix, resources, skills and management skills. (Chaffey, 2011, 391.) External environment stands for opportunities and threats, while internal environment stands for strengths and weaknesses of the company. Internal features of the company are entirely under the company's control, while the organization does not influence external factors. Strengths and opportunities are considered as auxiliary factors in the development and analysis of the company, while weaknesses and threats are harmful for the company.

As stated by Dibb and Simkin (2004, 25), the SWOT analysis examines a company's position, resources, management and trading practices, product, people, promotion, pricing and distribution.

Further below, each component of the SWOT analysis is described briefly (see table 1).

<p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTHS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Characteristics of a business which give it advantages over its competitors</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">WEAKNESSES</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Characteristics of a business which make it disadvantageous relative to competitors</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Elements in a company's external environment that allows it to formulate and implement strategies to increase profitability</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THREATS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Elements in the external environment that could endanger the integrity and profitability of the business</p>

TABLE 1. SWOT Analysis (CFI Corporate Finance Institute 2019, cited 12.08.2019)

The SWOT analysis for the case company is the part of the practical domain of the work and is located below in the text (see subchapter 3.4).

2.5 Business-to-business marketing

Business-to-business (B-2-B) refers to a business that is conducted between companies, rather than between a company and individual consumer (Chen 2019, cited 21.05.2019). It refers to the exchange of products or services among companies. B-2-B segment is much smaller compared to business-to-consumer; therefore attracting buyers is more sophisticated.

B-2-B marketing is a set of marketing actions and processes that include market research, marketing strategy development, promotion and data analysis of product or services between companies (Lessard 2018, cited 28.08.2019).

Consumers in the market mainly choose products based not only on price but equally on popularity, reviews and other emotional triggers. B-2-B buyers, in turn, base their decisions on bottom-line revenue impact (Lessard 2018, cited 28.08.2019.) Clients of the B-2-B market are professional buyers who know what exactly they need and are well aware of specifics of product or service.

As B-2-B marketing is much more specialized than, for example, consumer marketing, it requires a clear understanding of the customer's needs and how to deliver information to that specific customer in the most efficient way. To ensure valid promotion, the company needs to carefully consider the channels through which to promote the brand, where the customers will come from.

Here are the list stated by Lessard (2018, cited 28.08.2019) of the most common B-2-B marketing types and tools used by the companies to communicate company information, stimulate potential and existing customers and motivate action:

- Blogs
- Search
- Social media
- Whitepapers and eBooks
- Email

- Photo and video content

2.6 Marketing communications

Marketing communications are how companies attempt to inform, persuade, and remind customers about the products and brands they sell. Through marketing communications, consumers can learn more about the product and what the company and brand stand for, and accordingly, they can either become motivated to try it or refuse to choose this product. (Kotler & Keller 2016. 580.)

“Marketing communication activities in every medium contribute to brand equity and drive sales in many ways: by creating brand awareness, forging brand image in consumers’ memories, eliciting positive brand judgments or feelings, and strengthening consumer loyalty” (Kotler et al. 2016, 583).

2.6.1 How to develop effective communications

Effective communications require three main elements – sender, message, and receiver – connected by a message channel. The marketer must determine what the consumer is buying – that is, the consumer’s motivations (Czinkota & Ronkainen 2013, 423-433.)

Kotler and Keller (2016, 586) identified eight key steps that are required and are crucial to respect in order to develop effective marketing communications (see figure 3).

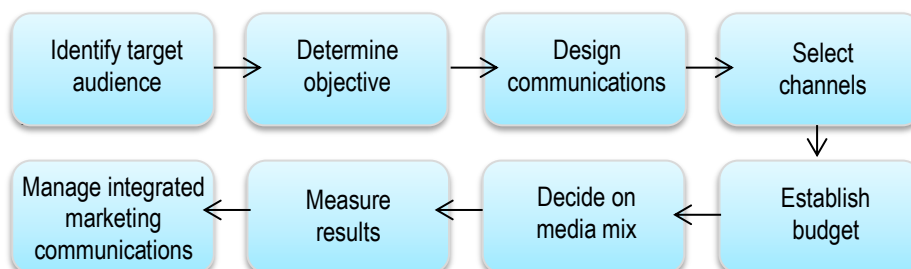


FIGURE 3. Steps in Developing Effective Communications (Kotler & Keller 2016, 586)

Further, the author explicates each step and its significance briefly.

- Identify a clear target audience - potential buyers of a company's products or services, current users, influencers, the general public. Target audience is the decisive factor for the development of the communications.
- Determine objectives. Set realistic and achievable communications objectives a business wants to achieve.
- Design communications. It requires defining three interdependent stages: message strategy – what to say, creative strategy – how to say it, and message source – who should say it.
- Select the communications channels. They may be personal and nonpersonal. Personal communications channels include one or two people communicating face to face or one person to audience through phone or e-mail. Nonpersonal communications channels include advertising, event, and experiences trade shows and public relations.
- Establish the total marketing communications budget.
- Selecting the media mix. Companies must allocate their marketing communications budget over the eight major modes of communication which are advertising, sales promotion, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, online and social media marketing, mobile marketing, direct and database marketing, and personal selling. The choice is made based on the study and selection of more effective tools, the willingness of the customers to buy the product or services, and the product or service itself (Kotler & Keller 2016, 602).
- Measuring results. It is the process of getting the results from a company's communication activities and investments such as outcomes and revenue.
- Manage integrated marketing communication. Kotler and Keller (2016, 599) refers to the American Marketing Association that defines integrated marketing communications as “a planning process designed to assure that all brand contacts received by a customer or prospect for a product, service, or organization are relevant to that person and consistent over time”. In essence, this item combines all the previous ones and their assessment in the framework of the established tasks.

2.6.2 Marketing communication mix

The marketing communication mix includes eight major models of communication, which are used to promote the company, products or services to a target audience. They can also be called marketing tools.

As had been mentioned previously, marketing tools are various tools companies use to communicate their information, induce customer interest and motivate action. There are traditional and digital marketing media, for example, search engine optimization, mobile marketing, online advertisements, email and online partnership. Social media is a subset of digital media marketing. Specific examples of social media marketing tools are posting, sharing, networking, and commenting on social media websites such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube. *Figure 4* below visually represents the elements of the marketing communication mix.



FIGURE 4. The Marketing Communications Mix (Kotler & Keller 2009, 473)

Further below, elements of the marketing communications mix are each described in more detail.

- Advertising. It refers to any paid form of presentation and promotion of goods or services.
- Sales promotion. It refers to a diversity of short-term incentives to encourage trial or purchase of a product or service, such as samples, coupons, and premiums; trade promotions, such as advertising and display allowances; and business and sales force promotions.
- Events and experiences. It refers to company-sponsored activities and programs designed to create daily or individual brand-related interactions with consumers, such as sports, arts, entertainment, and cause events as well as less format activities.
- Public relations and publicity. It refers to a diversity of programs directed to employees of the company or consumers, other firms, the government, and the media. It is done to promote or protect a company's image or individual product communications.
- Online and social media marketing. It refers to online activities and programs designed to engage customers and prospects.
- Interactive marketing or word-of-mouth marketing. Refers to the process of consumers sharing the information about different products, services and companies by talking face-to-face to by the use of social networks.
- Direct and database marketing. Use of mail, e-mail, internet or phone to communicate with customers and prospects.
- Personal selling. Refers to face-to-face interaction with prospects or potential customers in order to promote and sell the product or service. It may include presentations, answering the questions, and forth. (Kotler et al. 2016, 582)

2.7 Marketing channels

Marketing channels are channels used by business to reach the end-user. It includes people, activities and intermediaries necessary for the product to pass from the point of production to the point of consumption.

According to Kotler and Keller (2016, 32), there are three types of marketing channels the company uses to reach its target audience – communication, distribution and service channels.

1. Communication channels are media used to transfer messages from the company to target buyers or other companies and vice versa.
2. Distribution channels help deliver the physical product or service to the customer.
3. Service channels include warehouses, transportation, logistics, banks and insurance companies. That is everything that ensures the company smooth and successful transactions with potential buyers.

Undoubtedly, all three types of marketing channels are significant for a company's marketing. However, this thesis work focuses on developing marketing communications for the company, so the focus is on marketing communications channels above all.

2.8 Content marketing

Content marketing is a strategic marketing technique of creating and distributing valuable and consistent content to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience (Steimle 2014, cited 21.09.2019). Content marketing is an approach that allows the company to develop rather than getting quick sales. It is used to increase brand awareness, attract clicks, potential customers and sales. Indispensable part of a good content strategy is expertise in a specific area. It means that publications that company releases may not be directly related to the company itself, but the area, it operates in. People see the level of expertise and therefore choose to buy from that company.

Regular publications of content useful for the target audience lead to confidence building, the emergence of new customers, building the reputation of a brand, and increase loyalty of the audience. When implementing content marketing channels, it is essential to publish material that meets several conditions. The material should be precious, useful, high-quality, and relevant. It is essential to be regular to get and keep people involved through social media. The more content is published, the more engagement there is.

The content marketing pyramid is a great strategy that enables the company to maximize its content. It demonstrates the components of quality marketing, which should be published regularly (see figure 5).

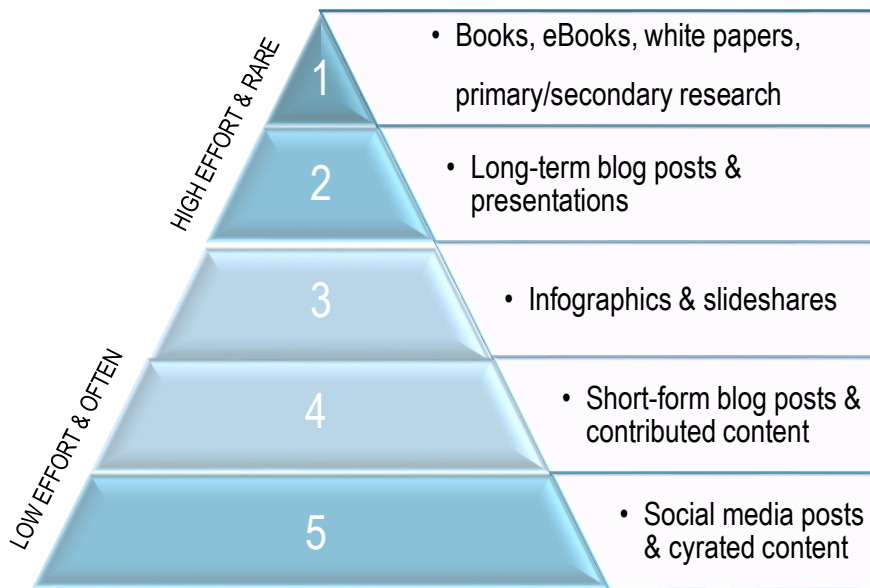


FIGURE 5. The Content Marketing Pyramid (Deshpande 2019, cited 2.09.2019)

According to the pyramid, social media posts, blog posts and articles should be published regularly and often without requiring too much effort. More laborious useful materials, like videos, photos and slides, are published less often and require low to high effort. The topmost layer of the pyramid is white papers, books, e-books and other printed materials. This type of content marketing material is very laborious, rarely published and requires much time, effort, and the participation of many people. However, in industries where trust and recognition of expertise is essential, such types of marketing materials are very useful and remain so for an extended period.

2.9 Digital marketing

Digital marketing is the process of integration of all possible forms of digital channels to promote a brand, products or services. Nowadays, this includes television, radio, social media and other forms. The use of advanced digital capabilities in the B-2-B business allows reaching the maximum of target customers and establishes the effectiveness of interaction with them, which ensures high efficiency of this approach. According to Kotler and Keller (2016, 32) modern digital media and its constant development, gives marketers various ways to interact with consumers and existing customers. These communications ways are grouped into three main categories: earned, owned, and paid media (see figure 6).

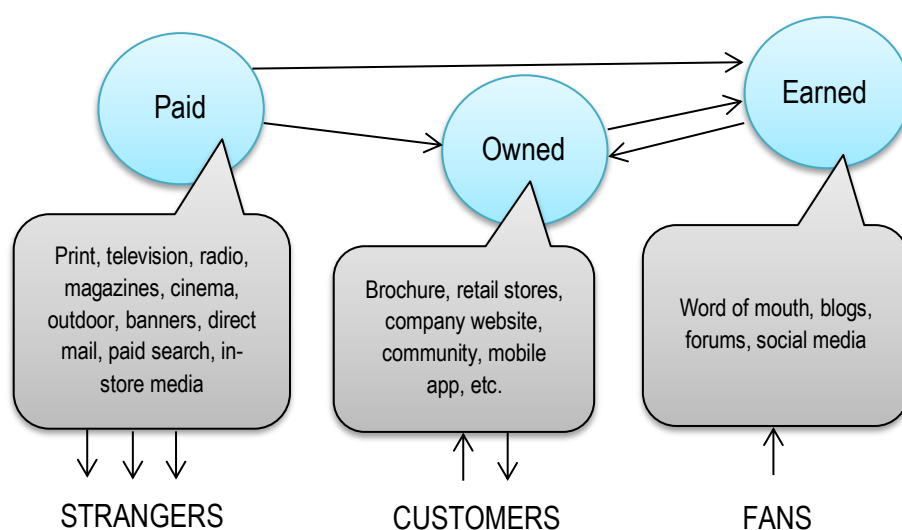


FIGURE 6. Paid, Owned and Earned Media (OMI Online Marketing Institute 2013, cited 26.08.2019)

Paid media is everything that allows the company to show its brand, products, services or advertisements for a fee. It includes TV, magazines, paid search, sponsorships, social media posts, sponsored advertising and others. The paid media audience is users of the World Wide Web who have not heard of the company before but are potentially interested in its products or services. These communications are ideal for conducting; for example, large-scale online campaigns aimed at increasing brand awareness and attracting conversions. Its undoubted advantage is the ability to measure the return on money and effort.

Owned media are communication channels the company owns, like a brand brochure, website, social media pages, company's own editions and others. Company independently creates and fully controls them. The audience of owned media is all the old, new and potential customers of the brand.

Earned media are streams in which customers and other outsiders voluntary communicate on something about the company, for example, shares, reposts, reviews, comments, and word of mouth. The audience of this channel consists mainly of those who are currently targeted by company advertising, as well as brand fans and those people who have previously been attracted through paid and organic online marketing channels.

Given the enormous marketing potential contained in the channels described above, every company in each business sector will inevitably adapt and optimize these strategies and processes for themselves. This, in turn, contributes to the growth of traffic from search engines and social networks, and long-term results.

All of the models, marketing elements, tools and channels described in the theoretical part of this work were essential to study for further part of the work, the practical framework that includes marketing communications development for the case company. The next part of the work encompasses the company's current situation analysis and further development of marketing communications for the company.

3 CURRENT SITUATION ANALYSIS FOR THE CASE COMPANY

This chapter covers the practical part of the work conducted using existing information about the company, theory studied, discussions with employees, employees and the author's experience. It covers information about the case company and SWOT analysis.

3.1 Case company Verkotan

3.1.1 Background

Case company Verkotan Oy is a Finnish based company founded in 2014 and started operations in 2015. The company locates in Oulu, Finland. It is an accredited testing laboratory operating in the wireless industry (Verkotan 2019, cited 5.05.2019). Verkotan is specialized in the fastest and the most accurate wireless test and certification solutions for wireless devices worldwide. It includes testing the devices for international standard and certificate services for their customers.

Verkotan is a Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association (CTIA) Authorized and Finnish Accreditation Service (FINAS) accredited test company and a member of numerous widely recognized global organization. Verkotan's testing services include SAR (Specific Absorption Rate) testing, OTA (Over-the-Air) testing, antenna testing, tailored test solutions, European Conformity (CE), Federal Communication Commission (FCC) and Innovation, Science, and Economic Development (ISED) certifications and certification solutions through partners, and other services. Employee's expertise and technology allows creating completely new test services according to customer needs.

The language of the company's operations is mainly English. Thus all the marketing activities are done in English to be targeted at a broad audience right away. However, because the company has many customers with a Finnish background, it also operates in Finnish, language more suitable for the customer.

3.1.2 Industry

Verkotan is operating in the wireless industry, which consists of information and communication technology, made up from telecommunications companies and internet service providers. This industry plays a crucial role in the evolution of mobile communications and the information society. According to Beers (2019, cited 5.05.2019), companies that work in that industry create the infrastructure that allows data in words, voice, audio or video to be sent anywhere in the world. The largest companies in the sector are wireless operators, cable companies and internet services providers.

The main point for the company in the industry is to receive performance satisfaction of the end-user. Within the value chain, Verkotan provides such services as, wireless performance test services consulting, building up capability, maintain the system. The services depend on the nature of request from the customer/client.

Internet of Things (IoT) is a slightly different branch, as companies in this area do not have their own capabilities. Therefore, companies from this branch apply for Verkotan services to help them understand what, why, when and how should be tested to get to the market. (Komonen, discussion 19.04.2019)

The industry is changing dramatically. Years ago only 5% of testing was done by antennas and the other 95% using cable. Now the situation is changing to absolute opposite way, and antennas become very complicated because of 5G – the fifth-generation cellular network technology. (Mäkikyrö, discussion 10.07.2019)

According to Komonen (discussion, 19.04.2019), there are several segments Verkotan is operating with or providing services to. Here is the list of these segments:

- Wearable devices and smartphones
- Research & development houses
- Cellular network operators. Verkotan can provide professional test services, e.g. antenna testing. A device testing is also a possibility if an operator requires it.
- Chipset vendors
- Network vendors
- Antennas
- Medical and IoT devices

- Test houses-partners, who or to whom the case company subcontract

3.1.3 Current marketing communications

Situation analysis aims to understand the current and future environment in which the company operates in order that the strategic objectives are realistic, considering what is happening in the marketplace.

The current marketing actions of the company is based on every day mostly short-term tasks, that are assigned to a specific person or persons, and that each employee can follow in platform called Trello, that will be described further (see subsection 3.1.4). At this stage, the company does not have a long-term marketing communications plan or guidelines.

3.1.4 Marketing communications tools

Further below, there is a list of channels and tools currently used in the case company.

1. Digital marketing channels:

1.1 Digital marketing tools.

- **Pay-Per-Click (PPC) through Google AdWords.** Verkotan is currently running two campaigns, which aim to acquire leads, consolidate the brand presence on search engine and supplement the organic position of company's main page. These two campaigns have moderate success with desired clicks and leads from this digital marketing medium. (Bakhit, discussion 20.09.2019)
- **Search Engine Optimisations (SEO).** It is a process of ensuring good traffic to the company's webpage through organic search engine results, mainly in Google. The ranks for specific keywords or search queries are decided according to Google's algorithms with different requirements and conditions that are necessary to get and keep a desired ranking in the organic search results. At the moment, Verkotan has first rankings on most of its services pages in Finland. However, in most other countries, it does not reach first page results except in a few services – SAR testing. This happens due to localization of the pages, with Verkotan pages being only available in English for the longest time, as well as the English pages not being utterly optimized for certain keywords. (Bakhit, discussion 20.09.2019)

- **Google Analytics.** It is used for monitoring and reporting results from digital marketing means used by the company.
- **Google Forms.** It is used for conducting and collecting feedback from customers who received the service. A customer survey helps to obtain real data, basis on which future adjustments or optimal management decisions are made. Through the survey, the company demonstrates to customers its interest in their opinion. Currently, there are two types of customer feedback forms – short and long. The short one (appendix 1) includes only two questions and is sent to the existing customers, who are already familiar with the company and have been using the services for some time. It is sent after the case is closed. The long one (appendix 2) includes nine questions and is more specific. It is sent once in a few months to the new customers. Usually, the form was sent by the marketing person, which could confuse the customer, who throughout the whole time was in contact with another specific person from the sales department. Now, amendments have been made, and the person working with the client must send the form. The marketing person, in turn, is engaged in the collection of reviews.

1.2 Social media marketing tools.

- **Company's website.** It is an opportunity to declare oneself, to deliver information about the activities of the company, all the services, mission and employees, what scientific work the company carried and others. The site is the company's unique media. It contains various news, for example, about the life of the company. News release did not have any specific schedule until recently when the company set a schedule for publishing news for the next 5-6 months. Still, the flaw remains since following the schedule is a challenge, and can vary, depending on the capabilities and time resources of the staff.
- **WordPress.** This platform has two essential functions, and it is mainly used to create news articles that are published on the company's website, and also, to work with the webpage, to edit all kinds of company's web pages content. Text-intensive articles with a scientific bias are created in this platform. Usually, it is the work of a marketer and laboratory expert. Articles with an amateur bias are the work of a marketer. These can be a description of the latest events in the company, appointment, interviews and more. Recently, there was a maximum of two news releases per week. From time to time, there are no publications, which indicate a lack of planning. The lack of news publications entails the absence of a monthly newsletter.

- LinkedIn.** It is the leading platform for breaking the current news and upcoming events in which the company will participate. It currently has 334 subscribers, and the number is growing slowly but continuously. Based on analytics from the Verkotan LinkedIn page (see figures 7-9), platform users are more responsive and more interested in live news, regarding the life of the company, employees, various interviews and more. In the figures below, the number of impressions is highlighted in the red circle. The most impressions belong to the news directly swaying the inner life of the company, while other posts of a more professional nature gain half as much.

Company From The Inside: Sales and Marketing Trainees Verkotan All followers	Elisa Lahtinen	8/27/2019	1,032	-	66	6.4%	18	2	6
It is time to relax and enjoy the warm summer sun. Happy Midsummer! Hyvää... All followers	Elisa Lahtinen	6/20/2019	653	-	11	1.68%	11	0	1
Ireland based company FIRE1 for Verkotan's latest reference All followers	Elisa Lahtinen	6/18/2019	465	-	11	2.37%	13	0	6
Verkotan is attending the Europe's Largest and Leading Internet of Things event in... All followers	Elisa Lahtinen	6/17/2019	588	-	19	3.23%	12	0	6
5G Beamforming Antenna Measurements for Orbis Systems, Electromagnetic Field... All followers	Mariia Smirnova	6/13/2019	349	-	6	1.72%	7	0	5
Electromagnetic Field Measurement at Verkotan All followers	Mariia Smirnova	6/10/2019	441	-	22	4.99%	8	0	7

FIGURE 7. Verkotan LinkedIn Analytics Screenshot (Verkotan LinkedIn Analytics, cited 22.09.2019)

Verkotan is happy to announce that we have a new member in our working team ... All followers	Mariia Smirnova	4/23/2019	1,581	-	43	2.72%	40	0	4
Verkotan is attending the 13th European Conference on Antennas and Propagation... All followers	Mariia Smirnova	4/1/2019	727	-	8	1.1%	13	0	6
Verkotan news: SAR Testing With a New Phantom, Canadian Recognition, 5GTN All followers	Mariia Smirnova	3/28/2019	584	-	14	2.4%	14	0	3
Verkotan is participating the 6G Wireless Summit! The summit takes place in Levi,... All followers	Mariia Smirnova	3/25/2019	702	-	11	1.57%	9	0	3
Verkotan is attending the Advanced Engineering 2019 event! The event will tak... All followers	Mariia Smirnova	3/14/2019	624	-	5	0.8%	7	0	3
Verkotan Now Provides SAR Testing With a New Phantom All followers	Mariia Smirnova	3/12/2019	815	-	26	3.19%	13	0	2

FIGURE 8. Verkotan LinkedIn Analytics Screenshot (Verkotan LinkedIn Analytics, cited 22.09.2019)

First Patent to Verkotan All followers	Mariia Smirnova	2/18/2019	838	-	34	4.06%	18	0	4
SAR and Market Surveillance Tests All followers	Mariia Smirnova	2/7/2019	436	-	8	1.83%	7	0	4
Verkotan team at Pesti-päivä! It was exciting and busy day. Many thanks to... All followers	Mariia Smirnova	1/31/2019	872	-	136	15.6%	15	0	5
Pesti-päivä 2019 at University of Oulu! Verkotan is taking part in Pesti Career Day... All followers	Mariia Smirnova	1/30/2019	655	-	14	2.14%	9	0	0
Officially 4 Years Anniversary! We are now celebrating Verkotan 4th anniversary of o... All followers	Mariia Smirnova	1/17/2019	2,272	-	62	2.73%	44	5	4
Ho-ho-ho! Verkotan wishes you a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a New Year... All followers	Mariia Smirnova	12/21/2018	1,498	-	131	8.74%	22	0	2

FIGURE 9. Verkotan LinkedIn Analytics Screenshot (Verkotan LinkedIn Analytics, cited 22.09.2019)

The LinkedIn news posts are always based on the news articles posted on the Verkotan webpage. In other words, LinkedIn news post is the summary of the article and a way to catch readers and get them to go to the company's website to read the full article. Independent posts are also published in the LinkedIn platform, for example, about the company's participation in trade fairs, announcement and other.

- **YouTube.** YouTube is rarely considered as a promotion tool; more often, it is used as an additional channel. The company has a YouTube channel that is not developed at all. It currently has four subscribers, and in 3 years, only six videos have been released. None of which exceeds two minutes. The company utilizes this platform for embedded videos on the webpage.
2. Email marketing tool.
- **MailChimp.** Verkotan utilizes this platform to create campaigns and newsletters, which are emailed to the subscribed audience once a month. Usually, the newsletter includes all the news published during the month and is released once a month. Currently, the number of subscribers to the Verkotan newsletter is over 2000.
3. Collaboration tool.
- **Trello.** Trello is a platform for organizing, scheduling and assigning tasks and current company's deals. It helps the company keep projects in order and instantly displays the current situation with projects and sales cases.

4. Lead generation tool.
 - **Leadfeeder.** It is a platform that tracks visits to a company's website, which page was visited and how much time was spent. This is very effective for the company, as it allows identifying potentially interested visitors and turning them into quality sales leads.
5. Promotional marketing tools are brochures, business cards, trade fairs. Company also possesses company presentation and videos developed to promote the brand and services while introducing the company to potential clients. The company presentation is continually being improved by updating services, data and other information.

Currently, the company is participating in a variety of possible exhibitions, mainly in Finland and in Europe. Usually, Verkotan has its stand, on which there are branded products, brochures, business cards, and equipment advertising services through a video or presentation. If there is no stand, company representatives are moving around meeting people, having discussions and sharing business cards. Such events always bring some new leads that can mature into new customers or partners.

6. Traditional marketing tools the company uses are magazines, newspapers. These tools are still in use but are increasingly being faded into the background. Typically, such tools have an established audience.

All of the listed tools are an excellent base for high-quality and effective marketing communications in the company when they are used thoughtfully and continuously.

3.2 Target markets and customers

For the B-2-B market, the target market segment is the company to which the company plans to sell its product or services. Having and knowing a target market for a product allows concentrating on a specific group of market consumers and creating an ideal product for them, sell it in the right place with the right marketing communications. If the target market is defined, then it is possible to create the proper advertising with a high response, choose the most attractive packaging, location for the sales department, and others.

According to Komonen (discussion, 2019) the main target markets for Verkotan are Scandinavian countries, Baltic countries and the UK. Currently, the main turnover comes from the following countries Finland, Germany, the UK, Sweden and Italy. The company already has a database of clients from various markets, but it is essential to get regular customers from these markets, rather the one-time customer. Without a doubt, Verkotan Company is also interested in entering other markets, such as Russia, America and countries of Asia, although it should be noted that the company already has a few customers from the listed countries.

However, when attracting customers and working, for example, with Asian countries, the USA and Russia, it is essential to understand and evaluate how the company's marketing strategy will be perceived there.

Considering that currently, Verkotan target markets are Scandinavia, the Baltic and the UK, there is no need to remodel the marketing strategy. However, it should be borne in mind when performing testing for countries, especially those crossing large state borders, that different approvals, taxes and formalities will be an integral part of the process.

Adding together, the main target markets for the case company are Scandinavian and Baltic countries and the UK. The target customers are B-2-B technology companies operating in the wireless telecommunication industry (see subchapter 3.1.2).

3.3 Competition in the industry

Wireless telecommunication industry is highly competitive and rapidly developing. Case company feature is that its founders have the measure experience in building the world-leading Nokia RF OTA test laboratories in Oulu, in the late 90's. Nokia Corporation and its brand is world-famous for its highly valued production, services and innovations. Employee's high qualification, innovative test methods, location of the company and high demand in the market, make Verkotan worthy competitor.

3.4 SWOT Analysis

This section will cover the current SWOT analysis for the case company. The table below represents the SWOT analysis (see table 2). Below after the table, each item is examined in detail.

<p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location • Knowledge, vast experience and high qualification of the employees • High-quality services • Flexibility • Presence in international markets • Continuous development of laboratories and equipment • Own patent 	<p style="text-align: center;">WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High market demand - not enough workforce • Undeveloped training system • Lack of investment in sales and marketing • Lack of clear goals • Lack of internal communications • Old work equipment - old hardware • Lack of dedication of the staff to the importance of marketing • No marketing experts
<p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many trainees • Work in international markets • Growth opportunities • Ever-growing demand 	<p style="text-align: center;">THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High number of leaders and competitors in the industry • Conventions in international work • Major investments in new technologies • A few major clients

TABLE 2. Case Company SWOT Analysis

3.4.1 Strengths

- Location. Company is located in the city of Oulu, which is considered to be a modern city where business and technology meets. It is known for active development, quality services and a diverse structure of the economy. In Finland and around the world, Oulu is known as a city of high technology.
- Knowledge, vast experience and high qualification of the employees. Each of the experts has up to 20 years of experience working in the industry.
- High-quality service. On account of the high level of expertise and knowledge company's experts can provide high-quality services to the customers.
- Flexibility. It refers to the possibility to modify test scripts and develop new test cases to fit customer need.
- Presence in international markets. Company currently provides services to several different markets, including the US, Russia, countries of the EU.
- Continuous development of laboratories and equipment. On account of the quickly changing wireless industry, future needs of existing and potential customers are also changing. Studies and forecasting allow to do quality product and services improvements by continuous innovations.
- Own patent. First patent "Testing Method and Arrangement for GPS Positioning Measurements" to Verkotan Oy was granted 14.12.2018. Development of a patent is an important and challenging step, which provides new test service capabilities, new assets and other opportunities for the company.

3.4.2 Weaknesses

- High market demand – not enough workforces. Verkotan Oy is a relatively small company, whereas the demand for the service is rapidly growing. These factors create a situation where there is not enough time to perform services due to a lack of personnel, equipment and working territory.
- Undeveloped training system. For example, during the introduction of a new employee, this employee should receive clear general information about the work and detailed about specific responsibilities and tools. The company must have a clear training plan for new employees.

- Lack of investment in sales and marketing, except for the minimum necessary funds advertising. It reduces opportunities to attract new customers.
- Lack of clear goals. The company has a clear desire to develop the business, an understanding of the things it seeks to achieve, but clear goals are not spelt out anywhere.
- The lack of internal communications. The lack of regular informing employees about the results of their work or work of others.
- Old hardware. Turning specifically to marketing, this creates significant difficulties in creating and processing content, such as photos and videos.
- Lack of dedication of the staff to the importance of marketing. Most of the employees are not involved in the marketing process, which hardens it a lot.
- No marketing experts are currently working in the marketing area of the company.

3.4.3 Opportunities

- Many trainees. It is an excellent opportunity for the company to find qualified well rounded hard-working workforce that can contribute significantly to the working process and the company's values.
- Work in international markets. Company provides services to a number of different markets, including the US, Russia, countries of the EU.
- Growth opportunities. The fact that the company operates globally around the world gives practically unlimited growth opportunities.
- Ever-growing demand.

3.4.4 Threats

- Large numbers of leaders and competitors in the industry. This reduces the company's chances of being selected by customers.
- Conventions in international work. Changes or innovation in custom procedures, duties and taxes.
- Major investments in new technologies. As the wireless industry evolves continuously and quickly, the technology also requires continuous improvements or even replacements. This, in turn, requires investments.

- A few major clients. Usually, large corporations already have suppliers of all types of products or services. However, as in this case, it happens that small companies get large customers. As a rule, such clients are given more time compared to other customers, and this work is carried out with the involvement of the first persons of the company. In other words, the cost of sales to such customers is quite high, which is explained by large incomes or the expectation of large incomes from working with this group of clients. However, this can be considered as an opportunity for a company to get such a client on its list and get a profit.

The SWOT analysis concludes this part of the work, which is devoted to the current situation analysis in the case company, what marketing communications are used, their meaning and value, and the SWOT analysis.

There is no universal structure for marketing activities that suits everyone. It depends on the specific situation, market trends, and audience. This chapter includes the research that helped the author to identify and research the current situation in the case company, what kind of marketing activities prevail at the moment, who is the customers the company willing to approach, and company's internal and external factors that affect its efficiency. All this information brings the reader to the next chapter, which is the development of marketing communications guidelines for Verkotan Oy.

4 MARKETING COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES FOR THE CASE COMPANY

This part of the work is based on the theory studied earlier, conducted research on the current situation of the case company, discussions, and personal experience of company employees and the author. The marketing communication guidelines were enhanced and developed also based on the current situation analysis of the case company, its SWOT analysis, and the content marketing pyramid.

Before moving on to this chapter, it is crucial to note one inalienable thing that will be mentioned further in this part. When talking about successful marketing results of the company, the vital moment is that the marketing activities are not the responsibility of one person in the company. To create excellent and harmonious marketing activities, each team member should be involved in one way or another. This should be considered when developing the marketing guidelines, as almost every expert in the company is included to some extent.

4.1 Objectives of the marketing communications

The process of setting objectives is a vital part of any business. Nothing is essential to the planning of international promotional campaigns than the establishment of clearly defined, measurable objective (Czinkota & Ronkainen 2013, 426). Kotler & Keller (2016) argues that most business units pursue a mix of objectives.

All the material the case company possesses and all it does is highly professional. According to Mäkikyö (discussion, 10.07.2019) in order to gain a potential customer, the information needs to be put simply and shortly for the common user to understand it. Due to the specifics of the operating area and terms used, the typical marketing may not work for such company and services the way it should. Thus it is essential to create unique and thoughtful content which will suit both professionals in this field and ordinary users.

Based on research and discussions made, the main objective of the marketing communications for the company is to deliver information about services and high-quality specialists to a target audience in the most accessible and understandable way, and the services – efficiently and fast.

It is essential to clearly state all the necessary information on the webpages, to hook and interest potential client. All of the above is the key to obtaining end-user satisfaction from using the services of the company by gaining their trust, meaning that the results were done right. Mäkikyrö (discussion, 10.07.2019) claims that it can guarantee that the customer will come back for services.

4.2 Key message

The key message is neither the advertising slogan nor the mission of the company, but the reason why the consumer should pay attention to the company and its services, and make it at least temporarily part of their life. The key message that Verkotan brings to the people is that it guarantees the fastest and most accurate wireless testing conducted by highly qualified employees with many years of vast experience. Through marketing communications, the company involves people in the processes inside the company, provides information about the success, development, and capabilities of the company. Thereby giving the audience a kind of confirmation that the company can bring what was stated.

4.3 Target audience for marketing communications

As analyzed above in this work, the main target markets for the case company are Scandinavia, the rest of Europe and the UK. The target audiences are B-2-B technology companies operating in the wireless telecommunication industry. More precisely, most potential customers are cellular network operators and antenna manufacturers. According to Salo (discussion, 21.09.2019) in their field, they always need a lot of testing for each prototype antenna. Test-house partners are also very attractive, as they produce sales for the case company and many have a greater audience reach, respectively more customers.

4.4 Channels to reach the target audience

This subchapter of the work includes marketing communication channels studied and researched in the subchapter 3.1.4. Only in this chapter, the author offers solutions for the future actions of the company, what should be done to improve the marketing of the company, attracting customers, and, accordingly increase sales.

Three factors need to be highlighted before moving along to the channels. These are the marketer, schedule, and company employees. It is crucial to have a person who is fully dedicated and responsible for the marketing activities in the company; otherwise, marketing will continuously go by the wayside, which the case company is facing now. Customers do not wait, and marketing can always wait, which is an extremely inappropriate approach. Next thing is schedule and deadlines, the importance of which is often underestimated. Following a time plan helps the company to keep customers involved in the company's activities, maintain interest in the company services, and enhance market competitiveness.

Further, the improvements in marketing communications tools are presented. These improvements were made, including the content marketing pyramid (see subchapter 2.8).

1. Digital marketing channels:

1.1 Digital marketing tools.

- **Pay-Per-Click (PPC) through Google AdWords.** The future goals for the company are to improve the quality score of keywords used, focus on a niche audience, and improve the conversion rate. This can be achieved by improving the landing pages of the website, structuring the campaigns logically with related keywords, and applying certain negative keywords to remove unwanted clicks.
- **Search Engine Optimisations (SEO).** The future goals for Verkotan are to be competitive when it comes to search results, especially in other countries than Finland. The company is currently working on that. In the recent past, Swedish and German web pages were launched. Also, continuous improvement of text content on the website, webpage load speed, backlinks, blog content, and others are subjected to constant development.
- **Google Analytics.** As it is used mainly for monitoring and reporting results from digital marketing means, except for the approach. Results received from the tool should be collected a month after the start of a new campaign. Results should be analysed and used to improve existing and future campaigns.
- **Google Forms.** As previously stated in the report, the company currently uses Google Forms for collecting feedback from the customers. It currently has two forms: the short one for the existing customer and the long one for the new customers. Because the current customer database of the company is not very large, one long survey with ten questions (see appendix 2) would be a more suitable option. At this stage of the

company's continuous development, detailed surveys of all customers will be valuable and will improve the quality of services. The form should be sent individually to every customer, only when the case is closed. The form should be sent only by the salesperson who accompanied this case, familiar with it and the client. It is more likely that the client will respond to the survey if it is sent in the context of the final email or call.

1.2 Social media marketing tools.

- **Company's website.** The website is currently valid in three languages, where the primary language is English, as well as Swedish and German. The last two options were recently implemented based on analytic received from page views. The website works appropriately; however, it needs improvements in download speed, as it is one of the first factors that affect customer decision to stay or leave the webpage. Other than that, used images and videos should be formatted so that the quality remains excellent in various places of the website. Once a month marketing person is recommended to check through all of the sections, subsections, buttons, pictures, mail and postal addresses, and other; to check that everything is working correctly and fix if not.
- **WordPress.** It is an independent platform that is great for editing the website and creating content. To increase the likelihood for an article to be in the top in a search engine, the right keywords need to be selected. This function is now available for the company; however, other essential functions will be available, that will help the content of the webpage to get to the top of search engine if the company buys advanced subscription.

WordPress platform is used for writing articles that are further published on Verkotan webpage. Author suggests publishing news articles stable once or twice a week. It can be either a scientific text or just a text with information attractive to readers. For example, if there are few upcoming tradeshows, it is easier to create one article and a relating post on LinkedIn, instead of posting a few posts on LinkedIn in a short time. The main thing is to publish weekly on Tuesday morning. If unforeseen circumstances occur, it is better to postpone the issue on Monday or Wednesday in the first half of the day, since Thursday is already busy releasing a post on another platform, namely LinkedIn. If there are two upcoming posts on the webpage, the release shall be scheduled for Tuesday and Thursday.

- **LinkedIn.** LinkedIn posts include relating posts to the news articles published on Verkotan webpage, posts including direct link to the monthly newsletter, posts about upcoming events the company will attend, and any other short announcements. As soon as the news article is published on the company's webpage through WordPress, a relating post on a recently released news article is released on the LinkedIn platform. To keep the readers and subscribers involved, LinkedIn posts should be released two times a week, on Tuesday and Thursday, on time before noon.

It is also crucial to accompany the new post with an attractive image and an enticing text that will encourage the reader to go to the news page and read the full news article.

- **YouTube.** Developing the channel on this platform is a time-consuming task. To attract subscribers, the content should be continuously published, at least once a week. Potential buyers or customers are unlikely to search for such services on YouTube, but they will follow the link to the video from the official webpage. Given the area in which the company operates, developing YouTube account as a platform for gathering subscribers and an audience will not bring benefit to the company, at least not in the near future. Therefore, it will be more productive to direct forces to the quality development of other marketing communication channels. However, for now, the YouTube channel can be used as an additional channel or as a video storage platform.

2. Email marketing tool.

- **MailChimp.** There is nothing to change in the work process with this platform, except for the elaborate inviting texts. The newsletter is a summary of all the news released in the last month. The monthly newsletter is sent only once, and there is no possibility to fix a flaw. In order for the recipient to become interested, open the letter and then follow the links that are inside, the marketer needs to come up with a specific text that will catch the reader. The monthly newsletter should be released once a month on Thursday of the last week of the month. The best timing is either early in the morning before everyone starts checking new mails, or at noon when people return to their office after lunch and recheck their mail.

3. Collaboration tool.

- **Trello.** This platform will be beneficial if not only sales and marketing employees, but all employees in the company will use it and track progress. Since the fulfilment of tasks, the common task of all. To improve the experience of usage of this platform, boards for

various tasks can be added for greater convenience. Each of the boards can be allocated to specific work processes or departments, for example, Trade exhibitions, Social media marketing activities, Webpage development, Sales and other. Then the tasks will become even more visual and organized.

4. Promotional marketing tools:

- **Creation of photo and video content.** Considering the fact that the company's area of operating seems difficult and incomprehensible for an ordinary buyer. As noted earlier, information for the customers should be presented conveniently and straightforwardly. Photo and video content is perfect for the execution of this. Photos always support textual information and clearly show what is stated. Video footage is a visual process with comments that allow the viewer to understand the essence of the work or action of any technique or equipment. The company currently has a camera available in the office, which is suitable for creating more or less amateur photos. To create professional photos for the website, the company must invite a professional photographer. This can be done as the marketer, and other top employees of the company decide to change the visuals on the website.

The photo content creation in the company should be done continuously once in 3-4 months. This includes photos of laboratories, details, employees at work and direct portraits. Photos are always relevant for refreshing the website visuals and for use in news articles and posts on social networks.

The video content can be produced along with photo creation. This includes interviews, videos demonstrating work in laboratories, video presentations for services promotion, and others.

- **Brochures.** People enjoy looking at colourful, informative flyers. Verkotan currently has updated brochure information and carefully designed flyer. It should be updated depending on the changes in the company, whether employees or technology.
- **Business cards.** Company employees currently have individual business cards. Cards have a right, strict, and simple design, and contains a minimum of necessary information. Most often, business cards are used at the exhibitions or any events where many people pass through the company's corner.

5. Traditional tool:

- Trade fairs. This is a traditional tool, is also perceived as a promotional marketing tool. As it is mentioned previously in this work (see subchapter 3.1), the trade fairs and exhibitions are great opportunities to get acquainted with people who can mature into new customers or partners. Currently, the company attends all possible events for which it has the capabilities and budget. It is great that the company realizes the importance of such events and allocates budget for it.

Further, the author presents the example of the social marketing activities schedule for November 2019 (see table 3).

NOVEMBER 2019

<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>	<i>Sunday</i>
				1	2	3
4	5 WordPress article + LinkedIn post	6	7 WordPress article +LinkedIn post	8	9	10
11	12 WordPress article +LinkedIn post	13	14 LinkedIn post	15	16	17
18	19 WordPress article +LinkedIn post	20	21 LinkedIn post	22	23	24
25	26 WordPress article +LinkedIn post	27	28 LinkedIn post Monthly website check Monthly newsletter	29	30	

TABLE 3. Schedule Example for Social Media Marketing Activities

Returning to the business unit strategic planning, the key and final unit, there is feedback and control. For marketing activities evaluation of feedback and analytics are the key. They allow evaluating the work of communications and drawing conclusions based on that. Thus, for

companies, in this case, it concerns the case company; it is necessary to monitor and collect data from all platforms the company uses and provide a report every month. Ideally, next to each marketing channel that the company uses, clear and measurable goal should be prescribed, in addition to the expected sales plan.

The work performed up to this point summarizes the main practical part of the work. Further, in addition to the above tools, the author presented suggestions for the development of the company's marketing.

5 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR THE CASE COMPANY

This chapter provides suggestions and recommendations for the case company that the author made up based on the research achievements, the theory studied, analysis made and own conclusions. These recommendations are essential complement to the marketing communications tools mentioned earlier in the practical part. Many of them emerged after the SWOT analysis of the company has been carried out.

5.1 Performance analysis

Analysis of the effectiveness of marketing channels is the final element in the marketing planning system. Company needs to know how many new customers and how much sales each channel generates. How much does it cost and how much each invested monetary unit brings. What is the payback period and return on investment. Knowing all these indicators, allow the company to use its marketing budget as efficiently as possible. As it was mentioned previously, it is essential to summarize the results of using each marketing channel monthly. It includes measuring key indicators, sales volume and achieved goals, and evaluation of effectiveness. Based on the received results the company will be aware of how effectively its budget is used. And also it will help to identify and abandon unprofitable and ineffective marketing channels.

5.2 Attitude towards marketing in the company

No doubt, highly qualified employees work in the company, who realized the importance of their work and can negotiate and present themselves. However, they have a lack of comprehension of how significant marketing is to the growing company and how important is the contribution of everybody. It is recommended for the employees to change their attitude towards marketing and to become more responsible concerning it. It is the duty of the superiors of the company, to inform the employees that they are part of the marketing process, and their participation is necessary for coordinated work and meeting the planning deadlines. As soon as employees become aware that they are contributing their part to the marketing of the company, the process will be smoother, faster, and more efficient. Employee engagement will, in turn, enhance the

internal communications in the company allowing the employees to work collaboratively towards a common goal.

5.3 Training system

Even though most of the company's employees have many years of experience, the industry is moving forward, so it is necessary and required for the staff members to continually develop. With the help of educational programs and training, it is possible to increase motivation of the sales staff, to work out any techniques for sales or negotiations, or to shape a better customer service.

Undoubtedly, staff training requires certain costs, and not every company can afford it. Therefore, the proposal for Verkotan will be careful monitoring of various trainings, their analysis and selection of the most suitable. It is also possible to send one or two employees for training, who then can transfer experience to other employees since there are not many workers in the company.

5.4 Hardware update

The availability of quality technology for marketing purposes is underestimated. The primary device in the work of marketer is a computer. This especially true for work with photography and video. If for everything else, the old hard and software can be used, and then newer technologies are required to work with photo and video content. There is no need to update the entire working equipment in the office of the company; however, it is necessary to provide proper hardware equipment for the marketing person. These modifications will contribute to open up more opportunities for marketing development. And since marketing is a kind of creative process, it will make this process more enjoyable, and accordingly more productive.

5.5 Marketing expert in the company

There is a false belief that the marketer in the company is not a necessity and can be replaced by another person. The case company did not have a marketing specialist so far. These were interns or short-term employees, who were directly involved in sales and marketing at once. Marketing is much more than just advertising and promotion. They are marketing tools, no more. Marketing

plays a role of a guide for the organization, forms the vector of its development. As a business philosophy, marketing covers all processes of an organization, as a tool it helps to set the right goals and find the best ways to solve it, concentrating all resources on it.

5.6 Marketing activities calendar

Marketing calendar serves as a platform for creating a clear schedule for the company's marketing activities. It organizes and prioritizes marketing activities, which allows evaluating the overall marketing picture and eliminating the activities that do not work for the company.

5.7 Application and tools

Summing up all the development suggestions for the case company, it is worth mentioning that in the world of marketing, there is a wide variety of different applications and tools for development. A marketer's task is to find the most suitable platform. For example, there are two convenient platform for planning, Hootsuite and Buffer, that can be used by Verkotan company.

Also, in the future, the company can consider the possible creation of a mobile app for its business. Indubitably, the area of operations of the company makes adjustments, but the mobile application can benefit the company in several ways. It can increase the image of the brand, show customers that business is keeping up with the time and the company counts on long-term partnerships. It can help the company to stand out from the competition to offer customers a convenient and modern channel of interaction. Since many companies still use traditional channels of promotion and communication with customers. There are many more advantages that a mobile application has, but most importantly, it serves as a means of attracting and retaining customers. However, the creation of it is an extensive and time-consuming process that requires professional knowledge and experts. Nonetheless, it can be considered for the future development of the company.

6 CONCLUSION

Marketing communications undoubtedly are the key to developing a company's marketing activities and promoting products or services. As indicated in the theoretical part of the work, many processes and tools contribute to the successful development of marketing and marketing communications. These are the Business Unit Strategic Planning, process of development of effective communication, marketing and marketing communication mix, the Content Marketing Pyramid. Not the whole theory, processes or tools are referenced in the practical part of the work because studying this theory was needed for the author to understand the subject better and determine what is essential to focus on the work.

The research was conducted with objectives to research marketing communications and what features they have. The main purpose of the work was to improve marketing communications company already have and develop them further. So the case company will be able to use for the development of an annual marketing plan. The purpose and objective were indicated in the abstract and introduction of the work so that the reader can immediately understand the specifics of the work. The accomplishment of the work is the ameliorated marketing communications tools with clear guidance to improve marketing brand position and customer growth through communications. Based on research and own experience, the author offered development suggestions for the company, which are training system upgrade, hardware update, call for a more responsible attitude towards marketing, hiring a marketing expert, and few ideas on application development. The author generated these suggestions as she progressed in work, for example, after the SWOT analysis.

The theoretical domain of the work has much supportive research and is based on reliable sources, mainly books and current information on the case company. According to the author, the research contains all the necessary theory base, explanations and references for the correct topic perception.

Each part of the work contains a short summary of what was done and for what purpose; as well as how the author will further develop the work. This helps the reader to remain involved and make it easier to follow the text.

All in all, the research has proven that marketing communications are essential for the company's marketing activities. However, this remains a challenge for any company, to understand the need to on marketing specifically for their company. Thus, if the case company analyzes the achievement and begins to apply them in the work process, this will be beneficial and profitable solution. In the future, well-coordinated, planned, and smooth work will bring the desired results. Namely, brand recognition, well-coordinated work of the marketing department, efficient work of social networks and digital marketing, and increased sales.

7 DISCUSSION

The process of working on the thesis work as a whole was pretty smooth. Working on theory did not cause any difficulties. The topic of the work has become extremely popular nowadays, so there is a considerable amount of literature, online books, articles and more to be found in the public domain for students. The company itself also possesses the information that I actively used in my work as a reliable source.

Theory and practice are complementary in this work. Theory research and the research of the current situation in the company have become a reliable basis to accomplish the purpose of this thesis report.

The accomplishment of the practical part did not cause any particular any difficulties or challenges, since it was based on theory, studying the current situation of the company, discussions with company employees, and my own experience, which I gained by first completing my professional practical there and then working as a sales and marketing trainee. In recent months of my work, my focus was entirely on marketing activities.

Of course, there were some limitations. After the summer holidays, the company has a very tight and busy schedule. It was challenging to arrange a meeting with some of the personnel. However, I still managed to get the information I was interested in, from discussions with other employees, who occupy top positions in the company. Also, there is much information that cannot be published or requires a specific approach. This applies, for example, to competitors, clients, partners, and some numbers inside the company.

It would be interesting to go deeper and do a further individual research on specific digital marketing tools like SEO and PPC, since they are essential pieces of the company's marketing and are in a slightly different niche than my experience and knowledge.

The estimated dates for the delivery of the thesis work were set for September. However, the date was postponed to early October. This does not apply to research or the practical domain of the work, but only to my personal circumstances. Other than that, I found the research process exciting and enlightening. This work was a completely new experience that endowed me with a

new knowledge about marketing and enriched the existing ones. It also drew attention to the importance of writing an academic text. Given that marketing is an area that interests me both for further studies and in general, I found this work as a huge potential that enriched my knowledge and skills, and will undoubtedly be used in the future.

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Customer Satisfaction Survey

We are constantly improving our services and your feedback is important. This survey has 2 questions and takes less than 1 minute of response time.

* Required

Email address *

.....
Cannot pre-fill email address.

1. How likely would you recommend Verkotan's testing services to others? *

- 1 Not at all
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 Highly recommending

2. Please specify why and feel free to share any other feedback *

Your answer

Short Customer Feedback Form

Customer Satisfaction Survey

We are constantly improving our services and your feedback is important. This survey has 10 questions and takes 1 -2 minutes of response time.

* Required

Email address *

.....

Cannot pre-fill email address.

1. Recommending Verkotan testing services to others *

- 1 Not at all
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 Highly recommending

2. Please specify why *

Your answer

3. How would you rate the response time (email negotiations, receiving the quote etc.)? *

- 1 poor
- 2 improvement needed
- 3 average
- 4 good
- 5 excellent

4. How would you rate the content of the quote (clarity and accuracy)? *

- 1 poor
- 2 improvement needed
- 3 average
- 4 good
- 5 excellent

5. How would you rate the availability of test slot? *

- 1 poor
- 2 improvement needed
- 3 average
- 4 good
- 5 excellent

6. How would you rate the test duration? *

- 1 poor
- 2 improvement needed
- 3 average
- 4 good
- 5 excellent

7. How would you rate the quality of the test report? *

- 1 poor
- 2 improvement needed
- 3 average
- 4 good
- 5 excellent

8. How would you rate the test engineers' expertise? *

- 1 poor
- 2 improvement needed
- 3 average
- 4 good
- 5 excellent

8. How would you rate the test engineers' expertise? *

- 1 poor
- 2 improvement needed
- 3 average
- 4 good
- 5 excellent

9. What was your overall experience of Verkotan? *

- 1 poor
- 2 improvement needed
- 3 average
- 4 good
- 5 excellent

Any other feedback or comments concerning Verkotan`s services?

Your answer
