



Defining the Sales and Distribution Channels for Finnish Design product Entering United States Markets

Case: Kinos Design Concepts

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ABSTRACT

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Kinos Design Concepts is a small company and working on market entry for a Finnish contemporary light, Double Bubble (Tupla Kupla in Finnish). The product is designed by Eero Aarnio, a well-known Finnish contemporary designer.

Commissioner and contact person for this thesis is JP Kinos (CEO) who has a lot of experience in Finnish – North American business including 12 years in the United States. The project collaborates with the sole manufacturer of the lamp, Melaja Oy.

The main objectives and purpose of this thesis were to provide help in this project in defining the right distribution and sales channels for the product. Decisions on distribution and sales channels are vital for the product especially when entering a new market to ensure the correct brand image for the product and avoiding expensive mistakes.

The main questions of this research were “What are the potential channels and collaborators in the United States for the Double Bubble?” and “Which are the most influencing channels for the Double Bubble?”

The research was conducted as a case study, a qualitative research method. Both primary and secondary data was collected. The Primary data was collected to gain a better and deeper understanding of which channels suits the best for the product in this study and the secondary data was collected to gain a better understanding of the sales and distribution channels. The primary data was obtained in verbal form through a semi-structured thematic interview. Interviews were held with five people who were chosen based on their experience and understanding of the United States market area and at least basic knowledge of business and management. Secondary data was obtained through searching existing researches, literature, articles, and journals on the topic. The data were analyzed as thematic analysis.

The results of this study indicate that Double Bubble would benefit from the use of multi-channel strategy and selective distribution through intermediaries paired with the use of social media marketing as support.

Key words: International Business, United States Markets, Design, Finnish Design, Case Study

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ABBREVIATION AND TERMS

TAMK	Tampere University of Applied Sciences
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
US	United States of America
VAR	Value Added Reseller
ROI	Return on Investment
SEO	Search Engine Optimization
SEM	Search Engine Marketing

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Kinos Design Concepts was established to conduct a market entry for Finnish design product designed by Eero Aarnio; Double Bubble lamp (Appendix 1.), Tupla Kupla in Finnish, which is a perfect lighting for contemporary homes and lifestyles. Product is well known design from this celebrated Finnish designer, and it is produced by Melaja Oy. Double Bubble was originally designed in 2000 and first presented for the public in 2003. (Designeroaarnio. 2019.)

Eero Aarnio is known for innovative and futuristic furniture designs such as the Ball Chair and Bubble Chair (Appendices 2. & 3.) introduced in the 1960s. He's products has been seen in movies, fashion photo shoots and in music videos. He's works are also displayed in continual exhibitions such as New York Museum of Modern Art, Victoria and Albert Museum in London and Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein. (Designeroaarnio. 2019.) More information about Eero Aarnio in appendix 4.

Melaja Oy wanted to expand its market with this product to United States markets and contracted JP Kinos and his consulting company to do this. JP Kinos is experienced entrepreneur and he has more than twelve-year experience in living and doing business in the United States. (JP Kinos, 2019)

1.2 Research questions and objectives

The purpose of this thesis is to provide help in Kinos Design Concepts market entry for a Finnish design product by investigating and defining correct sales and distribution channels for the product. The research was conducted through qualitative research methods to answer the needs of the commissioner. Data was collected through semi-structured theme interviews.

Research questions were:

1. What are the potential channels and collaborators in the United States for the Double Bubble?
2. Which are the most influencing channels for the Double Bubble?

The research was conducted by following the themes set by the research questions.

1.2.1 Qualitative Research methods

Qualitative research methods may be easier to define through comparing to quantitative approach rather than trying to define as such. The approaches of which are now compared can be used when doing research and they do not prevent one another. The main difference between these two is that where quantitative studies are fixed in design and provides information in numerical form, qualitative provides flexibility and the information is in text form. (Eriksson P., Kovalainen A. 2008. 4– 8)

These approaches are many times considered to be against one another but, especially in the business setting, they really compliment each other. They both have a vital role in ensuring your researches' best output and by combining both approaches you are able to find better results for your study. Traditionally qualitative research approach is used in social studies and a quantitative approach is used in natural sciences. (Eriksson P., Kovalainen A. 2008. 4– 8)

The qualitative approach helps you gain exact information and a deep understanding of your topic or phenomena. It may be used to help to form hypotheses and aiming quantitative research. (Eriksson P., Kovalainen A. 2008. 4– 8)

Qualitative data is analyzed through realistic analysis, asking what is in the data: Themes, content differentiation, Quantification, Categorizing or linguistically: Discourse analysis, Narrative analysis, Rhetoric analysis, Discussion analysis. (Eriksson P., Kovalainen A. 2008. 4– 8)

In qualitative research, the data is collected in verbal form, through interviews, for example, which allows an in-depth understanding of the topic. The researcher portrays, categorizes, and interprets the research material. (Paavilainen 2015. 17).

1.2.2 Case Study Methodology

The methodology for studying a 'real world' complexity is called a case study research. It can include different issues that the researcher finds worth studying. These issues can be studies about the efficiency of an organization, the success or failure of a merger, or the behavior of financial markets for example. It can be also applied outside the corporate world to study a community of consumers and individual consumers and citizens. The case study's data is analyzed and interpreted for conceptualization and theory generation and conclusions to form practical applications. (Gummesson. 2017. 6 – 7.) Educating and exciting 'real-life' cases are easily and often found in the business world (Eriksson P., Kovalainen A. 2008. 116.). In this case study, the market entry of a certain product is studied, and recommendations and conclusions are made.

The basic purposes of a case study are generalization and particularization. Generalization means that a specific can offer a substantive theory to be used in other cases alike, but no further. Cases can sometimes be part of generating theory as well as coming up with incremental improvements. Conversely, particularization is to understand a specific situation and sometimes forming recommendations for future decisions and actions. This thesis was made using particularization to study a single case. (Gummesson. 2017. 8.)

Case study research can be about the future being predictive, about the past by being reconstructive or it can be about ongoing process meaning the present. All these time dimensions are interlinked but offer their specific challenges and uncertainties. In reconstructive research, it may seem simple to find out what happened but the complexity in social settings of companies, governments, and markets it is difficult to get access to relevant and essential data. In ongoing pro-

cesses, it may be difficult to grasp the complexity regardless of straightforwardness. The predictive study is difficult if the future is affected by discontinuities. These discontinuities are found in social media and new infrastructures offered by the internet, thus there is no established pattern or repetitiveness. (Gummesson. 2017. 9– 10.)

According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008. 193), action research is thought to be especially suitable when the research question is related to describing an unfolding series of actions that are taking place over time in a certain group, organization or other community.

This study focused on the present with a predictive attribute in the form of recommendations.

1.2.3 Validity and Ethicalness of the Study

The research was initiated to serve a purpose and is based on the needs of the working life. This research and its results are to be used by Kinoss Design Concepts.

Ethical requirements have been met through the research process. In all research-related communications; with the research topic as discussions and during the interviews, I have tried to act with respect, reliably and with respect for the wishes of the participants. The interviews were done under permission.

The validity of this research, in my view, is good. The research strategy is chosen according to the research topic. Suggestions and recommendations were formed from the experiences and views of the interviewees.

The interviewees were chosen based on their experience and understanding of the United States market area and at least basic knowledge of business and management.

I have tried to provide enough information about the survey and its implementation to all who participated in the research process so that participation has been voluntary per participant's ethical views.

I have managed the information given to me confidentially.

The research was conducted anonymously, and no individuals can be identified from the published research.

1.3 The Product

The product Double Bubble, *Tupla Kupla* in Finnish, is contemporary lighting designed by celebrated Finnish designer Eero Aarnio. It comes in three different sizes – a small size table lamp, a medium-sized table lamp, and a sculpture-like floor lamp.



PICTURE 1. Eero Aarnio Double Bubble (Melaja Oy)

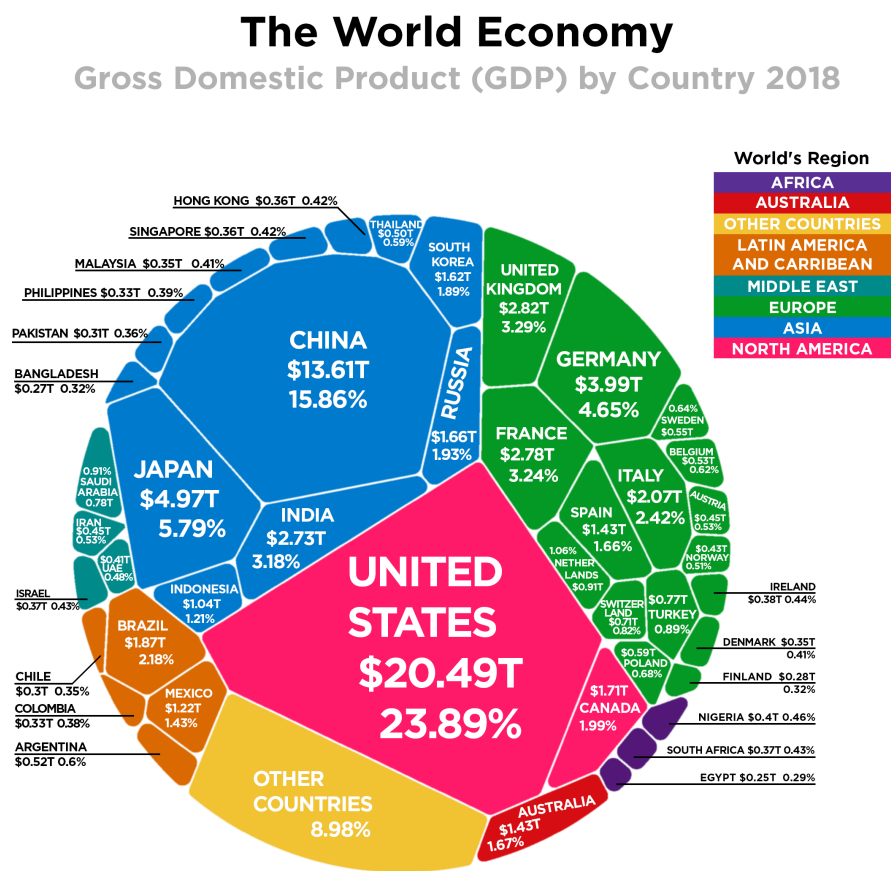
The light, pictured above, was designed in the year 2000 and it was originally intended to be produced in glass by glassblowing method. Glassblowing turned out to be too difficult for the shape and sizes wanted. Thus, only the chosen, plastic casting method, allowed the product to maintain its original characters as desired: Sculptural, complicated shape, uniform color of light and ensured durability. (Designeroaarnio. 2019.)

Double Bubble was introduced to the public in 2003 in an exhibition celebrating the 50-year career of Eero Aarnio. Since its launch Double Bubble has gained a

status of being a modern classic that is well known and appreciated an exclusive design product. (Designeroaarnio. 2019.)

1.4 Markets in the United States of America

The United States is the world's largest economy in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2018, according to the World Bank's 2018 Global GDP. According to these figures, The United States GDP in 2018 was 20 494 100 million US Dollars. (World Bank .2019.)



Article & Sources:
<https://howmuch.net/articles/the-world-economy-2018>
<https://databank.worldbank.org>



FIGURE 1. The GDP by country 2018. (howmuch.net. 2019.)

As seen in the figure above 23,89 percent of the global GDP is generated by the United States making it the largest single market area in the world.

According to Coresight Research (2019), the United States furniture industry is reaching \$114.2 billion in 2018, with a growing number of 6.7% based on the US Bureau of Economic Analysis.

2 SALES AND DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

2.1 Channels and Channel Layers

The distribution channel includes every organization involved in the process of bringing products from the producer to the ultimate consumer. There are several ways to design the channel and it may be simple or complex. Distribution mixes and methods vary among producers depending on the product and the market among other factors. (Zikmund & d' Amico. 2001. 11– 12.)

Distribution channel's members add value by performing different functions to complete the transaction and assist through the gaps in time, ownership, and place. These functions should be assigned to correct channel members to add the most value for the cost to ensure an efficient distribution channel mix. Some of the key functions in the distribution channel are listed below. (Kotler, Armstrong, Wong & Saunders. 2008. 882– 884.)

- Gathering and distributing information
- Promotion
- Contacting prospective buyers
- Matching the offer to fit buyers needs
- Negotiating an agreement on price and other terms
- Physical distribution
- Financing and risk-taking

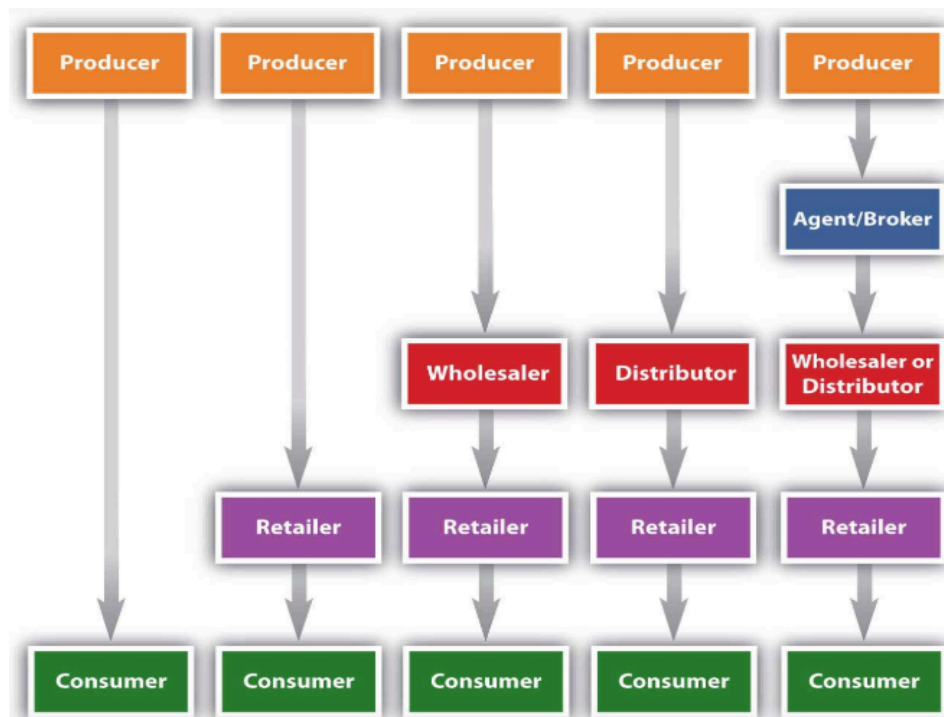


FIGURE 2. Basic Distribution Channels (Cueva. 2017.)

Companies can design their distribution channels in many different ways by combining different channel levels. Channel level is the layer of intermediaries used to perform channel tasks. (Kotler et al. 2008. 882– 884.)

Figure 2 above shows five different distribution channel systems. The first channel is a *direct-distribution channel* as it has no intermediary levels; companies using direct channel systems sell directly to consumers through different methods that will be discussed later. The rest of the channels use one or more intermediaries, being *indirect distribution channels*.

Overall, only the direct distribution channel offers full control in the distribution channel and pricing. Using more intermediaries means less control and more complexity. Intermediaries are further discussed later. (Kotler et al. 2008. 884.)

2.1.1 Channel organization

Every channel member must have a specified role to ensure a well-performing distribution channel. Organizing channel through established agreements prevents channel conflicts and manage them accordingly. Furthermore, the channel

performs better if it includes a firm, agency, or organization that has leadership or mechanism enabling this. Figure 3 below shows the difference between conventional marketing channel and vertical marketing system arrangement. (Kotler et al. 2008. 886.)

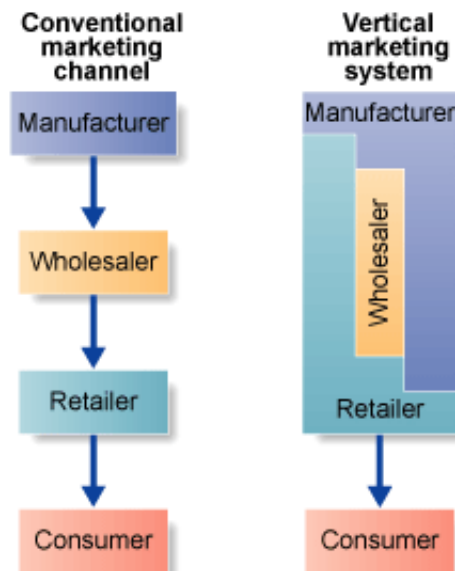


FIGURE 3 Comparison of conventional marketing system and vertical marketing systems (Kotler et al. 2008. 886.)

Conventional channel system

Each member acts as an independent part of the channel and work toward its profits and may do so at the expense of other channel members. Lack of concern for the overall channel performance may cause channel conflicts which are hard to resolve because of a low level of control over other channel members. (Kotler et al. 2008. 886.)

Vertical channel system

Channel leadership is established through a unified system where one channel member has ownership over the others or has contracts to possess power over them which creates a will to work towards overall channel performance. (Kotler et al. 2008. 886.)

2.1.2 Disintermediation

Disintermediation means shortening the channel, bypassing or eliminating intermediaries ergo using more direct channel structure. The main reason for this trend is the impact of online sales. Traditional brick and mortar retail are losing its business for internet sales which provides convenient buying experience for consumers. (Zikmund & d' Amico. 2001. 363; Kotler et al. 2008. 892– 895.)

Eliminating channel levels does not eliminate the need for the function the intermediary performed. When a producer decides to disintermediate an intermediary, it has to perform the functions itself or it may outsource some distribution functions, transportation, and storage services for example by contracting a courier. Companies disintermediating their distribution channels have resulted in new forms of intermediaries in need to ease channel conflicts, one being the growth of infomediaries. (Zikmund & d' Amico. 2001. 363; Kotler et al. 2008. 895.)

2.1.3 Multi-Channel Strategy

A multi-channel strategy is used by companies who reach one or more customer segments via two or more channels. Figure 4 presents the multi-channel distribution system where different segments are reached through different channels. In segment 1 the producer sells directly to consumers through the internet for example and segment 2 is reached by using retailers as an intermediary. Segment 3 uses distributors and dealers to reach buyers and segment 4 is reached by using producers' direct sales force. These segments are determined by the companies themselves and thus may contain both consumer and business buyers. (Kotler et al. 2008. 891– 892.)

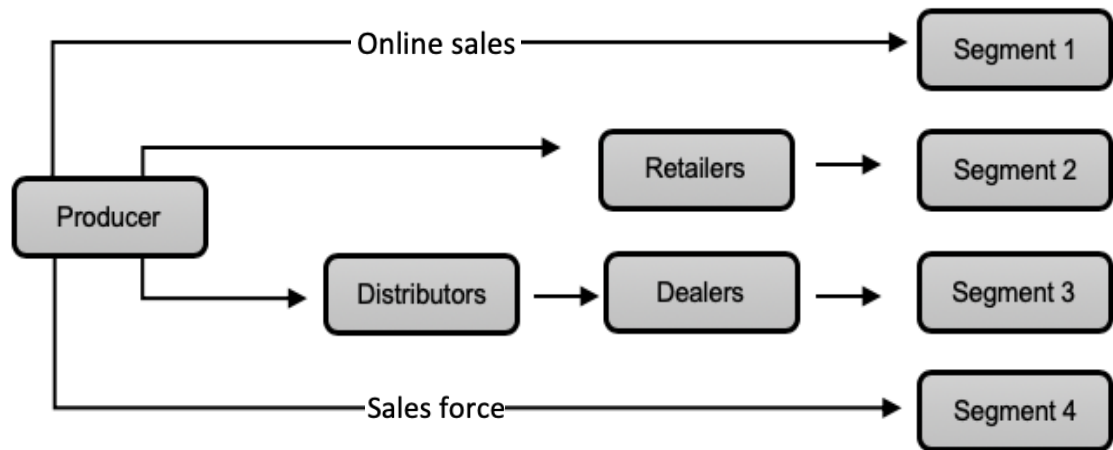


FIGURE 4. Multi-channel distribution system (Kotler et al. 2008. 892, Modified.)

Using a multi-channel distribution system gives producers many advantages, especially in larger and more complex markets. Each channel is an opportunity to expand market opportunities and coverage and the potential to reach more diverse customer segments. However, using multiple distribution channels increases the overall complexity of the system thus becoming harder to control and potentially generates conflicts and unnecessary competition between channel members. (Kotler et al. 2008. 891– 892.)

2.2 Direct Sales

Direct sales channel has no intermediaries between the producer and consumers. The company sells products directly through telephone sales, catalogs, the internet, or other communications. Whatever communication is used it contains a call for action, usually order through mail, telephone, or internet. (Kotler et al. 2008. 884; Zikmund & d'Amico. 2009. 390– 391.)

Direct marketing attracts consumers because it is convenient; purchasing from home saves time and you may order the product directly to your door. Retailers and producers are attracted because they may be more cost-efficient since there are no fixed costs such as labor. (Zikmund & d'Amico. 2001. 390– 391.)

Controversially, Kirov (2017) writes in his article that a direct sales channel may add overall cost due to the required sales team which needs to be close to the

target market. As any additional division, sales team creates labor, management, and administrative costs, he adds.

2.2.1 Online Sales Channels

Online sales channels, and online marketing in general, is the fastest-growing form of direct distribution and sales. The Internet has transformed the traditional retailing and marketing to move from brick-and-mortar into using online channels as the only channel, or a combination of both. Finding a retailer without any online presence is very unlikely today. Consumers are accustomed to the speed, convenience, and price advantages that online sales channels provide. Online sales channels offer efficient and powerful tools for building more individualized customer relationships and enables interaction between the seller and the consumer. Additionally, consumers have greater assortments and catalogs to browse which they may choose independently at any time of the day. (Kotler et al. 2008. 825, 839.)

As online sales and marketing are growing fast it also comes with a great number of different definitions, trends, and orientations. Sometimes it is referred to as e-commerce. According to Quin (2009. 7.) “e-commerce refers to various online commercial activities focusing on commodity exchanges by electronic means, Internet in particular, by companies, factories, enterprises, industrial undertakings, and consumers.”

E-commerce has enabled companies to establish wider markets and reach out to more customers, enhance the supply chain of product or service and overall creating more efficient solutions. The advantages of e-commerce are, especially, 24 hours accessibility and increased selection. Companies may offer a variety of products exclusively online that you are not able to buy from a brick-and-mortar retail. Limited customer service, Lack of instant gratification and inability to touch products can be seen as a disadvantage in e-commerce. (Bloomenthal. 2019.)

2.2.2 Websites

Websites are designed for various purposes and their content is set out according to the purpose. Two main types of websites are the corporate website and marketing website. Corporate websites are designed to offer information and interaction to answer consumer's questions, build customer relationships, and supplement other sales channels. Corporate websites aim to be more informative and share the company's core values than marketing websites. As the name implies, marketing websites are designed to generate sales. These websites may also provide information and interaction, but the engagement is to lead the consumer towards direct purchase by using promotional features and shopping tips for example. Marketing websites allows the consumer to place an order and pay through a catalog or similar process. (Kotler et al. 2008. 850.)

The website's role in the distribution and sales channel depends on the channel design decisions but in today's environment web presence is generally perceived as an integral part of doing business.

2.2.3 Search Engine Optimization

Search engine optimization (SEO) refers to techniques to design and develop websites that perform high in search engine rankings, which means to be found easily on the internet. The target is to appear in the top search results of search engines. Several elements affect the ranking rate of a website such as keywords, page titles, web site structure, links from other websites, and content. (Ledford, JL. 2007. 13– 14.)

SEO helps more specifically websites rank higher in so-called organic searches which means the conventional way where people search for information, services, and products via search engines. SEO does not include search engine marketing (SEM) which means paid advertisements among search results. Well, the optimized website is relevant, authoritative, and have a good rank. (Hubspot.2020.)

2.2.4 Social media Marketing and Selling

Social media is used to interact directly with existing and potential consumers and may be considered to be used as both a direct and indirect channel. Social media is a new distribution channel and the use of platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram have grown rapidly. Indirect methods include sharing content and interacting with the consumers as well as growing brand awareness and brand engagement. (Braun. 2017.)

Direct selling is also possible through social media platforms like Instagram, for example. Instagram has a Shoppable post feature that allows people to buy the product directly from the posts and thus turn followers into customers effortlessly. (Smith. 2019.)

Categorizing social media platforms is difficult since they have overlapping characteristics and some of them fall into multiple categories. one example of a social media platform category is social content-sharing services, which include blogs, video services (YouTube), image sharing (Instagram), and audio sharing. Other categories include social networking (Facebook), social bookmarking services, social news services, and community-building services. (Ng & Zimmerman, 2015.)

Most of the social media platforms are free to use and have the potential to reach a great number of people in the targeted segments thus it does not require huge, direct monetary capital to use. Ng and Zimmerman (2015) write that most of the services require the investment of time to maintain which may generate extra costs. Additionally, the popularity of using social media platforms in sales makes it more difficult to gain visibility.

In the same way as websites, also social media presence is an essential part of distribution and sales in today's business setting. A notable number of potential customers are using social media as a source of information and inspiration. Additionally, the chance for interaction is an influential feature. However, social media requires more active and consistent maintaining and is more content-heavy.

For example, attractive blogs and Instagram feeds require consistent updating to remain relevant and interesting for consumers. (Ng & Zimmerman, 2015.)

According to Clement (2019), there were 2.48 billion social network users across the world. This number is projected to grow to 2.96 billion in the year 2020 and 3.09 billion by 2021. The most popular social network is Facebook with 2.4 billion monthly active users.

2.2.5 Influencers

Influencers are used more in the field of marketing than directly at sales, but they have a growing role in online selling. It is most effective through engaging channels like Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Blogs, and Twitter. (Mediakix, 2019).

Influencers are emerging methods in both fields of marketing and field of sales and have proven to be efficient due to the rise of social media channels' popularity and companies' efforts in developing social selling methods and strategies. (Mediakix. 2019.)

Brown and Fiorella (2013. 62– 63.) writes that it is difficult for companies and brands to understand how to attract these influencers. Every platform requires different skills and knowledge, for example, Twitter and Facebook have different characteristics. So-called social scoring platforms are designed to help companies to connect with the correct influencers for the correct purpose and platform. (Brown & Fiorella. 2013. 62– 64.)

An influencer is a person who supplies information, advice, and recommendations and thus affects the purchase decision. Influencer maybe whoever inside or outside your organization and persons from various positions may act as an influencer. Whoever has the information to affect the purchase decision is an influencer. (Zikmund & d'Amico, 2001. 178, 195.)

Influencer marketing is now included in the inbound marketing funnel and is becoming more considered as part of the buying journey and effective part of a company's marketing. (Influencerdb, 2017).



FIGURE 5. New Marketing Funnel. (Influencerdb. 2017)

As the graph above suggests, has the marketing funnel changed due to increased awareness of the effectiveness of influencer marketing. Although, this old and new marketing funnel has different categories they work concurrently with each other.

Nearly two-thirds of marketers are increasing their influencer marketing budgets in 2019 and 17 percent of companies will use more than half of their marketing budget on influencer marketing, according to Mediakix influencer marketing survey (Mediakix. 2019.)

The marketing survey reveals that the biggest concern for companies in influencer marketing is finding the best influencers for their campaign and measuring the ROI (Return on Investment), despite what marketers say, "ROI from influencer marketing is comparable to or better than other marketing channels." (Mediakix. 2019.)

Due to the ongoing evolution of using influencers and in an increasingly digital environment, it is important to consider it as a part of sales and distribution channels too rather than only as part of marketing.

2.3 Indirect Sales

2.3.1 Intermediaries

Intermediaries are used by companies to add value for their products and to make them available more efficiently. Intermediaries have existing operations, sales experience, and contacts that can offer more value for producers than they would achieve by doing everything on their own. Intermediaries are also more capable of building coherent and vast assortments for consumers by breaking larger order quantities into smaller, more desirable quantities and thus matching the supply and demand. (Kotler et al. 2008. 881– 882.)

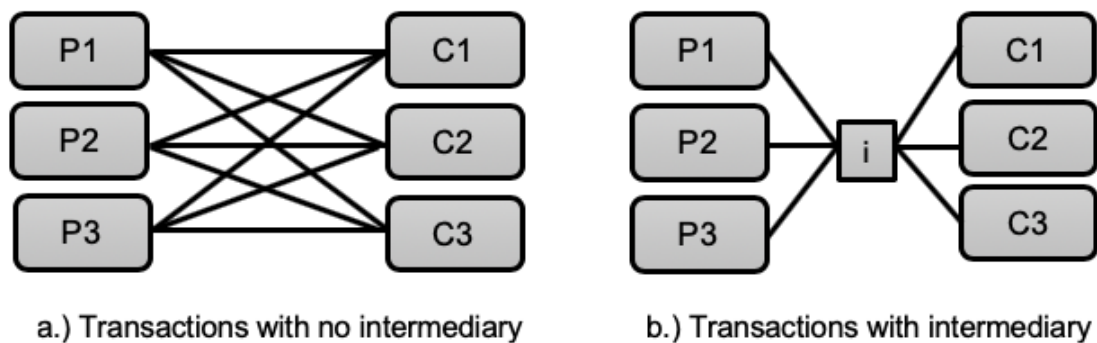


FIGURE 6 Intermediaries reduce the number of transactions (Dhotre. 2010. 6, Modified)

Producers use intermediaries despite losing the opportunity to interact with their consumers and control over the price. These risks are lower with the additional benefits discussed above and as shown in figure 6 the cost and burden of transactions can be reduced with the help of intermediaries. (Dhotre. 2010. 5– 6.)

Thus, choosing intermediaries correctly may have a positive impact on the final cost for the producer and a more desirable final price for the consumer.

2.3.2 Resellers

Resellers are organizations or individuals in the distribution channel who buys products or services intending to resell them for profit. (Kotler et al. 2008. 181.) The following wholesalers and retailers are both considered to be resellers although their functions have a few differences.

2.3.3 Wholesale

Wholesalers are primarily engaged in selling goods and services to those who are buying for resale or business use rather than to the final consumer, retailers for example. Wholesalers add value by performing channel functions and by including all activities involved in selling the goods and services (Kotler et al. 2008. 897– 898).

Traditionally wholesalers' functions include buying, warehousing, transporting, and selling. However, they usually perform one or more of the following channel functions (Kotler et al. 2008. 898; Raatikainen. 2008. 173.)¹:

- Selling and promoting
- Buying and assortment building
- Bulk-breaking
- Warehousing
- Transportation
- Financing
- Risk bearing
- Market information
- Management services and advice

However, there is a vast amount of different types of wholesalers and their functions' service level varies. According to Kotler et al. (2008. 898.) Merchant wholesalers, brokers, agents, and manufacturers' sales branches and offices compose the three major groups.

1. *Merchant wholesalers* can be divided further into two types: full-service wholesalers who provide a full set of services and limited-service wholesalers who offer fewer services but are usually specialized in certain functions.

¹ "Asiakas, tuote ja markkinat" (Raatikainen. 2008. 173.)

2. *Brokers and agents* do not take title to the goods but rather brings buyers and sellers together. They are usually specialized in in only a few functions based commonly on customer type or product type.
3. *Manufacturers' sales branches* execute wholesaling through sellers and buyers themselves rather than using an independent wholesaler. (Kotler et al. 2008. 898.)

2.3.4 Retail

Businesses whose sales come primarily from selling products and services directly to final consumers are called retailers. These intermediaries sell their products and services for their customers' personal use and for non-business purposes. Retailers are usually the final link between the consumer and provider which gives them a significant role in the sales channel. (Kotler et al. 2008. 898.)

Retailers are not necessarily traditional shops and stores, but also mail-order catalogs, door-to-door salesman and online retailers like Amazon are retailers. (Blythe. 2012. 178).

Like wholesalers, retailers perform value-creating functions to add value; Providing an assortment of products, holding inventory, breaking bulk for customer-friendly quantities, and providing services. Retailers' assortments are generally well known for the consumers who know which retailer to choose for a certain type of product. Commonly retailers specialize in designated assortments by category but may also offer by offering a unique selection of products based on lifestyle for example. (Levy & Weitz. 2009. 6– 8.)

Additionally, businesses choose to sell their products through retailers for customer convenience. As mentioned above, according to Levy & Weitz (2009. 8.) consumers know well retailers' assortments, thus, retailers take a selection of certain brands and place them in one convenient location. Using retailers also reduce transportation and inventory costs.

Below are short descriptions of the functions of retailer:

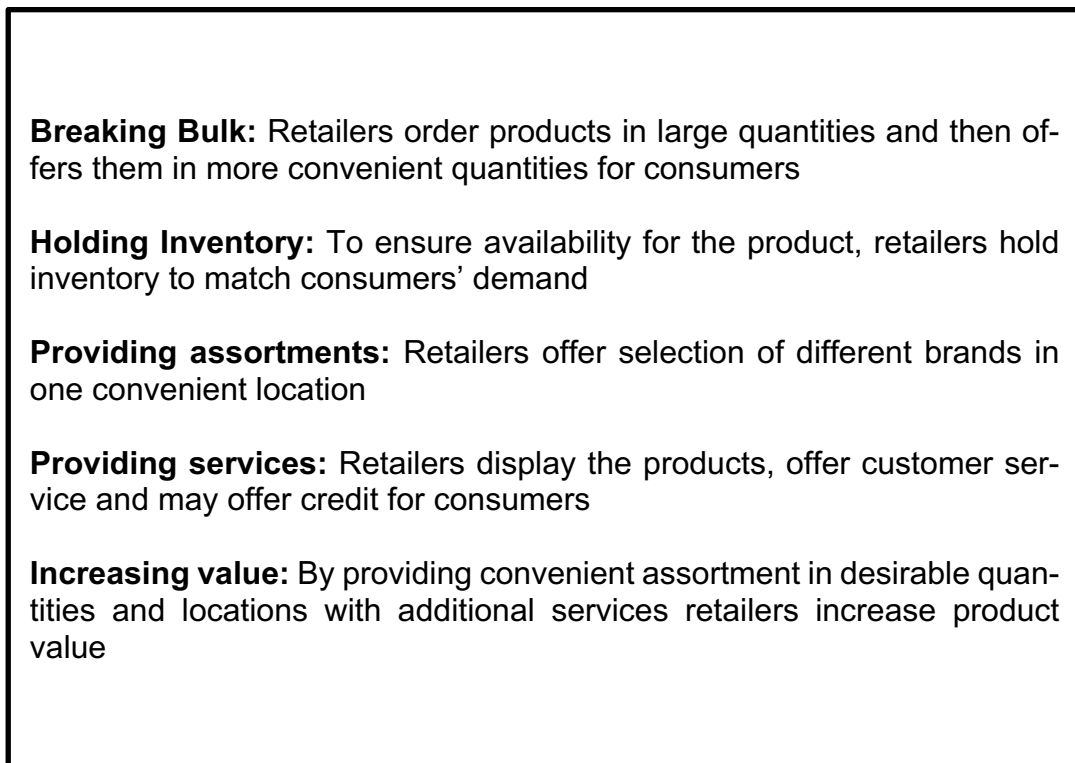


FIGURE 7 Functions of retailer (Levy & Weitz. 2009. 6– 9, Modified)

2.3.5 Specialty stores

Specialty stores are retailers who concentrate on the limited product category and offer a narrow but deep assortment. Usually, their selling expertise is more in-depth for the particular product mix and they are tailored to focus on a specific market segment which is the major reason for their success. (Zikmund & d' Amico. 2001. 387; Levy & Weitz. 2009. 49– 51.)

Some of the most well-known specialty stores are the fast-fashion chains H&M and Zara who are specialized in cheap and chic fashion in quick rotation; new collections are introduced weekly or even twice a week. However, these chains are focused on selling their collections rather than compiling assortment from outside brands and usually they provide a high level of service in relatively small stores, unlike the global chains. (Levy & Weitz. 2009.49– 51.)

2.3.6 Selective & Exclusive distribution

Exclusive distribution strategy is usually used with products that require special effort in marketing and selling. Intermediaries are given an exclusive right to resell the product in a given area and in return the producer may expect maximum sales effort and liaison. Contractual agreements are commonly used to stipulate the conditions and responsibilities between the producer and the intermediary; These contracts include sale conditions, a trading area, and warranty policies for example. (Zikmund & d' Amico. 2001. 369– 370; Sherlekar & Gordon 2009. 145, 146.)

In a selective distribution strategy, the product is sold only in a limited number of stores that have the desired store image. This strategy is commonly used for specialty products to reach the correct target market and amplify the exclusivity and prestige of the product. The producer may also benefit from selective strategy since intermediaries, like retailers, have a limited number of competitors and are consequently more likely to invest more in the marketing, support the list price, and pursue other suggestions of the producer. (Zikmund & d' Amico. 2001. 369– 370.) Sherlekar and Gordon write that selective distribution is a profitable choice if the product requires after-sale services (2009. 145).

Selective and exclusive distribution is compared with the intensive distribution strategy in which maximum exposure is pursued. Typically, convenient goods are sold through intensive distribution channels for masses of consumers. (Zikmund & d' Amico. 2001. 368.)

2.3.7 Value Added Resellers

The Value Added Reseller (VAR) is used by resellers, distributors, and manufacturers to guarantee after-sales services and support, installation, product training, or maintenance for the buyers. This enables the resellers to generate more revenue from their services and creates brand credibility for the product or service, to add value. (Gupta. 2016. 110– 118.)

If you take a look at the description of most of the intermediaries, arguably, they are all in their respective ways Value Added Resellers. However, VARs are designed to provide more comprehensive services like installation and assembly services as defined by Gupta (2016. 110– 118).

2.3.8 Collaborative selling

“Collaborative marketing is the act of combining your company’s resources, assets, and funds with other companies in order to better accomplish your marketing goals.” (Moran. 2019.)

To gain better reach in marketing and sales it is possible to combine company’s resources with other companies that ideally are not direct competitors but share similar audience and target market. Other aspects, in identifying a possible collaboration, are similar marketing goals and complimentary brand identity. (Moran. 2019.)

Maff (2019.) lists and describes the benefits of collaborations as follows:

1. Enhanced exposure

When companies collaborate, they bring together different audiences and they complement other company’s marketing channels. When expanding the marketing channels through collaboration, it is possible to gain access to new markets more effortlessly.

2. Greater inspiration

Collaborating helps companies to learn about the market in new perspective and enables finding new tools and techniques, learning from the other party of the collaboration.

3. Larger network

Collaboration opens possibility to grow networks and develop further.

4. Saves money

Because of the larger network, audience, visibility and possibility to share expenses, collaboration may be cheaper in total for one company.

5. Lifestyle advertising

Collaborations are often considered to be a good chance to use lifestyle marketing, which is directed for more brand-oriented audiences in contrast of aggressive traditional marketing.

6. Adds value

Organizations share a common purpose which may amplify brand value perception. Establishing a collaboration may be limited to a certain area or time depending on the agreement between the companies. (Maff. 2019.)

2.3.9 Drop Shipping

Drop shipping is a method used by retail businesses and has multiple benefits compared to standard retail methods. The biggest difference to standard retail is that in drop shipping model the merchant does not own the inventory or stock any items that are for sale. When the merchant receives an order, it purchases the needed inventory directly from the manufacturer, wholesaler or from other third party where the product is then directly shipped to the customer. (Hayes & Youderian, 2019. 1; Blythe. 2012. 178.)

Some of the disadvantages of drop shipping are low margins, shipping complexities, possible inventory issues and supplier errors. Since it is possible to establish a retail store with low initial investment and there is quite a number of small retailers and thus competition which together with low investment requirements may lead into aggressive pricing with low margins. Inventory issues and supplier errors may occur due to the fact that many drop shipping retailers are working with multiple suppliers and thus, are not always up to date with the inventory and the communication channels are rarely effective. These errors in the supply chain creates also the complexity in shipping especially if the retailer is sourcing the orders from multiple suppliers. (Hayes & Youderian, 2019.)

Despite these issues, drop shipping has some really valuable assets - low capital requirement and overhead costs, easy to start, location flexibility, scalability and wider selection of products. Traditionally retailers would need to use vast amounts of money in purchasing and maintaining inventory but drop shipping method relies on third party inventory which reduces the capital requirements

considerably. Compared to brick-and-mortar businesses the company may reduce expenses also by taking advantage of home officing. (Hayes & Youderian, 2019; Ferreira, C. 2020.)

2.3.10 Infomediaries

The infomediary acts as a trader for electronic information and helps consumers and producers find each other by providing information and shopping services. Usually, infomediaries offer specific information at a low cost. Infomediaries do not directly resell a product but refer consumers to the reseller's website and store. (Zikmund & d' Amico. 2001. 363; Kotler et al. 2008. 895.)

However, according to Oxford Reference (Doyle. 2016.) Infomediaries have evolved into the direction of capturing and sharing consumer information, collected through registration and consent on websites. The information collected is then sold to third parties to develop marketing campaigns.

2.3.11 Vertical exchange

Vertical exchanges provide electronic marketplaces to connect buyers and sellers. Most of these online marketplaces do not take title or handle the products but provides information and web-services, working as an intermediary. Services provided may also include online tracking and transportation which is one of the ways they create value. The greater value created by vertical exchanges is the ability to bring masses of buyers and sellers together and aggregating information for consumers to compare. (Zikmund & d' Amico. 2001. 364– 365.)

2.3.12 Trade Shows

Trade shows feature many booths that work as temporary sales and display location for companies. Producers, Resellers, suppliers, and other marketers provide information and attract attention for their products and services to obtain sales leads and establish collaborations. Trade shows are important channels in

establishing business-to-business contacts. Most of the trade shows are organized along with certain product- lines or categories and closed to the general public. (Zikmund & d' Amico. 2001. 555.)

Trade shows have high potential especially for companies looking for expansion or entering new markets as they attract many visitors and vendors in the same convenient location. Raising brand awareness and competitor analysis are also additional benefits of attending a tradeshow. (Evoexhibits. 2018.)

2.4 Channel Design Decisions

Companies have many factors to consider creating an efficient and intensive distribution. Channel design means to determine the length and width of the channel that is the number of intermediaries and organizations in different levels of distribution, ergo choose the right channel mix. As mentioned before, the channel design may be simple or complex depending on the product and the market among other factors like customer segmentation, culture, and competition. (Zikmund & d' Amico. 2001. 11– 12; Czinkota & Ronkainen. 2007. 416.)

Channel design and objectives are determined by different factors and Czinkota & Ronkainen (2007.) summarizes these factors as shown in figure 8. These factors influence differently depending on the market area and usually, they have interactive effects of the others. External determinants are existing structures to which the producer has to adjust. Internal factors are determinants which the producer may have a chance to have an impact on, to a certain extent.

External	Internal
Customer characteristics	Company objectives
Culture	Character
Competition	Capital
	Cost
	Coverage
	Control
	Continuity
	Communication

FIGURE 8. Determinants of channel design (Czinkota & Ronkainen. 2007. 416, modified.)

According Kotler et al. (2008.) “the channel objectives are also influenced by the nature of the company, its products, its marketing intermediaries, its competitors and the environment.”

2.4.1 Customer needs

As distribution and sales channels have a major role in increasing and delivering value for the customer, are the customer needs the first thing to find out when making channel design decisions; characteristics of targeted customers thus form the foundation for it. What customers need, why, when, and how they buy are the questions to determine how the product should be made available. (Kotler et al. 2008. 896.)

A more in-depth question to consider is the service level that your target market is expecting for the product since providing the highest level of service combined with fast delivery and add-on services may not be the most practical or even possible to achieve without increasing the cost for the channel and thus the consumer price needlessly high. (Czinkota & Ronkainen. 2007. 416– 417; Kotler et al. 2008. 896.)

Defining customer needs requires balancing the costs and achievable level of services to match the price preferences of the customers. (Czinkota & Ronkainen. 2007. 416– 417; Kotler et al. 2008. 896.)

2.4.2 Control

Using intermediaries comes with many benefits, especially when entering a new market, their knowledge with existing relationships and experience provides more effortless entry. However, the use of intermediaries also means less control over the marketing, pricing, display, and selling conditions for the product. The longer the channel is, the more difficult it is to control these conditions. Maintaining the

desired level of control requires careful communication with the channel members to avoid conflicts. (Czinkota & Ronkainen. 2007. 424.)

Decisions on the level of control are based on the producer's objectives on the product as well as the product characteristics and are in correlation with other channel design decisions.

2.4.3 Product Character

The nature of the product has a major impact on channel design as some products require more after-sales services for example. The positioning of the product has to match with the sales channel to reach the targeted customers efficiently. (Czinkota & Ronkainen. 2007. 416, 420.)

Other similar products may indicate a good practice in the markets and analyzing that example is a good idea to understand the product characters' impact on the channel design. However, replicating a channel design from a competing product may not be a good idea, because the product character is only one factor affecting the channel design.

2.4.4 Selecting Channel members

Selecting intermediaries requires determined characteristics and the use of measuring and indicators to find the better ones. Evaluating newly established companies may be more difficult than accomplished ones; Kotler et al. (2008) write that the producer wants to assess the members' years in business, growth, and profit, reputation, and other product lines that the member is representing. Customer base, location, and future potential are important to evaluate if the intermediary will have exclusive or selective distribution rights. (Kotler et al. 2008, 910).

2.4.5 Determining the right Distribution Channel

Choosing the right channels for a product is an important part for companies since its effects are directly seen in the overall sales and according to CEO of Kinos

Design Concepts JP Kinos (2019), choosing the wrong channels for a product can be very expensive for the company.

Blythe and Zimmerman (2018. 248) emphasize that customer segmentation is the most important factor to consider when a company is determining the right distribution channel. Different types of customers require different types of services, which may have a significant impact on the choice of channel decisions.

Every company must identify the objectives that serve their goals most efficiently; based on those objectives determining the right channels is objective and adequate. For example, some products might require more control over the distribution channel to support the brand image whereas other products just need the most efficient way to reach masses of consumers, some products rely on intermediaries and their value-adding activities whereas other products benefit from direct methods.

3 EMPIRICAL PART

3.1 Data Collection

The secondary data was obtained through searching existing researches, literature, articles, and journals on the topic. The secondary data was collected to gain a better understanding of the sales and distribution channels. Primary data was collected to gain a better and deeper understanding of which channels suits the best for the product in this study.

The primary data was obtained in verbal form through a semi-structured thematic interview. This method was chosen because, in a dialogue discussion, different meanings and ideas about the topic may come to mind, unlike, for example, answering a question in writing - it is easier to specify questions and answers and it is possible to ask additional questions. Thus, it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of the topics. (Elliot, Fairweather, Olsen, Ian Fairweather, Pampaka. 2016.)

As compared to a structured interview, a semi-structured interview is more open and thus, allows new ideas to be raised during the interview by the interviewee. Usually, the broad topics are included in the interview schedule, with indicative questions, which are followed to cover these topics. The interviewing process is flexible and allows to change order, change questions, or ask extra questions to explore and clarify the interviewee's responses. (Elliot et al. 2016.)

I had interviews with five people who were chosen based on their experience and understanding of the United States market area and at least basic knowledge of business and management. I choose to conduct the interviews via Skype or a similar tool since geographical distance and the government's recommendation for social distancing because of the occurred worldwide pandemic at the time of the interviews. During the interviews, I wrote personal notes and the interviews were also recorded to ease thematizing. Interviewees' permission was asked for the recording. The interviewees were informed about the topics and themes of the interview beforehand and I had drawn indicating questions to use during the interview that wasn't told beforehand.

The purpose was to find out what are the potential channels and collaborators, and which are the most influencing channels for the Double Bubble in the United States, for Kinoss Design Concepts. These questions worked as research questions as well.

3.1.1 Data analysis

The collected data was qualitative, and the analysis was made as a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a systematic approach that comprises of identifying themes or patterns. The resulting thematic patterns are then interpreted by seeking similarities, commonalities, overarching patterns, theoretical constructs, or relationships. Essentially, thematic analysis helps the researcher to reduce and manage large amounts of data without losing the context. It is a helpful tactic that allows us to get close to or immerse oneself in the data, for focusing on the interpretation, and for organizing and summarizing the data. (Mills, Durepos & Wiebe. 2010. 926 – 927.)

The identification of the themes was done deductively, based on the research theoretical framework. The interviews were transcribed and then a concept map was comprised to sort themes and sub-themes from the data collected. The summarized data was then reviewed and interpreted.

3.2 Hypothesis

A hypothesis for this research was formed to affirm the goals of this research, and it answers the research questions.

The contemporary light, Double Bubble's potential sales, and distribution channels are most likely formed by combining both direct and indirect sales channels and it benefits from the use of intermediaries. Retail channels are important for success. Online sales channels are the most influencing channels for the Double Bubble.

4 FINDINGS

Five interviewees were chosen based on their experience and understanding of the United States market area and at least basic knowledge of business and management. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain a deeper understanding of the possible distribution and sales channels and the most influencing ones.

The study area is the US market area, so the interviewees were expected to have appropriate knowledge of this specific area. All data is respondents' knowledge, assumptions, or predictions.

Respondents' names are not mentioned in this research but are called respondents. The respondents' experience in the US market area and field expertise is depicted in the table below.

TABLE 1 Respondents' experience and expertise

Respondent	Experience	Expertise
Respondent 1	3 years	Business & Management
Respondent 2	2,5 years	Sales & export
Respondent 3	6 years	Legal advisory
Respondent 4	Over 20 years	Sales, market entry and export
Respondent 5	10 years	Supply chain

4.1 Channels and Channel Layers

The multi-channel strategy was seen as the most fluent option for the Double Bubble in the US markets. This view is supported in the theory (see chapter 2.1.3) as using a multi-channel distribution system gives producers many advantages, especially in larger and more complex markets. Each channel is an opportunity to expand market opportunities and coverage and the potential to reach more diverse customer segments.

4.2 Channel decisions

A common view in the interviews was that for a design product like Double Bubble, it is important to hold control over the channel members. As discussed in chapter 2.4.2, the use of intermediaries means less control over the marketing, pricing, display, and selling conditions for the product. The longer the channel is, the more difficult it is to control these conditions. It was perceptible from the majority of the respondents that it would be ideal to have only one or a few good channel members than a vast number of volume-oriented members.

Control over the distribution channels to support the brand image is seen appropriate approach by the respondents. However, as one of the respondents noted, it is a decision that has to be based on the desired brand image. When that has been established, it is important to stay true to your positioning.

Channel members that have understanding and knowledge of the product were seen as important as the product character requires a certain level of specialization in design products.

One respondent pointed out the significance of pricing and the threshold in changing it. Lowering the price is easy but raising it is difficult and thus, using price as a tool is dangerous. This has to be considered also when choosing sales and distribution channels for the product to avoid inconsistencies in pricing across the channels and channel conflicts.

4.3 Direct and Indirect sales

As already stated, a multichannel strategy was seen as the most influential strategy for the Double Bubble. Indirect channels hold many benefits through their value-creating functions and existing customer bases.

Direct sales might also emphasize exclusivity, as few of the respondents pointed out. If the Double Bubble would only be available through the Kinso Design Concept webshop, it would support the exclusive image but creating traffic would require extensive marketing campaigns and effort, and thus it was seen as a problematic approach.

The indirect approach enables benefitting retailers existing in-store visitors and webshops which have potentially existing traffic and thus, reaching consumers requires less effort.

A few respondents pointed out that the product at this price point needs to be seen personally before making the purchase decision, which also speaks for the reason to build a multichannel distribution strategy.

Project sales approach was mentioned to be a potential channel; sales directly to public spaces and projects would build familiarity besides being a good sales channel.

The majority did not recommend using Amazon at all, except for one respondent. The use of Amazon was justified by its size and reach over the US markets. However, the effect on the value perceived and brand image was a concern.

Trade shows and exhibitions were seen as a potential channel for reaching out for new collaborations. Large professional trade shows attract a lot of people and thus hold great potential. Choosing the correct trade shows requires some research. Respondents viewed tradeshow mainly as business to business events.

4.4 Use of Social Media

Direct selling directly through social media platforms, such as Instagram, is growing in the US and a lot of people have found it convenient, as according to Instagram, 130 million accounts tap on shopping posts monthly (Instagram. 2019.) Although, there is a growth in using these sales channels it is seen to work better for products at a lower price point, according to interviewees. However, people who are interested in design products will more probably come across the design products in their feed. It might not generate first-time buyers for design but with more 'seasoned' design buyers it might work, according to one respondent.

Most of the social media platforms are free to use and have the potential to reach a great number of people in the targeted segments thus it does not require huge, direct monetary capital to use. This theory (see chapter 2.2.3.) gives credence to that whatever sales and distribution channel is decided to be used, social media channels should be introduced at least in marketing.

Social media was viewed as a marketing channel and web stores as sales channels.

Through social media, using local influencers to attract a larger audience, and also the attention of the target group, social media was seen as the best channel to increase direct sales and support indirect sales.

Chosen influencers should have credibility in the field of design, homes decor interior design, and lifestyle. Credibility was seen as more important than reach. One of the respondents suggested that Finnish people living in the US should be considered as influencers, as they have credibility and understanding over both Finnish products and US markets.

4.5 Type of Intermediaries

The use of intermediaries is essential for Double Bubble to enter the US markets. As seen in figure 6 the use of intermediaries reduces the number of transactions and thus the cost and burden of transactions. (see chapter 2.3.1.) Additionally, the intermediaries offer other beneficial assets; experience in the market and existing customer base. This is supported by the theory that consumers know well retailers' assortments; thus, retailers take a selection of certain brands and place them in one convenient location. (see chapter 2.3.4) Using retailers, for example, creates an opportunity for the Double Bubble to enter the market in the right locations in curated assortments. Finding trustworthy intermediaries is vital to ensure the correct brand image for the product and thus selective strategy was seen as a rational approach amongst the respondents.

Selective distribution strategy is well justifiable based on the theory discussed earlier in chapter 2.3.5. In a selective distribution strategy, the product is sold only in a limited number of stores that have the desired store image. This strategy is commonly used for specialty products to reach the correct target market and amplify the exclusivity and prestige of the product. The producer may also benefit from selective strategy since intermediaries, like retailers, have a limited number of competitors and are consequently more likely to invest more in the marketing, support the list price, and pursue other suggestions of the producer. (Chapter 2.3.5.)

One of the respondents reasoned that in the US it is possible to be more selective because markets are bigger in every segment.

In the beginning, using specialty stores and boutiques to build awareness and above all to find a critical mass in certain areas was seen as a good approach. Also, boutique-style stores were seen as a good fit to enhance the exclusive image of the Double Bubble.

Creating volume is not possible by using specialty stores and one respondent suggested using bigger chain stores, located in metropolitan areas, like Costco wholesale or Best Buy to create a chance for a bigger volume. The thoughts of other respondents did not support this approach.

Avoiding Walmart and other cheap brand places were recommended throughout. Also, any retail company that tends to sell products by offering massive discounts, both online and instore, should be avoided.

One of the respondents pointed out also that supply chains with intermediaries are less difficult as they usually have established services for backward logistics too, for example. This is supported in the theory (see chapter 2.3.4) as intermediaries one value-creating function is to provide services.

As discussed in chapter 2.3.1 Intermediaries are also more capable of building coherent and vast assortments for consumers by breaking larger order quantities into smaller, more desirable quantities and thus matching the supply and demand, which supports the views of the respondents.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are compiled according to the research findings and are assimilated with the theory and the interview material. The initial research questions are answered in

1. What are the potential channels and collaborators in the United States for the Double Bubble?
2. Which are the most influencing channels for the Double Bubble?

The research was initiated to serve a purpose and is based on the needs of the working life and the results can be used to confirm, adjust, or set out future strategic decisions.

5.1 Sales Channels

Both direct and indirect sales channels are recommended to be used in selling the Double Bubble in the US markets. Kinoss Design Concepts is recommended to form a multi-channel strategy for sales and distribution.

Direct sales channels should be hosted by Kinoss Design Concepts like they already have initiated by establishing a website and a brochure for the product. (Appendices 5. & 6.) However, it has to be taken into consideration how is the traffic directed to the web store. According to the respondents, paid advertisement is recommended to be used to build awareness initially. Creating traffic requires extensive marketing campaigns and effort and thus, is seen as a problematic approach.

Influencer marketing and social media marketing are recommended ways to increase direct sales in a cost-efficient way. The use of influencers is discussed further in chapter 5.2.

Indirect channels hold many benefits through their value-creating functions and existing customer bases. As discussed in chapter 2.3.4., consumers know well retailers' assortments, thus, more potential customers are reached using established retailers. Based on this theory it is recommended to sell the Double Bubble through resellers.

The recommended multi-channel system, for the Double Bubble, should preferably consist of resellers that have already existing web stores and online sales activity. Some potential resellers are listed below:

- MC Furniture
- Modtempo
- MOMA Design store
- Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland
- Ohio Design Centre
- Sedlak Interiors

These suggestions include active web stores and desirable product assortment to support Double Bubble and are close to Kinosh Design Concepts' warehouse location. Contact information can be seen in appendix 7.

Avoiding Walmart and other cheap brand places are recommended throughout as the effect on the value perceived and brand image was a concern amongst the respondents. Also, any retail company that tends to sell products by offering massive discounts, both online and instore, should be avoided to sustain consistent pricing and brand image across the channels. This includes the use of Amazon, which is not recommended.

5.2 Distribution Channels

It is reasonable to interpret that the use of intermediaries is essential for Double Bubble to enter the US markets. Mirroring the theory to the interview results refers that by reducing the number of transactions and thus the cost and burden of transactions are recommended as the whole line consists of only one product and is not a high-volume commodity. Also, intermediaries have experience in the US markets and established networks.

The use of a conventional channel system (See figure 3) is seen as a preferred approach for better cost-efficiency. Consequently, keeping the channels shorter is recommended to retain control for the product.

Intermediaries are also a valuable asset in building brand image and awareness for the product. Building a comprehensive sales and distribution channel mix requires more extensive resources, which in this particular case is not recommended to be done independently. As discussed in chapter 2.3.1 Intermediaries are also more capable of building coherent and vast assortments for consumers by breaking larger order quantities into smaller, more desirable quantities and thus matching the supply and demand. (Kotler et al. 2008. 881– 882.)

Based on the findings and the product character it is suggested to follow a selective distribution strategy. In a selective distribution strategy, the product is sold only in a limited number of stores that have the desired store image. As this strategy is commonly used for specialty products to reach the correct target market it would also amplify the exclusivity and prestige of the Double Bubble. Zikmund & d' Amico (2001. 369– 370.) writes that selective retailers are more likely to invest more in marketing, support the list price, and pursue other suggestions of the producer This theory further justifies the recommendation for selective strategy. Additionally, interviews supported this as an amplifying and influential factor for the brand image perceived as more luxurious if sold and distributed selectively.

5.3 Additional Remarks

Based on the interviews, Kinos Design Concept should take into consideration the use of social media, especially, in marketing. However, the use of social media as a direct sales channel is not recommended before studying it further.

Through social media, using local influencers to attract a larger audience, and also the attention of the target group, social media is the most influential channel to increase direct sales and support in indirect sales for the Double Bubble According to the interview respondents. Chosen influencers should have credibility in the field of design, homes decor interior design, and lifestyle. An additional benefit is received by using Finnish people in the US as they potentially understand both Finnish products and the US markets.

Potential influencers for the Double Bubble in the US for Kinos Design Concepts:

- Emmi Granlund, Interior designer and visual artist based in the US
- Jukka Hildén, Head of Finnish film production company in the US

Both of the recommended persons are established in their field and active in social media and followed by both, Finns and Americans. Emmi Granlund has credibility through her profession as Jukka Hildén is head of Finnish film production company which has successfully sold Finnish shows to the US.

Kinos Design Concepts next strategical steps to follow should include creating a brand framework, marketing, and sales strategy and a style guide which is important to communicate and inform the collaborators and channel members the desired image and actions for the product. The brand plan would also make communication more coherent. Implementing these into action, measuring, and adjusting are the next steps.

The good brand framework takes into account the following questions for example:

1. What is your purpose?
2. Cohesive messaging – create a style guide
3. What are the emotional triggers to build customer relationships?
4. What is your level of flexibility if something does not work?
5. How do you cultivate your loyal customers?
6. What do your competitors do?

Building a brand framework helps to reach a long-term goal and it compiles the characteristics and components of both Kinos Design Concepts and the Double Bubble. (Stec. 2017.)

6 SUGGESTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

6.1 Suggestions for further studies

A few topics worth further investigation emerged during the study. This research could extend into a deeper analysis of direct sales channels for design products particularly, and its effects on the brand image received.

The use of social media as a direct sales channel for design products and purchasing through social media platforms has not been studied extensively. As a rapidly growing selling platform it would be beneficial to study its possible applications in the design furniture industry.

It would be beneficial to study how to create a brand plan and marketing and media strategy for Kinos Design Concepts.

6.2 Limitations of this study

The problematic part of this study turned out to be to obtain secondary data. The databases on design and furniture sales in the US are not easily feasible. It would have been beneficial to gain access to costly databases such as Coresight research or Statista. These databases sell information and researches for companies thus the pricing for an independent researcher is unattainable.

Current literature and research are hard to find or there are no credible sources for finding information about the latest trends in the furniture market sector; especially online sales and distribution methods are subjects that are not covered topically in literature more than five years old. Due to the ongoing evolution and increasingly digital environment, I have found that information and definitions are shattered and indecisive.

The timing and nature of exporting a product to US markets were difficult because of the political instability. The UL license from US authorities proved to be a slower process than anticipated and it had a major impact on the original schedule, framework, and study plan.

Coronavirus Outbreak harmed getting interviewees as many of the candidates could not find the time and a few of the earliest respondents withdrew their participation on the same ground. This affected the schedule of the research further.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Double Bubble - Eero Aarnio



Double Bubble, sizes Small and Medium. Teemu Nurmivuori.

Appendix 2. Ball Chair - Eero Aarnio



Aarnio Originals, Ball Chair. 2020. <https://fi.aarniooriginals.com/>.

Appendix 3. Bubble Chair - Eero Aarnio



Aarnio Originals, Ball Chair. 2020. <https://fi.aarniooriginals.com/>.

Appendix 4. Eero Aarnio

About Eero Aarnio

The Double Bubble lamp was designed in 2000 by celebrated Finnish contemporary designer Eero Aarnio. It was first presented in 2003 at an exhibition celebrating his career.

Initially created from blown glass, the Double Bubble lamp is now cast in plastic to ensure durability and a uniform color of light.

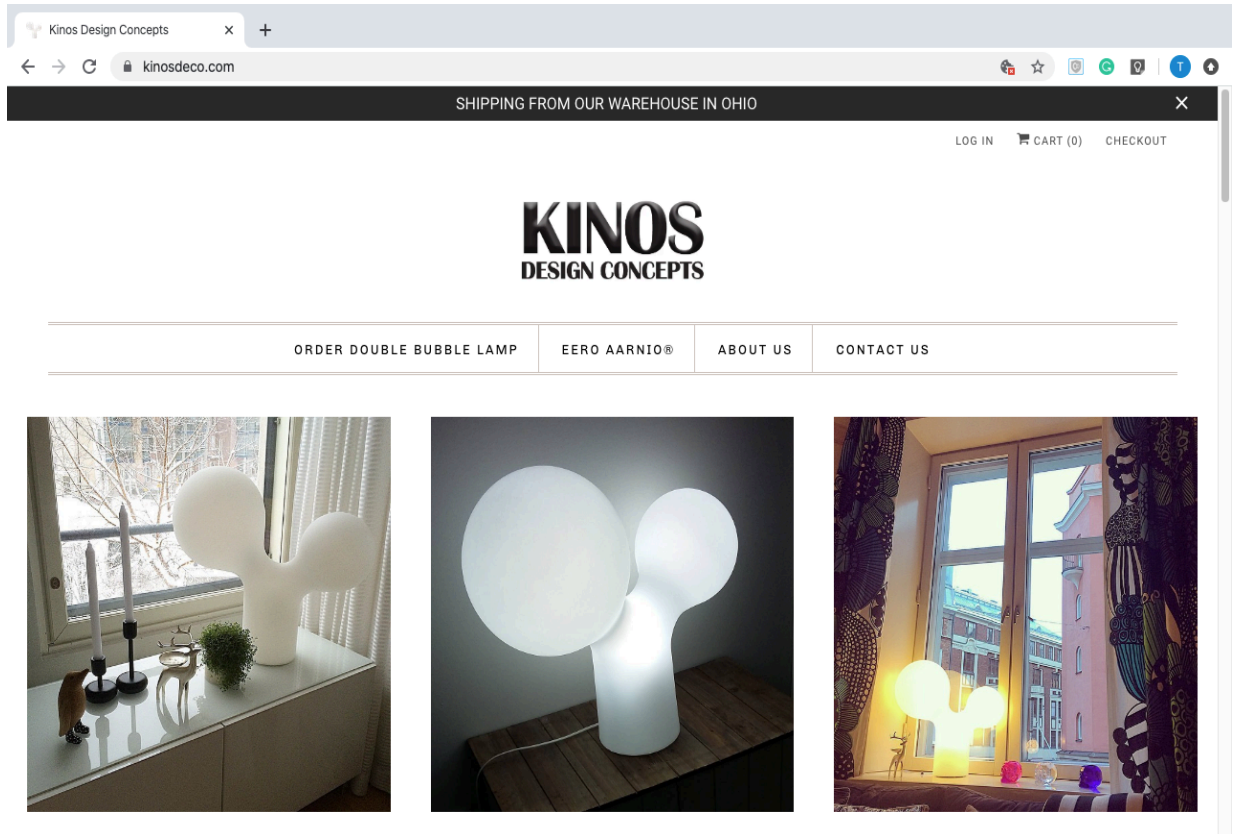
Eero Aarnio (born 1932 in Helsinki, Finland) is noted for innovative furniture designs, such as his plastic and fiberglass chairs. Aarnio's designs were an important aspect of 1960s popular culture, and could often be seen as part of sets in period science-fiction films. Because his designs use very simple geometric forms, they are ideal for a variety of contemporary settings.



Eero Aarnio continues to create new designs. Many of Aarnio's works are included in the world's most prestigious museums, including Victoria and Albert Museum in London, MoMA in New York and Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein.

Designer Eero Aarnio. Kinosh Design Concepts. 2018.

Appendix 5. Kinos Design Concepts website



Kinos Design Concepts. 2020. <https://kinosdeco.com/>

Appendix 6. Product Brochure



**Contemporary Lamps
For Contemporary Lifestyles**



The Double Bubble lamp, or Tupla Kupla in Finnish, is perfect lighting for contemporary homes and lifestyles. It comes in three sizes- a small size table lamp, a mid-size table lamp and one monumental floor lamp.

Double Bubble design lamps are cast in plastic to ensure durability and to maintain a uniform color of light.

Melaja Oy, located in Finland, is the sole manufacturer. All three lamps have 3 bulbs. The small and mid-size table lamp uses E12 base 3-6W LED bulbs. The large floor lamp uses E26 base 6-9W LED bulbs.



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Contact Us Today

For more information about Double Bubble lamps, pricing and delivery, contact us today at Kinos Design Concepts.

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KINOS
DESIGN CONCEPTS

Appendix 7. Potential Resellers

MC Furniture

Website: <https://www.mcdfurniture.com/>

Phone: (440) 585-7430

Email: joseph@mcdfurniture.com

MOMA Design store

Website: <https://store.moma.org/>

Phone: (212) 708-9400 (Information Request)

Director of Merchandising at The Museum of Modern Art: Emmanuel Plat:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/emmanuelplat/>

Museum of contemporary Art, Cleveland

Website: <https://www.mocacleveland.org/>

Phone: +1 216-658-6940

Email: shop@mocacleveland.org

Modtempo

Website: <https://www.modtempo.com/>

Phone: (216)716-2664 (OH)

Email: support@modtempo.com

Ohio Design Centre

Website: <http://ohiodesigncentre.com/>

Phone: 216 831 1245

Email: -

Sedlak Interiors

Website: <https://www.sedlakinteriors.com/?fbclid=IwAR3MY32qQWiAE0Mj8yo99WeUiaq5fq4UQiHv6fMpDK8MWIP1uKmyNZwTIKQ>

Phone: 440 248 2424 (OH)

Email: info@sedlakinteriors.com

Appendix 8. Potential Influencers

Emmi Granlund is a Finnish visual artist, interior architect and a model. She has also her own design brand.

Contact: info@emmigranlund.com

Social media (Instagram): <https://www.instagram.com/emmi.granlund/?hl=fi>

Jukka Hildén is a Finnish entrepreneur known from the stunt group Dudesons and is the head of Rabbit Films USA, production company. His wife, Chachi Hildén, is dancer, choreographer and actress and has 1.8 million Instagram followers.

Contact: jukka.hilden@rabbitfilms.com

Social media (Instagram): <https://www.instagram.com/jukkadudeson/?hl=fi>