Optimizing the growth hacking funnel for startups: A Case Study of We Encourage Oy

Trang Nguyen

2020 Laurea

Laurea University of Applied Sciences

Optimizing the growth hacking funnel for startups: A Case Study of We Encourage Oy

Trang Nguyen
Business Information Technology
Thesis
May, 2020

Laurea University of Applied Sciences **Abstract**
Bachelor of Business Administration
Business Information Technology

Trang Nguyen
Optimizing the Growth Hacking Funnel for startups: A Case Study of We Encourage Oy
Year 2020 Number of pages 66

This thesis project concerns growth hacking, a trending topic for startups. The main purpose of the thesis is to build a growth hacking plan with guidelines and suggestions for the client company, We Encourage Oy, following the AARRR growth hacking funnel. We Encourage was recently founded and is currently under the prototyping stage.

The project tasks are (1) forming a knowledge base about startups and growth hacking, (2) benchmarking from successful stories, (3) studying about the potential clients and insights from company' view, (4) creating a growth hacking plan for the company, (5) summarizing and giving conclusions.

The theoretical framework introduces the readers to startups and growth hacking. In the first part, a definition of startups and the challenges they are facing is explained. The following part focuses on the concept of growth hacking, the differences between growth hacking and its previous version – digital marketing and the growth hacking funnel.

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were applied in this thesis. A survey was created, consisting of 22 multiple-choice questions with the aim of learning about the customer journey and their expectations about We Encourage services. The survey received 115 responses and contributed valuable insights to the research. In addition, an interview was set up with the CEO of the client company to learn about their services, targets and future plans.

In the final part, the theoretical base is summarized together with the research results to provide insights and suggestions for the client company. The suggestions together form a growth hacking plan that helps We Encourage acquire more new donors, bring great experiences for them and increase retention rate.

Keywords: growth hacking, AARRR funnel, digital marketing, startups

Contents

1 Introduction

In 2014, Airbnb, an online marketplace for homestays and tourism experiences, received 10 million guests and 550000 properties listed worldwide, making up 10 billion valuation (Brown 2015). Throwing back to the first days, Airbnb only had three renters, each one paying 80 dollars.

Another story is from one of the biggest ride sharing service companies – Uber. In just 4 years from 2009 to 2013, Uber witnessed a significant growth, which was considered “growing faster than Ebay did” (Dillet 2013). In 2013, the company is valued at 3.76 million dollar and operated in more than 35 countries and still expanding until now (Brown 2014).

What is the secret success behind the growth of Airbnb and Uber? Even though they have different strategies regarding company resources and current situation, they both applied the same method, which is growth hacking. This term is becoming more and more popular recently, especially in the startup world.

1.1 Research background

The opportunities to learn and grow in the startup environment have encouraged me to research and gradually gain interest towards the topic of growth hacking. I wanted to systemize the learning process during the job experiences as well as the self-learning and combine with the knowledge learned from Laurea University of Applied Sciences to build up this thesis research.

After finalizing the final thesis research, I came to the next stage which is to look for a company as a case study. We Encourage Oy agreed on being the client and supporting me with the thesis, as a result of mutual interest.

In February 3rd, I had the first discussion with the founder of the company. We both recognized that a growth hacking plan is needed for the company to enter the market and growth sustainably, along with acquiring and nurturing the audiences. The focus will be on how We Encourage Oy can apply the previous case studies from successful companies, following the 5 stages of the growth hacking funnels.

1.2 Research purposes

We Encourage Oy is recently founded and at the prototyping stage at the moment.

The challenges that We Encourage Oy is facing are mostly about resources and customer acquisition. These are also the same problems for the young startups, as it is hard to interact with the target audience with the limited funds and resources. A business model and a strategy for sustainable growth in long-term is lacking in the company.

The product will be launched soon in first half of 2020. We Encourage Oy is working on identifying buyer personas and creating great customer experiences. A brand guideline and some marketing channels have been set up but there are no clear strategies.

Growth hacking meets the needs to solve the challenge for We Encourage. A good growth hacking plan will help We Encourage Oy reach their target audiences, turn them to loyal customers, reduce the churn rate and get revenue.

By the end of the research, I wish to complete and deliver a growth hacking plan with guidelines and suggestions for the client company following the AARRR growth hacking funnel.

1.3 Research objectives

As discussed in the previous section, the final product of this thesis is a growth hacking plan with 5 stages based on the growth hacking AARRR funnel for We Encourage Oy. The aim of this plan is to help We Encourage acquire new customers and nurture them into advocates. In order to achieve this goal, there are smaller objectives needed to be done:

- Objective 1: Forming a knowledge base about startups and growth hacking

  It is always vital first to combine different resources to form a knowledge base regarding the topics before moving to the implementation stage. Relevant terms, facts and figures, process about startups and growth hacking will be explained in details.

- Objective 2: Benchmarking from successful stories and identify the elements that contribute to a good growth hacking plan.

  By benchmarking, I will have a deeper view on what other companies have been doing and what are the key takeaways for We Encourage. This is a continuation of the objective 1 but with a more practical approach.

- Objective 3: Study about the potential clients and insights from company' view

  To achieve this objective, a survey and an interview will be conducted in order to create learn about the potential customers and make the most out of growth hacking. The aim is also to get insights from the founder and take away lessons to apply on the client company.

- Objective 4: Creating a growth hacking plan for the company

Based on the knowledge base, the company analysis and other key findings, a growth hacking plan with 5 stages will be built.

- Objective 5: Conclusion and reflection

This is to summarize the whole process and what knowledge and skills I have gained during this thesis research.

1.4 Thesis structure

The thesis has four parts: an introduction, literature review, practical, and a conclusion.

The first introduces about my background and my motivation from to form this thesis research, the objectives that I hope to achieve, and relevant information to help the reader get an overview about the client company – what services they provide and what challenges they are facing. Chapter 2 describes the methods used in the research.

The second part presents the literature review: how to define growth hacking, where the term comes from, how it is different from its previous edition – digital marketing and how the growth hacking funnel works.

The third part concerns the practical aspects of the research. It focuses on analyzing and evaluating the primary and secondary data, based on which, I will develop a plan for the client company. The content of the survey, as well as the final growth hacking plan as a pdf will be attached at the end of the thesis, in Appendix.

The last part is a conclusion to wrap up the whole thesis, and my reflection from the process.

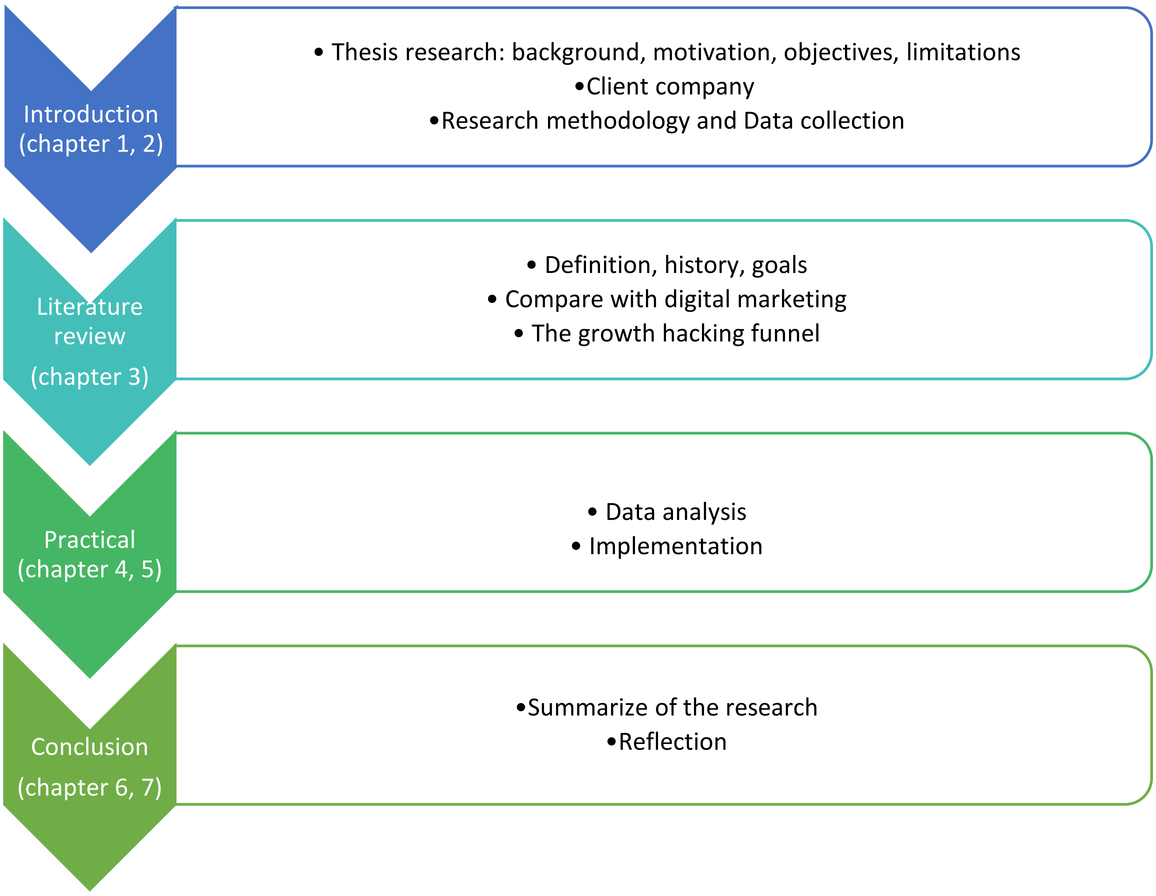


Figure 1. Thesis structure

1.5 Research limitation

There are some noticeable limitations about this research which are listed as below:

First of all, growth hacking is a young field, and hence there is a serious shortage of academic sources. I am not yet an expert in the field. Therefore, in addition to published books, it is necessary to gather information from some of the field's pioneers' blog posts, e-articles, presentations, infographics.

Secondly, a non-disclosure agreement has been signed between the company and the thesis worker, which means any figures or information affecting the company will not be mentioned to prevent legal issues. All of the data being used only to support the thesis's purpose. Regarding the GDPR which has been taken into action since 2018, the research group and the interviewee information is confidential and should be protected by the thesis worker.

Time-limitation is another limitation that I have to subdue. The thesis as well as this project is expected to finish in 4 months following the timeframe of a Bachelor thesis.

In terms of the client company, We Encourage is a startup company in the prototyping stage by the time I started. There were a lot of uncertainties with the company's operational activities. Hence, the growth hacking plan that I suggest in this thesis will be focus mainly on one target audience which has already been identified: the donors.

Even though I took advantage of the time working as a thesis worker for We Encourage to keep track with the company activities, the growth hacking plan in this thesis, to some extent, could not guarantee the success for all startups.

1.6 Company introduction

1.6.1 Mission

We Encourage Oy is a social impact startup, which was founded in 2019 by Anna Juusela. The interest in future and trends, plus the passionate for women and gender equality have led her to establish We Encourage.

We Encourage works as a fundraising and marketing agent for NGOs and small-scale fundraisers which empower women and girls under oppression, honor-based violence and forced marriages. We Encourage builds a crowdfunding platform using AI tool and Blockchain technologies, to incentivize families to educate their daughters instead of selling them into marriage. The solution focuses on the transparency and connection between NGOs and the donors.

1.6.2 Products and services

We Encourage Oy can be described as both a business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) company. Kento (2019) from Investopedia defined these two terms as below:

B2B refers to business that is conducted between companies, rather than between a company and individual consumer. We Encourage works with different NGOs and fundraisers and plays the role as a fundraising and marketing agent for NGOs. These NGOs and fundraisers are carefully selected and are willing to commit with transparency and follow-up.

B2C refers to the process of selling products and services where consumers are the final end-users. We Encourage is the link between NGOs and donors, assists the donors in the fundraising process and helps them follow up on how their money is being spent.

Currently, We Encourage offers two products: We Encourage Fundraising and We Encourage AI tool. The former is already taken into use with piloting partners from Nicehearts and Idea Nepal, while the latter is under development.

We Encourage Fundraising helps NGOs to serve their customers or donors better by creating transparency and connection. The donors are aware of how the money they donate is spent in the right place for the right people. This transparency attracts more donors for the trustworthy NGO's causes and thus makes a bigger impact on the lives of people in need.

We Encourage AI tool aims to provide psycho-social support and guidance to women victims of intimate partner violence, gender-based violence and promoting sexual and reproductive health. This AI tool is expected to act as a reliable source of information for women on their rights and where to seek different levels of support. The tool will be providing step by step recommendations to victims and act as a helping friend.

1.6.3 Target audiences

We Encourage defines its target audiences as the three groups below:

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are non-profit and non-criminal organizations and function independently from the government (Folger 2020). We Encourage aims to target Advocacy NGOs which are organized to promote particular causes, with a specialization in the area of women empowerment, education for children or gender equality

Small-Scale Fundraisers (SSFs) is a new defined target group. Before in Finland, fundraising has always been strictly controlled. Only NGOs with a fundraising permit are able to arrange money collecting. Starting from March 2020, however, the new fundraising act will come into force. The new act will allow small-scale fundraising, meaning that a group of minimum of 3 persons (Finnish citizens) can arrange a money collecting twice per year. The maximum amount raised by small-scale fundraising is set at EUR 10,000 and it may last no more than three months. (Ministry of the Interior 2019)

Donors are private individuals or a group of people that comprise a significant portion of NGO funding. Without the contribution from donors, the NGOs can hardly exist.

In terms of the thesis, I would focus mainly on We Encourage Fundraising and the B2C approach with the donors as the target audiences.

2 Research methodology

The research methodology of this thesis is based on the structure of the research process onion developed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012, 128).

Figure 2. Research onion (Saunders & Lewis & Thornhill 2012)

2.1 Research approach

A research project will involve the use of theory. The theory does not make explicit in the research design; however, it plays an important role in building the base for the research (Saunders & Lewis & Thornhill 2012, 129).

There are two research approach: deductive - and inductive

The **deductive** approach is about testing theory. In this approach, the researchers develop a theory and hypotheses and design a research strategy to test the hypotheses. In other words, with deduction, we look at the consequences of a theory. Deduction involves gathering facts to confirm or disprove the hypothesized relationship (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2005, 16), and is usually used in scientific research.

The deductive approach has its origins in research in natural sciences. However, starting from the 20th century, the emergence of social sciences led to the frequent use of **inductive** approach (Saunders & Lewis & Thornhill 2012, 131). Compared to deduction, induction concerns building theory. Methods begins with ideas, data and facts that lead to theories and predictions, and a new cycle begins with new theories (Myers 2013, 23). Nowadays, most business researchers use this approach to observe facts and generate new theories.

The process of deduction and induction is not exclusive of each other. In some cases, both of the approach can be used to support one another. The common requirements for these two approaches are the natural understanding of the existing knowledge, and the willingness to keep up to date with new development (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2005, 16).

In terms of this thesis research, both deductive and inductive approach will be used. As the topic of growth hacking is pretty new and hence there is a shortage of academic sources, the induction will be helpful in generating, analyzing and reflecting data. This research also needs to be investigated deductively based on existing literatures.

2.2 Research methods

The next layer of the onion is research methods. According to Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005), research methods refer to the process of collecting data and obtaining information from them in order to solve a problem and give solutions. There are two research methods: quantitative and qualitative. The differences between these two methods lie in the measurement and their reflection (Bryan & Bell 2011, 39).

Quantitative methods have been the dominant strategy in business studies. It is described by Bryan and Bell (2011, 150) as “entailing the collection of numeric data and exhibiting a view of the relationship between theory and research”.

Qualitative methods, on the other hands, focus on non-numeric data. Quantitative are “governed by clear rules and offer a way of exploring issues, which can not be expressed by number” (Greener 2008). Some principal quantitative methods are action research, interview, case studies, structured observations.

Quantitative and qualitative methods will be combined to serve the purpose of this thesis research, through an interview and a survey. The survey is mixed with multiple choice questions and open-ended questions.

2.3 Data collection

2.3.1 Primary data collection

When secondary data cannot always help giving a concrete solution for the problems, we must collect the data that is relevant and consistent with the research. Especially when the problems concern people’s attitude, intentions and behaviors, primary data helps in understanding the reasons behind. Sources of primary data can come from experiment, observations and communication (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2005, 102).

I choose communication and observations as the sources for this thesis research. The data is obtained through the observation of competitors, the unstructured interview with CEO and the survey with potential customers. The unstructured interview describes an interview with only a few questions prepared and processes like a normal conversation.

2.3.2 Secondary data collection

Secondary data is usually collected by previous researchers for some other purposes. It is considered cost-effective and timesaving compared to primary data. In some cases, it can help overcome difficulties in the gathering of primary data (Cowton 1998).

The secondary data used in this thesis is obtained from different articles, blog, infographics, newspaper, industry reports.

3 Literature review

3.1 Startups

In order to identify the benefits that growth hacking can bring to a startup, it is vital to first understand how to define a "startup", what is going on in the startup world as well as what challenges startups are facing.

3.1.1 The definition of a startup

Steve Blank, an entrepreneur and Silicon Valley legend, defined a startup as a "temporary organization designed to search for a repeatable and scalable business model" (Blank 2010).

A startup is often confused with a small company. The main differences between these two types lie in the company's growth goals and revenue forecast. While startups focus on disrupting markets and fast pace development, small businesses set goals on long-term growth in an existing market (Pope 2020).

Blank (2011) divided startups into 6 types based on their goals and strategies. These 6 types are:

- lifestyle startups
- small business startups
- scalable startups
- buyable startups
- large company startups
- social startups

The case company in this thesis is a social (impact) startup in Finland. A social startup is driven not by how much money they can make, but how many lives they can impact.

3.1.2 The startup scene in the world and in Finland

The startup phenomenon first started in Silicon Valley, but soon expanded and has become fully global with growth centers in all over the world. However, not all startup hubs are similar.

In Finland, the startup scene has been driven by students from Aalto University, starting from 2009. Slush was created and gradually changed the attitudes of the society towards entrepreneurship (Aalto University teacher 2019).

According to Business Finland, what attract talents coming to Finland to establish startups are the developed entrepreneurship culture, a vibrant and friendly startup ecosystem with accelerators, angel investors, venture capital and strong innovation support by the government. The capital Helsinki ranks number one in the world in local connectedness among founders, investors and experts. Some figures below are highlighted from an evaluation published by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy:

- There are 2442 start-up companies operating in Finland up till now. 15% of which are “growth startups” with a significant increase over a three-year period. While 2442 is not a huge number of startups compared to other big startup hubs, 15% is a very high rate of good quality startups, considering the size of Finland’s population.
- Helsinki alone is a home for more than 853 startups, which accounts for more than third of all Finnish startups
- Finnish startups and early stage growth companies raised the highest amount of funding to date, with 479 million euros as the total financing figure.
  (Business Finland 2019)

3.1.3 Challenges for startups

Besides the growth of startup trend and the great opportunities that the world in general and Finland have brought to entrepreneurs, most of the startups have been struggling to survive and overcome the obstacles. Most of the challenges are unique for each startup, however, some of the common ones can be mentioned below:

- Financial issues

Funding is important for improving technology, hiring talents and acquiring customers. However, any startup would face financial issues in different stages for several reasons.

- Human resources problems

Most of the startups starts with one or a few co-founders. Not all of the founders have the knowledge of the field. The team later needs expanding due to the need within the process, for example, prototyping development or customer success management.

- Support mechanisms

The term “mechanisms” concerns the people that plays a significant role to a startup such as angel investors, venture capital, incubators or accelerators. Lack of support from these people will increase the risk of failure.

- Environmental elements

Also, there are other external factors that have an impact on the success of a startup. Some of them are government policy, legal issues, the existing trends or limitations in the market. Without a supportive environment, a startup will likely to fail.
(Salamzadeh & Kawamorita 2015)

While the last two factors are external and cannot be controlled, a startup can have a direct impact in giving solutions for the financial issues and human resources problems. That is the start of how “growth hacking” was born.

3.2 Growth hacking

3.2.1 Growth hacking: history, definition and goals

The stories of successful products and services are about how they pass through different stages of the product life cycle:

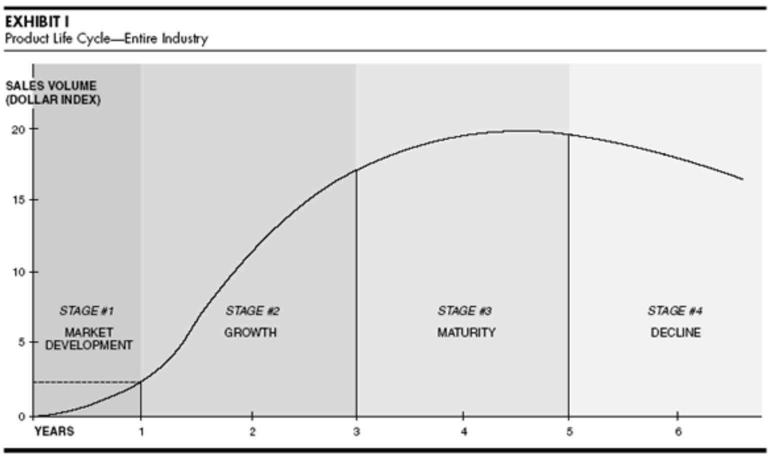


Figure 3. Product Life Cycle—Entire Industry (Levitt 1965)

After being brought to the market, the demands for the products and services start to accelerate. This is where “growth hacking” steps in as a tool to hack the growth of customer awareness, build brand preference and market share.

In the book “Hacking Growth” published in 2017, Sean Ellis, who is known as the father of “growth hacking”, and Morgan Brown, wrote that:

“Every company needs to grow their base of customers in order to survive and thrive. But growth hacking isn’t just about how to get new customers. It’s about how to engage, activate and win them over so they keep coming back for more.”

Growth hacking is a method which combines digital marketing and IT Engineering. Growth hacking is dependent on analytics and social metrics and helps the companies to set goals and track their goals through analytics, which helps them understand customers better and satisfy customers’ needs.

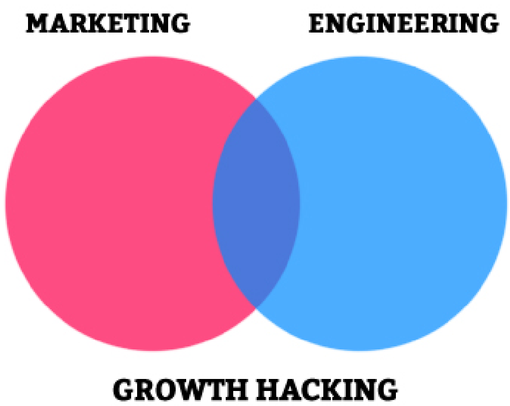


Figure 4. What is growth hacking? (Batesole 2019)

Ellis and Brown (2017) also explained in his book the three fundamental elements that build up growth hacking:

- A collaboration between different teams to break down the wall between conventional marketing and engineering.
- A constant utilization of data collection and analytics.
- A continuous practice of testing new ideas and evaluate the results to make quick change and adaptation.

Growth hacking has been known for the last 6 years, but its history is more than that. The term “growth hacking” first appeared in 2010. Dropbox, a cloud service, which was still a small startup in 2008, decide to make their move in marketing by hiring Sean Ellis. Sean documented the process and saw the value in his methodologies. In 2010, he gave this process a name “growth hacking” (Batesole 2019).

Growth hacking started to gain more attractions in 2015, all thanks to the article written by Andrew Chen: “Why growth hacking is the new VP of Marketing”. Since then, we have seen more of articles, researches, reports and blog posts regarding the topic.

Some people might wonder, before growth hacking was a thing, many companies have paid attention to their marketing efforts and applied successfully their own methods to keep growing. In fact, these companies have the advantages from a different landscape. Not all companies, especially startups have enough money to invite an influencer or purchase an advertising slot in TV during golden hour. With fewer resources, less budgets, how do startups compete in this fast-changing world? They need a solution that helps them work faster, smarter and leave better results. That is why growth hacking is important.

According to Batesole (2019), the goals of growth hacking are to:

- Bridge the divide between marketing and product

In most companies, there is a clear division between marketing and product department. Marketing team claims that the product is not good enough to convert the audiences to customers, while on the other hand, product team believes the responsibility to acquire customers belongs to marketing team. With growth hacking, marketing and product team join hands and the company begins to see the opportunities to growth.

- Leverage rapid experimentation

This is related more to the product side. The team has to test ideas across customer journey, such as onboarding, retention, upsell

- Adhere to the metrics

Growth hacking helps the companies to align the strategy to the most important metrics, which are normally the value that the products deliver to the customers. An example is from Airbnb. Their most important metric is not about the downloads, but about how many nights are booked with the app. If they just download the app, Airbnb can not deliver them the values, and they can not share their experiences with Airbnb in their network.

- Foster a culture of grit

Growth hacking is not an easy path. It requires hard work, failures, opposition and challenges. In order to be successful, it is vital to recognize and communicate the need to have a grit, to stick to it, challenge ourselves and encourage the team to keep moving forward.

3.2.2 Growth hacking VS digital marketing

Growth hacking is the next level of digital marketing (MVP Workshop author 2016). They both share some common principles but are differentiated by many aspects.

According to Biyani (2013), a growth hacker really is just a marketer, but one with a different set of challenges to tackle and tools to work with. In fact, growth hacking and digital marketing emphasize on experimentation, creativity and are tracked with measurement tools such as increased engagement, increased conversion, increased retention. In addition, the process working in both concerns the utilization of customer psychology and customer personas.

The aspects that set digital marketing and growth hacking apart are:

Background: Digital marketers don't usually have tech background, while growth hackers do. In addition, a growth hacking team consists of almost every department in the company: marketing, design, tech.

Their focus and goals: In the growth hacking AARRR funnel, digital marketing focus on the first two phase: leads acquisition and activation. Digital Marketers simply generate leads, or in other words, make the audiences want the product.

Growth hacking focuses on all 5 phases: Acquisition – Activation – Retention – Referral – Revenue. Growth Hackers work closely with people from other departments to define the products based on data.

Marketers have lots of KPIs they track, while growth hackers focus only on metrics that lead to growth: more web traffic, more social media engagements, and — most importantly — more sales (Kajabi 2018).

Here is an example: A marketer could use engagement rate to analyze an overall goal of building brand awareness. A growth hacker, by comparison, could set a goal of increasing social sharing by 50%. (digital marketing Institute author 2018)

Their keys: Acquiring new customers and increasing brand awareness is key to digital marketing success. With growth hacking, product and data analysis are keys. A/B testing and conversion optimization are crucial in a growth hacking process.

Their target: The growth hacking model is often associated with startup companies (and low-cost budgets) that are looking for exponential growth, while digital marketing can be applied for almost any types of companies.

In conclusion, growth hacking is not a replacement for digital marketing. Far from being separate entities, growth hacking and digital marketing are intrinsically linked (digital marketing Institute author, 2018). Different companies will have different strategies based on their current situations.

3.2.3 The growth hacking Framework – AARRR funnel

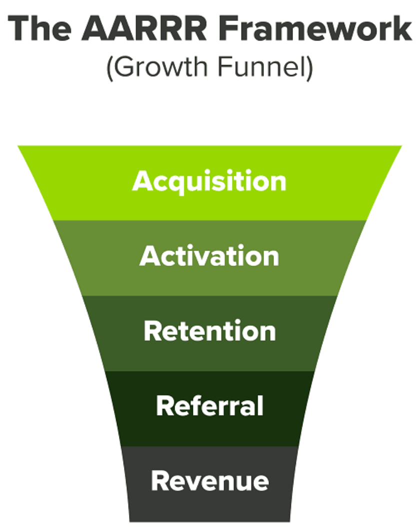


Figure 5. The growth hacking funnel (Muolos 2020)

AARRR stands for Acquisition, Activation, Retention, Revenue and Referral. These are the five stages in the framework that allow the companies to measure and optimize every phase of their customer journey – from when they start finding out about the product (Acquisition) to creating income for the business (Revenue). Each phase has its own set of metrics and techniques to focus on (Arendsz 2017).

a. Stage 0: Finding a product/ market fit

The funnel starts with a must-have product. So how do the companies identify if their products fit with the current market?

There are three elements that contribute to a must-have product: the customer, the problem and the solution. When all three conditions are met, it means that the product brings solutions to help the potential customers solve the problems, or in other words, it achieved product/market fit (Tüfekyapan 2018).

Why is product/market fit important? The first reason why startups fail, is because they are not flexible enough to receive feedback from customers and end up creating a product that does not satisfy their customer.

In their book "Hacking Growth", Sean Ellis and Morgan Brown (2017) suggested to do surveys: on potential customers asking about their wishes and needs, and on current customers asking how disappointed they will be if the products are no longer available. By that, a company can confirm whether it achieved product/ market fit.

b. Stage 1: Acquisition

The first A in the AARRR funnel describes how companies make potential customers find them. The more we can target, the more chances these audiences would be interested in the products. However, depend on each company's stage of growth, business model and current situation, the growth hackers can decide how much effort to spend on this first stage (Ellis and Brown 2017, 142).

Once the product/market fit is figured out, it is time to learn about product/channel fit. What are the marketing channels that work best to encourage more customers to visit the website? Typically, acquisition techniques can be divided into paid, owned and earned channels.

Figure 6. Paid, owned and earned channels (Sahab 2019)

- Paid channels

Paid channels are the competition where normally the companies have the biggest budget will win. However, by distributing the cost effectively and having the right optimization and approach, a startup with low budget will still have a huge chance.

A popular paid channel is Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Advertising. PPC is a text advertisement, and the process happens through a bid and budget, so that the ads display will be listed with the mark “sponsored” and appear at the top and to the right of the organic search results (Lombardi 2011). Compared to SEO, PPC Advertising has an immediate visibility.

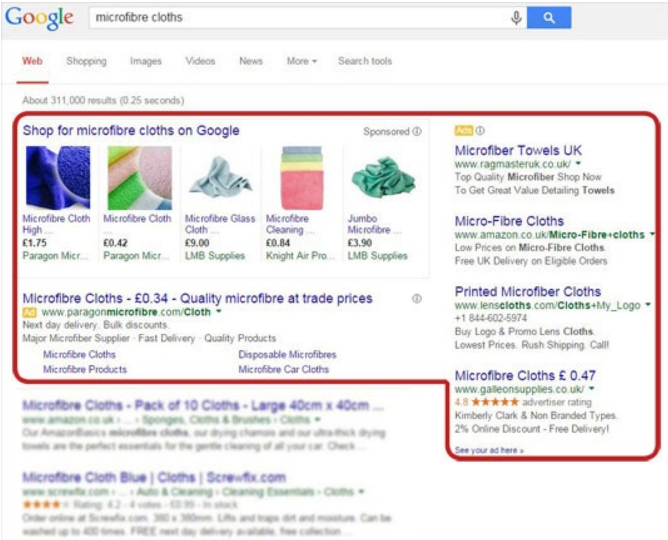


Figure 7. Pay-per-click display (Lombardi 2011)

Remarketing and retargeting are both used to reconnect the customers who have visited the websites and performed some purchases but haven’t finished. Google Adwords (2017) has listed one benefit of Remarketing and Retargeting:

“It allows you to strategically position your ads in front of these audiences as they browse Google or its partner websites, thus helping you increase your brand awareness or remind those audiences to make a purchase.”

In addition, in owned channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Linkedin, the platforms also support advertising that help boost the content and the website.

- Owned channels

Owned channels refer to the channel that the company can control and is unique to the brand, such as social media channel and SEO. They do not require a huge financial capacity to maintain and are used commonly in startups.

Social media

One of the most common examples of owned channels is website, and social media is an extending version. Social media acts as a communication tool between the business and the audiences. With increased traffic across different channels, companies are able to gain more subscribers and followers, thereby generating more leads and increasing conversions (Bagadiya 2018).

Social media is not only about creating, posting and sharing useful content. A growth hacker's tasks are to try and implement different strategies for different social media platforms. Some factors that contribute to the success of a social media campaign are the content relevancy, posting schedule and frequency, call-to-action.

For instance, Facebook is the biggest player in social media – the king of social media heap with billion of users and best suitable to build brand awareness. Instagram, on the other hand, focuses more on photos and visuals and often attracts younger generation. With Linkedin, the tone of voice should be clear, concise and objective since it is more of a professional networking (Ryan & Jones 2011, 17).

In addition, some channels have always updated new features which supports the growth hacking process. Instagram with Story highlight, IGTV and Livestream functions, Facebook Messenger with chatbot, just to name a few. A company can take advantages of social media management tools to easily manage and track the analytics performance of each channel, for example: Hootsuite, Buffer, Planoly etc. These tools give a convenient place to monitor all social media activities under one place, with built-in statistics and measurements, schedule updates, keywords monitoring and more (Ryan & Jones 2012, 168).

Oatly is a company that successfully hacks growth by implementing a social media campaign, making a normal drink become trending in the internet and acquire many new customers. They built a project named "Hey Barista" to target a professional community and reach small businesses serving coffee and looking for dairy alternatives to incorporate into their menus (Miashkova 2020).

Figure 8. "Hey Barista" Project from Oatly (Miashkova 2020)

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Chang (2018) conducted a survey on how startups distribute the resources in the acquisition stage. It can be clearly seen from the figure below that SEO plays a vital role in this stage for both early and late state startups.

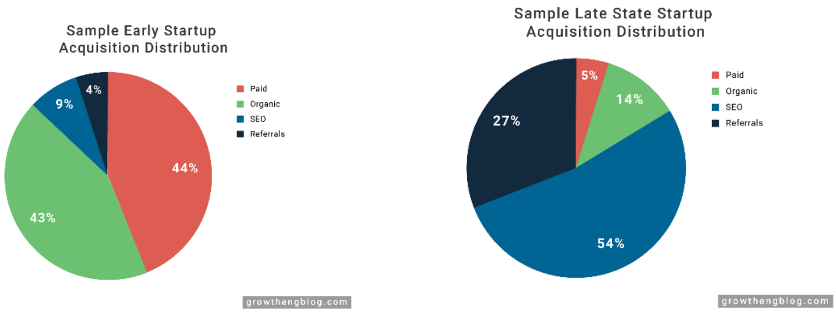


Figure 9. Acquisition Distribution (Growthengblog 2018)

Building SEO takes time, but the results will have a last-long impact. To begin with, some keyword research should be done. Think about how the audience will type in the search box to find the products and evaluate them with Google Trends or SEM Rush tools. Use these keywords in the website (on-site) and create relevant content (social media posts, blog posts) around them (off-site). High-value keyword will help the company have a better rank in the organic search results and drive more traffics to the websites (Chang 2018).

- Earned channels

Earned channels are neither what the company pays for nor what the company owns. They are gained through promotion effort, normally from a third party. The company do not have the right to control them, but can influence them positively with the right work.

The most common earned channels are Word-of-Mouth, customer ratings and reviews. SEO belongs both to owned and earned channels.

It is well-noted that a company does not have to use all of the techniques listed above. A better way is to test in a small scale with a few channels to see how successful they would be before adopting the next ones. Balke (2017) suggested the three questions to ask about acquisition:

"1. What channel is driving the most traffic (#)?

2. What channel is driving the most valuable traffic, in other words, performs best (%) in terms of customer conversion?

3. What channel has the lowest customer acquisition cost ($), i.e. cost per customer converted?"

Getting more website traffics is important, but it is not the only thing we do with growth hacking. The next stage will be all about how to turn these visitors into customers.

c. Stage 2: Activation

Most companies focus on acquire the audiences and retain them into loyal customers, but fail to pay adequate attention to the second A in the AARRR Framework – Activation. Activation is all about the first experience a customer has when interacting with the products. A meaningful experience can be defined differently based on the products that the companies offer. These interactions could be signing for a free trial, subscribing to the mailing list, registering as a member or downloading some free resources (Ivanoff 2015). Helping the audiences have the best first experience will support them to understand the full value of the products, and ensure their loyalty. This stage concerns mainly on the product side, but marketing still makes important impacts. In terms of this thesis, the focus will be on the marketing side.

- Product features

This stage is where product team and marketing collaborate to create the first best experience for the customers. Schultz (2014), VP of Growth at Facebook, advises the companies to find the product's magic moment. So how do we define this "magic moment"?

For Facebook, the magic moment happens when the user can see their family and friend's face. With eBay, it is about finding the unique item that the user care about and want to get a hold of. And the magic moment with Airbnb users are when they find the cool houses in the platform where they can stay for their holiday (Schultz 2014).

In some cases, the growth team can consider creating a free trial so that the audiences would have the opportunities to experiences themselves without persuasive. Plus, some feedback and comments can be collected during the trial period to improve the products in the future.

- Customer onboarding

Landing page

A landing page is not a homepage. Home pages welcome audiences and encourage them to look around and browse the products. Normally, a homepage has navigation bars, links to other pages on the site and can have several call-to action buttons. Meanwhile, a landing page concentrates on converting them into customers (Brianna 2019). Therefore, the content and design on a landing page should be precise, focused and not create distractions.

A landing page is built with the following elements: logo, headline, copy, call-to-action, visuals, optin form (Brianna 2019).

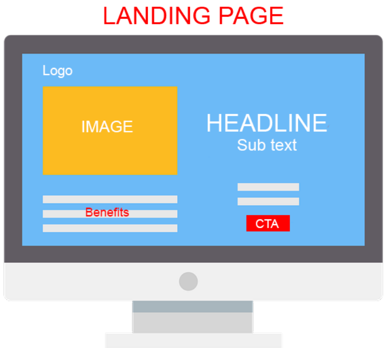


Figure 10. Elements of a landing page (Brianna 2019)

There are plenty of cases when a landing page is used, but the main purpose is to capture email and collect contact information from potential customers.

A case study of Nauto: Nauto is a company providing data platform for self-driving cars. Understanding the lack of information from the audiences, Nauto has come up with the ideas to publish a simple and free eBook. They create a landing page to introduce some preview statistics, link to their social media channels, add a call-to-action “Download Now” and encourage audiences to sign up and get the eBook.

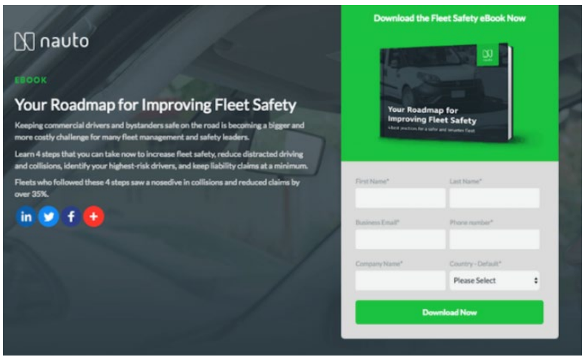


Figure 11. A case study of Nauto (Cook 2020)

Email marketing

Email is one of the best tools for generating leads and driving revenue. Even though email marketing is for long-term use, it is still a crucial part of growth hacking. An email marketing process starts by using other channels such as social media or landing page to encourage people to sign up for the mailing list, keeping these subscribers updated with newest product information and relevant content in newsletters and gradually converting them to customers.

The moment when a person joins the mailing list is the moment will decide the success of customer onboarding flow (Perzynska 2019). In fact, there are other factors that affects the flow in the later process, but the welcome emails always have heavy impact.

Below is an example of Asana's welcome email:

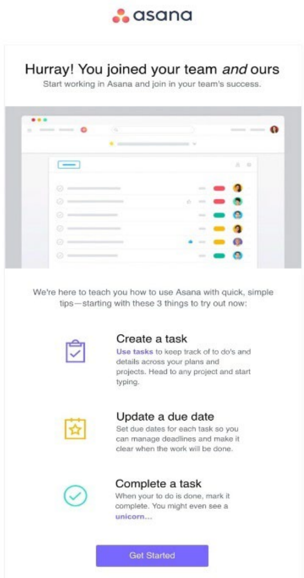


Figure 12. Asana Welcome email (Perzynska 2019)

What factors make this welcome email attractive for the audiences? First of all, the email design aligns with their product, which is great for their overall brand recognition. In addition, the messaging is tight and focused, making the next steps clear for the subscriber (Perzynska 2019).

Together with the welcome email, the email series create the opportunity to nurture customer relationship. With the support from email marketing platform such as ActiveCampaign or Mailchimp, the automated trigger-based email series can be easily launched. This will be discussed further in Stage 3: Retention

d. Stage 3: Retention

What is the point when many people sign up for the product, but no one actively use it? If the retention rate is low, all of the other growth hacking techniques are meaningless. On the other hand, if a customer stays long enough in the funnel, he or she will turn into the advocate of the company. According to Reichheld (2001), a 5% increase of retention rate can generate a 25% increase in profit, which makes it the most important stage in the growth hacking funnel.

The opposite to retention is churn rate. Churn rate implies the percentage of people give up on the product after signing in. Churn rate is an important metric to evaluate the success of not only the marketing campaigns but also the products overall. When churn rate is smaller than retention rate, it means that the growth process nearly reach success.

Regarding marketing, the common techniques for retention stage are Content Marketing and System Events and Time-based features

Content Marketing/ Blogging

We are all aware that Content Marketing plays an important role throughout the growth hacking funnel, from engaging customers to earning better visibility with SEO. However, fewer people talk about how Content Marketing is able to retain existing customers. According to Neil Patel (2018), content marketing costs less 62% on average but delivers 3 times retention.

Having a frequent updated blog with FAQs, how-to guides, product reviews, testimonials or industry reports is one of the most common methods to keep the users informed about newest information and help them get onboarding with the products they purchased. Nevertheless, no matter how valuable the content is, it should be easily accessible (Patel 2019). Other ways could be through email newsletter or simply an update on the website.

In addition, blogging gives more freedom than other social networking and email newsletter. Therefore, blogging is an ideal channel to repurpose content. For example, a company can take advantages of the responses from a Facebook post and expand them with a blog post highlighting some of the comments (Miller 2013).

Below is an example of how Unbounce use content marketing to retain customers. The first title “Don’t give up…” suggests people other ways to explore and keep them interested in the product, while the second title helps the customers up to date with the new features.

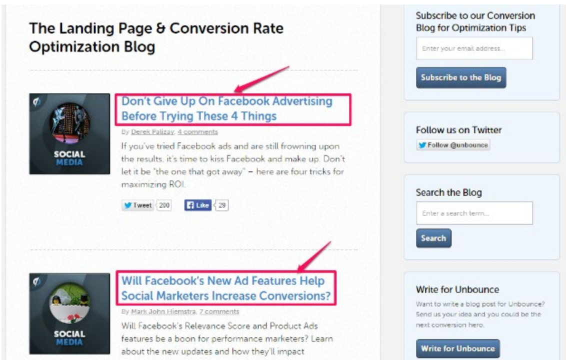


Figure 13. Unbounce's Content Marketing Strategy (Patel 2019)

System Events and Time-based features

Duolingo is a platform for learning foreign language. What makes Duolingo unique from other language platform is that it was designed like a game where users can gain points, lost lives and earn rewards by logging in continuously (Risman 2018). They have applied time-based features successfully, getting people stay interested in learning a new language and coming back for the platform instead of a normal game on their phones (Risman 2018).

System Events and Time-based features are also used in email marketing. This is the continual of email marketing in stage 2: Activation. As opposite to one-off email campaign and newsletter, the email automation triggers happen when an event occurs, for example, someone sign up for the mailing list or complete their purchase order. The users will then receive an onboarding email series in a specific time. Email automation helps save time as we don't need to send a separate email whenever a new person joins the mailing list. The email content is vary depending on the product offers.

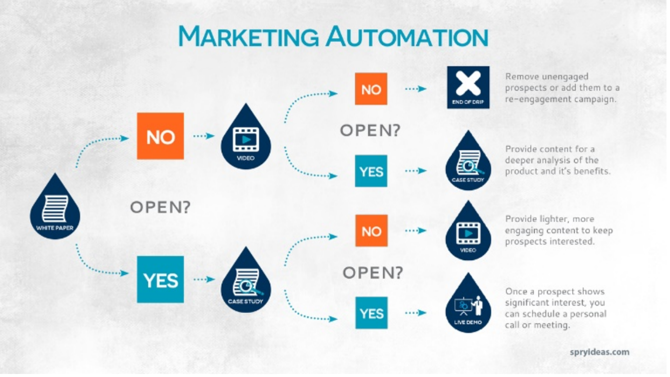


Figure 14. Example of an email onboarding series (Porter n.d)

Community group/ Forum

The use of Facebook Group as a way to engage the audiences and engage the community has become widespread. A Facebook Group is created for those with similar interest to discuss and exchange sources of advice, ideas, and inspiration (Taylor 2017).

Compared to a normal Facebook business page, a Facebook group often has a higher engagement rate. In addition, due to the changes to Facebook algorithm, posts on Facebook groups tends to have a more frequent appearance on News Feed. They are an excellent place for authentic communication for business to retain their customers (Topkin 2020).

e. Stage 4: Referral

To begin with, let's take a look at some figures from different milestones of Dropbox (Mengoulis 2019):

- In 2008, they have 100,000 registered users
- 1 year later, in 2009, this number grew to 4 million
- In 2017, the total registered users are 39,9 million, with their value up to 10 billion and generate 1 billion revenue.

3900% growth in 15 months, how does Dropbox do that? Besides their continuous development on the product, their referral program contributes to this growth. Anyone who invites their friends to join Dropbox, will receive a 16GB free space.

Nowadays, this technique has been used more frequently. For example, Uber gives 10 dollar free for users, or Tier customers receives 1 free ride for 15 minutes when their friends also sign up on the platform.

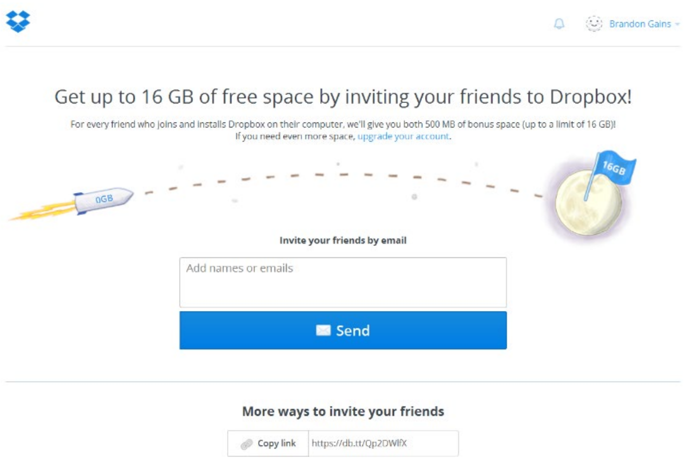


Figure 15. Dropbox's Referral Program (Mengoulis 2019)

In this referral stage, a company will give users the ability to share how their problems have been solved by the company's product. This is done by create a viral loop to get referrals from current user (Nguyen 2016). The metrics used to evaluate this stage is Net Promoter Score, the number of invitations that users send in their network, and the number of people who accept the invitations.

Figure 16. Basic Referral Loop (Coryell 2015)

Jantsch (2018) explained the four types of referral programs: direct referral, implied referral, tangible referral, community referral programs. Dropbox, Uber and Tier all use direct referral which means the companies will state to their existing clients an offer to make a referral turn into a customer. Implied referral is somehow similar to direct referral, but it does not ask directly for return. Tangible referral can be simply described as “give a friend a free product”, meaning that the companies give the customer a tangible gift that they can share with friends, and their friends later also become customers. Community referral programs are used mostly in partnering with NGOs for promotion campaign, so by supporting these organizations with their mission, both sides will receive reputation, sales and referrals.

f. Stage 5: Revenue

The ultimate goal of doing acquisition, activation, retention and referral is to generate revenue from them. The companies must pay attention to increase Customer Lifetime Value and minimize Customer Acquisition Cost (Ellis 2017, 133). These two key metrics identify how to monetize and increase the revenue per customer. In other words, some strategies are needed to extend the relationship between the business and customers, meanwhile reduce the cost to achieve them at the first place (Fontanella 2019).

In addition, if the products have multiple features or the companies have more than one product, getting people buy everything is not always possible. On the other hand, when the customers have everything they need at once, rarely do they come back. This is when upselling and downselling come in. The company can consider what parts of the products that can stand alone but still generate revenue?

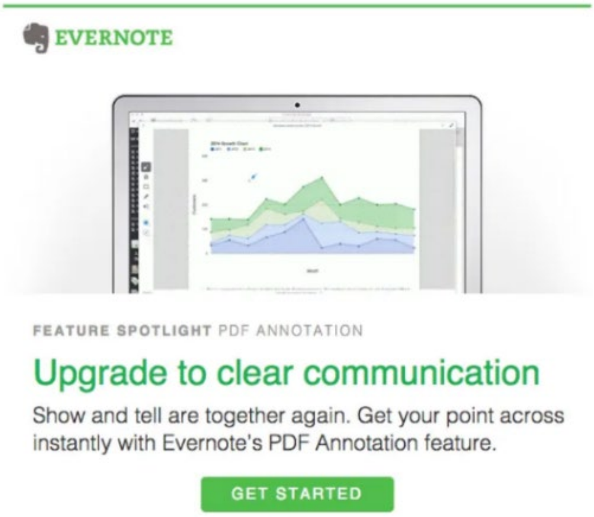


Figure 17. Upselling with Evernote (Grant 2018)

Above is how Evernote upsells their products. Evernote provides a free pricing plan with limited features for every user. In order to receive the newest advanced features updated, the users must upgrade their pricing plan to Premium. This is a wise move since their target audiences are professionals and businesses who are in need of more than just basic features.

Generating revenue is the last stage in the AARRR funnel, but it is not the end. The journey is not a one-time funnel but a continuous loop (Nguyen 2016).

g. Summary

The five stages of the AARRR funnel can be summarized in the table below:

Stage in the funnel	Purpose	Key metrics	Techniques
Acquisition	How can I make potential customers find me?	Increase of awareness and of website traffics	- PPC advertising (SEA, Google Adwords) - SEO - Social Media Marketing – Organic and Paid - Word of mouth

Activation	How can I provide a good enough experience for my potential customers?	Customer conversion rate	- Product features - Landing page - Email Marketing
Retention	How can I keep potential customers coming back to me?	- Customer Retention Rate > Customer Churn Rate = Growth - Daily and Monthly Active Users	- Content Marketing - Blogging - System Events and Time-based features
Referral	How can I get potential customers to talk about me in their circles?	- Net Promoter Score (NPS) - Social share	- Affiliates/ Referral program - Campaigns, contests
Revenue	How can I turn potential customers into paying customers?	- Customer acquisition cost < Customer lifetime value = Growth	- Loyalty program - Upsell and downsell strategies - Revenue flow

Table 1. 5 stages of the growth hacking funnel

4 Research results

4.1 Secondary data collection

Before my thesis research, there were some researches and surveys done by the client company in order to learn about the market and customer behaviors to fundraising. Some key figures that support in building a growth hacking plan for We Encourage will be highlighted in this section.

With the development of technology, **online donation** is becoming more popular. The amount of online donation in 2017 is double compared to that in 2014.

40% of the donors are enrolled in a monthly giving program. In addition, up to **50% of people** continue to donate after the first year. On the other hand, the main reason why they stop donating is completely under the control of the organization. By ensuring **great customer service**, **cultivating commitment and transparency**, an NGO can retain long-term donors.

Jan Rachels (2019), founder and president of Testament.be and senior consultant of Emolife Belgium, said: “The need for funding from high value donors is growing more than ever as public funding diminishes. But philanthropists don’t just want to give money anymore. They want to feel that they are part of the solution, that they have been involved in the decision-making.”

In terms of millennial donors, **60% of them** agree that seeing the impact of their donation affects their decision to donate, however, only large donors can access to this information.

People, especially donors in younger generation, do not prefer interrupting and negative emotional experiences when donating. In other words, an NGO which do not provide positive donor-centered experiences will witness a significant drop in donations.

In summary, from the previous researches, we can learn that the expectation to see the impact of donation, and to donor-centered experiences are the two most important factors that drive the donors interest in donating for a cause. The solutions from We Encourage match with the need from the donors, therefore fulfills the criteria of a product/market fit.

4.2 Primary data collection

4.2.1 Competitors research and benchmarking

Since We Encourage is still new to the field, understanding competitors and take away lessons from them are needed when making a growth hacking plan. We Encourage has two direct competitors in Finland’s market which are Go Fund Me and Mesenaatti, while Kickstarter is considered as an indirect competitor since they target funds for creative projects.

Go Fund Me

Go Fund Me is the leader in online fundraising. Organizations and individuals raise funds through the platform for medical, memorial, emergency, education or non-profit purposes (Go Fund Me n.d). They are active on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Blog and Apple Podcast.

Below are some insights from their social media channels:

Channel	Quantity	Frequency	Quality Details
Facebook page	1,6 million followers	4 times per day	23 likes 2 comments 4 shares

Facebook group: Go Fund Me	6364 members	43 posts a day	587 new members in the last 30 days
Instagram	864 posts	Once per day	400 likes 82 comments
Twitter	7209 tweets	3 times per day	2 comments 18 loves 18 retweets
Linkedin	17,214 followers	Twice per month	60 likes 25 comments

Table 2. Research on competitors - Go Fund Me

Most of their most engaging posts are about the stories behind each fundraising campaign. In addition, what is also noticeable about their channels is the featuring for long-term donors on media and heroes nomination. Reflected in the growth hacking funnel, they have implemented a good strategy to onboard their donors and keep them coming back for upcoming campaigns.

Their revenue stream from organizations and individuals can be shown as:

Service fee 7,6% of the total donation + 0,25 euros per donations

Mesenaatti

Go Fund Me operates in almost every countries and donors can find fundraising campaigns nearby. Mesenaatti, on the other hand, is only available in Finland. This is the biggest Finnish fundraising platform. They are currently running a campaign named Corona aid with around 60 projects.

Mesenaatti use Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin for interacting with the donors and keep them updated about new projects. They have good interactions with followers by commenting, tagging and replying typically in just a few hours. However, they use Finnish as the main language and only a short version of the website in English.

Kickstarter

Even though Kickstarter is not a direct competitor to We Encourage, what they have done in terms of social media and email marketing to acquire and retain donors are good examples that We Encourage can benchmark and apply in our own situations.

Kickstarter is a fundraising platform for bringing creative projects into life. They are active in many channels: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube, Email Newsletter, Podcast.

Channel	Quantity	Frequency	Quality Details
Facebook page	1,5 million followers	Twice per day	30 comments 14 likes 9 shares
Facebook group: Kickstarter Best Practices (CLOSED group)	8500 members	7 posts a day	114 new people in the last 30 days
Facebook group: Kickstarter Projects (OPEN group)	7072 members	21 posts a day	659 new people in the last 30 days
Instagram	2100 posts 268k followers	3 times per week	169 likes 6 comments
Twitter	23,700 tweets	3 times per day	4 comments 142 loves 49 retweets

Table 3. Research competitors - Kickstarter

Kickstarter has 2 blog pages on Medium. The first blog introduces new fundraising campaigns and fundraising tips from successful projects (eg. how to launch your ideas on the platform, how to build a community around your project, transition after funding). Meanwhile, the second one focuses on the engineers working for Kickstarter and their behind-the scenes-stories which is a good way to build employer branding and raise awareness about a great place to work.

They also have different sections for people to subscribe to their email newsletter. Whether the donors interested in Art, Photography or Games, they can choose to subscribe and keep themselves updated with the latest projects in that field.

However, what Kickstarter is missing is about the follow-up activities after the fundraising campaigns end. Most negative reviews are about the authority of the projects. Some of them received enough funds and then run away.

4.2.2 From the interview

The interview with Anna Juusela, CEO and Founder of We Encourage, was take place in April 10^{th}. It was an unstructured interview and processed like a normal conversation. Some insights from the interview are listed below.

The uniqueness of We Encourage is about the mission the create transparency between NGOs and donors. Many NGOs lack skills, resources and know how on fundraising and marketing so We Encourage offers service and support for NGOs with ideating the cause, planning and executing the marketing and with follow-up marketing. Most of the other fundraising platforms don't offer help with marketing the cause. The platform uses AI technology to show where and how the money was being spent.

In addition, We Encourage have a clear target group for the causes, women and girls. That differentiates from the fundraising platforms with multiple different causes and target groups.

In terms of the donors, the company targets the early adopter millennials (women and men aged 20 to 45), those ones who are easily adaptable for new solutions, and eager to donate, but frustrated with the lack of transparency. We Encourage serve the donors by being the verifying link between the NGO and the donor, so that the donor can trust that the donation will be ending up where it should.

We Encourage aims to be the number 1 platform when it comes empowering women and girls, and the trusted entity between the donors and NGOs, so that donors will immediately know they can trust on donating for the campaign that is on the platform.

In the future, the plan is to become a global platform. At the moment, We Encourage already starts exploring the potential international target causes.

4.2.3 From the survey

An online survey was designed using the theoretical framework in previous chapters. Since customers are the central of a growth hacking plan, the survey aims to better understand the customer journey regarding a product/ service and their expectations towards NGOs and We Encourage services.

The survey consists of 22 close-ended questions (Appendix 1) and was divided into 3 sections: general information, customer journey and expectation towards a product/ service. It was opened for 10 days, from April 8th to April 17th, 2020. The target was residents in Finland and people in We Encourage community. The survey was sent to Finnish and foreigners in Finland through Facebook groups and We Encourage community group. There is no limit in the number of respondents, but a target of 100 responses was set. In April 17th, the survey received 115 responses which exceeds the target. This confirms the reliability and validity of the survey. The following data is extracted directly from Google Forms.

Demographics

The following figure describes the age group of the respondents. Half of the respondents are from 18 to 25 years old. The group 25-35 years old marks one-third of the responses, while only 18,3% are from 35 to 55.

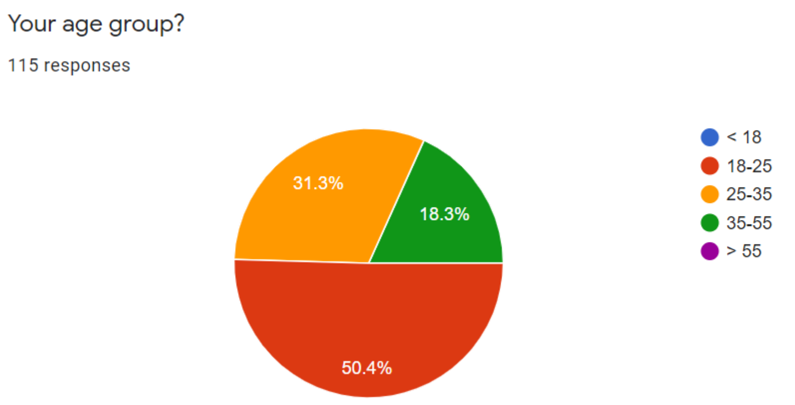


Figure 18. Question 1 - Age group

Female is the dominant group with 75% of the respondents. The other 24% is taken by male and 1% by “prefer not to say”.

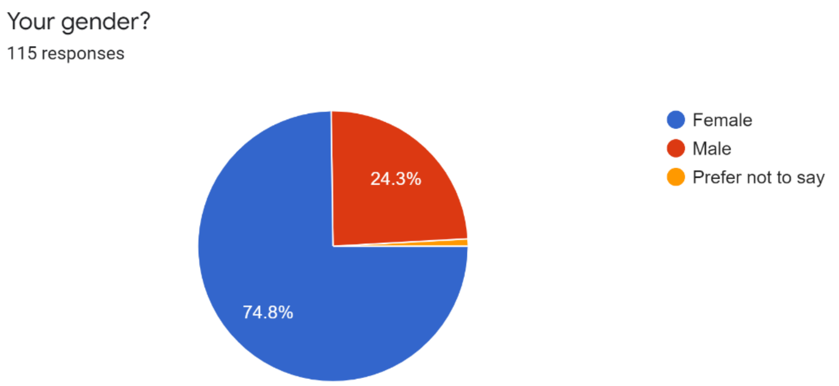


Figure 19. Question 2 - Gender distribution

The third question asked about the occupation of the respondents. The options given are multiple choice questions, meaning that respondents can choose more than 1 that describes exactly their occupation. Most of the responses with two answers are from students with part-time job or students working as a freelancer. In the following chart, student and full-time worker makes up to 47% and 43.5% of the responses.

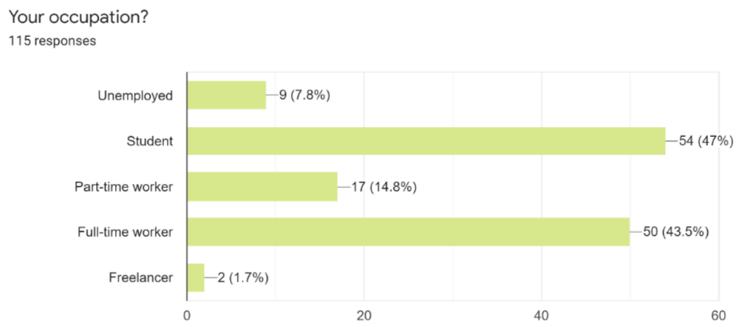


Figure 20. Question 3 - Respondents' occupation

Combine the first three questions, since the company target early adopted millennials (20-35 years old), the survey has reached the right audiences and headed to the right path with 83,7% of people from 18 to 35 and nearly three-fourth of female. In addition, We Encourage aims to support women empowerment, it will result in better empathy and understanding in the topics given in the next questions. The occupation does not guarantee respondent's contribution to NGOs and charities, however, people with stable income might have more experiences in donating.

Understanding customer journey

Data from customer journey helps to understand customers behaviors in terms of each stage in the growth hacking funnel, from learning about the products/services to become an advocate for the organization, what they often behave in a situation and what attracts them the most. This section has a total of 11 questions, and the data from question 10 has been translated into table 2.

Question 4 asked the respondents about how they often learn about a new product or service. This question will support We Encourage in choosing the right channels to build awareness about the services and acquire new donors. The results reflect the current trends nowadays with 90% of the respondents choose social media. Social media has been proved to be an effective tool for promoting with a huge number of users across different channel. On the other hand, word-of-mouth still plays an important role. More than half of the respondents listen to recommendation from family and friends about a product/ service and start to discover more about it. Advertisements are being used by many companies, however, people still value opinions from their network rather than a paid ad that they see on social media. To add more, We Encourage would like to minimize the use of paid ads since it is against the value of the company.

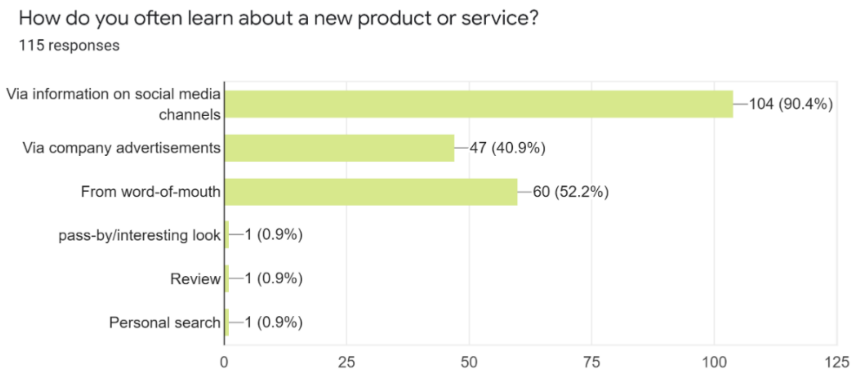


Figure 21. Question 4 - Aware of new products/services

When asking people about the important of the first impression, I want to link this to the activation stage when a user first experiences the product or service. A majority of responses vote for 4 – 5, meaning that these first interactions have a powerful affection to their later decision.

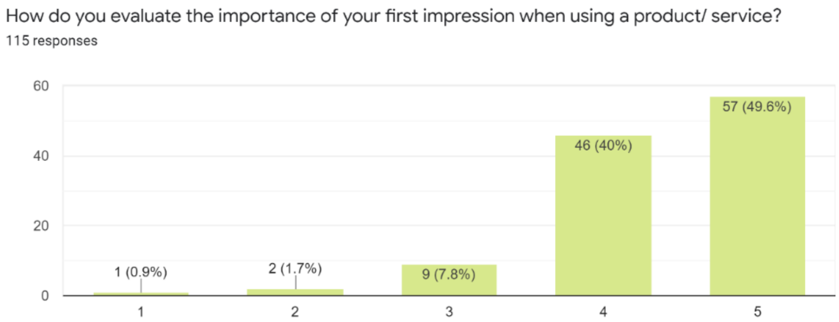


Figure 22. Question 5 - First impression

The following question also supports for the activation stage. The figure shows that 96,4% of respondents would love to try out the products/ services before purchasing and using them, which is a huge number and its high importance. In addition to question 4, a free trial or a live demo can be counted as customers’ first experience. What is reasonable for We Encourage to implement is a live demo of how the fundraising platform works, so that donors can follow, donate and see their impacts.

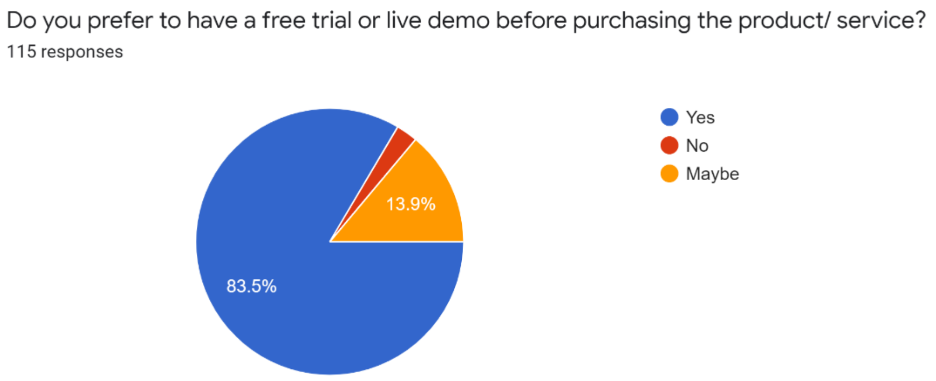


Figure 23. Question 6 - Free trial/ live demo

After learning about or purchasing the product or service, people tend to follow them on digital channels. In other words, they have moved towards in their customer journey. In the chart below, they explain the reasons to follow: simply interest (49,6%), keep updates with information and promotion (48,7%), get inspired from the content (44,3%) and go through reviews and testimonials (42,6%). Only a small amount of responses affects by others in their network or wants to connect with like-minded people. All the data will contribute to the topics the social media campaigns and content marketing. Some suggestions for this stage would be to identify the content to go live on digital channels, start doing surveys and collecting testimonials and ask people to leave reviews about the platform. In question 10, we will go deeper on how to divide the ratio for each content topics.

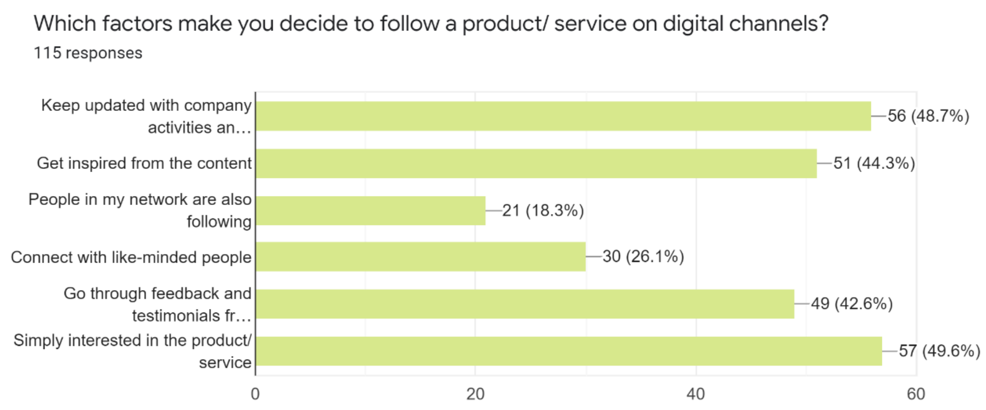


Figure 24. Question 7 - Follow product/service on digital channels

Question 9 aims to learn about specific channels that people use to follow products and services. From the theoretical framework, we learn that Facebook is the biggest player in social media industry and the results reflect the exact position of Facebook with 104 responses

(90,4%). Instagram and Linked placed in the second and third with 47% and 26,1%, respectively. Twitter is more popular in the US, and since the survey target residences in Finland, it does not gain a lot of votes (5,2%). A minority use Medium or other blog platform to follow products and services. Youtube has been mentioned in one response.

From this question, to summarize, Facebook should be taken into consideration with highest priority as the main channel to interact with audiences and keep them informed with the upcoming events and activities. Instagram is more about visualization and will be a great option to simplify the information into infographics and pictures, in addition to photos and videos from previous campaigns. Linkedin is better for B2B approach, but in terms of B2C, Linkedin can be utilized to build awareness of the company and the NGOs and SSFs that We Encourage works with. Some effort could be put for blogging, since the other three channels have word limits and blogging can help explained in more details.

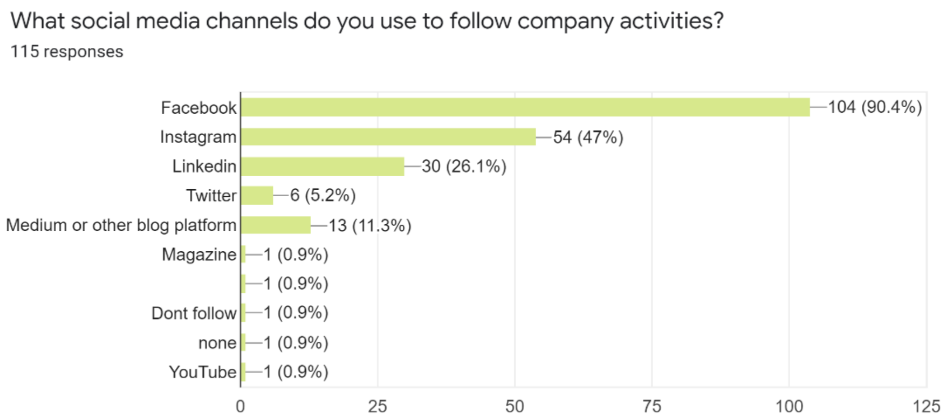


Figure 25. Question 8 - Social media channels

Table 4 interpreters the frequency of using social media from respondents. Some channels have been mentioned and the respondents are required to evaluate their frequent usage. They can choose between “more than 1 per day”, “1 per day”, “2-4 times per week”, “once per week”, “rarely” and “never”. In the table, I have translated the options into score from 5 to 0 and counted to average score.

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average score
Facebook	0	7	19	21	24	44	3.7

Instagram	17	14	25	23	14	22	2.6
Linkedin	19	27	25	21	16	7	2.1
Twitter	27	44	25	12	3	4	1.4
Medium and blogs	17	47	22	18	8	3	1.7
Email Newslet-ter	6	36	28	14	18	13	2.4

Table 4. Question 9 - Social media channels frequency

From this table, we learn about the right amount of posts on social media to avoid overwhelming and vice versa. There should be an average of 1 new post in 1 or 2 days for Facebook, 2 to 4 posts per week for Instagram and once per week for email newsletter. This result is reasonable and is the continual for the responses in question 9.

Moving on, after learning about the channels as well as the frequent usage, the next step is to discover what kinds of content that attract audiences the most. From all of these data, we have enough information to start creating a social media and content calendar. Content that helps develop new knowledge ranked number 1, followed by entertaining content and inspirational content.

Question 10 can be combined with question 7 in order to divide the slots for different content. People follow products and services on digital channels mostly because of their interest, so content about the girls who were saved from forced marriages thanks to a recent donation campaign with We Encourage might have a better engagement rate. Some relevant examples are how fundraising platform is different from other donation methods, how a person can start to raise funds and make an impact. For fun and entertaining content, the topic that is relevant in the case of We Encourage is the funny day-to-day team photos in the workplace. We Encourage already have a collection of stories about real life cases in domestic violence and forced marriages, which can be utilized to inspire people to donate and help people in need.

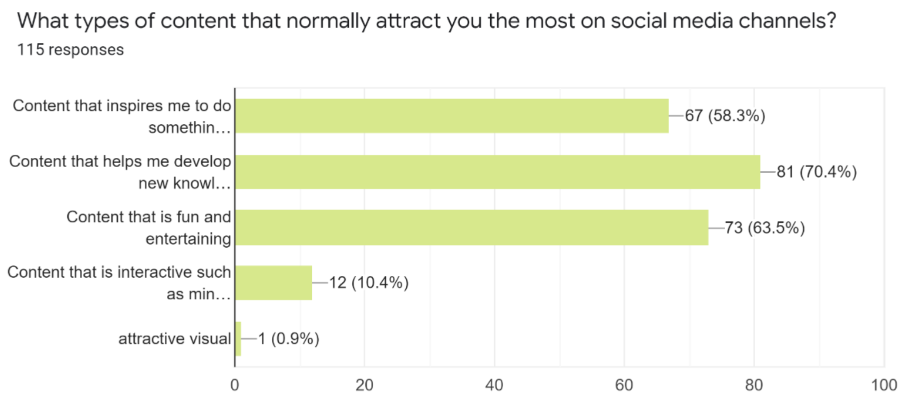


Figure 26. Question 10 - Content on social media

In question 11, in addition to the 4 given options, the respondents can add their own reasons that make them decide to purchase a product or service. “The product/service make my everyday life easier” receive 104 responses, accounts for 90,4% of the respondents. Some people also consider a good customer support service as a factor that affects their decision (47,8%). Following is the feeling that they bring positive impact with 40,9% and gaining status with 14,8%. A few people add pricing in the options. The responses to this question will be used to combine with the next questions that are related to content marketing in acquisition and retention stage.

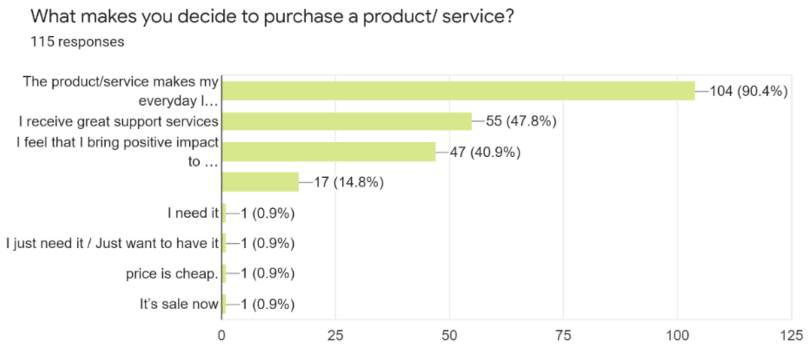


Figure 27. Question 11 - Decide to purchase

The next question concerns about the stage after purchasing. The journey doesn’t end at the moment when customers decide to use a product or service. They will continue to learn about different ways to apply the product, update themselves with the latest news in the industry and connect with people who share the same concern. The company should be aware of the channels that audiences use to get onboard, and take advantages to retain customers. Most of them keep using social media channels (59,6%), while some people join a forum or community such as Facebook group (38,6%). A part of the respondents prefer company's blog (24,6%) and a smaller group choose to subscribe company's mailing list (14,9%).

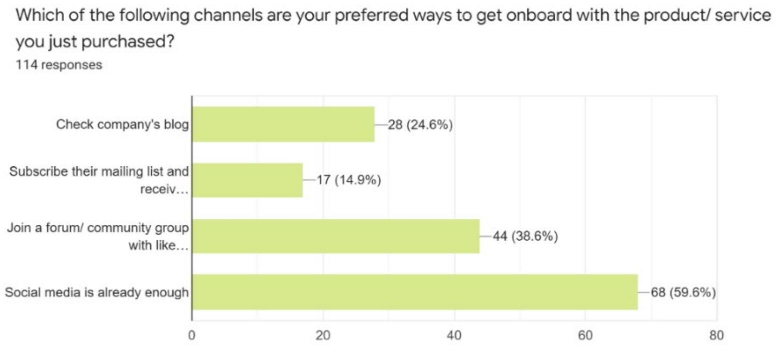


Figure 28. Question 12 - Get onboard with the product/service

In the referral stage, we have learned about the referral program of Dropbox which leads to outstanding results. Referral is another word for "word-of-mouth", concerning the fact that people often value opinions from their network. Applying the successful example of Dropbox into the case of We Encourage, I change referral program into ambassador program, which still keeps the purpose of spreading the product/ service in a user's circle but is more suitable for a fundraising platform. In the next two questions, I asked the respondents about their willingness and their expectation as an ambassador.

The results gained shows that nearly 75% said 'yes' or 'maybe' to become an ambassador for their favorite brand. Through this ambassador program, they expect to bring people towards a common goal (65,5%), gain extra income (55,2%), open their network (51,7%) and receive training from experts (47,1%). All of these factors will be taken into consideration when building an ambassador program for We Encourage.

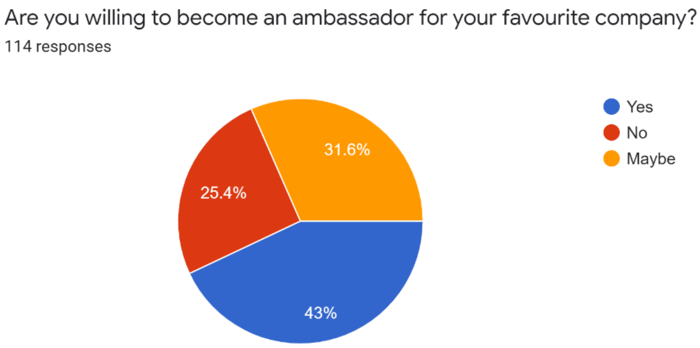


Figure 29. Question 13 - Ambassador

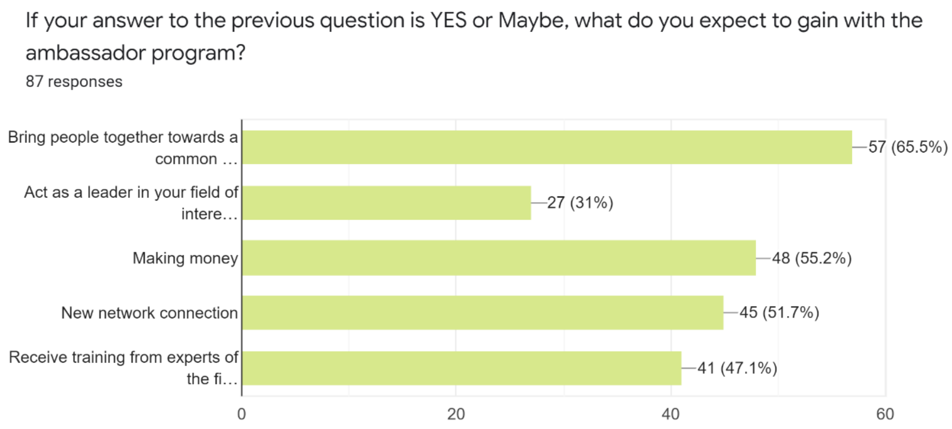


Figure 30. Question 14 - Ambassador activities

Opinions on NGO's fundraising activities

Figure 31 depicts the amount of people who have already donated to NGOs and SSFs. 60% of them answered 'yes'. This information tells more about the background of the respondents, from which we can come up with ideas to get them started or continue donating.

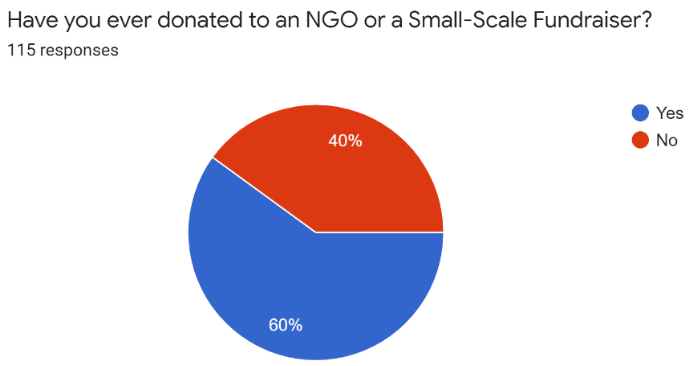


Figure 31. Question 15 - Donate to NGOs/SSFs

Understanding the factors that trigger the audiences to donate money is the key to keep them coming back to the platform and donate more. Some common reasons are written in the options and most of them received nearly the same responses: "when I emotionally moved by someone's stories" (61,7%), "when others are also donating" (only 5,2%), "when I have a clear idea of a charity's objectives" (60,9%) and "when I feel the organization is trustworthy enough" (70,4%). From this data, it can be concluded that the audiences are easily affected not by other people donating, but by the trustworthiness of the organization and their own emotions.

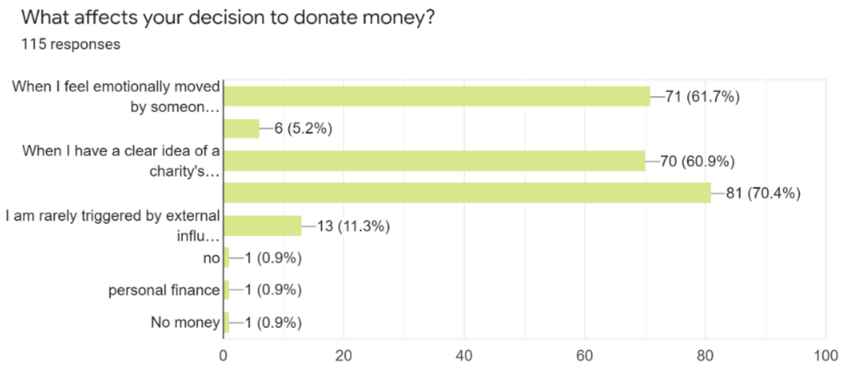


Figure 32. Question 16 - Decide to donate money

Question 17 listed some of the common methods to donate money: cash, bank transfer and fundraising platform. Bank transfer is the most preferable way while fundraising platform only accounts for 16,5%. Since this result links directly to We Encourage services, more awareness should be built about the platform, through blogs or visuals. To add in for question 7, a content focus will be on explaining how a fundraising platform can make their life easier.

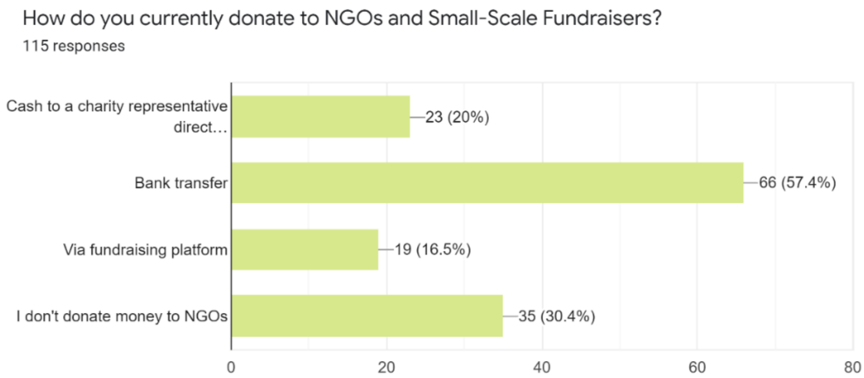


Figure 33. Question 17 - Donation methods

In the previous researches, the results pointed out that people are expecting more about the transparency of the charities. In addition, people prefer to donate if they feel the organization is trustworthy enough (question 16). Also, from the competitors' analysis, I did also mention the case of Kickstarter. They have received plenty of negative comments about the authority of the funding projects, since the host disappears after the donation campaign ends. In this chart, only 16 responses are totally satisfied with the transparency, the rest lies in between 2 and 4. By ensuring the trustworthiness from the projects, We Encourage will have a better chance in acquiring new donors.

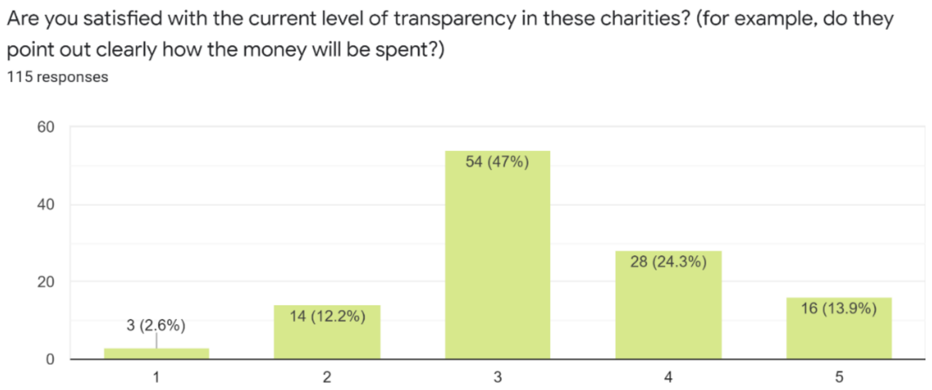


Figure 34. Question 18 - Transparency of the charities

I would like to clarify the factors to build trust in the next question. Each respondent can rate from 1 to 5 (1-not important and 5-very important) for the factors mentioned. In the end, I have translated the results into table 5 and calculate the average trust score. With 4.5 point, it enhances that showing how the money has been spent after the donation is the most important. In addition, the other 5 options have nearly the same score and they should be considered equally when building the growth hacking plan. For instance, We Encourage should clarify more about who they are, what they do and what they stand for, as well as the organizations they work with. To support marketing activities for the NGOs and SSFs and ensure the campaigns go smoothly with enough content, We Encourage can build a checklist of what NGOs and SSFs should discuss and submit.

	1	2	3	4	5	Average score
The advertising and promotion clearly describe who they are and what they do	5	8	23	34	50	4.1
They are active on digital channels (eg. frequent updates and interacting with donors)	5	14	33	38	26	3.6
The success of their previous campaigns	4	8	32	49	24	3.8

They clearly show how the donation has been spent	1	2	14	26	73	4.5
Their message is consistent throughout all the channels	2	9	31	44	32	3.9
Testimonials from people who have worked or cooperated with them	3	9	31	39	37	4.0

Table 5. Question 19 - Factors that contribute to the worthiness of an NGO

Expectation towards We Encourage's services

The questions in this section concern directly about their expectation towards We Encourage's services.

Question 20 asks some specific topics that audiences would like to see about NGOs and SSFs on We Encourage's social media channels. The option with most votes is about the benefits that an NGO or SSF can bring to help people in need. This is suitable for the results from question 10, 16, 18, 19 and contributes to the content ideas to acquire new donors and retain existing ones. Case studies from real life events ranked second with 72,2% responses. Combined with question 16 about the factors that trigger them to donate money, having content related to real stories will affect their emotion and encourage them to make an impact. In addition, the competitor research also shows an equivalent result that the most engaging posts belong to the real life stories category. Some people are also interested in upcoming events and previous campaigns from NGOs and SSFs.

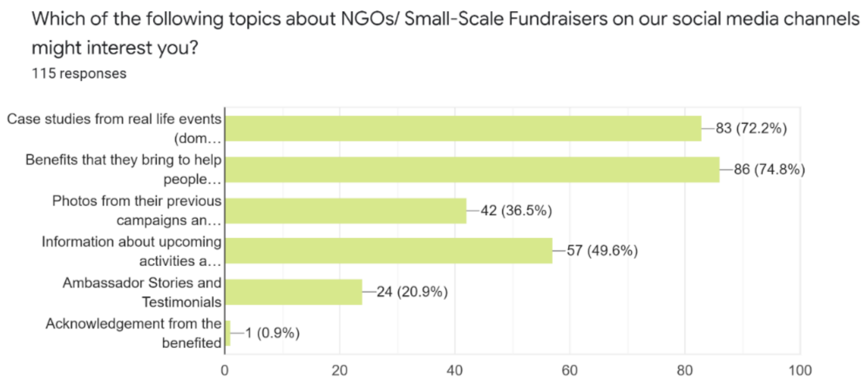


Figure 35. Question 20 - Topics on social media

Question 21 also specifies some services that We Encourage can bring value to the audiences. Not many people join a forum or community group as results in question 12, but most of the respondents would love to have an online community where people can share their own stories and make impact in different ways. These results do not contradict each other, since question 10 asks about their usual behavior and question 21 concerns their expectation. Budgeting sheets to report on where the money has been spent also receives a large number of votes (58,3%). In addition, in the free words section, some respondents also mentioned that budgeting sheet should be in good visuals and easy to follow and should be done periodically. Following are possibility to make an impact in different way with 53,9%.

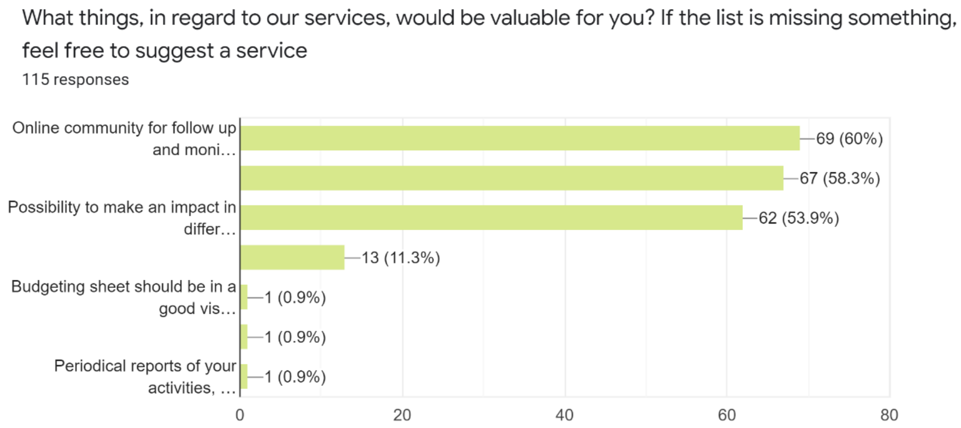


Figure 36. Question 21 - Expectation towards the services

We Encourage's business model processes in the way that it is free for NGOs and SSFs, the company takes the commission directly from the donation. The primary concern for We Encourage is the reasonable amount for the commission and this question is a suggestion to finalize the revenue stream. This commission will be used later to help NGOs with follow-up marketing activities and also to pay expenses. According to a research by the company, the average amount of other fundraising platform is 20%. The chart indicates that there are no big differences between the four options given. 30,4% is the highest ratio which belongs to 10% commission, followed by 23,5% for 20% commission. A small number of the responses has different opinions, however, having no commission or less then 5% is not realistic for the growth of a company. This data will be used to discuss with the company. In addition, some data from the competitor research should be combined to plan a good revenue stream.

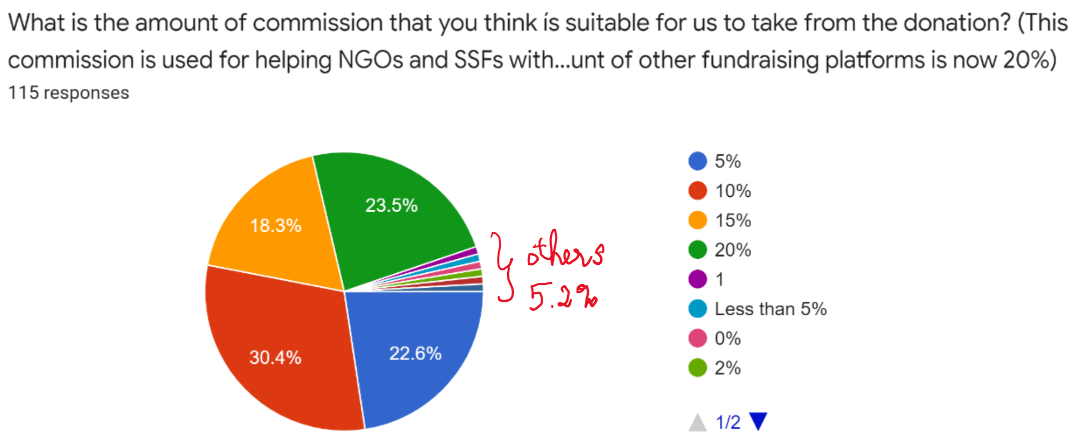


Figure 37. Question 22 - Commission fee

The following table is to divide the questions into categories and explain what questions support for which stages in the growth hacking funnel

Stage	Questions
General information	1, 2, 3, 15, 17
Acquisition	4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21
Activation	5, 6, 7
Retention	11, 12, 19, 20, 21
Referral	13, 14
Revenue	22

5 Growth hacking plan suggestions

Regardless of the size of the company and its particular needs, growth hacking is a method that should be adapted and customized accordingly (Ellis & Brown 2017, 16). The following plan is only a suggestion for the client company at the time period of this thesis research and based on specific situations, and it does not guarantee success for all startups. It is also vital to keep in mind that the growth hacking funnel is not a one-time process. Each suggestion should be tested, analyzed, implemented and repeated.

5.1 Acquisition

5.1.1 Social Media

Since social media is the main tool that audiences usually use to search for information about a product or service, a focus should be shifted on social media at the acquisition stage. Some figures about We Encourage's current social media channels are listed as below:

Platform	Current followers (Updated: 27.04.2020)
Facebook We Encourage Fundraising	287
Facebook Group We Encourage #takeaction	104
Linkedin	138
Instagram	68
Medium	20

Figure 38. Current followers on social media channels

The specific goal is to acquire a stability of new followers on different channels per month. The general plan can be summarized as below. The data is taken from the survey as well as observations from the performance of each channel on Buffer. The company is using Buffer as the social media management tool:

Platform	Expectation of new followers per month	Frequency	Best engagement time
Facebook We Encourage Fundraising	+ 50	Once per day	Weekday, 10AM-1PM
Facebook Group We Encourage #takeaction	+ 35	Twice per week	Weekday, 3-5PM
Linkedin	+ 20	2 times per week	Tuesday and Thursday, 1-3PM
Instagram	+ 20	3 times per week	Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 11AM – 3PM
Medium	+ 10	Biweekly	Thursday, 11AM

Table 6. Plan for social media

In general, at this stage, the focus will be on building the image of the company, its goals and mission, people behind the team and previous successful campaigns.

Facebook

Facebook is the main channel to update information and interact with audiences. A good Facebook page should have enough information in: profile and cover photos, description in “about” section, pin posts at the beginning for important updates, a call-to-action on the top right corner of the page. We Encourage is using “call-to-action” button for the pilot testers application, and later after the testing period ends, it can be switched to the link to the website.

On Facebook page, there are flexible changes between the following types of posts:

Status. It is used for introducing the company, interact with audiences by asking questions and mini challenges or sharing instructions and updates from the platform.

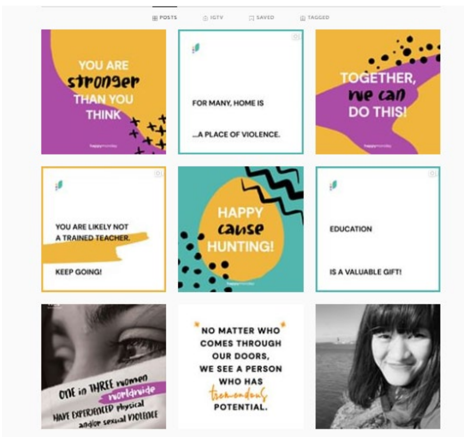
Share. In this acquisition stage, the company does not have enough of its own content materials. So, it is good to reshare the industry news or helpful resources from other pages as well and mentioning the sources.

Photos and Videos. Photos and videos are more engaging and can easily capture interest from the audiences. Some fun photos about the team is a nice way to let people know about who are behind the missions. Some information can be transformed into infographics.

The company already pays attention to asking for testimonials and reviews on Facebook. The content is visible and can be reused for different purposes.

Instagram

Instagram is a photo and video sharing social network. In other words, it is all about visualizations. People, especially younger generation prefer Instagram since the information is clear, concise and illustrated with visuals. The posts from Facebook can be reused and the text information will be selected to design the visuals. In addition, the photos and videos posts on Instagram should be aligned with the branding system to differentiate We Encourage from its competitors. Below is the current Instagram feed of the company:



y:

Figure 39. Instagram Feed

One disadvantage of Instagram is its inability to include a link in the caption. The bio at the beginning only allows one link at a time. That's why I suggest We Encourage to set up a Linktree account that contains all the necessary links. People can access all these links in bio section. With Linktree, the admin can track the traffics to different sites:

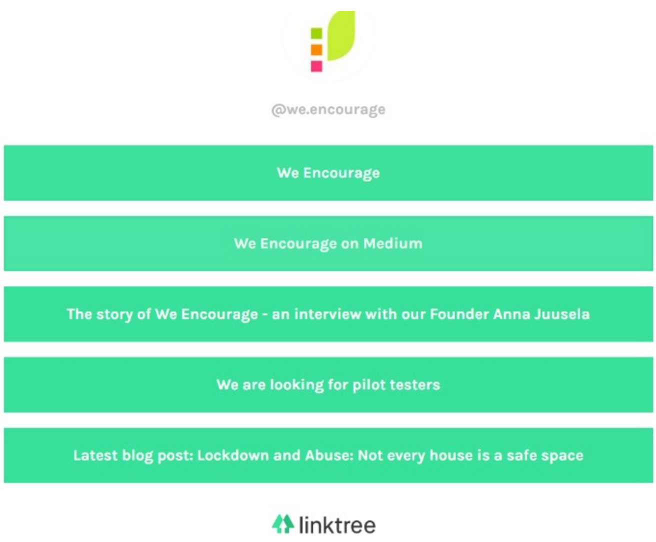


Figure 40. We Encourage on Linktree

Linkedin

Linkedin is a powerful tool for B2B approach that assists We Encourage in finding new partners or opening new network connection. However, in terms of the donors, Linkedin can still be utilized to build company branding and support SEO visibility. Industry news and blog posts will be the main content on Linkedin. For Linkedin, the tone of voice should be neutral and professional.

Buffer

We Encourage use Buffer to manage all social media platforms. Besides scheduling posts, Buffer helps track the performance of each posts, manage social listening (hashtags or mentions), tailor the content for each network and connect with third-party integrations (email marketing, review push). The company is advised to check the analytics at least once per month to evaluate the performance and propose new plans for upcoming month.

5.1.2 SEO

Having valuable keywords is the first essential step to build a SEO plan. Nowadays, there are many online tools that support in generating keywords, such as Moz (moz.com), SEMRush (semrush.com). However, the costs range from $50 to $100 per month, which is not suitable for the situation of a startup. A recommendation is to use its free trial version with limited results, combining with research about the customers, putting themselves in the case of the customers when they search for a new product or service on Google. Google Trends (trends.google.com) is a great free tool that helps check and analyze the popularity of the keywords.

The keywords that We Encourage use are: “We Encourage” as the company name, “Take action”, “Impact maker”, “Empower women”, “Fundraising platform”. In the following part, a plan on how to apply these keywords will be explained.

Optimizing on-site keywords

On-site keywords refer to the use of keywords directly in the website. The figure below is an example of SEO on their homepage. It can be seen that all the keywords are utilized clearly from the navigation bar, title, header tags, button and the short descriptions. Since the current website is being renewed, I would suggest the company pay attention to include the keywords in their URL of the sub-page and the meta tag.

Figure 41. SEO on-site optimization

Off-site keywords and inbound links

Optimizing on-site keywords is just the beginning of a SEO plan. Google is compared to a library where people search for books (websites). A famous author with high reputation will be ranked higher than others, and the same can applied for websites. Google check the popularity of the content on a website and decide to rank it on Google Search results page. That is why beside on-site optimization, a strong focus should be put on off-site and inbound links. In other words, it is about having the website referred from other sources: hosting or sponsoring for events, creating partnerships, having guest blogging, etc.

We Encourage has set up a blog on Medium platform which is a good source for off-site optimization. The current articles on the site are mostly about introduce the platform and look for new partners. The suggestions would be to tailor the content around the keywords. In addition, having frequent guest blogging can help increase the validity of the site.

Regarding partnerships, We Encourage had an interview published by Good News Finland on February 2020, a big and trustworthy publisher in Finland. In addition, I have connected We Encourage with Entrepreneurs of Finland and The Shortcut. These are the two big organizations working with startups in Finland. (The article from Entrepreneurs of Finland was recently published on April 28th, 2020). There were some plans for hosting events but they were postponed because of the Corona pandemic.

An extra information is that by the time of the thesis research, the company main website has ranked #1 when searching for the terms “We Encourage”. This is a great start with SEO visibility and proves that the effort has headed in the right direction.

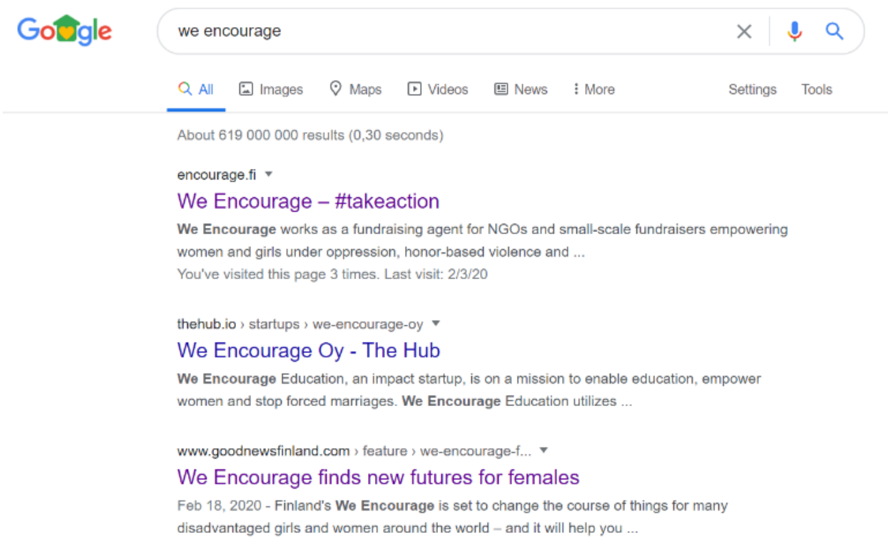


Figure 42. We Encourage on Google Search

5.1.3 Word-of-mouth

A single recommendation from family members or friends is always more valuable than an advertisement on social media channels. To accompany this, I suggest building an Ambassador program in the referral stage. The process happens in a circle, people who have used the services will become an ambassador and share about the experiences in their network. Their network will continue to become new users and join the program to spread the words.

It is also worth asking for testimonials from the team members and the partners. Once the people who have worked in or with We Encourage have great feedback and reviews about the company, the trust will be built gradually.

Another suggestion is having a frequent feedback survey from the donors. The survey can be sent out after the donation campaign ends to ask about the experiences with the platform, and the permission to share their opinions.

5.2 Activation

5.2.1 Video tutorial

The aim of activation is to create a great first experience for the users, through which pulls them closer to the retention stage. In terms of this case, the first experience counts when they first interact with the platform.

A tool which is usually used by many companies is free trial, however, it can not be applied directly into the case of We Encourage. A live demo can be replaced and still provide the same experience. My suggestions would be to transform this live demo into the form of a video tutorial when the company will show the user how to access and use the platform to donate money and keep track with how the money is being spent. The video can be posted on the website and reshared across different social media channels.

5.2.2 Landing page and Welcome email

In addition to the first experiences with the product and service, the first feeling when signing up to the email list is also important. The landing page and welcome email should leave a welcome feeling for the donors.

The figure below shows my work for the landing page of We Encourage. This landing page consist the necessary elements that was mentioned in the theory base: logo, headline, short and precise introduction about the company, call-to-action “Subscribe”, visuals, optin form. As the General Data Protection Regulation comes into force, I added one more section for the subscribers to confirm the marketing permission. In the footer, I listed out the social media channels that We Encourage have so that they can follow immediately.

The landing page can also be accessed via: https://mailchi.mp/09d2c1e21cbd/happynewsletter

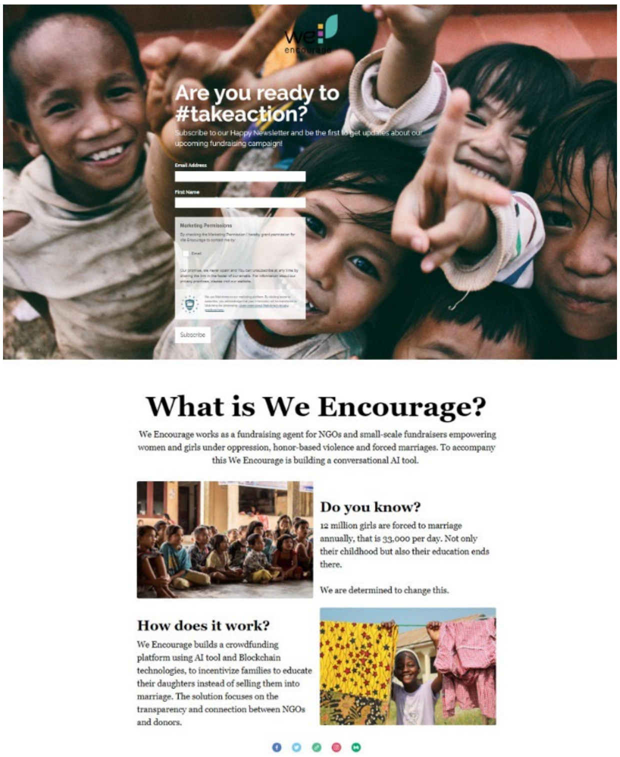


Figure 43. Landing page

After signing up in the landing page, the donor will receive a welcome email. The moment when a person joins the mailing list is the moment will decide the success of customer onboarding flow, in which, the welcome emails always have heavy impact.

In addition, followers can sign up to the newsletter directly in the Facebook page:

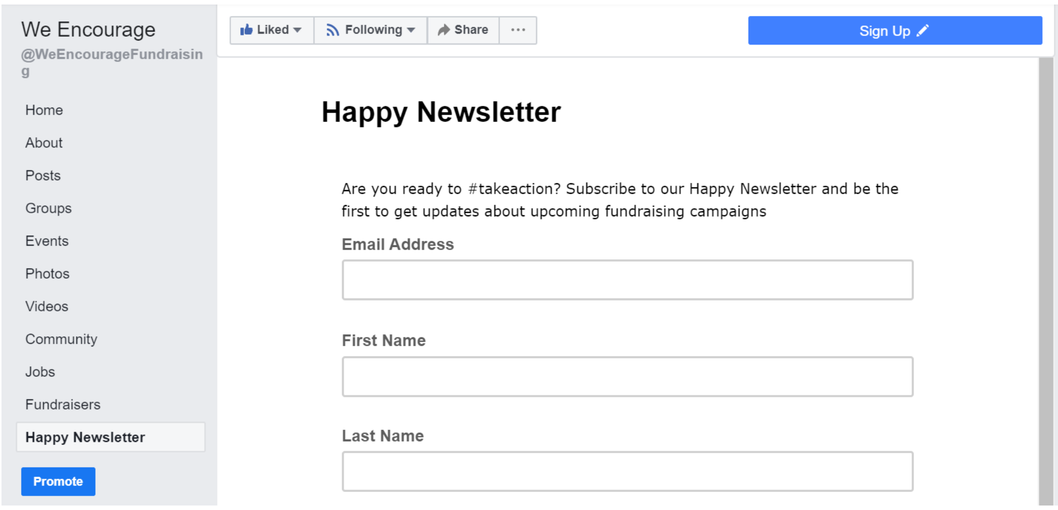
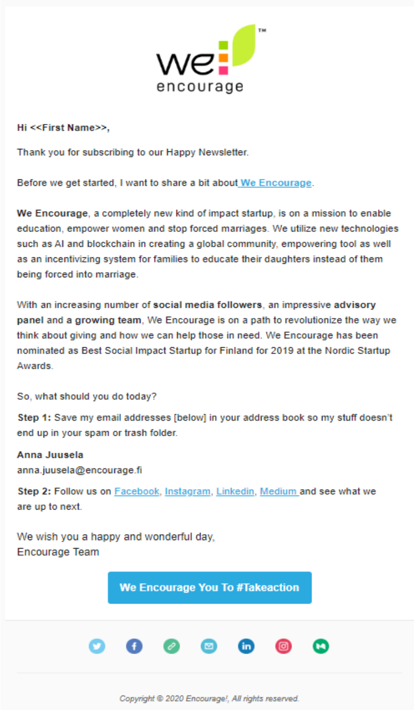


Figure 44. Sign up to mailing list on Facebook

The following email that I set up for the company uses Mailchimp, an Email Marketing Management platform. Mailchimp will store the data of the people who sign up and the administrator can later manage the list easier.

The email has a welcome message, a short introduction of the company and tells exactly the next steps that the donors should take.



we encourage

Hi <<First Name>>,

Thank you for subscribing to our Happy Newsletter.

Before we get started, I want to share a bit about We Encourage.

We Encourage, a completely new kind of impact startup, is on a mission to enable education, empower women and stop forced marriages. We utilize new technologies such as AI and blockchain in creating a global community, empowering tool as well as an incentivizing system for families to educate their daughters instead of them being forced into marriage.

With an increasing number of **social media followers**, an impressive **advisory panel** and **a growing team**, We Encourage is on a path to revolutionize the way we think about giving and how we can help those in need. We Encourage has been nominated as Best Social Impact Startup for Finland for 2019 at the Nordic Startup Awards.

So, what should you do today?

Step 1: Save my email addresses [below] in your address book so my stuff doesn't end up in your spam or trash folder.

Anna Juusela
anna.juusela@encourage.fi

Step 2: Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Linkedin, Medium and see what we are up to next.

We wish you a happy and wonderful day,
Encourage Team

We Encourage You To #Takeaction

Copyright © 2020 Encourage!, All rights reserved.

Figure 45. Welcome email

5.3 Retention

5.3.1 Community group

From the survey research, a majority of respondents would love to have an online community to connect with like-minded people and follow up with the activities. Moreover, the new algorithm of Facebook has changed and posts from a group are likely to appear more in News Feed.

Currently, We Encourage already set up a closed group named “We Encourage #takeaction”, however, the company does not have a clear strategy on how to nurture the members. People who join the group usually attract by the company’s mission or just recently donated and want to follow up. This is a perfect place to build the community for the exact target audiences, but keeping them engaged and retained with the services might take time.

Facebook Group has the function to tag every new members of each week, and it can be used to start the first conversation with them. The poll option is a great way to keep them engaged and let them contribute to the community. Another idea is to have a specific topic biweekly for the members to share their thoughts and experiences. Below are some examples:

“Lockdown and abuse have become a primary concern in this pandemic period. We would love to hear your opinion on this issue.”

“What is the one little thing that make you happy today?”. The admin can also share the stories first as a pioneer, and other members will feel more confidence to contribute.

“What have your experiences on our platform so far?”. It is also a perfect platform to ask about their feedback on the service, along with the survey.

To get started with engagement, I have created a challenge that will be tested in the Facebook group in the upcoming weeks. Each person will complete a set of activities in the upcoming 7 days. The aim of this challenge is to help people appreciate every little happy thing in their life and in the last day, we encourage them to bring these good things to other people and suggest them to start or continue to donate on our platform. The official visual for this challenge is not shown in this thesis, the following figure only illustrates the main content.

Figure 46. 7 days of happiness challenge

For people who donate more than 5 times, they will be featured as a "hero" in the groups and other channels, depending on their permission. By doing this, their contribution will be valued and the community will take it as a good model to follow.

5.3.2 Email sequences for donors

Once the audiences sign up via the landing page (section 5.2.2), their contact information will be recorded in Mailchimp system. With Mailchimp, I can set tag and manage the subscribers. For the donors (tag "donors"), they are most interested in content that helps them develop new knowledge about the service or get inspired from the case studies (chapter 4.2.3). The new blog posts and information on upcoming events and projects in the newsletter would be best suitable for this type of audiences. If the subscribers added to the list was from NGOs or SSFs (normally through manual add or from a different landing page), they will be tagged as "cause" and receive different topics for the newsletter.

A frequent automated email will be sent out at 11AM weekly to the donors to share blog updates if new articles are added:

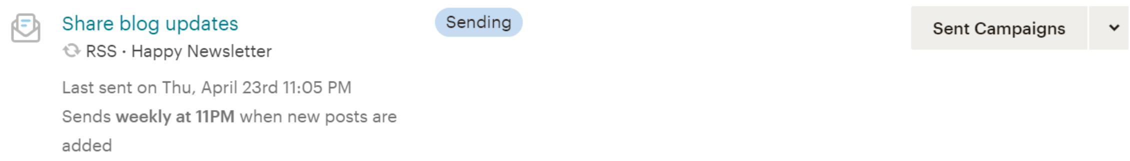


Figure 47. Share blog updates

At the end of every month, the donors will receive a monthly newsletter which includes the summary of previous activities in the current month and the plan for next month.

Since the platform is not completed at the moment, I would recommend having another a trigger-based email sequence in the future. The trigger happens when a donation is made, and a thank-you letter will be sent out. Beside the tag "donors", they will be assigned one more tag based on the name of the organization that they donate to: "Nicehearts", "IDEANepal". When the donation campaign ends, they will receive the budgeting sheet report and learn about how they have made an impact to people in need.

With Mailchimp, the company can easily check the performance of the email: open rate, click rate and adjust the content and timing in order to receive high engagement rate.

5.3.3 Content Marketing

A valuable content is evaluated based on these key elements: the driver of the content, the interest from the customers' side and the tone of voice (section 5.1.1).

In section 5.1.2, when discussing about the plan for SEO, content and blogging have been mentioned. At the acquisition stage, the content focuses on developing new knowledge about the company and the platform. During retention stage, the content will be shifted heavily to case studies, updates from NGOs and SSFs and relevant events – these are the topics that respondents expect to see in social media channels and blogs. Along with this, some time slots can be saved for content relevant to acquisition stage.

The following template is an example of a content calendar plan for We Encourage in May (the actual plan is not published publicly). From the template, the content has been divided into different categories and marked with colors. Monday and Wednesday are fixed with “Happy Monday” quotes that inspire people and motivate them at the beginning of the week, and “Reality check” - facts and figures to raise awareness about the problems concerning forced marriages or domestic violence. Posts on Tuesday together form the picture of the NGO. In addition, a new case study will be updated biweekly on Medium blog on Thursday.

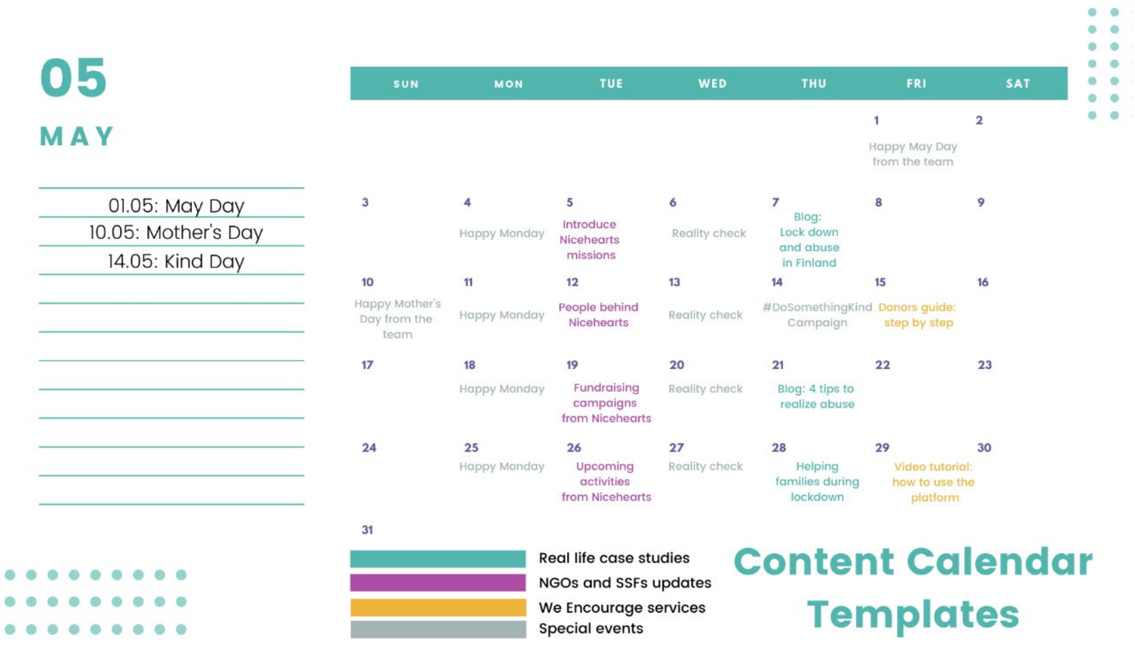


Figure 48. Content Calendar example

5.4 Referral

Stage 4 of the growth hacking plan is to get users share about We Encourage in their network. I have conducted a plan for an Ambassador program which based on the lessons learnt from Dropbox (chapter 3.2.3 Referral) and people’s expectation in the survey about being a representative for their favorite company (chapter 4.2.3).

The goals of this program are to get people #takeaction to build a better community, make more and more people aware of We Encourage and increase the visibility of We Encourage to public. People who are chosen for this program are already a part of the community, have a strong motivation and highly commit to the tasks.

Some of the tasks can be listed such as: sensitize people who may not be aware of some humanitarian problems or do not fully know the activities of the fundraisers, endorse the work that the fundraiser is doing on social media channels, help raise donations for cause or be a host/ speaker at We Encourage events or other related events. For each activity that they complete, they will receive an equivalent score. This score can be exchanged into affiliate money.

By being an ambassador for We Encourage, they can access We Encourage's event with no cost, expand networking opportunities and benefit from the platform as a user themselves. The company will release their certificates and give a recommendation via a personal letter or LinkedIn. In addition, they can officially list WE on LinkedIn as a place they volunteer at as a brand ambassador. Throughout the period, they will receive practical training on topics related to fundraising, project management, public speaking, AI, blockchain etc. from experts in company's network. There are also possibilities to receive extra income for registered users using the affiliate link.

According to the survey, 60% of the people know about a new product or service through word-of-mouth. With this Ambassador Program, the ambassadors will help spreading about We Encourage by word-of-mouth and online channels, making more and more people aware of and support We Encourage reputation, and motivate people to sign up to donate or to create their own cause.

5.5 Revenue

A good pricing strategy is important to determine how likely it is for a donor to keep using the fundraising platform provided by We Encourage. As mentioned in the survey, the company should gather the opinions from the respondents and the data from the competitor research, and combine with also the situations of the company in order to determine the revenue stream.

We Encourage have decided for a commission fee of 16% of each donation. The service is free for NGOs and Small-Scale Fundraisers. This is a reasonable cost to be able to run the company and for marketing the causes. The amount collected will also be visible for donors.

5.6 Summary

The growth hacking plan for We Encourage can be summarized in the graph below:

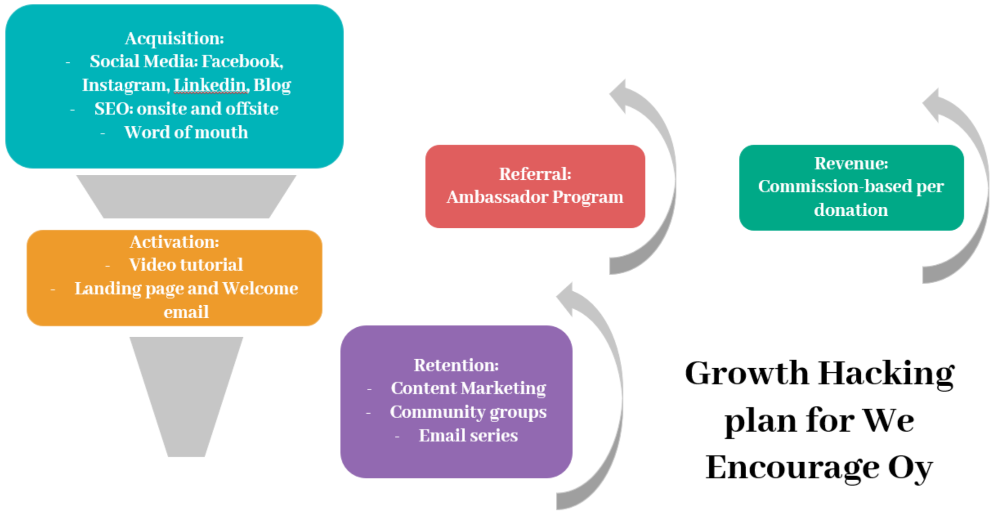


Figure 49. Growth hacking plan

To acquire new donors, some organic reach will be used. Paid ads are not recommended since they are against company's value. Facebook is the main channel for company updates and interaction with followers. Instagram focuses on visualization and company working cultures. Linkedin is used mainly to target NGOs and SSFs but also plays an important role in building brand awareness. The blog in Medium is updated weekly with content that are related to industry news. SEO is optimized both onsite and offsite. It is important to pay attention to word-of-mouth as well, since people often value recommendation from family and friends.

Activation is the first interaction of the donors with the platform. A landing page and welcome email has been set up for people to subscribe to the Happy Newsletter. In addition, I would suggest for a video tutorial or live demo of the platform.

To keep the donors coming back and donate more, I build three automation email sequences to keep them updated with the newest blog posts and upcoming projects. Content Marketing in this stage should focus more on real-life case studies, benefits that the funds will bring to people in need and upcoming activities. A Facebook group named "We Encourage you #takeaction" was created as a place for people to discuss and build a supporting community.

The aim of having an Ambassador program in Referral stage will encourage donors to stand up and bring people together towards a common goal, through which We Encourage can increase its visibility and reputation.

The company chooses a commission fee of 16% of each donation. The service is free for NGOs and SSFs.

6 Conclusions

The fact that growth hacking is becoming an efficient method to acquire and nurture customers has emerged more studies and research on the subject. The client company We Encourage is lacking of human resources and budget and is looking for solutions to reach the potential customers and keep them retained with the service.

With this thesis, the goal is to learn about how to optimize growth hacking for startups through the form of a growth hacking plan. A theory base was formed at the beginning to give an overview of the topic. A survey was created to understand to customer journey and their expectation. Along with that is an interview with the CEO and results from previous researches. All of these data support in the process of building a growth hacking plan that following the AARRR funnel. In each stage, there were recommendations and guidelines for the client company to apply and follow. Some first results from my work has also been illustrated. However, growth hacking is a long process of testing, analyzing, implementing and repeating. Some recommendations are valid at the moment but might be outdated in the future. It is important to keep updated with the newest trends and learn to apply in the current situation of the company

This research does not fully represent growth hacking; therefore, further researches are recommended. Some aspects for expanding this study would be on the rewarding systems and push notifications for donors, the use of Google Analytics to track traffics to the website or the mobile optimization for homepage and landing page.

7 Thesis reflection

This thesis research is my final project to obtain a bachelor's degree. Throughout the research, I had the chance to combine the academic knowledge learnt during 4 years at Laurea University of Applied Sciences with the skills and experiences gained after two mandatory internships.

A strong foundation with digital marketing and service design and research skills contribute to the completion of this thesis. I am not an expert in growth hacking, yet I would like to bring my skills in digital marketing to a whole new level. And with this research, not only can I discover deeper about this topic and learn about how successful companies apply it into real situation but also get the chance to practice and test with the client company.

This thesis is being done during the Coronavirus pandemic, which results in some difficulties in the transition period. Everything moves online, which was not really convenient at first.

However, on the other side, it is a test for my project management skills. In the future, work can be done remotely and the skills to manage the tasks online become more essential.

Moreover, stress and pressure during the thesis process is inevitable. I learnt how to organize the tasks logically and did not let the work finished in last minutes. By doing that, I can avoid chaotic in the end of the process and have time to review my work.

Last by not least, my communication skills have been improved throughout the research, thanks to the discussions with my thesis supervisors and meetings with my colleagues. There were some struggles in the beginning, but they were handled well.

References

Printed

Bryman, A. Bell, E. 2011. *Business Research Methods.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. 3rd edition.

Cowton, C. J. 1998. *The Use of Secondary Data in Business Ethics Research.* Journal of Business Ethics 17.

Ellis, S. Brown, M. 2017. *Hacking Growth: How today's fatest-growing companies drive breakout success.* Penguin Random House UK. 1st edition.

Greener, S. 2008. *Business Research Methods.* Ventus Publishing ApS. 1st edition.

Ghauri, P. Gronhaug, K. 2005. *Research methods in Business Studies: A practical guide.* Pearson Education. 3rd edition.

Myers, M. 2013. *Qualitative Research in Business and Management.* Sage Publications. 2nd edition.

Miller, K. 2013. *Content Marketing for non-profits.* John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1st edition.

Ryan, D. Jones, C. 2011. *The best digital marketing campaigns in the world: Mastering the art of customer engagement.* Kogan Page Limited. 1st edition

Ryan, D. Jones, C. 2012. *Understanding digital marketing: Marketing strategies for engaging the digital generation* . Kogan Page Limited. 2nd edition

Saunders, M. Lewis, P. Thornhill, A. 2012. *Research methods for business students.* Pearson Education. 6th edition.

Electronic

Aalto University teachers. 2019. *Starting Up Online Course.* Accessed 29.02.2020.

https://starting-up.org/en/starting-up/introduction/startup-history/

Arendsz, G. 2017. *An introduction to the AARRR framework.* Medium. Accessed 21.03.2020

https://medium.com/@ginoarendsz/an-introduction-to-the-aarrr-framework-b8570d6ae0d2

Bagadiya, J. 2018. *Fundamentals of growth hacking in Marketing.* SocialPilot. Accessed 23.03.2020 https://www.socialpilot.co/growth-hacking

Batesole, B. 2019. *growth hacking Foundations.* Lynda from Linkedin. Accessed 09.03.2020

https://www.lynda.com/Marketing-tutorials/Growth-Hacking-Foundations/5010662-2.html

Biyani, G. 2013. *Explained: The actual difference between growth hacking and marketing.* The Next Web. Accessed 10.03.2020

https://thenextweb.com/insider/2013/05/05/the-actual-difference-between-growth-hacking-and-marketing-explained/

Blank, S. 2010. *What is a startup? First principles*. Accessed 29.02.2020.

https://steveblank.com/2010/01/25/whats-a-startup-first-principles/

Blank, S. 2011. *Why Governments Don't Get Startups-Or, Why There's Only One Silicon Valley*. Xconomy. Accessed 29.02.2020.

https://www.xconomy.com/san-francisco/2011/09/01/why-governmentsdont-get-startups-or-why-theres-only-one-silicon-valley/?single_page=true

Brianna, B. 2019. *10 Uses for a Landing Page and How to Build One That Converts*. Lyfe Marketing. Accessed 24.03.2020

https://www.lyfemarketing.com/blog/what-is-a-landing-page/

Brown, M. 2014. *Uber — What's Fueling Uber's Growth Engine?* Growth Hackers. Accessed 20.03.2020

https://growthhackers.com/growth-studies/uber

Brown, M. 2015. *Airbnb: The Growth Story You Didn't Know*. Growth Hackers. Accessed 20.03.2020

https://growthhackers.com/growth-studies/airbnb

Business Finland authors. 2019. *Finnish Startup Environment*. Accessed 29.02.2020

https://www.businessfinland.fi/en/do-business-with-finland/finnish-business-environment/startup-environment/

Chang, J. 2018. *SEO for early stage startups - Must-dos and FAQ.* Growthengblog. Accessed 23.03.2020 https://www.growthengblog.com/blog/2018/7/30/seo-for-early-stage-startups-must-dos-and-faq?utm_campaign=Submission&utm_medium=Community&utm_source=GrowthHackers.com

Cook, K. 2020. *19 of the Best Landing Page Design Examples You Need to See in 2020.* Hubspot Blog. Accessed 24.03.2020

https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/landing-page-examples-list

Coryell, D. 2016. *How to Hack Together a Referral Program In Less Than 1 Hour*. Startup Grind on Medium. Accessed 25.03.2020

https://medium.com/startup-grind/how-to-hack-together-a-referral-program-in-less-than-1-hour-5ebfff5a725a

digital marketing Institute author. 2018. *growth hacking explained: What is it and how can it benefit you?* digital marketing Institute. Accessed 10.03.2020

https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/en-eu/blog/growth-hacking-explained-can-benefit

Dillet, R. 2013. *Benchmark's Bill Gurley: "Uber Is Growing Faster Than eBay Did".* TechCrunch. Accessed 20.03.2020

https://techcrunch.com/2013/04/29/benchmarks-bill-gurley-uber-is-growing-faster-than-ebay-did/

Folger, J. 2020. *What is an NGO (Non-Governmental Organization)?* Investopedia. Accessed 08.03.2020

https://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/13/what-is-non-government-organization.asp

Fontanella, C. 2019. *How to Calculate Customer Lifetime Value*. Hubspot Blog. Accessed 24.03.2020

https://blog.hubspot.com/service/how-to-calculate-customer-lifetime-value

Go Fund Me authors. No date. *About Go Fund Me*. Go Fund Me. Accessed 23.04.2020

https://www.gofundme.com/c/about-us

Google Adwords author. 2017. *About Remarketing*. Google Support. Accessed 23.03.2020

https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/2453998?hl=en

Grant, L. 2018. *Onboarding Emails*. Vero. Accessed 24.03.2020

https://www.getvero.com/resources/guides/lifecycle-marketing/onboarding-emails/

Ivanoff, M. 2015. *AARRR Metrics For eCommerce Stores: The Holy Grail of Growth*. Metrilo. Accessed 23.03.2020

https://www.metrilo.com/blog/aarrr-metrics-for-ecommerce

Kajabi author. 2018. *What is growth hacking, Why it Is Important, Process and Examples*. Kajabi. Accessed 21.03.2020

https://blog.kajabi.com/what-is-growth-hacking-why-it-is-important-process-and-examples

Kento, W.2019. *Business-to-Consumer (B2C)*. Investopedia. Accessed 08.03.2020

https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/btoc.asp

Levitt, T. 1965. *Exploit the Product Life Cycle*. Harvard Business Review. Accessed 08.03.2020

https://hbr.org/1965/11/exploit-the-product-life-cycle

Lombardi, G. 2011. *SEO vs. PPC: Which search strategy will deliver your biggest ROI?* PennWell Corporation. Accessed 23.03.2020

https://search-proquest-com.nelli.laurea.fi/docview/916233308?pq-origsite=primo

Mengoulis, A. 2019. *Dropbox grew 3900% with a simple referral program. Here's how!* Viral Loops. Accessed 25.03.2020

https://viral-loops.com/blog/dropbox-grew-3900-simple-referral-program/?utm_campaign=Submission&utm_medium=Community&utm_source=GrowthHackers.com

Miashkova, J. 2020. *The marketing genius of Oatly: A case study*. Awario. Accessed 25.03.2020

https://awario.com/blog/oatly-marketing-case-study/?utm_campaign=Submission&utm_medium=Community&utm_source=GrowthHackers.com

Ministry of the Interior. 2019. *New Fundraising Act will come into force in spring 2020*. Finnish Government. Accessed 08.03.2020

https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/article/-/asset_publisher/1410869/uusi-rahankerayslaki-voimaan-kevaalla-2020

Muolos, T. 2020. *AARRR Framework: 10 Steps to Building a Growth funnel*. Growth Rocks. Accessed 08.03.2020

https://growthrocks.com/blog/aarrr-framework/

MVP Workshop author. 2016. *growth hacking vs digital marketing*. MVP Workshop. Accessed 10.03.2020

https://mvpworkshop.co/blog/growth-hacking-vs-digital-marketing/

Nguyen, R. 2016. *Customer Journey Mapping Using The Pirate Framework AARRR!* The Product Blueprint on Medium. Accessed 24.03.2020

https://medium.com/the-product-blueprint/customer-journey-mapping-using-the-pirate-framework-aarrr-d1f7a1bafe43

Patel, N. 2018. *12 Overlooked Content Marketing Strategies That'll Skyrocket Your Growth*. Neil Patel – The All-in-One SEO Tool. Accessed 25.03.2020

https://neilpatel.com/blog/content-marketing-strategies-to-skyrocket-growth/

Patel, N. 2019. *How to Use growth hacking To Attract and Retain Customers*. Neil Patel – The All-in-One SEO Tool. Accessed 25.03.2020

https://neilpatel.com/blog/how-to-use-growth-hacking-to-attract-and-retain-customers/

Perzynska, K. 2019. *21 Best Welcome Email Examples to Engage Customers*. Get Vero. Accessed 23.03.2020

https://www.getvero.com/resources/welcome-emails

Pope, E. 2020. *Startup vs Small Business: What's the Real Difference?* Fundera. Accessed 29.02.2020.

https://www.fundera.com/blog/startup-vs-small-business

Rachels, J. 2019. *Special Focus: What today's philanthropists really want*. European Fundraising Association. Accessed 06.04.2020

https://efa-net.eu/features/special-focus-what-todays-philanthropists-really-want

Risman, A. 2018. *Gina Gotthilf on growing Duolingo to 200 million users*. Intercom. Accessed 25.03.2020 https://www.intercom.com/blog/podcasts/gina-gotthilf-growth-duolingo/

Reichheld, F. 2001. *Prescription for cutting costs*. Bain & Company. Accessed 25.03.2020

https://www.blueprnt.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/BB_Prescription_cutting_costs.pdf

Sahab, T. 2019. *Own, earned & paid media in digital marketing*. Tupin Blog. Accessed 08.03.2020

http://www.tupin.org/paid-media-vs-earned-media-and-digital-marketing/

Salamzadeh, A. Kawamorita, H. 2015. *Startup Companies: Life Cycle and Challenges*. International Conference on Employment, Education and Entrepreneurship. Accessed 29.02.2020.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280007861_Startup_Companies_Life_Cycle_and_Challenges

Schultz, A. 2014. *Finding your product's magic moment*. Intercom, 26. Accessed 23.03.2020

https://www.intercom.com/resources/books/growth-handbook

Taylor, L. 2017. *Facebook Group Roundup*. The School Librarian; Wanborough Vol. 65, Iss. 4. Accessed 21.04.2020

https://search-proquest-com.nelli.laurea.fi/docview/1975572234

Topkin, D. 2020. *9 of The Best Facebook Groups We've Ever Seen*. Hubspot Blog. Accessed 21.04.2020

https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/best-facebook-groups-examples

Tüfekyapan, M. 2018. *What is the Product/ Market Fit?* growth hacking Studio. Accessed 22.03.2020

https://growthhacking.studio/growth-hacking/what-is-the-productmarket-fit/

Figures

Tables

Appendix 1: Survey questions

Thesis Survey Research: Understand your customer journey

Hi survey takers,

I am Trang Nguyen, a final year student at Laurea University of Applied Sciences. At the moment, I am working on my thesis research with We Encourage Oy - a fundraising agent for NGOs and small-scale fundraisers empowering women and girls under oppression, honour-based violence and forced marriages.

The objectives of this survey are to learn about your customer journey and to understand your expectation towards a product/service.

I highly appreciate all the constructive comments and responses. All information and answers provided will be kept confidentially and solely used for research purpose.

* An NGO is a non-profit organization that operates independently of any government, with the purpose is to address a social or political issue. A Small-Scale Fundraiser is a group of at least 3 people organizing fundraising activities.
*Required

General information

1. Your age group? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ < 18
- ◯ 18-25
- ◯ 25-35
- ◯ 35-55
- ◯ > 55

2. Your gender? *

Mark only one oval.

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

3. Your occupation? *

Tick all that apply.

- [ ] Unemployed
- [ ] Student
- [ ] Part-time worker
- [ ] Full-time worker
- [ ] Freelancer

Understand your customer journey

4. How do you often learn about a new product or service? *

Tick all that apply.

- [ ] Via information on social media channels
- [ ] Via company advertisements
- [ ] From word-of-mouth

Other: [ ] ______________________

5. How do you evaluate the importance of your first impression when using a product/ service? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not important	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Very important

6. Do you prefer to have a free trial or live demo before purchasing the product/ service? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

7. Which factors make you decide to follow a product/ service on digital channels? *

Tick all that apply.

- [ ] Keep updated with company activities and promotion
- [ ] Get inspired from the content
- [ ] People in my network are also following
- [ ] Connect with like-minded people
- [ ] Go through feedback and testimonials from previous customers
- [ ] Simply interested in the product/service

Other: [ ] ____________________

8. What social media channels do you use to follow company activities? *

Tick all that apply.

- [ ] Facebook
- [ ] Instagram
- [ ] Linkedin
- [ ] Twitter
- [ ] Medium or other blog platform

Other: [ ] ____________________

9. How often do you like to see new content on: *

Mark only one oval per row.

	More than once per day	Once per day	2-4 times per week	Once per week	Rarely	Never
Facebook						
Instagram						
Linkedin						
Twitter						
Medium and other blog platform						
Email Newsletter						

10. What types of content that normally attract you the most on social media channels? *

Tick all that apply.

- [ ] Content that inspires me to do something new
- [ ] Content that helps me develop new knowledge
- [ ] Content that is fun and entertaining
- [ ] Content that is interactive such as minigame, polls, vote

Other: [ ] ____________________

11. What makes you decide to purchase a product/ service? *

Tick all that apply.

- [ ] The product/service makes my everyday life easier
- [ ] I receive great support services
- [ ] I feel that I bring positive impact to the society when using this product/ service
- [ ] I gain status when using the product/ service

Other: [ ] ____________________

12. Which of the following channels are your preferred ways to get onboard with the product/ service you just purchased?

Tick all that apply.

- [ ] Check company's blog
- [ ] Subscribe their mailing list and receive newsletter
- [ ] Join a forum/ community group with like-minded people (Facebook group, Linkedin group, company forum or other online forums)
- [ ] Social media is already enough

Other: [ ] ____________________

13. Are you willing to become an ambassador for your favourite company?

Mark only one oval.

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No
- ( ) Maybe

14. If your answer to the previous question is YES or Maybe, what do you expect to gain with the ambassador program?

Tick all that apply.

- [ ] Bring people together towards a common goal
- [ ] Act as a leader in your field of interest
- [ ] Making money
- [ ] New network connection
- [ ] Receive training from experts of the field

Other: [ ] ____________________

Your expectation towards We Encourage services

About We Encourage

We Encourage helps NGOs and Small-Scale Fundraisers to serve their donors better, with our fundraising platform to show where the money actually is being collected for, and how much is reserved for covering the fundraising costs for We Encourage and for marketing the cause. After the fundraising is done, we help with follow-up marketing, showing people how and where their donated money is being spent, how their help has been making a difference in people's lives.
Our business model process in a way that it is free for NGOs and Small-Scale Fundraisers, we take the commission directly from the donation.

15. Have you ever donated to an NGO or a Small-Scale Fundraiser? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

16. What affects your decision to donate money? *

Tick all that apply.

- [ ] When I feel emotionally moved by someone's story/a campaign (in news / promoted by charity)
- [ ] When other people in the community are also donating
- [ ] When I have a clear idea of a charity's objectives
- [ ] When I feel that the organization is trustworthy enough
- [ ] I am rarely triggered by external influences to give to charity
- [ ] Other: ________________

17. How do you currently donate to NGOs and Small-Scale Fundraisers? *

Tick all that apply.

- [ ] Cash to a charity representative directly
- [ ] Bank transfer
- [ ] Via fundraising platform
- [ ] I don't donate money to NGOs
- [ ] Other: ________________

18. Are you satisfied with the current level of transparency in these charities? (for example, do they point out clearly how the money will be spent?) *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very Dissatisfied	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	Very Satisfied

19. In your opinion, how important these factors are to help determine if an NGO/ a Small-Scale Fundraiser is trustworthy? (1 - Not important and 5 - Very Important) *

Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5
The advertising and promotion clearly describe who they are and what they do	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
They are active on digital channels (eg. frequent updates and interacting with donors)	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
The success of their previous campaigns	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
They clearly show how the donation has been spent	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
Their message is consistent throughout all the channels	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
Testimonials from people who have worked or cooperated with them	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

20. Which of the following topics about NGOs/ Small-Scale Fundraisers on our social media channels might interest you? *

Tick all that apply.

- [ ] Case studies from real life events (domestic violence, children abuse, forced marriages)
- [ ] Benefits that they bring to help people in need
- [ ] Photos from their previous campaigns and events
- [ ] Information about upcoming activities and events
- [ ] Ambassador Stories and Testimonials
- Other: [ ] ______________________

21. What things, in regard to our services, would be valuable for you? If the list is missing something, feel free to suggest a service *

Tick all that apply.

- [ ] Online community for follow up and monitoring how and where money is being spent
- [ ] Budgeting sheet to be able to see where the money will be spent, supportive tools and systems for NGO's for effectively running their operations
- [ ] Possibility to make an impact in different ways eg sharing time and expertise
- [ ] Become an ambassador for the causes
- Other: [ ] ______________________

22. What is the amount of commission that you think is suitable for us to take from the donation? (This commission is used for helping NGOs and SSFs with their marketing activities and other expenses. The average amount of other fundraising platforms is now 20%) *

Mark only one oval.

- ( ) 5%
- ( ) 10%
- ( ) 15%
- ( ) 20%
- ( ) Other: ______________________

Appendix 2: Final growth hacking plan

OPTIMIZING THE GROWTH HACKING FUNNEL FOR STARTUPS

Case Studies: We Encourage Oy

Content

1. Company Introduction
2. 5 stages of a Growth Hacking Plan
3. A Growth Hacking plan for We Encourage Oy
4. Materials

"Growth Hacking was born out of startups"

- SEAN ELLIS, FATHER OF GROWTH HACKING

1. Company introduction

#WEENCOURAGE #TAKEACTION

A SOCIAL IMPACT STARTUP WITH THE MISSION TO EMPOWER WOMEN AND GIRLS

We Encourage Oy is a social impact startup, which was founded in 2019 by Anna Juusela
We Encourage works as **a fundraising and marketing agent** for **NGOs and small-scale fundraisers** which empower women and girls under oppression, honor-based violence and forced marriages.

SERVICES OFFERING

We Encourage Fundraising
helps NGOs to serve their customers or donors better by creating transparency and connection.

We Encourage AI tool
aims to provide psycho-social support and guidance to women victims of intimate partner violence, gender-based violence and promoting sexual and reproductive health. .

TARGET AUDIENCES

Non-governmental organizations and Small-Scale Fundraisders (B2B)
with a specialization in the area of women empowerment, education for children or gender equality

Donors (B2C)

2. 5 stages of a Growth Hacking Funnel

• ACQUISITION

How can I make potential customers find me?

2. ACTIVATION

How can I provide a good enough experience for my potential customers?

3. RETENTION

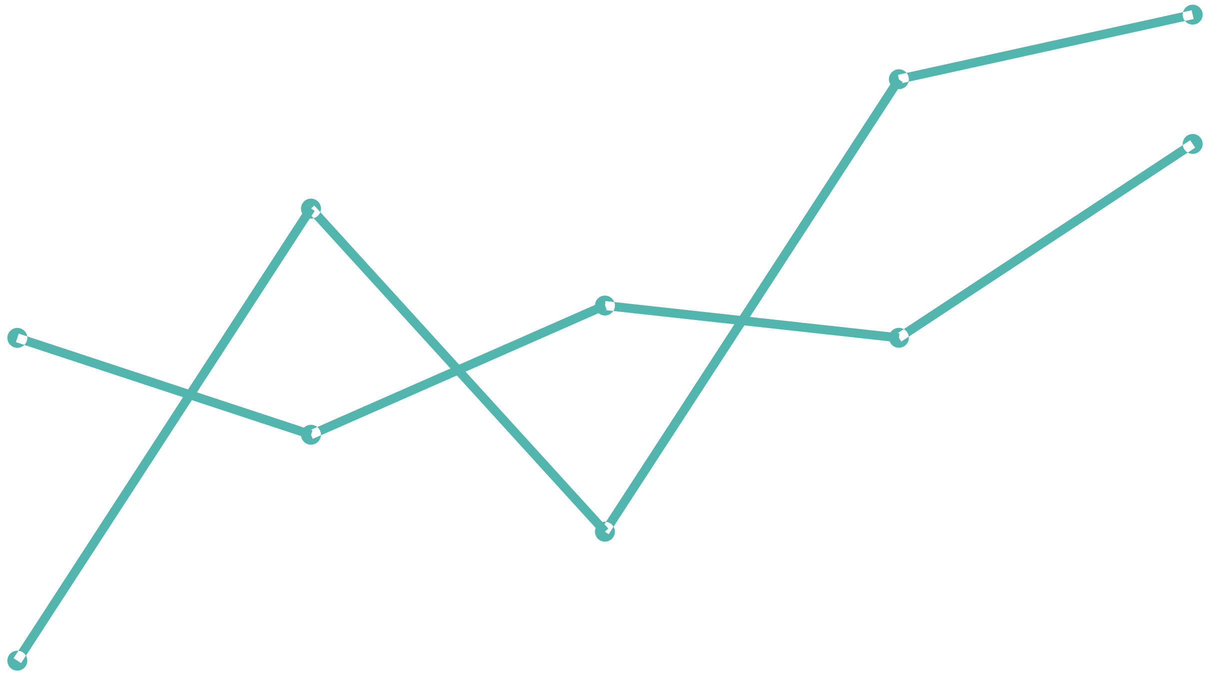
How can I keep potential customers coming back to me?

4. REFERRAL

How can I get potential customers to talk about me in their circles?

5. REVENUE

How can I turn potential customers into paying customers?



3. A Growth Hacking plan for We Encourage Oy

Stage 1: Acquisition

Organic social media

SEO

Word-of-mouth

Organic social media

Facebook

Status: introducing the company, interact with audiences.

Reshare the industry news or helpful resources.

Photos and Videos, infographics

Testimonials and reviews

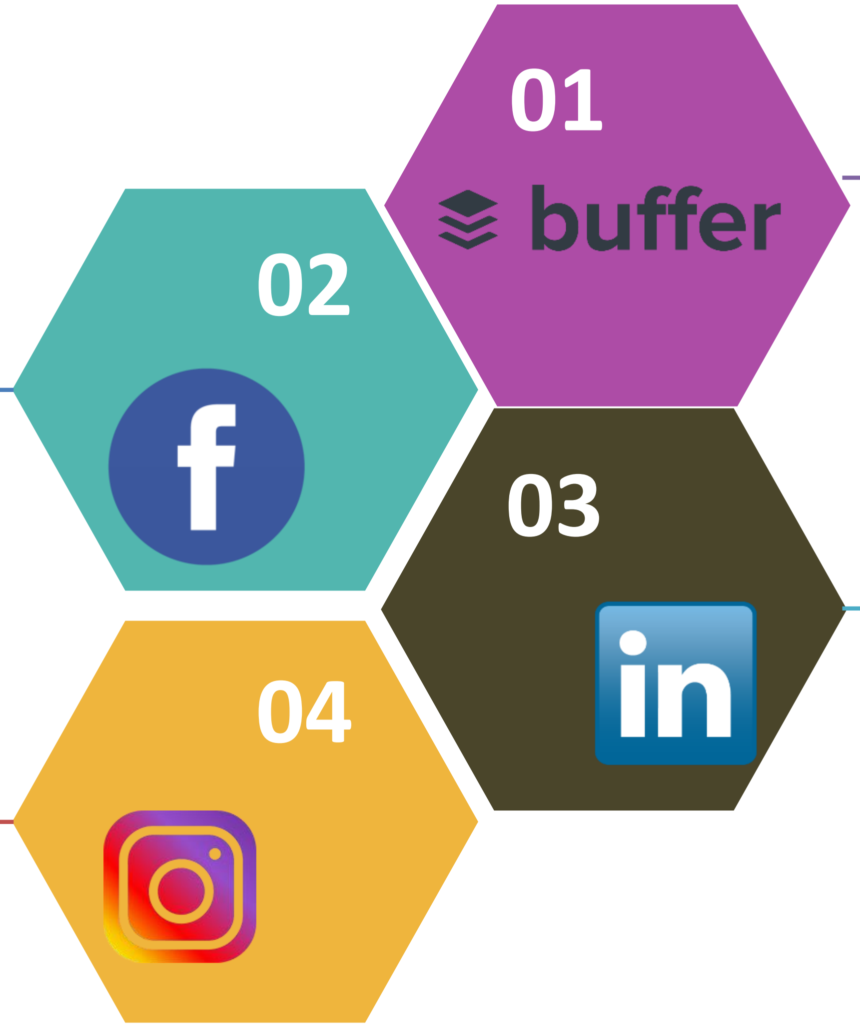
Pin posts and call-to-action

Instagram

Photos and videos sharing. Content reused from Facebook.

Be aligned with the branding system.

set up a Linktree account to track the traffics to different sites



Buffer

Publish and track the performance of each posts,

Manage social listening (hashtags or mentions)

Tailor the content for each network and connect with third-party integrations

Linkedin

Update Industry news and blog posts

Tone of voice: neutral and professional.

SEO

onsite and offsite

Onsite SEO

“Keywords: We Encourage”, “Take action”, “Impact maker”, “Empower women”, “Fundraising platform

- Title: name of the business
- Header: beginning of a paragraph
- Description: include as much keywords as possible
- Navigation bar
- Button

Offsite SEO

- Collaboration: create partnerships with publishing firm and companies in the same industry (Good News Finland, Entrepreneurs of Finland, The Shortcut)
- Hosting or sponsoring events
- Blog: guest blogging, case studies, infographics, posts related to news

Word-of-mouth

Testimonials from team members

Asking for testimonials directly from We Encourage team

Feedback from partners

Once the people who have worked with We Encourage have great feedback and reviews about the company, the trust will be built gradually

The Ambassador program

people who have used the services will become an ambassador and share about the experiences in their network. Their network will continue to become new users and join the program to spread the words.

"I feel my responsibility is to build awareness around women empowerment, and that is what I am doing here at We Encourage! We can not change the culture, but we can together change people's mindset!"

- Trang Nguyen
Digital Marketing

Stage 2: Activation

The magic moment when the audiences start interacting with the platform and sign up for the mailing list

1. Check out the video tutorials

A live demo in the form of a video tutorial. The company will show the user how to access and use the platform to donate money and keep track with how the money is being spent

2. Moving to the landing page

The landing page can also be accessed via:
https://mailchi.mp/09d2c1e21cbd/happynewsletter

3. Receive a welcome email

The moment when a person joins the mailing list is the moment will decide the success of customer onboarding flow, in which, the welcome emails always have heavy impact

Stage 3: Retention

Community group

an online community to connect with like-minded people and follow up with the activities

Email series

using Mailchimp to manage contacts and send out frequent newsletter

Content for blog

a valuable content = the driver of the content + the interest from the customers + the tone of voice

Community group

Step 1: Set up a group

A closed group named “We Encourage #takeaction”

Step 2: Welcome new members weekly

Tag every new members of each week, and start the first conversation with them

Step 3: Nurture community members

- Polls and votes
- Minigames and give away challenges
- Biweekly discussions on a certain topic

Email series

Blog posts sharing update

A frequent automated email will be sent out at 11AM weekly to the donors to share blog updates if new articles are added

Monthly newsletter

The summary of previous activities in the current month and the plan for next month

Trigger-based email sequences

When a donation is made, a thank-you letter will be sent out. Once the donation campaign ends, they will receive the budgeting sheet report and learn about how they have made an impact to people in need.

Content for blog and social media

- ❑ Real-life case studies
- ❑ NGOs and SSFs updates
- ❑ We Encourage services
- ❑ Special events



The Ambassador Program

Goals	Activities	Benefits for attendees
- Get people #takeaction to build a better community - Make more and more people aware of WE - Increase the visibility of WE to public	- Sensitize people who may not be aware of some humanitarian problems or do not fully know the activities of the fundraisers (40%) - Endorse the work that the fundraiser is doing (30%) - Help raise donations for cause (20%) - Be a host/ speaker at WE event (10%) (optional)	- Access WE event with no cost - Expand networking opportunities - Receive certificates and recommendation - Receive practical training, coaching sessions on social media, fundraising, project management, public speaking, AI, blockchain etc. from experts in the field - Receive commission for registered users with the affiliate link

Stage 4: Referral

Stage 5: Revenue

16%

is the commission fee that We Encourage will take per donor. No fee from the side of NGOs and SSFs

Growth Hacking plan in summary

Acquisition:
- Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, Linkedin, Blog
- SEO: onsite and offsite
- Word of mouth

Activation:
- Video tutorial
- Landing page and Welcome email

Retention:
- Content Marketing
- Community groups
- Email series

Referral:
Ambassador Program

Revenue:
Commission-based per donation

4. Extra materials

Event Calendar 2020

MARCH

08.03 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
14.03 MARCH CROWDFUNDING DAY

APRIL

15-22.04 NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK
14.03 MARCH CROWDFUNDING DAY

MAY

01.05 MAY DAY
04.05 KIND DAY
10.05 MOTHER'S DAY

JUNE

20.06 JUHANNUS EVENT
21.06 NATIONAL SELFIE DAY

AUGUST

12.08 INTERNATIONAL YOUNG DAY

OCTOBER

11.10 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRLS CHILD

NOVEMBER

20.11 WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY

DECEMBER

10.12 HUMAN RIGHT DAY
31.12 MAKE UP YOUR MIND DAY

05

MAY

01.05: May Day
10.05: Mother's Day
14.05: Kind Day

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 Happy May Day from the team	2
3	4 Happy Monday	5 Introduce Nicehearts missions	6 Reality check	7 Blog: Lock down and abuse in Finland	8	9
10 Happy Mother's Day from the team	11 Happy Monday	12 People behind Nicehearts	13 Reality check	14 #DoSomethingKind Campaign	15 Donors guide: step by step	16
17	18 Happy Monday	19 Fundraising campaigns from Nicehearts	20 Reality check	21 Blog: 4 tips to realize abuse	22	23
24	25 Happy Monday	26 Upcoming activities from Nicehearts	27 Reality check	28 Helping families during lockdown	29 Video tutorial: how to use the platform	30
31						

Real life case studies
NGOs and SSFs updates
We Encourage services
Special event

Content Calendar Templates

Content Checklist from NGOs and SSFs

NGOs and SSFs are required to send out these information in order for We Encourage to take care of marketing the fundraising campaign and reporting the follow-up activities

GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of organization's vision, mission, goals and future plan

PROJECT AREA

What areas does the project belong to?
What is the current situation of this area?
Please mention some figures if possible

CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

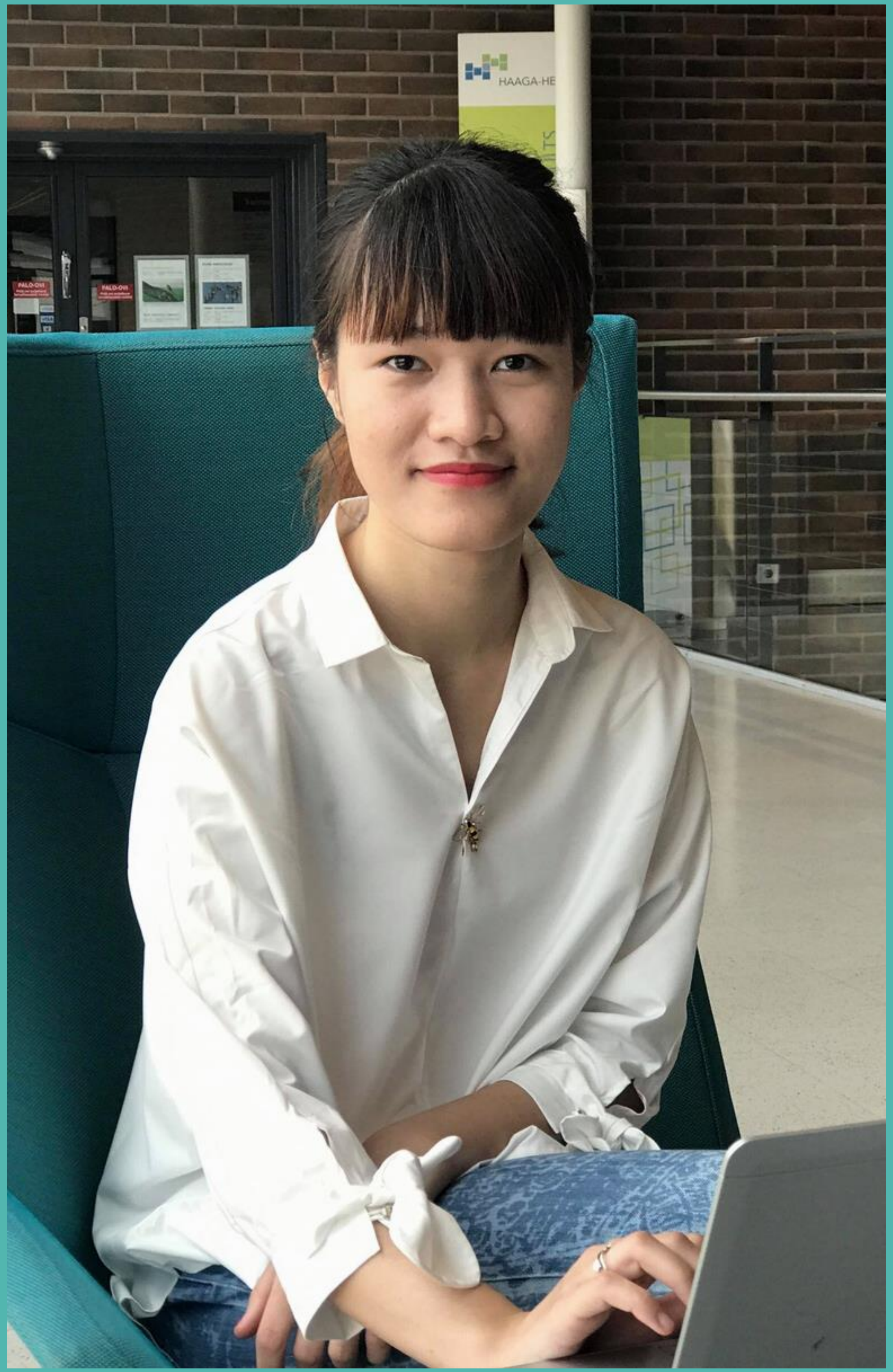
What are the goals and specific objectives of this campaign?
What are the activities that include in the campaign?
What are the expected outcomes?

PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

Agreement on using logo, photos and videos
Photos of the team (optional)
Photos and videos from previous and current campaigns

Content Inventory template

Title	Publishing date	Content	Channels used	Target	Keywords	CTAs
Our CEO/Founder talks about our mission	May 18	There is plenty of money in the world. But it is people's will for change and making a difference that is important.	Blog and social media channels	Donors, NGOs, SSFs	mission, fundraising. impact	Find out more



TRANG NGUYEN

Bachelor student at Laurea University of Applied Sciences