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Creating a Marketing Plan for a Social Alarm Company



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Abstract

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The purpose of this thesis was to develop an easy to implement marketing plan for a small-sized social alarm company. After the author conducted their practical training at the case company, it was decided that they would collaborate to create a marketing plan for the company. The company was unable to allocate resources to create a plan themselves, and an outsider's perspective may offer a refreshing outlook on the company.

Marketing is an important aspect of a company's operation; thus, care should be taken to ensure that it is conducted in an efficient way. Especially small businesses require constant marketing efforts, as they are extremely dependent on their image. Marketing a social alarm company is different to marketing a more approachable business, such as a general store or a clothing brand. Social alarm companies do business mostly with caretakers of the elderly and the disabled. Due to this, marketing efforts must be handled in a careful manner. Ethics play a large part in marketing to such demographics. Social alarms are also directly responsible for a person's safety.

Through literature review as well as an interview with the CEO, the thesis aimed to create a consistent marketing plan founded upon relevant concepts from marketing literature. The thesis explains these theoretical concepts and apply them to the case company to acquire an understanding of the company's marketing needs. These concepts include Situation Analysis, PESTEL Analysis, SWOT Analysis and the Marketing Mix. Empirical data was gathered through an interview with the CEO of the company. The empirical data was used alongside the theoretical knowledge to create Marketing Objectives and finally, the Marketing Plan itself.

The result of the project is an efficient general marketing plan that will allow the case company to secure a larger percentage of the market share.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
2	Theoretical Background.....	3
2.1	Definition of Marketing.....	3
2.2	Strategic Marketing Planning Frameworks	4
2.3	Creating the Marketing Plan	6
2.3.1	Situation Analysis	7
2.3.2	PESTEL Analysis	8
2.3.3	SWOT Analysis.....	10
2.3.4	Marketing Mix.....	12
3	Research Process	16
3.1	Thesis Process	16
3.2	Data Collection via Interview	18
3.3	Case Company Specifics	19
4	Empirical Findings.....	21
4.1	Company Introduction	21
4.2	Situational Overview	22
4.3	Environmental factors affecting the company.....	23
4.4	Strategic Advantages and Disadvantages of the Company.....	25
4.5	Marketing Mix Modified	28
5	Marketing Plan	30
5.1	Internal and External Factors	30
5.2	Marketing Mix specifics.....	33
5.3	Marketing Objectives and tactics.....	33
5.4	Control the marketing actions	35
6	Conclusion	37
	List of references	39
	Appendices	

1 Introduction

Marketing social alarms is a challenging task. As public opinion can quickly be swayed from positive to negative, it is important for companies in the field to handle their operations with care. Especially small-sized companies face considerable risks when operating in the field of social alarms. Proper understanding of marketing can be difficult to acquire for these companies, as they have a limited amount of resources to allocate towards marketing study.

The purpose of this thesis is the development of an encompassing marketing plan for a Finnish social alarm supplier. The opportunity for such a development arose in 2019 when the author conducted his practical training at the company. Collaboration opportunities were discussed between the CEO of the case company and the author, and it was decided that a marketing plan would be formulated to assist the company in expansion.

Established in 2007, the case company has been active for 13 years. In this time, they have formed valuable business relationships with both their suppliers and customers. Trust has been established and maintained by providing extensive service and support, as well as having a core set of values that the company adheres to. Partnership with a Swedish social alarm supplier has allowed the company to streamline their business-to-business sales efforts by providing both a social alarm product and service in an easy-to-manage package. A partnership, in this way, also offers logistical benefits as trust between business partners allows for more developed logistic solutions. These include pre-ordering, prioritized shipping, shipment tracking, and discounts.

Marketing is vital for company operations. Modern marketing requires considerable resources to ensure that matters are handled correctly. Aspects of modern marketing such as social media and other technological opportunities can lead to a company's success or downfall. Modern marketing mostly benefits modern products, such as toys or smartphone applications. Marketing social alarms needs to be handled correctly, as ethics play a large part in marketing to their demographics. They are directly responsible for a person's security, and as such, have a large impact on the company's image.

A theoretical background of relevant marketing literature, as well as an interview with the CEO help to build a foundation to explore the marketing plan. The thesis will explore the marketing

concepts used in the process, such as SWOT Analysis, Situation Analysis and Marketing Mix. Empirical data will be gathered through an interview with the CEO. These will help create the marketing objectives and the marketing plan itself.

The case company owns a small warehouse. This makes inventory inexpensive and, since the products are relatively small, efficient. This is important, as the distribution channel for the case company is the direct-to-consumer channel. This channel removes the need for any wholesalers and retailers, selling the product straight to the customer.

Despite a lack of a concrete marketing plan, the case company has acquired a considerable customer base in both private customers, as well as larger businesses such as elderly residential homes. The company has previously relied on the CEO's expertise and business contacts. However, competitors aim to claim more of the market share. To combat this, a detailed strategic marketing plan will be presented by this thesis, to allow for faster expansion and reclaiming of market share.

2 Theoretical Background

The theoretical background constructs a foundation for the thesis. Theoretical concepts related to marketing planning are introduced in this section. Marketing plan frameworks will be studied, as well as the main contents of the marketing plan.

2.1 Definition of Marketing

Marketing is defined as “a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others”. It is a vital process for most, if not all businesses. Investing resources into marketing allows a company to sell their products and services more effectively, as well as increase their popularity. (Kotler, 1998, 4-5.)

Managing markets is the primary goal of marketing efforts. To be able to persuade buyers to prefer an organization's products and services over another's takes considerable investment of resources. Marketing should be considered a continuous process, as it constantly needs to adapt to ever changing customer demands. An important practice for marketers seeking to meet these demands is marketing management. It is defined as “the analysis, planning, implementation and control of programs designed to create, build and maintain beneficial exchanges with target buyers for the purpose of achieving organizational objectives”. (Kotler et al., 1998, 16-17.) Marketing management places emphasis on building and maintaining profitable customer relationships. When promotion and clear communication are used in conjunction to achieve better customer relationships, a company can retain customers and secure a more stable cash flow. (Kotler et al., 1998, 17.)

2.2 Strategic Marketing Planning Frameworks

In this section, the thesis will outline two frameworks used in marketing planning. These frameworks provide structure and content for the marketing plan. Both of the frameworks are derived from peer-reviewed marketing literature.

1. Introduction	Introduce the company
2. Environmental Analysis	Company network, gather market intelligence, SWOT analysis
3. Competitor and internal situation analysis	Analyze competition and identify trends
4. Objectives	Define qualitative and quantitative objects
5. Key strategies	Study strategies for achieving objectives
6. Product and Services	Analyze product and service capability
7. Communications	Identify target audiences, conduct public relations operations
8. Channels	Analyze and develop channels
9. Sales force	Determine sales objectives and assess size and structure
10. Pricing	Set pricing objectives and analyze demand
11. Budgeting	Set budgets for each step
12. Management	Implement and allocate tasks

Table 1. Steps of a Strategic Marketing Plan (Marcos Fava Neves 2006, 5-7).

This framework provides a clear frame for marketing efforts. A company introduction is used to build a foundation for the plan. This foundation is then expanded upon via company specific analyses, such as environmental- and competitor analyses. A company's internal and external factors

are qualified before adopting an approach that focuses more on the company's actions. The company's actions, such as strategies, services and communications are explored. Lastly, the framework focuses on setting development objectives for the company. (Marcos Fava Neves 2006, 13-14.) However, for a small-sized company such as the case company, the author considers it to be too extensive and must be compared to a simpler framework. Simpler contents of a marketing plan were proposed by Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders and Wong in *Principles of Marketing* (1998). The contents are detailed below.

Executive Summary	Quick overview of the plan
1. Current Marketing Situation	Background data on the market, product, competition and distribution
2. SWOT analysis	Identifies Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
3. Objectives and Issues	Defines the company's objectives in different areas
4. Marketing Strategy	Presents the broad marketing approach to achieve objectives
6. Action Programs	Specifies the teams for specific actions
7. Budgets	Projected profit and loss statement
8. Controls	Details how the plan will be monitored

Table 2. Contents of a marketing plan (Kotler et al., 1998, 10).

The second framework offers more general approaches to marketing planning with fewer individual steps. An executive summary acts as an introduction to the plan, which also provides a summary of the steps and their contents. As in the previous framework, analyses are conducted on the situation and capabilities of the company. These analyses include SWOT- and Current Marketing Situation analyses. This framework has a clear focus on marketing, as opposed to providing a strategic overview of the entire company. Next, objectives and strategies are defined. These are

followed by action programs that specifies which teams work on which objectives. Previously detailed strategies are directed to relevant teams. Lastly, profit and loss statements are detailed, as well as controls for detailing the monitoring of the plan's effectiveness. (Kotler et al., 1998, 10-12).

Steps from both of the frameworks will be implemented to create a simple structure to both follow and implement for the marketing plan. Some steps that are present in both frameworks are to be omitted, such as **budgets** and **action/task allocation**. This is due to the limited size of the case company, which severely restricts their resources. The plan must be able to be implemented in an easy, light manner. This will also result in the number of steps to be reduced, to ensure proper focus on each step.

To supplement the SWOT-analysis, a PESTEL-analysis will be implemented into the structure to ensure a thorough analysis of the company's operations. PESTEL or PESTLE is a tool used in strategic marketing planning. Using it allows the marketing planner to quantify potential external risks or other factors associated with a company or product. (Rastogi, 2016, 384.)

A marketing mix analysis will also be conducted to acquire a stable foundation of the company on which to build suggestions for improvements. A thorough marketing mix plays a substantial role in both evaluating a company's capabilities, as well as their marketing potential. Customer satisfaction and value creation can both be positively influenced by improving company attributes detailed in the marketing mix. (Badi, 2018, 2.)

2.3 Creating the Marketing Plan

This section outlines the different methods used in marketing planning. Analyses used to construct the marketing plan will be detailed. These include Situation analysis, PESTEL analysis, SWOT analysis and the Marketing mix.

2.3.1 Situation Analysis

The internal and external factors that contribute to a business are examined in a situation analysis. This analysis is worth conducting well before any development of a marketing strategy has begun, to serve as a basis for the planning process. (Lake, 2019.) Situation analyses are used to review economic and business climates, as well as examine the effectiveness of its strategic marketing efforts. Other factors to explore include key products, organization performance and competition comparison. A situational analysis includes a SWOT analysis, which stands for 'Strengths and Weaknesses as they relate to our Opportunities and Threats in the marketplace'. (Westwood, 2006, 27.) Challenges with a situation analysis may include excessive listing of factors, which will make analysis time consuming and difficult. Some organizations may be unable to remain objective when conducting a situation analysis, resulting in opinions being listed instead of facts. (Lake, 2019.)

The situation analysis will be comprised of five components. These are Competitive Situation, Product Situation, Distribution Situation, Environmental factors and a SWOT Analysis. It is important to assess each component individually and objectively. (Lake, 2019.)

Competitive Situation

By comparing an organizations performance against their competitors, insight into strategic planning and possible competitive advantage can be acquired. Questions such as 'Who are the competitors for each product group?' and 'What are the market shares for each product for each competitor?' provide answers that benefit organizations greatly. By examining their competition, a business may gain insight into what earns their competition results, and improve their own operations based on the concepts learned. (Westwood, 2006, 26-27.)

Product Situation

Product Situation discusses the current product trends of the organization. Questions such as 'Do existing products meet customers' needs?' help with determining if the current products or services offered are meeting customer needs and demands. (Westwood, 2006, 27-28.) Examining products and services separately will help decide if and how each meets the market demands (Lake, 2019).

Distribution Situation

Matters of distribution, such as distributors or other intermediaries are explored in the Distribution Situation -section (Lake, 2019). Current distribution channels and ways to improve them will be examined in this section.

Environmental Situation

Economic- or sociological factors, both internal and external that impact the organization will be analyzed in the Environmental Situation -section (Lake, 2019). Answering such questions as 'Are there problems caused by Taxes/duties?' when analyzing economic factors will help in determining them. (Westwood, 2006, 27-28.) Sociological factors include, for example, the impacts of different cultures on the performance of the business (Lumen Learning, 2019).

2.3.2 PESTEL Analysis

PEST analysis is an analysis of the political, economic, social, and technological factors in the external environment of an organization, which can affect its activities and performance. The PESTEL model is a marketing tool, used primarily in identifying the key external (macro environment level) forces that might influence an organization. By examining an organization with a PESTEL analysis, different external factors can be better accounted for. Organizations may also choose to change certain aspects of their operations to better benefit from these external factors. (Jurevicius, 2013.)

Political Factors

Political factors in the PESTEL model refer to different ways the government intervenes in the economy and affects businesses. This includes ways such as freedom of speech and press, political stability, trade restrictions, tax policy, and environmental law. These can affect businesses in a multitude of ways; some beneficial, while others are harmful. (Professional Academy, 2019.)

The business environment can greatly be affected by governmental influences. Influencing industries and economies can have substantial effects in industries related to one another. This can cause shifts in organizational structure and business relationships. (Rastogi, 2016, 385.)

Economic Factors

Economic factors refer to factors born of the economy. They impact organizations in many ways, including how profitable they are. These include interest rates, exchange rates, inflation, purchase power of consumers, and business- and economic growth. A company's pricing policies can be drastically affected by changes in economic factors. (Rastogi, 2016, 385.)

Many divide these factors into micro- and macro-economic factors. Macro-economic factors concern any given economy's demand, as well as its management. Control of interest rates and taxation are a few ways for governments to affect this. Micro-economic factors are concerned with how people spend their incomes. This largely affects Business-to-Consumer (B2C) organizations. (Professional Academy, 2019.)

Socio-Cultural Factors

These factors are comprised of different social factors, such as how the population views a certain subject, along with their attitudes and beliefs of it. Age distribution, health consciousness, and career attitudes are some examples of these factors. Understanding these components allows for marketers to better understand customers. (Professional Academy, 2019.)

Cultural expectations and different norms can have direct effects to a company's performance. Considering the various advantages and disadvantages of marketing in a certain location may allow the company to shift their focus towards more profitable locales. They can also be used to determine ways for the company's products or services to adapt to the local market. (Rastogi, 2016, 385.)

Technological Factors

Technological factors involve the rapidly changing technological environment of marketing. This includes ways of producing and distributing goods and services and communicating with markets. Quick adaptability of marketers is required in this set of factors, as it is easy to fall behind in the fast-evolving technological landscape. (Professional Academy, 2019.)

Barriers of entry are often considered when determining the technological factors affecting a company's performance. In highly technological fields, these barriers are often higher as new

companies must make considerable investments to reach a starting point in the market. (Rastogi, 2016, 385.)

Environmental Factors

Factors that concern things such as pollution or the insufficiency of raw materials are considered environmental factors. Ethical business and production practices are also considered environmental factors. Environmental factors are directly linked to a company's vision, and may have adverse effects on company image if poorly handled. (Professional Academy, 2019.)

Environmental factors also include geographical and climate effects. These factors can affect many operations of a company, including logistic operations. (Rastogi, 2016, 385.)

Legal Factors

Factors associated with legal issues are listed under legal factors. Equal opportunities, consumer rights and laws as well as product and employee safety. Legal factors are especially crucial, for an organization might find legal repercussions for their actions should they fail to properly consider them. (Professional Academy, 2019.)

Company policies and laws that affect the company are both considered in when exploring legal factors. While studying legal factors rarely yields competitive advantage, it is vital for a company's operations to ensure that no incriminating acts are committed. (Rastogi, 2016, 385.)

2.3.3 SWOT Analysis

The PESTEL analysis as well as the current situation analysis both provide data to be used for the SWOT analysis. SWOT is an abbreviation of 'Strengths and Weaknesses as they relate to our Opportunities and Threats in the marketplace'. (Westwood, 2006, 26-27.) It is a list of detailed factors that influence an organization's performance in the market. It is a tool often used by managers to gather and analyze information on an organization's current capabilities, as well as external factors. (Ambrosi, 1998, 50-51.)

Organizational Strengths	Characteristics that give advantage over others in the industry.
Organizational Weaknesses	Characteristics that place at a disadvantage relative to others.
Environmental Opportunities	External elements in the environment that give benefits for the organization
Environmental Threats	External elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the organization

Table 3. The Components of a SWOT Analysis (Gürel, 2017, 3).

There are several pitfalls to be avoided when constructing a SWOT analysis. For example, an abundance of information may result in difficulty determining what action needs to be taken first. There is also the possibility that managers incorrectly assess their future strategy as their strength. The SWOT analysis focuses on the present situation of an organization; thus, any plans for future implementations do not yet count towards the current strengths. (Ambrosi, 1998, 51-52.)

Strengths

The first aspect of the SWOT-analysis is Strengths. It is described as a characteristic, that distinguishes itself by adding value to something, be it the organization or an aspect of it. The author describes strength as a “positive, favorable and creative characteristic”. (Gürel, 2017, 4-5)

On an organizational level, strength associates with different abilities, properties and aspects through which the target of the analysis gains a competitive edge over other organizations. Strengths may exist as resources, favorable image, trust between supplier and buyer, or customer loyalty among other things. Being strong is important to a company and being strong in multiple ways offers different benefits a company in many ways, being able to take advantage of the external opportunities presented to them and respond to possible threats. (Gürel, 2017, 4-5.)

Weaknesses

“Weakness refers to not having the form and competency necessary for something. Weakness means that something is more disadvantageous when compared to something else. In this regard, weakness is a characteristic that is negative and unfavorable “. (Gürel, 2017, 4-5.)

On an organizational level, weakness acts as a counterpoint to strength: where strength exceeds, weakness falls short. In business, weaknesses mostly consider where the organization performs poorly when compared with its competitors. It may also be an effect or a condition that causes disadvantages in different areas. Failing to identify weaknesses will result in the company not being able to take advantage of its strengths and opportunities and being more susceptible to its threats. Identifying the weaknesses should be followed by efforts to fix them, as even a few underlying weaknesses can lead a company to ineffectiveness and inefficiency. (Gürel, 2017, 4-5.)

Opportunities

Opportunities list external factors that offer advantages or opportunities for activity and growth. It is a positive characteristic for a company. They are presented through the business environment as advantageous events or effects. Analyzing the environment and identifying these opportunities allows for a company to act upon them, which may provide them with extensive benefits. Relating to the other SWOT aspects, opportunities allow for companies to use their strengths, overcome their weaknesses and neutralize threats. (Gürel, 2017, 5-6.)

Threats

External factors that make reaching organizational goals more challenging are listed under the final section of the SWOT – analysis. Threats can arise from the near or far ends of the business environment, meaning that a legislation change in a different industry can affect other organizations as much as a legislation change in their own industry. They can cause an organization to lose to competition or damage its very existence. (Gürel, 2017, 5-6.)

2.3.4 Marketing Mix

One of the most significant aspects of the strategic marketing process is considered to be the Marketing mix. The original marketing mix, proposed by McCarthy (1960) consists of the 4 Ps of marketing. These are Product, Price, Place and Promotion.

The marketing mix is “The set of controllable, tactical marketing tools that the firm blends to produce the response it wants in the target market.” Everything the organization can do to influence the demand for their product will be gathered in the marketing mix. The effectiveness of a

marketing plan can be measured by how well it blends the 4 Ps of marketing to create a coordinated plan that seeks to achieve the company's marketing objectives. (Kotler, 1998, 37-38.)

The marketing mix is a significant part of the marketing process. Its main purpose is to create both satisfaction and value for the customer. Through this, customer demands are met and eventually, long-lasting business relationships formed. (Badi, 2018, 1-2.)

Product

Product refers to the goods and services that a company offers to the target market. This includes physical products as well as different services, such as maintenance or training. It may also include places or persons. Depending on the nature of the company, products may take precedence over services, or vice versa. (Kotler, 1998, 38-39.)

Both a customer's loyalty and satisfaction will be influenced by the features and attributes of the product or service a company provides. Customers demand products of both high quality and performance. Meeting these demands provides an organization with competitive advantage. Different external environments, such as social, technological, political and economic environments can have effects on the needs and wants of customers. Researching these environments and staying flexible will allow a company to maintain and increase their customer loyalty. (Badi, 2018, 3-4.)

Price

The second element of the marketing mix is Price. It is what the customers pay to get the product. It is the amount of money charged by the organization for receiving a product or service. It can also be the value that customers exchange to obtain a product, such as with trade-ins. Negotiating the price is an important aspect of determining it. (Kotler, 1998, 39-40.)

There are a number of factors that influence the pricing decisions that an organization makes. These include material and development costs, differentiation, competition and market share. The customers also have a perceived value of the product, which is affected by cultural factors. (Badi, 2018, 3-4.)

Place

The third P of the four is Place. Place determines where and how customers are to obtain a product. This includes all the activities a company takes that allow for a service or product to be available to customers. Selecting where to allocate the most resources to ensure the best returns on a place is vital for an organization. Without a place, the customers wouldn't be able to receive the products they want. (Kotler, 1998, 41-42.)

Examples of place include distribution channels used by the company, decisions regarding warehousing and logistics, and inventory. Researching each element individually and seeing how they affect each other is an excellent way for an organization to create value and save resources. A successful distribution process ensures that a company is able to provide a product in the right place and at the right time. This can offer many advantages, such as quickly responding to demand, and informing customers about an organization's products and services. (Badi, 2018, 3-4.)

Promotion

The final element, Promotion, concerns different activities through which organizations persuade customers to purchase their products. This means advertising through different channels and methods, such as promotional events or media messages. Different incentives such as sales are used to acquire customers and ensure their loyalty. (Kotler, 1998, 42-43.)

Efficient promotion requires identifying the needs of the target market segment. This, along with brand establishment and positive brand image association, will ensure customers stay loyal. Other elements of the promotion process include public relations, personal selling and advertising. Due to its nature of directly affecting an organization's image in a customer's mind, promotion can be considered the most powerful element in the marketing mix. (Badi, 2018, 4-5.)

Public relations are an effective method of promotion for a company. Public relations concern an organization's relations to the public, and managing them via communication methods. They include strategies of establishing the communications and evaluating them. The object of public relations, the public, can be divided into two categories – internal and external publics. Both of these affect the company's goals and how to reach them. (Grunig, 1992, 5-6.) As industries become more technology focused, public relations have moved to different social media platforms. The public uses social media sites daily, and company promotions can affect a larger demographic using social media. Allocating more focus on social media and an internet presence allows for a

company to employ different methods of public relations, such as direct communication with customers. (Solis, 2009, 32-33.)

Personal selling is another effective promotional method. It offers a unique approach to modern marketing strategies. It is considered one of the oldest forms of promotion, and is comprised of a direct communication between a seller and a buyer. This direct communication allows the parties to interact and influence each other. The marketing of some products and services greatly benefit from having their capabilities demonstrated. In these cases, it is vital to use personal selling. The demonstration's effectiveness depends largely on the demonstrator's expertise on the subject. (Adesoga, 2016, 105.)

3 Research Process

The aim of this thesis is to create a marketing plan for a case company. Thus, the end result is an applicable solution to a problem an actual organization may face. This renders the thesis a development task, instead of scientific research, which is concerned with explaining phenomena. (Ojasalo, Moilanen, & Ritalahti, 2014, 17-22.) As the task has been commissioned by a commissioning party, co-operation between the author and the client must be conducted to ensure both parties benefit from the agreement.

To create an effective developmental project, the author must be able to identify and narrow down the right research problem through either previous knowledge on the subject or careful theoretical research. This ensures that the development task includes more than simply a broad theoretical background and analytic research. If the author fails to separate the irrelevant information from the relevant, the development task runs the risk of becoming too extensive and inapplicable. (Ojasalo, et al., 2014, 11-13.)

Researching primary and secondary data are vital parts of the research process. Primary data refers to information collected directly from the source. This information is often new and highly relevant to the research topic. Primary data is often collected with methods such as interviews or surveys. These allow for the researcher to organize specific methods of data collection on certain subjects. These methods include questions directly addressing the research problem. Secondary data is data collected from an existing source. Data collected from statistics, websites and reports are considered secondary data. Secondary data is often not as focused as primary data, but offers a higher number of data on the research topic. Obtaining secondary data requires less resource investment from the researcher, but may not answer research problems as accurate. Combining both types of data ensures the research problems are thoroughly addressed. (Wolf, 2016.)

3.1 Thesis Process

This section details the process of this thesis. Events related to the thesis will be explained, such as marketing literature research and peer presentations. Research process will also be explored.

This includes the collection and analysis of primary- and secondary data. A timeline is also used to visually showcase different events in thesis- and research process.

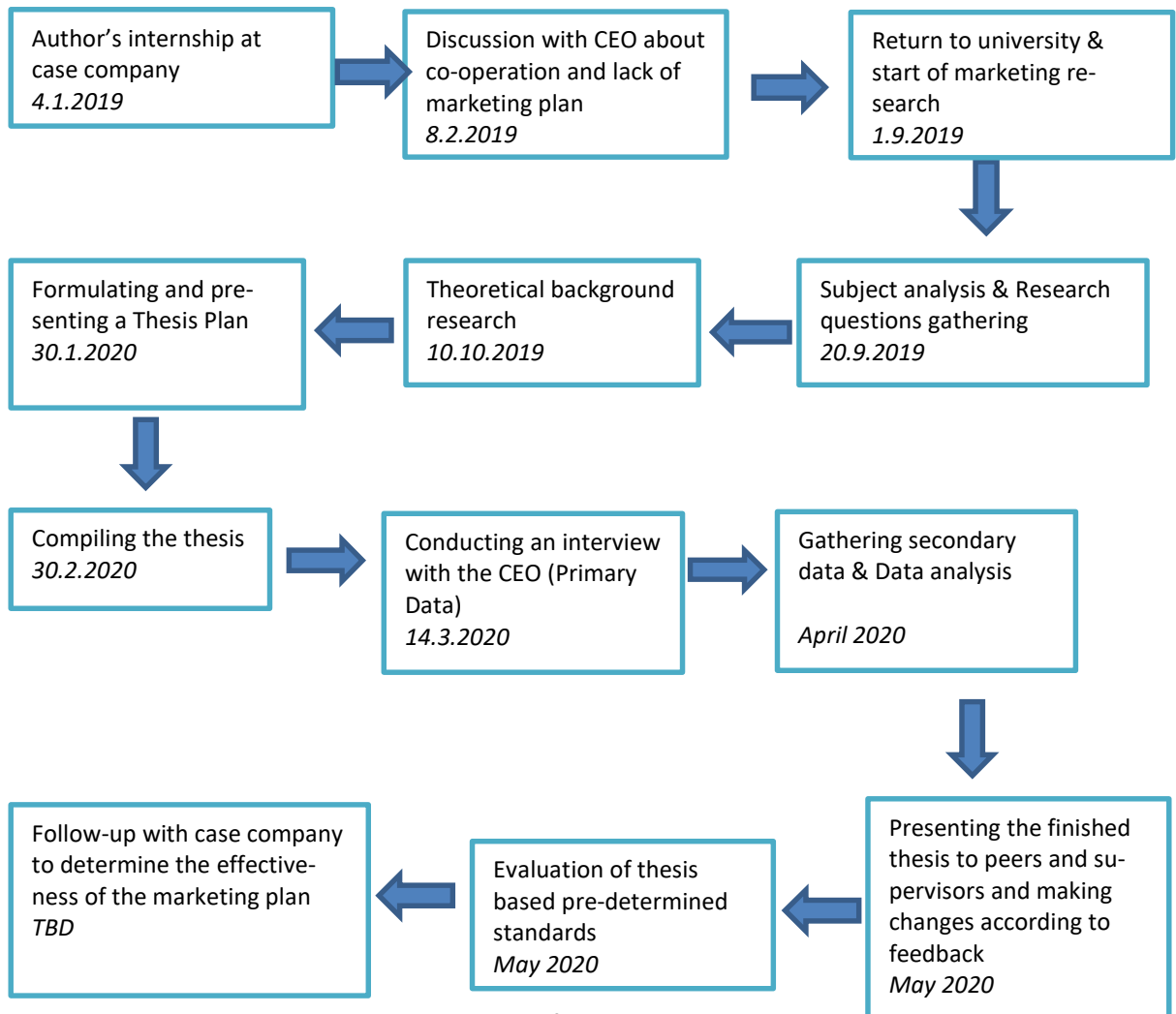


Figure 1. Thesis timeline depicting the events of the thesis process

As the timeline shows, the author began their internship at the case company on 4.1.2019. During this time, they studied the social alarm industry and received knowledge of both the field and the case company. After discussing marketing with the CEO, it was revealed that the company lacks marketing strategies. It was agreed that as a thesis project, the author would create a guide and marketing objectives for the case company to follow.

Upon returning to the university and continuing studies, the author started researching marketing methods and strategies to construct the thesis on. After submitting a subject analysis, the research on the theoretical background began. This consisted of gathering relevant marketing concepts, and narrowing the scope down to one of a small company. After presenting the finished

thesis plan on 30.1.2019, the next step was to compile the actual thesis. To gather primary data, an interview was conducted with the CEO of the company. Secondary data was gathered mainly via websites.

Once feedback has been received on the thesis, changes can be made to ensure it is clear and encompassing. Upon finishing the thesis, it will be evaluated on the previously determined standards. In the future, the author intends to conduct a follow-up with the case company to determine the effectiveness of the plan.

3.2 Data Collection via Interview

Interviews are an effective tool for gathering specific data and people's views on a subject. They are much like conversations, but their institutional nature creates differences between them. The interviewer wants information on a certain topic or matter and will drive the discussion towards certain themes. All participants in an interview play a certain role. Recording and transcribing the interview ensures that the data can be properly analysed later. (Hyvärinen, Nikander, & Ruusu-vuori, 2017, 12-14.)

Structuring an interview properly is crucial. Beginning and ending an interview the correct way ensures that answers for the research questions have been found. Beginning the interview consists of building a common ground between the parties, and then laying down a foundation of structure for the interview. The structure exists for both the interviewer and the interviewee to assist with asking and answering relevant questions. Before ending the interview, the interviewee must be informed that the interview is about to end and possible ending statements will be collected. (Hyvärinen et al., 2017, 20-22.)

This thesis will use the thematic interview type of interview. A thematic interview is one constructed upon one or more central themes, about which the interviewer is attempting to learn more about. The interviewee is free to explain their views of these themes, and a few complementary questions will also be employed to ensure that research questions are properly discussed. A thematic approach is especially efficient when interviewing experts on the subject, as it can allow for new additional perspectives to the themes that the interviewer had not previously considered. Interview questions should be formed in such a way that they are according to the

theme, but not too restrictive as not to allow the interviewee to properly explain their view or add relevant information. (Hyvärinen et al., 2017, 22-24.)

3.3 Case Company Specifics

The commissioning party for this thesis is the case company, a social alarm retailer in Finland. The organization was established in 2007 and it is a family business, operating on a small scale. In this time, the company has formed many successful business relationships, many of which are still maintained today. The company supplies and maintains social alarms mainly to elderly care houses. The company was run solely by the CEO until 2017, when it began hiring new personnel. The company has sustained mostly through the contacts and relationships established by the CEO through direct communication via phones or from previous businesses. The purpose of this thesis is to create an easy to follow and implement marketing plan for the case company. This is achieved through conducting relevant marketing analysis, as well as forming marketing objectives based on them and an interview with the CEO.

Pictured below is a list of products supplied by the case company. These include both a more modern digital care phone Novo, as well as an older GSM care phone model. Pictured also is a bracelet associated with the care phones and different accessories.



Figure 2. List of products supplied by the company. From left to right: Digital Care phone Novo, GSM Care phone, Care phone bracelet and accessories.

Care phones are devices that connect to a network and enable a two-way conversation between the end user and emergency centre staff whenever an alarm is made. The end user, often an elderly person, may create an alarm in situations of distress, such as falling or when facing a fit. Emergency staff will be dispatched as a result of an alarm. In the case of false alarms, the end user is asked to confirm the nature of the alarm, which is then checked off.

4 Empirical Findings

In this section, the gathered primary and secondary data will be analyzed. This analysis will provide insight into the internal and external factors affecting the company. The data will be used to conduct the analyses outlined in the theoretical background.

The primary and secondary gathered for the thesis form the basis of the empirical findings. Primary data was gathered through an interview with the case company's CEO. The personal interview was conducted in March of 2020. The timing allowed for the data to be thoroughly analysed. The interview questions were based on the theoretical foundation of the thesis. The CEO was questioned on topics relating to the company's current situation, company advantages and disadvantages and product details. Questions regarding the company's vision and business relations were also presented. Lastly, the outlook of the future of the company was discussed. Specific interview topics allowed for the gathering of relevant data. The data collection method was a thematic interview, as it allows for the interviewee to expand on topics and share their expertise.

Secondary data was gathered from websites and reports. Relevant data was revealed after thorough analysis. Main topics of the secondary data were "elderly care in Finland" and "social alarm industry in Finland".

4.1 Company Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to create a marketing plan for a Finnish social alarm supplier using theoretical knowledge as a foundation. The company was established in 2007, and has been active for 13 years. They mainly operate in the Northern-Ostrobothnia region of Finland, but also do business with regions norther of Finland. They operate by selling, renting and maintaining social alarm systems. These are security systems designed to assist the disabled and elderly with their daily lives, and provide security through monitoring and alarming caretakers. Operating in such a field makes direct marketing difficult, as the CEO indicated in the interview conducted for acquiring information for the thesis. Currently, the company has no marketing efforts, operating entirely on the CEO's experience and contacts. New clients are acquired mainly through directly contacting potential clients. The company's main supplier is a Swedish social alarm supplier, with

which they conduct much of their daily business. This includes purchasing inventory and managing logistics.

4.2 Situational Overview

From a competitive standpoint, the company fares relatively well. As the social alarm market is quite small in a small country such as Finland, there are but few competitors. The market is by approximation worth around 5 million euros (Heikkilä, 2020.) The largest competitor for the case company is the Tunstall Group, which also provides social alarms to many municipalities. The CEO describes their company as being the underdog in this market, despite the lack of many direct competitors. They also explained that direct marketing efforts have very little impact on the decision making of municipalities when selecting a social alarm provider. Mostly price is what determines who wins the social alarm bid for a municipality. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

Product situation of the company is positive. The case company offers private customers and municipalities different social alarm solutions. These include digital care phones, GSM care phones, as well as care phone accessories such as door and bed alarms. For services, the case company provides technical support and installation. Examining these separately is challenging, as each is intrinsically linked with each other. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

According to the CEO, the product they provide is 'excellent'. They were the first company to offer digital care phones in the Finnish market. Easiness of installation and use provides competitive advantage for the case company. The product is generally well-received by customers, and most report to be satisfied with it, as the case company aims to have development discussions with their clients at least once a year. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

There is relatively little to explore in the company's distribution situation. Currently, the case company does not employ other distributors in their business. The products are mostly distributed via a spokesperson, as the CEO handles sales of the products. After a contract for a product is signed, the product(s) are shipped via the post office, or sometimes delivered in person via a car. This has been found to be a cost-effective method of distribution (Heikkilä, 2020.)

4.3 Environmental factors affecting the company

As the company is operating from Central Finland, there are many external and internal economic- and sociological factors contributing to the business' operation. Taxation is heavy in Finland, especially for entrepreneurs. This affects the company's available resources negatively, harming their possible growth and expansion. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

As the case company's most important clients, the municipalities, receive funding from the government, it can be difficult to secure a contract with them at times. The government makes cuts to the elderly care funding almost every year, meaning municipalities have to choose the lower priced bids. According to the CEO, politicians have, despite their promises, done very little to alleviate the situation. This can lead to cases where the case company is unable to meet such low-price requirements to sustain their operations. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

A PESTEL analysis will be conducted for the company. The information gathered from the PESTEL analysis will be used to construct the SWOT analysis. PESTEL helps with identifying strengths and weaknesses of an organization, which will then be further explored in the SWOT analysis.

Political factors

As the case company is mostly associated with the elderly care industry, many regulations and governmental decisions of that industry will affect them. Finland has begun a social healthcare reform in 2019, which will aim to streamline the current social welfare and healthcare system. According to the Finnish institute for health and welfare (THL), this reform will change the older, more municipality-based funding program. This allows for more funding going to those in need, as the government will more directly influence the amount of available funds. The goal of the reform is to allow the elderly more stay-at-home care (THL, 2019).

This can be extremely beneficial to the case company, as one of the company's focus areas for the future is to invest in stay-at-home care by creating more solutions to private users.

Economic factors

According to the Helsinki Times, Finland is quite likely to find itself in a technical recession in 2020. Technical recession refers to an economy contracting its total output in two consecutive quarters.

This is due to changes in the eurozone, such as Great Britain exiting the European Union. This, coupled with declining investment rates and the domestic economy relying almost entirely on domestic demand in 2020, means a technical recession is a likely outcome for Finland's economy. (Teivainen, 2019.)

This is a neutral to negative situation for the case company. No boost in domestic demand means the spending will likely remain as in previous years. A declining economy might make customers less likely to spend money on products or services. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

Socio-Cultural factors

The elderly care industry has been under much social scrutiny due to the incidents associated with Esperri Care LLC. In January 2019 Valvira (National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health) was forced to close the Ulrika nursing home of Esperri Care located in Kristiinankaupunki. This was due to a suspected death due to malpractice. (Niemistö & Stt, 2019.) This led to the entire industry receiving criticism and being viewed in a negative light.

In Jyväskylä 2018, an elderly person was hospitalized after not able to receive help as their social alarm malfunctioned. The malfunction was due to Elisa, the cellular network provider applying maintenance on their network. (Suihkonen & Paananen, 2018.) Events such as these can have tremendous effects on social alarm providers, even if they are not at fault for malfunctions. The case company has taken many steps in avoiding public backlash by being quick to inform clients of any possible maintenances or malfunctions pre-emptively, and quickly reacting to arising problems. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

Technological factors

Case company owns and maintains a website, which aims to provide for customer needs. Online communications are mostly handled through the website or e-mail. Case company was the first to introduce digital care phones to the Finnish market. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

Environmental factors

Proper understanding of ethics is vital in the elderly care industry, as malpractice may lead to hospitalization and even death. The case company provides customers with as much information as possible and communicates on their needs and wants accordingly. The case company also

requires all products they sell to have a CE marking, as they ensure the product was produced under proper conditions. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

Legal factors

As an employee mostly does office-related work, employee safety has minimal risk involved. Consumer rights are considered whenever a product is faulty or malfunctions, a replacement will be offered by the company. However, in some cases the company is not at fault, as in the previously mentioned case with the cellular network provider Elisa applying maintenance. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

4.4 Strategic Advantages and Disadvantages of the Company

Strengths

The case company has many strengths, most stemming from the CEO's experience in the field and networking. Through networking, the company can benefit from business relationships with experts of different fields, such as information technology. With over 15 years of experience working in the social alarm field, the CEO has acquired valuable experience that translates into efficient decision making. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

The company's customer base is loyal and stable and are in daily communication with the case company. Communication is a key factor in dealing with customers, as it has a direct impact on the company image and customer loyalty. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

Another considerable strength is the company's market share. The company has secured a considerable portion of the social alarm market of Northern Ostrobothnia, with some clients residing in municipalities in the more northern parts of Finland. This market share is secured through case company's constant efforts to maintain customer loyalty, as well as improving their products and services. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

Business relationships with suppliers, mainly with a Swedish social alarm supplier allow the company to maintain a small inventory. This minimizes risks related to inventory damage and decreases the need for larger warehousing. Other benefits, such as discounts and logistic planning also become available with companies working together. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

The CEO themselves list out their strengths as having great service, reachability and an excellent product. The company prides itself on being able to meet most, if not all customer demands and keep them satisfied with constant communication and being always reachable. The quality of their products is also an important factor, and their knowledge of it helps to ensure that all products are properly installed and maintained. A customer may easily reach out to the case company for assistance with anything related to the product and service, and they will receive easy to understand guidance. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

The size of the company was also mentioned as a possible strength, although small company size is often associated with weakness. A small company is able to react quickly to changes, beginning projects or training with speed and ease. Changes can also be implemented much faster than in a larger enterprise. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

Weaknesses

A considerable weakness of the case company is the lack of efforts for expansion. Now, the company invests very little into marketing, relying mostly on customer loyalty. New customers are acquired through direct contact and on-site visits. While a reliable method, it is slow and not cost-effective, as resources are spent on travelling and lodging. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

The rather narrow supply of products is another weakness. The company's website endorses two types of care phones, one being digital and one being an older GSM model. They also display a wrist button, and a selection of accessories. The company could benefit greatly by mimicking its competitors and offering modernized social alarm solutions. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

Case company also lacks personnel, employing only two people aside the CEO. While it keeps salary costs low, it makes it difficult for the company to branch out. The CEO has expressed interest in supplying different types of products, but the resources for such undertakings are limited. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

Company size is both a strength and a weakness. In a small company, a lot of responsibility is divided between a very few people, meaning a mental toll is taken on the staff. The CEO also underlined the lack of resources; the case company would address many of its weaknesses and threats had it the resources to begin combatting them. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

Opportunities

The case company can benefit from many opportunities presented by the business environment. The social healthcare reform discussed in section **Pestel Analysis – Political Factors** will have a positive effect on the financial aspect of elderly healthcare. An increase in funding and the streamlining of service acquisition will result in social alarms being purchased at a higher rate. This also presents an opportunity for expansion. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

The social alarm field is almost purely a technological field, meaning harnessing new technology can have very beneficial effects for a company. Researching and developing new products using Artificial Intelligence or Virtual Reality could bring multiple opportunities to the case company. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

However, perhaps the most considerable opportunity is the steady rise of the elderly. According to the CEO, 25% of Finns will be over 65 years old. This means that the number of possible clients is getting larger. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

Threats

An example of a societal threat was discussed in the **Pestel Analysis - Socio-Cultural Factors**. Social alarm companies can receive a lot of media backlash as a result from malfunctioning equipment. Equipment malfunction can even be a result of an external factor, such as a power outage or a network maintenance, and the social alarm company will receive the criticism regardless. Studying cases such as these allows the company to be proactive about such events, informing and educating customers accordingly and providing support when needed. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

Local competition embracing new technology can be a major threat if an organization refuses to adapt. The Oulu-based social alarm supplier 9Solutions markets their smart social communications platform, which is a system that uses Bluetooth, Wifi and a Cloud-service. This is very modern solution that is being introduced to many hospitals and elderly care homes across Finland. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

4.5 Marketing Mix Modified

In this section, the thesis will apply concepts of the Marketing Mix to the case company to create an overview of the 4 P's of the company. These will assist in determining the marketing objectives for the company, as well as improve the understanding of the company's current situation.

Modified marketing mix will begin with product assessment. The CEO of the company describes their product as 'excellent'. Their main product, the care phone Novo, has wide-ranging digital and GSM capabilities. It is modern, with many compatible accessories to enhance its operations. Especially in the field of care technology, customers demand devices that function impeccably. Great reliability and connectivity are required, even in rural areas. The product itself, in combination with its accessories, well meets the demands of the customers. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

For services, the case company provides reliable and friendly customer service each day of the week. For this, they've received positive feedback. Installation and maintenance are handled by the company on-site and remotely, allowing for issues to be resolved quickly. Service quality is reportedly very high, leaving a positive impact on the customers. Both products and services are great strengths to the company that can be employed in marketing efforts to attract more customers, and ensure the loyalty of the existing ones. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

Pricing for the case company has mostly yielded positive results. Customers are not apprehensive about pricing changes, and only a few have reported negative feedback due to the highness of the prices for some products. As the company already operates on an effective system, pricing will not be as relevant for the marketing objectives. Resources will not be allocated into creating new pricing models, as these resources can be used elsewhere. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

Case company should, however, be aware of possible collaborations that can be done with their suppliers, as these can significantly reduce their prices, allowing for easier sales. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

The element of place will be studied next. As the company is located in Oulu, most of their customers will be located near that area. The case company has also secured a considerable market in the north of Finland. The northern market is kept satisfied with frequent visits via the company car and communication efforts. Since the company also uses distribution channels such as sending the products via the post office, the place of the company itself becomes less relevant. Sales

are mostly handled on the internet, further reducing the relevancy of the location of the company's office, for example. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

Inventory of the company is kept and handled in a medium-sized warehouse, from which all of their logistics are handled. The company might benefit from a smaller warehouse, as most of the inventory takes up little space. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

Most services, such as maintenance, can almost entirely be done remotely via applications on the internet. This is another strength that the company's marketing efforts can highly benefit from, were they to utilise it correctly. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

Lastly, the company's promotional efforts will be reviewed. At the moment, barely any exist. The company has a website, thus an internet presence, but it is somewhat outdated. As outlined in a previous segment, sales are mostly handled remotely. The company is unable to utilize sales events, as they cannot be very liberal with their pricing. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

Personal sales are what allowed the CEO to initially gather a large customer base, and directly informing the customers of the product's capabilities and associated services will be a more personal approach, as opposed to the indirect method of remotely handling sales. The customers will also be able to direct questions and possible requests at a salesperson who has a lot of experience with the product and also has a say in the company. (Heikkilä, 2020.)

5 Marketing Plan

A marketing plan based on empirical data analysis will now be presented. This section contains marketing information specifically designed for the case company. The structure of the marketing plan is detailed below. The structure is based on frameworks presented in the theoretical background.

Marketing Plan Structure	
1. Situation Analysis	Current situation analysis of the company
2. PESTEL analysis	Conducting a PESTEL-analysis
3. SWOT analysis	Conducting a SWOT-analysis
4. Marketing Mix analysis	Conducting a Marketing Mix analysis
5. Objectives	Outlining marketing plan objectives
6. Control	Details methods of controlling and monitoring the plan

Table 4. Marketing Plan structure for this thesis

Factors affecting each analysis will briefly be listed. Introducing the most essential factors of each analysis allows for the company to access the most relevant information quickly. PESTEL- and SWOT-analyses will provide an overview of internal and external factors affecting the company. Marketing mix analysis provides insight into the company's capabilities. Lastly, the marketing plan will detail marketing objectives for the company. Methods of control for said objectives will also be introduced.

5.1 Internal and External Factors

PESTEL-Analysis

Political factors: Social Healthcare Reform provides excellent opportunities for growth. The reform aims to allow the elderly more stay-at-home care. To benefit from this, the company should seek to create more solutions for private users.

Economic factors: Finland entering a technical recession in 2020 will likely have an adverse effect on customer buying power and the financial outlook of the case company. The company would benefit from taking fewer financial risks and saving resources whenever possible.

Socio-Cultural factors: While social alarms are generally positively regarded, media can occasionally have adverse effects on the public image of a company operating in the industry. With effective communication, the case company can reduce the negative effects of these factors.

Technological factors: Case company could benefit from an updated website and developing more modern solutions for both municipalities and private users. However, it is necessary to avoid advancing too quickly with technology.

Environmental factors: The company's operations have relatively little effect on the environment. Northern climate may present logistical issues.

Legal factors: Following legislations relating to the elderly care industry will ensure that the company faces no negative effects from legal factors.

SWOT-Analysis

Detailed below is a table of the company's SWOT-Analysis. The SWOT-Analysis details the case company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. These elements are derived from a company's external and internal capabilities.

SWOT-Matrix	Beneficial	Harmful
Internal	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO's experience & Connections • Established customers are loyal and educated • Considerable Market Share • Reliable Suppliers 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No plans for expansion, lacking marketing efforts • Small supply of products • Lack of staff
External	Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social healthcare reform • Technological opportunities 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Societal threats • Competition growing

Table 5. Simplified SWOT-Matrix

The strengths of the case company are mainly found in the CEO's experience. This has allowed the company to establish a large and loyal customer base, and beneficial business relationships with suppliers. The company will greatly benefit from using their considerable strengths to combat the weaknesses and threats detailed in the list. For example, new products can be negotiated with suppliers. The social healthcare reform provides ample opportunities for the case company. This, combined with technological opportunities, can allow the company to research and develop new products designed for private customers. Another strength of the case company are the customers. The current customer base is considered loyal and well-aware of company operations. They are unlikely to negatively affect brand image, even if a product malfunctions for example. These customers allow a steady cash flow for the company. The company must exert effort to maintain the loyalty of these customers.

The company will also benefit from being aware of their weaknesses and threats. Lack of staff means a lot of responsibility is placed on a small number of people. The company may consider

hiring temporary staff during busier times to alleviate this weakness. By securing customer loyalty can the company effectively combat the growing competition.

5.2 Marketing Mix specifics

The product situation of the company is advantageous. With both high-quality products and services, the company can continue gaining competitive advantage. In the social alarm industry, reliability is of utmost importance. The product offers competitive advantage not only through its affordable price, but also through its varied capabilities and reliability of use. Customers report it meeting their wants and needs very well. Investing in more advanced products and services can allow the company further improvements in this sector.

Pricing strategies of the case company have been well-received thus far. The company may benefit from implementing sales or sales campaigns to incentivize new customers.

The place of the company meets their needs quite well. As warehousing is not as necessary, the company can afford a smaller location. Geographically, Oulu is located in Central Finland. This allows the company to reach markets both in the North and South.

Promotional efforts of the company are considerably lacking. Lacking an internet presence in the modern day can have considerably adverse effects on an organization. The company would greatly benefit from investing into promotional strategies. Sales strategies such as promotions or public relations efforts are effective methods of promoting an organization. Through public relations, both brand image and brand awareness can be improved. Different sales strategies will incentivize new customers to purchase a company's products.

5.3 Marketing Objectives and tactics

This section will outline marketing objectives for the company. When met, these objectives provide clear and quantifiable benefits for the company. The objectives are presented in order from most important to least important. The objectives are based on study of empirical data, and specifically designed to meet the needs of the case company.

Objective 1. Increase Brand Awareness

Methods: Construct a new website, monitor social media presence

The case company would highly benefit from a renewed website. Websites are what customers initially search out when learning more about a company. It is their first look into the company, its products, services and personnel. It is therefore important to invest in a high-quality website, to ensure a lasting positive effect on the would-be customers. The initial investment into constructing a website is relatively low, yet it yields very high returns as it actively builds a positive brand image and acquires customers.

The company website should include basic information, such as how to reach out to the company, as well as information on the company background and details in the products and services it provides. Design and construction should be outsourced to a professional website firm to ensure best results. This would also take strain off the already limited number of staff, as the maintenance of the website would be handled by another party. It may be beneficial to study the websites of competitors, to gain insight as to which designs work best.

Any company benefits from a social media presence. It is vital for a business to have that, as well as be aware of how they are perceived on social media. Clear and fast communication with users can help ensure that the company is perceived positively on social media. Positive feedback helps determine the strengths of the company, and negative feedback can point out weaknesses that the company needs to build on. Increasing online engagement in general is a very effective method of improving company image.

Objective 2. Increase Sales Revenue

Methods: Sales campaigns, expand product range

The case company has secured an impressive market share in the middle- and northern parts of Finland. It is beneficial to begin a sales campaign using sales incentives detailed in this thesis, such as sales campaigns, the company would be able to secure a market elsewhere in Finland as well, resulting in a larger market share.

As the company handles almost all of its business remotely, there are no discernible reasons as to why the other parts of Finland would be unviable expansion prospects. Proper handling of the distribution channels ensures that the company does not become encumbered by logistics costs.

The company's current product range, while effective, is quite limited. Branching out to different devices, such as GPS locators or other security hardware could prove very beneficial for the company's sales. While this method requires some resources upfront, it will quickly return the investment, as the company has a large pre-established customer base. It would be effective to market these products alongside the already provided products and services, as well as discover new markets for the new products.

Objective 3. Improve Customer Education

Methods: Inform media and customers of products

The company would benefit greatly from informing both customers and the media of how their products work. This would leave less room for confusion and misunderstandings that have previously had adverse effects on social alarm companies' reputations. Simplifying complex technological information and making it readily available for those who seek it would positively affect both company image and sales, as customers would be more confident in the products and media would be less inclined to report of the company in a negative light.

5.4 Control the marketing actions

Below is a list detailing the objectives, their methods as well as control processes that the company will use to track and measure the success of each objective. A control timeline of two years is suggested to track the efficiency of each objective.

Objective 1. Increase Brand Awareness

Methods: Construct a new website, improve social media presence

Control Processes:

- Track website visits and social media followers

- Request feedback on website layout
- Study if/how website/social media affects sales

Objective 2. Sales Revenue

Methods: Sales campaigns, expand product range

Control:

- Closely track sales numbers
- Determine trends in sales regions
- Gather feedback on interest for different products

Objective 3. Customer Education

Methods: Inform media and customers of products

- Determine customer impressions
- Set benchmarks to compare impressions in two years

These control methods ensure that the company receives reliable feedback on the efficacy of their marketing efforts. All objectives will benefit from benchmarking the results and comparisons between them.

6 Conclusion

The main goals of this thesis were to create a clear, concise marketing plan for a case company, and detail the steps of the process. The marketing plan is based on marketing theory gathered from marketing literature and scientific journals. Different analyses, such as Current Situation-, SWOT-, PESTEL- and Marketing Mix analyses lend the thesis a theoretical foundation. These analyses are generally used to measure different factors affecting an organization's performance.

Primary and secondary data that is used to conduct the data analysis for the thesis were gathered respectively from an interview with the CEO and different online sources. The thematic interview allowed for the CEO to explain their views on different subjects concerning the company's operations, and weigh in on their opinions on the results of the different theoretical analyses. Secondary data provided insight especially into external matters such as competition and environmental possibilities or threats. Combining these types of data allows for a deeper understanding of the internal and external factors affecting the company. The finished plan provides the company with marketing objectives. The completion of these objectives will positively impact the company. Methods for achieving these objectives are also detailed, and how to control and measure their effectiveness.

The author considers the thesis to have been a learning experience. Much of his previous knowledge on marketing was tested, as well as reinforced by further studying. Studying different aspects of marketing, especially from the perspective of a small company, was an interesting process. The scope of the project had to be kept small, and the lack of resources was always apparent when considering projects for improvement. Marketing literature often suggests large-scale changes and implementations, and is generally aimed at training marketers for larger companies. It is beneficial for marketers to study literature and methods aimed at companies of all sizes, so that a more general understanding of marketing itself can be acquired.

The case company appreciated the chance to work alongside a marketing student. They gained valuable insight on how marketing works, and what their company should be doing to better succeed in the world of modern marketing. As they had a somewhat outdated view on marketing and sales procedures, it was important for them to obtain an outside perspective on their business. The case company gained knowledge in the value of marketing processes.

The author considers the thesis to be somewhat short. A much deeper look at the company functions would have benefitted the case company's marketing efforts. However, it is important to keep discretion in mind in this market, as much sensitive information is handled by social alarm companies. The author would have appreciated a chance to interview other members of the staff, to gain a more thorough understanding of the company perception and ideas on what to improve. This would've allowed for gathering of more primary data, which in turn could have resulted in a more comprehensive marketing plan.

It is highly likely that the company will continue collaborating with the author in the future. A marketing communications plan is the logical next step to be constructed for the company. This would allow them to take the principles learned in this thesis and develop them further. Marketing communications greatly effect a company's expansion, which is one of the matters the company needs to improve upon to secure a larger market share. The company's marketing communications could include a deeper look at public relations in social media, for example. Social media allows for direct communication between an organization and a (potential) customer. It is also becoming increasingly required for a company, as many customers may view companies without a social media presence as suspicious or dated.

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