

Digital marketing strategy

Case company: Sea Sales Finland

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Abstract

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Abstract <p>The purpose of the thesis is to develop a professional digital marketing strategy for Vallisaari brand which the case company Sea Sales Finland owns. Sea Sales Finland operates in the service sector in Helsinki. The brand Vallisaari includes all the services provided by Sea Sales Finland in the island of Vallisaari which was opened to the public recently in 2016.</p> <p>The thesis was conducted mainly by qualitative methods. The primary data was gathered from semi-structured interviews and the field observations by the author during his internship period in the case company. However, also statistics were utilized in order to comprehend customer behavior online. The secondary data was collected from e-materials such as e-books, articles, Google analytics and images in order to grasp the concept of digital marketing. It included all the relevant digital marketing channels, techniques and tools available. In addition, the Sostac marketing plan model is introduced.</p> <p>After the concept was grasped and the data analyzed, recommendations were made for the case company by using the Sostac model. They include website development, email marketing, search engine optimization and social media marketing. The tactics will increase the brand awareness and will guide more people to use the services of Vallisaari. Furthermore, the recommendations included propositions for the case company to test the tactics and adjust them in the future if necessary.</p>		
Keywords Digital Marketing, SEO (Search engine optimization), SOSTAC, Social Media		

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	The case company: Sea Sales Finland	2
1.2	The purpose and research questions	3
1.3	Research methods and data collection	4
1.4	Limitations and structure of the thesis	5
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.1	Digital Marketing	7
2.2	B2B Digital Marketing	8
2.3	B2C Digital Marketing	9
2.4	Search engine optimization and marketing	10
2.5	Digital Marketing Channels	13
2.5.1	Website	13
2.5.2	Social Media	14
2.5.3	Blogs	17
2.5.4	Email Marketing	17
2.6	Sostac Model	18
3	RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS	23
3.1	Research design and strategy	23
3.2	Data collection	24
3.3	Situation analysis	25
3.3.1	Customer analysis	25
3.3.2	Competitor analysis	28
3.3.3	Digital Channels of Vallisaari	29
3.3.4	SWOT analysis	31
3.4	Objectives	34
3.5	Strategy	36
4	RECOMMENDATIONS	38
4.1	Tactics	38
4.2	Action	40
4.3	Control	41
5	SUMMARY	42
	LIST OF REFERENCES	43
	APPENCISES	46

1 INTRODUCTION

Computers, mobile phones and tablets are used more than ever for accessing the Internet which have changed the way of communication and interaction between people. Currently in 2020 there are almost 4.6 billion people who actively use internet which is 59% of the population of the world (Clement 2020). Digitalization has delivered many new opportunities and challenges for businesses worldwide and allowed them to conduct their business online in different forms. The internet has become highly competitive since its potential has been noticed but it has also opened possibilities for companies that they are able to use for their benefit.

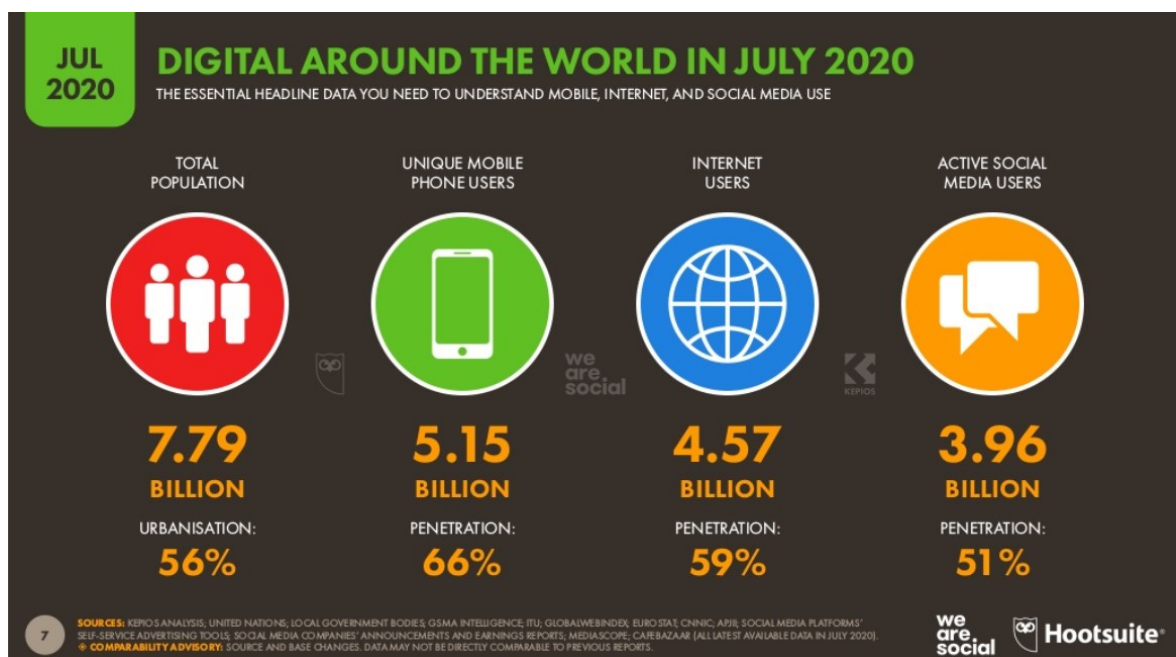


Image 1. Digital around the world in July 2020 (Kemp 2020)

Image 1 indicates that in 2020 almost 4,6 billion people (59%) are using internet and that almost 4 billion (51%) are using social media actively. Also, 5,15 billion people (66%) are using mobile phones which allows access to the Internet.

Digitalization has also allowed a new and effective way of practicing marketing with digital tools that have emerged. Nowadays, digital marketing is considered as the most important part of marketing. Digital marketing is one form of marketing where electronic media is being utilized by marketers for promoting their products and services into the market. In other words, the main goal of digital marketing is to interact with customers and to attract them through different digital platforms guiding them towards a purchase. In recent years, digital marketing has become crucial for many businesses in order to stay competitive.

Businesses all over the world are utilizing digital marketing and implementing strategies for attracting new customers and maintaining relationships with them by using different digital tools and channels (Afrina, Sadia & Kaniz 2015).

1.1 The case company: Sea Sales Finland

Sea Sales Finland was founded in 2018 which makes them a relatively new company. It was established as a subsidiary for Juvashipping Oy which wanted to expand their business and begin to operate on Vallisaari. Sea Sales Finland provides and organizes several different services in Vallisaari and they have two main brands which they sell, Vallisaari and Aava Lines. Generally, Aava Lines offers cruises and transportation with their ships around Helsinki including food and drinks for their customers. Vallisaari on the other hand, includes everything that Sea Sales Finland is offering in the island, such as camping, restaurants, games and other activities related to the history and nature of Vallisaari.

Vallisaari is also the name of the island where Sea Sales Finland operates, and that is where the name of the brand came from. The island is owned by Metsähallitus and it is located near Helsinki in the Gulf of Finland. Vallisaari brand has huge potential to grow since it is full of nature with unique environment, interesting history and amazing landscape. The visitors of the island have grown during the past years and are expected to continue to grow. Furthermore, businesses (or other groups) are able to book in advance many activities from their online store, such as cruises, buffets, group yoga, guided tours and many other activities. For individual visitors Vallisaari offers restaurants, cafeterias, camping and other leisure activities.

The CEO of Sea Sales Finland wishes that digital marketing strategy will be made only for the brand Vallisaari. Thus, in this thesis the author will focus on making the digital marketing strategy for the brand Vallisaari, mostly because Aava Lines is operating on a different field and is targeting on a different customer group and therefore would require different actions in terms of the digital marketing strategy. This also helps the author to narrow down the subject and be more focused on creating a successful strategy for Vallisaari brand.

Sea Sales Finland is interested in improving their digital marketing in order to gain better more visibility for their brand and attracting new customers online. However, Sea Sales Finland is a relatively small company and has limited resources. Many potential customers are using different digital channels and Sea Sales Finland wants to capitalize that and attract them towards their business. The issue is that Sea Sales Finland simply does not

have enough time to learn all the new digital tools or how to use them efficiently since they have their hands full with other aspects of their business.

According to their CEO they have invested money into SEO (Search Engine Optimization) without fully understanding how to use it efficiently. In addition, they have hired a person to take care of their Facebook and Instagram accounts for promoting their services which indicates that they are aware of the digital tools and are trying to improve their marketing by using them.

1.2 The purpose and research questions

The purpose of this thesis is to make a professional digital marketing plan for Sea Sales Finland which they can implement to their business. As stated before, their employees do not have enough time for learning how to use the digital tools for marketing efficiently which means that this strategy will be an excellent resource for them. In this thesis modern digital marketing tools and channels are being studied and described such as: SEO (Search Engine Optimization), Website and social media.

This study will focus on addressing the following research questions in order to achieve valid and reliable analysis from where a sufficient digital marketing strategy can be executed and developed in the future.

- The main research question: What is an efficient digital marketing strategy that Vallisaari can use to attract customers and raise brand awareness?

To help the author find an answer to the main research question, two sub research questions are established:

- Sub research question: What are the best digital channels and tools to attract and engage with customers for Vallisaari?
- Sub research question: What internal and external factors must be considered while creating a digital marketing strategy?

1.3 Research methods and data collection

Mainly qualitative research methods are utilized for conducting this study. It is a research strategy that focuses on words more than numbers during the data collection and analysis (Bell & Bryman 2011). However, also quantitative data such as statistics will be utilized in order to get accurate insights on customer behavior online.

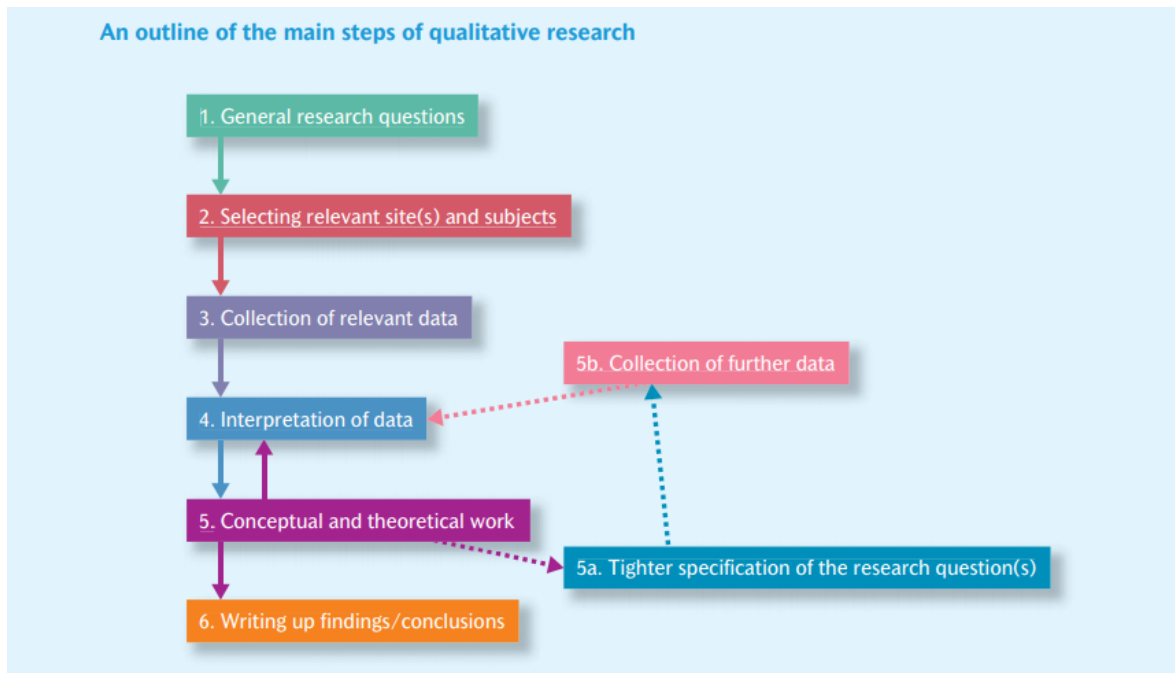


Image 2. An outline of the main steps of qualitative research (Bell & Bryman 2011).

Image 2 outlines the main steps of qualitative research method which the author will follow during this study. Firstly, in the introduction research questions are being established and Vallisaari brand selected as a subject of the research. Secondly, the secondary data for literature review is gathered mostly from e-materials, such as e-books and articles. The primary data is collected through semi-structured interviews and observations by the author from his internship period. After the data is collected, it is analyzed and recommendations are provided for the case company. Lastly, conclusions from the research will be drawn.

Data collection

Primary data will be collected through semi-structured interviews from experts of the field and observations by the author during his internship period in order to grasp relevant information. The semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer and the interviewee to dive in deep inside the topic since follow-up questions can be asked and the dialogue is flexible. The interviews will be recorded, and the interviewees will be informed about the subject in

advance. This will guarantee that both participants (interviewer and interviewee) will be prepared for the interview in order to achieve efficient results. Interviewees will be referred as interviewee 1, interviewee 2 etc. in order to keep their anonymity.

Secondary data is collected by utilizing e-books and articles which are chosen carefully from experts of the digital marketing field. In addition, Google analytics and studies which include quantitative data will be used in order to grasp insights and give the study a diverse and strong foundation.

1.4 Limitations and structure of the thesis

Every research has their own limitations. In this study the primary data is collected with qualitative methods from three semi-structured interviews and authors field observations. However, the author recognizes that the sample size for the interviews is small and that all the interviewees are (or used to be) working in Sea Sales Finland which can give a similar bias to the dialogue. In order to deal with these possible issues, the author also uses his own field observations from his internship period to ensure a broad perspective for the research and supplement it.

Furthermore, when e-materials are utilized, there might occur reliability issues or that the sources are outdated. In order to overcome them, sources from experts of digital marketing field will be used. In addition, the author will try to apply critical reading skills and find the latest publications to ensure that the information is reliable and valid.

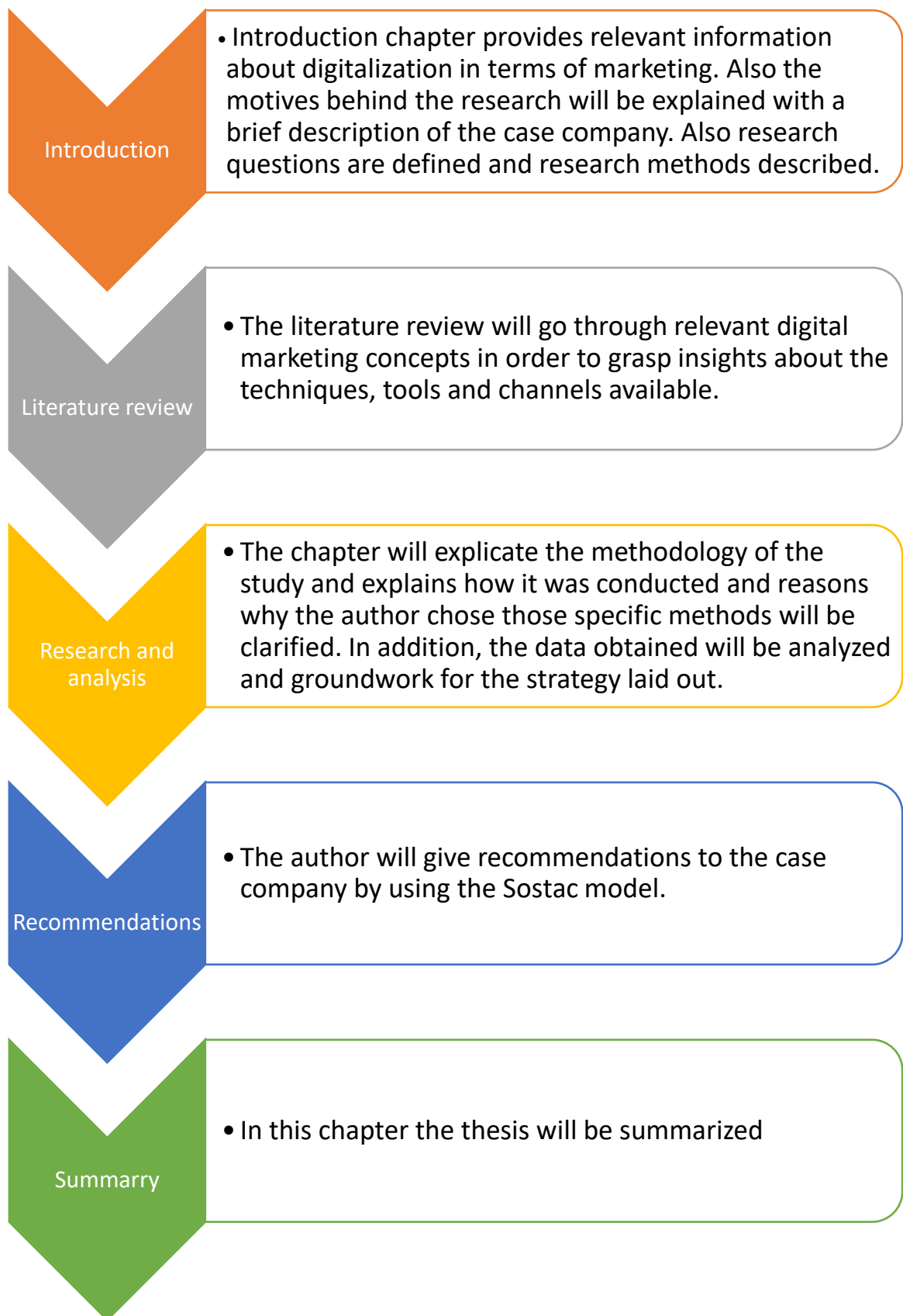


Figure 1. The structure of the thesis

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Digital Marketing

In this chapter digital marketing will be studied and explained thoroughly. Digital marketing as a concept is evolving all the time and due to this fact, it can be complex to define. It is commonly defined as marketing done online but this definition is quite vague and can leave many questions unanswered. Dr. Chaffey defines Digital marketing as "Achieving marketing objectives through applying digital technologies, data and media." (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick 2019).

Furthermore, digital marketing contains managing business online, for instance by using websites, applications for mobile phones and maintaining social media pages. Digital marketing is also linked with different elements interacting online such as search engine optimization (SEO), promotion in social media, online advertising, e-mail marketing and cooperation with other businesses online (Chaffey 2019).

Dr. Desai (2019) defines digital marketing as:

"Digital marketing is the marketing of products or services using digital technologies, mainly on the internet, but also including mobile phones, display advertising and any other digital medium."

Both definitions are pinpoints digital technologies and marketing. Dr. Desai adds an interesting point in her definition about any digital medium such as mobile phones which are also playing a big role in digital marketing since the usage of mobile phones is increasing rapidly. Social media in particular is being used with mobile devices and will be studied more in depth later in this paper.

Digital marketing offers many benefits for businesses nowadays since internet is so widely used all around the world and therefore it is convenient to use for reaching potential customers. Furthermore, digital marketing is very cost-efficient if it is executed correctly and highly measurable since it enables experts to see precise results immediately (Desai 2019). Perhaps one of the greatest benefit of digital marketing is that it allows easily creating customer relationships and maintaining them since it enables individual connection with the customers and possibility of targeting new customers (Miller 2012). In addition, it also helps businesses to know and understand their audience which can help them in many ways, creating brand loyalty for example (Digitalmarketinginstitute 2019).

Moreover, digital marketing enables getting closer to potential and current customers and helps to understand their needs more, augmenting value of products and services, expanding distribution channels and increasing sales online. In addition, it allows marketers to simplify their consumer leads, sales and after sales services. Digital marketing is like a futuristic mindset, where the customer is put directly into the core of all activities performed online, making it convenient for both, customers and businesses. Hence, both businesses and customers are benefitted since customers feel that their needs are understood better and are more likely to buy from a business that they feel comfortable with, while businesses are able to be more visible and create more volume to their sales (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 13).

Therefore, digital marketing has great potential which each and every ambitious business can capitalize. The risks are low and benefits high if digital marketing is performed efficiently. Furthermore, Vallisaari can benefit in many aspects of their business and be more efficient in terms of attracting customers and maintaining brand loyalty in the future if they focus more on digital marketing.

2.2 B2B Digital Marketing

B2B (Business to Business) digital marketing refers to all the digital marketing concepts utilized in the B2B sector and it has grown rapidly over the past years. B2B digital marketing keeps businesses competitive and according to Miller (2012) there are two main reasons why B2B digital marketing is important. Firstly, because the competitors are doing it and secondly because the customers are expecting it. Recently there has been an increase in B2B digital marketing which actually has been much slower to adapt into the new concept than B2C digital marketing which is studied in the next chapter.

Many B2B orientated companies have a goal in digital marketing where they attempt on gaining possible clients online with an objective of actually having a conversation with them and turning the possible clients into clients who will make a purchase. The digital marketing strategy should have an objective to attract and convert the people who are most likely going to do business with the company after seeing the company's website or other digital channels such as Instagram for instance. Moreover, the digital marketing attempts should be focused on the digital channels that specifically the target audience is using in order to be successful (Desai 2019).

A survey conducted by Marketing Sherpa found out that 71% of the B2B purchases begun from a search via search engines which indicates that there is a great potential for B2B

digital marketing and search engine optimization. The majority of B2B companies have noticed the potential and have increased their digital marketing budgets especially for inbound marketing such as Search Engine Optimization (SEO), social media, PPC advertising and webinars. Surprisingly, they have not lowered their budgets from the more traditional marketing like direct e-mails, print advertising or telemarketing which indicates that it still plays a significant role in B2B marketing (Miller 2012).

As mentioned in the previous chapter digital marketing offers great benefits in terms of communication which makes it valuable for B2B purposes. Usually the audience is smaller but more significant in B2B environment. In many cases old fashioned marketing techniques are not able compete with new digital tools such as Pay Per Click (PPC) advertising, blogs or social media which has driven companies towards them (Miller 2012).

2.3 B2C Digital Marketing

Businesses which are B2C (Business to Consumer) orientated usually put their digital marketing efforts on setting an objective to attract potential customers to their home website where they can be turned into customers without necessarily having to talk with the seller. As said in the last chapter B2C businesses have been faster to adapt different forms of digital marketing since they do not necessarily need to know the people that they are selling to personally. Due to this reason companies are more focused on creating a more fast paced customer journey where the customers purchase the products or services from the company's website, rather than actually making contact with the potential customer (Desai 2019).



Image 3. Customer journey online (Dinnen 2018).

Image 3 illustrates the customer journey online by first seeing an online advertisement or perhaps finding it in the social media. Then research of the product or service by visiting

the store, by phone call or searching it online. Finally, the purchase happens either in the online store (website) or in the traditional store.

Furthermore, in the B2C sector people usually search for the cheapest price possible and seek the most trustworthy seller. Therefore, it is important to think about the design of the website and create content for B2C buyers that gives them a secure feeling about the retailer. Due to the fact, that B2C buyers are searching for a good price and a trustworthy business, B2C businesses should prioritize trust, security, pricing and brand loyalty (Lucas 2017).

Moreover, B2C digital marketing should be entertaining. Content in the B2C has to be intriguing, authentic, emotional and pleasant in order to maintain the interest of the target audience. By doing that the businesses ensure that their customers are feeling positively about their brand and are more likely to purchase products and services from them (Lucas 2017).

According to a survey released by the business data platform Statista (2019) on which social media B2C marketers utilized conducting their businesses showed that Facebook and Instagram are by far the most used social media platforms. The results showed that 97% of the B2C marketers utilized Facebook, 78% Instagram, 54% YouTube, 46% LinkedIn and 57% Twitter (Guttman, 2019). Based on the results Facebook and Instagram are a must in the B2C sector in order to stay competitive and also YouTube, LinkedIn and Twitter should be taken into consideration depending on the business.

2.4 Search engine optimization and marketing

Search engine optimization is a relevant part of digital marketing and will be addressed as SEO in this thesis. Nowadays, people use search engines for getting information about almost everything which includes products, services and businesses that can lead to sales. Ledford (2015) defined search engine optimization in his book as follows:

“SEO is the science of customizing your website to achieve the best possible search engine ranking”

SEO aims to increase a website's visibility on the top of search engines such as Google and Yahoo with the specific key words. SEO contains actions inside (on-site) and outside

(off-page) of the website which seeks to improve the rankings of the website in organic searches.

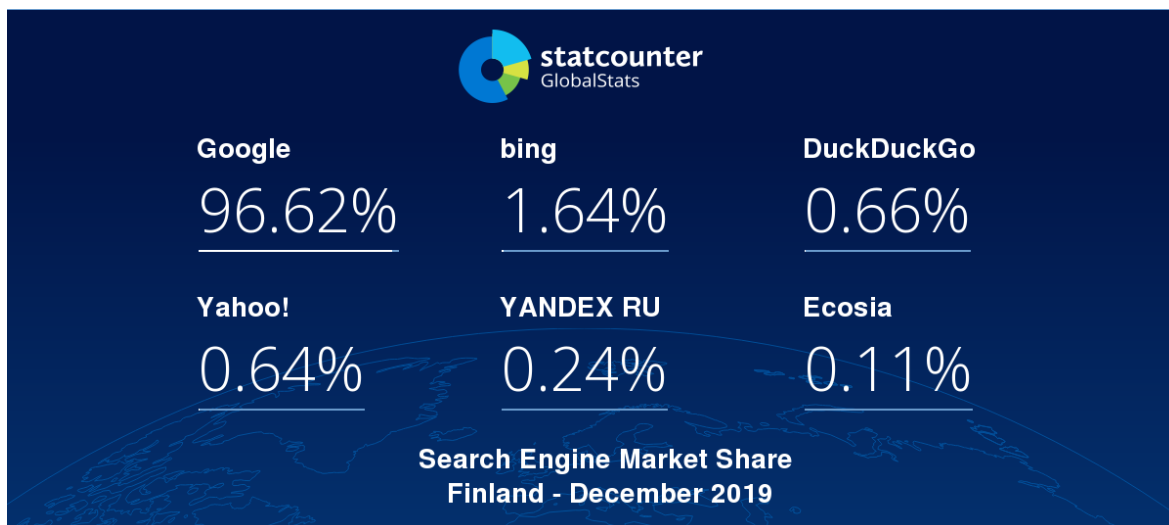


Image 3. Search Engine Market Share Finland (Statcounter 2019)

Image 4 from Statcounter indicates that at the end of 2019, Google was the most popular search engine in Finland with almost 97% of the internet users. It is a major finding in terms of search engine optimization since it implies that most of the efforts should be focused on getting the best rankings in Google.

Organic searches are a sustainable and efficient way to attract potential customers. Especially businesses with a low marketing budget can use this for their benefit since people who see a website through an organic search are already interested about the topic. Organic search refers to natural search where a person writes specific keywords into a search engine and will get results based on the keywords. Whereas paid advertising (search engine marketing) can increase the traffic online even more, but it does not always mean that the people who visit the website are actually interested about the content, due to the fact that the advertisement can appear with the wrong keywords in search engines and ranking up high. Many people end up visiting those sites quickly and exiting as soon as they realize that it is not the information they were looking for (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019).

However, paid advertisement combined with SEO can be a great combination and it can be modified to specific key words as well.



Image 4. Benefits of SEO For Business (Rose 2017)

SEO is one of the most crucial digital marketing tool and if it is executed efficiently it helps the businesses to increase traffic online, sales and brand awareness through search engines. SEO is highly beneficial for creating more targeted traffic online in businesses and more precisely to attract potential customers. Most importantly it helps already interested people to find the website of a business since it only increases the visibility in organic searches (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 368-383).

Search engine marketing on the other hand can increase the ranking of a website rapidly with paid advertisement and get a high rank in Google. They include banner advertisement, Pay Per Click (PPC) advertisement, search advertisement and promoted posts. Paid search engine marketing is usually established by businesses who want to start a digital marketing campaign for a specific product or service and last a certain period of time since the advertisement costs. The daily budget can be defined by the business and

the advertisement are shown based on the budget and how many clicks they produce (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 384-389).

2.5 Digital Marketing Channels

Digital marketing contains many different channels and tools online. Basically, they mean various online interaction techniques which are utilized for gaining brand awareness and inspiring people online to visit the company's website and familiarize themselves with the product or service and guiding them towards the purchase eventually (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019).

2.5.1 Website

Website of the business is one of the key elements of digital marketing since eventually businesses want the customer to end up there by using different methods. According to the marketing director of Charles Tyrwhitt Allison Lancaster an excellent website should always start with the customer, knowing who they are, how they usually shop and understanding how the marketplace functions in that specific field, containing knowledge of the competitors and how they function in the internet. Generally, people seek convenience and simple process of ordering products and services. In addition, people want a website that is fast to download, well designed and simple to navigate. Therefore, designing a website is crucial in order to satisfy the customers and make sure that they stay in the website and eventually continue to make the purchase (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 296).

Furthermore, website should be designed for both desktops and mobile devices since currently many people use also mobile devices for accessing the internet. According to the IAB research (2016) indicates that people expect also mobile optimized websites. A high percentage of 69% answered that a bad mobile experience will give them a negative feeling about the brand which will most certainly inhibit future purchases. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 296).

Chaffey and Smith recommend in their book to use the following elements for establishing efficient online experiences:

- Accessibility
- User centered design and usability
- Information architecture and findability
- Search engine optimization

- Web standards
- Visual design
- Digital analytics
- Legal requirements

All websites should meet the legal requirements under the disability and discrimination law. Efficiently designed website encourages users to access the website with different browsers, devices and it helps with the search engine optimization which also increases the visibility of the business in search engines. Usability of the website is also vital in terms of customer experiences where the information is easily available and the actions are not complicated to complete, this requires researching the customers and creating pertinent content.

The competition online is high and if the website is does not meet the expectations of the customer, they will easily choose another website that is more convenient for them.

2.5.2 Social Media

This chapter will focus on studying social media's role in digital marketing. According to Chaffey and Smith social media is currently one of the biggest opportunities for businesses (2017). Nowadays it is almost impossible not to know what social media is but what is more interesting is that it can be used in marketing and raise brand awareness significantly with different methods. The Chartered Institute of Public Relations (2013) defined social media as follows:

“Social media is the term commonly given to internet and mobile-based channels and tools that allow users to interact with each other and share opinions and content. As the name implies, social media involves the building of communities or networks and encouraging participation and engagement.”

This definition emphasizes a relevant feature of social media which enables people to communicate with each other digitally, including sharing videos, pictures and content. Another relevant aspect of social media in terms of business is that the different channels encourage people (potential customers) to interact and create user generated content like reviews and ratings about products, services and businesses for example. Thus, businesses can utilize consumer to consumer (C2C) digital communication for attracting new customers and creating brand loyalty (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick 2019).

Every business should focus on protecting and growing their brand in social media marketing. It can be done by taking the time to monitor and ease the customers by interacting with them and sharing content with social media which encourages favorable connection with the business and increasing its commercial worth. It can happen on the business's website, different social media and also on other 3rd party websites (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 225).

In general, social media websites are in the midst of the most used websites on the world, including the search engines such as Google. Developing a social media strategy requires understanding of the main social media platforms. According to Chaffey and Smith (2017) the main social media platforms are:

1. **Social networks** – Generally in the world, social networks are the core of social platforms where people can interact with each other. For instance, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat for customers, LinkedIn for businesses, and Twitter for both.
2. **Social news** – Almost every magazine and newspaper have their own website where their articles can be read, commented and shared through social media.
3. **Social blogs** – A blog of a business is able to create the center of their social media strategy and they will be studied in more depth later on this research.



Image 5. The most popular social media channels of Finland (Pönkä 2019)

The figure indicates that WhatsApp, YouTube and Facebook are the most used social media channels in Finland with around 3 million active users. Also, Instagram has a significant amount number of users, nearly 2 million.

Social media offers a huge potential for businesses and it can work as a helpful tool for guiding people towards the purchase. According to Dr. Solomon and Dr. Tuten there are 5 important parts in social media purchasing process:

1. **Increase awareness:** Businesses are able to increase their awareness by keeping their brand actively present in social media and target customers.
2. **Influence desire:** Social media marketing can be utilized like traditional advertising, many businesses share pictures or videos about their products and services online.
3. **Encourage trial:** Offering samples in social media is a great way of getting people to try a product or a service. After giving them a free sample they can share their experience with others and possibly attract more people towards the purchase.
4. **Facilitate purchase:** Social media also works as a distribution channel for inducements such as special prices or group offers. And by following the business in social media the audience is able to receive these inducements which creates more awareness.
5. **Cement brand loyalty:** Social media locales provide interacting activities for potential customers which can make sure that they use more time with the brand, leading to increasing brand loyalty. For instance, offering rewards for visitors through a game or organizing raffles.

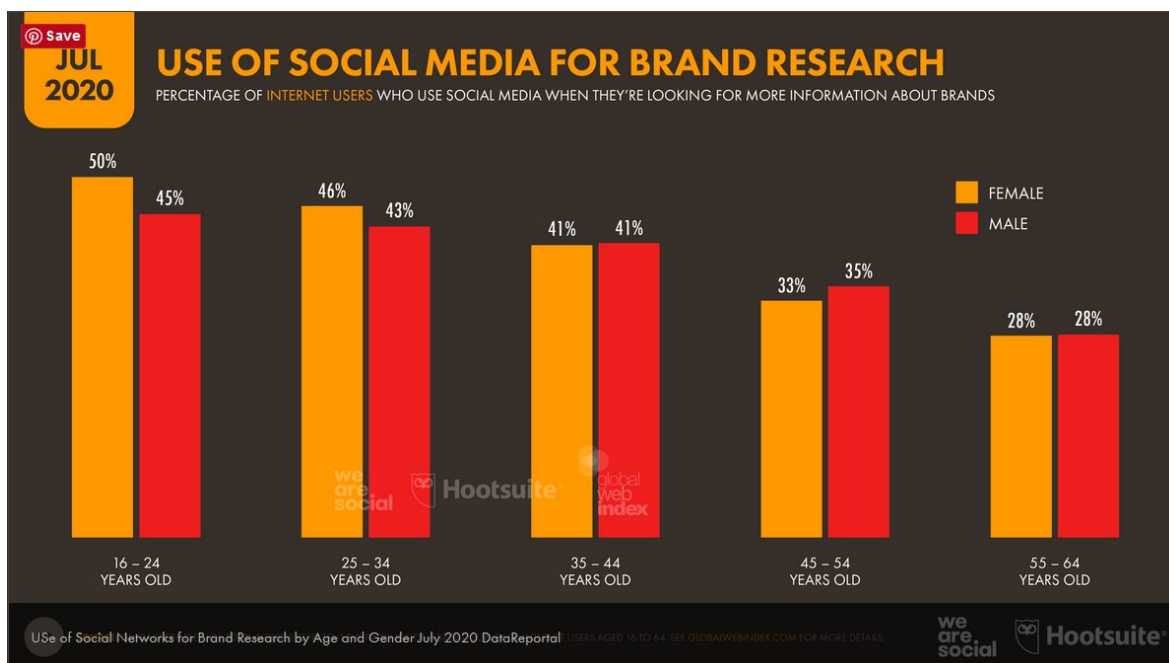


Image 6. Use of social media for brand research (Kemp 2020)

This figure from Global statshot report, implies that there is a significant amount of people who uses social media for brand research. Younger generations such as, 16-24 years old, 50% of females and 45% of males uses social media for searching a brand. Whereas people above 45 years tend to use less social media for brand research than younger generations.

2.5.3 Blogs

Blogs are utilized in digital marketing for increasing visibility in search engines and social media and hence attracting more potential customers. Dr. Chaffey and PR Smith (2017) define blog in their book as follows:

“An online diary regularly updated by an individual or group with topical news and views.”

Blogs are websites where the hosts update blog posts on a regular basis which usually contain text, pictures or videos. They can be provided by individuals or organizations which makes their content variable. Blogs usually have social sharing links where they can be shared into social media and they also have a section for discussion where people can comment and give their opinion or ask a question from the publisher (Solomon & Tuten 2017, 22).

2.5.4 Email Marketing

Even if digitalization provides a variety of different channels, emails are still widely utilized as a marketing tool since emails are an efficient way to practice online communication between customers and businesses. Although many people consider emails as an irrelevant SPAM (Sending Persistent Annoying eMail) that are also illegal in many countries which tells that any business should not send them. Therefore, it is crucial to aim for sending targeted emails and providing them with helpful and relevant information in order to meet the interests of the carefully targeted people (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 456).

According to Chaffey and Smith Opt-in emails are essential in email marketing which means that businesses have to ask the permission and the email address of the customers before beginning to send them emails which can be done when they make a purchase for instance. In addition, it is also important to provide them with an option of choosing “opting into” where they are able to choose their preferences; the type of content they wish to receive and how often they wish to receive them. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 456).

Moreover, email marketing offers plenty of benefits that many businesses can use for their advantage. Emails are comparatively low cost compared to traditional mails since they just require time and not even necessarily any money to send them. They also guide people to act; visit a website of the business where the offer of the email can be purchased instantly. In addition, email campaigns tend to be much faster to execute than the traditional media campaigns. Lastly, they are fast, simple and cheap to personalize for the targeted people than a physical media which indicates that emails have a big potential with low risks in marketing if they are sent correctly. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 484).

2.6 Sostac Model

In this chapter the author will introduce SOSTAC – model for planning and executing a digital marketing strategy. SOSTAC is a model especially for planning digital marketing strategy which Paul Smith developed. Smith is a best-selling business author and his SOSTAC planning framework is used by thousands of experts worldwide, to generate plans such as: marketing plans, corporate plans, advertising plans and digital marketing plans. It was also voted in the top 3 business models all over the world by the chartered institute of marketing (Chaffey & Smith 2017). For instance, many big companies such as LinkedIn have utilized the SOSTAC model in their organization.

*“SOSTAC is a system for going through the steps and building a marketing plan”
(Kotler, P)*

Moreover, it simplifies the planning of marketing and creating a strategy that is a useful technique for experienced marketers and also for upcoming practitioners (Reed 2014). Each step of the model is important and must be carefully considered before executing the strategy in order to minimize the risks and to succeed. Next, SOSTAC-model will be introduced step by step.



Image 7. SOSTAC model

SOSTAC model consists of 6 different steps:

1. Situation Analysis – Analysis of the current situation.
2. Objectives – What are the goals of the strategy?
3. Strategy – A plan of how to get to the goal.
4. Tactics – The details of the strategy.
5. Actions – The details of the tactics such as processes and instructions.
6. Control – Measuring and analyzing the results.

Furthermore, acknowledgment of the resources that are required for executing a digital marketing strategy is vital. First of all, the human resources are an important part that has to be considered since people who are creating the strategy, must have expertise skills in digital marketing in order to make it work. Secondly the budget must be set up in order to achieve the plans and plan to balance the costs if the sales are something else than expected. Last but not least the required time for the digital marketing strategy that includes schedules and deadlines since it has to be delivered on time and also there should be time for testing the strategy in order to have time on improvement (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 559-561).

Situation analysis

In the first step of SOSTAC, it is important to understand where the business is standing currently. The situation analysis does not consume a lot of time and helps to comprehend the big picture better. It simplifies the process of creating a digital marketing strategy and setting up the right tactics when the knowledge about the customers, competitors, available resources and the current trends is acquired. The situation analysis also provides the information about current marketing and marketing channels (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 559). In situation analysis the following factors are being analyzed:

- Customers – Who, why, how?
- Competitors – Who are they, what are they doing and in which channels?
- Partners – Can they help in marketing?
- Strengths and weaknesses of the company – Is there already a strategy, tools, visibility etc.
- The trends of the market – External SWOT-analysis about the market's situation

Objectives

In the second step of SOSTAC (objectives), the current situation has been grasped and next, the goals are being defined. When the goal is defined, it is more likely to get there rather than not knowing the goal. Again, the purpose of digital marketing is to help the businesses grow sales, for example by guiding them to online shops. Due to that fact the objectives can also be shown in a numeric format, it enables measuring them with digital tools (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 574-581).

Strategy

In the third step of SOSTAC, strategy, will provide the information on how to actually achieve the goals. Marketing strategy can be challenging to create since the world and markets are always changing. An excellent strategy can be developed while thinking the perfect customer. Imagining one's experience from the first impression about the company to a customer and all the way to a supporter of the business. A measurable path with different digital channels must be created in order to succeed. An important part of digital marketing strategy is also failures and learning from them by correcting the mistakes (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 581-590).

Tactics

The fourth step of SOSTAC is the tactics, which are also the details of the strategy. Tactics defines the tools, techniques and channels that are being utilized in order to succeed

the strategy. There are many available and efficient tactics for digital marketing strategies, here are two examples by Swan (2020) and Chaffey & Smith (2017):

- SEO - Well-structured SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and content plan enables the production of efficient content for the target audience which is optimized for the right key words that the potential customer uses in Google when making their purchasing decisions. This allows the business to be one of the choices when the purchasing decision is being made and gets to influence also to the purchasing criteria with informative content.
- Paid search engine marketing – Google AdWords can be bought to help increase the traffic online with very specific key words and guide it towards the website of the business.
- Social media – The right target audience is being recognized and efficient content is being created for them which will be delivered to them with social media. Constantly creating different offers and other easy conversions which can be repeated on a regular basis for the potential customers. When the customer takes the offer, one will be directed by email marketing to make other purchases as well.

Action

In the fifth step of SOSTAC tactics are being looked in more detail and being separated into small steps that are actually being done. For instance, SEO is being chosen to give an example of the action part (Swan 2020; Chaffey & Smith 2017):

- The overall structure of the website of the business is being checked: Does the website include everything that it needs in order to rank high in Google's search results? → The website can be modified to rank high in Google.
- What are the key words that the business is being found in Google? → Utilizing Google's Search Console to check with what keywords people found the website.
- How to produce content that supports the specific keywords? → Adding the right key words smoothly into the content and titles of the website.

Control

The sixth step of SOSTAC is control which means tracking and measuring the results. After the plan has been created it is important to follow its realization. In step number two objectives were decided which allows measuring the successfulness of the strategy. The numbers provided by different analytical tools need to be followed on a regular basis. This allows the people involved and the wanted numbers to be monitored and possible

mistakes can be corrected in order to have the better results in the future (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 601-610).

3 RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Research design and strategy

Research design is an important procedure on how the research questions will be answered. It includes goals which are obtained from the research questions, describes the data collection methods and examines the restraints that the researcher may encounter. Simply, the research design should explain why the researcher is utilizing the particular research design for the research, strengthening the validity and reliability of the study. Furthermore, researches are usually categorized in three different groups; exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. However, there are cases when a combination between them is utilized (Lewis, Saunders & Thornhill 2009, 136-138).

The author chose the nature of exploratory research for conducting this study. Exploratory research pursues to find out what is happening, attempting to find out new insights, looking answers for questions and evaluating phenomena. According to Saunders (2009, 139) exploratory study can be helpful when a person needs to understand a problem and to precise the nature of it. In addition, exploratory study offers a great advantage since it is flexible and can adapt during the process when new insights are discovered. Basically, there are three ways of collecting data for exploratory studies; researching literature, conducting interviews with the experts of the field and making focus group interviews. (Lewis, Saunders & Thornhill 2009, 140). Thus, exploratory study was the most suitable choice for this specific research since information is being gathered from literature, semi-structured interviews and observations.

The author chose to utilize the case study as a research strategy with qualitative methods. The purpose of a case study is to generate detailed and intensive information about the chosen phenomena. Case study answers to questions such as: what, how and why (Lewis, Saunders & Thornhill 2009, 177). Unlike other strategies, case study seeks to comprehend and interpret deeply a single phenomenon. Moreover, case study searches information about the dynamics, processes and mechanisms around the phenomena (Jyväskylän yliopisto 2015).

3.2 Data collection

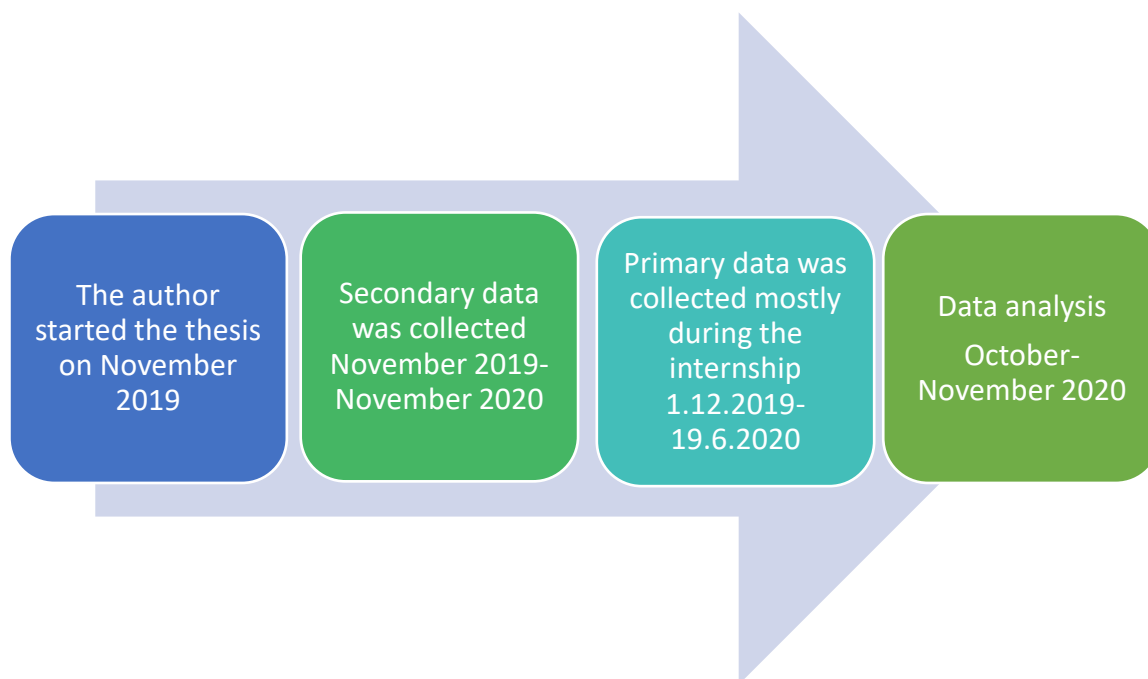


Figure 2. Data collection and analysis

Primary data

The author collected the primary data during the internship period which lasted from 1st of December 2019 to 19th of June 2020. The author's duties were mostly related to digital marketing. They included social media marketing, competitor analysis online, search engine optimization and developing the website. It allowed the author to observe and practice different elements of Sea Sales Finland's digital marketing. In addition, three semi-structured interviews were conducted for gaining information about the business. Firstly, the former digital marketing chief were interviewed in January 2019 to get a grasp from the previous year's work in terms of digital marketing. Secondly, the current social media marketing chief were interviewed in June 2019 in order to comprehend what are Val-lisaari's current activities online. Both semi-structured interviews were conducted face to face with the interviewees and recorded by the author. The third and last interview was conducted after the internship with the C.E.O of Sea Sales Finland in October 2020 to help the author gain insights from other aspects of the business, such as the competitors, relevant trends and the Covid-19 pandemic. In order to keep the anonymity of the interviewees they will be referred as: Interviewee 1, Interviewee 2 and Interviewee 3 in the situational analysis. Moreover, the interviews 1 and 2 were conducted face to face and recorded with the mobile phone of the author. The third interview was a phone call between the author and the CEO of Sea Sales Finland due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation.

The author chose to write notes during the phone call since recording it was not possible with the recorder application which the author utilized in the first two interviews.

Secondary data

Secondary data for the customer analysis was collected from the Google Analytics which Vallisaari. It provided relevant information about the visitors of their website who are either customers or at least potential customers. This will help to understand their customers on many aspects such as their demographics, motivations and preferences. The data will be analyzed by using the SOSTAC framework.

3.3 Situation analysis

The first step of the SOSTAC-model is the situation analysis which crucial to understand where the business is standing currently. It provides an overview about Sea Sales Finland. Including information such as who are they, in what field of business are they operating and how they provide their products and services to their customers (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 559).

The following information gains its roots from the data that the author has collected during the writing process. The author completed his internship in Sea Sales Finland, beginning on the 1st of December 2019 until 19th of June 2020. Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews and the observations during the internship for the case company. The author also utilized Google analytics as a source of gaining secondary data from the website of Vallisaari which is useful in order to understand the current and potential customers.

3.3.1 Customer analysis

Vallisaari has a broad variety of customers most likely because the island attracts all kinds of people with different backgrounds, ages, genders etc. Nevertheless, they all have one unitive factor which is their appreciation towards the sea and nature (Interviewee 1, 2 & 3).

Customer personas will be created based on the data that Google Analytics provides. The aim is to help the author to paint the picture about the customers of the business, their motivations and preferences which will be useful in order to make a sufficient strategy. For instance, knowing what kind of communication the customers like and feel good about.

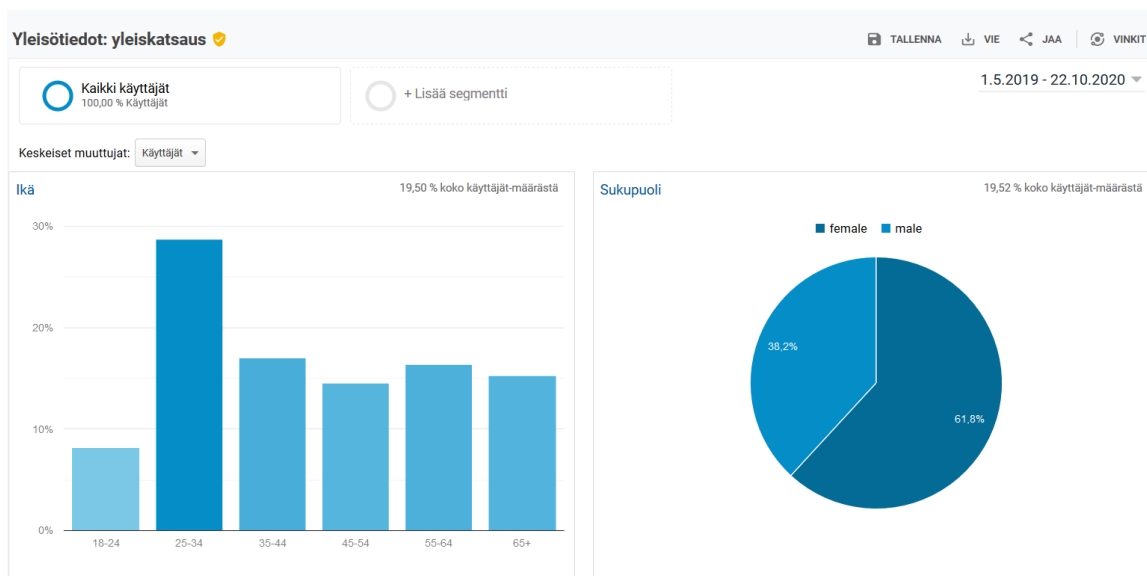


Image 8. Age and gender of the Vallisaari website visitors (Google analytics 2020)

The data from Google analytics indicates that most of the visitors at Vallisaari website are female (61,8%) and that the largest age group is between 25-34 years (28,7%). The data also showed that 78% of the visitors were Finnish speaking, 17% English speaking and 1% Swedish speaking. In addition, 96% of the visitors were located in Finland and 4% in other countries which is interesting to know. From the Finnish visitors, 80% were living in Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa, following Tampere with almost 5% and Turku with almost 3%. Last but not least the author found out that majority of the visitors (63,5%) were using mobile devices while visiting the website which is a major finding and therefore, Vallisaari has to ensure that their website is fully functional also with mobile devices.

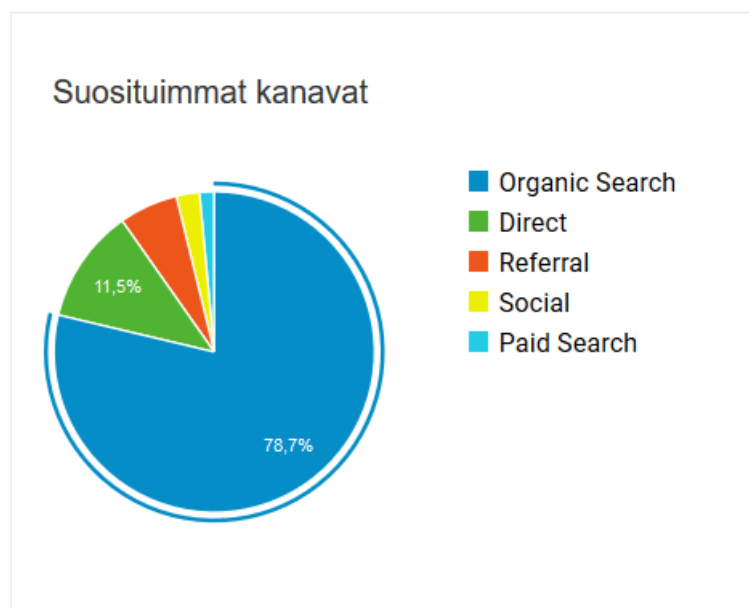


Image 9. Popular digital channels (Google analytics 2020)

The graph shows the data from Google analytics describing how people found the website of the company. It indicates that the majority (78,8%) of the visitors in the website came from organic searches via search engines, following direct visitors with 11,5%. There were 5,9% of Referral visitors (arriving through links from other sites) and only 2,3% arrived to the website from social media which tells that there is a huge opportunity of growth in that aspect.

Next, customer personas will be drawn from the data which Google Analytics provided for personalizing the customers which the author can relate to.

Persona A

Laura is 29-year-old nurse, who lives in Helsinki and happens to be a huge nature lover. Laura has a husband and 2 children. She is a responsible parent who wants the best for her family and children, she also believes that by doing activities together will keep their family close and well. On her free time, she likes to take walks outside in the nature and enjoy beautiful landscapes.

Scenario

Laura is thinking about what she could do with her family on a Saturday when everyone is free. She is using her phone and trying to find information about beautiful places in or near Helsinki and in Google she finds the website of Vallisaari. Immediately her curiosity increases, and she decides that it would be a wonderful place to spend an afternoon with her family. They learned from the website that the tickets for the boat can be bought online or in the boat and they decided to buy them directly from the boat.

Persona B

Jaakko is a 45-year-old man, living in Espoo and he is very curious about history. He is working as a captain of a ship but on his free time he is always looking to visit historical places or at least read about them. He also has a wife and one child. Their child is already an adult and he is studying abroad. Usually they travel together with his wife when both of them are having holidays.

Scenario

Jaakko heard from a colleague that Vallisaari has been opened for visitors and it is an interesting place also due to its history. Jaakko was interested and found the website of Vallisaari from Google and saw how easy it is to go there with a boat from Kauppatori. He convinced his wife to join him and they bought the boat tickets online with a credit card.

Persona C

Camilla is working on human resources department in a medium sized company close to Helsinki. She is a compassionate 32-year-old woman, who is always willing to help others. She is really close with her parents but does not have a family of her own yet. Camilla takes her work seriously and enjoys doing it because she feels that she is bringing value to their company.

Scenario

Camilla needs to promote the wellbeing of the employees at her company. She decided to organize a wellbeing day on a Friday for everybody. Camilla had seen some pictures in Instagram from Vallisaari and decided to visit their website. She realized that it could be the perfect place to organize this day. Camilla saw that she could send an invitation to tender about the day in Vallisaari website. The invitation was quickly answered, and the terms agreed.

3.3.2 Competitor analysis

Helsinki is surrounded by natural sites which are all competitors of Sea Sales Finland and narrowing it down to natural sites next to the sea, such as islands. The main competitors are Suomenlinna, Isosaari and Lonna (Interviewee 3). However, the competition between them are not traditional since Vallisaari in itself is not a product nor a service. It is an island, a brand and a natural site including different kinds of products and services like mentioned before. For instance, whenever people go to Vallisaari, it will benefit Sea Sales Finland since they have set up restaurants and other kinds of leisure-activities which they charge money from.

Vallisaari's biggest competitor by far is Suomenlinna which is an island next to Vallisaari and is more known with the tourists and people living in Finland. Suomenlinna is more popular place for visitors, due to its history and long-running ferry traffic from Kauppatori. According to Suomenlinna's website, it is one of the most popular attraction sights in Finland with around 1 million visitors each year (Suomenlinna 2020.) In Suomenlinna there are museums, restaurants and guided tours for visitors which attract people who are curious about the history and culture of Finland. The key differentiator between Vallisaari and Suomenlinna is the nature. Indeed, Suomenlinna is a beautiful island which pleases many visitors but the nature in Vallisaari is more wild and more diverse in terms of forests and species such as birds or bats (Interviewee 3).

Isosaari is also a big competitor which is another island located a bit further away from Helsinki than Vallisaari in the Gulf of Finland. Isosaari is also considered as an island full of nature and interesting history. Nevertheless, it is not so known to the public as

Suomenlinna (Interviewee 3). Vallisaari and Isosaari are competing for the same target audiences while Suomenlinna has already established a strong position as an attraction site and cultural hub spot. However, Vallisaari has a competitive advantage to Isosaari. It is easier to get to Vallisaari since there are two ferry lines going to Vallisaari and just one to Isosaari. In addition, the trip takes shorter time.

Lonna can also be considered as a competitor of Vallisaari. It is a much smaller island, just a 10-minute boat ride from Kauppatori. Lonna has a nice restaurant with pleasant views around it which attracts customers. Thus, it can compete just with food and views to the sea (Interviewee 3).

The competitors are also utilizing similar digital marketing channels as Vallisaari. They all have websites, Facebook and Instagram accounts. Suomenlinna has the most professional website, followed by Isosaari and then Lonna (Interviewee 3). Vallisaari could gain a competitive advantage towards Isosaari and Lonna by developing their website.

3.3.3 Digital Channels of Vallisaari

Vallisaari utilizes multiple digital channels to connect with potential customers. They have a website which is created via WordPress. The website is in Finnish but recently they have started to slowly translate it and create an English version of the website (Interviewee 2 & 3). Their website has also an online store where customers are able to book and purchase activities, cruises, boat parking, meals and many other services.

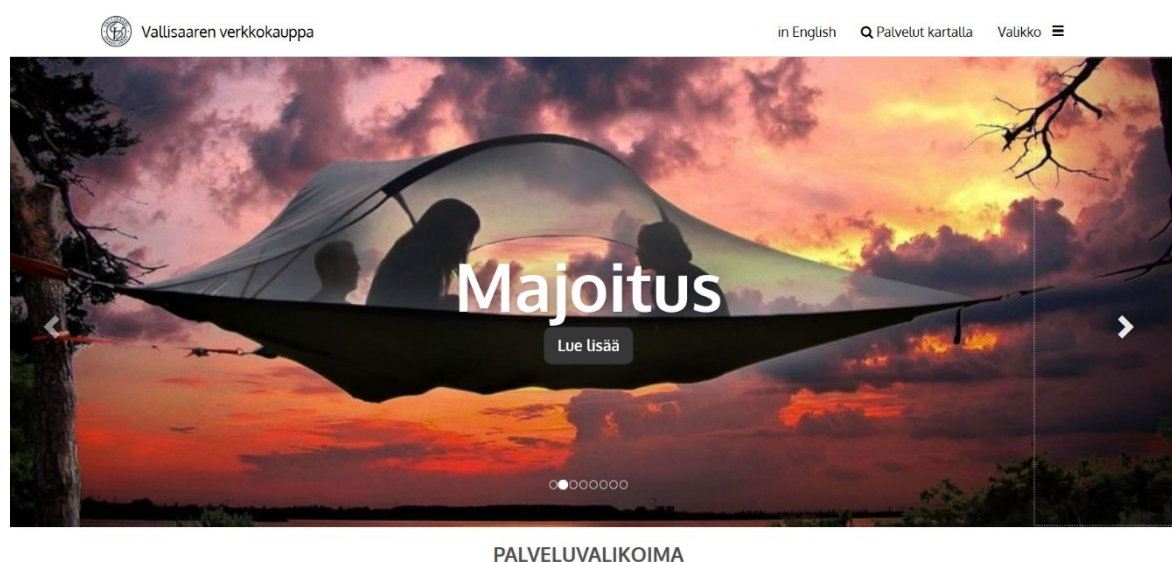


Image 10. Screenshot of Vallisaari's online store

Image 11 shows Vallisaari's online store where customers are able to book their services or buy their tickets to Vallisaari for instance.

Moreover, Vallisaari is also using different social media channels, mainly Instagram and Facebook (Interviewee 1 & 2). They have 1 700 followers on Instagram and nearly 7 000 followers on Facebook.



Image 11. Screenshot of Vallisaari's Facebook post

Image 12 is a screenshot of Vallisaari's Facebook on May 13th. The post has a good engagement rate on Vallisaari's standards with 231 likes, 22 comments and 15 shares. There is a direct link from the Facebook post to Vallisaari's online store where people can pay berth for their boats.

3.3.4 SWOT analysis

The authors Armstrong, G and Kotler, P who wrote the Principles of Marketing (2018, 79) defined SWOT analysis in their book as follows:

“An overall evaluation of the company’s strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O), and threats (T).”

Swot analysis is commonly used for identifying the Strengths, Weaknesses of a business and comparing them to the Opportunities and Threats. It is used as a technique to understand what the situation internally is, what kind of external factors exists and how they could be exploited (Giles & Piercy 1989).

Indeed, Swot analysis is a crucial part of the situation analysis in order to get a grasp of Sea Sales Finland’s current position. It will work as a tool that provides relevant information about both, internal and external factors which are important to comprehend in order to create a successful strategy for them. The information used in the swot analysis was collected from semi-structured interviews and observations by the author during the internship.

Swot analysis of Vallisaari

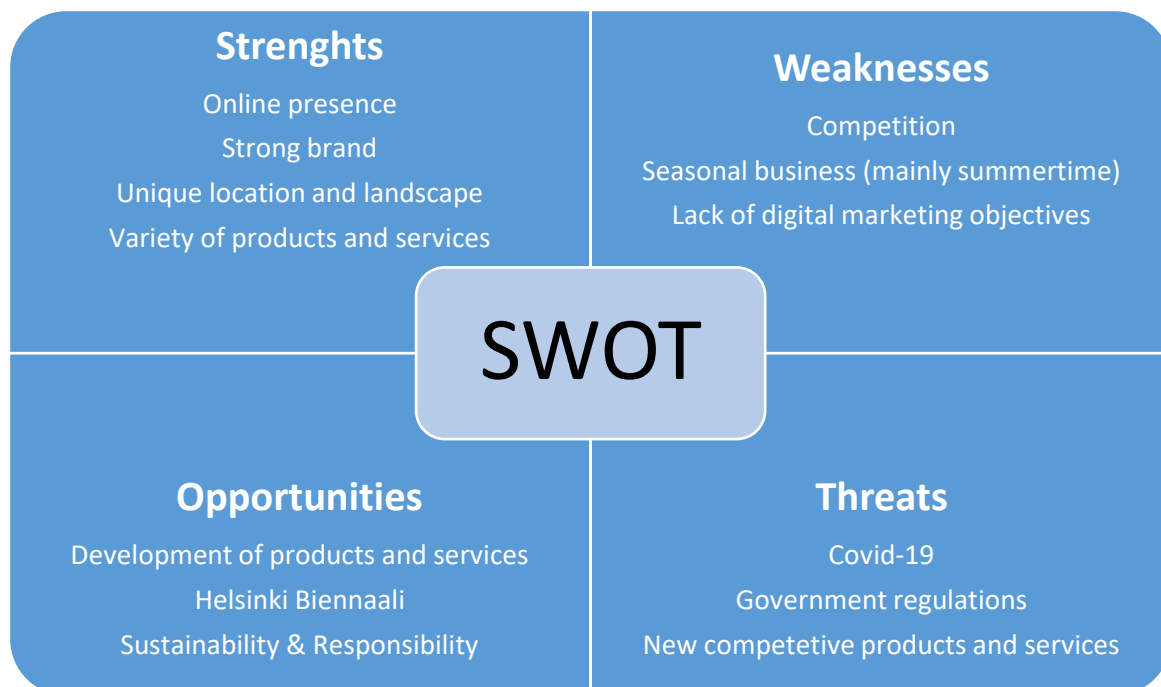


Figure 1. SWOT analysis of Vallisaari

Strengths

The key strengths of Vallisaari are definitely their online presence, brand and location. Indeed, Vallisaari has a sufficient online presence which it has established by utilizing their website and social media accounts (Instagram & Facebook). Moreover, they have created a strong brand for themselves that describes Vallisaari as a peaceful, responsible and pleasant natural site which offers something for everybody (Interviewee 1 & 2). In addition, their location makes their brand unique with its wild and diverse nature next to the sea (Interviewee 3).

The broad variety of their products and services can also be considered as a strength. It means that Vallisaari attracts also different types of people, including groups and individuals. For instance, they have a special ice cream café “Paja” that is naturally appealing to ice cream lovers on a hot summer day.

Weaknesses

The main weaknesses have been defined as competition, seasonality of the business, the resources used for marketing and lack of digital marketing objectives (Interviewee 1 & 2). The competitor analysis indicated that Vallisaari is not alone trying to acquire nature lovers towards their businesses. They have a tough competition surrounding them (demographically) which needs to be addressed.

As many other small sized companies, also Vallisaari uses little amount of money for their marketing. For example, the author found out from the first interview that despite the fact that the social media marketing chief wanted to “hire” social media influencers to share stories and pictures about Vallisaari, the proposition was declined because it was too expensive (Interviewee 1).

According to interviewee 2, clear digital marketing objectives have not been defined. It is difficult to get significant results from digital marketing techniques if there are no goals to reach.

Finally, their business is blooming only on the summer season due to the climate of Finland and since the ferries are operating from Helsinki to Vallisaari from April to September / October depending on the year (Interviewee 3). The reason behind that is simply the fact that people do not like going to the natural sites when it is cold and rainy outside.

Opportunities

By far, the biggest opportunity for Vallisaari next year is Helsinki Biennaali. Biennaali is a huge international art event organized in every two years (Interviewee 1, 2 & 3). The

original plan was to organize it in Vallisaari on the 2020 summer but due to the Covid-19, it became impossible since the government set regulations on many events. However, the new plan is to organize it next summer from 12.6 to 26.9, bringing Vallisaari possibly hundreds of thousands of visitors according to the estimations of Sea Sales Finland (Interviewee 3). This groundbreaking event would increase the awareness of the island to both Finns and tourists.

Another opportunity is to strengthen the idea that Vallisaari is a sustainable and responsible brand since people are worried about the global warming and pollution in the world. The carbon footprint is much lower when people travel in Finland and spend their day in the nature if compared for example a flight to Paris or another destination (Interviewee 1). This could bring positive attention towards the brand when people are knowing that Vallisaari is a sustainable and responsible location.

In addition, development of products and services are another opportunity for Vallisaari, they could find an innovative way of developing products or services which they could offer to their customers. It would help them against their competitors and bring more sales to Sea Sales Finland (Interviewee 3).

Threats

The worldwide pandemic Covid-19 has been damaging for many businesses including Sea Sales Finland. It has reduced people's appetite for traveling or even leaving from home. Many are afraid of catching the virus or spreading it to their elder family members (Interviewee 3). The government has been regulating how businesses can operate and set up restrictions on their opening hours and other procedures (Valtioneuvosto, 2020). The regulations have affected especially the travelling businesses and restaurants. Therefore, it is a big threat to Sea Sales Finland that the government will prohibit the organization of Biennaali next summer, declining a huge opportunity from them (Interviewee 3).

Another threat is that Vallisaari's competitors will come up with new competitive products or services and take potential customers away from Vallisaari.

Comparison

Vallisaari can and should utilize its strengths in purpose of seizing their opportunities. As stated before, Vallisaari has a decent online presence with multiple digital channels. It would make sense that they begin to upload more sustainable and responsible content for strengthening their brand towards a positive image (Interviewee 1). It would also show people that even during the pandemic they are able to find a responsible business that takes care of their wellbeing. According to the Interviewee 1, it is recommended to

propose social media influencers to create posts and stories about Vallisaari for advertising purposes. It would increase the costs of marketing but at the same time increase the awareness of the brand among people. However, this would only be recommended if Helsinki Biennaali will not happen since the Biennaali is already going to advertise their event with a big budget. Thus, it does not make sense for Vallisaari to increase their marketing budget that year (Interviewee 3).

Furthermore, threats must be taken into consideration. Helsinki Biennaali indeed, is an opportunity and a threat at the same time. If it were to happen, it would bring a huge number of visitors to Vallisaari, increasing sales and awareness. But there is still a chance that the government will prohibit it, like it did last summer, and it is difficult, if not impossible to predict the outcome. It would be recommended that if the government were to put strict restrictions, depending on the restrictions, Vallisaari could develop their services into matching them. For instance, if the restrictions says that it is not allowed to gather with more than 10 people at the same time in the same place, Vallisaari could create guided tours or other events for small groups of maximum 10 people (Interviewee 3).

Most of Vallisaari's business happen on the summer season from April to September / October depending on the year, making it a seasonal business (Interviewee 3). There would be room for developing new services for the winter. However, it would require a lot of research and resources. The winter would be a perfect time for Sea Sales Finland to develop their digital channels and improve them. For instance, the online store of Vallisaari could be readjusted and made clearer. This would allow them to step ahead of their competitors and make their customer journeys straightforward and convenient.

Furthermore, clear and achievable objectives are important to establish in order to change a weakness into an opportunity. The author found out from interviewee 2 that the objectives are vague and unclear which makes it difficult to measure digital marketing and to have certainty on what is working and what is not.

3.4 Objectives

The previous chapter analyzed the current situation of Sea Sales Finland. In this chapter realistic and achievable goals are laid out, based on the situation analysis. The objectives are defined in Figure 4.

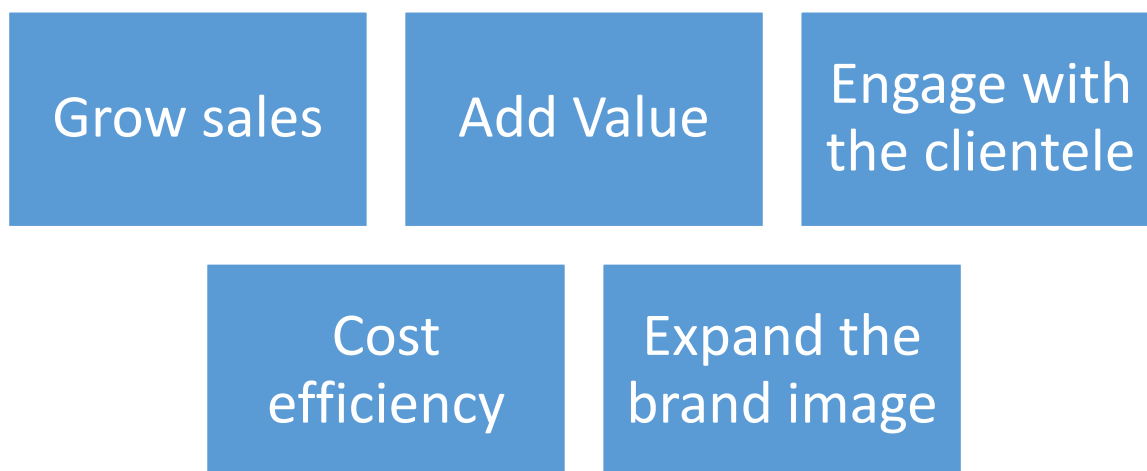


Figure 2. Objectives

The key objective is fundamentally to grow sales by promoting the brand and raising customer awareness. Increased sales can be achieved through the digital channels guiding the customers towards the purchase from Vallisaari's online store. It is also important to add value to the existing customers in order to keep them satisfied and getting them using Sea Sales Finland's services repeatedly. For instance, by proposing them another similar product or service with some benefits made specially for them after they have used the online store.

In terms of social media, the goal is set to increase the followers of Instagram and the likers of the Facebook page by 25% during next year. It is a realistic goal that can be achieved through frequent and appealing posts. Moreover, through social media channels spreading the awareness about Vallisaari is practical and cost efficient.

Another objective is to stay and get even closer to the clientele which can be done through social media channels Instagram and Facebook. There is an old saying that goes: "The customer is always right" which basically means that the customers know what they want and it is up to the business to provide it to them, otherwise the customers might go to the competition. The goal is to understand the clientele and learn from them in a way, that Vallisaari can answer to their needs and provide them with a service they find convenient.

Cost efficiency is also crucial for the strategy. It is important that the resources used (time & money) will bear lots of fruits in time. The aim is to minimize the costs and maximize the

results by focusing on search engine optimization, social media marketing and making the customer journey as smooth as possible on the website.

Last but not least a goal is set that Vallisaari will expand its brand image online and confirm the clientele about the sustainable and responsible choice they make when they visit Vallisaari. It is trendy to have a low carbon footprint and Vallisaari can utilize this to guide nature lovers to pay a visit.

3.5 Strategy

The strategy will be directly linked with the objectives. Vallisaari's focus in terms of marketing next year will be in the domestic markets. Due to the pandemic, tourism has declined and thus, it is important to broaden the customer base in Finland. Currently, most visitors come from Helsinki's metropolitan area, as Google analytics indicates. They will continue to be in the heart of the target market. In addition, efforts towards other areas of Finland will be included via Social media posts & SEO keywords.

The customer journey will be made easier. Meaning that the online store will be readjusted to be clear and convenient. The best time for the development of the website and online store is in the winter while there are no visitors in Vallisaari. Firstly, the customers who arrive to the website will find their purchasing process convenient which leaves them with a positive memory of the brand. Secondly, it will allow Vallisaari to have a competitive advantage online, towards Isosaari and Lonna. Furthermore, when the customers arrive to the online store it is recommended that they have a choice to create an account for the online store which would include giving their name and email address or to continue as "guests". The accounts would receive information about future events, timetables and much more to their email address which would also work as free advertising to targeted people.

Social media channels Instagram and Facebook will be utilized in order to strengthen the brand image as sustainable and responsible. Images from the nature such as: forests, sea and animals etc. will be posted in Instagram using more hashtags related to sustainability and responsibility. Facebook posts will be made similar in terms of photos but Facebook as a platform allows more text under the picture which works as a perfect place to write small stories about the carbon footprint for example. In addition, Facebook posts will include a link to Vallisaari's online store guiding the readers there. Moreover, Instagram and Facebook are efficient channels of spreading knowledge about the brand online and therefore, important factors in the strategy in terms of increasing brand awareness.

The strategy is extremely cost efficient and mainly requires time. It can be done without hiring extra personnel. However, the search engine optimization might require external help in the beginning.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Tactics

In this chapter the author will cover the details of the strategy. Tactics includes all the digital tools that will be utilized in order to achieve the objectives. It is recommended that Vallisaari utilizes its website, social media channels and search engine optimization in order to reach the objectives.

Tactic 1. Website and email marketing

The website development can be divided into two different categories which both will make the customer journey pleasant and convenient. Firstly, the website will be redesigned in order to be more practical. It requires visual changes, reorganization of the menu button and the pages inside the menu. This will change the perception on how the website is seen by the visitors in a positive way and increases the chance that they will stay there longer. Secondly, a new possibility in the online store will be made for clientele to create an account for Vallisaari's website. The account will be easy and fast to create for the customer since it will not require a lot of information from them. It is essential to provide the email address in order to create the account for Vallisaari and also the age and name can be asked. This will allow free and targeted email marketing for Vallisaari. For the people who will create the account, Vallisaari is able to send emails specially for them. The emails will contain information about Vallisaari, future events, discounts and timetables. However, author wants to emphasize that it will be a choice for the visitors of the website, they can also continue their visit as a guest without an account with just one mouse click.

Tactic 2. Social media

Social media will play a key role in two areas of the strategy. Firstly, Instagram and Facebook represent the brand online and they will be used to raise brand awareness with new potential customers and secondly strengthening the brand image as sustainable and responsible. Frequent and planned posts for targeted people in both channels are the key for success. The posts will contain a mix of four main categories: nature, products & services, information and raffles.

- Nature

The nature category is visually appealing and has been proven to be the most liked category in Instagram. The nature pictures will be a perfect way to show people the authenticity and unique environment of the island. On Instagram the posts will include hashtags about sustainability and similar key words. On Facebook the posts will be

similar but there is more room for writing. Thus, more information about the sustainability and responsibility can be emphasized there. For instance, stories from visitor groups who enjoyed their stay there can be shared. It is also recommended to link Vallisaari's homepage to these posts on Facebook.

- Products & Services

The posts about products and services that are offered in the island are important to showcase the broad variety of what Vallisaari has to offer for its visitors. This will ensure that people are aware of their possibilities during their visit. These posts will be mostly on Facebook since the posts will include a direct link to the online store of Vallisaari. Instagram will also post them from time to time, but they will be more relevant on Facebook.

- Information

Informative posts will work as keeping the interest of people that have already visited the island and also getting it from new potential visitors. They will contain information about the history of the island, locations that are popular for visitors and news about future events in the island.

- Raffles

Raffles are a great way of getting new followers on Instagram and likers on Facebook since they require engagement from the participants. They will be held monthly on Facebook and Instagram at the same time. The purpose is to get people to share the posts of Vallisaari so they can win a small price such as a coffee and pastry.

It is crucial that the posts are frequent and planned carefully since they need to be posted in a cohesive way. The idea is that in both channels there would be 2-3 posts per week. One about nature, one about information and one from products and services. Then there can be a raffle on the beginning or at the end of each month. Furthermore, it is also recommended that Vallisaari answer on a daily basis to the comments and questions that people add into their posts in Instagram and Facebook. This will keep Vallisaari engaged to its social media followers and is able to learn and understand them better. It also enhances the feeling that Vallisaari cares about their followers and their opinions.

Depending on the government regulations next year considering Biennaali, social media influencers can be utilized for promoting Vallisaari. However, cost efficiency must be kept in mind when discussing their prices. If the Biennaali happens, social media influencers are not needed. Nevertheless, they are a good method of raising brand awareness in the future.

Furthermore, LinkedIn account will be established for Vallisaari. It is a great platform for B2B marketing and there Vallisaari is able to reach new audiences and promote their services.

Tactic 3. Search engine optimization

In terms of search engine optimization, it is recommended to make a key word analysis and based on that add the right key words to Vallisaari's website in order to get the best possible visibility in Google. As stated in the Swot analysis one of Vallisaari's weaknesses was the competition and if they were to gain the highest visibility in Google it would be a great competitive advantage. The key word analysis should provide specific key words that would increase Vallisaari's ranking in Google. Moreover, the key word analysis should check the best key words in Helsinki but also in other areas close by such as Tampere and Turku for example. In addition, content inside the website should be modified in way that Google will favor the website. However, it is important to keep in mind that the content must please also the website visitors so balance between those must be found.

4.2 Action

The winter is the optimal time for executing the website development and search engine optimization for Google. The business is quiet, the workers have time to prepare for the summer season 2021 and there is plenty of time before the ferry traffic begins on April. It is recommended that the CEO of Sea Sales Finland takes charge of both since she has experiences from both. The website will be developed via WordPress website building software which Sea Sales Finland has used to create the websites for Vallisaari before. WordPress is convenient also for search engine optimization since it has function where it checks the content of the website and analyses it automatically. It will indicate where the problems in terms of SEO might occur and they are easy to fix with the WordPress tool. The emails can be made on different topics whenever something worthy of promotion arrives and sent to people who made the accounts on the website. One email can be designed about a specific topic, it is not necessary to design a new email to every person who will receive them.

The key word analysis for Google can be carried out by utilizing Google search console tool which the CEO has used before. The content inside the website might require extra help from Sea Sales Finland's partners. The algorithms of Google change and develop all the time and there might be new trends that only the experts of the field comprehend. Fortunately, the CEO of Sea Sales Finland has networked in terms of digital marketing and can turn to them if necessary.

In terms of social media part, it is recommended that the current chief of social media marketing carries out the strategy. The social media posts must be frequent and planned and she is the best candidate for the job since she has experience in the field and knows Val-lisaari inside out. This will not bring extra costs to Sea Sales Finland since she is already experienced on the field. In addition, it is recommended that she will establish the LinkedIn account since it is also a social media platform. This should be also carried out on the winter in order for it to be ready and fully functional for the summer season.

4.3 Control

In order to maximize the potential of the plan it is crucial to measure and monitor the results. Since these digital marketing tactics will not increase sales directly, it is necessary to look at other measurement possibilities. Google analytics is a great tool to measure the website development and check the data after the development was executed. The data should be compared with the previous year or previous month. Google analytics can indicate accurate information about the behavior of visitors such as how long they stay in the website, which pages they visited, for how long and when they exited the website. Google analytics should be checked monthly and adjustments made if necessary.

SEO can be monitored through Google analytics and Google search console tools, they can provide data that on where and how the visitors arrived into the website. The data needs to be analyzed in order to find out how efficiently the tactics worked. From the statistics content and key words can be modified.

Social media channels can be observed directly with the Instagram and Facebook accounts. Engagement is the key factor that need to be observed which means that how many people liked, commented or shared the posts. In addition, the number of followers of the social media accounts needs to be monitored and the numbers should increase.

Testing the tactics is crucial in terms of future development, at the end of the summer season it is recommended that conclusions from the strategy are made and future development planned. After the summer season the strategy should have increased engagement in social media channels and generated more traffic into the website. It is vital to test the results, learn from mistakes and adjust the strategy if necessary. In addition, it is also recommended that the LinkedIn account is studied during the summer season, see the results, analyze and learn from them since the author did not have enough information about from the interviews and observations to create a detailed strategy for it.

5 SUMMARY

The purpose of the thesis was to produce a professional digital marketing strategy for the brand Vallisaari which the case company Sea Sales Finland owns. Relevant research questions were defined to help the author comprehend the phenomena. Hence, the author was able to provide solutions for the case company. Also, appropriate research and data collection methods were chosen to conduct the study in order to enhance the reliability and validity of the study. The case company requested that current digital tools and channels are studied and recommended to them.

The theoretical part begins with literature review of the concept: digital marketing, which is studied by utilizing e-materials from the experts of the field. The relevant digital tools and techniques and channels are described, and the author introduces the Sostac - framework which was created to help marketers to establish plans and strategies for businesses. The secondary data obtained from the e-materials contributed by giving a strong base to the actual strategy.

The empirical part begins with research and analysis chapter with the description of the research strategies and primary data collection methods utilized. The first three steps of Sostac: Situation analysis, objectives and strategy are revealed and the groundwork for the strategy is laid out. Moreover, the primary data collected is covered and analyzed mainly in the situation analysis and answers to the sub research questions are provided. The recommendations chapter gives the answer to the main research question by utilizing the last three steps of Sostac: Tactics, Action and Control.

A digital marketing strategy for Vallisaari brand was established which the case company can utilize and enhance their online presence. In addition, recommendations for the future development was provided for Sea Sales Finland to ensure that the tactics will not be outdated soon. However, digital tools and channels develop quickly, and it is important to keep track of them.

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APPENDICES

Haastattelu 1

1. Mikä oli Vallisaaren strategia viime vuonna?
2. Oliko se toimivaa?
3. Mainitsit että budjetin takia ei otettu some vaikuttajia, mikä heidän keskiverto palkkio olisi ollut?
4. Onnistuisiko jokin muu palkkio, kuin raha? Esim. joku palvelu?
5. Mitä eroja oli Instagramin ja Facebookin sisällöllä?
6. Miten Biennaali vaikuttaa Vallisaaren markkinointiin?
7. Kuinka tärkeää digimarkkinointi on Sea Sales Finlandin kaltaiselle yritykselle?
8. Mitkä ovat tärkeitä osa-alueita kattaa digimarkkinoinnissa Sea Sales Finlandille?
9. Onko mitään uusia trendejä jotka olisi hyvä tietää?
10. Miten Sosiaalisen median hyötyä Vallisaarelle voidaan mitata?

Haastattelu 2

1. Minkä sosiaalisen median kanavien kanssa olet työskennellyt Vallisaarell
2. Mikä tällainen kamppanja voisi olla?
3. Millaista sisältöä Facebookiin ja Instaan on laitettu?
4. Minkälaisia eroja Facebookin ja Instagramin sisällöllä on ollut?
5. Mitä tavoitteita on asetettu Sosiaalisessa mediassa?
6. Kuinka tärkeää sinun mielestä digimarkkinointi on Sea Sales Finlandille?
7. Mitkä kaikki osa-alueet olisi hyvä digi/some markkinoinnissa?
8. Onko mitään uusia trendejä mitä olisi hyvä tietää?

Haastattelu 3

1. Miten kuvailisit Vallisaaren kilpailijoita?
2. Ketä ne ovat?
3. Mitä eroja on teidän ja kilpailijoiden välillä?
4. Mitkä ovat yrityksen tärkeimmät prioriteetit tällä hetkellä/ensi kesäkaudella (koro-
nan takia)?
5. Vaikuttaako covid-19 markkinointiin?
6. Mitä mahdollisuuksia / uhkia Vallisaarella on?