



Salman Sheikh

## **Marketing and Branding for SME's**



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Salman Sheikh  
Bachelor's thesis  
Spring 2014  
International Business  
Oulu University of Applied Sciences

## ABSTRACT

Oulu University of Applied Sciences  
Business Information Technology

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Author: Salman Sheikh

Title of thesis: Marketing and branding for SME's

Supervisor: Katja Aalonen

Term and year when the thesis was submitted: Spring 2014

Number of pages: 46

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Marketing and branding goes hand in hand, many companies focus only on marketing but not branding. There is a spectrum of opinions, manage both marketing and branding in a manipulative way according to need of small medium enterprises the key. Furthermore marketing is actively promoting a product or service. It's a push tactic. It's pushing out a message to get sales results while brand is strategic approach what precisely is left behind in the sub-conscious of people about the company or a product.

This thesis tries to unfold several key areas of marketing and branding for small, medium enterprises to identify different ways to enhance marketing and help structure brand strategies by using different tools. The goal is create awareness among the star-ups and other minor organization to take serious stance on branding and promote help marketing for non-tech industries.

The conclusion disclose that at present day, SME's can manage both marketing and branding by connecting to their customers in a measureable way which could strengthen their position in the competition but there can be improvements in the near future to help organization focus on their target group. Further it discusses how these strategies and tools can be taken into consideration to integrate with Finnish market and why culture is important in branding.

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**Keywords:** Marketing development, Marketing promotion, Brand strategies, Brand development, Marketing and branding tools, Non-tech industries

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

American Marketing Association (AMA) defines Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.(American marketing association 2013, date of retrieval 01.04.2014.)

Branding can be defined as a *"name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of other sellers"*. The main purpose of branding are that the message should be delivered clearly, shows worth or the credibility of your firm, connects your target audience where they feel connection, motivates the audience to become the potential buyers and concentrate on user loyalty (Lake 2009, date of retrieval 01.04.2014)

The study was commissioned by Maida Val sole company selling textile products. This commission was contracted in the third quarter of 2013. Maida Val specializes in home textile which offers unique designs at very affordable prices. The Author has worked in different fields of business containing marketing, branding, promotion and negotiations experience in different countries including South East Asian region, Middle East and Europe. The target of this study is to find and explore old and find new means of effective marketing and branding solution for small and medium size companies where they have limited resource to spend on these particular departments of their business operation. This thesis endeavors to expand the traditional way of marketing and branding and try to discover new techniques to adopt with marginal strive for marketing and branding solutions. The case company operates in the city of Oulu Finland and import textile related products from South East Asian region and thriving to get into the Finnish market and it is still very young in the market.

## 1.2 Purpose of the study

To explain several key areas how marketing and branding could be done for small, medium enterprises; several aspects could be taken into account to meet the mentality, demand and behavior of particular industry. Thereby different types of approaches can have different impact.

Marketing and branding is deep-rooted concept but for every industry someone always have reinvent the wheel to stand out. This study tries to pave a way for non-tech companies to do marketing and branding to get maximum output and achieve better outcomes by using right tools available which are cost effective, efficient and might give good results in short time.

### **1.3 Thesis Objectives and research questions**

21<sup>st</sup> Century brought technologies in our lives. It has changed the way we think. It has also diverse the way we act, behave and the way we do business. It has brought the challenges which have never been faced before. People now look for solutions which are more effective and less time consuming. Below are the objectives of this research. (Greenfield 2014, date of retrieval 01.04.2014)

Furthermore, modern and future technologies can play a key role in the growth of a company which could increase their profit and help it to expand. Constructing solutions for a right kind of problem is a time-consuming and an exhausted process. What kinds of modern technologies might be available for small and medium size industries?

Content marketing, why companies should try to focus on this particular technique and how it could help to change the image of company. What kind of marketing mistakes small companies make and how marketing mistakes might be avoided?

Additionally, explaining strategic point to highlight the importance of mobile marketing which could give an edge to small companies and why businesses should pay attention to it and what are mobile marketing techniques?

Also marketing and social media is a vast topic many companies are putting their product up in the social media. The report will try to cover this subject by explaining how it could be done in better way and might try to covers myths about social media marketing along with key roles of marketing in social media?

Moreover to understand branding it is vital to understand product or service that client bond with by their name, logo or slogan. What is branding and how to start branding a small business?

Every profession has their some own sets of rule. To take a start it may be essential to understand the rules of branding which might help companies to build recognition and certain reputation. What are the basic rules of branding?

As well budget could be complicated to control. This study tries to reveal the tools available in the market to establish brand and how SME's could do branding in low budget?

On the contrary when it comes to grabbing attention, a company must have branding strategies to establish themselves which might give a positive vibe to their consumers. What could be key branding strategies for companies to help gain growth?

Furthermore there is a saying that "the first place is always open". Small companies need is to thrive with patience and have consistency which might aid them to get reputation. SME's could be sometimes lack in consistency and cannot manage it properly. What is brand consistency and how it can be manage properly?

Also small business possibly tries harder to succeed and everyday probably some companies often do something to stand out from the crowd. It can be potentially lucrative for SME's to innovate. How innovation could help in branding?

Additionally, SME's might try to find right tools for their business. Whether a gadget, an app or competitive exploration on buyer statistics to support business to improve their targeting in different segments. This research would try to highlight some of the important branding tools available in the market at good price or completely free and also would strive to dig good tools for branding?

#### **1.4 Thesis Limitations**

It is important to restrict the subject according to rules and regulations. SME's perhaps nowadays struggles really hard to stay float as it is a very small market. The thesis will debate these issues from company prospective and will discuss how small companies could invest less in branding and marketing along with different strategic approach accordingly to grow. The thesis will consider marketing and branding to be interrelated. Some parts of marketing will involve branding

and vice versa. The thesis is aimed at non-tech industries and might give little prospective according to chapters.

The structure will be divided into 3 parts: Chapter 2 contains theoretical framework of marketing and branding; chapter 3 focuses on marketing research question's solution, chapter 4 consist on branding findings. Chapter 5 will try to provide recommendation and further discuss how study can be continued.

<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>Chapter 5</b>
Introduction	Theoretical framework	Marketing	Branding	Recommendation

As table above shows chapter 2 presents the theoretical background of the study. Theory of this study focuses on what is marketing and branding and how companies make their marketing and branding strategies. Furthermore the study would try to focuses on key questions on marketing and branding which might help SME's to flourish in the present age.



## 2. THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

What is marketing? There are various definitions on the web. Dr. Philip Kotler defines marketing as *“the science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. Marketing identifies unfulfilled needs and desires. It defines measures and quantifies the size of the identified market and the profit potential. It pinpoints which segments the company is capable of serving best and it designs and promotes the appropriate products and services.”* (Cohen 2011, date of retrieval 04.04.2014)

The second definition of marketing is provided to give a clear prospective on marketing for the readers to use elements and attributes according to their need. An effective marketing might set clear objectives that may ensure to achieve goals in the near future. There are several things which could be included in marketing e.g. how a company can increase sales and build strategies to contribute in growth. It may be easy for big companies to accomplish their tasks due to resources but it could be difficult for small companies as they have less budget, few brains for storming though these firms might have passionate and motivated people who can bring new ideas to emerge in competition.

(Info entrepreneurs 2009, date of retrieval 04.04.2014)

Moreover, marketing idea could consist of three things; thoughts, distinctiveness and action. The idea must be good enough which helps positively solve customer obstacle. If the idea is not unique probably nobody will take it into consideration whether the idea is applicable or does company have enough resources to implement it. SME's should try preparing themselves steadily to face competition in their own field. (Gregory 2014, date of retrieval 04.04.2014)

Additionally the world is changing, new ideas bringing furious competition for minor companies and they should prepare themselves to face stress and challenge to meet the demand of market. It may also bring lots of opportunities for new small companies to eliminate those complications by applying modern tools. Electronics could be the essences of small companies with these gears they can achieve something which took decades for several major companies to accomplish. Access to information about product, customers, interest, trends in the industry might play a big role in marketing and by taking closer look, everything about marketing nowadays may revolve around these attributes.(Vendhq 2014, date of retrieval 04.04.2014)

According to Chapman (Chapmen 2012, date of retrieval 05.04.2014). Whether its social media, communication with potential customers, websites, TV, radio, Mobile phones everything revolves around technology. It's might be a condition to be successful. By the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century the practice of receiving information from different source were only TV, radio and newspapers it was just a one way flow of information where companies were delivering their commercials with little less awareness of accurate need, taste or value of their consumers.

Furthermore in today's highly competitive business environment focusing on the needs or values of customers could give an edge over any other player in the market. Customer driven marketing strategies might be developed in a way to give value to those who will benefit from a product or service. There could be some elements which can be taken into account for example the age of a person or what kind of problem business wants to solve for consumer. Thereby, feedback is really important element for firms, small changes or tiny gestures might help small companies to make less mistake and aid build better customer relationship. (Oguzhan, Cantutan 2014, date of retrieval 04.04.2014)

In conjunction with SME's might makes lot of mistakes and possibly one of them is they sought to become big in a short time which may not be impossible but easy to fail task. Some companies could intend to include those target groups which has very less to do with their product or service. Businesses perhaps think of large competitors companies as their nemeses which might help them if they think of them as a source of information. Above all most of them may think their product or service deserves to be on the front page of every newspaper or certain industry magazine, being rational could be the key. If SME's fail to launch themselves as a serious company it is utterly clear not to become a brand in the near future. If a company is not a brand it's just another competitor in the market. Consider two coffee shops on the street, one is Costa Coffee ([www.costa.co.uk](http://www.costa.co.uk)) franchise/outlet/shop another is a simple coffee shop. One is a brand another is just a small shop around the corner. Branding is really important for small companies.

*"Brands are omnipresent; they penetrate almost every aspect of our life: economic, social, cultural, sporting, even religion .Due to its tendency to pervade everywhere they have come under growing criticism .In postmodern societies where individuals wants to give name to their consumption, brands can and should be analyzed through various perspectives: macroeconomics; microeconomics, sociology, anthropology, history, semiotics, philosophy and so on. (Decker 2012, date of retrieval 06.04.2014)*

Over and above this concept how small companies should brand themselves is really new to the world. SME's consider that branding is only for big companies and small companies have nothing to do with it. SME's should take this concept into serious consideration and may start building their brand from the beginning. Brand might be a multifaceted phenomenon. It is the face of a company whether it's a SME or global company. It has been broadly discussed in theoretical world that "brand" concept is only for big companies. Though "brand" for small companies a concept has been recently debated topic. The word brand is derived from Old Norse word "brandr", which means "to burn". It's a burned identifying mark on live stock by heated unique shape iron. It might give some understanding how branding is important to stand out of the crowd. (Clifton, Simmion 2003, date of retrieval 07.04.2014)

The thesis will attempt to put an effort on some of the key areas for branding a small company to give an overview of what might be possible ways for small companies to consider when building a brand. A fade sketch of basic rules and developments on branding and marketing perhaps provides a small analysis on how marketing and branding can be done for SME's

### **3. MARKETING FOR SME'S**

#### **3.1 Modern and future technologies for SME's**

Generally millions of Euros every year are spend on training employee to become best salespeople in the market even though there is no data to show and these training might enhance overall performance of a sales department of any big company. SME's should look for data besides people to increase their sale. A data focused method may help small companies to re-target their sales and make an average performance much better. It might also help them stop wasting time and money on training their employees. Several softwares are available in market for sales. Some other software which helps SME's saves time and money for example Skype ([www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)). (Campbell 2013, date of retrieval 08.04.2014)

Furthermore video conferencing could play an important role in marketing and sales. Some smartphones and tablets have built in videoconferencing application. SME's could use videoconferencing for holding online events or launch collaborative sales proposals. It might precisely lower the marketing budget and help small companies to demonstrate their product and could also aid small companies to replace in person meetings which relief them to save on travelling expense. But when companies really want to grab attention of a market they should have sufficient capital to push unique idea. Zebra imaging ([www.zebraimaging.com](http://www.zebraimaging.com)) produces large lifelike holographic images solutions which appear in 3D on film like panel. No absurd specs required for it, potential buyers can actually walk around and inspect the whole product. The company has created a car show for Ford ([www.Ford.com](http://www.Ford.com)) as well as holograms of celebrities for promotion. Sooner or later the technology cost would go down and eventually consumers might see those images in stores or streets. (Freedman 2005, date of retrieval 09.04.2014)

In addition to technologies several gears are out there which may assist SME's to do market and increase sales at the same time. Companies could send a discount coupons to a mobile phone user within specific mile radius or as they walk around their shop. Thereby, even if people are not buying company is paying close to nothing to market their product or service. Attracting new consumers may require exceptional approaches with a very little cash and hypersonic sound device is one of them. These devices are normally used by militaries to communicate over long distance. A devices direct sound to exact location and it's available commercially could focus on

an area just outside small shop. It might not be for every entrepreneur but it's a different approach.

Further Including there are also inexpensive software's available which might help small companies to build a better relationship between them and consumers these are also known as customer relationship management software's which collects the figures from customers and examine their preferences and SME's could make strategy according to the data and also numerous internet website help SME's to promote business. (Ransom 2014, date of retrieval 09.04.2014)

Yelp ([www.yelp.com](http://www.yelp.com)) internet website is to help small business to grow. Small companies like restaurants or retail store or a personal service provider can active their account on yelp and get a reviews about their product or service. Also SME's who strongly believe in product or service could list them on reviewing site like yelp or any local reviewing website. Thereby, an opportunity to create loyal customers but by any chance if company got worst review a guidance to handle these circumstances are available on website. (Casel 2012, date of retrieval 09.04.2014)

### **3.2 SME's marketing mistakes**

SME's new in the market or have very few clients are normally start-up companies they might not have any or enough data to rely on or enough understanding to build a product, services according to the need of the target customer. Companies might make decisions on hypothetical scenario and could land on a mistake. The objective to meet the demand of customer and how information can be collected regarding it, small companies could do field work and talk to different customers on streets. Considering only two people in company both may choose two main centers of the city for some days will produce some data. This type of strategy could be a start to introduce new product and aid build sale process.

Additionally SME's sometime might have no sales process. A sale process allows figuring what is working for company; products, demand, delivery time and a concrete customer. It could comforts small companies to become more scalable. Companies should consider this major marketing mistake. Requiring actual customer first and a sale process will produce good perspective on how consumer could utilize the product or service. Another marketing mistake which small companies might make is they believe in the mass market instead of micro market. Businesses often think

that by targeting mass market it's hard for them to fail but it could be done according to product segmentation with content marketing. (Inc staff 2014, date of retrieval 10.04.2014)

Furthermore small companies may not pay enough attention to content marketing which could lead them toward hefty mistake. TV and radio ads might cost lots of money and these old ways of doing marketing may not give enough return on capital spent on marketing. People are seeking better alternative to information they need which means SME's have a narrow window and content marketing can act like a ray beam from that narrow window for the growth of the firm e.g. blogs ([www.blogs.com](http://www.blogs.com)).

Additionally, small companies could have a blog on famous blogging website of the country with good content which may help to create online presence and create awareness of the company/product. While creating content, companies should try to understand that people crave for good piece of information related to their problems or something they want to have for themselves. SME's possibly urges to control their consumer experience it's easy for consumer to turn off or switch the TV channel. Thereby, companies might attract, engage and sell to consumer by doing right kind of content marketing. Social media platforms are for to connect with people but by creating good marketing content those people might become consumer e.g. a small video about product/service which is bad no one will give like/tweet or +1 it but a good video might share by several people. Businesses should not try to feed the content they should present the content. Therefore search engines play an important role and integrate social media platform sharing into their algorithms, new shares and good content might help spread business message. (Cain, 2013. date of retrieval 11.04.2014)

Furthermore to create good content businesses should emphasize on getting out their core message, helping consumers, not selling e.g. a clothing retail store knows about the latest trend in market and post pictures of the product on their social media website. Firms might produce the best message and still receive nothing attention if it is not delivered to the right audience.

Simultaneously target audience message content would be very effective for small companies to find their niche and maximize profit. SME's possibly have clue what is their audience and where to find them online e.g. a clothing retail store presents a content on famous fashion blogging website. SME's should try to understand that if they choose content marketing tool they should try to commit to provide a continuous flow of information about product or service. The focus should

be on growing business and encouraging audience to participate and connect with company help positioning as leader with good ideas and perception in market. Therefore creating awareness about product and company might attract more people on company's blog/website and may aid in the growth of a firm.

Moreover content should have viral features to get famous. There might be few means to benefit content go viral. The first, most common and successful one is induce some sort of emotional response; a simple chuckle is not only transmitting message but also amusing target audience. A different way could be that content is so convenient that people are persuaded to share it. Thereby, small companies should not only invest time in it but also try to identify how they can get best results from it. A simple precise approach might help company land on main stream. (Thomases 2012, date of retrieval 12.03.2014)

### **3.3 Mobile marketing technology**

Smartphones somehow playing an important role in marketing and all who might have smartphones are not only using it for calling and texting they are browsing, using several apps which make them tempting target. According to communication technologies agency the international communication union, there are now around 6 billion users of smartphone and other mobile devices representing nearly 90 percent of the world's population. This is a huge business opportunity for small companies to make lots of business by creating e.g. apps or mobile websites.

Apps don't replace company's mobile website. Therefore, small companies should try to pay attention to the basic reasons why their consumers would visit their website on the go for example QR or quick response codes serve as a linkage to direct a phone's browser to website. Users can scan the code with QR readers. Firms could make simple marketing mobile strategies e.g. by using quick response codes they could place an offer or get people to register for company's newsletter or even send them to like the page on Facebook. There are many technologies out there to help build mobile commerce and generate actual sales. Some technologies which does exist nowadays, one of them in "square" it provides credit card reader that plugs into smartphone and a person can sell product straight away. Google wallet ([www.google.com/wallet](http://www.google.com/wallet)) is under developing so companies never know what they might be able to achieve from these technologies. (Falls 2012, date of retrieval 14.04.2014)

Furthermore Texting is used by big companies as a good tactic but small companies can use that too. There are text messaging providers which might be inexpensive and give an access to a short phone number simple code and opt-in keyword. Then, use the text-messaging service to push episodic text messages out to the people who opt in. Some other technologies are in developing process and one of them is augmented reality. (Arnold 2011, date of retrieval 14.04.2014)

Additionally, augmented reality might be another big thing by couple of next years and small companies could take huge advantage of it. This digital marketing tool is quite young and taking its toddler steps. This tool will not only help firms to generate revenue but also might help them in the marketing prospective point of view. The only word which can describe this is "stylish". It works when turning mobile camera in a real life while browsing objects in a shop or anywhere Via mobile screen the software spot certain item which initiate content. Augmented reality is already built into mapping apps for Microsoft and Nokia Lumia and might soon become a normal feature.

Moreover, companies can create their apps that might offer in store augmented reality, a walking in customer see products through their mobile phone camera to check price cut or by just directing their mobile phone camera they might see product come to life in their palm. These are just small glimpse of future how mobile technologies could be beneficial for small companies. For firms that are looking for new ways to market their product they should try start planning future from now on as mobile technologies becoming advance day by day, the freedom presented by mobile might become massive.(Wasserman, 2011. date of retrieval 15.04.2014 )

Another revolutionary mobile technology in the field of communication is called NFC (Near field communication). The technology allows transfer of information for their smartphones to card reader. In the near future if a small store support this technology customer will be to pay with their smartphones. Companies can leverage this technology to offer promotions, coupons and discounts along with many other things. Thereby, POS system or point-of-sale system letting small retailers or business to accept cash "Payanywhere"(www.payanywhere.com) comes along with the steady swipe mechanism and much more. "Roamdata Roampay"(www.roamdata.com) works with many devices is plug in smartphone device. Even customer with Motorola Razr wants to buy from the standing stall would not a problem anymore. If companies really want a better,



simple and cleaner way of accepting payments these mobitech might provide better solutions for small companies. (Wang, 2011. date of retrieval 16.04.2014)

Furthermore location services might become big nowadays and could be a game changer in the mobile marketing. Almost everyone owns a smartphone which give marketers to launch campaigns at the right demographics which might prove to be successful factor. GPS or global position system is now a standard in every smartphone and people are willingly sharing their location which means whole new approach for mobile marketing. Companies can create discounts in exchange for their locations in specific define radius and could do whole lots of things with location service, they can target their consumer in a specific location e.g. If owner of a small restaurant in a food street of a city can create a specific ad for the people who are looking for a great food experience this might become a major revenue generator and growth factor in a small company. Therefore people that passes company store regularly can turn into potential customers and finally location service allows small companies to develop profiles of user based on location and travel patterns. The opportunity which mobile marketing and technologies can create may be is in the beginning of a process but still can help to take-off. (Keenan, 2012. date of retrieval 17.04.2014)

On the contrary the main factor which companies should take into consideration is that they should try to prevent disturbing people with no creative mobile ads and pop-ups. SME's should take an inbound strategy how they can pull consumers not squeeze and drag them with uncomfortable mobile marketing. Humans may shop and learn from many different experiences nowadays. A mobile marketing campaign should be an experience for consumer because it's something they never have this before or it's something different. These are few of the things which might strength or help in mobile marketing and some technologies which are inexpensive to help small companies earn more cash. The right mobile marketing technology invested in right people with the right skills or collaboration with right and different corporations could become foundation of growth for small companies.(Kanakaraju, 2014. date of retrieval 17.04.2014.)

### **3.4 Marketing in social media**

Leveraging the power of content might help elevate customers base in dramatic way. It is vital to understand the fundamentals of social media marketing to maximize, increase and strength the

position of company on social media websites. Some rules small companies should try to have to build strong foundation for social media marketing might serve them to stand out of the crowd. Before even starting which social media is for what purpose here are some directions might prove to be good rules which could help small companies to perform better in the world of social media platform.

Furthermore listening is very critical. SME's should try to read content about their target market. How they behave, spend time or money by listening more and talking less might give an upper edge. Small companies should attempt to focus but it's very easy for them to lose focus. It's better to think of niche then broaden strategy would help to have good chances for being successful. Therefore, better to specialize in one area because it's much easier to maintain an excellence of a content which can be posted on social media. It's always better to have good quality than having bad quantity. If the quality is fine enough there might be chances to get some response, thinking it will be an overnight success would not be right, keeping it rational and being committed to the long haul to accomplish marks would aid to maintain stability. Once company content is good enough, friends might share it eventually.

Additionally sharing is the keyword it has to be clear, good and precise. When doing marketing on social media, one of the successful factors might be creating values for clients. The content should be creative enough to develop a relationship between a company and a customer or it can act like the bridge between two parties. SME's should try never ignoring a person who reaches them out building strong relationship with clients. Therefore to make connection small companies should try to keep in touch with their audience social media page. Disappearing from social media platform might lead to a termination of connection. The business is about mutual benefits and if a firm doesn't share stuff of other people, they are not going to share firm content either make sure from time to time to share related and good content published by others.

- Facebook: For the people who already have some sort of connection.
- Google plus: If share similar urge then share it on google plus.
- Pinterest/Instagram: All about beautiful images. Make sure it's professionally taken else it will total turn down.
- Twitter: A bit mature and professional approach and can build a status and prominence.
- LinkedIn: The most powerful social media channel can help to position as a serious company.

In conjunction with to create good profiles on these social media site to create followers. Presenting company as trustworthy and paying attention to avatar are some keep to note and might be initial social media developing strategy. (Zetlin, 2013. date of retrieval 18.04.2014)

Small companies might often face lack in developing good social media strategies. They should try to understand that it's all about trends and trends may not be constant. They should try to be prepared to change according to trends. Businesses should think what will happen or how can we improve in developing good social media strategy. A picture worth a thousand words, companies should pay attention to visual form of content it can be graphics, image or infographics which could help them to create bit charisma. People might love to buy but they hate to be sold, focus on engagement to build strong bond with customers and assist company to stand out of the crowd. Firms should try to make sure that they are using the right tools for each social media network. For instance for Facebook ([www.Facebook.com](http://www.Facebook.com)) its advance audience tool. Small companies might even not have to pay for social media consultancy if they just use the right tool and using interactive content by showing statics would help to raise a bar for a company. It shows a firm is putting an extra effort and strong attitude where it matters. (Haden, 2014. date of retrieval 19.04.2014)

Furthermore companies might take different attitude toward marketing for example companies often believe that if their product is related to senior citizen they should not do social media marketing what might they don't realize is the potential of doing right kind of social media marketing and if a firm is not using it chances could be they are using it in some capacity. Everything is measurable on social media and companies can truly track progress or change the path if it is producing negative vibe but there is no such exact measurement for radio adds, TV or billboards etc. Social media may not be for creating new customers it might be to connect with the old customers to communicate with new ones. Everything might slowly change in 2020 regarding social media marketing a lots of new ways could emerge and specifically if a company is B2B they should also try to understand that a B2B is also a B2C it may be the time for small companies to start taking things into different prospective and consider uncommon approaches to meet the target audience. (Baer 2014. date of retrieval 19.04.2014)

Additionally the role of social media in a small company can be defined in a really simple question. What do Japanese animation, golf clubs and tattoo shops have in common? And an

answer to this question is "*not being promoted for common community*". A small company target may not be general public but it might be niche market and social media helps small companies to tactic their market in a way where it was difficult in the past. SME's should try to pay attention to ROIs (return on investment). They may not have enough capital so here might be some few general return on investments techniques using social media. Thereby, increase engagement on different platforms; try to understand followers once company has gain understanding through good communication, find new clients via different platforms of enterprise devotees, distinguish from others in a competition and eventually there is chance to increase sale at the end of the day. (Wishpond 2013. date of retrieval 19.04.2014)

## 4. BRANDING

### 4.1 Brand Building

The brand reflects the information that is available on web and off it. There are many ways to start building a brand from the beginning but easiest way to start is online besides bricks and mortar. The essence of a small business is saving cents from the beginning and investing again into business at the right time. Building a brand from the start might help small companies to invest their capital in the right direction. Several key aspects should be looked upon when a small company is in need to build a brand.

The business echoes service/product and brand represent company position. Before even start building a brand the best practice could be to understand business strength, weaknesses and skills as employer plus employees are good to leverage the business. In other words the skill company is mastered or are working to master might be the step one to start building a brand, knowing the company and workers ability give edge from the beginning.

The name represents what kind of company it could be but it's not a brand. A unique name might become a brand Google. For example the company have maps, glasses, chrome and many other products but its putting Google in the start "Google glasses". It is a way of strengthen the brand in the market and spread the message out to their enthusiasts. Creating a tremendous brand name will not only help Company to stay unique but it make business standout even if the company is providing almost similar solution. *"You want people to find you, not somebody who's got the same name as you,"* explains Dan Schawbel, author of *Me 2.0: 4 Steps to Building Your Future*.

Online turf is very important when it comes to brand names. Domain name that represent company brand name and shelter other social platform should be taken into consideration. If the brand name which small company is already retained, create a different brand name by keeping in mind it should corresponds to company's product/service and social platforms. Building a website for companies' domain name is grabbing attention and putting company's strength out. Use "LinkedIn" to find inexpensive and good website builder. Small companies should never make their own by themselves. It is the first image of the company to the whole world it should be dealt professionally by keeping it simple and clean. Social platforms might be second best thing when considering building a brand for small companies.

It is very difficult to manage all the social media platforms and to lessen busywork the key strategy is to set up an application which will allow company to simultaneously post to all social media platforms. There are several applications available which are free and fee. Hootsuite.com is one of them and companies can choose service plan according to their needs. Posting is one aspect of social media but staying connected with the clients at right frequency is another. Useful content which triggers emotional connection and triggers positive temperament by posting helpful tips about the product which companies offer or admissible news is of helpful. (James 2013. date of retrieval 20.04.2014)

Building a strong connection with clients is one side of the coin and other side is monitor companies brand status. Social media has become an essential component for numerous small companies to build authenticated online brand strategy. Small companies often find hard to be ready to respond to a question or complaint. Monitoring brand not only means an online presence but helping customer to answer their questions, complaints to create an experience which will nourish customer prospective. Several tools are available on the web which helps keep small companies to track and monitor their brand. “Google alerts” permit users to decide keywords trail and receive email updates whenever they emerge on the web. Socialmention.com help companies to keep track of customer feedback also there are services including “radian6” and “viralheat” which detect whether a post is negative, positive or neutral. Small companies can use these tools for their businesses to understand better which require most attention and maintain control of their brand. (Chafkin 2011. date of retrieval 21.04.2014)

## **4.2 Branding Rules**

One of the most important aspects of managing brand when it comes to small businesses is getting successful in the current challenging environment. Small business might mix their differences when it originates to branding. The way company should be branded is different than how a persona of a small company wants to brand it. Being a single entity of a purchasing a product, certain things are kept in mind. Buying products from brands we trust and respect and where there is B2B businesses intend to do business with the brand they know which are consistent and represent strong values by giving their word and fulfilling their promise. By defining the position of the company and where it should be place in market is a key line in making an ideal brand.

Focus point is much more important in making a successful brand. Crystal values and absolute purpose gives a clear vision of goals which as brand could be achieved. The position of a company is evolving state good brand shift their brand position as their business evolve according to need of their customers. Focus on what as a company need to be accomplished. Proposition of exceptional selling might enhance the drive of differentiation among competitors and customers expectation possibly is achievable. (DeMers 2013. date of retrieval 22.04.2014)

Furthermore contribution to the world or community might be a gain for the company when establishing a brand. Aligning company according to the product and defining what exactly as a company could return to the world might be a way of defining a brand contribution. For example A home interior company in England comes with an idea in 2008 "that for every piece of furniture that a person buys we will plant a tree" by the march 2010 the company has planted over 30,000 trees in local woodlands and plantations. It was an Eco scheme which made them the most prominent environmentally friendly furniture retailer in the region. (A world of furniture 2012. date of retrieval 22.04.2014)

Networking with harmonized brands which bonds similar standards could create a linking value for small companies. Creating a pioneering strategy which would assist both companies in their own dimensions will benefit not only two different companies but also engage the target market at excitement level. For example Two manufacturers pool resources to develop a promotional campaign featuring both brands Kellogg and Tropicana sponsor an advertisement showing their products used together at breakfast table. (Samu, Sridhar, Krishnan, Shanker, Smith, Robert 1999. date of retrieval 22.04.2014)

Supervising the business and marque in way to promote same message could be successful factor. The brand and the company should involve with each other so there should be symphony between them. For example if the company is technical in nature there might be less chance of being successful when connecting , sponsor to arts like ballet. Target market may be distracted by the inconsistencies in the business and a brand.

Creating credibility for the brand with an influential content/sponsor might deploy exposure. Connecting business with the appropriate activity might raise a profile and perhaps provide leverage to the brand. The reputation of the business by creating clout will enhance the status of

the brand and help business to maintain a strong position in the market. (Shipley 2013. date of retrieval 22.04.2014)

### **4.3 Branding in low budget**

Branding and marketing goes hand in hand. Small medium enterprises often have modest budget. Small companies often face the difficulty to manage their brand and create consistent buzz to achieve enduring growth. A brand strategy which consumes a lot of company's capital and don't generate sale often slows down the expansion process. "Think local" possibly is the good way to start branding. Company need less capital to build a brand strategy and perhaps have a focus point. Cross-promotion with other local business could provide a push in the beginning. For example a new born textile cushion making company could give special offer to another reputable home decor company who's making bed sheets. To set the aligned brand contribution a new born company could position themselves with the trusted brand already known by the market. The price of this brand strategy is the cost of the product or service given away.

Collaboration could help small companies to position themselves in the market but hosting a small event maybe facilitate SME's to spread their brand to a lot of people at once. Introduction to product/ service and members of the company help people to become potential followers. It's best to organize it at business place and also aid small companies to have their first press release. Which can be further shared on a blog or on a social platform and it could slightly enhance the chance of sharing on web as people who attended it might post it on their platform walls.

Furthermore supporting a fund raiser can help SME's to reach their word out. Being active in fund raising or any charitable event is a great way to spread the product or company name. There is a hitch by assuring that the target market of the product will be attending and the brand will be well represented in the audience. Although SME's can always analyze different marketing approach used by competitors to find holes and be there where they are not for example Youtube.com, instagram.com, Flipboard.com. (Prior 2012. date of retrieval 23.04.2014)

Celebrities are consider as one of the best ways to introduce company's product but so far is so costly that only big companies are able to cope up with this brand strategy but some time it can back fires consider all the brands that had Tiger wood signed when his scandal hit the news



channels. Though there are some how low cost ways to do it. For example kärpät (Finnish has won a trophy and keeping that in mind small companies can collaborate with each other to put together a gift bag which can be given to all the team players with a picture taken along which can be later post it on the web .How much does it cost? it cost exactly the same of the product and the time company spend on perfectly time pitch. There is a big chance Company's website gets lot of viewers and product might get hit. Oscars on the other hand did it perfectly with their Oscars bag this year overflows with \$55,000 in goodies including signature watches, makeup kits, vacation trips and jewelry. (Hodgon 2014. date of retrieval 23.04.2014)

Representation of product by celebrities/city star/ national star is one way the other is direct mail. Some famous fashion companies always go for straight approach, sending product/services directly to famous people companies anticipate that a celebrity might get snapped and it will widely mingle on the web. This path helped Rumba time (Rumbatime.com) to over 1 million sales when they send out their goodies to famous stars and their bright color watches were shoot on the wrists of many celebrities.(Tice 2014. date or retrieval 23.04.2014)

Additionally small companies can always hire a guest celebrity to present the new product in a trade show or make a short video about the introduction of the product. This access the quick hit of personage glimmer. Stars are introducing and it's chilly enough that they are showing company product and helping to take off. The personal appearance fee is going to be huge but considering the sale it will be fraction on ROI. SME's may think hiring a figure is not in the budget no matter how much they squeeze it. By giving a thorough consideration companies can relaize celebrities are at all levels. The Captain of city baseball team, pastry-cook of most famous café in town could spread the word out. By giving the right amount of thought to the product, target audience and publicity small companies will get they can figure who they should collaborate with to introduce or show existing product or service. (Tice 2012. date of retrieval 23.04.2014)

For example Volvo trucks recently featured Van Damme who is not that successful celebrity to test the stability and precision of Volvo dynamic steering they called it the most epic split. It became a viral video on youtube and there was one only one simple reason the collaboration was a perfect match. Performance can be seen in both the product and celebrity. (Volvo trucks 2014. date of retrieval 23.04.2014)

Small business owners often rely on local market at start. The best tool for them which has worked for a really long time is introduction of the company to at least five different other business whom a firm can collaborate or get incentive by giving business card. It is possible by figuring out the target audience and emotional connection. A lipstick making company and a eyeliner manufacture company have something in common, the target market who can post a picture of themselves looking like the singer by wearing companies lipstick and eyeliner, they can simply brand a new project "Winehouse looks". An emotional value will be there who love Amy winehouse a singer who was used to know with her unique appearance and makeup.

Moreover SME's knows lots of employer and this golden handshake with business card can bring some cash and help build a brand. Offering a deal to workers of nearby business by just signing a business card or giving VIP card to nearby firm will not hurt company. Giving an extra privilege to the employer of other firm will also show that the firm first taking action then asking for something in return. SME's should try to make every bank or major business employees their VIPs. (Slutsky 2012. date of retrieval 25.04.2014)

CSR could be use as a branding tool for SME's. "Chipotie" holding firm committed to serve only responsible raised food. It has released a short film featuring a "*Tim Burtonesque*" scarecrow that has a moral crisis about his part in factory farming short film promotes organic and sustainable farming. The film was shown in movie theatres to support sustainable agriculture and family farming. Small companies should try to spread their social responsibility from the beginning a post on social media platform or a song by local band or a short movie by students would not going to cost a lot. (Davis 2013. date of retrieval 25.04.2014)

#### **4.4 Branding Strategies**

Several Big brands might not have the principal sales or market share but they are able to create a connection with their clients through experience that triggers intuitive response. Company brand is mark of difference what make individual from their competitors. Adhering to brand management strategy shows level of loyalty with clients, suppliers and with other companies that they can trust organization brand. Brand strategies are so much important as a result these strategies build company reputation. Every big brand defines their position with the help of branding strategies whether its price, packing or collaboration to make a short term partnership on a project, brand strategies influence every decision. Even as a reader right now you are willing to spend more on

big brands e.g. Zara vs Hugo boss. There is 72% of chance you will be fine to spend more money on Hugo Boss product then on Zara. A report by Vancouver based consultancy group report shows. (Rockwell 2010. date of retrieval 26.04.2014)

Subsequently there are many way to start building a brand strategy. It normally consist of two main elements the product of the company and defining target audience. A brand strategy is some set of blueprint for what is generally vital to the corporation and their customer. The first thing as a firm when building brand strategy, should think about the intangible qualities of the product and service. Giving company's clients a reason why they should buy it only from us even the product is sort of same category as other are offering in the market. The main aim is to position consumer's mind so they accept as a different company from the competitor in the market. How SME's should put a stress on being convenient e.g. a software company can provide solutions to many businesses but saying they provide solutions in 12 hours to any problem they get probably make them standout "your problem is our solution" even a slogan which shows we are there to help or we are fast will constitute the foundation of brand.

In addition SME's often write in their mission statement about the "value" but unfortunately they don't live up to their promise. It's a guarantee which as a company is offering to their customers. How brand can fulfil their promise and contribute value and service to their consumers by putting actions. By defining target audience small companies should try understand their consumers they are buying the product for a reason SME's should try to connect with their consumers by creating a "want" and offering "need". (Entrepreneur staff 2013. date of retrieval 26.04.2014)

There are many tactics how brand could connect with their target audience. Getting personal with the consumers is one way e.g. Brad VanAuken, chief brand strategist for The Blake Project consultancy "theblakeproject.com". He says Amazon's incomparable product convenience, functionality and client experience all assemble to produce a hulking brand that buyers trust with millions of products, 24/7 access, superior search and browse technology, user reviews and many other sources of in-depth product information, Amazon.com offers a superior purchase experience. It also provide free shipping on orders over least total which is serving as a value to the company it also create a buying experience by giving option to its buyers as single-click order which save time. Although Amazon is a huge company but they are selling on website a first platform for any SME to sell their product. SME's should cultivate their association with consumers by serving them to make better selection.

Sell happiness, this's world largest beverage company has been doing since its inception "Coca-Cola". SME's should consider this strategy about their product; every small company could achieve this brand connection with customers the first thing should keep in mind is just making their customer happy even when it comes to promotion or customer contact. It develops an emotional connection which might provide leverage to the firm. "Open Happiness".

Living up to the mission statement is one way the other is the promise company is make to their clients. FedEx, DHL they are keeping their promise for many years. These companies earned great appraisal in ability for able to attain what it promises. FedEx operations don't think they are moving boxes or parcels; they treat as its people riches, livelihoods and destiny and this means a lot to people. SME's should consider this strategy to fulfil promise when there are solving problems or when they are engaging with the customers. SME's can make attributes like honesty, dependability or stability that is essential to businesses might help small companies to create a brand.

In Addition a different strategy is keeping it refreshing. Apple products are waited by public and press desperately. The company has strong consumer trust and they make sure that new product is improved; easy to use and have sleek design and spender will enjoy the experience when they are buying the product from their stores. Apple has always been about creativity and expression. They have created retail stores that encourage a sense of alliance and clarity between customers and sales assistances who are armed with handheld checkout scanners that facilitate buyers to make purchases without having to stand in line. SME's can think about their online store. How they can make it an experience to be more creative and simple at the same time. Its about companies brand philosophy where company wants to stand in the long run building confidence in consumers to shop online in the stores.

There is also a different way to build a confidence and that might be design an experience. "Target" is a discount store their sleek stylish campaigns and cooperation with other big brands that make limited edition merchandise for enthusiasts. Though they give wonderful retail experience but as a brand persona, they put so many endeavors to be open with smile and helpful gestures, it's just soulful which drives public to accept them. SME's should think of layouts and consistent design, whether it's packaging, website, company's office or retail store. Just

feeling good by being there is an experience which SME's should try to achieve and give pleasant sense than their rivals.

Staying consistent is one way of creating an experience for the customers Ford automaker is being consistent since founded by Henry Ford. Everyone knows and appreciate the Ford story. Changing logo, tag line shows adaptation according to customer need and be consistent about it. The CEO is actively involved on social media and interacting with customer to listen and solve their problems. This forges a strong connection. Ford is ranked among most stable and dependable brand on the face of this earth in automobile industries. SME's should strive to get their story out and emphasize on consistency at all level of business. Changing according to the need of clients, shows brand is moving forward.

Also self-empowerment focuses on consistency and Nike "just do it" stance declare its mission to bring motivation and modernization to every athlete. Nike is very customer oriented spreading their customers from the world most famous sportsperson to the everyday person. It invites everyone to "just do it". A constant product development shows company is innovative and thriving to satisfy their customer and evolving according to the demand of the customer which helps build strong trust on brand. Thinking of words like accomplishes, achieve, determine, move or succeed will help to execute brand strategy for small companies. SME's should build their brand strategy from day one and be very responsible. It's a reputé which will be carrying for years.

Further the late mighty giant Nokia "Connecting people" was all about innovation, discovery and inspiration. The company was really good when it comes to innovation but by then end of the day the company unfortunately could not connect itself with the people. SME's can learn a brand strategy from Nokia which is being innovative is one side of the coin but getting personal is another. By making sure and reaching out to customer and act according to their need. Listen to customers they know better what they need or what they want.

Every major brand has common patterns they are all about their customers, company performance, community, creating values and reliability when it comes to brand strategy. SME's perhaps should give serious thought before implement any kind of brand strategy. (Andruss 2012. date of retrieval 27.04.2014)

Among these patterns, Clarity is very important. Benefiting the end buyer using merchandise or facility has to be explicit across every communication levels. "Easy jet airlines" using very compelling language which helps them to understand their customer. Whether giving feedback to their customers or helping them to solve issue they try to be very clear. It also so help company to manage their brand it's a strategic decision of branding. (Desmarais 2013. date of retrieval 28.04.2014)

Additionally, brand management is a core part of brand strategy. Companies intend to do things which they can handle if something goes wrong, saving or creating company's reputation is one task but the difficult part is to manage through all odds. There are many tools available to manage a brand and these not only help SME's to manage but build a strong reputation. Some of the tools to manage company's brand are following:

- Personal Relationship (PR)
- Exhibitions (Specific according to company's product, Dubai Auto show)
- Web presences (Social media platforms)
- Short film/ad ( Posting on youtube)
- Print media ( Magazines, newspaper)
- Print displays (Billboards)
- Direct mails (Letters, adds)

All these have solitary value of communication. Companies can implement and execute a brand strategy via these channels to reach out their target audience. It is significant to keep it high profile which means it should appear in good and bad times. To put behind the rivals it is crucial to engage with target audience during different economic times to let them know the brand exist and its trust worthy. To keep brand at the top in the market during different times there are certain measurements which need to be follow by SME's. Networking with local business association, societies or chamber of commerce will help SME's to keep their company alive it might help them to build a partnership with an acquaintance to forge a market share of new product at different economic time. Holding webinars in these places for free will assist SME's to share and get knowledge and promote brand. (Rockwell 2010. date of retrieval 28.04.2014)

Sharing knowledge will help company to present as a market leader or a firm which hold strong market share. Revamp company cons of being new in market and making it into an asset. A different way to approach target market with prospective ideas in an old industry might assist to get attention. SME's should also try to define what their brand is all about once they get attention. If they don't define what their brand stands for soon their competitor will define it in their own way (Branson 2012. date of retrieval 30.04.2014)

Furthermore, creating Brand Image requires intrusion. Position a company with individuals who don't desire to revise their purchasing brand. It starts with name and message which convey unforgettable brand image. A unique recognizable name and logo with strong perception of consumer satisfaction provide edge over rivals and help gain awareness in the market. SME's perhaps could think to make an impression of their brand and create a mindset among people. Branding strategies is all about how company can be unique and achieve their goal to serve the audience. (Reiss 2011. date of retrieval 30.04.2014)

#### **4.5 Brand consistency**

Staying consistent about consistency is thriving attitude which SME's find it hard. The company with the best plan ever written in the fortune 500 will fail eventually without the dedication to consistency. The line between a fail and successful company is one thing that is consistency. A brand represent a company and its people e.g. a man working in Aston Martin stock maintaining has same logo on his business card as does the CEO of the firm. "*Aston martin*" ([www.astonmartin.com](http://www.astonmartin.com)) as a brand has to be consistent for the growth of the company and people working in the company.

Brand consistency help measure the effectiveness of the firm and aid to achieve good performance in the long run. It also creates accountability at all level in the company whether its employees or top leadership which helps build strong reputation for the firm. Company growth requires figures or a track of record of success which can trace by the brand tactics implementation. Brand consistency also help to maintain company's message loud and clear which give a clear prospective or target customer and help build stronger relationship with the target audience. Many major brands have an objective to be consistent and Apple is one of them. (Holtzclaw 2012. date of retrieval, 05.05.2014)

Furthermore apple ([www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)) is one of the brands which command the interest of the world with press launch and energize army of fans to camp overnight for the newest gear. Apple built its consistency with the passage of time by the sequence of its product in case if it is Phones, Mp3 players or operating systems. All products come along with unique design and smooth style. Pick any other brand Samsung, HTC, Nokia somehow they are similar but Apple phone is not just phone its iPhone.

It's does not take a rocket scientist to figure out that Apple logo can't be seen on really good CD player, really amazing camera, best washing machine, pay-as-you-go phones or fridge in the town. Apple go beyond the limits of modernization to produce elegant design. The brand consistency is astonishing. Even the most powerful company Google in 2013 were at second position in most valued brand and Apple was at top with (\$m) 98,316 (Interbrand 2014. date of retrieval 05.05.2014)

Apple maintains a brand consistency by following some basic tactics. Every means of print and electronic media is saturated whether its newspaper, social media platform or TV. A well develop, precise and significantly tuned message which could provide a perfect bridge to niche customer might give leverage. It takes really long time in this over-communicated society where there is so much information and for companies it takes a long time to penetrate their message and create a result. To craft an impacting message there are three main essences might needed frequency, uniformity and applicability.

Forge a clear distinctiveness might give an idea about the brand which can be applied on all the products of the firm even if products vary from each other and it could be achieve by drafting a brand bond which explain that "the brand is not for". SME's should focus on niche not everyone. It's the constitution of the company and everything differ from the company brand charter should be void. Small companies should try not to waste their words on public about their product that does not matter to them.

Furthermore if there are similar products in the market which are as good as the product which company holds, there is still opportunity to build a brand and be exceptional. There are at least three or four different bottled water brands available in every major super market. The frequently progressive marketplace produces the need of uniqueness in approach toward the customers. Unique words creates comprehensive product which implies depth and niche. Colgate([www.colgate.com](http://www.colgate.com)) "Total" brand implies it perfectly cleans teeth same is with Apple



brand first iPhone “The internet in your pocket”. Apple made a realization to people that the product was made for them which creates curiosity among people to find whether product was a perfect suit and if there is a link to that product these people might turn into potential and persistent loyal customers.

Additionally perception plays a key role to manage branding. It sends a notion in the market that the product is the best fit for niche customer. There are many aspects of perception from packing and visual presentation to the website or store in which product is offered. A high-end luxury brand won't sell their brand at super market.

“TAG Heuer”(www.tagheuer.com) align their brand with triumphant personalities as Leonardo DiCaprio is their brand ambassador gives a strong perception what this brand stands for and who should wear their watches. It is a multifaceted manner to be consistent by delivering promise, identification and standards of the company. If companies could not recognize how people believe, shop and purchase they might be unable to last against their competitors in the long run. Levi's made this mistake when the company released luxury men suits line under their Levi's name and customers refused their idea. Overextending could be the sign that a firm is incapable to produce new idea.

Apple does not puzzle brand image by making textile products or beverages they are not overextending and are being very consistent about their brand because it would botch the company's sleekness. The brand's promise should be understandable, gripping, distinctive and realistic. It could be certain and calculated attempt to be consistent. (Donnelly, 2010. date of retrieval 06.05.2014)

#### **4.6 Innovation and branding**

An innovation is something that detains customer's imagination with unique idea which can lead to build a strong brand. Silicon Valley clicks in mind when a thought is given about innovation. It consists of giants who bring new products to the world but as a human it is often to forget that ideas are generated by humans not companies. A small business could be capable of coming up with good idea and pave the way to launch a brand.

Virgin group ([www.Virgingroup.com](http://www.Virgingroup.com)) which own more than 400 companies worldwide is the perfect example. It started with student magazine and now has team of innovators in the group. The group is now helping and sharing their knowledge with many entrepreneurs across many industries in many countries. Vuyo is a small restaurant business in Johannesburg now giving franchises in the form of unique food carts helping creating employment and building brand. People want to eat food but by providing in a better way will give an edge over rivals and help company to get noticed first citywide and then perhaps nationwide. The company took the old and made it new with a very little gap spotted in the market. (Branson 2013. date of retrieval 07.05.2014)

On the contrary for small companies to be successful it is essential to find a small gap and fill it with the innovation. Ferroconcrete a branding firm design a reusable pet odor removing swipes which based on wet wipes. There are two unique attributes first, it is completely new idea and second it serves the need of targeted customer with unique packing. (Gibbs 2013. date of retrieval 07.05.2014)

Amazon did the same with customer service innovation with its new product called “Amazon Dash” the company took it to next level by adding a microphone feature. Speak the desire product and it will be delivered at the door step next day. Many big retail brands are trying to find out how they can change brick and mortar business model to online model. Though Amazon could have done it by developing a simple smartphone application but the company develop this device to live up to their slogan “making shopping easier”. SME’s could learn a lesson from this example. Innovation is not only a device it’s about inventing a new way to help customers. Built or create something for the target group they did not even know to ask for will not only help to establish or strengthen the brand but could also create happy customers which might bring new opportunities to the company. (Leiser 2014. date of retrieval 07.05.2014)

#### **4.7 Good tools for branding**

The first thing came into mind when i hear a brand called “Aston Martin” is a high quality, precision, standards, valued promise, power, beauty and soul. Companies could apply the same rule on them. What should come in customers mind when they hear about our brand? It’s tough business environment and competition is already furious for SME’s to stand out there are some tools which can help in branding, intangible and tangible tools.

Intangible tools are those which put company branding on track and tangible tools are those which helps measure the reputation or image of the firm. First let's discuss some intangible tools. Company culture is above all and most powerful intangible tool. The way business operates define its position in the market and also help build internal cohesiveness. Company culture defines how an employee wants to feel when they come to work or what they want to think about the company where they work. How they present the firm when asked where they work is all related to company culture. These employees become the advocates for the company's brand. Google the moment this name comes in mind many software developers wants to associate with their company culture and desires to work for them. (Inc Staff 2013. date of retrieval 08.03.2014)

Moreover identify uniqueness whether its product or service could bring prosperity to the small firms. This can be achieved by doing competitive analysis. Figuring out where competitors are placing their ads what is there PR coverage or even buy their product and service to inspect the differentiation point. This element of separation might allow SME's to generate a reputation which they crave to fasten in customers mind. Separation creates value which comes along with the promise.

A promise to deliver best unique values and serve customer needs or wants might result in strong branding. Delivering this value propositions for distant future will not only aid the company to live up to its promise but also help highlight the company and its brand. All above tools are intangible whether its uniqueness, company culture, promise or a value they all create a chain of reaction which assists to create and build strong brand for SME's.(Gordon 2006. date of retrieval 08.05.2014)

Furthermore there are tangible tools which might facilitate small companies to build strong brand. It can be divided into three categories which are given below.

- Monitor Reputation
- Social Media
- Analysing competitors

## **MONITOR REPUTATION**

### **Google Alerts**

When specific phrased is used it sends an email and the cost is free.

### **YextRep**

Tracks referral and reviews of business on websites Twitter, Facebook, Yelp, Foursquare. The cost is free.

### **Viralheat**

Offers geo-location features which check online conversations by area. The price is \$10 to \$90 a month.

### **Trackur**

It Informs how often keywords appear in articles and blogs. Free to monitor one keyword and the cost is \$18 to \$377 a month for several keyword hunts.

### **Radian6**

It is used to administer social media campaigns. It integrates with Salesforce.com, Omniture, and Webtrends. It is very expensive and effective. The cost is 600\$ per month.

(Inc staff 2010, date of retrieval 08.05.2014)

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

**Mention** monitor brand existence online it includes social features that allow to act in response to referral of business identity and to share industry news. The price is free or up to the need of business.

**Feedly** helps to discover great content to share with audience. Companies can also subscribe to RSS feeds to know industry blogs or news websites. The price is free.

**Twittercounter** is a free service that tracks changes in companies follower count and predicts future development over time. It also helps understanding how quickly number of followers is mounting and companies can use that information to make decisions about the content.

**Zapier** is a connector for all of the services company might use independently. It set up automatic notification inside HipChat rooms for Tweets, MailChimp campaigns, or new RSS items or business products like Dropbox. It's free and goes up to 99\$ per month.

**Bottlenose** is a search engine that queries all public information from social networks and groups and displays it in algorithmic order. It generates great content ranked by most to least important. The pricing is based on storage but for everyday user it's free.

**Followerwonk** divided followers into demographics so companies can understand them better. . The price is free.

**Quintly** is a powerful tool for in-depth social media analytics, helping find businesses social media performance on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, LinkedIn and Instagram. The company offers various plans from free to customize according to the need of business.  
(Haden 2014. date of retrieval 09.05.2014)

## **ANALYSING COMPETITORS**

**Adbeat** lets businesses see all of the ads that particular advertisers are using, split test their ad copy to help build strategy, and competitors didn't even know about it. It only track only Google ads. There's a 30-day free trial.

**AdGooroo** is a multifunctional tool. The basic service tracks ads for up to ten competitors. Its Industry Insight also allows firms to figure out ad placements. Price is not stated.

**MixRank** allows seeing the mix of ads that which different companies use. Companies can observe a snapshot of this data (without registering) that covers display ads, text ads, advertisers, and demographics.

**Moat** provides a free ad search tool that allows keying in enterprise competitors' brand names and seeing what ads they have revealed recently which give companies a good direction for where to place own advertising

**iSpionage** catches how rivals are promoting with Google, Microsoft, and Yahoo search marketing tools. SME's can view ads and track spending.

**KeywordCompetitor** helps discover pure and paid keywords, ads, and landing pages for opponents, with daily updates in list.

**SEMrush** finds significant long tail keywords, see competitors' PPC ads, and more. It also includes SEO tools. There is quite large of data available from the free search bar on the homepage. It is free but an upgrade model is for 69\$.

**SpyFu** let businesses sees up to six years of data on competitors' keywords, ranking, and ads helping with SEO and PPC advertising. There's a limited free tool and it comes with the price of \$79 per month.

The Search Monitor looks at paid and organic search and even how businesses surface against competition in comparison-shopping engines. This multifunctional tool also track labels as well as whose discussing company brand. The price is \$299 per month.

**Ahrefs** provides an asset of information on external links, referring domains and IPs, top pages, main anchor text, linked domains, and more. There's a limited free account covering 3 reports and 10 results, but for fuller data need to upgrade to the \$79 per month package.

**Alexa** has been tracking global web traffic for a long time. It provide website ranking on a global and country basis. It is free.

**SimilarWeb** is a reasonable analytics-monitoring tool that provides data on traffic sources, top content, social mentions and many more. There's a lot of data available for free, including referral sites. An upgrade is available for \$99 per month.

**Commun.it** is a free tool for building engagement on Twitter account.

**BuiltWith** inspect the technology at the back of competitors' sites, covering servers, content administration, core technology, marketing, and much more.

**Marketing Grader** is a free HubSpot tool which determines websites in terms of blogging, social media, SEO, lead generation and mobile, giving an overall score. It helps build strategy.

**Simply Measured** is a combo tool including analysis of influencers, brands, trends, traffic, conversions, competitors, and more. It covers all the main social media channels with 35 different reports. There are free reports available but a pro version cost's hefty 500\$.

**Who's Mailing What** is a good way to figure out competitors' direct mail, email, and social campaigns it also keep track of trends and see what the rivals are up to. This tool comes up with onetime hulky cost of \$747 per year.

**Social media** is the simplest way to keep an eye on competitors. Just follow rivals on social media platforms.

**Subscribe to opponents blogs** to see what kind of content they are covering and check out announcements of forthcoming launches.

**Sign up for their newsletter**, which is hands-down the best way to see how they are targeting ideal customers.

(Kilbourn 2013. date of retrieval 09.05.2014)

## 5. RECOMMENDATION

The purpose of this study was to find how SME's can develop marketing and branding strategies. The dissertation has investigated how SME's can strive to survive by flourishing their need according to the attitude, need and nature of the customers and markets. The present study was designed for business to use precise tools existing to achieve good results.

This thesis unfolds several key areas of marketing and branding. The result show how different approaches can affect company deeply. Marketing and branding is concept requires deep understanding and technologies effect it widely and small companies are getting influenced by different technologies which are solving their real time problems whether saving time, meeting in person, developing a location base marketing or just promoting business all these factors plays key role in the growth of a SME's.

The study also reveilles the importance of content marketing and social media, both are united with each other. To grow business an uninterrupted flow of information is needed which may help to create awareness of product and services. Content marketing might prove to be a connection between a firm and a customer whether its computer or mobile phone.

Today, people have internet in their pocket a device which is capable of bringing, helping and re-shaping our future together. Several solutions which is aiding SME's are related to mobile technologies whether it's QR or mobile marketing or payment solutions, consumer and companies are benefiting from them and new inventions related to mobile aid being convenient to clients. Although social media and mobile marketing is co-dependent but different social media platforms define their role and segmentation which facilitated companies to target their market and even find their niche to get return on their investments.

The second major finding of this thesis was focusing on branding. The study tried to find better ways to build branding for SME's. An intangible asset determines the value of the business by creating a loyal customer. Branding is all about company's reputation and status it is crucial for firms to control and monitor their repute. The rule of branding is to start it from the beginning by defining values, mission and CSR of the company by keeping the budget in mind.

A brand strategy could consume company budget. Some good ways are collaboration with similar businesses whether its trade shows or cross promotions it also help positioning a firm to get



introduced at wider level and create a strong content which can give leverage on social media platforms and could aid build brand at local level. Although there are different strategies but the key is to find an emotional connection with customers whether a firm is selling happiness, delivering values or keeping it sleek. All these strategies required consistency if the firm is not consistent, innovative and not adopting according to the need of customers the days of the firm might be numbered. Companies can secure themselves by choosing the right tools which facilitate them whether they want to monitor reputation manage social media platform or analyses of competitors.

Discussing SME's and the role of branding and marketing it is vital to understand the need of customers. It provides a bridge between a firm and the customer. Although it overlap quite easily but to understand properly and make a difference branding means a company recognize perception that helps make consumer to make a solid attitude against the product. If the perception is not effective then what strategies are required to change the perception. On the other hand marketing is a road of connection between customers and company. Below is the action plan which might help SME's.

## 5.1 Action plan

Step number	Action Steps	Responsibilities	Resources	Potential Barriers	Communications Plan
step 1	Name, slogan, mission statement and Website	Founders	Marketing agency	Already existence	Align to slogan and mission statement / Website developers
step 2	Identify skills	Employers, Employees	HR manager	Unaware	HRM
step 3	Product Analysis	Production manager/ developer	SWOT	Similar to market	Product / service development
step 4	Marketing development	Marketing manager/ Founder	Social media	Unaware	Marketing Content
step 5	Mobile marketing	Social media officer & Event manager	Apps/ Mobile communication service provide	Cost	Social media platform

step 6	Brand building	Brand mangers	Product uniqueness	Competitor	company positioning
step 7	Brand development	product developer & brand manager	Packaging, designing, brand consistency	Budget	Blogs, social media platform, CSR
step 8	Innovation	Product developer /brand manger	Niche target	Collaboration/ cross promotion/ find solutions	Social media, business, event collaborator
step 9	Monitor	Marketing manager / brand manager	Apps and sales data	Customer emotional connection	Apps, sales process ,methods, Customer feedback

**Step 10:** Repeat step number 8, 9 (solve problem or collaborate with other businesses) and again start from step number 4 up till step number 9 if the product is same. If there is a new product start from step number 3 till step number 9.

Entrepreneurs want to position the psyche of clients. It is critical to business and helps create a distinction. Customer prefer company's brand over other due to the identification of marketing. Although the strategies are purely depends on product, industry and culture of a particular region and the tools can be used accordingly. Branding and marketing activity should be relevant with the culture and suitable medium to pave the process of understanding between customer and company by offering a distinguishing product or service.

## 5.2 Discussion

Finland has a very unique culture. For other central EU countries it is hard to imagine a country that has vanquished over so much adversity. Finland has a strong value as they are warm-hearted, hardworking and capable of making decision alone as they cherish sovereignty. Although they are slow and have dry humor but generally they are very determined nation and are proud of their technologies.

(Lewis 2014, When cultures collide, date of retrieval 10.05.2014)

The Author has worked for 2 years in the city of Oulu, Finland in textile industry. There were several problems occur while working with Finnish market. The first conceived title was "Marketing and branding for SME's in Finland" but due to author's lack of cultural knowledge and less business experience the title was later changed into Marketing and branding for SME's (in general). There is a little room for market entrance in Finland with own brand unless product is completely new or unique. Major brands have capture big share of the market and customer are highly loyal to their brands. The best way to enter in the market was collaborating with other similar start-ups and small companies to combine resource and join hand with major company by analyzing their resources and negotiating profit percentage on sales and time basis, it is difficult but not impossible. There is still need to research for SME's in several areas which can facilitate to launch a new product or enter in the new marketing by understand the current economic situation of Finland

For further research possibilities, there can be a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative research planned by applying these branding and marketing strategies and tools in Finnish market. Until now we have concluded that these strategies and technologies can provide an edge to help understand customer connection and facilitate companies according to their requirements. Subsequently for the students who are typically studying influence of culture through regions and businesses environment. It would be really interesting to see how regional and business culture factors associate with organization marketing and branding tactics changing the buying behavior in Finland.

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