

BUSINESS PLAN TO STARTUP AN ONLINE HANDMADE CANDLE SHOP

Case: Smell the Rose Candle

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The objective of the study was to help the development of a plan for the operation of an online candle store in Finland and to identify potential challenges and obstacles that the online candle store might face while attempting to join the Finnish market. A further objective was to suggest the most effective strategy for overcoming those obstacles.

Data from reputable newspapers and government websites was gathered to draw a clear picture of the business plan and those elements that influence a business. As a result, the foundation for the business plan's creation was established, and it now includes the elements of PESTEL analysis, business model canvas, SWOT analysis, business idea, and marketing strategies.

Quantitative methodology was used in conducting a survey among the people living in Finland to map the customer behaviours of the case company. The survey received 109 responses, which were then to collect and analyse. The survey results showed potentialities and barriers when the case company entered the Finnish market, as well as indicated strategies to overcome barriers. The three potentialities are matching the habit of using candles, matching demands, and matching the taste of customers. On the other hand, a tiny number of customers prefer purchasing candle online and strong competitors are the two barriers of the case company. Furthermore, there are five strategies to overcome these barriers: focusing on the creation of products, reasonably pricing the item, providing all relevant information of products, encouraging customers to give feedback, and offering customers discount.

Key words candle, handmade candle, candle business, online business, start-up in Finland, business plan, F&B industry, entrepreneurship.

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1 INTRODUCTION

For the author, selecting a topic that would be engaging was both simple and challenging. Because the author is a student of tourism and hospitality, it is challenging for her to make the thesis project relevant to her field of study. However, the author's lifelong interest in candles making and artwork made it simpler to identify a topic that would hold her interest and keep her focused on writing the thesis—starting an online candle business in Finland.

In 2020, Finland was the 46th greatest candle exporter in the world with exports of \$2.4M. In the same year, candles ranked as 607th most exported good in Finland. Estonia (\$1.51M), Sweden (\$400K), Latvia (\$132K), Lithuania (\$104K), and Norway (\$47.7K) are the top exporters of candles from Finland. (OEC 2020). It has made it possible for the candle industry to expand in this Nordic nation. In comparison to many other nations, Finland makes it easier and safer to start a business. Opening a bank account, registering a business, and registering for tax administration all take two to three weeks. Furthermore, Finland offers a great environment for entrepreneurs. All policies are open and transparent in one of the least corrupted countries. Finland was ranked as the most technologically advanced nation in Europe at the start of 2019. This means that an entrepreneur can start business online, as well as get a wide range of services online. (Yang-Pyydysmäki 2020.)

Since the author does not have much capital at the beginning of the business, as well as experience setting up and maintaining an enterprise, the author has chosen the online business form since it is simpler to complete than other forms. Additionally, the formation of an online candle business can fulfil the author's passion for producing candles and creating art while also bringing beautiful, unique, safe, and ecologically friendly candles to candle enthusiasts in Finland.

There are two main objectives of this thesis project. The first objective is to support the creation of a plan to operate an online candle store in Finland and establish the foundation for a future business strategy. The second objective of

this thesis is to identify potential potentialities and barriers that the online candle business will encounter while trying to enter the Finnish market and to recommend the most appropriate strategy for overcoming those barriers. Following to the objectives of the thesis, the two questions that needed to be solved are “How to launch a candle business online in Finland?” and “What are the potentialities, barriers, and strategies to overcome such barriers in the Finnish market?”. Additionally, the challenge of this thesis is to support the topic of start-up an online candle business related to the hospitality sector that the author is studying at school.

2 BASE ANALYSIS FOR ESTABLISH THE ONLINE HANDMADE CANDLE SHOP IN FINLAND

2.1 PESTEL Analysis

PESTEL analysis is a framework or method for analysing and monitoring the macro-environmental elements that could have a significant impact on the performance of an organization. When launching a new firm or expanding into a foreign market, this tool is extremely helpful. In order to provide a deep understanding of a situation and related internal and external aspects, it is frequently used in conjunction with other analytical business tools such as SWOT analysis or Porter's Five Forces. Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal elements are referred to by the abbreviation PESTEL. (De Bruin 2016). The author used PESTEL analysis to take into account the factors that could affect the online candle shop in Finland, such as sociocultural distance, nation risk, market size and growth, and trade obstacles.

2.1.1 Political Factors

The following concept of political factors includes four major categories: entrepreneurship strategy, foreign trade policy, company (taxation policy and company form).

Entrepreneurship strategy

According to Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland (2022), the government released a resolution on entrepreneurship on April 21, 2022. Finland diversifies its business structure and provide opportunities for sustainable growth for businesses of all sizes by investing in a strong entrepreneurship policy. The resolution's vision and goal are to increase companies' trust to employ workers, expand operations, invest in Finland, and become globally. The vision furthermore aims to increase trust in Finland as a good area for entrepreneurship, which attracts foreigners and students run a business in Finland. In order to renew and diversify the business and economic structure, the government plays

an important role in supporting the growth of the operating environment for entrepreneurship.

Foreign trade policy

Finland has been a member of several international economic organizations, including World Trade Organization (WTO), Trade and Development – Aid for Trade, The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). It leads to Finland's trade policy is formed in accordance with both its own internal policies and those of these global trading groups, which are in turn closely linked. Since many cross-border trade restrictions have been reduced or eliminated, attention is now given to other trade restrictions, including technical rules and regulations, intellectual property rights, the use of subsidies, competition, and trade regulations. To ensure that Finnish businesses have comparable circumstances and equal possibilities for compete on international markets is one of trade policy's main objectives. (Finland Abroad 2022.)

Company (taxation policy and company form)

Paying taxes in Finland based on a salary and other income. The amount of tax is determined by the income received. The length of stay in Finland and whether the employer is a Finnish or foreign company determine how much tax a foreign worker from another country will pay. (City of Helsinki 2022). According to the Ministry of Finance, Value Added Tax (VAT) is a general consumption of goods and services. End-users are responsible for paying VAT, an indirect tax. VAT is a tax that is gathered by businesses that are relevant to it, added to the price of goods sold, and then paid to the government. In general, Finland still has a high tax rate. Finland is listed as having the fifth-highest standard rate among European nations. Since the beginning of 2013, Finland's regular VAT rate has been 24%, while there are two lower rates in use (10% and 14%). There is a zero-rate of VAT for some products, export delivery is an example. In this situation, tax is not due on the sale, but sellers are compensated for VAT on purchases of

production inputs. The tax rate is indicated as calculated from prices before taxes. (The Ministry of Finance 2022.)

When establishing a business, choosing company form is an important step. In Finland, the company form options include private entrepreneur, limited liability company, general partnership, limited partnership and cooperative. While there are numerous differences between these forms of business, there are some commonalities. (Suomi 2021a.)

After thorough consideration, the author concluded that a private entrepreneur form would be the best suited for her online candle shop. Because the author's business operations are modest in scale and primarily dependent on the author's personal labour, there would only be only her responsible for starting the business and managing it, including all potential profits, debts, and loans. Setting private entrepreneur up is simple and inexpensive. A private entrepreneur must pay 60€ when submitting start-up notification electronically and 115€ when submitting it on paper (Suomi 2022). This is the easiest, quickest, and most popular type for starting a new business. With this option, there is no minimum capital need and only one person is required to begin business operations under a company name. (Calvar 2018). In addition, since the author started a business as a private entrepreneur and are not allowed to get salary from it, the author would not be impacted by income taxes. From this kind of company form, the author receives only personal income, which is deducted from the company's profit after taxes have been paid. Therefore, the entrepreneur who runs such businesses is not subject to earnings-based income taxes. Instead, private entrepreneurs must pay advance tax, which is a tax on anticipated annual profit. (The Nomad Today 2019.)

2.1.2 Economic Factors

Finland adopted the euro in 1999. Finland possesses 46 active preferential trade agreements as a member of the EU. With 640 EU-mandated nontariff measures in effect, the trade-weighted average tariff rate (shared among EU countries) is 2.9%. Finland has 13 nontariff barriers that are country specific. Foreign

investment is not significantly hindered by governmental policies. A wide range of services are offered by the financially competitive industry. Manufacturing is at the heart of the export-led economy, particularly in the wood, metals, telecommunications, and electronics sectors. About the government size, the top rate for corporate taxes is 20%, while the top rate for individual income taxes is 31.3%. Value-added taxes and capital income taxes are examples of other taxes. The total tax burden is equal to 42.2% of the national income. Over the past three years, government spending has totalled 54.6% of total output (GDP), and budget deficits have averaged 2.2% of GDP. 67.1% of GDP is the equivalent of public debt. (The Heritage Foundation 2022.)

The Finnish economy is reputed to be one of the best in the world for trade and business freedom. Finland ranks ninth among the freest economies in the 2022 Index with an economic freedom score of 78.3. Finland is ranked sixth out of 45 nations in the Europe region, and its overall score is higher than both the average for the region and the entire world. In 2020, Finland's economic growth slowed, but it recovered in 2021. Expanding economic freedom has been a five-year trend. Finland has recorded a 4.3-point increase in economic freedom overall since 2017 and is now close to the top of the "Mostly Free" category. This improvement has been driven by an improvement in its rule of law scores (property rights, judicial effectiveness, and government integrity). (The Heritage Foundation 2022.)

2.1.3 Social Factors

Population in Finland

One of the Nordic nations, Finland, consistently earns the designation of "the happiest country in the world ". Nevertheless, Finland's population of about 5.5 million is quite modest. The majority of the population is situated in the southern region of the nation, particularly in the Helsinki metropolitan area. The region has roughly 1.5 million people, or 27% of the total population. In total, Finland obtains nine cities with a population of over 100,000. (EURYDICE 2021.)

Income and languages

The average monthly wage and salary for a citizen in Finland is about 3,460 euros for males and 2,896 euros for women, making it one of the higher-income Nordic nations. About 4.1% of their income, or a little fraction, is spent on apparel and shoes. (Statistics Finland 2021a.)

Finnish and Swedish are the two official languages in Finland. In 2020, there were the following speaker percentages: Finnish 86.9%, Swedish 5.2%, and other languages 7.8%. Finnish and Swedish are equal languages throughout the nation when communicating with the authorities, despite the Swedish-speaking population being primarily concentrated on the southern and western shores. In Finland, there are more than 150 different languages spoken by the population, with that number rapidly rising. 7.8% of the population was estimated to be multilingual by the end of 2020. Russian, Estonian, Arabic, English, and Somali speakers form up the greatest populations of bilingual individuals. (EURYDICE 2021.)

2.1.4 Technological Factors

Information and Communication Technology

Finland is one of the top nations for ICT (Information and Communication Technology) and digitalization. In 2017, ICT industry employed 6.8% of the workforce, which was the highest percentage in the EU. In addition, Finland has the second-highest rate of mobile broadband penetration and the highest per capita mobile data usage in the world. (Privacy Shield 2022.)

Social media users increased

In 2020, 82% of Finns between the ages of 16 and 89 accessed the Internet routinely. From the previous year, the share climbed by 3% points. In the two oldest age groups of the survey, those aged 65 to 74 and those aged 75 to 89, there was a 6% point and 7% point increase in daily Internet usage respectively.

The percentage of people who use the Internet increased from 82% to 92% throughout the course of the year. These statistics are taken from a survey conducted in 2020 by Statistics Finland on how people use ICT. (Statistic Finland 2020.)

E-commerce

In the last three months, 57% of Finns between the ages of 16 and 89 had made an online purchase. The percentage of people who purchased various services decreased, while the percentage of people who purchased commodities increased. Over half of all employed people (58%) reported working from home on a daily basis. There were 93% of Finns between the ages of 16 and 89 utilized the Internet, and 82% did so frequently. These statistics come from a survey conducted in 2021 by Statistics Finland on how people utilize information and communications technologies. (Statistics Finland 2021b.)

2.1.5 Environmental Factors

Weather and climate

Finland has a colder climate than many other nations, but the weather varies throughout the year. All four seasons are great times to enjoy and explore Finnish nature. Finland is famous for winter and snow because winter is the longest in four seasons with nights longer than days.

In winter, it is gloomy because the sun rises later in the morning and sets in the afternoon. Northern Finland experiences shorter daytimes than southern Finland. For several weeks, the sun does not rise at all in the northern part of Finland. While spring arrives in the north of Finland at the end of April, it starts in the southern region at the end of March. Although it is warmer than winter, springtime weather is frequently cool. In the spring, nature undergoes significant change. As plants and trees grow leaves, the snow melts and the landscape turn green. In summer, Finland experiences bright evenings and nights because of the early sunrise and late sunset. Following that, Northern Finland enjoys longer daylight

hours than Southern Finland. June is the month with the most daylight. Midsummer, or the night of the midnight sun, is observed in Finland in June. In the early summer, the sun never sets at all in Finland's most northern region. In autumn, nature is stunning and colourful when green leaves of many plants and trees turn yellow, orange and red. Autumn brings cool, rainy, and windy weather, and it is darker than summer. (InfoFinland 2022.)

Climate change

Global climate change is observable, including in Finland. Long-term temperature records show that Finland's climate has warmed up throughout the year. However, winter has seen the most warming. (Climateguide 2019.)

Depending on the global trend in greenhouse gas emissions, Finland's temperature is predicted to increase by 2.3 to 6 degrees by the end of the century compared to the years 1986 to 2005. As global warming continues, both nature and societies will experience extraordinarily quick changes, making adaptation necessary. Climate change has an impact on how the world economy is growing, the availability and cost of food and raw materials, the stability of societies, and the amount of migration that is either caused by or amplified by climate change. (Parviainen, Vapaavuori & Mäkelä 2010.)

2.1.6 Legal Factors

Consumer Safety Act

According to Consumer Safety Act 2011, the purpose of this law is to ensure the safety of consumer goods and consumer services; health and property hazards caused by preventive consumer goods and consumer services; when the danger occurs, ensure that the danger can be removed in a sufficiently efficient manner; ensure high-quality consumer safety monitoring; contribute to improving the operating conditions of operators. In accordance with the care and professionalism required by the circumstances, the operator must make sure that the consumer goods or consumer service does not pose a danger to anyone's

health or property. The operator must have sufficient and correct information about consumer goods and consumer services, as well as assess the risks associated with them. (Ministry of Employment and The Economy 2011.)

Safety requirements for indoor candles

Indoor candles must fulfil the requirements of the Consumer Safety Act is that they must not pose a danger to the health or property of consumers. Stability of the candle, use of a suitable wick and yarn and candle wax, appropriate instructions, and warnings are all significant factors in the safety of candles intended for indoor use. Indoor candle safety is the responsibility of the manufacturers, commissioners, importers, distributors, and sellers. Because indoor candles are considered general consumer goods, they are not CE marked and no license is needed to sell them. (Tukes 2011.)

“The term ‘candle product’ covers any product which works like a candle, such as freestanding and holder candles, tea lights, gel candles, container candles, outdoor candles and torches, candle lanterns, memorial, garden and oil candles, cake and novelty candles, Christmas tree candles, oil lanterns and lamps, burning mosquito repellents, candle gels and wax sold to consumers as well as candlesticks, chandeliers, candelabra and candle holders and candle rings as well as other corresponding products intended for use with them.” (Tukes 2011.)

The labelling needed for candle products is either a warnings or instructions for safe use. Its objective is to warn customers to the importance of using candle products safely. The placement of the labelling must ensure that it will reach the consumer in the purchase situation, whether it is on the product itself, its retail packaging, or supplied with the product. All writing must be clear and in a font size that is large enough to read in both Finnish and Swedish. In addition to be greater clarity, the instructions can include illustrative images or symbols. Important warnings to be attached to indoor candles include the general warning sign, text stating that burning candles must not be left unattended; burning candles must be kept out of reach of children and pets; burning candles must be placed on a non-combustible surface, sufficiently far from any combustible

materials; and the distance between candles must always be at least xx cm, which is recommended by the manufacturer. (Tukes 2011.)

2.2 Candle Market in Europe

Trade and production of candles

In 2018, the European Union (EU) produced candles worth €1 638 million. In comparison to 2013, this shows an 11% rise in the value of EU candle production. Following Poland (which produced €619 million or 38% of all candles produced in the EU in 2018) were Germany and Italy (each producing €164 million or 10% of candles). In terms of trade, the EU Member States brought in candles worth €1 572 million in 2018, with just over 77% (\$1 211 million) coming from other EU Member States. In comparison to 2013, the value of all candles imported by EU member states increased by 21%. The EU Member States exported candles worth €1 470 million, the vast majority of which (\$1 284 million, or 87%), went to other EU Member States. The value of all exports from EU Member States increased by 16% in comparison to 2013. (Eurostat 2019.)

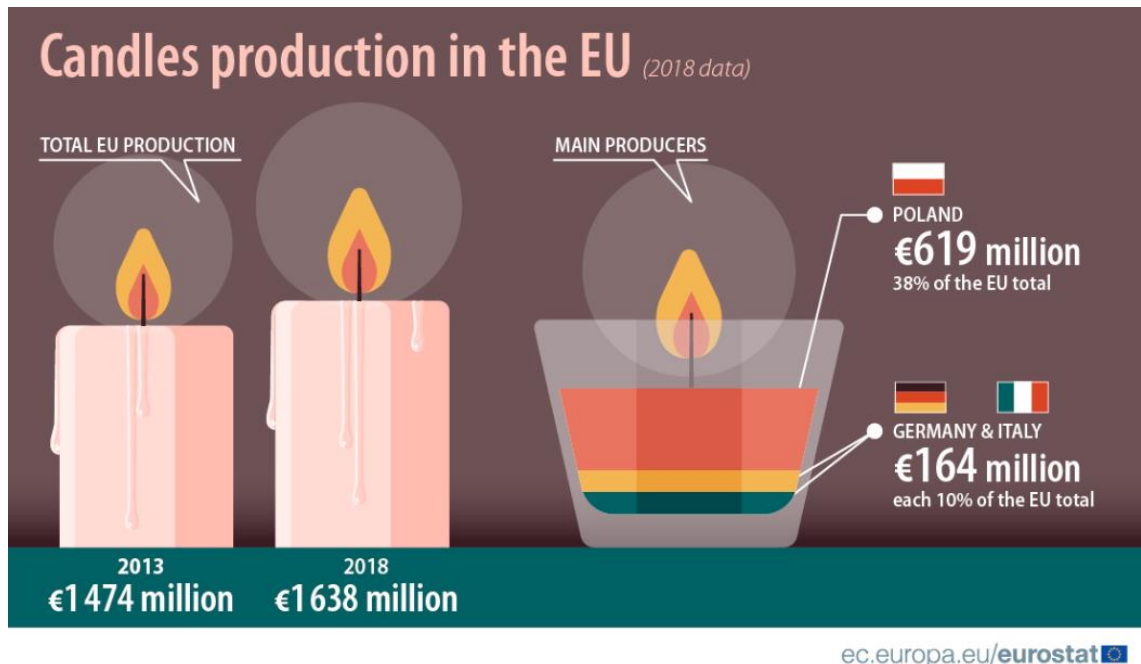


Figure 1. 2018 Data of Candles Production in the EU (Eurostat 2019)

In 2018, the United Kingdom imported candles worth €121 million from non-EU countries, accounting for 33% of all candle imports outside the EU in terms of value. The United Kingdom is the largest importer of candles into the EU. Candle imports from non-EU nations were primarily from China (€237 million, or 66% of extra-EU imports). Poland accounted for 21% of candle exports outside the EU in 2018 and exported candles worth €38 million to non-EU members. Poland now leads the EU in candle exports to the rest of the world. (Eurostat 2019.)

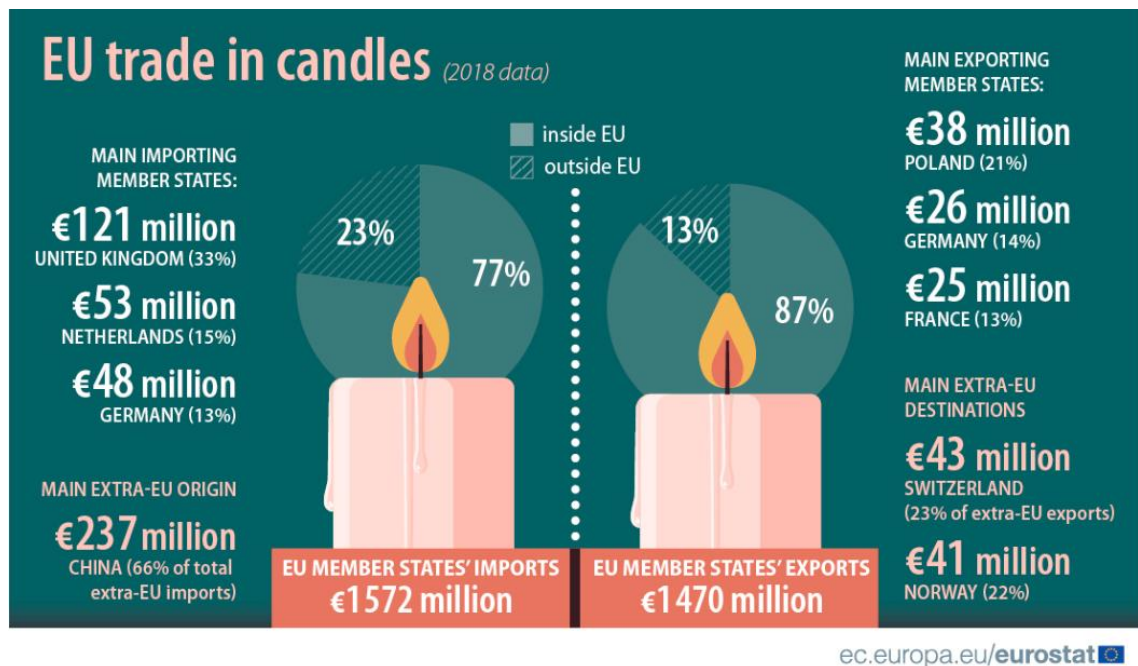


Figure 2. 2018 Data of EU Trade in Candles (Eurostat 2019)

Shopping attitudes

The majority of people who shop for household goods (58%) have purchased candles in the past; women are especially likely to have done so, with three quarters (74%) having done so. Candles are most frequently purchased by someone else in the household, according to those who have never purchased them (33%). The positive qualities of "creating a pleasant ambiance," "being a good gift option," and "looking good in the house" are all tested, and candles are more likely than other scented products to "best meet" these criteria. (Comres 2015.)

Candle usage

In the tested European markets, 50% of people use candles at least once a week; women are much more likely than men to do so (52% versus 43%). The most frequently used candle types are tealights (32%) and container candles (22%). The majority of respondents say they light candles to set a nice mood in their homes (67%), for special occasions like holidays (62%) and birthdays (55%). (Comres 2015.)

Customer behaviours

Price (61%) and scent (63%) are typically cited as the two most crucial considerations when purchasing candles. The two places where people are most likely to purchase candles are grocery stores or supermarkets (57%) and department stores (50%) The most frequently purchased candles are tealights, followed by candles in containers and graveyard candles, though the latter are primarily driven by one market (Poland). (Comres 2015.)

2.3 Candle Become Home Accessories as a Current Trend in Finland

Exporters from developing nations now have more opportunities thanks to a decline in the production of home accessories in Finland. Furthermore, given that Finland supplies many other European countries with home accessory exports, Finland may serve as a gateway to neighbouring markets. Both well-known and smaller design brands can be found in Finland. Popular brands in the middle to higher price ranges include Finlayson, Pentik, Balmuir, Iittala, Aarikka, and Casa (Stockmann's brand). In the lower price range, Kotikulta (a brand owned by Tokmanni) and House (a brand owned by S-group) are also well known. Momono, Artek, FinnMari, and Nougat are examples of small brands in Finland that fall into the middle- and upper-end price categories. For the production of candles, Havi, Desico, Puttipaja, and Kynttlä-Tuote Oy are all experts. Antrei Hartikainen, Be&liv, Inno, Katriina Nuutinen, Palaset, Woodnotes, and Verso Design are additional small design companies. In Finland, there are both large chain stores and stores that sell design brands. Popular names include (in the ranges of each country, from lower to middle to higher): IKEA, H&M Home, Hemtex, and Indiska are Swedish brands; Flying Tiger Copenhagen, Jysk, Sirius

Home, and Living are Danish brands. Nomess, Georg Jensen, Spirella, and Day and Nest Factory are examples of brands that are imported or affiliated with developing nations. The largest retailers of home accessories in Finland are Tokmanni, Stockmann, Prisma and Sokos (both belonging to the S-group), K-Citymarket (part of the K-group), and Tokmanni. While the others sell lower- and middle-end goods, Stockmann offers middle- to higher-end goods. These merchants offer goods under their own brands, Finnish design brands, and imports. Stores and online stores, such as Finnish Design Shop, Seven Art, Hobby Hall, and Hongkong, sell products sourced from well-known Finnish companies as well as smaller businesses and independent artists. (Finnpartnership 2018.)

This product type includes elements that foster camaraderie, nostalgia, and cozy environments. People now prefer to make their homes feel cozy and are more likely to spend more money on furnishings that can achieve this. One of the biggest holidays in Finland is Christmas. Birthdays, school graduation, Easter, Mid-Summer, and Vappu are additional occasions to celebrate (Vappu is celebrated on the evening of 30 April and continues to 1 May, with Finnish traditional drinks and food). Candles are no longer just useful objects; they have evolved into decorative home accessories thanks to home decor trends. Smell is equally important to appearance. (Finnpartnership 2018.)

2.4 Handmade Candle Concept

The difference between handmade candles and mass-produced candles is one of the reasons the author chose handmade candle concept. The manufacturing process is the key distinction between handmade and mass-produced candles. Handmade candles are created by hand, including the mixing, pouring, and testing. On the other hand, factory candles are primarily mixed and poured by machines, and only a small sample of the entire production is used for testing. There is nothing wrong in principle with factory-made goods, but the following factors make hand-poured products preferable:

Quality Assurance: Hand-poured candles are made and examined by a real person. The craft of making candles allows for a more focused eye on the product being made, unlike factories that rely on machinery to produce consistency.

Safer: Toxic materials such as lead wick or paraffin wax, which is petroleum-based will not be used to make the products when people are handling them. Therefore, handmade candles allow for complete control over the candle's composition.

Less waste: Handmade candles typically produce on a smaller scale, so any losses due to error will be kept to a minimum. There will be a lot more waste if the same error occurs on a production line. This not only costs a company money in lost sales, but it also wastes the planet's energy, water, and material resources. (Luma 2021.)

The other reasons for choosing handmade candle concept based on Finnish sustainability and Finnish customer interest. Consumers in Finland, similar to those in other developed markets, are becoming more and more interested in goods that are made ethically and sustainably. Compare to mechanically produced products, handmade home accessories are typically more expensive. (Finnpartnership 2018.)

3 BUSINESS PLAN FOR THE CASE COMPANY: SMELL THE ROSE CANDLE

3.1 Business Idea

3.1.1 The Reason for Business Idea and Business Name

The business idea of operating online candle store was initiated when the author found that Finland is quite supportive of new innovations and business ventures. Research and development are actively supported by both the governmental and private sectors. Finland's free-market economy boasts a robust industrial sector. Additionally, consumers' online shopping habits are increasingly. The latest trends in fashion, travel, dining, and other areas have been offered to customers due to rapid urbanization, the use of smartphones and social media platforms increased consumer demand for a variety of products to be available on the internet and prompted them to engage in frequent online shopping (Business Finland 2021, 6.)

The business idea is furthermore based on the author's story. The author has a special passion for scented candles, especially handmade candles. There was a time when the author suffered from a mental problem, she followed the doctor's advice to find an activity that made herself happier, and the author has been practicing candle making since that time. After starting candle making as a hobby, the author realized that she has enough patience, ingenuity, creativity, and aesthetic sense to create candle in special shaped. Moreover, the work of creation in candle making has helped the author to reduce psychological problems. Therefore, the author calls candles as a healing or soul-warming device. The business idea started when the author returned to Vietnam – her country, in the summer of 2022 to take part in a handmade candle making course trained by The Korean Craft Candle Association. Thanks to the course, the author gets variety knowledge about the theory, recipe, materials, and process of making candles entirely by hand for business purposes. The main goal of the business is to launch an online store and earn money in the field that the author is passionate

about. In addition, the company's goal is to help the customer heal by sharing with them the author's positive views on life.

The author came up with the business idea to establish an online candle store in Helsinki with the theme of handmade candles. The author will name the candle store as “Smell the Rose Candle” due to the author’s special love for candle, and customers can identify “Smell the Rose Candle” is a candle store by the word “Candle”. The phrase “Smell the Rose” is inspired by the idiom “Stop and smell the roses”, which means appreciating and recognizing the source of goodness in life. It involves taking the time to appreciate the ordinary joys in daily moments and understand what motivates those feelings. Therefore, the phrase “Smell the Rose” aims to encourage people to live life with a deeper gratefulness for the world around them rather than only focusing on rose, flower, or nature. Since the author developed a passion for candles and candle making, she has become more optimistic and appreciative of life. From there, the business name idea of “Smell the Rose Candle” was born. It represents that the author’s candle store not only simply share candles, but also share stories about life with customers and convey positive message through candles. In addition, the author will design a special candle in a rose shaped as the signature item of the store to emphasize the name “Smell the Rose Candle”.

3.1.2 Mission and Vision

Every business should have a clear statement of purpose that enthuses its audience and inspires them to become part of the organization. A mission statement defines a company’s line of business, purpose for existing, and purpose it serves. (CFI Team 2022a). Smell the Rose Candle’s mission statement is: “Our mission is to make our clients feel warm and positive by selling unique and meaningful candles”. According to this mission statement, each handmade product has a unique story to share with customers. These stories are typically about memories, or other positive aspects of life, and it has the effect of touching customers' emotions and making them feel more optimistic, warm, and in love with life. The author further guarantees that the product is made with sustainable, environmentally friendly, and non-harmful materials.

A vision statement outlines the long-term goals of an organization, usually within the next five to ten years, but occasionally even longer. It provides a clear direction for the planning and implementation of corporate-level strategies and paints a picture of what the company will look like in the future. (CFI Team 2022b). The author makes the vision statement for her candle studio as “We envision being the well-known candle brand offering unique and meaningful candles in good quality to people in Finland”. That means the author wants Smell the Rose Candle store to become the well-known candle brand in Finland in the next five years. The author wants Smell the Rose Candle to be recognized as a healing and unique candle brand based on good quality candles and its stories rather than a simple candle store.

3.1.3 SMART Objective

George T. Doran's article in the November 1981 issue of Management Review contains the first recorded use of the term "SMART." Since then, Saint Louis University's Robert S. Rubin, Ph.D., has discussed SMART in a piece for The Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology. (Mindtools 2016). SMART objective stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound. It provides the specifics of how an organization accomplish a goal.

Based on SMART objective framework, the author sets the goal of her business as: “Within 1 year, I want to launch a home-based business that sells candles and fragrance items in Finland to earn at least 500euro per month and increase loyal customers.” SMART objective of Smell the Rose Candle is described in Figure 3.

SMART GOALS

S

SPECIFIC

I want to launch a home-based business selling handmade candles and fragrance products in Finland, then expanding my brand throughout Europe.

M

MEASURABLE

I want to make a consistent monthly income of at least 500 euros.

A

ACHIEVABLE

I want regular income go up 30% each month.

R

RELEVANT

I want to increase loyal customers by enriching social and online relationships.

T

TIME BOUND

I want to launch my business within a year by on August 1st, 2023.

Figure 3. SMART objective of Smell the Rose Candle (Trinh 2022)

3.1.4 Location

Since there would only be one person founding the company and bearing all of the responsibility for running the company, the author chose the private entrepreneur type when operating a small business online. The author runs a home-based business from her apartment in Helsinki. As a result, Smell the Rose Candle is an online store based in Helsinki, and the main office, as well as a place

to make products is the author's apartment. The author's apartment has a lot of shelves for storage, one window, and a balcony door for ventilation. It is a place with enough space and safety to create handmade candle products; and the kitchen is the specific location for candle making. In addition, the author can keep the supplies required for the business in a separate storage room in her building.

3.2 Idea Concept

3.2.1 Raw Materials of Products

Candles are Smell the Rose Studio's primary product line, hence the author will briefly go over some of the materials used in candle production. At the same time, ensure that the author chose the candle-making materials to be healthful for consumers and environmentally friendly.

Wax

The essential component for making candles is wax, but not all wax is created equally. Most mass-produced candles are made with paraffin wax, which is derived from petroleum. As oil is used to make paraffin, the release of carbon dioxide during production increases the greenhouse effect. In addition to being a toxic process, burning them releases toxic chemicals into house. As a hand poured candle store, the author chooses to make candles from soy wax, palm wax and toxic-free paraffin options, which are vegan and eco-friendly.

Wicks

Large candle manufacturers frequently used lead-cored wicks in their creations, which are the primary source of wick pollution. On the other hand, hand-poured candles primarily use natural wicks that emit little pollution into the home. The author selects wicks made of wood, cotton, and linen because they are all completely safe to use.

Packaging

Handmade candles typically focus more on the environmentally friendly aspects of production, whether customers purchase online or in store. As a result, packaging is frequently simple, minimal, and composed of easily recyclable materials. Order packaging is mostly done with paper and cardboard. In order to keep costs down, the author's store does not feel the need to add extra packaging when it is not required.

Aromatic oils, dried flowers, paints, and other materials were also used by the author to make and decorate candles.

3.2.2 Products and Services

For the author, making candles is a form of creativity. The unique characteristic that distinguishes the goods made by Smell the Rose Candle from other competitors is that each item has own inspiration and own story. For instance, the memory of the author and her mother often did laundry on Tet holiday at home inspired the creation of a container candle with a fresh cotton scent. The author frequently finds inspiration for making candles in memories, stories of life, other's paintings, or her own photographs. Additionally, as a Tourism and Hospitality student and a passion for cakes and cocktails around the world, the author creates decorative candles that mimic the cakes and cocktails she enjoys. In Smell the Rose Candle store, the products and services will be offered to customers divided into four categories: pillar candles, container candles, decorative candles, and fragrance items. Furthermore, there will be offer of customized candles as a unique service at Smell the Rose Candle. All images of products attached below to illustrate the descriptions made by the author.

Pillar candles

Pillar candle is a candle can stand on its own without container. There are variations in the sizes, shapes, and heights of pillar candles. The rose candle, cameo candle, water colour candle and dipping candle are among the pillar candle varieties available in the author's store. All kinds of pillar candles can be scented or unscented depending on customer requirements. Especially, the rose

candle with the scent of rose flowers will be the signature of Smell the Rose Candle store.



Figure 4. Pillar Candles (Trinh 2022)

Container candles

A container candle is a container with wax and a wick inside. Container candles can be made in many ways depend on candle makers. Four different kinds of container candles available at Smell the Rose studio are tealight candles, scented candles, flower candles, and proposal candles. Tealight candle is a common type that is frequently used at restaurants, from casual to luxurious, as well as in special meals at home. Scented candles and flower candles are simply candles in jars, which are all fragrant and uniquely decorated. Propose candle is a type of

candle contains hidden message, which means when it burns for a while, hidden message will be revealed.



Figure 5. Container Candles (Trinh 2022)

Decorative candles

Decorative candles at Smell the Rose Candle are candle products decorated with cinnamon sticks, dried flowers, or cocktail candles in a cocktail glass. The author creates these candles from her own inspiration or in response to customer requests. It is crucial to remember that these candles should only be used for decoration; they cannot be used to light a fire the same as regular candles. Customers who purchase decorative candles from Smell the Rose Candle must use them exactly following to the instructions provided by the seller.



Figure 6. Decorative Candles (Trinh 2022)

Fragrance items

Other scented products besides candles include wax tablets and fragrance plasters. These items are not candles, they can be hung or placed in the room, wardrobe, or car and are frequently attractive enough to use as home decor. They serve to deodorize and spread scent.



Figure 7. Fragrance Items (Trinh 2022)

Customized services

Customers can customize their orders for candles at Smell the Rose Candle, which is a unique service. Candles in the shape of birthday cake for birthday party is an example. Additionally, Smell the Rose provides a service that allows customers to confide in and chat online while having candles made based on their moods and emotions.



Figure 8. Birthday cake candle (Trinh 2022)

3.2.3 Safety Instructions for Using Candles

According to the “Safety requirements for indoor candles” segment at 2.1.6 “Legal factors”, there must be warnings on instructions for safe use of candle products. Following to the products of Smell the Rose Candle, there are decorative candles that cannot be burning, and they might cause damage to customers, hence, these are instructions for using candles safely at the author’s store.

Pillar candles and container candles burning instructions:

- The decorations for the pillar candle and container candle such as flowers, strawberries, or cameo are made entirely of wax, so they are safe to burn.
- Trim the wick: Trim the wick to 5mm before lighting candle and clean off any wick debris. The candle's burning can be hampered by any debris that is left in the wax pool. A long wick can cause smoking, while a short wick produces a cleaner, brighter flame and an even burn.
- Always keep candle in sight and place it away from drafts.

- Burning time: Avoid burning candle for more than four hours at a time to get the best results. Extinguish, allow candle to cool, trim wick, then relight.
- Keep out of reach of children and pets.
- Extinguish candle if the flame is too high. Remember to extinguish the candle before leaving room.
- Pillar candles must be burnt on a heat proof plate. Container candle must be placed on a stable surface.

Decorative candles burning instructions:

- Some decorative candles such as cocktail candles or cinnamon candles contain cinnamon sticks, dried flowers and fruits inside the candles are only for decoration, they totally cannot be burned.
- Some decorative candles such as pressed candles contain dried flowers outside the candles should be only for decoration. If the customers would like to burn these candles, they must take all dried flowers out the candles before burning them.

All information above will be included not only in the product and package when customers purchase products, but also on the website of the store.

3.3 SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is a framework used to assess a company's competitive position and to create strategic planning. It stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The SWOT analysis evaluates internal and external variables as well as present and potential future situations. SWOT analysis is a method for evaluating a company's performance, rivalry, risk, and potential as well as that of any division, product line, industry, or other entity that the company may have. (Kenton 2021.)

The SWOT analysis (Figure 9) describes the case company.



Figure 9. SWOT Analysis of the Case Company (Trinh 2022)

Strengths

Starting an online business has several advantages. Firstly, the expenses are lower because online business can be operated by individually, an entrepreneur does not need to hire employees. Besides that, there is no need to face the cost associated with running a physical store such as office rental fees. Secondly, online business can be run anytime, anywhere. Thirdly, online business can help meet consumer demand by enabling entrepreneurs to sell goods internationally without having to establish a physical store.

The author is a young and adventurous person, which is considered a strength for start-up a business. Even though she failed many times, she still has plenty of time and opportunities to gain experience. Moreover, ambition and risk-taking help the author dare to try new things, take responsibility for the consequences and face failure.

Diversity of creative and functional products is the strength, because the items will be artistically designed and come in a wide range of colours, scents, and functions. There will be seasonal products and special services such as customize candles.

Sharing the positive stories of life, focusing the business as a brand of lifestyle and healing, and the form of collective advertising concentrating on content. Each product having a unique storytelling helps to attract customers.

The author has more than two years of experience making candles as a result of learning the craft on her own, applying her creativity, and joining candle making classes for business. Therefore, the author can produce professional, high-quality, and appealing creations by using her experience, skills, and continuous learning.

Sustainability is the last strength. To protect consumer's health and environment, natural ingredients, eco-friendly and recyclable materials are used to create handmade candles. Moreover, the operation of online stores helps to lower vehicle emissions.

Weakness

The initial weakness is the author's company is a new brand and young business in the Finnish market, therefore, the operation must start with a zero-margin business model. Compared to other candle brands, there will be a low level of brand recognition in consumers' minds.

This is the first time the author launches a business and lacks knowledge and experience to run a business in all aspects, hence, the author must face with difficulties in operate her business. Furthermore, the business is operated and run primarily by herself, so she must face with the huge workload and manage time for work-life balance.

Lack of ingredients and materials is one of difficult problem. There are some products made from complex ingredients and materials, which are difficult to find or even not available in Europe. The author must order those materials from Vietnam, Korea, and the UK; consequently, high import and transportation costs will result in high product costs.

Opportunity

The online shop is based in Helsinki, a potential market. Finland's capital, Helsinki, is a hub for commerce, tourism, and locals. Online businesses have opportunities thanks to the rising demand for shopping, especially online shopping. Additionally, the rising demand for candles as interior decor expands more potential clients.

Finland's climate and weather provide favourable conditions for the growth of the candle industry, especially in wintertime. Helsinki experiences winter from November to March, when the demand for candles in restaurants and homes will rise significantly because it is cold and dark.

"Celebrations" presents excellent opportunities for home decor accessories to adapt to a "moment" market, which focuses on a specific consumption moment as opposed to a general functional or emotional consumer need and demand. Candles for Easter, Christmas, or Halloween are examples of celebrations.

The case company will provide unique items such as candles in fruits-shape or ice cream-shape to attract customers.

Threats

Finnish and Swedish are the two languages that are most spoken in Finland, but the author primarily uses English. As a result, communication, handling paperwork, and reaching potential clients become challenging due to language barriers.

Currently, a wide range of domestic and well-known international brands are trusted by Finns. It is extremely challenging for the author's new brand to reach consumers once they have turned into devoted followers of those brands.

There are many strong competitors in the target market. There may be a new entrant on the Finnish market, which means there will probably be more rivals in the future.

3.4 Business Model Canvas

The term business model according to Kopp (2020) is “a company’s plan for making a profit. It identifies the products or services the business plans to sell, its identified target market, and any anticipated expenses”. The Business Model Canvas (BMC) was created by Alexander Osterwalder (2010), which enables planners to develop their own business structure by answering all critical questions in block. It includes nine elements in the form of a template: key partners, key activities, value propositions, customer relationships, customer segments, key resources, channels, cost structure and revenue streams (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, 16-17). As Oyem Ebinum (2016) defined “BMC is a strategic management tool to quickly and easily define and communicate a business idea or concept”. In other words, BMC can be viewed as a product roadmap’s mission statement. It is a convenient resource that can be used to ensure the roadmap always includes all the strategic components required for the success of the product.

The nine segments of BMC can be divided into four major business categories: customer, offer, infrastructure, and finance. Customer includes Customer Segment, Customer Relationship and Channels. Offer refers to Value Proposition. Infrastructure consists of Key Resources, Key Activities, and Key Partners. Finance includes Cost Structure and Revenue Streams. (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, 15.)

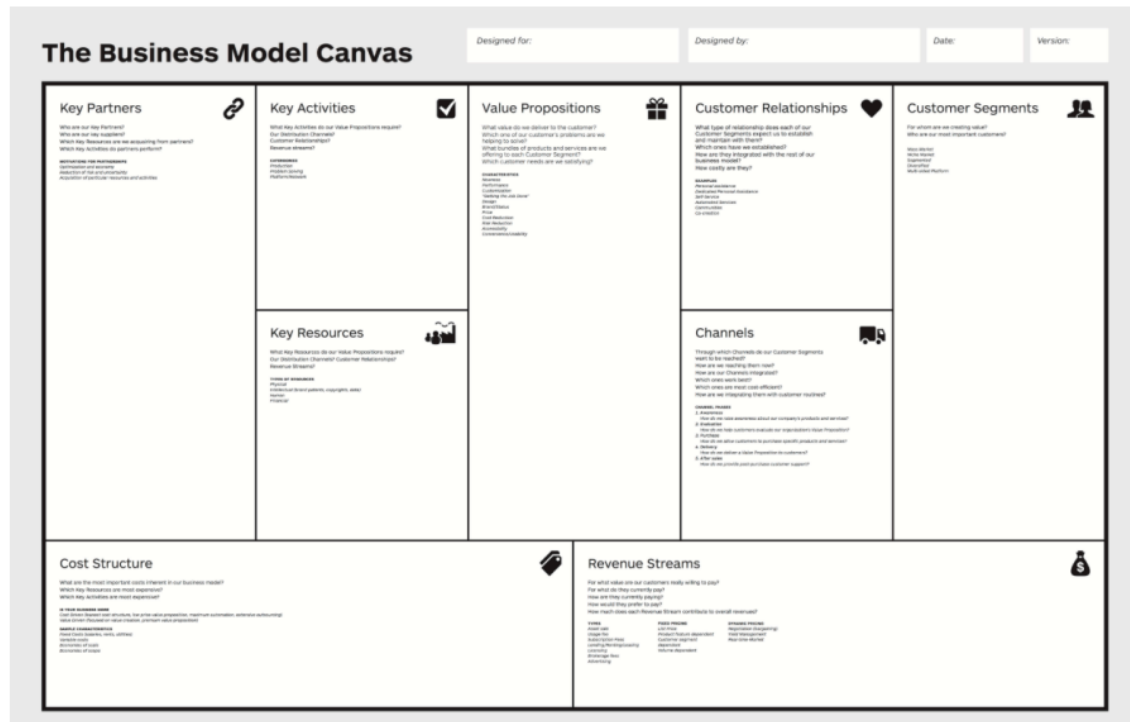


Figure 10. Business Model Canvas Template (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010)

3.4.1 Key Partners

Because starting a business requires the cooperation and support of numerous individuals and organizations, the business owners must look out for their partners and keep positive relationships with suppliers in the supply chain. According to Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010, 38), there are four main forms of partnerships:

- Strategic alliances between non-competitors.
- Cooperation: partnerships between competitors.
- Joint ventures: the creation of new business.
- Collaboration between buyers and sellers to ensure reliable supplies.

The first crucial key partner of a candle shop is candle making suppliers. Selecting reputable and suitable will not only provide candle store with a supply of high-quality raw materials to ensure both environmental and health safety, but also cooperation with candle shop in a long-term. The second important partner for an online store is a reliable delivery partners, because customers cannot

purchase products directly from the store; instead, they will receive product via shipping. The case company chose Posti as the main delivery partner. It is a courier company that operates in Finland and other nations in Europe. They provide services for B2B and B2C clients, as well as offer discounted rates for eCommerce depending on the number of shipments (either 30-200 or over 200 shipments/month). (Sampalo 2022). The next key partner are retailers, restaurants, and coffee shops. Retailers will support the author selling candles by displaying her candles in their stores. Additionally, the author can serve as a candle supplier to some restaurants and coffee shops since they frequently place tealight candles on tables in the winter. The last key partner will be local event organizations. They can cooperate with candle shop to prepare candles as thank-you gifts for attendees at events, as well as support the promotion of the candle brand to a large audience.

3.4.2 Key Activities

Every company has its own key activities that are essential to operating a business efficiently and smoothly. These activities vary depending on the type of business. Reaching customer target audiences, creating value, achieving financial objectives, and maintaining customer relationships are all undoubtedly the aims. The following categories apply to it:

- Production activities include those involved with product design, manufacture, and delivery.
- Finding creative solutions to consumers' problems is the emphasis of problem-solving activities.
- Platform and network management, service provisioning, and platform promotion are examples of platform-related tasks. (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, 36-37.)

Looking for a suitable supplier takes time, so managing the supply chain should be the first thing to concern. The candle shop should make sure the key supplier has the supplies available whenever the candle shop needs, and there is always a backup supplier in case the main supplier's supplies run out. The other key

activity of the candle shop probably includes designing new products, making candles, selling them, and providing the best services possible. In addition, packaging is crucial because candles are fragile goods that can be damaged during transport. The candle shop must ensure that the use of packaging paper is not redundant and packaging materials must be totally eco-friendly with the environment. Then, marketing activities are crucial because they help the candle shop's reputation spread widely. Due to the candle shop's marketing strategy and specific goals, a promotion and marketing campaign will be run.

Since there are an infinite number of online stores, there are an infinite number of competitors. Customer experience in eCommerce is therefore essential for launching an online business. (Lumoa 2019). The company can simultaneously retain customers and turn leads into customers by focusing on the customer experience. More satisfied customers may result from a positive customer experience, and happy clients may become brand evangelists. "eCommerce experience refers to the overall experience your customer had on your site, and it is how customers perceive the general interaction with your brand. Customer experience is a big umbrella covering all the shopping experience, whether online or offline, from the first-time customers learn about your company name." – Sarvaiya (2022). Some methods listed below will help to create a positive customer experience that will encourage customers to buy from the store and return for more:

- A good image can be worth a thousand words.
- Check that the website loads quickly on both computers and mobile devices.
- Include customer reviews.
- On the product page, inform customers whether an item is in stock or when it will be available after a backorder.
- Make it simple for clients to get in touch with the owner, request a quote, or subscribe to email.
- Allow customers to communicate with the owner in real time by providing live chat.

- Offer a self-service option or FAQ section.
- Make the checkout process simple and enable customers to save their carts.

Offer free delivery for the customers. (Schiff 2015.)

3.4.3 Key Resources

Human, financial assets, physical assets, and knowledge assets are the four most important components of key resources, according to Osterwalder (2010, 34). Regards to human, the candle shop needs an owner with the talent to make aesthetic and creative products. A passionate and experienced owner is essential for successful candle shop because they create the products and communicate with customers directly. The physical assets are supplies, which include raw materials, materials used for decorating candles, equipment, tools, and packaging.

According to CFI Team (2022): "Bookkeeping involves the recording, on a regular basis, of a company's financial transactions. With proper bookkeeping, companies are able to track all information on its books to make key operating, investing, and financing decisions". People who manage all a company's financial data are called bookkeepers. Without bookkeepers, businesses would be unaware of both their internal transactions and current financial situation. (CFI Team 2022c). For business owners, bookkeeping is useful. Businesses benefit from better cash flow management, future planning, and business operations knowledge. Additionally, it complies with the demands of both local and federal tax authorities.

The brand is the knowledge asset. As Kenton (2022) explains "The term brand refers to a business and marketing concept that helps people identify a particular company, product, or individual. Brands are intangible, which means you cannot touch or see them. As such, they help shape people's perceptions of companies, their products, or individuals. Brands commonly use identifying markers to help create brand identities within the marketplace. They provide enormous value to the company or individual, giving them a competitive edge over others in the

same industry. As such, many entities seek legal protection for their brands by obtaining trademarks". For example, the signature candle in rose-shaped and rose sent of Smell the Rose Candle is one of brand identity elements, people will immediately conjure up rose candles when Smell the Rose is mentioned.

3.4.4 Value Propositions

Customers' purchasing decisions are strongly influenced by the value that a company can provide them through goods and services that can meet the needs of each client segment. This block helps business in determining advantages in serving particular client. Some typical recommendations for companies looking to add value to customers are:

- In terms of technology, innovation refers to the creation of an entirely new set of requirements that have never existed before.
- Performance refers to providing value through offering enhanced goods or services.
- Customization refers to making goods and services specifically for each customer.
- Create value by helping customer doing their jobs done.
- Designing unique and gratifying products for customers can add value.
- Create value by giving customers sense of pleasure with brands.
- By offering customers discounts on goods and services, business may add value. (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, 23-25.)

In terms of customers, the candle shop promises to offer those benefits, which are referred to as its competitive advantages: handmade items that are unique, creative, beautiful, and functional; special services such as sharing stories in life, convey positive message and lifestyle via contents, images, and storytelling; and candle-making workshop.

3.4.5 Customer Relationships

A company's interactions with particular Customer Segments are described in the Customer Relationships Building Block. Clarifying the kind of relationship a business wishes to have with each customer segment is important. Relationships can be automatic or personal. The following motives may influence customer relationships:

- Customer acquisition.
- Customer retention.
- Boosting sales (upselling). (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, 28.)

The candle shop will concentrate on the social community and loyal customers to maintain good customer relations. Social communities are important for an online business because they encourage user interaction, increase brand awareness, attract potential customers, and promote brand loyalty. A social community can be created in the following ways: inviting friends to click “like” or “follow” the shop’s page; using hashtags into posts; engaging in cross-promotional advertising; developing a strategy to keep followers; or working with influencers. Furthermore, the candle shop must satisfy its clients because satisfied clients are willing to pay more for the products, and the candle shop should invest in building stronger relationships with loyalty customers.

3.4.6 Channels

This section demonstrates the methods a business can use to communicate and connect with different customer segments before delivering a value proposition. In terms of customer relationships, it is essential. Effective channels can raise customers' awareness of a company's products and services, increase their desire to buy and use products, and simultaneously communicate value propositions to customers. Creating and distributing Awareness, Evaluation, Purchase, Delivery, and After Sales are the main tasks involved. (Osterwalder and Pigneur 2010, 23.)

Operating as an online shop, choosing right channels to connect and communicate with customers is important. The main channel of the candle shop is candle store's website, where customers can find all information such as products, prices, descriptions, and instructions of using products, and contacts. The next effective channel could be social media such as Facebook page, Instagram, and YouTube to build social community, share blog post, and connect with people. Moreover, the customers can also look for the candle store's products at local retailers, fairs, or local events.

3.4.7 Customer Segments

Any business model's beating heart is its customer base. No business can last very long without consumers. A business may divide its customers into various segments based on common needs, habits, or other characteristics in order to better satisfy them. One, multiple, big or tiny customer segments may be specified in a business model. An organization must decide clearly which segments it will cater to and which parts it will ignore. Once this choice has been taken, a business model can be thoughtfully created using a thorough knowledge of the needs of a certain consumer base. (Osterwalder and Pigneur 2010, 20.)

The candle shop divided customers into three groups based on customer's habits and needs, and market segments to provide them the most quality and suitable products and services. The first group based on customer's habits, for people who use candle frequently for their daily life, both for burning and decoration. The second group made by customers' needs, for example, when they would like to buy candles for birthday parties, joke candles for Halloween, or candles as a gift. The third group of customers are based on market segments, and the author chose the niche market, which is targeting to candle lovers.

3.4.8 Cost Structure

All expenses incurred for starting a business, such as those for doing research, creating a brand identity, marketing, and sustaining customer relationships. These expenses include fixed costs, varying costs, scale- and scope-related

savings, and variable costs. The model makes it possible to total up these expenses once Key Resources, Key Activities, and Key Partnerships have been completed. (Osterwalder and Pigneur 2010, 40.)

Operating business costs are raw materials, other materials, packaging. Tools and equipment costs only spend on the first time of starting a business because they can be reused. Besides, marketing and promotions cost will be paid monthly, and transportation for shipping products is also included.

3.4.9 Revenue Stream

Revenue Streams of the organization are the amount of money that Customer Segments are willing to spend for their purchases and experiences. In order to maximize profit, the business should be concerned with the groups that produce the greatest revenue streams. Asset sales, use fees, subscription fees, lending, licensing, brokerage fees, and advertising are a few methods of generating income for a business. (Osterwalder and Pigneur 2010, 31.)

The customers' purchases of candle products and fragrance items will create most of the revenue. Additional fee will be charged for services such as candle-making workshop or customized candle request.

The figure below is the Business Model Canvas the author designed for Smell the Rose Candle.

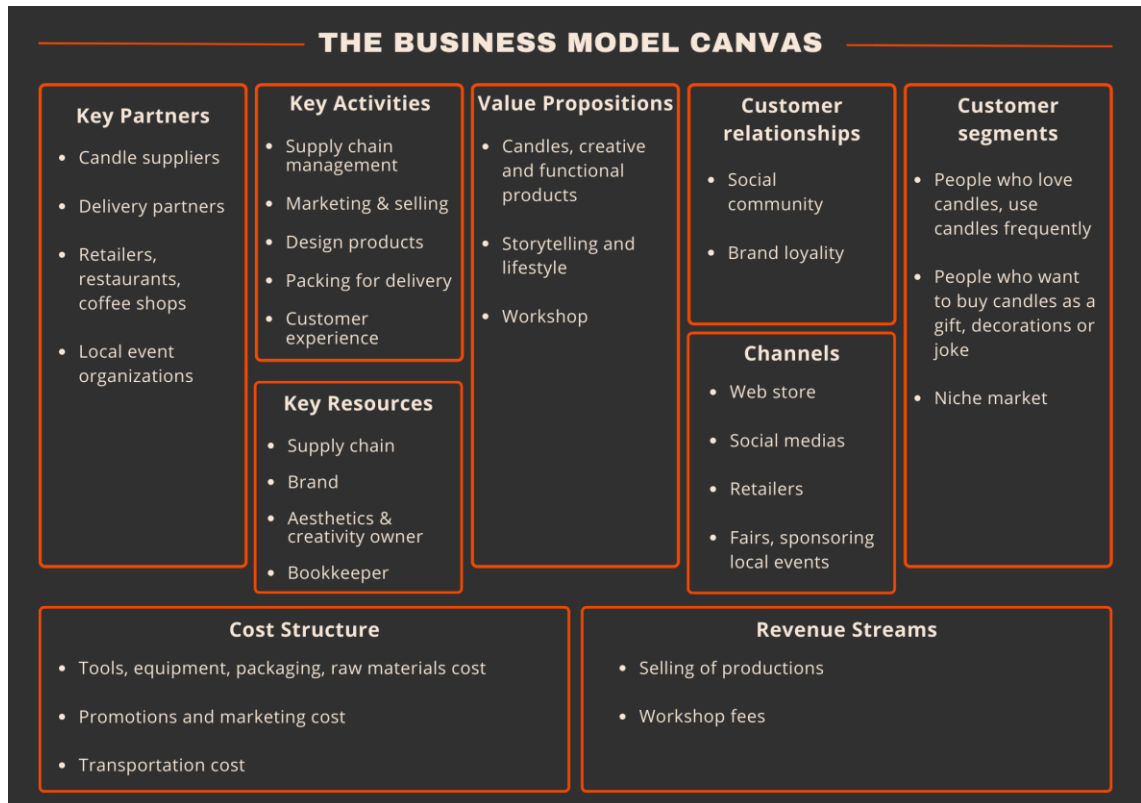


Figure 11. Business Model Canvas Applied in the Case Company

3.5 Bank Account and Payment Methods

For managing the financial transactions of the business, the owner needs a separate bank account. The bank statement for the account is a crucial component of the company's accounting records because it clearly demonstrates its payment transactions. Considering that the author had plans to operate her business in Finland, selecting a bank there could make transactions easier. According to European Banking Federation (EBF 2020), four major banks control 80% of the Finnish banking market. As domestically significant institutions (O-SII), Nordea Bank, OP Financial Group and Municipality Finance are under the ECB's direct supervision. On the other hand, the Finnish Supervisory Authority is in control of policing smaller domestic retail groups such as Savings Banks group, POP Bank group, and other small domestic banks. The largest group by market share is OP Financial Group (34.6%), while the second largest is Nordea Bank (25.1%). Danske Bank and Municipality Finance are nearly the same in market shares, which are 10.8% and 9.6% respectively. At the end of 2017, Danske Bank turned its Finnish subsidiary into a branch.

As a private entrepreneur, although the author can freely use her company's money, it is a good idea to open a separate bank account for her business name. This allows the owner can more easily distinguish between payments for personal use and those for business-related transactions. An extract from the trade register that is no more than three months old; a report of the nature of company's operation, such as the business plan; an estimate of the number and size of company's financial transactions; and a personal identification document are typically required when an entrepreneur opens an account for their company name. (Suomi 2021b.)

Payment is an important part of eCommerce. eCommerce payment processing has increased in popularity because of the widespread use of online banking and shopping. Its goal is to simplify the online checkout process as much as possible while maintaining the security of payment transactions. Customers can pay for online purchases through a payment gateway, which is an online payment service integrated into the eCommerce platform. (Pham 2021). There are many eCommerce payments gateways for freelancers, entrepreneurs, and businesses in Finland such as Paytrail, Klarna, Adyen, Paypal, Checkout, or Skrill. (USA Business Team 2020.)

3.6 Marketing

“Marketing refers to activities a company undertakes to promote the buying or selling of a product or service. Marketing includes advertising, selling, and delivering products to consumers or other businesses. Some marketing is done by affiliates on behalf of a company”. “Product, price, place, and promotion are the Four Ps of marketing. The Four Ps collectively make up the essential mix a company needs to market a product or service. Neil Borden popularized the idea of the marketing mix and the concept of the Four Ps in the 1950s.” (Twin 2022.)

According to Market Business News (2018), a marketing strategy is a comprehensive plan that combines all a company's marketing goals and objectives. Business executives utilize market research to develop an effective marketing strategy. In order to maximize their profits, they also pay attention to

the right product mix. A marketing strategy, to put it simply, is a plan created to advertise a product or service and create profits. “A good marketing strategy helps companies identify their best customers. It also helps them understand consumers’ needs. With a good strategy, it is possible to implement the most effective marketing methods”. “This includes an explanation of the goals a company needs to achieve with its marketing efforts. A company’s business goals shape its strategy”. (Market Business News 2018.)

Operating the candle shop as an online store, the author chose digital marketing as the main marketing strategy type. Because digital marketing is less expensive than other forms of advertising and has more potential to establish a brand, grow a company, and increase sales. Digital marketing, also known as online marketing, is the promotion of brands using the internet and other digital communication channels to reach potential customers. This includes text and multimedia messages as well as email, social media, and web-based advertising as a marketing channel (Alexander 2022). The methods of digital marketing strategies will be applied to the candle shop illustrated by the table below:

Table 1. Digital marketing strategies of Smell the Rose Candle

Types of marketing	Activities
Search Engine Optimization (SEO)	The candle store will at first pay search engines to appear on result pages. Then, the store will put a focus on search engine optimization (SEO) strategies to rank highly in search results naturally, such as using key words “candles” or “handmade candle”.
Content Marketing	The author will create content through blog posts and videos to develop a product, frequently for free, to spread information about a product, collect customer data, and persuade customers to stick with the business after reading the content. Content emphasizes education over selling to influence buying behaviour, for example, video content about how to use candles safety or blog post about inspiration makes the author create Rose Candle and story about Rose scent.
Website & Social Media Marketing	Creating Smell the Rose Candle’s website with domain name (example: smelltherosecandles.com).

	<p>Creating candle shop's Facebook page, accounts on Instagram, TikTok and YouTube.</p> <p>Keeping updating images, videos and information about products and services, and interacting online with customers to create relationships.</p>
E-mail Marketing	<p>Collecting emails from customers with Facebook Ads and opt-in pop-ups on website.</p> <p>Distributing messages include coupons, discount opportunities, or advance notice of upcoming sales.</p>

4 THESIS PROCESS AND METHODOLOGIES

4.1 Thesis Process

The author enrolled in the thesis project in spring-autumn cycle 2022, which means the thesis project began in the spring semester of 2022 in January and will end in the fall semester of 2022 in December. The author made the decision to begin thesis research by selecting the topic and the objective first, however, the thesis topic has been changed three times during the spring semester. As a result, until August 2022, the final thesis topic was decided and implemented by the author. It was time to acquire material and begin developing the theoretical background after deciding on the type of topic to research. The next stage is choosing a research methodology; a survey was prepared and approved by the supervisors. The stages of the thesis-writing process are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Thesis Process

Topic	Period	Tasks
Applying Green Activities and Photography to Sustainable Tourism in Lapland Case: Beyond Arctic Adventures Company	01.2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic research. • Idea poster presentation.
	02.2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading literatures about photography tourism, green activity, and sustainable tourism. • In search of commissioner. • Idea poster presentation.
	03.2022 04.2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and reading literature about chosen topic. • Contacting to commissioner (rejected by commissioner).
Business Plan to Start-up Scented Candle Studio in Helsinki Case: In-store Candle Studio	05.2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thesis topic changed. • Reading literature about business plan and candle industry. • Submitting topic and thesis project plan on Whihi.
	06.2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioner form (Approved by Lapland UAS).

	07.2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research information about business and entrepreneur in Finland. • Analysing materials about candle making, candle market, and candle industry.
Business Plan to Start-up an Online Handmade Candle Shop Case: Smell the Rose Candle	08.2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thesis topic changed. • Submitting new topic and thesis project plan on Wihi. • Start the writing process.
	09.2022 10.2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finishing table of contents. • Writing and finishing the theory part. • Preparing methodology (quantitative method). • Making survey template (Approved by supervisors). • Spreading the survey. • Submitting the preliminary version.
	11.2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysing the results of survey. • Finishing methodology. • Adding changes and polishing the final report. • Thesis final presentation.

4.2 Quantitative Methodology

Quantitative methodology is the main framework for social science research. It describes a group of strategies, techniques, and assumptions used to investigate numerical patterns in order to research psychological, social, and economic phenomena. Numerous numerical data are gathered during quantitative research. For instance, personal income is a numerical piece of data that is essentially quantitative. (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller 2014). Quantitative research aims to create knowledge and enhance understanding of the social world. Social scientists, including communication scholars, use quantitative research to investigate phenomena or events that have an impact on people. Social scientists are interested in studying people. A sample population is a particular group of people that can be studied using quantitative methods. Quantitative research

uses scientific inquiry to examine questions about the sample population using data that are observed or measured. (Allen 2017.)

The purpose of the research is to understand the customer market, including the customer target, customer's expectations and demands, and candle-using behaviours, as well as the potentialities and challenges that Smell the Rose Candle store must overcome when operating business in Finland. Quantitative methodology is undoubtedly appropriate for the nature of the research. For quantitative research, a variety of methods can be used such as experiment, survey, (systematic) observations, or secondary research (Bhandari 2022). For this specific research, a survey was conducted to gather information on the opinions and expectations of customers living in Finland of an online candle store. The data were then collected and analysed to provide the needed insights.

4.3 Electronic Survey

One of the most common methods for collecting data to evaluate is through surveys. A survey is a method for systematically and consistently gathering data from people. In surveys, participants fill out questionnaires that ask the same question of them all in the same way. The information gathered in this way can then be utilized to make conclusions about the population of interest. The opinions, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, actions, plans, and backgrounds of people can all be gathered. Surveys are used for needs assessments, opinion polls, and evaluations of the implementation, results, and effects of policies and initiatives. (Taylor-Powell & Hermann 2000, 3). As Taylor-Powell and Hermann (2000) mentioned: "A survey is most appropriate when your evaluation questions and information needs are best answered by the people themselves". There are aspects that the author cannot see directly, such as attitudes and beliefs of the customer. Alternatively, the author might not be able to clearly observe customer's behaviours, such as their daily use of candles. Therefore, a survey is most suitable for the research when the customer themselves can best respond to the author's information needs.

There are different ways to conduct surveys, including by mail, telephone, face-to-face interviews, with handouts, electronically (through email or web-based surveys), or by combining these approaches (Taylor-Powell & Hermann 2000, 3). The author chose electronic Web-based survey because of its advantages. Firstly, Web-based surveys have the benefit of being inexpensive and distributed quickly. Secondly, it allows for the direct transmission of survey replies into databases, erasing transcription errors and avoiding survey respondent modification. (Andrews, Nonnecke & Preece 2003, 185–210). Thirdly, it delivers results rapidly and can instantly connect with a lot of potential responses. Additionally, Web-based surveys can readily benefit from developing technology to give different question forms, customized instrument distribution, and assured anonymity, all of which can improve the trustworthiness of the data. (Jansen, Corley & Jansen 2007, 5).

Thanks to the author's supervisors' review and assistance, the final version of the survey was approved by those same supervisors in October 2022. "Mapping customer behaviour for the online store Smell the Rose Candle in Finland" was the title of a Google survey form that was created in English. The survey's form (see Appendix 1) was divided into four sections. The first section is about background information, which are about the respondent's age and gender. In the second section, there are inquiries about candle-related consumer behaviour. The next section includes questions about the effects of online shopping experience, as well as Smell the Rose Candle's products. The final section contains text fields asking respondents to enter their email addresses in a raffle to win a gift. There are 13 questions in the survey, and questions used in several formats such as multiple-choice, checkboxes, multiple-choice grid, linear scale, and short answer.

The survey was shared on different Facebook groups related to candle lovers and people who are living in Finland. Additionally, Lapland UAS students' emails were used to spread the survey. People live in Finland, who are both Finnish and foreign, as well as people interested in candles, were the target audience for the questionnaire. The survey was expected to receive between 100 and 120 responses because reaching respondents could be challenging, since there are

many people feel uncomfortable do answer the online survey, and many people who are interested in candles but not living in Finland do not want to participate in the survey. However, the chosen method allowed to gather needed data in support of expectations, which may be helpful in the process that would follow to achieve the research's final goal.

5 MAPPING CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR FOR SMELL THE ROSE CANDLE

5.1 Data Collection

In order to map customer behaviour for Smell the Rose Candle in Finland, the author created a list of survey questions. The author distributed the survey via email to all students of Lapland UAS, on Facebook groups such as Vietnam community in Finland, International students in Finland, Rovaniemi citizens, Helsinki citizens, Candle lovers in Europe (there are also people who living in Finland), and on WhatsApp groups of Finnish friends of the author. Starting on October 15, 2022, the survey was opened for 18 days, collecting results until November 1, 2022. The questions are being answered by 109 responders in total. In this chapter, the results of the online survey will be discussed.

What is your age?
109 responses

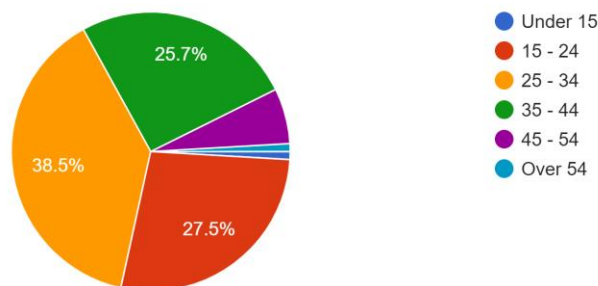


Figure 12. Age Group of Respondents (n=109)

What is your gender?
109 responses

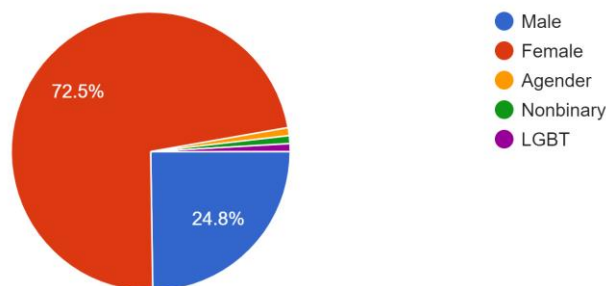


Figure 13. Gender of Respondents (n=109)

The first section of the survey consists of two questions regarding respondents' background information, including their age (figure 12) and gender (figure 13). These questions assist in defining the target market of Smell the Rose Candle. It can be clearly seen from the figure 12, the largest ratio of age groups (38.5%) is the group of people from 25 to 34 years old, while the age groups of 15-24 and 35-44 are at 27.5% and 25.7% respectively. The data of gender chart indicates that 72.5% respondents are female, 24.8% respondents are male, and the rest are other genders.

How often do you use candle at home?

109 responses

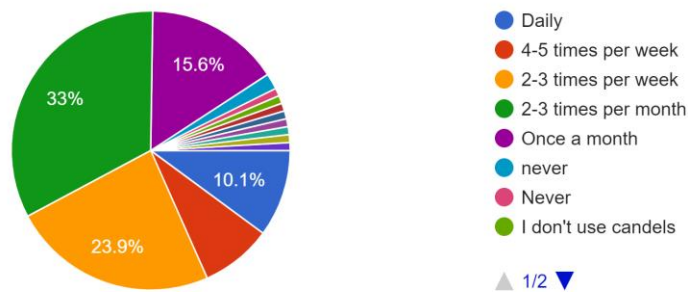


Figure 14. Respondents Purchasing Frequency of Candles (n=109)

Regarding to customer's purchase and use of candles, the questions in the second section aim to understand customers' candle-using habits and behaviours. The figure 14 shows the respondents purchasing frequency of candles. The biggest percentage of respondents (33%) use candles 2-3 times each month. 23.9% of respondents use candles 2-3 times per week, 15.6% use them once a month, while 10.1% use candles every day.

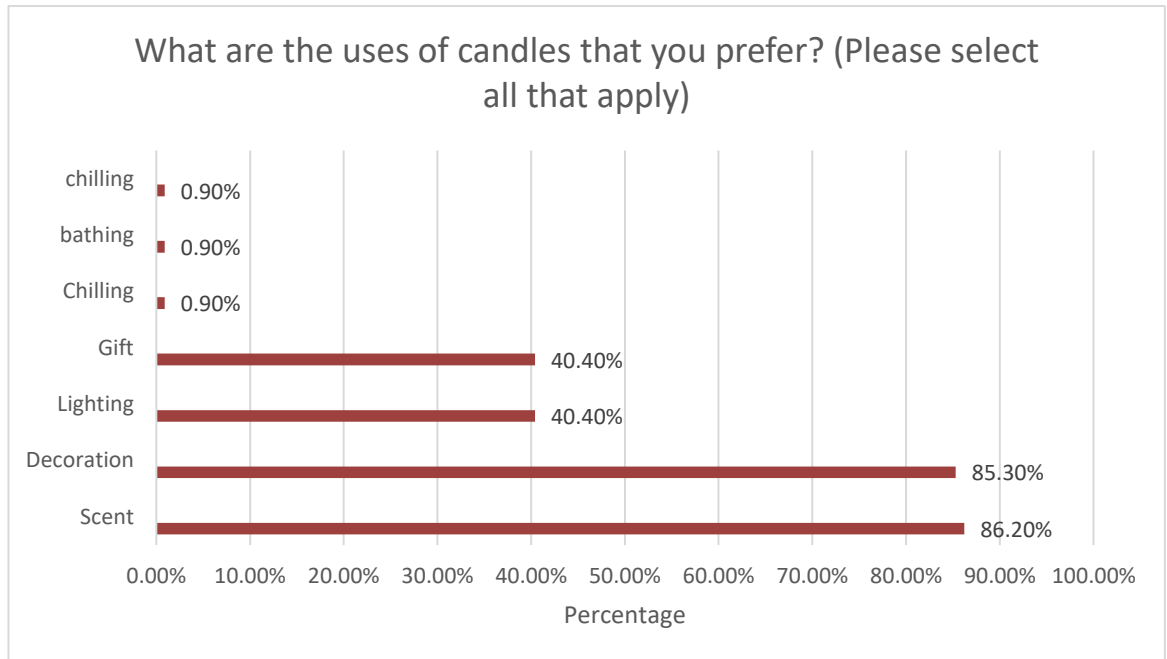


Figure 15. Purpose of Using Candles of Respondents (n=109)

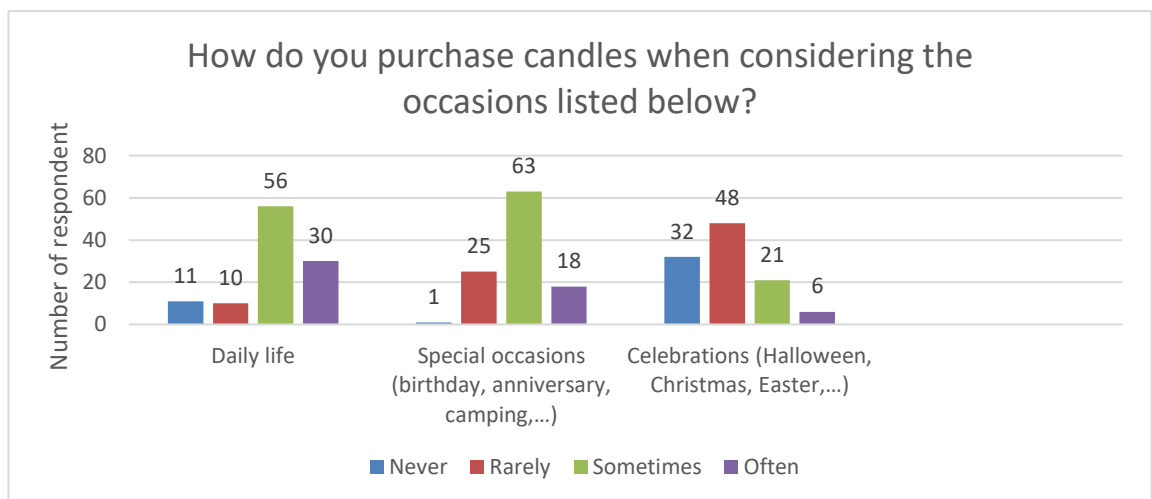


Figure 16. The Respondent's Purpose of Buying Candles (n=109)

Next, the purpose of using and buying candles of respondents are illustrated in the figure 15 and figure 16. In overall, the percentage of respondents who use candles for scent and decoration is highest, which are at 86.2% and 85.3% respectively, while the percentages for lighting and gift are the same at 40.4%. On the other hand, figure 16 demonstrates that most respondents purchase candles for special occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, or camping trips. The number of respondents who purchase candles for daily life use is lower than

that for special occasions, and the number of respondents purchase candles for celebrations such as Halloween or Easter is the least.

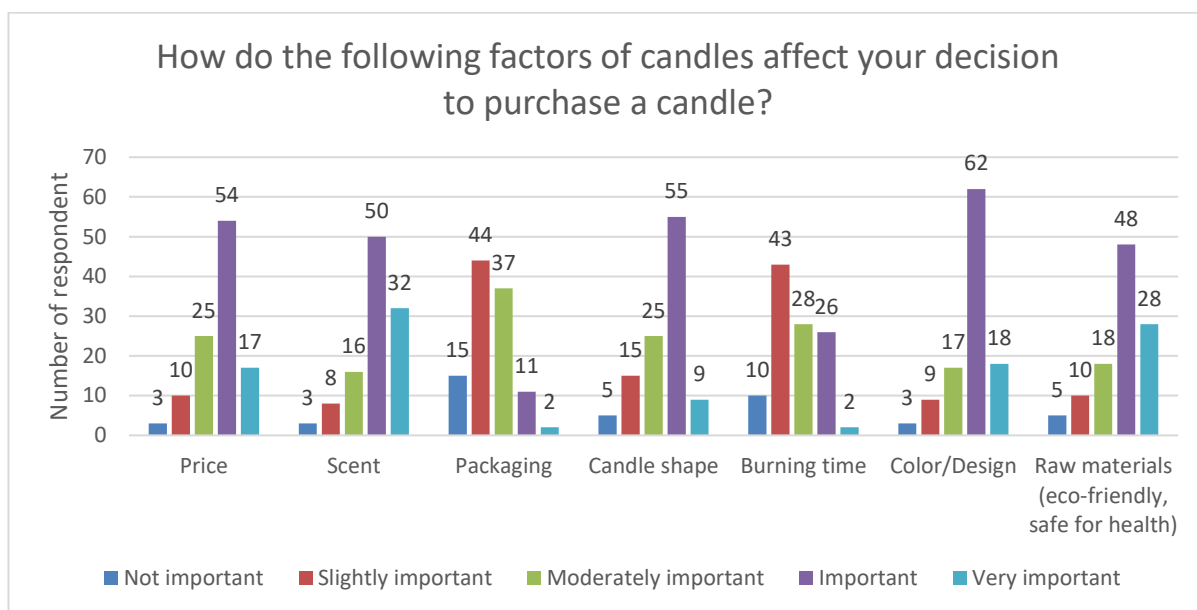


Figure 17. Candle Factors Affect Respondents' Choice (n=109)

According to the candle factors that influence response's decision in figure 17, the shape, colour, and design of the candle are the most important factors that respondents are interested in. The price, scent, and raw materials of the candle are the important elements that respondents concern about next, while packaging and candle burning time are the factors that people are concerned about the least.

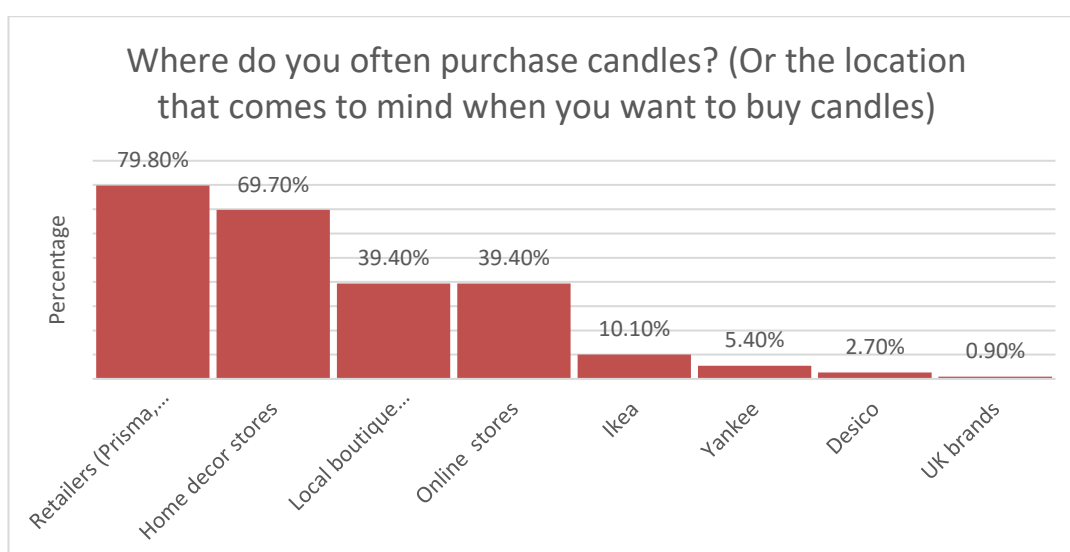


Figure 18. The Respondents' Choice of Candle Stores (n=109)

Furthermore, the question in figure 18 represents the choice of candle stores of respondents, which is crucial information for the author to identify competitors. There are 79.8% of respondents prefer to purchase candles from retailers such as Prisma or Tokmanni, 69.7% of respondents often purchase candles from home décor stores, while only 39.4% of them prefer to purchase candles from individual artists and online stores. Additionally, some respondents mentioned that they frequently purchase candles from Ikea, as well as from other brands including Desico and Yankee Candle.

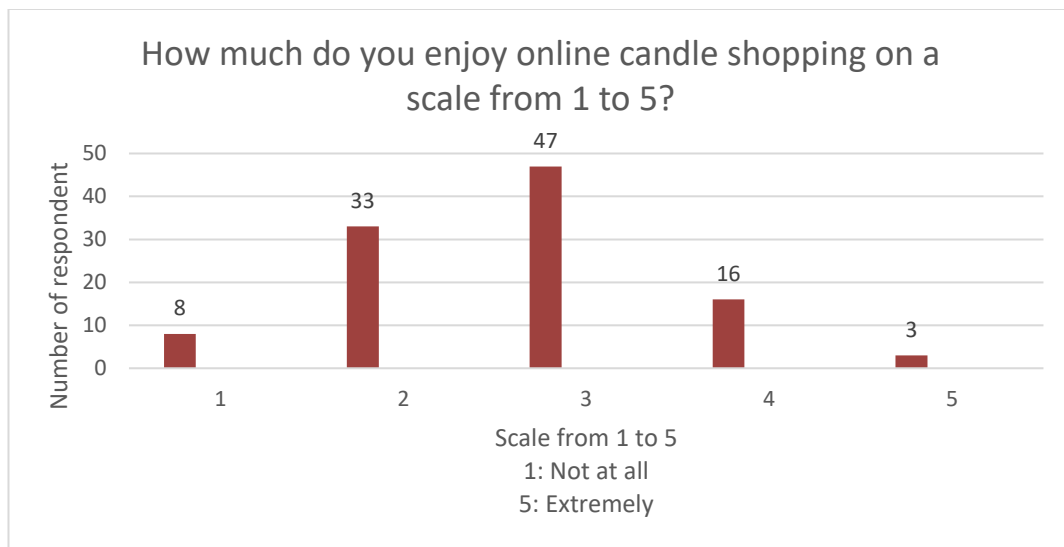


Figure 19. The Respondents' Enjoyment of Buying Candles Online (n=107)

The questions in the third section of the survey related to the online experience and Smell the Rose Candle's products. Figure 19 demonstrates the respondents' satisfaction with the online candle purchase. On a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely), 47 respondents rated their enjoyment of shopping candle online as being on a scale of 3, 33 respondents rated it as being on a scale of 2, 16 respondents rated the joy of online candle shopping as being on a scale of 4, 8 respondents rated it as being on a scale of 1, and only 3 respondents rated it as being on a scale of 5.



Figure 20. Factors Affect Online Shopping Experience of Respondents (n=109)

The chart in figure 20 displays factors can affect the online shopping behaviours of the respondents, in case of they need to buy a candle. The highest factor chosen by respondents (94.5%) is the detailed description of products, it means most of customer would like to know well about the products which they are going to purchase. Next, customer's review and special offer and discount are factors had been considered, 85% and 79% respectively. On the other hand, the respondents do not care much about the certification such as eco-label, which is only 12.8% of the participant who pay attention on the certification of the product. The chart also illustrates that the respondents are concerned about delivery time (37.8%), fear of scam (28.4%), easy to access the website (23.9%), and multiple payment method (21.1%).

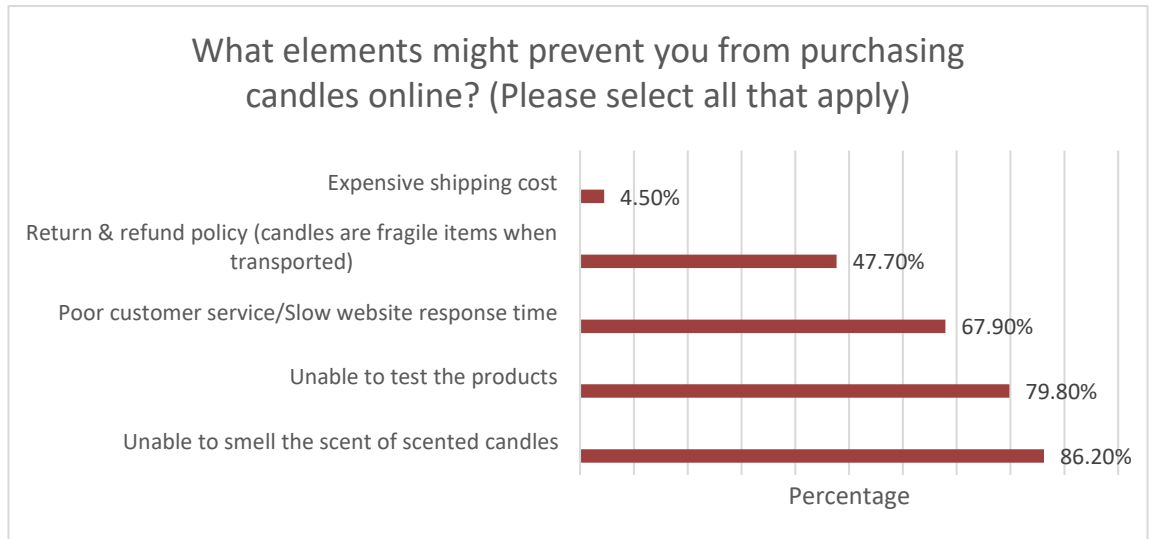


Figure 21. Factors Prevent Respondents from Purchasing Candles Online (n=109)

Furthermore, the two largest issues that make respondents worry about buying candles online, as shown in figure 21, are not being able to smell the scent of scented candles and not being able to test the products, with respective percentages of 86.2% and 79.8%. The factors of poor and slow customer service ranked by 67.9% of respondents, while return and refund policies by 47.7% of those polled. The additional expense of shipping fees is another issue that keeps people from ordering candles online.

A container scented candle (shown in the image below) weighs 200g, with a burning time up to 60 hours. It is made entirely of soy wax, all material...lth-safe. How much would you pay for this product?
109 responses

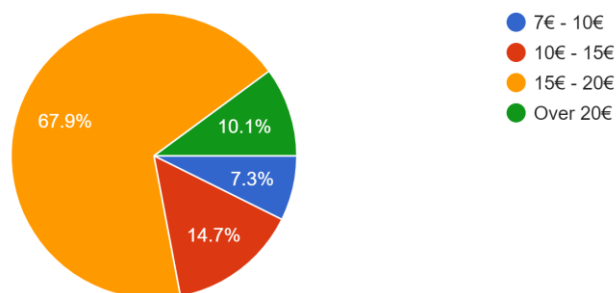


Figure 22. Smell the Rose Candle Product Pricing (n=109)

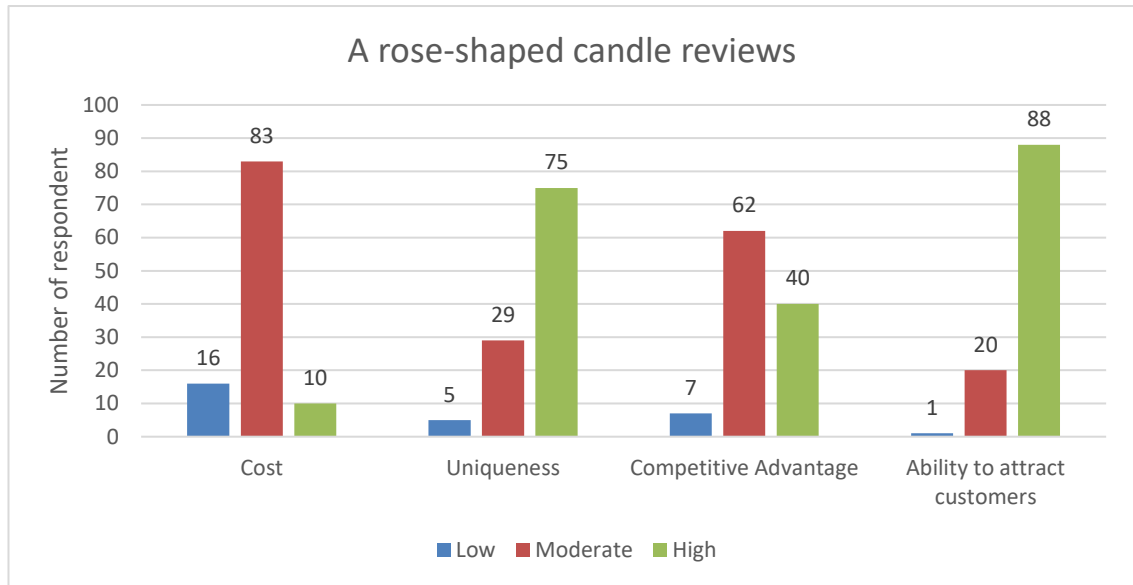


Figure 23. Product Review of Smell the Rose Candle (n=109)

The two questions for Smell the Rose Candle items are shown in figures 22 and 23. Figure 22's product pricing question shows that up to 67.9% of respondents place a value on scented candles between 15 and 20 euros, which is in line with the author's assessment of the price of scented candles. Finally, the majority of respondents to the product evaluation section of figure 23 gave the author's product a moderate rating for price and level of competitiveness while giving it a high rating for level of uniqueness and ability to attract customers. These reviews demonstrate that Smell the Rose Candle products have potential in the Finnish market.

5.2 Data Analysis

After gathering the data, the author can define the customer target group when Smell the Rose Candle enters the Finnish market. Additionally, it assists in identifying potentialities and barriers when the author launches an online candle business in Finland and in developing strategies to overcome those barriers. All results on target customer, potentialities, barriers, and strategies are described in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3. Data Analysis from the Survey

	Results from questionnaires	Results
Customer target group	Figure 22. Age group of respondents Figure 23. Gender of respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aged 15 to 44 • Female
Potentialities	Figure 24. Respondents purchasing frequency of candles	Matching the habit of using candles of customers: there are many respondents who are living in Finland use candles at least few times per month.
	Figure 25. Purpose of using candles of respondents Figure 26. The respondent's purpose of buying candles	Matching demands of customers: the main products of Smell the Rose Candles are scented candles and decorative candles for daily use and special occasions decoration.
	Figure 32. Smell the Rose Candle product pricing Figure 33. Product review of Smell the Rose Candle	Matching the taste of customers: most of respondents rated the products of Smell the Rose are unique and high ability to attract customers.
Barriers	Figure 28. The respondents' choice of candle stores	Competitors: Local candle brands (Desico), international candle brand (Yankee and Ikea), candle brands in Prisma and Tokmanni.
	Figure 29. The respondents' enjoyment of buying candles online	Small size target customer group of shopping online: there are under 50% of respondents enjoy online candle shopping.

Table 4. Strategies to Overcome Barriers

Results from questionnaires	Strategies
Figure 27. Candle factors affect respondents' choice	Focusing on the process of making candles, including selecting raw materials, creating shapes, colours, and designs, and selecting scents. Pricing the item reasonably is the most crucial factor.

<p>Figure 30. Factors affect online shopping experience of respondents</p> <p>Figure 31. Factors prevent respondents from enjoying purchasing candles online</p>	<p>Customers cannot test the product before purchasing it because the store is online, thus the solution will be to present visuals that describe the product while also introducing all relevant information, such as ingredients, shape, aroma, burning time, and usage instructions in both English and Finnish. Stories about items and brands should be emphasized to attract customers.</p> <p>Make the greatest products and services possible to attract and keep customers. Encourage consumers to leave feedback and reviews on the store's website and social media pages so that potential customers can read them and make a decision.</p> <p>Create a professional website with full contact details, delivery, return, and refund policy details. Provide clients with a variety of payment choices and discounts, such as free shipping on orders above 50 euros.</p>
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6 CANDLE IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY

6.1 Food and Beverage and Brand Collaboration

Co-branding is a marketing tactic in which various brand identities are applied to a product or service as a result of a strategic partnership. Co-branding (or "cobranding"), often known as a brand partnership, refers to a variety of branding partnerships that typically involve the brands of at least two businesses. With the use of distinctive logos, brand identifiers, and color schemes, each brand participating in such a strategic alliance contributes a component of its own identity to the combined brand. (Kenton 2020). According to Tobf (2020), co-branded partnerships are everywhere. A co-brand partnership can be a great way to rejuvenate the brand, create some positive buzz, and help the brand get some increased market share. When a business joins forces with another brand, the business benefit from its brand partner's endorsement, and possible receive better brand awareness in a new market segment. When done right, it's a win-win situation.

Food and beverage (F&B) and brand collaborations are one of the content-commerce categories that are beginning to spread internationally. The concept has started to catch on in Western countries led by KFC through partnerships such as the KFC x Crocs slip-ons, which were introduced at the beginning of the year 2020. (Booker 2020). Another example of F&B and brand collaboration is Supreme Oreo Cookies (Oreo x Supreme). On their official website, they announced this collaboration as their limited Spring/Summer 2020 product line. The limited-edition cookie was labeled with red as Supreme's brand color and splashed with their logo in place of Oreo's logo in the middle. The traditional cream-filled cookies were available in a pack of three for \$8 on the Supreme website and at all Supreme stores worldwide. Within days, bids on eBay for these cookies reached \$15,000. (Tobf 2020). Furthermore, there is an example of McDonald's Candles, which can be a prove candle brand can be related to the F&B industry by collaborating with them. McDonald's created a set of six scented candles in glass containers to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Quarter

Pounder's introduction. The ingredients in Quarter Pounders—Bun, Pickle, Cheese, Onion, Ketchup, and 100% Fresh Beef—were the inspiration for these candles. When burning them together, the aroma of a Quarter Pounder burger is released, and the stock was gone, according to the McDonald's website. (Tobf 2020). Thanks to the examples of F&B and brand collaboration, the author believes that Smell the Rose Candle will have the opportunity to collaborate with local brands on F&B in Finland in the future, to develop unique products and use co-branding as a business strategy for mutual benefits. Because brands that work together create opportunity for each to engage with new consumers through categories, flavors, and even marketing (Rosenbach 2022).

6.2 From Cakes and Cocktails to Candles

The art of candle making has developed, and candles today come in an unlimited number of shapes, sizes, colours, and fragrances. Candles are valued for their calming impact and frequently used to create a romantic and quiet atmosphere. (The Fun Empire Team 2022). As a Tourism and Hospitality student, the author has had the chance to experience, study and work in restaurants as a waitress and pastry chef. Additionally, with a passion for enjoying sweets and cocktails, it is obvious that the author has idea for creating candles resemble desserts, and candles with cocktail fragrances. The marketing campaigns for Smell the Rose Candle will relate to the candle products in the shape of desserts. For instance, on Valentine's Day February 14, the store will release cupcake-shaped candles that couples can purchase as gifts. Obviously, safe use will be expressly mentioned in the product packaging and usage directions, such as "This is a candle, not food" and "Keep out of reach of children". In addition, the campaign of scented candles for cocktail lovers named "Cocktail Inspired Candle" will be carefully developed by Smell the Rose Candle. This is a line of container scented candles made from soy wax with the aroma of classic cocktails. Each product will have a unique meaning and story about a classic cocktail. For instance, Gin and Tonic scented candle will have the scent of Gin and Tonic cocktail. Furthermore, image, a short story, and the recipe for the Gin and Tonic cocktail will be printed on the candle jar's packaging.



Figure 24. Cupcake Candles (Trinh 2022)

Gin & Tonic Candle

Summer version

Top notes: lime,
grapefruit, cucumber

Middle notes: ginger
beer

Base notes: gin, tonic,
mint

GIN
TONIC



4 CL DE GIN
8 CL DE TONIC
3 FEUILLES DE MENTHE
1 RONDELLE DE CITRON VERT
GLACONS

Figure 25. Example Poster for Cocktail Inspired Candle (Trinh 2022)

7 DISCUSSION

There were two main goals for this thesis project, and the author created two key research questions to support those goals. As a result, the research questions will have answers, and the study's objectives will have been accomplished.

The first research question was "How to launch a candle business online in Finland?". The author has done extensive document research, analysis, and step-by-step instructions to start an online candle business to answer this subject. The first step is completing the base analysis for establish the online handmade candle shop based in Finland in chapter 2 such as PESTEL analysis to evaluate the factors that might have an impact on the online candle shop in Finland. Particularly, the author can define the private entrepreneur as a suitable type of business form from political factors, as well as safety requirements for indoor candles from legal factors, which is the most crucial concern for the candle industry. Next, SWOT analysis of the case company was provided, which evaluates a company's performance, competition, risk, and potential as well as that of any divisions, product lines, industries, or other entities that the company may have. In addition, the Smell the Rose Candle's business model canvas was developed to draw the steps of starting the case company.

The second research question is "What are the potentialities, barriers, and strategies to overcome such barriers in the Finnish market?". The survey's data analysis helps the author identify potentialities and barriers when she launches an online candle business in Finland and in developing strategies to overcome those barriers. According to the Table 3 and Table 4. Data analysis from the survey in chapter 5, the case company operating a candle business in Finland has three potential outcomes: matching the habit of using candles of customers, matching demands of customers, and matching the taste of customers. On the other hand, there are two barriers for the author's business: a tiny number of customers prefer purchasing candles online; and strong competitors such as Desico, Yankee, and Ikea candle brands. The methods for overcoming obstacles will be discussed next. The first tactic focuses on the creation of candles. The second most important thing is to reasonably price the item. The

third one involves introducing all relevant information of products in both English and Finnish while also displaying images that define the product. To draw customers, stories about products and brands should be emphasized. The next step is to encourage clients to post comments and reviews on the store's website and social media pages. A professional website with complete contact information, shipping, return, and refund policy information should also be created by the author. Last but not least, give customers a range of payment options, discounts, or offers.

Regarding the reliability of this research, there were both strength and weakness factors affecting the results. The reliability of the results is that there were primary data collected in this thesis process. The primary data was gathered by collecting and analysing the results from online surveys. The author spread the survey on Facebook and WhatsApp groups, and the respondents were people who are living in Finland and some of them are candle lovers, which made the reliability for the research of mapping customer behaviour in Finland for the case company. On the other hand, most of the analysis's data came from online sources, the reliability of which cannot be verified. However, the sources were cautiously chosen and carefully chosen by the author. The information is trustworthy because it came from reliable sources such as reputable newspapers or government websites.

Furthermore, during the working process, the author applied knowledge earned in 3 years studying Tourism and Hospitality in Lapland University of Applied Sciences. The author's knowledge and fundamental foundation for completing this thesis project were provided by school courses in brand storytelling and communication, collaborative experience design, collaborative customer experience, and digital marketing. In the author's opinion, the thesis project has done its job in terms of researching the viability of a business idea, developing a brand's core values, examining consumer demand in the candle industry, and conducting a thorough business idea development process in order to adequately prepare for the establishment of an online candle business in the near future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. E-survey Template for Smell the Rose Candle's Research


Smell the Rose Candle

Mapping customer behaviour for the online store Smell the Rose Candle in Finland

Hi all,

I am an international student at Lapland University of Applied Sciences studying Tourism. I am planning to start a business and working on a graduate thesis project about launching an online candle store called Smell the Rose Candle in Finland. This survey is a part of my thesis project, which aims to understand more about customer using-candle behaviors and their expectations for an online candle store in Finnish market. The questionnaire is anonymous and takes about 8 - 10 minutes to finish. I appreciate you taking the time to complete my survey and your participation greatly helps my thesis.

Every respondent will have the opportunity to enter a raffle for a chance to win a set of scented wax tablets. Please contact me via email dung.trinh@edu.lapinamk.fi if you have any questions about the survey.

Thank you!

*Required

Background information

What is your age? *

Under 15

15 - 24

25 - 34

35 - 44

45 - 54

Over 54

What is your gender? *

Male

Female

Other: _____

Consumer habits regarding the purchase and use of candles

How often do you use candle at home? *

- Daily
- 4-5 times per week
- 2-3 times per week
- 2-3 times per month
- Once a month
- Other: _____

What are the uses for candles that you prefer? (Please select all that apply) *

- Lighting
- Decoration
- Scent
- Gift
- Other: _____

How do you purchase candles when considering the occasions listed below? *

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Daily life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Special occasions (birthday, anniversary, camping...)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Celebrations (Halloween, Christmas, Easter,...)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How do the following factors of candles affect your decision to purchase a candle? *

	Not important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Important	Very important
Price	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Scent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Packaging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Candle shape	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Burning time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Color/ Design	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Raw materials (eco-friendly, safe for health)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Where do you often purchase candles? (Or the location that comes to mind when * you want to buy candles)

- Online stores
- Retailers (Prisma, Tokmanni, K-city market, Stockmann,...)
- Home decor stores
- Local boutique shop/Individual artists
- Other: _____

Back

Next

Clear form

The effects of online shopping experience/ Smell the Rose Candle's products

How much do you enjoy online candle shopping?

- | | | | | | | |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Not at all | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Extremely |

What factors would affect your online shopping experience? (Please select all * that apply)

- Detailed description, information, and image of products
- Easy to navigate website
- Stories of the brand/products
- Special offers/discounts for purchase
- Customer's reviews
- Multiple payment methods
- Fear of scam
- Delivery time
- Certification (ex: eco-labels)
- Other: _____

What elements might prevent you from purchasing candles online? (Please select * all that apply)

- Unable to test the products
- Poor customer service/Slow website response time
- Return & refund policy (candles are fragile items when transported)
- Unable to smell the scent of scented candles
- Other: _____

A container scented candle (shown in the image below) weighs 200g, with a burning time up to 60 hours. It is made entirely of soy wax, all materials are used is environmentally friendly and health-safe. How much would you pay for this product? *



- 7€ - 10€
 10€ - 15€
 15€ - 20€
 Over 20€

A rose-shaped candle made from soy wax that is handmade and has a rose scent. Candles can be lit like regular pillar candles or used as decorations. It will cost 15€. How would you score the product? *



	Low	Moderate	High
Cost	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Uniqueness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Competitive advantage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ability to attract customers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Entering email to win a set of scented wax tablets!

All of your previous answers are completely anonymous. Responses to anonymous surveys cannot be traced back to the respondent. Unless you voluntarily enter your email address in this field, no personally identifiable information is collected. Additionally, your responses are combined with those of many others and summarized in a report to further protect your anonymity.

I am giving away 5 sets of scented wax tablets. Enter your email for the opportunity to be 1 of 5 lucky winners. Winner announced via email on 01.12.2022. (If you do not feel comfortable providing your email address, you may skip this question)

Your answer _____

Scented wax tablets[Back](#)[Submit](#)[Clear form](#)