



Visual Communication: Utilizing Brand for B2B Social Media

Strategy – Case Company-X

Gabriella Le Blanc

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences

Bachelor of Business Administration

Thesis

2022

Abstract

Author(s) Gabriella Le Blanc
Degree Bachelor of Business Administration
Report/Thesis Title Visual Communication: Utilizing Brand for B2B Social Media Strategy – Case Company-X
Number of pages and appendix pages 87 + 5
<p>It might be challenging to stand out from the crowd in the information-rich digital world. To draw customers' attention to material in an organic way, businesses must embrace the art of visual communication. This allows brands to create an impactful image of themselves, how they communicate the values they stand for, what their culture is like and helps build engagement with their audience.</p> <p>Utilizing sustainability of a product by being transparent has become a necessity for most companies in any industry. Customers are aware, conscious, and critical. They are the ones in charge and driving demand to shift towards sustainable measures through a business's processes. They expect brands to deliver values which correlate with the needs of the world today.</p> <p>The purpose of creative content is to exhibit a brand's image to potential new customers while providing value to the industry's current, devoted customers through visual communication. Understanding and incorporating heritage, way of life, brand origins, and the work they put into product design enriches brand affiliation. By understanding a brand, the more comprehensible the stance of the brand is in terms of sustainability and transparency.</p> <p>Captivating audiences with aesthetic and meaningful content is easily applied in creative industries but creating a social media strategy to target B2B clients within the industry is a challenge. Social media platforms offer content for consumers, who are end-users, but filtering through the masses to acquire new clients as a wholesale brand creates the need to examine the possibilities of doing so successfully.</p> <p>This thesis will examine the theory behind marketing on social media platforms and how to create value for the commissioning company to utilize visual strategies to do so. It includes theory about branding, visual communication, brand management, and selling sustainability using creative content. The outcome for this thesis is an illustration based on the case companies' sustainable aspects in product creation based on the theory of these chapters. It includes a specific strategy, tailored to the case companies' goal, which is to build brand awareness, grow on social media, and gain new clients while doing so.</p>
Key words Visual communication, B2B, Branding, Brand Management, Sustainability, Social Media Marketing, Creative Content

Table of contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Background	1
1.2	Project Objective	2
1.3	Project scope	4
1.4	Benefits	4
1.5	Risks and Risk Management	5
1.6	Definition of terms	5
1.7	Company-X	7
2	Branding.....	8
2.1	Brands and Branding.....	9
2.2	Brand Value	9
2.3	Customer-Based Brand Value	10
2.4	Consumer and Brand Involvement	10
2.5	Keller's Brand Equity Model	11
2.6	Brand Awareness.....	12
2.7	Establishing Brand Awareness	12
2.8	Sustainability	12
2.9	Sustainable Consumer Behavior	13
2.10	Sustainable Products	15
2.11	Megatrends by 2030.....	16
2.12	Transparency	17
2.13	How Brand Transparency is Perceived.....	17
2.14	Social Media and Content Creation	18
2.15	Creating Content	19
2.16	Social Media and Fostering Successful Engagement as A Brand.....	20
2.17	Visual Communication.....	20
2.18	Customer Engagement and Types of Visual Communication	22
3	Target Market, Industry, and Competitor Analysis	24
3.1	Internationalization: Goals	24
3.2	The Interior Design Industry	24
3.3	Target Market Statistics Globally	25
3.4	Industry in the U.S. Market	26
3.5	Industry in Canada	27
3.6	Industry in Asia.....	28
3.6.1	China	28

3.6.2	Japan.....	28
3.7	Benchmarking Competitors	29
3.8	Competitor Designer Rug Brands.....	30
3.9	Competitor Brand Positioning.....	32
3.10	Competitor Analysis	33
3.10.1	Website.....	34
3.10.2	Social Media	35
4	Client Segments.....	37
4.1	Current Clients	37
4.2	Wholesale Clients vs Retail Consumers.....	37
4.3	Applying Traditional Channels to Digital Forms	38
4.4	Utilizing Digital Marketing Strategies to Target Wholesale Audience	38
4.5	Survey Results	38
4.6	Survey Analysis.....	42
4.7	Analysis of Target Audience.....	43
4.8	Showrooms	43
4.9	B2B Marketing and Social Media.....	45
5	Final Product.....	46
5.1	Case Company Positioning: Brand Affiliation Using the Keller Model	46
5.2	Product – Illustration: Utilizing Visual Communication and Brand Image	47
5.3	Social Media Strategy for The B2B Market.....	50
5.3.1	Objectives for The Social Media Strategy	50
5.3.2	Social Media Benchmarks for Interior Design.....	51
5.3.3	Trending Hashtags.....	53
5.3.4	Creative and Visual Content	53
5.3.5	Image and Video Content	53
5.3.6	Paid Advertisement.....	54
5.3.7	Other Recommendations	54
5.4	Website Recommendations.....	56
5.4.1	SOSTAC planning model for the digital marketing plan.....	57
5.4.2	Incorporating the 5 S'	57
5.4.3	Content Marketing.....	58
5.4.4	B2B Content Marketing.....	59
5.4.5	Inbound Marketing	61
5.4.6	SEO Results	62
5.4.7	Recommendations for Optimization	64

5.4.8	Meta Description Tag.....	65
5.4.9	H2-H6 Header Tag Usage	65
5.4.10	Keyword Consistency	66
5.4.11	Google’s Page Speed	67
5.4.12	Social Results	67
5.4.13	Email Marketing	68
5.4.14	Statistics	70
5.4.15	Recommendations	71
6	Project Management Methods.....	72
6.1	Management Methods.....	72
6.2	Product Design.....	75
6.3	Goal of the Design.....	75
6.4	Design Methods	76
6.5	Creating the Final Design	76
	References	77
	Appendix 1. Excel: Competitor Benchmarking	88
	Appendix 2. Mixed Methods Survey Answers	89
	Appendix 3. First Draft of The Final Product: Illustration	91
	Appendix 4. Images Used for the Final Product.....	92

1 Introduction

This is a product-based bachelor's thesis for the Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences' International Business Degree Program, with a major in Customer Relationship Management and Communication. The purpose of this thesis is to develop a social media strategy that the case company can utilize to its advantage, to stand out to B2B clients, and to create an illustration which demonstrates the brand's sustainability efforts to engage customers through the practice of visual storytelling.

We heavily weigh sustainability when determining how to view a company. It creates brand value, and to stand out from the competition, you need to know how to creatively market it. Clients interact with businesses online and on social media, and inventive storytelling distinguishes businesses. (Walter and Gioglio 2014, 4.) The final product will be an illustrated example of the company's sustainability measures, which the case company can use on their webpage, promote on social media, and incorporate the findings of the social media analysis to better target their B2B clientele. This chapter will elaborate on the project objectives, challenges, stakeholders, key concepts, and benefits of this product to the case company in detail.

1.1 Background

The salability of a product depends on its sustainability, and compelling, appealing material is essential to demonstrating this. Products' effects on society and the environment are constantly being examined. The sustainability concerns that arise throughout a product's lifecycle must be addressed and communicated to the clients. (Kieckhäfer, Soghi, Spengler and Thies, 2019.) It is vital to take this into account when developing a branding strategy that speaks to the target audience through compelling visuals. Clients prefer visual material over text-based content, and websites with graphics on them get 120–180 percent more engagement (Walter and Gioglio 2014, 8). A strong visual communication strategy can increase the possibility for engagement, conversions, and sharing among clients rather than relying heavily on text-based content (Walter and Gioglio 2014, 8).

1.2 Project Objective

The goal of this product-based thesis is to produce an illustration for Company-X's website and social media account. Along with this product, I will present strategies they are able to incorporate into their social media and digital marketing strategies, specifically targeted for their B2B clients. By presenting creative stories, the company hopes to increase brand loyalty, expand its consumer base, and create an engaging and in-depth look into their products' transparency on the improved sustainability standards webpage. The expected outcome of this thesis is to give insight on how to produce new content while adhering to the brand's aesthetic, using imaginative imagery of the methods used in sustainable measures and the materials used in the products, and ultimately creating a narrative that will be used for their website, email newsletters and social media content.

The desired outcome is to generate brand value through sustainability, utilizing the culture and identity of the case company through visual communication.

The international aspect required by degree program of all theses is covered by having a Finnish legacy brand, operating in New York City, NY. Company-X designs the rugs in New York and crafts them in Finland. The business has been operating since 1981 and has sold their products within the United States for decades, offering their products for both commercial and private customers.

The project objective (PO) of this thesis is to create an illustration for the case company of their sustainability measures and to help understand why visual communication is important. The project objective was divided into project tasks (PT) as follows:

PT 1. Designing the theoretical framework. Gaining insight of the main characteristics of what is brand awareness, what does sustainability mean to customers and how is it achieved through visual communication.

PT 2. Benchmarking competitors. Determining what kind of brand marketing and social media content are competitors applying and how are they communicating about sustainability within their brand. Analyzing results.

PT 3. Analyzing the case companies' client segment and helping them in setting towards their goals. Analyzing the mixed methods survey results and narrowing down the social media strategy and digital marketing aspect targeted for their B2B clients based on results.

PT 4. Final product. Creating the illustration of the sustainability measures, which will be used for their web page and social media account and have defined suggestions for their social media strategy, and how to serve their B2B clientele through digital marketing.

Table 1. below presents the knowledge base components, project management methods and outcomes for each task.

Table 1: Overlay matrix

Project Task	Framework	Project Methods	Outcomes
PT 1.	Writing the theoretical framework	Desktop Research	Importance of company values and visual communication for clients
PT 2.	Benchmarking competitors	Desktop Research, Interview with the company, analysis	What kind of marketing and content are competitors producing and how are they communicating about brand, who are their main competitors in the market
PT 3.	Client segmentation	Desktop research results of benchmarking competitors, website, and social media analysis, mixed methods survey	Result analysis, indicating what clients are attracted to, determining what content is engaging and what digital marketing aspects are most important to the industry
PT 4.	Final product and social media strategy	Results from parts 1, 2, and 3	Data gathered from the first three parts will help determine the best social media strategy for the case company and help with creating the final product – Illustration of sustainability measures

1.3 Project scope

The focus of this thesis is how to develop a social media strategy for the B2B clientele, while strengthening brand identity and engaging customers through visual communication. Additionally, it thoroughly discloses the sustainability efforts of the case company. For the case company, the goal is to create a well-chosen illustration. They also need a strategy which will work in targeting wholesale clients within their industry. Information from desktop research and benchmarking competitors in the sector will decide this.

Social media analysis and content creation best suited for their target audience will also be determined. The completed product will show an illustration of the products' manufacturing process, as well as more information on how to increase social media reach and how this enhances the case company's brand image by showcasing the products' sustainability and fostering brand loyalty and value.

The benchmarking will aid in focusing the essential information on the visual communication strategies that other businesses are employing and, consequently, finding success. A focus group survey is also essential for determining what aspects of visual storytelling are relevant for this project. Additionally, desktop literature and case study research will aid in navigating the significance of visual communication.

1.4 Benefits

The project's commissioning company, will gain knowledge about how to increase their social media reach as well as receive the product. This solution will benefit their current clients by improving how they view the business and fostering brand loyalty and help them in determining the best strategy for their social media.

Based on current suggestions for how to produce interesting content, new clients will have a better grasp of their efforts to include sustainability into their product line and reaching out via social media will help them increase their client base.

I will develop a thorough grasp of what it's like to work on a social media strategy for a company which specializes with wholesale clients and what it takes to create branded content. Other learning goals include taking on more responsibility for the product outcome, improving my resume as a junior professional, and expanding my network in the interior design industry, with individuals, whom I plan to conduct business in the future.

New contacts in the field would be helpful for my own small business, which is related to the arts and interior design sector. My goal is to eventually live in the New York City region while expanding my own company.

1.5 Risks and Risk Management

Due to the differences in the target market or the sector itself, the data applied from research may not work to the case firms' advantage and is based on my own abilities and understanding. If so, there would need to be time before presenting the finished product to test its efficacy. This might be accomplished by developing a mixed methods survey for a focus group that either purchases products of or is a brand in interior design, values sustainability, and is accustomed to using social media. This focus group would be drawn from social media and would ideally have 5-10 participants to gather sufficient amount of data to analyze.

A setback would occur if the case company chose to stop producing the product that was ordered for any reason. However, the fundamental component of any brand building necessitates similarly structured topics (sustainability concerns, visual communication, branding utilizing the brands culture), and this could be applied to other businesses within related industries, such as the fashion or interior design industry.

The commissioning company's failure to communicate on time may be the third risk for this thesis. To reduce the likelihood of this happening, I would take preventative action by getting in touch with them in advance of any deadlines I have set for the process.

There is a significant risk that we won't discover a way to use social media to target their ideal clients. It can be difficult to find a way to do this with content marketing on social media as the wholesale market does not consist of end users.

1.6 Definition of terms

Branding is the subtle distinguishability customers will understand in differentiating a supplier's brand from another (Murphy 1992, 2).

Brand value is the customer's perception of the business based on how they perceive its qualities, traits, products, processes, and image. We can communicate with customers and control the primary message we want the brand to convey by shaping how they perceive the brand. By increasing consumer engagement through visual communication, the customer in a way adopts the brand.

This strengthens the bond between the customer and the brand, which eventually increases the brand's value. (Rosenbaum-Elliot, Percy, and Pervan 2018, 7.)

Brand Awareness is the outcome of which we want to help the case company to build stronger ties with, either existing or new customers. It is the main asset of a company and means there are repeated interactions and purchases from a customer based on strong preference of the brand. Customers are therefore emotionally attached to the brand and committed to their products and or services. (Rubio and Yagüe 2019, 4.)

Sustainability in branding impacts the brands reacting to sustainable production and execution of products within the brand correlate with the ongoing issues of the environment and have set a trend of conscious decision making along the process (Sesini, Castiglioni and Lozza 2020, 12).

Transparency of a brand is effective when communicating the image of the brand. Transparency speaks to the customer and helps in visualizing the scope of product origins. It drives brand integrity and customer empowerment. It effects across different levels of product complexity to design and the overall reputation of the brand. (Pontin and Cambier 2020.)

Social Media allows content to be shared via various media applications, designed to create interactive experiences with their audiences. It creates engagement between the end users and companies using it in marketing terms. (Luttrell 2014, 204.)

Content Creation is a creative marketing strategy that focuses on producing and disseminating useful, pertinent, and consistent information in order to draw in and keep a target audience and, eventually, encourage profitable consumer action as a result (Tuten 2021, 234).

Visual Communication is the aim of creatively communicating and developing ways of contacting the customers with engaging storytelling. It is the art of connecting an idea by narrating the message in a way, which effects the viewer at a deeper level. It has the potential to enhance loyalty, strengthen customer relationships, and increase awareness. Visual communication is the product of an artist, which helps in generating content for customers to understand the brand and the culture with imagery. It is often referred to as visual storytelling or creative storytelling, and the goal is to communicate brand attributes successfully through artistry (Walter and Gioglio 2014, 4.)

Customer Engagement in branding is discussed as a relationship between the company and the customer, where engagement is associated with the level of an active relationship that the customer shares with a company. It oversees the emotional connection, strategy of the business, interaction with the customer and company and allowing the customer to have a voice. (Palmatier, Kumar and Harmeling 2018, 3.)

1.7 Company-X

The history of Company-X began with a family business in Finland over 40 years prior to the company's establishment in New York City, NY, in 1981. Women had been weaving for decades, using the traditional pattern of Finnish rag rugs as a model. The founder and president are committed to the company's goal of producing high-end, luxury, Scandinavian-designed rugs. They offer hand-made contemporary rugs to the wholesale market in America. Their top clients are designer showrooms, interior designers, architects, developers, and high-income clients. They take great pride in the Finnish design heritage of their rugs. (Case Company-X 2022.)

The modern luxury carpet models may be seen online or in one designer showrooms they work with. All their products are made to order. All the high-tech power loom woven rugs are made by hand in Finland. They use innovative weaving technology that enables them to produce high-quality, long-lasting rugs using just wind and sun energy, which is completely carbon neutral. The Nordic region of Finland takes pride in using sustainable materials, and the carpets are made from strong paper yarn, recycled cotton, and renewable New Zealand wool. (Case Company-X 2022.) The goal of the company is business expansion. They strive to refine the essence of consumer perception of the brand. To accomplish this, it is in both parties' best interests to learn how to improve their image, not only by using their culture as a point of reference in the narrative to foster brand loyalty, but also by addressing sustainability issues since they are pertinent to the preferences of our clients.

Using social media and developing brand loyalty go hand in hand. They have between 500 and 600 followers on social media now. The corporation has welcomed the founder's daughter, who is now serving as vice president. They aim to grow their brand to an international audience, attract new clients in the design industry, and deepen their relationships with their current clientele. Particularly when it comes to upgrading content that they may have added to their website or social media. They have determined that the best method to address these issues is to concentrate on the branding through interesting visuals and narratives pertaining to their sustainably designed products. There is nevertheless opportunity for growth and improvement.

In the second chapter, branding will be discussed along with its effects on brands and brand value, customer-based brand value, and brand recognition. It will also discuss theory of sustainability and customer association when offering sustainable products, transparency, visual communication, and engagement.

2 Branding

In this chapter we will cover the theory of what is branding, how customers affiliate with sustainability and transparency within brands, visual storytelling, and social media engagement.

Branding has different approaches on how to speak to the audience. Topics related to sustainable measures, emotional connection, culture, and transparency are all voiced through branding. These approaches, paired with visual communication the brand is what correlates with how to grow customer engagement. Designing the way, it is implemented, requires communicating the plan so that it is seamless and thorough with the brand image. This chapter includes the concept itself, practices, theories, and models. The literature used to create the theoretical framework will help conclude how to conduct the final product for the company.

The following books and articles are relevant in researching the key elements for gathering theory for this thesis. *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring and Managing Brand Equity*, Keller, K. 29th October 2012, *Does Sustainability Sell? The Impact of Sustainability Claims on The Success of National Brands' New Product Introductions*, Van Doorn, J., Risselda, H., & Verhoef, P. C. 2021, *Inferring Brand Integrity from Marketing Communications: The Effects of Brand Transparency Signals in A Consumer Empowerment Context*, Pontin, I., & Cambier, F. March 2020, *Marketing Engagement Through Visual Content*, Manic, M. 2015, *The Power of Visual Storytelling. How to Use Visuals, Videos, and Social Media to Market Your Brand*, Walter, E., & Gioglio, J. 2014, *Social Media Marketing*, Tuten, T.L. 2021.

We must examine what factors drive brand value and what brand culture traits are distinctive to our case company to determine what fundamental elements lead to the design elements final product as well as the social media analysis. The essential ideas of this project are shown in the image below.

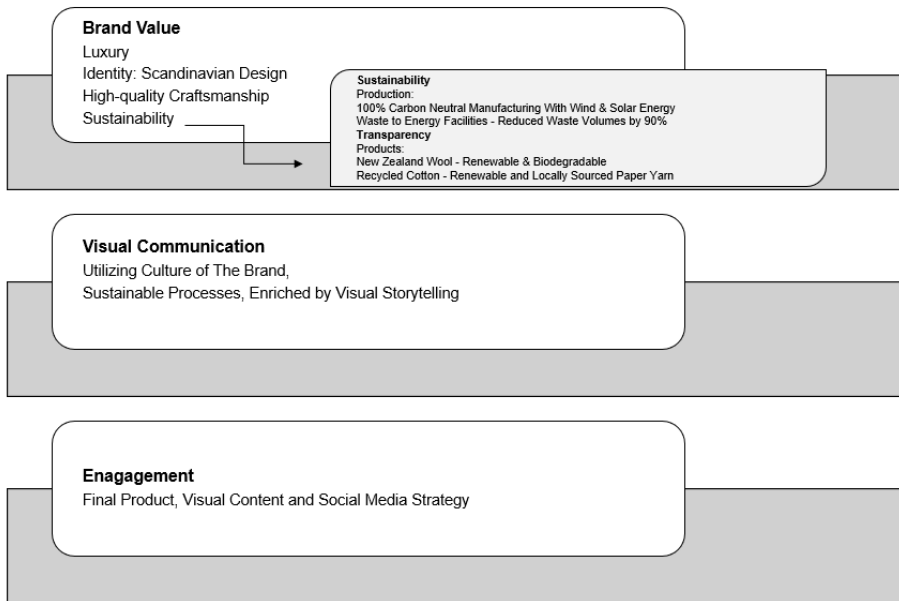


Figure 1. Brand Value, Visual Communication, Engagement

2.1 Brands and Branding

Successfully branding goes beyond the overall image of a company. What is considered as brand attributes correlate with the image itself which stems from the name, advertisements, packaging, and tone of voice (Barwise 2009, 14). The value of a brand is generally born from the customers experience with interacting with the brand. It is based on trust of the product, aesthetic, and psychological reasoning which the customer then recognizes (Barwise 2009, 15).

There is an abundance of choice in the market for any type of product imaginable. Branding is a skill of creating value for products and its attributes must fulfill a customer wants and needs. It must meet the customers' expectations and fall in-line with their own values. This creates the feeling of confidence within customers. (Blacklett 2009, 17,18.)

2.2 Brand Value

Brand value can be viewed from a financial, employee, or customer standpoint. In this thesis and with respect to the case company, we are interested in how important brand value is from the customers' point of view. Cognitive psychology is a key element in why brand value becomes significant to both the brand and the customer, as well as in how importance and relationships are created with the brand and customer.

It also comes into play when a business must decide how to sell itself and how to promote its goods, both of which have an impact on the brand value that customers associate with it. The distinctive features that a brand possesses are what cause brand familiarity and favorability. Current trends are what many brands are investing in, and effective marketing communications of brand attributes are essential and timely. (Farjam and Hongyi 2015, 14, 15.)

2.3 Customer-Based Brand Value

The concept of customer-based brand value is that the image and value of the brand is dependent of the customers perspectives, feelings, experiences they have had with the brand. Ensuring that customers get the right type of experience with a brands product is a challenge marketers will face. This challenge for marketers is creating strong ties with the brand and making sure that customers will always have the right kind of experience when interacting with the brand. (Keller 2012, 69.)

2.4 Consumer and Brand Involvement

Involvement	Brand Attributes	Consumer Benefits
<i>Emotional Realm</i>	Symbolic Meaning	Social Language of The Brand Self-Enhancement Self-Positioning
	Personality Authenticity	Transformation of Experience
	Reassurance	Safe Choice
<i>Functional Realm</i>	Keeping Promises of Performance	Easy Choice Certainty in an Uncertain World Replicability of Satisfaction

Figure 2. Brand Involvement (Strategic Brand Management 4th Edition.)

A product's ability to deliver on its performance guarantees is its fundamental brand attribute. Replicability of straightforward functional demands satisfaction and problem solutions are the most fundamental benefits that a brand may offer to clients. In an uncertain world, it provides certainty. Brands that occupy the emotional and cognitive space provide for trustworthy, rather than obvious decisions. (Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy, and Pervan 2018, 5-7.)

The variation is brought about by rising functional and symbolic degrees of risk. The consumer advantage of the brand becomes a safe choice when risks rise, and emotional processes take over more and more of the decision-making process. Safe in terms of meeting all the consumer

expectations of the product. As clients become more captivated with a brand, its symbolic meaning assumes paramount significance since it affects their life experiences and might even play a role in how they develop, express, and engage in their social and cultural identities. (Rosenbaum-Elliot, Percy, and Pervan 2018, 5-7.)

2.5 Keller's Brand Equity Model

The Keller Model

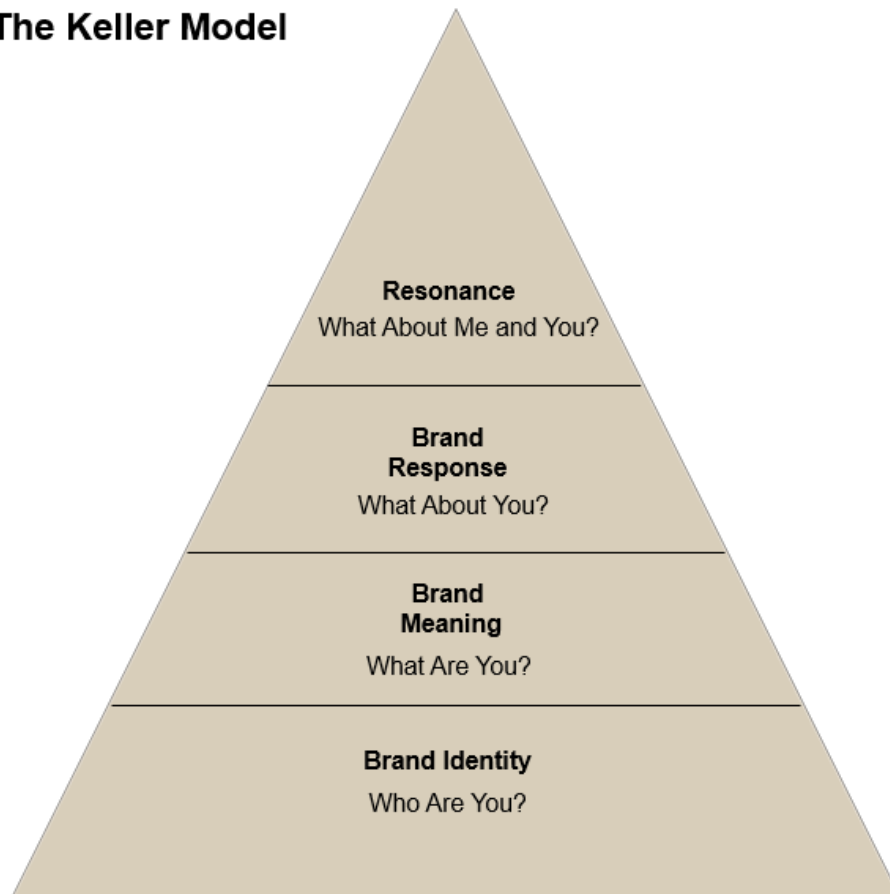


Figure 3. Keller's Brand Equity Model (Frontify 2022.)

The Keller's brand equity model helps to determine the overall performance of the brand. It may be perceived by laying out the primary features, consistency of the product, style and design features, price, and the effectiveness of the customer experience with the brand. (Hawker 2019.)

2.6 Brand Awareness

Recognition of a brand is the customers' ability to connect experiences with the brand prior.

Recognition and ability to connect with the brand based on previous experience led to being aware of and making decisions based on this. Brand awareness is usually in connection with the aesthetics, price, product, packing of the products and so on. Emotional attachment and falling in line with values is equally important when it comes to association brand attributes to brand awareness. Customer purchase motivation must be powered by positive attributes of the brand to drive to make the consideration to purchase from the brand. (Keller 2012 73, 74.)

2.7 Establishing Brand Awareness

Keller explains that the more the customer experiences the brand itself, the more likely it is to leave a lasting memory (Keller, 75).

What triggers experiences is largely to do with having positive experiences with the brand or by being indulged by the characteristics which are showcased either through marketing, social media, products, or customer service. Increasing brand awareness through creating familiarity and repeated exposure to the brand is the first procedure in establishing brand awareness, after which we can create emphasis on brand image. (Keller, 75.)

2.8 Sustainability

Sustainable products are those which have a positive impact on the environment as well as on society. Some typical instances are sustainably produced products which have been created by securing fair labor practices and by reducing the use of or reusing natural resources. (Van Doorn, Risselda and Verhoef 2021.)

Customers have already gained growing expectations from companies and their products related to sustainability. It is therefore of high value to promote the sustainability aspects of a company's existing and or new products. Individuals who are aware need to know that what they are investing in are in-line with their own values.

2.9 Sustainable Consumer Behavior

By which means consumers behave when making decisions about purchasing products dictates the importance of purchasing sustainable products versus those which are not. The attractiveness of sustainable products, becoming the ideal choice, are linked with overall mentality and consciousness of sustainability in our society. To do better for the greater good is to purchase wisely, which is choosing sustainable products. (Sesini, Castiglioni and Gemelli 2020.) The consumers behaviors can be approached from perspectives such as the marketing view, the consumers own interest, and the ethical focus (Antonides 2017).



Figure 4. Perceived Image and Values of Sustainably Driven Consumers (Han 2021.)

The image above demonstrates some key psychological traits consumers have, according to Han (Sustainable Consumer Behaviour and the Environment 2021.) The concept of the *green image* is frequently used to describe a person who has a perception of a product and its features (Kotler 1993, as cited in Han 2021, 8). Based on knowledge of the sustainable object's characteristics, this image emerges (Han 2021). The *pro-environmental behavior* consumer is one who chooses environmentally friendly products and engages in sustainable behaviors in daily life is exhibiting pro-environmental behavior (Laroche 2001, Paco and Rapose 2009, and Untaru 2016, as cited in Han 2021, 9).

Environmental knowledge is regarded as a primary cognitive dimension when describing environmentally sustainable consumer behavior because of its crucial function (Boo and Park 2013, Han and Hyun 2017, and Kaiser 199, as cited in Han 2021, 10). With *green product attachment*,

consumers that have a strong bond with a product are steadfast in their determination to keep buying it (Fedorikhin 2008, as cited in Han 2021, 10).

Additionally, consumers who are loyal to a particular brand show a willingness to maintain a current relationship with the brand (Thomson 2005, as cited in Han 2021, 10).

With the *descriptive social norm*, social pressure to engage in or refrain from performing a specific action is referred to as an unfavorable social norm. The degree to which a behavior is frequently perceived in a specific consumption circumstance is indicated by descriptive social norm. (Ajzen and Kruglanski 2019, Smith 2012, Han and Hwang 2017, and Matthies 2012, as cited in Han 2021, 10.)

Anticipated pride and guilt are when engaging in a certain consumption behavior, a consumer feels either good or terrible and expects good or bad feelings they will experience in the future by engaging in the action (Bamberg and Möser 2007, Klöckner and Matthies 2004, Steg and Vlek 2009, as cited in Han 2021, 11). *Environmental CSR* (corporate social responsibility) is when a socially responsible business is proactive in CSR initiatives for the preservation of the environment and has a better chance of improving customer retention and having a high reputation in the market's growing eco-consciousness (Afifah and Asnan 2015, Han 2019, and Lee 2013, as cited in Han 2021, 11).

Various studies with pro-social motivations that are grounded in social and environmental psychology theories have shown that cognitive elicitors are necessary for the effective activation of moral norms (Han and Yoon 2015, Roberts 1996, Straughan and Roberts 1999, as cited in Han 2021, 11). Unquestionably, one of the key components of such cognitive triggers is *perceived effectiveness* (Judge 2007, Roberts 1996, as cited in Han 2021, 11). A consumer's perception of the effectiveness of their environmental preservation efforts in lessening environmental damage is referred to as *perceived effectiveness* (Han and Yoon 2015, Straughan and Roberts 1999, as cited in Han 2021,11).

Connectedness to nature describes a consumer, who is typically more engaged in adopting ecologically sustainable consumption habits when they feel strongly connected to the natural world (Dutcher 2007, and Mayer and Frantz 2004, as cited in Han 2021, 12).

Green value is one's assessment of a product's effectiveness based on their perception of what is gained and lost, and it is the consumer's cognitive evaluation of an eco-friendly product's effectiveness based on their impression of what is gained and sacrificed (Zeithaml 1988 and Han 2018, as cited in Han 2021, 12).

2.10 Sustainable Products

Having sustainable products and strategies are beneficial for brands. However, some negative expectations may be pricing and price points of the products. Products which are sustainably manufactured being more expensive than the conventional counterparts. (Van Doorn, Risselda and Verhoef 2021.)

But this being, consumers link high prices with high quality, thus creating an important relationship again with associations towards the brand itself. (Van Doorn, Risselda and Verhoef 2021). The material value that can be obtained after use and implicitly in the price of a good or service both represent the product or service's sustainable value proposition. The motivation to purchase is usually inspired by values expressed in or represented by the goods, sought out a particular value promise for target customers, in addition to basic needs. (Has 2022, 26.)

It is crucial to satisfy the desire to purchase by recognizing values that are compatible with a given product. Brands actively leverage this relationship to align their own beliefs with what they do in terms of social responsibility and environmental sustainability. (Has 2022, 26.)

2.11 Megatrends by 2030

Megatrends aid in the shaping of major phenomena that occur on an enormous scale, many of which are correlated to some extent with climate, urbanization, population, and energy. Many of these relate to the current requirement to achieve carbon neutrality and consider the ecological effects that production and manufacturing have on the status of the planet today. (ESPAS 2022.)

MEGATRENDS FOR 2030

TRENDS

- Need to remain sustainable / sustainability sells
- New customers - Interior industries will continue to thrive / new homes new textiles
- Focus from the U.S. market to the international market
- Energy consumption ever growing / the ability to remain 100% carbon neutral is a big plus

FACTS

- Climate change
- Population Growth
- Urbanization
- Growing global economy, especially Europe
- Energy consumption

Figure 5. Megatrends: Reflecting the Case Company and Interior Design Industry (ESPAS 2022.)

Based on the data on the European Strategy and Policy Analysis page, we may forecast how trends that are expected to occur by the year 2030 will impact the interior design sector. Based on Figure 4, the case company is a front runner in sustainability measures, by having access to the right materials, tools, craftsmanship and they continue to work on this aspect as a number one strategic feature in their products. Higher population means having higher demand for interior design products and growth within the industry. Growth of the upper middle class shows that the power of purchase will remain high, and urbanization will lead to more homes being built and the need for interior design industries products. (ESPAS 2022.)

The case company should focus on broadening their business to target the European markets as well, where the global economy will grow significantly. The increasing need for energy means that their ability to already remain 100% carbon neutral and use “clean energy” adds leverage in brand worth as a business process. They must include tactics that relate to long-term goals and promote compliance with international regulations when it comes to sustainability. (ESPAS 2022.)

2.12 Transparency

Consumers are driving marketing strategy. Successful brands today speak honestly and humanely with their customers rather than "at" them. A revolution has been sparked by this demand for open communication and brand transparency. People are more intelligent and less likely to fall for a fabricated narrative, and they become bored with marketing lingo. Truth sells for the first time in history. (Watts, Williams and Baaghil 2013.)

Transparency in marketing may be used as a tool to develop brand stories that people believe in and want to be a part of. Applying transparency to content marketing strategies like blogs, social media, newsletters, and more, there are chances to inform and interact with the target audience at a deeper, more meaningful level. Finding a brand's stories and expressing them to the right audiences at the right times will help build connections through purposeful, actionable content. (Watts, Williams and Baaghil 2013.)

Without taking responsibility, brands cannot rise to the top. People who fear the possibility of excessive corporate power will rebel if it chooses to overlook these factors. A brand can have a positive impact and aid in the solution of some of the most difficult challenges facing the world today by implementing transparency throughout a service, business process, or production. Brands must understand their audiences to get there, and they must integrate this practice into their branding. They must adopt moral principles that emphasize humanity, sincerity, and integrity. These principles must be incorporated into their everyday routines. (Ind 2003, 17.)

2.13 How Brand Transparency is Perceived

Transparency has been explored from a brands standpoint in terms of the level of accessibility and visibility of information offered by them (Wilkin 2009, as cited in Merlo 2017, 2). Transparency has been described from the standpoint of the customer as an individual's subjective sense of getting pertinent information from the brand in question. (Merlo 2017, 2.)

Information accessibility requires that it not just be made available but also be simple enough for the intended audience to understand (Mittal 1999, as cited in Merlo 2017, 2). When there is too much or too complicated information available, clients may become even more uncertain, which could cause them to respond negatively or get alienated (Ziamou & Ratneshwar 2002, as cited in Merlo 2017, 2).

When complete information about a brands' offerings is made available and is simple for customers to understand, transparency is effective. This point emphasizes the significance of tasks like successful website design, customer data research, testing of customers' technical language comprehension, and so forth. (Merlo 2017, 2.)

The information that is given must also be impartial. It cannot deliberately emphasize favorable qualities while downplaying undesirable ones (Bennis et al., 2008, as cited in Merlo 2017, 3). Therefore, a solid transparency plan should be characterized by honesty, candor, and ability. Customers do, however, expect brands to emphasize and perhaps even somewhat exaggerate the good parts of their offerings. One strategy is to give customers access to the opinions and comments of other customers, which lessens perceptions of biased information. (Merlo 2017, 3.)

Customers can publish their reviews on shopping websites, blogs, social networking sites, and online forums thanks to the proliferation of online media. Given this, giving customers access to information from third parties can be a crucial part of a transparency strategy. (Merlo 2017, 3.)

Customers may view a brand attempt to be transparent as a powerful indicator of the company's goodwill, and such efforts may be rewarded with increased customer trust in the brand (Eisingerich & Bell 2008, as cited in Merlo 2017, 3).

2.14 Social Media and Content Creation

The creation and release of content for redistribution via social publishing websites is known as social publishing in social media. In a social community, content serves as the equivalent of the dollar in the economy as a unit of value. It offers a social gathering place for group involvement. By giving material a digital home and facilitating audience engagement and sharing, social media platforms help spread content to an audience. Because of social sharing, content producers can now reach a global audience and grow their fan bases without the constraints imposed by conventional publishing models. (Tuten 2021, 234.)

Individual users can be novices or experts. Social media is a tool that brands use to communicate with its stakeholders. In brand content marketing initiatives, it serves as a crucial distribution route. Social media is valued by brands for its capacity to distribute a wide range of content, reach and draw audiences, reach a larger audience through word-of-mouth sharing, collect audience feedback, target potential buyers, and support other marketing initiatives. (Tuten 2021, 234.)

Blogs, media sharing websites, social networking sites, and social bookmarking news sites are examples of social publishing outlets. Websites that regularly update their material are known as blogs. Websites for sharing videos, such YouTube, and images, such as Pinterest, as well as hybrids like Instagram, are all examples of media sharing platforms. (Tuten 2021, 234.)

2.15 Creating Content

A key component of marketing communications today is content marketing. As cited by Tuten, (Social Media Marketing 2021, 234), content marketing has been clearly defined by the Content Marketing Institution as "a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience - and ultimately, to drive profitable customer action." (Tuten 2021, 234.)

The importance of publishing high-quality material that draws in the audience is stressed by content marketing. Social media should be used to amplify the content and encourage audience involvement, conversation, and sharing whether the content is produced in owned, sponsored material in social media channels. (Tuten 2021, 235.) Depending on the point of view when it comes to sharing content, there are several sorts of social media content and layers to it. Tuten showed how they merged into four quadrants in the image below.



Figure 6. Types of Content (Tuten 2021.)

2.16 Social Media and Fostering Successful Engagement as A Brand

In order to create successful tactics, social media planning should be as meticulous as traditional public relations. Such initiatives involve brand participation in their development. It also needs the strategic input of the people who will be writing the strategy and those who will be using social media to communicate on the brand's behalf. The ideas and recommendations of numerous people combined provide the most effective strategies. When using online media platforms, brands frequently need to establish guidelines or parameters as well as a consistent tone of voice. (Luttrell 2016, 159.)

The brand's social media policies often reflect the company's personality as well, but they all share one consistent trait: Great policies come from shared principles that represent the brand's underlying values and the people behind the work, as well as from mutual trust in the material they produce. (Luttrell 2016, 159.)

2.17 Visual Communication

The importance of visual marketing has been effectively encapsulated by the emergence of visual social media platforms like Facebook, Pinterest, and Instagram. Brands that embrace visual storytelling in addition to developing and disseminating information are becoming the industry leaders. They receive followers, interactions, referral traffic, and sales as reward. (Walter and Gioglio 2014 ,7.) Consumers are using visual material to influence their decision-making about brands and products in a relevant way, from creating Pinterest boards to making interior design ideas to sharing photographs and videos. A successful visual storytelling strategy must take the "show, don't tell" stance in place of text-heavy material in order to increase the likelihood of engagement, conversation, and sharing. (Walter and Gioglio 2014 ,8)



Figure 7. Visual Content (Balliett 2020.)

Engagement and action have emerged as the new industry benchmark in a time when social media and blogs are thought to reach 80% of all active internet users in the United States. Brands are generating more action and cutting through the noise more than ever before because of successful visual storytelling. (Walter and Gioglio 2014 ,8)

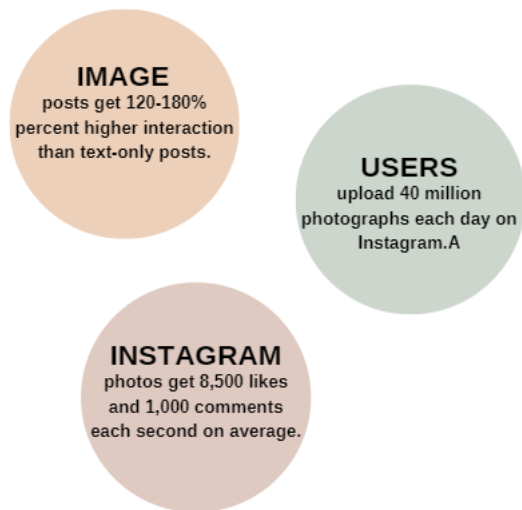


Figure 8. Visual Storytelling and Engagement Statistics (Walter and Gioglio 2014 ,8)

Posts with an album or image get between 120 and 180 percent higher interaction than text-only posts. Users upload 40 million photographs each day on Instagram and photos get 8,500 likes and 1,000 comments each second on average. (Walter and Gioglio 2014 ,8)

Because of the present era's technological breakthroughs, we are all constantly experiencing information overload. Consumers yearn for clarity in the chaos of information in order to process it all. As a result, humans have innately gravitated toward the easiest-to-understand form of content media: visual media. Because of this, brands that value the expectations of their customers are more likely to produce effective visual strategies. (Balliett 2020.)

We are intelligent beings. We can judge visual content just as quickly as we can process it in an instant. The delivery of this material must be considered as brands continue to lead with new media such as graphics, videos, demo reels, illustrations, and more. Brands must lead with authentic visual communication if they want to compete in a digital market that requires a visual discussion. (Balliett 2020.)

Information is efficiently and effectively represented visually, giving the viewer significance. Brands' visual content decisions need to be more compelling to stand out in an information and visually rich community, which is social media. (Balliett 2020.)

2.18 Customer Engagement and Types of Visual Communication

A compelling picture is essential in today's marketing environment as we established on chapter 2.17 *Visual communication*. Using visual material has become a crucial focus of interest for all brands across all media channels thanks to the widespread availability to mass communication devices with extended visual upgrades. A simple and successful marketing investment with significant advantages for any company and its brands is made possible by the declining costs and enormous range of services these platforms provide. (Manic 2015.)

Visual content is essential to attracting and retaining loyal clients. We can examine the three main categories of visual content as follows:

Illustrations - these are any messages that are presented in a static visual composition; examples include drawings, photographs, and, more recently, memes. All of them have significant marketing obligations, with the picture serving as the primary component, accompanied by one or more texts. (Manic 2015, 90.)

Comics - which are compilations of pictures and text that have a defined plot and are organized in a specific order. Infographics are a unique, contemporary type that display vast amounts of data in a graphical style, perhaps with a visual "narrative" from the beginning to the end. (Manic 2015, 90.)

Videos, moving pictures in the form of clips, and short films that may tell a story or deliver a message—preferably both—are all acceptable. For example, Instagram reels. (Manic 2015, 90.)

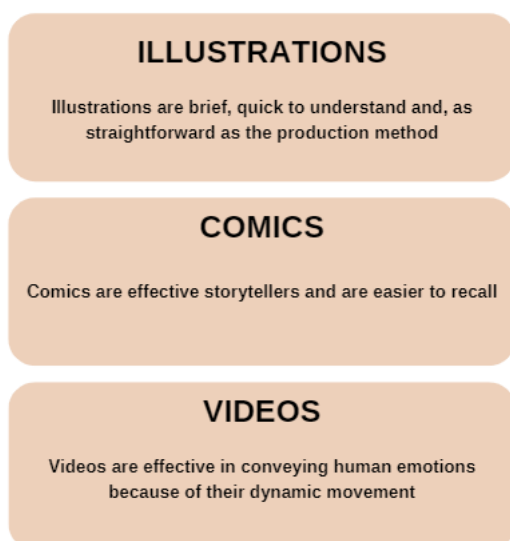


Figure 9. Dynamic Forms of Visual Content (Manic 2015.)

The image above demonstrates important features when it comes to using dynamic visual content. Illustrations are brief, quick to understand and, as straightforward as the production method. Comics are effective storytellers and are easier to recall and videos are effective in conveying human emotions because of their dynamic movement. (Manic 2015, 90).

The type of visual marketing strategy a brand implements, must place a major emphasis on visual material because of how closely it relates to human nature. Visual content marketing engagement benefits greatly from the significance of images and videos as well as the simplicity of today's graphic content development. Brands can attain the required reach and recognition with the aid of pictures, in whatever manner they choose to show themselves, increasing the effectiveness of marketing expenditures. (Manic 2015, 94.)

In chapter three, we define the case company's target market, statistically analyze the interior design industry, and conduct a competitor analysis to learn how their social media and websites' visual communications compare to the case companies.

3 Target Market, Industry, and Competitor Analysis

In this chapter, we delve into greater detail about the interior design industry—to which our case company belongs—including its trends, data on predicted growth, and an assessment of the target markets based on the case company's targeted internationalization ambitions. The competitors will be examined after the benchmarking and social media profile assessment of their brands will be done.

3.1 Internationalization: Goals

The case company is looking to expand their business first among the industry within the North American market. They are operating within the United States and work with showrooms and industry professionals in different states. (Case Company-X 2022.)

To cover the entire Northern American market, they plan to grow into the interior design sector in Mexico and Canada. They have investigated the potential in Asia in addition to North America as part of their internationalization efforts in the future. The recommended geographic segmentations will be justified with data from statistical sources after more research has been done on the regions of the interior design industry that are expanding around the world, as we will see in the second chapter. The countries not mentioned in this next chapter have been identified as neutral candidates in the expansion of the industry and are therefore not currently worth looking into in terms of internationalization goals for the case company.

3.2 The Interior Design Industry

The Interior Design industry consists of professionals who are primarily involved in the planning, designing, and managing of interior space projects to satisfy the functional and aesthetic requirements of the users. Interior designers must consider construction codes, health and safety laws, floor plans that account for traffic, mechanical and electrical requirements, as well as the needs of interior fixtures and furniture, in addition to the most recent design trends. Industry professionals often work in fields like home design, business and corporate design, institutional design, healthcare design, and education design. (IBISWorld 2022.)

3.3 Target Market Statistics Globally

Sources estimate that this global industry would reach a staggering \$255.4 billion by 2027. Additionally, from 2020 to 2027, the global market for interior design services will grow at a CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 7.8%. The most recent data on home decor shows that the worldwide home decor market had a value of \$616.6 billion in 2019. (Drah, H 2021.)

China, the second-largest economy on the globe, is predicted to reach a market size of astounding \$57.6 billion by 2027, expanding at a CAGR of 11.9% from 2020 to 2027. Important markets for interior design services include Canada and Japan. According to statistics on the size of the global interior design industry, each is expected to grow at a CAGR of 7% and 4.2% over the course of the forecast year. Another significant region is Europe, with Germany's market projected to expand at a CAGR of over 5.1%. (Drah, H 2021.)

The image below demonstrates the CAGR based on statistics of countries where the interior design market is expected to increase.

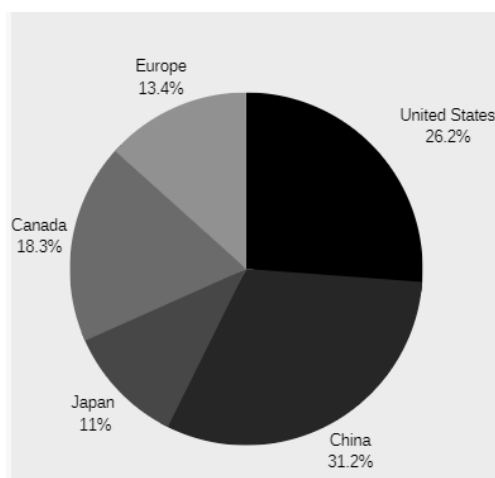


Figure 10. International Interior Design Services Market CAGR 2020-2027 (Drah 2017.)

Europe, China, Canada, Japan, and the US together accounted for \$11.3 billion of the global interior design services market in 2020. These markets are anticipated to grow to \$17.8 billion by 2027, which may seem impossible. China is most likely to keep expanding quickly among these markets. Additionally noteworthy is the expanding Asia-Pacific industry, which statistics on interior design predict will reach an astounding \$35.3 billion by 2027. (Drah, H 2021.)

3.4 Industry in the U.S. Market

- Size of the US Interior Designers Market in 2022: \$23.8 billion
- 3.9% Market Size Growth for Interior Designers in the US by 2022
- 4.6% US Annualized Market Size Growth for Interior Designers from 2017 to 2022

(IBISWorld 2022.)

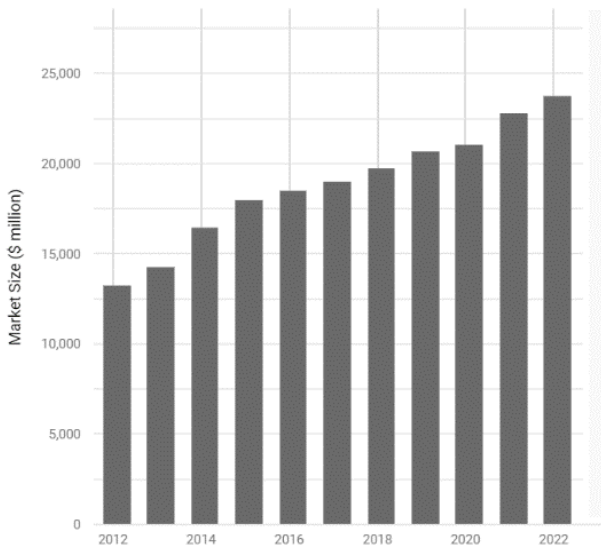


Figure 11. Figure 6. Interior Design in The US 2012-2022 (IBISWorld 2022.)

According to interior design figures from 2020, the US interior design services market was estimated to be worth \$40.7 billion. (Drah, H 2021.)

The industry is anticipated to expand, thanks to recovering corporate profits and increased investment in non-residential construction projects, but progress in these areas is largely a sign of ongoing progress in the larger economy as COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic-related economic conditions improve. Similarly, to how increased consumer expenditure is projected to enhance residential consumers' desire for home improvement projects, expanding per capita disposable income is anticipated to boost demand from households across different segments. (IBISWorld 2022.)

3.5 Industry in Canada

- Size of the Canadian Interior Designers Market in 2022: \$1.8 billion
- 1.8% Market Size Growth for Interior Designers in Canada in 2022
- 3.4% Annualized Market Size Growth for Interior Designers in Canada from 2017 to 2022

(IBISWorld 2022.)

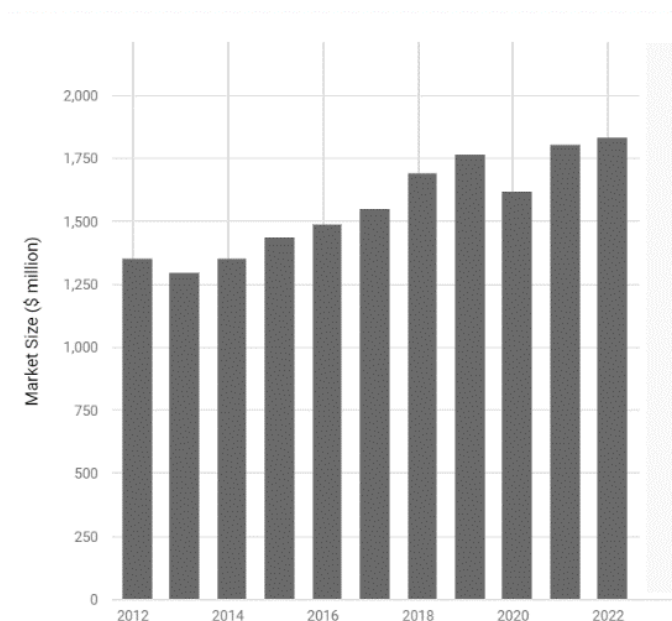


Figure 12. Interior Design in Canada 2012-2022 (IBISWorld 2022.)

The Canadian interior design market has primarily benefited from increases in downstream market demand throughout the five years leading up to 2022. Most of the five-year period saw an improvement in residential construction spending as concerns about a short-term housing bubble faded. The residential sector's demand increased as a result.

Even though housing starts are anticipated to fall in 2022, the housing market's rebound corresponded with declines in the non-residential building market, which was favorable for the sector. (IBISWorld 2022.) It is projected that the interior design industry in Canada will continue to expand because of steady demand from both the commercial and non-commercial sectors. Over the next five years, it is predicted that residential renovation costs would increase. Due to higher-income homeowners' limited time, that need professional services to develop a cohesive design style, the need for interior decoration and design will also rise.

Additionally, more eco-aware people are likely to hire business professionals to use sustainable materials in all facets of design, from refurbishment furniture to installations. (IBISWorld 2022.)

3.6 Industry in Asia

3.6.1 China

- \$648 billion business market 399 businesses total.
- Employment in Industry: 12,649

(IBISWorld 2022.)

Over the next five years, it is projected that China's building completion and interior design industries will see an increase in revenue. Due to the continued strength of the real estate sector, industry revenue growth is anticipated to be stronger in the first years of the period. As the market matures and the volume of homes traded declines, growth is anticipated to reduce in the coming years (largely due to high house prices and diminished affordability). Over the next five years, it is expected that China's household disposable income levels would continue to increase dramatically, leading to an increase in spending on private home remodeling and interior design. Growth will also be boosted by China's sustained and accelerated urbanization development. (IBISWorld 2022.)

3.6.2 Japan

- The Japanese interior design market is anticipated to reach \$48.83 billion by 2027
- Estimated to be \$39.85 billion market in 2022.

(Research and Markets 2022.)

Japan's interior design market is anticipated to expand rapidly. Increased disposable income, expanding home and commercial space, and rising urbanization are some of the key factors influencing the demand for furniture items in the nation. By 2019, the industry has grown from \$350 million market to around \$24 billion. (Mordor Intelligence 2022.)

The prevalence of luxury and high-end furniture and textiles is a notable aspect of Japanese furniture consumption. The number of households in the nation has significantly expanded because of the increased development activity that is currently taking place there. The demand for interior design items including living room and bedroom furniture is increasing as a result. Due to an increase in the use of office spaces, the market demand of products for offices is also on the rise in the country. (Mordor Intelligence 2022.)

3.7 Benchmarking Competitors

Researching luxury design rug brand names with sustainability at their core, we will be able to identify market competitors in this chapter. To draw a distinction between competitors, these different characteristics of the rug, design, and interior industries have been taken into consideration while compounding information.

Most sustainable brands market based on their sustainable products, and many luxury brands advertise themselves as being luxurious first and foremost. To analyze these two categories' parallels more effectively to our case company, and to produce a very useful source of data on which to base our final competitor study, we will combine them into a single image.

By competitive benchmarking we can calculate the true value of performance. With this kind of functional benchmarking, we can see new trends and learn where other businesses in the interior design sector are going. Competitive benchmarking demands a methodical approach beginning with the establishment of clear goals and analysis parameters. (Winik, M 2021.)

To elaborate on what is standard in this industry, benchmarking digital presence is important. Benchmarking web activity, features, and performance is necessary for every brand with a digital presence. Any data point can be used in digital benchmarking, which includes anything from keywords to conversion and ROI (return on investment). The main objective is to evaluate how the case companies' digital activity affects the performance overall and how it compares to their main competitors. (Winik, M 2021.)

Digital benchmarking can also be used to focus in on facets of the brands activities. We can assess traffic share, audience reach, and even learn more about things like how mobile apps are affecting the industry by concentrating on digital data. It enables us to evaluate various campaign types and marketing channels to choose where to concentrate efforts. (Winik, M 2021.)

3.8 Competitor Designer Rug Brands

Ben Soleimani - *Textured, luxury rugs, hand-woven, undyed natural yarns.*

An American brand based in the U.S., offering luxurious, hand-woven rugs using natural and undyed yarns. They deliver with their vision focused on quality, service, and design.

Kvadrat - *Craftsmanship, contemporary, feel & experience.*

A Danish brand selling globally, priding themselves with product craftsmanship, contemporary feel, and experience their designs offer. Their values are quality, design, and sustainability.

Nanimarquina - *Handmade, design, contemporary, socially responsible materials.*

With socially responsible and sustainable production, this Spanish brand offers contemporary designed, handwoven rugs with their vision being heavy in tradition and intuitive use of color.

Sera Helsinki - *Scandinavian design, craftsmanship, natural sheep's wool.*

Combining Scandinavian style to their hand-crafted design rugs, they offer luxury in their natural materials such as pure sheep's wool with their vision being transparent, heritage and design.

GAN - *Craftsmanship, design, handmade, luxury, natural and recycled materials.*

A Spanish brand creating handmade, luxury design rugs with natural and recycled materials, their vision is design, origin, and sustainability.

The Rug Company - *Sources finest quality rugs, with time honoring techniques.*

An American brand, sourcing fine quality textiles, created with time honoring techniques and craftsmanship. Socially responsible and quality rugs.

Safavieh - *High quality, innovation family business.*

An American brand serving a selection of high-quality rugs with innovation at their family businesses core, honoring family, history, quality and growth.

Fort Street Studio - *Family, collaboration, artistry, quality.*

An American, family run business, offering quality rugs made by artistry, collaboration, and tradition.

Edward Fields - *Legacy, quality, luxury, design.*

An American legacy brand, with quality, luxury, and design at its core, valuing heritage and craftsmanship.

Stark Carpet - *Heritage, design, innovation.*

An American heritage brand with unique design, innovation, and craftsmanship.

CC Tapis - *Materials, culture, craft, tailored service.*

An Italian brand with roots in France, favoring materials, culture, craft, and tailored service with social responsibility, legacy, and design at its foundation.

One Kings Lane - *Products, expertise, style.*

An American brand offering stylized products with expertise, passion, and personalized design.

3.9 Competitor Brand Positioning

The competitor analysis matrix below is based on measuring luxury design, retail design, and price points against the case company.



Figure 13. Competitor Matrix (Luxury Design, Retail Design and Price.)

The second competitor matrix below, shows us how transparent and sustainable each competitor positions at compared to the case company.

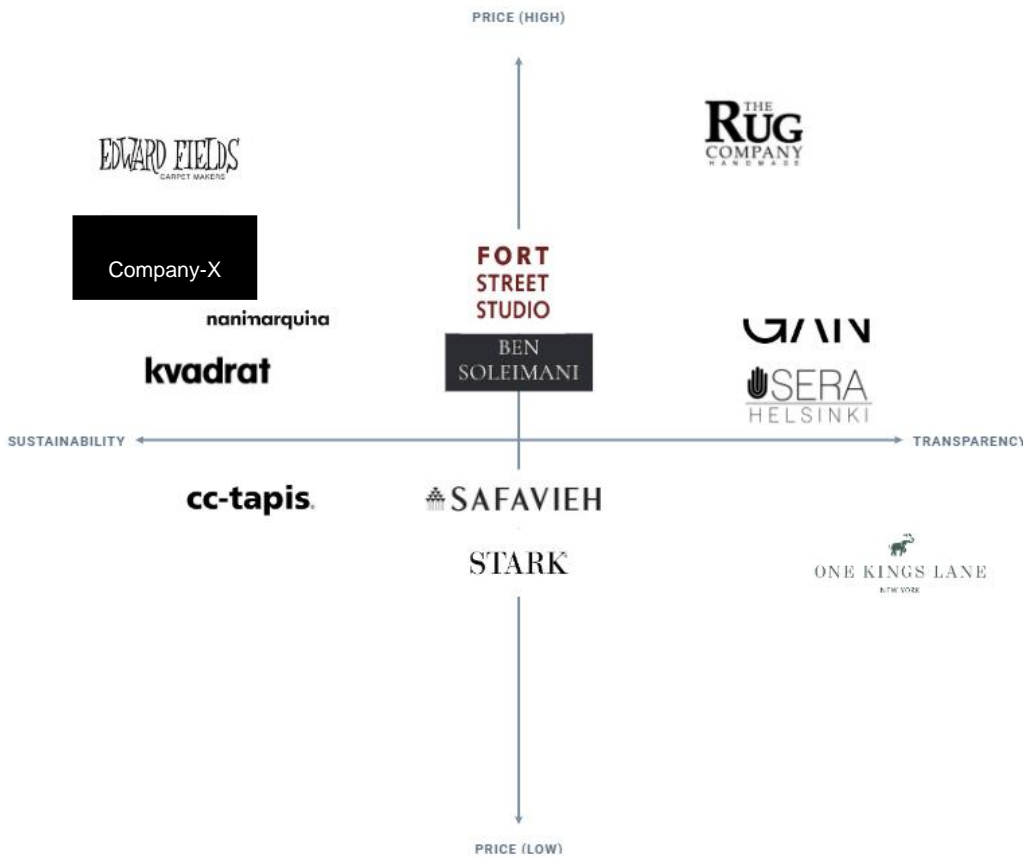


Figure 14. Competitor Matrix (Sustainability, Transparency and Price.)

The brands positioned in the middle are neither transparent nor open about their sustainability measures. The rest are either clearly putting in sustainability efforts, such as Edward Fields, Nanimarquina, Kvadrat and cc-tapis, or showcasing what efforts they put into the brand, becoming transparent when doing so, such as are One Kings Lane, Sera Helsinki, Gan, and The Rug Company.

3.10 Competitor Analysis

In order to construct a matrix based on their level of interaction and the quality and consistency of their material, we will first assess how the competing brands perform when exhibiting their brand essence on their websites and social media profiles.

3.10.1 Website

The marketing plan of your competitors, or at the very least, their social media marketing strategy, has become visible in the age of social media. Keeping an eye on your competitors is standard practice for larger businesses. To determine whether their campaigns are effective, you should find out what they are. And you can obtain ideas from that campaign if your target audience is comparable to that of that company.

However, monitoring your rivals on social media isn't at all about adopting their tactics. Crossover with your audiences' interests will result from being active in the same business. It might make sense for your brand to do so if you notice that your rival isn't reacting to current events. (Hahn 2019.)

The brands that have invested the most in visual and written marketing are cc-tapis, Kvadrat, and Nanimarquina. All three of these brands also ranked as very sustainable when positioning them into the competitor matrix (see Figure 14.) This also adds value for their clients and the way they communicate it is just as valuable.

These three companies feature video material that draws customers in and piques their interest. They did it in a way that is aesthetically beautiful and produced a welcoming atmosphere that you can virtually enter. This not only sparks attention, but adds to the brand's attractiveness, which the customer may view as adding value to the brand image, gaining trust, and engaging.

Using video content is key. According to McQuivey, as cited in (Balliett 2020, 31), "1 minute of video is worth 1.8 million words". While text-based material requires the brain to put words together to form sentences that then construct meaning, visual content allows the brain to instantly decipher meaning by forming messages (Balliett 2020, 31).

We are intelligent beings. We can judge visual content just as quickly as we can process it in an instant. While brands continue to dominate emerging media such as infographics, video, and motion graphics, they increasingly need to think about how this content will be executed (Balliett 2020, 32.) Brands must learn to adapt based on what industry leaders are doing and emerge as a renewed version of themselves, utilizing visual communication to succeed in a world that needs a visual discussion (Balliett 2020, 32).

3.10.2 Social Media

We may now evaluate the competitor brands' positions in relation to the case company based on their social media presence after determining where they stand in terms of sustainability, transparency, luxury, retail, and price as well as the importance of the website's digital appearance. The attractiveness of social media (holistic approach, visual appeal, and how information is arranged together on the feed), number of followers, and level of interaction (how frequently posts are generated, are there videos or reels, and how do they communicate to users) are crucial considerations. This was evaluated by keeping track of the competitors' posting frequency over a period of two weeks.

Ben Soleimani - 30k followers, prominent followers from the industry (elledecor), well executed content, timely, consistent.

Kvadrat - 232k followers, prominent followers, very aesthetic content, well planned and holistic approach, consistent.

Nanimarquina - 68k followers, story, intrigue, organic photography, holistic approach, consistent.

Sera Helsinki - 6,5k followers, emphasis on transparency, inspiring, but inconsistencies in frequency of posting.

GAN - 45k followers, events, dynamic photography, informative, inspiring, consistent.

The Rug Company - 224k followers, aesthetic imagery, timely, lifestyle and inspirational, video content, consistent.

Safavieh - 405k followers, lifestyle, inspiration, holistic, engaging, consistent.

Fort Street Studio - 6,5k followers, artistic, contemporary, inspiration, consistent.

Edward Fields - 4,5k followers, artistic, not as frequent, nor consistency in times of posting, inspiration.

Stark Carpet - 205k followers, home and living lifestyle, inspiration, consistent, but not frequent.

CC Tapis - 110k followers, artistic, holistic, aesthetic, well planned, engaging, modern, videos, consistent.

One Kings Lane - 990k followers, prominent followers (archdigest), consistent, lifestyle, inspiration, aesthetic, holistic, consistent.

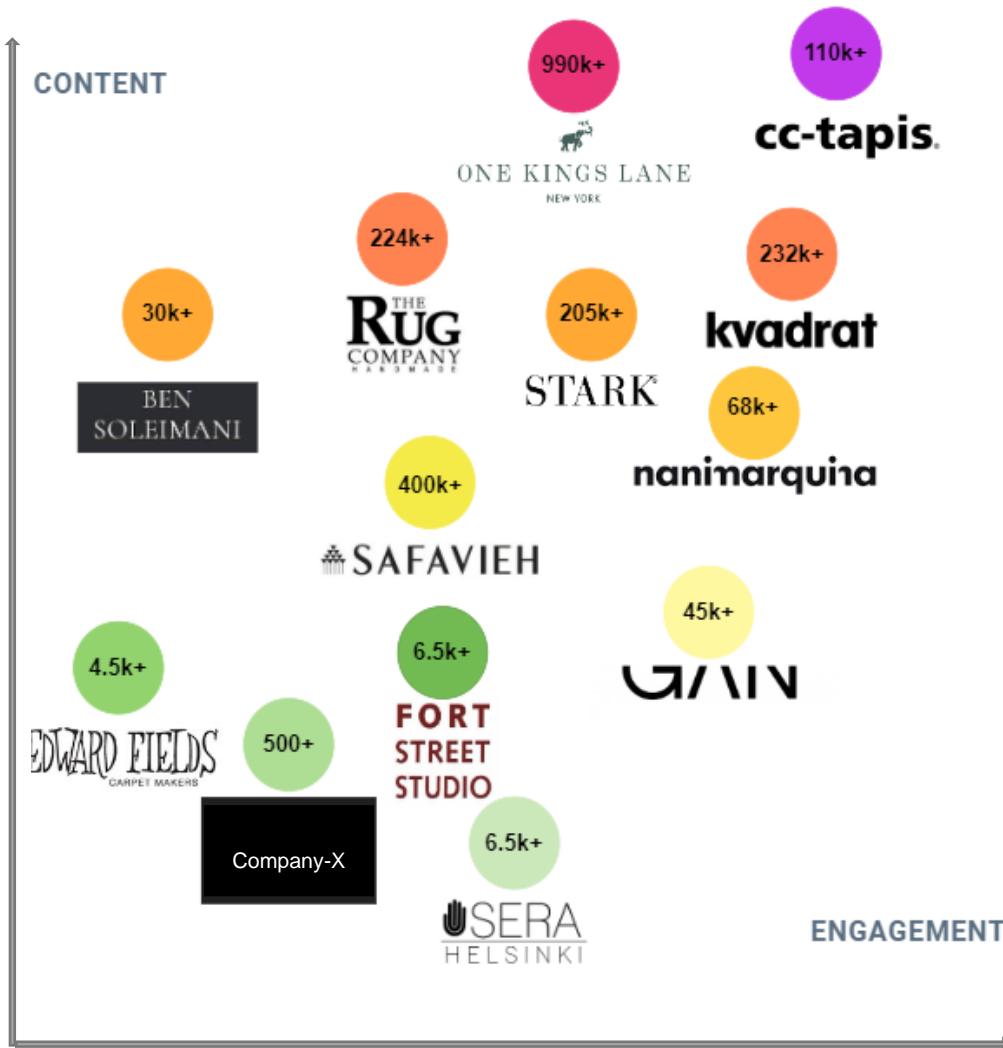


Figure 15. Competitor Matrix (Content and Engagement.)

When positioning the competitors based on their level of engagement and content on social media, we get the figure above. We consider followers, comments, likes, and shares when calculating *engagement* and by *content*, we mean the quality of the images, videos, and reels. The matrix is expressed with considering the highest follower base to the lowest.

The case companies' client segment will be covered in Chapter 4, along with a study of how people in the creative industries use social media and digital marketing to assist them in creating their brand online. This will make it easier to come to additional conclusions on how to use social media and digital marketing to target the example company's ideal customers (B2B) and find new ones.

4 Client Segments

This chapter will cover the case company's current clients, effective B2B social media marketing techniques, analysis of the survey results to identify the most effective approaches, and other conventional methods of B2B client targeting in the interior design sector which are still highly relevant in attaining new clients for the case company.

4.1 Current Clients

The case company is catering to the B2B wholesale market, and their customers consist primarily of interior designers, architects, and developers. Their clients are people who have access to exclusive designer showrooms, trade shows, and shop from the wholesale market.

4.2 Wholesale Clients vs Retail Consumers

The difference between wholesale and end clients is a significant distinction. In a retail scenario, the consumer or end-user buys the item straight from the retailer. A wholesaler, on the other hand, sells goods to other retail establishments rather than to individual customers. (Indeed 2021.)

Companies known as wholesale or wholesalers offer their products or services to other companies rather than to consumers. A wholesaler can create the products they are selling, or they can just sell them to another business for direct consumer sales. (Indeed 2021.)

Retail refers to the sale of products or services where the customer receives them directly. A department store is an illustration of a retail company. Customers at department stores can walk right in and make their purchases there, bypassing a middleman. A retail company is one that sells its finished goods directly to consumers. Particularly in compared to wholesale companies, the majority of retail businesses only offer a limited selection of services or commodities. (Indeed 2021.)

More often than wholesalers, retailers have direct interactions with customers. Retailers can interact with customers by having face-to-face conversations with them in a physical store, responding to their inquiries and problems, and handling their returns and exchanges. (Indeed 2021.) Because the products they sell are delivered straight to the merchant, wholesalers rarely engage with end users. This means that the retailer is the sole consumer a wholesaler normally deals with. (Indeed 2021.)

4.3 Applying Traditional Channels to Digital Forms

How companies use digital media and technology to sell and supply clients with products more effectively through the integration of traditional and digital channels can be compared in the next part. A company's digital marketing plan to attract new customers must consider how electronic communications can be used to improve all other components of their campaigns and how to bring value through these channels to their clients efficiently. (Chaffey, Edmundson-Bird & Hemphill 2019.)

4.4 Utilizing Digital Marketing Strategies to Target Wholesale Audience

An analysis of the digital marketing and social media usage of people working in the creative industries will help to determine the practical aspects of promoting their brand digitally. This will help to draw further conclusions about how to use digital marketing and social media to target the case company's desired clients (B2B) and reach new clients.

4.5 Survey Results

Creative entrepreneurs made up the majority of respondents, outnumbering those who worked for brands (4 out of 6). The importance of using social media to promote brand ranked as highly important.

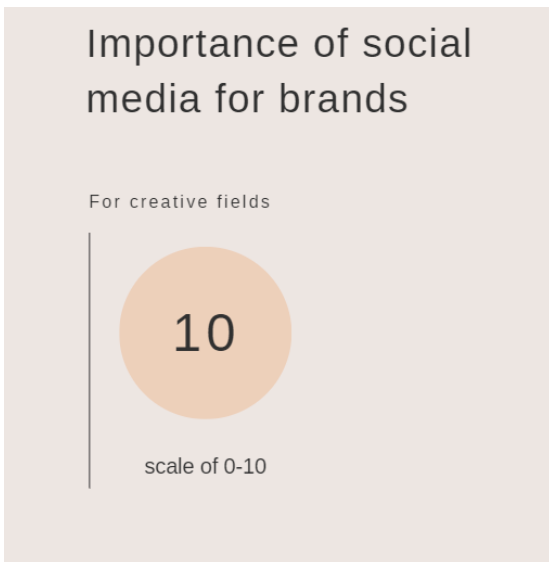


Figure 16. Importance of Social Media

The most popular social media platforms used by respondents to promote their brands are shown in the image below, listed from most to least answers.

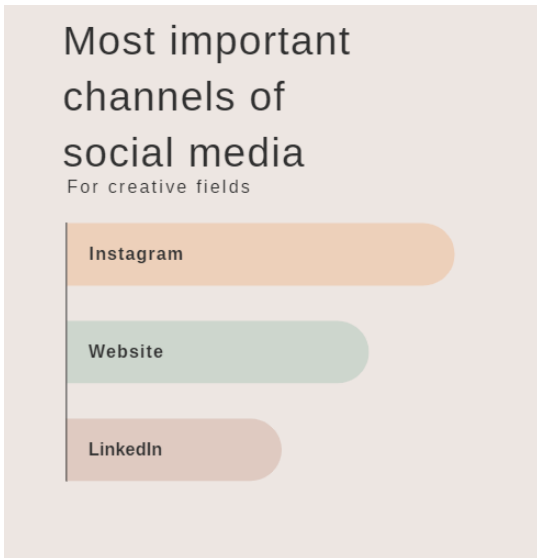


Figure 17. Most Important Social Media Channels

Facebook and Pinterest were not a part of the focus groups answers, as they were shown in Figure 8. Consumer Goods /Furniture, Furnishings & Household Items (Statista 2021), which focused on the U.S. market for specifically the interior design industry (see *chapter 3.10.2 Channels of Social Media Companies Use*).

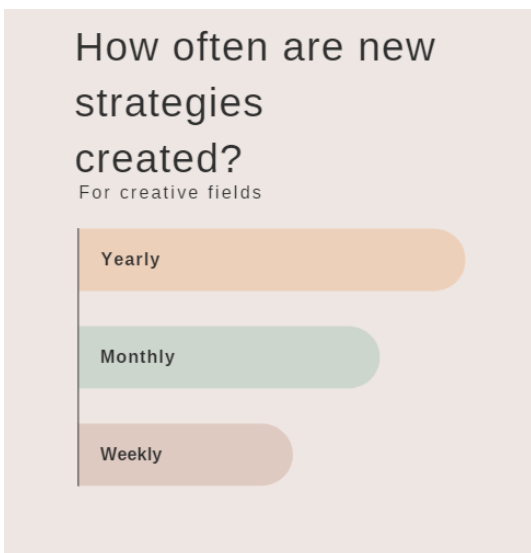


Figure 18. How Often Are New Strategies Created?

The image above shows how most respondents answered that they feel the need to create new strategies to better market their brand roughly 3 times a year. The second most answers were for once a month or so.



Figure 19. Success Rate of Current Strategy

Respondents felt that their current strategy works for them at an average success rate of 7,5.

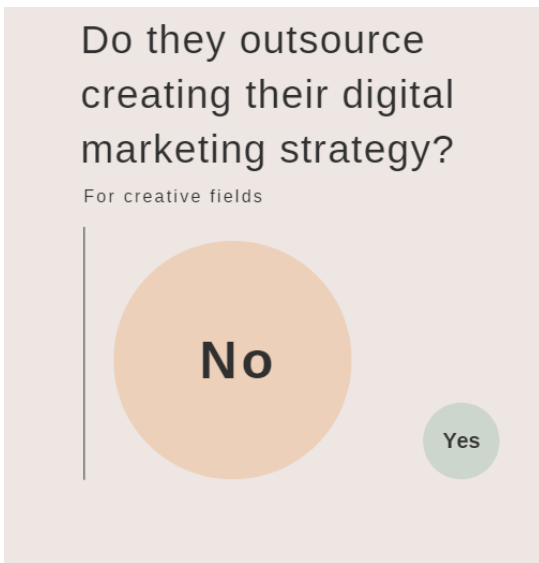


Figure 20. Outsourcing Digital Marketing Strategy

Almost all respondents answered to not outsourcing digital marketing strategies to second or third parties, meaning they produce their strategies themselves.



Figure 21. Ideal Clients

Most respondents answered as directing their focus on the B2C client segment.



Figure 22. Importance of Trade Shows and Events

The average answer ranked high when asked how important trade shows and events are for brands.

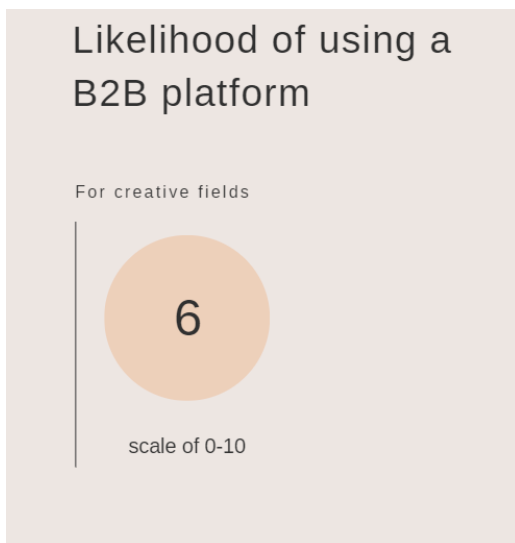


Figure 23. Likelihood of Using a B2B Platform

When asked about usability of a platform which would allow for brands to connect directly B2B, the median interest level can be ranked as slightly above average.

4.6 Survey Analysis

Respondents felt that they were successful in advertising their brand on social media. These days, everyone uses it, so that is where your customers will be.

Five out of six respondents indicated that Instagram was the most widely used social media network. Because it is well-liked, captivating, and visually appealing, and because these three qualities add the most value, it works well for the creative industries.

Based on the answers of how often creating digital marketing strategy is necessary, brands can better examine what works and what doesn't for their brand by building the groundwork for plans and strategies three times a year or monthly. They can then increase their reach by perfecting the formula that works best.

Based on calculating the median of all responses, the present digital marketing plan had an average success rate of 7,5 out of 10. This shows that brands conduct research, have the knowledge necessary to develop a successful plan for them and their brand, and test many ideas to see which one is most effective.

Five out of six respondents who responded say they handle their own digital marketing tactics in-house rather than contracting it out to a third party. The majority were independent, creative businesses who didn't now need to outsource this activity, or it was because outsourcing was more expensive.

The majority of respondents—four out of six—and just two out of six—identified B2C as their primary target market when asked about client categories. Only 1 said that both were equally significant. This might be a result of the marketing strategies that social media platforms like Instagram, which are widely utilized by B2C segments, have introduced to us.

Brands who participated in trade exhibitions or other events had an average success rate of eight out of ten. This demonstrates the significance of coming to a physical location to present whatever your brand has to offer, engage with customers, and promote the brand using all your senses.

Utilizing a B2B client-focused platform received a six out of ten average response. This may be mostly due to the unfamiliarity of marketing directly to B2B sectors or because the majority of the focus group participants were entrepreneurs and small-business owners who rarely target this market.

4.7 Analysis of Target Audience

The B2B client segment, which is the case companies target audience, consists of interior designers, developers, and architects, who have access to the wholesale market. Targeting this focus group through social media is difficult in a sense, because the current demographic largely consists of end users who are looking to purchase items directly from a brand or in store without the help of using professional services. To understand what channels, they use to promote their brand now, and the importance of them, we can compare the differences to high-end designer showroom to trade shows and working directly with returning customers and using social media marketing.

4.8 Showrooms

To better understand how their target audiences' sources products for projects, we must investigate articles for reference. Many designers source products for their projects from designer showrooms. The case company works with various showrooms across the U.S. which is specific to the industry itself.

How a showroom operates exactly is by enabling clients to test, try on, and inspect goods in person, while the actual purchase is frequently made online. Before making an online purchase, clients can examine products in-person and get to know them better using the showroom approach. Product showrooms are intended to provide engaging, hands-on experiences. (Iskalo Development Corp 2022.)

The product showroom idea has long dominated the high-end furniture and mattress industries as well as other high-end retail sectors. Contemporary retail showrooms are increasingly and more common for traditional brick-and-mortar, online, and huge firms. In today's world, where the majority of purchases are made online, many retail enterprises are aware of the potential advantages of a product showroom. (Iskalo Development Corp 2022.)

Brands can interact with new prospective customers through retail showrooms. People who might not be familiar with your products or services can learn more about them in person through one-on-one customer care. Attending a product showroom where they can try items out without feeling pressured to buy them right away makes many clients feel more comfortable. (Iskalo Development Corp 2022.)

Trade shows and Exhibitions

Trade shows and fairs are important for marketing products for industry professionals, although they are expensive. The trade show is one of the most important spending categories in the marketing budget for many brands, second only to sales force spending. Other than the efforts of the sales force and distributors, trade show expenses are frequently the main—and for many, the only—form of planned marketing communications activity. (Bonoma 1983.)

The most well-known form of the trade show is an exhibition. Manufacturers, distributors, and other sellers present their wares or talk about their offerings to invited guests like present and potential clients, vendors, coworkers, and the media. Typically, the public is shut out. (Bonoma 1983.)

On the other hand, exhibitions are accessible to the public and can be divided into two types: public shows and fairs. Common public exhibits have themes like home and garden, boats, cars, hi-fi, and antiques (Bonoma 1983.) The following are some of the trade show's effectiveness in terms of their goals: the quantity of leads produced by a show, how many actual sales these leads generated, and the price per new lead produced. (Bonoma 1983.)

To find new prospects and connect with current prospects and clients, trade exhibitions and events such as these are important in marketing a brand. By providing interesting content and engaging the target market in meaningful conversation, brands can distinguish themselves from their competitors. (Marketing MO 2022.)

Setting and measuring goals allows them to determine whether the investment of attending shows will yield a return. To keep leads from getting away, brands should execute marketing initiatives to increase traffic and foster communication after the event. (Marketing MO 2022.)

4.9 B2B Marketing and Social Media

Returning clients who are familiar with the case company's products directly collaborate with them to develop unique items for certain projects. These clients have the important characteristics of being repeat customers and may also bring in new clients through referral marketing. New prospects acquired through other entryways like exhibits, trade shows, or showrooms need to be contacted and connected with. It's all about honing the inbound marketing approach, which we'll go into more detail about in chapter 5. When it comes to targeting the B2B target audience through social media, finding the ideal social media approach becomes significantly more difficult. When more platforms favor a B2C marketing strategy, it can be difficult to target the B2B target market.

B2B marketing has progressed from the transactional strategy through the relationship approach and into a new phase referred to as information marketing. Marketing has become largely an information-handling challenge in the digital era. Information acquisition, analysis, and deployment success are essential for marketing success, therefore, the marketing businesses that use IT tools to create their marketing plan most effectively will be the most successful in this period (Naude and Holland 2004, as cited in Brennan and Croft 2012, 7.)

As a new IT tool, social media marketing has been around for a decade and is still being measured by its performance for marketing to other businesses. (Brennan and Croft 2012, 7.) The case companies' potential customers would be high-income B2C clients if we consider the potential consumers who may be reached through the conventional social media strategy. These potential customers would be contacted via techniques like targeted advertising, curated material that meets consumer demands, and presenting interesting content via visual imagery and video content.

Utilizing examples from the case company's brand positioning using the Keller model and the final social media strategy to be used, Chapter 5 will demonstrate the finalized result based on this thesis as well as the final product.

5 Final Product

This chapter contains the finished product, which serves as an illustration of the case companies' sustainability practices and the implementation of a successful social media strategy, considering the B2B market they intend to target. Keller's brand affiliation model will be used to assist us comprehend the case company's brand positioning, which is based on how they show their brand.

5.1 Case Company Positioning: Brand Affiliation Using the Keller Model

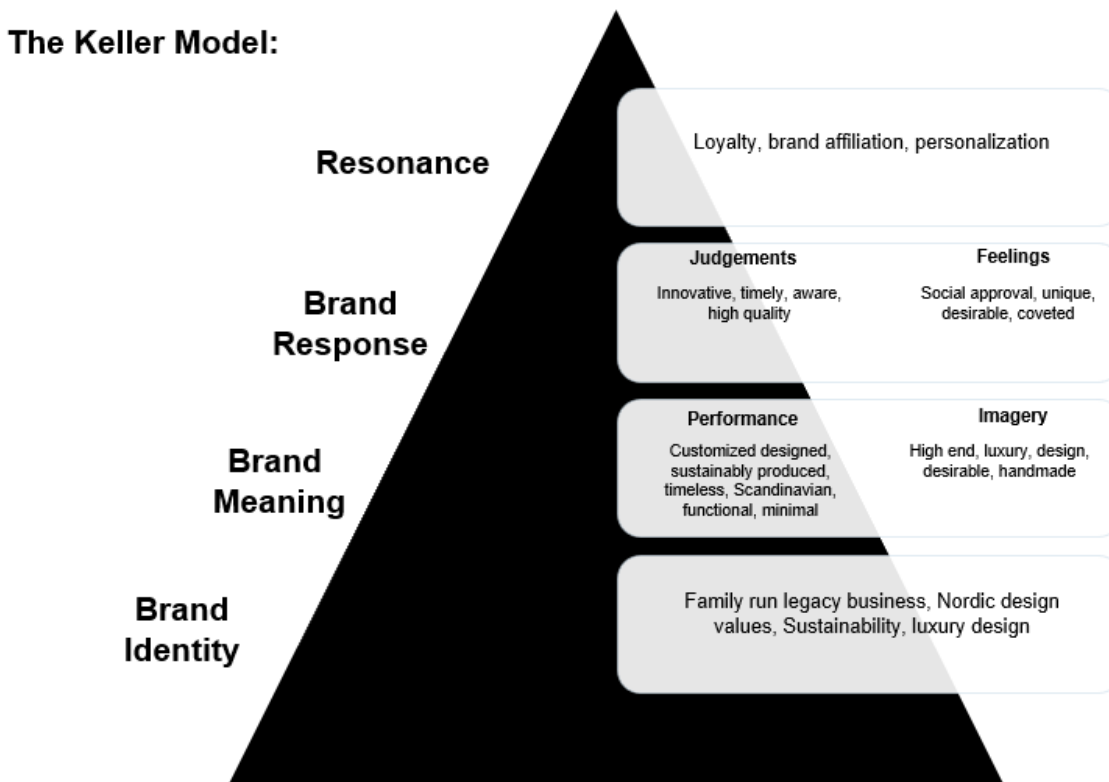


Figure 24. Keller's Brand Equity Model for Case Company-X.

The image above depicts the case company's brand image. The brand's identity is viewed as first and foremost a legacy business that will be passed down to the next generation. It is Nordic design at its core, with sustainability as a value, and the products are luxury design rugs.

Performance and imagery are used to convey brand meaning. They create customized designs that are both environmentally friendly and timeless. The products are designed in Scandinavia and are both functional and minimal. The brand image exudes high-end, luxurious design with a desirable vibe.

Brand responses may include product design innovation, timely awareness of social responsibilities, and high quality. This may elicit feelings of social approval, uniqueness, and desirability. The resonance it emits is brand loyalty and personalization.

5.2 Product – Illustration: Utilizing Visual Communication and Brand Image



Figure 25. First Version of The Illustration



Figure 26. Second Version of The Illustration



Figure 27. Third Version of The Illustration

The three versions of the illustration are shown in the final product. Any of these versions may be freely used by the case company to promote their product story on their social media sites or website.

The first version is the most minimal, the second uses a soft tone to convey the images, and the third is a more graphical representation. The goal is to be able to visually tell the story of their product using visual storytelling of their product materials to go together with their sustainability measures.

5.3 Social Media Strategy for The B2B Market

A B2B company's content must strike a balance between being interesting and not interfering with its audiences' social media experience to be successful there. To effectively benefit from social media, these businesses must determine what their audience wants to see. (Hahn 2019.)

The landscape of what it means to be a brand on social media has changed because of B2B businesses. Consider the following B2B tactics, which may help your own social accounts succeed, to engage and draw in your own audience. (Hahn 2019.)

An effective social media plan must be built on goals, just like any other marketing channel. The key to determining the effectiveness of your company's social media efforts will be to define clear, quantifiable KPIs, whether they are based on brand awareness or customer acquisition. You must decide what values are important to your brand before you can set KPIs. Are you attempting to leverage social media as a channel for acquisition? Do you wish to broaden your audience or boost traffic to your business blog? The metrics to track will be decided by this. (Hahn 2019.)

For instance, metrics like traffic and conversions are crucial if your company is seeking for leads. Engagement, reach, and experiences are additional crucial factors to consider for brand awareness. (Hahn 2019.)

5.3.1 Objectives for The Social Media Strategy

Objective: To increase brand recognition on social media.

Summary: By posting frequently on Instagram, LinkedIn, or Facebook, the aim is to increase the brand awareness of the company. By boosting posts 2-3 times a week on Instagram, and once a week on LinkedIn or Facebook, the publishing frequency will generate interest and engagement. The workload of the content writer will roughly be two to three posts per week, which should take one hour a day to create post drafts for the following week. (Hahn 2019.)

It will also be easier to manage the time when to post, what time to post, and be prepared to promote posts like on Instagram if you try to produce content that is ready to publish for the upcoming week. Channels of Social Media Companies Use

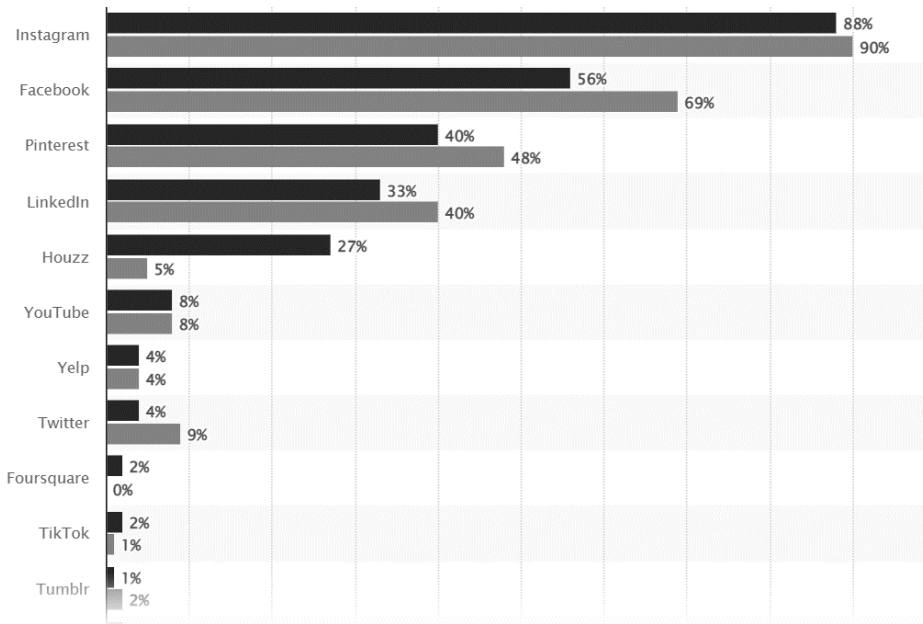


Figure 28. Consumer Goods /Furniture, Furnishings & Household Items (Statista 2021, United States region.)

The results are shown in this statistic on the social media marketing platforms utilized by interior design firms. Interior Design Monitors 2020 and 2021 by Schumacher & Statist state, that about 88 percent of respondents said they use Instagram to advertise their business in 2021. (Statista 2021.)

5.3.2 Social Media Benchmarks for Interior Design

The average brand in this sector saw a 0.3% increase in audience size over the last 30 days. Each post in this sector receives more than 936.9 engagements on average. With more than 1.61k engagements per post on their 423 posts over the past 30 days, Dwell is at the top of the list. With a growth rate of 0.9%, Sherwin-Williams outpaced the competition. (RivallQ 2022.)

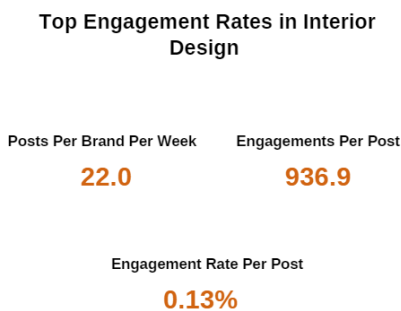


Figure 29. Top Engagement Rates in Interior Design (RivallQ 2022.)

Although these interaction rates are not exclusive to rug and carpet design, they provide insight into how effective social media methods can be when used properly.

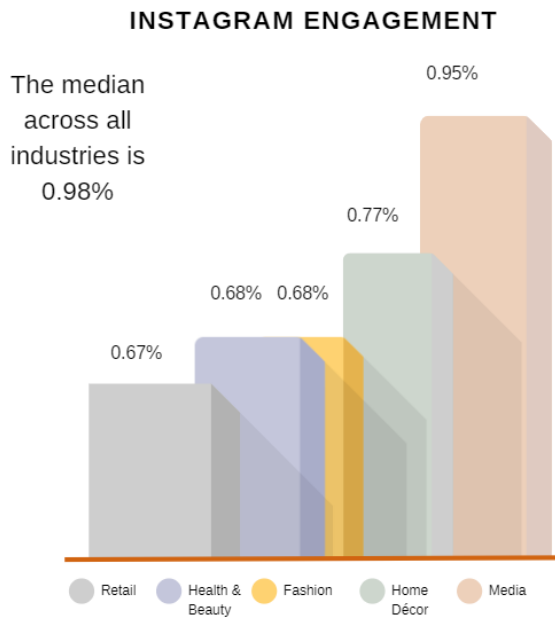


Figure 30. Instagram Engagement Rate (Digital Marketing Community 2019.)

The image above shows us the engagement rate by post. For our industry it shows 0.77%. Currently, the average median, when considering all industries is 0.98% per post, which falls into being good growth wise for the interior design industry. (Chen 2022.)

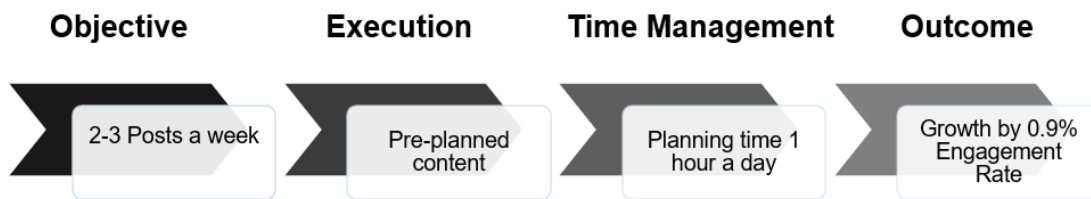


Figure 31. Process for Social Media Strategy.

Measurability: The objective is a 0.9% improvement per post engagement rate.

Relevant: By raising engagement rates, they should be able to increase brand recognition, and provide more leads from the industry.

Goal: By increasing the post frequency and focusing on intelligent, engaging language, they should see a 0.9% increase in their average engagement rate across all used social media channels.

5.3.3 Trending Hashtags

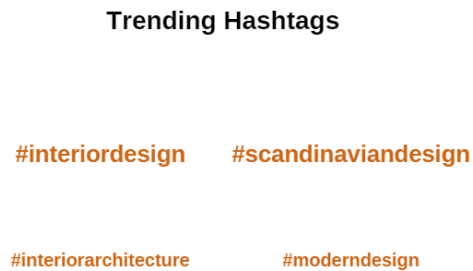


Figure 32. Trending Hashtags (RivalIQ 2022.)

Brands may increase their reach and, as a result, remain relevant when they post by utilizing industry-trending hashtags. Some websites curate by helping in locating relevant hashtags to utilize, such as later.com, which helps focus media management while streamlining the social media strategy with analytics and visual scheduling to make the feed more cohesive. Other websites which offer similar assistance are brand-watch.com, talkwalker.com, and hootsuite.com as well as other websites.

5.3.4 Creative and Visual Content

Because the case company is in the interior design industry, it is simple to create visual content organically. This will not be a problem, but the key will be determining what content is worth posting. Creative posts necessitate thought, time, and planning of time. Visual content can add more creative perspectives to posts by utilizing techniques such as images of products from photoshoots.

5.3.5 Image and Video Content

Video content is the most popular way to market on social media. Instagram is increasingly promoting reels, which is something to keep in mind when creating new content. The most important aspect is to aim for at least 2-5 reels per week to see growth and engagement.

When posting images, carousel images, or multiple images in one post, perform better than single images. With many images in one post, you can reach a wider audience, and these types of posts have worked to increase engagement. It is suggested to be active by posting at least 3-6 image posts per week to see growth in the account.

5.3.6 Paid Advertisement

Paid Instagram advertisements assist in reaching a larger audience. In the case of businesses, it may be worthwhile to see if they can promote their brand and products by directing paid advertisements to a specific niche audience within a B2B-focused community. This can be accomplished by selecting keywords based on hashtags that a specific niche audience would be interested in.

A good target market size in the New York City area could be 500-700,000 users, both men and women between the ages of 30 and 65. The region can be lifted to target specific cities where they may have showrooms, which they already work with to help promote in those areas more effectively.

A daily budget of \$10,00 a day to reach 10-15,000 users for a duration of 4-5 days is optimal to gain more reach and through that, more engagement and profile visits.

5.3.7 Other Recommendations

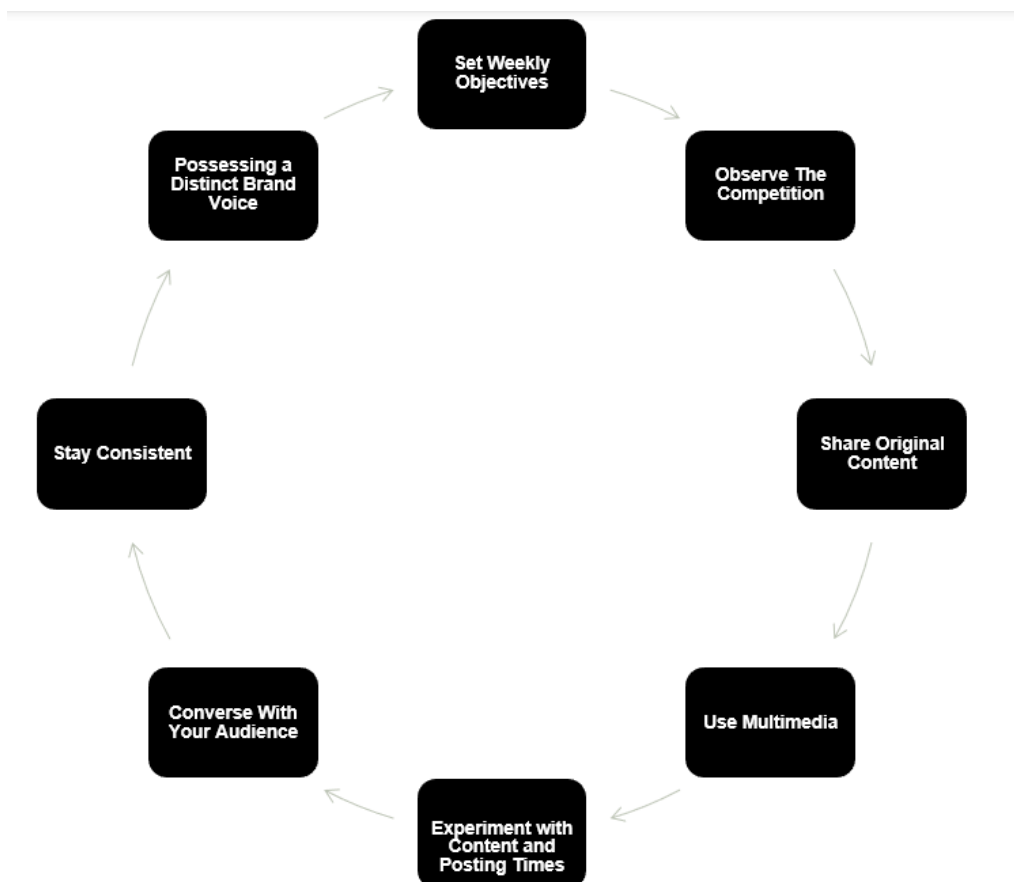


Figure 33. Recommendations for Social Media Strategy.

Setting weekly goals will enable you to maintain consistency in your work and raise brand engagement. Maintaining your brand's image while keeping an eye on the competition is also essential for development. By observing what others are doing, you can either adapt in a new way or get ideas for how to incorporate that into your social media marketing plan and content.

For many businesses, collecting information from various sources helps them build their social media presence. To some people, this may seem like common sense. The fact of the matter is that your audience can detect the difference between content that is unique and innovative and material that you produced purely to demonstrate your presence on the site. (Hahn 2019.) Their unique brand essence and products already helps them, in having the edge to creating fresh content that feels original.

When a social network introduces a new feature, social media marketers get thrilled for a reason: it gives them access to a brand-new medium to experiment with and test with their audience. Utilizing the multimedia formats that are exclusive to each channel is demonstrated perfectly by Instagram Stories, Twitter polls, and LinkedIn docs. Multimedia material provides interest to your social media platforms, which will help you capture the attention of your audience.

You might come across a poll, a video, a photograph, and a gif in a 10-second browse. Your brand's feed should reflect this in the same way and be able to deliver their message in a captivating way to filter through all the noise on social media. (Hahn 2019.)

Once you've shown that you can keep up a regular posting schedule and want to go a little further into audience insights, you should take this step. Every audience is unique, especially the case companies, so you'll need to conduct experiments to see what works best. There are always best practices for when and what you should post on social media and the only way to figure this out is to put it in practice before it can be perfected.

There are countless experiments to do for the social media channels. Here are some suggestions:

- Use questions and data in the posts in different combinations to discover which engages your audience the most.
- Try various link placements to see if they encourage users to click.
- Emojis can be added to check if interactions rise.
- Publish more often.
- Publish less.
- Test the effectiveness of a video post versus a still image by placing money behind each.

- To see how people respond to an advertisement, segment a different portion of your audience.
- Test various hashtag densities to see if impressions change.
- Invest more time in responding to posts to see whether this affects the number of followers you have.

(Hahn 2019.)

Social media was developed to facilitate interpersonal connections. That attitude hasn't altered even though companies have been present in the area for a while. Nobody wants to interact with a post that diverts them from the aesthetic of their ideal social feed because it is disruptive.

Participate in the conversations that your target audience is interested in having on social media to stay relevant. (Hahn 2019.)

Consistency is one of the hardest aspects about posting on social media. It takes a lot of work, preparation, and content production to post to every channel daily. If you're just getting started, consider investing time in developing insightful material that enriches your audience's feeds rather than posting frequently. A thoughtful tweet that contributes to the debate and promotes interaction is preferable than five short blog links with nothing but the post title as the content.

Making a publication calendar and using a social media tool to schedule posts in advance are two other ways to maintain consistency. (Hahn 2019.) Finally, it's critical to stick to the brand's tone and aesthetic. When attempting to grow on social media, this combined with the aforementioned tips should have a favorable effect on the following on social media and boost brand recognition to target the B2B industry that Company-X strives for.

5.4 Website Recommendations

Business processes will continue to become more digital in the future, and this process will happen at an ever-increasing rate. The correct strategic planning methods and adapting digital marketing tools are essential.

Using the SOSTAC model would be a recommended approach to construct an effective and planned model of concepts for the company to boost their current digital marketing demands and help expand their current business. (Haaga-Helia 2022, 1.2.) They want to grow in the B2B market and reach an international market, focusing on Mexico, Canada, and Asia.

5.4.1 SOSTAC planning model for the digital marketing plan

The following would be the steps to creating an action plan for the company using the SOSTAC model: Creating a map of their current condition, where they are now, where they want to go, how they will get there, the strategies they will utilize, how the company will implement the plan, and ultimately how they will follow through on the action.

To reach more clients in the interior design wholesale market and to gain a social media strategy which works for their target audience are some of the challenges which we plan to find resolution to and add value for the company (Haaga-Helia 2022, 1.3).

The introduction to digital marketing provided guidance on how to proceed with the various SOSTAC model procedures that can be used to shape the business's digital marketing strategy. After determining the areas for improvement, some key next steps include determining who will be carrying out the company's stated tactical processes. This would be the vice president of the business in charge of managing the primary digital marketing strategy.

Because it is a small business with a high level of hands-on involvement, it is necessary to pinpoint who in the organization can apply the processes. For Company-X, content preparation and consistency are essential. It is crucial to follow up after deployment because it will reveal how effective this technique is for them. (Haaga Helia 2022, 1.4 & 1.5.)

5.4.2 Incorporating the 5 S'

Case Company-X has a very good understanding of what works for them and uphold excellent customer service and response rates. Increasing sales through increasing contacts within the industry is one of the company's top priorities. In my thesis, I took on the project of developing a social media strategy for the company to increase friction and create buzz. For the company, we also aim to concentrate on adding value, both to current customers and to potential new customers. (Haaga-Helia 2022, 1.6.)

It is crucial to consider specific SEO techniques, such as the Google search engine, to improve how successfully clients will locate the case company. The Forbes article lists organic search as still being very successful. People researching online are independent, and one way this manifests

itself online is through self-research. Based on the options that clients discover through ads, the higher the website's conversion rate and the greater the likelihood of organic growth—which is still crucial for businesses generally— (Forbes 2014.)

Case Company-X has preferred organic growth to gain more interaction with their brand, thus more marketing strategies should be added to paid advertising to drive a wider range of visibility than what they are doing today. Along with this strategy, it's crucial for them to expand their social media presence. For this, they'll need a distinct plan, and it's especially crucial to target their email marketing at their current clientele with curated content. One of the case companies most crucial strategies for engaging and communicating with new customers as well as their existing and returning clients has been email marketing. This is a strength of theirs, and it will be related to how they should speak for their brand while maximizing social media interaction so that the brand essence is consistent on both ends of the channels.

Despite the constraints of their present social media strategy, due to the target audience being wholesalers, they have the time and resources to devote to strategic email marketing campaigns and want to develop new content for those efforts. In addition, they want to devote effort to developing a clever marketing strategy to expand the readership of their present newsletter.

5.4.3 Content Marketing

The case company prides themselves in using renewable or sustainably derived materials in their manufacturing processes, which is completely carbon neutral. One page of their current website discusses the sustainability measures they are using and the techniques they use in creating their broadloom. I tried Google search to see if their website appeared when I typed in terms like "custom rugs NYC," "sustainable carpets NYC," and "carbon neutral rugs and textiles NYC," but the search results for their business were not visible.

They may gain more by developing a blog page about sustainability and the value of it in their products that is more comprehensive and engaging. Given that their products are easy to care for, thanks to their broadloom weaving method, they may also be able to provide cleaning instructions and care advice for them.

After trying the blog title generator, the following blog titles stood out, "5 things you probably didn't know about sustainable rugs, how do you prolong the life of a rug? How to look after your rug". These are some of the ideas which could be applied to improve their webpage content for their products. (Haaga-Helja 2022, 2.2.)

5.4.4 B2B Content Marketing

All of the case companies' clients are wholesalers. They create special orders for designer showrooms, hotels, developers, and interior designers who want to source luxury designer rugs with a minimal elegance, and easy-to-maintain function.

Because of this, their primary method of content marketing is email marketing, which they have mastered by highlighting key aspects of their products and events to a certain clientele they have been serving for years.

By enhancing their website presence, which tells the story of their sustainability initiatives, and their social media presence—which is our focus in this article—they hope to develop as a company and attract new people in the B2B market. (Powell 2021.)

They would be able to reach a wider audience by emphasizing appealing to emotion, in this example by talking about sustainability, which is a strength of their products, in addition to being luxury design from the Nordics. (Powell 2021.)

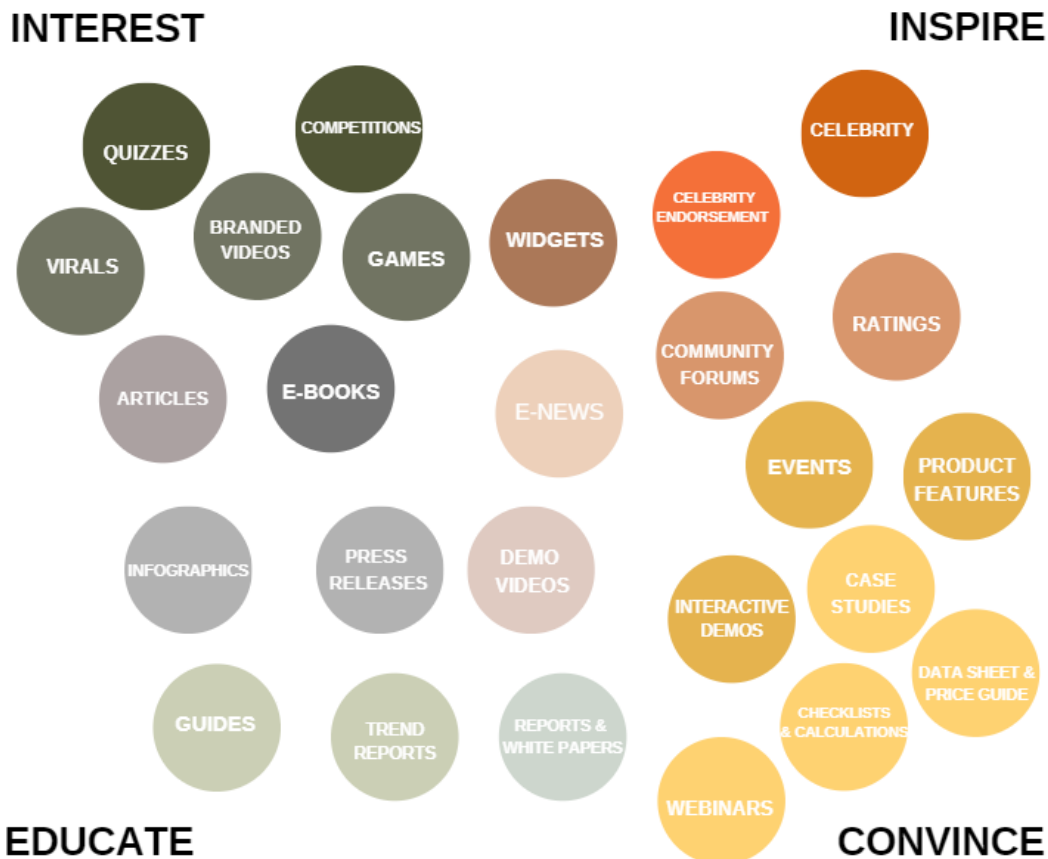


Figure 34. The Content Marketing Matrix (Smart Insights 2021.)

The image above demonstrates various approaches to use while designing content marketing strategy for businesses. They aim to concentrate on expanding their B2B market.

They offer a wide variety of custom products with cutting-edge features and with focus on sustainability. In this situation, it is advised that they take the educational path by writing more in-depth articles on their product's history.

They would be able to engage a new niche audience on social media by creating awareness. Their B2B audience would also gain from writing guides about the features of their items and adding more in-depth material like this to their website will increase the persuasion factor for customers to buy their goods. (Chaffey 2021.)

Utilizing the power of branded videos would also be beneficial, along with product features and events. They attend trade shows in NYC, which are one of their greatest sources for contacting new clients in the industry. The possibility of creating branded videos and video material in event

settings or behind the scenes from showrooms would create buzz over their products and services from an engaging perspective.

5.4.5 Inbound Marketing

The case company has an email marketing strategy for their current clients, but to grow their business and produce more activity that engages with their industries market, they should carefully craft their email marketing strategies to focus even more on product features, sustainability concerns, and rug and textile importance in design. Giving clients content that is empowering and inspirational is essential to developing a competitive approach. By producing relevant information for the client base, added value is generated which attracts more customers. (Halligan 2021.)

It's crucial to use a comprehensive strategy when promoting material on social media. In the textile and interior design industries, selling the lifestyle often involves visual communication. It is also a crucial element in establishing the value of a company's brand because it visually conveys the worth of the brand.

Deepening Connections With New Clients



Attract Tools - Engage Tools - Delight Tools

Ads	Lead Follows	Smart Content
Video	Email Marketing	Email Marketing
Blogging	Lead Management	Conversations Inbox
Social Media	Conversational Bots	Attribution Reporting
Content Strategy	Marketing Automation	Marketing Automation

Figure 35. Attract, Engage, Delight model (HubSpot 2021.)

The image above conveys strategy which uses attraction, engaging and delight tools to deepen connections with new clients. Based on the previously described content marketing approach, the case company is already able to concentrate on creating visually appealing social media material to draw people to their content. They may successfully promote their products by fusing visually appealing content with in-depth knowledge of their sustainability measures, how they are created, and the positive effects on the environment.

They can continue the dialogue and track success rates as their email newsletters and marketing are their greatest strengths.

5.4.6 SEO Results

The more results you will find with search words on Google, the harder it will be to show up in the results. For local companies, such as the case company, I ran another search to see how many results the term "sustainable rugs" produces for local businesses like the case company.

It provided 2,240,00 search results and advised using terms like "cheap eco-friendly rugs," "loomy rugs," "fair trade rugs," "organic carpets," and "non-toxic rugs" when looking for rugs. Since the company's founder is from Finland and the rugs are made there, which is also a component of their brand, I also decided to try the search term "Scandinavian carpets NYC".

Company-X does not appear in the search engine's organic results list, nor do they appear in the paid advertisements. The company does not display a specific place when I look for it on a map; instead, it displays as being in the United States.

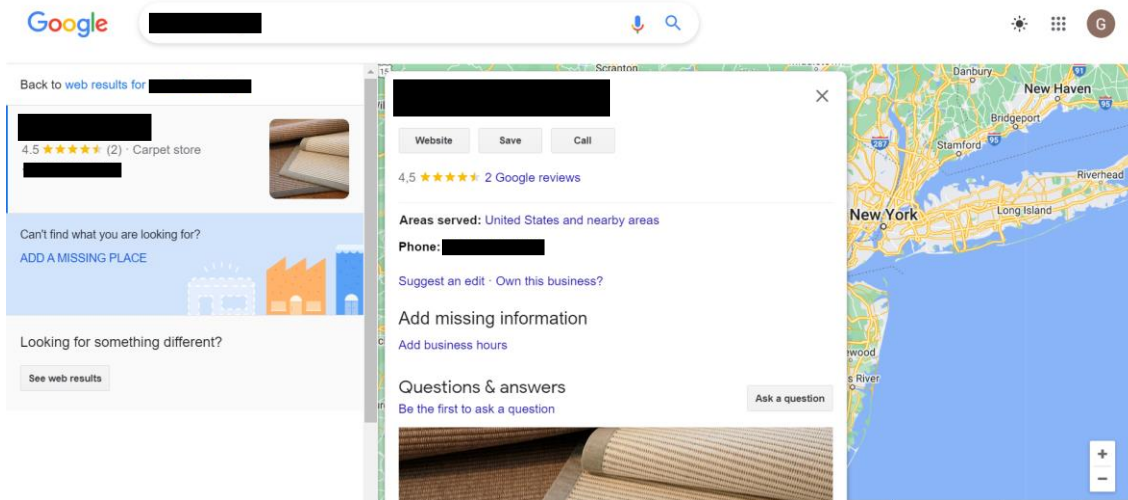


Figure 36. Google Search for Case Company-X.

The Google Maps search results are displayed in the image above.

How the page will appear in the search engine depends on relevant keywords, user experience, and metrics used to rank the time users spend on the website. (Haaga-Helia 2019, 3.6.)

The website of the company needs to receive plenty of traffic and interactions for SEO efforts to be successful, and for this to happen, it needs to appear in relevant search terms. Google AdWords is suggested as an alternative to organic SEO results.

Using social signals to connect their Instagram account to their website and Google AdWords for paid advertising are both effective for Company-X. The more traffic they can direct from their social media to their website, and vice versa, the more visibility their website will eventually get as the goal is to produce more interesting content on both their social media and website.

Additionally, using relevant keywords in their website's entries would aid in the optimization process. The keywords must have significant search traffic, commercial intent, and product relevance, but must also be long tail keywords which are more descriptive (Haaga-Helia 2019, 3.11.)

Keywords like "sustainable design rugs", "carbon neutral carpets", "Scandinavian design rugs", "handcrafted rugs", and "luxury designer rugs" are appropriate for Company-X but to make them descriptive we could suggest using "handcrafted sustainably produced design rugs", "Handcrafted in Scandinavia and woven using 100% carbon neutral processes" or "caring for your design rug".

Due to the size of the company and the time required to write fresh content for a website blog frequently, it may be more difficult for the search engine to put the success of the website higher on their priority list when using timely and relevant material as the only means of optimization.

The best strategies are, then, to maximize advantage of paid advertisements and social signals while concentrating on creating well-written pages for their website that contain all these keywords.

5.4.7 Recommendations for Optimization

After running through the website's performance analysis on SEO optimization, we get the following image of the case companies page performance.

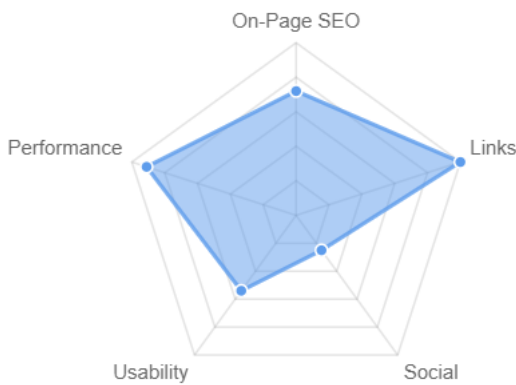


Figure 37. Page Performance

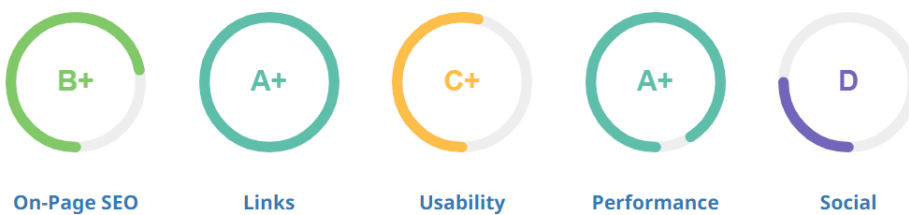


Figure 38. Page Usability Ratings

The website receives an overall grade of B plus. The majority of the page is optimized for On-Page SEO performance. On-page SEO is necessary to ensure that Search Engines understand your content and help it rank for relevant keywords.

They can continue to improve their page by ensuring that the HTML Tag Content is properly completed and that the text content is well aligned with the chosen keywords. (SEOptimer 2022.)

5.4.8 Meta Description Tag

- The page has a meta description tag, but it should ideally be between 70 and 160 characters long (including spaces).

“Company-X is a modern, environmentally friendly rug and broadloom company. We have contemporary rugs and broadloom in stock for residential, commercial, and hospitality projects. In addition, we specialize in custom rugs. Excellent customer service and quick shipping. Scandinavian design.”

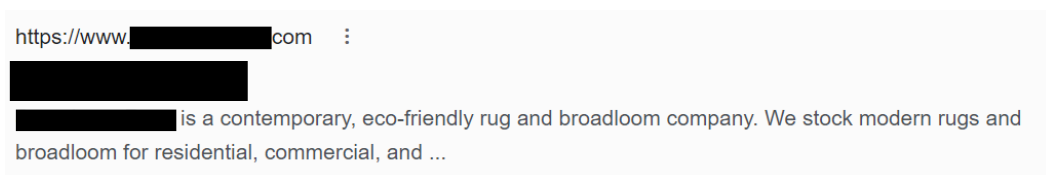


Figure 39. Snippet Preview

- 264 words
- A meta description helps search engines understand the content of the page and is frequently displayed as the description text blurb in search results.

(SEOptimer 2022.)

5.4.9 H2-H6 Header Tag Usage

- The page does not use multiple levels of Header Tags.
- HTML header tags are an important way of informing search engines about the important content topics on your page, and thus the keywords for which it should rank.

(SEOptimer 2022.)

5.4.10 Keyword Consistency

- The main keywords on the page are not evenly distributed across the important HTML tags.
- The page content should be centred on the keywords you want to rank for. These keywords should ideally be spread across tags such as the title, meta, and header tags.

(SEOptimer 2022.)

Keyword	Title	Meta Description Tag	Headings Tags	Page Frequency	
collections	×	×	×	2	
celebrating	×	×	×	1	
years	×	×	×	1	
rugs	✓	✓	✓	1	
broadloom	×	✓	✓	1	
gallery	×	×	×	1	
sustainability	×	×	×	1	
stockists	×	×	×	1	

Figure 40. Individual Keywords

Keyword	Country	Position	Total Searches	Estimated Traffic	
[Redacted]	🇨🇦 FR	3	1,300	126	
[Redacted]	🇺🇸 EN	1	50	15	
[Redacted]	🇨🇦 EN	11	1,300	11	
[Redacted]	🇺🇸 EN	1	30	9	
[Redacted]	🇺🇸 EN	2	50	8	
[Redacted]	🇬🇧 EN	6	140	4	
kascades	🇺🇸 EN	21	1,300	2	
[Redacted]	🇨🇦 EN	27	1,300	2	
wood rug	🇺🇸 EN	56	1,000	2	
wood rug	🇺🇸 ES	66	1,000	2	

Figure 41. Top Keyword Ranking by Country

5.4.11 Google's Page Speed

The page is fine, but it could be more mobile-friendly. Usability is critical for increasing your available audience and lowering user bounce rates, which can indirectly affect the search engine rankings. Google indicates that the page received a low score in their Mobile Page Speed Insights evaluation. According to Google, the performance of a webpage is becoming more important from the standpoint of users and, as a result, ranking. (SEOptimer 2022.)

5.4.12 Social Results

There is not a strong social presence or level of social activity according to the analytics run. Social media is useful for customer communication, brand awareness, and as a marketing channel for bringing more visitors to the website. It is recommended that they include all of their profiles on their page for maximum visibility, and that they work to build a following on those networks.

- Connect Instagram page
- Add Facebook pixel: If they decide to run Facebook Ads in the future, the Pixel is a useful piece of analytics code that allows to retarget visitors.

(SEOptimer 2022.)

5.4.13 Email Marketing

Given that email marketing is one of the oldest types of digital marketing and has historically matched business demands, the case company has already been implementing an email marketing plan that meets their present needs. We'll keep looking into how they use it now and how they may employ alternative viewpoints to modify their existing email marketing strategy.



Figure 42. Case Company-X Email Newsletter.

Target clients for Company-X come from the B2B industry. Their email marketing primarily focuses on new designs, product information or upcoming trade shows. An email marketing newsletter for their trade fair that took place at the Jarvis Center in NYC in the spring is shown in the image above.

When considering the form of the email marketing, it is important to keep in mind that online browsing has become more visually appealing. Today, it's all about engaging your audience. For instance, using video material to advertise new products is one effective email marketing strategy. Emails of gratitude are another option that the case company should use. Consider the family-run legacy Company-X, which has a long history of serving the B2B market.

Upholding ties with clients are just as important. Following trade fairs, they would want to think about sending a thank you for attending email marketing campaign that would highlight the event's

trade fair in video clips. Something fun and participatory will assist create a lasting impression and pique the interest of potential customers who weren't present, for instance. Using email marketing effectively can help you boost sales (Haaga-Helia 2019, 4.2).

Subcategories for various clients should be made by Company-X to strengthen this. Instead of having them all in one email, they should plan emails that are specific to target customers from distinct groups. Their B2B marketing is effective, but their need for growth means creating more campaign newsletters.

The first challenge will be figuring out how to add people to the email list and keep them there. To accomplish this, they will need to consider their options and incorporate them into their plan. They ought to have automated email segments for their new clients because they are a small team. The key is creating compelling content (Haaga-Helia 2019, 4.3). The email should be relevant to the audience, contain a strong subject line, a main point, and a call to action (Haaga-Helia 2019, 4.3).

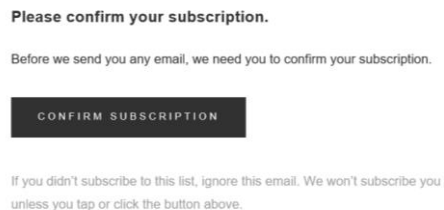


Figure 43. Case Company-X Newsletter.

An example of their confirmation of newsletter subscription is seen in the image above. The "thank you for joining up to our newsletter email" message that should have immediately followed this subscription email but was not sent. The quantity of material they can create for their email marketing will be directly related to how frequently they update their social media accounts.

They will be able to produce more intriguing and captivating emails as a result for their marketing plan which can be in sync with both channels of marketing. By focusing on quality content for one channel, it is easier to create content for the other.

5.4.14 Statistics

A business will constantly seek to segment its market and understand how to employ personalization in its marketing plan (Haaga-Helia 2019 4.4.) Additionally, dependent on their level of performance, they should modify their email marketing. On the system they are currently using, they can keep an eye on this. Open rate, click-through rate, and bounce rate are a few of these. They need to keep track of how many individuals open their emails, click on their links, and how many emails bounce back as undeliverable. (2019 Haaga-Helia, 4.5.)

Understanding data analysis is key, and it's also essential to know what email platforms individuals use. According to market share, Apple iPhone, Gmail, Apple iPad, and Outlook are the most popular email clients. 2019 (Haaga-Helia, 4.5).

Because the emails will vary from user to user depending on the content, this is significant from a marketing viewpoint. On various systems, imagery and video content will display differently. The content must adhere to the requirements for how it will appear for those users as more individuals convert to using their phones for work and checking emails. 2019 (Haaga-Helia, 4.5).

The most intriguing email marketing data was that 65% of users prefer images-rich emails over those that are wordy. 88% prefer that HTML emails from businesses. The email marketing newsletters should be timed to go out at a specific hour; historically, 6 am has seen the highest click-through rates of any other time. (Haaga-Helia 2019, 4.6.) This indicates that the majority of users are active in the morning, reading their email either before to or during the commute to work.

Utilizing catchphrases that are simple to comprehend and relate to, especially when they contain terms that encourage potential customers to take action. Words like "Submit," "Go," and "Click Here," for instance, have been shown to increase email marketing engagement. (Haaga-Helia 2019, section 4.7.)

Email is the most effective kind of marketing, according to 59% of B2B marketers. Company-X has chosen to utilize this type of digital marketing with their B2B clientele already for the same reason (Haaga-Helia 2019, 4.7).

The click-through rates of triggered emails are 119% greater than those of routine emails, and the most recent email subscribers are typically the ones who are most inclined to act on newsletters (Haaga-Helia 2019, 4.7).

The case company must therefore have a follow-up email for customers to click on after they sign up for the original newsletter. The next time they send out a newsletter, they will feel more confident and be able to elicit an emotional response.

Company-X has a good open rate with an active and solid email list of interior designers and architects with 1300 subscribers. Their open rate is 50% with an 8-10% click through rate. They send out their newsletters once a month and reminding the audience of their presence is their focus. (Case Company-X 2022.)

5.4.15 Recommendations

The best course of action for Company-X is to define the material they will publish about their products and to create distinct, strategically written emails for their clients. They need to organize their email lists, communicate with their audience more through interactive content, and work to develop an automatic mailing system for their newsletter list that is easy to understand and follow.

They should drive traffic to their newsletter on their website but should also consider giving a 5-10% discount for new subscribers to draw in traffic to their newsletter. In addition to having an effective campaign strategy which works to bring in new subscribers on their website, they should promote their products and services at designer showrooms and trade fairs with the same intention to sign up.

The project management techniques applied in this report and the work that went into producing the finished product will be covered in the sixth and final chapter.

6 Project Management Methods

This chapter will go over the research methods which were used in conducting this thesis and show the results which helped to create the product for the case company as well as the results of the survey regarding social media and digital marketing strategies. The goal was to examine the visual marketing and imagery on existing websites and social media sites, related to the case companies' industry, to better understand the desired outcome for this project objective and product design, as well as for the social media strategy.

6.1 Management Methods

A mixed methods research survey was conducted to further support this clause. The reason for choosing this approach was because the goal of qualitative research is to describe and clarify human experience as it manifests in people's daily lives (Polkinghorne 2005), and the goal of quantitative research allows to generate a scale between the importance of the question for the respondent (Swanson & Holton 2005, 32).

By using both qualitative and quantitative techniques to collect information to support this research survey for the thesis and for analytical purposes, the data was transferred from a platform used to conduct the research, into a single Word file. Participant selection was based upon people within the creative industries to broaden the scope of getting volunteers to answer the questions. Understanding the connection between experience and linguistic expression was necessary to determine which elements stood out the most from the data. (Polkinghorne 2005.)

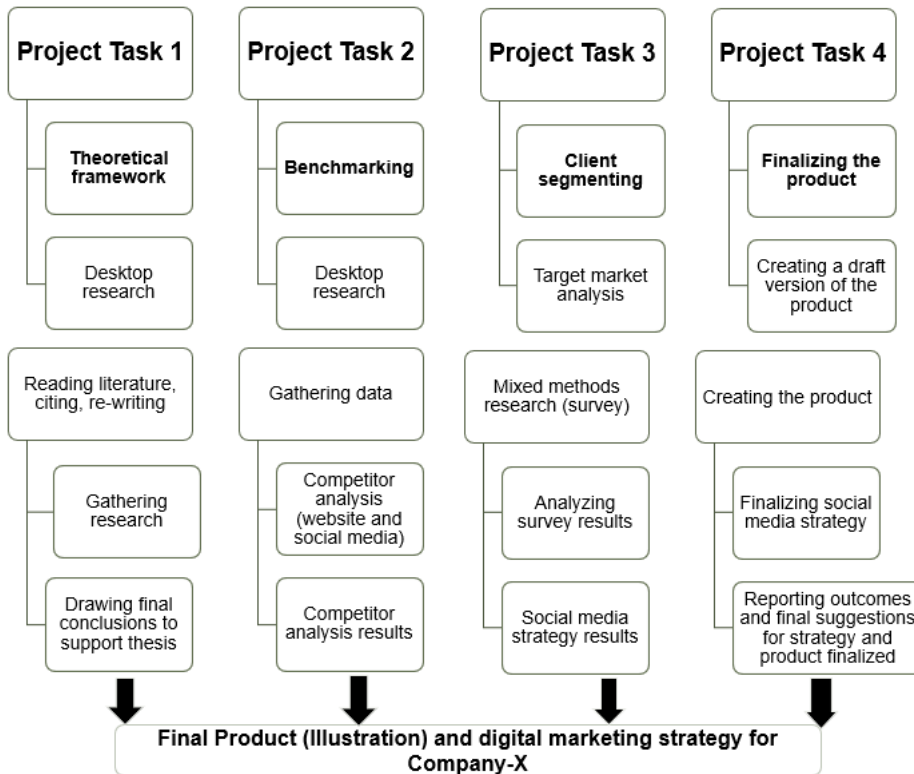


Figure 44. Project Management Methods.

The figure above demonstrates the order of which the project management was conducted by project tasks.

Parts 1 and 2 of the project tasks were done by desktop research methods in the beginning, to establish the theoretical framework. Branding, brand culture, sustainability, transparency, customer engagement and social media were examined in theory and their importance was justified in the beginning of this thesis. Benchmarking the case companies' competitors was the second step of the process. The methods used were researching competitors' websites and conducting social media analysis to draw further conclusions to support the final outcomes.

Companies were chosen based on their products, services, geographical location, and popularity. Analysis was conducted by gathering 5-10 top industry leaders which were analyzed based on similar attributes. Analyzation was based on visual content, visual communication strategies, number of followers, amount of social media activity, number of posts created per day on social media, video versus picture content, and their websites visual attributes.

Based on social media's popularity as a marketing channel, the case company can succeed and change by learning from its social media interactions and analyzing its competition (Ruhi, 2014). The knowledge gathered using these research techniques served as a solid foundation for the

product plan and social media content strategy. The data collected helped reveal the most recent patterns in how their rivals are utilizing visual communication techniques for their sustainability initiatives and with promoting their brand.

Part 3 of the project assignment is based on the information from part 2 of the tasks, which helped to understand the competitors' methods for customer communication and brand awareness creation through visual communication. Examining the visual marketing and imagery on active websites and social media platforms that is connected to the industry of the case company was the main objective. The final product's design was guided by this information.

The mixed methods research was done by gathering participants via my own social network, whom were individuals working for, or representing their own brands within the design industry. Having 6 participants answer 10 questions helped determine what their usage of social media are and how do they apply digital marketing strategies to operate successfully in their field of design.

The final social media strategy for the case company was based on parts 2 and 3 results. Three stages went into creating the final design. The final product was painted over by a wheat pasting technique, using existing free images online and the case companies own images, and designed using their sustainability initiatives to show how their products are designed.

When designing an illustration, drafting is an important stage to take to obtain the greatest design that adheres to the aesthetic goals of the case companies. Originally, hand painting the full visual narrative of their sustainability procedures was the goal, however wheat pasting turned out to be a superior solution. This was due to the fact that it met the dual purposes of making use of already-existing images and doing it in a more intriguing, creative manner. The completed version was captured on camera and posted online. For the case company's usage, a final analysis, and recommendations for creating a dynamic social media strategy, to produce content, was provided separately in the end of this thesis.

6.2 Product Design



Figure 45. Mood Board.

The image above shows the companies' aesthetics, color scheme, and sustainability initiatives, including the materials and procedures it uses. This served as an example of the final product.

The mood board assisted in developing an idea of what the final visual communication would look like. The product provides an interesting perspective on what sustainability means to them as a legacy company, illustrates the framework of how the materials are sourced, and highlights transparency of the production process of the products in the factory, which is based in Finland. It might be challenging to stand out from the crowd in the information-rich digital world. To draw customers' attention to material in an organic way, businesses must embrace the art of visual communication. (Walter and Gioglio 2014, 4.)

6.3 Goal of the Design

The purpose of this product was to exhibit the brand's image to potential new customers while also providing value to the industry's current, devoted customers through visual communication. Understanding the case companies' heritage, way of life, brand origins, and the work they put into product design was the aim. I was able to better comprehend what they stand for, in terms of sustainability measures, by understanding who they are as a brand.

This made it easier to decide what objectives I had to meet when making this product for them.

The objective was to produce an image that was carefully crafted into a compelling message that would, through visual communication strategy, align the thinking of their client base. (Walter and Gioglio 2014.)

6.4 Design Methods

To have created a successful and useful design, the product had to be created based on the data from benchmarking competitors' strategies. Seeing how the competitors in the field operated helped to give an in-depth visual understanding of their processes and what speaks to their audiences.

Setting up a meeting with the case companies vice president, who oversees managing their social media account and posting fresh material, helped in identifying who Company-X's primary rivals are. I investigated interior design firms that specialize in carpets and other rug companies in the United States after an initial encounter to gain insight into their field's competitors. At this stage of developing the theoretical foundation on which the product was to be based on, desktop research was conducted.

6.5 Creating the Final Design

An Excel file with information to cross-reference competitors, revealed the most successful branding methods, and emphasized their sustainable initiatives through visual communication and is included in the appendices. Following the benchmarking research, I was able to determine the optimal strategy to produce fresh content and make recommendations based on these findings after positioning the case company based on its brand attributes.

After completing all the earlier processes, I was able to deliver the design to help shape the final product, which will serve as an example of Company-X's product sustainability cycle for their clients. Building a successful end-product for the firm to utilize required close collaboration with the company to discuss their preferences about aesthetics and how it will represent their products. Using imagery from a branding and marketing point of view is a powerful tool. Human emotions are connected to visuals, such as illustrations are short, and easy to understand, and convey the demonstrative side of telling a story behind the products. (Marius 2015, 90.)

References

Antonides, G. 21 September 2017. Sustainable Consumer Behaviour: A Collection of Empirical Studies. MDPI. URL: <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/9/10/1686/htm>. Accessed: 24 August 2022.

Balliett, A. 2020. Killer Visual Strategies. Engage Any Audience, Improve Comprehension, and Get Amazing Results Using Visual Communication. John Wiley & Sons. Canada.

Barwise, P. 2009. Brands and Branding. The Economist. Bloomberg Press New York. URL: https://books.google.fi/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Y7lOnm10nTUC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=branding+scholarly+articles&ots=JyVc8x4U8f&sig=l1o-VM0bKDXdu6817i7VBR5YQXM&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false. Accessed: 1 June 2022.

Blacklett, T. 2009. Brands and Branding. The Economist. Bloomberg Press New York. URL: https://books.google.fi/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Y7lOnm10nTUC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=branding+scholarly+articles&ots=JyVc8x4U8f&sig=l1o-VM0bKDXdu6817i7VBR5YQXM&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false. Accessed: 1 June 2022.

Bonoma, T.V. January 1983. Get More Out of Our Trade Shows. Harvard Business Review. URL: <https://hbr.org/1983/01/get-more-out-of-your-trade-shows>. Accessed: 21 September 2022.

Brennan, R., & Croft, R. September 2012. The Use of Social Media in B2B Marketing and Branding: An Exploratory Study. Journal of Customer Behaviour. 7. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263577783_The_use_of_social_media_in_B2B_marketing_and_branding_An_exploratory_study. Accessed: 21 September 2022.

Chaffey, D. 15 February 2021. The Content Marketing Matrix. Smart Insights. URL: <https://www.smartinsights.com/content-management/content-marketing-strategy/the-content-marketing-matrix-new-infographic/>. Accessed: 30 August 2022.

Chaffey, D., Edmundson-Bird, D., & Hemphill, T. 2019. Digital Business & E-Commerce Management. URL: https://books.google.fi/books?hl=en&lr=&id=oYufDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT23&dq=digital+e-commerce+scholarly+articles&ots=OoirfsYleu&sig=OjN9NyqUMm_A6bHmEUfOT-NiAH30&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=digital%20e-commerce%20scholarly%20articles&f=false. Accessed: 16 September 2022.

Chen, J. 15 March 2022. Instagram Statistics You Need to Know for 2022. SproutSocial. URL: <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/instagram-stats/>. Accessed: 6 September 2022.

Drah, H. 2021. Globe Newswire, Allied Market Research. 20 Gripping Interior Design Statistics for 2022. URL: <https://whydoeseverythingsuck.net/blog/interior-design-statistics/>. Accessed: 14 September 2022.

Ehrenfeld, J. 2008. Sustainability by Design: A Subversive Strategy for Transforming Our Consumer Culture. New Haven: Yale University Press. URL: <https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300142808>. Accessed: 10 April 2022.

ESPAS. 2022. Welcome to 2030: The Mega-trends. URL: <https://ec.europa.eu/as-sets/epsc/pages/espas/chapter1.html>. Accessed : 30 August 2022.

Farjam, S., & Hongyi, X. July 2015. Reviewing the Concept of Brand Equity and Evaluating Consumer-Based Brand equity (CBBE) Models. Volume 1, Issue 8. Wuhan University of Technology. URL: https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/47891932/Reviewing-the-Concept-of-Brand-Equity-and-Evaluating-Consumer-Based-Brand-Equity-CBBE-Models-with-cover-page-v2.pdf?Expires=1654071473&Signature=REb546ckH4EgPNoKxT5nDYiYzml-Q8VE3pqj0NLCUCA4zhnjqvo5oAF8HWpjyA5HiqF9y5G6qICiBR6mf0fgCTw-KtiGJq~PAzR-kET0RmKFBuO4Bvc~xg5ALd-ySN2UAEPXQ3cFZwDg3f~G18PzwOWiKrijYb62k5ZDzlbXGWI-wVm9a2fzqP8YgJmaXH~FRCNOJGsFL9PInNS8XHL-culdg6xU9WT0nnLhtTKLr1RRMmNskzrvqg1aS4-BY0AYItFLfBYttXZQjpred4N4wL0eYLaLU-nlJute8DTG2KtBync~63JXuM2NdU1ojdFAIo6-JGoP31BRANaiIzTe14DAg__&Key-Pair-Id=AP-KAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA. Accessed: 1 June 2022.

Forbes. 13 October 2014. Five Important Digital Marketing Elements to Consider. Newtek – Your Business Solutions Company. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/thesba/2014/10/13/five-important-digital-marketing-elements-to-consider/?sh=d91b4623a3ed>. Accessed: 29 August 2022.

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. 15 January 2022. Rouhiainen, L. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences Moodle. Digital Marketing in Modern Business. 1.1 INTRO Why Digital marketing is Important for You? Accessed: 29 August 2022.

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. 15 January 2022. Rouhiainen, L. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences Moodle. Digital Marketing in Modern Business. 1.2 INTRO Digital Marketing Strategy Planning SOSTAC – part one. Accessed: 29 August 2022.

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. 15 January 2022. Rouhiainen, L. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences Moodle. Digital Marketing in Modern Business. 1.3 INTRO Digital Marketing Strategy Planning SOSTAC – part two. Accessed: 29 August 2022.

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. 15 January 2022. Rouhiainen, L. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences Moodle. Digital Marketing in Modern Business. 1.4 INTRO Digital Marketing Strategy Planning SOSTAC – part three. Accessed: 29 August 2022.

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. 15 January 2022. Rouhiainen, L. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences Moodle. Digital Marketing in Modern Business. 1.5 INTRO Digital Marketing Strategy Planning SOSTAC – part four. Accessed: 29 August 2022.

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. 15 January 2022. Rouhiainen, L. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences Moodle. Digital Marketing in Modern Business. 1.6 5 S's Planning Model. Accessed: 29 August 2022.

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. 14 March 2022. Rouhiainen, L. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences Moodle. Digital Marketing in Modern Business. 2.1 Introduction to Content Marketing. Accessed: 30 August 2022.

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. 14 March 2022. Rouhiainen, L. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences Moodle. Digital Marketing in Modern Business. 2.2 Tools for Generating Blog Titles. Accessed: 30 August 2022.

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. 17 August 2019. Rouhiainen, L. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences Moodle. Digital Marketing in Modern Business. 3.6 SEO Ranking Factors – Part One. Accessed: 30 August 2022.

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. 17 August 2019. Rouhiainen, L. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences Moodle. Digital Marketing in Modern Business. 3.11 SEO Introduction to Keywords Optimization. Accessed: 30 August 2022.

Hahn, I. 2019. 10 B2B Social Media Strategies That Work Best for Any Industry. HubSpot. URL: <https://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/32765/how-b2b-marketers-can-succeed-on-the-6-big-social-networks.aspx>. Accessed: 6 September 2022.

Halligan, B. 2021. Inbound Marketing vs. Outbound Marketing. HubSpot. URL: <https://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/2989/inbound-marketing-vs-outbound-marketing.aspx>. Accessed: 30 August 2022.

Han, H. 19 December 2021. Sustainable Consumer Behaviour and The Environment. Figure. 8–12. URL: https://books.google.fi/books?id=v9tKEAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=consumer+behaviour+sustainability&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=consumer%20behaviour%20sustainability&f=false. Accessed: 18 September 2022.

Has, M. 7 February 2022. Sustainable Products: Life Cycle Assessment, Risk Management, Supply Chains, Eco Design. Chapter 3. Business and Sustainability. 26. URL: <https://books.google.fi/books?id=3OtcEAAAQBAJ&pg=PA26&dq=sustainable+products&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwip8SPxZ76AhUHtosKHR-wD-YQ6AF6BAgHEAI#v=onepage&q=sustainable%20products&f=false>. Accessed: 18 September 2022.

Hawker, K. September 27 2019. Keller's Brand Equity Model – What It Is & How to Use it. Medium. URL: <https://medium.com/@keatonhawker/kellers-brand-equity-model-what-it-is-how-to-use-it-84e42d562299>. Accessed: 24 August 2022.

IBISWorld. 10 January 2022. Building Completion and Interior Design in China Industry Outlook (2022-2027). Building Completion and Interior Design Industry in China – Market Research Report. URL: <https://www.ibisworld.com/china/market-research-reports/building-completion-interior-design-industry/>. Accessed: 14 September 2022.

IBISWorld. 23 June 2022. Interior Designers in the US Industry Trends (2017-2022) & Interior Designers in The US Industry Outlook (2022-2027). New Home Feel: Rising Consumer Spending is Anticipated to Drive Industry Revenue Growth. Industry Research Reports – United States. URL: <https://www.ibisworld.com/united-states/market-research-reports/interior-designers-industry/>. Accessed: 14 September 2022.

IBISWorld. 10 July 2022. Interior Designers in Canada Industry Trends (2017-2022) & Interior Designers in Canada Industry Outlook (2022-2027). Designer Demand: A Slowdown in the House Markets is Expected to Slow Revenue Growth. Interior Designers in Canada – Market Research Report. URL: <https://www.ibisworld.com/canada/market-research-reports/interior-designers-industry/>. Accessed: 14 September 2022.

Ind, N. 2003. Beyond Branding. How The New Values of Transparency and Integrity Are Changing The World of Brands. 17. Kogan Page. URL: https://books.google.fi/books?id=MMrpxsyErwYC&printsec=frontcover&dq=transparency+and+brands&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=transparency%20and%20brands&f=false. Accessed: 7 September 2022.

Indeed. 5 January 2021, Updated 23 February 2021. Retail vs. Wholesale: Definitions and Differences. URL: <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/retail-vs->

- Palmatier, R.W., Kumar, V., & Harmeling, C.M. 2018. *Customer Engagement Marketing*. Palgrave McMillan. URL: https://books.google.fi/books?id=-EszDwAAQBAJ&pg=PA97&dq=customer+engagement&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=2#v=onepage&q=customer%20engagement&f=false. Accessed: 10 April 2022.
- Polkinghorne, D.E. 2005. Language and Meaning: Data Collection in Qualitative Research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. 52 (2). 137-145. URL: <https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2F0022-0167.52.2.137>. Accessed: 15 September 2022.
- Pontin, I., & Cambier, F. March 2020. *Journal of Business Research*. Volume 109. Inferring Brand Integrity from Marketing Communications: The Effects of Brand Transparency Signals in A Consumer Empowerment Context. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.11.060>. Accessed: 10 April 2022.
- Powell, A. 9 September 2021. How are B2B and B2C Content Marketing Different? Martech Alliance. URL: <https://www.lxahub.com/stories/b2b-vs-b2c-content-marketing>. Accessed: 30 August 2022.
- Research and Markets. March 2022. *Japan Home Décor Market (2022-2027) by Products, Price, Distribution Channel, Location, Competitive Analysis, and the Impact of Covid-19 with Ansoff Analysis*. URL: <https://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/5566895/japan-home-decor-market-2022-2027-by-products>. Accessed: 14 September 2022.
- RivallQ. Live social media benchmarks for home décor. URL: <https://www.rivaliq.com/live-benchmarks/home-decor-industry-benchmarks/>. Accessed: 13 September 2022.
- Rosenbaum-Elliott, R., Percy, L., & Pervan, S. 2018. *Strategic Brand Management*. 4th Edition. Oxford University Press. 5–7. URL: https://books.google.fi/books/about/Strategic_Brand_Management.html?id=RWliDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=kp_read_button&hl=en&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false. Accessed: 10 April 2022.
- Rubio, N., & Yagüe, M.J. 2019. *Customer Loyalty and Brand Management*. MDPI. URL: <https://books.google.fi/books?id=KyWxDwAAQBAJ&pg=PA98&dq=brand+loyalty&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwilt-5y4n3AhXssYsKHe2PCkwQ6AF6BAglEAI#v=onepage&q=brand%20loyalty&f=false>. Accessed: 10 April 2022.
- Ruhi, O. August 2014. Social Media Analytics as a Business Intelligence Practice: Current Landscapes & Prospects. *Journal of Internet Social Networking and Virtual Communities*. URL:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271154328_Social_Media_Analytics_as_a_Business_Intelligence_PracticeCurrent_Landscape_Future_Prospects. Accessed: 21 May 2021.

Case Company-X 2022. Company. URL: <http://www.Case Company-X.com/company>. Accessed: 8 April 2022.

Case Company-X 2022. Gallery. URL: <https://www.Case Company-X.com/installations/griffen>. Accessed: 10 April 2022.

SEOptimizer. 2022. Case Company-X. URL: <https://www.seoptimizer.com/www.Case Company-X.com>. Accessed: 3 November 2022.

Sesini, G., Castiglioni, C., & Lozza, E. 2020. New Trends and Patterns in Sustainable Consumption: A Systematic Review and Research Agenda. *Sustainability* 2020, 12, 5935. URL: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12155935>. Accessed: 26 April 2022.

Statista. 2021. Consumer Goods /Furniture, Furnishings & Household Items. United States region. Published by Kunst, A. URL: <https://www.statista.com/forecasts/1186765/interior-design-experts-social-media-channels-used-by-their-company-in-the-us>. Accessed: 13 September 2022.

Swanson, A., Holton, E. F. 2005. Foundations and Methods of Inquiry. Barret-Koehler Publishers Inc. Quantitative Research Methods. Step 1: Determining Basic Questions to Be Answered by Study, 32. URL: https://books.google.fi/books?hl=en&lr=&id=AyMZt9Ao-dEEC&oi=fnd&pg=PA29&dq=quantitative+research&ots=N6sqGuZi4b&sig=AMXJwWPmTUquXbmkU7BEBkSM5q4&redir_esc=y#v=one-page&q=quantitative%20research&f=false. Accessed: 16 September 2022.

Tuten, T.L. 2021. Social Media Marketing. Sage Publications LTD. 4th Edition. 234-235. URL: <https://books.google.fi/books?id=KfkFEAAQBAJ&pg=PA234&dq=social+media&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjW6aKBtZ76AhXGlosKHcoTD5IQ6AF6BAgKEAI#v=one-page&q=social%20media&f=false>. Accessed: 18 September 2022.

Van Doorn, J., Risselda, H., & Verhoef, P. C. 2021. Does Sustainability Sell? The Impact of Sustainability Claims on the Success of National Brands' New Product Introductions. *Journal of Business Research*, 137, 182-193. URL: https://pure.rug.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/179979759/1_s2.0_S0148296321005889_main.pdf. Accessed: 24 August 2022.

Walter, E., & Gioglio, J. 2014. The Power of Visual Storytelling. How to Use Visuals, Videos, and Social Media to Market Your Brand. 4–8. URL:

https://books.google.fi/books?id=HmjOAgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=visual+storytelling&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=visual%20storytelling&f=false. Accessed. 10 April 2022.

Watts, D., William, D., & Baaghil, S. 2013. Brands in Glass Houses: How to Embrace Transparency and Grow Your Business Through Content Marketing. Content Marketing Institute. URL: https://books.google.fi/books?id=fMVdngEACAAJ&dq=transparency+in+products&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y. Accessed: 7 September 2022.

Winik, M. 22 March 2022, Updated 3 August 2022. 7 Types of Benchmarking for Better Business Decisions (+ Examples). Similarweb LTD. URL: <https://www.similarweb.com/corp/blog/research/business-benchmarking/benchmarking-types/>. Accessed: 14 September 2022.

Figure Sources

Figure 1. Brand, Value, Visual Communication, and Engagement. Le Blanc, G. 2022.

Figure 2. Brand Involvement. Rosenbaum-Elliott, R., Percy, L., & Pervan, S. 2018. Strategic Brand Management. 4th Edition. Oxford University Press. 6. URL: https://books.google.fi/books/about/Strategic_Brand_Management.html?id=RWliD-wAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=kp_read_button&hl=en&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false. Accessed: 7 September 2022.

Figure 3. Keller's Brand equity Model. Frontify 2022. URL: <https://www.frontify.com/en/brand-equity/>. Accessed: 1 June 2022

Figure 4. Perceived Image and Values of Sustainably Driven Consumers. Han, H. 19 December 2021. Sustainable Consumer Behaviour and The Environment. Figure 1. Key Drivers of Environmentally-Sustainable Consumer Behaviours. URL: https://books.google.fi/books?id=v9tKEAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=consumer+behaviour+sustainability&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=consumer%20behaviour%20sustainability&f=false. Accessed: 18 September 2022.

Figure 5. Megatrends: Reflecting the Case Company and Interior Design Industry. ESPAS. 2022. URL: <https://ec.europa.eu/assets/epsc/pages/espas/chapter1.html>. Accessed : 30 August 2022.

Figure 6. Types of Content. Tuten, T.L. 2021. Social Media Marketing. Sage Publications LTD. 4th Edition. 234-235. URL:

<https://books.google.fi/books?id=KfkFEAAAQBAJ&pg=PA234&dq=social+media&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjW6aKBtZ76AhXGlosKHcoTD5IQ6AF6BAgKEAI#v=one-page&q=social%20media&f=false>. Accessed: 18 September 2022.

Figure 7. Visual Content. Balliett, A. 2020. Killer Visual Strategies. Engage Any Audience, Improve Comprehension, and Get Amazing Results Using Visual Communication. John Wiley & Sons. Canada.

Figure 8. Visual Storytelling and Engagement Statistics. Walter, E., & Gioglio, J. 2014. The Power of Visual Storytelling. How to Use Visuals, Videos, and Social Media to Market Your Brand. 8. URL: https://books.google.fi/books?id=HmjOAgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=visual+storytelling&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=visual%20storytelling&f=false. Accessed. 10 April 2022.

Figure 9. Dynamic Forms of Visual Content. Manic, M. 2015. Marketing Engagement Through Visual Content. Bulletin of The Transylvanian University of Brasov. Series 5. Economic Sciences. Volume 8 (57) Number 2. 90–94. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290084483_Marketing_Engagement_Through_Visual_Content. Accessed: 18 September 2022.

Figure 10. International Interior Design Services Market CAGR 2020-2027. Drah, H. 2021. Globe Newswire, Allied Market Research. 20 Gripping Interior Design Statistics for 2022. URL: <https://whydoeseverythingsuck.net/blog/interior-design-statistics/>. Accessed: 14 September 2022.

Figure 11. Interior Design in The US 2012-2022. IBISWorld. 24 June 2022. URL: <https://www.ibisworld.com/industry-statistics/market-size/interior-designers-united-states/>. Accessed: 14 September 2022.

Figure 12. Interior Design in Canada 2012–2022. IBISWorld. 10 July 2022. URL: <https://www.ibisworld.com/canada/market-size/interior-designers/>. Accessed: 14 September 2022.

Figure 13. Competitor Matrix (Luxury Design, Retail Design and Price.) Le Blanc, G. 2022.

Figure 14. Competitor Matrix (Sustainability, Transparency and Price.) Le Blanc, G. 2022.

Figure 15. Competitor Matrix (Content and Engagement.) Le Blanc, G. 2022.

Figure 16. Importance of Social Media. Le Blanc, G. 2022.

Figure 17. Most Important Social Media Channels. Le Blanc, G. 2022.

Figure 18. How Often are New Strategies Created? Le Blanc, G. 2022.

Figure 19. Success Rate of Current Strategy. Le Blanc, G. 2022.

Figure 20. Outsourcing Digital Marketing Strategy. Le Blanc, G. 2022.

Figure 21. Ideal Clients. Le Blanc, G. 2022.

Figure 22. Importance of Trade Shows and Events. Le Blanc, G. 2022.

Figure 23. Likelihood of Using a B2B Platform. Le Blanc, G. 2022.

Figure 24. Keller's Brand Equity Model for Case Company-X. Le Blanc, G. 2022.

Figure 25. First Version of The Illustration. Le Blanc, G. 2022.

Figure 26. Second Version of The Illustration. Le Blanc, G. 2022.

Figure 27. Third Version of The Illustration. Le Blanc, G. 2022.

Figure 28. Consumer Goods /Furniture & Household Items. Statista. 2021. Consumer Goods /Furniture, Furnishings & Household Items. United States region. Published by Kunst, A. URL: <https://www.statista.com/forecasts/1186765/interior-design-experts-social-media-channels-used-by-their-company-in-the-us>. Accessed: 13 September 2022.

Figure 29. Top Engagement Rates in Interior Design. RivalIQ. Live social media benchmarks for home décor. URL: <https://www.rivaliq.com/live-benchmarks/home-decor-industry-benchmarks/>. Accessed: 13 September 2022.

Figure 30. Instagram Engagement Rate. 2019. Digital Marketing Community. URL: <https://www.digitalmarketingcommunity.com/indicators/instagram-engagement-rate/>. Accessed: 6 September 2022.

Figure 31. Process for Social Media Strategy. Le Blanc, G. 2022.

Figure 32. Trending Hashtags. RivalIQ. Live social media benchmarks for home décor. URL: <https://www.rivaliq.com/live-benchmarks/home-decor-industry-benchmarks/>. Accessed: 13 September 2022.

Figure 33. Recommendations for Social MEDIA Strategy. Le Blanc, G. 2022.

Figure 34. The Content Marketing Matrix. 2021. Smart Insights. URL: <https://www.smartinsights.com/content-management/content-marketing-strategy/the-content-marketing-matrix-new-infographic/>. Accessed: 30 August 2022.

Figure 35. Attract, Engage, Delight Model. 2021. HubSpot. URL: <https://blog.hubspot.com/blog/taxonomy/6307/bid/2989/inbound-marketing-vs-outbound-marketing.aspx>. Accessed: 30 August 2022.

Figure 36. Google Search for Case Company-X.

Figure 37. Page Performance. SEOptimer 2022. URL: <https://www.seoptimer.com/www.CaseCompany-X.com>. Accessed: 3 November 2022.

Figure 38. Page Usability Ratings. SEOptimer 2022. URL: <https://www.seoptimer.com/www.CaseCompany-X.com>. Accessed: 3 November 2022.

Figure 39. Snippet Preview. SEOptimer. 2022. URL: <https://www.seoptimer.com/www.CaseCompany-X.com>. Accessed: 3 November 2022.

Figure 40. Individual Keywords. SEOptimer. 2022. URL: <https://www.seoptimer.com/www.CaseCompany-X.com>. Accessed: 3 November 2022.

Figure 41. Top Keyword Ranking by Country. SEOptimer. 2022. URL: <https://www.seoptimer.com/www.CaseCompany-X.com>. Accessed: 3 November 2022.

Figure 42. Case Company-X Email Newsletter.

Figure 43. Case Company-X Newsletter.

Figure 44. Project Management Methods.

Figure 45. Mood Board.

Appendix 1. Excel: Competitor Benchmarking

	A	B	C	E	F
1	Designer rug brands	Vision	From	Values	Price (USD)
2	Ben Soleimani	Textured, luxury rugs, hand-woven, undyed natural yarns	US	Quality, service, design	500-2000
3	Kvadrat	Craftsmanship, contemporary, feel & experience	Denmark	Quality, design, sustainability	NA
4	Nanimarquina	Handmade, design, contemporary, socially responsible materials	Spain	Tradition, color, intuition	NA
5	Sera Helsinki	Scandinavian design, craftsmanship, natural sheeps wool	Finland	Transparent, design, heritage	500-2000
6	GAN	Craftsmanship, design, handmade, luxury, natural + recycled materials	Spain	Origin, design, sustainability	500-3000
7	The Rug Company	Sources finest quality rugs, with time honouring techniques	US	Craftsmanship, responsibility, quality	2000-8000
8	Safavieh	High quality, innovation family business	US	Family, history, quality, growth	NA
9	Fort Street Studio	Family, collaboration, artistry, quality	US	Family, artistry, tradition, quality	NA
10	Edward Fields	Legacy, quality, luxury, design	US	Heritage, craftsmanship, quality	NA
11	Stark Carpet	Heritage, design, innovation	US	Craftsmanship, unique, design	NA
12	CC Tapis	Materials, culture, craft, tailored service	Italy	Social responsibility, legacy, design	900-2000
13	One Kings Lane	Products, expertise, style	US	Design, passion, personalized styling	200-10000
14					

	G	H
1	Website	Social Media
2	Luxury vibe, images, text based storylines, inspiration, visual appeal	30k followers, prominent followers from the industry (elledecor), well executed content, timely
3	Visually interactive, video content, modern, blogs, interest	232k followers, prominent followers, very aesthetic content, well planned and holistic approach
4	Video content, visual imagery, engaging, storytelling	68k followers, story, intrigue, organic photography, holistic approach
5	Nice visuals, modern feel, easy to scroll, inspiring	6,5k followers, emphasis on transparency, engaging content, inspiring
6	Okay, basic, hard to scroll	45k followers, events, dynamic photography, informative, inspiring
7	Visually appealing, blogs, inspiration	224k followers, aesthetic imagery, timely, lifestyle and inspirational
8	Boring, literal, un-inspiring, business like	405k followers, lifestyle, inspiration, holistic, engaging
9	Visually appealing, easy to scroll, not so modern though	6,5k followers, artistic, contemporary, inspiration
10	Visually appealing, easy to scroll, impressive (history and legacy)	4,5k followers, artistic, not as frequent or consistent times of posting, inspiration
11	Visually appealing, lifestyle images, inspiring	205k followers, home and living lifestyle, inspiration, small inconsistencies with posting times
12	Video content, visual imagery, engaging, storytelling	110k followers, artistic, holistic, aesthetic, well planned, engaging, modern, videos!
13	Retail like setting, boring photos	990k followers, prominent followers (archdigest), consistent, lifestyle, inspiration, aesthetic, holistic
14		

Appendix 2. Mixed Methods Survey Answers

Mixed methods survey results: Answers from respondents

1

Mixed methods survey
G. Le Blanc, 15 September 2022, conducted for thesis research in BBA in international business
Haaga-Helia UAS

Author Note
Rohtuvuorentie 18 B 51, 00820 Helsinki Finland.
Information gathered into this document is solely for the purpose of research.
All participant answers remained anonymous during the conducting of the process.

Abstract
The purpose of gathering this qualitative and quantitative data is to better understand what social media channels are important to creative industries and to gain insight of how they use digital marketing for their field. Based on this information, I can conduct further analysis for my thesis *Visual communication: Utilising Branding for B2B and Social Media Strategy – Case Company Scandevor Rugs*

Keywords: social media, digital marketing, qualitative research, survey

2

All answers are unchanged from the original transcript and have not been altered.

1. Please describe your brand/business and what industry it falls into.

- I'm fashion designer and in the progress of developing my ma thesis collection. The base is a zero-waste pattermaking method which utilizes and multiplies shapes from nature to create the garment.
- Global consulting – Data and AI
- The company/brand is a global design house with both fashion, bags and accessories, and home categories. It falls into the design industry.
- Art & advertising
- I'm a fashion photographer. My industry is the way I freeze the reality into a photo
- Fashion

3

2. What are the most important digital marketing tools for you?

(Name top 3, from most important to least important.)

- Instagram, web page
- Website, LinkedIn, Google AdWords
- Social media
- Instagram, website, Facebook
- Instagram, Make contacts on social media, Cookies
- Instagram, LinkedIn, Website

4

3. How often do you create new digital marketing strategies based on your business's needs?

(Once a week, once a month, twice a year etc...)

- As a student I don't do that often yet, but in the future with my own brand I would recreate a plan between 3-4 months
- per campaign – every month
- To the previous question (I didn't get to finish it): social media, Google Search, Email newsletters. Now my answer to this question: A strategy is made once a year to align on overall business goals, then quarterly we make a strategy for each quarter/seasonal collection, and then we frequently adjust the strategy even more weekly or monthly to align with product delays or if we are falling behind in the revenue goals
- Twice a year
- Once a month
- Once a year

5

4. Who are your ideal clients you target with your current digital marketing strategy?

(Based on your industry, B2C/B2B)

- Adults in their 20-30's, environment conscious, interested in this new way of expressing themselves through clothing that can be changed according to the clients wants and needs
- B2B, 2 strategies: employer branding (target audience is potential employees, talent, current employees, partnerships, etc.). Business branding: clients (Fortune 500), media, strategic partners (cloud partners)
- B2C but also in hopes that we remain attractive to new B2B clients (wholesalers). Ideal clients for our brand are people who make salaries of \$100,000+, have interest in liberal arts, design, educational subjects, people who dress on the more expressive side. We also target customers who live in the cities where we have stores and wholesale accounts.
- B2C
- Creative people are my target, don't matter the age and the gender. My ideal clients must love art and know a lot about that, so they can appreciate my work
- B2C

6

5. How well does your current digital marketing strategy work for your brand/business?

(0 = not well, 10 = excellently)

- 4 / 10
- 7 / 10
- 8 / 10
- 8 / 10
- 5 / 10
- 10 / 10

7

6. How important is it to promote your brand/business at trade shows or events?

(0 - not at all important, 10 - crucial for promoting)

1. 8 / 10
2. 9 / 10
3. 7 / 10
4. 8 / 10
5. 8 / 10
6. 0 / 10

8

7. How important are social media channels for promoting your brand?

(0 - not at all important, 10 - crucial for promoting)

1. 10 / 10
2. 10 / 10
3. 10 / 10
4. 10 / 10
5. 7 / 10
6. 10 / 10

9

8. How likely is it, that you would use an application or service directed for B2B clients to promote your brand/business?

(0 - not at all likely, 10 - highly likely)

- a. N/A
- b. 7 / 10
- c. 9 / 10
- d. 3 / 10
- e. 5 / 10
- f. 3 / 10

10

9. Do you outsource your digital marketing to a second or third party?

(To create content or perform marketing strategies for your brand/business)

1. NO
2. NO
3. YES
4. NO
5. N/A
6. NO

11

10. Do you plan your digital marketing yourself?

1. N/A
2. YES
3. YES
4. YES
5. YES
6. YES

12

Data collected using Typsform.com

Data collected 13-15 September 2022. Access to the survey - URL:

<https://ivjyked02m.typsform.com/to/DO4ZNSV>

Appendix 3. First Draft of The Final Product: Illustration

Appendix 4. Images Used for the Final Product

All images used for creating the final product are free for commercial use and downloadable from Pixabay.com.



Cotton. Canon EOS 5d Mark 3. JPG 5760x3840. Published 4 September 2015. URL: <https://pixabay.com/fi/photos/puuvilla-kukat-maljako-valkoinen-922881/>. Accessed: 3 November 2022.



Sheep. Sony Dsc-Hx400v. JPG 5184x3888. Published 14 October 2019. URL: <https://pixabay.com/fi/photos/lampaita-el%c3%a4imet-karjaa-nis%c3%a4k%c3%a4s-4544180/>. Accessed: 3 November 2022.



Wood. Canon EOS 1200d. JPG 5184x3456. Published 19 February 2015. URL: https://pixabay.com/fi/photos/search/wood/?manual_search=1&pagi=2. Accessed: 3 November 2022.