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Creating a Digital Marketing plan for Company X

Bachelor's Thesis

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis focuses on the development of a digital marketing plan for Company X, a small Finnish company providing travel services in Finland. The purpose of this thesis is to help Company X, identify areas for improvement, and create a comprehensive digital marketing plan that can help the company. The proposed digital marketing plan is designed to increase brand awareness for the company, drive traffic to the company's website, generate leads, and, eventually increase sales. The plan is made to the unique needs and resources of Company X, with a focus on cost-effectiveness as well as measurable results.

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1.THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Introduction

The travel business is very competitive and dynamic, with many companies fighting for potential clients' attention. In this setting, it is essential for travel companies to have a solid marketing strategy that allows them to successfully connect and engage with their target audience, differentiate themselves from rivals, and generate sales. This thesis creates a thorough marketing plan for Company X, a travel firm that will specialize in 'whole Finland' holiday packages. Company X caters to tourists interested in experiencing the country's distinctive appeal beyond the usual attractions by providing an extended itinerary that allows passengers to see lesser-known parts of the country. By providing an extensive itinerary that allows travelers to explore lesser-known areas of the country, Company X caters to tourists interested in discovering the nation's unique charm beyond the conventional destinations. However, despite the agency's innovative concept, a lack of effective marketing is limiting their visibility on the market. The thesis seeks to explore ways to overcome these challenges and devise a marketing plan that enhances Company X's visibility and reach within the target market.

This research will primarily focus on digital marketing, since Company X's potential customer base primarily consists of foreign travelers. By using digital platforms to promote their services, the company can effectively target a diverse audience in a cost-efficient manner, enabling them to compete with larger, established travel agencies. Therefore, this thesis aims to answer three critical questions concerning the development of Company X's marketing plan. These are:

How can you efficiently identify and target the company's target segment?

What marketing methods and tactics are best suited for the promotion of the company's tour packages?

How can the company monitor and assess the effectiveness of the proposed marketing plan in the future?

To achieve the research objectives, this study will adopt a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. Specifically, the research will employ interviews with industry experts to gain insights into effective marketing strategies and tactics for travel agencies, as well as a quantitative survey to gather data on the interests and travel preferences of prospective customers. By integrating these methods, this study will provide a fresh perspective on the target market and offer practical recommendations for developing an effective marketing plan for Company X.

1.2 Literature Review

A digital marketing plan is a detailed plan that explains an organization's strategy for promoting its products or services, building its brand, and engaging with its target audience using digital platforms. According to Opresnik, M.O (2020), a digital marketing plan can be defined as the structured process of researching and analysing the marketing situations, developing and documenting marketing objectives, strategies, and programs, as well as implementing, evaluating, and controlling activities to achieve these goals.

Digital channels refer to the various online platform's businesses use to communicate with their target audience. According to the Digital Marketing Institute, digital channels can be categorized into owned, earned, and paid media. Owned media are platforms that a company owns and controls, such as its website and social media accounts. Earned media refers to online mentions, shares, and recommendations by customers and other stakeholders, while paid media is advertising on online platforms. (Digital Marketing Institute, 2023)

Content marketing is the practice of creating and distributing valuable and relevant content to attract and retain a target audience (Gunelius, S. 2011 p.10). Content marketing has become an essential part of digital marketing as it helps businesses build relationships with their customers more directly than with more passive marketing. Pulizzi and Barrett (2008, p. 8) proposed one of the first definitions of content marketing: "the creation and distribution

of educational and/or compelling content in multiple formats to attract and/or retain customers”

Social media marketing involves using social media platforms to promote a brand or product. According to Constantinides, social media marketing is based on the principles of relationship marketing, where businesses aim to build long-term relationships with their customers. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter are inexpensive and have a large reach in the modern marketing space. Facebook and Instagram combined have over 5 million users in Finland alone. (Lahtinen, Niko, et al. 2022 p.234)(Constantinides, E, 2014)

The process of increasing the visibility of a website or online content in search engine results is known as search engine optimization (SEO). SEO can be a powerful tool for increasing website traffic, generating leads, and improving brand visibility, according to Lahtinen, Niko, et al. 2022. SEO includes a number of techniques, including keyword research, on-page optimization, and link building. It is also critical to keep up with changes to search engine algorithms.(Lahtinen, Niko et al 2022 p. 28,189)

The concept of a website as a home base is essential in digital marketing, as a landing site for your customers from external sources. A website serves as the central hub for all digital marketing activities, providing a platform for businesses to showcase their products, services, and brand identity. According to (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick 2019), a well-designed website is crucial for driving traffic, generating leads, and converting visitors into customers. Websites should be user-friendly, responsive, and optimized for search engines to maximize their effectiveness as a home base for digital marketing efforts.

Data-driven digital marketing is the practice of leveraging data and analytics to inform marketing strategies and make data-informed decisions (Wedel & Kannan, 2016). Data-driven marketing allows businesses to better understand their target audience, track the performance of marketing campaigns, and optimize their marketing efforts based on insights gathered from data analysis (Wedel & Kannan, 2016). By utilizing data-driven digital marketing, businesses can improve the effectiveness of their marketing strategies, increase

their return on investment (ROI), and achieve their marketing objectives more efficiently (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Pay-per-click (PPC) advertising is a form of digital marketing where advertisers pay a fee each time their ad is clicked, essentially buying visits to their website. Google Ads is the most popular PPC advertising platform, and it allows businesses to bid on keywords relevant to their target audience, and drive traffic to their home page. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

1.3 Research Methodology

This section will start by explaining the qualitative research methodology that will be employed in this thesis. The qualitative research methodology involves conducting interviews with a professionals in the travel industry to gather insights into their behavior, preferences, and perceptions of Company X's travel packages. The quantitative research involves a questionnaire for students of OAMK, which is used to analyze interest in the bus travel industry. The methods chosen for this study were chosen because using mixed methods research can give a more complete picture than a standalone study using only one method. (Tegan G 2021)

The target population for this study will be professionals in the travel industry and students of OAMK. A purposive sampling technique will be employed to select participants for the interviews, with the aim of obtaining a diverse sample that represents a range of perspectives and experiences in the industry. (Nikopoulou K 2022)For the questionnaire, a convenience sampling technique will be used, and it is administered online to all students of OAMK who are on the mailing lists available for use.

In order to ensure ethical standards are met, informed consent will be obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in the study, adhering to the guidelines set forth by the Helsinki Declaration (World Medical Association, 2013). Confidentiality of all data collected will be maintained, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (European Union, 2018), and the data will be used solely for the purpose of this study.

It is important to note that this study has some limitations, including the relatively small sample size and the limited geographic scope of the research. Nevertheless, the insights gained from this study can be valuable in understanding the behavior, preferences, and perceptions of professionals in the travel industry and students of OAMK towards the travel industry and its marketing. This study can contribute to the existing literature on the travel industry and may help in the development of future research in this area.

1.4 Qualitative Methods

This thesis employs a qualitative research methodology to gather insights into the behaviour, preferences, and perceptions of professionals in the travel industry towards Company X's travel packages. Qualitative research is a research method that involves the collection and analysis of non-numerical data, such as interviews, observations, and documents, to understand the meaning and interpretation of social phenomena from the perspective of the participants. (Pritha Bhandari 2020)

The qualitative research design for this study will involve conducting semi-structured interviews with professionals in the travel industry. Semi-structured interviews are a flexible form of data collection that allows the interviewer to follow up on interesting or unexpected responses and explore in-depth the participants' views and experiences. (Pritha Bhandari 2020)

1.5 Quantitative Methods

In addition to qualitative research methods, this thesis will employ quantitative methods to collect data and assess OAMK students' interest in the tourism business. A survey will be administered to OAMK students to gather information about their impressions of package travel and their interest in purchasing travel packages offered by Company X.

The survey will be administered online in Google Forms, and it will consist of a combination of different kinds of questions. Closed-ended questions will include multiple-choice questions, Likert scales, and rating scales, while open-ended questions will allow participants

to provide more detailed feedback on their experiences and perceptions of travel marketing and travel packages. (Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000).

The data collected from the survey will be analyzed using quantitative analysis methods, including descriptive statistics, frequency analysis (Field, 2009), and correlation analysis (Cohen, 1988). This will provide an understanding of the interest of OAMK students in the travel industry and the factors that influence their decision-making.

1.6 Setting goals

To create a digital marketing plan for Company X, it is important to first identify the company's goals and objectives. The most common goal companies have when investing resources into web presence or social media activity is increasing sales (Lahtinen, Niko, et al 2022, p.73,75). However, since the company is only a startup, the goals should be made to reflect that. Setting up Key Performance Indicators for your company early on is important, and using some website-specific indicators can be useful to measure the success of any advertising campaign. A Key Performance Indicator is defined as "a set of quantifiable measurements used to gauge a company's overall long-term performance." (Alexandra,T 2023) Because, in the case of Company X, the website isn't functional yet, this will be a theoretical analysis of goals that are set after the company has built a website.

The SMART model can be used to set realistic, achievable goals for a company. (Doran, G.T 1981, p.35-36) This model was not made to be used in the modern digital age, but it provides a general, simple guidelines to use when setting goals for the success of a marketing campaign. The first letter of the SMART model, S, stands for Specific. Specific goals are more likely to be achieved since they are clear and concise. In this case, the specific goal for Company X could be to increase website traffic by a certain percentage over a given period.

The second letter, M, stands for Measurable. Measurable goals allow for tracking progress and determining whether a marketing campaign has been successful. For example, the goal could be to increase website traffic to 1000 people a month in the first month after the website's launch.

A stands for Assignable. Assignable goals mean that the responsibility for achieving the goal is clear and assigned to a specific individual or team. In the case of Company X, the responsibility for achieving the set goals goes to the entrepreneur running the company, or perhaps a hired marketing agency, or a freelance assistant.

The fourth letter of the model, R, stands for Realistic. Realistic goals are achievable, given the available resources, budget, and timeframe. It is important to set realistic goals that are challenging but not impossible to achieve. For Company X, a realistic goal could be to reach a certain number of social media followers, and website traffic within the timeframe of the goal.

The final letter of the model, T, stands for Time-Related. Time-related goals have a specific timeframe in which they should be achieved. For Company X, the timeframe could be three months, to six months long term. As a small company, it is good to keep the overall goals short-term, so that you can adjust and react to changes quickly.

Setting a realistic goal for the company is important. The SMART goal that this thesis recommends for Company X is to increase monthly website traffic to at least 750 unique visitors and gain 150 new social media followers on Facebook and Instagram within three months of launching the company website. This goal is specific and measurable, with clear targets for website traffic and social media followers. It is also achievable and realistic, given the available resources and timeframe. Furthermore, it is time-bound, with a clear deadline of three months.

To monitor progress towards achieving this goal, it is essential to define relevant KPIs. The first KPI is the number of monthly unique website visitors, which can be tracked using Google Analytics. The second KPI is the number of new social media followers on Facebook and Instagram per month. The third KPI is the engagement rate on social media posts, which can be measured by likes, comments, shares, and clicks per post. The fourth KPI is the number of email subscribers added to the mailing list per month. The fifth KPI is conversions on the

website, such as sales, customers asking for help, and other relevant metrics.(Lahtinen, Niko et al 2022. p.242,244)

By monitoring these KPIs regularly, the marketing team or person can determine whether they are on track to achieve the SMART goal. If the goals are not being met at any point, they can reevaluate resources, priorities, and strategies to get back on track. In conclusion, the SMART goal and associated KPIs outlined in this section provide a useful framework for Company X to monitor progress towards achieving their goals.

2. EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

2.1 Results from Qualitative Research

The qualitative research for the thesis was based on getting interviews from industry professionals and asking them questions on their perceptions of travel marketing and generally about methods used in the travel industry, in order to answer the research question of ‘What marketing strategies and tactics are best suited for the promotion of the company’s tour packages?’. The result was that only one interview was arranged, but nevertheless it has given an insight as well as confirmation for some of the literary research.

-The person who was interviewed had around 10 years of experience as an entrepreneur and had experienced first-hand how difficult it is to compete in the travel market. She had many good suggestions, and her insights were valuable in understanding the challenges faced by tour operators in the highly competitive travel industry. The interviewee highlighted the importance of having a unique selling proposition and differentiating oneself from competitors in order to stand out.

Another thing that she highlighted was that you should find business collaboration networks, such as Travel Oulu, and others, that collaborate with other small and medium local travel businesses. This can help to increase visibility and attract more customers.

Another important step was to make connections with travel organizers in the target countries. This can help in 'breaking the barrier' of trust with travellers from other countries. She also recommended concentrating on the KPI's (Key Performance Indicator) of traffic and conversion, which are vital to track as a small company. (Appendix 3)

2.2 Results from Quantitative Research

The quantitative research for this thesis was conducted through an online survey, which aimed to gather data from students at OAMK. The survey was designed to understand their travel preferences, booking behavior, and factors that influence their decision-making process. The survey was distributed through the school email system, and received a total of 697 responses. (Appendix 2)

The results of the survey showed that a minority (15%) of respondents were aged 40 and above, which is the target audience that aligns with the target audience identified for Company X. From these responders, the survey indicated that the primary reason for travel among responders was to experience new cultures and explore nature, which can be leveraged by Company X in their marketing efforts. (Appendix 2)

In terms of booking behavior, the survey revealed that most respondents preferred to book their travel packages online, with the majority (55%) using online travel agencies such as Tripadvisor. However, a significant proportion (35%) of respondents also stated that they preferred to book directly with the tour operator, indicating the importance of having a strong online presence and an easy-to-use booking system on the company's website. (Appendix 2)

The survey also highlighted the importance of pricing and location, emphasising that many prefer to book to the most affordable places. However, location was the most popular option when choosing a travel package, which suggests that Company X should consider choosing their locations carefully, and trying to keep the price as low as possible. (Appendix 2)

Overall, the results of the quantitative research provide some insights into the general approval and thoughts of the public, and they give some credible advice on how to plan and align the marketing plan towards concentrating on the essentials, such as marketing the unique locations of the tour, and making a high quality listing on TripAdvisor.(Appendix 2)

2.3 Analysis

The analysis of the results from both the qualitative and quantitative research provides valuable insights for Company X on how to develop effective marketing strategies for their tour packages. The qualitative research highlighted the importance of having a unique selling proposition and finding business collaboration networks, which can help Company X differentiate themselves from their competitors and increase their visibility to potential customers.

I did analysis with excel as well as using the tools included in the survey software. For the interviews, a similar content analysis approach was taken. The interview recordings were transcribed and then reviewed multiple times, writing and analysing the questions and answers that were discussed.

The quantitative research revealed that Company X's target audience, individuals aged 40 and above, represented a minority of the survey respondents. However, the survey did provide insights into the travel preferences and booking behaviour of the respondents, which can be leveraged by Company X in their marketing efforts. The primary reason for travel among respondents was to experience new cultures and explore nature, which aligns well with the tour packages offered by Company X.(Appendix 2)

The survey also indicated that most respondents preferred to book their travel packages online, with online travel agencies such as TripAdvisor being the most popular option. However, a significant proportion of respondents also preferred to book directly with the tour operator, highlighting the importance of having a strong online presence and an easy-to-use booking system on the company's website.(Appendix 2)

The survey results also emphasized the importance of pricing and location, with many respondents preferring to book to the most affordable places. However, the location was the most popular option when choosing a travel package, suggesting that Company X should carefully select their tour locations and try to keep prices as low as possible. (Appendix 2)

Overall, the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative research highlights the need for Company X to develop a unique selling proposition, differentiate themselves from competitors, and collaborate with other small and medium local travel businesses. Additionally, Company X should focus their marketing efforts on promoting their unique tour locations and providing an easy-to-use booking system on their website. By incorporating these improvements into their marketing strategy, Company X can effectively target their desired audience and increase their visibility to potential customers.

3. Marketing Plan

3.1 Defining Target Audience

Defining the target audience is an essential component of any marketing plan. It allows businesses to modify their products and services to cater to their customers' specific needs. Understanding the demographics, behavior, and ways of thinking of Company X's target audience is critical for developing effective marketing campaigns and driving sales. The company can then create tailored packages and promotional offers that resonate with its target audience and reach them through the most relevant channels by identifying factors such as age, gender, income, education level, travel preferences, and online behavior. According to ~~Tilastokeskus~~ (2022), most travelers to Finland are from Germany or Netherlands.

For the company, and for the purposes of this thesis, I created a buyer persona that reflects the ideal customer profile for Company X from Germany or Netherlands, who is an older individual in their 60s or 70s with a passion for travel and adventure. This buyer persona may be retired or nearing retirement and may have a higher disposable income, allowing them to indulge in their travel interests. The buyer persona may prefer cultural experiences and may enjoy immersing themselves in local customs and traditions. They may also appreciate historical landmarks, museums, and other cultural attractions. This individual may prioritize

comfort and convenience in their travel arrangements and may prefer well-planned and organized trips with minimal physical exertion.

As an older individual, this buyer persona may prefer slower-paced travel and may value relaxation, comfort, and safety during their trips. They may prefer accommodations with modern amenities and facilities and may prioritize accessibility and ease of movement in their travel plans. The average stay of international travelers in Finland was 4.6 according to Tilastokeskus. This should be taken into account in order to not make overly long trip plans, since travelers would be unlikely to book them.(Tilastokeskus 2022)

This buyer persona may also value social interactions and may seek opportunities to connect with other travelers or locals during their trips. They may enjoy group tours or organized activities that provide opportunities for socializing and making new connections.

When it comes to online behavior, this buyer persona may use the internet for travel research, booking accommodations, and researching destinations. They may be active on social media platforms like Facebook, where they can connect with friends and family, share travel experiences, and seek recommendations for travel destinations.

Understanding the unique preferences and interests of this buyer persona will enable Company X to tailor their marketing strategies to effectively reach and resonate with this specific audience.

(Hubspot 2023,Appendix 4)

3.2 Competitor Analysis

The market for tours in Finland is mostly concentrated on Rovaniemi and the capital (Tourradar 2023), and there is a distinct lack of operators that offer a deeper dive into the less-travelled paths of Finland. To conduct a thorough competitor analysis, Company X must identify and analyse its direct and indirect competitors in the travel industry. According to Indeed, Direct competitors are those who offer similar types of tours and services to the same target audience, while indirect competitors are those who offer alternative solutions to the same problem or need. (Indeed 2023)

The limited competition in the less-travelled paths of Finland can be attributed to several factors. First, these areas are less developed in terms of infrastructure and amenities, making it challenging for tour operators to provide services and experiences that meet travellers' expectations. Second, marketing and promotion of these areas may not be as extensive as in popular tourist destinations, resulting in less awareness and interest from potential customers. Third, the high operational costs of remote areas may discourage smaller companies from giving trips in these areas, leaving only a few larger operators with the resources to do so. Also, the limited availability of experienced guides and personnel in these areas may also contribute to the lack of competition, as it can be difficult to find good guides to lead tours and provide the desired quality experiences.

One of Company X's direct competitors could be Lapland Safaris, which is one of the largest tour operators in Lapland, Finland. Lapland Safaris offers a variety of tours and activities ranging from snowmobiling, husky and reindeer safaris, Northern Lights tours, and cultural activities. Another direct competitor could be Nordic Travels, which offers tours and activities such as ice-fishing, snowshoeing, and snowmobile safaris. These experiences cater to a lot of the people that want to experience Finnish culture and can afford a multi-day trip to Finland. (Lapland Safaris 2023) (Nordic Travels 2023)

Indirect competitors could include online travel agencies such as TripAdvisor or Booking.com, which offer a wide range of travel packages and accommodations for travellers to Finland. Other indirect competitors could include alternative travel options such as city promotions or self-guided tours, which provide travellers with more flexibility and independence in their travel plans.

3.3 Digital Channels

Once the target audience for Company X has been defined, the next step is to select the appropriate digital marketing channels to reach and engage with them effectively. There are various digital marketing channels available, and it's essential to choose the ones that are most likely to reach the target audience based on their online behavior and preferences.

Based on my analysis as well as information from the knowledge base, here are some digital marketing channels that can be effective for Company X:

Social Media: As the buyer persona is likely to be active on social media platforms like Facebook, leveraging social media marketing can be an effective way to reach and engage with the target audience. Company X can create engaging content, run targeted ads, and interact with potential customers on social media platforms to promote their travel packages and offerings. Social media is where most of the focus of digital marketing is, as recommended by the interviewee, and where a majority of potential customers find their information on travel destinations. (Appendix 2)

Search Engine Optimization (SEO): As the target audience will be funneled to the website, optimizing the website for search engines can help Company X to improve their organic search rankings and increase visibility among potential customers. This can be achieved by creating high-quality, relevant content on the website, optimizing meta tags and descriptions, and using relevant keywords related to the target audience's search queries. (Lahtinen, Niko et al, 2022 p.163) Building your website with these tags can be difficult, but there are many tools online that can be used to optimize your website, such as Google Analytics and Yoast. (Forbes 2023) Example keywords for the website are: Travel, unique travel destinations, travel package, Finland. Including these keywords in your website's content can improve its ranking on search engines, for no cost (Ahrefs 2023).

Email Marketing: Email marketing can be an effective channel for Company X to directly reach out to potential customers and nurture relationships with them. By collecting email addresses from website visitors and customers and sending targeted and personalized emails, Company X can promote their travel packages, share updates, and offer exclusive deals to encourage bookings on the website.

Content Marketing: Creating and promoting valuable content related to travel and adventure can be a great way to attract and engage the target audience. Company X can create a blog on their website and publish regular articles, videos, or infographics that provide useful information, travel tips, and inspiration to their target audience.

Online Travel Agencies: Partnering with popular online travel agencies that are popular among older travelers can help Company X to reach a wider audience and increase bookings. Listing their travel packages on sites like Booking.com, Expedia, or TripAdvisor can expose their offerings to a large customer base and increase their online visibility.

In conclusion, selecting the right digital marketing channels is crucial for Company X to effectively reach and engage with their target audience. By leveraging social media, search engine optimization, email marketing, content marketing, online travel agencies, and influencer marketing, Company X can increase their online visibility, build brand awareness, and drive bookings. However, it's important to prioritize and focus on a few channels that are most likely to reach the target audience and gradually expand the marketing efforts of the company.

3.4 Implementation

The implementation of the marketing plan is an important step in achieving the marketing objectives of the company, since it is how the plan itself is put into action. It will involve putting into action the strategies and tactics developed during the planning phase. To begin the execution of the marketing plan, there should be a clear understanding of its objectives and steps. This was outlined in section 1.6, and this section will run down a theoretical scenario that the company could follow in the future.

Step one: Allocate resources. The first step in executing the marketing plan is to allocate the necessary resources, including budget, time, and personnel. The company should determine the budget for each marketing channel and allocate resources accordingly. They should also assign specific tasks and responsibilities to members of the company or hire external resources if necessary. Once the budget is set, the focus should be to allocate resources to build a website that is attractive to international customers. Specifically, attention should be put to invest in an SEO-friendly website, as outlined in section 3.3, Digital Channels. Once this is done, a budget should be allocated to SEM (Search Engine Marketing), and Social media marketing.

Step two: Develop content marketing. The company should create a content marketing plan that aligns with the buyer persona's interests and preferences. The plan should include a blog on the website, or on a blog website, that provides engaging travel-related content, including travel tips, local customs, and traditions, and destination guides. The company could also create some videos and infographics that showcase their travel packages and experiences. (Lahtinen, Niko, et al. 2022, p.170,177)

Step three: Social Media Campaign. The company should make social media accounts and start sharing their travel related posts on these accounts. The company should also allocate some of their budget for these accounts, running targeted ads on Facebook, Instagram and Google Ads. This will help improve awareness of the company in the eyes of potential customers and increase the brand awareness of the company. Specifically, a campaign focused on promoting the Finnish culture and the attraction of smaller destinations should be made. The company could hire a professional to edit the content and photos or take them themselves. (Lahtinen, Niko et al 2022, p.234)

Step Four: Partner with local agencies. As suggested by the interviewee in (Appendix 3), the company should look for support in local agencies which can provide support and cooperation. This can increase their online visibility and credibility in the eyes of customers, which in turn helps customers find the website, and increases trust in the eyes of customers.

Step Five: Monitor and measure performance. This will be discussed in section 3.5 Measuring Results.

3.5 Measuring Results

Measuring the results of a marketing campaign is essential to evaluate its performance, determine its success, and identify areas for improvement. By tracking key metrics, Company X can determine the effectiveness of their marketing strategies and tactics and make data-driven decisions to optimize their marketing efforts. As previously outlined in section 1.6,

these important metrics can be e.g the number of unique website visitors per month, and the number of new social media followers per month.

One of the most important metrics to track is return on investment (ROI). ROI measures the revenue generated by the marketing campaign compared to the cost of the campaign. By tracking the ROI, Company X can determine the effectiveness of their marketing strategies and optimize their budget allocation. They can also determine which marketing channels and campaigns generate the highest ROI and allocate more resources to those channels. This can be difficult to measure, but with website analytics the company can see which traffic comes from what advertising source. It is then possible to calculate what percentage of sales comes from each source, giving you the ROI. The paid channels with the highest ROI are Facebook and Google Search advertising. (HubSpot, 2020)

Website traffic is another important metric to track. By monitoring the number of visitors to their website, Company X can determine the effectiveness of their digital marketing channels, such as search engine optimization and social media marketing. They can also track the source of the traffic to determine which channels are driving the most traffic to their website and invest more in what works. (Lahtinen, Niko et al 2022. p.244)

Conversion rate is another metric that was introduced in section 1.6. Conversion rate measures the percentage of website visitors who take a desired action, such as making a booking or filling out a contact form. By tracking the conversion rate, Company X can determine the effectiveness of their website design, content, and call-to action. They can also improve their website to increase the conversion rate and drive more bookings. (Appendix 3)

Social media engagement is a difficult metric to raise, but it can be a great tool when used correctly monitoring likes, comments, and shares of their posts on social media platforms, Company X can determine the effectiveness of their social media marketing and engagement with their target audience. By analyzing social media engagement, they can optimize their social media strategy to increase engagement and reach a wider audience. (Lahtinen, Niko et al. 2022 p.233)

Finally, feedback from customers is an important indicator to track in order to determine customer happiness and loyalty. By collecting feedback from customers through surveys, reviews, and user comments, Company X may identify areas for improvement and make changes to their marketing. Customer feedback may also provide insights into the preferences and desires of their target audience, allowing Company X to adapt their marketing efforts to meet those expectations. According to the quantitative study, a large number of individuals read and base their trip destination selection on reviews (Appendix 2), implying that it is critical to collect consumer feedback and act on it, commenting on and correcting concerns raised by customers.

In conclusion, by measuring metrics like ROI, website traffic, conversion rate, social media engagement, and customer feedback, Company X may adjust their marketing plans and techniques to efficiently reach and engage their target audience and generate sales. Company X may make data-driven decisions and constantly enhance their marketing efforts to achieve growth for the firm by regularly monitoring and evaluating these KPIs.

4 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the thesis has presented an actionable digital marketing plan for Company X. The plan includes a detailed analysis of the target audience, competitor landscape, and the selection of digital marketing channels to effectively reach and engage with potential customers.

The buyer persona created for Company X's ideal customer profile has been based on quantitative as well as qualitative research. This will enable the company to tailor their offerings and marketing strategies to meet the unique needs and interests of their target audience.

The section including the competitor analysis has highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of Company X's direct and indirect competitors. The company can use this information to differentiate themselves from their competitors by offering unique travel experiences and promoting their Finnish cultural offerings.

The digital marketing channels recommended in the plan, including social media, SEO, email marketing, and online travel agencies, are all designed to help Company X reach and engage with potential customers effectively. By implementing these channels, the company can increase their brand awareness and drive sales.

The research gave good insight into some of the opinions and attitudes of potential customers. However, there are some ways the research could have been improved or expanded. For example, the survey could have included more open-ended questions to gather qualitative data in addition to the quantitative data. Getting more interviews would also have been beneficial from the data collection point of view.

Overall, the marketing plan presented in this thesis provides a roadmap for Company X to effectively market their travel packages to potential customers, differentiate themselves from their competitors, and ultimately increase their sales and revenue. The thesis also emphasizes the importance of continuous monitoring and evaluation of the marketing strategy to ensure its effectiveness and make necessary adjustments in response to market changes and customer feedback.

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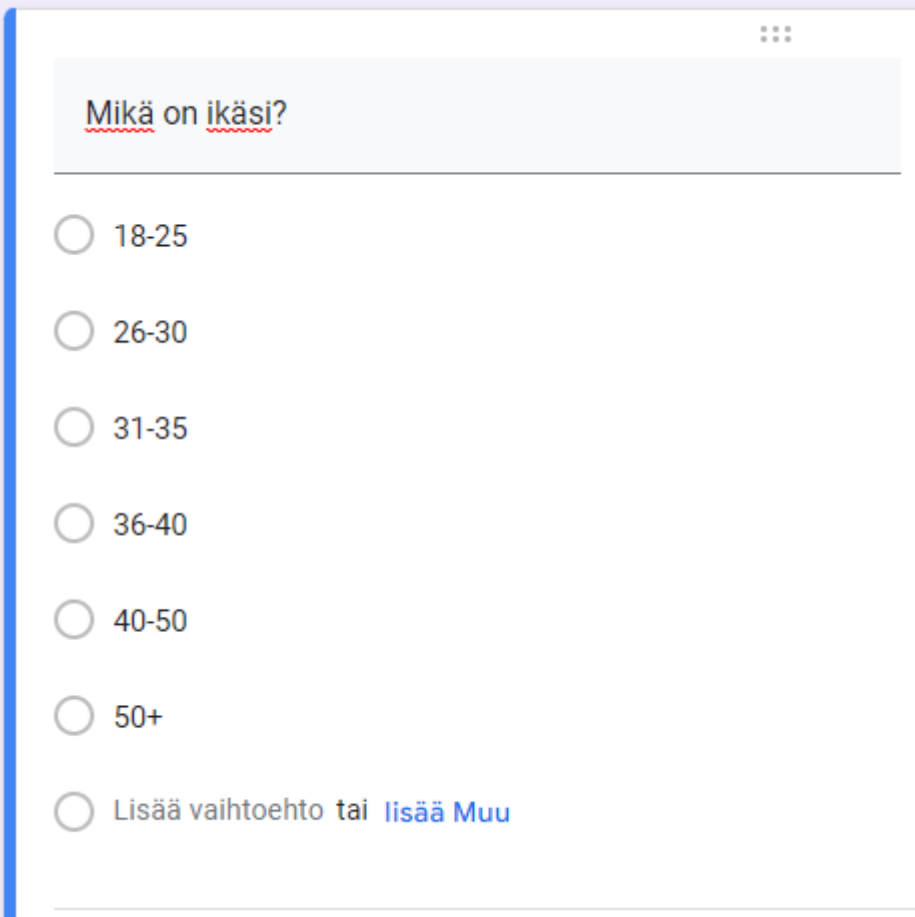
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APPENDIX

1.Survey questions:



Mikä on ikäsi?

- 18-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 40-50
- 50+
- Lisää vaihtoehto tai [lisää Muu](#)

Mikä on sukupuolesi?

- Mies
- Nainen
- En halua vastata
- Muu
- Muu...

Miten tyypillisesti suunnittelet matkakohteesi? *

- Sosiaalinen media
- Hakukone, verkkotutkimus
- Suosituksia ystäviltä tai perheeltä
- Muu...

Millaisista matkailuaktiviteeteista olet ollut kiinnostunut opintojen aikana? (Valitse kaikki jotka * sopivat)

- Nähtävyydet ja kulttuurielämykset
- Ulkoilu ja luontoaktiviteetteja
- Kaupunkikierrokset ja yöelämää
- Muu...

Miten mieluiten varaat matkatoimintasi? (Valitse kaikki jotka sopivat) *

- Online-matkojen varausalustat, esim tripadvisor
- Suoraan matkatoimiston tai matkanjärjestäjän kautta
- Google

Mitkä tekijät ovat sinulle tärkeimpiä valitessasi lentoa tai matkapakettia? (Asetus
tärkeysjärjestyksessä) *

	Hinta	Kohde, matkareitti	Maine ja arvostelut	Ekologisuus, vastu...
1 Erittäin tärkeä	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4 Vähiten tärkeä	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Kuinka todennäköisesti annat palautetta tai arvosteluja matkapaketista tai matkatoimistosta
matkasi jälkeen? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
En koskaan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Aina

Kommentteja, lisättävää (ei pakollinen)

Lyhyt vastausteksti

2. Interview Questions

Could you introduce yourself and tell us about your current role in the tourism industry?

How many years of experience do you have in the tourism industry?

How important is digital marketing for travel companies who want to attract foreign tourists and which digital platforms do you recommend for this purpose?

How can a small company differentiate itself from larger, more established travel agencies in its marketing?


What role does content marketing play in the travel industry and what kind of content is most effective in attracting potential customers?

How can a small travel company effectively target tourists who may not have previously considered Finland as a destination, and what unique selling points should it emphasise to attract these customers?

What are the current trends in the tourism industry that a small tourism company should be aware of when developing its marketing strategy?

How can a tourism agency effectively monitor and evaluate the success of its marketing and what metrics should it focus on?

3. Buyer Persona

	<p>Preferred Method of Communication</p> <p>Facebook, Email, Phone</p>	<p>Goals or Objectives</p> <p>Gain trust Provide unique experience</p>
<p>Name</p> <p>Karl Wolff</p>	<p>They Gain Information By</p> <p>News, Facebook, Email feed</p>	<p>Biggest Challenges</p> <p>How to gain personal connection Providing well-planned trip</p>
<p>Job Title</p> <p>Manager, Senior Engineer,</p>	<p>Nationality</p> <p>German, French, Netherlands</p>	<p>Post-experience</p> <p>Reviews! Connects with friends and family</p>
<p>Age</p> <p>50 to 70 years old</p>		
<p>Highest Level of Education</p> <p>Master's degree (e.g. MA, M</p>		
<p>Industry</p> <p>Trade, Technology</p>		
<p>Organization Size</p> <p>51-200 employees</p>		