Marketing Plan

Case company: Standard

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The thesis is made for event organizing company called Standard. Standard was launched in 2006 with original name "LAOS" and its members are currently focused on organizng Drum and Bass music events and shows. The company does not have significant business or marketing background therefore marketing plan was suggested and approved as a topic.

The main objective of the thesis is to create a marketing plan that company will be able to apply both for short and long terms. The marketing plan itself is focused on: Increasing the number of visitors, Improving social media situation and gaining social media interaction with the audience. Due to Standard's budget, marketing plan is small budget oriented and includes methods requiring minimun investment.

The thesis includes four main parts: Introduction, Theoretical framework, Empirical part and Discussion. Introduction presents basic information about thesis, main objectives and company's outlook. Following the theoretical part which opens up concepts of marketing and event marketing, fragments of marketing plan such as background situation, opportunities and options, objectives, strategies and marketing mix. The chapter includes SOSTAC model as authors used it as a main structure when creating the marketing plan. Digital marketing is the last step of the theoretical framework and includes information about Internet and Social Media Marketing.

Empirical part tells about the project planning and implementation while discussin leads to the results of the thesis and its conclusion.

The product, which is a marketing plan itself is attached as an appendix to the thesis and presents SOSTAC planning model and Digital Marketing analysis and suggestions. Marketing plan includes discussions regarding Situation Analysis, Objectives, Strategies, Tactics, Action and Control (of actions) of the company. For better convenience, Tactics and Actions are merged together.

Keywords Marketing plan, Event Marketing, Digital Marketing, Social Media, Drum and Bass, Standard

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1 Introduction

The thesis intends on creating a marketing plan for the Standard Company. Standard is a Finnish company established in 2006 and it is focused on organizing drum and bass music events in Helsinki. The thesis commissioning is provided by promoter and a DJ of Standard Paula Finer, with the whole Standard team being involved in providing necessary information.

Authors of the thesis decided to create the marketing plan for the company based on the previous performance of one of the members on the Standard's show and common interest of both authors in music industry. The authors of this thesis aim to create a marketing plan for Standard after having discussion with the commisioner and realizing that the company lacks a marketing plan.

1.1 Standard company- An overlook

Standard company was found out in 2006 by Erno Pellinen with original name of "LAOS" and was organized with other members of "LAOS" musical group. The company was operating a club specifically for Drum and Bass events. After a successful series of parties, the company took a break and continued their activity in 2015 with the new name Standard. The current team consist of Erno "Laos" Pellinen, Ville "Wispy" Penttinen and Paula "Mizfire" Finer. The aim of the company is to make Drum and Bass more popular in Finland and get more people to know about the genre. The crew of Standard tries to recruit skilled drum and bass artists specializing in "liquid" type of sound, both local and from abroad. The team prefers to book artists according to everybody's opinion and the main criteria for the artist is to be passionate about the genre with a pleasant personality.

1.2 Objectives

As the thesis is product based, the main aim of the study is to create an effective, functional and most preferably cost effective marketing plan.

The objectives for the marketing plan were set by the authors of the thesis which are:

- To improve the company's social media marketing situation.
- To Increase social media engagement with the audience and other similar event organizers. (More comments, likes and shares etc.)
- To increase number of visitors participating in the company's events.

2   General philosophy of event organization marketing

This section will cover the theoretical framework that will act as a backbone for the thesis and provide with all the necessary concepts that will be later applied to create the product. The authors will briefly describe marketing, followed by an overlook on event marketing to be specific. Furthermore, the concept and definition of a marketing plan, including all its components and the model used to create the marketing plan will be introduced. Finally, the authors will discuss digital marketing, emphasizing on social media marketing.

2.1   Marketing theory

The authors of this thesis initiate the theoretical framework with an introduction to marketing. Generally, marketing is mainly understood as selling and advertisement. Although it is true in essence, however marketing is not to be considered as just making sales and spreading information about your product or service, but it has somewhat advanced to the art of delivering satisfaction to customers. Marketing is generally understood as a tool that aids marketers to sell their product with ease by setting a reasonable price, placing the product effectively and promoting it through the correct channels. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014)

Rhonda Abrams and Julie Vallone (2008, p. 5) state that the main purpose of marketing is motivation and connection with the customer based on the broad spectrum of company's activities and events. Meanwhile, Michael R. Solomon, Greg W. Marshall and Elnora W. Stuart (2015, p. 28) define marketing as a tool that enables marketers to 'deliver value to everyone whom a transaction affects'.

The authors follows up the introduction of marketing with it's purpose and how it aids in selling one's product or service.

The objective of marketing can be broken down to 2 sub categories

1) Increasing awareness. The initial aim of marketing is to develop, and further increase awareness of one's firm in the eye of the general audience. This step is significant as it is very difficult to make sales if the customers do not know what your product is and the value it brings to them. Nowadays, marketing has risen to such an extent that it is all around us- on every possible platform, whether digital or not, that some companies have started adopting rather bizarre schemes to attract customers' attention. (Abrams & Vallone, 2008, p. 5)

2) Driving sales. Once the customers know who you are and what value your product or service can possibly bring to them, marketing hence enables to create a need for customers to buy the firm's product. This can be done by understanding truly what a customer needs, and therefore tailoring your product accordingly, hence delivering the 'right' product and consequently driving sales. (Abrams & Vallone, 2008, p. 5)

Many companies believe that having a nice product or service will necessary attract customers. This belief however is not true. Regardless of how outstanding a product or service is, it will have a great disadvantage if the proper marketing is missing. Many new and small companies might face this issue if they enter the market without increasing awareness of their product. Marketing can also be seen as a vital tool in generating sales since not only does it inform the customers of your product, but also furthermore, it aids the customers to understand why a certain product is beneficent to them and how it differs from competition. Therefore, it is important to outline and account for marketing in the strategic advancement of a product or service. (Abrams & Vallone, 2008, p. 6)

2.2   Event marketing

Leonard H. Hoyle (2002, p. 2) says that event marketing is the main driving force to attract audience to attend the event. Although events may be marketed in unique and special ways, there is still a guideline that is to be followed in order for a successful event, which can be broken down to *the three E's*, which are the following. (Hoyle, 2002, p. 2)

Entertainment
These days, entertainment has been made so feasible with the help of televisions, home theatres and such entertainment products that for people to actually leave their homes and come to an event, there must be a special need that can't be fulfilled with the consoles available at home. (Hoyle, 2002, p. 2)

Excitement
Excitement may at some point, be confused as being one with entertainment, but there is a difference. Events must have a certain blend of excitement that induces exceptional feelings amongst the audience. The excitement factor in an event is what causes to 'set the stage on fire'. It could be anything, from the outstanding performance of a musician that would be left as an imprint on the audience's memory and future generations to come. (Hoyle, 2002, p. 2)
A good example would be the first time of Michael Jackson performing his moonwalk.

Enterprise

Enterprise is defined as the willingness of an event organiser to explore new dimensions of unimagined ideas. It is what makes an event unique. Understanding the fact that humans crave to experience something never done before. Something they could tell their friends about. In order to do so, one must not overlook the fact that trying something new involves risk, which an event organiser must be willing to take. (Hoyle, 2002, pp. 2-3)

"What would you attempt to do if you knew you could not fail?" (Hoyle, 2002, p. 3)

2.3   Marketing Plan

In this section, the authors aim to define marketing plan, the purpose and contents of a marketing plan, the function and importance of research and finally the practical application of a marketing plan in a company.

The authors of this thesis consider a marketing plan to be a 'playbook' for a company. Simply put, a marketing plan aims to present direction to a marketer. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014, p. 26)
Furthermore, it eases with keeping in track for the long run. Launching a new product or service in the market can be challenging without a detailed marketing plan that would deliver a clear object and approach on how to proceed with one's product. (Doyle & Stern, 2006, p. 85)

The following section will break down marketing plan to subcategories, defining each segment and stating its purpose.

2.3.1   Background situation

Naturally, before you wish to focus on strategizing for the future, it is ideal to have a preview of the product or service to assess how well it is doing currently in the market, what has caused the product to reach the position it is in and how does the company seem to progress from the present perspective. The background situation can be broken down to three segments: Current performance, background analysis and opportunities for the future. (Doyle & Stern, 2006, p. 86)

Current performance

A statistic approach is a suitable method to measure the current performance of a company. The number of sales the product or service has made and the market share figures uncover the marketing aspect of performance. Obtaining a measure of cash flow, total gross profit, net margin and similar statistical attributes reveals an overview of financial performance. The results obtained are taken for comparison on a scale of time and against competition to produce a final statement that suggests whether the performance of a product or service was satisfactory or not. (Doyle & Stern, 2006, p. 86)

Background analysis

Two aspects contribute to create an overall background analysis. The first one is based on the current performance; what factors have led to the present situation of the product or service in the market. The second aspect consists of an outlook of how well the business will boom based on the current situation of the market, the environment and business approach of the company. Simply put, this aspect will suggest the direction of the business based on current analysis. (Doyle & Stern, 2006, p. 87)

The current performance of a business is a result of environmental changes affecting the market, along with the influence of the decision-making by the management. Environmental changes are furthermore broken down to two sub categories; Macro and Micro environmental changes. Macro-environmental changes are deduced by changes in the overall atmosphere of the target market, which include demographics, economic conditions and similar forces that affect the position of a business in the market. Micro environmental changes however are concerning the target audience, competition, prices and cost. Moreover, these changes are only applicable to the specific market the business has chosen to operate in. (Doyle & Stern, 2006, p. 87)

Peter Doyle and Philip Stern (2006, p. 87) continue to explain that such changes are uncontrollable by the firm. One can say that these factors act as a mean to test a business' flexibility and readiness to adapt.

Secondly, the current performance is also determined by how a firm's management chose to react to situations in the past. The management's choice of objectives, strategies and tactics applied along with the selection of price, distribution and promotion collectively lead to an impact on the present position on the firm. (Doyle & Stern, 2006, p. 87)

2.3.2 Opportunities and options

Once a company has identified it's current situation and understood the significance and consequences of the changes taking place, the next step is to analyse a company in accordance to certain attributes it possesses. A conventional tool used for such purpose is the SWOT analysis. Each letter in the word represents a specific attribute of a company that the management has to evaluate. (Armstrong, Kotler, & Opresnik, 2017, p. 85)

Following is a description of the elements in SWOT analysis:

Strengths

A company's strengths include the areas in which it excels and outshines other similar products or services in the market, such as a patented technology or a high sense of CSR (Company social responsibility), which has given the brand a great reputation. (Armstrong, Kotler, & Opresnik, 2017, p. 85)

Weaknesses

Weaknesses can be seen as factors that may cause a company difficulty to keep up with competition, moreover lead to hindrance in achieving the company's set objectives. These can include a lack of capital, or a lack of expertise in a certain field. (Armstrong, Kotler, & Opresnik, 2017, p. 85)

Opportunities

Opportunities are the company's possibly available elements, which it can utilize in order to obtain a competitive edge. Examples can include globalising a movie, which implies that it is available in several languages in order to boost sales. (Armstrong, Kotler, & Opresnik, 2017, p. 85)

Threats

Threats embody factors, both internal and external, that if are not dealt with can have negative impacts on a company. One example is a strike from employees demanding a salary raise. (Armstrong, Kotler, & Opresnik, 2017, p. 85)

Following an analysis of the attributes mentioned above, managements proceed to apply the results of their findings to pinpoint the problems and opportunities at hand. Once they have recognized the possible routes to take, managements can proceed to utilize their strengths to go after the possible opportunities. In addition to advancing on the positive scale, managements work on minimalizing their weaknesses to resist the possibility of threats to rise in their business. (Doyle & Stern, 2006, p. 86)

Figure 1. Swot Analysis (Armstrong, Kotler, & Opresnik, 2017)

The authors of the thesis now proceed by describing the second component of a marketing plan: the marketing objectives.

2.3.3 Marketing Objectives

Peter Doyle and Philip Stern state in their book "Marketing Management and Strategy" (2006, p. 87) that marketing objectives are divided to two segments: Marketing goals and financial goals. Setting such objectives is essential in a business because having a milestone provides a clearer image of how to proceed with marketing. Objectives also aid in measuring progress. (Doyle & Stern, 2006, p. 87)

Marketing goals

Peter Doyle and Philip Stern (2006, p. 87) continue by stating that marketing goal has to be both 'sale and share' orientated, ensuring that the primary focus is on attaining both as opposed to merely focusing on increasing sales. They also add that having secondary goals is practical. Secondary goals can include boosting customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. (Doyle & Stern, 2006, p. 87)

Financial goals

As the name indicates, financial goals regard numerical targets, which include profits, cash flow and similar stats. Statistic objectives are essential in a marketing plan as they illuminate a business' progress in a more logical fashion. (Doyle & Stern, 2006, p. 88)

After defining the two kinds of goals, the authors proceed to state that there are certain measures that need to be taken in order to create efficient goals. Firstly, the goals made must be sound and appropriate in terms of strategy. Secondly, the goals set have to be realistic and unquestionably achievable, meanwhile ensuring that there is enough of a challenge to keep employees performing. Too much of a challenge could lead to a loss of motivation. Peter Doyle and Philip Stern conclude the list of measures with stating that the goals set also have to be fundamentally from authentic and trusted sources. (Doyle & Stern, 2006, p. 88)

2.3.4   Marketing Strategy

As the name suggests, a marketing strategy defines the approach a company takes in order to achieve their targeted results. The decisions a company makes are divided in two fields; the target market segment and the differential advantage. (Doyle & Stern, 2006, p. 89)

Target market segments

This area concerns the buyers in the market. The company strategizes by filtering out the general market to obtain the customers the company intends to achieve. Moreover, companies deduce a customer profile for their audience. Gary Armstrong, Philip Kotler and Marc O. Opresnik (2017, p. 198) define several elements, which combine to create a customer profile. Following are the points:

Geographic segmentation

This sector differentiates the market based on nationality, region and location. Customer needs may vary at a certain country from another, this results in companies localizing their product or modifying it with respect to a customer's location. (Armstrong, Kotler, & Opresnik, 2017, p. 198)

The authors of the thesis provide an example by considering H&M, a well-known clothing store that operates globally. In their stock to Finland, they may include winter jackets whereas for their merchandise intended for Saudi Arabia they focus on delivering clothing for a much warmer climate.

Demographic segmentation

When segmenting a marketing demographically, a company focus on the sociological aspects of a population. These include the age, gender, income, religion, education and so on. Demographic segmentation is the most favorable aspect since it has the biggest

impact on the change in customer needs. (Armstrong, Kotler, & Opresnik, 2017, p. 199)

Psychographic Segmentation

Psychographic segmentation is an approach regarding the customer's personality and lifestyle. Authors of "Principles of Marketing" book further include that people in the same demographic group can have very different psychological characteristics. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014, p. 200)

Behavioral segmentation

This sector mainly regards the customer's relation to the product or service, meaning their knowledge of what is being offered to them, how they use the product or service and finally their opinion and feedback of the product. The behavioral segmentation is the most valuable point when initiating market segmentation. (Armstrong, Kotler, & Opresnik, 2017, p. 201)

Differentiated marketing

Once a company has deduced a customer profile and identified which segment of market it intends to enter, it proceeds to modify its product or service in accordance to the target market. This results in more efficient sales since the product or service is tailored exclusively for their customers. Doing so results in an increase in the expense an effort a company has to input. It is therefore wise for a company to compare the cost of producing unique products or services with the result of increase in sales to realize if differentiating their product or service is worth it. (Armstrong, Kotler, & Opresnik, 2017, p. 202)

2.4 Marketing Mix

Marketing Mix is a tactical set of independent instruments, which come after the strategy is established and set. The Mix is crucial for the reason that it jointly links marketing practises that would not be able to achieve the goals of the company singularly. This set of instruments is sequently combined into 4 Ps (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014, p. 312)

Product

The product creation is an exceedingly critical element in the life of any product-based organization. The product is presented as a physical item, a service, an idea or a person, depending on the sales model. Product is anything that can satisfy the customer's need and is applied to the market with the purpose of further consuming. (Solomon, Marshall, & Stuart, 2015, p. 89)

Promotion

Promotion is any shape of communication inside the market and has a role of reminder to the target audience about the company's products and their benefits towards the customer. Methods of the information distribution may appear in different shapes and forms such as Telemarketing, posters, magazines, Internet and social media advertising as well as selling in person. In fact, marketing specialists invest more intensively into online promotion for the reason that more consumers prefer Internet to traditional media these days. (Solomon, Marshall, & Stuart, 2015, p. 30)

Place

The definition of place is seen as a procedure or set of activities conducted to deliver the product to the customer. Place involves an assortment of products, a place of the preservation of the product, management of the stock, distribution channels, transportation and further logistics of the goods to the target point. (Pelsmacker, 2013, p. 3)

The authors of the book "Marketing: Real People, Real Choices" (Solomon, Marshall, & Stuart, 2015, p. 30) share that this tool of the Marketing Mix is connected to the supply chain which forms the number of companies functioning collaboratively in order to deliver a product from manufacturer to the customer.

Price

In short, the sum of money paid for the service or product accounts for the last P of the Marketing Mix. For the most of the time price have been playing a prominent role in the consumer's decision-making process when choosing the product. Unlike the previous three components of the Marketing Mix standing for cost, price focuses on generating profit and is a remarkably versatile component among the whole four. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014, p. 312)

Nevertheless, major part of organizations, marketers and entrepreneurs experience multiple problems when dealing with pricing and endeavour to focus on other segments of the marketing mix. In the meantime, skilled specialists consider pricing to be a valuable aspect to obtaining customer's attention and interest. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014, p. 312)

Patrick De Pelsmacker says in his book "Marketing Communications: A European Perspective" (2013, p. 30) that applying the methods of the lowering the product price or discounting may be efficient in the process of the customer attraction but at the same time may affect the organization's profit. Patrick De Pelsmacker claims that pricing tool should not become a regular practise if building the stable position and brand based on the

product characteristics are the primary objective of the company. (Pelsmacker, 2013, p. 30)

Figure 1. Instruments of Marketing Mix (Pelsmacker, 2013, p. 3)

In order to achieve a stable and well-functioning Marketing Mix, Patrick De Pelsmacker states (2013, p. 3) that there are two principles required; synergy and consistency. The 4 Ps of marketing have to be merged in such a fashion that the company's product or service have durability in the sense of market presence, while being simultaneously in harmony. The second principle, synergy, signifies the fact that Marketing mix tools have to work accordingly, avoiding clashes. In other words, the instruments of a marketing mix should collectively fortify the brand of a company. (Pelsmacker, 2013, p. 3)

2.5 SOSTAC- An innovative approach to market planning

The authors of this thesis continue by including the elements of a market plan mentioned above, along with some additional ones, to a refined model known as SOSTAC. It is highly appraised by marketing experts, as the web page Smart Insights states. The editor

continues by stating that it is easily retainable and moreover includes and organizes the several elements of a market plan accordingly. (Chaffey, 2016) The components of SOSTAC model are mentioned and briefly described below.

Situation

Mentioned previously as Background situation, the situation aspect regards a company's current performance in the market. (Chaffey, 2016)

Objectives

Previously mentioned as marketing objectives, this section covers the company's idea of where they want to be, financially and concerning their position in the market. Using SMART goals ensures that the goals to be achieved are competent. The authors of this thesis will open up about SMART goals under the section *Actions*. (Chaffey, 2016)

Strategy

As previously mentioned, this sector targets how a company will achieve their objectives after they are identified. This includes market segmentation and an overlook of a company's competitors/collaborators. (Chaffey, 2016)

Tactics

Once a certain strategy is selected, the tactics sector elaborates on how the strategy will be implemented. The authors of this thesis covered this topic under marketing mix, with the 4 Ps being the tactical instruments. (Chaffey, 2016)

Actions

The authors of this thesis consider actions to be a further elaboration of tactics, which were a derivative of strategy. This section includes the details of application of tactics, which include the individual responsible, a timeline to be followed and a basic measure of resources needed for execution. (Chaffey, 2016)

The actions mentioned in an action plan are often refined with being **SMART** goals**.** The elements of SMART goals are mentioned below.

Specific- The goal has to be specific in accordance to what is being accomplished, who is responsible for it, why it is necessary, where and with what resources will it be achieved. (Haughey, 2016)

Measurable- The goal must be identified in a sense that it could be measured in terms of progress. (Haughey, 2016)

Achievable- The goals set should be reasonably achievable. In other words, they should be attainable regarding the resources available (employee effort, company finances). This is to make sure that employees actually put an effort and stay motivated at the same time. (Haughey, 2016)

Relevant- The goals must be meaningful in terms of being at the right time, by the right person, strictly for obtaining the company's aims. (Haughey, 2016)

Time-bound- The company must set goals that are capable of being measured in relevance to time. Long-term goals must be separated and identified with separate priorities from short-term goals. (Haughey, 2016)

Although SMART goals may not be entirely accurate when stating long-term goals as the situation and may change in the long run, they are still useful in keeping the employees motivated and engaged since they break down a goal to several attributes that make it realistic and easily understandable. (Haughey, 2016)

Control

This aspect of the SOSTAC model refers to how the performance of the actions carried out will be supervised and further revised, if needed. This includes deciding the person responsible for supervising the progress, the means to measure and finally how often the progress will be checked. If the situation seems to be unfavourable, the employee responsible must understand that and decide the steps that are needed to be taken to get the company back on track. (Spilkin, 2014)

Figure 2. SOSTAC Model (Chaffey, 2016)

2.6 Digital marketing

The authors of the thesis commence the discussion of this topic by stating that in this modern era that we live in, digital marketing is just as essential, if not more, as traditional marketing techniques. To back this claim, the authors quote the president of Luckow Communications Alan Luckow stating: "The Web changed the way the world does business. What is surprising is the number of businesses that have little or no Web presence, or that do not have any online marketing. This is what happened to the dinosaurs-except in this case, no bones will be left behind." (Abrams & Vallone, 2008, p. 259)

The authors of the book "Successful Marketing: Secrets & Strategies" (Abrams & Vallone, 2008, p. 259) conform by stating that people in general mainly use the web to research a product before buying it, and even buying it, proving that the web has made a huge impact on the procedure of sales. (Abrams & Vallone, 2008, p. 259)

Rhonda Abrams and Julie Vallone (2008, p. 256) continue by discussing the various benefits of digital marketing. They begin by saying that online marketing creates opportunities of globalization for your product or service, by making it effortless to interact with foreign markets. Online marketing also allows marketers to direct their effort and money on the ideal customers, once they are recognized.

Furthermore, as Julie Vallone and Rhonda Abrams claim (2008, p. 259), that one of the most important benefit of online marketing is that it's measurable and immediate. Since marketing is carried out on digital platforms with various analysis tools present, it is remarkably quick to find out the efficiency of one's online marketing application. Results obtained include number of clicks on ads for example. After analyzing the results, marketers can effortlessly and quickly adjust their technique to obtain better outcomes if they notice that the advertisement didn't generate expected results. (Abrams & Vallone, 2008, p. 257)

Finally, Rhonda Abrams and Julie Vallone (2008, p. 259) conclude the benefits of digital marketing by stating that marketing online, in addition to being effective and responsive, is affordable. Though companies may invest vast sums of money on advertising online, businesses may perhaps achieve favorable outcomes with lower budgets. (Abrams & Vallone, 2008, p. 259)

Digitally, there are several methods online to reach a customer; a marketer has to simply find the most suitable approach. The following section will go through the various ways to market online.

2.6.1   E-mail marketing

> *"Twitter might be sexy, but e-mail brings the sales"*
> (Charlesworth, 2014)

A digital marketing strategy of a company can seriously benefit from e-mail marketing especially if combining with other marketing methods. Although, sending E-mails seems as an uncomplicated task at first, it must be performed thoroughly in order to reach the customer and keep the brand's reputation as many people can't stand spam and try to avoid the spam sources. (Clow & Baack, 2016, p. 260)

Abrams Rhonda and Julie Vallone (2008, p. 295) list that email marketing is:

- **Easy.** The presence of several e-mail communication tools make it effortless to stay connected via e-mail

- **Quick.** Thanks to modern technology, e-mails can be written and sent instantly.

- **Effective.** Since users check their e-mails on a regular basis.

- **Affordable.** Unlike the printed letters, their electronic version is mostly cost free. (Abrams & Vallone, 2008)

Alan Charlesworth (2014, p. 273) adds that email marketing is viewed as highly efficient component to be digitally branded.

2.6.2   Websites

It is of utmost necessity for every company to own a website in modern era. A website acts as an online representative for a company online. Customers can effortlessly obtain knowledge of a company's offerings, mission statement and product/service information with the help of a website. In addition, communication is made simple. Today's customers usually check a company online after hearing about it. They do so to obtain essential information of a company, which include working hours, location and partnerships. Furthermore, a website aids in presenting a company's reliability in the eyes of a customer. Abrams Rhonda and Julie Vallone add in their book that a well-established and

maintained website aids in providing a competitive edge over competition. (Abrams & Vallone, 2008, p. 263)

However, companies must not focus entirely on making a good website. Attracting customers to the website as just as essential, as Armstrong, Kotler and Opresnik (2017, p. 463) state. Companies do so by advertising their website on other websites, for example. A good website might go in vein if it is not engaging customers, causing them to fail to stay on the website and possibly return. Such incidences can be prevented by making sure websites are user-friendly and attractive in the eyes of the customer.

2.6.3   Search engine optimization

In the book "Integrated Advertising, Promotion, and Marketing Communications (Clow & Baack, 2016, p. 264)" authors begin the description of SEO by presenting the significance of this method. He states that search engine optimization constitutes to a massive proportion of online marketing. The facts presented are; 50% of online marketing expenditures and the statement that 80% of web traffic begins at search engines. Hence, these numbers prove that SEO is critical for successful marketing. Search engine optimization in essence is the method used to ensure that a company's website is among the top results that display when a user searches on the web. SEO aids in increasing the number of visits to a company's websites. (Clow & Baack, 2016, p. 264)

Rick Allen, vice president of CaboVillas.com depicts the importance of search engine optimization with the following quote: "Your rankings on search engines are like brick-and-mortar real estate. A Page 1 ranking is like being located in a busy shopping district. A ranking somewhere on Page 5 is like being located on a small side street with no traffic." (Clow & Baack, 2016, p. 264)

There are two ways to carry out search engine optimization. The first method goes by the name of organic search, and as the name implies, is a natural approach for companies to ensure top results. This is done by including popular keywords and phrases in your website, which are frequently used. The second method is search engine marketing (SEM). Unlike organic search, SEM takes place when companies fund search engines to ensure that their website appears among the top results of a search. SEM also goes by several other names, including paid placement and search engine advertising. (Clow & Baack, 2016, p. 265)

2.6.4 Internet advertising

Online ads exist vastly on the internet now. They are of various kinds. Some ads are static on the side like posters, while other ads could be GIF animations or even messages moving across the screen. Online ads may be considered irritating by some as they might pop up on front of the content a user is trying to view, furthermore have sounds that distract and interrupt a user's experience on the website. Nonetheless, if the ad is attractive and catches a user's interest, it may lead to a view. Some users find a particular ad to be annoying, whilst other users get intrigued with the same ad if it relates with their interest and values. Successful ads are produced by ensuring that the content is appealing, and that they are in a relevant website.
 (Abrams & Vallone, 2008, p. 311)

The authors of the thesis furthermore proceed to continue by using the famous expression 'one man's trash is another man's treasure'.

2.6.5 Social media marketing

The birth and rise of social media networks has revised the way people keep in touch with society (Clow & Baack, 2016, p. 274).
Due to its widespread use, social media marketing has provided both opportunities and challenges for for marketing departments. That is because social media evolved in terms of algorithms, new features and strategies to be practiced. (Erkilic, 2018)

Kenneth E. Clow and Donald Baack (2016, p. 274) continue to state that while marketers can obtain a more involved connection with their customers, a negative brand image can also be fabricated and spread rapidly. (Clow & Baack, 2016, p. 274) Social media has emerged to become a vital tool in spreading a company's message and infiltrating social circles. Getting a company's product or service recommended by someone from a person's social network is a highly efficient way for getting your brand marketed. (Meadows-Klue, 2018)

The authors of this thesis add to the statement of the website by pointing out that, having a product or service recommended by a friend possibly has the highest impact on a person as it comes from a real connection, which is often trusted most.

Clow and Baack (2016, p. 274) add that social media platforms are designed to attract the population in general, regardless of their age, race, gender and such. While major social media networks aim to provide interaction in general, many companies design their

platforms to target a specific interest or group of people. An example illustrated by authors is dating sites such as Tinder or FarmersOnly.

Social media marketing is mainly vital for increasing traffic to a brand and furthermore increasing a brand image. It also provides companies with a chance to monitor customers' satisfaction of a product or service. Since social media platforms host an enormous amount of audience, it further leads to viral marketing, simply put social media platforms aid in increasing brand awareness drastically. (Clow & Baack, 2016, p. 274)

There is a vast number of social media platforms that have emerged on the internet, with several new ones emerging continuously. Each platform embraces diverse type of people, to some extent. A company may target a certain platform that coincides with their product or service to produce optimal results. The following section will cover some of the major social media platforms. (Clow & Baack, 2016, p. 274)

Facebook

Facebook is, without doubt the most frequently used and oldest social media platforms. An article from Disruptive advertising claims that Facebook hosts more than 1.4 billion users as of December 2017. The article further explains how beneficial Facebook marketing is due to the simplicity it provides to reach a huge audience. However, the effort and finances applied may result to be ineffective if a company fails to deliver appropriate content to a suitable audience. Therefore, the article states that companies must be cautious when marketing on the platform. (Andrus, 2018)

An article from Sproutsocial claims that this channel is undeniably an absolute necessity if a company aims to practice successful social media marketing. (York, 2018)

Twitter

Kenneth Clow and Donald Baack (Clow & Baack, 2016) define twitter as a microblogging service that allows users to post 'tweets' with a maximum of 140 characters per tweet. They further explains that, as compared to Facebook, the users are more racially diverse. Twitter has an edge over Facebook when it comes to monitoring users' opinion about a company, with the help of certain software, which pinpoint the name of a brand or relevant keywords in a tweet. The message displayed in tweets can be useful for assessment and therefore reaction. The effectiveness of Twitter as a platform can be seen by how Starbucks exploited the platform to create the "Tweet-a-Coffee" campaign. (Clow & Baack, 2016, p. 275)

YouTube

Kenneth E. Clow and Donald Baack state (2016, p. 276) that due to the ease of recording and uploading videos using smartphones, YouTube has emerged to become one of the fastest growing area of social media networking, hosting the most videos. (Clow & Baack, 2016, p. 276)

Chron.com states that the website receives more than 3 billion views on its videos daily, thus proving that it is a vital station that companies use to brand their product. (Gresham, 2018).

Kenneth E. Clow and Donald Baack (2016, p. 276) continue that the ability for general audience to post and like videos makes it further easy for a brand to circulate around possible consumers. One example is bloggers or regular consumers that upload product or service reviews on their profile, admiring or criticizing it. Another sector where YouTube excels is helping consumers to understand how to use a product or service, as watching a video is simply much easier to understand, compared to the traditional way of reading instruction manuals. (Clow & Baack, 2016, p. 276)

Understanding the fact that anyone, especially consumers, can upload a video stating their opinions of a product or service is vital for companies in order to improve their brand image. Companies can analyse videos uploaded that provide negative feedback to address the issue stated or use it to modify their product or service in order to improve the brand's image. (Clow & Baack, 2016, pp. 276-277)

Instagram

Lifewire.com defines Instagram as another social media platform that is primarily related to mobile-based visual content. (Moreau, 2018). Kenneth E. Clow and Donald Baack state (2016, p. 277) that Instagram has beyond 200 million users, with 60% of the users accessing the platform daily. The two main tactics applied for successful marketing are contests and crowdsourcing photos. Users upload pictures representing a specific brand, allowing for a C2C approach to marketing. A brand image is highly appraised when the customers themselves, rather than the brand are marketing it. (Clow & Baack, 2016, pp. 277-278)

The authors of this thesis further add that the consumer-based marketing approach on the platform lead to Instagram being considered a highly valued tool for marketing.

Music-related social media platforms

Since the thesis is regarding a music event organizing company, the authors of this thesis have decided to include certain music platforms that have elements of social media

marketing present. Such platforms include YouTube music (a separate version of YouTube focusing entirely on music), Soundcloud and Mixcloud.

Soundcloud is an audio service that enables its users to share and release music, podcasts and other audio material. Social features are also included, so users are able to like, comment on and share other user's audios. Soundcloud has collaboration with other social media platforms, which allows users to access Soundcloud content without actually accessing the website. (Giannetti, 2014).

An article on Gleam (Burstin, 2017) states that the users of Soundcloud consist of people related to the music industry, including musicians, producers and label representatives. The platform also hosts Influencers, radio and podcasts hosts. The author of the article claims that Souncloud is the LinkedIn of the music industry. Simply put, Soundcloud enables interaction between professionals and the general audience (Burstin, 2017).

Mixcloud is somewhat a similar platform to SoundCloud, except that it offers episodic content such compared to SoundCloud's traditional approach of libraries of single-track streams. (Pizzo, 2015)

Generally, DJs prefer to use Mixcloud as it excludes the possibility of possible removal of their music due to legal issues. Users are granted unlimited free uploads, which acts as a competitive edge when compared with SoundCloud. (Morse, 2018)

3 Creating the Marketing Plan

In the following section, the authors of the thesis commence the planning of the project (making the marketing plan). The section includes the ideation involved and means to collect all the relevant data for creating the marketing plan, followed by an analysis and application of the data to create a market plan.

For the reason that thesis is product based, the main and the most valuable aim is to create an efficient and applicable marketing plan (since the company does not have one currently) which will be relatively cost effective (in accordance to the company's budget). The goal of the marketing plan is to provide benefits to the marketing campaign of Standard Company and improve its marketing situation, increasing brand awareness and hence their sales of service.

3.1 Project plan for the product (Marketing plan)

Naturally, whenever a project is originated, the initial stage is planning how exactly the project will be conducted. This includes a brief description of what methods will be used to obtain necessary data, how the data will be applied and what the outcomes are expected to be. Hence, we will commence creating our final product with a project plan. The authors commenced our planning by agreeing that they will be using the SOSTAC model as the backbone of the market plan. In order to learn about the company's *situation* and *objectives*, data was required. The authors decided that they will obtain this data by conducting qualitative interviews with the company.

After there was a clear understanding of the company's situation and objetives, there will be analysed the third aspect of the SOSTAC model, which is *strategy.* Strategy regards a study of the target market, followed by an understanding on how the company can modify its service in accordance to the market. To learn more about the target market, the authors plan to conducted qualitative interviews with 15 people who have attended a Standard event, with an analysis of the feedback they provide.

After an understanding of the target market and how the company may modify its service in accordance, the authors proceed by deciding the *tactics/actions* that are to be conducted in order to implement the marketing strategies. The 4P's will be discussed and an action plan will be provided to the company for this purpose.

Finally, the last aspect of the SOSTAC model, *control,* will be discussed. The authors plan on telling the company how they can monitor the performance of the tactics/actions carried out.

Since digital marketing is such a distinct and significant element for marketing especially for event organizing, it was decided to discuss this aspect seperately. The authors will commence the discussion of digital marketing by analyzing their social media platforms and suggesting ways to boost their following and engagement on the platforms.

After discussing the company's social media platforms, The authors will continue by examining their approach on digital marketing besides social media, with suggestions on how the company could progress.

3.2   Implementation of the Project plan

This section will cover the implementation of the project plan which will result in the creation of the market plan for Standard company. The authors started by deciding to collect data that will be applied in creating the SOSTAC model for the marketing plan. The section includes a description of the procedure for obtaining data. To learn about the company's current situation and objectives, the authors decided to use a qualitative approach, so a personal interview with the team of Standard Company was conducted.The following section will elaborate the method and conclusion.

The authors created a Facebook messenger group involving Sheryar Nasir and Ilia Iarusov (the authors of the Thesis), Paula Finer (DJ/Promoter and commissioner of thesis), Sam Williams (VJ/Promoter) and finally Erno "Laos" Pellinen, the owner of the company. The group was used to question the crew and receive information about the company needed to create a marketing plan. The authors chose to communicate this way since it is a relatively easy and fast approach to obtain information from all the team members simultaneously. The company agreed to this approach since this way, every question asked could be seen by all the members in the group and the suitable members for each question could provide input. This approach is also easy in the sense that there was no need to meet the team physically and they were not under the pressure to answer right away, as opposed to having a face-to-face interview.

The authors initiated the interview by asking the team to give a brief description about the company itself (Who founded and when?, How long is the company active etc.). After receiving information about the company in general the authors continued by asking the

company about their current performance, background situation and their knowledge about competition to obtain their *situation*, the first element of the SOSTAC model. The owner of the company described that the company was doing satisfactory compared to other event organizers and he saw them as possible collaborators instead of competition. When asked about their finantial situation, Erno stated that the company made little-to-no profit yearly.

Erno further mentioned that the company was not intended to operate to provide financial benefits, but rather to unite the Drum and Bass music community and organize such events smoothly, giving the authors some idea of the company's *objectives,* second element of the SOSTAC model. The team further added they would like to improve their current situation in the market by having their brand awareness and event participations increased (higher ticket sales). Paula mentioned that currently the team lacks a marketing plan and conducts marketing without any set of guidelines, so a proper marketing plan would be highly beneficial for them.

After the authors figured out where the company currently is and where it would like to be, they proceed to figure out how the company could achieve its desired results. Simply put, the third element of the SOSTAC model will be identified*,* which is the *strategies.* The first aspect of strategies, the target market, was obtained by conducting qualitative interviews with 15 people that have taken part in Standards events.

The interviews were conducted to deduce a general idea of the customer's demographics, occupation, location etc. The interview also included questions on how they percieve the events could bring higher levels of excitement, entertainment and enterprise related (3E's event marketing). There were further questions that helped us figure out what made the interviewees come to such events and what did they find important about them. The authors also asked them if they were aware of the company's presence on social media platforms and most of them stated that they were not, which led us to concluding that social media marketing development is crucial for the company at this stage. Following is a list of questions asked from the people:

- Name
- Gender:
- Where are you living?
- Age:
- Occupation:
- What makes you go to such events and what is important about these events?

- What makes an event more entertaining for you?
- Memory from the best event you experienced?(What makes an event more exciting?)
- What could the company introduce to events that has not been done before? (Enterprise related)
- Are you aware of the company's presence on social media platforms?

After the interviews were conducted, there were gathered the results and concluded them to create an ideal customer 'profile'. With the help of this profile, it was deduced what was more or less expected from the company's events from the customer's perpective. Using this information, the authors provided the company with suggestions on how they could modify their product in order to fulfil customer expectations, by adding elements to enhance user experience or providing promotional offers for example. Such suggestions fall under the section of *Tactics/Actions,* which were combined since there was not much seperation in the two elements. Simply put, this section contained all the steps the company could carry out to implement their marketing strategy.

To further implement the strategies, there was used the 4P's marketing tool, explaining each P in the mix with a suggestion on how the complement could work on each element of the mix. After the marketing mix, there were created two action plans, one for actions before the event and one for actions after the event has been carried out. The authors provided the company with basic actions with a deadline and a status section to mark if the action is complete, and suggested that the company may freely modify or add more actions if they wish to do so, since action plans can not be precise in the long run as the situation of the market or company's approach may change. Following are screenshot images for the action plans created for the company:

Before the event

Action	Responsible person	Time line (done by when?)	Status (mark x)
Contact and recruit DJs/performers for the event		2 months before event	
Evaluation of resources, budget, risk managment		2 months before event	
Recruite cameraman, other crew members needed		1 month before event	
Create/post event on social media platforms		1 month before event	
Distribute posters, possible radio mention and so		2 weeks before event	
Invite people/promote event on SM		2 weeks before event	
Decorate the venue/set up the stage		3 days before event	
Check equiment, confirm with DJs and crew		2 days before event	
Manage security, first aid etc		2 days before event	
FINAL CHECK: Confirm with everyone involved in event		1 day before event	

Figure 3. Begore the event action Plan

After the event

Action	Responsible person	Time line (when?)	Status (mark x)
Post about success of event on Social media platforms		1 day after event	
Thank the audience, DJ/performers and crew for participation		1 day after event	
Evaluate success of event; discuss issues/challenges faced		3 days after event	
Upload pictures taken during event on social media platforms		3 days after event	
Compile and upload videos taken during event		1 week after event	
Handle payments for DJs/performers and crew members		Decided by company	
Preparation and planning for next event		2 weeks-1 month after event	

Figure 4. After the event action Plan

Once the company was presented with the tactics and actions, the authors proceeded by explaining how the company could measure the performance of their actions and tactics applied. In other words, the company was provided with a description of *control*, the last element of the SOSTAC model. The authors included in the marketing plan a series of questions that they could use to analyse their performance and ensure that they are proceeding in the right direction. Following is the list of questions suggested:

- Was the objective of the action carried out accomplished?
- How will the action's performance be monitored?
- How often should the performance be monitored and by who?
- What was the reaction of customers? (Audience feedback)
- Was the action completed with suggested amount of resources?
- How relevant was the tactic/action for the company's objectives?
- How could the action be carried out more efficiently in future?

With the control section covered, the authors concluded the discussions for the company using the SOSTAC model.

After the SOSTAC model was defined and implemented, the authors proceeded by commencing a situational analyis followed by possible actions for the company in the digital sector. It was stated that this section will be discussed seperately since digital marketing is such a distinct and essential aspect of marketing these days. Authors started by analysing the various relevant social media platforms and the company's situation in each platform.

The authors commenced by analyzing the company's Facebook page, discussing their followers and other stats. There was a screenshot of page and the results of free analytics tools included, such as Likealyzer and Facebook insights in the marketing plan. After analysing the situation, there was provided some feedback on how the page could

increase engagement, including a description of Facebook insights and a picture to state how it works.

After an analysis on Facebook, the authors moved to Twitter and realized that the company did not have an account present. The authors suggested that having creating an account there could be beneficial since majortiy of Twitter's userbase consists of young teens, which was also relevant to the target market's customer profile.

The authors further proceeded by analysing the company's Youtube page, which had 293 followers and one video uploaded. It is suggested adding more content and engaging with customers or other company accounts more actively for more efficient brand awareness.

After Youtube, there was checked company's Instagram page. The company seemed to be fairly more active here compared to other social media platforms. The authors advised that the company could further increase its followers (therefore brand awareness) by giveaways on the platform, using relevant hashtags and linking their account to Facebook. Instagram's importance for social media marketing was also mentioned since its one of the largest growing social media platforms currently.

Finally, the authors checked the company's situation on music related social platforms SoundCloud and Mixcould. The company didn't seem to be very active here which may make sense since the company itself is regarding organizing music events, rather than being artists themselves. Nevertheless, the authors mentioned how the company could still benefit from these platforms since the platforms holds users that are interested in music and the company could therefore attract more customers with the use of these platforms.

Finally, the authors concluded the Social media section by explaining its importance and providing a list of tips that could be used (on one or more platforms) for efficient marketing and increasing engagment on the platforms. Following is a list of tips provided that can be applied to a single (or multiple) platforms which would aid in increasing the company's social media awareness:

- Make use of various available tools (with free tools also available) that aid in managing multiple social media accounts simultaneously, saving time and effort.
- Keep your audience updated with updates such as news, photos and videos, answering user questions and directly engaging in comment sections. This makes the connection with the audience more authentic.

- If the company has not posted in a while and does not have any material to post, make use of old popular posts and revive them, one example being throwback posts for succesful events and such.
- Try to upload content on your platforms daily, with regular intervals. Use the available targeting tools available on social media platforms to make sure the content is delivered to the appropriate audience.
- Share other people's contents, which can lead to them sharing yours.
- Find out the most appropriate time to post (on each platform) and make use of it, as this can improve the likeliness of your content to reach your audience.
- Keep the audience updated on social media with Live feeds of events (For example Instagram live and Facebook live) as this would spark excitement for the audience and keep them interested in the company's social media accounts.

Digital marketing excluding Social media

After the company's social media platforms were analysed with possible tips for efficiency, the authors moved on to marketing on other digital sectors. It was commenced with e-mail marketing and how the company could benefit from it by connecting with DJs and possible collaborators.

Secondly, ther was discussed the importance and appliable tactics for websites and online ads for the company. The authors realized that the company does not have its own website present, and as mentioned in the theory, a company's own website is crucial for any business. The authors suggested creating a website will be very crucial for the business. It suggested by the authors how the company could create a website with relevant content and attractive design (with an example of Drum and Bass event organizing website in Russia). Furthermore, the authors continued to suggest how the company could beneift from posting ads of upcoming events as posters on other websites, linking the ads to their possible website or Facebook page.

Finally, there was discussed Search Engine Optimization, and how the company could make use of popular hashtags or paid tools to find out the most suitable keywords to include on their website to ensure top results on, for example, Google search.

4 Discussion

The thesis was produced by Sheryar Nasir and Ilia Iarusov, business students of Haaga Helia University of Applied Sciences. The main objective of thesis was to create a product, which in this case was the market plan for Standard Company which could hopefully aid the company by providing useful insight and guidelines to conduct marketing activities in the future to obtain their marketing objectives. The company had aims to increase their brand awareness, generally and on social media, and to increase the number of visitors coming to their events. The authors will now proceed to evaluate the process of writing this thesis, followed by their learning outcomes in the process.

4.1 Thesis process

The authors started the process of writing this thesis by identifying the main aims of this thesis, with the help of the thesis commisioner and other members of the company to understand what exactly do they expect from the end product, the market plan. After there had been gotten an idea of their expectations and objectives, the authors started to gather necessary data that was required in order to create the market plan, simply put the data that was required to create a theoratical framework for this thesis. There were studied many books and surfed web pages online for gathering necessary data and started creating the theoratical framework. The process was somewhat smooth as the authors had previously studied all the topics during their bachelor studies in Haaga Helia, there was merely needed some 'brushing up'.
After the theoratical part was complete, the authors proceeded to work on creating the product, with the process started creating a project plan. The process was somewhat challenging in the beginning as the authors didn't know how to implement all the knowledge gathered and proceed with implementing it. After discussions with the supervisor and gaining some insight, there was gained a better understanding and created a project plan for the product.

After the plan was created, it was time to implement it. The authors used data gathered to figure out the company's situation and objectives, followed by their knowledge produced possible strategy's and tactics/actions for the company, with some insight on how to monitor their performance. There was Digital marketing insights included as a separate section in the marketing plan due to the authors' perception of how crucial it is for the company to gain brand awareness, which led authors to elaborating it in detail seperately.

The authors believe that the product will be quiet benificial for the company since the

members of the company lacked business expertise and were practicing marketing without a proper plan or guideline. The market plan created was tailored to match their understanding of marketing and all the model/tools used to create it. The objectives provided the company are being met with possible strategies and tactics/actions they can apply from the authors.

4.2 Challenges and solutions

The main challenge was faced during the thesis process was the insufficient amount of time authors had to create the thesis. The authors started writing their thesis at the first half of Ocotober, with the deadline to submit the first draft being November 15th. Limited time meant that the authors had to make the most out of each day and apply extra effort than would have been normally required to create a bachelor thesis. The writing of the theoratical framework did not present any challenged but when it came to applying all the learning, there were issues on how to begin, mainly on what to include on the emperical part of this product-based thesis. After discussion with Marika Alhonen, the thesis supervisor, the authors had a much clearer vision and idea on how to proceed and it was decided to start with planning the project of making the product, followed by implementation of the project plan.

Creating the product also presented some issues. Since the members of the company were not so familiar with marketing (or business in general), it was a bit challenging to gather the necessary data to receive information about the company's situation and objectives. After making the questions simple enough for them to understand with the help of example of possible answers they could provide, the authors managed to get the required information and proceeded. When it came to obtaining strategies for the company (which required target market segmentation), there were some issues getting enough data to obtain a more realistic average of answers due to the lack of time had. The authors tackled this issue by changing the interview type to qualitative, which meant that less people will be included in the interview but with a more detailed approach.

4.3 Learning outcomes and conclusion

To say the least, the whole process of creating this thesis was quiet educational for the authors. Even though the authors had basic knowledge of more or less every topic discussed in the thesis, they still went in to quite depth to make sure the product, and whole thesis in general, was reliably accurate. The challenges that authors faced further provided opportunities to gain knowledge and experience by tackling them. The process

of creating the market plan required project planning and the authors believe this is something they exceled at from practice due to the lack of time had.

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6   Appendices

Appendix 1. Marketing Plan for Standard

Appendix 1.
Marketing Plan for Standard Company

Sheryar Nasir
Ilia Iarusov

Table of Contents

1   Executive summary

The marketing plan is created for event organizing company named Standard. Company is concentrated on running Drum and Bass type of music events and requires the marketing plan for the further improvement of its marketing situation and brand awareness.

The marketing plan is a final product for the authors' thesis conducted for Haaga-Helia Univercity of Applied Sciences and is based on the studies held during the whole study process.
The marketing plan is divided into two main parts: Marketing plan itself based on the SOSTAC model and Digital Marketing Plan with the emphasis on the Social media.

The data required to be implemented in the marketing plan was acquired using the interview that was held with Standard team on a Facebook group. The got further data by analysing the company's social media platforms and conducting a SWOT analysis of the company.

Before authors proceed to fill out the elements in the model, brief introduction shall be provided to the SOSTAC model and SWOT tool with a visual representation to improve understanding of the tools.

2   SOSTAC model

The SOSTAC model has become popular lately due to its simplicity and the ease it provides in understanding the several elements in a market plan. The authors decided to use the model since it segregates the several aspects of the marketing plan with ease and in chronological order. Following section includes a brief description of each component.

- **Situation.** Where are we?
- **Objectives.** Where do we want to get?
- **Strategy.** How do we get there?
- **Tactics.** How exactly do we get there?
- **Actions.** What (and how) a company has to do?
- **Control.** Are we proceeding the way we want to? How can we measure performance?

Now that an idea of how a SOSTAC model appears and functions, the authors proceed to implement it in for Standard Company.

2.1 Situation

Based on the answers the authors got from the interview held on Facebook group, there was formed an idea of the company's situation. The current performance was perceived to be satisfactory in the eyes of the team, compared to other Drum and Bass event organizers. The company was not making a huge profit (which was anyways not their main target). The company has not been applying efficient marketing strategies due to the lack of expertise in the field, the awareness seems to be moderate to low. There was not much focus on financial situation since it was not much relevant by the company.

2.1.1 SWOT analysis

Once the background situation was obtained, the authors proceeded by discussing the company's possible opportunities and options. A SWOT analysis was conducted. The results can be seen in the following table.
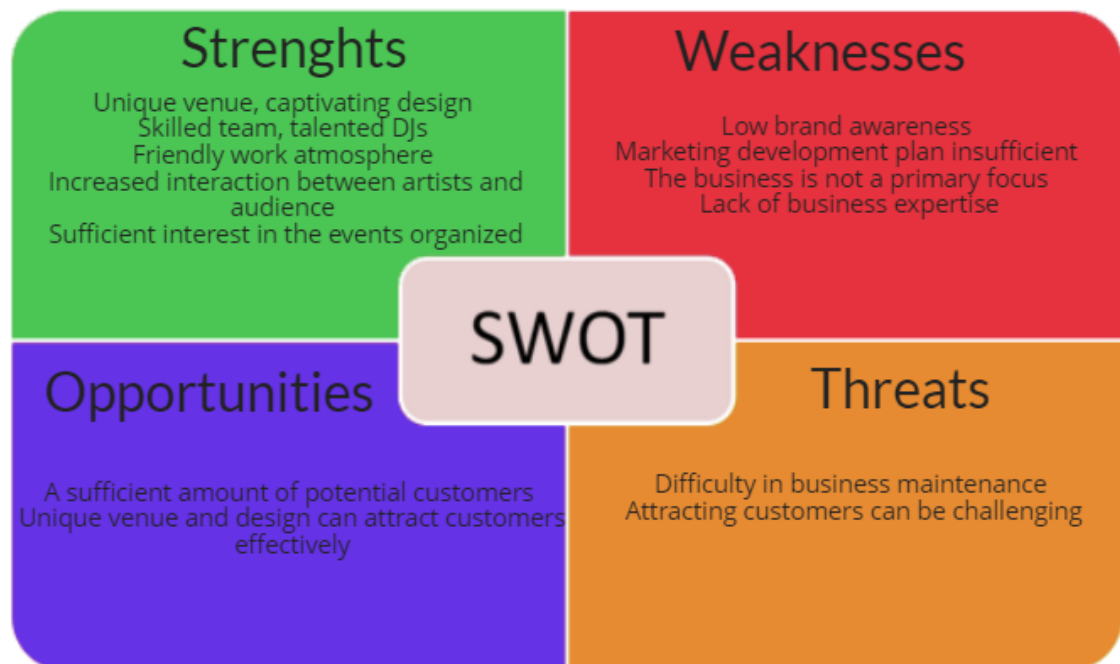

Figure 1. SWOT analysis

As the table shows, the company's strengths include a nice venue with an intriguing interior design. The location is a boat on along the river which has the dance floors inside it. The achitecture is unique compared to other clubs, so it is easily distinguished from

competition. The team consists of skilled DJs and event organizers that work in a pleasant atmosphere, providing a good team spirit and efficient event organizing. The DJ booth is relatively close to the dance floor which makes it easy for the audience to mingle with DJs, hence boosting the quality of user experience provided. There is also a good amount of audience when it comes to Drum and Bass, which can be seen as another strength.

Considering the positive traits of the company, some opportunities were derived. Firstly, the fairly large interest in the genre played can be seen as an opportunity for increasing ticket sales and brand awareness. Secondly, the events' unique location and inner atmosphere can provide a competitive edge and, at the same time, help the company to market themselves effectively.

When it comes to weaknesses, the fact that the company is still young and doesn't have a mass following is the first point. The team is not much experienced in the business sector so they lack entrepreneur skills. Furthermore, the team has not developed a proper market development plan which is quite essential for thriving companies. The owner himself, along with some other employees have other jobs which means that they are not focusing entirely on the development of the company.

Considering the weaknesses of the company, there were derived some possible threats to the company in the future. Firstly, due to a lack of business expertise and market plan, the authors of the thesis understood that running and maintaining the business suitably could be difficult. Secondly, as a result of low brand awareness, attracting new customers to the event could be a challenge since many people simply don't know about the company and the events it organizes.

After analysing the company's options and oppurtunities, the authors proceed to have an overlook on the competitors/collaborators in the market.

2.1.2 Competitors/collaborators

Currently, Helsinki is the city with the biggest amount of organizations focused on organizing drum and bass parties and shows in Finland. There are currently four organizations in Helsinki specialized on that, one of which is Standard. Other organizers include The Circuit DnB, Helsinki Jungle Mafia and Liquid Helsinki.

After an interview with the team was conducted, the authors realized that the company does not see other Drum and Bass event organizers as competitors, rather as possible

collaborators. So authors will be seeing the other organizers with that mindset. Following is a description the other companies:

Helsinki Jungle Mafia

This company is run by a experienced DJ and producer known as Physics, and it focuses mainly on harder type of Drum and Bass and Jungle. Physics run a radio show every Monday at 10pm on Basso radio. Previous events hosted artists as Logistics, Roni Size, Noisia, S.P.Y and SEBA. The events usually host from 100-700 hosts depending on the artist performing, with an event hosted atleast once every 2 months

The Circuit

The Circuit is created and organized by DJ and producer Noisewave. The events focus mainly on rougher styles of Drum and Bass such as neurofunk and jump-up. The events are usually held every 3-4 months, and they have hosted artists such as Galante, Hybrid Minds and Counterstrike, with MC Micstatic as an MC on most events. The events usually host up to 150 people.

Liquid Helsinki

As the name suggests, this company has a more pleasant approach to Drum and Bass music styles, such as liquid Drum and Bass and other similar styles. The company are at the initial stage of development with only a handful of events organized. Residents: Sampsterrr

Science Hki

Run by VVR, Axu, Trisector & St. Laurent Science Hki concentrates on more minimalistic and darker techno influenced sound of Drum and Bass. Science Hki has a series of podcasts being released on Mixcloud and iTunes as well as they appear on Basso radio every second Monday of the month.
There were no events noticed lately but there is an event planned in November and includes both Science Hki residents and DJ Fanu as headliner.

Drop Zone

Drop zone identifies itself as a future oriented bass heavy event organizer, both underground and overground. On average, the event hosts an audience of around 200-400 people. The company has hosted various events in 2016 and also had one this year on September 21st , and the event hosted 18 artists. Artists included Bell Curve, Lua Preta, Anna Morgan and Sam Binga.

2.2 Objectives

In this section the authors proceed to answer the question "Where do we want to be?" From the interview with the company it was found out that the company was mainly concerned with increasing brand awareness. This could be in the form of more ticket sales, more visitors or a higher following on their social media platforms. The team was also conducting marketing without a set of guidelines, hence a need for a proper marketing plan. It is ideal to make sure the objectives follow a certain criteria to make sure they are appropriate. This can be done by utilizing **SMART** goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound)

Following is a list of objectives for Standard Company to achieve by June 2019:

1. Obtain 100% more likes/followers on social media platforms.
2. Increase social media interaction with the audience and other similar event organizers. (More comments, likes and shares etc.)
3. Increase number of visitors to events by 50%
4. Gain coverage on traditional media platforms before an upcoming event like the press, a mention of Standard's event on radio and so on. (Secondary objective)
5. Now that it was figured out what to do, the authors proceed to advise on how it can be done.

2.3 Strategies

Strategies is an answer to "how we achieve our goals?". This can be done by analysing certain aspects of the market which inclide the target audience and competitors/collaborators. Furthermore, the company can review the customer profiles deduced and modify their service provided for effiecient results.

2.3.1 Target audience

To learn more about the target audience, there were conducted qualitative interviews with people that have been to Standard and related events. For obtaining data that would improve the quality of Standard events , there were used the 3E's theory that makes events more desirable(Excitement, Entertainment and Enterprise). Following is the list of questions that were used for the interview.

- Name
- Gender
- Where are you living?
- Age
- Occupation:
- What makes you go to such events and what is important about these events?
- What makes an event more entertaining for you?
- Memory from the best event you experienced?(What makes an event more exciting?)
- What could the company introduce to events that has not been done before? (Enterprise related)
- Are you aware of the company on social media platforms?

Using the questions stated above, there were interviewed 15 people (9 males and 6 females) and analyzed the answers they provided to obtain a general view of Drum and Bass audience and their beliefs to what would make these events more desirable.

A majority of the people interviewed were students (9/15) of the age 20-27 both males and females. The rest of the interviewees were people of different occupations, such as post workers, office assistant, marketers and entrepreneurs, mostly males, of the age 25-34. All the interviewees currently live in the Uusimaa region (Helsinki, Espoo, Porvoo) and attended Drum and Bass events at least once.

After analyzing the rest of the results the authors concluded that the most of the participants were interested in the concept of the venue itself (parties being hosted on a boat along the river). They also believed that is important to have a nice atmosphere in the events, which includes the other audience, the crew and the DJs. The quality and type of music played was also considered to be important. When asked about adding a unique element of entertainment to the company's events, the interviewees reacted with conformity, indicating that doing so might be appreciated by the audience.

Providing entertainment in events may be done by providing a unique service that may not be available otherwise at home for example. Many people stated that the venue itself, along with the possibility to drinks at the bar makes events entertaining. The venue includes the location, the decoration of the event (lighting etc.) and the audience present.

Events must have a certain blend of excitement that induces exceptional feelings amongst the audience. The excitement factor in an event is what causes to 'set the stage on fire'. The people interviewed believe that this may be achieved by playing exceptionally well music, which could be underground (so they've never heard it before). One interviewee stated that the fact that his friend was performing made the event something to remember.

Enterprise is defined as the willingness of an event organiser to explore new dimensions of unimagined ideas. It is what makes an event unique. When asked the people how this could be done, the interviewees had a variety of suggestions, with the most popular one being the introduction of gogo dancers (or similar performers) to these events. One interviewee also suggested occasionally spraying water on the audience to cool the atmosphere down, since it may get really hot in such raves. There was a suggestion as well about carrying special offers and lotteries.

When asked if they are aware of Standard's presence on social media platforms, many people stated that they were not following the page but may have come across some of the posts uploaded by Standard regarding upcoming events, while others were not familiar at all and were merely participated along with friends who were aware of the event. The interviews held further concluded that most of the interviewees were mainly informed of events from word of mouth by their friends. This shows that the company could improve their social media awareness to attract such customers to their events.

2.3.2 Differentiated marketing

Once a company has deduced a customer profile and identified which segment of market it intends to enter, it proceeds to modify its product or service in accordance to the target market. From the interview conducted, there was received an ideal profile of the audience in general. Henceforth the authors proceed to suggesting how the company could modify the events to match the preference of the customers.

Since the majority of audience seems to highly value their company in such events, the company could provide incentives to customers that invite their friends to such events, further boosting the amount of participants. One way could be granting a free drink to a person if they manage to get 3 friends with them. There could be an offer on buying drinks as well, such as getting a drink for free if you buy 3, since people seemed to point out that the possibility of buying drinks in the event is an important factor that motivates them to join such events compared to enjoying the same music at home.

The target audience had strong opinions about the DJs performing at events. Selecting a skilled DJ to perform at the event can be beneficial for getting positive appraisal. However, the target audience also seemed to appreciate underground music, especially if the DJ was someone they knew. So recruiting new and upcoming DJs occsionally can also be seen as advantageous.

As the authors concluded from interviews, the target audience were highly in favor of new elements being introduced to events. The company can therefore enhance the user experience by offering unique amusements to the audience, possibly something they can remember and furthermore tell their friends about, which would eventually add to the company's brands awareness.

2.4 Tactics and actions

Tactics can be seen as an implementation of the strategies that the company has chosen to apply to achieve their marketing objectives, with the actions being the straightforward activities that have to be conducted to abide by the strategies. Since the tactics and actions are more or less similar in essence, it was decided to combine the two together.

After the company has deduced a customer profile and decided how the service could be adjusted in accordance to the market, the company now has to use certain tools, which in Standard's case were selected to be the marketing mix, for efficient marketing. The marketing mix is a set of tools that divide the service being provided to certain aspects that a customer can review and compare. The authors have decided to use the 4 P's for this purpose. The authors of the thesis proceed to describe how this should be carried out.

Product
Since Standard Helsinki is an event organizing company that provides a service, rather than a physical product, the main focus will be on what the event has to offer as a service. This can include entertainment, excitement, unique amusements and such. The company must keep in mind that the 'product' (in this case service) has to be associated with the target market, fulfilling their expectations and needs from the service.

Price
As the name suggests, this section regards the price of the service being granted. Usually, price has been playing a prominent role in the consumer's decision-making

process when choosing the product. So it may be beneficial if the company reviews the prices of tickets, distribute discounts and incentives in accordance to their target audience.

Place

This section regards the venue of the event. From interviews conducted, the people seemed to like the location and design of the venue. However, the company stated that there is restrictions regarding the capacity of people the area can hold. The company can consider changing their venue if they decide to hire a famous DJ, expecting a huge sum of visitors to attend the event.

Promotion

Having a nice product/service is insuffiecient in the modern era without marketing it properly. This section includes how a company may advertise their upcoming events to the target audience. There is many ways to do so, whether digitally or traditionally. The company may place posters of DJs performing in an upcoming event, mention the event on a radio show, or choose to market the event and invite people digitally. The company has to choose the most feasible element, which in this case seems to be digital marketing, mainly on social media.

Now that the authors have figured out the 4P's of marketing mix and how they can be implemented, they further proceed to direct actions the company can take to achieve their marketing objectives.

Normally, actions required to implement marketing strategies are sorted in a table, called an action plan. There was created a model for the company to utilize, with the main objectives being covered. Following is the action plan created for the company to use, before an event occurs.

Action	Responsible person	Time line (done by when?)	Status (mark x)
Contact and recruit DJs/performers for the event		2 months before event	
Evaluation of resources, budget, risk managment		2 months before event	
Recruite cameraman, other crew members needed		1 month before event	
Create/post event on social media platforms		1 month before event	
Distribute posters, possible radio mention and so		2 weeks before event	
Invite people/promote event on SM		2 weeks before event	
Decorate the venue/set up the stage		3 days before event	
Check equiment, confirm with DJs and crew		2 days before event	
Manage security, first aid etc		2 days before event	
FINAL CHECK: Confirm with everyone involved in event		1 day before event	

Figure 2. Before the event action plan

As the table shows, the actions have been assigned in chronological order with respect to time. The colors represent the timing of the actions to be completed, with the final action being in red. The company can use this action plan, and possibly further modify it by editing/adding actions to their preference if necessary.

Once an event has been succesfully organized and hosted, there are several actions a company can conduct to further market the company and their events. There was deduced another table for these actions. Following is the table.

Action	Responsible person	Time line (when?)	Status (mark x)
Post about success of event on Social media platforms		1 day after event	
Thank the audience, DJ/performers and crew for participation		1 day after event	
Evaluate success of event; discuss issues/challenges faced		3 days after event	
Upload pictures taken during event on social media platforms		3 days after event	
Compile and upload videos taken during event		1 week after event	
Handle payments for DJs/performers and crew members		Decided by company	
Preparation and planning for next event		2 weeks-1 month after event	

Figure 3. After the event action plan

As the table shows, the colors of the actions have been reversed since now the actions on top are immediately after the event with the following ones proceeding with time. The company will be provided with these tables seperately as an excel file, so they can easily use/modify the action plan to preference, since actions can be difficult to produce for long term goals as the situation or tactics might alter with time.

2.5   Control

This aspect of the SOSTAC model refers to how the performance of the actions carried out will be supervised and further revised, if needed. Although the action plan created contains a section for status of the action, the control section goes to more depth of actions carried out. This includes measures of monitoring performance, which can be deduced by analyzing the reaction of the audience for example. Qualitative interviews and results of user interaction on social media platforms are some ways to deduce reaction of audience. Control section can also include a section which discusses on how the actions completed could be altered in future for more efficiency. Following is a list of questions that could be used to monitor performance:

- Was the objective of the action carried out accomplished?
- How will the action's performance be monitored?
- How often should the performance be monitored and by who?
- What was the reaction of customers? (Audience feedback)

- Was the action completed with suggested amount of resources?
- How relevant was the tactic/action for the company's objectives?
- How could the action be carried out more efficiently in future?

Using these questions, the company can monitor the performance and comprehend the significance/consequences for the tactics/actions applied.
Since digital marketing is such a huge aspect in the modern era, the authors have decided to discuss and analyse it seperately for the company.

3   Digital marketing situation and analysis

In this section, the authors of this thesis will go through a brief description of the company's digital situation and possible improvement. Simply put, authors will go through their social media platforms and further discuss how the company markets online otherwise, followed by ways on how it could be improved.

3.1   Facebook

Standard Helsinki has a page on Facebook where users can find out about their upcoming events, read reviews about the events and get updated with photos and videos of events that have taken place. The page is currently followed by 386 people. The authors discovered that the page is currently not running any ads. This could be the starting point to work on for increasing brand awareness on Facebook. Facebook ads can be effective if they are targeted to the right people. It could help the page to increase its following and interest in the events.
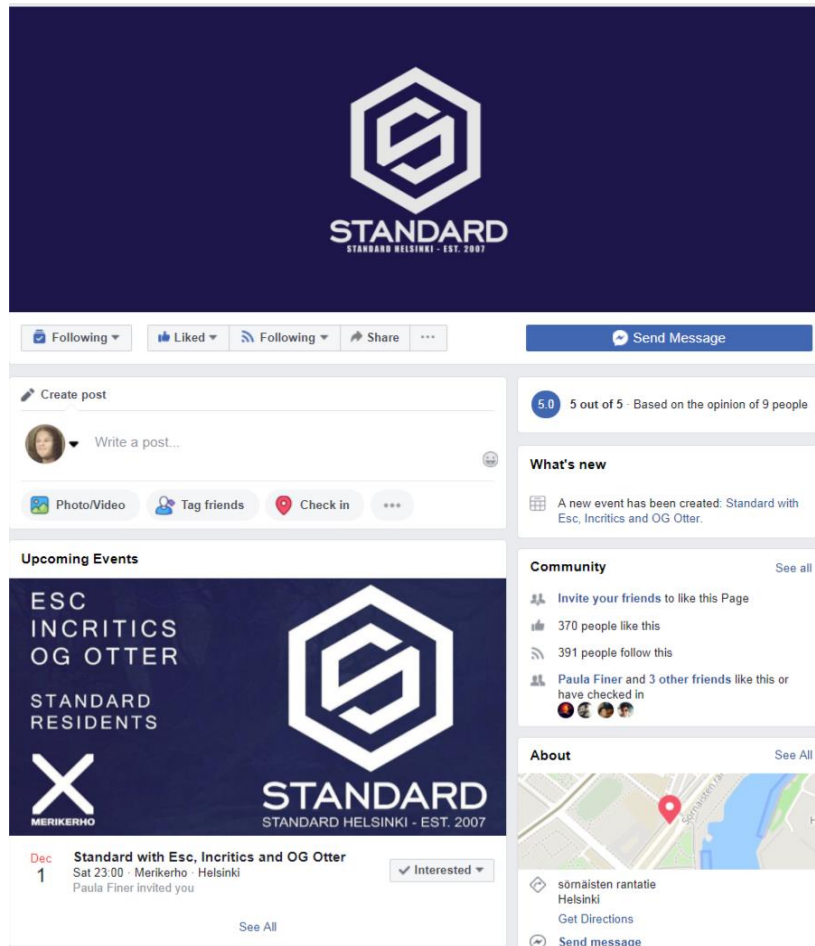
Figure 4. Company's Facebook Page

The authors of this thesis would also like to suggest creating a profile on Facebook (different from Facebook page) and adding all the people that have been to the events previously along with people that show interest in upcoming events. Once the people are on the profile's friend list, the team can easily invite those people to future upcoming events using the profile. The profile can also be used to interact with the audience on a more personal level, if needed. The performance of the company can be measured using Facebook Insights as well as Likealyzer, free tools that provide statistics that can be studied to get an understanding of how to progress. Following are illustrative pictures:

Figure 5. Facebook Insights tool.

Figure 6. Likealyzer Results

3.2 Twitter

After conducting research, it was found out that the company does not have an account present on Twitter. Twitter is widely used by the younger generation, therefore the authors realized that it would be very beneficial for the company to have presence on the platform. The company could attract a following, and possibly potential customers by uploading

tweets and news about the Drum and Bass scene in Finland. Standard could also connect with other Drum and Bass event organizers on the platform to interact with them for possibly collaborations. Uploading tweets with relevant hashtags (E.g. #drumandbass, DnBHelsinki etc.) to stay relevant and increase awareness. Twitter can be beneficial since most of its users are young teens, which are relevant to the target market's customer profile deduced from interviews.

3.3   Youtube

The company has a YouTube channel with 293 subscribers and 1 video uploaded. The authors of this thesis believe that the company's awareness among Drum and Bass fans could be greatly increased if the company started uploading videos more regularly and even marketed them. YouTube is a great source of media for audience so uploading more videos of events that have taken place could attract people to join for upcoming ones. The company can benefit from YouTube by increasing interaction on comments and uploading videos more frequently to keep followers entertained and tuned in, while attracting new ones too.

3.4   Instagram

Standard company has an Instagram page with 368 followers and 50 uploads on their page. The page seems to be active with their last post on the 5th of November, 2018. The company has also uploaded a Facebook link of their upcoming event on the Instagram bio. The fact that the company is active on Instagram is seen by us to be a good step towards getting brand awareness since Instagram is rapidly growing to become the biggest and most used social media platform. The company could, however, grow its following by organizing competitions and giveaways of free tickets and such. Using multiple hashtags is an efficient method of getting the company's posts widespread among the platform.

3.5   SoundCloud

After conducting research, the authors realized that the company itself is not present on SoundCloud, though the members of the team have personal accounts on the platforms. Since Standard Helsinki is in essence an event organizing event, with their main focus being organizing Drum and Bass events, there came a conclusion that having a SoundCloud page may not be of utmost significance. However, the members of the team

could make use of the platform to find potential DJs for future collaboration, and promote the organization by uploading series of mixes composed by the DJs performing at Standard.

3.6   Mixcloud

Standard Helsinki has an account present on Mixcloud with only 7 followers and one upload which was made 7 months ago. This shows that the team is barely active on the platform. This could be changed by constantly dropping mixes from events that occur to gain a better following. The team could also use the account to contact other DJs for future collaborations.

3.7   Social media insights:

After analysing Standard Helsinki's social media accounts, the authors realized that the company could boost its brand awareness significantly by being more active on their platforms, connecting with the general audience and potential collaborators. Uploading more content with relevant hashtags could is one way that aids in getting recognition. As a young company that lacks a huge capital, social media can be seen as the most effective way to market Standard Helsinki and get recognition. Here is a list of tips that could help the company boost its following and spread media across platforms succesfully.

- Make use of various available tools (with free tools also available) that aid in managing multiple social media accounts simultaneously, saving time and effort.

- Keep your audience updated with updates such as news, photos and videos, answering user questions and directly engaging in comment sections. This makes the connection with the audience more authentic.

- If the company has not posted in a while and does not have any material to post, make use of old popular posts and revive them, one example being throwback posts for succesful events and such.

- Try to upload content on your platforms daily, with regular intervals. Use the available targeting tools available on social media platforms to make sure the content is delivered to the appropriate audience.

- Share other people's contents, which can lead to them sharing yours.

- Find out the most appropriate time to post (on each platform) and make use of it, as this can improve the likeliness of your content to reach your audience.

- Keep the audience updated on social media with Live feeds of events (For example Instagram live and Facebook live) as this would spark excitement for the audience and keep them interested in the company's social media accounts.

3.8 Other channels for digital marketing

After going through how the company could be marketed more effectively on social media, the authors will now continue to analyse how the company could conduct marketing digitally otherwise.

3.8.1 Email marketing

As previously mentioned, E-mails are considered to be an effortless and quick way to communicate and market a company. Since Standard Company is fundamentally an event organizing company so the application of E-mail marketing may seem to be restricted. The company can however use E-mails to contact DJs. The company can also connect with other Drum and Bass event organizers using E-mails to talk about possible collaborations.

3.8.2 Websites and Internet ads.

As discussed earlier, having a website is crucial for any business. Since Standard is a relatively small company that lacks a sufficient amount of employees and capital, the resources (time and capital) required to establish and maintain the website might outweigh the actual benefit the company may receive by doing so. However, if the company does plan on creating a website, they can include a section where customers could enter their email addresses in order to be updated by company in the form of newsletters and promotion of upcoming events.

Internet ads, however, could be resourceful. If the company wishes to budget internet ads, they could put up posters of upcoming events as ads on other websites related to the Drum and Bass scene. If the company wishes to do so without having an actual website, they could link the poster to their Facebook page (or website) which is constantly updated with upcoming events and general news about the company. The team must however be careful with where and how they post their online ads in order to ensure efficiency. Linking

the company's social media accounts to the website is essential since social media has the mass audience, which could be utilized to attract customers to the company's websites. Having an attractive design and layout is crucial for the website, as it can keep the users interested and lead them to visit the website again or furthermore share it with their friends. Following is an example of an event organizing company's website (next page).
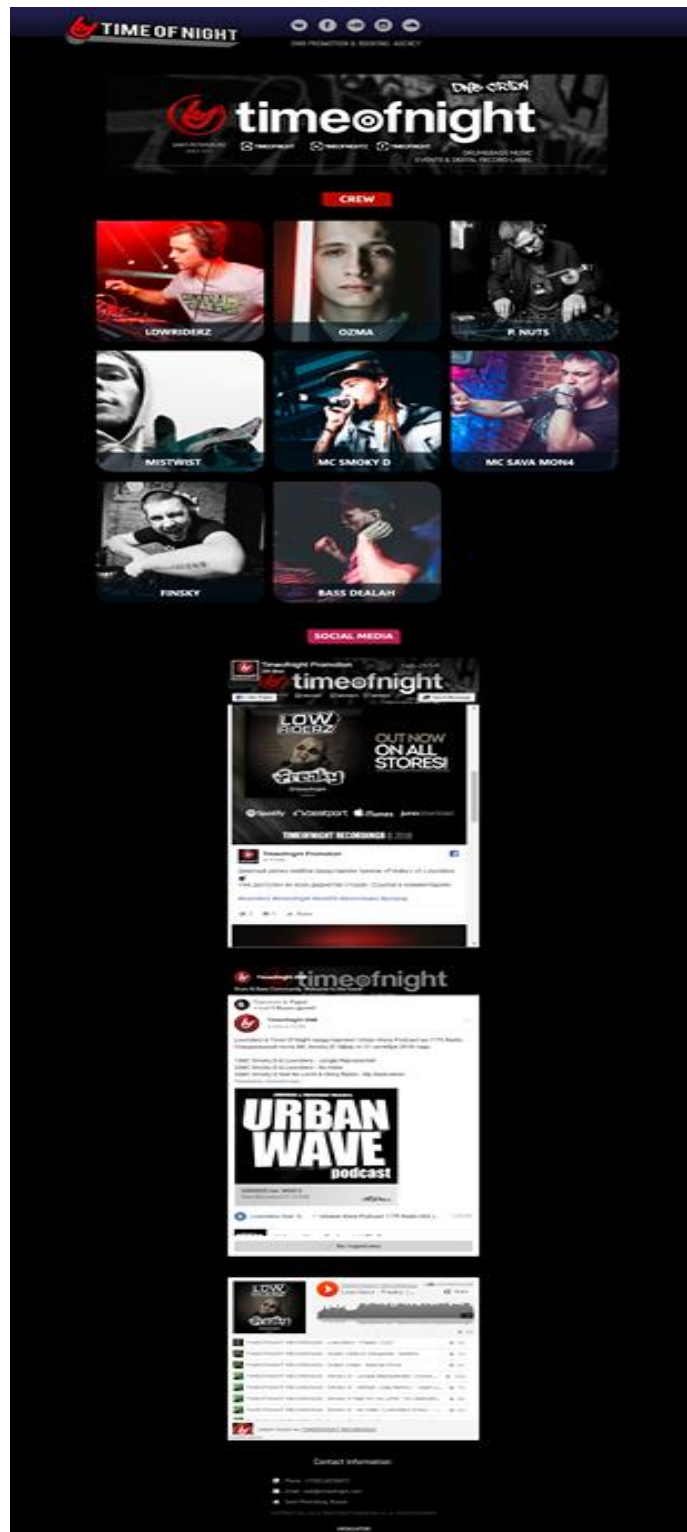

Figure 7. An Example of a Website

As seen by the photo, the website has an introduction of the crew followed by a section that links the web to their social media platfoms. The design also seems to be catchy. This could be an ideal example of the layout the company can choose to have if they wish to create a website for the company.

3.8.3   Search engine optimization

The authors decided to use Google's search engine and entered "Standard Helsinki". The first result that popped up was of the company's Facebook page. However, searching for "Drum and Bass events Helsinki" did not show any results regarding the company on the first page, although a couple of Facebook pages. The company could work on this by adding certain keywords to their Facebook pages or using paid SEM to obtain better results. Having a website would further improve search engine results. The company could conducted a research to find out what keywords the target audience use (eg popular hashtags) or using paid tools (eg Google adverts) to find words that the company could use on their potential websites for better results on Google search.

4   Conclusion

The following section concludes the marketing plan created for Standard Company. The authors of the thesis really hope that the information provided turns out to be useful and aids the company in achieving their marketing goals. If the company has any questions regarding the market plan or require tips on how to utilize it, the authors state that the company is more than welcome to contact us to obtain possible useful insight.