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Improving effectiveness in e-marketing communication for  
Chinese SMEs: 2CCM

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## Improving effectiveness in e-marketing communication for Chinese SMEs: 2CCM

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The purpose of this thesis was to come up with perspectives on improving effectiveness in e-marketing communication for Chinese SMEs. The aim of this thesis was to analyze Chinese e-marketing communication channels and message delivery. This thesis was done for 2CCM, which is an online store for selling fashionable and stylish high-end products.

The thesis was roughly divided into two parts which were theoretical part and recommendations. The theoretical part introduced the concept, Chinese e-marketing communication channels and message delivery, whereas the recommendations focused on how to improve effectiveness in e-marketing communication in practice.

The theoretical part of this thesis was collected from literature, journals and online publications. The theoretical part explained definition of E-marketing, E-business and E-commerce, analyzed the Internet adoption in China and e-marketing situation of SMEs. Different Chinese e-marketing communication channels were described and compared. The theoretical part also contained the message delivery and website design.

The empirical research was a qualitative research through conducting an interview with the owner of the case company. It aimed at exploring the real situation and difficulties of 2CCM in e-marketing communication. The key recommendations were given for 2CCM in terms of communication selection, message delivery and website design.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The topic of this bachelor thesis is Increasing effectiveness in e-marketing communication for Chinese SMEs. This thesis was made for Chinese SMEs for attempting to improve effectiveness in e-marketing communication.

E-marketing is an inalterable trend of marketing transition. The Internet is a giant network of interconnected networks, which is designed to cultivate connectivity and accelerate information exchange. Marketer admitted that Internet helps communication and advertisement effectively. To sum up, this thesis emerged at the right moment under these circumstances. (Chaffey & Smith 2008, 33; Dann 2011, 8; Mohammed, Fisher, Jaworski & Paddison 2003, 339.)

Meanwhile, investors and entrepreneurs are certainly curious about how Chinese social network works in e-marketing communication, due to the fact that most of prominent social media was banned in China. This is what makes the thesis challenging and interesting.

More than three years business and marketing study stimulated author into such a challenging topic. Author was wholeheartedly eager to bring up practical guide and recommendation on how to enhance e-marketing communication competence in terms of channels and message delivery for case company. Besides, author as a stakeholder is involved in an online shop business, which explicated why author would like to explore more advantageous knowledge on improving effectiveness in e-marketing communication.

This thesis starts with introduction of the case company. Chapter 3 precisely defines purpose, problems and conceptual framework together with boundaries and limitation of the thesis. The literature review starts from chapter 4 in which the concept of e-marketing, SMEs and Internet adoption are well explained. Chapter 5 demonstrates different Chinese e-marketing channels, and the comparison is made in the following chapter. Chapter 7 includes creative message strategies, message execution and website design. Chapter 8 discusses the methodology of how to properly collect and

accurately interpret data. Research findings and valuable recommendations are shown in chapter 9 and 10 respectively. The last chapter describes the process of writing this thesis and includes author's self-evaluation.

## 2 2CCM

"My name is 2cm but everybody calls me 2ccm" This is the slogan of 2CCM Shop reveals the meaning of shop's name and the founder, Mr.Zhang Changmo. The owner had run a tangible shop for almost one year when in high school. After it closed, the owner purchased a large quantity of Takashi Murakami's products and sold them out, to gain capital for online store. 2CCM emerged ascribe to years experiences of business operation and sheer devoted passion towards fashion.

The mission of 2CCM is to promote the latest and newest world fashion culture as well as new trend to passionate fashion fans, by offering reasonable and affordable products and services. The owner of the shop is avidly advocating the beauty and fashion, which is the pure desire for setting up.

2CCM is a small online store which has only eight employees. Only one employee is responsible for the message delivery, and takes in charge of three different communication channels. Other employees have to order products, and take care of inventory and after sales service. The owner remains confidential about the turnover.

2CCM targets young fashionable white-collar workers who are between twenty to thirty years old, and sixteen to twenty years old teenagers who like to show-off. Target customers are characteristic of young, fashionable and vigorous. Power of consumption and enthusiasm are the two primary criteria for customer targeting.

2CCM is an online SME that mainly utilizes the Taobao platform and various social media networks for marketing. Precisely, it has a website and uses WeChat, Weibo for marketing and communication.

Surprisingly, 2CCM official Weibo account has over 60,000 followers. If this continues, 2CCM will have a huge market. Thus, it is important to maximize the effectiveness in e-marketing communication. (The website of 2ccm.Taobao 2014; the website of Weibo 2014.)

### 3 PROBLEM SETTING AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 Purpose

In this thesis the effectiveness improvement implemented for a Chinese SME, 2CCM, is researched and analysed. The aim of it is to seek possible and relevant solutions to improve effectiveness in e-marketing communication especially for most Chinese SMEs.

As the one to complete this project, the author definitely will benefit from it. Author of this thesis absorb knowledge and gain experience on how to improve effectiveness in e-marketing communication in Chinese market. The massive research and practical information enable author to be an expert in e-marketing communication.

The project will benefit the case company, 2CCM, as well. The theoretical information presented in report can be processed by the owner of 2CCM, and the research data acquired and analysed can be utilized to improve effectiveness in communication, and to maximize its profitability and influence.

#### 3.2 Problem setting

Considering this topic of thesis tends to be a research-oriented one, problem formulation is the first necessary step. Research problem, how to increase effectiveness in e-marketing communication in Chinese market, is the primary question that has to be answered after research. From this point of view, and based on conceptual framework, research objectives are further divided into theoretical and practical ones.

Research problem:

How to increase effectiveness in e-marketing communication for Chinese SMEs?

Theoretical research objectives:

1. What are the typical e-marketing communication channels in China?
2. Which one is the most effective communication channel in China?
3. How to produce creative message strategies in China?
4. How to execute message effectively in China?

Practical research objectives:

1. How does 2CCM select e-marketing communication channels?
2. How does 2CCM manage message delivery?
3. What are the obstacles of improving effectiveness in e-marketing communication for 2CCM?
4. What is the future plan for 2CCM to improve effectiveness in e-marketing communication?

### 3.3 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework briefly outlines the structure and boundaries of thesis. To sum, the thesis is divided into theory research and recommendations to 2CCM.



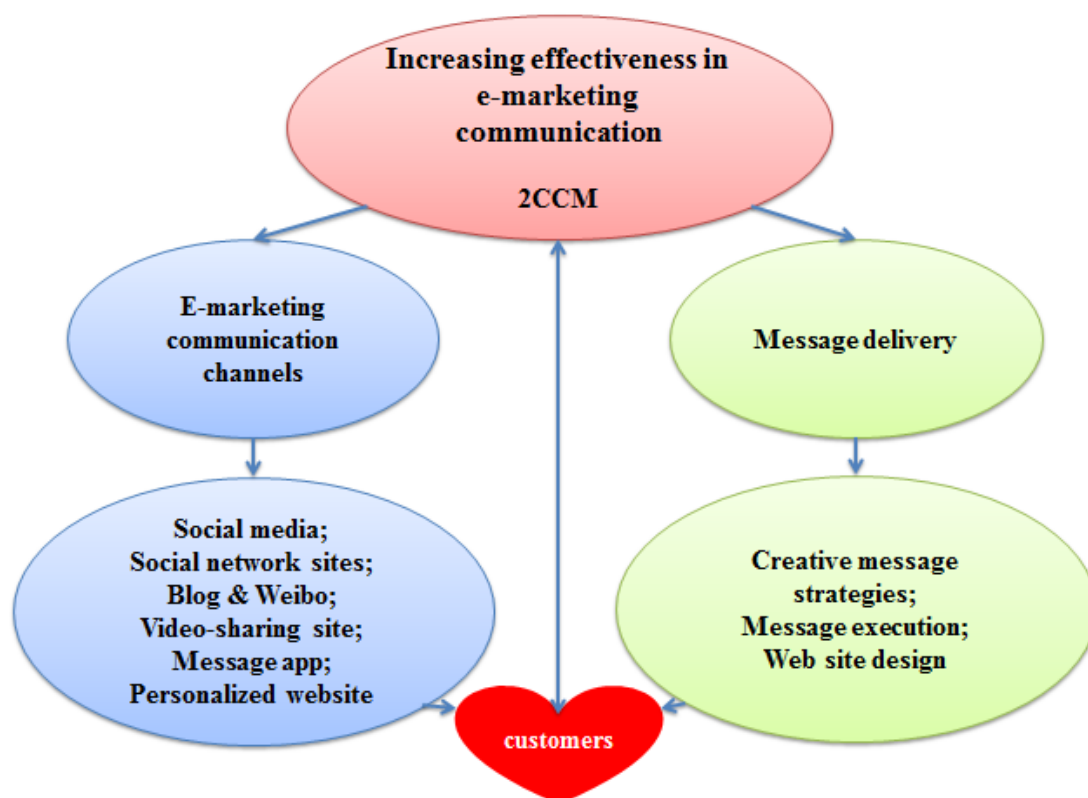


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

The theory places emphasis on improving the effectiveness in e-marketing communication which encompasses two elements, e-marketing communication channels and message delivery. Several communication channels will be mentioned but solely focus on the Chinese e-marketing communications. On the right side of this figure, it contains the message delivery subject including message strategies, message execution and website design.

Theoretical research result provides grounds for implementation. Eventually, the recommendations are given based on the combination of theoretical information and practical circumstances. As it is seen in the figure, the ultimate goal is to satisfy customers and make them happy. Once customers are happy, it benefits to 2CCM, which is a win-win situation.

### 3.4 Boundaries and limitations

It is well-known that e-marketing is a very broad term, which gives the best reason to narrow down the scope. This bachelor thesis primarily puts emphasis on e-marketing communication aspect, and especially for Chinese SMEs.

As for literature review, definition of e-marketing will shortly be explained along with both advantages and problems. However, more detailed message such as the E-planning and E-customers are excluded as these are irrelevant to the subject. Considering 2CCM's situation, most communication channels mentioned in thesis have to be in line with the Chinese e-marketing status, which means Facebook, YouTube are unnecessary to be mentioned as those are blocked. In no way can this thesis cover all thousands of different social media and other e-marketing channels. All those mentioned means are selected and compared based on a certain standard, preferences and popularity.

Regarding the message delivery, 2CCM's strategy and positioning have to be taken into consideration but solely focusing on the message aspect. Additionally, the style and art design discussed in this thesis have to virtually follow current trend and in line with Chinese young people's value.

When it comes to implementation, the theoretical research results provide ground for communication channel selection and message evaluation. The recommendations will be given in terms of the communication channel selection and message delivery rather than e-marketing strategy or planning. The primary concept is to find out the best solution to improve effectiveness in e-marketing communication.

## 4 GENERAL VIEW OF E-MARKETING IN CHINA

### 4.1 Definition of E-marketing

Due to the characteristics of the Internet, it lowers costs in communicating with customers and facilitates access to information more effective than traditional marketing channels. Compare to printed documents, online information is obviously considered as a cost effective and environmental friendly resource. Internet accelerates universally information search, makes SMEs' global marketing strategy possible and increases productive and efficiency as a global medium. Owing to the development of price-comparison technology, customers are able to easily compare prices among various products and brands and conveniently select items. Information nowadays is more transparent to consumers and competitors, which spurs competition and innovation. (Jobber & Fahy 2009, 263-267; Riquelme 2002, 276-286.)

The terms of electronic business, electronic commerce and electronic marketing are often referred synonymously. However, the distinction apparently exists in terms of scope of business processes and internal transactions. (Combe 2006, 1.)

The term electronic commerce (E-commerce) is generally understood to mean the use of the Internet and the Web to facilitate online selling or transaction. Digital technology enables the function of e-tailing, online banking and online shopping where buyers actually buy and shoppers actually shop. The core concept of e-commerce is commercial transactions, which put stress on the value exchange in return for products and services. E-commerce would not happen if there is no monetary exchange. (Laudon & Traver 2009, 9; Chaffey & Smith 2008, 12.)

Electronic business (E-business) is rather a broader term, to some extent, encompasses e-commerce and e-marketing. It primarily stresses the use of the Internet and other digital devices to consummate transactions and business processes from procurement, to production, logistics, sales and marketing, after sales and more. Precisely, e-business does not include commercial exchange while it contributes to business operation. (Chaffey & Smith 2008, 12; Laudon & Traver 2009, 10.)

Electronic marketing (E-marketing) is at the core of e-business. It means to approach customers by utilizing various digital promoting media channels. The significant distinction between e-marketing and e-commerce is the involvement of targeted customers instead of using a network to facilitate the process of value exchange. Thanks to the development of advanced technology, E-commerce can occur even without e-marketing. (Chaffey & Smith 2008, 13; Dann & Dann 2011, 7.)

The Figure 2 below shows three alternative relationships between e-marketing, e-commerce and e-business. It is apparently seen that the last one is the most appropriate one for explanation. (Chaffey & Smith 2008, 13.)

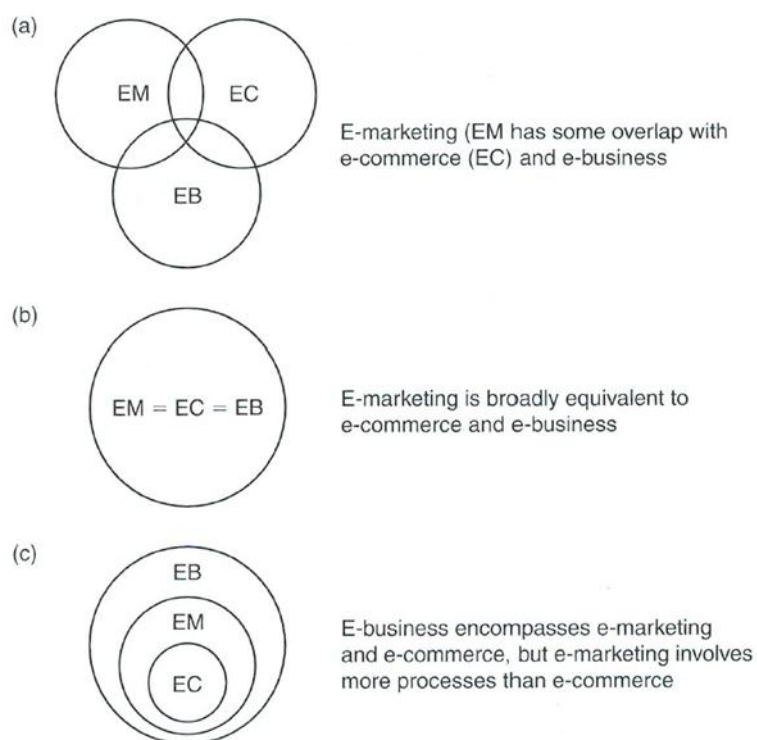
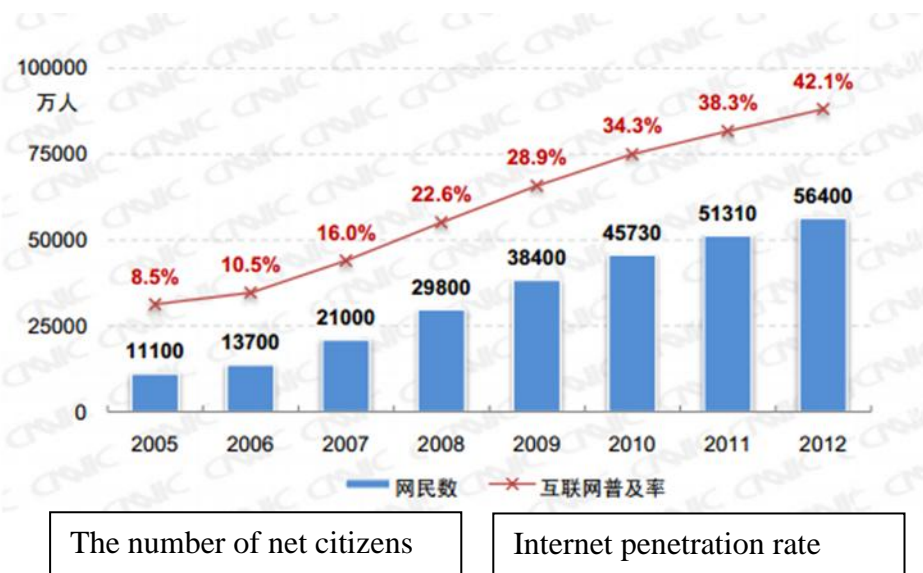


Figure 2. Three alternative relationships between E-marketing, E-business and E-commerce (Chaffey & Smith 2008, 13.)

#### 4.2 Internet adoption in China

Chart 1 presents an increasing tendency of the number of Chinese net citizens and Internet penetration rate. According to acquired data, the number of Chinese cyber citizens reached 564 million in 2012. China's Internet penetration rate is 42.1 percent which increased 3.8 percent compared to 2011, however, it is still lower than most

developed countries such as Germany or the United Kingdom. Only about 156 million people in rural areas had access to Internet until 2012 albeit rural residents make up 50% of the total Chinese population. To sum up, China, especially in rural area, has huge potential in e-marketing. (Huang & Tsang 2010; Website of CINIC 2014.)

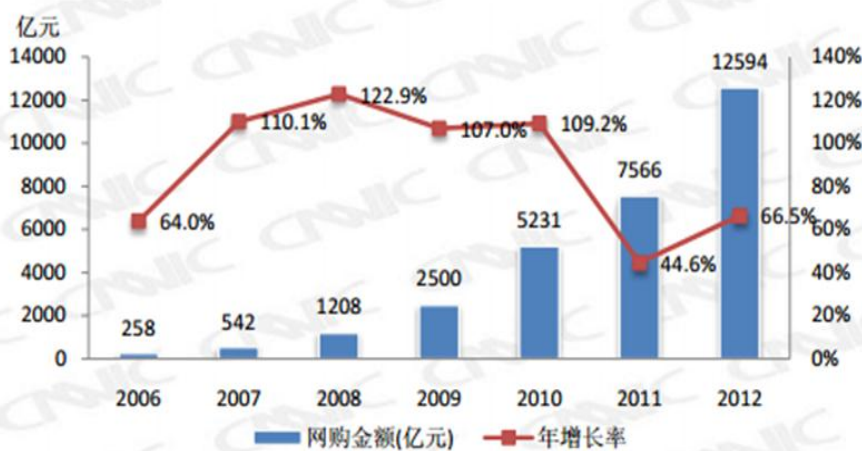


The number of net citizens

Internet penetration rate

Chart 1. The number of Chinese net citizens and Internet penetration rate (Website of CINIC 2014.)

The total capital of online market transaction attained more than 125 billion Chinese yuan in 2012 which rise from 44.6 percent to 66.5 percent within a year. Chart 2 shows the amount of online transaction and growth rate from 2006 to 2012. There is a growing trend of overall amount of transaction but the growth rate is rather slow. (Website of CINIC 2014.)



The amount of online transaction

Growth rate

Chart 2. The amount of online transaction and growth rate from 2006 to 2012 (Website of CINIC 2014.)

Chart 3 demonstrates the consumption capability of online shopper. The average per capita consumption amount reached 5203 Chinese yuan in 2012. More than a half of consumers spent over 1000 Chinese yuan on online shopping. About 22.6 percent of shoppers spent around 2001 to 5000 Chinese yuan. With the type of merchandise enrichment, the power of consumption increased. (Website of CINIC 2014.)

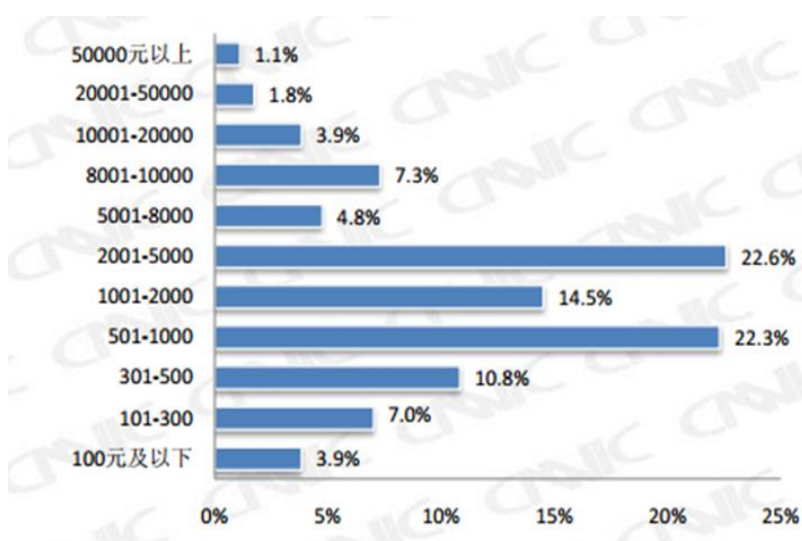


Chart 3. Online shopper's capability of consumption (Website of CINIC 2014)

In conclusion, Internet culture consumption occupies a more and more important place in composition of Chinese's net citizens with the popularity of Internet. (Website of Marketing China 2014.)

#### 4.3 SMEs and E-marketing

The internet has evolved to an essential asset for enterprise operation. It penetrates to people's daily life. Chart 4 displays the total number of websites from 1995 to 2013, which reveals the fact that there were 785,293,473 sites in November 2013. (Website of Netcraft 2014.)

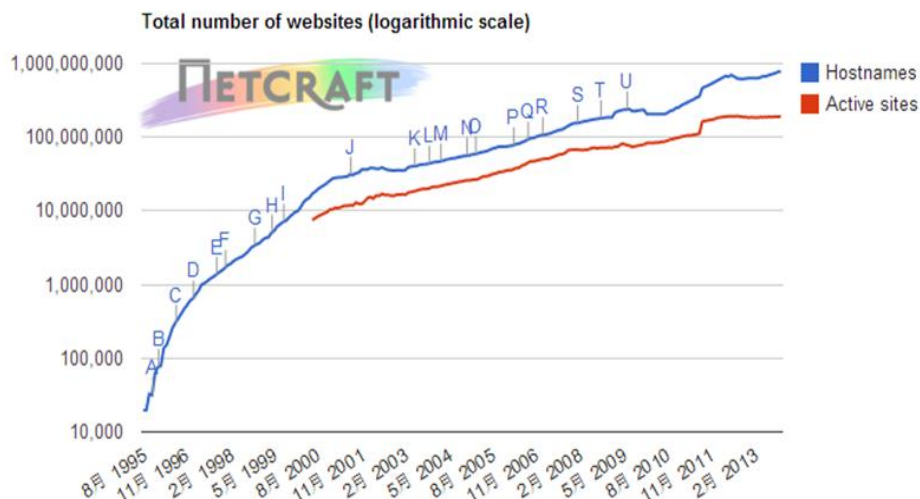


Chart 4. Total number of websites from 1995 to 2013 (Website of Netcraft 2014.)

A research conducted by Gilmore et al., carried out an exploration about the impact of Internet on small to medium-sized enterprise marketing activities. The objectives of research were to analyze the situation of SMEs base on endorsement of the Internet and e-marketing from 2000 to 2004, and to probe the barriers in implementation. Even though e-marketing is a fast developing business, these barriers still obstacle the development in today's business. (Audrey, Damian & Scott 2007, 234-247.)

The result of study points out, e-marketing is still in its infancy for some SMEs and several factors impede e-marketing activities. Entrepreneurs have not fully seen the value of Internet and e-marketing, therefore, it is hard to convince marketers that e-marketing activities will ultimately occupy traditional marketing, since SMEs were highly dependent on traditional marketing to earn profits at that time. (Audrey, Damian & Scott 2007, 234-247.)

The study accomplished by Gilmore et al. explored barriers to e-marketing for SMEs. Those barriers were due to the impact of generic characteristics of SMEs, practical implementation and maintenance issues and organizational obstacles. (Audrey, Damian & Scott 2007, 234-247.)

The common difficulties that most SMEs encountered in e-marketing activities are limited time, resources and expertise. Most SMEs lack of technology professionals

who are able to maintain website and manage the online activities. In most cases, seeking for external consultants or purchasing software package became alternatives, which increase uncertainty in operation. Meanwhile the study indicated that it increases the expenditure if purchasing online presences. In addition, without the support of information technology expertise, SMEs fail to implement professional, interactive website design and add value. Meanwhile, customers, suppliers or partners lacking experiences of using digital methods become an obstacle for SMEs when applying Internet and e-marketing. (Audrey, Damian & Scott 2007, 234-247.)

SMEs have not received enough benefits from the Internet and e-marketing, instead, SMEs perceived value of e- marketing is to decrease the costs of printing materials. However, research revealed the transformation that entrepreneurs optimistically believe that the Internet and e-marketing plays significant role in business and will be vital. To make full use of Internet requires sufficient time, great attention and adequate resources. (Audrey, Damian & Scott 2007, 234-247.)

A study by Herman investigated the adoption of Internet in China regard to small, medium and large enterprises. Research studies anticipate that the usage of Internet is more likely to benefit small and medium business because of flexibility. However, result of the research claims large companies accumulate more advantages including increased sales and cost effective. Lack of specialized employees, financial resources, technological skills and security mechanisms delay embracement of the Internet, which proved Gilmore et al.'s research outcomes. (Riquelme 2002, 276-286.)

## 5 CHINESE E-MARKETING CHANNELS

### 5.1 Social media

Social media is seen as an intermediary between content, users and communication technologies which includes social networking sites, blog, micro-blog and video sharing sites. It diversifies the way of communication and eliminates the geography barrier. (Agresta, Bough & Miletsky 2010, 2-10; Dann, Dann 2011, 344.)



Social media blooms around the world, so also in China, although plenty of beloved apps like Facebook, YouTube are blocked by government. Chinese Internet giants have seized opportunities to invent new substitutions. The figure 3 below is China's social media landscape in 2014, which convinced that a tremendous achievement have been made by those giants. (Website of Tech in Asia 2014.)



Figure 3. China social media landscape 2014 (Website of Tech in Asia 2014.)

### 5.1.1 Social network sites

The initial idea of Internet was to engage scientists in computer science departments around the United States. It was intended to build a community that enables scientists to share statistics, knowledge and perspectives in a real-time online environment. However, nature of online network sites and communities has developed dramatically, and has targeted a much wider audience to share interests, hobbies, experiences and photos. (Laudon & Traver 2009, 11-3-11-10.)

The definition of social network is generally understood to mean a group of people with shared social interrelationship and common ties among participated members or

people who share a place for some period of time. The online social network more precisely sets out the online spot where people interact with others. (Laudon & Traver 2009, 11-3-11-10.)

Without any doubts, Facebook dominates the online social networks with more than 500 million active users. It has developed to be the best communication option for business-to-consumers and business-to-business customers to effectively interact with clients. Unfortunately, Chinese government blocks it since July 2009 due to strict net censorship. Nevertheless, there are several other alternatives emerged on the market, such as RenRen, Kaixin001, Qzone, 51.Com, and other smaller specific networks as well. (Website of Facebook 2014; Website of Chinese social media 101 2014.)

### *RenRen*

RenRen former name is Xiaonei, literally, means inside the campus, at early stage it mainly targets college students, while after it changed name to RenRen translates as People's Web, it extends targeted group to people who are outside the campus. Latest news shows RenRen has nearly a total of 31 million active monthly users. (Johansson 2010, 56-58; Website of RenRen 2014; Website of VB 2014.)

As a faddish Chinese social network site, RenRen is almost identical with Facebook in terms of interface, features, and functions and so forth. However, it has a few unique features, such as, a "footprint" feature, and self-developed in-house games, and personalized homepages. (Johansson 2010, 56-58; Website of RenRen 2014; Website of VB 2014.)

RenRen has a feature called Public Homepage same as Facebook fan-page function, which is a platform for organizations, companies, celebrities and media to release information and to advertise. Users can automatically view all news, new posts and activities from the page by adding Public Homepage as a friend. The amount of Public Homepage is limited due to strict and complicated censor processes. (Johansson 2010, 56-58; Website of RenRen 2014; Website of VB 2014.)

A characteristic feature of advertising of RenRen is it facilitates advertisement filtered to specific target groups. Entrepreneurs can simply purchase the banners and specify who the banners will be visible to. Target groups can be selected by location, gender and relationship, keywords, education and occupation, and interest. A comprehensive and effective tracking system developed by RenRen helps measure and monitor e-marketing performs. (Johansson 2010, 56-58; Website of RenRen 2014; Website of VB 2014.)

In a nutshell, RenRen is one of the most popular, most open and best financed Chinese social networks. In spite of popularity has decreased, RenRen still has latent power to expand business and accomplish success. (Johansson 2010, 56-58; Website of RenRen 2014; Website of VB 2014.)

#### *Kaixin001*

Kaixin001 is a social network website launched in March 2008. It is the pioneer that mainly targets the white-collar workers. In-house games such as parking cars, stealing crops and other games attract most of users working at offices. Kaixin001 has more than 70 million registered users and has exceeded 2 billion page views. (Johansson 2010, 58; Website of Kaixin001 2014; Website of VB 2014.)

Unlike Facebook and RenRen's successful advertisement application, the marketing possibility of Kainxin001 is not promising because a large quantity of users spends time on playing games and chatting. It develops the function of Public Homepage as well to verify organizations, companies, celebrities and others. The initial advertising way is to place banners on website pages, but problem is users are so addicted to game playing that neglecting the advertisement. (Johansson 2010, 58; Website of Kaixin001 2014; Website of VB 2014.)

#### *Qzone*

Qzone is a personalized social network sites, owned by Tencent, an Internet giant, launched in 2005. It allows users to write blog, share photos, listen to music and watch videos. Users are authorized to design virtual background and accessories based on its own preferences in order to make Qzone are different and unique.

Qzone is a leading Chinese social network site which has more than 600 million active user accounts. The main targeted groups are teenagers, rural and casual users. It draws traffic from QQ Messenger which arouses controversial issues towards the number of users and classification of social network. Qzone is likely regarded as an internal social network site mostly for QQ Messenger users. (Website of Qzone 2014; Website of VB 2014.)

### *51.com*

51.com, an early prominent social network sites, targets that lower tier cities, was founded in June 2009. It has over 160 million users and has generated around 350 million page views. However, it is now struggling with growth due to narrowed target group. At the moment, it focuses on building an extraordinary game community. 51.com is obviously less competitive compared to RenRen and Kaixin001 which specify to urban market. (Johansson 2010, 58-59; Website of 51.com 2014; Website of VB 2014.)

### 5.1.2 Blog and Micro-blog/Weibo

Blog simply refers to a website or platform where journal entries, articles or links can be shared to public. In China, blog is an excellent tool for celebrities to publish personal life, news and photos or to engage with fans. One third of most popular and influential blogger are celebrities or extraordinary entrepreneurs. However, with the advent of other new types of social media, blog becomes less popular as before. (Eley & Tilley 2009, 81-82.)

Micro-blog in Chinese language is called Weibo, which is a broadcast medium. It has similar features as Twitter, allows user to post a less than 140 characters sentence with pictures, video links and so forth. Recently, it has been widespread and mass adopted. The most popular micro blog service providers in China are Sina, Sohu, Netease and Tencent. (Website of Chinadaily 2014; Eley & Tilley 2009, 82.)

### *Sina Weibo*

One of Chinese biggest web portals, Sina Corporation, launched Sina Weibo in August 2009. Sina Corporation states it accumulated 2,5 million daily active users last quarter in 2013 and the number increased 4,2 percent from 58,9 million to 61,4 million in December. Roughly estimated number of total registered users is more than 500 million. (Website of Seeking Alpha 2014; Website of Weibo 2014.)

A user's profile shows user's name, a short description, the number of followers and fans the user has, and the number of tweets that user posted. There are two types of user accounts: regular accounts and verified user accounts. Verified user accounts which have to be censored by site service group, are basically belonging to celebrities, sports stars, and well known organizations and other VIPs. Figure 4 below displays the interface of a verified user account.



Figure 4. Interface of a verified user account (Website of Weibo 2014.)

Content of tweet contains text, videos, pictures and links. Under each tweet, users can like, comment, save and repost it. There is a dialog mode that enables private conversation among users. Figure 5 shows the Interface of a tweet. (Website of Seeking Alpha 2014; Website of Weibo 2014.)



Figure 5. Interface of a tweet (Website of Weibo 2014.)

### *Tencent Weibo*

Tencent Weibo is owned by Tencent Holding Limited which is one of the biggest Internet companies in China. Tencent Weibo has similar functions with Sina Weibo and it is the third most popular social network in China as it has attracted more than 230 million active users and 540 million registered users. Tencent Weibo is well integrated with other Tencent services such as QQ music, QQ album and so forth. It launched an English version aiming at targeting and capturing overseas market. Figure 6 shows the interface and functions of Tencent Weibo. (Website of Social media today 2014; Website of TechRice 2014; Website of Tencent Weibo 2014.)



Figure 6. Interface and functions of Tencent Weibo. (Website of TechRice 2014.)

### 5.1.3 Video-sharing site

Creating, uploading and sharing videos with families, friends or even strangers are no longer difficult as before, since sites like Youku, Tv.Sohu, make world easier and convenient. Even international corporations like Nokia, Dell, have seen benefits of those video-broadcasting channels, and agreed to make use of those means to achieve marketing objectives. (Eley & Tilley 2009, 82.)

### *Youku*

Youku is a preeminent video-sharing site in China founded in June 2006 by Victor Koo. Youku emphasize on customers experience and continuous service improvement strategy. In March 2012, Youku have completed acquisition process towards Tudou which is a popular video-sharing site as well. Unlike other simply video-broadcasting sites, Youku have successfully expanded business to Television and

Mobile terminals areas. Users are able to watch the videos for free and are permitted to upload videos irrespective of length. Youku diversifies contents such as movies and televisions, daily variety and news room, running through videos making, broadcasting and publishing. Youku have influenced whole video industry structure and whole media pattern, and have satisfied user's perspectives to freely and easily view, upload, source and share amusing and delightful videos. (Website of Youku 2014.)

#### *Tv Sohu*

Tv Sohu is the first video-sharing platform. It belongs to one of the biggest Chinese Internet portals Sohu, launched in 2006. It provides high-definition movies, dramas and documentaries, and also provides channels for users to upload videos. Tv Sohu's market share has increased significantly from 3.4% to 13.4 % within 12 months. In 2012, Tv Sohu achieved an agreement with iQiYi and V.QQ to develop a Video Content Cooperation (VCC), intending to effectively allot resources and seek for mutual collaboration to competing with Youku group. (Website of Tv.Sohu 2014.)

#### 5.1.4 Message App

##### *WeChat*

WeChat is a Chinese instant messaging app available in smartphone app market. It primarily enables users to communicate with friends and groups effectively. So far, WeChat has accumulated more than 271, 9 million active users and 100 million international registered users even though it mainly targets mainland China. (Website of Tencent 2014; Website of Chinese Social Media 101 2014.)

Awesome features of WeChat differentiate it from WhatsApp although two apps share similar features. For instance, Video call feature allows WeChat user to make face-to-face video which similar with FaceTime function. Moments is also called Friend circle in Chinese where users can share text, pictures and links or comment on each post, but all comments are only available between friends for protecting privacy. (Website of Tencent 2014; Website of Chinese Social Media 101 2014.)

Three other features, Shake, Look Around, Drift Bottle, close the relationship between strangers. By shaking the phone, user finds new friend if somebody is shaking at the same time regardless of distance and location. User can search and greet nearby friend by clicking look around function. Drift Bottle feature allows user to throw a virtual bottle with message into the invisible sea while someone could catch and reply or re-throw it into the sea, which remains mystery between strangers. Figure 7 displays WeChat's interface. (Website of Tencent 2014; Website of Chinese Social Media 101 2014.)



Figure 7. WeChat's interface (Website of Tech in Asia 2014.)

WeChat is not only a message app but also a new online storefront and a mobile wallet from business point of view. There are two types of public accounts that WeChat provides: subscription accounts and service accounts. SMEs start with registering a public account and then release information via it for simplifying business operation. Recently, the new version develops a function permits users to bind its bank cards to the app and conduct monetary transaction. Moreover, Tencent brings online investment fund into WeChat for encouraging users transfer money from saving accounts to mobile wallet and make investment. (Website of Tech in Asia 2014.)

## 5.2 Personalized Website

### *Taobao*

Taobao is a Chinese online shopping website founded by Alibaba Group on May 10, 2003. Taobao merges business operating models of eBay, Rakuten and Amazon to facilitate consumer-to-consumer commerce by providing free platform for small and



individual entrepreneurs to launch online stores, together with business-to-consumer commerce by offering platform at Tmall for retailers. Taobao has gathered more than 500 million registered individual entrepreneurs and has stored more than 800 million items, turns it into the biggest online shopping website in Asia-Pacific region. The mission of Taobao is to promote integrity, dynamic and speedy online transaction culture, attempt to develop a safe and effective online transaction platform, and propose to build a mutual help and relaxing e-shopping community. (Website of Alibaba Group 2014; Ying 2011.)

There are several derivative products supporting better business operation and improving customer satisfaction. AliWangWang, an embedded instant chat program, is one distinctive product enables effective communication between sellers and buyer before or after purchase. Chatting records are regarded as electronic evidence when it involves rights protection issue.

Taobao Wangshop is a shop authorized by Taobao which allows sellers to design and decorate unique and distinctive store interface for the sake of boosting traffic and visits. Paid version entitles sellers to have a large space for pictures, higher pixel of interface, more flexible website editor and more functions. Free version has fewer features while it at least has more personalized functions compared to standard version, intends to assist beginners to develop.

Taobao credit rating system is seen as an evaluation system where trade partner needs to evaluate seller in terms of quality of products, delivery time and after service after transaction is completed. A favorable comment values one point added to seller's account, and a medium review values zero point and a negative review means one minus point. Accumulated points and transaction amount have correspondent star rating system present to buyers. Sellers have a crown symbol on website representing the most reliable and the best store. (Website of Alibaba Group 2014; "Taobao credit rating system"...2012.)

## 6 COMPARISON OF CHINESE E-MARKETING

### 6.1 Comparison of social networks

The table 1 demonstrates the differences among diversified social networks. Qzone has the largest the number of users, but this is based on the fact that all users automatically come from QQ Instant Messenger's user. Accordingly, it cannot be considered as solid evidence to examine popularity of Qzone. Additionally, Qzone mainly focuses on teenagers, which limits the effectiveness in advertising and targeting. (Website of VB; Website of Renren; Website of Kaixin001; Website of Qzone; Website of 51.com 2014.)

Table 1. Comparison of different social networks

	RenRen	Kaixin001	Qzone	51.com
URL	<a href="http://www.renren.com/">http://www.renren.com/</a>	<a href="http://www.kaixin001.com/">http://www.kaixin001.com/</a>	<a href="http://qzone.qq.com/">http://qzone.qq.com/</a>	<a href="http://www.51.com/">http://www.51.com/</a>
Users	280 million	100 million	600 million	160 million
Location	1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> tier cities	1 <sup>st</sup> tier cities	2 <sup>nd</sup> & lower tier cities	Lower tier cities
Target groups	Students White-collars	White-collars	Teens	Mixed
Business communication	Fan-page function	Communication channel		
Parent Company	Oak Pacific Interactive		Tencent	

Besides it, Renren is the second largest group and targets students and white-collars in large and second largest cities, which is convenient to advertising. Kaixin 001 had a competitive advantage years ago, but it is no longer able to reach potential group because unfortunately those users are simply addicted to games. 51.com focuses on rural areas and targets to different interest group which is a merit when advertising to comparatively poor and unprogressive cities. (Website of VB; Website of Renren; Website of Kaixin001; Website of Qzone; Website of 51.com 2014.)

Kaixin001 facilitates functions which allow companies and organizations to interact with users in order to establish relationships with existing and potential customers. Renren has a similar fan-page function that enables message deliveries from companies to customers despite the fact that procedure is a bit complicated. The format of those two functions is rather same, where companies list all information such as profile, contact information, news, where companies are able to publish links, photos, and videos like microblog function, where customers could give feedback and comment on pages. However, Qzone and 51.com lack those interactive functions, which is a weakness and results in a decline in business. (Website of VB; Website of Renren; Website of Kaixin001; Website of Qzone; Website of 51.com 2014.)

In general, in terms of communication between business-to-business and business-to-customer, Renren has potential and superiority compared to other social networks. (Website of VB; Website of Renren; Website of Kaixin001; Website of Qzone; Website of 51.com 2014.)

## 6.2 Comparison of microblog and WeChat

Considering the popularity, attributes and functions of microblog and WeChat, it is purposeful to analyze three objects rather than simply compare two subjects. From the table 6, it can be seen that Tencent Weibo and Sina Weibo gathered most users, and have strong support from parent company. However, the differences between two microblogs are positioning and targeting strategies. Tencent Weibo targets to teenagers and young group people, which leads to a boom of online games and entertainment. It cannot be regarded as an effective channel concerning e-marketing business. To some extent, Tencent Weibo is not competitive as Sina Weibo concerning business-to-business communication. (Website of Sina Weibo; Website of Tencent Weibo; Website of WeChat 2014.)

Table 2. Comparison of Sina Weibo, Tencent Weibo and WeChat

	Sina Weibo	Tencent Weibo	WeChat
URL	<a href="http://www.weibo.com/">http://www.weibo.com/</a>	<a href="http://t.qq.com/">http://t.qq.com/</a>	<a href="http://weixin.qq.com/">http://weixin.qq.com/</a>
Users	500 million	540 million	271,9 million
Location	1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> tier cities	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> tier cities	1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> tier cities
Target groups	White-collar urban, Elite-based, celebrities, media figures	Teenagers, celebrities	White-collars
Business communication	Verified account	Verified account	Public account
Parent company	Sina corporation	Tencent	Tencent

Sina Weibo is the pioneer that allows verified accounts to release advertisement information. This strategy is an advantage, while now it seems users complain about annoying and unnecessary advertisement. Nowadays, Sina Weibo encounters the problems of a decline in users' number and embedding too much advertisement on interface. (Website of Sina Weibo; Website of Tencent Weibo; Website of WeChat 2014.)

At that time, WeChat is born to against Sina Weibo. Even though WeChat has fewer users than Sina Weibo and Tencent Weibo, it has strong influence on users since people are crazy about new inventions. Public account feature helps users to follow it and receive information directly which meet users' expectation. (Website of Sina Weibo; Website of Tencent Weibo; Website of WeChat 2014.)

In a word, Sina Weibo is in a leading position and has decisive advantages at present, but WeChat has large potential to compete with Sina Weibo. (Website of Sina Weibo; Website of Tencent Weibo; Website of WeChat 2014.)

### 6.3 Comparison of video-sharing sites

It is well-known that YouTube is the most successful video-sharing site in the world, which appeals to many organizations who turn to social media and the Internet marketing rather than traditional TV marketing. In China, two competitive video-sharing

sites are Youku and TV Sohu, and both of them have a large group of audiences. However, for most SMEs, Youku is a better option because it has a simple step to publish own record videos and can make a big influence. (Website of Youku; Website of TV Sohu 2014.)

For better competing with Youku, TV Sohu have agreed to establish an alliance with iQiYi and V.QQ, which is seen as a breaking point to reinforce competitive advantages and to attain a larger market share. Nonetheless, TV Sohu targets large corporation and organizations, which makes it less attractive to SMEs. (Website of Youku; Website of TV Sohu 2014.)

## 7 MESSAGE DELIVERY

### 7.1 Creative message strategies

Creating a successful marketing communication strategy starts with developing a creative message strategy, and the next thing is to execute it by selecting different communication channels. Effective message strategies should fulfill the principle of ROI which represents relevant, original and impact. It is impossible to achieve marketing purpose, attract attention and leave impression disregarding the ROI rule. (Duncan 2005, 276-283.)

The definition of message strategy stresses the idea of bringing up brand message to a target audience in an innovative and persuasive way. In general, strategies integrate rational and emotional thinking, or initiate brand image relevant to consumers. The figure 8 below briefly outlines three basic steps in innovating message strategies. (Duncan 2005, 276-283.)

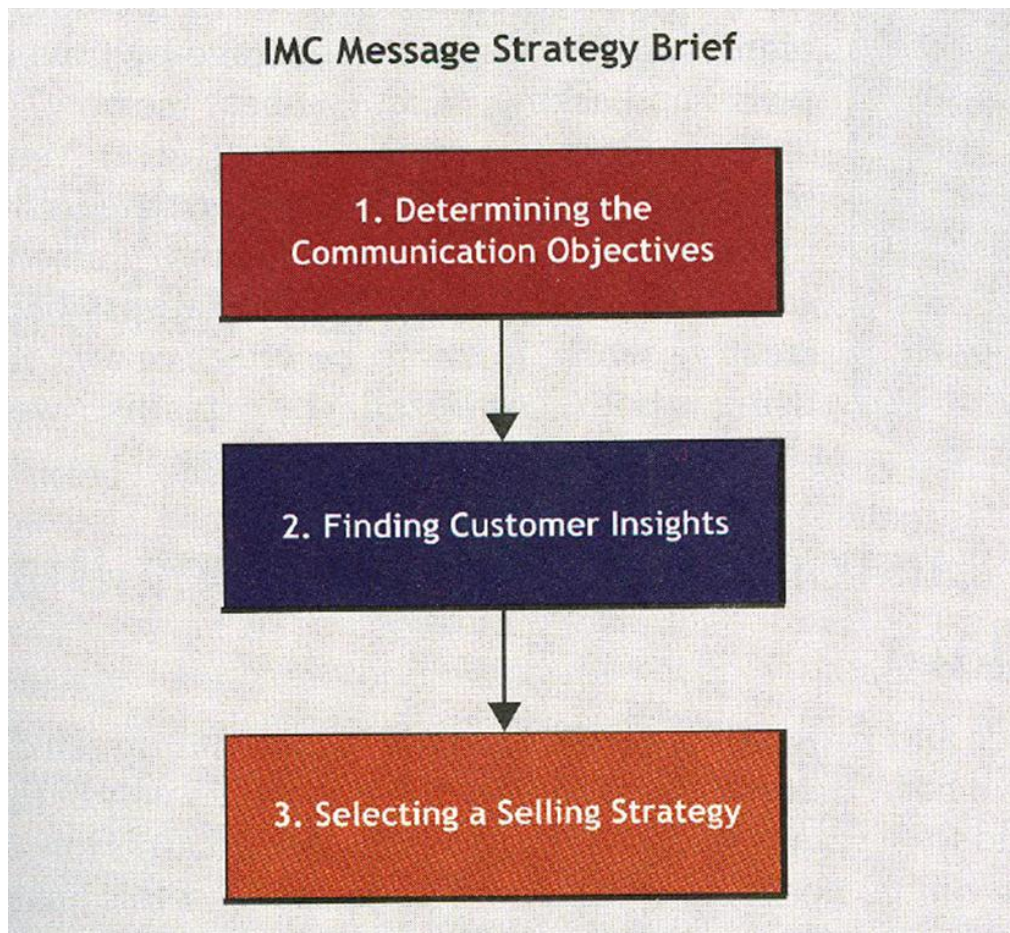


Figure 8. Three basic steps in message development (Duncan 2005, 283.)

Step 1: Determining communication objectives: What type of impact does the message need to achieve?

The concept of communication objectives is different with marketing objectives, the former refers to the purpose of delivering a shared value while the latter emphasizes on figures achievement. (Duncan 2005, 282-284.)

Marketing communication objectives can be set as cognitive path which focus on creating awareness of brand or opportunity to use or buy it, and the goal is to share brand knowledge and understanding. Affective path targets to create or change a brand image or personality, or attitudes with brand linking, or inspire a desire or wish. Behavioral path aims at increasing trial, purchase and repeat purchase by encouraging showroom visit, website visit, and inquiries. Organization should define objectives according to inner and outer situations. (Duncan 2005, 282-284.)

### Step 2: Customer insight: Finding diamonds in the data

It does not make any sense if the message cannot strike a chord to customer's mind. The explanation of customer insight is below-the-surface attitude or belief that affects customers' behavior.

A mission of account planner, who is regarded as the voice of customers, is responsible to discover customer insight hidden from surveys, statistics or data, or "diamonds in the data". Account planning is required to bring strong customer strength on the planning of marketing communication by using research and brand insights. To engage customer, in a way, is to connect consumers in a relevant way. Thus, account planner needs to identify hidden desire inside customer's heart and then fulfill the appetites. (Duncan 2005, 284-286.)

### Step 3: Selecting a selling strategy

Primarily, the widely used selling strategy underlines the concept of benefit that is how a product pleases consumer's needs and desires. The initial intention of a benefit-selling strategy is to give a belief that customer will get benefits after buying or using products. Other strategy emphasizes the importance of the features of a product, for instance, a strategy emphasize on giving reasons to convince customers that a product will provide promised advantages. A feature selling strategy can either stress on products distinguish elements or on price. For instance, the value pricing strategy is to convince the best quality with the lowest price to consumers. The strategy of a unique selling proposition (USP) is based on a product's most special quality from competitive products, which directly indicates the brand's position. There is no right or wrong strategy, the only matter is to align with company's communication strategy. (Duncan 2005, 290.)

## 7.2 Message execution

An innovative idea and appropriate strategy cannot ensure the success of message delivery without proper execution. A message execution is defined as a format to deliver marketing communication message, such as an advertisement, flyer or package label. There are five key elements that cannot be overlooked when bringing the big

ideas to public, such as message storytelling, tone and style, copywriting, art direction and consistency. (Duncan 2005, 306-308.)

Message story formats, such as news announcement, inherent drama, endorsement, lifestyle, have to be aligned with company's strategy and contents. A successful message execution is to develop emotional relationships with consumers by using appropriate formats. For example, PepsiCo filmed an innovative mini movie advertisement named Bring Happiness Home during Chinese spring festival. This mini movie told the story of returning home for family union. It is well-known that Chinese spring festival is the most important tradition event. The purpose of PepsiCo to film this mini movie is to build a joyful and sweet brand image to audience. This movie was specially made for the Chinese customers. (Duncan 2005, 308-310; Website of Advertising Age 2014.)

Tone means general atmosphere or manner of expression in marketing communication. It reveals the attitude and emotions sometimes, for example, the United States Marines uses a threatening tone for the familiar line "We never promised you a rose garden" to exaggerate the tough-guy mentality. Experienced teams understand exactly how to avoid some unwelcome styles such as pedantry, peachiness and pomposity. Humor and slang may contain sensitive message, which should be used appropriately and carefully. It is unnecessary to absolutely avoid using those expressions, sometimes, humor and slang can arouse unpredictable success. Chinese young generation frequently uses the slang and modern language, or even network language in online communication. New usage of network new word jargon is welcomed by young people. (Lin 2011, 3-10; Duncan 2005, 310-311.)

Words draw attention as well as pictures, and the latter provides visuals to viewers. As research mentions, the visuals and headline in print messages attract most attentions. The best message is words and pictures work synergistically which means visuals develop something to the words and words elaborate the meaning presented in the visuals. (Duncan 2005, 311-313.)

Business executives intend to build brand awareness and provide information by using different methods such as printed brochures and flyers. However, those ways



lack of interactivity unlike the websites which engage customers and stakeholders in communication.

Online advertising and website are the two basic types of online formats. The table 9 below implies that most customers are inclined to return to sites that have high-quality content, are easy to use, are quick to download and are updated frequently. (Duncan 2005, 326-327.)

Factor	Percentage of Respondents Citing This Factor as Important
High-quality content	75%
Ease of use	66
Quick to download	58
Updated frequently	54
Coupons and incentives	14
Favorite brands	13
Cutting-edge technology	12
Games	12
Purchasing capabilities	11
Customizable content	10
Chat rooms	10
Other	6

Source: Heather McLatchie, "E-Business Essentials," *clipwebzine*, August 23, 1999, <[www.clipwebzine.com/article.cfm?storyid5163](http://www.clipwebzine.com/article.cfm?storyid5163)>.

Figure 9. Factors driving repeat site visits (Duncan 2005, 326.)

### 7.3 Website Design

Website works as a tool to assist effective message delivery. Site design strategy definitely should fit with organizational business strategy and structure. It is the priority to identify the target customers and know customers' preference as it affects the success and popularity of the website. The purpose of setting up a website could be meaningless without properly collaborating with communication strategies. It is just a beginning to launch a website, as the website maintenance is an ongoing process. (Duncan 2005, 327-329; Geest 2001, 57-61.)

Effectiveness of a website is measured by usability which can be achieved through applying usable tools into practice. User-centered design, such as target groups, task analysis and testing, is used to understand viewer's requirements and refine designs. A unique website design attracts audience, and however, a universal usability merges principals of standardization and adaptation. (Geest 2001, 57-61.)

Web-page design starts with a framework of content and a flow chart which used to show how the navigation and links work. The main page or first page is called home page where readers begin looking at a website. Many webpages facilitate hyperlinks which allow viewers click to another page or site, so that viewers could have more options to choose what they want to view. (Duncan 2005, 327-329; Lynch & Horton 2009, 51-95.)

The most significant and complex part of a webpage design is navigation which underlines the process that people have access to a website, and find the information and move to another pages. Navigation is one important measurement of a website. Program has to be formed well to satisfy the typical viewer's pattern of information search, which proved the importance of a universal usability. (Duncan 2005, 327-329; Lynch & Horton 2009, 51-95.)

The majority of viewers favor those websites that are convenient to find information, and easily get back to home page. Figure 10 demonstrates the scope of the complexity a website can be created. (Duncan 2005, 327-329; Lynch & Horton 2009, 51-95.)

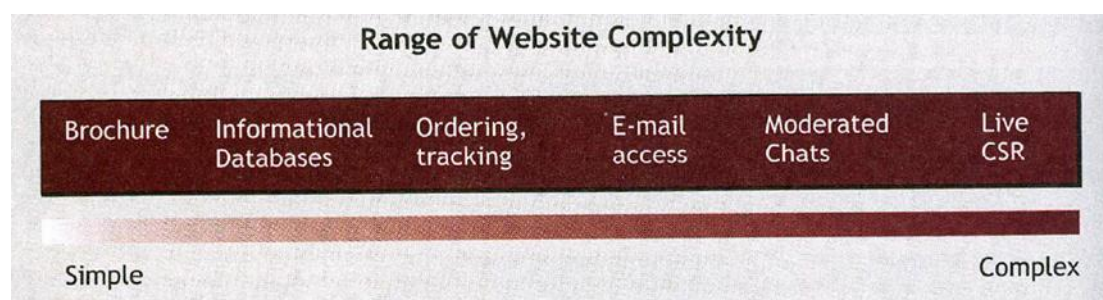


Figure 10. Range of website complexity (Duncan 2005, 328.)

The list below reveals the ground rule for establishing a website: (Duncan 2005, 327-329.)

- Make the home page work hard to establish your identity and tell what you do.

- Make the interface intuitive. People know how to use the site without any technology training; all operations should be obvious.
- Make content prominent and clear. Don't bury the content under a lot of graphics, ads, or complicated site design.
- Make navigation user-friendly and clear.
- Don't create too many levels to distract users.
- Make sure menu options are complete.
- Give users a way to return to the main menu easily.
- Use links rather than long periods of scrolling.
- Put navigation aids at both the top and the bottom of the page.
- Provide a site map on a noticeable place.
- Give contact information such as contact person's email address, telephone number, and working address.

## 8 METHODOLOGY

### 8.1 Research design

There are three common used research strategies for research project, exploratory, descriptive and explanatory studies. Exploratory approach is to figure out what is going on and to seek new visions to the problem, which is the best option to clarify a problem. Descriptive research is defined to characterize an accurate profile of persons, events or situations. It requires researchers to have a clear big picture of the phenomena before data collection. The goal of explanatory (causal) research is to find out relationship between variables. This thesis has both exploratory as well as descriptive purpose but the main focus for outcome is exploratory research. The reason for choosing exploratory approach is that it is the best way to explain and understand what exactly the problem is, and to solve it from a new angle or perspective. Descriptive research is used to profile 2CCM by examining its contents and features of e-marketing channels. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003, 96-98.)

The normal ways to accomplish exploratory research is to search literature, communicate with experts in the subject or conduct focus group interviews. In this thesis, literature information was collected through various sources, and a semi-structured interview was conducted with the owner of 2CCM. Descriptive research is flexible and broad. While it does not have particular limitation of any approaching methods, but helps narrow down the scope when the research is progressing. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003, 96-98.)

Literature sourcing and assessing have to be related to research problem and objectives. It is not easy to source theoretical information from library due to limited collection and the scope of this thesis. The main focus of this thesis is Chinese e-marketing, which makes author to turn to search information through Chinese websites and other channels, which limits sufficiency of literature assessing. However, on the other side, those obstacles help maintain diversity and variety of references. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003, 70-71.)

## 8.2 Research method

Qualitative data is referred to comprehensive description of situations, events and behaviors gathered from documents, correspondence, record and case histories. It intends to explore reasons and processes behind the decision making or problems, that is why smaller but focused samples are demanded rather than large random samples.

Quantitative data is collected, subsequently interpreted and analyzed by computer. The nature of quantitative research is to experiment hypothesis which weigh the importance of large data collection and analysis. The differences between quantitative and qualitative data can be seen in the following table. ((Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003, 378; Glenn 2010, 104; Jha 2008, 45-48.)

Table 3. Distinctions between quantitative and qualitative data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003, 378.)

Quantitative data	Qualitative data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on meanings derived from numbers</li> <li>• Collection results in numerical and standardized data</li> <li>• Analysis conducted through the use of diagrams and statistics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on meanings expressed through words</li> <li>• Collection results in non-standardized data requiring classification into categories</li> <li>• Analysis conducted through the use of conceptualization</li> </ul>

The thesis is using qualitative research due to the nature of the project approach. The primary method adopted in this thesis is semi-structured interview. In an exploratory study, semi-structured and in-depth, or non-standardized interviews are helpful to explore situations and look for new perspectives. It allows interviewer to have a list or structure of themes and questions at hand, but the order of the questions and contents can be varied depending on the flow of interview. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003, 246-248.)

The semi-structured interview is chosen for several reasons. Firstly, direct conversation makes it easier to answer questions and collect primary data, and avoids ambiguity and misunderstanding. Secondly, it is the most appropriate way to answer either complex or open-ended questions. Thirdly, interviewee could give hints or new visions to questions that might be neglected by author. The questions would send to the interviewee before the interview.

### 8.3 Population and sample

There is a need to collect and analyze data in order to answer research problem and objectives. Suitable sample techniques help reduce the amount of data needed to collect, which greatly saves resources. The term of population in that case means the full set of cases from which a sample is taken. In this thesis, the population is Chinese SMEs which used e-marketing techniques for marketing communication. It is important for the company to have experience with e-marketing communication

techniques and especially to be familiar with Chinese social media and other platforms. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003, 150-151.)

The sample is selected based on thesis purpose (non-probability sampling). This type of sample is commonly used in a situation when working with very small samples such as in case study research. Knowledge, experience and observation are used on selecting the case company to conduct semi-structure interview. 2CCM is chosen on the basis that it is a typical SME that utilized multiple e-marketing channels in communication, and has achieved a brilliant outcome. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003, 175.)

#### 8.4 Creating interview questions

The purpose of the interview is to research the effectiveness in e-marketing communication of 2CCM. The questions are formed based on the research problem, empirical objectives and theory. The research problem which is determined at the beginning is: How to improve effectiveness in e-marketing communication for Chinese SMEs? The implementation research objectives are listed as following:

1. How does 2CCM select e-marketing communication channels?
2. How does 2CCM manage message delivery?
3. What are the obstacles of improving effectiveness in e-marketing communication for 2CCM?
4. What is the future plan for 2CCM to improve effectiveness in e-marketing communication?

The interview questions are divided into four parts: introduction questions, communication selection, message delivery and future plans. First part of interview was to profile 2CCM, and second and third parts were to explore the situation of its e-marketing communication, and the last part was to look for its future blueprint. Interview questions are mixed with different types of questions, such as open questions, probing questions and specific and closed questions. The language of questions is accurate and clear to avoid ambiguity or misunderstanding. The interview questions

are firstly created in English and then were translated into Chinese by the author of this thesis. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003, 262.)

## 8.5 Data collection and analysis

In this thesis, data is collected through primary and secondary sources. Secondary data includes both raw data and published summaries, which can be classified into documentary survey-based and multiple source secondary data. It plays a vital role in data collection and analysis, as it provides useful sources to answer research question and objectives. In theoretical part, secondary data is gathered from plenty of sources, such as books, journals, articles and websites. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003, 188-194.)

Not only secondary data is collected but also primary data in this case. A semi-structured interview is conducted between the owner and the author in order to receive realistic information. The interview questions are designed and have been revised by supervisor, and then send forward to interviewee. The interview was carried out through an online video conference in July, and was recorded by the author. The interview questions can be seen in the Appendix 1.

Once interview was completed, some analytical aids, such as summaries, self-memo and a research diary, are indeed needed to analyze data. Author produced a summary of key points after interview, and summed up answers, observations and notes taken during the interview. Then, author started to process data with the help of theoretical knowledge and practical situation. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003, 386.)

## 8.6 Validity and reliability of the research

Two focuses, reliability and validity, has to be draw attention for lowering the risk of getting the answer wrong. Reliability can be measured by three questions: Will the measures yield the same results on other occasion? Will similar observations be reached by other observers? Is there transparency in how sense was made from the raw data? (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003, 100-101.)

Subject or participant error threatens the result of reliability, as participant's attitude and enthusiasm may change from day to day. For instance, workers usually maintain a high working enthusiasm on Monday morning, while it changed to another picture on Friday. Thus, the interview date was set on Wednesday. Interviewee tried to interpret answers and ensured that all answers were understood correctly without any ambiguity and misunderstanding during the interview, which overcome the threat of observer bias. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003, 100-101.)

Validity indicates whether the conclusion of the research is really what it supposed to be. In this case, interview questions were created by the author, and then sent to supervisor for approval. Author revised questions based on supervisor's valuable advice, to make sure that all questions were understood same way. This makes answers valid and valuable. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003, 100-102.)

## 9 RESEARCH FINDINGS

Pure enthusiasm devoting to fashion explains inspiration and mission of 2CCM. The founder volunteers to promote the beauty and fashion, bring all fashionable and vogueish products to fashion lovers. In general, 2CCM's primary objective is not only gaining an extraordinary turnover, but also advocating fashionable design and concept.

The owner's previous experience of running a tangible shop supports new set-up as to precisely target customers and understand customer behavior. As one of fashion lovers, the owner is able to stay close to customers and understand customers' needs. All above together with owner's keen fashion sense ascribe to the success of 2CCM.

Weibo, WeChat and Taobao website are the three particular channels that 2CCM utilized for e-marketing communication. As the owner said, different communication channels specialized in different aspects, for instance, Weibo is described as the best means for e-marketing owing to forwarding function. However, WeChat is more



convenient for communicating with customers thanks to instant message function. Taobao is the main platform used for releasing product information and online shopping, while default interface setting limits customers' experience and innovation.

According to the interview, the owner is the one who has absolute power to decide the communication channel selection. Meanwhile, there is no selection process and special requirements for selecting communication channels. Interviewee points out that communication channels were selected due to the popularity and current trends. The owner comments that Weibo is more effective in the dissemination, while WeChat is more effective in communication through experience and observation, which is why the combination of different communication channels is the most effective way.

The interviewee is familiar to the term of creative message strategies. The owner integrates 2CCM's marketing communication strategy which is bringing the fashion design concept to a marketing message. The owner has sheer authority to control the message delivery, including the content, layout of message, and sometimes discusses with one employee who is responsible for managing Weibo and WeChat.

The message delivery process is dominated and taken charge by the owner when the new arrival or the special occasion is coming, such as Valentine's Day, Single Day and Mother's Day. For instance, 2CCM used Weibo to organize several e-marketing campaigns in reward products and coupons to winners during the World Cup. Weibo is regarded as an effective channel to engage with customers. 2CCM account always release buyers' shows which bridge the gap between high class fashion and ordinary fashion lovers. 2CCM encourages fashion lovers to post own fashion mix and match photos, and share a stylish fashion sense.

In owner's opinion, content and publish timing are of significance in message delivery. New products and hot products need to edit a short description or design story. The result indicates communication effect is optimal reached of those hot and new products with description. However, the framework of each channel challenges the effectiveness in message delivery.

Generally speaking, 2CCM has achieved a satisfactory level regarding to effectiveness in e-marketing communication compared to many large fashion buyers' shops. 2CCM enjoys the advantage of bridging the gap between high-end products with customers when delivering new message. For example, describing a story of how the product is designed when delivering a message. Nonetheless, the reason why 2CCM fails to maximum achieve the effectiveness communication is lacking of influential fashion bloggers' resources and supports.

Frankly, 2CCM did not use any traditional marketing channels because none of it in favors 2CCM. Nowadays, 2CCM organized an online and offline activity which collaborated with 101 Factory for providing a real shopping experience to customers. The goal of this activity is to show credibility, which is of importance to Chinese online customers due to the fact that reliability of online store is heated doubted. Besides, 2CCM eagers to probe customer's consuming behavior and collect feedback in real practice through this offline activity.

In the future, 2CCM will continue to follow trends, and catch the most popular e-marketing communication channels to improve effectiveness. The table 4 shows status, purpose, advantages and disadvantages of different communication channels.

Table 4. Three different communication channels

Communication channels	Status	Purpose	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>2ccm Taobao</b>	Crown I	Online store	Well organized system with all necessary tools including communication, payment and service center	Prescript framework limits customers experience and innovation
<b>Weibo</b>	VIP Registered User	Advertising	Forwarding function facilitate effectively advertising and targeting	A decline of its popularity
<b>WeChat</b>	Registered Users (Two IDs)	Communication	Instant message function convenient effective communication	Limited friend numbers

### *Taobao*

2CCM Taobao website which is a personalized website operates under Taobao platform. As described in the previous chapter, Taobao is the most welcomed online shopping websites which facilitate individuals and organizations to set up online stores by providing a systematic platform and auxiliary supports.

Homepage of 2CCM is divided into three parts, visual display, main product collection and category and service center. Visuals display area shows different pictures including famous designer's portrait, popular brand image and latest products. Product collection places recommended products information from clothes, shoes to accessories, including image, price and product profile. The left side of the homepage is the category list and service center. 2CCM places shop dynamics to show the latest information and credit rating interfaces to prove credibility.

When customers click to all products or a certain item, the interface exhibits the product picture, description, price and sold items and comments. A single item's interface shows the order requirements and information, together with detailed product profile which made by 2CCM employees. 2CCM details the purchasing notes, size measurement and lists Weibo advertising information as well as no processed product images, while it sometimes attaches photos directly from other websites and other sources. Besides, 2CCM describes stories for special products or designers, and publishes buyers' show, which is regarded as an effective communication strategy.

Well-designed framework helps entrepreneur, easily and smoothly start up online store, however, it restricts the owner's innovation and customers' experience. In addition, it requires specialized personnel to design and maintain a website including information editor, and photo editor, patient customer service representatives, which consumes plenty of resources. For the fashion industry, timing is extremely of importance. No one would be willing to buy an outdated item, or even a few days delay is unacceptable. However, the real practice is it takes at least one day to release all necessary information on the website when the new arrival is coming. A personalized website can be seen as a plus for e-marketing communication only if it organized professionally and systematically; otherwise, it leaves a bad image of inferior products on customers.

## Weibo



Figure 11. Interface of 2CCM Weibo Account (Website of Weibo 2014.)

Figure 11 displays the appearance of 2CCM Weibo account. It has gathered 69225 followers which are potential and regular customers. Owner has released more than a thousand tweets within three years. The top tweet describes the entire brands that 2CCM covers and personalized website address and WeChat account. Majority of tweets is released to introduce product information, and receive customers' feedback and comments. However, it sometimes involves current news and personal comments at the very beginning stage of operation. Normally the pictures are attached under each tweet together with the message or Taobao website link.

Weibo is seen as the most effective channel for advertising. There is one tweet which forwards more than 17000 times and comments over 4573 times. Not all tweets have aroused such attention. Primarily, a common tweet could only transmit nearly five times and very few people comments on tweets. Nonetheless, it cannot be regarded as evidence that Weibo fails to reach effectiveness in e-marketing communication.

Conversely, taking NPC as an example, it is a Chinese fashion brand created by two famous Chinese superstars Mr. Li and Mr. Pan. The NPC official Weibo account has over 232 thousand followers, however, solely around ten persons would leave com-

ments or forward to others. The number of “likes” received less than a hundred times. Thus the fact that 2CCM successfully attracts attention through Weibo channels can be seen.

However, Weibo does not fulfill the need of instant communication, which obstacles the effectiveness in e-marketing communication. Buyers cannot initiate conversation and response immediately, which is the barrier in improving effectiveness in e-marketing communication. Customers would turn to other sellers if he or she cannot get instant information, or would start to complain to other potential customers if his or her requirements fail to be fulfilled.

### *WeChat*

Today, WeChat emerged as the most popular message app. User is no longer interesting in other social media and most of users switch to WeChat App. There is no doubt that WeChat is an effective communication app as it facilitates immediate communication. At the same time, the function of friend circle allows users to publish message without any character limits, and visuals and links. It protects the privacy since the content of conversation is solely transparent between friends rather than strangers.

2CCM has two WeChat accounts due to the restriction of limited number of friends. Consumers can send WeChat message or voice message to inquiry the products information, delivery or payment methods and so forth, and will get response immediately. The function of WeChat App enables 2CCM to effectively communicate with customers.

### O2O

Online to offline activity is another way to manage effective e-marketing communication in practice. 101 Factory is a distinctive tangible fashion store acquired a high reputation as a leading fashion shop around Hubei province. This collaboration with 101 Factory runs once a year in order to increases the impact of 2CCM.

The outcome confirms effectiveness in e-marketing communication improved, so as to more customers are starting to be aware of 2CCM brand, and show interests in it.

By organizing this cooperation, employees observe customers' shopping experience and behavior, communicate with consumers so that they understand what customers want rather than what employers want to offer. Meanwhile, it is of significance to build a mutual trust between sellers and buyers especially in a virtual environment. One of the important purposes of this activity is to demonstrate credibility of 2ccm Taobao by building a display room and exhibiting products.

In conclusion, 2CCM uses three different communication channels for effective e-marketing communication. The combination of Taobao, Weibo and WeChat relatively offsets the individual drawbacks and magnifies merits. However, in practice, 2CCM lacks specialization in a certain channel. In other words, 2CCM fails to allocate resources in hand wisely. On the other hand, 2CCM has attracted enough attentions and followers. Overall, 2CCM manages the e-marketing communication effectively compare to competitors.

## 10SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this thesis was to research on improving effectiveness in e-marketing communication for Chinese SMEs. It includes analysis of current Chinese e-marketing situation and communication channels, together with the study of message delivery. Ultimately, comprehensive and valuable recommendations will be given based on theoretical research and 2CCM's current circumstance. The case company, 2CCM is an online store for selling fashionable and stylish high-end products, and it targets vigorous fashion lovers who have enough buying power and enthusiasm.

For better capturing the theme, this thesis well defined purpose and problems, outlined conceptual framework and set boundaries and limitations at the beginning. This thesis would benefit not only 2CCM and author, but also those SMEs that looking for solution to improve the effectiveness in e-marketing communication. Existing and potential shareholders motive author avidly research and responsibly draw a conclusion.

The main problem of this thesis was how to increase effectiveness in e-marketing communication. Then research objectives were divided into theoretical and practical parts for analyzing and answering in detail. Conceptual framework built based on the main research problems and research objectives, and outlined the basic structure of this thesis. E-marketing communication channels and message delivery were two primary aspects. Ultimate goal was to satisfy customers and benefit to case company, 2CCM. However, the concept of e-marketing was rather broad, so then it narrowed down to e-marketing communication and particularly focused on Chinese marketing. Therefore, all communication channels and message delivery strategies mentioned in this thesis have to be aligned with Chinese culture and market situation.

The research used both exploratory as well as a descriptive strategy, but the main focus was exploratory research. Research method was qualitative and used a semi-structured interview. The interview was carried out between the author and the founder of 2CCM for exploring the situation of how 2CCM managed its e-marketing communication.

The interview questions were designed based on the main research problem and research objectives. Questions in the interview were straightforward with clear and understandable language avoiding ambiguity and misunderstanding. Different types of questions mixed ensured reliability and validity of research data.

The research data was collected through primary and secondary sources. Analysis of the collected data was carried out by summing up the key points in interview and linking to the theory. Interview was conducted on Wednesday to avoid the subject error threats. All questions were well explained during the interview to avoid the threat of observer bias. The validity of research was ensured through the pre-testing. The interview questions were first made by the author and then sent to supervisor to revise it, finally it forwarded to the interviewee to make sure all questions were clear and understandable. It was essential so as to determine if the questions were needed for achieving research objectives, and to assess if questions were relevant to the topic of this thesis.

Internet as a tool makes communication convenient, eliminates the barriers of geography and time zone, and improves the effective and efficient message exchange. E-marketing is a term at the heart of e-business, which stresses to utilize digital media channels to promote, and advertise. The process of e-marketing occurs, does not require business transaction or monetary transaction. E-marketing has changed dramatically with the advent of Internet technology.

Internet penetration rate and the number of Chinese net citizens have increased significantly during recent years. With the advent of numerous e-business enterprises, online shopping model emerges as a new trend for Chinese consumers. Statistics prove that there is a growing trend and will continue rising tendency of the overall amount of online transaction. However, in rural areas, Internet adoption rate is still very low. On the other hand, it alludes to the great potential of Chinese e-marketing.

A research conducted by Gilmore et al. indicated that e-marketing was still in its infancy for SMEs as several factors obstacle the process of development. The research pointed out that lacking of technology professionals relatively high cost of Internet and website maintenance and irrationally resource allocation restricted entrepreneur's plan to start up e-marketing. Nevertheless, the research revealed that entrepreneurs optimistically believe that e-marketing is of importance in today's business.

Social media encompasses social networking sites, blog and micro-blog, and video sharing sites, is a new technology brings a non-linear concept that allows a group of people share information openly and freely. Various prominent social media channels were blocked in China, but it stimulated bloom of Chinese social media industry.

Social network site motives a group of people share interrelationship and communities at a virtual place. RenRen, Kainxin001, Qzone and 51.com are four dominating sites in China. RenRen focuses on inside campus students, but then it expands to outside campus. It facilitates a fan page function allows enterprises to advertise and communicate. Moreover, most important is this function make convenient to entrepreneur to filter target groups by categories. Having a strong connection to business users makes Renren superior to other three channels.



Weibo is one of the most popular broadcast mediums in China. Sina and Tencent Weibo are the two mostly welcomed channels. WeChat is a trendy message app which is developed to facilitate effective communication and message sharing. Weibo and WeChat focus on different aspects regards to e-marketing communication, the former stresses on advertising and targeting but the latter is aiming at effective communication. Sina Weibo and WeChat have a similar strategy targeting to white-collar workers and creating convenience to business communication.

Youku and Sohu are two excellent video-sharing sites, the former specializes in making videos individually and simplifying process of uploading and sharing self-made videos, and Sohu emphasizes on sourcing high-definition TV shows for viewers. Therefore, it appropriately reasons Youku is a better choice for SMEs in communication channel selection.

Taobao is one of the biggest online shopping websites in China. It not only offers an online shopping place, but also encourages small and medium sized entrepreneur to set up online stores. Free platform with well-organized system attracts million entrepreneurs to start an online business including the case company. There is no other channel have such influential impact competing with Taobao platform so far.

A successful marketing communication strategy has to fulfill the principal of ROI, relevant, original and impact. It is significant to bring up a brand message to audiences in a creative and persuasive way. A superb marketing communication strategy should arouse customers' rational and emotional thinking, and strike a chord. Steps of creating a message strategy start by determining the communication objectives, then finding customer insight, and eventually selecting an applicable selling strategy. Message execution requires keeping message storytelling, tone and style, copywriting, art direction and consistency in mind when delivering the message. There is no standard principle to be applied, but the message has to conform to the content, format and culture.

Website design is required to adapt to business strategy and structure, and target for right groups as well. Technology specializes are indeed needed for website design and maintain. Too complex or too simple website may lead to a failure of e-

marketing communication. It annoys customers if the navigation is ambiguous and unclear. However, if the framework of a website is too simple, then customers might discredit the professional competence. Hence, it is crucial to follow the ground rule when establishing a website.

2CCM benefited from Taobao platform, Weibo and WeChat, and would continue to use those three channels if they are still popular and attractive, otherwise, 2CCM would switch to other prominent channels. Taobao platform is front battle field for 2CCM, and Weibo is the place for arousing attentions, and WeChat is the one for effectively communication. There is no channel selection process and no special principle of selection. One basic rule is to follow the trend when selecting channels. The founder has utter authority to make decisions of channel selection.

Message delivery is controlled by the founder as well, but one employee assists message execution when it needs. Publish timing and content are of great significance as it affects the effectiveness of communication especially in the fashion industry. A brand storytelling or a description of product really helps improve effectiveness of e-marketing communication in practice.

To sum up, 2CCM has achieved a satisfactory level in terms of effectiveness of e-marketing communication as a SME. However, lacking of influential fashion blogger's support and technology professions' assistance, result in failure of maximizing effectiveness in e-marketing communication. Moreover, 2CCM utilizes different channels to compromise the drawback of each channel, but it does not have a main focus. An applicable recommendation will be given in the following chapter to encounter the problems for the sake of improving effectiveness in e-marketing communication.

## 11 RECOMMENDATIONS

After researching and analyzing effectiveness in e-marketing communication of 2CCM, it was discovered that 2CCM has achieved at a satisfactory level as it aroused

enough attention and built renown while it has not reached at an excellent level. This recommendation will give little valuable and practical guidance for 2CCM to improve effectiveness in e-marketing communication. Despite the fact that the owner of 2CCM already had a whole picture of three different channels and other channels, it is practical to distribute a systematic summary and conclusion to 2CCM.

#### *Communication channel selection*

Research findings revealed that 2CCM did not have a particular channel selection process but rather would like to follow trends. 2CCM insisted that it is impossible to adhere to one channel forever as new technology develops so fast. Target customers are characteristic of vigorous and new trend followers, which explain why 2CCM cannot stick to only one channel and put all resources to develop it.

However, in theory, it cannot neglect the importance of channel selection process. Marketers should research on different types of channels, and probe both advantages and drawbacks of each channel. Since traditional marketing channels cannot help 2CCM increase its effectiveness in communication, turn to social media channels is an unchangeable approach. Selecting one or more than one appropriate e-marketing communication channel(s) among millions of channels is not an easy task which requires mass research and practice.

It is highly recommended to utilize Weibo, WeChat, RenRen and Taobao platform as those four channels are relatively popular and helpful in e-marketing communication. Considering the limited resources of 2CCM, it cannot afford to maintain four different channels at the same time, so it is reasonable to abandon RenRen. However, it is advisable to put weight on Weibo, WeChat and Taobao based on its characters and effect.

Taobao platform means a lot to 2CCM since it is the main channel to market and communicate with consumers; hence, it is considerable to allocate resources on constructing, renovating and maintaining Taobao platform. Other two supportive channels, Weibo and WeChat, the former one focuses on the marketing side and the other one emphasizes on communication. Thus, suggestion is to summon up technology

experts to monitor Weibo account especially when a new message is about to release. Additionally, a verified account increases the credibility, so it is practicable to register a verified user account. As for WeChat, the advice is to equip experienced customer service representatives to answer customer's problems since it is one of the main channels for communication.

Meanwhile, lacking of influential fashion blogger's support challenges effectiveness in e-marketing communication quoted from founder of 2CCM. The intelligent solution for that is to create a blog so that it can build a reputation and impact. The blog does not have limitation on number of characters and photos, so it is an effective channel to introduce the product information in detail, such as story of designers, model photos and how to match those clothes with accessories.

In addition, fashion online community is also an ideal channel to make the e-marketing communication effective as it gathers enough fashion lovers who are actually potential customers. Hupu and Douban are the two recommended online communities as those two have an absolute impact compare to other communities. Hupu is the one mostly for sports lovers, which fit to 2CCM business strategy as limited edition sport products are one of the major products of 2CCM. Douban community has unimaginable influence of vigorous and young people who are 2CCM potential target customers, which why Douban is suggested.

### *Message Delivery*

In retrospect, interviewee pointed out that the concept of creative message strategies has somehow integrated into e-marketing communication strategy, while 2CCM did not have a clear outward strategy. The process of creating message strategies has to follow the steps mentioned in previous theory, and the most important is to fit company's strategy and structure no matter what kind of communication objectives, selling strategy is set. Normally, creative message strategies for 2CCM has to be applied to fashion principle, which agreed by the founder.

2CCM did pay attention to how the message is executed in terms of content, format and tone. Whereas, it is advisable to create unique and distinct posts to support message delivery as visuals draws much attention than sole text. Moreover, the message

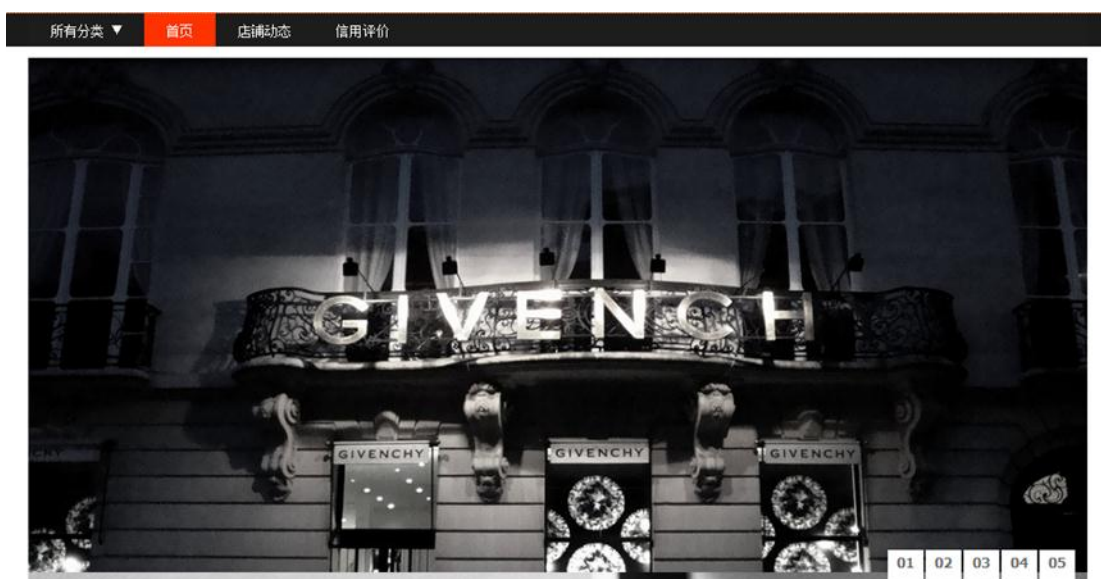
released through Taobao platform should be accurate and formal as this is an official place for message delivery which differs from other support channels. The language and tone of the message can be flexible and informal in Weibo and WeChat channels, for instance, an appropriate humor and slang can be used to have a positive effect.

When it comes to website design, 2CCM should draw attention on this part for improvement. 2CCM website does not look professional and creative as it should be which challenges the effectiveness in e-marketing communication. Primarily, 2CCM should consider employing workers who are experts in Internet technology or at least have previous experience of Internet technology industry. The owner cannot be able to monitor everything from marketing, communication to website maintenance; hence, it is vital to assign right employees at the right positions. If the team of 2CCM is not able to produce a professional website, it is considerable to outsource to those specialized Internet technology teams.

Detailed suggestions, as regard to Taobao platform, Weibo and WeChat, will be exemplified in the following parts.

### *Taobao platform*

Taking NPC Taobao online store as an example, even though NPC has more resources and connections than 2CCM, it is worthwhile to compare and learn from NPC.



Picture 1. Partial interface of 2CCM Website (Website of 2CCM Taobao 2014.)



Picture 2. Partial interface of NPC Taobao Website (Website of NPC Taobao 2014.)

Picture 1 above is the partial appearance of 2CCM website, and it looks rather simple and unorganized. On contrast, the NPC Taobao website formed professionally and efficiently which greatly increase the effectiveness in e-marketing communication. When it comes to see closer, website of the NPC emphatically highlight the logo and name of NPC, categorize the different parts such as homepage, new arrival, summer and spring series and discount and sales districts. The photo in the central displays the new products and specifies the date when the product is coming and attaches the description of new products. This vividly explained how the words and text work effectively.

When looking back to 2CCM website, it is worthy to view how NPC manages website design and e-marketing communication effectively and efficiently via Taobao platform. Firstly, the logo, slogan and name of 2CCM should place in an obvious place; otherwise, it cannot leave an impression to consumers. Secondly, 2CCM should create a new series high definition photos, and replace the existed one as it does not look professional. Even though photos can catch attention quickly, the effectiveness of e-marketing communication cannot achieve without text support. Additionally, those pictures are not original, so that it might be involved in a copyright infringement issue. Thirdly, the framework of the website is rather too simple, thus,

2CCM website should design more than one layer such as homepage, new arrivals and sales.

Each single product page site, 2CCM website creates purchasing information, a short brand and designer introduction, size information and item show, and service notes. 2CCM should make a detailed size information list including the model size, and package and drop display. At the same time, 2CCM should edit own brand introduction together with the designer and product description. The most prime element is the quality of pictures as low quality photos result in a decrease of effectiveness. 2CCM should edit a logo or slogan on each photo to protect its copyright.

Considering Taobao platform is the front battle field of 2CCM, it is of importance to allocate all supportive resources on it and run it effectively and efficiently.

### *Weibo*



Picture 3. Effective tweet on Weibo (Website of Weibo 2014.)



Picture 4. Ineffective tweet on Weibo (Website of Weibo 2014.)

Those two pictures revealed the distinction of two tweets, obviously that the first tweet is more effective than the second one according to received data. Effective tweet contained product name, available sizes, price and a short comment about this product. However, the ineffective one had only name, size and price of the product, which highlighted the importance of description of products and personal comments. As for the tone, the former one used a soft tone and attempted to add slangs while the second one used a straightforward way to deliver the message which might sound serious to target customers.

Therefore, owner of 2CCM should take the content and tone of the message into consideration. For example, the content of a message should include all necessary information and should be clear and easy to understand. Meanwhile, it is advisable to appropriately use the slangs and to increase a humor sense in a message. The tone of the message should not be too straightforward, otherwise it makes customers uncomfortable. Moreover, owner of 2CCM can consider posting some posts on guiding customers how to match apparels and accessories, or what will be the new trend for next season.

### *WeChat*

The purpose of utilizing WeChat is to make communication more effective since it facilitates the instance message function. Thus, for those who hold the WeChat account, should reply the inquiry from customers as soon as possible without any delay.



The working hours should be visible in the profile description. In addition, the profile picture and name should relate to 2CCM.

WeChat system equips function of advertising, for instance, the friend moments function allows user to share pictures and text same as Weibo. It is recommended to upload product, brand information to WeChat together with Weibo. Once a channel is adopted, it is bright to make full use of it, and otherwise, it is a waste of resource.

### *Valentine's Day*

Effectiveness of e-marketing communication stresses on two elements, effective communication channels and effective message delivery. A success message should catch viewer's eyes and then iron released a message to consumer's mind. Content and releasing time is very critical as owner mentioned in the interview, thus, a special occasion and visual supports can help improve effectiveness in e-marketing communication.

Chinese Valentine's Day was on the third of August 2014, which was a perfect timing to for promotion. This time, the author designed two visual posts of Chinese Valentine's Day theme to service the message delivery. Chinese Valentine's Day is a special day for couples and marketers, as many couples will purchase decent presents for their beloved one so that it is said that an excellent opportunity to start communication campaign for entrepreneurs.

Before organizing this e-marketing communication campaign, 2CCM team and the author initially agreed on the objectives of this campaign. According to the basic three steps of determining IMC message strategy, defining a communication strategy is the beginning step. In this case, a cognitive path was set for building brand awareness and creating purchasing opportunity. This strategy adopted considering the fact that 2CCM is a relatively small company and needs to build own brand awareness to show credibility and mark impact.

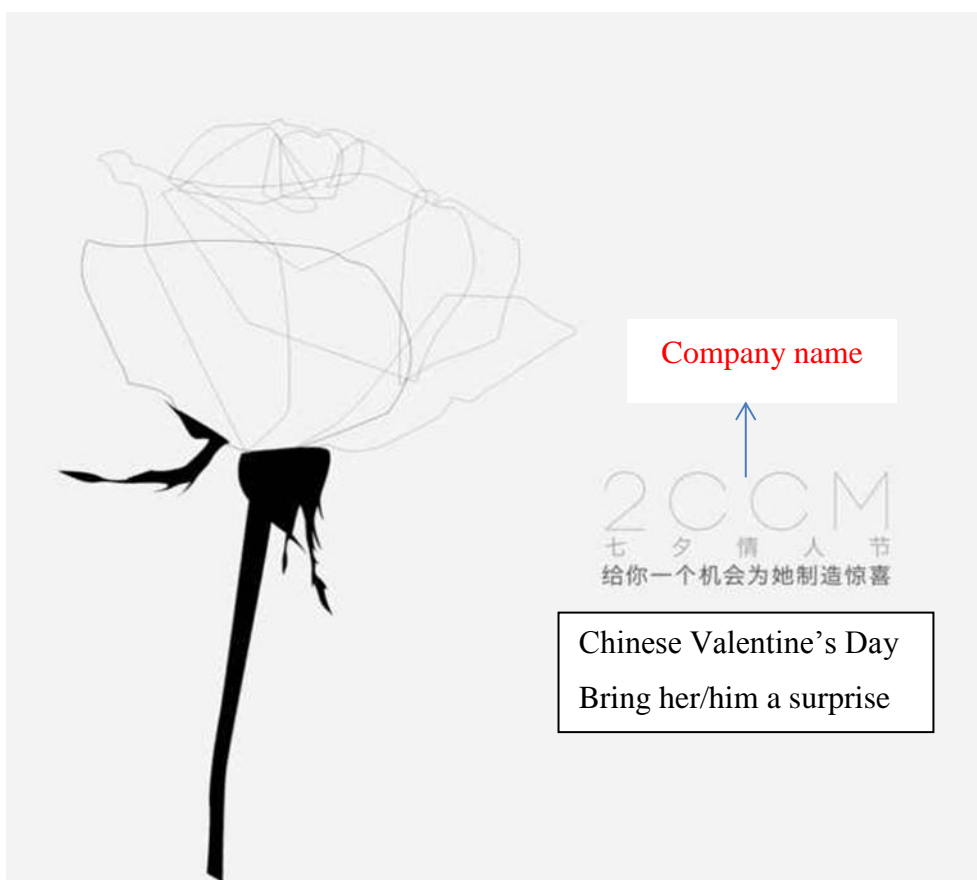
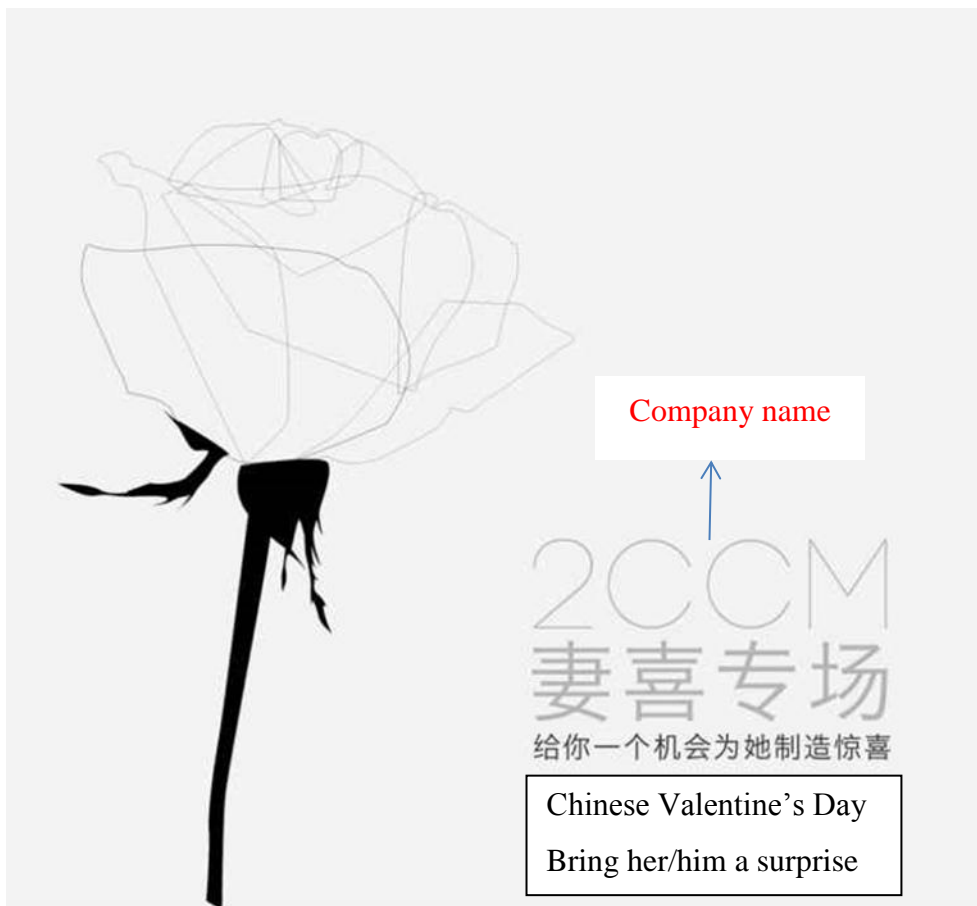
As for the customer's insight, 2CCM and the author researched on the customer's behavior and preference by analyzing customer data and the observation. The result

found out that most of the fashion lovers appreciate elegance and unique appearance. Thus, the author took it into consideration when designing theme posts.

The last step is to select a selling strategy, and for 2CCM, a unique selling proposition adopted due to the fact that most of 2CCM's products are high fashion and limited items which are distinctive to those ordinary ones. Therefore, 2CCM decided to emphasize the features of the products in order to highlight the brand positioning.

Black and white background theme was designed to show elegance and high fashion sense, which meets the positioning of 2CCM. In retrospect, theory suggested that words and pictures have to work synergistically so as to improve effectiveness. The left side of a post is a rose which links to the Valentine's Day theme, and the right side is case company's name and a text encourages bringing him or her an unprecedented surprise on Chinese Valentine's Day.

The author was responsible for the message delivery in this e-marketing campaign. The purpose of creating two theme posts is to improve effectiveness in e-marketing communication. Meanwhile, this e-marketing campaign practice applied theoretical knowledge into real business and successfully gave answer to the research problem. The author firstly talked with the owner of 2CCM, and understood the requirements and expectation, and then, the author started to come up with the concept and layout of posts. This was a practice to combine the research knowledge with real business circumstance, in order to satisfy shareholder's demand. Luckily, the owner highly appreciated this idea and splendid work.



Picture 5. Chinese Valentine's Day theme posts of 2CCM

Eventually, 2CCM and the author chose two channels which are Weibo and Taobao platforms to release information. However, the channel of WeChat was abandoned this time as it does not have an influential power in advertising and marketing. As usual, WeChat acted as a supportive tool for making convenient for communication.

The author and the owner of 2CCM created a twitter to introduce the Chinese Valentine's Day activity and recommended product information. The two theme posts were attached under the text description to capture viewer's attention.

Since maintaining consistency is crucial as well, the visuals on 2CCM website were recommended to be replaced by a new theme of Chinese Valentine's Day. Additionally, the information about this e-marketing campaign was also available on Taobao website. The recommended new products were listed on the top of the website with detailed description.

## 12FINAL WORDS

I started writing this thesis since February in 2014 and I spent almost six months on accomplishing thesis. I am really satisfied for selecting the topic of this thesis and finding a case company smoothly at the beginning. It was such a privilege for me to be able to involve in a case company, 2CCM, that later be given an opportunity to conduct my thesis on the subject of e-marketing communication for Chinese SMEs.

I kept a high motivation throughout the thesis writing process as it was interesting and practical for me and 2CCM. Even though I failed to stay my preliminary schedule for my thesis due to personal reasons, I still tried my best to keep up with it. My Finnish language exam firstly made the process of writing my thesis challenging but after that, I fully concentrated on accomplishing my thesis. Meanwhile, summer break made the process of collecting suitable materials difficult, so I turned to find online resources and managed to overcome this difficulty.

I am really content that I was able to collect relevant material for the theoretical part of my thesis. For that I want to give my sincere gratitude to the librarian for helping me find valuable resources for my thesis. Considering the focus of this thesis, I could not rely on finding valuable from the library so as to I had to search plenty of information through Chinese media channels.

During the course of writing thesis, I was highly stimulated to fulfill it over the past six months with the aid of my supervisor Tapio Pirkanaho. His faithfully patience and valuable guidance directed me to overcome difficulties and confusion throughout the whole process of writing my thesis. I cannot accomplish such kind of tremendous work without his support. Meanwhile, I would like thanks to my opponent for her valuable feedback and comments.

In brief, this thesis has taught me a lot about theory of e-marketing communication, and how to improve effectiveness in practice especially for Chinese SMEs.

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## APPENDIX 1

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IN ENGLISH:

1. What inspire you start to run 2CCM?
2. When do you start to run 2CCM?
3. How do you start to run 2CCM?
4. What are the mission and vision of 2CCM?
5. What are the opportunities and difficulties when running 2CCM?
6. Does 2CCM have any logos, slogans or brochures?
7. Who are your target customers? Why do you select these customers as target customers? What are the typical features of this type of customers?
8. What kind of channels does 2CCM use in e-marketing communication? Why?
9. Does 2CCM use any traditional channels in marketing communication? Why?
10. In your opinion, which communication channels is the most effective one? Why?
11. Can you briefly describe the processes of channels selection of 2CCM?
12. Does your 2CCM team have any criteria for e-marketing communication channels selection? What are those criteria?
13. Who is responsible for communication channels selection? Who has authority to make decision?
14. What challenges 2CCM most when selecting e-marketing communication channels?
15. Do you familiar with the term of creative message strategies? Does 2CCM have any creative message strategies? (Bringing up brand message to a target audience in an innovative and persuasive way)
16. Can you briefly describe the processes of message delivery of 2CCM?
17. Does 2CCM have any principals for message delivery? For instance, the content of message has to be interesting and attractive. Or each message has to attach some related photos.
18. Who is responsible for message delivery? Do you involve in this activity? Is it an open discussion with all staffs?
19. What challenges 2CCM most when delivering message to customers?
20. In your opinion, which factors matter most in message delivery? (Contents, layout, design...)

21. Does 2CCM use any methods to measure the effectiveness of e-marketing communication?
22. Considering personalized website is your primary communication platform, does 2CCM have specialized people to maintain and develop it?
23. Which level do you think 2CCM has achieved in terms of effectiveness of e-marketing communication?
24. In your opinion, compare to your competitors what are competitive advantages of 2CCM regards to effectiveness of e-marketing communication?
25. In your opinion, compare to your competitors what are drawbacks of 2CCM regards to effectiveness of e-marketing communication?
26. What kind of plans do you have for your future e-marketing communication development?
27. Could you talk about cooperation with 101 Factory? What is this activity about?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IN CHINESE:

1. 什么因素激发你去经营 2CCM 淘宝网店?
2. 你什么时候开始经营 2CCM 淘宝网店的?
3. 你是怎么开始经营 2CCM 淘宝网店的?
4. 2CCM 淘宝网店有什么使命和愿景吗?
5. 你认为在经营 2CCM 淘宝网店时有哪些机会和挑战?
6. 2ccm 淘宝网店有没有任何标志, 标语和宣传手册?
7. 哪些是 2CCM 淘宝网店的主要顾客?你为什么选择这群消费者为主要顾客?这组消费者有哪些特点?
8. 现在 2CCM 淘宝网店主要选择哪些营销传播渠道?为什么?
9. 2CCM 淘宝网店采取了任何传统营销传播渠道吗?为什么?
10. 在你看来,哪种营销传播渠道对于 2CCM 淘宝网店来说最有效?为什么?
11. 你能简单描述下 2CCM 淘宝网店对于营销传播渠道选择的过程吗?
12. 对于营销传播渠道的选择, 2CCM 淘宝网店有任何的标准吗?这些标准是什么?
13. 在你的团队里,谁主要负责营销传播渠道的选择?谁有权利来决定?
14. 哪些因素为营销传播渠道选择过程增加了挑战?
15. 你对于创意策略(creative message strategies)这个术语熟悉吗? 2ccm 淘宝网店有任何的创意策略吗?
16. 你能简单描述下 2CCM 淘宝网店信息发布的过程吗?
17. 对于信息的发布, 2CCM 淘宝网店有任何标准或者规定吗?比如,发布的信息要有趣,吸引人.或者发布信息时需要配上相关图片.
18. 谁主要负责信息发布?你参与这部分吗?
19. 哪些因素为信息发布过程增加了挑战?
20. 在你看来,哪些因素对于信息发布最为重要? 内容?设计?布局?...
21. 2CCM 淘宝网店用什么方法去检测营销传播的有效性?
22. 考虑到淘宝网页是主要的营销平台, 2CCM 淘宝网店有专人进行维护吗?
23. 就营销传播的有效性而言,你个人认为 2CCM 淘宝网店到达了哪个阶段?

24. 在你看来,相比于其他竞争者,2CCM 淘宝网店在营销传播上有哪些优势?
25. 在你看来,相比于其他竞争者,2CCM 淘宝网店在营销传播上有哪些劣势?
26. 对于电子营销传播,你对 2CCM 淘宝网店未来有什么计划吗?
27. 你能聊一聊 2CCM 淘宝网店和 101 Factory 合作的活动的吗?