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# DIGITAL MARKETING OF NINJAMAILS

Research question:

“What are the ways to increase the number of Ninjamails users among recent graduates  
by using digital marketing tools?”



Bachelor's thesis

International Business

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ABSTRACT

The following thesis was conducted for Ninja Stars startup company, based in Madrid, Spain. Ninja mails offers an all new professional online service, which allows finding the email address of any person from any company by only knowing the name of the desired recipient and the recipient's company.

In the thesis the author examined the digital marketing concepts in terms of startup development and the improvement of the external company's image for a particular target group of recent university graduates. The writer tried to find the effective digital marketing techniques and practices to increase the number of users of the commissioning company by studying related theory and conducting research by a survey and interview. The outcomes of the work represented are found the recommendations part of the thesis.

In the research process the author of the thesis explored different digital marketing techniques which would have potential to develop and adopt in business operations of the case company. Social media and online consumer engagement, strategic partnership, affiliate marketing and search engine optimization are the main parts of the theory of the thesis. Towards the end of the paper, the writer has incorporated the survey for the recent graduates and an interview with the founders of Ninja Stars company to have a complete picture of the perception about case company's service and be able to formulate the most effective digital marketing campaign.

As a result, the following recommendations were formulated for the case company:

- Development of marketing channels via affiliate marketing and strategic partnership.
- Adopting new practices and methods in the company's business operations such as e-mail marketing and social media consumer engagement.
- Conducting search engine optimization and Google AdWords campaign.
- Special strategy for the recent university graduates.

**Keywords** digital marketing, Ninjamails, business, e-mail marketing.  
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## CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION .....	1
2	THEORY .....	2
2.1	Implementation and effectiveness of e-mail marketing .....	3
2.2	Social Media Techniques and Online Consumer Engagement Strategy .....	7
2.3	Online Public Relations and Reputation management .....	12
2.4	Affiliate Marketing and Strategic Partnerships .....	15
2.5	Search Engine Optimization Process.....	17
3	RESEARCH.....	19
3.1	Current Situation Internal Analysis .....	19
3.2	Development Assessment of Ninja Stars.....	21
3.3	SWOT Analysis of NinjaMails .....	22
3.3.1	Strengths .....	22
3.3.2	Weaknesses .....	23
3.3.3	Opportunities.....	24
3.3.4	Threats.....	25
3.4	Methods of Research.....	25
3.4.1	Interviews Analysis.....	26
3.4.2	Survey Discussion.....	28
3.5	NinjaMails Competition Analysis.....	30
4	RECOMMEDATIONS.....	34
4.1	New practices and Methods for Future Implementation .....	34
4.2	Development Strategy for Marketing Channels .....	35
4.3	Search Engine Optimization Campaign .....	37
4.4	Digital Marketing Strategy for Recent Graduates .....	38
5	CONCLUSION.....	41
	SOURCES .....	43



## 1 INTRODUCTION

As a case company for this bachelor thesis, its author has chosen Ninja Stars S.I. startup company, which was established in Madrid, Spain in February 2015 by three professionals with business, technology and law backgrounds. Ninjamails is a professional online service, which allows its users to get in contact with any person of any organization, only by knowing the name of the desired recipient and the recipient's company, without knowing any additional contact information. The system of the service automatically finds the e-mail data, and contacts a client with the recipient's professional e-mail box. The author of this paper found the idea of the company interesting and since the author is currently doing her internship at Ninjamails in the marketing team, it is much easy be able to understand the key concepts of the digital marketing from within in the case of this company. As it was previously mentioned, Ninja Stars S.I, is a startup company, so they still do not have an established marketing strategy and that is why the main purpose of the thesis is to develop a digital marketing strategy for the company to attract more users. Currently the company operates only in Spain, but its plan for the nearest future is to expand Ninjamails business in other Spanish-speaking and English-speaking countries, starting with Chile.

The team of NinjaMails consists of people from different countries, what makes the spirit inside the company truly international and creative. There are workers and interns from Spain, the US, Russia, Italy, China, Germany and France in the company. Each of them belongs to a particular team depending on their education and experience. Ninjamails has big ambitions towards international success, that is why it was crucial to internationalize the company from inside by non-Spanish members as team members. Ninjamails is a young company, so there was a great variety of topics to choose for the thesis, but at this stage of business development digital marketing plays one of the most important roles to make the service of startup visible for potential customers.

The research question of the thesis is: "What are the ways to increase the number of Ninjamails users among recent graduates by using digital marketing tools?" Recent university graduates, who are going to look for their first working experience, are potential target group of the Ninja mails service, that is why it was decided to focus on them during the research of the thesis.

The research objectives for the thesis are, firstly, to study digital marketing theory to find out the best methods and techniques to create a unique and beneficial digital marketing strategy to increase the number of Ninja Stars S.I. users among recent university graduates, secondly, to analyze current situation of the company by carrying out a precise analysis of its internal and external current situation, thirdly, to evaluate the main problems and challenges of the company towards its objectives, utilizing the information of the past and present experiences of the company and its overall data, collected by interview with the CEO of the company and survey for recent university graduates. The last objective of this paper is sharing valuable recommendations for Ninjamails and answering the research question in details.

The methods the thesis writer uses are interview and survey, which allow to collect enough data to make the recommendation for the company's development.

## 2 THEORY

The theoretical part, which follows below, serves as a basis for the practical part of this paper and provides insights into the main areas of interest of the case company. Since the research question of the thesis is "What are the ways to increase the number of Ninjamails users among recent graduates by using digital marketing tools?", the main concepts of Digital Marketing theory were examined by the author of the thesis in this chapter of the paper. Ninja Stars is a startup company and the digital marketing strategy is in the process of development at the moment, that is why the theory part of the paper covers digital marketing subtopics such as E-mail marketing, Social Media and Consumer engagement, Online Public Relations and Reputation Management, Affiliate marketing and Strategic Partnership. E-mail marketing and Social media are crucial tools to reach out potential customers among young people, since this target group are very active Internet users. Online PR and Reputation management allow to create an attractive image online and deliver the accurate message to new customers. Analyzing all above-mentioned theory is essential to conduct the research and recommendations parts of the thesis.

### 2.1 Implementation and effectiveness of e-mail marketing

E-mail marketing is known to be one of the most effective digital marketing approaches. It makes the process of communication with the customers on a personal level much easier by means of universal Internet space. It is very important to create an effective e-mail marketing strategy to avoid the loss of credibility of their customers by production of spam letters which are most likely to never be opened by receivers due to association of irrelevant or unsolicited messages. It is possible to avoid this by creating interesting content and making your offer of value for the customer. In general, e-mail marketing is quite simple and savvy to implement to maintain consumer engagement, increase the credibility to the business and to improve the brand, but at the same time the most significant difficulty of using this mechanism is creating original and valuable content that would attract customers' attention. (Dodson, 2016).

There are several e-mail marketing tools, which help to create an effective e-mail marketing strategy. For instance, testing tool can detect if the message is going to pass the main spam filters. Tracking tools show the statistics of opened or ignored messages. Personalization tools allow to modify and categorize the content of a message for various target groups. It is mainly about providing users with valuable content, high performance and quick feedback systems, using from users' profile information, search, contextual and social data resources. Being attentive to the customer's preferences is essential to create personalized e-mail content. There are several ways how a marketer can improve the quality of the e-mail content, such as asking the right questions, make use of the current location and time of company's potential customers, setting up automated behavioral trigger e-mails, matching personalized e-mails and landing pages and, finally, personalize the business of the company according to the main target group of the customers. (Dodson, 2016)

Customer relationship management plays an important role in using e-mail marketing most efficiently. Customer relationship management helps to conduct a precise segmentation of the market, distinguish different target groups and connect with your customers in the most professional manner (according to their tastes and preferences). Furthermore, it is important to mention that being familiar with the legal regulations is crucial while conducting an e-mail marketing campaign. There are various legislation requirements concerning e-mail marketing all over the world, so in each particular case the legal actions vary from one region of the country to another. For example, there is a specific legislation law concerning data protection in each European country, making this a sig-

nificant issue to look for when starting any e-mail marketing campaign. (Jenkins, 2009)

Also, it is crucial to have a specific plan of action for the e-mail marketing campaign. Firstly, there is a need to define the target market and the goal of the operation. There are different possible types of goals such as generating more sales, increasing popularity of a brand, maintaining the relationship with the customers and etc, depending on the overall business objectives. Digital CRM system can help to segment the customers according to their interests and preferences and personalize the message, for example, using customer's first name, etc. Favorable e-mail design is also substantial, since it helps to create a visual impression on company's customers. Those brands that have a unique optical features tend to struggle less with creating a unide image of the company in their clients' perception. The frequency of the sent e-mail also should be taken into account. (Jenkins, 2009)

Although, the overall design of an e-mail is important, the content plays a crucial role in provoking people to take action in purchasing the offered goods or services, so it is truly essential to think of the most attractive copy of the e-mail. There are several recommendations to take into account while composing the e-mail content. Firstly, the subject line is more important than it may seem from the first sight. The potential customer will make a decision to either open and read e-mail or ignore it depending solely on the subject line. The general line should clearly sketch the content of the message while at the same time be irresistible and expressive. That is not so easy to pull off, but the result is worthy of the attempt. Secondly, giving the extend information about the service or good is necessary in the message by providing value proposition and clear headline to the key ideas of the e-mail, since the readers most probably are not familiar with presented service and they need to be able to find all important information such as links to the company's website, etc. Besides, avoiding long paragraphs could be a good idea, because they are difficult to write and make them look attractive for the readers. Hence, the better choice is to keep the paragraphs short and dynamic in order to add energy and life the content of the e-mail, and to make it more engaging for the potential customers. In addition, it is important to think of the tone of the message. Despite of e-mail being a commercial tool, it is vital to keep an informal style in the letter by being personal and approachable towards a reader. (Jenkins, 2009)

As it was mentioned before, targeting is essential while delivering personalized message to the specific groups of the people, so by using CRM system it becomes possible to build a comprehensive profile of the customer base and to track their purchasing behavior. (Jenkins, 2009)

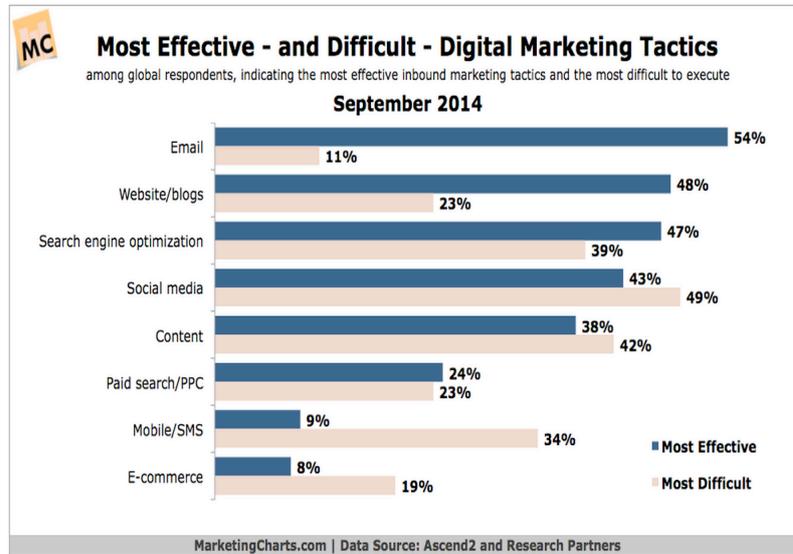


Figure 1: Effectiveness of e-mail marketing (Oracle.com/marketingcloud.com, 2016)

On the figure above, it is clearly visible that e-mail marketing is one of the most performing marketing tools, but at the same time the least difficult in terms of execution. It is much easier to optimize attractive e-mail content for the target group of customers once, than, for instance, updating day-to-day social network feed. E-mail marketing is cost-consuming and oriented on quick results. It is still relevant and widely used in various companies all over the world.

There are several advantages of this marketing tool such as ability to offer relevant content and encourage people to subscribe by placing link in the message. E-mail operations can be easily tracked and it makes it truly useful for collecting statistical information. Of course, the effectiveness of email marketing directly depends on its appropriate execution. E-mail marketing strategies should be up-to-date, relevant, useful and valuable in order to catch the attention of potential customers. Also, e-mail marketing could be combined with social media techniques. When the company's e-mail lists grow, its social media network grows at the same time, so that is why e-mail marketing and social media are great tandem for quick growth of online audience. E-mail marketing is particularly good for small businesses, which are oriented on targeted categories of clients by providing effective, personalized and special service for them. (Jones, 2009)

It is important to mention the reasons why using e-mail marketing as a part of a company's digital marketing campaign is advisable. Firstly, it helps to stay in touch with customers and gain customer loyalty. The second reason is that it is measurable. Through e-mail marketing marketers can learn a great deal not only about their customers, but also about the most and least effective approaches to attract them. The third reason is that e-mail marketing allows to capture information such as age, gender, interests of the online users, which helps to create more personalized content in the future. Next reason is that it is actionable and the results could be seen in short term, in contrast to other digital marketing tools, where the time of waiting for particular results could be much longer. Also, e-mail marketing is really cost-effective and it can be executed quite easily. (Jones, 2009)

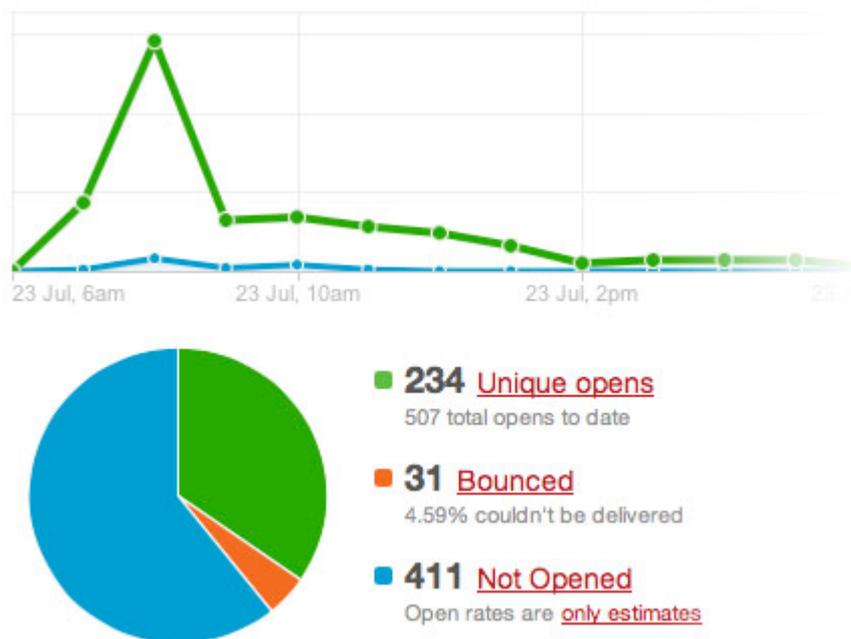


Figure 2: Tracking information of E-mail Marketing (bluecastdigital.com, 2016)

### 2.2 Social Media Techniques and Online Consumer Engagement Strategy

Social media plays a very important role in digital marketing and it represents various forms of virtual communication by which users create online communities to share information and ideas participating in different forms of social interaction. Nowadays, social media is a big part of everyone's lives all over the world, making it a very helpful tool for marketers to get valuable information about people's preferences, opinions, current trends and other data. This information could be very useful in engaging with consumer effectively and having a positive impact of social media on the company's profitability. There are several reasons why it is so important for any company to get involved in social media. For example, better engagement with customers, getting insights which are available only on social media sites, and of course, access to customers who are already online. Social media helps a company to get to know its customers better and recognize the customer's honest opinion about company's services, brands, industry, competitors and other topics of interest. The efficiency of the digital marketing campaign depends on how well the company knows about its customer, and social media allows to get to know the customer without being intrusive. Being proactive as a social media user by raising the company's online profile will improve the reputation and image of the brand. Market research surveys and similar tools are very useful in detecting customer's desires and help to conduct the effective digital marketing strategy. There are several important actions, which marketer needs to add to the overall digital marketing campaign to make it even more effective. Firstly, use blogrolls and trackbacks of the search engine software to attract more bloggers to the company's web page. Secondly, install the free blogging software named WordPress to create attractive content for company's blog without additional costs. Thinking of different content strategies is crucial, because mainly it is one of the most significant reasons why the visitors of the blog can convert into the customer. Some attractive ideas to create an interesting content of the website are recent company's news, combinations of information on services or goods in the separate lists to make the reading of the content way easier for the visitors, and creating microblogging sections on different types of use of the particular service or something else, the main objective to make it in the most creative and interesting way for the potential customers. (Zarella, 2010)

Recently, the social network Twitter has become very popular among people of all ages around the world, which makes Twitter a great choice for developing brand awareness of the company's service through it. Following the concepts of a particular business area on Twitter would be useful and informative when trying to get to know the main target group of the customers and tracking the tendencies in the businesses of the main competitors. Nowadays, there are plenty of online influencers who are willing to attract lots of new potential customers to company's product or service in a gentle and unobtrusive manner. Online influencers already have wide and loyal audiences in the form of social media followers. Therefore, using an online influencer's services will bring quick spread of company's message, campaign etc. Also, since online influencers usually have a good network they would be of a great help when it comes to growing the audience and increasing company's visibility. Online influencers are the masters of creating attractive content, that is why they got so many followers, so cooperation with them will benefit your company not only by improving the brand awareness, but also by facilitating some new fresh ideas concerning the best way of introducing the company's service. Likewise, collaborating with online influencers can add credibility to the brand and open marketer's eyes on several not yet discovered channels for engagement with potential customers. (Zarella, 2010)

There are various tools of social media which a marketer can use to reach a diverse audience around the world. Social bookmarking is an online service which enables customer to add, edit and save bookmarks to their favourite web resources and classify them using tags. By creating fascinating content and providing a simple access for the visitors to bookmark the page a marketer will reach more potential customers and get targeted traffic to company's website. (Scott, 2007)

Also, the tags applied to a page by an audience will make the access to the company's website more approachable and increase the recognized relevance for new visitors through particular key words. Social media submission sites allow to submit videos, podcasts, audios and other things which wide audience could possibly acknowledge. Submissions which get numerous votes eventually end up on the website's main page and maintain significant traffic to it. By virtue of social media submission websites, a marketer can get direct access to people's preferences and honest opinions about the goods/services or content in the specific area of the digital campaigns. Besides, it can increase the traffic, online reputation and disclosure of the organizations web. Forums and discussion sites help marketer reveal important information on the interests of company's target audience and identify what they dislike about company's

service. This information shall be reviewed and analysed and, afterwards, certain changes shall be made in accordance with customers' feedback. These websites could become the biggest spots of distribution for the company's digital content. Reviews and rating sites are also quite useful to get the insights from the company's potential audience. After getting this information vital business operations can be improved according to customers' desires and tastes. Likewise, it is a great tool to get to know main competitors and their business techniques to prepare yourself for a smart response by taking appropriate actions in the future. Social network sites like LinkedIn, Vk, Facebook and so on are the first what comes to people's minds when mentioning the phrase "social networking sites". (Berners-Lee, 2000)

All the above-mentioned digital networks, as well as many others, enable people to connect with their friends and share important information with each other. There are several ways how a marketer can benefit to his business by using social networking websites. First of all, social network is a perfect place for advertising, because there are usually several options for companies to target advertising established on the profile data of users. More than that, that is another tool to boost online reputation by creating company's own page. Social media networking websites make it easy to monitor customer's opinions to understand their needs better and improve company's digital content, keeping it valuable and up to date.



Figure 3: Key Social Media Platforms (virtualprojectconsulting.com, 2016)

Also, online pages on social networking sites can attract brand advocates who are passionate about a particular industry, product, or service. Therefore, by recruiting these brand advocates it is possible to gain more visitors and potential customers from the rest of their social network. Blogging is another form of reaching a global audience and potentially gaining massive exposure. Having a blog can help the company provide consumers with more related information on its business and service, answers on frequently asked questions and engage with the online community by providing personal information on company's team and way of work to improve general experience of dealing with the company. Podcast is a part of a blogging concept which a marketer can use to get relevant feedback from the online audience and be able to offer additional channel to get access to the company's market. Microblogging is quite a new concept in digital marketing and it is also can be of a great help to stay up-to-date with marketing news and to get the access to profiles of the industry leaders. Also, it allows to understand the influencers, support constant communication with the target markets, raise online profits and generate web traffic. (Bird, 2007)



Figure 4: The Reasons to have a Blog (onlinebusinessbay.com, 2016)

Another potential benefit of being engaged with the customers via digital social channels, is using capacity of viral propagation reaching thousands of people faster and wider comparing to word-of-mouth marketing. Being able to reach the wisdom of the crowd lets a company get input from online communities and find answers to some of the most challenging questions and problems in their business operations. This way, the company can conduct a detailed research, create more attractive designs and make decisions based on real preferences of the customers. There are different social networks on the Internet where to look in order to find online influencers, who can then promote a company's product or service. The figure above demonstrates that the most popular social media

sites are Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn and others. (Germin8.com, 2016)

Some people compare online influencers to an ecosystem of business. These influencers are well-connected and industry-specific professionals, who can directly impact the purchase decision makers. Also, influencers are able to boost awareness at the top of the sales channels, mostly on social media e.g. Facebook, Instagram, twitter etc. It allows companies to transfer awareness through trusted and familiar channels, and by virtue of this increase sales and profitability of the business. The final result depends on marketing influencer's professionalism and the message content. According to Digital marketing literature, there are several types of online influencers such as educator, evangelist, motivator and mentor. Usually, there is criteria which makes an online influencer a professional. Online influencer should be following, active on social media, have an outstanding and interesting account and should have connection with the business of the particular company which wants to use this type of marketing service. It is important to remember, that the real influence process occurs offline during face-to-face conversations between people rather than online onforums and blogs. (Germin8.com, 2016)

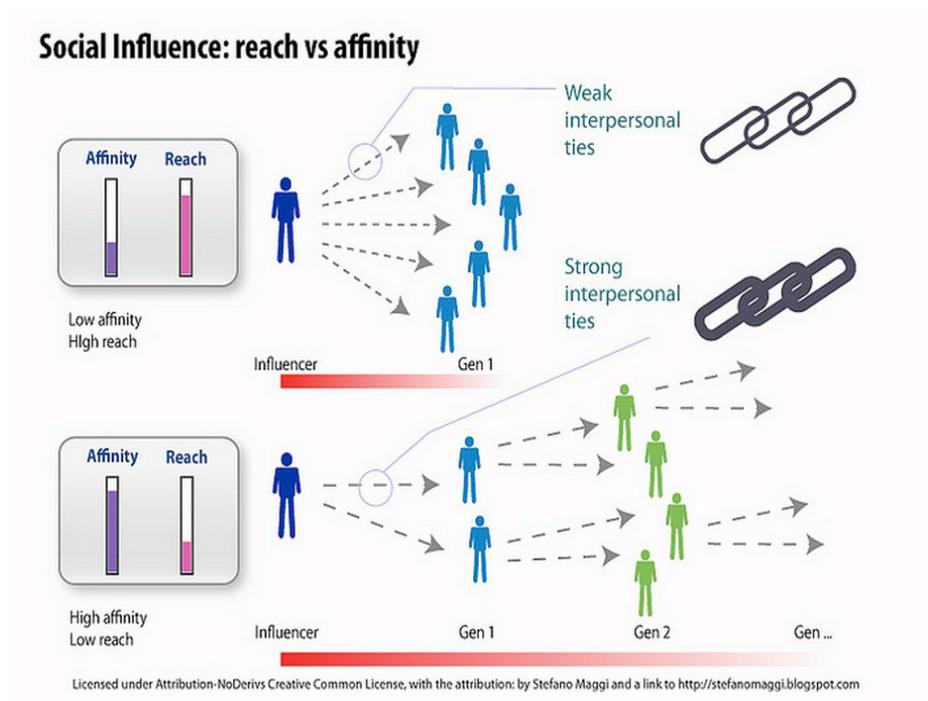


Figure 5: Online influencers (sujanpatel.com, 2016)

### 2.3 Online Public Relations and Reputation management

Online Public Relations (also known as PR) is an extremely important component of an effective digital marketing campaign for many reasons. PR is more about creating a long-lasting impression on customers, which is more important to maintain long-term relationships with the potential users. The main tool to attract both media professionals and customers is a company's website, where all interested parties can get familiar with the PR content of the company. The company's website is one of the most controllable channel to publish PR content on. Also, it is crucial to understand the target market of the company, online sites and tools which they use to be able to engage with its customers effectively and build mutual trust and productive two-way relationship. The other way to attract new customers is creating online press releases about service development, significant announcements of news etc. Of course, it is essential to create interesting and appealing content to catch the attention of the readers. (Forbes.com, 2016)

The headline and the first paragraph plays an important role in the perception of an entire article. Pointing out the milestones of the article in the beginning creates a better structure and consequently makes the article easier to read for clients and customers. Keeping the structure of the article objective and "to the point" also improves the general look of the text. In addition, it is important to remember that company's press release should not contain any jargon. On the contrary, a press release should be easy to access, including compelling language. After the attractive content is created, it is necessary to distribute it through various channels on local, national and international levels. Furthermore, spreading the press release by submitting it on some online distribution services such as P.com, Marketwire, Business Wire etc. is highly necessary. Likewise, using the services of media websites, journalists and various online services like Yandex news, Google news and others is advisable. (Brown, 2009)

Blogger outreach is another way to maintain public relations. Blog-spotheand is an easy way to convince famous bloggers to promote a company's brand through their blogs. Since famous bloggers already have a large and loyal audience, the company could benefit a lot by cooperating with them, generating online profit and advancing reputation of the organization. To be able to approach bloggers first of all a marketer needs to target desired blogs of the industry and get familiar with content of their blogs. After that, it could be helpful to engage with them by comments or retweeting their posts and then start building relationships with bloggers online. Additionally, it is essential to be open and trans-

parent about a company's purpose and the reason of contacting them. Another effective online marketing tool to improve company's reputation is writing helpful articles or, in other words, article syndication about organization's services, goods or news for potential customers. This tool is quite cost-effective and simple to use, so nowadays it is quite popular among marketers all over the world. Of course, to create a content that would appeal to potential readers, it is better to use the service of writing experts, who are able to create effective articles. In general, an effective article is specialized, targeted on specific audience, valuable, has a consistent style and short. There are plenty of different online publishers to submit the final versions of the articles and promote them among lots of readers around the world. Go Articles, and thousands of various other websites to publish articles are easy to find through the Internet. (Brown, 2009)

Creating a company's blog is another easy way to interact with the customers on an individual level online. Also, by establishing a blog, the organization gets opportunity to publish important updates, news and articles related to the company's service and by this provide a customer with deeper insight into the company's culture. Company's blog should be interesting and entertaining for the customer, so it is important to keep it personal, fresh and updated. Encouraging comments and keeping unobtrusive conversation with the customers are essential to gain their trust. Negative comments can take place as well, and answered to accordingly and with respect, so the rest of the audience could see that the company is very responsive to opinions and ideas of every single client. The blog should be very well optimized for search engines to attract more visitors and increase its visibility. (Brown, 2009)



Figure 6: Online Reputation Management (griphonmarketing.com, 2016)

Reputation management is the process to control the opinions of people on the Internet in connection to a company's service, brand, and main executives. The first step to gain the insights into the points of view of potential customers is to get involved in conversational spaces of clients, such as social networks, forums, blogs, etc. Additionally, there are various online services which are made to control online conversation and buzz, for instance TNS Media Intelligence's Cymfony, BuzzLogic, Nielsen Buzz Metrics and many others. Cost-saving monitoring solutions are set up alerts, for example, through Google or Yahoo services, RSS feeds or just searching via different websites that need to be monitored. Since all tracking devices are set up, it is time to check on a regular basis all of the updates of these sites and give quick responses to positive and negative feedback comments. (Wertime, 2008)

There is always a possibility to be misunderstood by the customer and gain a bad online reputation. So it is crucial to do everything possible to prevent negative online publicity. Regular participation and involvement on company's online communities as well as getting in touch with the customers through these communities are very important in regards to being seen as a trustworthy organization. Responding to negative comments is essential to turn negative perception of the client into a positive one. First, repeated negative comments need to be understood and analyzed in order to be able to provide professional and appropriate responses. It is necessary to be positively involved in the conversation and be able to admit company's mistakes, if they have been made, looking for a win-win resolution. If the core of the problem is misunderstanding, the representative of the company needs to clarify the case publicly to prevent similar matters in the future. Respectful and professional approach towards organization's customers is a key to positive resolution of any case. In case if the negative feedback is fabricated by competitors and does not have anything in common with the real situation, it is necessary to counter it immediately by contacting the website administrator. (Wertime, 2008)

## Online PR tactics employed

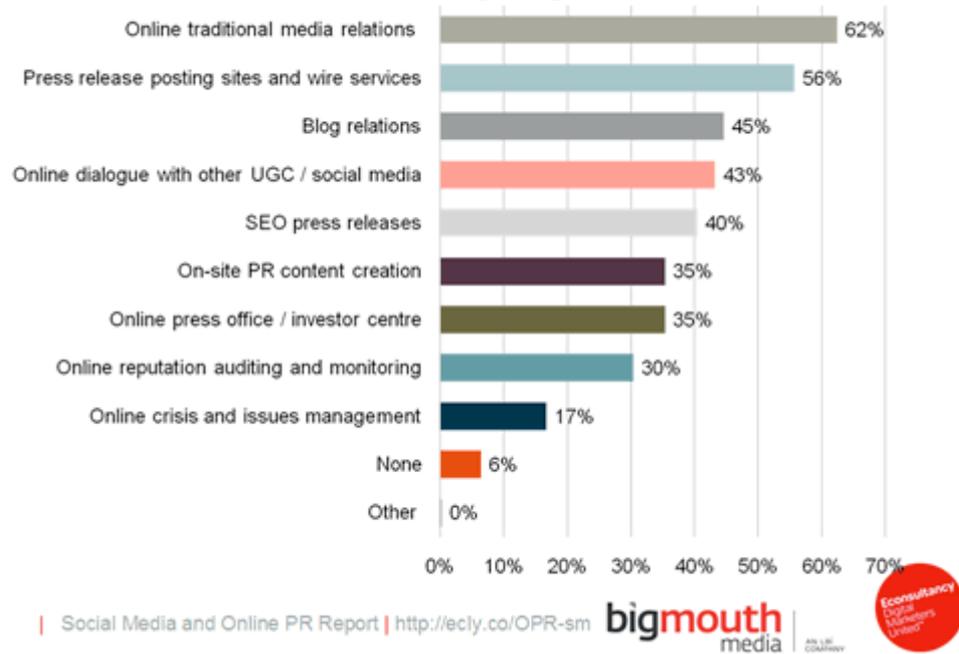


Figure 7: Online Public Relations tactics (frozenpr.wordpress.com, 2016)

## 2.4 Affiliate Marketing and Strategic Partnerships

Affiliate marketing is an online based marketing practice, where the business rewards its affiliates for each visit or new customer brought up by the affiliate's marketing efforts. It is an integral part online marketing operations and in the past decade it has become the most popular and profitable tool of digital marketing. Affiliate marketing offers ready sales force operating, which is based only on a commission basis. The main affiliates are individuals or bigger organizations which are able to push the traffic out to brand sites in return for commissions. It is important to be careful while picking up affiliates for the company, to get truly good results. It is better to have couple of trustworthy and professional affiliates than a bunch of incompetent ones. Also, there are superaffiliates, which represent significant enterprises such as Trade-Doubler, Commission Junction and the rest. The main reason why affiliate marketing is effective is that it promotes a need to pay only for the recent clicks, which makes this operation cost-efficient for the company. To maintain a successful affiliate marketing campaign, the advertiser should examine different affiliate sites. It is possible to find some of these sites on [affiliatetips.com](http://affiliatetips.com). The next step is to decide to use affiliate service as out-

sourcing or manage it inside the company, considering the advantages and disadvantages of both options. In the case of outsourcing of affiliate marketing there is a huge need to control the activities of the outsourced company to prevent unnecessary spending. (Brown,2009)

Another option is to join an affiliate program or network in situations where the company already owns a website and wants to promote other services or goods. Generally, these programs are free, and by joining, the company gets access to special URLs which can recognize the sales based on the particular organization’s website. Talking about payment methods of affiliate programs, is important to mention. There are several types of payment methods, such as pay-per-click, pay-per-lead and pay-per-sale. Each of these payment methods have their unique features and particular type should be chosen according to the company’s budget and inner system operations. Finally, the main advantage of affiliate marketing is the ability to replace a single website of the company with different websites all over the world, crucially increasing the disclosure and future success in sales of services or goods of the organization, at a little cost or free out of charge. There are several affiliate networks to mention, which could be used to find suitable affiliates for the company. The most popular ones are 15 Days Cash, Google AdSense, ClickBank, COPEAC, Motive Interactive and Profitistic. (Brown, 2009)

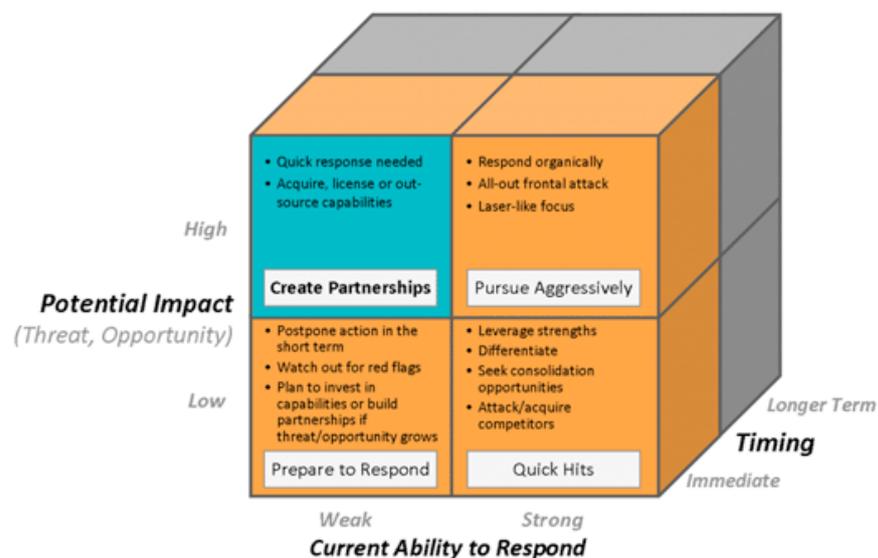


Figure 8: Strategic partnership (2020outlook.com, 2016)

Strategic partnership is a formal alliance between two organizations, typically formalized by several business contracts, which form a legal affiliate

relationship between two parties. Strategic partnership should benefit both partners and create a win-win situation in their collaboration. Online strategic partnership allows one party to get popularity or rating through the other one and vice versa. It is about sharing audience, risks and reputation in some way. This collaboration should be balanced for both sides. (Wikipedia, 2016)

### 2.5 Search Engine Optimization Process

Search engine optimization is crucial for an effective digital marketing campaign. The first aspect to take into consideration, is starting an online optimization process using customer search behavior. This means understanding who is the main target group of the visitors, their habits and preferences to be able to convert them into loyal customers. There are four main stages involved in the process of development of search engine optimization for a business. The first stage is setting measurable goals for the campaign, which will address both customers and business pain. After that, a marketer needs to prepare the keyword selection on enough high search volumes. To find out the relevant keywords combinations it would be helpful to take a look at Google trends, which also can show how search terms are trending and the difference among them in trending rate. Additionally, a marketing specialist can use SEMrush system to evaluate the company's competitors, their target keywords and their estimated volume traffic. (Wordstream.com, 2016)

The second stage is on-page optimization, which represents affiliation of the chosen keywords into the on-page optimization of the company's web. The second stage starts from analyzing the style and structure of the organization's site such as existence of navigation bar, the menu links and simplicity of utilizing the website by visitors. Also, the marketer should make sure that the content of the company's site is relevant, unique, and up-to-date. The third stage is to optimize the technical mechanics of the page, by inserting necessary keywords into the URL. It is important to make sure that the URL is attractive and descriptive, so it would be easy for visitors of the website to identify and recognize the company's website even before opening the link. Paying attention to the HTML of the site is also meaningful, especially at meta tags. They should not influence the page layout and also give general information about the page content, which is utilized by search engines to track the company's web. The most

important meta tags are the title tag and description tag. (Wordstream.com, 2016)

Structured data markup is another technique to implement the optimization of the website, which allows to improve search result accuracy, clarify the look of appeared listing in SERPs, and embellish the attractiveness of displayed information. Moreover, there are several types of site-maps, which serve as a list of every page on a company's site or a map of the website structure. Must use in the company website site-maps are HTML site map and XML site map, which represent texting and coding formats of the site's content. The final element of off-page optimization is social sharing of the content through different social media networks. It is important to be active in sharing interesting content of the website on social networking sites to generate brand awareness of the company's services or goods. The last stage of search engine optimization is analysis. The analyzing process needs to be implemented in the following positions: evaluation of site's position in SERPs rating, traffic score of the search volumes achieved and conversion of the speed and relevance of the company's website search traffic. (Dodson, 2016)



Figure 9: SEO Process ([www.threeroutes.com](http://www.threeroutes.com), 2016)

### 3 RESEARCH

The research part of this thesis includes analyzing the theory related to digital marketing tools and current situation of Ninja Stars company by consulting with internal reports of the company based on the results and interviews with co-founders concerning the current position of Ninja Stars comparing to its potential competitors. Moreover, this part provides necessary information to formulate digital marketing strategy for further recommendations for the company. The results of the survey are presented to conclude analysis and to be able to give valuable recommendations to Ninja Stars company.

#### 3.1 Current Situation Internal Analysis

Ninja mails is aiming to change the business world by implementing an absolutely new form of professional communication. As it was mentioned before, Ninjamails provides a new easy-to-use communication tool, by virtue of this online platform it is possible to find any e-mail address: decision-makers of corporations and companies, which could be potential clients or partners. Using this online platform allows businessman all over the world use their time in the most efficient and the smartest way possible, which is crucial for any successful enterprise.

Communication in the business world is strongly dependent on the use of email. How is it possible to contact someone if you do not know their email? Gaining new professional contacts is expensive, especially for startups and small and medium enterprise companies. By using Ninja mails the above-mentioned companies would have an economic and effective way to contact anyone only knowing the name/surname of the executive and the company he/she is working for.

The main target customers of Ninja Stars are startups, SMEs, students who are looking for a job and want to get in contact with the HR decision maker directly, and, of course, big corporations and companies, which main priority are efficient time management and the speed of internal and external operations of the organization. Ninja mails is also

aiming towards people who are trying to get their resume to a company they want to work for, but they do not have email of the right person. All key categories of Ninja Stars are able to easily get what they want by using Ninja mail online system.

A young audience is very important for Ninja Stars, since usually young people experience problems in finding their first job. For this reason, Ninjamails aims to focus its marketing efforts towards a younger audience. By reaching out to a younger market, the company is able to gain more prospective consumers and gain a loyal customer base. Our generation grew up with Google and continues to remain loyal to the big company, so the case company wants to build a relationship with this generation in order to make Ninjamail as common of a service as Google. In order to get the company's name out in public, one of the main challenges of Ninjamails right now is that it currently exists only in Spain, but the company has great ambitions to extend their business throughout Europe and then the US; eventually reaching the rest of the world.

Using AI, Big Data and their own algorithm Ninja is able to easily predict email addresses in the business world. Ninjamails' revolutionary service has the potential to change how people do their day-to-day business. As it was said by the CEO of the company Fausto "Google revolutionized the Internet, and Ninjamails is revolutionizing the e-mail industry."

The main distribution channel of Ninjamails (to reach startups) is contacting accelerators and incubators. According to the previous experience of collaboration with Spanish accelerators and incubators, the huge interest was noticed and these organizations can help to expand the popularity of Ninjamails among young professionals and startups. Ninja Stars also has a communication department focused mainly on social media, networking and event marketing, since nowadays they are the most powerful tools to reach huge amounts of people at the same time. Besides the above-mentioned distribution channels, Ninjamails uses its own online platform to reach target customers and potential investors.

The digital industry is quite large today, which makes it so that there are some potential competitors that will challenge Ninjamails. One of the biggest competitors Ninjamail has to face is a professional network site, LinkedIn Premium. LinkedIn allows users to post their resume and reach out to different prospective clients, employers, and employees. Fortunately for Ninjamail, LinkedIn does not typically provide non-professional e-mail addresses. Ninjamail's database is able to predict an accurate e-mail address for people in high-to-low positions within a corporation. Email finder sites are another competitor Ninjamail has to be able to face. Email finders tend to rely on third party sources and can on-

ly function through the deep web. Email finders also do not update their sources quickly, whereas, Ninjamail is able to update their databases easily and quickly.

### 3.2 Development Assessment of Ninja Stars

Ninja Stars startup company is in the process of an active development in all of its departments including legal, technical and marketing ones. As it was mentioned by the founder in the interview that the legal regulations of Ninja service complicate the process of business evolution for the company, so first of all it is necessary to clarify all laws and legislations concerning the legality of the company's service to operate worldwide without any fees and notifications from the government about the illegal distribution of confidential information. There is also a lack of technical specialists in Ninja Stars to keep on track and to work effectively on daily objectives. The company may look for interns with technical background to fill the gap in the technical team and also save the company budget, avoiding hiring full-time employees. Looking for more investors and business partners from big companies is another task to accomplish before implementing digital marketing strategy. When all above-mentioned issues are resolved, that is a time for execution of a digital marketing strategy offered by the author of the thesis. Digital marketing is crucial for a startup evolution, because it allows to build a new customer base, develop strong relationship with already existing clients and create the image of the brand according to company's objectives and aspirations. Since the main target audience of Ninja Stars are recent graduates, digital marketing techniques are essential to use to attract new customers from this target group by efficient and constant implementation of a digital marketing strategy. There is a great variety of new practices and techniques the Ninja Stars should use in its business operations for achieving successful outcomes, for instance e-mail marketing and social media integration. Developing of new marketing channels through affiliate marketing and strategic partnership is also an important part of the digital marketing campaign, since it is the most effective way to find more customers in the digital space. Both of these techniques combined with reputation management allow to build trustworthy relationship between the company and the customers by adding up value to the image of the company in the eyes of the clients. Search engine optimization campaign is another effective technique discussed further in this chapter. This technique allows to achieve impressive results in popularity rates in short term. Finally, there is a special strategy for recent graduates recommended to implement by thesis writer, which can help to attract the main target group of the company using different techniques which were developed during the research process of the thesis by analyz-

ing the theory and comparing with the outcomes of the conducted survey and the interview with the founders. All above-mentioned findings are presented further in this chapter.

### 3.3 SWOT Analysis of NinjaMails

SWOT analysis is a great tool to analyze the current position of the company in the industry. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Ninjamails company are presented in the precise analysis below.



Figure 10: SWOT analysis (wikipedia.org, 2016)

#### 3.3.1 Strengths

Since the co-founders of Ninja mails are three young professionals with business, engineering and law backgrounds, it will for sure benefit company by their fresh ideas and approach to business operations by combining their skills and working as a unite team towards future success of the company. The second strength of Ninja mails is the brand new and unique service. Using AI, Big Data & their own algorithm, Ninja is able

to predict email addresses in the corporate world. This revolutionary service has the potential to change how people do their day-to-day business. Ninjamails has the ability to predict email addresses provided the full name and company name of the desired person. “Google revolutionized the Internet, and Ninja Stars is revolutionizing the email industry”. The third strength of the company is its international and creative team, which represents young members from different countries with interesting and professional backgrounds. Ninja mails has Russian, American, Spanish, Italian representatives, each one has its unique skills and abilities to offer to grow faster in the non-stop digital service business.

The next strength is Ninjamails’ surprising interest growth from the side of influential investors, business incubators, and accelerators in Spain and abroad. Since at this moment the office of Ninja Stars is located in Madrid, their business partners are mainly native Spanish. Ability to learn and grow fast has been proven recently by radical increase in sales of Ninja mails product and collaboration with even more business incubators in Chile and the US. Ninja Stars company can offer its customers amazing and professional e-mail accounts and surprisingly relatively low cost for the service, which is always an attractive point for potential customers, who would like to try a service at the very first time.

Finally, the biggest strength of Ninjamails is its unique service, allowing students, young professionals, startups and SMEs make their day-to-day business life easier and more efficient by providing opportunity to be able to connect with anyone anywhere.

### 3.3.2 Weaknesses

The first weakness of Ninja Stars is the absence of a marketing strategy, which is in the process of development by company’s marketing department. Since Ninjamails is a startup company there are always things which need to be done and time is the most expensive resource in these conditions. The second weakness of the start up is the presence of the company mostly in Spain, which makes it impossible to reach more potential investors and customers abroad.

As it was mentioned before, time is one of the biggest and most important assets for any startup, and it is for this reason that the Ninja team tries to do its best to overcome its current weaknesses as soon as possible. Lack of budget for a start up is a normal factor for a company’s initial stage of development. The company is developing its networks to reach both potential investors and customers. The main channel they are using to reach Startups is the Accelerators and Incubators one. They are

contacting all these companies based in Spain offering them to add the service of Ninja Stars company in their portfolio services for Startups. They seem to be very interested. The company also has a communication department focused on social media and networking, as nowadays it's powerful for reaching users. Besides the social media outreach, they are using their own tool, Ninjamails, to contact whatever company needs the Ninjamail email service. Another weakness to mention is the unclear profile of its target market at the moment. Ninja mails is on stage of investigating who would be potentially interested in its service. For now, the main target group of the Ninja Stars are students and young graduates who are looking for a job and want to contact HR decision-makers of any company and startups, SMEs, who are eager to get new professional contacts and save their time looking for e-mails of the key people of big companies and corporations. So, by trying out various profiles of target market representatives, the company could expand the group of potential customers in the nearest time and have a more accurate picture of their target market.

### 3.3.3 Opportunities

The biggest opportunity for Ninja Stars is its international growth. Since it has already been mentioned that the company has some interested investors in Chile and the US, there is a truly great potential for it to grow internationally at a quick pace. Currently the CEO and COO of the company are in Chile working on signing a contract with the influential business incubator there, which means that company is constantly working on its internationalization process. Besides, by virtue of international team members of the company the databases of corporate e-mail addresses in Russia and other Russian-speaking countries and the US were collected, so when the company is developed enough, they are going to launch Ninja mails e-mail prediction service in these countries as well. German and French speakers of the company are currently preparing databases for German and French-speaking countries. All above-mentioned factors give a clear proof of internationalization ambitions of the company which is combined with its hard work and creative approach by virtue of international mindset of the Ninja mails team.

There is a great variety of business incubators and accelerators in the international market. After conducting a precise research, Ninjamails team should be able to find out ways to get in touch with greater number of

investors to increase the speed of business development. Currently the company is working in this direction and has already achieved exciting results to work further with even more motivation. The next opportunity for Ninja Stars is the creation of a mobile application. Since the mobile world is of a great importance in the lives of people, it is the next step to get even more users; thus, making Ninjamails' service more convenient for its potential users. Also, it is a great way to attract more young people, who usually like this kind of apps. Expanding functional part of Ninjamails is a potential opportunity for the company, as well. The greater variety of offered services will expand the target market group of the company and the profitability of the business. Creating different offers and discounts for the Ninjamails customers is something what the company has already started to implement. It is extremely important on the initial phase of business development, so now Ninja Stars has various offers both for the companies and private customers according to their characteristics and income (e.g. special offers for students, big corporations etc.).

### 3.3.4 Threats

The first threat for Ninjamails is that there are already plenty of competitors in the market with similar service, e.g. LinkedIn, e-mails finders etc. Nevertheless, the service which is provided by Ninja Stars is unique, making Ninjamails particularly attractive in the marketplace. The industry of digital services is developing extremely fast nowadays, so there is always a risk that the company with advanced and similar service will enter the market. Ninjamails is constantly updating its system to keep on track the latest digital trends. The same applies to innovations in the industry, the company needs to adjust the functions of the service constantly to meet the expectations of their potential customers. The next threat is that a new company will find out the algorithm of Ninjamails and will offer similar service to the customers. This threat does not depend on company's team, all they can do is to improve Ninjamails service and to make their clients turn into loyal customers.

### 3.4 Methods of Research

There are different methods which can be used during the research process, including observation, interview, survey and experimentation. Each

of these methods has its advantages and disadvantages, and depending on the case and the research question, should be used appropriately. Interview and survey methods were used during the research of this thesis. There are different ways of carrying out survey during the research process: by postal service, telephone, personal group or individual survey and digital method. As a result, about 150 answers have been received; which is enough to be able to see the tendencies in responses and to see the overall picture of respondents' opinions.

Thinking of the general picture for precise research, the interview with founders of Ninja Mails was conducted as well. It was a short interview consisting of 9 questions. These questions mainly concerned the current situation of the company and its future plans. Also, one of the most significant question was about the most effective digital marketing tools to promote Ninja Mails on line and increase the number of users as soon as possible. As a main outcome of interview the founders have agreed that having a digital marketing strategy is crucial for future success of Ninja Mails.

### 3.4.1 Interviews Analysis

During the research on the main thesis question, "How to increase the number of NinjaMails users by digital marketing tools", it was obvious for the author that before conducting a survey, which was mainly oriented towards students who are looking for a job, it would be reasonable to have an interview with the founders of the company. The questions and answers of the interview are presented in the appendix part of the thesis.

The first question of the interview was concerning the current situation of the company and its mission. The founder of the company explained that the current objective of NinjaMails was to increase the awareness of potential customers about the existence of the NinjaMails service and to convince potential clients to use the service. The current mission is to develop a clear determination of a target market for the company and to be able to provide more accurate concepts of the service according to exact profiles of its customers. Moreover, the company is in the process of internationalization and has recently established a branch in Chile, so it is growing in both markets at the same time. The second question was about the biggest challenge of the company. As a founder of Ninjamails mentioned, the main challenge is a lack of budget for business development and the unclear division of tasks among team members due to big amounts of work in various areas of the NinjaMails operations. Also, examination

of the laws that apply to the business and the search for funding are challenges for Ninjamails, which currently require a lot of effort from company's team. According to founder's answer, the recent achievement is new collaboration with new business partners such as famous Spanish companies Telefonica, BCD travel and IE Business School and the recent boost in sales. The plans for the future of the company are mainly conducting more cooperations with business incubators, accelerators, and the expansion of Ninjamails' business in Peru, contributing to the global partnership with Telefonica and raising a round of investment of one hundred euros and creating a stable team. The biggest future ambition of the company is to become one of the most influential e-mail service companies by creating a customer lead generator (CLG) with the incorporation of the profile of all impacts, so that the generation of leads increases more efficiently by the segments. There was an interesting answer concerning competition in the interview. The founder explained that the Ninja Stars' competitors have chosen to create alliances like hiring LinkedIn API to provide contact details that people have within the platform or buying third-party databases such as the ones that airports have, when one needs to provide his e-mail to use wifi. In the opinion of Ninjamails' director Fausto Escrigas, to increase the number of Ninjamails users, the most effective way would be to use strategies of growth hacking like Ninja Stars' biggest competitor LinkedIn does on the level of digital marketing tools. Also, the company started working with AdWords to publicize the service, e. g. tools pay per click, so it brings new users by segments. The last question of the interview was related to the SWOT analysis of Ninjamails, and according to the founder, the main strength of Ninjamails is its unique and innovative service ad technology and it is a marketing product itself, while the weakness is its lack of resources and a lack of sufficient labor force in IT team. Also, they believe that the company's opportunity is worldwide expansion and their potential threat includes the possibility of similar and innovative services in the digital market. The potential threats of the company are difficulties with complex and sophisticated law regulations of the business. Additional comment was concerning updated info on revenue of the company. The company has reached 22,000 euros in six months and has a plan of projects before the end of the year in the amount of 30,000 euros.

As an outcome of the interview with founders of the company it is logical to make a conclusion that the main objective for now is to increase the popularity of Ninjamails service and by this increase the number of new customers. There are lots of big ambitions in the spirit of the company's mindset and that is why the team of the company is ready to face challenges and fight for its future success as a revolutionized phenomenon of e-mail industry.

### 3.4.2 Survey Discussion

This section is focused on discussion of the thesis survey, which was carried out to find out the best possible digital marketing strategy for Ninjamails. The survey was oriented on last year students, who are about to graduate and are feeling confused about the ways to find their first job. By virtue of the conducted survey the most important information for research was collected and the results are presented further.

About 150 responses have been collected during survey research, from them 56 percent being male and 44 being female respondents. The great majority of people are last year students or graduates, 46 percent of them are unemployed. 70 percent of respondents believe that direct contact with the decision-makers of the company is the most effective option to apply for a job position. Half of the people who answered the survey somewhat agree with the statement that using online platforms like LinkedIn in a job search is a must-do for successful outcomes. 82 percent of people agree it is important to minimize waste of time on the job-seeking process. More than a half of the respondents has considered being able to contact a decision-maker of any company via online prediction platform.

Moreover, almost everyone thinks that they can benefit from using online e-mail prediction systems to find a job. The most popular answers for the question “What stops you from using an effective e-mail prediction platform to contact any decision-maker?” were “I have never heard of any online platform like this” and “I would like to try it.” The price of the service is important for more than half of responding students. 45 percent of students would pay 3-8 euros for 30 e-mails and only 16 of respondents would pay more than 8 euros per month for unlimited trial.

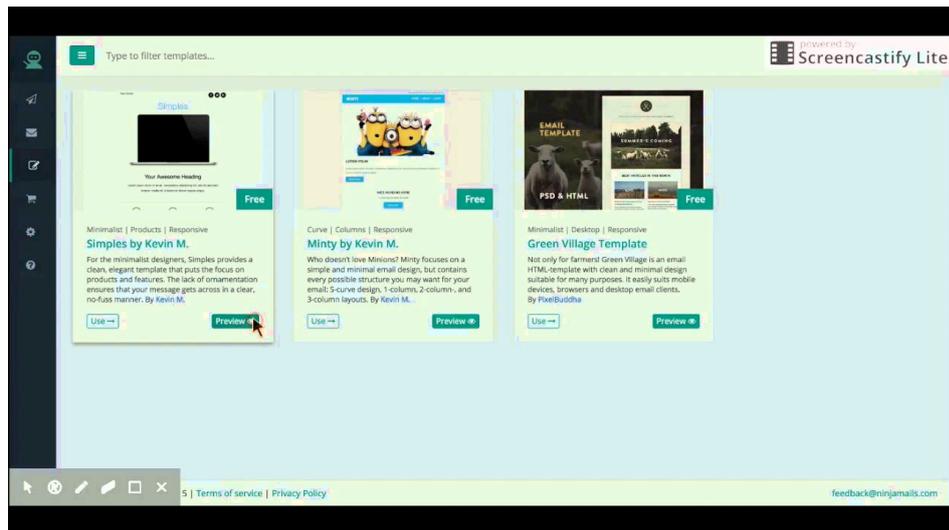


Figure 11: Ninjamails in action (ninjamails.com, 2016)

The majority of people has agreed that this service is useful mainly for students and graduates who are looking for a job. In the opinion of the respondents, the most trustworthy resource to get information about current digital trends from are digital professional resources, specific literature and various social networks such as Facebook, Twitter etc. Finally, before using the service of an unknown company, the respondents pay the most attention on opinions and references on company's service and companies website. The least percentage of respondents pays most attention at strategic partnerships with the companies, which are already familiar to responding students.

According to the survey results, which are presented above, it is logical to draw the conclusion that the majority of students of the last years and recent graduates are potentially interested in the service Ninja Mails is providing. First of all, since over 70 percent of respondents believe the direct contact with the decision-makers of the company is the most effective option while applying for a job, because it can save time and enable express oneself better without various standard forms of applications. The second reason, which allows to acknowledge the respondents' interest is that most of them agree that time is important in job-seeking and they are ready to use on line platforms which could connect them directly with decision-makers of any company. Another important thing, to pay attention to, is that about half of respondents do not use platform because they have never heard of it, otherwise, they would like to try it. It means that there is

a tremendous interest from the side of respondents towards the Ninja Mails service, the problem is, that there is no awareness about the availability of the service in the market.

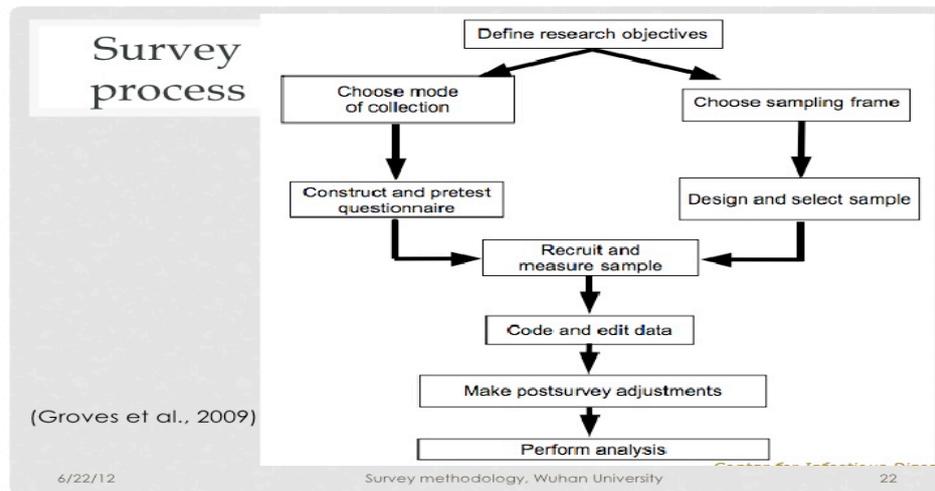


Figure 12: Survey Process (groves.com, 2009)

The price is also an important issue here, since the majority of respondents can only afford to pay for a service less than 3 euros per month.

To conclude, people understand that direct communication with decision-makers is essential to get a job and do not want to spend too much time on it. Everyone agrees time is money, and something what could save the time is rational. The issue for the company is that the majority of people are not familiar with the service, so it is impossible for them to start using it. The main task is to reach attention of lots of people and attract them by using various techniques and offers to try a Ninja mails service and then realize all the benefits it can bring.

### 3.5 NinjaMails Competition Analysis

Analysis of the situation of competitors is very important for business operations of any company. There is lots of information to learn from, especially on the initial stage of development, which can be found in the pro-

cess of scanning competitive companies. In this section the advantages and disadvantages of main competitors of NinjaMails are discussed.

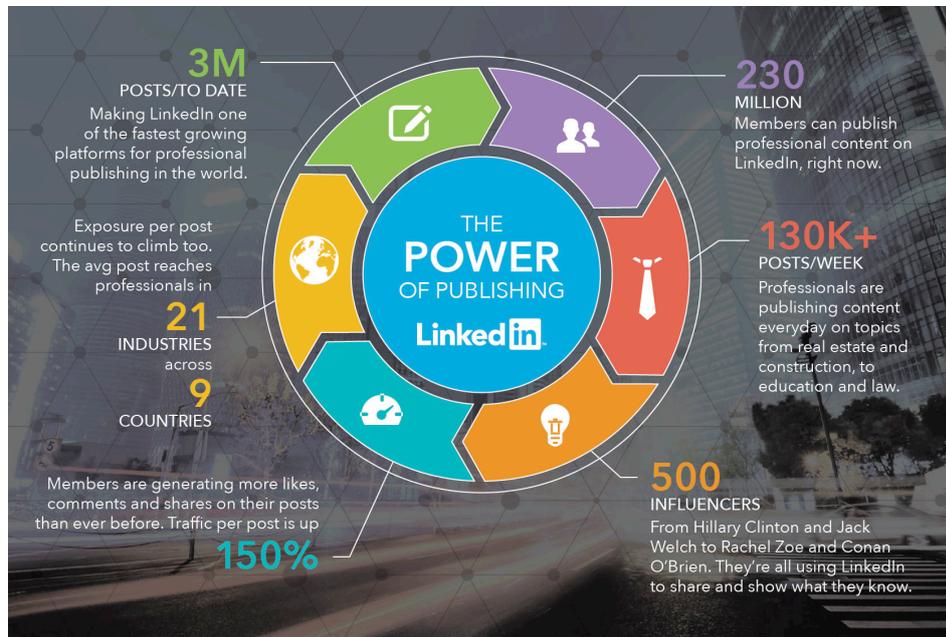


Figure 13: LinkedIn Power (linkedin.com, 2016)

The main competitor of NinjaMails is LinkedIn, which is a business-oriented social networking system, established in 2002 in the United States. Their service is available in 24 languages all over the world and currently has more than 500 millions of accounts. LinkedIn has a great range of functions for its users such as obtaining introductions to the connections of connections, options to look for and apply for job offers, following different companies and business professionals, among other functions. Premium users have additional functions, for instance, to contact

any professional without limit etc. LinkedIn also has application platforms which provide access for external services to display some information about user at the page e.g. recommendations on books, networks etc. Moreover, there is a mobile version available in free access for users of both iPhone and Android mobile phones. LinkedIn supports the formation of interest groups, most of them business and employment related. Job listings and online recruiting are also available for free use. Job recruiters and decision-makers of the company are active users of the service who utilize it to find potential candidates for their job offers. LinkedIn also allows to see the skills of users and endorse other network members to add some skills. In 2012 the company has launched the LinkedIn influencers platform and it is becoming wider and wider, the most famous members of

this platform are Richard Brendson, Bill Gates, Jack Welch and others. Advertising and for pay research is in the process of development right now. The head of the company wants to launch all new service which will give opportunity to do a professional research in the business-to-business mode. The pricing policy at LinkedIn varies according to particular plan, in general it is 24 \$ per month for job-seeker mode.

Taking into consideration all above-mentioned, there are lots of advantages of LinkedIn to mention such as familiar service, lots of business and professional related functions, relatively low prices and a proven efficiency. In its turn, NinjaMails do not have a great variety of functions as LinkedIn for now. The startup focuses on one and only function to connect people with decision-makers without Premium accounts and for a lower price. NinjaMails is very simple service to use, which makes it so easy and functional. There is more specific set of functions in NinjaMails, rather than in LinkedIn, but the results are more accurate as well.

Another competitor of Ninja Stars company is Viadeo, which is a professional social network, has about 65 million members and is available in different languages including English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Russian. The company was found in May 2014, by two French university graduates and has grown really fast since then. It is the main competitor of LinkedIn. Viadeo has partnerships with Google OpenSocial, IBM Lotus Notes and Microsoft Outlook Connector. The company's headquarter is located in Paris and there several offices in Madrid, Barcelona, London, Milan, Mexico City, San Francisco and others.

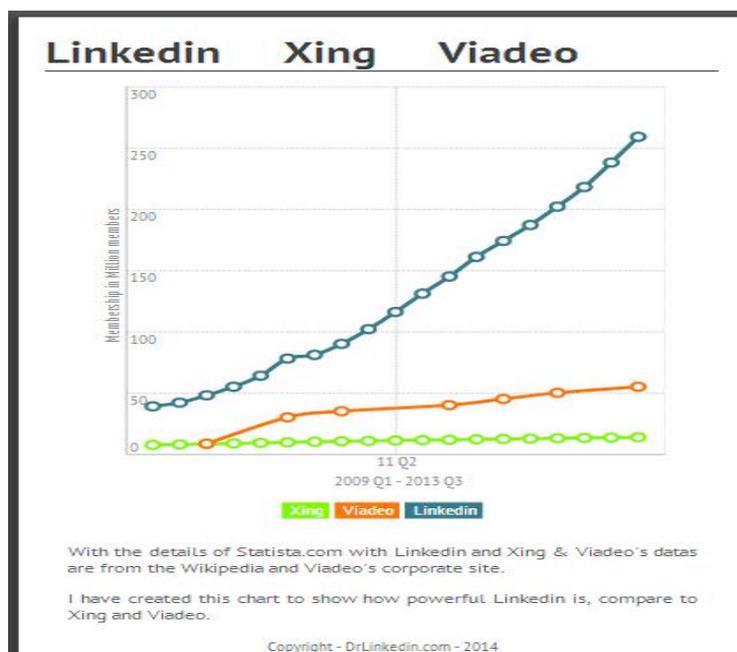


Figure 14: LinkedIn, Viadeo & Xing (LinkedIn.com, 2016)

Comparing two main competitors of Ninja Stars, each of them has its advantages and disadvantages, which the case company can use further to develop its own strategy of business operations in different fields. Viadeo has a really strong base in France with over 5.5 million members, but it has notably weak rates in the USA. Also, Viadeo has way more premium users than LinkedIn. It was noticed that users spend much more time on LinkedIn than people do on Viadeo, connecting this with higher effectiveness of LinkedIn groups comparing to the hubs on Viadeo. The main way for Viadeo to grow was mainly through acquisition in different countries, purchasing the local business network and adapting its business operations according to the characteristics of each country and its culture in particular. That is why Viadeo attracts new members among salespeople and middle managers. On the other hand, LinkedIn has the same approach to their customers all over the world, so among their members, people with both middle and high manager position profiles can be found.

The last competitor to mention is Xing, a career-oriented social networking site that enables creating a small world network for professionals all over the world. The company was founded in August 2003 by Lars Hinrichs in Hamburg, Germany. It is available in about 200 countries in different languages. This online platform has to offer profiles, groups, forums and event coordination. There are two options of user features in the platform, which are a free basic membership and a premium one with additional features such as searching for people with specific qualifications and sending a message to unconnected users. Also, Xing provides its premium members with a very easy access to e-mail addresses of any of their members. The company also has its own Ambassador program for particular regions or cities around the world. The Xing Ambassador program holds different events to promote social networking as a new business tool and also connect its members to discuss different ideas and get to know each other better. It is also a competitor of European Viadeo and American platform LinkedIn. Xing platform also serves as the infrastructure for famous corporate groups such as IBM, Accentuate and others. Mostly it is famous in Germany and German-speaking regions including Austria and Switzerland.

According to the features of business development of Ninja Stars' competitors, the case startup company needs to precisely analyze competitors' strategies and try to adopt some of them to reach improvement and gain more competitors. Further in the Recommendation part the author presents some competitors' techniques with Ninja Stars could use to increase the number of users among recent graduates.

## 4 RECOMMEDATIONS

The recommendations part of the thesis includes author's suggestions based on the research, precise analysis of collected data and thesis conclusions. The objectives of the recommendation part are to help Ninja Stars company develop its future business operations in the most efficient manner and increase the number of Ninjamails users among recent university graduates by virtue of digital marketing tools.

### 4.1 New practices and Methods for Future Implementation

Taking into consideration analysis of Theory and Research parts of the thesis the author proposes to apply new digital marketing practices and methods, which would be potent to increase the numbers of users among recent university graduates. E-mail marketing is an essential online marketing tool to deliver relevant content to the potential customers and being able to engage with them, achieving quick results. It is also totally effective in terms of small and startup businesses like Ninja Stars. It is advisable to try out e-mail marketing in the operations of the commissioning company, adopting testing, personalization, design and planning tools to achieve the best results in attracting new customers from recent graduates' base. There is another advantage for Ninja Stars to practice this method in their business and it is their own e-mail base, which could be used by segmenting to reach more people, potentially interested in the company's service.

Besides e-mail marketing, practices of social media and consumer engagement are suggested to include into marketing operations of the company. The main reasons for that are high activity of young people on social media, so it makes it an extremely efficient channel to reach the main target market of Ninja Stars. Social networks such as Facebook, Vk, Twitter, Instagram and others should be used on a daily basis in Ninja Stars operations to interact with their customers and keep them updated about company's news and everyday work. Also, using service of online influencers would be highly recommended for Ninja Stars, since it is effective in short-term and for initial phase of the business. There are lots of online influencers for each business sector to choose from and many youngsters are following them on social media sites, so there is a high potential that they will pay attention on posts of online influencers who have their trust and who are creating new trends for public audience. Blogging also would fit into new implemented methods for Ninja Stars. The startup company has

lots of work and has updates almost every day, making a blog or vlog would potentially increase the attention to the company and its internal operations. Personal information always grabs attention of the audience, that is why making a blog/vlog personal would be truly appreciated by visitors and there is a possibility they will start using a service as well.

Online Public Relations also would be a good addition to new practices of Ninja Stars, especially through daily blogging and writing useful articles for potential clients. Articles could be not only about company's service, but also about related fields such as digital business, ways to find a job using the Internet, finding business partners and others which would potentially attract new customers from the target market base of Ninja Stars. Nowadays, Internet is a powerful tool in the digital industry, so the case company should use all possible options to reach its professional objectives.

It would be recommended to utilize some aspects of Reputation Management in business operations of Ninja Stars. It allows to be able to control people's opinions online and influence them in the positive way for a business. It is really important to encourage Ninjamails customers to write feedback after using a service, so the rest of people could see the information about the efficiency of the service and general opinions. There is also option to use Google service to track opinions of the customers and being able to update and improve already functioning service to provide better working outcomes.

### 4.2 Development Strategy for Marketing Channels

The author of the thesis recommends to the case company developing new marketing channels via Affiliate marketing and strategic partnerships. Ninja Stars can find a few affiliates which are able to push the traffic out to brand sites in return for commissions. There are big companies specializing in digital traffic and individual affiliates in the market. It would be advisable from the beginning to find a professional and trustworthy affiliate which is not very expensive for a company to get positive results of cooperation. Ninja Stars could also find some of them on web sites such as Click Bank or AdSense.

Strategic partnership is highly recommended for Ninja Stars as well, especially in current initial phase when the company is unknown for large groups of people. Ninja Stars has already started its cooperation with big Spanish corporations such as Telefonica and IE Business School, but there are still lots of companies out there to contact to create a win-win cooperation between two parties. Companies which are focused on cooperations, mobile and online industries most probably would be interested to integrate Ninja Stars service in their daily operations on commission base in the beginning and then with full mutual commitment.

The main target market of Ninjamails' company is young people aspiring to get their name in the business world. Company staff believes it is smart to target specifically young adults because the youth is the future. If Ninja Mails is capable of being successful among this audience, it has the potential to continue growing popularity with younger generations in the future. Company is planning to target high school students, college students and grad students. They will try to partner with universities where the target market is most prevalent. Strategic partnership with university would increase the client base among young people from recent graduates and of course the company can provide some special offers for them to encourage them even more to try its brand new service.

In addition, the company team should attend college career fairs to build a network and connect with students. Ninjamails team should also try to attain young ambassadors to help promote the startup. Ninja Stars can offer their ambassadors incentives for all the referrals they give out. Lastly, doing some sort of social media promotion on company recent cooperation would be essential for future successes of Ninja Stars. For example, the company could have its own ambassadors comment on other peoples Instagram photos or tweets something about the company.

Development of marketing channels could be combined with effective digital marketing components such as content sponsorship, viral marketing, mobile marketing and e-couponing. Sponsoring a particular section of a website which is frequently visited by a main target group of Ninja Stars, would attract more new clients, because the service of the case company would become more visible for them. It could be a section for business development, personal professional growth, etc. Viral marketing, in its turn, would help to take control over online word of mouth, making it possible for a company to create desirable image for their potential customers. It is especially important applying to start up business, when the company is lacking popularity and constant client base. That is

a time to build reputation and make the name of a brand sound differently but always professionally. Mobile marketing is another technique Ninja Stars could apply to develop new marketing channel and be widely oriented on various group of people. Every person from all age groups is a user of mobile phone, so it is a proved way to guarantee reaching future customers. Using mobile marketing professionally avoiding spam and delivering a marketing message in a friendly and competent manner would encourage people to check out the promoted service. E-couponing can encourage users to continue using Ninja Stars service after the first time. According to the results of the survey, people would really appreciate some offers and coupons for the second and further use of the service by becoming Ninja Stars' loyal clients. To be a company people care about, the company should start to care about their loyal clients. To be sure that the chosen marketing techniques are efficient, it is recommendable for the company to make regular evaluation of effectiveness using online ad metrics tools and after that make a revision and to make sure only effective business techniques remain in the company's business operations.

### 4.3 Search Engine Optimization Campaign

Search engine optimization campaign is a crucial tool to increase online visibility of Ninja Stars and attract more customers. Firstly, the company should set measurable goals for the campaign, prepare a key word selection on high enough search volumes, taking into consideration example of Google combinations and trends, then use SEMrush system to evaluate company's competition. The next stage to implement is on-page optimization, in other words affiliation of the chosen keywords into on-page optimization of the technical mechanics of the page by inserting necessary keywords into the company's URL. Also, Ninja Stars need to pay attention on their HTML address to make it short and memorable. Structured data markup will help to improve search result accuracy, clarifying the look of appeared listing in SERPs.

As it was mentioned earlier, the company has already started using Google AdWords in their operations, and by now it has a positive effect on economic profit of the company. The author of the thesis believes combining both Google AdWords and Search engine optimization can be very effective for actual stage of the business. In the case of Ninja Stars company should use pay-per-click advertising method, since the company first needs to expand their customer base and using this Google Ad-

Words method, the company pays only for real clicks and visits, which is quite economic option for the startup's budget.

### 4.4 Digital Marketing Strategy for Recent Graduates

The research question of the thesis is “What are the ways to increase the numbers of Ninja Stars users among recent graduates by digital marketing tools?”. Above-mentioned techniques and practices are effective for the case company to implement to be able to attract new customers from any of their target market group. Group of recent graduates is a specific target market and this thesis is at first place focused to find out the ways to attract particularly this group of customers. For instance, the company could implement strategic alliance with other companies. This could be very beneficial for NinjaMails, because it would mean an easier access to their target market, gaining new knowledge, and achieving an increase in efficiency. By paring up with another company, Ninjamails has the potential to exchange clients and expand their target market as well. For example, they could try to obtain an alliance with similar companies like LinkedIn, Glassdoor and Internships.com, among others. Since lots of recent graduates are already users of these companies it would be easier for Ninja Stars to attract them to their service as well.

The e-mail service of Ninjamails could be integrated to LinkedIn or Glassdoor functioning options and many people would have had opportunity to start using Ninja Stars service.

The next step towards success for Ninja Stars is creation of a mobile application. Since the mobile world has a crucial importance in the lives of people, it is the next step to get even more users; thus making Ninjamails service more convenient for its potential users. Also, it is a great way to attract more young people, which usually like this kind of applications. The app should be in a free access in Apple Store and devices for Android, so the potential customers can have full access to the program and its downloading. Also, important to make sure the application is free of charge, because otherwise people doubtable will dare to try on an unknown service. Ninjamails app should have an attractive and simple-to-use design, which make it affordable for people of all ages. Also, the company could organize some specific promotions for new users, for instance “Invite five friends and get ten Ninjamails for free” or “Post about Ninja Stars in any social media web sites and get a gift from Ninjamails”. Ninja Stars should use all these online promotion techniques to encourage their customers to

share their Ninja experience with their friends and by this promoting Ninjamails service.

According to contacted survey the price of the Ninjamails service is too high in opinion of respondents among recent graduates and students of the last year. The solution would be to start with a free-of-charge trial, as some competitors currently offer, while slowly adding up some fee when the customer is familiar with the service and its benefits. Many responding students find the information about digital marketing trends from specific literature and social network sites, that could be a reason for a company to use these channels to increase the popularity of the service. Also, would be useful to pay attention at forums and websites with opinions and references on company's service, since it was the most popular answer among respondents concerning "places to check before using a new service". People first want to know the experience of previous users, so it is highly recommended for Ninja Stars to work on their reputation online and make sure the feedback of the customers is positive and if not work to improve the external image of the company online.

Another idea which would be efficient to implement for growth of users is to create additional functions of Ninjamails service for both recruiters and applicants. The recruiters would get free trials to respond the e-mails of graduates and applicants in its turn would have access to data base of companies by various filters like region, field, size of the company etc, so both of the parties could use Ninjamails service efficiently for their particular purposes. This new function would definitely improve the perception of students who are looking for a job, making Ninjamails service more specific and relevant in relation to job search and possible fast and positive outcomes. Recruiters also would have had another platform to use in the process of headhunting, so the chances for them to try Ninjamails service increase significantly. There is already this function exists in LinkedIn, but the advantage of Ninja Stars service would be direct contact via e-mail with decision-makers of the company, while the competitor does not offer this possibility on the page of any company from the list. Of course, LinkedIn has premium accounts, but it is way more expensive than Ninja Stars' service.

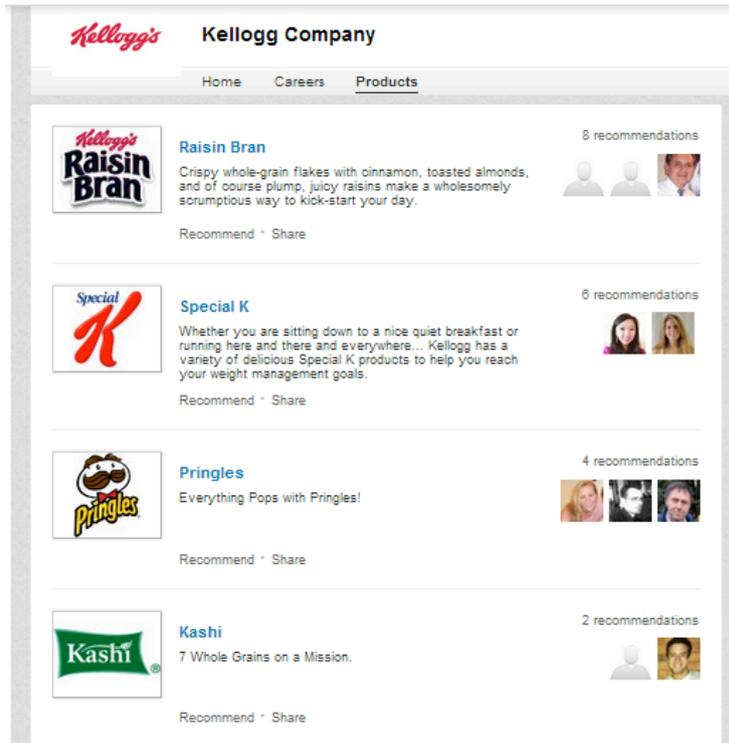


Figure 16: List of companies in LinkedIn (LinkedIn.com, 2016)

To attract more graduates to use Ninjamails service in their internship or work placement search the company need to come up with various offers and promotions which would be potentially attractive for new young users. It could be not only free trials, but also different competitions and encouragements, so the graduates will be enthusiastic to try a service at least for the first time. Competition for the best CV or the most popular applicant which has the greatest number of recruiters' positive answers and invitations for the personal interview etc. The gifts for winners may be Ninjamails service related or not, it could be tickets to the online business conferences or recruitment fairs or even discounts for online language courses. The students for sure will appreciate this and there is a huge probability they will want to try the Ninjamails service and advice it to their friends.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The following chapter of this thesis is the final one, where the main conclusions based on overall thesis findings are presented.

The thesis was conducted for the Spanish startup company Ninja Stars. As a result, the research objectives for the thesis were implemented, which are studying digital marketing theory, analysis of current situation of the company and evaluation of the main problems and challenges towards company's objectives and finally formulating valuable recommendations for Ninja Stars and answering the research question. The research questions of this thesis is "What are the ways to increase the number of Ninja Stars users among recent university graduates by digital marketing tools?". The research methods the author used to answer the research question were interview with the CEO of the case company and survey for recent university graduates.

Consequently, the answer for the research question was represented in the following recommendations which were formulated based on theoretical and research parts of this thesis:

1. After precise assessment of the company's current situation there is a need to adopt new digital marketing related practices and methods in their business operations such as e-mail marketing, social media and consumer engagement. It is the most effective way to increase the quality of consumer relations and to create new channels for engagement with Ninja Stars' potential clients.
2. Next suggestion is to develop new marketing channels via affiliate marketing and strategic partnership. New marketing channels are the key to new customers. Conducting affiliate marketing operations could help the case company to reach more people and promote Ninjamails service to them. Strategic partnerships are widely used by Ninja Stars competitors such as LinkedIn and Viadeo and the results of these types of cooperation are impressive in terms of fast enlargement of the users' base. That is why Ninja Stars should try to cooperate in strategic partnership with another company, which has already got its wide group of customers.

3. Further, the author recommends to conduct Search Engine Optimization and Google AdWords campaigns, since nowadays implementing of those is a must for all digital marketing strategies especially in terms of the first stage of company's development. It allows quickly and efficiently increase the number of service users and pay for this affordable for startup price.
4. Finally, the main recommendation is to adopt special digital marketing strategy for the recent university graduates which is presented in part of the recommendations of this thesis.

All above-mentioned digital marketing strategies can help Ninja Stars company to grow efficiently and reach some of their main business objectives.

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INTERVIEW:

Abbreviations further:

**A** – Alina Kolmakova (the author of this thesis)

**F** – Fausto Escrigas (Founder of Ninjamails, the case organization)

Interview questions:

1. A: Comments on the current situation of NinjaMails (main objectives, current mission)
2. What are the main challenges at the moment?
3. Recent achievements?
4. What are plans for the future?
5. What is the biggest ambition for Ninja in the future?
6. What is the current position of Ninjamails towards its competitors?
7. What do you think would be the best way to increase the number of Ninjamails customers by digital marketing tools?
8. What are the main strengths, weaknesses opportunities and threats of the company, in your opinion?

Answers:

1. F: At this moment NinjaMails is on the stage of intensive development and working on increasing the popularity of our service among potential customers in Spain and abroad. Current mission is to determine the target market of our service and main objectives are to increase awareness among people and by this increase profitability of the company.
2. The main challenge at this moment is lack of budget and coordination of task division among team of the company.
3. We have started to work with business incubator in Chile and gained about 3000 new customers of NinjaMails service.
4. Plans for the future are continue developing relationship with business incubators and expand our business abroad, starting with Spanish-speaking countries.
5. The biggest ambition for us is to become one of the most important e-mail services online and, of course, completely revolutionize modern e-mail system.
6. There are no competitors with exactly the same business model and service in the market. Online services like LinkdIn and e-mail finders have different purposes of functioning and, there is no doubt, this types of services are already familiar for customers, so NinjaMails is only in the beginning of its developing journey towards popularity and success.
7. The best way to increase the number of users of our service would be to get familiar with NinjaMails as much people as possible.
8. The main strength is unique service, weakness is lack of budget, opportunity - future worldwide expansion and threat - possibility of similar and innovative service in the market.