

Suggestion of Digital Marketing Channels for XXXXX Oy



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TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä opinnäytetyö on kirjoitettu XXXXX Oy yritykselle. Opinnäytetyön päämäärä on ehdottaa digitaalisen markkinoinnin kanavia, joiden avulla XXXXX Oy pystyisi mahdollisimman tehokkaasti tavoittamaan kohdeasiakkaansa ja välittämään heille tietoa yrityksestä.

Tämän opinnäytetyön tavoitteet ovat: (1) ymmärtää digimarkkinointia, digimarkkinoinnin kanavia ja kanavien valintaprosessia. (2) tutkia XXXXX Oy:n kohdeasiakkaita. (3) tutkia XXXXX Oy:n kilpailijoita sekä näiden pohjalta (4) ehdottaa tehokkaimpia digimarkkinoinnin kanavia XXXXX Oy:lle ja neuvoa yritystä siitä, mitä kanavia ei mahdollisesti kannata hyödyntää.

Tämän opinnäytetyön taustamateriaali on koottu kirjoista, e-kirjoista, artikkeleista, internet-sivustoilta sekä blogeista. Tämä opinnäytetyö pohjautuu materiaaleihin, jotka käsittelevät markkinointia sekä digimarkkinointia.

Tämän opinnäytetyön lopputulema osoittaa, että XXXXX Oy:n haluttu kohderyhmä on aktiivinen useissa digikanavissa. XXXXX Oy:ta suositeltiin tämän opinnäytetyön pohjalta hyödyntämään kotisivuja, online-videoita, Facebookia, Instagramia, mobiilikauppaoptimointia sekä hakukoneoptimointia yrityksen pääasiallisina digimarkkinointikanavina kohdeasiakkaiden tavoittamiseksi.

Tämän opinnäytetyön lopputulos antaa XXXXX Oy:lle pohjan yrityksen digimarkkinointikanavien valinnalle.

Avainsanat Digimarkkinointi, Markkinointi, Digimarkkinointikanavat, Digimarkkinointi kanavien valinta

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ABSTRACT

This Bachelor's thesis is written for the case company XXXXX Oy. The purpose of this thesis is to recommend the digital marketing channels that would be the most suitable for the case company to effectively reach their target customers and interact with them.

The objectives of the thesis are (1) to review and understand digital marketing, digital marketing channels and channel selection. (2) to research the target customers of the case company. (3) to research the competitors of the case company and based on these (4) to recommend the most suitable digital marketing channels for the case company and advise what channels not to use.

Information for the thesis was collected from books, e-books, articles, websites and blogs. The materials that were used as a basis for this thesis were concerning marketing and digital marketing.

The outcome of this thesis indicated that the ideal target customers of the case company are active on various digital channels. It was recommended for the case company to use website, online videos, Facebook, Instagram, app store optimization and search engine optimization as their main digital marketing channels and tools to reach their target customers.

The result of this thesis will offer the case company the basis for the digital marketing channel selection.

Keywords Digital marketing, Marketing, Digital marketing channel, Digital marketing channel selection

Pages 37

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Thesis background and objectives	1
1.2	Case company Introduction	1
1.3	The research problem and the research question	2
2	THEORY	2
2.1	Digital Marketing.....	3
2.1.1	Online Marketing.....	4
2.1.2	Social Media Marketing.....	4
2.1.3	Mobile Marketing.....	5
2.2	Digital Marketing Channels	6
2.2.1	Online Marketing channels	6
2.2.2	Social Media Marketing channels.....	9
2.2.3	Mobile Marketing channels.....	11
2.2.4	Other Digital Marketing channels or tools	13
2.3	Target marketing and customer profiling	15
2.3.1	Target Marketing.....	15
2.3.2	Customer Profile based on the target market.....	16
2.4	Marketing channel selection.....	17
2.4.1	Sales Distribution Model	17
2.4.2	Multi-channel marketing.....	17
2.4.3	The Bullseye framework.....	18
3	CASE STUDY RESEARCH.....	19
3.1	Customer and competitor insights of the case company	19
3.1.1	Customer profile.....	19
3.1.2	Data based on the customer profile.....	20
3.2	Survey - Digital behaviour of the desired customers of XXXXX Oy	21
3.2.1	Survey goal and objectives	21
3.2.2	Survey execution	22
3.2.3	Survey results	22
3.3	Competitor analysis	24
4	RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION	26
4.1	Recommended digital marketing channels for XXXXX Oy.....	27
4.1.1	Online marketing channels.....	27
4.1.2	Social media marketing channels	28
4.1.3	Mobile marketing channel/tool.....	30
4.1.4	Other recommendations	31
	What channels not to use	32
4.2	Conclusion.....	33
	REFERENCES	36

Appendices

Appendix 1 Digital behaviour survey

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Thesis background and objectives

The purpose of this thesis is to advise the case company, XXXXX Oy, on what digital marketing channels they should utilize as a part of their digital marketing. The aim is to find out the best possible digital marketing channels to be recommended to XXXXX Oy so that they can be utilized to reach the potential target customers of the commissioning company.

This thesis is made for the case company and for large circle of readers interested on this specific topic. The suggestions are based on the theoretical framework and the research part of this thesis. The suggestions are made by the author of this thesis.

The main purpose of the research is to study and recommend the most suitable digital marketing channels for XXXXX Oy to reach the target customers and receive actual purchases from them. Different areas of digital marketing and the channels are taken into consideration in this thesis.

The objectives of this thesis are:

1. To review and understand digital marketing, digital marketing channels and channel selection.
2. To research the target customers of the case company.
3. To research the competitors of the case company.
4. To recommend the most suitable digital marketing channels for the case company and advise what channels not to use.

1.2 Case company introduction

XXXXX Oy is a Finnish start-up that offers speech therapy mobile applications. The company was founded in 2018. Currently XXXXX Oy has four members of staff. The story of XXXXX Oy started from Häme University of Applied Sciences course called "Amazing Business Train". In the course business ideas are being developed from scratch in to a concept in two days of intensive working on a train trip across Finland.

Currently XXXXX Oy offers a mobile application that works as an educational tool for the parents of children aged 4-8 who have problems with the pronunciation of the letter "R" in the Finnish language. The mobile application is designed to be used together with the child and the parent or other adult.

The idea behind XXXXX Oy started from the problem that the queues to get into speech therapy in Finland are long because of the lack of speech therapists in Finland. Pronunciation problems of the letter “R” are common in the Finnish language. XXXXX Oy offers a solution to learn the pronunciation of the letter “R” at home by using a mobile application that follows the methods used in speech therapy. The mobile application is developed together with Finnish speech therapists. The mobile application consists of educational games that are structured in the same order that the pronunciation of the letter “R” is taught in speech therapy.

Currently XXXXX Oy is working on expanding to create mobile applications to other pronunciation problems that exist in the Finnish language, for example with the pronunciation of letters “K”, L and “S”. Expanding to foreign markets is part of the future plan of XXXXX Oy. For example, Ukrainian and Estonian languages have similar pronunciation problems than the Finnish language that could be trained with similar methods of speech therapy.

1.3 The research problem and the research question

The research problem:

The case company does not have a clear perception of the digital marketing channels that would be most suitable for them. Currently the company has some existing digital marketing channels, for example the company website, Facebook-page and Instagram-page. The digital marketing channels that the company has are not being updated systematically at the current moment and the content varies.

The case company needs effective digital marketing channels to increase the awareness of the company among the possible customers, to attract the possible customers, to communicate with the customers and to be able to create customer engagement through digital marketing channels.

The research question:

“What digital marketing channels should XXXXX Oy utilize in order to effectively reach their target customers?”

2 THEORY

The purpose of the theory part is to understand the thesis topic from the theoretical perspective. The theory part is focused mainly to explain digital marketing. Digital Marketing can be further divided into three parts; Online Marketing, Social Media Marketing and Mobile Marketing. All these three parts of digital marketing are explained in the theory section. In the end of the digital

marketing part there exists a part that explains “Other Digital Marketing channels or tools.”. In addition , at the end of the theory part the terms of target marketing, customer profile and marketing channel selection are being introduced and explained.

2.1 Digital marketing

Digital Marketing is an area of marketing that consists of the use of various online tools such as social media, homepage, search engine and mobile marketing. Digital marketing means promoting products or services through electronic channels. Digital Marketing reaches the consumers via internet on electronic devices such as smartphones, tablets and computers. (Amstrong, Kotler & Opresnik 2017,458.)

Digital marketing can be categorized as the new form of direct marketing. Direct marketing previously consisted of the traditional marketing efforts such as telemarketing, face to face marketing and catalogue marketing. In direct marketing the targeted customers are engaged directly, and the aim is to build strong and long-lasting customer relationships. Direct marketing enables the tailoring of marketing actions to be more personalised and unique for the customers. In the recent years direct marketing has been transformed to online forms of marketing. For example, the product catalogues can today be found online rather than in a paper format that those were previously published. Internet based direct marketing is expected to continue to grow even more in the future. (Amstrong et al., 2017,458.)

Digital and social media marketing are growing and changing their forms constantly due to new technological innovations and the dominance of digitalization. Digital Marketing has made marketing efforts available to consumers at any time and at any place through electronic format. Digital marketing can be categorized to three subcategories; online marketing, social media marketing, and mobile marketing. All these three categories consist of different channels and forms of marketing. For example, online marketing consists of the utilization of online advertising, web sites, email marketing, online videos and forums and blogs. (Amstrong et al., 2017 460-467.)

Digital marketing is said to benefit both the consumer and the marketer. The consumer has immediate access to information, promotions and a possibility to make instant purchase of a product etc. due to digital marketing and internet. For the marketer digital marketing enables to reach the target consumers effectively, with a big volume and with a low cost. (Amstrong et al., 2017, 459-460.)

2.1.1 Online marketing

Online Marketing means marketing actions that happen via the Internet. Online marketing consists of creating and updating company's websites, advertising and promoting the products or services online, marketing with emails, posting and producing online videos and use of blogs and other online forums for marketing actions. (Amstrong et al., 2017, 462.)

Online marketing, social media marketing and mobile marketing all happen via The Internet. All these forms of digital marketing happen through utilizing different channels and all the forms have distinctive characteristics. That is why these three areas of digital marketing are all divided in to individual sections. In the future there may appear new areas of digital marketing as digital marketing and technology is developing constantly. (Amstrong et al., 2017, 462.)

Carefully targeted and tailored email messages, online display advertisements, which can be seen when consumer is browsing through the Internet, and blogs where people share their opinions about specific topic are good examples of ways to utilize online marketing. (Amstrong et al.,2017,465-467.)

Online marketing has created new phenomenas such as spams and viral marketing. Viral marketing means word-of-mouth marketing that happens in a digital format, the consumers pass on the online marketing messages to their friends and family for example by sharing content about a company on Facebook. Spam is defined as unwanted marketing material that a consumer receives for example via email. (Amstrong et al., 2017 465.)

2.1.2 Social media marketing

Social media can be defined as following "Independent and commercial online social networks where people congregate to socialize and share messages, opinions, pictures, videos and other content."(Amstrong et al., 2016,467.) Social media marketing means updating and creating content to company's existing social media channels or creating new own social media channels for the company. Different social media sites offer different ways of sharing online materials with the followers of the sites. For instance, by sharing photos, videos or comments on social media sites. (Amstrong et al., 2017,468.)

Currently there exists numerous sites of social media and new social networks are constantly developed and entering the social media market. Good examples of successful and popular social media sites that are used around the world are; Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram and LinkedIn. Different social media channels have different users from various age groups and backgrounds. Social media channels offer diverse ways to share personal content about the user and about one's opinions and thoughts. The content that is published on the social media channel engages the audience to continue following the specific social media site. (Blick 2011, 282.)¹

Marketing via social media networks can be considered versatile. There exists numerous costly and costless ways to utilize social media in marketing actions of an organization. Paid advertisements, social media campaigns and competitions, collecting, maintaining and communicating with the followers of company's social media sites are all examples of a social media marketing activities. Viral marketing is a low-cost way for organizations to distribute their marketing messages. The customer is the one who utilizes viral marketing, for example by sharing a Facebook competition on the users personal Facebook profile the user is simultaneously promoting the company that has launched the Facebook competition. (Scott 2011, 37.)

The behaviour and content in the social media sites of a company is nowadays considered as a part of the branding of the company or its specific product. People tend to browse through companies Instagram or Facebook sites and form their opinion of the company based on the content they observe from the sites. Social media pages are modern source of information for consumers. The appearance of a company in social media should be carefully considered, planned and designed to follow the style and values of the company and its brand. The content that a company publishes on their social media sites should also follow the same style of the company. (Scott 2011, 37-38.)

2.1.3 Mobile marketing

Mobile marketing means producing marketing content and material available to mobile devices; smartphones and tablets, in a functional format for the users. With mobile marketing the consumers can be reached anytime, anywhere if the consumer owns a mobile device and has access to wireless internet. Availability and reachability are the strong advantages of mobile marketing. Companies need to be prepared to be reached at any time if the customer so requires. (Scott 2011, 204-205.)

Mobile devices offer the possibility to do all activities related to purchasing the product with one device; search information about the product, search opinions and ratings of others about the product, compare prices of the product, search for offers of the product and finally purchase the product with the mobile device. After the purchase consumer can share one's opinion about the product immediately. This saves time and is cost-efficient for the customer compared to the traditional way of the purchase process. (Scott, 2011, 206.)

Mobile Marketing offers the possibility for marketers to receive engagement and loyalty from the customers by interacting with them through mobile marketing. With mobile devices the purchase of a product can happen immediately; the buying process can be quick and easy for the consumer. Marketing messages, promotions, applications, app store optimization are examples of ways for organizations to implement mobile marketing. (Amstrong et al., 2017, 471-473.)

Mobile marketing enables personal interaction between the company and the consumer and due to that mobile marketing can be a way to create loyal customer relations and form communities. As all the other areas of digital marketing, mobile marketing is changing constantly as communication technology is developing. (Ryan & Jones 2012, 2013-2015.)

2.2 Digital marketing channels

The aim of this section is to introduce channels of digital marketing. Online marketing, social media marketing and mobile marketing all have their own channels. These channels are ways for the companies to reach and communicate with their customers online. There exist other digital marketing channels as well that cannot be categorized under specific areas of digital marketing, examples of those are introduced at the end of this section.

2.2.1 Online marketing channels

Web site

The purpose of a web site is to get the consumer closer to make a purchase from the company or to offer information about the company. Web sites can be divided into two subcategories; Marketing Web sites and Branded Community Web sites. Marketing web sites aim to the customer making a purchase from the company and branded community web sites aim to engage the customer and create a community from the users of the site. (Amstrong et al., 2017 462-463.)

Official website of any company can be considered as an important part of online marketing. Websites are usually the place where people seek for information about the company and form their opinion about the company. Website should be following the style, concept and values of the company and its brand. The name of the website, the content, colours, themes, functionality etc. should be carefully considered by the company. (VanAuken 2004,147-149)

Differentiation is mentioned in various marketing activities. Differentiation is important also when setting up and planning the webpage of a company. Website should have something that makes it memorable in the eyes of the consumer; this may result to the consumer making an actual purchase decision based on the website and spreading of positive viral marketing. (VanAuken 2004, 157-159.)

Adding links to the social media channels of the company to company's website is a way to integrate social media with the website. Linking the social media sites in the website and vice versa simplifies the information search of the customer; more information and pictures about the company and its product can then be easier to find. (Ryan & Jones 2012, 170-171.)

Online advertising

Online advertising is the visible part of online marketing. Online advertising can be defined as following: "Advertising that appears while consumers are browsing online, including display ads and search-related ads."(Amstrong et al., 2017, 463.) Usually by clicking the online advertisement, the consumer is directed to the official website or the promotion page of the company. (Amstrong et al., 2017, 464.)

Online advertising differs from traditional advertising (For example, advertising over radio, TV, newspapers etc.) with the ability to target the desired audience more efficiently and reach the niche markets more easily. Another difference between traditional advertising and online advertising is that in online advertising the communication can be mutual but with traditional advertising the communication between the consumer and the company happens only one-way. (Scott 2011, 3-7.)

Email marketing

Email marketing is highly used cost-efficient method to build and maintain customer relationships in marketing. Email marketing can be defined as following: "Sending highly targeted, tightly personalized, relationship-building marketing messages via email."(Amstrong et al., 2017, 464.) In recent years the opening process of emails has changed. In the past emails were being opened from personal computers on the workplace, today emails can be opened with mobile devices from anywhere and at any time. (Amstrong et al., 2017, 464-545.)

Emails with marketing content sent to a list of customers or possible customers usually include an actual "Call of action", for example an offer or a discount code that is valid with in a specific timeframe for the receiver of the email. Not all marketing emails have to include "Call of action". The email can also aim at strengthening the customer relationships by offering amusing content for the receiver of the email. (Ryan& Jones,2012,125-127.)

Online newsletter can be used to implement email marketing. Newsletters provide information for example about upcoming events or sales campaigns of the company. Avoidance of spamming must be kept in mind when designing email marketing content, because spamming the customers may end up with negative results. Spam means an unwanted, unsolicited marketing message, that may irritate the receiver of the email. (VanAuken 2004, 145-146.)

Online videos

Online videos are video material that are created by the company for marketing purposes. Online videos can be shared in various channels, on company's websites or on social media channels (Facebook, Youtube, Instagram..) controlled by the company. The content of online videos varies based on the company's style and the type of business. Online videos can be for example

regular advertisements, vlogs, tutorial videos and many more. Online videos with an entertaining content may create high engagement among the customers of the company and reach new potential customers. (Amstrong et al., 2017, 465.)

Videos are a visual way to provide information in a simple and understandable form. Online videos and live video streaming can be used to communicate with the audience of different organizations. Online videos are part of each brand's image. Good online videos posted by a company can produce positive reputation for the brand. Good online videos may also boost the viral marketing online, if people end up sharing the videos with their followers in their personal social media pages. Each company can modify the online videos they post on the internet to meet the look and style of the brand visually and content wise. (Scott 2011, 75-79.)

Blogs and other forums

Blog is an abbreviation of the word "Weblog". Blogs are websites about certain subjects where the writer publishes texts that are related to the subject of the blog or other areas of interest of the writer. In the internet there exists other online forums besides personal blogs. In online forums people can discuss and share ideas, experiences and opinions that are usually related to a certain topic that the forum site presents. There exists a great number of blogs and other online forums around the internet that are focused on various subjects, for example; Fitness-blogs, Baking-blogs, Fashion-blogs etc. In blogs there usually exists comment place after the blog text, that enables the communication between the writer and the audience of the blog. The purpose of blog is to share opinions and ideas and generate discussion about certain topics. (Scott 2011, 60.) (Amstrong et al., 2017, 466-467.)

Blogs can be used as an online marketing tool and as a way for the company to seek insights of their business field. Popular blogs can reach thousands of readers that are interested in the specific subject the blog or the certain blog post is about. If a popular blogger recommends or introduces a certain product or service in one's blog text, the blog text can lead to actual purchase of the product or service recommended. (Blick 2011, 231-234.)

A company can utilize blogs in their marketing and PR in many ways. Blogs are also a tool for collecting information about what are people's opinions about the certain subjects. A company can interact and promote their reputation with their potential customers by commenting and being active on the blogs that talk about the subject that they are working with. Companies can also work with the bloggers that write about the subjects related to the company's products or services. A company can for example pay for the blogger to give him or her opinion about the product the company is aiming to promote. A company may also set up its own blog and start to produce amusing content for their target audience. Company's own blog can result as risen customer engagement and as a way to create customer communities from the readers. (Scott 2011, 64.)

2.2.2 Social media marketing channels

In this section the most relevant social media channels for XXXXX Oy from the point of view of the author are being introduced. There exist numerous other social media channels besides the ones mentioned below, such as LinkedIn, Snapchat, Flickr, Google+ and many more. Likewise, new social media sites and channels are created and born constantly.

Figure 1. shows the number of monthly users on popular social media sites in the year 2017.

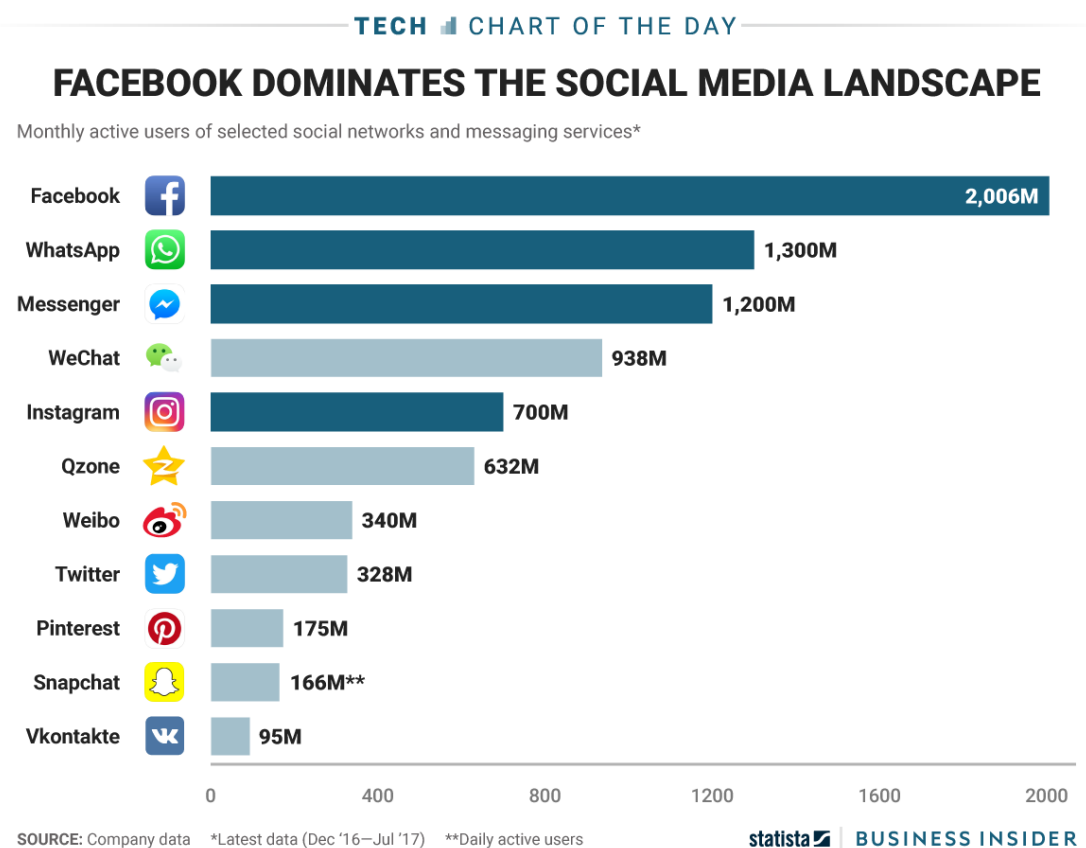


Figure 1. Facebook dominates the social media landscape (Nudelman/Business Insider 2017).

Facebook

Facebook is a social network that connects millions of users around the World. Facebook was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg. The users of Facebook can upload photos, videos and share their opinions as a status update in their personal profiles. Besides personal profiles Facebook profile can also be created by companies or other organizations to promote their products and services online. Creating a Facebook page is free but using Facebook for marketing purposes requires monetary invests from the companies in some cases.

Facebook for example sells paid advertisements, data and metrics about the people who visit the company's Facebook sites. (Juslen 2013, 17-20.)

Facebook marketing has different divisions; Free Facebook Page, Paid Facebook-marketing and earned media that means the visibility earned from the users of Facebook who comment, like and share the specific Facebook page. Facebook marketing is persistent; it requires time, planning and constant communicating with the earned media. Campaigns and promotions are ways to activate and widen the earned media and boost viral marketing. (Juslen 2013,28.)

Facebook collects plenty of data from the users of the service. This enables the efficient targeting of Facebook marketing campaigns and promotions for the marketers by purchasing the data from Facebook. A marketer can define precisely the customer type one wants to reach. Then Facebook sells the marketing space from the network and shows the advertisement to the defined customer segment. (Juslen,2013,55-57.)

The price of Facebook marketing is set by using two different pricing models; CPM- Cost per mille or CPC- Cost per click. The budget is determined by the company and Facebook gives an offer, for example 0,08 EUR/ CPM) and the campaign is charged with the outcome. (Juslen 2013 163-167.)

Twitter

Twitter is a social media channel that was founded in 2006. In Twitter the users post short messages on their Twitter accounts and create discussion with their followers and friends with the "Tweets". The messages post to Twitter are simple and concise because the amount of characters of the posts are limited to 140. (Blick 2011,290)

Twitter can be used as a tool to get connected with the customers and to create strong customer relationships and engage the customers through mutual communication. It is a channel where companies can share information about upcoming events, news and other issues related to the company and its specific products or services. Customers can provide feedback, ask questions and share their opinions about the company or brand via Twitter. (Scott 2011, 220-225.)

As other social media sites, Twitter offers a way for organizations to utilize targeted marketing through paid advertisements and promotional campaigns bought from Twitter. A large amount of people can be reached by utilizing Twitter in marketing actions. (Scott 2011, 222-224.)

Instagram

Instagram is a popular and free social network founded in 2010 where the users can share their photos and videos with their followers on their personal Instagram accounts. On Instagram the usage of hashtags, the tag to identify the features of the picture, are being used when publishing video or picture material

to the social network. In August 2016 Instagram added a new feature; “Instagram stories”, a feature in the account where the user can publish videos or photos about what is happening at the current moment and these stories will disappear from the profile after 24 hours. The idea behind this feature was indeed copied from another popular social media channel; Snapchat. (Vaynerchuk 2018, 223-225.)

Instagram is used tremendously in today’s marketing. Many people have become world famous through their Instagram accounts and collected even millions of followers to their page. Marketers typically pay for the people who have lot of followers and an ideal audience for their product for marketing and promoting a certain product on their personal Instagram page. Companies use Instagram for building their company brand and style. Company’s Instagram page can be used by the consumers as a platform to search information about the company and its products. (Vaynerchuk 2018, 226-228.)

YouTube

YouTube is a website where the users can watch, share and comment videos. YouTube was founded in 2005 and in the year 2006 it was bought by Google and it has been owned by Google since then. YouTube has enabled Vlogging; blogging in a video format and made it a popular form of entertainment. YouTube has content from all areas of entertainment; cooking, music, interviews... (Vaynerchuk 2018, 192-195.)

In marketing there are several ways to utilize YouTube. A company can set up their own YouTube channel and post relevant content to their company there and “Build an Engaged Community” (Edwards,2015) from the users of YouTube that could be potential customers for the company. Paid advertisements can be bought from the video sharing website. “There are four different options: in-stream, in-slate, in-search, and in-display. Each has a slightly different purpose, but all are effective at reaching highly segmented groups of users.” (Edwards, 2015). Another way of marketing via YouTube is to pay for popular Vloggers and other YouTube celebrities to promote the products and services of a company on their YouTube channels. (Edward,2015).

2.2.3 Mobile marketing channels

Mobile applications

Mobile applications are software’s that are installed to mobile devices or tablets. Mobile applications are downloaded from the internet via App Store, Google Play Store or from other application market. The content and purpose of a mobile application can be anything. Inside the application there may exists paid advertisements and other marketing material from other organizations. Mobile application can be free for the user to download or the application can include a fee for the user. (Ryan & Jones 2012, 230-233.)

Mobile applications can be a way for a company to add value to their customers and gain positive image among the customers of a company in that way. For example, many supermarket chains have their own free mobile applications that offer information about the supermarket and its offers. This is a concrete example of adding value for the customer in his or her customer experience and to create customer engagement via mobile application. (Amstrong et al., 2017, 472.)

Mobile marketing messages and promotions

In mobile marketing, the advertisements are shown in the mobile devices of the consumer while they are browsing with the mobile device. Offers, promotion campaigns, ads, videos and other mobile marketing material appear in the screen of the user while they are using different sites with the mobile device they have. Usually by clicking the advertisement the consumer is being lead to the company's website or social media page. (Amstrong et al., 2017, 472.)

Mobile marketing messages and promotions can be targeted to the ideal target customer segment by buying data for example from different social media organizations. Mobile marketing messages are a way to build awareness of the company's brand and the products or services it offers. Mobile marketing messages are used to catch the attention of the potential buyers and to build customer relationships. Mobile marketing messages usually offer the newest information about the company and for example, the offers and sales the company has to offer at the current moment. (Ryan & Jones 2012, 217-219.)

App store optimization (ASO)

App Store Optimization is an essential part of today's mobile marketing since the popularity of mobile applications have risen largely over the past years. App store optimization means the activities done to boost the ratings and rankings of a mobile application in the application store. By utilizing app store optimization, the mobile application reaches the targeted consumers efficiently and the visibility of the mobile application is boosted in the application store. The abbreviation used of app store optimization is ASO. (Nguyen 2016.)

App store optimization aims at increasing the visibility of a mobile application in the application store. App store optimization can be further divided into two dimensions; on-page and off-page factors. On-page factors are the components of the application; the title and description of the application, ratings, reviews, appearance etc. Off-page factors are analytics of the application such as server speed, number of downloads and customer engagement. These factors and all the keywords related to the application need to be carefully chosen by the marketers when planning the app store optimization. For example, the title of the application plays a crucial role when the customer is searching for an application from the application store to download. (Nguyen 2016.)

When developing app store optimization strategy, the most essential issues to take into consideration are the buying personas, the planning of the content and the keywords. The objectives of the ASO-strategy are set based on these. Organizations produce analyses and research of the target customers and create buyer personas based on the research. Buyer personas need to be defined so that the organizations can target and reach their customers efficiently. The content planning in ASO can be explained by that when the customer searches information about the application, there should be information available. The application should be visible in many places; on ratings, rankings, reviews, blogs, social media etc. so that the customer can find the facts she or he wants to know about the application. These contents should be planned and executed by the organization that market the application. The keyword planning in ASO requires a research of the keywords. The marketers should understand their customers to know what words they most likely use when searching an application. Synonyms and ways of describing things should all be listed down before choosing the final keywords that are to be used in the ASO strategy. (Nguyen 2016.)

2.2.4 Other digital marketing channels or tools

Influencer marketing

Opinion influencers, opinion leaders and other influencers are people who have special knowledge or skills on specific subject and have impact and power with in people interested about that specific subject. Opinion leaders can be for example politicians or celebrities who have gained a broad social network and connections for themselves. Examples of modern opinion leaders are bloggers, Instagrammers and vloggers on YouTube who update their page or channel actively and have a relevant number of followers or audience. (Braatz 2017.)

Influencer marketing is a marketing method where the marketing message is communicated through an opinion influencer to a specific target audience. The aim of influencer marketing is to effect on the buying decisions of the audience or to build the brand image of the company via the opinion influencer. Opinion leaders have received a wide social network for themselves. In influencer marketing, the social network of an opinion leader is being used by the marketers to gain reachability and visibility for their marketing actions. (Braatz 2017.)

There exist many ways for a company to utilize influencer marketing. One way is to send free samples of products or invitations to events to an opinion leader and ask for a public recommendation or other way of promoting the product, if the person savours the product or the event. Another way to implement influencer marketing is to directly pay for the opinion leader for the promotion of the product or service on their social media page or personal blog. In some cases, it is the organization who plans the detailed posts for the influencers to share, not the influencer him/herself. The visual appearance, the time to post and the post hashtags to be used are clearly predefined for the blogger etc. The

ultimate goal in influencer marketing when using opinion leaders to recommend and promote the product or service of a company, is to have an impact on the buying decision of the consumer. (Braatz 2017.)

Search engine marketing

Search engines are online tools such as Google, Bing and Yahoo! that people use for searching information by typing keywords on the template on the internet. Search engine marketing means marketing via search engines on the internet. Search engine marketing can be divided into two separate parts; search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine advertising. (Scott 2011,298.)

“Search engine optimization is the process of improving the visibility of a website through an understanding of how search engines work and of the keywords that people use” (Blick 2011,300). People can be led by organizations to a certain webpage by using search engine optimisation. Using search engine optimization for digital marketing purposes can be implemented in many ways. (Blick 2011,300-302.)

Keywords are important in search engine optimization and those should be carefully considered and listed when creating the content of the webpage of a company. When creating the website of a company it is important to create a list of keywords that are to be used. The marketer should examine different ways of expressing one content and what synonyms the keywords have. The keywords should be targeted to the desired audience the website wants to reach. (Blick 2011, 303.)

Search engine advertising is a different concept than search engine optimization. Search engine advertising happens when a marketer pays to a search engine company for the link of the website of a company to appear on top of the certain search by the keywords. Search engine advertising can be done also by showing an advertisement of the company on the search page when a certain subject is being searched by the user of the search engine. Typically, the cost of search engine advertisement is based on bids. Search engine advertising enables the use of intensive targeting. (Scott 2011,298.)

Google Analytics

Google Analytics is a free analytics service that offers data and statistics that can be used for search engine optimisation and other digital marketing purposes. Google Analytics provides information for organizations. For example, about the duration of the time used by a user when visiting a website and what activities the user does when visiting a company’s website. Google Analytics collects numerous charts to visualize the data and creates customised reports about the data collected. (Jornsay-Silverberg 2016)

Google Analytics can be used as a tool in digital marketing. Google Analytics offers versatile data about the user behaviour of the customers of different

companies. The data received can be used as a research material. The data received from Google Analytics can offer aid in designing marketing actions of a company because it enables the decision-makers of a company to know more about the user behaviour of their customers. (Jornsay-Silverberg 2016)

2.3 Target marketing and customer profiling

This part introduces the concept of target marketing and customer profiling in digital marketing. Customer profile of the ideal target customer of the case company works as a basis for the survey conducted with in this thesis to found out what digital marketing channels the ideal target customers use.

2.3.1 Target marketing

“Market segmentation: Dividing a market into distinct groups of buyers who have different needs, characteristics, or behaviours and who might require separate marketing strategies or mixes.” (Amstrong et al., 2017,198.)

“Target market: A set of buyers sharing common needs or characteristics that the company decides to serve.” (Amstrong et al., 2017, 206)

Market targeting process starts by selecting the customer segment the company wants to enter. The evaluation of the segments is done by researching the segment size, growth and other features of the segment. The segment features are then compared to the objectives and goals of the company. The company objectives and the segment should be matching. The competition and the competitors in the specific business wield a company is about to enter should be taken into consideration in the segmenting process. (Amstrong et al., 2017, 207.)

For XXXXX Oy the customer segment occurs from the problem it was created to solve; To help the parents of the children aged 4-8 with the difficulty to pronounce the letter R. The segment was automatically chosen based on the type of the business. Because of the product type of XXXXX Oy, educational mobile application, the segment cannot be modified. The target market for XXXXX Oy is the parents of children aged 4-8 who have problems with pronunciation of the letter R. The marketing actions for XXXXX oy are concentrated on the specific target market and it is not suitable for mass marketing because of the product type.

After the evaluation of the market segments, the segment is further divided into smaller sections: target markets. Target market consists of a certain type of customers who have a need for the product, service or solution the company offers. To enter a target market there exists different marketing strategies; undifferentiated marketing, concentrated marketing, differentiated marketing and micromarketing. These strategies are divided by the importance of how precise the segment is defined. For example, by using undifferentiated

marketing, the segmentation is ignored, and the product is being marketed to the mass market. (Amstrong et al., 2017, 2007.)

2.3.2 Customer profile based on the target market

Customer profile can be created when the company has selected its target market. Customer profile means the detailed description of the ideal customer a company wants to reach and create lasting customer relationship with. Customer profile provides extensively descriptive information about the ideal customer. Customer profile provides psychographic and demographical information about the ideal customer type:

Psychographic information

– Behavioural features, for example: lifestyle, attitudes, values, interests.

Demographic information

- Physical features, for example: age, gender, occupation, income-class. (Graham 2017)

The purpose of customer profile is for the company to understand who the customer is. The company is more likely able to create effective marketing strategies based on the detailed knowledge about their ideal customer. Customer profile can be used as a tool in both traditional and digital marketing. Because the customer profile offers information about the customer and the behaviour of him or her, the customer profile offers aid for the marketer to inspect what marketing channels to use to reach the ideal customer. (Gordon & Berry 2011,190-195)

Customer profile offers help in the decision-making process of organizations. Detailed customer profiles enable companies to plan their marketing and decision making to be customer based and oriented. There can be several customer profiles for one product or service because there may exist more than one typical buyer type and potential users for that product. (Graham 2017)

In recent years, customer-oriented marketing has been a trend. Detailed and well-structured customer profile can result as a tool to help the company meet the customer's expectations and needs effectively. (Graham 2017)

Usually customer profile is done by implementing a market research of the target customers. There exists two ways to conduct a market research; quantitative or qualitative market research. Quantitative research relies on structured data that is being collected by implementing experiments or surveys. Qualitative research method is based on subjective unstructured data that is collected for instance by focus groups or in-depth interviews. Based on the market research when there exists an adequate amount of data, the customer profile can be created. The marketing actions can be planned based on the results of the market research. (Gordon & Berry 2011,151-155)

Customer profile is a description of the typical customer type and the description gives an answer to several questions that the marketer may have. For instance, to the following questions; Who is she? Where she buys? What social media channels she uses? How much money she makes? can be answered based on the well detailed customer profile. The process of reaching the customer becomes simpler when the marketer is familiar with the findings from the customer profile. (Gordon & Berry 2011,151-155)

2.4 Marketing channel selection

This part introduces models that are being used as a part of marketing channel selection process. There are many factors that need to be considered when selecting a marketing channel for a company, for example; the type of product or service the company is selling, the target customers, the budget of the company and the competitors in the industry. Therefore, there exists many models and ways for marketing channel selection.

2.4.1 Sales distribution model

When the target customers of a company are selected, the next step for the company is to develop the sales distribution model. The sales distribution model is the way that is used to reach the target customers. The aim of the sales distribution model is at first to catch the attention of the target customers and in the end to receive purchase of the product or service the company is selling and to create customer engagement.

The selection of the distribution channel depends on the type of the product or service the company is selling, the industry in general and the business model that the company has developed. The sales distribution models have three different main groups: intensive (many distribution channels), selective (few distribution channels) and exclusive distribution (few or only one distribution channel). The distribution strategy is being chosen to get connected with the customers and it can be changed or modified later if the situation so requires. (Harris 2017.)

2.4.2 Multi-channel marketing

Multi-channel marketing means when the customer is being reached and the interaction with the customers happens by utilizing various marketing channels. The company takes advantage of many channels, for example email, retail store and catalogues, to reach the customers. (Marrs 2017.)

In multi-channel marketing the channels can be paired, for example by combining mobile and television marketing together. One example of pairing marketing channels is to have a hashtag to a television program. The discussion can happen simultaneously on social media behind the hashtag while a television program is on air. (Marrs 2017.)

The benefits of multi-channel marketing are that the brand awareness can be broader when utilizing multiple channels, the customers have the possibility to choose the channel that they prefer and using many channels enables the data collection from various sources. The negative sides of multi-channel marketing are that specific products might be better sold through one good channel, the costs and the time invested to the channels may require lots of monetary resources and managing many channels can be demanding. (Marrs 2017.)

2.4.3 The bullseye framework

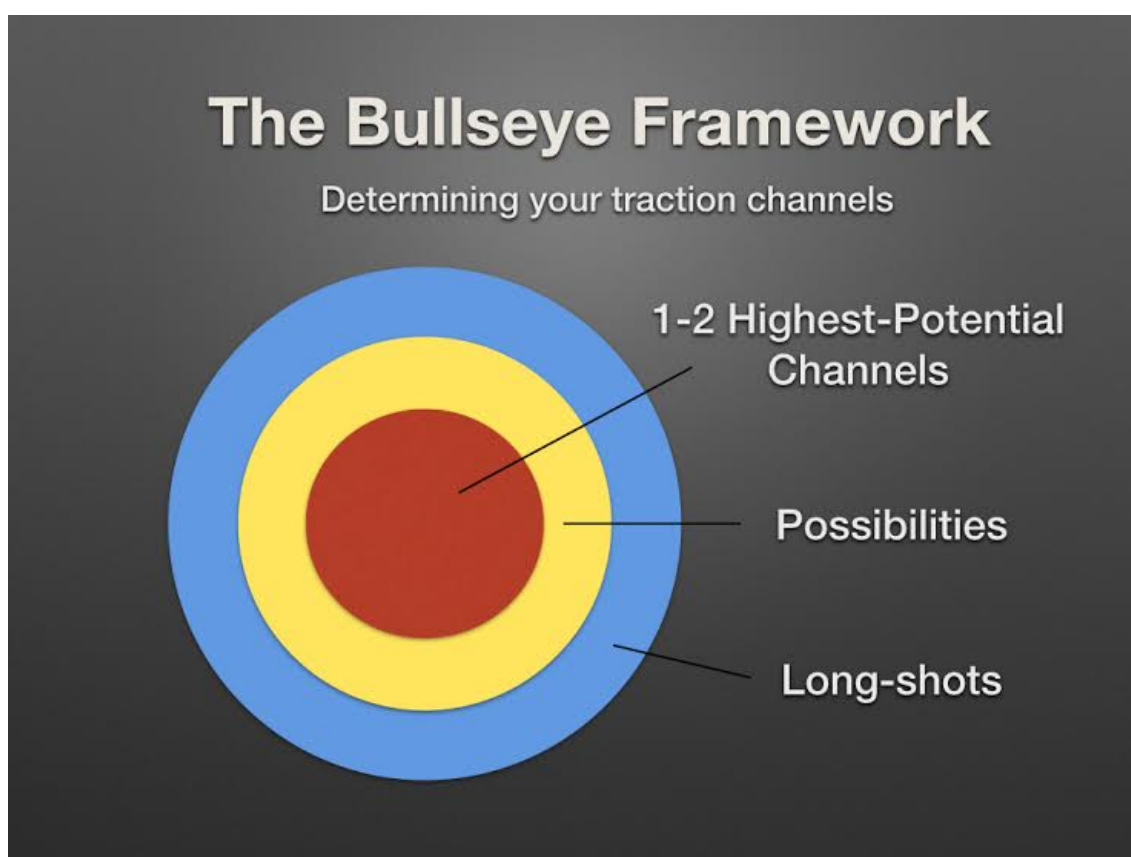


Figure 2. The bullseye framework (Balfour 2014).

Bullseye framework is a model for selecting the distribution channel that is the most suitable for a company. The aim of the framework is to focus on the most optimal distribution channel instead of using various channels. The Bullseye framework was created especially for start-up companies and it consists of three-stages.:

The outer ring:

In the first stage of the model, all possible traction channels are being analysed and example strategies on how to use these channels are being developed. Brainstorming is the key in the first stage and all the possible options should be considered. At this stage it is important to research what other similar companies

in the specific industry have done; what channels have they used, and have they been successful or not. (Weinberg 2015.)

The middle ring:

In the second stage of the model, the tractions are tested with low-cost in the channels that turned out to be the most promising based on the stage one. The channels that turned out to be less appealing should be left out at this stage. The low-cost channel tests should be based on these three questions:

“1.How much will it cost to acquire customers through this channel?2.How many customers are available through this channel?3.Are the customers that you are getting through this channel the kind of customers that you want right now?”(Weinberg 2015.)

The inner ring:

In the third stage, the “core channel” is being selected based on the test results from the second stage. The marketing efforts and resources are then allocated towards the most promising traction channel; “The Bullseye.” This stage includes the analyse of the selected core channel and the research of the ways to get the optimised results out of the selected core channel. (Weinberg 2015.)

3 CASE STUDY RESEARCH

3.1 Customer and competitor insights of the case company

The purpose of this part is to define the ideal customer type of XXXXX Oy based on the customer profile and to receive information about the competitors of the case company.

3.1.1 Customer profile

Based on the information received from the case company the ideal target customer of XXXXX Oy is being profiled as following:

Customer X

Who?

The customer X is a Finnish 25-40-year-old mother or father of a 4-8-year-old child that has problems with the pronunciation of the letter “R”. Customer X is used to use mobile applications and considers a mobile application as an effective tool to teach him or her child the pronunciation of “R”. The customer X has a permanent job and steady income.

Key values?

The customer X is family-centred, open-minded, respects education and has a modern way of life. The customer X is not afraid to test new things and innovations.

Looks, interests, lifestyle?

The customer X is in work life and wants to control him or her own schedules. In him or her free time customer X spends time with family and hobbies sports. The customer X is interested in the latest issues of the society and what is going on in the World. Customer X is an active user of social media sites. The customer X likes to spend spare time on surfing in different forums and sites on the internet and social media.

To summarize;

- 25-40-year-old
- Mother or Father of a 4-8-year-old child
- The child has problems with the pronunciation of the letter “R”
- Steady income and job
- Family-centred, modern way of life (XXXXX Oy)

3.1.2 Data based on the customer profile

The author made observations based on the customer profile given by the case company XXXXX Oy by searching information from different sources on the internet. Data that was found about the ideal customer type of XXXXX Oy was the following;

- Based on the data from the year 2017 from Statistics Finland there exists 1 057 092 adults from the age group of 25-40 in Finland. From this age group 512 432 are women and 544 660 are men which means that 48,5% are women and 51,5% are men. (Statistics Finland 2017.)
- Based on the data from the year 2017 from Statistics Finland there are 310 064 children from the age group of 5-9. (Statistics Finland 2017.)
- 87,9% of the citizens of Finland speak Finnish as their main language. (Statistics Finland 2017.)
- One fifth of Finnish children have problems with pronunciation at the age of five.(Jokela 2000.)
- The most common pronunciation problems among Finnish children are with the letters R, L and S. (Jokela 2000.)

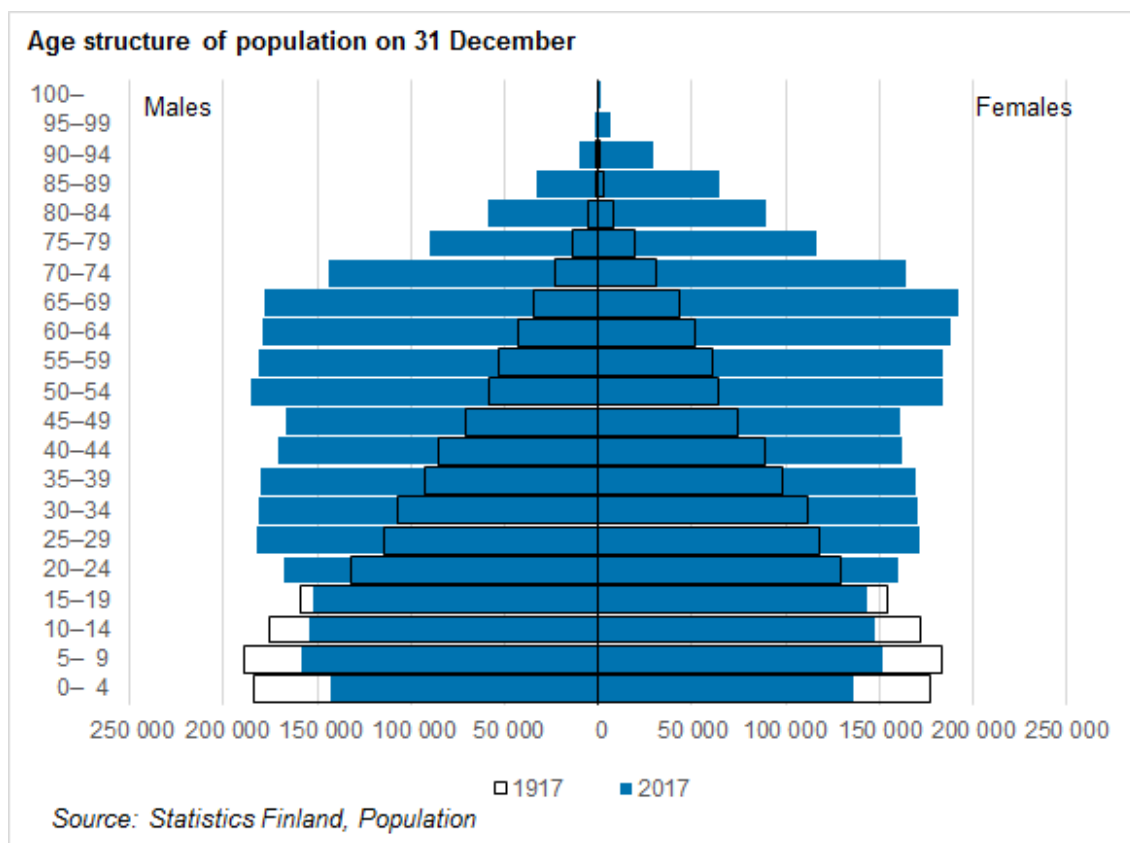


Figure 3. Age structure of population on 31 December (Statistics Finland 2017).

The ideal customer type of the case company does exist based on the information that was found. The specific amount of the ideal customers of XXXXX Oy cannot be accurately defined but as every fifth child has problems with pronunciation in the age of five, the conclusion can be that the amount of target customers is about tens of thousands of parents. Because new babies are born to Finland every day, the pronunciation problems do not disappear from the country. When one pronunciation problem of a child is solved, there appears new ones from other children.

3.2 Survey - digital behaviour of the desired customers of XXXXX Oy

As a part of this thesis the author designed and conducted quantitative research in a survey format (the questions can be found in the appendix 1) to gain insights from the digital behaviour and the digital marketing channels used by the respondents, that represent the ideal target customers of XXXXX Oy based on the customer profile given. The survey consisted of eight questions and had 74 respondents.

3.2.1 Survey goal and objectives

The main goal of the survey conducted by the author of this thesis was the following:

- Gain information about the digital behaviour and the digital marketing channels that the people who represent the ideal target customer type of XXXXX Oy use.

The objectives for the survey conducted by the author of this thesis were the following:

- What social media sites do the desired customer of XXXXX Oy use?
- What digital channels do the desired customer of XXXXX Oy use to search information from?
- Do the desired customers of XXXXX Oy follow opinion influencers online?
- What factors do the desired customers of XXXXX Oy value in the selection of a mobile application?

Based on the goals and objectives the author created the questions for the survey. The questions were designed to give answers to the objectives when asked from the desired customer group of XXXXX Oy.

3.2.2 Survey execution

The survey was conducted by the author of this thesis in online format by utilizing Google Forms. Google forms is an online tool for creating and sharing surveys and analysing the survey results online.

The survey consisted of eight separate questions that aimed on fulfilling the goals and objectives of the survey; receive data on the digital behaviour of the desired customer type of XXXXX Oy. Most questions of the survey were multiple choice questions and with the possibility to choose more than one alternative.

The survey was sent to people who have the characteristic of the ideal customer type of XXXXX Oy;

- Parent of a child aged 4-8.

The survey had 74 respondents and the survey collection time was one week.

The respondents were able to answer the survey anonymously, to ensure gaining truthful answers from the respondents. The survey was designed to be quick and easy to answer, to avoid overloading the respondents and to receive as many responses as possible in the data collection time. Answering to all the questions from the survey did not require more than one minute of time from the respondents.

3.2.3 Survey results

The main findings from the survey conducted by the author of this thesis are discussed in this section.

The survey had all in all 74 respondents of which 68.9% were women and 31.1% percent were men. All the respondents had children that were from the age group of 4-8 years old. The biggest age group from the respondents were 20-25 years old with 37% of the respondents. 19.2% of the respondents were 26-30 years old, 15.1% of the respondents were 31-35 years old, 10.9% of the respondents were 36-40 years old and finally 17.8% of the respondents were over 40 years old.

Social media channels

The most popular social media channels that were listed on the survey (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat) among the respondents of the survey were Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Almost everyone, 97.3% of the respondents of the survey uses Facebook. 77% of the respondents uses Instagram and 75.7% uses YouTube. Surprisingly only 17.6% of the respondents uses Twitter. 36.5% of the respondents uses Snapchat. Only one person from the respondents did not use any of these social media channels listed on the survey.

Blogs

One main finding from the survey conducted by the author was that the percentage of the respondents of the survey that reads blogs actively is merely low, only 16.2%. This means that 83.8% of the respondents of the survey do not read blogs actively or at all. From the people who do read blogs actively were asked an extra question to list what kind of blogs they read. Examples of the answers for the type of blogs the respondents read were; Professional blogs, Wellness and Fitness blogs, Cooking blogs, Family blogs, Décor blogs and Technology blogs.

Opinion Influencers

One question of the survey asked to rate how much the opinions or ratings of opinion influencers has impact on the purchase decision of the respondent. Almost half of the respondents, 44.4% rated that the opinions or ratings of opinion leaders does not have any impact on their personal buying decisions. Only 1.4% of the respondents rated that the opinion of opinion leaders has a big impact on their buying decisions.

Digital channels for searching information

The most popular channels for searching information online among the respondents of the survey were search engines, web-sites of the companies and social media sites of the companies. Almost all the respondents use search engines, such as Google, to search for information online. 64.9% of the respondents uses the official web-sites of the companies and 58.1% uses the social media sites of companies to seek for information online. 44.6% of the

respondents use online discussion forums (such as Vauva.fi) for information search.

Mobile applications

In the survey the author asked for factors that are important for the respondents in the selection of a mobile application. The ratings in the application store were important for 52.8% of the respondents. Other user's experiences and opinions about the mobile application were important for 62.5% of the respondents. 33.3% of the respondents stated the low price as an important factor in the selection of a mobile application. Features that were important for less than 30% of the respondents were the following; the number of downloads of the application, security impression of the application, the description of the application in the application store, the technical details of the application and the size of the application.

To summarize the survey results; almost all the respondents use the popular social media sites; Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Snapchat and Twitter are not so much used social media sites among the respondents of the survey. Almost all the respondents use search engines to search for information. Nearly all the respondents do not read blogs actively. Opinions of opinion leaders does not have a significant impact on the buying decisions of the respondents. The respondents of the survey value ratings in the application store, other user's experiences and low price when choosing a mobile application.

3.3 Competitor analysis

In this section, the main competitors of XXXXX Oy are being discussed. The aim of this section is to gain information of the strengths and weaknesses of the competitors of XXXXX Oy and research what digital marketing channels the competitors are using to reach their customers. Based on the observations made by the author and information received from the case company there exists three main competitors for XXXXX Oy that offer similar services in the industry of speech therapy in Finland. The main competitors are:

- XXXXX Oy
- XXXXX by XXXXX Oy
- The traditional speech therapy offered by public and private health care associations.

XXXXX Oy

XXXXX Oy is a Finnish company founded in 2003 that offers a wide selection of rehabilitation and healthcare services in Finland. XXXXX Oy has approximately 200 members of staff currently. The reason why XXXXX Oy is a competitor for XXXXX Oy is that they offer online speech therapy services and they have mobile application called "XXXXX" that consists of a memory game of words that include

the letter “R”. The price of the memory game is 5.9€ and the online speech therapy services that they offer are priced between 29-295€.

The competitive advantage of XXXXX Oy over XXXXX Oy from the point of view of the author is that it is a well-known association in Finland and they have received a trustworthy position with their brand.

XXXXX Oy’s products related to speech therapy (they sell other services than speech therapy as well) can be bought from the website of XXXXX Oy. The products are online therapy and application games that are made for learning either the pronunciation of the letter “R” or “S”. Based on the observations made by the author XXXXX Oy’s products are targeted to individual consumers but they also sell online speech therapy packages for professionals and organizations.

By the observations of the author it founds out that XXXXX oy are utilizing different channels of digital marketing. XXXXX Oy has Facebook and Instagram accounts. XXXXX Oy’s website has a separate section for their blog. In their webpage they also promote their email newsletter, which can be ordered from the site.

XXXXX

XXXXX is an organization that is owned by therapeutic center XXXXX Oy that was founded in 1994. XXXXX is an internet-based site where you can find support from speech therapeutics and online learning material for different areas of speech problems.

The competitive advantage of XXXXX over XXXXX Oy from the point of view of the author is the quick access to get support and help from speech therapist with online session. The price of XXXXX’s online learning package is 77€ for four months’ period.

XXXXX has a selection of online learning products. For example, XXXXX sells online “Task book” for the process of learning the pronunciation of the letters R, S and K. The online learning products can be bought directly from their online store. Based on the observations made by the author the products of XXXXX are targeted to individual consumers; the parents of the children who have problems with pronunciation of the letter “R”, “S” OR “K” or with all these letters.

The author made observations of the usage of digital marketing of XXXXX. The author found out that XXXXX is active on social media. XXXXX has Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts that are being updated regularly. On the official webpage of XXXXX there exists a blog that has posts about different areas of speech therapy written by one speech therapist from XXXXX.

Speech therapists from public and non-public health care associations

Speech therapy in Finland can be gained for children from the public health care centres for free. The other option for speech therapy is to buy it from the private health care centres. Speech therapy is being also offered free for children in need through primary school's health care systems. As an example, one private health care organization called "ProNeuron" charges 80-90€ for 45 minutes and 100-120€ for 60 minutes session of speech therapy.

These traditional forms of speech therapy are competitors for XXXXX Oy but they can be also seen as opportunities; the speech therapists could have co-operation with XXXXX Oy and recommend XXXXX mobile application for their customers and receive relief for their long queues. This mutual co-operation could end up benefitting both parties.

The competitive advantage of the speech therapists over XXXXX Oy from the point of view of the author is that their services can be tailored individually for the different and unique needs of the customers. The traditional speech therapists also have the authority and trustworthiness from the respected educational degree and the position they have received.

Many private health care associations are active users of digital marketing. According to the observations made by the author, many private health care associations utilize social media channels as a part of their digital marketing. For example, Terveystalo and Mehiläinen (popular Finnish private health care associations) are active on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Competitive advantage of XXXXX Oy

Compared to the competitors the competitive advantage of XXXXX Oy from the point of view of the author is that it is a modern tool, mobile application for learning the pronunciation of the letter "R". Because XXXXX Oy offers a broad application in a mobile format, which the competitors do not offer at the moment, the fact that it is a mobile application could be seen as a competitive advantage. Most of the learning material to learn the pronunciation of the letter "R" in speech therapy are available now in paper format or online but not downloadable to mobile version. The advantage of mobile application is that it can be used anywhere and at any time and by following the schedules of the customer.

XXXXX Oy's mobile application is designed to be used together with the child and the parent. Many educational mobile applications are designed to be used by the child on his/her own and then the mobile application separates the child and the parent rather than connects. By using the mobile application together, the ideal result in the end is to create good childhood memories for the child. Quality time between the parent and the child while learning the pronunciation of the letter "R" could be seen as a competitive advantage of XXXXX Oy.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

4.1 Recommended digital marketing channels for XXXXX Oy

In this part of the author of this thesis recommends what digital marketing channels should XXXXX Oy utilize in their digital marketing actions to be able to reach their target customers based on the theoretical and the research part of the thesis. The author advises XXXXX Oy to utilize the following digital marketing channels and tools; website, online videos, Facebook, Instagram, app store optimization and search engine optimization. In the end of this part the author discusses what channels XXXXX Oy should not utilize in their digital marketing actions.

4.1.1 Online marketing channels

Website

Based on the survey conducted by the author, the official website of a company is the place where most of the desired customers of XXXXX Oy seek for information. The author recommends that XXXXX Oy should put lots of effort to their official website and regard it as their key digital marketing channel. The customer should be able to find all the information she or he needs from the website. The information should be easy to find for the customer and the content should be clearly expressed. The appearance of the website should be pleasant to look at and matching to the product. The author recommends utilizing high quality pictures and the similar colours that are being used inside the application and in the logo of the company on the website.

The author recommends that all the answers for the following questions should be found from the official website of XXXXX Oy easily and in understandable format:

- What is XXXXX?
- To who is XXXXX for?
- What content does XXXXX have?
- What is the price of XXXXX?
- Where can the customer download XXXXX from?
- Is XXXXX created together with professionals of speech therapy?

Because XXXXX Oy offers an educational mobile application, the customers are likely to seek for credibility and trustworthy. Especially when buying educational application for their own children. The author recommends that XXXXX Oy should point out clearly that the application is created together with the Finnish speech therapists in their official website and in the other digital marketing channels and even inside the actual mobile application. The appearance of the website should support the credibility. The fact that XXXXX uses similar structure and methods that are used in the traditional speech therapy should be pointed out in the official website of XXXXX Oy as well, from the point of view of the author.

The author recommends that all the digital marketing channels should follow the same style in the appearance that is used on the official website of the company. The solid style used in all the channels is part of the brand building and it would help the customers to recognize XXXXX Oy from all the digital marketing channels used.

Online videos

The author recommends XXXXX Oy to utilize online videos as those can be made with merely low budget and are a way to express and share information in easily understandable format. Blending pictures with online videos would help in making the company's social media content attractive and amusing to browse and to follow.

Online video's content can be variable. XXXXX Oy could for example post videos that give tips for the learning process of the pronunciation of "R", peeks about the application's content and video greetings from the application's mascot. The author recommends that XXXXX Oy should post online videos frequently on their social media pages (Facebook and Instagram) and some of the videos could be put on the company's official website as well. The well managed videos can end up offering more value to the customers. The customers can end up being entertained and they might learn new facts because of the videos and this may increase the customer engagement. Good videos can end up being shared forward and, in that way, more people and potential customers can be reached.

The style of the online videos should follow the similar style used on other digital marketing channels of the specific company so that the publications are solid, based on the theoretical part.

As mentioned before, the author recommends that the colours used in the logo and the actual mobile application of XXXXX Oy would determine the main colours that are to be used in the marketing materials of the company. The main colours should be used in the online videos as well. If all the digital marketing channels utilize the colours used in the logo of XXXXX Oy the result can be a unique, connected and rememberable style.

4.1.2 Social media marketing channels

Facebook

Based on the survey conducted by the author it was discovered that almost everyone from the desired customers of XXXXX Oy uses Facebook. The author recommends that XXXXX Oy should utilize Facebook as their main social media channel. There exist many ways to use Facebook in marketing, based on the theoretical part of this thesis.

The author recommends that a consumer should be able to find all the information she or he needs about XXXXX mobile application compactly from the

Facebook Profile of XXXXX Oy. The survey results revealed that 58,1% of the respondents use the official social media sites of a company to search information about it; due to that the information should be easy to find from the main social media channels that a company utilizes. At least the basic information:

- What is XXXXX?
- To who is XXXXX made for?
- Where can the application be bought?
- What is the price of XXXXX?

should be found from their Facebook page. In the Facebook page it should be mentioned that the additional information can be found from the official website of the company and the link to the webpage attached.

The author recommends that the Facebook page of XXXXX Oy should offer amusing and relevant content for the customer of XXXXX Oy of which the followers of the page more likely consists of. Based on the theoretical part of this thesis, the amusing social media content is one of the ways to create customer engagement. Useful content in the Facebook page is a way to add value for the customer and to build a positive image about the company. The Facebook posts, pictures, videos and other content should be posted regularly; few times a week.

The useful content of XXXXX's Facebook page might also end up boosting the viral marketing; the followers may end up sharing posts of XXXXX on their personal Facebook profiles. The author recommends that XXXXX Oy would post competitions and other sharable content to their Facebook profile to strengthen the viral marketing and the follower's motivation to continue following the page.

XXXXX Oy has a clear target market. Facebook enables the effecting targeting of paid advertisements and campaigns, according to the theoretical part of this thesis. The author recommends that XXXXX Oy should utilize this possibility to reach their target customers.

Instagram

Instagram was the second most popular social media channel among the respondents of the survey the author conducted as a part of this thesis. 77% of the respondents uses Instagram and it is used for information search as well. The author recommends that XXXXX Oy should utilize Instagram as one of its social media channels. Instagram is a good channel for reaching the customers as it is one of the most popular social media sites in the World now. Instagram offers the possibility to gain customer engagement if the content is interesting for the followers. The posts on the Instagram page should follow the style of the company. Using one specific filter on the Instagram page feed of XXXXX Oy is one way to make the page look solid and connected.

As the possible customer of the case company uses Instagram as a source for searching information, the Instagram page should also have informative content. The author recommends that the Instagram page should not be too official and information focused but it still should contain the main information of the company. The author recommends that the following information should be found from the biographia-section on the Instagram page of XXXXX Oy:

- Short description of the mobile application
- Link to the official webpage where the customer can find more information
- Link to the place where XXXXX can be bought

The author recommends that XXXXX Oy should pay attention to the content that the company posts to its Instagram page. The content can be for example pictures and videos from the application and its mascot, user experiences and tips for the learning process. In the best case the useful and amusing content can end up to adding value for the ones who have bought the XXXXX application. The author recommends that the Instagram page should be updated regularly to obtain the followers interest. The author recommends posting videos or pictures approximately few times a week; too much posts could end up irritating the followers.

Like Facebook, Instagram also offers a way to reach the defined target market efficiently with paid advertisements and campaigns. The author recommends XXXXX Oy to utilize this opportunity especially when launching new products; to attract attention and to direct people for the Instagram page of XXXXX Oy to find out more about the company and its products.

4.1.3 Mobile marketing channel/tool

App store optimization

To boost the visibility of XXXXX in the application stores, the author recommends the company to use app store optimization. As a part of the app store optimization, XXXXX Oy should do keyword planning and content planning based on the buying personas. Active visibility online supports the app store optimization according to the theoretical framework; when people search for information about an application the company needs to be presented in many channels so that people can find the information they are looking for about the application.

According to the theoretical framework, ASO has two components; On-page and Off-page factors. Examples of on-page factors are ratings and appearance and examples of off-page factors are analytics and server speed. Some of the components can not be controlled by the company, for example ratings and reviews. The users personally give their own opinions and ratings about XXXXX-application. What the company can do, is to make the application as good as possible and well-functioning to receive good ratings. To some on-page the company can have a control on; the appearance, the title and the description.

The description is the first thing that comes visible on the screen when the consumer has clicked the applications title in the application store. Therefore, the title and the description of the application may play a crucial role on the selection of the mobile application. The author recommends the description to be compact and written with understandable language. The author recommends avoiding using speech therapy terms and expression that might not be well known among consumers.

Some off-site factors like analytics and server speed, needs to be on point before the application is on the application store. If there appears dysfunctionality on these off-site factors, those need to be modified through updates to avoid negative ratings about the application and unsatisfied customers. Some off-site factors develop over time, for example customer engagement and number of downloads. The well-functioning application, meaningful updates and efficient communication support the building of a customer engagement.

Steps recommended by the author in the ASO-strategy for XXXXX Oy:

- Careful keyword and content planning
- Putting the keywords on the online sites of XXXXX Oy
- Carefully considered title and description of XXXXX to the application stores
- Well-functioning application and quick response if errors appear (to ensure good ratings and reviews)
- Appearance of the application according to the style of the company
- Active communication and visibility through digital channels with the customers

4.1.4 Other recommendations

Search engine optimization

Search engines such as Google, are used for searching information online by almost all the respondents that took part to the survey that was conducted as a part of this thesis. As XXXXX is a tool for learning the pronunciation of the letter “R” the possible customers, the parents of the child who have problems with the pronunciation of “R”, most likely use search engines when searching for help for their child’s pronunciation problem. This is the place where XXXXX Oy needs to be visible. The author recommends XXXXX Oy to use Search engine optimization and paid search engine advertisements to ensure that the targeted customers will find XXXXX Oy among the competitors when they are searching for a solution to their problem.

The author recommends that XXXXX Oy should create a list of keywords and sentences that the customer would most likely use when searching for information. The company should consider synonyms and different question forms. The specific problem can be typed to search engine in many ways for example by: how to teach the letter “R” for child or what to do when child cannot pronounce “R”. After the keywords are listed those words should be integrated

to the textual content of XXXXX Oy's online channels; website and social media sites. To help in the keyword planning process the author recommends XXXXX Oy to utilize a free online tool called "GoogleAdwords". GoogleAdwords helps in creating keyword options and lists. The search engine advertisements are easy to buy from GoogleAdwords after creating lists of keywords with this tool.

Steps recommended by the author in the SEO-strategy of XXXXX Oy:

- Careful keyword and content planning by utilizing Google AdWords
- Integrating the keywords to the online sites of XXXXX Oy
- Prioritizing the most important keywords to be used in targeted search engine advertisements
- Buying of targeted search engine advertisements with Google AdWords

What channels not to use

There exist numerous digital marketing channels that XXXXX Oy could utilize to interact with their customers. To maximize the optimization of the marketing resources, the author recommends that some channels of digital marketing should be left out. Digital marketing efforts require monetary resources, time and staff. Limitation of the digital marketing channels to the most optimal ones could be a way for XXXXX Oy to save costs, as it is a new start-up company with a low amount of staff members.

The author recommends that the monetary resources should be allocated to the key digital marketing channels; the ones that are used by the target customers of XXXXX Oy the most. Due to the allocation, XXXXX Oy would be able to focus on the main channels and reach their customers effectively through them. The main channels can be developed to attract customers with highly considered content and updated regularly, when there are enough resources left to focus on them.

From the survey conducted by the author it found out that for example, the usage of Snapchat, Twitter and blogs are merely low among the desired customers of XXXXX Oy. The author recommends that XXXXX Oy should not make costly marketing efforts on these channels that are not popular among the desired customers of XXXXX Oy at least not in the current situation. The quality of the digital channels used is better than the quantity, from the point of view of the author. If there is no time or money to put effort to all possible digital marketing channels, it is better to focus on making the key channels as good as possible than use all the possible channels that may end up with poor appearance and content, says the author.

Like it is mentioned various times in the theory part of this thesis, the technological innovations change the digital marketing environment all the time. New social media sites, marketing tools and digital phenomena appear constantly. XXXXX Oy should be aware on the latest trends and modify their digital marketing plan and the channels they use when latest changes and

updates appear. It is important for XXXXX Oy to be visible and active on the channels that the target customers of them use.

The author recommends that XXXXX Oy would put their digital marketing efforts to the channels and tools mentioned earlier; website, online videos, Facebook, Instagram, app store optimization and search engine optimization. The other channels the author recommends not to put too much efforts at least not in the current moment. Focusing on the main channels could be a way for XXXXX Oy to save costs of digital marketing and to allocate the working hours of the employees of XXXXX Oy to be put to the most important digital marketing channels.

4.2 Conclusion

This part of this thesis concludes the previous parts. The focus on the conclusion part is on the main outcome of the thesis; the recommendations made for the case company XXXXX Oy.

Thesis background

The aim of the thesis was to end up with recommendations on what digital marketing channels the case company, XXXXX Oy, should utilize to reach their target customers effectively. The research question of this thesis was “What digital marketing channels should XXXXX Oy utilize in order to effectively reach their target customers?”. To answer the research question, the author researched the competitors of the case company and conducted a survey that aimed on receiving data on the digital behaviors of the ideal target customer type of XXXXX Oy.

Theory

The theoretical framework of this thesis consisted of the explanation of the terms and practices of digital marketing, targeting and channel selection.

Digital marketing means the activities done online to reach the customers by utilizing various online tools and practices. Digital marketing can be further divided into online marketing, social media marketing and mobile marketing. Online marketing channels are for example website, email-marketing and online videos. Social media marketing channels are for example Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Mobile marketing channels are for example mobile applications, mobile marketing messages and promotions.

Target marketing and customer profiling are part of digital marketing. After market segments are selected, the segment is divided into target markets. Targeting means selecting the customer type that would be ideal for the company to sell its products or services to. Based on the target market, customer profiles can be created. Customer profile means the detailed description of the ideal customer type of a company.

Marketing channel selection is one part of digital marketing. For example, the product type, competitors and the industry have an effect on the selection of the marketing channels for a company.

Research

The case company gave a customer profile of their ideal target customer type and the author created and conducted a survey based on the information received from the customer profile. The aim of the survey was to receive information of the digital behavior of the ideal customer type of XXXXX Oy.

The main findings from the survey conducted was that Facebook, Instagram and YouTube were the most popular social media channels among the respondents. Surprisingly, blogs were not actively read by the respondents and the opinion of opinion leaders did not have a significant impact on the buying decisions of the respondents. Almost all respondents used search engines and the official website of a company to search information from. Factors that the respondents value when choosing a mobile application are the ratings, other user's experiences and low price.

The main competitors of XXXXX Oy are XXXXX Oy, XXXXX by XXXXX Oy and speech therapists from public and non-public health care associations based on the competitor analysis part of this thesis.

Recommendations

Because XXXXX Oy offers mobile applications that are sold via digital channels the author recommends the company to focus mainly on digital marketing efforts. XXXXX Oy should be active on various channels to reach their target customers effectively. The digital activity is also one way to boost the app store optimization of the company.

The theoretical framework together with the research conducted by the author support the recommendations of this thesis. The main digital marketing channels that was recommended to the case company to use are website, online videos, Facebook, Instagram, app store optimization and search engine optimization. Majority of these channels are used by the competitors as well based on the competitor analysis.

The key digital channel for the case company was recommended to be the official website of the case company. All the information that the customer may need about the application and the company was recommended to be found from the website clearly presented.

Facebook and Instagram were founded out to be the most used social media channels among the respondents of the survey, that represent the ideal target customer type of XXXXX Oy. Facebook and Instagram are good channels for

effective targeted marketing, viral marketing and can help in building customer engagement. Because of these factors it was recommended for the case company to focus mainly on these social media channels.

It was recommended for the case company to use online videos on its digital channels (on the website, Facebook-site and Instagram-site) as a communication tool and to create amusing content to the case company's digital marketing channels. If the customers of XXXXX Oy end up sharing the online videos on their personal social media sites, the online videos could end up boosting the viral marketing of the case company too.

As a recommendation it was stated that the case company should utilize app store optimization and search engine optimization so that the customer could find the case company effectively among the competitors. It is crucial that when the customer searches for a solution to him or her child's pronunciation problem online, that the case company is visible in the search on the application store and on the search engines. Especially because XXXXX is an educational application, the target customers most likely search information about it from search engines mobile and online based on the survey results. To create successful app store optimization the on-site and off-site factors need to be planned and executed well. Careful keyword and content planning was recommended to be done by the case company in both search engine optimization and app store optimization.

The style that the case company uses on its digital marketing channels was recommended to be solid in order to strengthen the brand image and to make it easier for the customer to recognize the case company from various channels. The digital marketing channels was recommended to be updated regularly and with useful and amusing content.

It was recommended that at this stage the digital marketing channels that are not actively used by the ideal target customers of the case company should not be used in the case company's digital marketing. For example, Snapchat, Twitter and blogs are not actively used by the ideal target customers of the case company, based on the survey conducted. To save digital marketing costs and resources, it was recommended not to utilize these channels.

The digital marketing channels that was recommended to XXXXX Oy was selected among the digital channels listed on the theory part of this thesis. The customer profile, the competitor analysis and the survey results gave the basis for the recommendation made by the author. By creating a detailed strategy to the channels recommended, the ideal target customers of XXXXX Oy can be reached effectively.

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DIGITAL BEHAVIOUR SURVEY (Translated from Finnish – executed in Finnish)

1. Age
2. Gender
3. What social media channels of the following do you use?
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
 - Twitter
 - Youtube
 - Snapchat
 - Nothing from the options listed
4. Do you read actively blogs or other online forums?
 - Yes
 - No
5. If yes, what?
6. If you follow opinion influencers on social media, has their opinions or recommendations had influence on your purchase decisions?
 - Yes
 - No
 - I don't follow opinion influencers
7. What digital channels do you use for searching information?
 - Search engines (for example Google)
 - Company websites
 - Company social media sites
 - Blogs
 - Forums
 - Other, what?
8. What factors are important for you when selecting a mobile application?
 - Good ratings at the application store
 - The amount of downloads the application has
 - Opinions or recommendations of other users
 - The technical data of the application
 - The size of the application
 - Low price of the application
 - Security

-Nothing from the options listed