



## Strategic Marketing Plan for Wedding Store

Case: Golden Crown Wedding Store, China

Wu Fan

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## ABSTRACT

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The objective of this thesis is to build a strategic marketing plan for the Golden Crown Wedding Store. The strategic marketing plan and the analysis of the situation of the market are the main part of the thesis. This thesis will help the case company to develop their business.

This thesis used both qualitative research and quantitative research. An interview and a questionnaire are the major information sources of the empirical data for the research. The theoretical framework in this thesis aims to study the main elements of the strategic marketing plan. An internal analysis, customer analysis, market analysis, competitor analysis and SWOT analysis are also presented in this thesis.

The result of the thesis is a feasible strategic marketing plan for the Golden Crown Wedding Store. This strategic marketing plan is based on the internal and external analysis of the case company. The strategic marketing plan puts forward new ideas for the case company.

Key words: Wedding Business, Wedding Planning, Strategic Marketing Plan, Internal and External Analysis

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

In China, due to the development of the secondary industry and tertiary industry, people's living standards have hugely improved. Especially the tertiary industry develops very fast. Many emerging business types have generated. These emerging businesses bring people more enjoyments of life and job opportunities. China is an enormous market by global standards. Many companies want to expand in the Chinese market. However, expanding in China is a difficult business process.

In this thesis, my objective is to build a strategic marketing plan for my case company. The strategic marketing plan is built for the wedding business. The case company is the company in which I did my practical training in July – September 2010. The company operates in a city which located in the eastern of China. The company already owns two wedding stores in this city. There are several customers for whom the store arranges their wedding because the customers appreciate and value the store's services. A good planning and complete wedding equipment attract an increasing number of customers to purchase the service from the wedding store.

In the present years, the wedding business is becoming increasingly popular in the Chinese market. It is an emerging business in Chinese market. On its emergence, this business received positive response from customers. Chinese people enjoy excitements and they love to share their happiness. People invite friends and family to celebrate with them when they have wedding events. People in China consider a wedding is a significant ceremony. They will invite a huge number of people to their wedding. This activity also brings a big business opportunity. Restaurants, photographic industry, travel industry, furniture industry and decoration-oriented business benefit from these opportunities.

The wedding store which is the case company in this thesis is a wedding celebration shop. It started becoming popular in Shanghai in 2002. At that time, the wedding store just sold candies. Selling candies are a result from the fact that Chinese people have a custom that when a couple has a wedding, hosts should send to guests the wedding candies. Sending candies symbolize the love of the couple's sweetness. With the wedding industry developing, the wedding store not only sells candies, but also a range of wedding services. The purpose of wedding store is to give customers a memorable wedding.

### 1.1 Background and Motivation

Golden Crown Wedding Store belongs to Rainbow Sky Co. The Rainbow Sky Co. was opened up in 2003 and it was a candy agency at that time. They send their products to the shops and supermarkets. As a result of the development of market, there have been an increasing number of supermarkets opened. Rainbow Sky Co. realized the potential of the operation of the supermarket and the manager considers there was a good prospect of the supermarket business in China. Today, the Company has a supermarket, two wedding stores and a candy agency. (Rainbow Sky Co, 2012.)

The first Golden Crown Wedding Store was opened up in 2008. The wedding business started emerging in China at that time. There were some wedding stores in Southern China but not in the eastern region. The company's manager decided to start a wedding store after investigating the market potential. The second one was opened up in 2010. This shop provides wedding services and products which are used by people organizing weddings. The product range includes some subsidiary food, such as candies, and nuts. The shop also includes trinkets, such as wedding cards and services, i.e. wedding scheme. In addition, the services include wedding planning, wedding etiquette, hosting weddings, making videos, and arranging public venues for weddings. (Yuan 2012.)

When I did my practical training in the company, I found out that there was a big space to develop the wedding store. Due to the lack of some wedding products and service, the turnover of the wedding store did not achieve the desired results. The company's manager Ms. Yuan discussed this problem with me and told me she needs new ideas to develop the wedding store. A strategic marketing plan designed through this research will help the case company managers realize the real market situation and make a competitive plan for the company.

I chose this topic because I am interested in this wedding business. It shows a part of special Chinese culture. I also want to find out how to make a strategic marketing plan, in order to study what necessary elements of making a strategic marketing plan. The market I analyzed is the market in which the case company operates in. This strategic marketing plan will help the case company achieve the desired results and expand the brand of the wedding store in the market and attract more customers.

In this thesis work, I analyze my case company situation. Lastly, I will make a holistic strategic marketing plan for the wedding store in the thesis.

## 1.2 Research Objective and Question

My thesis objectives are to learn how to make a strategic marketing plan, to find out what elements impact on making strategic marketing and then to make a complete strategic marketing plan for my case company. I analyze the internal and external environment of the case company to build the marketing plan.

Deriving from my thesis objectives, my first research question is the following:

What is a strategic marketing plan?

This question is difficult to answer directly. This question aims to learn about the holistic operation in marketing. I will learn how to build the strategic plan by theoreticall. In general, I will answer this question by consulting literature and previous research.

The second question that I find answers to in my work is as follows:

How can a strategic marketing plan be build for the Golden Crown Wedding Store?

I will answer this question by combining the theoretical information and the information from the empirical research. I will analyze the real situation of markets to answer this question and to build a strategic marketing plan for the case company.

### 1.3 Research methodology

A business case reflect real simulates. (Ellet 2007, 13.) Yin (2009, 18) points out that “case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear evident.”Collis and Hussey (2003,3) describe research is central to both business and academic activities. It is a process of inquiry and investigation. Research has systematic and methodical features. Furthermore, research will help researchers to increase knowledge. As an answer to the question of why do firms need marketing research, Kent (2007,3) gives a straightforward answer to this question, i.e. “to help managers make better, more informed decisions”. Business researchers analyze market, customer and competitors and build detailed marketing plans for the business.

In this research, my objective is to build a strategic marketing plan for my case company. My main research questions are “what” and “How” questions. Thus, I will use



qualitative research methods to describe and explain the research and also use quantitative research to analyze the situation of case company.

Qualitative marketing research is to explore and understand people's attitudes, perceptions, motivations and behaviors by constructing and analyzing the data which are largely collected in nature (Kent 2007, 86). Qualitative research provides information and knowledge that the business need.

In this research I do an interview of the wedding store manager. The manager provided information about the wedding store. The information provided includes information about the situation, investment, and also the problems they faced.

Kent (2007, 151) points out that quantitative research needs a structural case, variables and values imposed upon them, and that to obtain the variables it is necessary to operationalize them in deciding on the process of measurement are to be used. A questionnaire means a document that is used as a tool with which to collect data conducted by asking people questions. (Kent 2007, 151.)

In this thesis, the questionnaire is used for customer satisfaction inquiry and analysis. Customers answer questions on the questionnaire dealing with customer satisfaction and give some suggestions. From this questionnaire, the researcher realizes the customer demand and what aspect should be improved.

#### 1.4 Structure of Study

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter 2 focuses on the theory part about what a strategic marketing plan is and on the analysis of market. Chapter 3 describes the methodology of the research. Chapter 4 discusses the main elements the plan needs and give suggestions for this strategic marketing plan. The last chapter is the conclusions chapter of the thesis.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical framework for this thesis is discussed here, with a focus on a strategic marketing plan and build it. I will write theoretical knowledge about what is a strategic marketing plan and how to make it. Wedding business, as well as internal analysis, external analysis, SWOT analysis of the case company is provided and strategic marketing plan process is discussed.

### 2.1 Wedding Business

In every country people hold weddings. Different countries have different customs of weddings. China has its own customs on weddings. Wedding business is called “sweet business” in China. Along with the development of the Chinese economy, Chinese people improve their living standard. Wedding business is becoming an emerging industry in China. (Baidu, 2012.)

Wedding stores started to open in Shanghai in 2002. Wedding stores spread within a few years in China. The increased number of wedding store has brought about the development of many other industries. Wedding business provides services and sells wedding products to people who get married. Wedding services include wedding schemes, wedding etiquette, providing wedding hosts, photography, making videos, and holding wedding parties. Wedding products include wedding candy, wedding invitations, cigarette, alcoholic drinks and wedding jewelry. Wedding stores have comprehensive services for the people who get married. Holding a wedding involves many practical matters to do. Customers come to the wedding store, and the store arranges everything for the customer. (Biadu, 2012.)

## 2.2 Strategic Marketing Plan Process

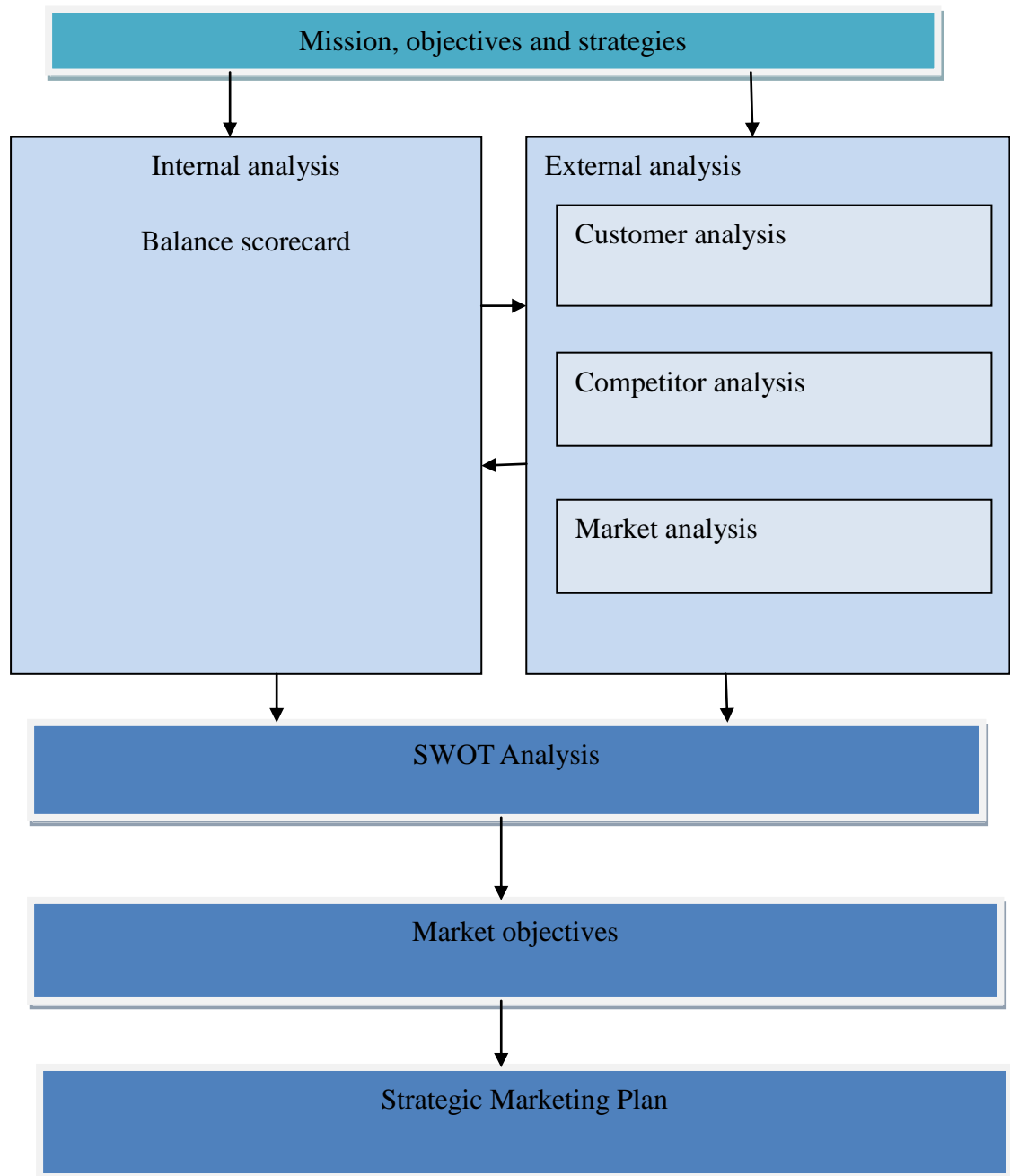
Planning based on many personal business issues. Strategic Planning includes marketing and the fit between production, finance and strategy and environment. (Jobber 1998, 29.) Planning process has a significant meaning in planning work. It is the framework of the research. Gilligan and Wilson (2003, 44) point out that a strategic marketing planning process involves making a plan to develop the strategies based on the assessment of market and perceptions of managerial expectations and the competence of the companies. They maintain that planning is a living and meaningful process and a plan is a guide and inform decisions which can be used on day-to-day works. (Gilligan & Wilson 2003, 44-61.)

Alsem (2007, 21) describes the process in the following way: the strategic marketing plan process is a combination of an external analysis and an internal analysis. The internal analysis is to determine the firm's strengths and weaknesses. The objectives of external analysis could provide the opportunities and threats. The combination of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) helps managers find out an effective strategy.

However, Gilligan and Wilson (2003, 65) provide a description of a more detailed planning process than Alsem (2007) does. First, the executive summary is needed. The planner should realize the background of the company and to understand the mission, objectives, and financial performance. On the basis of the understanding, the planner makes a market and situational analysis. The next stage is making an internal analysis and external analysis. Following these analyses, the planner needs to analyze critical issues to reduce the competitive threats and to find out opportunities and principal assumptions underpinning the plan. The planner drafts the target market and its characteristics and ensures the marketing objectives. When the above steps have been completed, the competitive strategy can be made. From the seven Ps, brand, budgets and objectives, the planner makes an action plan. Relying on the action plan, the manager

starts controlling the plan and considers the ability of implementation. Lastly, contingency planning is necessary in the planning process. Even though the Gilligan and Wilson's planning process is somewhat cumbersome, but it is very complete. This process includes every detail. (Gilligan & Wilson 2003, 65-68.)

Figure1 incorporates the two theoretical remarks to support this thesis in the strategic marketing plan process. The original figure is from the Alsem's (2007, 21) Overview of the Strategic Marketing Planning Process which aims to make it into a relevant strategic marketing plan process for the thesis.



**Figure 1. Strategic Marketing Plan Process (Alsem 2007, 21)****2.2.1 Internal Analysis**

Internal analysis in the planning process is the control stage which is the starting point of the process (Alsem 2007, 55). Aaker and McLoughlin (2010, 99) maintain that internal analysis means to provide a detailed cognition of strategically important information about the company. The internal analysis includes: Financial performance, performance dimensions, strength and weaknesses basis of current and future strategies, identification and prioritization of the threats and opportunities and relationships between organizations, competitors and market. (Aaker & McLoughlin 2010, 99 - 109.) Internal analysis helps researcher to realize the operation of case company.

Internal analysis usual begins with an analysis of firm financials which includes measures of sales and profitability. They provide a target of the success of last strategies and assess the necessary of strategic changes. (Aaker & McLoughlin 2010, 100.) However, Alsem (2007, 24) deems that internal analysis includes strengths and weaknesses analysis of the company. The more important stress is brand's performance. He consider before the strength-weaknesses analysis it is important to have a detailed analysis of the brand's performance is needed. Aaker and McLoughlin (2010,103) also point out that the importance of the performance which is beyond profitability. They suggest this brand loyalty set up on the customer base. The customer satisfaction affects the brand loyalty. Aaker and McLoughlin discribe the factors which affect the performance of brand which are Brand Loyalty, Product Quality, Brand Associations, Relative Cost, Innovation, Employee Capability and Performance and Values and Heritage. (Aaker & McLoughlin 2010, 103 - 107.)

Thus, internal analysis in this research includes brand's performance analysis, financial analysis and strengths and weaknesses analysis. The internal analysis helps a researcher

to get a detailed understanding of the case company inside and find out the mission of this company. Then, the researcher will assist the company in achieving the business objectives.

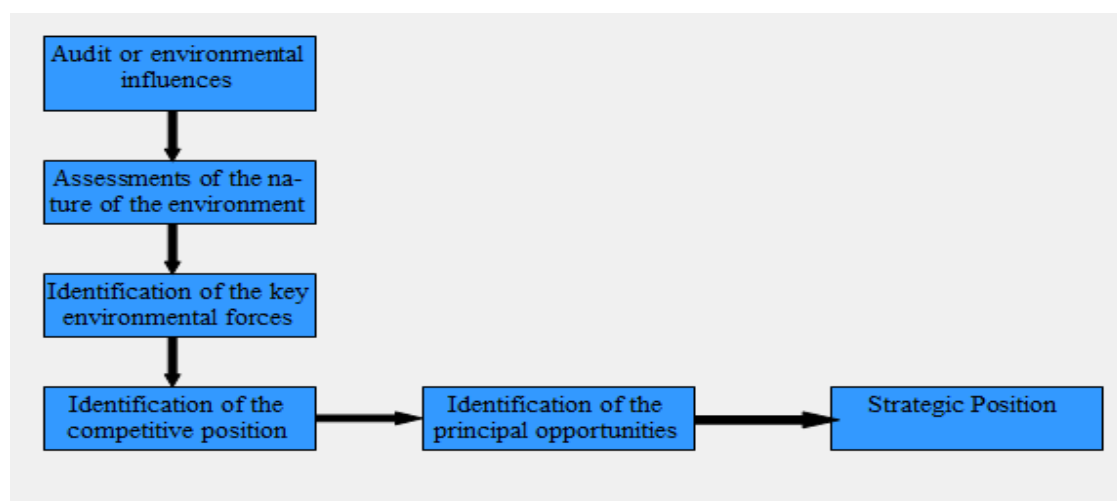
### 2.2.2 Market Analysis

Market analysis is significant for making a plan. It contains political factors, economic factors, social-cultural factors and technology factors. These factors directly affect the market performance. Aaker and McLoughlin (2010, 60) indicate that market analysis has two objectives. The first one objective of a market analysis is to ensure a strategy to attract the current and potential customers in the market. The second objective of market analysis is to find out the dynamics of the market. (Aaker & McLoughlin 2010, 60.)

Kotler (2000,192) points out that the business market include all activities the companies obtain products and services used in the production of other products or services that are sold, rented, or supplied to others. He also analyzes there are four main influences to affect business buyers' decisions which are environmental, organizational, interpersonal, and individual. Aaker and McLoughlin (2010,60) indicate market analysis is to make some strategic judgments about the market which builds on customer and competitor analyses.

Aaker and McLoughlin (2010, 61) suggest to do market analysis often include following dimensions: to find out the emerging submarket, to ensure actual and potential market and submarket size, to observe the market and submarket growth, to quarry market profitability, to build cost structure, distribution systems, to draw the trends and developments and to find out the key success factors. However, Gilligan and Wilson (2003, 341) believe that marketing analysis equals to the environmental analysis. They give five stages of the analysis. This process illustrated in Figure 2. Gilligan and Wilson (2003, 344) display that the first stage audit of environmental influences which purpose to find out the types of environmental factors which influenced the companies'

development and previous performance. The second stage is an assessment of the environment. The third one is to find out the specific environmental factors. The fourth stage is an analysis firm's competitive position which includes strategic group analysis and market share analysis. The last one is to find out the opportunities and threats of the firm and to put the company in a strategic position. Gilligan and Wilson provide a specific plan for this market analysis. (Gilligan & Wilson 2003, 343 – 344.)



**Figure 2.** The five stages of environmental analysis (source: Johnson and Scholes 1998, cited in Gilligan & Wilson 2003)

### 2.2.3 Customer Analysis

Customer is a part of the marketing environment and analysis the customer behavior is very important. (Brassington & Pettitt 2005, 69.) The creation of the customer value is being emphasized in the marketing concept in recent years (Alsem 2007, 73). Kotler (2000) indicates that customer analysis can be used for the market segmentation and to analyze the customer motivations and usefully partitioned into an understanding explore the unsatisfied customer demand. The field of customer behavior studies to satisfy customer needs and desires through understanding how individual groups, and organizations select, buy, use, and dispose of goods, services, ideas, or experiences.

Aaker and McLoughlin (2010, 26) describe customer analysis mainly by dividing the analysis into three parts. The first one is segmentation. They also point out that the

segmentation means the identification of customer groups that answer differently from other groups to competitive products. The segmentation will help companies to ensure the customer groups. Through to research the segmentation, researchers will find out the most profitable ways. The second one is customer motivations. It helps researchers to consider the objectives of customers and to find out the reasons why customers change their mind. The last one is unmet needs. An unmet need means a customer need that is not being met by the existing products. Unmet needs the strategically important meanings because the unmet needs will increase the market share and create a new market. (Aaker & McLoughlin 2010, 35.)

#### 2.2.4 Competitor Analysis

“Competitors are companies that satisfy the same customer need” (Kotler 2000, 223). Competitive analysis is a central element of the marketing planning process, with detailed attention paid to each competitor’s obvious objective, resources, capabilities, perceptions and competitive position and their marketing plans and individual elements of the marketing mix (Gilligan & Wilson 2003, 177).

Aaker & McLoughlin (2010, 42) explains that before doing a competitor analysis, researchers should identify current and potential competitors. After competitors are identified, the understanding and strategies of the competitors should be found out. The analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each competitor or strategic is important. (Aaker & McLoughlin 2010, 42.) Alsem (2007, 131) points out except the competitor analysis obtain strengths and weaknesses of the competitors but also the future behavior of the competitors. To sum up, to do this competitor analysis researchs first should identify competitors and analyse the strengths and weaknesses and future behavior of competitors.

#### 2.3 SWOT Analysis



SWOT analysis is one of the well-known and frequently used tools in the marketing planning process. The quality of the outcomes often sustain because of the relatively surfaced mode in which it is conducted. (Gilligan & Wilson 2003, 88.) SWOT analysis in four parts, i.e. strengths, weakness, threats and opportunities.

SWOT analysis is therefore designed to achieve two principal objectives. The first objective is to divide significant data from that which is merely interesting. The other objective is to find out what management must do to develop its distinctive competencies no matter how and in the long term within each of the market segments. (Gilligan & Wilson 2003, 89.)

Along with the development of business and economics TOWS analysis came out, TOWS analysis can be seen to add another scale to the traditional believing about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. A basal principle question can be increased about just how useful this slightly of analysis is within today's markets (Gilligan & Wilson 2003, 102).

Internal Elements	Organizational Strengths	Organizational Weaknesses
External Elements	Strategic options	
Environmental Opportunities (and risks)	S-O: Strengths can be used to capitalize or build upon existing or emerging opportunities	W-O: The strategies developed need to overcome organizational weaknesses if existing or emerging opportunities are to be exploited
Environmental Threats	S-T: Strengths in the organization can be used to minimize existing or emerging threats	W-T: The strategies pursued must minimize or overcome weaknesses and, as far as possible, cope with threats

**Table 1.** The TOWS matrix (Wehrich, 1982, 102, cited in Gilligan & Wilson 2003)

### 3 METHODOLOGY

The methodology based on the theoretical and practical explanations. I will write the scientific research design for to get the solutions to research questions. The provenance of the author gathered the requisite data and how to analyze the data displayed. Research methods, research process, data collection and analysis of the research are provided here.

#### 3.1 Research Methods

The research objectives are to learn how to make a strategic marketing plan, and then to make a complete strategic marketing plan for the Golden Crown Wedding Store. “A case study is a methodology that is used to explore a single phenomenon in a natural setting using a variety of methods to obtain in-depth knowledge” (Collis & Hussey 2009, 82). This thesis uses multiple methods which are qualitative and quantitative. Kent (2007,86) describes qualitative marketing research aims to explore and understand customer’s attitudes, perceptions, motivations and behaviors by constructing and then analyzing data that are largely qualitative in nature. Kent (2007,117) quantitative marketing research sets out to measure the extent of, or changes in, marketing phenomena and to test ideas about them in order to make predictions. Collis and Hussey (2009) pointed that the goal of case study can be exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. This thesis is exploratory due to the few studies have been conducted in the same research area.

#### 3.2 Research Process

This research started with author took practical training at Rainbow Sky Co. I have

talked with company manager Ms. Yuan about wedding store. Ms. Yuan said she has intentions to develop the wedding store to attract more customers. However, it has many difficult problems with this idea. After that, I decided to do this research to make a strategic marketing plan to help her develop the wedding store. The objectives and research questions of this research were discussed and decided together with Ms. Yuan. In order to learn more about the strategic marketing plan, the literature was reviewed. It displayed in the last chapter. Furthermore, the interview was conducted with Ms. Yuan. Questionnaires of customer satisfactions were sent to 30 customers. Firstly, I interviewed Ms. Yuan and ask her some questions which can help the researcher to analyze the situation. Second, a questionnaire has made by researcher after discussing with Ms. Yuan. We give 30 questionnaires to customers in the wedding store.

### 3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The data in the thesis are obtained from primary and secondary sources. Collis & Hussey explain the primary data are data generated from an original source, such as researchers' own experiments, surveys, interviews or focus groups. Secondary data are data collected from existing sources, such as publications, databases and internal records. Interview and questionnaire are the tools to get the primary data. The interview was processed with company managers. The data include financial data, customer satisfaction and marketing situation from the interview. The data are analyzed from interviews in situation analysis part in chapter 4. The data collected from questionnaires have analysis using tables or charts. In addition, there are some data gained from secondary sources, such as company record and archives and wedding business field analysis from the Internet.

Ghuri and Grønhaug (2005, 131 – 133) maintain that interviews need a real interaction between researchers and interviewees. Interview can divide into two types. The first one is structured interview which means “where a stand format of interview is used with an emphasis on fixed response categories and systematic sampling and loading procedures

combined with quantitative measures and statistical methods. The other type is unstructured interview which means the researchers do not have fixed questions. Regarding to the mode of interviews, interview was conducted face-to-face. The interview is semi-structured. The list of questions is predetermined. Nevertheless, the order of the question is flexible. The researcher also can ask more questions after get some question answers from the interviewee. These questions will add into the question list to help the analysis. The interview for company manager focuses on the operational strategy of the wedding store.

Questionnaire helps researchers to get the information and make the right decisions for marketing strategy. A good questionnaire helps researchers to achieve their objectives. (Aaker & Kumar & Day & Leone 2011, 275.) Regarding to the mode of questionnaires, 30 questionnaires were sent by internet and to the customer in the wedding store. The reason why I put it in the wedding store due to these customers is the real customers who are going to get married. The questions focus on the customer satisfaction of the wedding store. This questionnaire will analyze in chapter 4 by tables and charts.

### 3.4 Limitation of Research

During the thesis work, there are some problems difficult to solve in the research process. In the preparation period, the theoretical knowledge of the wedding business is difficult to find out. Due to the wedding business is an emerging industry, so there is very less relevant documents about the wedding business. However, I have obtained the information about the wedding business on the internet.

In the research process, I have sent out 30 questionnaires to the customer. Every customer is the customer which buys products from the case wedding store. It takes a long time to finish this work and collect. It should thank Ms. Yuan provide helps for me to do this questionnaire and send the results when I am in Finland. However, I couldn't gain the questionnaire directly. It may affect the results of the questionnaire.

## 4 STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN IN WEDDING BUSINESS

The focus is on the practical and experiential work in order to analyse the qualitative and quantitative research and research results. The strategic plan is also displayed in this chapter. Firstly, the case company is analyzed based on the interview of the company manager. Secondly, the customer situation is analyzed on the basis of the questionnaire. Furthermore, this chapter also includes the analysis of the market, competitors together with the SWOT of the wedding store. Lastly, the suggestions for the strategic marketing plan are also presented at the last of this part.

### 4.1 Golden Crown Wedding Store Overview

Golden Crown Wedding Store belongs to Rainbow Sky Co. Rainbow Sky Co. is a medium sized trade firm. Rainbow Sky Co. was set up in 2003. The company has a candies agency, two wedding stores and a supermarket. The company has about 50 employees. The first wedding store was opened in 2008. The second one opened in 2010. Wedding store provides wedding products and wedding services. Wedding products include wedding candies, nuts, trinkets, wedding cards, red wine, alcoholic, presents. Services contain wedding planning, wedding etiquette, and wedding host, making videos, and arranging public venues for weddings. ( Rainbow Sky Co. 2012.)

The first wedding store located in city business downtown. The store has 50 square meters. It has four employees and one store manager. The second one located in wholesaling market. The market wholesales candies, wines and subsidiary foods. However, this thesis uses the first wedding store data for the analysis the research questions. ( Rainbow Sky Co. 2012.)

4.1.1 Internal Situation

Internal analysis displayed in this part. The balanced scorecard tool is used in this internal analysis to analyze the objectives of the wedding store. Niar (2004, 13) defines “the balanced scorecard is a methodology to solve problems in balancing the theories of a strategy with its execution. The balanced scorecard from four different aspects analyzes the objectives of wedding store, i.e. financial, customer, internal and learning. Some interview questions improve information for this balance scorecard.

Theme <sup>+</sup>	Objectives <sup>+</sup>	Measures <sup>+</sup>	Targets <sup>+</sup>	Initiatives <sup>+</sup>
Financial <sup>+</sup> 	1.Revenue <sup>+</sup> 2.Gross profit margin and operating margin <sup>+</sup>	1.Cash flow <sup>+</sup> 2.Operating costs <sup>+</sup>	Increase 25% per year of turnover <sup>+</sup>	1.Interest rate <sup>+</sup> 2.Turnover <sup>+</sup>
Customer <sup>+</sup> 	1.Satisfied customer <sup>+</sup> 2.Improve brand image <sup>+</sup>	1.Customer feedback and sales rate <sup>+</sup> 2.Customer loyalty <sup>+</sup> 3.New customers <sup>+</sup>	Couples who holding weddings <sup>+</sup>	1.Customer survey <sup>+</sup> 2.Marketing campaign <sup>+</sup>
Internal <sup>+</sup> 	1.Unique services <sup>+</sup> 2.Comprehensive wedding products <sup>+</sup> 3.Improve marketing <sup>+</sup>	1.Build wedding planning department <sup>+</sup> 2.Marketing performance <sup>+</sup>	Attract more new customers <sup>+</sup>	1.Wedding planning services <sup>+</sup> 2.Customer survey <sup>+</sup> 3.Turnover <sup>+</sup>
Learning <sup>+</sup> 	1.Innovation <sup>+</sup> 2.Competent marketing staff <sup>+</sup>	1.Quantity of Wedding planning projects <sup>+</sup> 2.Education and Employee survey <sup>+</sup>	Manager <sup>+</sup> Employees <sup>+</sup>	1.Develop of the services and products <sup>+</sup> 2.Training <sup>+</sup>

**Figure 3.** Balance scorecard of Wedding Store

Financial

The financial data collect from the interview question 4 and 5. According question 5,

Ms. Yuan said the turnover of a wedding store about three million RMB. The gross profit has about four hundred thousand RMB. She pointed out that the objective of the financial part is increase 25% of turnover. (Yuan, 2012.) Also increasing gross profit margin and operating margin, this will come true by innovation services and add wedding products. The revenue and margins will measure by cash flow and operating costs.

#### Customer

The objectives of customer are improved brand image and satisfied customer. The target customer group is couples who holding wedding. Wedding store will through customer survey and marketing campaign. The measures are customer feedback, sales rate, customer loyalty, and new customer increasing rate.

#### Internal

The goal of internal is attracting more new customer. The unique services, comprehensive wedding products and improve marketing are the objectives of the internal part. The measures are building a wedding planning department and marketing performance. It embodies by customer survey and turnover of the wedding store.

#### Learning

The objectives of the learning part are innovating and competent employees. The target group is the store manager and employees. The measures are the quantity of the wedding planning projects, employee survey. The learning part is initiated by developing the services and products, take training for the employees.

#### 4.1.2 Market Situation

Market analysis helps managers to make a strategic management method for company. The market analysis also unearths market's profit potential. The researcher has talked about the market situation with Ms. Yuan in the interview (Q1). First of all, Ms. Yuan

explained why she opened the wedding store. She has investigated some wedding stores in Shanghai and some south area and also conducted market survey. She consulted the civil affairs bureau and the worker said there are dozens of couples take the marriage registration every day. Furthermore, when some festival comes, there are hundred couples take marriage registration. This phenomenon means wedding store has huge market potential.

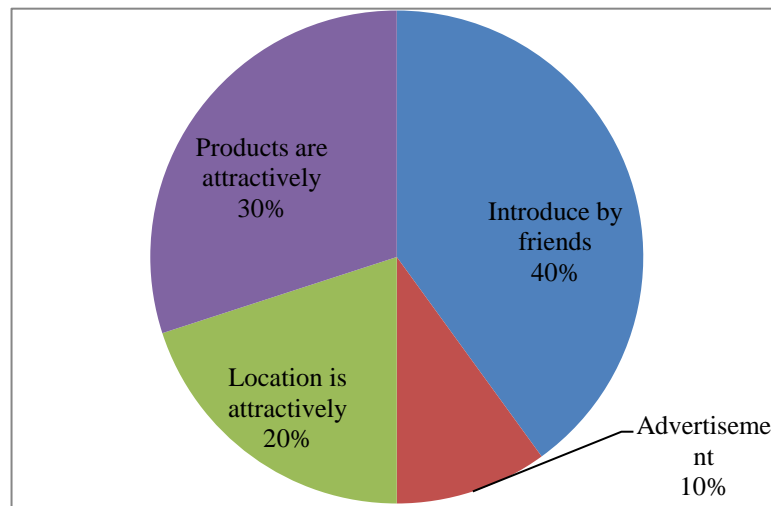
On the other hand, wedding business is an emerging industry in China. Wedding store start opens in Shanghai. The Golden Crown Wedding Store located in a northern city. The economy of this city is developing fast in recent years. There are increasing people realize what is a wedding store and accept it.

#### 4.1.3 Customer Situation

Customer analysis belongs to external analysis. In this part, a questionnaire is used to analyze the customer. The questionnaire survey (Appendix 2) is conducted in a wedding store in China. There were 30 questionnaires sent to the customers. Through this questionnaire, many answers received to the questions about customer situation which help the wedding store to make the strategic marketing plan.

At the start of the questionnaire, customer loyalty has been tested. From the questionnaire question 1, the question ask how customers know the wedding store and purchase products. Question 1 use four different reasons to test customers' attitudes. That are introduced by friends, advertisement, location is attractive and products are attractive. The detail data is displayed in figure 4.





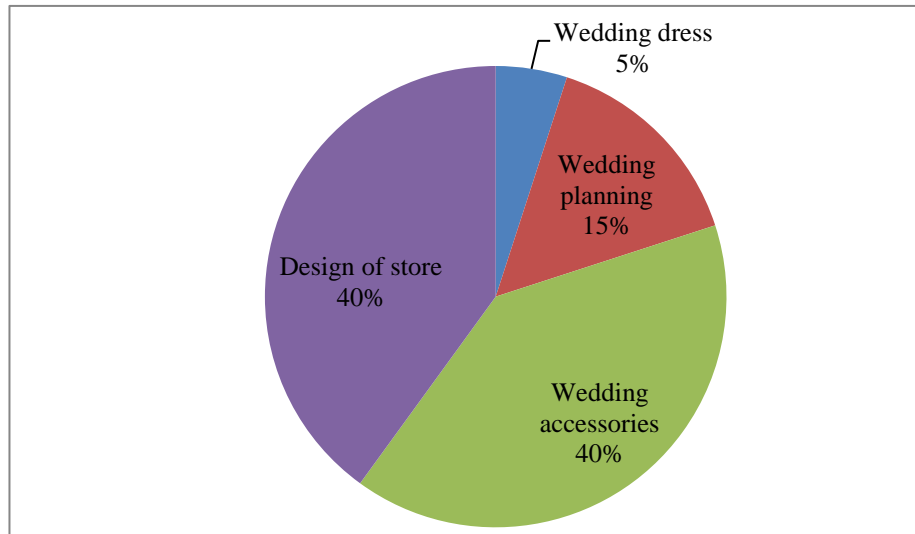
**Figure 4.** Reasons for customer know the store

This figure 4 presents the customer loyalty for the wedding store. Accounted for the largest proportion is introduced by friends which has a 40 percent quota. Otherwise, according to the questionnaire question 4, there are 80 percent customers maintains the services attitudes of employees are very good and the rest 20 percent customer maintains the services attitudes of employees are good. This phenomena represent wedding store employees' service attitudes are good. It means the service attitudes in a wedding store attract returned customer and also introduce the wedding store to their friends. Ms. Yuan also omphasis that good attitude will attract more customers than anything. It is a good management method for service business.

In question one of questionnaire, products have attractively also occupied 30 percent. The product of wedding store is a big highlight. High quality products attract more customers come to wedding store. In questionnaire question 2, 95 percent customers deem that the product is the most important feature affects them to choose a wedding store. Location is also an important effect for the store. The advertisement also plays a role to attract customer. This phenomenon represents wedding store already has customer loyalty.

Customer demand is the most important for the customer analysis. Figure 5 points out

that what is customer needs in wedding store and also presents what should develop in wedding store.



**Figure 5.** Customer demand

The researcher has discussed with Ms. Yuan about the options of the questionnaire question 5. She pointed out that accepts the wedding candies, she wants add some more products and services in the wedding store. So the options are recommended by Ms. Yuan. There is about 40 percent customer deems the wedding accessories is not enough. Customers want to purchase some ornaments put on their house or wedding sites.

Customers also suggest the design of the store is unsuited. There are 40 percent customer maintains the design of the store should more exquisite. Ms. Yuan also deems a good design of the store could improve the taste of the product and service.

In the final part of the questionnaire there is an open question for customers to write their answers to. The question is asks customers to give their opinions concerning the wedding store's physical appearance. There are 90 percent customer replaied that a wedding store should provide one-stop service. One-stop service means that customers can find everything they want in one store. (Guo, 2012.) Customers want to purchase everything they need for a wedding in one store. In sum, the wedding store under

analysis in this thesis should add more wedding products and services to satisfy its customers.

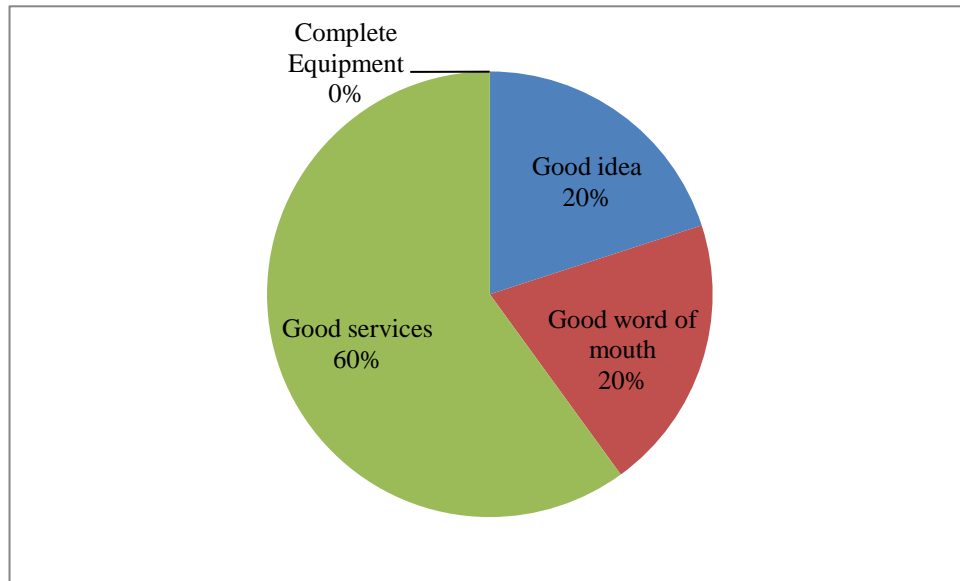
#### 4.1.4 Competitor Situation

Competitor analysis helps managers know the tactics of competitors and make equivalent methods to beat others. The researcher has discussed the competitor with Ms. Yuan in the interview (Q8). She found out that there are three types of wedding store on the market. The first one only provides wedding candies to customers. The other one provide wedding planning services to customers. The last one offer wedding accessories to customers. She wants to offer the one-stop services to customers. It is more convenient for customers purchasing their needs and attracts more customers.

On the other hand, Ms. Yuan is a professional seller on candy business. Due to Ms. Yuan start her business with the candies. She acts many famous candies in Rain Sky Co., such as Alpenliebe, Dove, etc. The price of same brand candies is cheaper than other competitors. However, Ms. Yuan disclosed a serious problem in candy shops. Some retailers adulterate fake products in the candies for reducing the price of candies. They put fake into genuine products and get huge profits. Ms. Yuan said the real candies about 40 yuan (RMB) one kg, but the fake only purchases 5 yuan every kg. These black-hearted retailers never care what chemical composition in the fake products. So she emphasizes must be strict control the supply for the wedding store and she promise never sell fake products to the customers.

In wedding planning company, many companies purchase photographic equipments, wedding equipments and decorations to attract customers. These equipments invest about one million RMB. Ms. Yuan deems this investment is not valuable for the company. Furthermore, one million is a big amount for the case company. The questionnaire question 6 has investigated customer what is important in wedding planning for them. Figure 6 displays what the customer needs for the wedding

planning.



**Figure 6.** Wedding planning service needs

Obviously, good service attracts more customers. As Ms. Yuan said, good service is most important in tertiary industry. There are 60 percent customer deems good services attractive. There also are 40 percent customers believe good ideas and good word of mouth can attract them purchase the service. Nobody cares the equipment is complete or not. Thus, Ms. Yuan decide that not purchase so much equipments for the wedding planning service.

#### 4.1.5 SWOT Analysis

This SWOT analysis is a good tool for marketing planning process. This SWOT helps managers make strategies for companies. Table 2 is the SWOT analysis for the Golden Crown Wedding Store.

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Professional candies seller</li> <li>2. Products and services are complete</li> <li>3. High quality products</li> <li>4. Good service attitude</li> <li>5. Good training for employees</li> </ol>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Marketing promotion</li> <li>2. Lack of wedding planning</li> <li>3. Brand loyalty</li> <li>4. Wedding accessories not enough</li> </ol>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Market potential</li> <li>2. Emerging industry</li> </ol>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Competitors</li> <li>2. Price war</li> <li>3. Customer identification</li> </ol>

**Table 2.** SWOT analysis for the Golden Crown Wedding Store

The strengths of the Golden Crown Wedding Store are as follows:

Firstly, researchers have already mentioned previously, this company is a professional seller due to the company is candy agency. Otherwise, the wedding store has both wedding products and wedding services, and it provides one-stop services. The wedding store also provides high quality products. All products they sell come from guaranteed suppliers. Ms. Yuan has promised that they will never sell fake to customers. In addition, the customer questionnaire reflects that the service attitudes of the employees are good. Furthermore, the quality of training is reflected by customer evaluation. The results of training reflect on the customer questionnaire.

The weaknesses of the Golden Crown Wedding Store are as follows:

The marketing promotion needs to be increased. According to the customer questionnaire, the advertisement has certain effect on the markets, so the advertisement will attract more customers. Compared with competitors, the wedding planning of the wedding store should be improved. The wedding store already has some brand loyalty in the market but not enough. Building brand loyalty is very important to keep old customers and attract new customers. The last weakness is the fact that the wedding store should increase the wedding accessories to satisfy the customer demand.

The opportunities of the Golden Crown Wedding Store are as follows:

As was discussed above, the number of daily married couples is a big market potential for the wedding store. Furthermore, the wedding business is an emerging industry. There are not very many competitors offering one stop services in the market in the wedding business in the city which the case company located.

The threats of the Golden Crown Wedding Store are as follows:

The competitors have their own products and services in the wedding business. I have introduced three types of wedding stores. They are professional in different aspects. When the stores sell the same products, price wars are unavoidable. Some businesses sell fake to their customers to reduce the price of their products, but customers can not distinguish between the real product and the fake. There are also some retailers who attract their customers to reduce prices maliciously. The last threat is customer identification. There is a large number of customers who do not understand what a wedding store is. Implanting the wedding store concept to customers is difficult.

#### 4.2 Market Objectives

The market objective has discussed with Ms. Yuan during the interview. She deems the long term objectives are difficult to achieve. There is a short term objective for the

wedding store presented. After the discussion, one year objectives build on the market and company situation.

The first objective is intangible which aims to build brand loyalty in customers. This is a comprehensive objective of the wedding store. To achieve this objective, the store should improve the services, provide good quality products, advertising and market promotion. It is important to make the customer know that the wedding store provides unique services and high quality products.

The second objective is building the real one-stop service system for the customer. For this objective, the store should fill in the lack of the services and products. The one stop service will satisfy customer demand and attract an increased number of customers.

In sum, the objectives of the wedding store are to build brand loyalty and lead the wedding business in this city.

#### 4.3 Strategic Marketing Plan

According to the empirical and theoretical research, I build a strategic marketing plan suggestion for the Golden Crown Wedding Store. It will guide the wedding store to achieve their market objectives.

Firstly, there is the need to improve the services of the wedding store. By offering more wedding accessories in the store than at present. To find out fashionable, cute, elegant style accessories and to put it into the store satisfy different customer demands. For the service part, I suggest that the wedding store should build a wedding planning department. The planning department would accord the customers' needs to design and arrange the weddings for the customers. To build the planning department would reduce the work of sellers and make the planning service more professional. Now today, people

seeking for wedding services have increasingly many demands on their weddings. The planning department would provide customized services for different customer.

Secondly, to improve the market promotion and brand loyalty to make more customers know the wedding store. The company can advertise into the markets in their ability. In addition to advertising, they can hold some promotional activities to attract customers. When the festival comes, the number of people get married will increase. The wedding store can launch some marketing promotions to attract more customers. Such promotions may allow customer buy a certain amount of candies will gain a wedding accessory, or customers can attend a lucky draw when they buy a certain quantity of certain products.

According to the customer questionnaire, a good design of the wedding store also attracts increases the number of customers. People like to buy products in a comfortable environments. A good environment makes people happy. Thus, I believe redecorate the wedding store is necessary. The style of the wedding store should be festive and romantic to catering customer taste.

Finally, the Internet is a good medium for extending the wedding store. There is an increasing number of Chinese young people who use the Internet to read news, or to learn to know brands and so on. Such as other countries young people such as use Twitter. Chinese people have our own Twitter which called Weibo. The wedding store can build a homepage and organize there their marketing promotion activities and some store news on the home page. The homepage will attract more people to realize the wedding store and come to the store to buy products.



## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The objective of this thesis is making a strategic marketing plan for the case company. In order to achieve this objective, relevant literature was reviewed. The practical research was based on the case company. According to discussions and analysis of the research, two research questions are addressed. This chapter includes the answers to the research questions and the suggestions for the future research.

### 5.1 Conclusions

Firstly, the strategic marketing plan build on the basis of this theisis is based on theoretical foundations. Secondly, analyzing the market and the case company situation was important for making the strategic marketing plan. The analysis includes internal and external analysis for the case company. The strategic marketing plan is based on the analysis of the case company.

In this thesis, I have combined the theoretical knowledge and empirical understanding, as well as built a strategic marketing plan for the Golden Crown Wedding store. At the start of the research, internal analysis has been taken. The internal analysis helps me have a complete understanding of the case company. For instance, the financial situation and market objectives. I used interview to get information about the case company. On the basis of the internal analysis, external analysis is also important for the marketing plan. In the external analysis, market, competitors and customers were analyzed. A questionnaire was used in customer analysis which display the satisfactions of the customer. After the internal and external analysis, SWOT analysis has been used for building the strategic marketing plan. Lastly, a strategic marketing plan has built for the Golden Crown Wedding Store.

This thesis has two research questions. The first question is as follows:

### 1. What is the strategic marketing plan?

Generally, this question was answered in the chapter discussing the theoretical foundation of this thesis. Firstly, the strategic marketing plan aims to make strategies for the company based on the analysis of the company and markets. This plan is a guide for the company's future work. This strategic marketing plan leads the company to achieve the objectives of the company. The strategies include marketing strategies, customer strategies, product strategies and internal strategies. These strategies will help the company to increase its profit and build a good brand image. The strategic marketing plan contains internal analysis, customer analysis, competitor analysis, market analysis and SWOT analysis to analyze the real situation of the market and the company. The analyses found out the corresponding solutions of the problem which exist in the company. This strategic marketing plan should consider the long term and holistic aspects of the company. Cooperation in each department is important. In sum, strategic marketing plan built here is a good tool to help the manager of the wedding store to achieve the objectives of the company.

The second research question is as follows:

### 2. How can the strategic marketing plan be built for the Golden Crown Wedding Store?

For this question, I need to find out the objectives of the company. Next, the analysis of the company helps me to realize the situation of the market. To obtain a complete understanding from internal analysis, customer analysis, market analysis, competitor analysis and SWOT analysis is necessary. Researcher through the interview and questionnaire to realize the real situation of the case company. After the analysis the situation about the case company, the strategic marketing plan for the company was made by combining the analysis and the objectives.

## 5.2 Suggestions for Future Research

The study of this thesis is focused on making a strategic marketing plan for the wedding store in China, i.e. the case company of thesis. This strategic marketing plan gives new ideas to develop the wedding store. Furthermore, the thesis exposed the strengths and weaknesses of the wedding store. This strategic marketing plan supports the objectives in the future for one year. This plan opens up new fields for the store which will help the store attract more potential customers. Future research is to focus on how to build a franchising network for the wedding store.

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## APPENDICES

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## Appendix 1

1. What is your opinion about building a wedding store? Would it has market potential?
2. What issues should be considered in setting up this wedding store?
3. In this wedding business, what aspects should pay more attention?
4. How much is needed to invest can set up a wedding store?
5. What are the turnover and profit of the wedding store during one year?
6. What is the target market area?
7. What should change and develop in the wedding store?
8. How many competitors there are and what are features of competitors?

Name	Position	Company name	Interviewed time	Interviewed date
Yuan Hongya	CEO	Rainbow Sky CO.	15:00---17:00	Oct. 15 2012

## QUESTIONNAIRE

## Appendix 2

Please use multiple choice for the following questions.

1. How do you know our wedding store and our products?
  - A. Introduce by friends
  - B. Advertisement
  - C. Location is attractive
  - D. Products are attractive
  - E. Other \_\_\_\_\_
2. What factors affect you choose a wedding store?
  - A. Size of store
  - B. Products
  - C. Services
  - D. Design of wedding store
  - E. Word of mouth of the wedding store
3. What products you want purchase in wedding store when you conduct a wedding?
  - A. Decorations
  - B. Wedding dress
  - C. Wedding services
  - D. Wedding planning
  - E. Candies
  - F. Cigarette and wines
  - E. Other \_\_\_\_\_
4. Have you been satisfied on our services when you have purchased goods?
  - A. Very satisfied
  - B. Satisfied
  - C. OK
  - D. Unsatisfied
5. What should we develop or add some products or services in our store in your opinion?
  - A. Wedding dress
  - B. Wedding planning
  - C. Wedding equipment
  - D. The design of store
  - E. Others \_\_\_\_\_
6. What factors of the following attract you to give your wedding to a professional group to plan?
  - A. Good idea
  - B. Good word of mouth
  - C. Good services
  - D. Complete Equipment
7. What the wedding store looks such as in your mind?
 

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Thank you very much!