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FACEBOOK MARKETING PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION FOR
A SMALL ELECTRONIC SHOP IN SHARM EL SHEIKH, EGYPT

Degree Programme in International Business
and Marketing Logistics
2014

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Satakunnan ammattikorkeakoulu
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FACEBOOK-MARKKINOINTISUUNNITELMA JA TOTEUTUS PIENELLE ELEKTRONIIKKALIIKKEELLE SHARM EL SHEIKISSÄ, EGYPTISSÄ

Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoitus oli tehdä Facebook-markkinointisuunnitelma case yritykselle, joka on pieni elektroniikkaliike turistikohteessa Egyptissä, ja toteuttaa suunnitelma. Epävakaan poliittisen tilanteen vuoksi turistit olivat lähteneet kohteesta ja Facebook-sivulla pyrittiin saavuttamaan turistit silloinkin, kun he eivät ole kohteessa. Opinnäytetyön tavoitteina oli etsiä tietoa markkinointisuunnitelman tekemisestä, päättää, mitkä vaiheet suunnitelmasta ovat oleellisia tässä tapauksessa ja etsiä tietoa Facebook-markkinoinnista, vertailuanalyysistä sekä case yrityksestä ja sen bisnesympäristöstä.

Teoriaosassa käsiteltiin markkinointisuunnitelmaa, johon sisältyi missio, PEST- ja SWOT-analyysit, ja markkinointistrategia, sekä markkinointimixiä, Facebook-markkinointia ja vertailuanalyysiä yleisellä tasolla. Teoriaosa perustui ammattikirjallisuuteen: pääasiassa kirjoihin ja muutamaan online-lähteeseen, mutta opinnäytetyön case yritys pidettiin mielessä teorian alusta loppuun.

Tässä tutkimuksessa käytettiin kvalitatiivista tutkimusmenetelmää. Tarvittavat tiedot empiiriseen osaan kerättiin jokapäiväisessä keskustelussa case yrityksen omistajien kanssa, havainnoimalla case yrityksen liiketoimia, vertailuanalyysillä Facebookissa ja muutamalla online-lähteellä Egyptin bisnesympäristöstä. Teoreettista taustatietoa käytettiin empiirisessä osassa, jotta pystyttäisiin päättämään, mitkä asiat olivat tärkeitä ottaa huomioon, jotta kaikki tarpeellinen tieto saataisiin Facebook-sivulle.

Facebook-sivun toteutusprosessi käsiteltiin opinnäytetyössä selittämällä, mitä tehtiin missäkin vaiheessa, ja näyttämällä kuvakaappauksia eri vaiheista, jotta lukija saisi lopullisesta Facebook-sivun sisällöstä mahdollisimman selkeän kuvan, vaikkei pääsisikään katsomaan itse sivua. Facebook-sivulle kerättiin tärkeää tietoa case yrityksestä, sinne jaettiin linkkejä sekä kyseiseen bisnesalueeseen että turistikohteeseen liittyviin julkaisuihin ja ammattimaisia tuotekuvia lisättiin kuvakansioihin.

FACEBOOK MARKETING PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION FOR A SMALL ELECTRONIC SHOP IN SHARM EL SHEIKH, EGYPT

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The purpose of this thesis was to create a Facebook marketing plan for a case company, which was a small electronic shop in a tourist destination in Egypt, and implement the plan. Due to the unstable political situation the tourists had fled from the destination and the aim of the Facebook page was to be able to reach them even when they were away. The objectives on the thesis were to find information on marketing planning process, deciding on which phases of the process were relevant in this case and finding information on Facebook marketing, benchmarking, the case company and its business environment.

The theory part discussed the issues on marketing planning including business mission, PEST and SWOT analyses, and marketing strategy, marketing mix with the 4P's, Facebook marketing and benchmarking in general. The theory was based on professional literature, mainly books and couple online sources; however, the specific case was kept in mind throughout the whole theory.

The methodology used in this research was qualitative. The needed information for empirical part was gathered through casual conversation with the owner's of the case company, observation of the way business was done in the case company, benchmarking on Facebook and few online sources dealing with the Egyptian business environment. Theoretical background was used in the empirical part in determining what issues were important to consider in order to have all the necessary information on the Facebook page.

The implementation process of the Facebook page was covered in the thesis by explanations on what was done at which point and screen shots of the different phases were provided for the reader to see what the result was even if they would not have access to the actual Facebook page. The Facebook page was filled with important information about the case company, various links related to the business and the location and professional looking product photos.

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis process began when the Egyptian friends of the author asked her to help them with the Facebook marketing of their recently opened electronic shop. The unstable political situation in Egypt for the past few years had driven most of the tourists away from the tourist destinations, which is why the shop owners thought that the best way to reach them and maybe lure them back would be online. The main reason why they asked for the author's help was that she spent a lot of time on Facebook and, although she did not have any experience on marketing on Facebook, it would be easier for her to learn, since she was already more familiar with the platform than they were.

The author thought that in order for the Facebook marketing to be efficient she could not only create a page for the shop and hope she would know what to do with it, but she would have to conduct some sort of research on relevant issues and plan the implementation well. She was struggling in finding a topic for her thesis around the same time and eventually she was able to combine these two.

It is not always realized that marketing operations always need some planning, usually more than expected. Therefore, issues on marketing planning process are discussed in this thesis. However, there are some parts left out, since they were not considered as relevant in this specific case. On Facebook marketing the different free options were examined and the best option chosen. Through benchmarking it was possible to think outside the box in order to come up with something different for the Facebook marketing. The political situation in Egypt and how it affects the case company were also discussed as well as cultural differences to be considered in this case.

2 INTRODUCTION TO THE CASE COMPANY

Underwater Canon is a small electronic shop in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt. Two Egyptian businessmen, who both are working in the shop as salespeople, founded it on 15th December 2013. At the moment they have three other employees: one salesperson, one repairperson and a trainee, who is the author of this thesis. In their product portfolio they have smart phones, tablets and cameras from Samsung, Nokia, Apple, Sony and Canon, to mention few, laptops from HP and Apple, and accessories for all, including underwater covers. In the future they are hoping to expand their products more towards professional underwater cameras. They also provide fixing services for phones, cameras, tablets and computers. Their customer base consists mainly of international tourists, which is a difficult customer base to have at the moment, because the tourism field in Egypt has still not recovered from the revolution in 2011.

3 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Purpose

The purpose of this study was to create a Facebook marketing plan for a relatively new, small electronic shop in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt. Since the whole city is based on tourism and the tourists had been away for few years already, the buying power of the local people had been on the downside, which meant that electronic products are not the first products on which they would use money and it was crucial to reach the foreigners somehow in order to have them visit the shop once they came back. After the Facebook marketing plan was created the plan was also implemented in order to get the company started and to give them a clear picture on what they should be doing once they started the marketing on their own.

3.2   Research questions and research objectives

Research questions:

- How to do a marketing plan?

- What is included in it? And which parts are necessary for this case?

- How to create a business page or group on Facebook?

- Are there some restrictions?

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the page and the group?

- Which is better in this case?

- What is the company like?

- What kind of business environment it has?

- What information should be included in the Facebook page?

- How to reach customers by it?

- What have others done with Facebook marketing before?

The objectives of the project were: searching what is needed in developing a marketing plan and determining which phases are most essential in this case, collecting information about the company itself, the business environment and Facebook marketing. At the beginning of this thesis process they did not have a clear competitive advantage, because there were many small shops in Sharm el Sheikh that had similar products and because of that the expectancy was that Facebook marketing might be the answer to that, or if not, maybe some other possibility for competitive advantage would occur. However, the further the research for theory proceeded, more clear it was that Facebook marketing would be the competitive advantage for the case company. Why it came to this conclusion will be further explained in chapter 4.6 Competitive advantage.

3.3   Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) follows the process design by Jobber and Fahy (2006, 328) with some differences and additions. First stage of marketing planning process is business mission, which is followed by PEST analysis and SWOT analysis. In the next stage there are marketing objectives and after that target markets and

competitive advantage. Competitor analysis and competitor targets have been left out from the usual marketing planning process and the reasons behind that will be explained in chapter 4.6 Competitive advantage.

In this case marketing mix consists of 4 P's of marketing: product, price, promotion and place. After the marketing mix theory about Facebook marketing is gathered with the emphasis on page and group marketing because they are free of charge. Benchmarking is also needed for Facebook marketing to avoid mistakes and gain valuable ideas of what might work in this case. After benchmarking the Facebook page is created and the marketing operations begin.
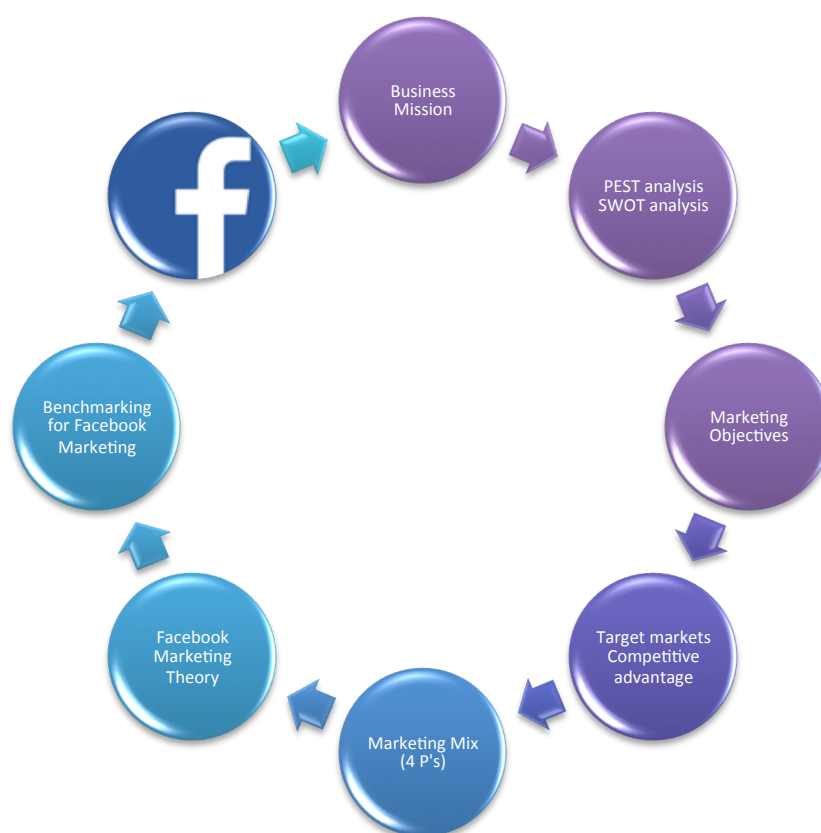

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study. Facebook marketing planning process design based on Jobber and Fahy (2006, 328)

3.4 Limitations

There were couple issues that limited the observation. During the observation period the customers visiting the shop were speaking mostly Arabic, Russian and Italian,

none of which the author understands, which is why the observational results may be somewhat different than they could have been if she had understood them. Also, the lack of Nordic customers, which was the main group that the company wanted to reach, meant that it was not possible to differentiate the Nordic customers from the rest except on a general level; what kind of customers they are usually considered to be. The author's feelings and interpretation of the salespeople approaching her on her first trip to Egypt were used as a comparison point, since she belongs to that group. However, it is important to remember that even though she is Finnish, she is an individual as are all people, and she cannot represent the average Finn in all aspects.

4 MARKETING PLANNING

4.1 Business mission

According to Jobber and Fahy (2006, 328) there are two main questions to be asked when determining business mission: "What business are we in?" and "What business do we want to be in?" which means that principally business mission informs why the company exists. Business mission should not be solely product-based, but rather market-focused. If the market and needs are included in determining the business mission, it will concentrate more on customer satisfaction instead of production of the goods. Kotler and Armstrong (2004, 41) state that the mission statement of the company is sort of an "invisible hand" that leads the people's actions in the company. They advice to use the same two questions as Jobber and Fahy, but there are also two other important questions to make sure that the market-focused aspect of the mission is not forgotten: "Who is the customer?" and "What do customers value?"

There are four important points that the business mission should include. First one is a solid understanding of the business with the ability to take into account the possible changes in the business operations in the future. Second point is that the leader of the business should have a strong motivation and be personally attached to the business and he should be able to give the same motivation to others working for the business. Third point is that there should be a common sense of purpose in the company,

meaning that everyone in the business is working towards winning and this way is encouraged to think creatively, for example, about competitive advantage instead of copying what other companies are doing. And lastly, the mission statement should be enabling, which means that the management should be able to make decisions on which opportunities and threats to focus and act on according to the mission statement. (Jobber 2010, 41-42.) According to Kotler and Armstrong (2004, 42) the main points to remember are that the mission statement should be realistic, specific and motivating and it should fit the market environment.

4.2 PEST analysis

There are four main macroeconomic forces affecting the business and what kind of marketing decisions to make. These are political/legal forces, economic forces, social/cultural forces and technological forces, which together form the PEST analysis. PEST analysis is used for making most of the upcoming opportunities and minimizing the effects of the potential threats and, therefore, it is often used before SWOT analysis. (Jobber & Fahy 2006, 29; Jobber 2010, 73.)

Political/legal forces determine rules for business operations. A good example of this is the cigarette business. When politicians decide that it is no longer allowed to smoke in restaurants or other public places and the companies are not allowed to advertise in any way, the demand for cigarettes may decrease. Different countries have different national laws and the company should always check the laws in that specific country to avoid making a marketing plan that turns out to be useless because the law forbids the company from using it. For example, in Greece it is not allowed to advertise toys, and people from other countries might not even consider the possibility that they could not advertise them if they expanded the business there. (Jobber & Fahy 2006, 40; Jobber 2010, 73-76.)

Politics affect also otherwise than legally. In developed countries politics are based on democracy, but in other countries it may not be the case, although they might say it is. The political environment can be either encouraging for enterprises or making it very hard to do business. If the political situation in a country is not stable, it affects

on how well the businesses are doing. (Pitt & Koufopoulos 2012, 48.) This is true especially in Egypt's case because one of the main sources of income used to be tourism but now the people in tourist destinations are struggling because there has been an enormous slump in the tourist flow for few years already.

Economic forces consist of three major influences: economic growth and unemployment, interest rates and exchange rates, and the development of economic areas. Most of the economies in the world have been growing since the mid-1990s until 2009 when the economies slumped. During the growth period many customers have a higher demand on products and the companies are doing well, but when the economy slump comes, customers tend to stop using money and start to save it instead, which can make the situation very hard for companies financially. The slump usually causes also more unemployment because of the financial difficulties of the companies and the decrease in the needed workforce caused by the decrease in demand, and the unemployment leads to even less demand because of the customers' decrease in buying power and it becomes a vicious cycle. (Jobber & Fahy 2006, 30-32; Jobber 2010, 76-77.)

Interest and exchange rate fluctuations can also have a great effect on the companies' financial situations. For example, if the exchange rate between Euro and US dollar is €1 = $1.34 and a company from Finland is exporting their products to the United States and receive the money from the sold products in euros, it means that they will receive fewer euros than they would if the exchange rate was €1 = $1. Development in economic areas affects on business greatly. Before the economic areas were mainly countries alone, but because of the globalization it has gone more towards larger economic areas such as the European Union and the Pacific Rim countries' economic area ASEAN. (Jobber & Fahy 2006, 30-32; Jobber 2010, 77.)

There are three social forces affecting on marketing to be considered in this case: changes in the demographic profile of the population, cultural differences and social responsibility and marketing ethics. Demographic forces consist of three parts: growing world population, which age group has most people and rising number of households with two people working. World population growth is most likely to happen in Africa, Asia and Latin America and not in the developed countries, but since these

areas have a high level of poverty many companies ignore them. The major change in the age groups at least in the EU area is that there will be more people over 45 years old and less people younger than that. This can affect on marketing greatly because different age groups are drawn towards different forms of marketing. This can also be beneficial because over 45-year-olds tend to have more savings than younger people and have, therefore, more buying power. Nowadays it is also more likely that in a household both parents are working; the women do not necessarily only stay at home and take care of the children as has been before, although this varies greatly amongst different countries. It is beneficial for businesses in the hospitality and tourism fields because the families with dual-income have more opportunities to eat out and travel. (Jobber & Fahy 2006, 33-34; Jobber 2010, 86-87.)

Cultural forces can have great effect on marketing, because different cultures have different traditions, taboos, values and attitudes. Also the business operations vary in different cultures: some cultures have a more laidback approach and some are very strict, some have a clear hierarchy and only few people make the important decisions, but some have the emphasis on teamwork. Cultural differences have to be considered also in tourism business, for example, because it takes a different approach if the customer is an Italian or a Finn. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and marketing ethics are issues that every company should address. CSR means that the company takes responsibility for its actions in case they are causing harm to the environment or general public and of course the goal would be that they could prevent any harm from happening at all. The ethical thinking can be quite far from the legal thinking: it depends on the personal moral principles and values instead of court orders. One example of ethics and CSR is mobile phone industry: there is scientific proof that mobile phone use has a link to development of brain tumors, which means that mobile phone manufactures have to spend a lot of money for the research to ensure that their phones are as harmless as possible. (Jobber & Fahy 2006, 35; Jobber 2010, 87-89.)

Technological forces can also affect enormously on the business. New technologies can be used in two ways: added to the products for increased functionality and other user benefits or used in the process of creating and delivering products to clients. New communication technologies are not only affecting on people's lifestyles, but

also how business communication works. For example, many people want multiple features on their phones, for both, personal and professional use. (Pitt & Koufopoulos 2012, 46-47.) A technological development that has changed especially marketing means is Information technology (IT) because before all the interviews and surveys had to be done face-to-face or on the phone, but now there are plenty of options: e-mail, online survey with a survey tool such as ZEF or SurveyMonkey, or even on videoconference. (Jobber & Fahy 2006, 44-45; Jobber 2010, 90-91.)

4.3   SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis is an easy and structured way to gather all the important issues on the business and the company. As Figure 2 shows, above there are strengths and weaknesses, which are internal and can be affected by actions that are made in the company. Below are opportunities and threats, which are external and therefore uncontrollable by the company itself. Strengths and opportunities are considered positive and weaknesses and threats negative. An important point in the evaluation process of the strengths and weaknesses is that they should be considered from the point of view of the customer: what issues the customer values. After the SWOT analysis is done, it is time to start thinking how to turn the weaknesses into strengths and threats into opportunities. These strategies are called conversion strategies. One approach can also be focusing on matching the strengths with the opportunities. (Jobber & Fahy 2006, 335-336; Jobber 2010, 46-47.)

		Source
Strengths	Weaknesses	Internal (controllable)
Opportunities	Threats	External (uncontrollable)

Figure 2. SWOT analysis (Jobber & Fahy 2006, 334)

4.4 Marketing objectives

There are two types of marketing objectives to consider: strategic thrust and strategic objectives. Strategic thrust focuses on which product to sell in which markets. There are four options: existing products in existing markets, new/related products for existing markets, existing products in new/related markets and new/related products for new/related markets, as can be seen in Figure 3. The goal in market penetration is to make the customers more brand-loyal, either so that they switch less or they use the product more often. In product development the main goal is to make the product better for the current market, hence making the target customers more satisfied. In market development the intent is to reach new customers with the existing product, which usually means opening a shop in a new location. When entering new markets the case can be that the product needs to be developed further in order for it to sell in the new market. Or as in Apple's case, they made a completely new product, iPod, for a new younger customer base than they had in the computer market, but the product was still an Apple. (Jobber & Fahy 2006, 337; Jobber 2010, 48-49.)

	Markets	
	Existing	New/related
Existing	Market penetration or expansion	Market development
New/related	Product development	Enter new markets

(Products)

Figure 3. Strategic thrust alternatives (Jobber 2010, 48)

There are four options for strategic objectives: build, hold, harvest or divest. The important issue here is to remember that building sales and market share is not the only way to go, unless presenting a new product when build is usually the best option. When the product already exists the right strategic objective will be determined ac-

cording to the PEST and SWOT analyses, and the strategic thrust. Strategic thrust and strategic objectives together can give a prediction of the direction of the business and products in the future. (Jobber & Fahy 2006, 337; Jobber 2010, 50.)

4.5 Target markets

According to Jobber and Fahy (2006, 338-339) and Jobber (2010, 51) the target customers should be customers who are actually interested in the products; there is no point in running after customers who are not going to buy the product, no matter what is done. If the target group is too wide it can be hard to reach even the segment that would be interested in the product. One possibility is to divide the customers into large, medium and small customers, including size, growth potential and customer requirements.

Kotler and Armstrong (2004, 54-55) say that customers can be grouped by using the basis of geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioral factors. Once the market has been segmented it is possible to choose the target markets. For a small company it is possible to choose from two options: either choose few specific segments (niche marketing) or choose many segments that have different customers but same needs. Many companies start by choosing one segment and then widen their target markets later on once the business takes off.

4.6 Competitive advantage

The key to success is to have a clear competitive advantage. Usually competitive advantage is determined according to target markets and competitor targets, but during this thesis process it became very clear that the case company's competitive advantage would be the Facebook marketing, and that is why the competitor targets have not been talked about separately. In competitive advantage there are three options: either the company should be better than competitors, faster than competitors or closer than competitors. (Jobber & Fahy 2006, 339; Jobber 2010, 52.) By Facebook marketing the case company would be closer than competitors, since the actual

location of the shop is far from the customers, but through Facebook it is possible to reach them even when they are not in Sharm el Sheikh.

This leads us back to the Facebook marketing. Because Facebook has set many restrictions on how the marketing there should be conducted, for example, writing grammatically correct English (Olin 2009, 144.), it is clear that it cannot be done efficiently without the proper background research and language skills, which means that even if other companies with similar products in Sharm el Sheikh would have a Facebook page, it would not be as effective as the Facebook page for the case company.

5 MARKETING MIX

Marketing mix has four main elements: product, price, promotion and place. These help the businesses in decision making on marketing issues. The marketing mix usually has to be differently executed with different segments of the customers in order to keep it efficient in all cases. Competitive advantage is also closely connected to marketing mix because it determines which parts of the marketing mix are more focused on and in what way. (Jobber & Fahy 2006, 10; Jobber 2010, 52-53.)

5.1 Product

Kotler and Armstrong (2004, 276) define product as "anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use, or consumption that might satisfy a want or need", which basically means that a product is a physical object that satisfies a need. However, physical products such as phones are not the only kind of products; there are also service products such as medical services or insurance. The product is number one in marketing mix because, before anything else, the product has to be appealing to the targeted customers. (Jobber 2010, 303.)

There are three levels in a product: core benefit, actual product and augmented product, as shown in Figure 4. Each of the levels adds customer value. On the core benefit level the issue to think about is what the customer is really buying. For example, when a customer buys a Dyson vacuum cleaner the main point is to be able to clean the house, but the real reason behind choosing Dyson may be the inspired technology and product development. The second level in the product is the actual product. This includes features, design, brand name, quality level and packaging. Returning to Dyson: the brand is known as the leading technology in cleaning devises, the design is interesting but practical and high quality is guaranteed, and all these factors together deliver the core benefit. The last level of product is augmented product, which means everything that is added to the necessary ingredients to make the product more appealing. The augmented features can be aftersales service, warranty, installations or delivery and credit. (Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 27 9.)

Actual product
- Features
- Design
- Brand name
- Quality level
- Packaging

Core benefit

Augmented product
- Aftersales service
- Warranty
- Installation
- Delivery and credit
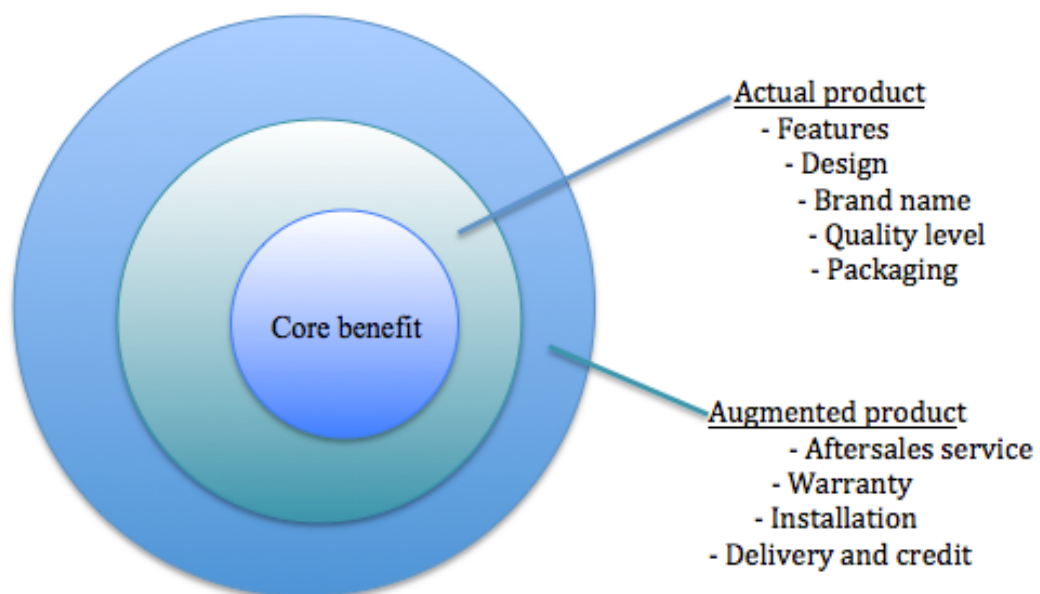
Figure 4. Three levels of product (Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 279)

There are four types of consumer products: convenience products, shopping products, specialty products and unsought products. Convenience products are products that the customer buys frequently without much comparison or planning and with a low cost. Shopping products are products that are bought less frequently and involve planning, shopping effort and comparison of brands, usually with a higher cost. Spe-

cialty products have a strong brand preference and loyalty, therefore, there is not much comparison between brands since the customer already knows which brand it has to be. A good example of this is Apple; although there are many other brands with similar and cheaper products, customers who have bought Apple before usually stay with the brand. Unsought products are products that have little product awareness; usually the customer does not know of such product existing or knows about it but has not thought about buying it. (Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 280-281.)

5.2   Price

Price is the amount of money the customer spends on a product. Price is the only element in the marketing mix that earns revenue; all the other elements are solely costs. This is why it is extremely important for the marketers to be able to set the prices correctly, not too low (lost margin) but not too high (lost sales). (Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 345; Jobber 2010, 422-423.)

There are internal and external factors that affect on the pricing decisions. Internal factors include the marketing objectives, marketing mix strategy, costs and organizational considerations. If the company has a clear picture of the target market and positioning, its marketing mix will be quite straightforward. However, if the main objective is to survive, making the prices lower in hope of more demand may turn it the other way around. It is important to keep adding value to the product in order to keep the customers interested and to be able to raise the price. Marketing mix strategy emphasizes the fact that the price has to be in sync with the other elements of the marketing mix. Often the companies choose first what price they would hope to receive from the products and then build the other elements of the marketing mix accordingly. Costs have most likely the highest impact on the price setting; the company hopes to receive enough money to cover all the costs of the production, distribution and selling of the product, and still receive a fair share in returns. There are two types of costs: fixed and variable. Fixed costs remain the same no matter what the production and sales levels are and variable costs fluctuate directly according to the production levels. Fixed and variable costs sum up to the total costs of the product. When it comes to organizational considerations it is important for the management to decide

who sets the prices. In large companies there are usually product line managers who set the prices, but in smaller companies the prices are most likely set by top management. (Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 347-352.)

External factors affecting the price are the market and demand, competition and other environmental factors. The costs set the minimum level of the price and the market and demand set the maximum level. There are four different kinds of markets that set the price differently. In a market of pure competition the prices are quite the same for every seller; there is not much effect on the price from product development or advertising and sales promotion. In a market with monopolistic competition the prices can vary a lot because the products may have different levels of quality, features and aftersales services. In an oligopolistic competition there are only few sellers that are enormously affected by each other's price variations. There are only few sellers because the market is not easy to enter and the sellers have to keep track on what the competition is doing at all times. The last market is pure monopoly, which consists of one seller. In pure monopoly the price can be set lower if the product is very much needed but the customers do not have enough money to buy it, or the price can be set to cover costs or to gain good profit. In Finland the clearest example of pure monopoly is Alko because it is the only place in the country where it is allowed to sell alcohol products that have more percentages than regular beer. Competitors' costs, prices and offers affect on the price setting as well. If the company has a better quality product than competitors, it is able to charge more from the customers, but if the product is not as good as competitors' products, the price has to be less in order to make sales. There are also other external factors such as economic factors; recession, inflation or interest rates, resellers; they should receive a fair profit to encourage them to sell the product, and social concerns; sometimes the company's best has to be left second for broader societal good. (Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 352-357.)

5.3 Promotion

There are six main components in the promotional mix: advertising, personal selling, direct marketing, internet promotion, sales promotion and publicity. However, since this thesis is concentrating on no charge Facebook marketing, only internet market-

ing is covered here. With internet promotion it is possible to reach people around the world with low cost and there can be interaction between the company and customer before the customer even sets foot in the shop. (Jobber 2010, 462-463.)

5.4 Place

There are four types of consumer distribution channels: producer direct to consumer, producer to retailer to consumer, producer to wholesaler to retailer to consumer and producer to agent to wholesaler to retailer to consumer. Producer direct to consumer is a good option to the producers because by cutting out the middlemen they will receive more money for themselves. Many airlines are using this distribution channel nowadays. Producer to retailer to consumer has become a good option because of the growth of the retailers; again one middleman (wholesaler) can be left out of the distribution process. Producer to wholesaler to retailer to consumer can be tricky because of the larger retailers since they might be able to sell the same products at a lower price if they buy it straight from the producer and sell to the customer, when smaller retailers have to use the wholesaler and have less profit. Agent is usually added to the last consumer channel only in the case of entering foreign markets, since it is easier for the agent to contact the local wholesalers and retailers than the producer who is in another country. (Jobber & Fahy 2006, 297-298; Jobber 2010, 627-630.)

6 FACEBOOK MARKETING

Evans (2008, 31) defines social media as following: "Social media involves a natural, genuine conversation between people about something of mutual interest, a conversation built on the thoughts and experiences of the participants." This definition shows that social media is not the same as the regular media because in social media there is constant, on-time, communication between parties. According to Leino (2010, 251) social media consists of three points: content created by users, community where the content is shared, and technology that provides the platform for creation, communication and sharing. Halligan and Shah (2010, 85) have a more simpli-

fied definition for social media: "people connecting, interacting, and sharing online". According to Sweeney and Craig (2011, XV) social media has so many opportunities that marketers easily become confused because they do not have enough time or money to make the most of all opportunities and, therefore, they should choose which social media channels answer best to their objectives.

6.1 Facebook marketing

Facebook started off as a network for Harvard students, but soon spread out to other universities and later to anyone with computer access. Now it is the largest and most active social network in history: it has over 1.2 billion users worldwide. (Haydon 2013, 10-11.)

According to Holzner (2009, 5-6) Facebook marketing cannot be done in the same way as old-fashioned marketing because on Facebook the customers have more control over the marketing environment and it is the marketer that needs to fit in, not the customer. It is the creativity and the ability to engage users that counts. On Facebook the standard ads can very easily be considered as spam, which can lead to removal of the Facebook account.

There are many ways to do marketing on Facebook: sponsored ads, newsfeed ads, Facebook pages, Facebook groups, Facebook events and Facebook notes. Facebook is used as a marketing tool usually when the marketing budget is less than 8000 euros per month. (Olin 2011, 19.) With the case company the marketing budget is closer to no euros at all per month, which is why this thesis will concentrate only on these two options: Facebook page and Facebook group. Facebook pages are usually used when the goal is to add online visibility for a company, celebrity or a brand. People can like the page and then they will see the updates and posts of the page in their newsfeed. Facebook groups, on the other hand, are usually used for bringing together people who have similar interests: a hobby or some current issue, for example, but they can be used for companies as well. What Facebook page and group have in common is that there can be an unlimited amount of fans for the page and members in the group. (Olin 2011, 20-21.)

6.2   Advantages and disadvantages of business pages and groups on Facebook

Before the Facebook marketing can begin, it is necessary to decide which is better for the case company: Facebook page or a group. Table 1 consists of the advantages and disadvantages of both options.

Table 1. Advantages and disadvantages of Facebook page and group (Holzner 2009, 54-55; Olin 2011, 83-85, 111; Haydon 2013, 57-58)

Facebook page	
Advantages	Disadvantages
+ Designed for business purposes	- Less interaction with the fans
+ Custom apps	- Administrator is #1 in hierarchy, but has
+ Viral reach	no control over the fans
+ Hierarchy	
+ Visitor statistics	
Facebook group	
Advantages	Disadvantages
+ More interaction with the members	- Not meant for business use originally
+ Group chat and e-mail	- No custom apps
+ Can be public, closed or secret	- Limited viral features
	- No hierarchy, but some control for administrator
	- Invitation is not really an invitation
	- Must think carefully who to invite
	- Have to be friends to invite in the group

Facebook page advantages

The main advantage of Facebook page is that it has been designed for business purposes and, therefore, there are different custom apps that help the user make the page more distinctive. Facebook pages have a viral reach meaning that when a fan likes an update of the page or comments on it, it will be shown in the newsfeeds of that person's friends as well, thus it may bring more fans. The page also has a hierarchy: the administrator is the one to make the updates and posts, and fans have the possibility to like them and comment on them. Fans can also write on the "wall" but it will be

shown in the sidebar, not in the middle of the page, where the updates are. On the Facebook page it is possible to see visitor information if there are enough fans on the page: there is information about how they interact with the page, where they are, what age group they belong to, what languages they speak and such. (Olin 2011, 83-85; Haydon 2013, 57-58.)

Facebook page disadvantages

The disadvantages of a Facebook page are that there is less interaction with the fans than there is with group members and that although the administrator is the highest person in the hierarchy of the page he/she has no control over the fans. (Olin 2011, 111.)

Facebook group advantages

The advantages of a Facebook group are that there is more interaction between the group members and the administrator because the group members can post photos and updates in the group and, therefore, have a major influence on the topics discussed in the group, and there is also a possibility to have a group chat with all the members and the group can have its own e-mail address so that e-mails can be shared with the whole group at once. A Facebook group can be public, closed or secret. Of course a secret group would not fulfill the needs of a business based group because it cannot be found with the search engine, but the company can choose whether they want the group to be public; anyone can join, or closed; people have to be invited or they have to send a request to join. (Holzner 2009, 54-55; Olin 2011, 99-100; Haydon 2013, 57-58.)

Facebook group disadvantages

The disadvantages of a Facebook group as a marketing tool are that, first of all, it is originally meant for other than business use. It has no custom apps to make it individual, there is limited viral features meaning that posts that are shared inside the group will not be shown to people outside the group, which means that it is less likely to gain more group members than it is to get more fans for the page. There is also no hierarchy, which means that any group member can post anything they want in the group, however, the administrator can have some control over the group members, for example, only the administrator can add new members. A smaller disad-

vantage that may still be very important in business use, is that when someone is invited in the group, Facebook adds them automatically: they do not have the choice whether they want to join or not, which means that if they have no interest in being in the group, they have to delete themselves separately. This can be considered annoying and that is why it should be carefully thought who would be interested in the group and invite only those people. Which leads us to the last disadvantage: the administrator of the group has to be friends with everyone that he/she wants to invite in order to add them in the group. (Olin 2011, 111; Haydon 2013, 57-58.)

Since the most recent source (Haydon 2013, 57-58.) says that "Groups are for connection, not promotion" and there are clearly more disadvantages than advantages in the Facebook group and the other way around for Facebook page, it was chosen that in this case Facebook page would be the best option for marketing purposes. Olin (2011, 111) also said that if the purpose is commercial and the goal is to gain more customers, Facebook page would be the primary choice.

6.3   Creating a business page on Facebook

When creating a Facebook page, the first step is to click "Create Page" and to choose a business type which suites the particular business best. There are six options that are shown in Picture 1: local business or place; company, organization or institution; brand or product; artist, band or public figure; entertainment and cause of community. For this case it would be one of the first three. Each option also has a subgroup, for example, in local business or place there are subgroups such as restaurant, library, hotel and many more. (Olin 2011, 67-68; Haydon 2013, 58-59.)

Picture 1. Facebook page types (Haydon 2013, 59)

After choosing which business type is best it is time to give a name to the page. This is a crucial point because once the name is chosen it will be hard, or even impossible, to change it. Therefore, the name should represent what the business is about; most often the best option is to name the page after the company's name. After the name and categories are chosen the Facebook Pages Terms have to be accepted and then it is time to click the "Get Started" button. (Olin 2011, 68-69; Haydon 2013, 59-60.)

The next step is to start modifying the page with the following points:
1. Adding a profile picture.
2. Inviting friends to like the page.
3. Letting the fans know about the page.
4. Posting updates.
5. Marketing the Facebook page on the website.
6. Getting the phone ready (optional).

It is recommended to start with steps 1 and 4 and then move to add more information about the business on the page, for example, the description of the business. The profile picture should be the company logo or something else that reflects the company. It is also important not to forget to add a cover photo for the page because at the best it can create a powerful first impression when people click on the name and see the

page. After adding the photos, the first update can be posted: "Hello Facebook! We are new here", for example. Next step is to click "Modify page" and write some information about the company: street address and other contact information, when it was founded, mission statement and description of the company, to mention few. (Olin 2011, 71-73; Haydon 2013, 63.)

There are different possibilities for apps on the Facebook page and the most common apps that are recommended to add are events and notes. One app that may also be found useful is an app called Static IFRAME Tab that helps in making the page look more and more distinctive. In case the page creating and information gathering process is likely to take some time before the actual launch of the page, it may be best to limit the access to the page until launch. This can be done by going to the "Edit Settings" and choosing "Unpublished". This way only the administrators of the page can see the content on the page until the page is changed back to "Published". (Olin 2011, 74-75; Haydon 2013, 64.)

6.4 Most common mistakes in Facebook marketing

There are many mistakes that marketers can make on Facebook marketing because there are restrictions on what cannot be done on Facebook. These are the main reasons why Facebook marketing will be the case company's competitive advantage because these mistakes are not in common knowledge. Here are collected the mistakes that concern this case the most. First of all, it is not allowed to use capital letters in the beginning of every word or to write one complete word in capital letters. Another important point is that everything written on the Facebook page should be grammatically correct; there can be words that are commonly used in spoken language but there cannot be spelling mistakes or slang. The sentence structure should also be according to the grammar rules meaning that there should be full sentences and one sentence cannot begin in the heading and then continue in the marketing text. Unnecessary use of dots or other punctuation marks is not allowed as well as the use of symbols or numbers instead of words. (Olin 2011, 144-145.)

English is widely spoken in Egypt, especially amongst people working in the tourism and hospitality field, but the correct spelling of English is very rare and this is why the case company will benefit from having someone, who uses written English on daily basis, participating in their Facebook marketing operations.

6.5   Benchmarking

There are many ways to define benchmarking depending on the goals of the specific case. When benchmarking is considered from a competition or industrial point of view it is the process of measuring the chosen part of business operations against the competitors or industry leaders, or the search for the best practice in the industry to reach superior performance. (Kozak 2004, 5.)

Benchmarking can be used to help organizations see their strengths and weaknesses, to satisfy customer needs and to motivate employees. It can show how the company can improve its performance and why the differences between different companies exist. It can also help the company in improving their competitive advantage. (Kozak 2004, 2.)

There are four types of benchmarking: internal, competitive, industry and generic. Internal benchmarking can be used in large companies that have different operating units, departments or processes. Competitive benchmarking is harder, because the information about competitors' processes, products and other information may be hard to find, although it could be important. However, if the competitor is a larger world-class company, it is usually easier to find information because they are often asked to make presentations on their success. In industry benchmarking the goal is to find what other companies in the same industry are doing. This may sound like a competitor but it is not because the company being benchmarked could be, for ex-ample, from another country, which takes it out of the competition category. Generic benchmarking has the widest opportunities because the company can choose any-thing that needs to be improved and use either a company from the same industry for benchmarking or choose a company from a completely different industry. Using a different industry for comparison may lead to breakthrough performance because the

company learns to think differently. However, some level of imagination is needed to be able to see the similarities in two different industries. (Tuominen, Niva & Malmberg 2012, 16-17.)

7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

7.1 Research methods

This thesis provides a marketing plan for the case company with a clear emphasis on Facebook marketing and a Facebook page for marketing purposes and reaching the customers as well as the background information on how to manage the page later on. In the theoretical part information on marketing planning process, marketing mix, Facebook marketing and benchmarking was gathered.

There are two types of research methods: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative research method is based on numbers, standardized data and an analysis with the use of diagrams and statistics. It is also very systematic. Qualitative research, on the other hand, is based on words, non-standardized data and the analysis is conducted by conceptualization and the research plan can vary if the situation needs it. Since this thesis does not include a statistical analysis, qualitative research method is used. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003, 377-378.)

The theoretical part of this thesis is based on secondary data and, although there is a possibility to have statistics on the fans of the Facebook page, there was not enough time to consider that and, therefore, qualitative research is only used. There is information based on benchmarking of Facebook pages and also observation, which is a way to collect primary data by observing and recording behavior and actions (Cavusgil, Knight, Riesenberger & Yaprak 2009, 57). There are two types of observation: systematic and committed. Systematic observation is structured in detail but committed observation forms freely in the situation, and in systematic observation the observer is an outsider, but in committed observation the observer is a part of the group. Usually systematic observation is used in quantitative research and committed

observation is used for qualitative research. (Hirsijärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2010, 214-215.)

7.2 Implementation

Since the author of this thesis had been travelling to Egypt every few months for the past three years and she was working in the case company during the writing of the empirical part of the thesis, it was possible not only to observe the customers and the salespeople in action, but also gain information on the Egyptian business culture, the company, their products and way of doing business through casual conversation, which is why planned and structured interviews were not needed to gain inside information. This was beneficial because it was possible to ask anything concerning the issues in the thesis whenever the questions arose. This made it easier to stay in the planned schedule because no time was wasted by waiting for answers while being unable to continue before receiving them.

The observation was implemented inside the shop. The author was working on the computer in the corner of the room so that she would not be disturbing the customers while they interacted with the salesperson. She was placed in two different corners during the three months; one that was more in the background and one where she was more visible to the customers. It turned out that although it was harder for her to observe while she was further away from the customers, many customers seemed to be somewhat bothered by her presence while she was closer to them. Eventually she moved back to the background.

Issues to observe were: Are there some differences in how customers act depending on their nationality? Do the salespeople change their approach depending on the nationalities of the customers? Do the customers haggle? What are the reasons for unsuccessful sales?

7.3   Reliability and validity of the research

Reliability and validity are used in order to avoid mistakes in the research. Reliability means that if the research would be repeated, the same results would come. This can be determined, for example, if two researchers come to the same conclusion or if the same person is examined on different occasions and same results come from both times. Validity means that the measurements used actually measure what the researcher thinks they measure. For example, if a questionnaire is used, the people answering the questionnaire might understand the questions in a different way than the researcher meant and if the results are still interpreted in the original context, the research cannot be considered as valid. (Hirsijärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2010, 231.)

In qualitative research the reliability and validity are somewhat harder to establish than in quantitative research. In case studies it can often be the case that the explanations of people and culture are so unique that there are no two cases alike, which means that the reliability and validity cannot be measured in the traditional way. However, they should be measured in some way. This can be done, for example, by explaining in detail how the research was conducted; what kind of people were included, in what kind of place the research was conducted and what happened. The validity can be determined by seeing if the explanations reflect the interpretations. (Hirsijärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2010, 232.)

What should be remembered in this thesis is that the observations are based on the eyes and interpretation of one person. However, since many customers were speaking a language the author could not speak, she often had to ask from the salesperson afterwards what happened if there was something she could not understand from the body languages. Therefore, there is also interpretation of other people, however, the conclusions were drawn by the author alone. Worth to mention as well is that there could have been effects on the interpretations of the author depending on her mood each day, since she was experiencing extreme culture shock at some point. It is also important to remember that some customers may have been in a bad mood as well, which could have affected the way they acted. Whether this happened or not is quite impossible to say.

8 RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION

8.1 Case company's business mission

Keeping in mind the questions from chapter 4.1 Business mission (What business are we in? What business do we want to be in? Who is the customer? What do customers value?), it can be determined what the case company's mission statement should be. At the moment the shop is in the electronics business: they provide electronic products and repair services. In the future they hope to be in the professional underwater camera sales and repair business. The customer is a tourist, mostly from Russia or Italy, but with the Facebook page they hope to reach the Nordic (and other western) customers, even though they still have not returned to Egypt's holiday destinations in large volumes.

Now, what do the customers value? An average person on a holiday wants to either relax or have many new experiences, or why not both. Therefore, they want to have easy and fast solutions in any difficulties they may face and they want to be able to have some sort of record of their vacation: to show people back home what they experienced or simply to be able to return to the memories later on by themselves. This means that if their camera breaks or is stolen, they need to get it fixed or replaced fast at a price that fits their holiday budget. Or if they realize at the destination that they would like to go snorkeling or diving and take photos, but they do not have the proper equipment, they have to be able to buy it somewhere.

According to all this with the emphasis on the last question the mission statement could be following: "Our mission is to make sure you can share your holiday experiences at the seaside with your friends and family when you go back home and that you can return to those memories whenever you want, even years later. We want you to be able to fully enjoy your holiday and that is why we try to help you as fast as possible, so you don't waste your time waiting for a camera or phone to be fixed or something else. We want you to feel welcome in our shop and to have a good customer service experience."

8.2   Analyzing the business environment

8.2.1 PEST analysis

Political/legal forces

The unstable political situation in Egypt has affected the tourism enormously. In 2010 there were 14.7 million tourists, but in 2013 only 9.5 million. In 2011 there was a revolution when the people of Egypt were unsatisfied with the dictatorship of president Hosni Mubarak and the army that had lasted for 30 years. In 2012 a presidential election was arranged and the first ever president chosen by the public in Egypt was Mohamed Morsi. As it turned out, he did not keep his promises and in 2013 he was toppled and the power was given back to the army. This lead to many western travel agencies cancelling all their winter holidays to Egypt and to the western governments advising their citizens to avoid travelling to Egypt even independently and, therefore, the tourist flow slumped even more than before. (Kingsley 2014; Gordon 2014.)

Now that there has been another presidential election and the president is Abdel Fatah al-Sisi from the army, it is believed that the political situation in Egypt is going to a more stable direction and the tourists could start returning. The travel agencies in Nordic and other European countries are offering holidays in Egypt again, however, from Finland there are still no straight flights available to Sharm el Sheikh, only to other destinations in Egypt.

Economic forces

The revolution in 2011 hit the country's economy extremely badly and the tourism field was one of the most affected fields. The unemployment rate rose very fast and the economic growth is still very slow. The unemployment rate is 13.4% and a year earlier it was 12.7%, which means the amount of unemployed people is still increasing. The Gross domestic product (GDP) real growth rate is 1.8%, which is less than a year before. The exchange rate of Egyptian pound has also gone to a worse direction every year. (Website of the Central Intelligence Agency 2014)

Social/cultural forces

From the social and cultural forces the demographic profile of the population and the cultural differences are the forces that affect this particular business the most. As it was mentioned in chapter 4.2 PEST analysis, the better buying power of the rising amount of 45-year-olds in the population and the dual-income in many western families are beneficial to tourism field because it means that more and more people have the possibility to travel and use the hospitality services. Even though, at the moment those people are still more likely to choose other destinations than Egypt for their holidays, Egypt has many experiences to offer that other countries simply do not have, which is why the tourists are likely to return as soon as they feel safe enough.

The cultural differences are extremely important to consider in tourism field, even more so, when the destination is in an Islamic country and the tourists mainly come from Christian countries. This can affect on both, marketing and the interaction between the different parties. A good example of differences in marketing is Braun epilator advertisement (Picture 2) on Braun's Facebook page.

Picture 2. Braun epilator advertisement (Facebook page of Braun 2014)

This photo is clearly designed for the Arabic consumer, because the model's both shoulders are covered, one with her hair and one with a towel, and she is wearing an over-knee dress. However, for western consumers this photo may seem very odd, because they are used to seeing more skin on advertisements, especially on this particular topic, and it seems like such an inconvenient way to remove hair while being almost fully clothed.

When it comes to interaction between different nationalities, there can be enormous differences. First of all, there can be a language barrier. In Sharm el Sheikh Russian and Italian tourists often expect the salespeople to speak their languages because so many do and sometimes they are not willing to speak English, although they might be able to speak it, which might affect the sales if there is no person available who speaks those languages. Secondly, Egyptian people are usually not shy and they tend to speak very much even though they might not know the vocabulary perfectly or their accent could be very hard to understand. They also tend to speak very loudly. This enthusiasm can sometimes be considered as aggressive, especially in the eyes of a Finnish person, and if the salespeople do not know that, they might end up driving the customer away.

It was found that there were actually less differences between nationalities than was expected when the issues addressed during the observation were considered. There was no significant difference in whether the customer haggled or not depending on the nationality or whether they knew exactly what they were looking for or not and how determined they were to get it. It was also found that more than the nationality of the customer the differences in the mood of the salespeople affected the way they interacted with the customers. It was also noticed that with difficult customers they were more likely to raise their voice in order to make a point on some issue. It is, however, important to remember that there were no Nordic customers during the time the observation was conducted and had there been any, the results may have been different.

Technological forces

Information technology (IT) has changed the way business is done, especially in marketing area. Nowadays many companies have a Facebook page because that is a good way to reach the public and they have a chance to interact more efficiently than through a website. People may also think that it is easier to write comments or ask questions on the company's Facebook page than to send a formal message through the website or to call the company.

People tend to update their Facebook timelines when they go on holiday and more and more people use Facebook even during their holiday, which is why it is important for a company in a tourist destination to have a Facebook page. Facebook chooses the advertisement according to the location of the devise the person is logged in on and this way the tourist might see the company's ad and try to find it, when otherwise the tourist might not walk past the shop and notice it. In the case company the paid advertisements are not an option at the moment but even the free Facebook page can still be beneficial when more and more people like it and the word spreads.

8.2.2 SWOT analysis

Strengths

Underwater Canon's strengths are that they have experienced salespeople, a professional repairperson and their shop has a professional-looking interior design. The salespeople have years of experience with customer service, especially for different nationalities, as well as electronic sales. The repairperson of the shop is one of the best in Sharm el Sheikh: he was able to fix a phone which had been going from one person to another for months and no one else could fix it. The shop has used an interior designer for the decoration inside the shop and they have a premise that is big enough to look like a real company, whereas many shops in Sharm el Sheikh are small and do not look as professional. The larger shop is more likely to draw in customers, especially the western people.

Weaknesses

The company's weakness is that they have limited financial resources due to the bad state of tourism for the past few years. They use all the money they can for new products and, therefore, there is no money left for marketing purposes, which is why Facebook marketing is a very important opportunity for them. Another weakness is that the shop is located on a small street next to the main street in Il Mercato, which means that many possible customers might not notice the shop on the side street unless they are actually looking for underwater products.

Opportunities

Facebook marketing is still categorized here as an opportunity, but the goal of this thesis is to turn this opportunity into a strength. Even though the marketing on Facebook will be only through the free Facebook page for now, the opportunity to use paid advertisements remains if the financial situation is better in the future. One opportunity, and actually a goal of the company at some point in the future, is product development. They could add more professional products in their product portfolio with the emphasis on the underwater equipment. Another opportunity that could be turned into strength is that they have connections to a Finnish and a Norwegian person, which can be beneficial in receiving inside information about those nationalities in general, but they still have not taken fully advantage of this opportunity.

Threats

The threats of the case company are the unstable political situation in Egypt and little demand in relation to competition. As it was mentioned in chapter 8.2.1 PEST analysis, the political situation has driven away the tourists, most of all from western countries, and even though the travel agencies are offering holidays in Egypt again, at least Finland has not returned to Sharm el Sheikh yet. This is most likely affected by the bombing of a tourist bus in Taba in February 2014. Even though Taba is located in the Sinai Peninsula, it is hours away from Sharm el Sheikh but people still consider the whole area unsafe. Due to this there are not enough tourists in Sharm el Sheikh considering the amount of electronic shops, which makes the competitive situation even harder.

8.3 Marketing strategy

8.3.1 Marketing objectives

Strategic thrust

The strategic thrust in the case company can be interpreted in two ways. One way is to consider the Nordic and other western customers as existing market, since they have been in Sharm el Sheikh before. The other way is to consider them as a new market because there have been very few of them in Sharm el Sheikh lately. Because the case company was established in a time when the western tourists had already left Sharm el Sheikh, they will be considered in this thesis as a new market and, therefore, the strategic thrust should be market development.

Strategic objective

Keeping in mind the PEST and SWOT analyses and the strategic thrust, it is clear that the strategic objective is to build. The customer base is very small at the moment and the financial situation of the company is difficult, which is why the objective is to gain more customers and to gain more profit, so that more opportunities could be turned into strengths in the future.

8.3.2 Target markets

The company is hoping to reach especially Nordic customers, even though there are very few of them in the location at the moment and this should be kept in mind when determining the target markets. To start with, the basic needs that the customers of this particular business have are electronic gadgets and their accessories, and fixing services. The needs that the company answers to can cover a wide section of the market, and overall the customer base could consist of residents and tourists in Sharm el Sheikh. To narrow down from this could be the tourists who are on Facebook. Next the international tourists could be separated and after that the international tourists who have found the company's Facebook page and liked it. These tourists can still be divided according to their geographical locations and their nationalities,

but for now the target markets could be the international tourists who like the Facebook page.

8.4 Marketing mix

8.4.1 Product

When determining the three levels of the case company's products, it is important to keep in mind that they have several different products and those products may or may not have the same core benefit or augmented features. For example, the core benefit of an underwater cover for a camera or phone is that the buyer is able to take photos underwater. The actual product features may vary, for example, some will work in a depth of less than 20 meters, some up to 60 meters, and the design is different whether it is meant for a phone or a camera. Then again when the product is a smart phone charger, the core benefit is to be able to charge the phone, and more importantly, use the phone. The actual product varies mainly according to the brand of the phone but otherwise the chargers are mostly the same.

In these both cases the augmented product is the same: it is possible to return a product in case it does not work, however, the chargers are tested before they are sold to make sure they actually work and the underwater covers can be checked to be airtight, which is done especially when the customer is unsure whether it is safe to put their expensive phone or camera under the water inside the cover. It is also possible to have the products delivered to the hotel in case the customer is unable to attend the shop.

From the four types of consumer products (convenience, shopping, specialty and unsought products) the products of the case company are mostly shopping products. People do not buy cameras or phones very frequently, the buying process usually takes time and effort and they compare the brands and prices. Phone covers may be bought more frequently and without much planning, which is why they could be considered as convenience products. However, it may take a lot of comparison when choosing the cover, which could put it in shopping products. Underwater covers can

be considered as shopping products, since they are not bought very frequently and it takes time to choose one that fits the needs and that the customer feels is reliable. Underwater covers can be, however, considered as unsought products as well, because many may not think about buying one until they come to Sharm el Sheikh and decide to go snorkeling or diving.

8.4.2 Price

The main internal influence for the case company's price setting is costs. They need to gain enough money from their products to cover the costs in order to survive. With the money from sales they need to pay the salaries and the rent of the shop, and after that they still have to be able to buy more products to sell. Since haggling is common in Egypt, the prices set should be somewhat higher than they need to be, so that it is still possible to lower the price if the customer starts to haggle. If a customer is not willing to pay the lowest possible price, it may still be important to make the sale in order to have good publicity for the company and in this case it is still possible to add some other product that does not cost as much for the company to the sale in order to gain the needed amount of money. In a small company as this, it is possible for the owners to change the prices on the go when needed, which is common in the haggling culture.

The company is in a market of pure competition, because there are many shops that sell the same products most likely originated from the same places meaning that the quality is mostly the same as well as the prices. That is why the customer service is important and sometimes it might be more important to make the sale and leave a good impression for the customer than get the minimum price from that one specific product. Especially, because the reason behind unsuccessful sales is usually that the customers consider the price too high for the quality they expect to receive. It is also very common in Sharm el Sheikh that even if the shop does not have CD's, for example, they might go somewhere else to buy a CD if the customer needs it, because that way the customer values the customer service in that particular shop and even though that customer may not want to by anything from the shop's collection that

time, they might return later on or tell their friends to use that shop if they need any-thing.

8.4.3 Promotion

The company has printed out some fliers and business cards to hand over to customers but the promotional part of marketing mix is focused on Facebook marketing. The goal is to reach foreign customers, possibly even before they set foot in Sharm el Sheikh. For a small business in a holiday destination the best way to reach customers is to have an online presence, because it helps the word-of-mouth to spread faster and to a wider audience. It is also very important for a company that does not have a large marketing budget, which is the case here. The Facebook page is also supported by a website that was planned and created during the author's practical training in the company. More details on the Facebook marketing will be given in chapters 8.5 Benchmarking on Facebook and 8.6 Facebook page implementation.

8.4.4 Place

The distribution channel for the case company is producer to wholesaler to retailer to consumer. The products come from the producer in China to the wholesaler in Cairo where the case company buys the products and then sells to consumers as shown in Figure 5. However, the plan is to cut out the wholesaler in Cairo from the distribution channel and purchase the products straight to the case company from China in the near future, which is shown in Figure 6. One of the shop owners will travel to China in order to make contacts and hopefully gaining the opportunity to purchase the products straight from them in the future, which would reduce the case company's costs and, therefore, the company would have more money to buy new products and go towards more professional products as planned.
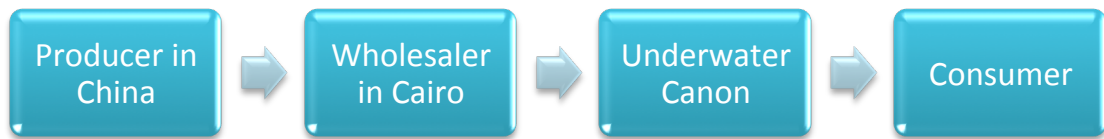
Figure 5. Distribution channel of Underwater Canon at the moment

Figure 6. Planned distribution channel of Underwater Canon in the future

8.5   Benchmarking on Facebook

Since Facebook is full of opportunities it is important to try to think outside the box. Disney Pixar if anything, is filled with creative people, which is why the author of this thesis entered their Facebook page in the first place. They have a lot of photos and updates on the upcoming projects, www-links to news about their productions and video clips of movies on their Facebook page. They are also updating the page on daily basis. All of this gives a good image of the company and creates a platform for the fans to feel included and to be able to share their thoughts on the movies they love. Picture 3 shows a screen shot from the videos tab on Disney Pixar's Facebook page. There are trailers of movies, introduction videos to toys based on movie characters, movie clips and a video showing the fans how the production team commits to the work by having fun competitions between different departments. (Facebook page of Disney Pixar 2014)
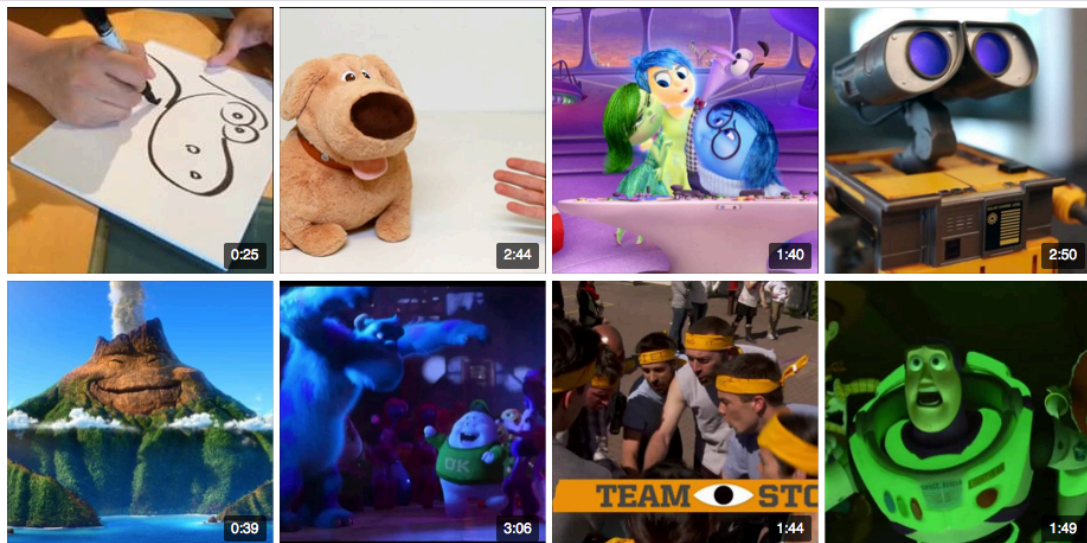
Picture 3. Preview photos of few video clips (Facebook page of Disney Pixar 2014)

The case company can use Disney Pixar's Facebook page as an example in two ways. Firstly, www-links on product reviews of products they have in their shop or they are planning or hoping to have in their shop some day can be added. There can also be some links to news about Sharm el Sheikh because it is important to spread good publicity about the whole destination in order to have the tourists return. Posts from Facebook pages promoting Sharm el Sheikh as a destination and especially posts concerning snorkeling or diving can also be shared. However, the emphasis should be on the electronics and, therefore, there should also be a lot of product photos on the page and they should be taken in a professional way with clear white background.

The second way of utilizing benchmarking required few weeks of brainstorming and browsing through different Facebook pages thinking how to make the case company's page creative. Finally, the inspiration stroke based on Disney Pixar's Facebook page. Some customers were unsure if they would feel safe to put their phones inside the underwater cover and then put them in the water. What a better way to show them it is safe than shooting a video of closing a phone inside the cover, putting it in the water, putting some other things in the water as well and photographing them. This way there could be a video uploaded showing that the phone is still dry and working after the photos were taken and also a photo taken underwater at that very

moment could be uploaded onto Facebook to show that the cover was not drastically decreasing the quality of the photo.

8.6 Facebook page implementation

As recommended in the sources used in the theory part of this thesis, the Facebook page name was chosen to be the name of the case company. Therefore, the address of the Facebook page is www.facebook.com/underwatercanon. After the Facebook page was created it was unpublished so that photos, information and posts could be added in order for the people to consider the page interesting enough to like once they were sent the invites to like the page.

8.6.1 Profile picture and cover photo

The profile picture for the case company's Facebook page was chosen to be the logo of the company (Picture 4) so that people would learn to recognize the logo and they would be able to notice it from their newsfeed by one gaze. Since all the pictures from now on are screen shots from the Facebook page of Underwater Canon showing information and photos posted to the page by the author during this thesis process and the information as well as photos are created by the author, the source is not mentioned separately after every picture.

Picture 4. Underwater Canon's logo

A photo from outside the shop at nighttime (Picture 5) was chosen to be the cover photo. A dark photo with bright colors standing out from it could be intriguing enough to help the page pop out when people enter the front page of the shop. It also helps them recognize the shop when they come to Sharm el Sheikh and start looking for it.


Picture 5. Cover photo of Underwater Canon's Facebook page

Photography has been a hobby of the author for few years now, which was beneficial because she had a good professional camera and she could see, which view angles show the shop in the best way, inside as well as outside. She was also used to being very pedantic when it comes to taking photos, which was good because there are often various things lying around on the tables in the shop, which would not give a very professional look on the photos. She also had some experience on Photoshop Elements and image processing is a very important part of photography, especially when combining darkness with bright lights and the point is to be able to get something visible from the dark areas as well. Rest of the photos that were uploaded to the Facebook page are included in chapters 8.6.3 Pre-launch posts and 8.6.5 Post-launch posts.

8.6.2 Information

Information on the company was added on the Facebook page. Picture 6 shows the "About" tab with a short description that is also shown on the front page under the profile picture, the address of the shop and a map showing the location, e-mail address, mission statement that was determined on chapter 8.1 Case company's busi-

ness mission, longer description, products offered and the date the company was founded. Later on more information such as the phone number of the shop and their website address was still added.
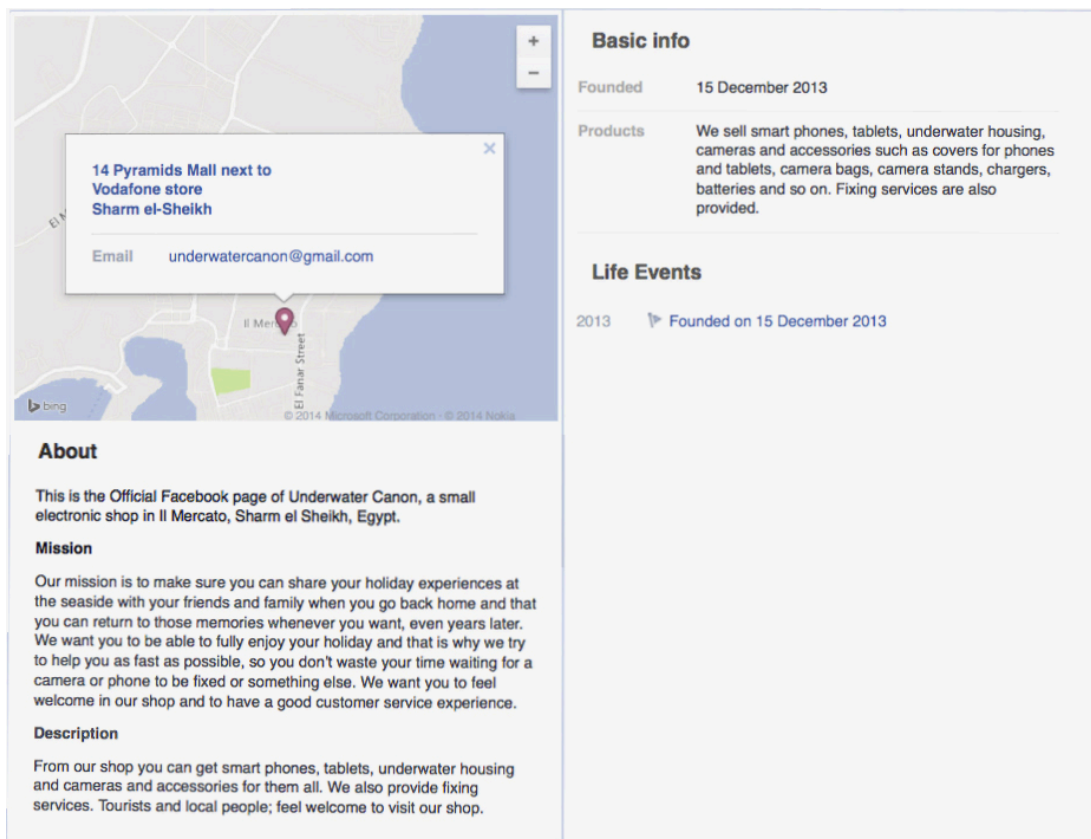

Picture 6. Screen shot from the "About" tab on the Facebook page

8.6.3 Pre-launch posts

The first post on the Facebook page was put simply: "Hello Facebook! We are new here". Picture 7 shows a screen shot of the post. Since the page was still not published at that point, there is a text "Boost Unavailable". In the right lower corner there are options under which name the author can comment the post: as herself, as Underwater Canon or as Daily Dose of Mr. Dashwood, which is a fan page of her friend's dog, where she is also an administrator. Picture 8 shows the second post, which included photos from inside the shop.
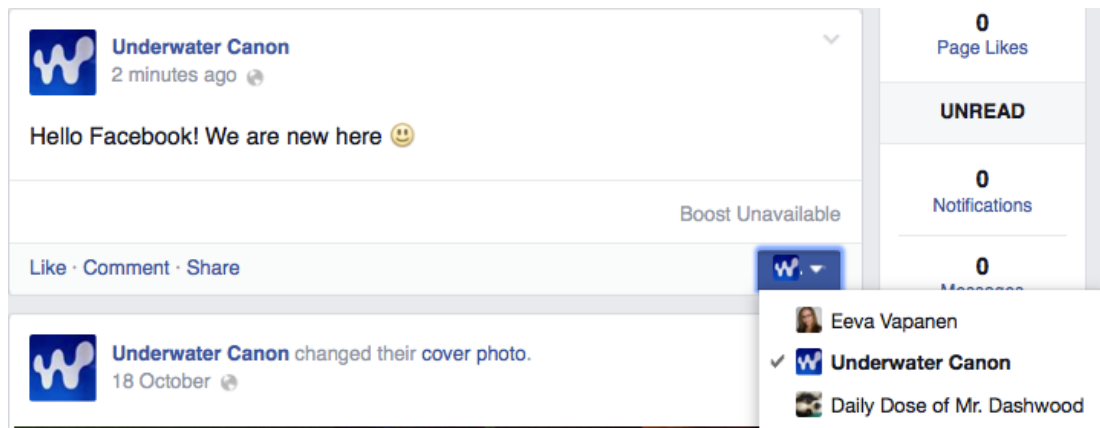
Picture 7. First post on the Facebook page
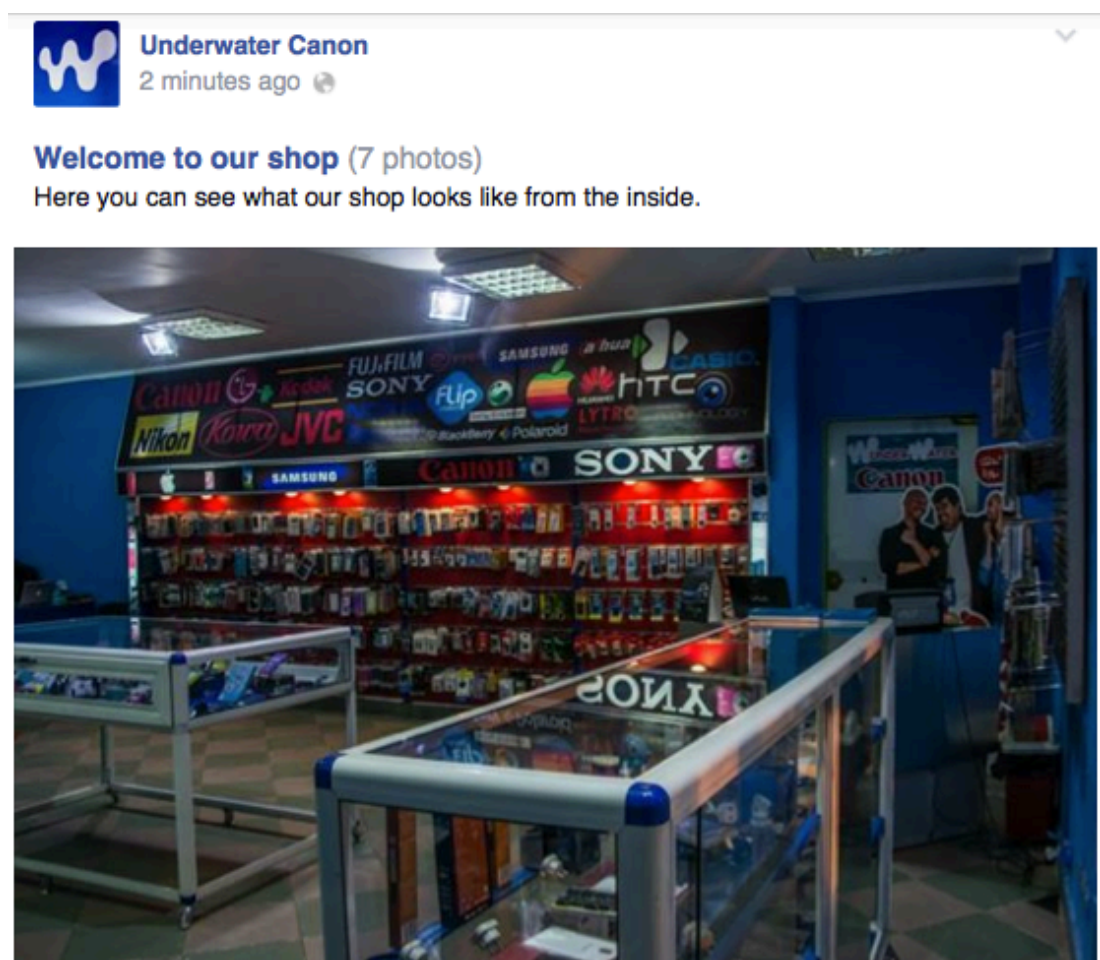
Picture 8. Second post on the Facebook page

There were many photos of the shop's products uploaded onto Facebook and Picture 9 shows the first photo that was uploaded and the way the captions in the photos were written in all the product photos uploaded further on. The photos uploaded later on were shot in a more professional way than shown in Picture 9. A large white blank paper was used as a background in order to make the photos look as profes-

sional as possible. Picture 10 shows a broader view of the "Products" album once there were more photos and the result of using the white background can be seen there as well.

Picture 9. First post of a photo in "Products" album
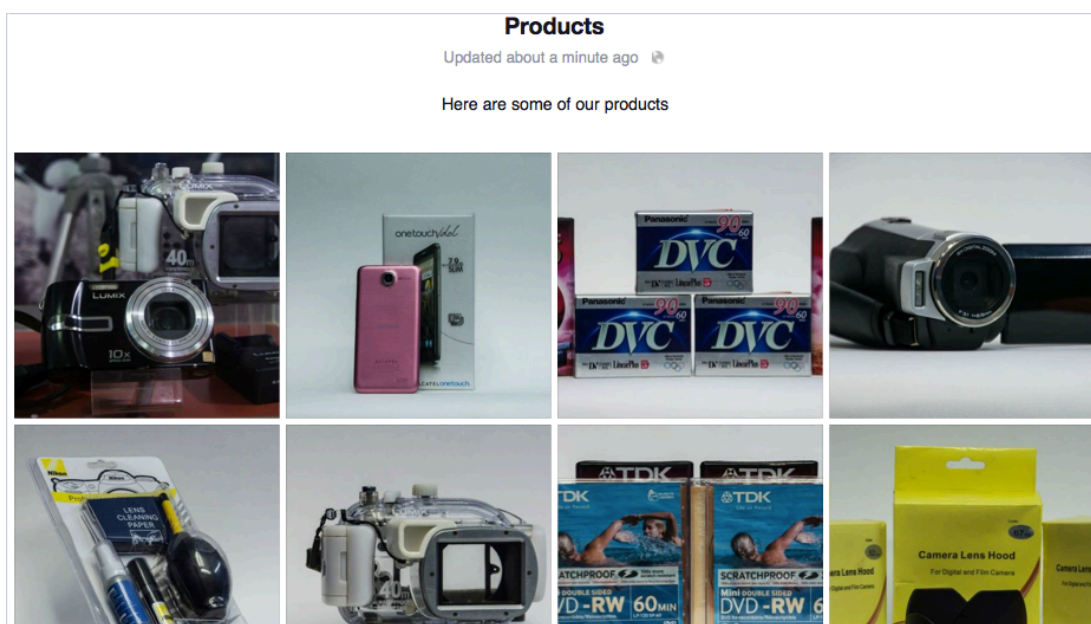
Picture 10. "Products" album overview

During the author's stay in the shop the owners realized that it would be good if smoking would not be allowed inside the shop, since the goal was to make Nordic people, who are used to having fresh air indoors, feel welcome. This may or may not have been due to the constant complaining of the smoke by the author. It was important to give this information on the Facebook page as well, since it is not the expectation in Egypt to have a smoke-free shop, which is why Picture 11 was posted on the page.

Picture 11. Smoke-free shop

There were also several links posted on the Facebook page. Picture 12 shows a link to a product review of the camera that was the first photo to be uploaded to the "Products" album. The rest of the links shared on the case company's Facebook page are shown in chapter 8.6.5 Post-launch posts, since they were used after the Facebook page was changed to public.

Picture 12. Product review post

8.6.4 Launch

Once all the necessary information on the Facebook page was added and there were some updates and photos for the fans to see, the page was launched. This included publishing the page again after unpublishing it for the time of construction and inviting friends to like the page. The author chose friends who she knew liked to travel and friends she knew to be international minded, for example, people from her study group in SAMK. The owners of the shop also sent invitations to their Facebook friends in order to help the word spread faster. The customers who came to the shop after the launch were also told about the Facebook page and they were helped in finding the page from Facebook. The day after the launch there were over 20 likes and by the time the thesis was finished, which was approximately two weeks after the launch, there were 45 likes.

8.6.5 Post-launch posts

The product photography session had many important aspects. First of all, the goal was to have professional-looking product photos on the Facebook page. Secondly, a "making of" -photo of the product photography session, shown in Picture 13, was

uploaded to give the page a personal touch, to make the fans feel more included and to show them that the shop actually has those products and the photos are not just taken from the internet. Thirdly, it was also an important training session to show the owners of the case company how to take the product photos in order for the photos to look good once they were responsible for updating the Facebook page and the author was no longer available for photography purposes.
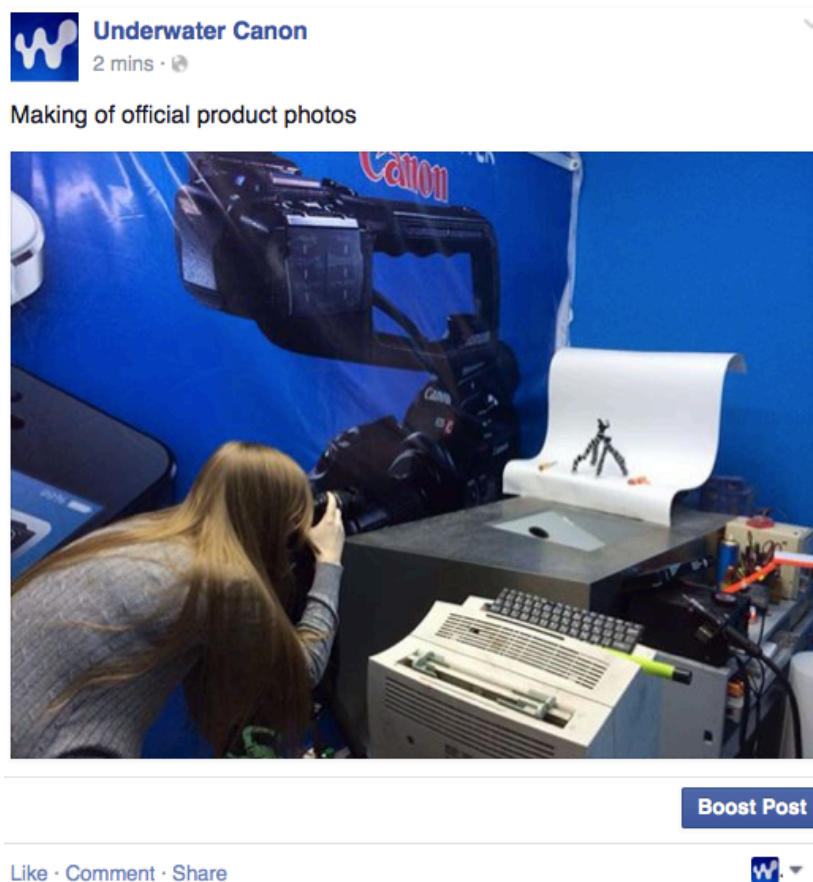
Picture 13. Product photography session

There were many links shared still after the launch of the Facebook page. The link in Picture 14 was shared to give the fans a possibility to find information about the camera that was used in taking the photos that were uploaded on the Facebook page. Picture 15 shows a link to news about Sharm el Sheikh being the third most favorite winter destination in the vote by users of TripAdvisor. The website for the case company was finished during the author's practical training in the company and a post to invite the fans to take a look at the website was posted as well, as shown in Picture 16.

Picture 14. Post on a link to information on Nikon D7100
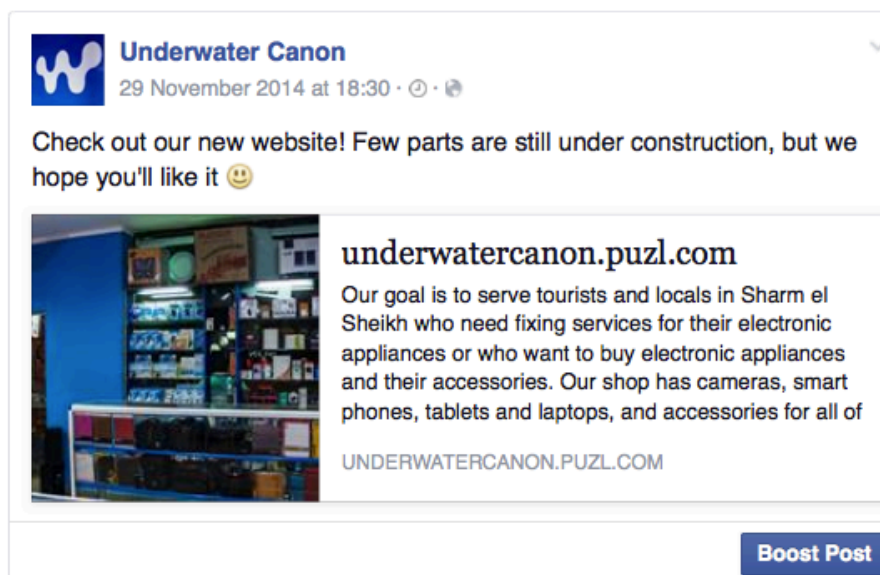
Picture 15. Post on TripAdvisor's vote results

Scheduled Posts

Underwater Canon
29 November 2014 at 18:30 · ⊙ · 🌐

Check out our new website! Few parts are still under construction, but we hope you'll like it 🙂

underwatercanon.puzl.com
Our goal is to serve tourists and locals in Sharm el Sheikh who need fixing services for their electronic appliances or who want to buy electronic appliances and their accessories. Our shop has cameras, smart phones, tablets and laptops, and accessories for all of
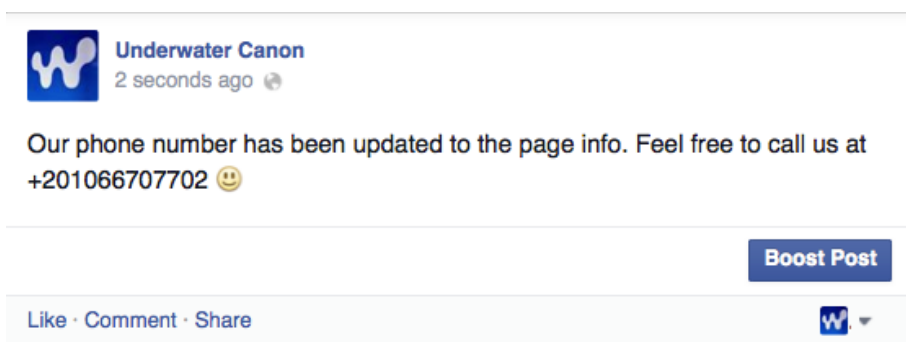
UNDERWATERCANON.PUZL.COM

Boost Post

Picture 16. Inviting fans to see the case company's website

There were also various product photos posted after the launch in order to have a new post every day. Facebook also had a new feature that allowed the author to make a scheduled post so that when she had a day off, she did not have to go on Facebook because she could upload the post the day before and then the post appeared on the page at the time she had set. The screen shot in Picture 16 already shown earlier was taken from the "Scheduled Posts" tab before the fans were able to see the post.

The phone number of the shop was added later on, because the original number was not working and it took some time to get a new number. When the information was added to the page info, it was also notified to the fans as a post in the timeline, as shown in Picture 17.

Underwater Canon
2 seconds ago 🌐

Our phone number has been updated to the page info. Feel free to call us at +201066707702 🙂

Boost Post

Like · Comment · Share

Picture 17. Phone number post

9 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As the thesis has shown the business environment for the case company is not of the most supportive kind. The unstable political situation has taken away the most important customers and since most of the local people in Sharm el Sheikh make their living in the tourism field, even the locals do not have much money to use, which makes the customer base even smaller. It is admirable how the people in Sharm el Sheikh still keep establishing new businesses and do not give up. Now that the situation is hopefully about to get better again, their persistence will finally pay off.

After the thesis is finished the author will add the owners of the shop to be the administrators of the Facebook page, but she will also stay as an administrator for few more weeks so that she can see if the owners know what they should do and she can still help them from the inside. Once the owners are responsible for the updating of the Facebook page, they should have new posts daily, or at least almost daily. They can post more product photos once they receive new products, they can look for more product reviews and news about the location and share the links, and they could also follow some Facebook pages promoting Sharm el Sheikh and share some of their posts. It may be a good idea to plan ahead the posts every few days using the scheduled posts feature because then they would not have to think actively every single day if they remember to post something new, and they could have the notifications on so that if someone comments or asks something, they would still be able to answer soon even if they would not otherwise go to the page that day.

The arrangements for the photo shoot unfortunately took so much more time than planned that the video shoot mentioned in chapter 8.5 Benchmarking was left out of the implementation process in this thesis. However, the case company should still consider shooting the video because it would give a reliable and professional image and make the fans feel included, as did the product photography session photo. In order to help them with the video shoot, there are two different script options provided in Appendices. The first one (Appendix 1) is written with the idea of shooting the video at the beach and the second one (Appendix 2) in the shop. The challenges to be

considered when deciding which to use have been mentioned after both scripts in order to make their decision easier.

Apart from the frequent Facebook page updates and the video shoot there are many possibilities for the case company in the future. First of all, they should always keep their minds open and think creatively about the Facebook marketing in order to come up with something new to make their page different. Secondly, the statistics tab on Facebook can be used later on for further research. Thirdly, if they gain more money to use for marketing purposes, they can widen their Facebook marketing operations from the page to a paid advertisement campaign, which also will need good planning. Lastly, a further research on marketing planning with the aspects that were left out from this thesis project can also be conducted in the future, for example, at the point when they can widen their product portfolio into more professional cameras and some findings on this thesis may not be relevant for them anymore.

10 EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

In the beginning of this thesis project the author was feeling uncertain about her ideas and she kept making some sort of plans in her head, but was not confident enough to talk to a teacher about it until the time was starting to run out. Eventually she was assigned with a supervisor and after talking to her about the topic, the project plan was finished within a week.

The author was determined to graduate in December 2014, but she was struggling in finding a place to do her second practical training and in the beginning of the summer vacation she came up with the idea to do the training for the same company for which she was doing her thesis. This way she was able to have a deeper understanding on the company's hopes and needs, which made the thesis more valuable. This also meant that when she could combine the training with the thesis, it was easier to keep the planned schedule and graduate on time.

The writing process was very difficult and stressful. The main problem was not being able to start the theory even though the reading process had been going on for a while already. Eventually the theory was written in a week, although it required a lot of Red Bull and sleeping only 2-4 hours every night. In the empirical part the actual writing process was a bit easier, but the research before writing took much more effort as well as the planning of the Facebook posts and taking the photos for the page. Culture shock due to the extreme differences in the Finnish and Egyptian ways of working was also causing a lot of stress.

Due to the high stress levels the author was starting to feel like she would go crazy before the thesis would ever be finished. At the moments when this feeling was strong, her family and friends were an extremely important help to her. Eventually the owner's of the shop also started to realize how stressed out she was over the thesis and they did everything in order to help her in all that she needed to get done. Anyone who has gone through a thesis process, or anyone in a relationship with a person doing their thesis, would probably agree that it brings out the worst in people and if the relationship can survive that, it is definitely on a strong basis and the couple might feel even closer than before by the end.

Even though there were some difficulties with communication and the schedule in the last weeks of the thesis process, the implementation of the Facebook page was done successfully and the author as well as the company were satisfied with the result. The owners were especially satisfied with the fact that there was not only information about the company and their industry, but also the location because that is the main reason for tourists to come there. They were also very happy with the product photos even though at first they were unsure if the white background was as necessary as the author seemed to think. Overall they considered the Facebook page to look very professional and even better than they had expected. They think, and hopefully that will be the reality, that the Facebook page will bring the company the desired reach for their customers and bring them more business. The author was not only satisfied with the results of the thesis, but also the fact that she had finally finished everything concerning her studies and she would graduate within the planned schedule.

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<u>Video script #1 "At the beach"</u>

The opening frame shows a view at the beach. The person talking is in the front and the sea is in the background. The person is shown approximately from the waste up.

<u>Person talking (PT)</u>: *Good morning everyone! Today we've come to the beach to show you how to use the underwater cover for smart phone.*

PT: <u>Showing the phone and the cover.</u>
Behind camera (BC): **Taking a closer shot.**

PT: *So first we'll put the phone inside the cover and then we'll close the cover. At this point the important thing is to close the cover properly, so the water will really stay out.* <u>Showing how to close it.</u>

PT: <u>Bringing the object to be photographed in the frame.</u> *Since there's not much to photograph in the ankle deep water, we'll put this 'thing' under the water and take a photo of it and that photo is going be on the Facebook page so you can see the result.*

PT: <u>Setting the 'thing' down under the water and the phone as well.</u>
BC: **Bring camera closer. Shooting from above in approximately 45-degree angle so people can see the phone and the 'thing'.**
PT: <u>Take some photos.</u>
BC: **Return to the previous frame.**
PT: <u>Take the phone out of the water.</u> *Okay, so now I've taken some photos and first I'll just dry the cover so the phone won't get wet when I take it out.* <u>Dry the cover with a towel.</u>
PT: *Okay, and let's open it so I can show you the phone.* <u>Open the cover and take the phone out. Show to the camera that the phone is still working.</u> *As you can see, the phone is still dry and working, so as long as you know how to use the cover right, you can just enjoy taking photos underwater. Thanks for watching (and have a nice day)!*

<u>PT</u>: <u>Go out of the frame.</u>

BC: **Take a last frame of the sea. Cut.**

<u>Challenges in this approach:</u> Have to go to the beach right after sunrise so there won't be too much people (too much noise and possibly interruptions) and if it's windy the voice of the person talking won't be recorded well (might be a problem even without the wind).

Video script #2 "In the shop using a glass box"

The opening frame shows the person talking is in the front and the shop wall in the background. The person is shown approximately from the waste up.

Person talking (PT): *Hello everyone! Today we are going to show you how to use the underwater cover for smart phone.*

PT: Showing the phone and the cover.
Behind camera (BC): **Taking a closer shot.**

PT: *So first we'll put the phone inside the cover and then we'll close the cover. At this point the important thing is to close the cover properly, so the water will really stay out.* Showing how to close it.

PT: Bringing the object to be photographed in the frame. *Since there's nothing interesting in a glass box full of water, we'll put this 'thing' under the water (or a photo under the box) and take a photo of it and that photo is going be on the Facebook page so you can see the result.*

PT: Setting the 'thing' down under the water and the phone as well.
BC: **Bring camera closer. Shooting through the glass so people can see the phone and the 'thing'.**
PT: Take some photos.
BC: **Return to the previous frame.**
PT: Take the phone out of the water. *Okay, so now I've taken some photos and first I'll just dry the cover so the phone won't get wet when I take it out.* Dry the cover with a towel.
PT: *Okay, and let's open it so I can show you the phone.* Open the cover and take the phone out. Show to the camera that the phone is still working. *As you can see, the phone is still dry and working, so as long as you know how to use the cover right, you can just enjoy taking photos underwater. Thanks for watching!*

BC: **Cut.**

<u>Challenges in this approach:</u> Have to do after shop is closed so there are no interruptions and the glass box might start to leak.