



TAMPERE POLYTECHNIC

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FINAL THESIS REPORT

**CHOICE OF A SALES CHANNEL WHEN LAUNCHING A NEW
SKIN CARE PRODUCT LINE TO THE FINNISH MARKET**

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ABSTRACT

The cosmetic industry is a fast growing market in Europe. Finland is the leading country where cosmetic market is rapidly increasing. The Finnish market showed a remarkable growth in 2006 when it was the fastest growing cosmetic market in Europe by 6,8 %.

Créations Couleurs, a raw material producer for cosmetics, is situated in the Cosmetic Valley in Dreux, France. I did my internship for the BBA program in Créations Couleurs in the year 2006. During the stay, Jaana Printz, the Technical Director of Créations Couleurs introduced me to an idea of establishing a company, Bellwell, and launching a new skin care product line to the Finnish market.

This thesis aims to find out if beauty salons would be a suitable sales channel for a new skin care product line. This is analysed on the basis of a survey conducted to support the research. From Créations Couleurs, a group of experts in the field were also in on the research, bringing their view, long experience and know-how to the research.

The market situation in cosmetics industry in Finland is analysed in the thesis. Also a positioning analysis and SWOT-analysis were made to find out if there would be a market niche for a new skin care product line in the Finnish cosmetic market.

As a part of the survey, a questionnaire was sent to 75 beauty salons in 3 biggest cities in Finland to find out if there are potential retailers for Bellwell's new skin care product line. 29 salons answered to the questionnaire and after analysing the results they showed that there would be a potential market niche for a new skin care product line that would be launched to market through beauty salons. As it turned out from the answers of the questionnaire, 15 out of 29 salons were interested in the kind of a new skin care product line that Bellwell products are. These 15 salons were also interested in adding the new Bellwell skin care product line to their salons. In Recommendations, it is more closely analysed how the new product line could be launched to the market and how it could be marketed on the basis of the survey.

Key Words: Sales Channel Cosmetics Industry Positioning Market Analysis

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1 Introduction

Today cosmetics is a fast growing industry all over the world. There is a demand for luxury products for women and men's lines of products are in an even higher growth. Cosmetics are something people use in some form every day. In the biggest fashion centres, like in Paris, and at its world famous *Paris Fashion Week* every year, it is even more appreciated. Models use the most elegant and expensive designers and the biggest brands in the market, such as Christian Dior, L'Oréal and Chanel which are maybe the most highly respected and known brands in French cosmetic industry.

In Finland, on the other hand, there still is not a defined cosmetic industry developed, mostly because of historical reasons. The followed trends have been influenced by the neighbouring country, Sweden. Nevertheless, nowadays Finnish fashion and design is becoming more known all over the world than before. Design brands such as Iittala and Marimekko are raising awareness and interest in America, Japan and all over Europe.

In Finland the market in cosmetics is still rather small compared to other Northern countries. However, the desire to get more international and bring Finland more up-to-date and on the map is huge and that is why there could be a place in this growing market for a new line of elegant and international products.

1.1 Background of the Research

France is known to be one of the biggest cosmetic producers in the world. Cosmetic Valley, situated in Eure-et-Loir, near Paris, is the most important source of the cosmetics produced in France; there are almost a hundred enterprises with 6000 professionals working on fragrances and make-up products. (Cosmetic Valley 2005)

CIT Sarl (or Cosmetics Innovations and Technologies Sarl) is one of the many companies operating in the Cosmetic Valley, in

Dreux. When completing my studies I did my work placement in CIT Sarl as a marketing assistant. This research began when CIT Sarl wanted to launch its own line of skin care products to the Finnish market and a proper sales channel had to be chosen.

In the beginning there were two main options for a sales channel for this research. In co-operation with Créations Couleurs (CIT Sarl) the decision was made that the products will be sold in beauty salons, in biggest cities in Finland. This option of a sales channel is more closely studied in this thesis.

The other option for a sales channel was direct marketing but was left out because it would not have been a suitable and as effective sales channel for Bellwell products. In either case the products would not be sold in stores but kept exclusively available through selected sales people. Carefully selecting the sales people would ensure they have a proper understanding of cosmetics and preferably a background in beauty care as well.

However, direct marketing would have been very challenging in this case, since there is quite much competition in direct marketing in cosmetics in Finland. Another obstacle would be the poor reputation of direct marketing in Finland. Therefore the real challenge would have been to get sales people involved and to obtain customers. (Kuningaskuluttaja, 16.2.2006)

A third possible option would be to approach the consumers through supermarkets or department stores which have a good, solid position in Finnish market and people have adopted those as daily buying places. Nevertheless, the core of the image of the product line is to be unique and not available in every store. More importantly, the products could not be on display i.e. in supermarkets where there would not be any sales person to promote the products. The sales of this product line should be based on professionals who know the product and hence are able to recommend it and advise consumers in the use of the product.

1.2 Purpose of the Research and Research Problems

A new business, Bellwell, importing and selling cosmetics would be established in Finland. The chosen sales channel would be to market the products in Beauty Salons and Hair-and Beauty Salons; first in the biggest cities: Helsinki, Tampere and Turku.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse if the chosen sales channel, selling the products in beauty salons, will be suitable for Bellwell skin care product line. The beauty salons' possible willingness to become retailers is also studied in this research. By sending 75 questionnaires to beauty salons in Helsinki, Tampere and Turku, 29 answers were collected and analysed.

The aim is also to explore the current market situation in the targeted areas and analyse the competition and Bellwell's possible position in the cosmetics market.

As the intention of the thesis is to answer **whether the chosen sales channel is suitable for Bellwell's products** there are research problems that must be taken into consideration throughout the whole process of making this thesis and possibly to find answers or solutions for the problems.

First must be solved if there are potential retailers for new skin care product line in the targeted areas. This is analysed by studying the answers collected from a questionnaire sent to selected beauty salons.

The competitive analysis has also been a very important part of this research and it was started already in France, in co-operation with Créations Couleurs. It is essential to look for and to know the main competition in Finland and compare the products, as well as the sales channels between Bellwell and its competition.

In Chapter 5 of this thesis, under the title of Recommendations are some suggestions of how to launch a new product line in Finland.

The recommendations are supported by the survey that is presented in Chapter 4.

1.3 Research Methodology

Research was done by collecting both primary and secondary information. Primary information was gathered by conducting a survey, a questionnaire that was sent out to 75 beauty and hair- and beauty salons, situated in Helsinki, Tampere and Turku. The questionnaire contained both open and multiple choice questions.

Helsinki, Turku and Tampere were selected as a potential target group because they are the biggest cities in Finland where the population is more compact. Also there are considerably more consumers in these three cities for whom the products are targeted than anywhere else in Finland. One significant reason for choosing Helsinki, Tampere and Turku is also because of the high number of beauty salons located in those areas. Therefore more customers could be expected to get to know the Bellwell products.

Secondary information was gathered from the Internet, books and newspaper articles.

1.4 Structure of the Research

This research is divided into five parts. The first part is the introduction of this research. It deals with cosmetics as an industry and tells how this research was first started. It explains what is behind on the background of this study and the reasons for doing it.

In the second part the business idea is introduced with the products. Also the partner company that co-operates in this research in France is introduced more closely.

The third part contains the current market situation in the cosmetic market in Finland, including the current market analysis, the competitive analysis and the SWOT-analysis of the business and deals with the question how to position this particular company and its products to the Finnish market.

The fourth part contains a survey which is supported by a questionnaire. The conducted survey with a questionnaire is introduced and the answers to it are analysed in the fourth part of the thesis.

The fifth part is under the title of Recommendations which contains some suggestions of how to launch a new product line. The recommendations are supported by the survey that is presented in Chapter 4. The sixth part of this thesis has the conclusions on the basis of the conducted research.

2 Bellwell

The idea is to create and establish a new company, called Bellwell Incorporated. Bellwell would import cosmetic goods to Finland. It would co-operate with an already existing French company, Créations Couleurs (CIT Sarl) and along with importing cosmetics goods to Finland, Bellwell would also function as a raw material supplier.

2.1 Business Idea

The business idea is to launch a new cosmetic product line in Finland. As there is not an existing company yet, one would have to be established. Bellwell Inc is a company under planning, in a co-operation with Créations Couleurs' Technical Director Mrs. Jaana Printz. Créations Couleurs would produce and pack the cosmetics in France and the product would be sold in Finland. There is also a possibility to expand the sales to another country later on, using the same methods, so far as there is a positive outcome on this research which would promote the sales.

The idea is to launch a product family, named Digiskin that would consist of cosmetics products and later as the status of the company and the products have been well-stabilized Bellwell would launch a new category of well-being products, such as nutritional supplements, to the market. A possible addition could also be a skin care line for men (Digimen).

2.2 Beauty Salons and Hair- and Beauty Salons as potential sales channel

Nowadays, cosmetics in Finland are most commonly sold in big department stores and the number of smaller boutiques has been decreasing fast over the past few years. The Finnish cosmetics industry is a 600-million-euro business yearly and develops faster than other fields of business, in general (Sipilä 2006).

When choosing beauty salons as a potential sales channel the biggest problem is to create the net of retailers around a new product. It is always difficult when implementing a launch of a product that is represented by a new company with no existing image and has not yet gained any customer base or feed-back, hence has no reputation as other competing, well-stabilised and renowned brands, products or companies.

Selective distribution is a distribution strategy which is used by many high-quality brands, such as Chanel. This distribution strategy restricts the sale of a product to a limited number of outlets. The selected outlets must have the desired store image and the manufacturer has to acknowledge that a great deal of effort is on the part of the retailer. As retailers benefit from limits on the number of competitors they are more willing to accept the manufacturer's controls on the marketing strategy. (Zikmund / D'Amico 2001: 369)

For Bellwell, beauty salons were selected as a potential sales channel mainly because of their professional personnel with know-how and experience of cosmetics. As the sales personnel would already have a background in the cosmetics, this would ensure their understanding of how the products work. Therefore they are able to sell the products to the customers and to give them the proper guidance in how to use the products and also to explain the science behind them. This also enables the customer to hear a professional's point of view. This is selective distribution for Bellwell as this choice of sales channel would give the product more exclusivity and it would not be found from any stores but the products would be available only at selected hair and beauty salons.

After contacting beauty salons in the selected cities, questionnaires were sent and answers were collected. This showed that there are salons that could later on be potential retailers. This will be further discussed in the chapter 4.

2.3 Partner

Créations Couleurs is a cosmetic raw material producer, situated in the cosmetic valley, in Dreux, France. Créations Couleurs was founded in 1987 in Grasse, on the Côte d'Azur and has been successfully in business for over 20 years. It is a well-known cosmetics raw material producer, not only in France but also everywhere else around the world. They have built a sales network around the world, operating in every continent where cosmetics is an industry. Créations Couleurs has developed and manufactured a range of products for skin care, sun care, colour care and hair care. It collaborates with customers and partners sharing the know-how and technical facilities to create modern, innovative and challenging products for their customers' market needs. (Créations Couleurs 2004)

Créations Couleurs has customers that play a big part in the cosmetic industry, like L'Oreal, Chanel and Dior to mention a few.

Cosmetics Innovations and Technologies Sarl is the distribution company and operates with businesses outside France together with distributors.

2.4 Defining the New Product Line

In cosmetic industry skin care products are beginning to play a big role and the customers are noticing the importance of for example anti-aging and sun care products which are ones of the most demanded products in the skin care market at the moment. As the climate change is the topic on everyone's lips it is not a wonder that we start focusing on the damage it could do to our skin as well and emphasizing on how it could be prevented. (Presso, 4.11.2006)

Digiskin represents the new skin care product line which consists of 3 different products, at first in the beginning. The aim is to add new products to the product family in every 6 months. (Printz

30.3.2006, interview)

As I interviewed the Technical Director of Créations Couleurs, Jaana Printz in March 2006, who has designed the image for the products, explained that the image and looks are classy and elegant but at the same time fresh and modern. The products are made of high-quality raw materials and therefore are effective. The prices vary depending on the product. They should not be too low-priced because then it might not attract the consumer as it should since it should give the impression that it is a little luxury for every day. Yet, it has to be affordable to buy. Being a new product line, Digiskin does not have a customer base ready but in fact most of the potential buyers are already settled with some other competing product and the challenge will be to win the consumers on Digiskin's side.

Target Group

According to the interview with Jaana Printz, Digiskin products are mainly targeted to women, 25 years old and up in the whole of Finland. It is targeted for women who are interested in their appearance and well-being and make the effort to see a professional on regular bases. The target group is women who are seeking for effective products and who buy their beauty care products based on professional recommendations made personally.

3 Cosmetic Industry in Finland

The Finnish consumers use more make-up daily than ever before. Yet it is somehow frowned upon in the Finnish society to make appointments in beauty salons and use a lot of money to buy cosmetic products. As the nature is all around the Finnish consumer it is only normal that they rather want to look “naturally beautiful” than cover themselves up with powder and lipstick. However, the Finnish people look up to the trends of the Middle-European countries, such as France, Italy and Spain and want to get recognised as an independent, well-being country. Finland wants to be more international. It is noticeable that in many ways, not only in the education and technology but also the latest fashion trends are being followed closely.

3.1 Current market situation

3.1.1 The Finnish cosmetic market is growing faster than in other countries in Europe

The Finnish consumers spend more and more money on taking care of themselves which shows in the fast growth of cosmetic market in Finland. In the year 2006 the sales increased by nearly 7 percentages bringing the cosmetic market up to 718 million euros.

In 2005 the consumption of cosmetic- and hygiene products was approximately 137 euros per person, when in the year 2004 it was 129 euros. This is still below the average consumption in Europe which is 146 euros per person but Finland is getting close. The Finnish market showed a remarkable growth in 2006 when it was the fastest growing cosmetic market in Europe (6,8 %). Denmark took the second place (6,6 %). In France, however, which is often seen as the power player in cosmetics market the consumption of cosmetics has decreased. The overall consumption in European Union countries has only grown one percentage compared to year 2005. The biggest spenders in cosmetics are Switzerland (214 €),

Norway (198 €), Denmark (173 €) and Sweden (169 €). Compared to Finland, the consumption of cosmetics in European Union countries is less only in Greece, Portugal and Ireland, and for the first time also in Germany. These differences are caused by the price level differences and differences in statistics. (Teknokemian Yhdistys RY, 2006)

3.1.2 Luxury products and men's cosmetics in a vast growth

The good condition of the economy in Finland is showing also in the demand of cosmetics- and hygiene products, both daily consumer goods and luxury goods. One reason for the high demand is the fact that nowadays well-being and taking care of oneself is becoming more and more important. The positive trend in cosmetic- and hygiene products reflects also to good products being available in all price categories and customers have a vast choice – the cosmetics and hygiene market offers something for everybody. (Teknokemian Yhdistys RY, 2006)

Hair care products are the best selling product line compared to other cosmetic- or hygiene products. Hair care, hygiene, skin care and colour cosmetics all increased sales significantly in the year 2005. Due to the warm summer in 2005, especially sun care product sales took a big step forward. Self-tanning products were also one reason for the good demand. (Teknokemian Yhdistys RY, 2006)

In 2005 one important factor for the positive development in the cosmetic industry was the sales of fragrances. In addition to the fragrances, men's products and that market offers numerous possibilities. The sales of skin care products for men have also affected to the whole cosmetic market and its growth even though these products are still just a small part of the market. Men's products are estimated to continue increasing also in the future as men are paying more attention to their well-being and looks than before. These products are marketed more and more and men are beginning to be aware of all the products in many price categories

and the product lines that are expanding, adding different products to their collections.

In the past, the Finnish consumer has used a lot less money in a year to buy cosmetics than other European countries. On average, it used to be 100 euros per year and today it has increased up to 140 euros per year. This is a good step forward, as in Europe in general the consumers use only about six euros more than the Finnish. The Finnish already use more on cosmetics than Germany or Portugal, for example. The Finnish cosmetics industry is in a faster growth than anywhere else in Europe. Over a billion euros is spent on beauty- and health care products yearly in Finland and the growth is faster than normally in other fields of business. (Teknokemian Yhdistys RY, 2006)

The tables 1 and 2 below show the consumption of cosmetic- and hygiene products per person, in Finland and in Europe. (*The European Cosmetic, Toiletry and Perfumery Association, COLIPA statistics*)

Table 1 Consumption of cosmetic- and hygiene products in Finland 1995-2005

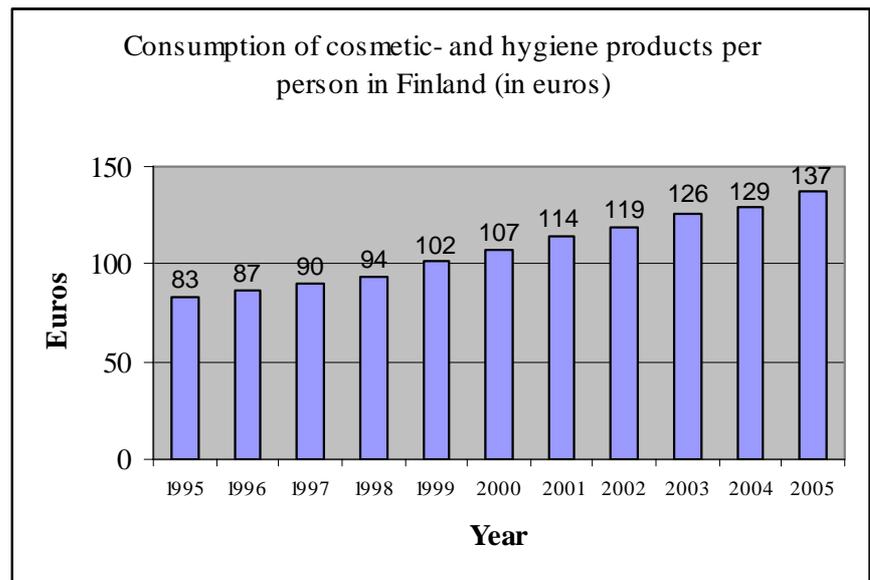


Table 1 shows especially the fast growth in Finland, during years 1995-2005. According to a research institute ACNielsen, the growth has happened in all the product lines. The vastest growth has happened in the sales of body lotions, facial creams and perfumes, compared to statistics drawn up last year.

The economy is fairly good and the Finnish consumers have buying power and also the social environment favours the looks. Every day it is made more and more desirable in the society to invest in and pay attention on the looks. It is even common for the companies, nowadays, to buy spa-treatments and organise styling and beauty events for their employees. (Research Institute ACNielsen)

Table 2 The cosmetic- and hygiene market in Europe in 2005

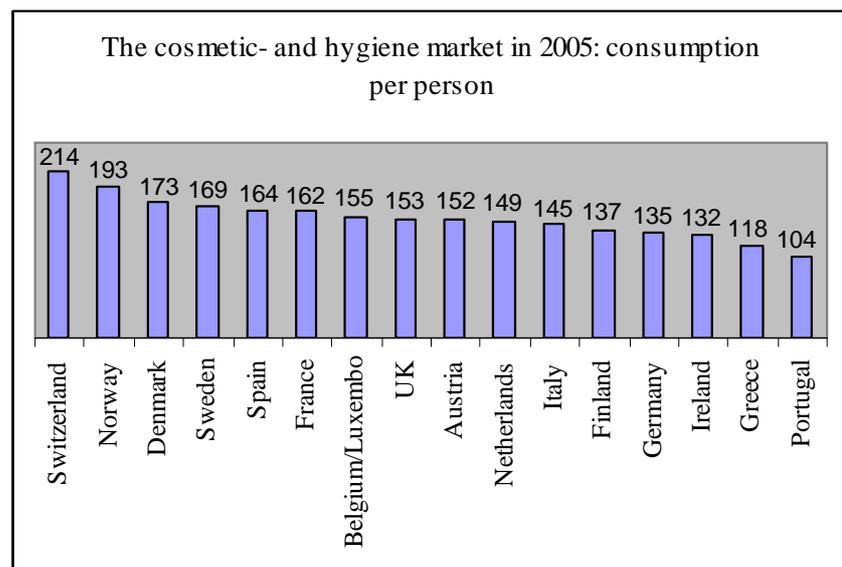


Table 2 shows the countries that spend the most money for cosmetics in Europe. Switzerland and Norway are the top two countries. France, however, which is often described as the leader in cosmetics is only on the sixth place.

This boom of taking care of oneself and looking more beautiful and younger is not only a trend for the young consumers but also the aging consumers want to stay up-to-date and look young and

“fresh” and are willing to pay for it. The growth in cosmetics field is not only due to the women but the men’s lines of products are increasing rapidly as well. (Sipilä 2006)

The selective cosmetics, the more expensive brands, such as Dior, Chanel, and Yves Saint Laurent do not yet have a big competition in the Finnish market. The two biggest and most known department stores *Stockmann* and *Sokos* sell approximately 80% of all selective cosmetics in Finland. Neighbour country Sweden has also noticed the growing market in Finland and the well-known Swedish department store *Åhléns* is going to bring a new cosmetic store, *Kicks* to Finland and in the future is planning to open up to 80 stores. (Presso, 4.11.2006)

Since the small perfumeries disappeared from the market there are fewer places for the consumer to buy and the availability of the products has weakened. Therefore there is a market niche for new products and even more expensive ones, since consumers are anyhow willing to use money on cosmetics. Competition will likely increase bringing also more international cosmetic brand chains in to the market.

3.2 Main Competition in Targeted Areas

The targeted areas where Bellwell products would be sold are the biggest cities in Finland: Helsinki, Tampere and Turku. More beauty salons will be selected as retailers in Helsinki and Helsinki area than Tampere and Turku because it is the capital and there is more demand in cosmetics for the manufacturers and more consumers than anywhere else in Finland. This *geographic segmentation* is a way of dividing a market into different geographical units. This way the company can decide in one or few geographical areas and pay attention to geographical differences in needs and wants. (Kotler / Armstrong / Saunders / Wong 2002: 321)

Bellwell’s main competitors in Finland are the Finnish brands

Lumene and Nanoel. Other foreign brands, such as Lancôme, L'Oreal, Dior, Phytomer, Dermalogica, Yves Rocher, Avon and Oriflame are strong competitors as well. All the well-being products in the market are also a threat to a new company launching its products to the market because the consumer can choose whether to use their money to buy the well-being products or cosmetic products.

It is difficult to get a new product, without an existing image and customer base into a market place. Retailers choose carefully what kind of products would fit also their image. Currently the department stores, such as *Stockmann* and *Sokos* are popular with the consumers. It is still an old habit for the consumers to get everything in one place.

In November 2006 a new department store only for cosmetics opened its doors in Vantaa. Over 3000 m² vast *Megastore Eve* is situated in Vantaa *Retail Park*, near Helsinki. It is a department store selling cosmetics and offering spa services, nail studio services and restaurants for the customers. Megastore Eve is also a significant competition for Bellwell. They offer the services in addition to selling cosmetics and therefore all the spa- and nail studio services are a competition to the beauty salons where Bellwell products would be sold. (Witikkala 2006)

The chief executive and owner of Eve, Jukka Keski-Pukkila described the current market situation in Finland in an article in *Markkinointi ja Mainonta* -magazine, 24.10.2006. According to Keski-Pukkila the Finnish well-being- and cosmetic market are growing fast. At the moment, department stores rule the market. In brand cosmetics the two biggest functioning retailers can rule even up to 80 percentage of the market and the level of rent is exceptionally high. Due to the high rent the amount of smaller boutiques has decreased fast over past years. (Witikkala 2006)

Keski-Pukkila says that cosmetics is a 600-million-euro business and that the development in the field of cosmetics is significantly

faster than in other fields of business, in general. For example the growth of brand cosmetics has been up to 8-9 percentage in a year. (Witikkala 2006)

3.3 Positioning

Nowadays consumers have many options to choose from; in cosmetics one can find different brands in many price groups and in different qualities. Positioning products is therefore essential; the company has to identify a group of customers for whom they have a differential advantage and then position itself to market. Positioning is a way to map out the market and situating a brand or a product in that market. By positioning, the company can also find a niche in the market, among the competitors. (Kotler / Armstrong / Saunders / Wong 2002: 355)

As a part of positioning, competitive analysis is usually done to further explore the competition. Competitive analysis is an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of current and potential competitors. It is made to map out the competitive brands and companies to know what the main competition is as well as the customer needs and preferences that the company is competing to meet. (Kotler / Armstrong / Saunders / Wong 2002: 417)

Competitive analysis helps to find out what are the similarities and differences between the competitive companies' products/services and those of your company by analysing the strengths and weaknesses of the products and services. It helps map out the competition in the market and by comparing the company's own product to the competition it is easier to position the product in a certain place in the market. (Autio / Holopainen / Kanerva / Mannermaa / Rinne 1974: 193)

The different characteristics in the competing products as well as their strengths and weaknesses are essential to be known in order to analyse what kind of advantages or barriers they may cause. The

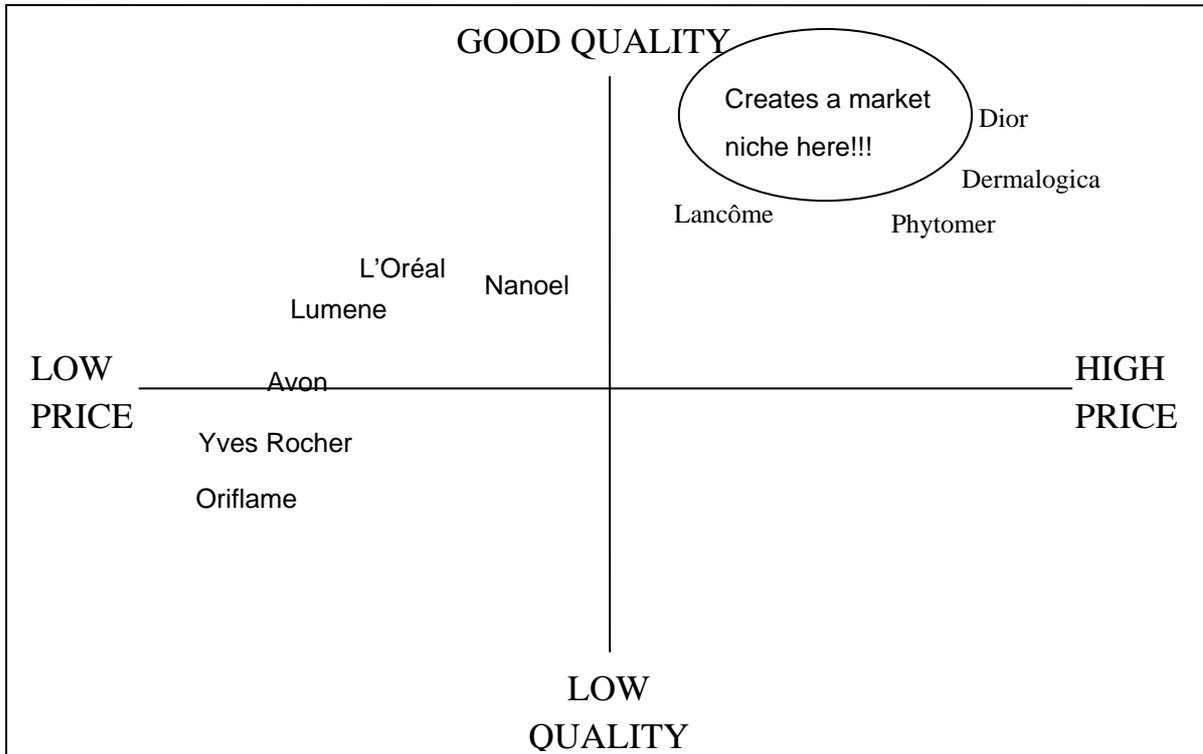
company has to know how it is uniquely suited to compete with the other companies. (Kotler / Armstrong / Saunders / Wong 2002: 417)

A thorough competitive analysis is not done in this thesis but it is talked about since the main competition is acknowledged. Comparing Bellwell to the competition, positioning chart is made to find out where Bellwell could be situated in the Finnish cosmetic market. The positioning for Bellwell was done on the basis of a comparison to the competition. By analysing the competitors' place in the market Bellwell can later on form a strategy using the positioning chart (Table 3 below).

The positioning chart to place Bellwell to a certain spot on the market was made in June 2006 in co-operation with Mrs. Jaana Printz, the Technical Director of Créations Couleurs and Aesthetician Ms. Jaana Mäkinen. The analysis is based on background information and years of experience and knowledge of Mrs. Printz and Ms. Mäkinen.

Table 3 below was conducted among Créations Couleurs group of experts in the field, including also Mrs. Printz and Ms. Mäkinen, on the basis of their opinion on the brands. Two main features; price and quality are measured in Table 3. Prices of the products offered by each of the companies in Table 3 were compared to each other and analysed by product lines. That way the companies could be positioned in the Table 3. The analysis was made to find out in which sector of the *Positioning of Bellwell* –chart Bellwell would be situated.

Table 3 Positioning of Bellwell



The chart shows the position of Bellwell's main competition and their products in the Finnish market from the customers' point of view. It shows there is a market niche for a product that can be pricy but also is a very high-quality product. Hence, the main competition for Bellwell would be those in *high quality-high price* sector.

Bellwell's skin care product line Digiskin contains very high quality products. The prices vary depending on the product. On this basis of this chart could be said that Bellwell would have a fair chance to succeed in the market. According to Table 3 the brands that are the biggest competition for Bellwell are Dior, Dermalogica, Phytomer and Lancôme.

3.4 SWOT-analysis of Bellwell

SWOT Analysis, is a strategic planning tool used to evaluate the *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats* involved in a

project or in a business venture. It involves specifying the objective of the business venture or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieving that objective. (Zigmund / D'Amico 2001: 42)

SWOT-analysis groups key pieces of information into two main categories: *Internal factors* are the strengths and weaknesses internal to the organization and *External factors* are the opportunities and threats presented by the external environment. The internal factors may be viewed as strengths or weaknesses depending upon their impact on the organization's objectives. What may represent strengths with respect to one objective may be weaknesses for another objective. The factors may include all of the 4P's; product, pricing, promotion and placement, as well as personnel, finance, manufacturing capabilities, and so on. The external factors may include macroeconomic matters, technological change, legislation, and socio-cultural changes, as well as changes in the marketplace or competitive position. (Zigmund / D'Amico 2001: 42)

SWOT analysis is just one method of categorization and has its own weaknesses. For example, it may tend to persuade companies to compile lists rather than think about what is really important in achieving objectives. It also presents the resulting lists uncritically and without clear prioritization so that, for example, weak opportunities may appear to balance strong threats. (Zigmund / D'Amico 2001: 43)

As mentioned before, there is a market niche for new cosmetic products in the Finnish market. The demand is growing and the price of the product does not dictate the consumer's buying decision. This is an optimal opportunity for Bellwell.

Finnish cosmetics are highly appreciated and popular in Finland. However, France is considered to be the fashion centre of Europe and therefore it is a strength to have a strong French company operating with us. It would allow Bellwell to get the latest news

and information of what is the demand and what is being offered in the biggest cosmetics market in Europe. This partnership gives us a competitive edge as Créations Couleurs have the know-how and their production is always of high quality.

The challenge is that the hair and beauty salons already sell other competing products. As the customer is perhaps already using some other brand, it is difficult to change their buying decision, especially when Digiskin is not yet a recognised brand. Therefore the launch of Digiskin needs to be done with careful consideration. A new product is always difficult to introduce to the market as it has no previous reputation but that can also be used as an advantage. The right kind of promotion gives a possibility to create a desired image for the products. Selling the same products in stores would require more extensive promotional efforts since the consumers are not yet familiar with the products and at the stores there is not necessarily anyone recommending the products. Recommendations on how to launch the product line will be discussed in Chapter 5.

STRENGTHS

- Co-operation with a well-established French Company
- Know-how
- Quality
- Raw Materials from Créations Couleurs
- No customer base but the salons already have their own customers

WEAKNESSES

- New company with no image
- No existing customer base
- Price is fairly high
- No existing retailers and difficulty of getting the products into the salons
- Financing

- Lack of experience

OPPORTUNITIES

- Cosmetics is a fast growing business in Finland, it gives almost unlimited possibilities for Bellwell to grow along the market
- To spread county wide, also in small towns
- Chance of having a loyal customer base because of the effectiveness and good quality of the products
- The products differ from the competition by their image: Digiskin is elegant and feminine but also the word “Digi” refers to modern and fresh

THREATS

- Competition -> Convincing the potential customer to try out a new product, “breaking their buying habits”, in stead of buying the same product as before
- All the other well-being products are competitive products
- Difficulty of entering the market

4 The Survey

As I started my internship at Créations Couleurs, France, my employer Jaana Printz (the Technical Director of Créations Couleurs) explained their plan of an idea of a new product line that Créations Couleurs wanted to launch in the Finnish market. The idea was to market the products through beauty and hair- and beauty salons in the biggest cities in Finland. Helsinki, Turku and Tampere were chosen as the cities and 75 questionnaires were sent to beauty salons in those cities. 29 (38,5%) out of 75 salons replied and the 29 answers were collected and analysed. 28% of the answers were collected from salons in Helsinki, 41% from Turku and 31% from Tampere.

The questionnaires were sent to the salons on 19.1.2007 for the first time. After this first round 26 out of 75 salons answered. The questionnaire was sent the second time on 29.1.2007 to collect more answers. However, this time only 3 more salons sent their answers for the questionnaire.

The beauty salons were chosen by their size, through the Internet site www.webinfo.fi. The biggest beauty- and hair and beauty salons are listed in that site by cities. After contacting the chosen salons a survey was made by sending a questionnaire to 75 salons aiming to learn about their customer base and current products and asking of their interest in becoming retailers for a new skin care product line. In this chapter, the questionnaire is more closely elaborated, question by question and the answers are analysed to find out if there are potential retailers for Bellwell products.

4.1 Questionnaire for hair and beauty salons

This questionnaire was made to map out the customer target group and the product lines in the selected hair and beauty salons in Tampere, Turku and Helsinki. The purpose of the questionnaire was also to find out if there are potential retailers for a new

Bellwell skin care product line. The final version of the electronic research questionnaire (Appendix I) was made using TAMK (Tampere Polytechnic University) Intranet Lomake-editori. The questionnaire was divided into 4 main sub groups using both open and multiple choice questions.

The first sub group of the questionnaire was under the subtitle of information of the enterprise (Perustiedot yrityksestä). This subtitle contained a question of the name and the address of the salon which was recorded for possible use in the future. There were both, open- and multiple choice questions.

The second sub group of the questionnaire was under the subtitle of the target group of customers (Asiakkaiden kohderyhmä). This sub group aimed at getting to know if the target group would be the same as Bellwell products' target group for customers. This also helped finding out information on possible competition. Questions included what their customer group mainly consists of. In this sub group there were only multiple choice questions.

The third sub group was under the subtitle of currently sold products (Nykyiset tuotteet); aiming towards finding out what kind of products the salons are offering their customers at the moment. There were both, open- and multiple choice questions in the third sub group.

The fourth sub group was under the subtitle of potential products (Potentiaaliset tuotteet) targeted at gathering information if the salons were interested in selling the kind of products that Bellwell would offer. This was asked by questions posing different characteristics in the products that the salon chooses and what they think were the most important characteristics in a product. This part also contained a question if the salons would be interested in selling a new skin care product line in their salons. There were only multiple choice questions in this sub group.

4.2 Results of the questionnaire

This questionnaire as seen in Appendix 1 is more closely dealt with in this part. The questionnaire was made in Finnish as all the salons were situated in Finland. Questions and the collected answers are explained and analysed question by question.

The first question in the questionnaire was an open question about the name and the address of the salon, which is recorded for possible later use.

The second question was a multiple choice question:

Is your salon

1 .a Hair salon

2. a Beauty Salon

3. a combined Hair- and beauty salon?

Table 4 Question 2: Type of the salon



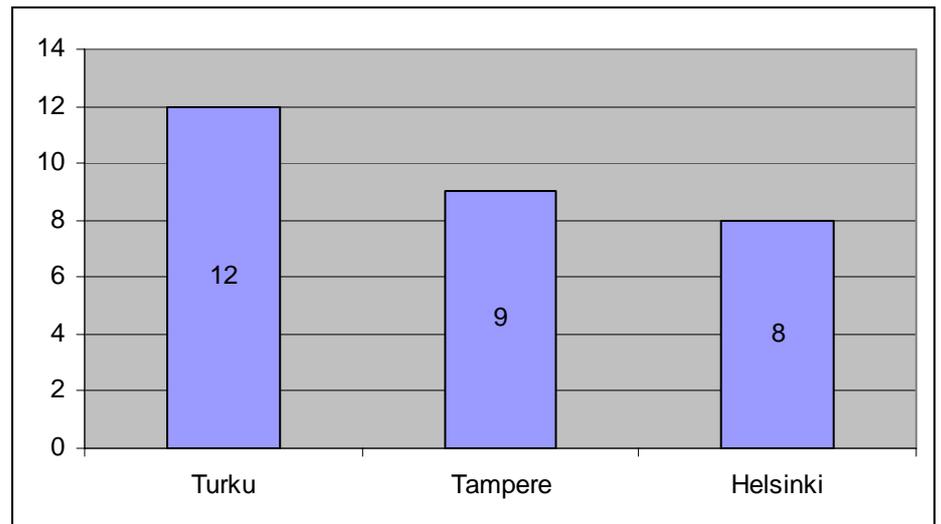
As the bar chart above shows, the salons were divided as follows; there was one hair salon, 20 beauty salons out of 29 (69%) and eight salons (27,5%) were combined hair- and beauty salons. Hence, this sample group turned out to be suitable for the purpose, since potentially these salons would offer their customers the kind

of cosmetic products that Bellwell has to offer.

The third question was an open question:

Where is the salon located?

Table 5 Question 3: Location of the salon



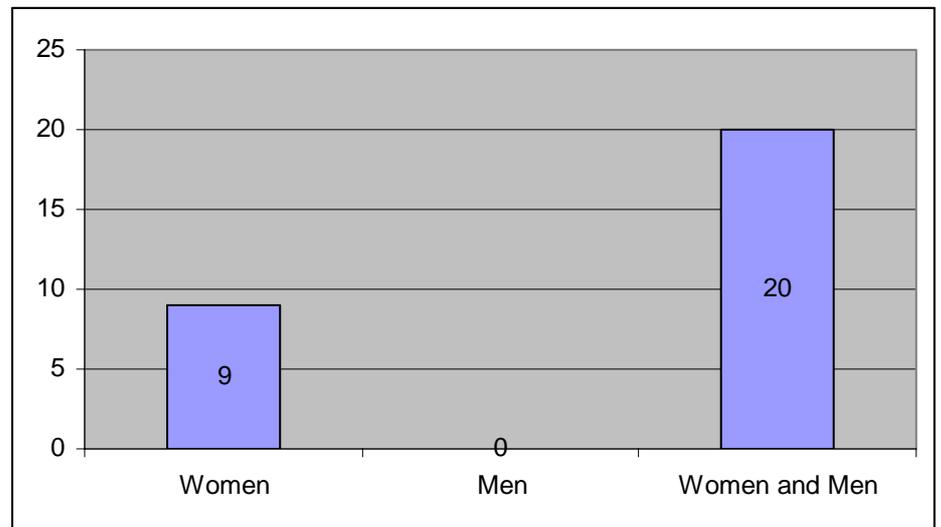
As the results show 12 salons (41%) were located in Turku, 9 (31%) in Tampere and 8 (28%) in Helsinki. This shows that the salons are quite evenly divided among the three cities so the answers are collected fairly evenly, preventing the answers from being biased.

The fourth question dealt with the main customer group of the salons. This question was a multiple choice question.

Does your customer group mainly consist of

1. *Women*
2. *Men*
3. *Women and Men?*

Table 6 Question 4: Gender of the customer group



20 out of 29 salons (69%) said their main customer group consists of both women and men. 9 salons (31%) answered that most of their customers are women, none of the salons answered that men would be their primary customer group.

As most of the salons (69%) answered that both women and men are forming their main customer group, it shows that in the future there is potential to launch a product line for men as well (Digimen name is under planning).

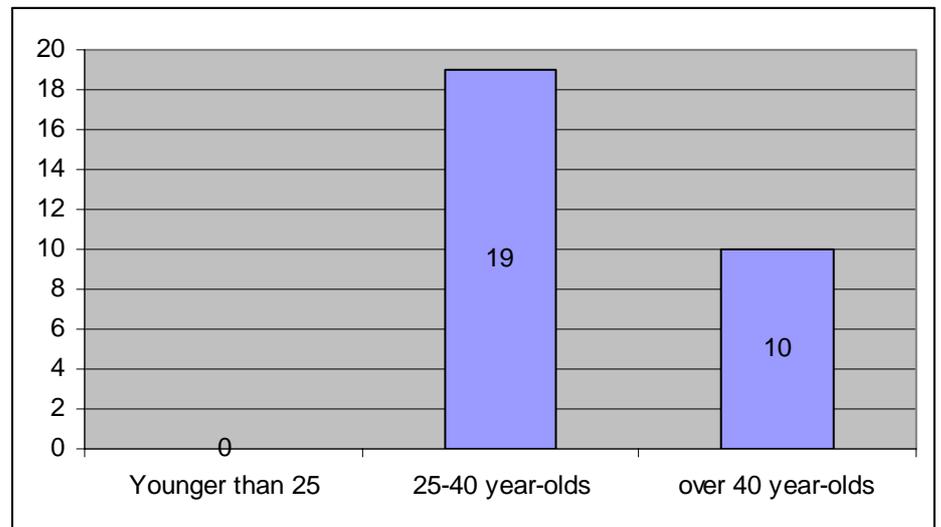
Comparing the tables 6 and 7 to each other and cross-analysing the answers showed that 31% of the salons potentially have the same customer target group as Bellwell; women, aged 25-40. Therefore these salons could be potential retailers for Bellwell.

The fifth question was a multiple choice question.

Does your customer group mainly consist of

1. Younger than 25-year-olds
2. 25-40 year-olds
3. over 40 year-olds?

Table 7 Question 5: Main customer group



None of the salons answered younger than 25-year-olds, 19 of the salons (65,5%) said their customers are mainly 25-40 year-olds and finally 10 salons (34,5%) answered that their primary customer group consists of over 40 year-olds.

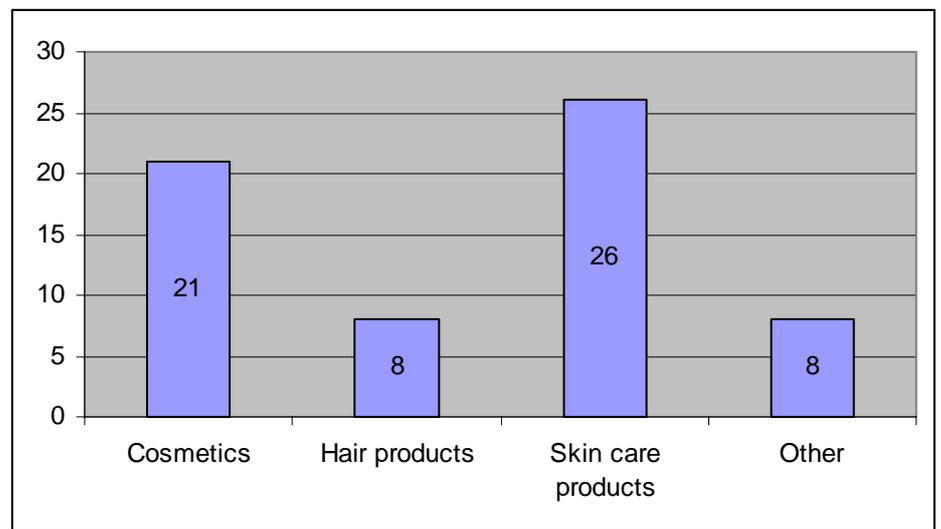
The majority, 65,5% answered 25-40 year-olds, which is Bellwell customer target group as well.

The sixth question was a multiple choice question.

Which product lines do you offer to your customers?

1. *Cosmetics*
2. *Hair products*
3. *Skin care products*
4. *Other products*

Table 8 Question 6: Current product lines



Cosmetics and skin care products are the most commonly offered products in these 29 salons. 21 out of 29 salons (72%) answered that they mostly offer their customers both, cosmetics and skin care products.

The seventh question was an open question.

Which individual product is the most sold product in your salon?

This question got 17 different answers but the most commonly answered were facial creams, lotions, and skin care lotions.

This question aimed to answer what kind of products the salons mostly sell. Most salons answered selling mostly the kind of products that also Bellwell would have to offer. This can be seen either as an opportunity to gain retailers or as competition to Bellwell.

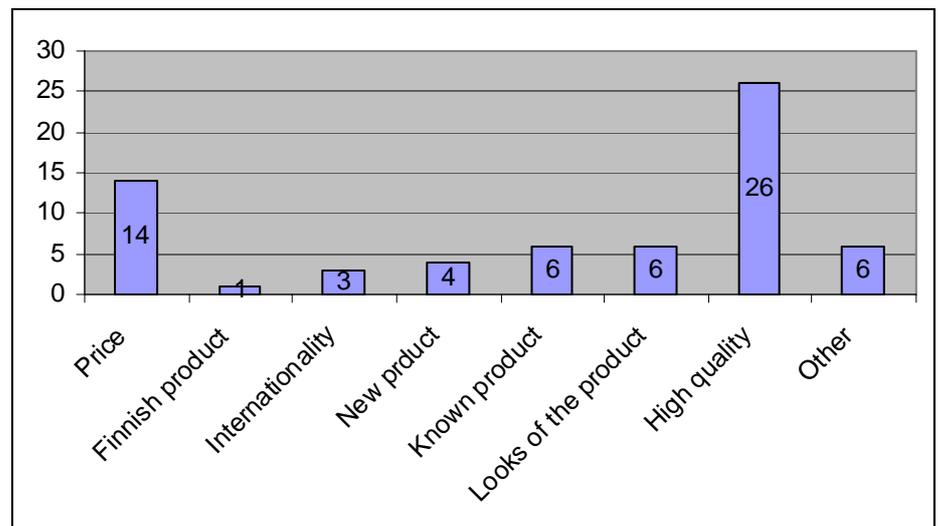
The eighth question was a multiple choice question.

Which factors affect the most on your decision when you select a new product line for your salon?

1. Price
2. That the product is Finnish
3. That the product is international

4. *New product*
5. *Well-known product*
6. *The looks of the product*
7. *The high quality in the product*
8. *Other*

Table 9 Question 8: Factors affecting on the selection of a product



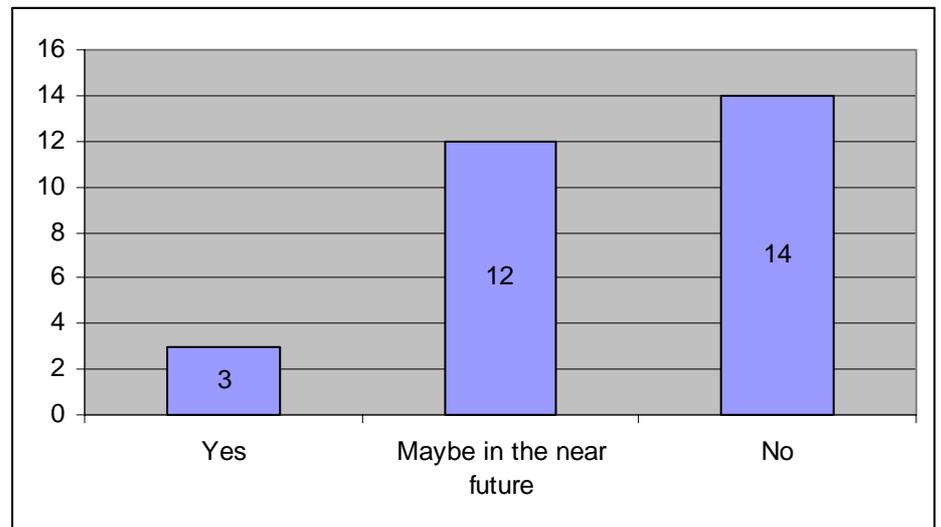
The two significantly most answered factors were the price of the product which was answered by 14 salons (48%) and the high quality in the product by 26 of the salons (89,5%). There by it can be stated that the selected salons consider price and quality as the most important feature in a product. Bellwell products are made from high-quality raw materials and there fore fit in to this high quality-characteristic.

The ninth question was a multiple choice question.

Are you looking for a new product line to be added in your salon?

1. *Yes*
2. *Maybe in the near future*
3. *No*

Table 10 Question 9: Search for a new product line



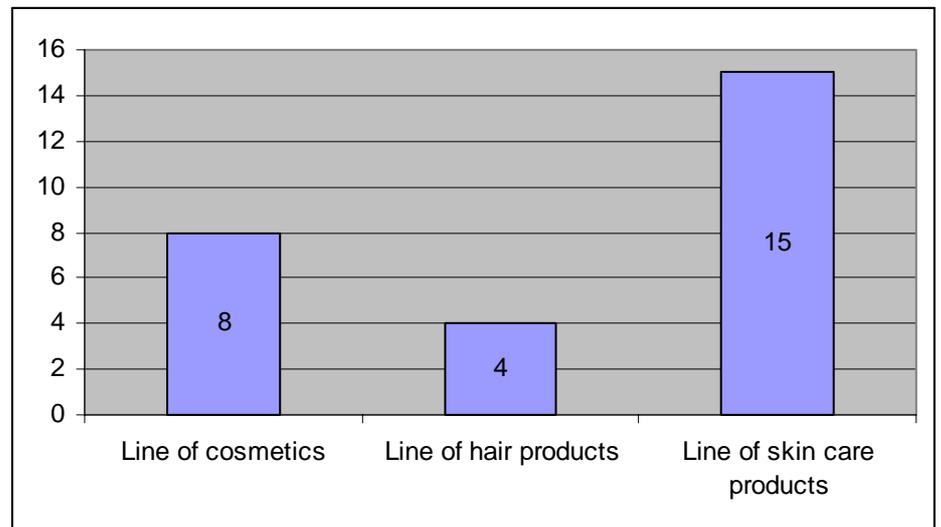
This question was asked to find out if the salons would be interested in a new product line or not. 15 out of 29 salons (52%) answered that they would be interested in the option of adding a new product line to their salon. 3 salons (10,5%) said they would be interested and 12 (41,5%) said they would be interested maybe in the near future.

The tenth question was a multiple choice question.

If you answered yes to the question above, what kind of product line would you be interested in adding to your salon?

1. *Line of cosmetics*
2. *Line of hair products*
3. *Line of skin care products*

Table 11 Question 10: Product line in interest



All of the 15 salons, answering the previous question that they would be interested in adding a new product line to their salons, answered they would be interested in a line of skin care products. These 15 salons could be potential retailers for Bellwell skin care products.

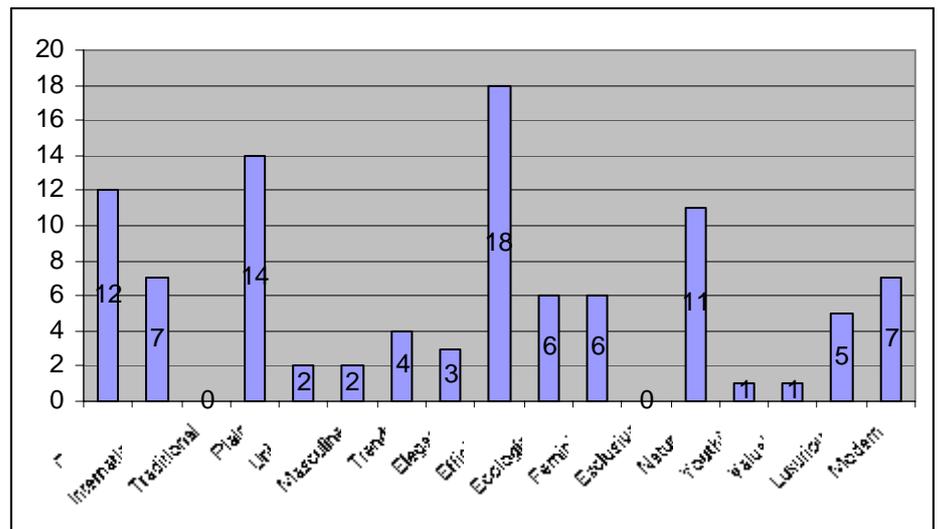
The eleventh question was a multiple choice question.

Choose the most appropriate ones from the following characteristics that would best describe the product line you would be interested in.

1. *Classy*
2. *International*
3. *Traditional*
4. *Plain*
5. *Unisex*
6. *Masculine*
7. *Trendy*
8. *Elegant*
9. *Efficient*
10. *Ecological*
11. *Feminine*
12. *Exclusive*

- 13. Natural
- 14. Youthful
- 15. Valuable
- 16. Luxurious
- 17. Modern

Table 12 Question 11: Important characteristics on products



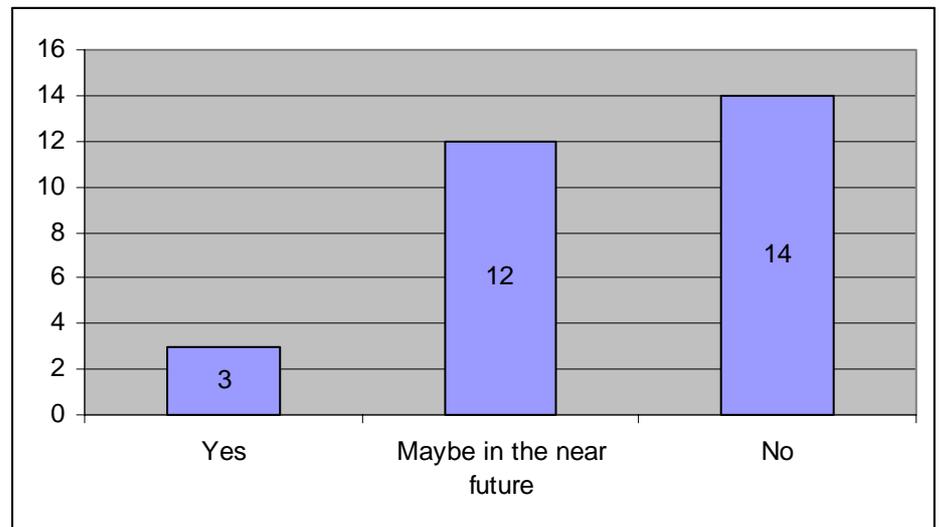
Efficiency was clearly the most important characteristic in a product, according to these salons. In addition to efficiency (62%), Classy (41%), Plain (48%) and Natural (38%) were in the favour of the 29 salons. Bellwell products could be characterized as Efficient, Classy, Elegant Feminine and Modern. These values got many votes from the salons which tell of their interest in the kind of product line that Bellwell presents.

The twelfth and final question of the questionnaire was a multiple choice question.

Would you be interested in adding a new French skin care product line to your salons?

1. Yes
2. Maybe in the near future
3. No

Table 13 Question 12: Potential retailers for Bellwell



This question was added to the questionnaire to ask the salons about their interest in Bellwell. This question aimed at answering if there are potential retailers for Bellwell among these salons. 15 of the salons answered positively, whether yes or maybe in the near future. In Turku there are 7 salons, in Tampere also 7, and one in Helsinki that answered that they would be interested in adding Bellwell product line in their salons now or in the near future. This is a very positive sign for Bellwell, showing that 52 % of these selected salons would potentially be interested in adding Bellwell products to their salons.

4.3 Analysis of the questionnaire

This questionnaire made to answer if there would be potential retailers for Bellwell products and if the selected salons would be interested in Bellwell products. By analysing the answers it can be stated that there are salons that could be potential retailers. As can be seen in the results of questions 9 and 12, 15 out of 29 salons (52%) said they would be interested in adding a new product line to their salons, now or in the near future.

All of these 15 salons (100%) were all also interested in adding a

new skin care product line to their salon which is a very positive outcome for Bellwell that would like to launch a new skin care product line.

According to the answers of question 11, shown in Table 12, the salons were interested in a product line that was Classy, Plain, Efficient and Natural. As explained in Chapter 2 according to the interview with Mrs. Printz on the 30.3.2006, the image and looks of Bellwell products are classy and elegant but at the same time fresh and modern. From the features given in question 11 Bellwell products could be positioned under Classy, Elegant, Efficient, Natural and Modern of which 3 characteristics were in the top 4 highest scores of all characteristics listed.

The salons selected were reliable target group for the questionnaire as they were gathered from 3 different cities; hence it makes the results unbiased. In questions 4 and 5, 7 out of 29 salons (24%) answered that their main customer group consists of women, aged 25-40, which is also Bellwell's main customer target group.

As a conclusion of this questionnaire there would be potential retailers in Tampere, Turku and Helsinki for Bellwell products. There is also interest and demand in the products Bellwell has to offer as can be seen in questions 7 and 10.

5 Recommendations

This chapter proposes some recommendations for Bellwell in the future on the basis of this thesis and using the survey as a support. As the survey showed there are potential retailers for Bellwell in 15 of the selected salons. This results to the fact that selling and marketing the skin care product line through beauty salons would be a suitable and functioning option for Bellwell.

5.1 Choice of a Sales Channel

It can be difficult to forecast how a new cosmetic product line will succeed in the Finnish market in the beginning. Finland as a market place is somewhat challenging due to the fact that the specialty stores do not have a good position in the market. Supermarkets and department stores attract consumers more than the smaller stores specialising in cosmetics, for example. Compared for example to France, Finnish consumers use the services in beauty salons a lot less and that is partly the reason why it is still more expensive and even unknown in Finland. However, as discussed in Chapter 3, the Finnish consumers have started to spend more and more money on taking care of themselves which shows in the fast growth of cosmetic market in Finland. (Sipilä 2006)

Bellwell products could be launched to market through selling the products in beauty and hair- and beauty salons in Finland, using the expertise of the trained professionals. First the sales could start functioning only in the biggest cities; Helsinki, Tampere and Turku as the results of the survey showed that there are salons interested in a new skin care product line.

As Helsinki is the capital, most of the salons could be later on chosen in Helsinki or Helsinki area, for example Espoo. Shopping centres with a beauty salon located around Helsinki would be suitable sales channels as well since big shopping centres attract

consumers. In Tampere and Turku the 7 salons in both cities could be contacted. Together with the one interested salon in Helsinki the 15 salons could be the first retailers for Bellwell.

To start the business the objective for Bellwell is to get good retailers at wanted areas with a big customer base that would increase the sales. Another objective is also to have sales personnel in the salons that are willing to learn about Digiskin products and eager to recommend the products to the customers. The goal, in the beginning would be to have approximately five salons selling the products in all 3 cities; Helsinki, Tampere and Turku.

As the survey shows there are already 15 potential retailers for Bellwell; by cities, the potential retailers are situated as follows: In Turku there are 7 salons, in Tampere also 7, and one in Helsinki that answered that they would be interested in adding Bellwell product line in their salons now or in the near future. This is already a good start for Bellwell. These salons can be contacted in the future as the names and addresses of the salons are recorded.

Maybe in the future, Bellwell could expand to other, slightly bigger stores, such as Stockmann beauty, which is a part of Stockmann department store. Stockmann beauty is specialized only in cosmetics and hygiene products. This is a suggestion for the future, but is not yet studied if Stockmann beauty would be willing to add Bellwell products in their collection. (Stockmann 2007)

5.2 Marketing

At this stage it is still difficult to further plan the implementation of marketing, at the moment only recommendations can be done as there are no existing figures shown for the budget, for example. The marketing of Bellwell products for consumers could be done by marketing the products in the salons. Digiskin products would be presented by the salon personnel directly to the customer. The

personnel would play an important role in selling the products; they should have an excellent knowledge of the products to be able to convince the customer to buy it. Therefore it is essential that all the retailers are given thorough training so that they are able to promote the products in the best possible way and to answer any questions the customers may have. The retailers would also be provided with additional training whenever new products are added to the product line.

Promotion of a product is the part of the marketing mix that includes all forms of marketing communication. Promotion is the way the marketers talk to existing customers and potential buyers. Promotion can give a message about the company, the product or other elements of marketing mix. (Zigmund / D'Amico 2001)

Promoting Bellwell could be done by handing out posters and leaflets, in order to introduce the products to customers. Posters could also be on show in the salons for everyone to see. As this is a new product line and still unknown to customers, samples of the products could be given to salons which they could use in treatments and tell about the Bellwell product to the customer. This way the customer would have first-hand experience on the product and learn how to use it.

To attract more retailers in the future, advertisements would be placed in trade magazines and Bellwell would also be present at trade fairs.

6 Conclusions

Finland is still a small factor in the European cosmetic market but is making its way through and growing fast, compared to other European countries. In Finland, the big department stores still rule the market, leaving a little space for smaller boutiques and salons compared to France for example where both women and men use a lot of time and money to take care of their looks. However, the Finnish consumers are starting to be more and more interested in cosmetics and hygiene products than ever before. Following the Middle-European trend, the Finnish consumers have also started to pay attention to their looks. Especially men's products have increased significantly and competing products can be found in different price levels.

France is often seen as the leading country for cosmetics, as most of the well-known brands are French, such as Dior, Chanel and L'Oréal. Cosmetic Valley is an area situated in Eure-et-Loir, France, near Paris where there are almost a 100 companies producing cosmetics. Créations Couleurs situated in a small city Dreux is one of them. As I did my internship in Créations Couleurs in 2006 Jaana Printz (The Technical Director) introduced me to an idea that they would establish a new business, Bellwell like to launch a new skin care product line in Finland. At first, there were two main options for a possible sales channel for the product line; direct marketing and marketing through beauty salons but after a careful consideration it was decided that the product line's potential sales channel would be the beauty salons.

In order to position Bellwell to the Finnish cosmetic market, the market situation had to be analysed. Analysing the main competition and making the positioning was conducted in co-operation with Créations Couleurs' group of experts in the cosmetics field. As the main competition was acknowledged, Bellwell could be placed on the positioning chart, shown in Chapter 3. The chart tells about the main competition and where there is a possible market niche for Bellwell.

This research was made to find out if the chosen sales channel would be suitable for this particular product line and also to map out if there are potential retailers willing to add the new product line into their salons. A survey was conducted that was supported by a questionnaire. Beauty salons in the three biggest cities in Finland; Helsinki, Tampere and Turku were chosen as a target group for the questionnaire. 75 questionnaires were sent out to the salons and 29 out of 75 salons (39 %) answered.

The questionnaire aimed at finding out if there were potential retailers for Bellwell in these 3 selected cities. The answers collected from the questionnaire were analysed and according to the survey there is interest for a new skin care product line in salons situated in Helsinki, Tampere and Turku. 29 out of 75 salons answered the questionnaire and 15 out of those answered were interested in adding Bellwell products in their collection. Also 26 of the salons (89,5%) said they were interested in a high quality product and Bellwell products are made out of high quality raw materials. 15 salons (52%) answered that they were interested in a new skin care product line to be added to their salons. This leads to a conclusion that there would be potential retailers for Bellwell products.

As a conclusion, this survey proved that selling and marketing Bellwell products through beauty salons is a suitable and effective sales channel for Bellwell. This choice of a sales channel supports the product; the sales channel is exclusive yet functional, the customer target group is suitable for the products and the product line has the potential to expand and improve, according to the needs and wants of the customers. This research can be used as preparatory work in a possible future business plan for Bellwell.

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Appendix I: Questionnaire for the hair and beauty salons

KYSELYKAAVAKE PARTURI-KAMPAAMOILLE JA HOITOLOILLE

Kyselylomakkeen tarkoituksena on kartoittaa parturi-kampaamojen ja kauneushoitoloiden asiakasryhmää ja tuotesarjoja.

Perustiedot yrityksestä

Liikkeen nimi ja osoite

Parturi-kampaamo Kauneushoitola Yhdistetty parturi-kampaamo ja kauneushoitola

Liikkeenne on

Millä paikkakunnalla liikkeenne sijaitsee?

Asiakkaiden kohderyhmä

Naisista Miehistä Sekä naisista että miehistä

Koostuuko asiakkaanne pääasiassa

Alle 25-vuotiaita 25-40 -vuotiaita Yli 40-vuotiaita

Ovatko asiakkaanne pääasiassa

Nykyiset tuotteet

Mitä tuotesarjoja myytte asiakkailleen?

Kosmetiikkaa

Kampaamosarjoja

Ihohoitotuotteita

Muu

Mitä yksittäistä tuotetta myytte eniten?

Mitkä asiat vaikuttavat siihen, mitä tuotesarjoja otatte myyntiin?

Hinta

Suomalaisuus

Kansainvälisyys

- Uutuus-tuote
- Tunnettu tuote
- Tuotteen ulkonäkö
- Tuotteen korkea laatu
- Muu

Potentiaaliset tuotteet

Kyllä Ehkä lähitulevaisuudessa Ei

Etsittekö uutta tuotesarjaa lisättäväksi valikoimaanne?

Jos valitsitte kyllä tai ehkä edelliseen kysymykseen, niin minkälaisesta sarjasta olisitte kiinnostuneet?

- Kosmetiikkasarjasta
- Kampaamosarjasta
- Ihonhoitosarjasta

Valitkaa seuraavista ominaisuuksista ne, jotka parhaiten kuvailisivat tuotesarjaa, jollaisesta olisitte kiinnostuneet.

- Tyylikäs
- Kansainvälinen
- Perinteinen
- Selkeä
- Unisex
- Miehekäs
- Trendikäs
- Elegantti
- Tehokas
- Ekologinen
- Naisellinen
- Eksklustiivinen
- Luonnonläheinen
- Nuorekas
- Arvokas

- Ylellinen
- Moderni

Kyllä Ehkä Ei
 lähitulevaisuudessa

Olisitteko kiinnostuneet ottamaan liikkeeseenne myyntiin uuden,
ranskalaisen ihonhoito-tuotesarjan?

