



A marketing e-guidebook for Finnish businesses in Hong Kong

Tracy Nguyen

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences
Business Service Solutions and Languages
Bachelor's Thesis
2024

Abstract

| |
|---|
| Author(s) Tracy Nguyen |
| Degree Bachelor of Business Administration |
| Report/Thesis Title A marketing e-guidebook for Finnish businesses in Hong Kong |
| Number of pages and appendix pages 28 + 7 |
| <p>The objective of the thesis is to gather marketing ideas to support marketing strategies of businesses in a foreign business environment. The introduction part explains the background of opportunities and challenges businesses might encounter in the vibrant and dynamic city like Hong Kong. The local market of the city is very competitive and overwhelming therefore it motivated the author to create a simplified source of information that businesses can take advantage of as part of their marketing strategy. The outcome of the thesis is a marketing e-guidebook as an appendix.</p> <p>In the theoretical part, the specific marketing topics were selected and covered based on the observations and work experiences in the local business setting which was Hong Kong. Following marketing related theories were covered: relationship marketing and networking, event marketing, local marketing and digital marketing. In addition to marketing factors, it was seen to be essential to also examine cultural differences, between collectivist and individualist cultures. It is necessary for businesses to understand the local culture and to be able to adapt in a different business environment in order to succeed.</p> <p>The methods used to support the empirical part of the thesis and the outcome were benchmarking, observing and ideating. Moreover, open discussions with local professionals and experts provided valuable insights which influenced the outcome of the thesis. The author learned through the studies and work experiences that although Hong Kong is one of the most expensive cities in the world, it is still possible to increase business visibility with budget-friendly approach.</p> <p>The last chapter is a discussion part that summarizes the results and a few suggestions for future development. Additionally, thoughts of own reflection of this whole thesis were put into words as well.</p> <p>The final outcome which is the marketing e-guidebook consists of eight different marketing activities. The marketing e-guidebook is simple and straightforward. One of the sub-goals was to collect ideas and activities that are easily implemented and low budget. As throughout the process of creating it, one common thread that connected every marketing activity turned out to be relationship building and networking. A very important aspect for businesses to take into account, especially in a collectivist environment.</p> |
| Key words Marketing, localization, networking |

Table of contents

| | | |
|-----|---|----|
| 1 | Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1 | Objectives and the outcome of the thesis | 2 |
| 1.2 | Key concepts..... | 3 |
| 2 | Marketing aspects in theory..... | 4 |
| 2.1 | Local marketing | 4 |
| 2.2 | Relationship marketing and networking | 5 |
| 2.3 | Event marketing | 7 |
| 2.4 | Digital marketing | 8 |
| 2.5 | Cultural differences | 11 |
| 3 | The process of developing the marketing e-guidebook..... | 14 |
| 3.1 | Local market of Hong Kong | 14 |
| 3.2 | Collaborations with the locals | 16 |
| 3.3 | Event organizing | 18 |
| 3.4 | The art of networking..... | 19 |
| 3.5 | Challenges in a foreign market..... | 20 |
| 3.6 | The outcome | 21 |
| 3.7 | Implementation and timetable | 22 |
| 4 | Discussion..... | 23 |
| 4.1 | Summary of the outcome | 23 |
| 4.2 | Suggestions for future development..... | 23 |
| 4.3 | Own reflection | 24 |
| | Sources | 25 |
| | Appendix 1. A marketing e-guidebook for Finnish businesses in Hong Kong | 29 |

1 Introduction

Hong Kong has always been a very vibrant and attractive city for international business, due to its free trade system, low taxation and geographical location in Asia. The city also acts as a bridge for international businesses to enter mainland China's market. (Lintunen 29 October 2021.) Business market in Hong Kong is diverse and very competitive which can cause some challenges for a new international business to enter to the local market. Therefore, it is crucial for a new business to do sufficient research about the local business environment and its culture. One of the promising starts is to join the Chamber of Commerce.

Local audience in Hong Kong has generally a good image of Finland as a country. They know about Moomin and Marimekko, but they might not know that those brands are originated from Finland. How is this possible? Maybe the way Finnish businesses and brands do marketing is not loud enough. The competition in Hong Kong is very high, therefore businesses need to invest in marketing with louder and bolder strategies to capture its niche in the city of over 7 million of people.

Hong Kong is listed as one of the most expensive cities in the world (Economist Intelligence 2023). One of the challenges new businesses might face, while planning to enter the local market is to have a sufficient financial resource to cover the marketing cost, with the risk of not knowing if it will be profitable. Adding to the struggle of finding the right channels and network. It can also be challenging for a new business to analyse and observe the local market from across the globe. Not having enough relevant information about the local business market, new international businesses can lose great opportunities to expand and grow their businesses overseas. When the local business environment seems too overwhelming and unknown, the easiest way is to contact the Chamber of Commerce located at that targeted market and ask for consultation. The main focus of the Chamber of Commerce is indeed serving its members by connecting foreign businesses with the local market and vice versa. They provide timely and relevant information, and their daily operations are tightly linked with marketing activities. They are a reliable organization which brings visibility and has established a solid network, which businesses otherwise may not have an easy access to as a newcomer.

In the theoretical part, the thesis will focus on the topics such as relationship marketing and networking, event marketing, local marketing, digital marketing and cultural differences. These topics are the main scopes of theoretical research which are related to the outcome of the thesis. Methods used to support the thesis are benchmarking, observing, ideating and having open discussions with local business experts.

1.1 Objectives and the outcome of the thesis

I was working at the Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong for six months and got a great opportunity to get involved in the daily operational activities as well as observe the local business environment. I was benchmarking, observing and having open discussions within business network, especially experts and professionals with long-time engagement with Finnish businesses.

Hong Kong has plenty of events happening all year around. I got overwhelmed by participating in events and activities from different scales and always had the question in my mind: how can new businesses enter the marketing scene and succeed in a very competitive market like Hong Kong? This question influenced me to create a marketing e-guidebook for new businesses entering Hong Kong market and for the existing ones, especially for Finnish businesses which are targeting for budget-friendly marketing.

The main objective of the thesis is:

How to help Finnish businesses to enter the local marketing scene?

Sub-objectives are to answer the following questions:

1. How to do low-budget marketing?
2. What kind of marketing activities would bring more visibility and attract more audience to Finnish businesses?
3. How to adjust businesses into the local market?
4. What kind of obstacles or challenges are there?

The intention is to unravel above mentioned questions in order to build the final outcome which is the marketing e-guidebook. This is one of the benefits for Finnish companies or organizations when joining the Finnish Chamber of Commerce and receive the direct access to the marketing e-guidebook. Keeping in mind that the activities are relatively low-cost and easily implemented. The Chamber doesn't have this kind of a product to offer to its members yet, and I believe that this e-guidebook will be useful and beneficial for both parties, the Chamber and the members.

The marketing e-guidebook consists of eight marketing ideas acting as foundations for businesses to build up their marketing strategies in the local market. Number eight specifically because in Chinese culture number eight is considered as a lucky number (Yeromiyana 13 December 2023). Competent cultural knowledge is one of the essential keys when entering a foreign market. Cultural differences from a few perspectives will be covered in the later part of the thesis.

1.2 Key concepts

The key concepts of the thesis emerge to be the following topics, such as marketing, localization and networking.

As the outcome of the thesis is influenced by marketing theories and perspectives, it is only natural to highlight marketing as one of the key concepts. It can also be described as a core factor of the thesis. Marketing happens in businesses through promotions and activities which aim to increase profitability, build brand awareness and reputation, and bring value to the target audience (Forsey 25 February 2021).

Localization describes a process of adapting and adjusting a business to a restricted locale or a certain market. Localization requires acknowledgment of particular factors such as local cultural norms or local regulations. (Vostokova 15 March 2024.) This is necessary for businesses to understand when they want to attract the local target audience and build valuable, long-term customer relationships. It is a significant matter, especially for businesses aiming to expand their operations to a foreign market.

Networking creates a form of reciprocity between people (D'Souza 2015, chapter 1). This social practice is an important aspect in a business environment as it enables endless opportunities and insightful information exchange. The importance of networking will be elaborated more in chapter 2 of the thesis, as well as other topics of the key concepts.

2 Marketing aspects in theory

In this thesis, there will be following theoretical areas in marketing that will be studied and covered: relationship marketing and networking, event marketing, local marketing, digital marketing and cultural differences. These topics are the most relevant theories in order to support creating the final outcome of the thesis which is the marketing e-guidebook. So, why do businesses need marketing? Marketing involves understanding and satisfying customers' needs and preferences, creating value through products or services of the brand or business. Focusing on communicating that value target audiences, creates a beneficial customer relationship. (Kotler, Armstrong & Opresnik 2018, 28–30.) Every business need marketing because it is vital for them to find the most effective tools and strategies in order to create brand visibility, engage the target audience, provide value proposition and make the business profitable.

The first theoretical topic will cover local marketing aspect.

2.1 Local marketing

It goes without saying the importance of studying the local market and its consumer behaviour before developing one's marketing strategies and activities. Marketing is everywhere. A business needs to collect the following information in order to identify its business opportunities in the local market: research on customer needs and preferences, competitors in the market, trends and the culture. The key is not putting the focus on the product or service, but to find a solution for customers' needs and create an experience where customers get engaged and form a valuable customer relationship (Kotler et al. 2018, 31).

Local marketing is usually aimed to attract potential audience within a specific geographic area. Especially for any physical establishment, marketing for the locals is essential for any nearby businesses. Different data collection is one of the keys to learn about consumer behaviour of the locals and to conduct marketing strategies through research. By creating and converting marketing tools in use towards local user-friendly, such as using local SEO or local advertising, help to better reach out to the audience. To boost business visibility, there are many activities that businesses can implement, for instance, acting as a sponsor in local events or arranging online giveaways. (Decker 4 March 2024.) Diverse niches exist in different neighbourhoods and geographic areas where businesses have great opportunities tailoring their products and services to local preferences.

There are a few important external factors to take into consideration when preparing local marketing strategies. In economic environment, businesses need to carefully adjust the pricing to align with the local purchasing power. From the political aspect, there can occur unfavourable risks for

foreign businesses trying to integrate into the local market. Dissimilar business practices and unstable political situations raise uncertainty. Laws and ethics in marketing vary in different business environments and countries which is crucial for businesses to understand and follow. Violating contracts can be solved in the court in some cultures, when other cultures avoid taking matters that far in order to maintain business relationships. (Usunier & Lee 2005, 156–158.)

2.2 Relationship marketing and networking

Businesses are founded by people for people. They are formed by numerous of relationships between people which establish an important foundation of stakeholders. The network or the business relationships people have, have always been one of the key advantages while starting or running a business. Customer relationship more likely to be the most crucial one to create and maintain. How can relationship marketing help businesses to reach out to the target audience and have an impact on them to be engaged?

Especially in today's world when connecting and interacting with people, locally or globally, can be only one click away thanks to digital revolution, it is even more essential for a business to know how to build and enhance the relationship between them and people. According to Smith and Kawasaki (2011, 39–44) using the template of P.O.S.T can provide a basic understanding of relationship marketing. The figure below tells what P.O.S.T stands for:



Figure 1. The meaning of P.O.S.T (adapted from Smith & Kawasaki 2011, 39–41)

The guideline of P.O.S.T system is very straightforward and basic for a business to start doing their research in relationship marketing which help to answer key questions and bring beneficial aspects along the process. A business can succeed in building an effective relationship marketing when they are able to connect with people in the most genuine and caring way (Smith & Kawasaki 2011, 27). A business needs to know who are the people they are targeting to form a relationship. They can gather target audience's data and information by using psychographics and technographics. Secondly, a business needs to have a clear vision on what kind of a goal (objective) they want to achieve when executing operations. In order to achieve the final objective, it's critical for a business to plan and have deeply analysed strategies. They need to understand what kind of actions need to be taken along the process. To support the process and the outcome, a business should study what kind of technology tools or platforms bring the most effective results. (Smith & Kawasaki 2011, 39–41.)

It doesn't matter if the interaction and communication is through Internet or face-to-face setting, for a business to be able to gain solid, long-term people-to-people (P2P) connections is a key for a promising and sustainable success in relationship marketing. To build a positive brand image and to attract the target audience in today's world, businesses need to emphasize on transparency, trust, shared values and personalized experiences for people.

To have a solid network or to maintain long-term relationships, one must possess competent soft skills. Soft skills stands for Emotional Intelligence Quotient (Smith & Kawasaki 2011, 56). People value authenticity and mutual respect. One of the significant advantages when communicating with empathy is creating a feeling of human-to-human interaction. This is an important point for a business to bear in mind, especially in today's world of digital era where human touch has reduced, but still needed. High EQ (Emotional Intelligence Quotient) is a great asset when attending network occasions and building the network of your own.

Business network is naturally established when one plans to start a business. Why networking plays an important role in business environment? Networking doesn't always mean attending various events, meeting all the people and exchanging business cards. It is about building supportive relationships which are linked to drive common goals. Networking creates a form of reciprocity between people. The more diverse the connections and relationships are, the more beneficial and opportunities arise. (D'Souza 2015, chapter 1.) One encounter with one person can open up more links to further connections and broaden the network (Thomas & Burton 2014, chapter 1).

Networking interactions create great opportunities for business collaborations, sharing resources and related information. By being active in attending networking events, businesses have the chance to enhance their brand reputation and bring more visibility. Networking doesn't always

need to happen in business settings. Networking happens anywhere anytime with anyone, not only at professional environment but also in private time. Nowadays, interaction using technology and digital tools are commonly used for networking. A win-win relationship in networking is when each party practises give-and-receive custom with trust (D'Souza 2015, chapter 3). To maintain and expand the network one has, it is important to keep the consistency in investing in these connections. It takes time, genuine effort and energy.

Networkers need to find their own ways for effective networking which serves their interests at best because networking can be a lot of work. Skilled networkers know how to sell compelling reasons to form relationships and get people to be engaged (D'Souza 2015, chapter 5). Networking is also a brilliant way to conduct word-of-mouth marketing. Word-of-mouth marketing is a powerful practice for businesses because recommendations are based on loyal or satisfied customers whose experiences are more trustworthy and reliable when recommending to their network (Makin 7 May 2023). It creates an on-going chain of promoting and reaching out to wider audience. What makes it even more appealing and effective is that word-of-mouth marketing is free marketing for businesses.

2.3 Event marketing

Events act as a significant role in networking and marketing. There are endless numbers of events happening throughout the year, either locally or globally. Combining marketing and event forms the concept of event marketing where its goal is to bring the businesses and their target audience together (Wallo, Häyrynen & Pajala 2022, chapter 1). When a company decides to organize or join an event, they need to carefully plan and take into account a lot of details such as budgeting, the program or collaborative aspects. Events can be smaller scale occasions such as a ceremony, a promotion or a launch to bigger events such as trade fairs, flash mobs or exhibitions (Wallo et al. 2022, chapter 1).

According to Preston and Preston (2012, chapter 1), a successful event marketing needs to be able to convey excitement and memorable experiences to the audience, and that requires a well-planned marketing strategy. Businesses or brands need to define clearly their ultimate goal for organizing events, whether it is about bringing brand awareness, making more sells or building business relationships. In such diverse and competitive market, it is crucial to come up with innovative ideas and profitable strategies in order to prevail the audience to participate and interact with businesses and brands (Preston & Preston 2012, chapter 1). Also taking into consideration the impact of the pandemic on customer behaviour and increasing demand of hybrid events. What challenges and actions need to be taken for the event organizers to bring the similar experience on-site to online.

When businesses organize events, they allow the audience to interact directly with them in a face-to-face setting where it's the easiest way to connect and build the potential customer relationship. How one can make people feel, stays in their memory longer when all the senses are being utilized. Additionally, receiving feedback directly from the audience is very invaluable for businesses. (Wallo et al. 2022, chapter 1.) Especially when launching a new product, it is advantageous to observe the immediate reaction from the target audience, how much interest a new product can raise and if there is any demand in the market. These observations can bring initial evaluation of the success of a new product and support further decision-making.

The success of event marketing can be assessed by collecting firsthand feedback, conducting surveys or as Wallo et al. suggest (2022, chapter 1) using Net Promoter Score. Businesses need to examine if their event marketing bring any profit and achieve a desirable outcome because it is a part of marketing cost of the budget. Otherwise, event marketing can become costly if the organizer doesn't have a clear vision for event strategy that needs to take into account the target audience, profitability, achievements and success measuring (Wallo et al. 2022, chapter 1). Whatever the end-goal of the event organizer may be, the aim is to use event marketing as a tool to convey a positive impact to the target audience and the network.

Event organizing has gone through evolution throughout the years and digital advances have a huge impact on changes and trends. Depending on the format of an event, new technology has brought new tools to attract and get online audience involved in forms such as webinar or livestreaming. Digitalization has enabled sustainability trend at the events by providing relevant information through apps or QR-code (Wallo et al. 2022, chapter 2), and decreasing the need of printing materials. Digitalization is a game-changer in marketing industry overall. In today's world, digital marketing is a must which is the next topic to be covered.

2.4 Digital marketing

There are billions of people using digital devices everyday such as tablets and smartphones, to interact with each other. Digital and technology revolution has drastically changed operational systems within businesses, including marketing scene. The inevitable goal is to understand the interactions between the target audience and their behaviour in digital marketing. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 5–6.) Figure 2 below may help businesses to understand the importance of '5Ds' in digital marketing.

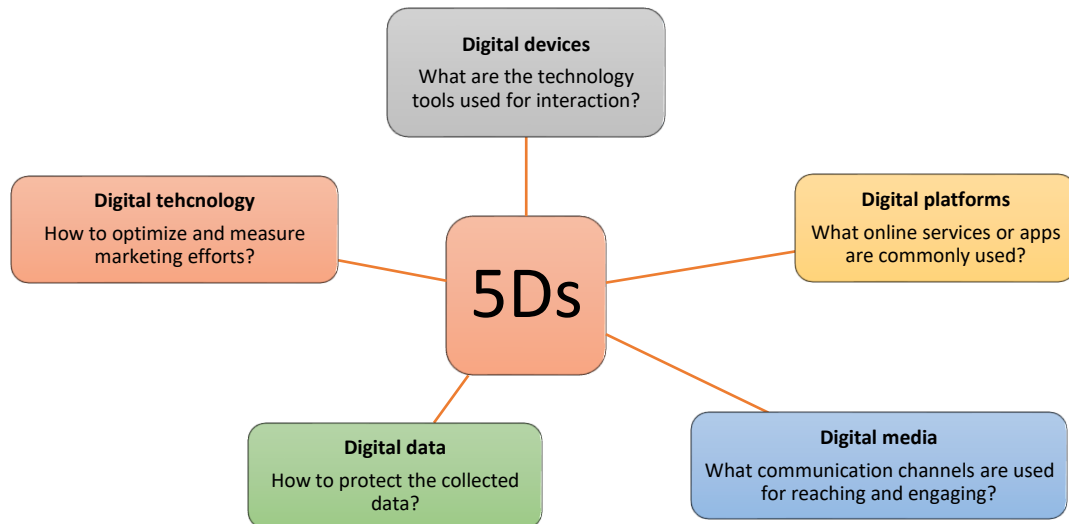


Figure 1. '5Ds' in digital marketing (adapted from Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 5–6)

According to Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019, 9) one can describe digital marketing as “Achieving marketing objectives through applying digital media, data and technology.” Basically, businesses need to invest in digital means and platforms which align with their business model to generate contents in the most efficient ways and get consumers to react. For example, when creating a website, one needs to choose a suitable platform or a server to build a website because no business wants to own a website with frequent bugs happening or works very slowly, which most likely will drive the audience away to another website. It's important to step into consumers' point of views when designing the layout for a website, should be easily navigated on different kinds of digital devices, texts and colours aligned, sufficient information and content, and language selection. Not to forget the legal aspect which is data collection, the transparency of it and consumers' consent. EU adhere to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to protect personal data (European Union s.a).

Especially in digital marketing, having skills in SEO and SEM are required and essential in a competitive market. Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is a tool to use if a business wants to pay for advertising and push promotions on major platforms like Google Ads. It helps businesses to target their audience and boost the website traffic. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) on the other hand helps boosting the online visibility, listing and ranking of a business in search engine platforms, i.e. Google. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019, 400–401.) It's important to know how to use key optimization with relevant keywords in order to attract organic traffic from search engine results pages. If a business desires to maximize their profitability and achieve the best results of SEO, they need to become search engine competent and have a deep understanding of search engine fundamentals (Jefferson & Tanton 2015, chapter 7).

Figure 3 below shows that social media platforms are heavily used by remarkable amount of people worldwide, and the numbers keep growing. Facebook is still leading the highest rank on the list with over 3 billion users. Social media platforms are powerful channels to generate contents to the audience. Businesses should take advantage of different social media platforms to create relevant and valuable contents such as reels, posts, videos, livestreaming, paid advertising and interact with the audience or collaborate with influencers. Through these content creations, the audience find it easier to relate, connect and interact with businesses (Jefferson & Tanton 2015, chapter 5).

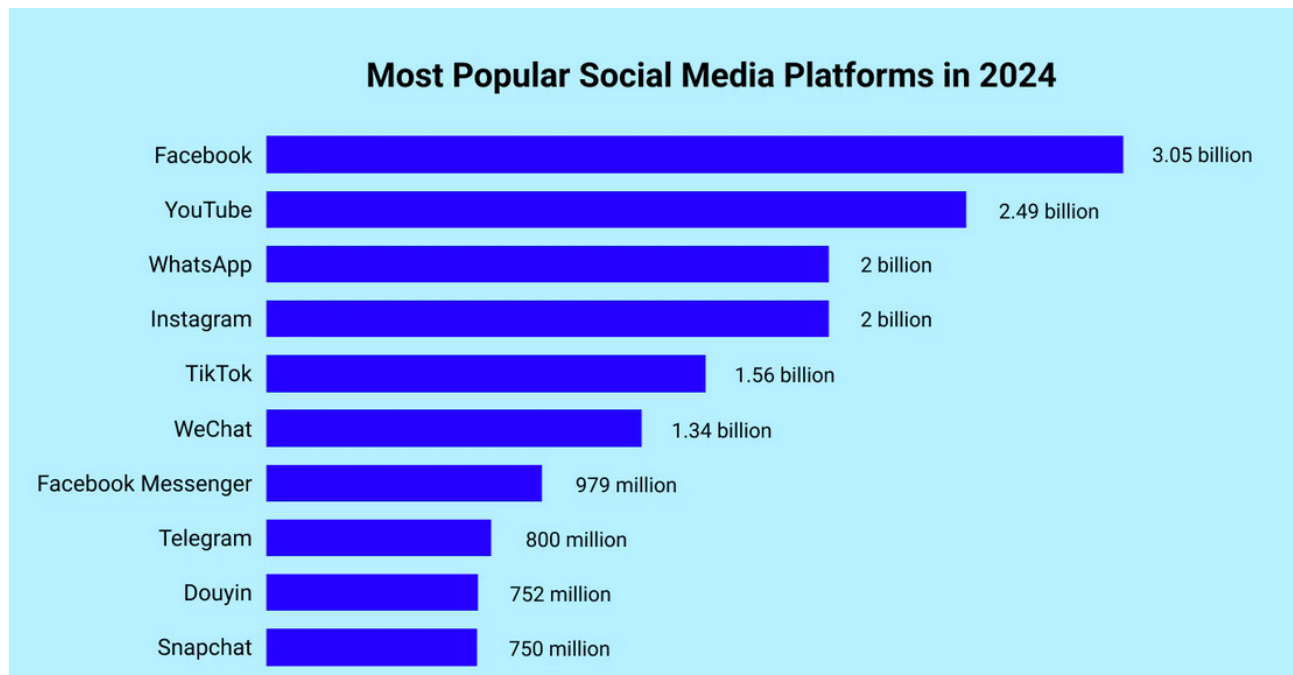


Figure 2. Most Popular Social Media Platforms in 2024 (Bernhardt, G. 2024)

According to Jefferson and Tanton (2015, chapter 5) people use a social media platform like Facebook to seek entertainment and socializing, but actually nowadays people also use the platform to practice selling products during their livestream or on marketplace. With the social media platform of billions active users, spreading contents is very fast and widely shared which supports marketing goals of a business. There are multiple ways to attract the audience to take action on liking and sharing contents such as providing incentives (Ray 2013, chapter 1). A business won't sell nor become profitable if there is a lack of customer engagement. Social media users have a power influencing the network, therefor one false move can ruin the reputation of a business.

Another effective social media marketing practice is to collaborate with Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) or social media influencers (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick. 2019, 419–420). They have their own niche audience with whom they have built a strong credibility and community. A great content creator studies about their target audience and will generate contents that speak volume to the

audience. The influencers are segmented from everyday influencers to celebrity influencers (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick. 2019, 423–424), which has an impact on their commissions and influence power. For the exchange of promoting brands or businesses, influencers can get sponsorships or commissions through affiliate links.

Overall, digital marketing world can be tangled but there are many different tools for businesses to use and take advantage of. Digital and tech savvy businesses have advantages in the market and agilely hop on trends in fast-paced digital marketing environment. Again, the ultimate goal for a business is to create a valuable and profitable customer relationship.

2.5 Cultural differences

Local cultural knowledge is an important aspect where businesses need to invest in if they plan to start or expand their businesses globally. There can be subtle differences between cultures which might not cause much of confusion, but there can also be major differences which need deeper understanding and adapting. This thesis covers Finnish business operations in Hong Kong local market, and from Figure 4 below, one can notice clear differences between these two cultures.

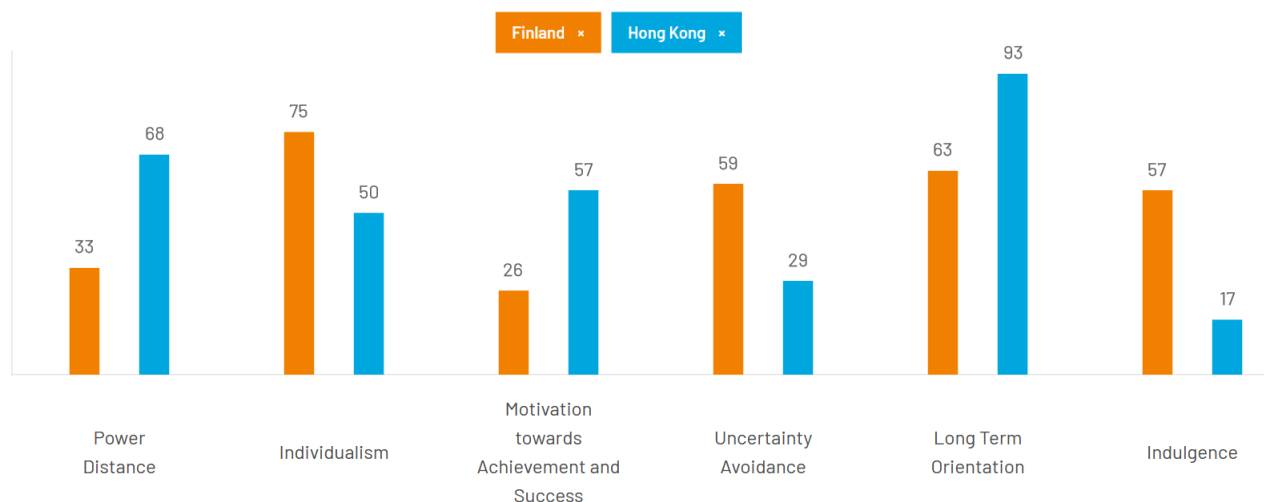


Figure 3. Hofstede's dimension comparison between Finland and Hong Kong (The Culture Factor s.a.)

Why understanding culture differences is related to marketing? It helps tremendously to integrate in the local market and to understand the local consumer behaviour better. Culture holds certain beliefs, values and expectations which are shared among a specific group (Deal, Dalton, Hoppe, Prince, Wilson & Prince 2007, 7–8). There is no right or wrong, weird or normal cultures. They are simply different. (Usunier & Lee 2005, 9.) Ignoring the differences and not willing to adapt to a new business environment can have a bad impact on businesses trying to succeed in the local market.

According to Solomon and Schell (2009, chapter 11) having a so-called "global mindset" is when one is able to naturally adapt oneself in a different culture's behaviour and understand why things work the way they do without questioning or judging. Therefore, a business having competent resources in understanding cultural differences adds value when tailoring marketing strategies that can be approachable and relatable to the local target audience in the most effective way. With the knowledge to support careful planning, marketers will avoid causing misunderstandings or conveying wrong messages. Having the ability to assess different views provide diverse perspectives (Usunier & Lee 2005, 86–87).

Figure 4 shows certain differences between individualistic (Finland) and collectivistic (Hong Kong) cultural behaviour and attitude (The Culture Factor s.a). This influences consumption behaviour and purchasing power. For example, in individualistic culture, the decision making on a purchase is heavily decided by an individual, whereas in collectivistic culture, the opinions of the group must be taken into account (Usunier & Lee 2005, 89). Marketers need to know what is more relatable and what kind of characteristics can sell to individual decision makers and what appeal more to decision makers influenced by a group, whether it is family or community. It is essential for businesses to be flexible and be able to deliver products or services according to the local consumers' preferences.

One factor that businesses aim to gain from their target audience is loyalty which is linked to brand awareness, brand loyalty and the network. According to some research, being loyal is more relatable and valued in collectivist cultures (Usunier & Lee 2005, 93–95). In a collectivist culture people tend to trust recommendations by their acquaintances (word-of-mouth marketing) and stick with certain brands for a long time if there's no specific reason to switch. Long-term loyalty emphasis between human relationships (network) is also valued more in collectivist culture, which reflects on business relationships such as stakeholders or business partners.

Even though English language is considered a global language, businesses should not ignore the importance of local languages when entering foreign markets. Language acts as a significant part of a culture and it is a tool used in communication (Usunier & Lee 2005, 374–375). People prefer to naturally interact in their native language because it is easier to interpret and feels effortless. Different languages are not similar in a way that, it is not always possible to translate some contexts in one language to another one (Usunier & Lee 2005, 383–384). There are ancient national proverbs which might make sense in language X but will lose the meaning when trying to use them in language Y. Language usage needs to be taking into consideration when thinking about marketing communication and advertisement. At the end of the day, conveying messages correctly is desired.

Culture is a complex topic but having a basic knowledge about general differences between cultures opens new opportunities and perspectives and ease the integration.

3 The process of developing the marketing e-guidebook

I spent six months of my internship in the Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong (abbreviated as FinnCham HK). The Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong is an independent non-profit organization and has been established for almost 40 years. The Chamber is dedicated to serve its members by connecting businesses from Finland to Hong Kong's network and bringing more visibility to the established Finnish and Finnish related businesses in the local market. The Chamber aims to share timely business-related information and advocacy to collaborative international forums. The Chamber cooperate closely with Consulate General of Finland in Hong Kong to promote Finland and its new sustainable and tech innovations. The Chamber also joins forces with other international chambers, especially European chambers in organizing different themed events. Since Finnish community in Hong Kong is relatively small, it is important to maintain the community spirit and network with monthly gatherings and traditional events.

After surviving pandemic and political riots, Hong Kong opened its borders again in 2023 and plans to restore its pre-covid economic growth. These unfortunate events led the Chamber to re-think its operations and activities. The most important questions arose: how to attract new members and how to maintain current members? The Chamber's main revenue source was membership fee. While spending six months in Hong Kong working with Finnish and local companies and professionals, I noticed differences in marketing practices between different cultures which will be more elaborated later in this chapter. These daily observations and benchmarking inspired me to create a marketing e-guidebook which is specifically available for Finnish businesses as members of the FinnCham HK. I believe this marketing e-guidebook will be useful tool as a part of service development of the Chamber and will be beneficial for Finnish businesses to bring more visibility in the local market, especially if they wish to keep their marketing activities budget-friendly.

3.1 Local market of Hong Kong

Hong Kong is an international business hub where stable economic growth, low taxation system and a gateway to mainland China act as advantages for businesses (Leppäkorpi 3 December 2023). The thriving market dynamics attracts international businesses to explore opportunities and potentials to expand further to other markets around Asia. For a business to become successful, it depends on its capability of integrating into the business environment.

Table 1. Number of regional headquarters, regional offices and local offices (adapted from Census and Statistics Department 2023)

| Year | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Regional headquarters | 1504 | 1457 | 1411 | 1336 |
| Regional offices | 2479 | 2483 | 2397 | 2311 |
| Local offices | 5042 | 5109 | 5170 | 5392 |
| Number of companies in total | 9025 | 9049 | 8978 | 9039 |

From statistic numbers above (Table 1), one can see the steady growth number with international enterprises. Even though pandemic and political issues may have affected negatively to the growth in 2022, the following year already shows promising number of foreign businesses establishing or re-entering to the Hong Kong market. As start-ups are booming all over the world, Hong Kong is also an ideal place for start-ups to explore their opportunities in the market, as it shows strong development and growth (Figure 5).

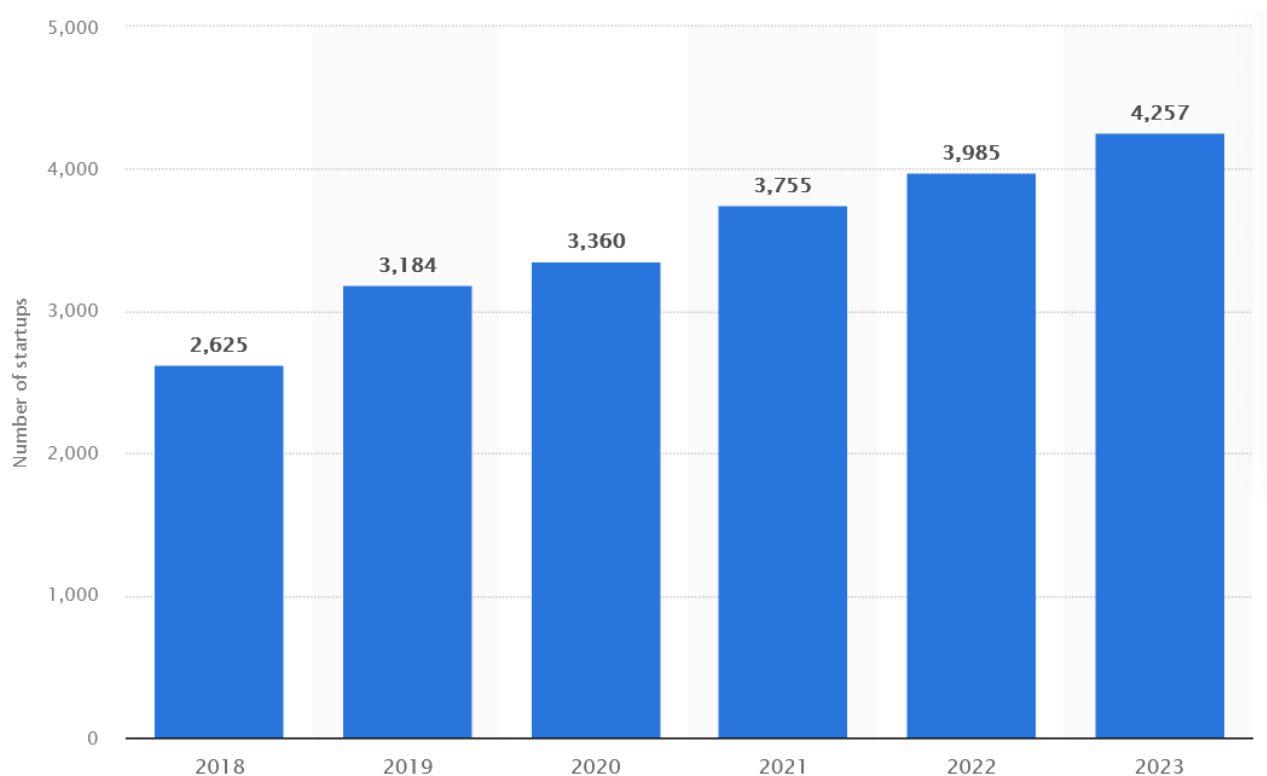


Figure 5. Number of startups in Hong Kong from 2018 to 2023 (Textor, C. 2024)

Even though it is relatively easy for businesses to enter Hong Kong's local market, it might not be easy to find important and right business connections without a decent network. This is the reason why becoming a member of the Chamber of Commerce would be one of the most convenient options. There are numerous ways to collaborate with the Chamber to bring more visibility to the business, to seek for consultation and to expand business network. What kind of marketing collaborations and network are provided by the Chamber of Commerce?

Businesses can regularly collaborate with the Chamber to generate contents on the Chamber's social media platforms. For example, the Chamber can set up an interview with a new business or with an existing one to share about their business operations or to give business updates. Interviews can be easily recorded and uploaded on Youtube channel or edit them to shorter reels, highlight the main points and upload them on Instagram, Facebook or LinkedIn. Interviews can also be recorded in a written form to be included in monthly newsletter sent to the Chamber's subscribers or as a blog on the website. Whenever there are new updates or contents, businesses may ask the Chamber to repost them in order to reach out to wider audience.

Businesses can propose hosting an online or on-site event together with the Chamber. Business webinars have become more and more popular after pandemic, and organizing one doesn't require too much work. Webinars also allow audiences around the world to participate without physical presence at one specific location. If businesses have products which are better to be showcased on-site, hosting a small product launch event is also possible. If online or on-site events are not possible to be implemented, businesses can suggest the Chamber to share brochures or samples at networking events or social gatherings hosted by the Chamber. Additional way to bring more visibility and support the community is to become a sponsor.

There are different committees running under the Chamber. Committees are focused on specific areas, such as sustainability or education. As a member of a committee, businesses can participate to make an impact, represent similar values that resonate with business organization's values and bring more awareness to people. This involvement creates a positive reputation for any business or brand.

3.2 Collaborations with the locals

There are endless choices of how to collaborate and with whom to collaborate in Hong Kong. Interesting topics and views arose when I had the chance to discuss with local professionals and entrepreneurs who have worked with Finnish organizations for a long time. They shared valuable insights from locals' point of views about marketing, and emphasizing how businesses should attempt more partnerships with the locals.

If creating contents for marketing is limited inside the business organization, businesses can reach out to universities for collaboration. They can ask marketing students to draft ideas and implement contents for social media platforms. Creating opportunities for the students to work with businesses on practical projects, will challenge their innovative skills and bring them valuable experiences. The new generation is fast learners and more adaptive to new trends. They have limitless pool of ideas and are curious enough to experiment.

Apart from working with the marketing students on content creation, businesses could take part in other activities organized by the universities, such as participating in career fairs or workshops. At career fairs, businesses have a chance to draw attention from the audience, introduce their business activities, recruit future talents and gain more visibility. Workshops can be related to business operations or themes that resonate with the values and image of the organization. For example, teaching Finnish language to the local students and at the same time promoting Finland's educational quality, advances and opportunities. These collaborations are definitely budget-friendly, and what is even more valuable for the long run is the relationships and network formed during the partnerships.

Volunteer work at local charity organizations and communities raises positive influence and bring more visibility to the business. Enhanced brand image will attract wider audience. For example, if a company is an advocate for sustainability, they can participate in tree planting or beach cleaning. Through volunteer work, the organizations are engaged in building a better impact for their own businesses and also for the community, the municipality or the city. Charity events gather diverse people together and there are possibilities to meet significant people through the network with whom one can foster potential business collaborations.

When it comes to digital marketing on social media platforms, collaborating with local KOLs or influencers will boost the brand image quickly, not only locally but also globally. Influencers have their own niche audience, and they understand their followers' needs. They also speak the local language which makes it easier for them to convey the message or sell to the local audience. Successful KOLs have an influence on consumer behaviour and increasing purchasing power. Businesses should find influencers who could possibly represent the brand, products or services at best. Budget-friendly approach can be like sending samples to influencers for testing or inviting them for an experience. Social media platforms are powerful, and not to forget that there are other popular social media platforms used specifically in China, such as Weibo (similar to Instagram story sharing) or Douyin (similar to TikTok).

If marketing budget is not too limited, businesses can consider hiring local PR company. A local PR company has well established local connections with people in the media industry such as

journalists or influencers, who can help to secure and expand media coverage through multiple media outlets. They have a solid experience, local language and specialized expertise in executing their duty. They can help businesses to build brand awareness, increase brand visibility and enhance the brand reputation. Because a PR company has wide and diverse professional network, they can present collaborations and partnerships to businesses. Outsourcing marketing activities to a local PR company is time and resource efficient.

I believe that through these marketing collaborations mentioned above really help businesses to bring more visibility and reach out to wider audience in the local market. Especially when businesses do marketing in the local language, it breaks the barrier between foreign businesses and the local audience because it is easier to convey the message and make contents more relatable in the mother tongue.

3.3 Event organizing

There are countless of events happening in Hong Kong throughout the year. I got a chance to experience in both organizing events and participating in events. There can be many business events held in one day and they can overlap during the busiest seasons. Not only locals enjoy attending events and socializing, but the attendees are also comprised of international visitors. Investments and purchasing power are not only limited to local business people and consumers, but there are also major interests from Mainland China.

As mentioned in the theory chapter, event marketing is profitable in many ways and especially in the city that is very vibrant and full of different events happening daily, from launch parties to big exhibitions. Social gatherings are part of the locals' lifestyle and culture. Event marketing is not solely about promoting and selling but also a great occasion for networking which highly describes Hong Kong. The dynamic city is a combination of Western and Eastern influences which provides diverse and vibrant event marketing opportunities, and businesses should not shy away from it.

It could feel overwhelming for a new foreign company to know how to start their event marketing journey in an unfamiliar environment without the right network. This is again one of the reasons why joining the Chamber of Commerce will benefit businesses. The Chamber not only organizes events themselves, but they have the access to the right connections that enables business collaborations. For example, it would be financially a burden for small businesses to rent a booth in a big exhibition. It would be more reasonable and cost-effective to join forces with other small businesses to share a booth and the expense.

The Chamber works closely with the Consulate General of Finland in Hong Kong which aims to promote the image of Finland, its green innovations and investments. Finnish businesses have

great opportunities to make connections and collaborate with them through the Chamber. Another option is to work with local commercial departments. For example, different commercial parties would like to collaborate with the Chamber and especially with Finnish and Nordics during winter season because winter represents Christmas. Due to very high rent in Hong Kong, it would be more rational and cost-effective to open a pop-up store at the seasonal venues and events. Businesses can showcase their products or services by setting up a stall or a pop-up, in one or multiple locations at the same time, following seasonal themes or relevant topics. This marketing model is very profitable for product traders particularly.

To keep in mind that not only locals are consumers or visitors but also millions of tourists visiting the city every year. It is important to hire local staff with language expertise in order to maximize the communication, promotion and sales.

3.4 The art of networking

Hong Kong is all about networking. The emphasis has been connected to networking and connections throughout the process of the thesis. People gain advantages through connections. People enjoy socializing. Business negotiations are made during lunch or dinner meetings. Business agreements are made through a handshake. Trust is built through mutual respect. Hong Kong is a collectivist culture, therefore, building and maintaining human-to-human relationships are one of the core values. This cultural aspect is quite different compared to Western or Finnish cultures where business matters are stated clearly on the written contract and professional relationships are not being mixed with personal relationships. But once one can understand the beauty of relationship building and the benefits it brings, one will realize all the investments were worth it.

There is a Chinese word '*guanxi*' which describes the social relationships between individuals and what it takes to get an access into the circle. It is based on reciprocity between individuals which means that if one does a favour, another one will pay back by returning a favour when it is requested. It is a logic of receiving and giving. For example, when business partner A promises to introduce new business deals, it would be appropriate for business partner B to show gratitude by treating them for a dinner or sending them basket of fruits. And when business partner A asks for help, business partner B will try their best to help out in return. Breaking the circle of '*guanxi*' is when favours and respect are not being mutually exchanged, therefore, the network and relationships will be dissolved.

In a vibrant city like Hong Kong, there are plenty of ways to start building own network. There are diverse range of activity groups and hobby clubs to choose from. As mentioned earlier, all kinds of events happen daily, from business to casual ones. Meeting one person will lead to other new

connections, like a snowball-effect. Different networks are linked to each other through someone, and one can never know who they will be introduced to, which can lead to business relationships or valuable friendships. The background, the profession and the status of people are unpredictable, therefore, encountering new connections can be full of surprises yet fruitful.

I got to practice socializing and networking myself during my internship in Hong Kong, and although it required a lot of time and effort, I learned that it is essential part of the local culture, and it is worthwhile. This custom might feel unfamiliar to the Finnish culture where people are more individualistic, and small talk is not much related to the custom. Finnish culture doesn't have the sense of unity and communality, and those factors can be helpful in many aspects in a collectivistic environment. For example, there are very few Finnish businesses and entrepreneurs in Hong Kong, and the opportunities and achievements might be limited for small businesses in a competitive market. Rather than working alone, it would be more productive and profitable for businesses to work together as a unity. Shared goals and partnerships can lead to long-term success and new opportunities.

3.5 Challenges in a foreign market

There may occur some challenges when entering a foreign market as an international business. Through my daily observations in business environment in Hong Kong, I found out that the most challenging part in integration is to not understand the local culture and the market dynamics. Reasons can be based on ignorance and not willing to adapt, or not brave enough to take essential steps towards changes. A well-planned business strategy can be successful in the market of a native country, but it does not grant the similar successful numbers in a foreign market with totally different cultural approach and practices.

A careful market research doesn't just include numbers, but also requires studying and understanding cultural differences that need to be respected and adapted. There are simple practices to begin with and to gain the knowledge in order to avoid unexpected outcomes. For example, in most Asian cultures the colour white refers to death. Foreign businesses should avoid gifting anything in colour white, such as white flowers, unless it is for funeral. Another example is related to traditions and customs practiced during national festive celebrations. On Chinese New Year people exchange red envelopes for good luck. Businesses can easily tailor and print their own red envelopes to be gifted to their business partners and stakeholders to show appreciation. These subtle cultural practices don't require much of work but the gestures themselves show genuine respect towards the local culture and integration.

Even after understanding the local market and business practices, but lacking willingness to change would not be easy for a foreign business to succeed. For example, customer service in Finland is rather described as reserved approach. Customers are being greeted when they walk into the shop, and they have their own space and time to stroll around. Customers may ask for help when needed. The interaction between a seller and a customer doesn't need to be active. On the other side of the world, in Hong Kong, local sellers might seem too aggressive in Finnish eyes. They actively approach customers and introduce their sales pitch, hand out brochures or samples, and they follow customers around the shop. This kind of approach can make a Finnish customer uncomfortable and drive them away quickly, but for the local customers it is seen as a normal practice. Local customers prefer to be educated about the products or services by sellers and they enjoy being served. The local market in Hong Kong is highly competitive, therefore, foreign businesses should take a bold step towards changes and adaptation in order to have a footstep in the market.

Hong Kong is a dynamic city for international businesses, but it is also one of the most expensive cities in the world. The estimation of marketing activities can be witnessed through human eyes, simply by looking at the outcomes displayed to the public. Lack of financial resources and talent acquisition can be hard for a foreign business to make a breakthrough in the local market. These factors limit a foreign business to execute their operations at their best, seize opportunities and further expansion in the market. This is the reason why collaborations between small businesses, different institutions and organizations can generate better results, have more impact and more importantly, build the network and valuable business relationships.

3.6 The outcome

Through numerous different event organization and participation, additional marketing activities and insightful discussions with local professionals during the internship in Hong Kong, generated the idea of a marketing e-guidebook that consists of eight ideas or suggestions for businesses to adopt. Daily observations and benchmarking were the most useful methods to ideate and create the marketing e-guidebook. Open discussions with international and local business people opened up new perspectives and they helped to understand the local market and practices better. It was helpful to conceptualize which marketing activities are practiced in the local business environment and which activities are worth investing in through various work opportunities and experiences.

Hong Kong is a dynamic city with over-the-top marketing style that requires constant effort and investments. Finnish businesses and brands have equal potential to grow, but the visibility is lacking compared to other Nordic and European businesses. Therefore, there was a desire to create a marketing e-guidebook that includes carefully selected budget-friendly marketing activities which

can be implemented in the local market, and hopefully will be profitable and useful for businesses. There is one essential factor that features in every marketing activity, and that is networking. It cannot be emphasized enough the importance of networking in Hong Kong, and not to forget the cultural aspects and the communication language that help the target audience to better resonate.

3.7 Implementation and timetable

Appendix of this thesis is a marketing e-guidebook that was created throughout the process of the thesis. The marketing e-guidebook aims to be easily implemented, straightforward and low-budget. Each puzzle was put together to resolve the main objective of the thesis which is:

- How to help Finnish businesses to enter the local marketing scene?

Each theory part of marketing in chapter 2 was selected and covered based on its relevance to the most common marketing activities practiced in Hong Kong. The theory chapter acted as a foundation for chapter 3 of the thesis where marketing ideas for the marketing e-guidebook were created. All the marketing activities presented in the marketing e-guidebook are explained in the chapter 3 and shortly summarized in the marketing e-guidebook.

It was planned to start the process of the actual thesis writing in January but because of overlapping workload of the internship, the start was postponed later. Lack of topic ideas also delayed the start of the thesis. After finishing internship and returning to Finland in March, there was less distraction around and more time dedicated to the writing process. Due date for finishing the thesis was flexible and set to be either by the end of this semester or the following semester.

Initial ideas of the contents in the marketing e-guidebook were ideated in the beginning of the thesis. As moving along with the writing, all the ideas became clearer with additions and improvements during the process. The marketing e-guidebook was created by Canva, and the drafting started in the middle of thesis writing. It was important to take into consideration the visual side of the marketing e-guidebook as well. The final touches were made after the writing process of the thesis was done in May.

4 Discussion

4.1 Summary of the outcome

The main objectives were to look into the local marketing scene and to find key activities in marketing for the target audience, as in the members of the Chamber or Finnish businesses, to be influenced by the outcome and put theory into practice. It was taken into consideration the budget-friendly aspect of marketing activities, the impact of cultural differences and possible challenges in a foreign market. Business localization is possible when business strategies are carefully planned, market research is broadly done and having capability of adapting to the local culture.

The key outcomes were highly emphasised on networking and business relationship building. All the activities presented in the marketing e-guidebook were connected to collaborations. Expanding the network enables endless opportunities. Even though Hong Kong has a very competitive market, and it is one of the most expensive cities in the world, businesses can leverage the potential of success through great connections. In a vibrant city like Hong Kong with over 7 million inhabitants, it is relatively easy to build relationships and further link up with mutual connections. It takes time to invest and requires constant efforts to build solid relationships, but it is worth it for a long run.

The outcome of the product which is a marketing e-guidebook consists of budget-friendly marketing activities that are easily implemented. The marketing activities are created to be simple and can be quickly adopted. Businesses only need to actively take initiatives, reach out to the right connections and put ideas and suggestions into practice. It depends on the goals and resources, businesses need to evaluate which marketing activities align with their brand and operations, and if there would be any limitations to invest in marketing scene.

The downside of the outcome, the marketing e-guidebook, would be not having a possibility to personally test out the marketing activities in real-time in order to evaluate its benefits and results. It would have been helpful to receive feedback from different sources during the process and measure its success. It is hard to know which activities would have worked out and which not, if there were no possibilities to experiment due to the ending of the internship. It would have been a failure if businesses don't see any utility of the marketing e-guidebook. Moreover, all the marketing activities presented might already be familiar to the businesses and they wouldn't bring any additional value to their marketing strategies.

4.2 Suggestions for future development

As for future development, it would be ideal to have an opportunity to work with local marketing professionals in order to learn from their marketing perspective and expertise. It would definitely

help to come up with new ideas or enhance the existing ideas to another level. It would also be helpful to learn about the budgets invested in marketing in realistic numbers. Because the outcome of the thesis, which is the marketing e-guidebook, was created based on budget-friendly perspective, discarding this limitation factor would enable new ideas and possibilities. Bigger investments can lead to versatile success, for example collaborating with renowned global companies or becoming a main sponsor for major events.

Marketing activities and trends keep evolving in today's fast-paced environment. In order to keep up in a highly competitive market, such as Hong Kong, one needs to be agile, open-minded to explore and willingness to make changes. By doing careful market research, understanding the target audience and having efficient resources to implement marketing activities, businesses will have high potential to gain success and profitable growth.

4.3 Own reflection

The most challenging part of writing this thesis was finding a right topic that was relevant to the specialization and interesting enough. I had some ideas in the back of my mind, but I struggled to structure the whole concept. I consider myself as a good writer, but I constantly experienced blockage which affected my thought flow during the writing process. It was hard to summarize contexts into your own words when the original authors have explained the theories so well. I often felt my vocabulary was lacking when I tried to find the correct words to describe my thoughts. It wasn't easy to explain things and convey the main points in a way that the reader would understand my inner thoughts. It also took tremendous time to search for source of information and correct the references and the grammar.

Do I think that I could have produced a better result? Yes. I believe that there is always room for improvement. Did I try my best? Yes. Especially going through the most difficult time of my life while writing the thesis, I managed to push myself everyday to proceed with the writing and meet the deadlines. It required a lot of effort, initiative and discipline to finalize the thesis, especially when I was mainly working on it independently, not depending much on external guidance. I am content with how the thesis turned out as there were a lot of time and energy invested in.

Sources

Bernhardt, G. 30 January 2024. Top 10 Most Popular Social Media Platforms. Shopify. URL: <https://www.shopify.com/blog/most-popular-social-media-platforms#>. Accessed 9 April 2024.

Census and Statistics Department. 21 December 2023. Number of regional headquarters, regional offices and local offices. URL: https://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/web_table.html?id=325-43001. Accessed: 27 March 2024.

Chaffey, D. & Ellis-Chadwick, F. 2019. Digital marketing. 7th ed. Pearson. Harlow. E-book. Accessed: 22 April 2024.

Deal, J. J., Dalton, M. A., Hoppe, M. H., Prince, D. W., Wilson, M. S. & Prince, D. W. 2007. Developing Cultural Adaptability: How to Work Across Differences. Center for Creative Leadership. E-book. Accessed: 22 April 2024.

Decker, A. 4 March 2024. The Ultimate Guide to Local Marketing. HubSpot blog. URL: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/local-marketing>. Accessed: 13 April 2024.

D'Souza, S. 2015. Effective Business Networking. 2nd ed. Pearson. Harlow. E-book. Accessed: 22 April 2024.

Economist Intelligence. 30 November 2023. Worldwide Cost of Living: Singapore and Zurich top the ranking as the world most expensive cities. URL: <https://www.eiu.com/n/singapore-and-zurich-top-the-list-as-the-worlds-most-expensive-cities/>. Accessed: 23 March 2024.

European Union s.a. Data protection under GDPR. URL: https://europa.eu/youreurope/business/dealing-with-customers/data-protection/data-protection-gdpr/index_en.htm. Accessed: 22 April 2024.

Forsey, C. 25 January 2021. What is Marketing, and What's Its Purpose? HubSpot blog. URL: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/what-is-marketing>. Accessed: 26 April 2024.

Jefferson, S. & Tanton, S. 2015. Valuable content marketing: How to make quality content your key to success. 2nd ed. Kogan Page. London. E-book. Accessed: 22 April 2024.

Kotler, P., Armstrong, G., & Opresnik, M. O. 2018. Principles of marketing. 17th Global ed. Pearson. Harlow. E-book. Accessed: 22 April 2024.

Leppäjärvi, S. 3 December 2023. Hongkongin talousnäkymät, syksy 2023. Team Finland. URL: <https://www.marketopportunities.fi/home/2023/hongkongin-talousnakymat-syksy-2023?type=country-outlook&industry=cross-industry>. Accessed: 24 March 2024.

Lintunen, J. 29 October 2021. Hongkongin liiketoimintaympäristö syksyllä 2021. Ulkomisteriö. URL: https://um.fi/edustustojen-raportit/-/asset_publisher/W41AhLdTjdag/content/hongkongin-liiketoimintaymparisto-syksylla-2021/384951. Accessed: 23 March 2024.

Makin, S. 7 May 2023. The Power of Word-of-Mouth Marketing for Your Small Business. LinkedIn. URL: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/power-word-of-mouth-marketing-your-small-business-sean-makin/>. Accessed: 1 April 2024.

Preston, C. & Preston, C. A. 2012. Event Marketing: How to Successfully Promote Events, Festivals, Conventions, and Expositions. 2nd ed. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Hoboken. E-book. Accessed: 22 April 2024.

Ray, R. 2013. The Facebook Guide to Small Business Marketing. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Hoboken. E-book. Accessed: 22 April 2024.

Smith, M., & Kawasaki, G. 2011. New Relationship Marketing. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. Hoboken. E-book. Accessed: 22 April 2024.

Solomon, C. M. & Schell, M. S. 2009. Managing across cultures: The seven keys to doing business with a global mindset. McGraw-Hill. New York. E-book. Accessed: 22 April 2024.

Textor, C. 16 February 2024. Number of startups in Hong Kong from 2018 to 2023. Statista. URL: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1368566/hong-kong-number-of-startups/>. Accessed: 27 March 2024.

The Culture Factor s.a. Hofstede's dimension comparison between Finland and Hong Kong. URL: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison-tool?countries=finland%2Chong+kong>. Accessed: 11 April 2024.

Thomas, S. & Burton, B. 2014. Business Networking For Dummies. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. Chichester. E-book. Accessed: 22 April 2024.

Usunier, J.C. & Lee, J. 2005. Marketing Across Cultures. 4th ed. Pearson. Harlow.

Vostokova, K. 15 March 2024. What Is Localization? Lingoport blog. URL: <https://lingoport.com/what-is-localization/>. Accessed 26 April 2024.

Wallo, H., Häyrynen, E. & Pajala, K. 2022. Tapahtuma on tilaisuus: Tapahtuman suunnittelu ja toteutus. 6th ed. Tietosanoma. Helsinki. E-book. Accessed: 22 April 2024.

Yeromiyan, T. 13 December 2023. An Introduction to Chinese Numerology. Chinese Language Institute. URL: <https://studycli.org/chinese-culture/chinese-numerology/>. Accessed: 23 March 2024.

Appendix 1. A marketing e-guidebook for Finnish businesses in Hong Kong

By Tracy Nguyen

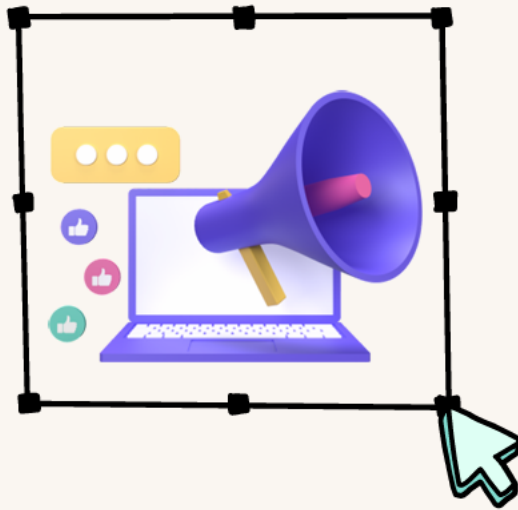
Marketing E-GUIDEBOOK

The cover features a light beige background with a blue grid pattern at the top and bottom edges. On the left, there is a yellow lightbulb with a pink base and three yellow stars above it. To the right of the lightbulb, the title 'Marketing E-GUIDEBOOK' is written in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. Above the word 'Marketing', there is a circular cluster of icons including a megaphone, a computer monitor with a gear, a play button, a document, and a target. Pink dashed lines radiate from the top and right sides of the title.

Contents


- Introduction
- 1 Collaboration with the Chamber
- 2 Collaboration with charity organization
- 3 Run a pop-up store
- 4 Collaboration with local universities
- 5 Hire a local PR company
- 6 Collaboration with local KOLs / Influencers
- 7 Take part in bigger exhibitions and events
- 8 Networking
- Conclusion





Introduction

This is THE Marketing E-Guidebook you need if you want to kick-off your marketing game in the local business environment. There are 8 ideas presented that are easily implemented and can be included in your marketing strategy. Enjoy!



1 Collaboration with the Chamber

- Share business updates and news through the Chamber's social media platforms, newsletter and website
- Co-host business and networking events, such as webinars or workshops
- Become a sponsor
- Engage in corporate social responsibility
- Support the community

The Chamber has a solid network foundation which provides great opportunities to establish business connections.

Active collaboration with the Chamber increases brand awareness and visibility that can bring potential partnerships or business opportunities.

Contributing to the Chamber's community activities enhances business reputation and social responsibility.



2 Collaboration with charity organization

- Extended media coverage
- Brand affinity
- Impact on positive changes, such as environmental protection
- Commitment to social responsibility

Charity activities provide opportunities to make a positive impact and enhance business reputation. Extensive media coverage is always advantageous.

Businesses can enforce their mission and values by making meaningful changes, such as tree planting or beach cleaning.

An excellent occasion to build and expand business network.



3 Run a pop-up store

- Competitive rent
- Interactive displays attract customer engagement
- Creative designs create social media buzz
- Can be located at one or multiple venues
- Organic data and feedback collection from the audience

Pop-ups are budget-friendly, and they increase brand exposure and visibility in high-traffic locations. The most ideal for product launching or selling.

Attractive pop-up stores catch attention and raise curiosity from passerbys which lead to personal interaction with customers.

Potential collaborations with other brands will attract new customers and achieve mutual benefits.



4 Collaboration with local universities

- Provide marketing projects for students
- Promote own business by participating in career fairs or setting up workshops
- Establish important business relationships with the institutions

Collaborating with university students can generate new innovative ideas and creations for marketing practices.

Participating in events and activities organized by the universities, enhances brand presence, strengthens educational partnerships and leverages social impact.

Businesses also have first-hand access to recruit future talents and experts.



5 Hire a local PR-company

- Extensive media outreach
- Professional expertise
- Resource and time efficiency
- Local language competence

Advantages of hiring a local PR-company to handle marketing activities are their extensive relationships in the media industry, professional competence and multimedia coverage.

Pr-companies produce high quality contents with the local language that resonate to the target audience.

Pr-companies' expertise help businesses to raise brand awareness and achieve marketing goals efficiently.



6 Collaboration with local KOLs / Influencers

- Potential to extend brand visibility on various social media platforms
- Highly segmented audience
- Attract interests through branded contents
- Increase purchasing power
- Cost-effective marketing approach
- Local language competence

KOLs have strong influence on their followers with whom they have founded trust and credibility. Influencers have their own niche audiences and any brand recommendations can have an impact on consumer behavior.

Collaborating with local KOLs enables active engagement with the audience and enhances brand advocacy through high-traffic social media channels.

Compared to traditional advertisement, partnering with KOL's can be more cost-effective and offer higher return on investment.



7 Take part in bigger exhibitions and events

- Co-host with other small businesses or the Chamber
- Join forces with bigger public organizations, such as Business Finland or Team Finland
- Represent own country image

It can be more beneficial if small businesses can collaborate together as an unity in bigger-scale events in order to generate greater outcomes and gain mutual profits.

Businesses not only promote their own brands, but they also take part in boosting positive county image of their own.

There is a large number of visitors in big events, such as trade fairs, therefore it is important to hire language-skilled staff to better communicate, promote and sell to the audience.



8 Networking

(word-of-mouth marketing)

- Attend various networking occasions
- Increase brand visibility and expand impact in the circle or market
- Effective word-of-mouth marketing
- Access to valuable insights and business opportunities
- Business cards are important

Networking can be practiced anywhere; at events, hobby clubs or professional associations. Building and expanding diverse network bring numerous advantages to businesses.

Word-of-mouth referrals are one of the most effective marketing practices. Trustful recommendations boost brand awareness, increase sales and create more business opportunities.

Exchanging business cards is still a common business practice, and it is a convenient way to collect contacts for follow-ups.



Conclusion

A golden thread that connects each marketing activity is relationship building. Having an extensive network can lead to valuable business opportunities and advancements.

Sometimes a small, simple investment can generate great return.

Wishing you a successful journey in the marketing game!

