

# SUGGESTIONS FOR MARKETING PLANNING FOR MEDICAL STORE

Case: MP Pharmacy

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This thesis study is aimed to give suggestions for marketing planning for MP Pharmacy promoting Super Collagen C+ by Neocell. This research answers questions, and the suggestions will be able to help the pharmacy meet their customer's demands and expectations.

For the secondary data, a variety of theories, including marketing communication, service marketing, marketing mix and customer behaviour, were discussed to in order to build the theoretical framework for the thesis study. The primary data was collected by two research methods. The qualitative research was conducted as an interview with the representative of MP pharmacy on the one hand. On the other hand, the quantitative research was conducted as a survey at the selling point of MP pharmacy. The survey collected altogether 34 responses in two weeks. Deriving from the results of the survey, it can be seen that most of the customers of Super Collagen C+ were young and middle aged female living nearby the pharmacy. They trusted the quality of the product and would recommend the product to their families and friends. In addition, there were four main suggestions for marketing planning given in this thesis. The first suggestion was to improve the pharmacist-patient relationship. Thereby, MP Pharmacy should target the group of customers who are in need of Super Collagen C+. Using popular social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram to attract the customers was the third suggestion. The final suggestion from this thesis was to be involved more in local and national healthcare campaigns.

All the suggestions put forward in this thesis work were planned for the current situation of the pharmacy. The thesis work does not contain any budget suggestion or financial information since this information is classified within the business. The pharmacy representative is to determine whether she will make use of the advertising activities proposed in the suggestions for marketing planning.

Key words

consumer behaviour, marketing planning, pharmacy

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## SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

%	Percentage
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPP	Good Practice Pharmacy
VND	Vietnam Dong
US	United States

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

MP Pharmacy is a family business working in retailing medical products such as Western medicine, supplement food and basic medical equipment. The store has just operated since April 2016. As a new player on the market, MP pharmacy is trying to take over the local area which is located in a crowded community on Nghia Tan Street, Ha Noi, Viet Nam. Since having an extreme long list of products, it is not a possible task to promote every single product in the market. As a result, the owner of MP pharmacy has made a decision to choose a key product and bring it to the market with the maximum effort. After carefully considering a variety of options, Super Collagen C+ by Neocell has been selected.

With a powerful dosage of six grams of collagen per serving, Super Collagen C+ also includes 60 mg of vitamin C as calcium ascorbate. Neocell's collagen is received from pharmaceutical food grade cow-like collagen, which gives the drug store more than certain that clients are getting the most elevated quality item that money can purchase in term of collagen. Neocell's collagen has also received over 900 positive reviews in Amazon with four point five out of five stars.

This thesis study is aimed to give suggestions for marketing planning for MP Pharmacy promoting Neocell's collagen. By researching to answer specific questions, the suggestions will be able to help the pharmacy meet the customer's demands and expectations. The author was also able to determine the connection between the pharmacy and customers via information generated from marketing research. Utilizing the information gathered assisted the author to shape a complete marketing plan not only for delivering the message to target audiences through a variety of channels but also guiding the business to stay concentrated on building the desired business-system which supports the business growth in a calculated way.

In regard to the data collection, there is a variety of sources of secondary data spreading from official statistics, reference books, scholarly journals to academic

publications. The primary data is collected using both quantitative and qualitative method. Figure 1 displays the outline of the research structure of this thesis

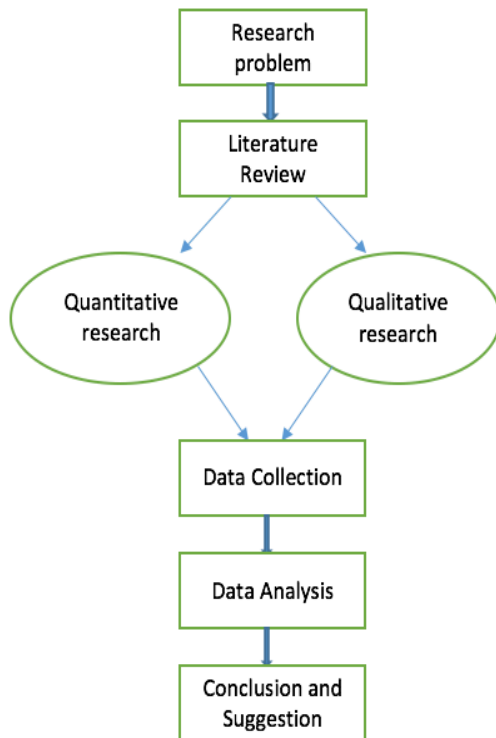


Figure 1. Research Structure (Turunen 2015)

In the first step, the research problem was identified and reviewed with related theoretical framework. During the second stage, quantitative and qualitative research methods were conducted in order to collect raw data from the field. During the stage to follow, a data collection created and was analysed accordingly. The data collection is a significant material for the author to understand current situation of MP Pharmacy and its competitors, customers as well as the operational environment.

## 2 BUSINESS VISIONS, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF MP PHARMACY

Pharmacy is a vital part of the healthcare system, supplying a wide range of healthcare-related products, advice and services to the public. It is extremely important for them to have accurately dispense medications with explanation and advice related to specific patient cases. In this business, appropriate ethical and professional behaviour has always been considered. (WHO 1994.) Being aware of these factors, the pharmacists from MP Pharmacy have been endeavouring to be more professional, focusing on their knowledge, experience and customer service skills.

Meanwhile, with the growth of other pharmacies in a certain area, besides their profession, MP Pharmacy has taken the marketing strategies into consideration in order to catch more attention. The word of mouth advertising for this small new business is important to gain recognition and build up a trusted relationship with the customers. Currently, the pharmacy market is targeted mostly around the residential area. It is critical first to gain trust and good attitudes toward the customers. Inside the pharmacy store, there is a television showing the latest drugs and supplements, a way to push consumer decision making process. Since the big benefits from the Internet and social media, they will expand the attention by utilising websites and Facebook to promote the pharmacy as well as following the needs and demands of the marketplace and enhance the pharmacy's competitiveness.

In the next five years, MP Pharmacy will continue to exceed the customers' expectation and satisfaction with the best price for their prescription medicines. By utilising the marketing strategies, they hope to increase the number of customers by more than 35% per year. It is expected, based on the turnover, after two years, they are able to open one more pharmacy and for that reason they can reach more customers in other areas. In the future, MP Pharmacy expects to establish a pharmacy franchise across Ha Noi operating with high efficiency, responsibility and professional service style



Lastly, the pharmacy need to establish a long-term relationship with suppliers to maintain the reasonable prices and avoid the high-demanded medicines being out of stock. Since in Vietnam, there is a number of fake medicines penetrating to the market from illegal manufacturers and from China. This issue has arisen the fear and suspiciousness among customers. Therefore, in the medical business, forming a relationship with prestige suppliers would develop the pharmacy reputation and spread the trust among customers, offering accurate medicines for clients with stable prices.

All in all, being a small business in a competitive area, the pharmacists themselves first concentrate on building up their medical expertise and customer service skills. In respect of attracting more walk-in customers, the pharmacy interior and appearance is necessary to be considered. Applying effective marketing strategies would help the store expand their potential market and loyal customers, leading to the growth of turnover for MP Pharmacy.

### 3 COMMUNITY MARKETING

#### 3.1 Community Marketing and Reasons to use it

Community marketing is a technique to draw in a local crowd of people in a dynamic, non-nosy prospect and customer orientation. While marketing communication strategies, for instance, advertising, PR, promotion and sales all concentrate on attracting clients. Community marketing concentrates on the requirements of existing clients. This accomplishes four elements for a business: associates existing clients with prospects, associates prospects with each other, interfaces an organization with clients or prospect to solidify loyalty, and interfaces clients with clients to enhance product adoption and satisfaction. (Mena 2013.) There are two sorts of community marketing. The first type is called organic or natural marketing, which is carried out without the help of the business. Organic marketing is informal promoting, typically it is word-of-mouth, and is a standout amongst the best marketing methods, on the one hand. On the other hand, sponsored community marketing is advanced by the business via social activities such as sponsors in the local community improvement initiatives or corporate social responsibility. (Bryan 2004.)

The first reason to use community marketing is that it requires less money than the other marketing methods. A portion of the world's most grounded brands were initially worked through low-cost community-based-marketing. Nike, Starbucks, Google are a few examples. At the point when companies concentrate first in addressing the requirements of their existing customers, they do not need to spend enormous amount of money to pull in new customers. What is more, when they remain nearby to their communities they do not need to bother with statistical survey to let them know what people want. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, love and belonging is the third most important need of humans. People are modified to need certain demands. Having a feeling of belonging to a place and the sentiment of being caught on are what Maslow described on his love and belong hierarchy of needs. These necessities are regularly met through families, clubs and communities. At the point when companies start to concentrate on creating communities, it has a capable effect that builds emotional bonds. When

a new community is born, people who once experienced of being alone now have a place to belong. When the community gets stronger, people who once experienced of being marginalized now find validation. They find that they have an imperative part to play. Moreover, a community brand remains significant because of its continual adjustment to the evolving needs, interests and estimations of the people who believe in the brand. (Bryan 2004.)

### 3.2 Service Marketing

According to the American Marketing Association (2013), services formalize as “Activities, benefits and satisfactions which are offered for sale or are provided in connection with the sale of goods.” A service is characterized by the following sub-categories.

While products have tangible qualities which deliver information for customers who can then have a comparison among products, services are intangible and do not have physical existence. They are therefore not able to be touched, tasted, held or smelt before unveiled. Moreover, services create unique challenges that most of them cannot be consumed prior to the final purchase. Hence, it is necessary to attach tangible attributes. For example, communication helps reduce the level of tangible for one’s service and, at the same time, raise customers’ comfort level by explaining more in detail. Compared to a product, the quality of a service can vary by many factors, comprising who, where, how and when it is provided – called variability or heterogeneity. Considering the nature of service, the service offering cannot be uniform or standardised. Thus it is unique and inexactly repeatable, while products can be mass produced. Service is perishable, which cannot be stored, returned or sold at some other time in the future. As soon as the service offering is consumed, it cannot be delivered to another customer. For instance, a customer who was not satisfied with the service of MP Pharmacy cannot return that service back to the store. As the result, he could choose another pharmacy in the future. Lastly, services are unique because they are simultaneously provided and consumed in the same location. What is more, separating a service from the service provider is

extremely difficult. This is a reason why a pharmacy cannot operate without the presence of its customers. (Margaret 2007.)

### 3.3 Essentials of Service Employees

It is important to understand the role of service employees to customers as well as the company's competitive positioning. Taking retailing medical products industry as an example, the encounter with pharmacist is the one of the most important aspect of a service from a customer's perspective. On the other hand, from the pharmacy's perspective, the way service is delivered by frontline pharmacist can turn into a competitive advantage. There are five main reasons explaining the importance of a service employee. The service employees are the core part of the product, since they are the most visible component of the service. They are the one who directly deliver the service and have big impact on the service quality. Moreover, the service employees are representatives of the company's service. From a customer's point of view, they are the company at that particular moment. Whatever the service employees do would highly affect the company's reputation. Then, the service employees also refer to the company's brand. The service employees and the service they provide are a main element of the brand. They determine whether the brand expectation is delivered. Another reason to carefully select a service employee is that it directly affects the company's profit. The service employees are important for generating sales, cross-sales, and up-sales. Finally, the service employees have big impact on the productivity of company. (Wirtz, Chew & Lovelock 2012.)

In addition, the service employees keep customers satisfied and continue to their loyalty to the company. While the employees who do not deal directly with clients might have the capacity to speculate what will make clients cheerful, just the services employees who communicate face to face can guarantee that they are totally satisfied. (Schreiner 2016.) Moreover, customers are the profit of a company and well-trained service employees know how to build a strong relationship with them. The service employees are representatives for most businesses, and many customers' conclusions will be shaped by their relationships with the service employees. Through good or bad time, a strong

association with the customer base will guarantee that the business keeps on running. (Foxbusiness 2012.)

### 3.4 Marketing Mix

In general, marketing strategy is often implemented around four elements: product, price, promotion and place. These elements are commonly known as 4Ps. The 4Ps of marketing is a model for upgrading the segments of the “marketing mix” – the way in which a business brings a new product or service to market. It helps the business to characterize marketing options including product, price, promotion and place. As the result, the business will be able to meet a particular customer need or demand. In short, it is about putting the right product in the right place, at the right price, at the right time. (Kotler & Kelly 2006.) Figure 2 shows the four elements of 4P’s Marketing mix model.

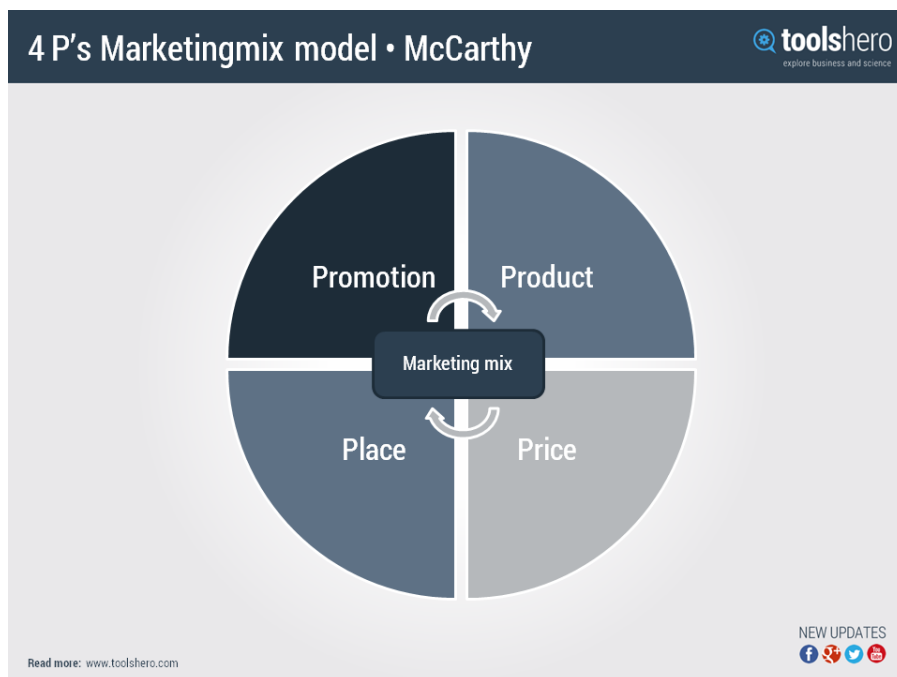


Figure 2. 4P’s Marketing model (Vliet 2011)

The product line is applied to both physical products and services. Sometimes the product is divided into: physical product, extended product and total product. The physical product is the basic product. It is absolutely about the functional and aesthetical attributes such as dimensions, function and life. On the other hand, extended product is the physical product with extra qualities such as packaging,

brand name, service and guarantee. Finally, a total product is an upgrade version of extended product. The extended product combines with emotional, instrumental and expressive qualities and/or values that the consumers attach to this. The product remains for the short term. Changing the product by changing the packaging or new innovations, be that as it may, requires time. The price is an essential variable for both the provider and the customer and is mainly dictated by the proportional relationship between supply and demand. The cost can be adjusted quickly, as an aftereffect of which this marketing instrument is often utilized. (Vliet 2011.)

Place is composed of both the geographical location where the product is offered and the type of distribution channel. For instance, shopping centres are places where commerce is dominant. Other than location, the place where the product can be found in the shop is likewise a relevant element; providers pay to have their items put at eye-level in supermarkets, at the outer ends of the walkways and at the cash register. There are two types of distribution channels: direct and indirect distribution. Direct distribution implies that the product is delivered directly from the provider to the end customer, for example insurance agencies, outlet stores and online shopping. Indirect distribution means that the product is sold to the end customer by a broker such as an intermediary company or retail business. (Ehmke, Fulton & Lusk 2016.)

All communication of a business that is intended to generate sales coming under promotion. Promotion is a core concept and can be split into different sub-categories of promotion-mix as follows. Public relation is aimed at a decent connection with public groups such as customers, competitors, suppliers and financiers. Then, free publicity creates familiarity for example by press releases as well as publishing favourable user reviews. Unfortunately, complaints made in public also go under free publicity. The next element in the promotion mix is advertising. This is commercial non-personal communication aimed at large groups of consumers. Its fundamental goal is to simulate sales, e.g. publicizing flyers, radio and TV advertisements and transport shield promoting. Personal sales is also one of the promotion tools. A successful but costly sales tool. During collaborations with the client any complaint or preconception can be responded

to. Personal sales create customer relation, a foundation of trust is made with the customer. Sales promotion is known as the emphasis on price reduction such as three for two promotional price or a sale. The price reduction itself comes under the 'P' of price. The final method is cold calling. This is about approaching random or chose people or organizations by phone with the goal to sell products. (Vliet 2011.)

In this thesis, Public relations, Advertising and Personal sales were taken as the main promotion tools of MP Pharmacy. In the author's opinion, these three suggestions were not only the best promotion tools but they were also easy to implement for a young business like MP Pharmacy. The used promotion tools are described in detail in chapter five.

### 3.5 Consumer Behaviour Model

Consumer behaviour is among the most active topics in marketing today, which continues to be researched from different frames of reference. Consumer behaviour is examined to ascertain how customers including individuals, groups and companies work to satisfy their needs and desires; on buying a specific service or product as well as the way they invest their available assets like money, time and effort. Consumer behaviour includes two distinctly different types. They are Business to Business and Business to Customer. Especially, individuals that were private are explained as people who bought solutions or an item for his or her need that is individual and they are also the end-users. Another type is business customers including gain or non-profit authorities, businesses or associations. However, this thesis is only going to seek to tackle private customer group. The figure 3 describes how a purchaser reacts to a various stimulation. (Kotler & Keller 2006; Schiffman & Kanuk 2007.)

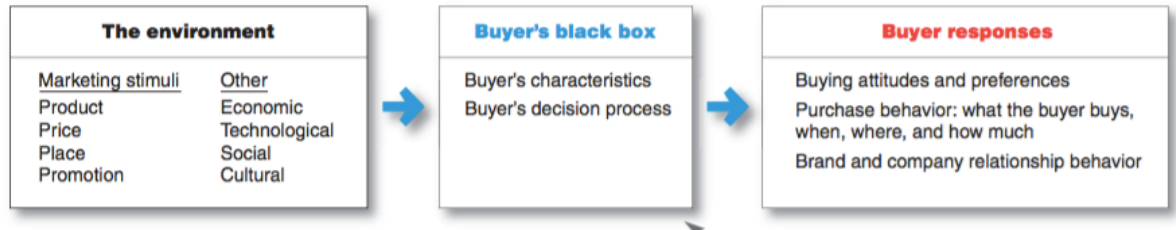


Figure 3. Model of Buyer Behaviour (Kotler & Armstrong 2012)

Specifically, the surroundings including other stimulation and advertising communication have an excellent influence on the purchasers. Advertising stimulation consists of four parts which are price, products, place and promotion and other actions conducted by the firm to attract customers. Additionally, the surroundings also contain additional important stimulation which are societal, technical, economical and cultural. These surroundings elements measure into the purchaser's blackbox to generate an answer consequently. Entrepreneurs must recognize the blackbox comprehending what, when, where and why the customers purchase service or a specific product. Purchaser's results, nevertheless, may be hardly called without comprehending the purchaser's blackbox that will be emotionally complex even though the surroundings stimulation may be understood. Therefore, entrepreneurs are anticipated to consider buyer's features and decision-making procedure. For this reason, they can get purchaser's answers assisting their consumers which need to be fulfilled by an organization and reinforce the connection between a company and its consumers. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012.)

### 3.6 Consumer Decision Making Process

The Consumer Decision Making Process is a theory employed by marketers to determine the decision-making process of a customer journey from beginning to end. Figure 4 describes the Decision Making Process of a customer.



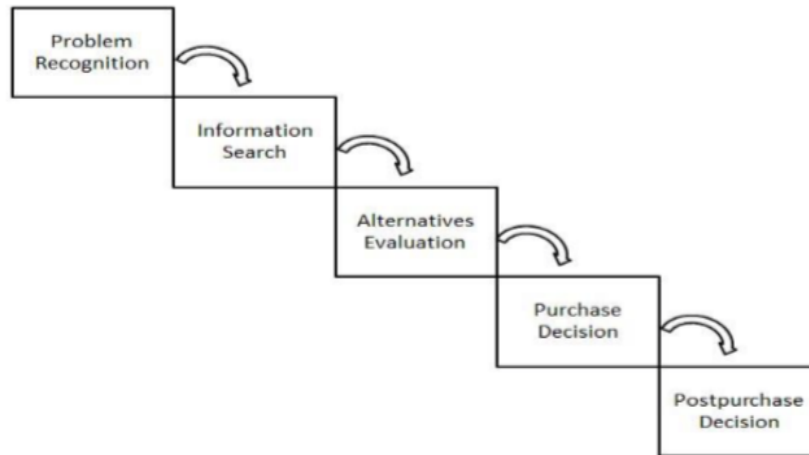


Figure 4. Consumer Decision Making Process (Kotler & Keller 2006)

The first and the most significant step in the consumer decision making process is Problem/Need-recognition. In this step, a buyer recognizes his need then a purchase will take place to fulfil the need. The demand may be activated by internal stimulation, e.g. hunger, desire or external stimulation, e.g. marketing. (Kotler, Keller, Koshy & Jha 2009.) Maslow maintained that requirements are ordered in a structure. According to Maslow's hierarchy, only if the needs have been met by an individual at a period that is particular, he or she may go to the following phase. The issue should be resolved through solutions as services and products. It is the way the issue should be understood.

The information search phase is the next step the customers need in order to learn what they believe is the greatest option or may take after they have understood the issue. This is the buyer's attempt at seeking the internal or external business environments to determine sources of advice associated with the buying choice that is focal. Consumers can reply on visual, print, and voice media for getting info. (Bunn 1993.)

Evaluation of alternatives is the phase at the consumers assess different products/brands on the foundation of changing product characteristics, and whether these can be deliver the advantages the customers are seeking. This phase is greatly affected by one's perspective, as attitude places one in a frame of mind: liking or disliking an item, going towards or away from it. (Kotler, Keller, Koshy & Jha 2009.)

The fourth phase is when the purchase takes place. According to Kotler, Keller, Koshy & Jha (2009), there are two factors that disrupt the the final buying choice: negative feedbacks from other buyers and the level of motivation to obey or accept the feedbacks (Kotler, Keller, Koshy & Jha 2009).

The final phase in the consumer decision making process is post-purchase behaviour. This phase is essential to keep customers. This can subsequently significantly influence the selection procedure for a purchase that is similar from the exact same firm later on, primarily at the information search phase and evaluation of alternatives phase. (Blythe & Jim 2008.) If customers are satisfied, this results in brand loyalty. However, the information search phase and evaluation of alternatives phase are fast-tracked or bypassed entirely. Due to this, brand royalty is the ultimate objective of many businesses.

On the basis of being dissatisfied and satisfied, a customer will distribute either negative or positive feedback about the merchandise. At this phase, businesses should carefully create favourable post-purchase communicating. (Foxall & Gordon 2005.)

## 4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDY

### 4.1 Qualitative Research Method and Collection of Information

At present, companies are able to collect data from smart devices such as iPhone and iPad, websites and other relevant sources. However, in this thesis, the information is collected via an interview and doing a survey at the selling point of the pharmacy, in order to gather necessary data for the marketing planning. The first used research method is the interview with the owner of MP Pharmacy. The personal interview is one of the most common methods of getting information. There are two styles of methods when interviewing and they are opposite to each other. The informal style maybe arranged as “chats” or “vox-pops”, on one hand. On the other hand, a highly structured, formal interview with professional required skills is the other style of interview. (MacDonald & Headlam 1986.)

Since the author and the owner of MP pharmacy have known each other for awhile, the interview was conducted in an informal style, and via video call on Facebook. Mrs. Huong told the author about the store. This was her second pharmacy, but it still has the same business goals and business objectives. She also tries to direct her second pharmacy in manner that it could be a franchise in Hanoi. After that, the interview was going more into details about the business process. Mrs. Huong started the interview by asking what could she get after launching the suggestions for marketing planning and the way of doing the market research for Super Collagen C+. The author explained his possible strategies for gaining more market for the product and how the product was going to be promoted. The market research result will be shown in the next chapter. After that, the author asked Mrs. Huong about Macro Environment in retailing medical products. As a legal Pharmacy, the store must follow the law. As the owner of MP Pharmacy, Mr Huong could be able to answer what were the main political factors that were affecting the pharmacy. Moreover, she was able to explain how the exchange rate impacted on the business. Mrs. Huong was also aware of the change of technology that could have a big impact on her business. She was talking about her main competitors before answering the questions about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of MP Pharmacy in her opinion.

After gathering enough information for the suggestions, the author asked Mrs. Huong for cooperation in the future and had an agreement of her further contribution for this marketing planning.

#### 4.2 Quantitative Research Method and Data Collection

Quantitative research asks people for their views in a manner that is structured in order which the researcher can generate data and hard facts to lead the project. To get statistical results that are reliable, it is significant to implement the survey in the way to ensure the respondents are representative samples of the intended market. Customer surveys and questionnaires are commonly used in quantitative market research. The research can be conducted by face to face method using a clipboard and pen. However, it also can be done over telephone, online website as well as via post and email. Survey questions have to be carefully considered thus the result will provide data that is meaningful. (Marketing donut 2016.) In this thesis, the second used research method is carrying on a survey at the selling point of MP Pharmacy.

A survey of 12 questions was created by the author. At first the author decided to print out the survey and implemented it at the selling point of MP Pharmacy. However, in this way, the data would be hard to collect for both the author as well as MP Pharmacy. As a result, an online version of the survey was made on Webropol. The survey was translated into Vietnamese and sent to MP Pharmacy. Whenever, a respondent has the survey, the author could be able to observe the result right away. After having enough of respondents, a full report was conducted automatically on the website. The author expected to have at least 50 people to take the survey. However, during the process, there were only 34 people responses to the survey due to limited amount of time. The survey was launched for two weeks and it was not enough time to find respondents using Super Collagen C+. The respondents were asked to give their general information in order to have further discussion if needed in the future.

### 4.3 Data analysis and Results

The survey was conducted at the selling point of MP pharmacy and only customers who are using Super Collagen C+ were asked to complete the survey. There were totally 34 respondents participating in this survey.

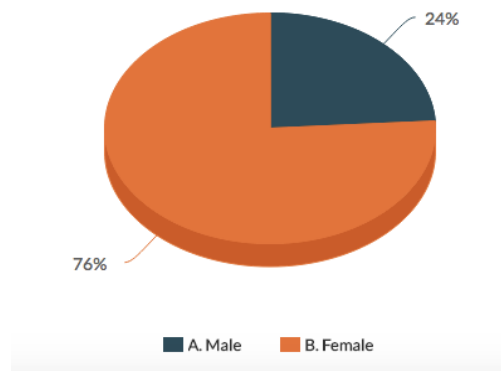


Figure 5. Gender (N=34)

As shown in Figure 5, the female gender answered significantly more than the male gender. It is apparent that women, accounting for 75.5% of the respondents, take care of their health and appearance, compared to men. Totally 23.5% of the male respondents was interested in this product, showing that a growing number of men care for their well-being and they perhaps buy this product as gifts for their family and friends.

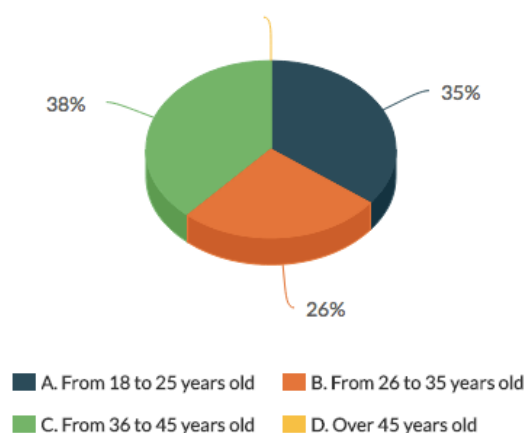


Figure 6. Age (N=34)

Figure 6 illustrates the age of respondents who would like to consume the product. In fact, from 18 years old, human body start stepping in the degeneration process. Therefore, 35.3% of the respondents represent the age group of 18-25, 26.5% of the respondents from 26-35 years old and 38.2% of the respondents from 36-45 years old are purchasing Super Collagen C+. Meanwhile, there was not any customers over 45 years old involving in this pie chart. This in turn shows that the pharmacy's advertising and the product itself have not appeal to middle-aged customers.

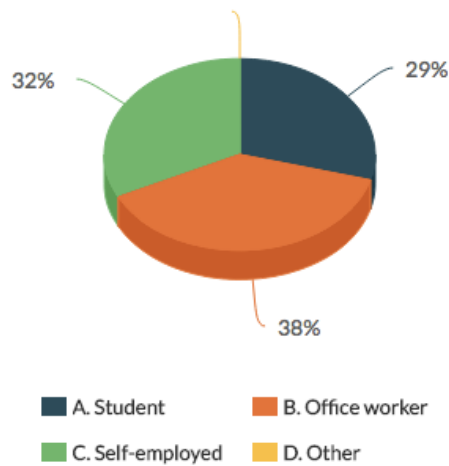


Figure 7. Occupation (N=34)

The results, as shown in Figure 7, indicate that office workers accounted for 38% of the respondents, while students and self-employed people comprised 29% and 32% respectively. With the increase in the use of the Internet, a growing number of consumers has chances to approach this Collagen supplement via websites or social media. In addition, among office workers and students, word of mouth communication plays an important role in information spreading, pushing the decision making process. Furthermore, there are several schools and offices nearby the store, a reason to big proportion for students, office workers and self-employed shoppers.

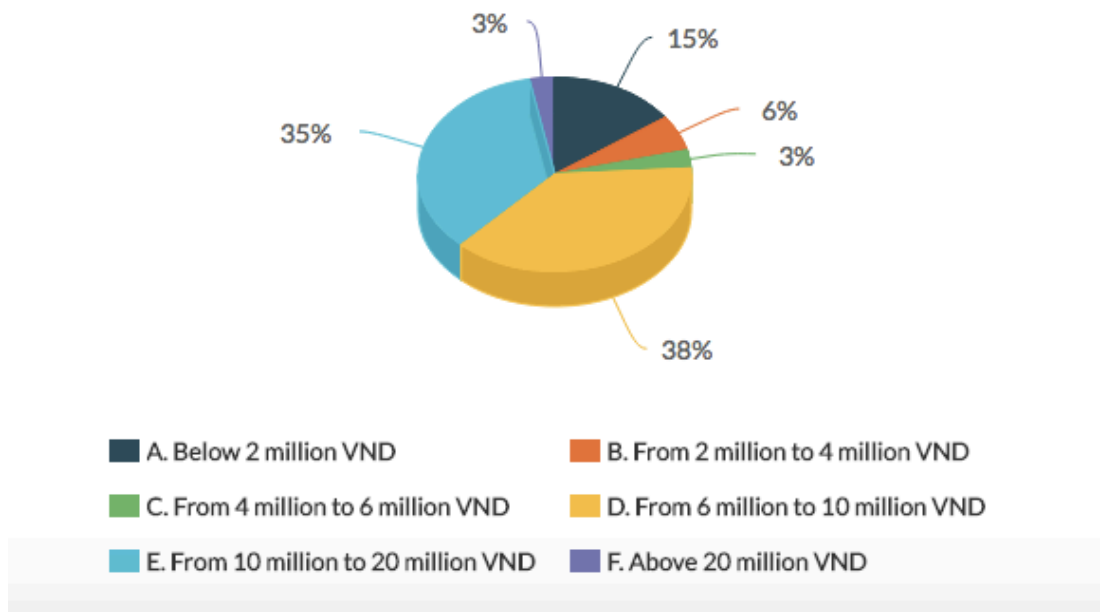


Figure 8. Monthly Income (N=34)

From Figure 8, we can see that the consumption of the medical product is mainly by buyers with high income from 6 to 20 million VND, from 248 to 828 Euro, accounting for 38% and 35% in that order. Likewise, the percentage of people having income below 2 million VND, which is around 88 Euro, is 15%. Although that the price of product takes a quarter of their earnings, they still choose this supplement, resulted from the product's quality and promotion. Finally, 3% shopper earning above 20 million VND, around 828 Euro, per month spent money in this supplement.

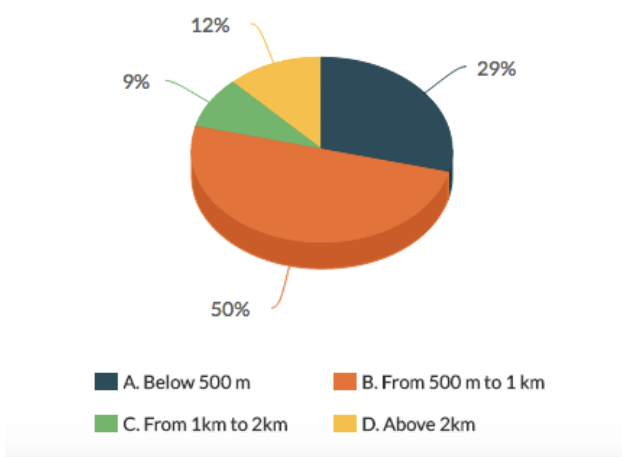


Figure 9. Distance to Pharmacy (N=34)

Figure 9 illustrates that 79% residents living around one kilometre from the shop. In the meantime, there are 9% and 12% customers living from one kilometre to two kilometres and above two kilometres respectively. In fact, not only does MP Pharmacy carry on business in a certain area, but there are also some other pharmacies like MP. Therefore, the competition among pharmacies is quite tight, and most of MP Pharmacy's customers are loyalty living near the store.

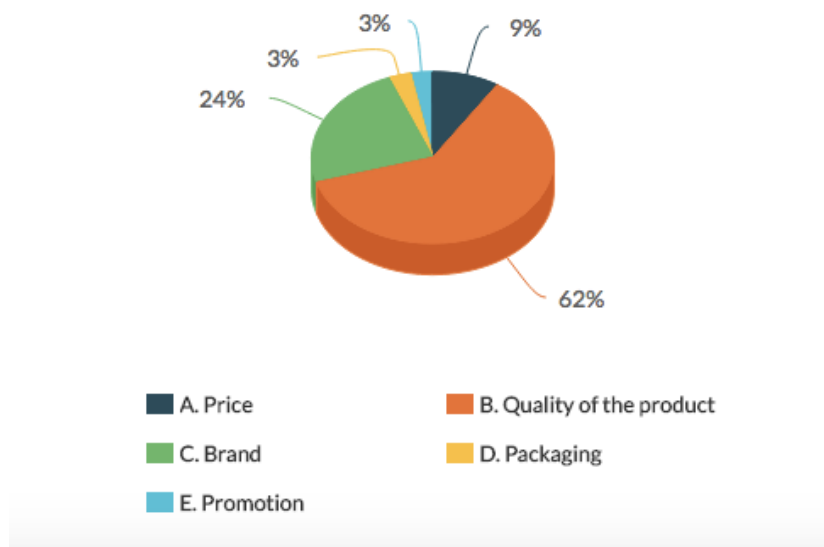


Figure 10. Product Purchase (N=34)

From the data showed in Figure 10, Super Collagen C+ is purchased because of its quality. It is apparent from this chart that 62% of the respondents considered the quality of the product before buying, since this is the supplement which has to be good for their health. Likewise, brand and price are factors influencing their decision, accounted for 24% and 9%. However, only a few people thought about packaging and promotion when buying.



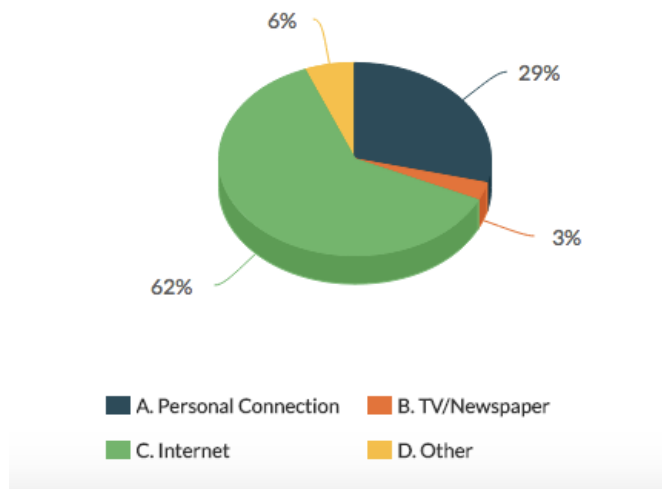


Figure 11. Proportion of Product's Coverage Channels (N=34)

Figure 11 presents that the Super Collagen C+ was known mostly via the Internet, 62%. It shows that the Internet plays a key role in penetrating the marketplace and the product marketing strategies along with the big benefits of the variety of marketing communication channels. 29% of the customers knew the product through personal connection - word of mouth. The following channels are other customer approaches, TV or newspaper with 6% and 3% in that order. Marketing through the Internet is much cheaper with high efficiency than TV or newspaper.

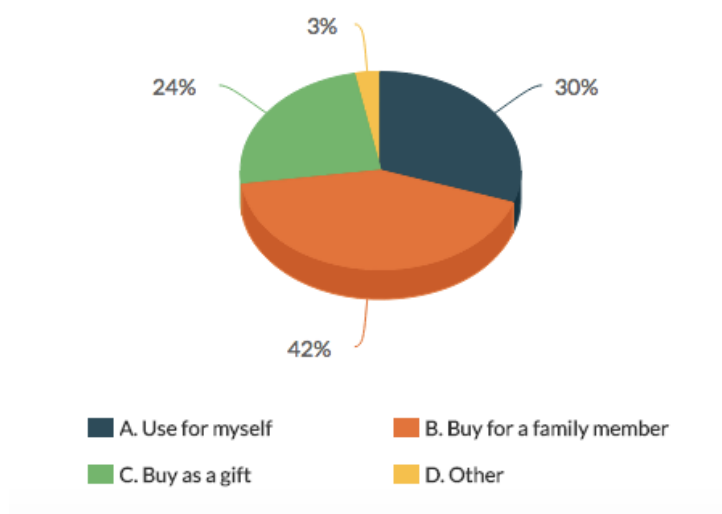


Figure 12. Proportion of Product Usage (N=34)

Figure 12 provides the purpose on buying Super Collagen C+. Buying for a family member accounted for 42%. Using for oneself and buying as a gift were following with 30% and 24% respectively. Based on this chart, the pharmacy should take this into their marketing strategies for Super Collagen C+ to meet consumers' demands.

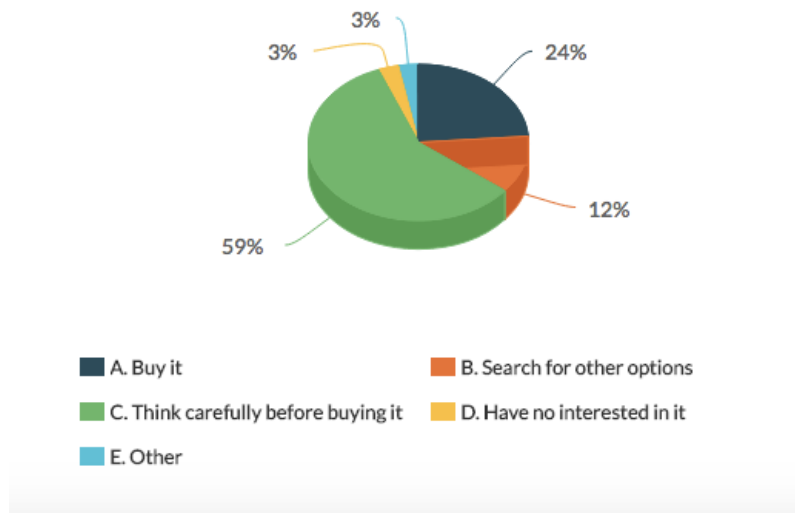


Figure 13. Product Buying Decision (N=34)

Figure 13 demonstrates how quickly the customers buy Super Collagen C+. Since it is related to the medical factor, 59% consumers will think carefully before buying it. By comparing the price, brand recognition, ads and medical advice from sellers, they would choose this or search for other options.

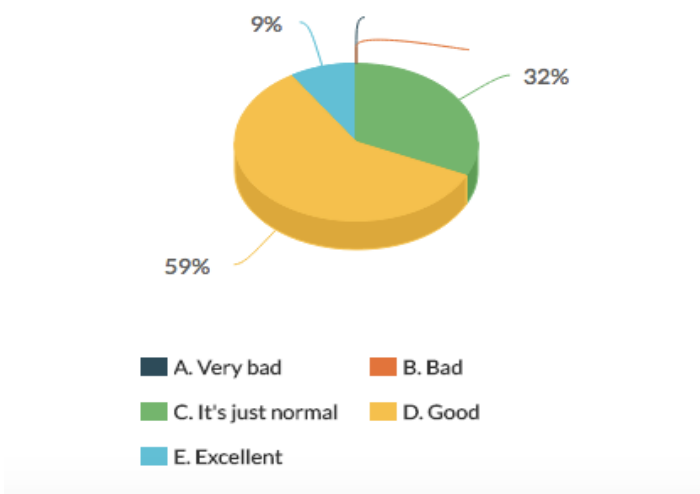


Figure 14. Product Satisfaction (N=34)

Regarding the level of satisfaction shows in Figure 14, this product gained lots of positive feedbacks. 59%, 32% and 9% of the respondents think that Super Collagen C+ is good, normal and excellent respectively. However, the store still has to keep improving the quality of the product in order to increase the customer satisfaction.

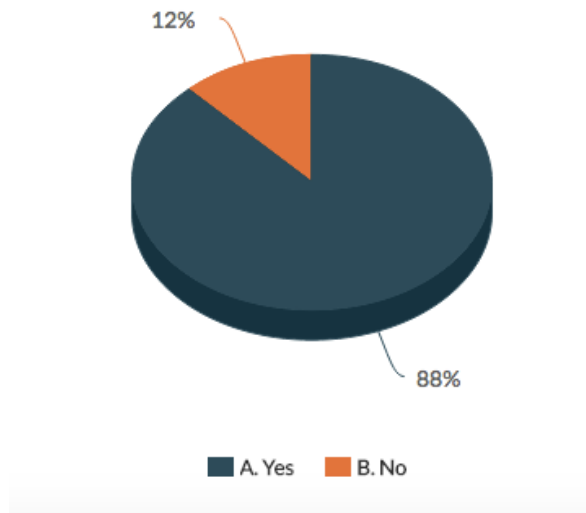


Figure 15. Product Recognition (N=34)

The majority of those who responded to question item felt that they would buy the product even if the Super Collagen C+ is changed and turn into a brand new product. However, 12% of the respondents would not buy it. Taking this in account, it is recommended to give more information of the product in order to raise the brand recognition and trust among customers.

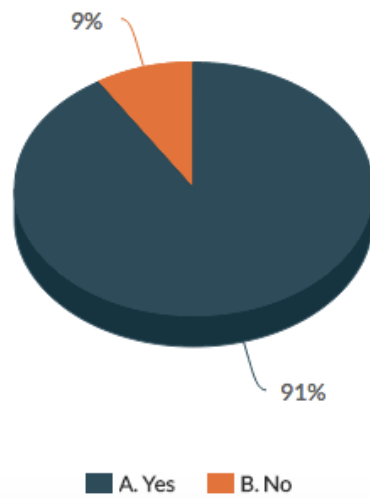


Figure 16. Ready Recommend A Product (N=34)

In Figure 16, 91% of those who were interviewed indicate that they will recommend Super Collagen C+ to their families and friends. Considering 9% of the customers not recommending, it is again to found out the reason based on the quality of product, brand, price, promotion or using purpose.

## 5 MARKETING PLANNING

### 5.1 Macro Environment Analysis

There are four factors of Macro Environment Analysis as known as PEST. They are Political, Economic, Socio-cultural and Technological factors. The imperative standard of Macro Environment Analysis is to recognize these four factors from the more extensive, wild outside environment that may influence the association. (Oxford Learning Lab 2016.)

Firstly, Political elements allude to the solidness of the political environment and the mentalities of political parties or developments. This may show in government impact on tax polices, or government inclusion in business environment. (Oxford Learning Lab 2016.) After gathering the information from the owner of MP Pharmacy as well as from online resources, the author discovers major policies for pharmacies in Vietnam. The first basic objective of the Vietnamese Nation Policy on pharmacy store is to ensure the safety and effectiveness of medical product usage since all sources of medical products produced domestically or from foreigner countries are established to Vietnamese people via pharmacy stores. Then, the second basic policy is to follow the Good Pharmacy Practice standard as known as GPP. This is a national framework of quality standards and guidelines. GPP has four following principles. The qualified pharmacies have to place the benefits of patients and the public health first, above their profit and benefit. The qualified pharmacies also have to provide high-quality medical products including detail information of the product as well as appropriate advice to customers and monitor their medical product usage. The GPP pharmacies must have engagement in self-treatment activities for simple diseases including medical product supplying and counselling. Finally, the GPP pharmacies have to contribute to improve effectiveness of the health-care system and public health.

Secondly, Economic factors speak for the more extensive economy. These factors include financial development rate, exchange rate, inflation rate and expenses of crude materials, for example, energy, petrol and steel. (Oxford Learning Lab 2016.) Vietnam's GDP has expanded by 5.5% during the first six

months of 2016, contrasted with 6.3% of development in a similar period a year ago (World Bank 2016). The data has shown that Vietnam is still a very promising market for operating business even if there is a setback in 2016 compared to 2015. A high growth economy will create many opportunities for investment to expand production and business activities. Exchange rate will create big opportunities but may also be a risk for businesses due to its impact on import and export relation. In Vietnam, the current exchange rate is calculated daily, based on a comparison between weighted average of Vietnamese dong prices against major currencies in the US, the European Union, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Japan and China. (VnExpress 2016.) Inflation rate and expenses of raw materials are also extremely important element to be mentioned. When the inflation rate is high, it will discourage savings and create significant risks for the business, social purchasing power will be reduced, leading the economy stalled. The inflation rate also has an impact on costs of raw materials. The higher the rate, the higher the cost.

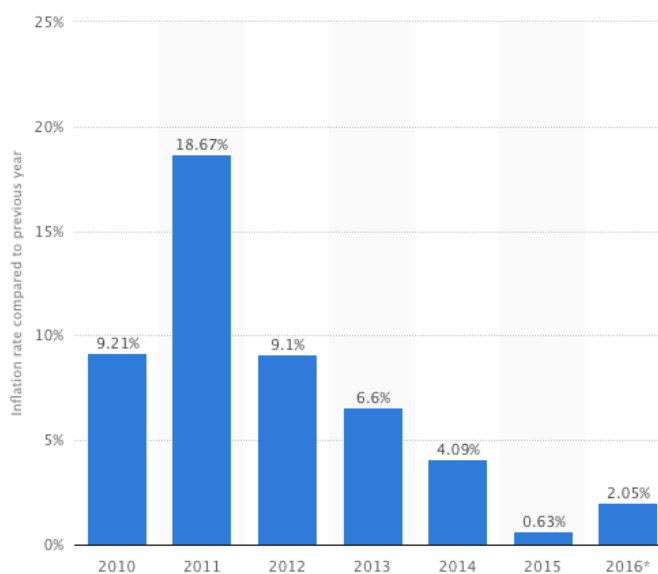


Figure 17. Vietnam Inflation rate (Statista 2016)

Figure 17 shows the inflation rate of Vietnam in 2016, compared to previous years. In the last two years, the rate has decreased by almost four percent and hit its bottom in 2015 with only 0.63%. Even the rate is currently at 2.05% in this year, it is still a promising number of not blowing like it was in 2011 in comparison with what is happening in the world's economy.

Thirdly, socio-cultural factors symbolize the lifestyle of the society where a business running in. They might contain socio-economic classes, demographics, age submission, population growth rates and living conditions. (Oxford Learning Lab 2016.) In MP case, the pharmacy will face a heavy pressure on customer service due to changes in expectation of the customers. As a result, it is extremely important to have well-trained employees as well as price transparency. The rapid development of the social media platforms such as YouTube and Facebook bring more information to the customer concerning about their health problems. The market will expand with increasing health concerns. Finally, technological factors represent the speed of advancement and new innovations, adjustments in information and mobile technologies, adjustments in web and ecommerce as well as mobile business, and government’s research activities. (Oxford Learning Lab 2016.) The first impact of technology on MP Pharmacy would be that it will make the store to be more responsive due to the new technologies of patient advertising. The social media platforms also have impacts on the business. They create new digital opportunities, creating a “brand” new online version of the pharmacy.

## 5.2 SWOT Analysis

SWOT is analytical framework that can be able to point out the biggest challenges as well as the most promising new markets for a company. It stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. (Taylor 2016.) Every business- even the biggest one that controls their markets has a limited supply of workforce, production capital and capacity. Assessing the business’s strengths helps it determine the best way to allocate these resources in a way that may lead to the greatest possible potential for profitability and sales growth. The management team will analyse where the firm can compete efficiently. (Hill 2016.) Table 1 shows the strengths and weaknesses of MP Pharmacy and it also describes the opportunities and threats that the business is facing at the moment.

Table 1. SWOT Analysis

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The business has very high-skilled employees including pharmacists, managers, and other staffs.</li> <li>• The business has gained reputation within the community due to its services as well as the quality of the products.</li> <li>• The owner of MP pharmacy has been working in this sector for the last 15 years. As a result, she has gained great experiences in management in order to run the business smoothly.</li> <li>• With the awareness of the rapid development of technology, MP pharmacy has always been updated to the newest medical products and their suppliers. As a result, the pharmacy could be able to better serve its customers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The selling price of some medical products are beyond general living standard.</li> <li>• The business sometimes is in low financial positions. It could stop the business updating and installing newest technology.</li> </ul>
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The market of retailing medical products grows strong and stable.</li> <li>• MP pharmacy is surrounded by a community with large population of patients.</li> </ul>	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retailing medical products is a sensitive area of business since it closely relates to human health and government regulation.</li> <li>• MP pharmacy has been competing many competitors in</li> </ul>



	<p>recent years and there will be many more pharmacies to be established due to special interest of health-care services in Vietnam.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Import expenses will rise sharply in the coming years. As a result, it will increase the service prices as well as operating costs of MP pharmacy.</li> </ul>
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### 5.3 Target Market and Positioning

MP Pharmacy will focus on two target markets which are the walk-in customers and the online order customers. The walk-in customers will be reached via advertisements in the local area. The advertisements will be delivered as posters, flyers emphasizing the quality and utility of Super Collagen C+ to the local work-offices and residential quarter. An electronic billboard will also be set up at the selling point of MP Pharmacy, showing short videos about Super Collagen C+. On the other hand, the online order customers are considered to be an extremely potential target market. The market research showed that 62% of the respondents know about the product via the Internet. Facebook marketing will be the primary tool in this marketing campaign, since Facebook is the number one social media platform in Vietnam. This channel is cheap and easy to approach for the potential customers.

The drugstore would position themselves as a prestige medical seller with customer service orientation. Super Collagen C+ has confidence with its safety, quality and effectiveness, since the product has gained lots of positive feedbacks from consumers. The pharmacy will offer Super Collagen C+ with valuable service and reasonable price compared to other pharmacies. As there are many

other supplements, pricing is one way to compete. Competing on price, the pharmacy has to accept smaller margins which would lower their profitability in the future. However, this is just a short – term strategy to enhance consumers' consciousness and more chances to penetrate to the market.

#### 5.4 Marketing Mix

The MP Pharmacy marketing mix is combined of the following elements: product, place, price and promotion. Super Collagen C+ is the main element in the product mix. In order to develop the product, not only will there be add-on services to create new value for the product, but these services would also contribute to the brand recognition and raise consumers' attention. A customer data is necessary to be made at this point, since it would be a statistical tool to analyse the customers and receive their feedback. The product mix describes as following progress. At first, positive feedbacks from customers will be printed out and re-designed into a little card attaching inside Super Collagen C+ package. Then, the pharmacy will re-design the Super Collagen C+ package to be more attractive to Vietnamese people, since the original package is created in Western style. A ten-day free trial package will be distributed to new customers as they have known much about the product. After ten days, MP Pharmacy will ask them for feedback. This is a way to add more value to the product. Finally, MP Pharmacy will give away spa vouchers to loyal customers who frequently buy the product, since the store has strong relationship with few spas in the area.

As a GPP pharmacy, the pharmacy has already acquired the basic standards in Place Mix. However, there are still factors that could be improved in order to attract more patient to the pharmacy. The Place Mix in this marketing plan includes the following steps. In the first step, a bigger parking slot will be built for customers. Therefore, they could take more time at MP pharmacy without worrying about their vehicles. MP pharmacy is located right in middle of its target market. Therefore, a primary message to potential customers should be the convenience when buy medical products. Medical products can be also deliver to patients' homes or any location that are suitable according to their demands. The last step will be caring about customers' appointments. Since service

appointment is time-dependent element of service, losing an appointment equal to loss of income. In order to save time, avoid loss of income and increase the convenience of the pharmacy, MP Pharmacy will remind the customers about their appointments in advance via telephone, email, text message, etc. The service prices of MP pharmacy are mainly fixed. As a result, there is a limitation doing pricing strategies. However, taking into account the size of the market, the demand of buying medical products and the operating costs, the price can be adjusted accordingly. Super Collagen C+ is a functional food and it is a profitable product. Thus, MP pharmacy will sell this product 5-10% lower than the market in order to gain customers' attentions.

There are several promotion strategies that MP Pharmacy could apply. The promotion mix is described as following. The first used promotion tool will be personal selling. Personal selling is an important method in retailing medical products. In this way, the pharmacy could interact with the customers and be able to receive their feedback. In order to be successful in personal selling, the pharmacist should have in-depth professional knowledge as well as communication skills. Then, using word-of mouth would be helpful enhancing by personal connection. Word-of mouth is always a good way of communication from customers' point of views. They always prefer recommendations from friends, relatives or neighbors. As a result, MP Pharmacy will try to build good relationships with their customers in order not only to retain old customers, but also recruit new ones. They will have regular talks with the customers to check whether they are happy with the pharmacy's services or are they in need of any advice. Working on public relations could also be another way to attract the attention of the local citizens. There are plenty of activities including: contributing to public health awareness campaigns, for example taking to local students on public health issues such as Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Advertising tools using in-house materials such as: flyers, posters could also be used. Online platforms like website and Facebook are also included. At the moment, the pharmacy has not established an official website and Facebook account yet, but they will be opened as soon as possible. Finally, MP Pharmacy will use famous beauty-care bloggers, websites to promote for the product since Super Collagen C+ is a skin care product.

## 6 SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter is a summary of the results of the interview and the survey. It also gives suggestions for MP Pharmacy in order to draw a marketing plan. On one hand, the interview was conducted as an informal style. The commissioner was able to answer the questions related to the business. She gave the author basic information of MP Pharmacy which helped the author in analysing the current situation of the business. For example, the macro environment and SWOT analysis were build up based on the suggestions of Mrs. Huong. She was the one who could point out the factors impacting the business at that moment. On the other hand, the survey was conducted in the first week of August and ended two weeks later. There were totally only 34 respondents doing the survey at the selling point of MP Pharmacy supervised by the commissioner. It can be seen that most of the buyers of Super Collagen C+ were female. However, there were still male buyers of the product accounting for 23.5%. The buyers were mainly from 18 to 25 years old and middle aged people. Super Collagen C+ was well-known to office workers working in the local community 500 metres to one kilometres away from the pharmacy. Since Super Collagen C+ is quite expensive comparing to the average monthly income of Vietnamese people, it was common that most of the buyers highly earned per month. Then, the quality of the product was the most important factor influencing the customers' buying process. This product is extremely popular on the Internet. There was no surprise that Super Collagen C+ reached the customers mostly via the Internet. Despite the fact that most of the users were satisfied with the product, they still carefully considered before deciding to purchase Super Collagen C+. Finally, 91% of those who were interviewed indicate that they would recommend the product to their family and friends. They had become loyal customers of the product even it would be changed in the future.

After considering both the information from the interview and the survey, it is possible to give suggestions for marketing planning. The first suggestion is to improve the pharmacist-patient relationship. This marketing strategy can be utilized to get patient enrolment in services. Having a better relationship with the patient will give MP Pharmacy a better promotion opportunity. When advertising

services, there is a demand to form a closer kind of relationship from both the pharmacist and patient being included in the product. MP Pharmacy should listen to the patients during pharmacy visits with the purpose of identifying unmet healthcare needs. The pharmacists from MP Pharmacy should use friendly language with the patients and give them realistic expectations of the pharmacy, and have a plan to meet these expectations. Then, MP Pharmacy should also target at a special group of customers who have a requirement for a service. In this case, it should be the group of customers who are in need of Super Collagen C+. Via the quantitative research in the thesis, it is possible to identify the target group. This is a strategy to focus on marketing efforts. In addition, MP Pharmacy should also include non-traditional and technology notions into the promotion of the services. The pharmacy should comprise patient-friendly features describing the services on the website for both present patients as well as future patients who are looking a healthcare product. In this case, it is Super Collagen C+. Popular social networking sites in Vietnam such as Facebook and Instagram are also possible marketing tools. With the development of the latest social networking websites, MP Pharmacy should realise that lots of companies are using this technology increase company exposure to reach out to customers, and help the company standout. It is also significant for the pharmacy to get creative with their advertising campaigns in order to reach the target customers. The final suggestion from this thesis for MP Pharmacy is to be involved more in local and national healthcare campaigns. These community events are a way to raise brand's awareness and gain trust from the community. The events play an important role in influencing public opinion not only on what MP Pharmacy is qualified to do, but also what the pharmacy can contribute to the local people and the community.

## 7 CONCLUSION

This bachelor's thesis includes the suggestions for marketing planning for MP Pharmacy. This thesis is conducted based on the author's interesting on Pharmaceutical Industry. Mrs. Huong is the representative of MP Pharmacy at the moment doing this thesis. She had an agreement with the author on supervising and providing information needed to accomplish the thesis. The author of the thesis utilized exactly the given information in order to create the most suitable marketing suggestions the pharmacy.

At first, the author began the thesis process by reviewing the theoretical framework of marketing. The next step of the thesis was to analyse the current market as well as the business's goals, visions and objectives. The author also committed an analysis of the current situation of MP Pharmacy and its surrounded environment. The purpose of the suggestions for marketing planning was, therefore, to raise awareness among its target sections as a way to obtain new clients and keep the present ones and to enhance the business's visibility. The thesis does not contain any budget suggestion or financial information since these information is classified within the business. The suggestions for marketing planning were made with the present scenario of MP Pharmacy. Following the very first year, it is guided to go through the strategy and make needed upgrades. It is also up to the pharmacy representative to determine whether she will make use of the suggestions given in the thesis. The pharmacy should consider integration of advertising techniques including forming and using tailoring advertising to a target people connecting with patients and looking to previous advertising successes when developing marketing strategies. A market plan should be purposefully and consistently developed to be part of the pharmacy's procedures that are routine and integrated into the workflow of the pharmacy. MP pharmacy must even be daring in exploring new approaches to find creative solutions in order to overcome obstacles. It is also necessary to develop and execute marketing strategies to support the services and growth of the profession that customers as well as the healthcare community can embrace these services.

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## APPENDICES

- Appendix 1. Questionnaire
- Appendix 2. Results of Survey in Table

## Questionnaire

## Appendix 1

1. What is your gender?
  - A. Male
  - B. Female
  
2. How old are you?
  - A. From 18 to 25 years old
  - B. From 26 to 35 years old
  - C. From 36 to 45 years old
  - D. Over 45 years old
  
3. What is your occupation?
  - A. Student
  - B. Office worker
  - C. Self-employed
  - D. Other
  
4. How much do you earn monthly?
  - A. Below 2 million VND
  - B. From 2 million to 4 million VND
  - C. From 4 million to 6 million VND
  - D. From 6 million to 10 million VND
  - E. From 10 million to 20 million VND
  - F. Above 20 million VND
  
5. Do you live near by MP pharmacy?
  - A. Below 500 m
  - B. From 500 m to 1 km
  - C. From 1km to 2km
  - D. Above 2km
  
6. What do you consider as the most important factor when buying Super Collagen C+?
  - A. Price
  - B. Quality of the product
  - C. Brand
  - D. Packaging
  - E. Promotion
  
7. How do you know about Super Collagen C+?
  - A. Personal Connection
  - B. TV/Newspaper
  - C. Internet
  - D. Other
  
8. Why do you buy Super Collagen C+?
  - A. Use for myself
  - B. Buy for a family member
  - C. Buy as a gift

D. Other

9. If you go to a medical store and you find a Super Collagen C+, what will you do?

- A. Buy it
- B. Search for other options
- C. Think carefully before buying it
- D. Have no interested in it
- E. Other

10. What is your level of satisfaction when using Super Collagen C+?

- A. Very bad
- B. Bad
- C. It's just normal
- D. Good
- E. Excellent

11. In the future, if Super Collagen C+ is changed and turn into a brand new product, would you still buy that product

- A. Yes
- B. No

12. Would you like to recommend Super Collagen C+ for your friends/family?

- A. Yes
- B. No

## Results of Survey in Tables

## Appendix 2

## 1. What is your gender?

Number of respondents: 34

	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
A. Male	8	23.53%
B. Female	26	76.47%

## 2. How old are you?

Number of respondents: 34

	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
A. From 18 to 25 years old	12	35.29%
B. From 26 to 35 years old	9	26.47%
C. From 36 to 45 years old	13	38.24%
D. Over 45 years old	0	0%

## 3. What is your occupation?

Number of respondents: 34

	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
A. Student	10	29.41%
B. Office worker	13	38.24%
C. Self-employed	11	32.35%

D. Other	0	0%
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#### 4. How much do you earn monthly?

Number of respondents: 34

	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
A. Below 2 million VND	5	14.71%
B. From 2 million to 4 million VND	2	5.88%
C. From 4 million to 6 million VND	1	2.94%
D. From 6 million to 10 million VND	13	38.24%
E. From 10 million to 20 million VND	12	35.29%
F. Above 20 million VND	1	2.94%

#### 5. Do you live near by MP pharmacy?

Number of respondents: 34

	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
A. Below 500 m	10	29.41%
B. From 500 m to 1 km	17	50%
C. From 1km to 2km	3	8.82%
D. Above 2km	4	11.76%

6. What do you consider as the most important factor when buying Super Collagen C+?

Number of respondents: 34

	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
A. Price	3	8.82%
B. Quality of the product	21	61.76%
C. Brand	8	23.53%
D. Packaging	1	2.94%
E. Promotion	1	2.94%

7. How do you know about Super Collagen C+?

Number of respondents: 34

	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
A. Personal Connection	10	29.41%
B. TV/Newspaper	1	2.94%
C. Internet	21	61.76%
D. Other	2	5.88%

8. Why do you buy Super Collagen C+?

Number of respondents: 33

	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
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A. Use for myself	10	30.3%
B. Buy for a family member	14	42.42%
C. Buy as a gift	8	24.24%
D. Other	1	3.03%

9. If you go to a medical store and you find a Super Collagen C+, what will you do?

Number of respondents: 34

	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
A. Buy it	8	23.53%
B. Search for other options	4	11.76%
C. Think carefully before buying it	20	58.82%
D. Have no interested in it	1	2.94%
E. Other	1	2.94%

10. What is your level of satisfaction when using Super Collagen C+?

Number of respondents: 34

	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
A. Very bad	0	0%
B. Bad	0	0%
C. It's just normal	11	32.35%



D. Good	20	58.82%
E. Excellent	3	8.82%

11. In the future, if Super Collagen C+ is changed and turn into a brand new product, would you still buy that product

Number of respondents: 34

	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
A. Yes	30	88.24%
B. No	4	11.76%

12. Would you like to recommend Super Collagen C+ for your friends/family?

Number of respondents: 33

	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
A. Yes	30	90.91%
B. No	3	9.09%