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# E-COMMERCE AND ITS ROLE IN STRENGTHENING A BRAND

Case Company X

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<p>Tiivistelmä</p> <p>Opinnäytetyön toimeksiantajana toimii maanrakennuskone alalla toimiva yritys, jonka nimi pidetään salassa toimeksiantajan pyynnöstä. Työn tarkoituksena on auttaa yritystä keräämään tarvittavaa tietoa brändituotteisiin erikoistuvan verkkokaupan avaamisprosessissa. Työn tarkoituksena on auttaa yritystä antamalla tarvittavat työkalut verkkokaupan avaamiseen. Tavoitteena on antaa yritykselle selkeä visio verkkokaupan avaamisen eduista sekä edellytyksistä.</p> <p>Teoreettinen viitekehys koostuu kahdesta osasta, joissa käsitellään brändiä sekä verkkokauppaa ja näiden merkitystä sekä yhteyttä yrityksen brändin vahvistamisessa. Teoreettinen viitekehys toimii kehitysehdotusten pohjana yhdessä toteutetun kyselyn, sekä analyysimenetelmien kanssa. Teoreettiseen viitekehukseen peilaten ja yritykselle tehtyjen benchmarkkauksen sekä SWOT-analyysin avulla yritykselle luotiin kevyt markkinointikäsikirja.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyössä tehtiin pääosin kvantitatiivinen kyselytutkimus, jolla kartoitettiin potentiaalisten asiakasryhmien kiinnostusta perustettavaa verkkokauppaa kohtaan. Kysely toteutettiin Webropol-työkalulla ja se keräsi 85 vastausta. Vastaajat tavoitettiin suurelta osin Yritys X:n sosiaalisen median kanavien, sekä sähköpostin kautta. Kysely oli myös saatavilla paperisena versiona Yritys X:n toimitiloissa. Kvalitatiivisena tutkimusmenetelmänä toimivat benchmarkkaus ja SWOT-analyysi. Benchmarkkauksella ja SWOT-analyysillä kartoitettiin yrityksen ja sen kilpailijoiden toimintaa ja mahdollisuuksia.</p> <p>Kyselyn tuloksista nousi esille vastaajien vahva kiinnostus avattavaa verkkokauppaa kohtaan. Kyselyn tulokset ilmensivät teoreettisesta viitekehyksestä esille nousseita ilmiöitä. Vastaajat; työntekijät, jälleenmyyjät ja yhteistyökumppanit olisivat valmiita ostamaan tuotteita verkkokaupasta osoittaakseen sitoutuneisuuttaan, sekä samalla toimiakseen yrityksen brändilähettiläinä.</p>	
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<p>Abstract</p> <p>The client of this thesis operates in excavation machinery industry. The purpose of this thesis was to help the client to gather valuable information for opening an online store, which is specialized in branded merchandise. This thesis gathers information about the theoretical background on e-commerce and gives some tools for launching the case company's online store. The goal is to present the benefits and preconditions when opening an online store.</p> <p>The theoretical background is based on two parts, which include theory about brands and online stores. The purpose was to clarify the meaning and connection between these two concepts in reasserting the brand. The theoretical background forms the basis for the conclusions and suggestions formed together with the survey and other analysis methods in this study. Based on the theoretical background, benchmarking against competitors and the SWOT-analysis, a small handbook of marketing was made for the client.</p> <p>A quantitative survey was executed in order to learn about the demand for the online store among the potential customers. The survey was executed with the Webropol-tool and it gathered in total 85 responses. The respondents, - members of staff, dealers and cooperating partners - were reached via social media and email. The survey was also available in the company's facility in print. The qualitative part of the research consisted of benchmarking and a SWOT-analysis, which were used to map the company's and the competitors' operations and possibilities.</p> <p>The responses showed a great interest towards the upcoming online store. The results embodied the suggestions arising from the theoretical background. The respondents would be ready to buy the company's branded products in order to show their commitment, thus working as the company's brand ambassadors.</p>			
<p>Keywords Brand, brand equity, brand leveraging, internal branding, online store, e-commerce, Golden Circle, Search Engine Optimization</p>			

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The companies with a strong brand are thought to be less risky. The certainty, the guarantee and the removal of the risk are all included to the price of the brand product. When determining the financial value of the brand, the professionals are also taking into consideration all the additional revenues which are created by the presence of a strong brand. (Kapferer 2008, 23-24.)

Digitalization is performing technically by the usage of big data and cloud services or that rely on humane actions such as social media. The generalization of the key technologies and the fall in the operating costs has brought new, more efficient operation models. (Kallionpää and Grönroos 2015, 11.) Online sales of physical items started in 1990's with online stores that ran an actual store in addition to the online store. There have been a few online stores that have started and still continue as online stores, including Amazon. (Juslén 2009, 31.) According to Digibarometri 2016, Finland has the best resources to benefit from the deepening digitalization among the 22 countries which were included in the evaluation (2016, 5).

This thesis is based on an assignment from a company. Company X offered the possibility to help them to suggest the tools for launching an online store. The relevant tools presented in this thesis are a marketing handbook, a survey, a benchmarking and a SWOT-analysis. The online store's aim is to build the company's brand stronger. Today Company X's main line of business is in pile driving equipment and the online store is launched to sell merchandise items. This thesis covers the themes of the brand management and online store. These themes are significant since the online store is established to strengthen the brand by selling merchandise items. By brand management the Company X is able to control the brand leveraging and the online store is the tool to accomplish this.

This subject is considered to be important because it's topical for the company and for the trade. Most of the competitors of the Company X already have online stores, which suggests that the concept is working.

As competitors of the client company already have existing online stores, the idea behind opening one for Company X is to take it to the same level with the competitors and to improve their internal branding. The availability of the products and services is one of the key factors to satisfy consumers' needs. The company's products should match with the demands of the markets. (Bergström, Leppänen 2013, 287.)

Another reason for setting up an online store is to support the dealer's network. The company's dealers are working all around the world and they need supporting material for marketing and sales. (Bergström, Leppänen 2013, 332.) Survey results showed that most of the respondents were interested in purchasing promotional wears to promote the company or as a business gifts.

## 1.1 The aim of the thesis, research question and design

The aim of this thesis is to establish an understanding how an online store can help B2B companies to strengthen their brand by selling merchandise items. Launching an online store can seem as an expensive marketing trick but when executed in a cost-effective manner it increases the added value of the brand. The theoretical framework of this thesis discusses about the brand, assertion of the brand and the utilization of the online store in this process of making the brand stronger.

Another aim is to create a small handbook to help Company X's personnel launch the online store. This thesis is executed in cooperation with the client to give them valid information about the market environment along with the possibilities, and to gain the authors professional competence of the topic.

The research question is "How to utilize online store in brand assertion?". This means to concentrate on the theories of brand and online store, in order to deepen the understanding of the subject.

The authors have benchmarked the competitors' online stores to analyze the user experience, layout and common practices, such as prices, of the competitors. Benchmarking will also be used as a foundation for the survey. The survey will be executed in order to find out if the online store will have demand and to map the possible product selection. It has been executed by using Webropol-survey program. The survey is meant for the possible target customers and company's employees, and retailers.

Both survey and benchmarking results will be discussed more thoroughly later in this thesis. Some of the conclusions are presented as interlinked with the theory, if it is important to understand for the context. The benchmarking, the survey and the results are included as appendixes at the end of the thesis.

The survey and benchmarking have been requested by the client and are executed with a schedule. Since these are the most important aspects for the client, those are executed first. After collecting the information about the competitors and the target customers, the next step is to look into the theory. The theory is based on multiple relevant professional literature sources. The theory is shaped by the research question and the topics which are important to understand for this thesis. The handbook is based on the gathered information. The purpose of the handbook is to help the Company X plan the marketing when launching the online store. The last step is to draw a parallel of the theory and the components of the research to give common understanding about the topic for the company.

## 1.2 Research structure and limitations

The first half of this thesis' theory is looking into brand management in sustaining brand equity. The theory is based on multiple relevant professional literature sources. This section will go through theories about the concept of a brand the theory of Golden Circle, brand equity and management as well as leveraging the brand.

The second half of the thesis' theory focuses on the online store and how the online store supports the existing brand of the company. This part of thesis provides mostly theoretical background about online store, digital marketing and search engine optimization.

This thesis does not cover the marketing aspect thoroughly although the importance of the subject is acknowledged. Because of the limitations of this thesis it is not possible to immerse more into the subject of digital marketing and go extensively through all of the tools to promoting and digital marketing. The tools that could help the digital marketing are covered in the theory of the online store. The subjects that are covered more thoroughly are considered to be the most helpful in the process of launching the online store of Company X's point of view and making the process of getting the visitors to the new online store easier. The tools are meant to help the digital marketing and therefore to enhance the brand awareness.

The analysis part is presented at the end of this thesis. It gathers the findings of the benchmarking, SWOT-analysis and the survey results. The timetable given by the client for the survey is during the holiday period in Finland which is a limitation for this thesis. It is most likely affecting to the number of the responses.

The client of this thesis doesn't want their name to be used in the report.



## 2 THE CLIENT: COMPANY X

Company X is a long-term operator in their field of business: 40 years of experience in developing and manufacturing the industry's leading piling equipment. Company X works in the business-to-business sector and their upcoming online store is opened for promotional products. Their vision is to be most successful piling equipment manufacturer and most desired partner in the world. The company's success is based on the world's best production range and readiness to do their best for their customer.

Company X's core values are customer satisfaction responsibility, ability for renewal and respect for the environment. They have excellent products, services and operations and a fast reaction time for their customers' requirements. Their ability for renewal extends to both their products and their personnel: continuous improvement and development of their activities, continuous development of product and service solutions and ensuring their personnel's competence. The company appreciates locality and social responsibility. These values are the base for the strengthening of the brand.

### 3 BRAND MANAGEMENT - SUSTAINING BRAND EQUITY

This chapter explains brand, brand equity, brand management and brand leveraging and how they help the Company X to strengthen their brand among workers, dealers and customers. These themes have been selected to explain the opening of the online store from the brand perspective. The concept of brand explains the basic elements of the brand and how it is defined.

#### 3.1 Concept of a brand

“The American Marketing Association (AMA) defined the brand in 1960 as: A name, term, symbol, or design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors.” (Heding, Knudtzen and Bjerre 2009, 9.)

The majority of the companies sees branding as package design, logo and advertising. Brand, the image, is commonly known to affect to people's behavior. When choosing a product, people look for some company which offer them a product that will fulfill their expectations (see figure 1.). (Lindroos, Lindroos and Nyman 2005, 23-24.) Branding is about creating a difference between products or services when compared to the competitors. This is possible when a company mobilizes its resources and functions, and focuses those to intention of branding. (Kapferer 2008, 31-32.) A strong brand gives an advantage for a company to develop their products and services now and in the future. The companies which have the authority to guide the ideation, also dominate the expectations upon future's supply. In order to succeed they have to have a clear picture where the industry is going and what products/services are they able to offer for their customers when the time comes. The brand control and the product/service development are essential and challenging. (Lindroos etc. 2005, 177-178.)

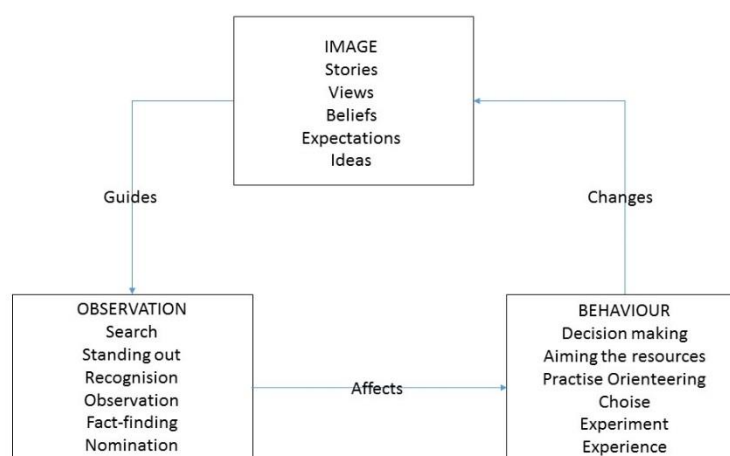


FIGURE 1. The process of creating a brand image (Lindroos, Lindroos and Nyman 2005, 23.)

#### 3.2 Brand equity and management

This chapter explains the profound idea what this thesis wants to accomplish. The reason Company X is opening the online store is strengthening the brand and so it is important to explain why a company will want to invest their money and time in such.

Brand equity can be defined as a set of qualities such as awareness of the brand's name, loyalty of the customers, impression of the quality and associations, such as "pure" or easy to use, that are linked to brand and adds the value to the product/service. (Aaker 1991, 15-16.)

Most marketing observers agree that brand equity is defined in terms of the marketing affecting uniquely to the brand. Same marketing actions on brands and non-branded products affect in different ways depending on the brand name or other elements of the brand. Brand equity represents the added value for the product or service. Companies with a positive customer-based brand equity are known to be having more accepting customers when launching a brand extension, less sensitive for price increases and more willing to seek the brand in new distribution channels. (Keller 1998, 43-45.)

The brand equity can be thought to exist because of the brand awareness and the brand image or identity. Brand awareness is created by increasing the familiarity of the brand through repeated exposure and strong associations with the appropriate product categories. There are two guidelines for establishing brand awareness. First, it's important to reinforce brand name visually or verbally. This means usages of a logo, slogan or a jingle. The second guideline is to pair the brand with its corresponding category through advertising, promotion or sponsorship. (Aaker 2002, 10.)

Brand's awareness can be measured in different ways: how consumers remember a brand, from recognition to recalling the brand. (Aaker 2002, 10.) A positive brand image on the other hand is created by marketing programs which link strong, favorable and unique associations to the brand. (Keller 1998, 50-52.) A brand identity provides direction, purpose and meaning for a brand and it is thought to use brand image as an insight into brand identity. (Aaker 2002, 68-69.) Brand image is thought to be on the receiver's impression of the brand whereas brand identity is thought to be the impression of the sender. One of the key concept of brand management is the brand identity. "Identity means that the brand should respect its key values and defining attributes." (Kapferer 2008, 271.) When talking about brand management, the company wants to know what their own opinion of the brand is first, rather than the publics. (Kapferer 2008, 174.) In Company X's case, they are building the brand identity stronger by creating the online store.

### 3.3 Brand marketing

Brand equity is reinforced by marketing actions. Marketing can be thought to be split into two key functions: marketing communication and brand marketing. This thesis concentrates on brand marketing. Brand marketing is thought to express brand values, characteristics and features of the product or the company. It aims to longer-lasting customer loyalty which is not attached to a specific window of opportunity. The main focus is to find "buyer for life". (Kotler 2009, 443.)

Brand-led approach in marketing is appropriate especially when a company is introducing a new product or service. It usually requires from the company a frank marketing battle with the category leaders where classic awareness building is required. These markets are usually defined as ones where consumer can make definite differences between the brands. (Bones and Hammersley 2015, ch. 4). This is the case in the Company X's field of business. The brands are strong and customer relationships are long lasting. The customers make the choice between companies' main product lines. The online store works as a marketing tool for the brand. It is built to reinforce the already existing brand equity. Online store supports the brand by strengthening the company values. Company X's core values are customer satisfaction, ability for renewal and respect for the environment.

In general, brand equity is reinforced by marketing actions that continually state the meaning of the brand to the consumers – in terms of brand awareness and brand image, as follows according to Keller:

- What products does the brand represent; what benefits does it supply; and what needs does it satisfy? For example, Company X is offering through the online store more marketing material for their dealers and is gaining more visibility.
- How does the brand make those products superior? What strong, favorable, and unique brand associations exist in the minds of consumers? For example, by choosing environmentally friendly products to the online store the Company X is strengthening their brand values.

(Keller 1998, 502-503.)

Brand management requires a long-term view of marketing decisions. Actions that a firm takes as a part of its marketing program have the ability to change the customers' perspective about the brand. These same marketing actions affect to the success of the future actions. Brand equity has to be managed over time by reinforcing the brand meaning and, if necessary, making changes to the branding program by identifying the new sources of brand equity. (Keller 1998, 501.)

### 3.4 Leveraging the brand

This chapter covers the aspect of expanding the brand in order to satisfy customer needs and to achieve the goal of stronger brand equity. The brand leveraging has been processed thoroughly the Company X's case. Since the case, the leveraging is limited to certain extent.

Brand extension has become common practice with all kinds of brands nowadays. Many companies have shown that typical product brands can become an umbrella brand covering many segments and products. For example, Mars is not anymore only a bar, but an ice-cream, a chocolate drink etc. This kind of development is the direct consequence of the recognition that brand is the capital and the source of competitive advantage of the companies. As a company wants to enter markets they have been absent, most of them do so using one of their already existing brand name. (Kapferer

2008, 295.) The company X's decision to open the online store can be seen as a way to manage the brand equity.

When launching a new brand extension, it demands time, energy and allocation of resources and creates a risk. Extension takes the company to a new field of markets which might be dominated by entrenched competitors. There is not only a financial risk, but it can endanger also a company's brand image, distribution channel, among the trade partners and end users. The logic of continually increasing the customer value, in business-to-business market, leads naturally into a brand extension. (Kapferer 2008, 297.)

There are many ways how to leverage the brand. Company X has chosen to create a range brand through the brand extension (see Figure 2). (Aaker 2002, 275.)

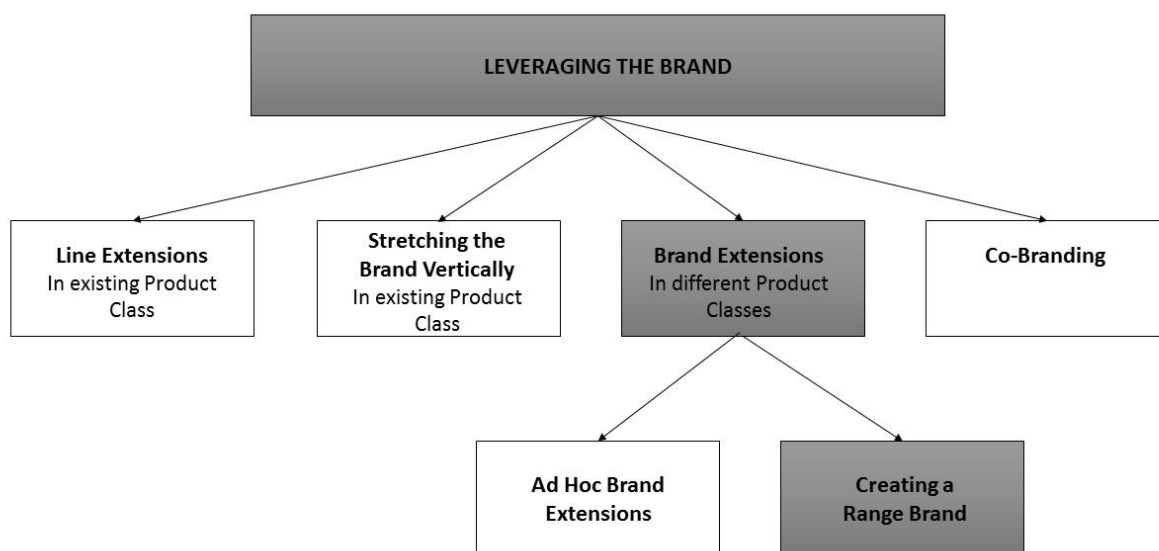


FIGURE 2. Leveraging the Brand (Aaker 2002, 275.)

Whereas a brand extension is driven by current brand image, the brand range will offer room for the brand to develop. A range brand creates an identity to the brand that works across the product or service groups. It can also initiate the customers to see the relationship between products – the relationship which they might have missed. The objective of range brand is to create a strong brand asset which can offer a competitive advantage for the company. Range brands are known to be adding visibility and reassuring the customers that the company is capable of working in other fields too. When a company has more than one line of products or services it is more approachable and memorable. (Aaker 2002, 292-295.)

### 3.5 Internal branding

This chapter explains the usage of online store as a way to assert the brand. It clears up why a B2B company is starting to sell merchandise out of their field of business, when target customers are going to be their own employees, dealers and existing customers.

The expectation for internal branding is that the company's employees become brand ambassadors as company directs the marketing toward the employees. This helps the employees market and represent the company more fluently to the external customers. It has become common manner to sell the branded promotional products via company's online store dedicated for this purpose. The stores can be presented in various channels, such as e-commerce site, physical store or printed catalogs. (Bodkin, Peter and Thomas 2016, 479.) Marketers acknowledge that employees purchase the items from these kinds of stores. However, there is no research done to find the factors that impact to the likelihood that an employee will purchase from the store. (Bodkin, etc. 2016, 480.)

According to Promotional Products Association International (2015), the five most popular contexts for purpose of use for promotional products were business gift, brand awareness, employee relations & events, trade shows and dealer/distributor programs. (PPAI 2015, 2.) This can be seen to strengthen the idea of popularity of internal branding. The five most popular products categories were wearables: such as t-shirts, writing instruments, bags, drinkware and desk/office/business accessories. (PPAI 2015, 1.)

## 4 GOLDEN CIRCLE

Marketers have discovered that they can't compete just with traditional product- and service differentiation. When the qualities of the products and services are not different enough, the advantage of differentiation is searched from the brand and its relationship with its target group. The markets are won in people's minds. People buy with reason and feeling. They investigate the rational reasons but make their final decision – conscious or not – with the feeling. The experienced brand value seals the deal. (Takala 2007, 118). This chapter is to give a perspective for the analysis and it is referred multiple times during this thesis.

Every organization has a clear vision what they do for business. Some know how they do it. But only few people know why they do what they do. The Golden Circle theory bases on three key questions: why, how and what. The brand is built from inside out. The idea is to start with the question "Why", which emphasizes the driving power of the brand. (Sinek, 2013.)

## The Golden Circle

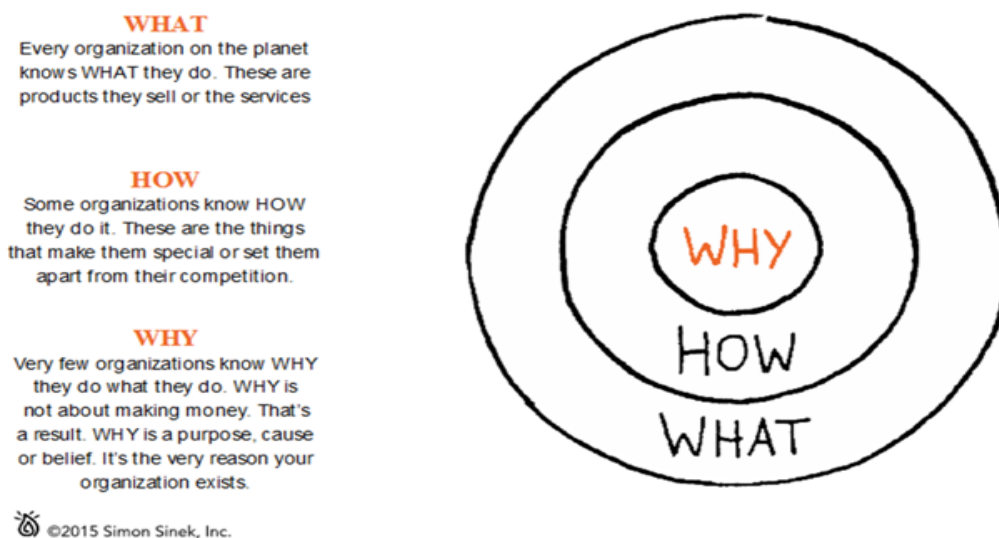


FIGURE 3. The Golden Circle (Sinek 2015, 4.)

The theory of Golden Circle is bind closely to the law of diffusion of innovation. The theory claims that 2.5% of our population are innovators, 13.5% are early adaptors, 34% are early majority, 34% are late majority and 16% are so called laggards. (Rogers, 2003.) The early majority does not want to try anything unless someone has tried it before them. The innovators and the early adopters are comfortable doing decisions based on their feeling. The same feeling comes from the why: if you believe in something, and you sell it, you will find the people who believe to the same thing. The feeling comes from the inner part of the brain that makes the primal decisions. The outer part of the brain makes decision based on the reason – facts and numbers – the what. (Gladwell, 2002.)

If the company wants mass markets success or mass market acceptance to their product, they have to achieve the tipping point between 15 percent to 18 percent of market penetration. The Tipping

Point expression first came into popular use in the 1970s to describe the flight to the suburbs of whites living in the oldest cities of the American Northeast. When the number of incoming African Americans in a particular neighborhood reached a certain point – 20 percent, say – sociologists observed that the community would “tip”: most of the remaining whites would leave most immediately. The Tipping Point is the moment of critical mass, the threshold, the boiling point. The tipping point is the moment when an idea, trend, or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire. (Gladwell, 2002.)

When strengthening the Company X’s brand there are 3 aspects to consider based on the Golden Circle:

1. Why to do it: The online store is created to make people feel more connected to the brand.
2. How to do it: By using online store as a tool to deepen the customer relationship.
3. What to do: Concretely this means selling brand products in the online store in order to strengthen the customer commitment to the brand.



## 5 E-COMMERCE

The Internet brings the company closer to its customers and partners since they can access information directly from the company's website. The internet makes the size and the location of the company irrelevant. It also increases feedback from the customers. Most companies have little exposure to the customer's comments and feedback. Websites and online stores change that; interactive qualities and easy access provide companies with direct information. A tool as simple as a "contact us" button on e-commerce site or another website gives the customer an easy way to provide the company with feedback. (Rosen 2000, 8-10.) As well as direct feedback, the online store has other ways to collect information and data about the customers.

The concept of marketing communications covers a very wide range of functions. Apart from the traditional four functions outlined in the promotional mix (advertising, public relations, sales promotion and personal media) marketing communications now cover the Internet, messages on T-shirts, word of mouth, word of mouse (online talk), e-mail and many other routes. The problem is that there are so many routes that it has become difficult to ensure message consistency. That is why marketing is integrated. There are nine different levels of integration: awareness stage, planning integration, integration of content, formal integration, integration between planning periods, intra-organizational integration, inter-organizational integration, geographical integration and integration of publics. Those are usually represented as a ladder. (Blythe 2009, 206-209.) For now, the level of integration that the marketing in Company X's online store is hoped to achieve is between integration of content and formal integration. Integration of content means ensuring that there aren't contradictions in the basic brand messages and integrating the themes of communication to make the basic messages same. Formal integration means using the same logo, corporate colours, graphic approach and style for all communications. (Blythe 2009, 208.)

It is not enough just to have a website or an online store. The prerequisite for an online store is to have visitors. Visitors usually come to the site through keywords, but this only happens if the website has been built in a search engine optimized way. (Kananen 2013, 55.)

In this section, there will be theory about the online store as well as a general overview about digital marketing as well as theoretical background about search engine optimization and collecting data.

### 5.1 Online Store

Online store is in its simplest way a webpage where product information is shared, as well as a way to purchase the selected items without having any face-to-face or phone contact to a seller. The basic assumption is that the whole buying process can be done online in real time. The stores functions are usually automated. (Vehmas 2008, 4.) E-commerce is enabling international competition with foreign operators. The online stores are in high regard for unlimited opening hours, internationality, alternative methods of delivery, wide range of goods and product information.

Reliability and recommendations are key factors when choosing an online store. Reliability is developing by awareness, reputation and experiences of the users. Reliability is connected with fundamentals of online store. In a reliable online store the products are presented clearly and delivered quickly. Price-quality ration is good and the method of payment is qualified safe. (Bergström and Leppänen 2013, 300–301.)

When talking about e-commerce site, four levels of maturity have been defined.



FIGURE 4. The maturity levels for eBusiness (Morath 2000, 111.)

In this theory, the first level is named "Static": the e-commerce sites in this particular level usually include basic information about the company, but aren't personalized. They only exist for the purpose of getting visibility in the web. The second level is called "interactive". The e-commerces in this level are a bit more personalized than the ones in level one. They usually contain queries, email and form entry and they tend to be account oriented. The e-commerces in this level might feature customized product pricing and bill presentation. In level two the goal is to explore. E-commerces on level three "transactive" use personalized or target marketing. The e-commerces also use business transactions, self-care, back office integration and are more customer-oriented because the e-commerce's goal is to be an effective business channel in order to help the company to develop. The fourth level of maturity is called "intelligent". E-commerce's interaction in this level is driven by customer value and the goal is to transfer the business into something new. The e-commerces integrate their partners and are highly personalized. They constantly have new offerings, products and services that are enabled by internet technology. (Morath 2000, 110.)

Company X's e-commerce site can be thought to be ranked between the levels two and three since it's not the company's main field of business. The basic qualities are going to be placed on the level two. Customers are planned to have some information about the products and offers via email. They can order all the products straight from the online store. They'll get a confirmation about their order and delivering schedule right after the purchase. This service requires more communication and integration with the back office but it is the best possible service for the customers. This also demands real time inventory keeping and interfacing with the supplier. (Morath 2000, 110.)

Company X is going to need partners to cooperate in order to execute the e-commerce's webpage and with the merchandise. The company has three different solutions to pick from when talking about the arrangement of the e-commerce. The first is to take a full deal, in which case everything related to the e-commerce would be taken care for by an external operator, including product stocking and delivery. The second possibility is to take a semi-deal. The technical execution will, for the foreseeable future, come from an external operator including the updating the e-commerce. In this deal the Company X would be in charge of delivering the merchandise and taking the orders. The third option is to take a self-service deal, where the e-commerce's web page is done by a professional but the Company X is going to update the page and be on charge of the purchasing the merchandise. At the moment, it looks like the Company X is going to choose the semi-deal to simplify their task list.

There are some key elements that are crucial to starting a successful business online (Vehmas 2008, 35-37):

- The product range must be carefully considered. As well as the products, the categories on the online store should be carefully considered.
  - There has been done a survey for the Company X's online store in order to find out what are their target consumers ready to purchase.
- The layout of the online store consists of graphical image, well-thought-out technical execution, logical user interference and usability.
  - Getting the visual basics right is truly important when talking about a company's webpage. The visual perspective reminds people of the brand they have seen before by using implicit logo, colors and fonts which are commonly known as a brands graphical guidelines. If these features are managed correctly, these visuals should drive the associated and required emotions of recognition within a visitor's mind, leaving marketers and web designer free hands to create more enriching picture of the brand to the visitors. (Cocoran 2007, 33-34.)
- Companies should be careful when creating a new web page or e-commerce site not to use fortune to the visual side. Surveys have shown that customers are more interested in a convenient

buying process, such as rapid response, quick downloads, good organization etc., than in appearance. A simple site with clear, accessible information is more effective than a site with beautiful graphics, poor navigation, and little relevant information. (Rosen 2000, 158.)

- The first goal of visual design is to support the company's message that they want to send. The second goal is to create an identity for the company. The identity is a visual message that goes through the publication that with its form tells something about the sender's. The company should repeat the visual image on their website, online store and the social media to be recognized, connected and reinforce their basic visual image. (Huovila 2006, 12.)
- The visibility that helps customers to find the online store. Separation from the other stores is difficult.
- The online store should be updated regularly, in a way that helps customers to see that the online store is vivid. For example, news, dated "coming up" announces etc. are helpful. When the customers see that the store is updated, they are more likely to purchase.

## 5.2 Digital marketing

The most important forms of digital marketing are the company's website, branded websites, search engine optimization, keyword advertising, online advertising (banners, pop-up ads etc.), online seminars and –events, online contests and email advertising. (Karjaluoto 2010, 129.) Since Company X already has a website where they can market the online store as well, SEO will be covered more thoroughly in this section. E-mail advertising could be later included in digital marketing plan.

The easiest way to integrate online store with the existing marketing programs is to include information about the online store element into all of the planned marketing, sales and support programs and website as well as social media. This way the e-commerce site doesn't appear as a separate venue. The web address of the online store should be included in existing ads and other marketing materials. (Rosen 2000, 180-182.)

Before creating an e-commerce, the goals must be defined clearly. The goals to digital marketing have to be measurable and specific. Objectives should be measurable by statistics. Surveys and interviews are easy way, so called soft measures, to keep track on the visitors and their opinions about the e-commerce. For example, the business objectives that aren't as effective goals are to have a presence on the internet or get more repeat visitors. (Rosen 2000, 103.) Information on visitor activities and customer base should be tracked from the company's e-commerce site. The information can be used to identify popular paths and entry points, which will help designing search engine optimization, keywords, keyword phrases and the links in other medias such as the Company X's website and social media. (Rosen 2000, 164.)

In digital marketing companies are too often paying too much attention to the visitors, but when talking about the e-commerce this is not the case. In the marketing of the e-commerce site it is crucial to get visitors and pay attention on them. It would be recommended to choose one or more of these targets as the goal of the digital marketing:

1. Enhancing brand awareness
2. To change brand image
3. Accomplishing a trial
4. Customer marketing

(Karjaluoto 2010, 128).

In Company X's case the reasons for digital marketing is to enhance brand awareness, which is the key point on opening the online store as well.

Banner advertising is the most common, most accepted and probably most blocked form of paid advertising in the internet. The purpose behind banner advertising is to create small advertising placements, using the same techniques as offline promotion, which are live pointers to other points on the internet, for example to website, blog or Twitter profile. Unlike offline advertising, the live pointer aspect can take consumer straight to the website with only one click. The banner advertisement has created a range of related genres of interactive advertisement, for example affiliate marketing, which are ranked lower in terms of popularity. (Dann & Dann 2011, 198.) Affiliate marketing is paid advertising in chosen online channels. It is a referral programme with partners in the affiliation agreeing to a fee that is paid when referred customer completes a transaction. (Charlesworth 2007, 8.) It is an easy way to collect data about possible customers and get return to your marketing investment.

Digital marketing is a form of engagement marketing. There are many authors that have written about engagement marketing, amongst them Tomi Ahonen and Alan Moore. Engagement marketing is involving people to your company's cause. It takes the interest of the target group onto the level where interaction, sharing and the relationship to the company's brand becomes a fascinating, rewarding and worth the news. It makes people commit to your company's cause but with their own terms and for themselves. (Takala 2007, 16.) Customer engagement refers to engagement of customers with a brand or a company mainly in social media. It aims for long-term engagement, customer loyalty and advocate through word-of-mouth. The purpose is to create, stimulate or influence customer's behavior and attitudes by using content marketing. (Head 2012, 77.)

Digital marketing cannot be discussed without simultaneously talking about content. Today we live in a landscape where content is everywhere. Today's companies are defined by their created content online. Content in its myriad different forms is the currency that digital marketers use to engage, interact and influence their customers. Content is one of the few marketing channels that allows marketers to contact their potential customers along all phases of the customer cycle, during research, purchase and review. (Ryan 2014, chapter 11.) Consumers are expecting to find information about any product, service, company, individual, cause or challenge they face by simply using the search engine of their choice. That is why Company X has to make their content findable. There are two most important categories when it comes to content strategy: educating the customer and building trust. The content that builds trust can be for example a blog, social media or reviews. The educating content can be seminars or FAQ sections (Frequently asked questions) on the website as well as in the e-commerce site. (Meyerson 2015, 30.) In addition to educating and informing the customer's content marketing helps the customers to connect with the company and boost credibility, visibility and salability among the customers. Content marketing is most efficient if it's done in a multi-platform, targeted way. (Lorrie 2011, 53.) Some examples of content marketing have been given in the Handbook (see Appendix 1).

### 5.2.1 Search engine optimization (SEO)

There are many ways to get visitors to your website such as the traditional communication channels: radio, TV, prints, direct advertising etc. They can act as drivers to lead customers to the website. Social media, such as Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and different types of blogs, can also be used as an effective driver. Optimizing the website is a basic element to all kinds of online coverage. This includes the web pages' content, visual and technical execution. (Kananen 2013, 54.)

In search engine optimization, the main idea is to get visitors to the website by getting the website to show as high in the search engine results as possible. The optimization strives to enhance the ranking that the search engine would naturally give the site by adapting the content of the page better and more apposite. (Lahtinen 2013, 177) The term "search engine" is used widely in the literature in relation to SEO, but in this case the term refers to Google. (Lahtinen 2013, 177–178.)

When a search is made online, the search engine scours its corpus of billion documents. First it returns those results that are relevant or useful to the searcher's query and second, it ranks those results according to the popularity of the website serving the information. It is both relevance and popularity that the process of SEO is meant to influence. (MOZ 2016.) To a search engine, relevance means more than finding a page with the right words, keywords. The words should be used in the headline of the text in the website, as well as the first and the last paragraph and the link. Use the same words to name the pictures that are in that site. Typically reaches include the following main focus areas: company, brand name, key products, key personnel, industry, conferences, patents, news, competitors, product launches and job vacancies. (Stokes 2008, 54.)

Organic search traffic results when a visitor is typing in a keyword phrase to a search engine, such as Google, and follows one of the unpaid links to a site. The most important success criterion is high ranking on the list of search returns. The placement in the result list is implicated by strong content, high visibility and search engine optimization. (Hanson and Kalyanam 2007, 255.)

Generating leads by including valuable content on the pages, where people are looking for basic information, is central to marketing success. Content is the foundation to the search engine optimization. Keywords are the words or sentences that prospect customers are typing into the search engines to find whatever they are looking for. (Meyerson 2015, 32.)

Keyword means a word that has been entered to the AdWords-system, which the ad is wanted to be react with. The term 'keyword' is misleading, since the keyword can also be a phrase. If the keyword and the search term mean exactly the same thing it is enabling the ad to show in the search engines results. It is important to find the right keywords so that the company's web page will be shown in the accurate and wanted search results. The probability of the company's ad coming up in the results will increase if they define adjusted keywords, since search engines can't recognize keyword if the spelling is differing from the original one. (Salomaa 2014, 11.)

In order to reach the customers in the moment of the search and to run adverts via AdWords, the company has to create an ad-account. With the account the company can pay the campaigns clicks and administer the campaigns. (Salomaa 2014, 17.) AdWords is a useful tool in search engine optimization. Defining the keywords and the use of the Google AdWords is not relevant in this thesis, so these topics won't be discussed further.

### 5.2.2 Collecting data

There are many tools to help collect data about the company's sites visitors: where they came from, where they landed and where they went. These tools should be used to track visitor patterns so that Company X can streamline the navigation of the company's site. The tools can provide the information of how many unique visitors the site receives and the most common paths people take. (Rosen 2000, 165.)

Big data presents multiple challenges. One challenge is how to identify which data is relevant, another is to be able to analyze it and after that how to react to the results and how to bring all of the data into use. Big data is defined as "high-volume, high-velocity and high-variety assets that demand cost-effective, innovative forms of information processing for enhanced insight and decision-making". (Richardson, James and Kelley 2015, 45.)

There are two main approaches for collecting web analytics data: cookie-based tracking and server-based tracking. By collecting data from the online store, it is easier to understand consumers and the way they see the online store. It might take some time at the beginning to find the right aspects

to measure the user profiles but it pays back the used time and money in a long run. (Stokes 2008, 506.)

In cookie-based tracking the analyst adds a page tag, a piece of JavaScript code, to every page of the website. Then a user accesses the page using their browser. This tag sends an array of information to a third-party server, like Google Analytics, a server that stores and collects the data. The analyst then accesses this data by logging into the third-party server. Server-based tracking involves looking at log files - documents that are automatically created by servers and that record all links that take place on the server. Web servers are the computers that websites are stored on so they can be accessed online. A new line is written every time a new request is made - for example, clicking a link. (Stokes 2008, 506-507.)

TABLE 1: The difference of the cookie-based and server-based tracking (Stokes 2008, 509.)

Cookie-based tracking	Server-based tracking
Page tagging requires changes to the website and can be used by companies that do not run their own web servers.	Log files are produced by web servers, so the raw data is readily available, but the company must have access to the server.
Cookie-based tracking can be less accurate than server-based tracking. If a user's browser does not support JavaScript, for example, no information will be captured.	Log files are very accurate – they record every click. Log files also record visits from search engine spiders – useful for search engine optimisation.
Page tags are proprietary to each vendor, so switching can mean losing historical data.	Log files are in a standard format, so it is possible to switch vendors and still be able to analyse historical data.
Page tagging shows only successful page requests.	Log files record failed page requests.
JavaScript makes it easier to capture more information (e.g. products purchased, or the version of a user's browser).	Server-based tracking can capture some detailed information, but this involves modifying the URLs.
JavaScript tracking can report on events such as interactions with a Flash movie.	Server-based tracking cannot report on events.
Third-party page tagging service providers usually offer a good level of support.	Log file analysis software is often managed in-house.

A third option, called universal analytics, is a way how the data is gathered and analyzed. Universal analytics is an example of non-cookie-based server tracking. With this method, data can be found and gathered from a variety of sources. So far analytic programs haven't been able to identify individuals as they have been using the web page with PC or their smartphone. Aside from company's website, data can be collected from other places where audience interacts with the company: for example, Facebook Insights. In order to universal analytics to work the web user has to be logged in to the website or online tool. (Stokes 2008, 508-510.)



There are plenty of tools that can turn all this collected information into a report that gives the company much needed insight to the website visitor's behavior. This helps the company to see how effective the website is and what changes should be done in order to improve it. (Meyerson 2015, 39.) One way to stay on track of the visitors is to use Google Analytics. It is Google's tool which allows to measure company's online sales and results. It also allows to see how company's websites users are using the page; how they enter there and how to get them to come back. Google Analytics enables to modify how the software is producing the data and reporting it. (Google 2016.) There are several guidebooks written on how to use Google analytics. It is important to make sure that the company's page has the code on visitor follow-up in use, the usage of the tool can be learned later. It is just important that the code is collecting the data from the beginning on. If there is something on the company's page to measure, use the tool on Google Analytics to bring in the information. (Salomaa 2014, 76.)

## 6 RESEARCH METHODS

The research methods used are quantitative and qualitative research, SWOT-analysis and benchmarking. In this thesis, competitive benchmarking is used as a qualitative analyzing method together with SWOT-analysis. This method is selected in order to generate further information about the operation mode of the competitors. Benchmarking is executed to find out how the competitors are executing their e-commerces, what kind of value it gives for their brands and to use as a base for the questionnaire. The e-commerces are analyzed by the user experience, layout and common practices of the competitors. The information is gathered by inspecting the competitors' online stores.

The purpose of SWOT-analysis is twofold. First, it seeks the significant factors affecting the organization. The factors are both internal (strength and weaknesses) and external (opportunities and threats). It is meant to offer quick executive summary for the key issues. Second, it helps the company to see how strengths and weaknesses are align with the opportunities and threats to help strategy formulation. (Hooley, Piercy and Nicolaud 2012. 38.)

The SWOT-analysis has been used as qualitative method when gathering information as well. It is choose to generate a bigger picture about the current state of the online store. The SWOT-analysis has multiple purposes and the first is to identify most important factors, internal and external, which are affecting to the organization and its market. The second is to find out how are the weaknesses and strengths align with opportunities and threats. This helps the organization to formulate the strategy. The SWOT-analysis provides this way a quick way to have a bigger picture for the key issues. (Hooley, etc. 2012, 38.)

Competitive benchmarking is measuring the company's operations and strategies against 'best in class' companies. This means it can be executed even outside the company's own field of subject. The purpose is to adapt the best practices to improve your company's performance. It is important to choose the companies to benchmark against carefully. They can be straight competitors or from other field of business, but they are excellent what they do. The aspect to benchmark is chosen by the needed information. Collecting the relevant data can be thought to be difficult since most of the companies want to keep their advantages hidden. Hooley, Piercy and Nicolaud (2012) have mentioned Swain's (1993) three main resources for relevant data to be published sources, such as company reports etc., data sharing in conferences etc. and direct interview with customers etc. The final stage of the competitive benchmarking is to compare the collected information to your own company. (Hooley etc. 2012, 107.)

There are many excellent examples of successful online stores such as eBay and Amazon.com. This benchmarking has concentrated to online stores which operate on the same field as Company X. Competitive benchmarking was made for some of Company X's direct and indirect competitors which have successful merchandise online stores. The competitors have been selected by request of the Company X's marketing manager. There are both domestic and foreign companies included.

When executing quantitative research, there is possibility to choose from questionnaire, systematic observation or usage of already existing registers and statistics. Questionnaire is the most typically used method. Questionnaire, or survey, is known to be trustworthy for been standardized. All the questions are presented in same order and way for each respondent. It works well with big respondent groups which are dispersed. (Vilkka 2015, 94.) The results are usually interpreted as numbers or percentage (Heikkilä 2014, 15).

Qualitative research is helping researchers to understand the research subject (customer, company etc.) and to understand the behavior process. Usually the research group is small and the results are processed carefully. The research is executed by using stationary or interviews. (Heikkilä 2014, 15-16.)

This thesis uses both quantitative and qualitative research methods when executing the survey. The survey includes quantitative questions where respondents can answer by choosing the best alternative which reflects their opinion. For example, one of the questions asks the respondent to choose the most fitting price for a product. The survey includes also qualitative questions where respondents could give examples and ideas for the company to use such as what other products would the customer want to buy.

When presenting the findings, it's common to compare, attach and generalize the gathered information. Research report is meant to be written objectively. The results are presented in a way which is not affected by the researcher or his/her opinions. (Vilkka 2007, 159-160.)

The goal of this thesis is not to make a wide quantitative research about the topic, but more mapping the possibility of e-commerce site as a brand assertion. There has been made a quantitative survey in order to gather a wide range of answer whether it is lucrative to open the online store. Quantitative research is also called statistic research. The collected information is usually generalized to represent a larger statistic group. It is used to collect information that can be expressed numbers and the results are usually represented with figures and tables. Quantitative research is usually used to gather information about the existing situation, but it's often facile since it can't look into the reasons behind the information. In the past years, the surveys that are made online have become popular. The term survey is used for a systematic questionnaire. (Heikkilä 2014, 15, 17.) A wider research is topical after the online store is opened and has functioned for some time.

## 7 FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of benchmarking and SWOT-analysis as well as the results from the survey. All of the methods of analysis have been done in order to map the current state of competitor's, amount of demand and the interest rate toward the possible products.

### 7.1 Findings of Benchmarking

The benchmarking showed that the competitors' online stores had wide selection of layouts and implementations. Many of them had thought the details thoroughly and the online stores seemed professional. Most of the differences were detected in pricing or product selections. The pricing and product selection can be seen as companies' own choices: depending on how impressive they want the e-commerce site to be. (See appendix 2: Benchmarking.)

Competitive benchmarking means that a company measures its strategies and operations against competitors. The idea is to find the best solutions from the other companies in order to improve your own performance. Benchmarking usually involves four main steps (Hooley, Piercy and Nicolaud 2012, 107.):

- Identifying who to benchmark against
  - Company X's marketing manager pretend a wish to include specific competitors to the benchmarking. The competitors were Ponsse, John Deere, Bauer Machinen, Liebherr and Soilmec.
- Identifying what aspects of business to benchmark
  - The sections which were observed because they were seen as the most relevant aspects for this thesis were online stores findability, product selection, -information, -categories, -pricing, payment methods, delivering time and -costs, usability of the e-commerce site including the language selection and mobile apps. The gathered information builds a structure for a well working base for the online store. The parts which weren't solved with the benchmarking were chosen to create the structure for the executed survey. By observing these certain categories, it was simple to conceive which aspects of the online store need more information or opinions of the target customers via survey.
- Collecting relevant data to enable processes and operations to be compared
  - The relevant data was collected from the above-mentioned companies' websites and/or online stores. As mentioned, some of the categories were included in order to get the relevant data for the survey (products, delivery etc.) or categories were discussed were affecting to the utilization of the online store as well as the visual look.

- In pricing the clearest way to set prices out were even numbers, as those are following the common pricing in Finland. The key is that the prices are consistent and follow the same guideline.
  - Some of the benchmarked online stores seemed to be hard to find when entering to the company's website. This might be intentional from the company as the online stores are intended for internal usage. It would seem that the easiest location for the online store is to locate the link of the online store to the navigation bar of the company's website or to the bottom/side bar.
  - It was noticed that product categories should be systematic and the products should be located in specific categories. If the online store has only few products, it's understandable to have only few categories. But in the cases where the company has a wide selection of products, from clothes to dishes, it's smart to separate the selection to multiple, related categories.
  - Product description should include all the basic information about the product to ease to buying process. Most of the benchmarked companies had the proper material information mentioned. Some of the companies had mentioned especially detailed information, for example the washing temperatures for the clothes.
  - Since Company X is creating an international online store, but they are also operating in Finland, they should at least consider offering electronic banking, PayPal and credit card as payment methods. These payment methods have been acknowledged in multiple countries and are thought to increase the reliability of the online store.
- Comparison with own processes
    - The comparison with the own process is hard to do since the online store of Company X is not yet opened, so the gathered information is mainly used as a guideline on how to do the processes when opening the online store.

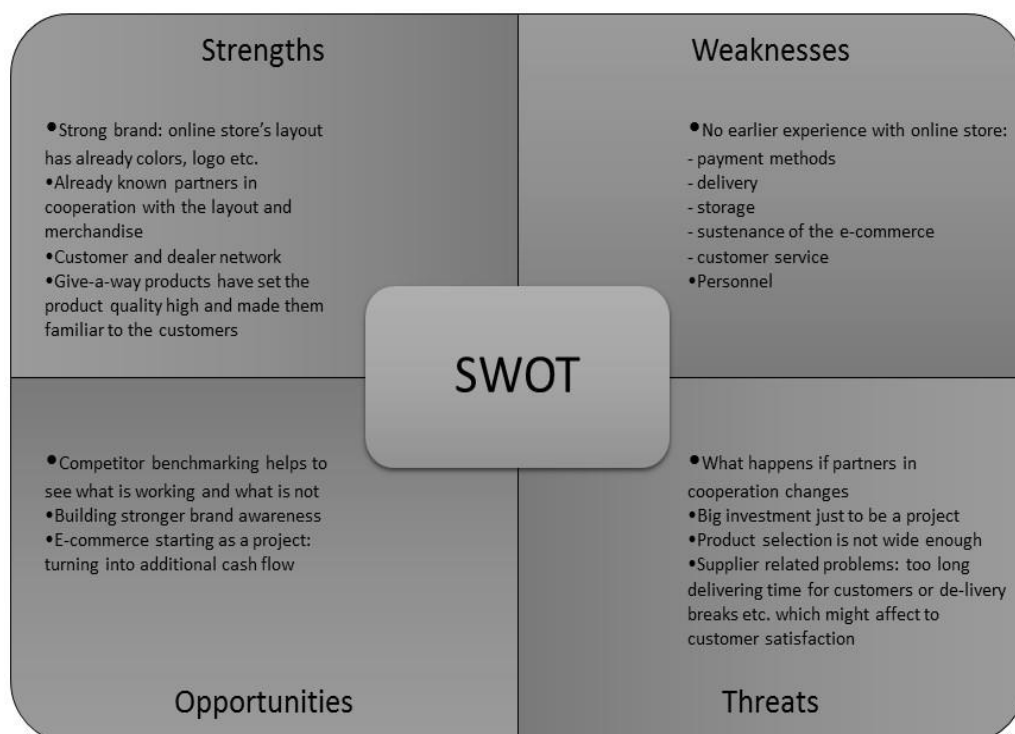
The image that is perceivable from the competitors' online stores is that they are selling solidarity. Pictures of the staff members with their family members, all wearing the company clothes, appeals to globally acknowledged value: family. When people buy, or receive items from a company member, they can find new kind of engagement towards the company.

These items that the companies in this field of business sell in the online store have been usually giveaway gifts. Now those are still used as a give-aways but also available for other usages. As those items are working as a company gifts, Christmas gifts etc., people can see the price which the company has defined for the items. This can raise the association of branded company clothes as more valuable brand items.

## 7.2 Findings of SWOT-analysis

This analysis is meant to open slightly the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the process of opening an online store for the Company X. As a source for the SWOT- analysis the authors used the conversations with the Company X's marketing manager, the theoretical framework in this thesis and the findings from the benchmarking. The conclusions are meant to help the company to notice the unsolved problems with the e-commerce and the strengths or possibilities which haven't been considered before.

FIGURE 5. SWOT-analysis



### Strengths:

Company X has updated and defined their brand guidelines a couple of years ago and the guidelines are available on the company's website. This makes designing the e-commerce site's layout easier. By following the already existing guidelines, the online store will retell the overall look of the company's brand. They also have partners which they have been cooperating when executing the current websites etc. It will make the designing process faster when the partner has an idea of the company's wishes.

Company X has been expanding its business to abroad since 1980's. Due to that the company has built a strong export and dealer network and a strong and well-known brand among the customers

and other companies on the field. During these years' company X has also collected lots of loyal customers who are interested about the company's latest achievements.

Company X has had free merchandise for years and they have invested to the quality of those. Give-a-way gifts have showed for the customers and dealers the standard quality of the products as well as made those familiar for them beforehand.

Weaknesses:

Company X's machinery has not been sold online and therefore they don't have experience of online store. First, they have to decide how they are going organize the building and maintenance of the e-commerce. They have 3 different options:

1. Company Y is responsible of everything.
2. Company Y designs the e-commerce site and updates it and Company X takes care of the orders and merchandise.
3. Company Y designs the e-commerce site but Company X takes care of everything else later on. They have to either hire staff for taking care of the online stores orders and other running errands connected to the store, or agree a certain person to be in charge of those matters. The chosen arrangement is going to affect also on the issues mentioned above: payment methods, delivery, storage, sustenance of the e-commerce site and customer service. If they choose the option three, they should choose a person with experience on websites or train the person so that they know how to utilize the tools that are given here in this thesis about collecting data and SEO etc.

Opportunities:

By executing the benchmarking Company X is finding tips from the competitors which have the experience of running the online store. It is their possibility to find new and well working ideas to the store.

As the company has to rethink their image that they represent to the consumers through the online store they are also strengthening the brand identity for themselves.

When the online store is opened, the main reason is to gain more visibility for the brand but in a long run it can bring also extra incomes to the company.

### Threats:

As the online store is opened Company X continues to outline their product selection. This means that for some time there might be a limited selection of merchandise available. It takes some time at the beginning to find out the rotational speed of the merchandise, which might have led into running out of items and into delivering pauses. Company X has been co-working with the supplier before, but this type of collaboration is new for both of them. This can also end up in delivering pauses. As Company X can't predict the demand of the merchandise and don't want the delivering times to be too long, they might order too big starting stock as precaution. If that should happen, the rotational speed of the merchandise in stock wouldn't be optimal. One of the biggest threats is that the partners in co-operation changes. It might take some time to find a new as trustworthy and reliable partner and it can harm the business.

The delivering costs might rise too high with worldwide delivery so it should be carefully considered where and how it will be organized. If the e-commerce is thought to be only a project and it won't get attention after the opening, it might be a rather expensive marketing trick. If it is thought to be only project type solution, it would be recommended that the company will set a certain period of time when they will give time and effort for the e-commerce to get as much out of it as possible.

### 7.3 Findings of questionnaire

The goal of this questionnaire was to find out if there is demand for Company X's online store. The questions concentrate to possible products, prices and ways of distribution. The desired target groups the company wanted to reach included its customers, dealers and workers.

The questionnaire was executed by using Webropol. It was sent as an email to the company's workers and it was available in the company's cafeteria as a printed version. The marketing manager of the company shared the questionnaire link also in Company X's official social media sites. When briefing the questionnaire, there was mentioned the possibility for the respondents to win Company X's Lego-set.

The briefing for the link to the survey through social media was as follows: "Interested in Company X branded goods? Answer this short survey to help us to offer interesting Company X goods for You. The survey is open till 4th of July 2016. Cheers!"

We used both Webropol and paper version to get as many respondents as possible in order for the results to be trustworthy. Respondents were able to choose whether they wanted to fill in the online survey in English or in Finnish. The printed survey was available only in Finnish, since most of the workers at the factory are Finns. For the purpose of analyzing the collected data, the answers of the paper questionnaire were fed in to Webropol. This allows the usage of Webropol as the tool to analyze all of the answers.



Before the questionnaire was shared it was tested multiple times by executors. This is how it was ensured that the survey was working correctly and that it was easy to use. The questionnaire was available from 6.6.2016 till 4.7.2016. On 20.6. possible respondents were reminded about the survey via email and social media.

### 7.3.1 Results

This section analyzes the answers gathered from the questionnaire. The survey was made to give additional information to Company X about the interest towards e-commerce site and possible sales items from the potential customers. These subject matters support the development work in order to find out the dedication level that the customers have towards the brand equity. The figures have been presented for both English and Finnish respondents. The English respondents are mostly the company's dealers and customers as the Finnish respondents are the workers of the company. The figures have been made to identify the difference of these groups.

Some of the questions in the survey were mandatory and some were not. The survey led the respondent through the questions depending on the answers in relation to following question. In some of the questions respondent was able to choose more than one of the options. This is the reason why some of the results have more "respondents" than others. The results have been analyzed by using the figures and tables, in addition to verbal responses. The tables and figures have been used if those are relevant for demonstrating the results.

There were in total 85 responses, of which 10 responses were in paper. 55 percent of the respondents answered in Finnish and 45 percent in English. The timing of the survey was during the summer holiday season in Finland which might have influenced on the number of respondents.

As seen from figure 6, 87 percent of Finnish respondents said that they are members of the staff. On the contrary only 18 percent of the English respondents are staff members. 56 percent of all the respondents were working at Company X.

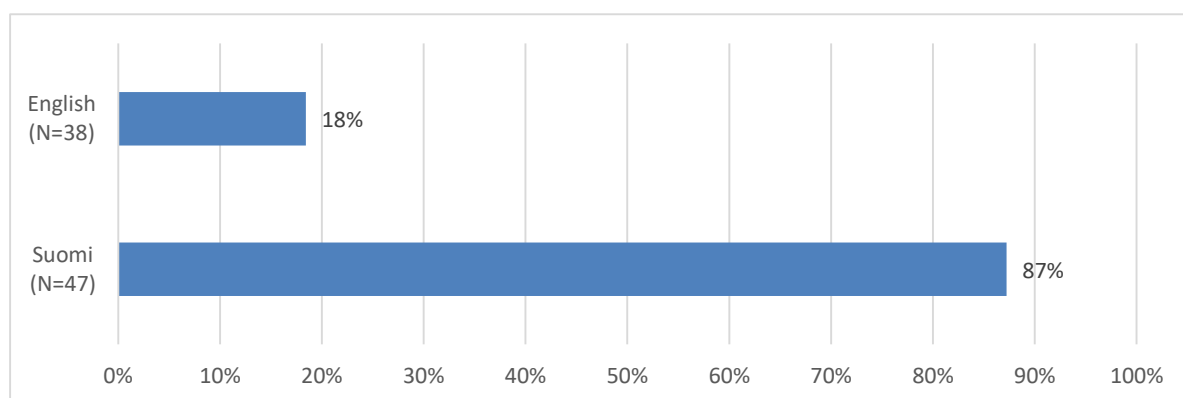


FIGURE 6. Respondents working at Company X

If respondents weren't working for Company X, they were asked about their connection to the company. The respondents who weren't working at Company X, 44 percent of total respondents, were

partners, distributors, current or former customers, a part of the trade press or drivers of Company X's machinery, or have a contract maintenance, work as a dealer or for a dealer, or are owners of Company X's machinery, or engineers and mechanics. Respondent groups mentioned were suitable for the wanted target audience.

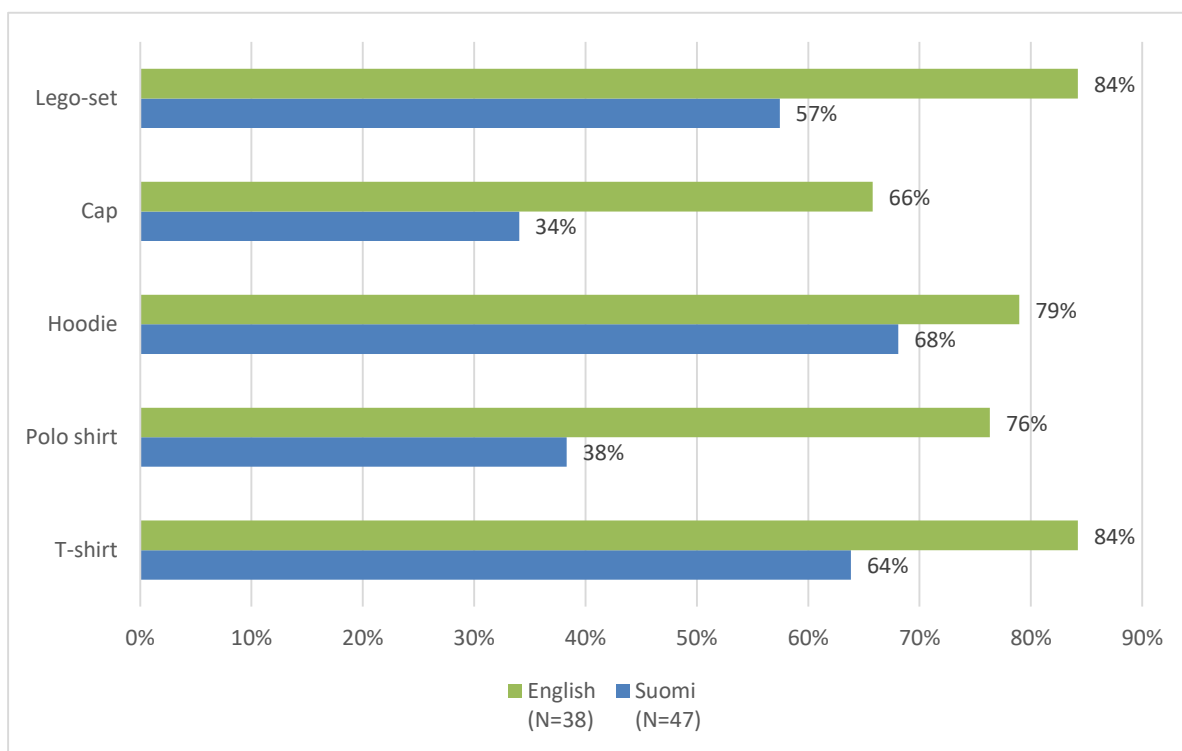


FIGURE 7. Respondents interested in purchasing products from the Company X's online store

As can be seen from the figure 7, English respondents were more interested in purchasing the suggested products: a t-shirt, a polo shirt, a hoodie, a cap or a Lego-set. Finnish respondents were most interested in buying a t-shirt, a hoodie and/or a Lego-set. Finnish respondents' willingness to purchase these products might have been affected by the fact that they might have received the mentioned items for free in the past. At this point of the survey the respondents hadn't seen the possible price ranges for the products. This might affect the results.

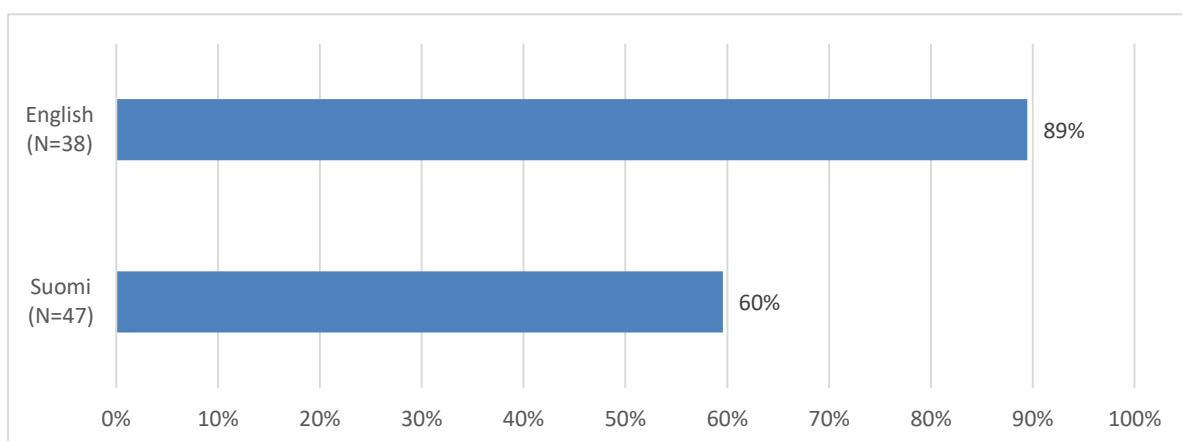


FIGURE 8. The respondents interested in purchasing other products than suggested

When asked if they were interested in purchasing other kind of products than suggested, 73 percent of the all respondents answered affirmatively. There was more interest among the English responses than the Finnish responses.

As for proposals as products to sell in the online store, the respondents mentioned a wide selection of different kinds of merchandise. The following suggestions were mentioned more than once: Credit card holder, a beanie, hearing protectors, a coffee mug, different kinds of scale models, seat covers and a water bottle.

TABLE 2. Suggested items for online store

Suggested products	
General merchandise	Clothes
Scale models	Jacket
Sticker	Sweater
Lego models	Beanie
Hydraulic components or steel	Shawl
Sun protection for windshield	Shoes
Card holder	Belt
Rig model	Ice Hockey Jersey
Frisbee	Neck tie
Seat cover	Shofshell jacket
Wireless hearing protectors with radio	Shell suit
Briefcase	Playsuit
Card holder that sticks to phone cases	Hats
Golf equipment	Buff
Mölkky, games	Socks
License plate frame for vehicles	Bags
Small scale models for kids	PPE Workwear
Towel	Backpack
Memory Pad	
Flash drive	
Key chain	
Bookazine	
Hollowware	Food related
Water bottle	Candies
Coffee mug	Beer
Coaster	Wine bottle
Lunch box	
Yeti tumbler	
Thermos bottle	

TABLE 3. The survey's results in relation to Company X's merchandise prices

Product	Euros					All	
	<10€	10-30€	30-50€	50-100€	>100€	%	N
<b>T-shirt</b>							
Fin	54%	46%				100	48
Eng	32%	68%				100	41
<b>Polo-Shirt</b>							
Fin	23%	77%				100	47
Eng	23%	68%	10%			100	40
<b>Hoodie</b>							
Fin	13%	43%	45%			100	47
Eng	24%	41%	32%	2%		100	41
<b>Cap</b>							
Fin	77%	23%				100	47
Eng	65%	35%				100	40
<b>Lego-set</b>							
Fin	23%	28%	34%	11%	4%	100	47
Eng	22%	32%	22%	22%	2%	100	41

Table 3 illustrates the survey's results in relation to Company X's merchandise prices. The English and Finnish responses have been sorted out because of the differences between the answers in these two classes. 30 percent of the respondents were ready to pay something between 10 and 30 euros for the Lego-set. The Lego-sets retail price is currently 200 euros. Only three percent of the respondents were willing to pay more than 100 euros for the Lego-set. As seen from Table 3, the majority of the English respondents were ready to pay 10-30€ and the Finnish respondents 30-50€.

As for the hoodie, most of the respondents (42 percent) were willing to pay 10 till 30 euros. 39 percent of the respondents answered that the price should be between 30 and 50 euros. Here 32 percent of the English respondents were willing to pay 30 till 50€ compared to 45 percent of the Finnish respondents. Only one person was ready to pay more than 50 euros for the hoodie. None of the other piece of clothing were valued more than 50€ worth. The cap's price was defined less than 10€ by 71 percent of the respondents and the remaining 29 percent saw the suitable price would be between 10 and 30 euros.

Most of the respondents thought that the going rate for the t-shirt and polo shirt would be between 10 till 30 euros. 43 % of all of the responders answered that they would be ready to pay less than ten euros for the t-shirt. Among the English respondents 68 percent and from the Finnish 46 percent were ready to pay 10 till 30€. For the polo-shirt 72 % the respondents thought that the fitting price would be between 10 and 30 euros.

The people who answered in English were asked how they would prefer the delivery to be arranged. They were given examples TNT, UPS and FedEx. 55 percent of the respondents prefer UPS as the means of delivery, 18 percent of the respondents prefer TNT and 13 percent respondents answered that it doesn't matter for them. FedEx and the Finnish Post got also few mentions.

From the Finnish respondents were asked how they would prefer the delivery to be arranged. Home delivery and pick up from the office were given as examples. 49 percent of the respondents that

answered in Finnish said they would prefer pick up from the office. 21 percent of the respondents answered that Finnish Post would be the best way of delivering. 17 percent of the respondents said they could use posti or pick up service. 9 percent of the respondents answered that they would prefer home delivering. 4 percent of the respondents didn't want to reply. The Finnish respondents were mostly working at the company, which affects the popularity of the response "pick up from the office".

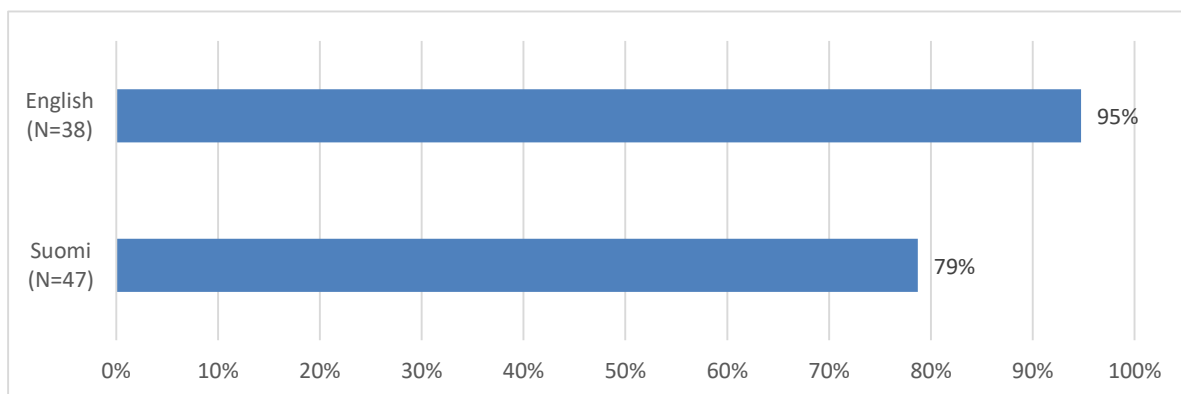


FIGURE 9. Respondents interested in purchasing the possible products after seeing them

86 percent answered that they would be interested to purchase from the online store after seeing the possible product options and delivery ways. 21 percent of the respondents that answered in Finnish weren't interested in buying anything from the online store. Among the respondents that answered in English only 5 percent weren't interested.

When asked why the respondents would buy merchandise from the online store, they mentioned that they would buy products as gifts, for themselves, to represent the company, as a representation gift, to show commitment for the company, and because "I like the name and what it represents". In the question was mentioned possibilities to buy the products as a gift or to feel more connected to Company X.

## 8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the information gathered from the survey, benchmarking and SWOT-analysis reflected on the theoretical background. The purpose is to emphasize how the questionnaires results can be utilized in the perspective of the online store strengthening the brand. The conclusions have been presented and divided by exploiting the theory of Golden Circle which has been introduced earlier in the chapter 4. The theory is chosen in order to illustrate the effect of the different actions and to show the connection between different sections. The theory about the Golden Circle has also been used in every theme covered in the Marketing Handbook to gather the conclusion.

Company X's online stores target group is going to be rather exclusive according to the questionnaire. 56% of all of the respondents were working at Company X. The rest of the respondents were mostly partners, customers, trade press members, drivers or owners of Company X's machinery, engineers and mechanics. The target group is mostly connected by their psychographic profile and it is narrowed by the intentional internal branding. There might appear some variation in the customer base as the online store is opened, but the important common factor is that they have some sort of connection to Company X as the merchandise will have Company X's logo on the items.

In the questionnaire, there was also a short clearance about the needs of the target group. The respondents were given alternatives from the products that are planned to be on the selection on the Company X's online store, as well as a change to suggest some products that they would be interested in purchasing.

The price draw was included in the survey to gather more responses for the questionnaire. It is questionable if it affected the survey results in a more favorable way. Also, the given examples of the responses might affect to the results by leading the respondents.

Based on the answers on this survey, Company X should open an online store. The concept seems to be interesting for the target group since three quarters of the respondents were interested in purchasing the products mentioned in the questionnaire and they had multiple new additional suggestions for products that they would be interested in buying. As mentioned in Chapter 2.5, there is no guarantee that the target customers purchase from the online store even though it got positive feedback. The likelihood of employees and dealers to actually purchase is still lacking proper research to predict the possible purchasing rate.

### 8.1 Why open an online store - Emphasizing the company values

The motives and the level of interest of the possible customers were tried to clarify by asking the respondents why they would buy merchandise from the online store. There were mentioned possibilities to buy the products as a gift or that purchase would make them feel more connected to Company X. From the responses emerged four different types of answers. The reasons the respondents wanted to buy products were:

1. As gifts, representational gifts or for their own use
2. To represent the company
3. To show their commitment to the company
4. They liked the brand and what it represents.

These answers would confirm the findings from the benchmarking and the brand theory. The customers would be ready to buy the feeling of solidarity and the values which the company represents. Company X's values are customer satisfaction, responsibility, ability for renewal and respect for the environment. In the marketing handbook the given goal to the opening of the online store was to build a strong brand by accentuating the core values of the brand. The company is also known to be a family business since they started. The respondents are ready to buy the company's brand products to represent the company and thus to become brand ambassadors.

These findings can be emphasized in the marketing actions when opening the online store. Company X can appeal to these certain values with the marketing material and the design of the website, for example using pictures or texts that implicate to the appealing values. The respondents were expressing the willingness to show their commitment to the company. These specific customers could be harnessed to engagement marketing on social media etc.

Company X should also consider later, when expanding the product selection, the reasons behind the customers' purchasing. The products should be selected to fit the above mentioned functions, such as gifts etc.

## 8.2 How to utilize the brand equity and engagement in the process

As explained in Chapter 2.2, if the company's brand equity is high the customers are more likely to accept the online store as a brand extension and willing to purchase merchandise. The survey showed that 86% of the respondents, current workers, dealers and customers would be interested in purchasing in online store. This also refers to the fact that the Company X's brand engagement is rather high among their partners.

As explained in the Handbook, customer engagement refers to engagement of customers with a brand or a company mainly in social media. It aims for long-term engagement, customer loyalty and advocacy through word-of-mouth. The purpose is to create, stimulate or influence customers' behavior and attitudes by using content marketing. (Head 2012, 77.)

By doing content marketing a company can lead and encourage customers to start social media conversation. The connection between the social media and e-commerce site is acknowledged:

- Online interaction and social media have today large impact for consumers behavior and value creation
- On this account it's important to understand the value of company, service and product information (Heikkonen 2015, 8.)

On the other hand, the financial approach measures the brand value by isolating the net additional cash flows created by the brand. These additional cash flows are the result of customer's willingness to buy one brand over the others even though it's more expensive. The reason is that the customers have created a bond with the brand through company's marketing. The classical definition for the brand defines it as follows: "a set of a mental associations, held by consumer, which add to the perceived value of a product or service". (Keller, 1998.) (Kotler 2008, 9-10.) Based on this theory Company X's brand has not reached the level of brand engagement they have wished for. The respondents of the survey were not willing to pay the price that was an average price of the benchmarked brands according to the survey (see Table 4). This could indicate that the brand is not as highly valued yet as the competitors. It must be taken into consideration that the respondents didn't have possibility to see the possible products. They didn't have any product information except the product name and possible price categories. This can affect the respondents' opinion on the possible prices.

TABLE 4. Benchmarked pricing and pricing information from the questionnaire

	PONSSE	John Deere	Bauer Maschinen	Liebherr	Soilmec	Questionnaire average
T-shirt	15,00€ - 20,00€	32,00€ on average	5,50€	12,80€ - 22,60€	10,00€	10,00€ - 30,00€
Polo shirt	23,00€	42,00€ on average	22,00€	35,00€		10,00€ - 30,00€
Hoodie	60,00€	83,00€		60,00€	40,00€	10,00€-30,00€
Cap	10,00€ - 15,00€	12,99€ - 18,00€	5,00€	7,90€ - 9,90€	8,00€	Less than 10,00€

We can't either be certain after the benchmarking in what scale and/or profit the competitors sell their corresponding products. We can't have absolute certainty how much the answers would differ if the respondents had had the opportunity to get more information or pictures of the merchandise beforehand.

The range of goods should be considered carefully. When starting the online store, a range of merchandise could consist of only few, well considered items. In this case those could be basic merchandise, for example the products mentioned in the questionnaire and a few additional ones. In the future when Company X is ready to expand their range of selection, there are products that have been requested in the survey that could be taken into consideration.

The visual look of the site is important to Company X; it reflects the image of the company online. That is why Company X should be interested in the look and the layout of the online store. Branding is the visual imagery of the company and it applies to their logo, brochures, products and packaging. Visual branding defines the company and that is why Company X's online store and website should reflect the current branding of Company X. (Rosen 2000, 159.)



In the Handbook there is a revision reminding that Company X has defined clear brand guidelines. In their graphic guidelines booklet there has been defined all the colors, fonts, logos etc. to be used. The repeated exposure of the layout and the brand look is also commonly recognized to increase the brand awareness.

### 8.3 What are the actions in substance - Online store

As the benchmarking showed, many of Company X's direct competitors had an e-commerce. Company X's target customers showed also that they would be interested in purchasing the online store's goods according to the survey. The online store and its merchandise can be thought to build a range brand. In Company X's case, it is not giving a straight competitive advantage to the company, as range brands usually do, since most of the competitors already have one. But it will take it to the same level with the competitors. Company X can't sell an unlimited number of pilling machines to their clients so they'll have to offer them extra services, such as maintenance services. In this specific case an online store for merchandise and promotion ware to keep their brand visible. Current customers and dealers might have been longing some marketing material etc. but they haven't been able to buy or receive those specific items before.

Company X should also make changes to their SEO and keyword strategy on their website in order to benefit as much as they can of the expanding traffic that the website will achieve. The keywords for SEO should be adjust once more to make sure those are still suitable. There are existing multiple tools that can be used to identify competitors' keywords and to thus utilize those same once in Company X's SEO strategy. Document updates on the company's website will make sure the website shows up more prominently as result for a search engine search if the search uses top keywords.

As the online store is opened, it would be recommended to collect data about the visitors on the page. By collecting and analyzing data about visitors, Company X can find out where the customers are coming from. Doing SEO helps to get more visitors to the online store – and visitors are crucial, since they are the prospects. As explained in the Handbook collecting and understanding the data is one of the key factors in content marketing. Content is the commodity users of digital media consume and it's what they look for when they search for new brands or information about products. It's consumers' way to promote the brand by sharing updates. By sorting out data Company X'll find out what web users are searching for when they come to their site. Tools for analyzing the data: SEO, Google Analytics.

There are also tools for content marketing given in the Handbook. Content marketing is to educate and inform the customers, and connect them with the company and boost credibility, visibility and salability among the customers. It is multi-platform, targeted to a specific audience and behavior-driven. There are also some examples. First make a list of key categories and then a list of the topics; the content should reflect company values, profits and qualities; then decide the format: written, audio, video or pictorial; when deciding the channel, keep in mind the audience and adjust the format to it.

Since Company X's website is on WordPress layout, it would be recommended to use plugin called Yoast SEO. It is meant to improve sites on all needed aspects. It helps to write better content, forcing to choose focus keywords when writing articles, as well as making sure that focus keywords have been used regularly. (De Valk 2016.)

#### 8.4 Recommendations

In the Handbook there are tools to promoting. Public relations is a way to express that you stand for the brand. Direct marketing and selling are executed usually for the products and/or services: the products or services are not what differentiate from the others players in the markets. It is the brand – the why. Sales promotion and advertising are the actions done to make customers attracted to the brand. There are also given some examples of promotion. Create hashtags “#” for people to use when talking about your online store in social media pages. When launching the e-commerce site, there can be some happenings around it: for example “Black Friday” including Facebook-event, sales, real-time discussion about the online store and Q&A. Affiliate marketing is a paid advertising in chosen online channels. An easy way to collect data about possible customers and to get a return to the marketing investment. Trade shows are a possibility for the customers to see the merchandise live. Direct email about offers for customers or potential customers, press releases such as ads in trade papers, company's own info letters etc. are affordable ways to promote the company and/or the online store. Email marketing can be used with banners sent in emails to promote the online store or new products.

Company X could offer for the customers the possibility to get personalized offers when purchasing in the online store or receiving offers via email. In future Company X can also consider adaptable delivering costs or product prices with certain clients, for example to dealers who are ordering the products for work purposes.

It is acknowledged that it is useful to do another survey as the online store has been opened. The survey, executed in 2016, had rather low answering rate. By doing another survey the result may vary and give a broader perception as the respondents can see the working online store, products, layout etc.

The second survey could inspect more on what people are willing to pay for and how they feel about brand after seeing the online store. It seemed that most of the respondents were not as interested in purchasing the products mentioned in the survey as they were about their own suggestions. The products that the respondents mentioned stood out from the products that were mentioned to be sold in Company X online store. The products were from different price categories and ranges of merchandise. This raised a question if the product selections should be re-thought or that company should add some of the suggested products to their selections.

In the questionnaire, most respondents were interested in purchasing the Lego-set, but later responded that they were not willing to pay the estimated price of the set, which is around 200€. The conclusion is suggesting that people are not ready to purchase that particular Lego-set. In other questions respondents showed interest for some kind of Lego or scale models. Company X should consider to get some cheaper model to replace the current, more expensive one, to confront the demand.

Since in this survey a lot of the respondents seemed to be interested in miniature models, it was thought to be something to observe more. It might be affective to do another survey to map the interest among the dealers. If there is as large demand as it seems according to the first questionnaire, perhaps Company X should invest in making the miniature models. It has been acknowledged in this thesis that the manufacturing costs for the cast are at the moment too high. Company X expressed that they are not willing to invest in the miniature models, but it is worth to consider again later because of the number of requests. In the second survey the pricing should be brought out and then let the estimated target group decide if they are still willing to purchase them.

Another aspect that Company X should take a close look before deciding if they should open the online store are the resources. Would the brand have another way of assertion? Online stores take a lot of time and effort to start off. Other ways to solidify the brand could be to devote into sponsorships or building a strong image of Company X as a trade fair trouper.

## 9 DISCUSSION

This thesis was made to collect useful information about strengthening the brand of Company X as well as collecting theory about how to utilize the online store in branding and how to market the online store. The subject was interesting for the researchers because it is topical. For Company X this thesis is useful for evaluating the time consumption of the online store and to understand in general the aspects of opening, maintaining and marketing the online store.

When critically observing this thesis, it is good to take into consideration that the researchers have interpreted the theoretical background concentrating on the points that have been relevant concerning this thesis. Therefore, the findings are not universal since this was a case study and should not be treated as such, even though the literature is reliable. The researchers did not have access to all of the information concerning the opening of an online store. The online store of the case company has not opened yet and the process is still in creation stage and so some assumptions had to be made. This thesis was made to help in the creation process, which explains the missing details.

When observing the validity and reliability of the findings of the research, the researchers think that the research was not ideal. The product range of the merchandised items have grown more limited after the research was made and so the responses to the questionnaire could differ if there had been more specific information available in the questionnaire. It could have affected the responses if there had been, for example, pictures of the products. The sampling error should be taken into consideration as well; in the research the number of respondents was rather small and homogeneous. If there had been a wider sample with more extensive and miscellaneous respondents, the answers could have given an entirely different starting point to the research.

The process of making this thesis was about nine months. The process begun in March 2016 with a meeting with the client. Company X's marketing manager gave suggestive ideas about what they were expecting for the thesis; they wanted benchmarking and a questionnaire. After the meeting the researchers looked into the theory about the benchmarking and what to take into consideration when making the questionnaire. The benchmarking as well as the questionnaire were made during the summer. During the fall semester researchers looked into the theory section of the thesis. They also created an E-commerce handbook: What to take into consideration when opening an e-commerce – Case company X. The handbook was built on themes that were connected to the theory about the Golden Circle as a conclusion. The themes discussed were goal, promotion, customer, product, data and layout and customer experience. In Company X's case the reasons for digital marketing is to enhance brand awareness (which is a key point on opening the online store as well).

There is a great deal of theory accessible about the subject. It took a long time to go through the material and to understand what is relevant for this thesis. The researchers found it difficult to keep the research question in mind while ploughing through the theory. The time management was difficult since the researchers both were working during the process of making this thesis. If this thesis were to be made again the researchers would make a stricter timetable and put their minds into the

theory in an earlier stage. The researchers would also invest more in to the questionnaire; the re-search questions would be considered more carefully in order to find the questions that would have been more useful for this thesis. Given this, the questions were given by the client and gave the client useful information.

The thesis process was educational and gave the researchers a good starting point for postgraduate studies as well as future careers. The researchers have developed professionally and their expertise has expanded. The researchers learned how to search for relevant and trustworthy theory. They also learned what it takes to manage these kinds of projects.

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## APPENDIX 1: HANDBOOK

# E-COMMERCE HANDBOOK

What to take into consideration when opening an e-commerce: case  
Company X

By: Penttinen & Turunen

Slide 1. E-commerce handbook.

## Introduction

- This is a handbook about what to take into consideration when opening an online store
- Every theme is connected to the theory about the Golden Circle as a conclusion
- The timeline below shows the connection between the sections

\*By clicking the headline you can take a short cut to the wanted section



- The themes discussed in the slideshow are:
  - Goal
  - Customer
  - Promotion
  - Product
  - Data
  - Layout and customer experience

Slide 2. Introduction.



## Goal

- The goal when opening the online store in Company X's case is
  - To build a strong brand by accentuating the core values of the brand: *Customer satisfaction. Responsibility. Ability to reform. Respect of the environment.*
  - To extend the brand: Company X's customers are not buying unlimited amount of piling machines, but they are willing to deepen their commitment to the brand.
  - Make the brand more visible

(Kapferer 2008, 297-306.)

Slide 3. Goal.

## Golden Circle

- The theory of Golden Circle: brand is built from inside out. The idea is to start with the question "Why", which emphasizes the driving power of the brand.
- When reasserting the brand there are 3 aspects to consider based on the Golden Circle by Simon Sinek:
  1. Why do we do it: The E-commerce is created to make people feel more connected to the company X's brand
  2. How do we do it: By using E-commerce as a tool to deepen the customer relationship
  3. What are we doing: Concretely this means selling brand products in the online store in order to strengthen the customer commitment to the brand

(Sinek 2016-10-16)

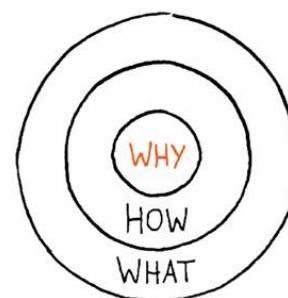
## The Golden Circle

**WHAT**  
Every organization on the planet knows WHAT they do. These are products they sell or the services

**HOW**  
Some organizations know HOW they do it. These are the things that make them special or set them apart from their competition.

**WHY**  
Very few organizations know WHY they do what they do. WHY is not about making money. That's a result. WHY is a purpose, cause or belief. It's the very reason your organization exists.

©2015 Simon Sinek, Inc.



Slide 4. Golden Circle.


Goal → Customers → Promotion → Content marketing → Product → Data → Layout and customer experience

## Customers

- When a research was made on the Company X's online store in 2016, 56% of the respondents were working at Company X.
- The rest of the respondents consisted of partners, customers, trade press members, drivers or owners of machinery, engineers and mechanics.
- 84% of respondents were interested in shopping in the online store

**95%**  
from English respondents

**79%**  
from Finnish respondents



(Penttinen and Turunen 2016.)

Slide 5. Customers.

Goal → Customers → Promotion → Content marketing → Product → Data → Layout and customer experience

## Customer Engagement (CE)

CE refers to engagement of customers with a brand or a company mainly in social media . It's aiming for long-term engagement, customer loyalty and advocacy through word-of-mouth. The purpose is to create, stimulate or influence customers behavior and attitudes by using content marketing. (Head 2012, 77.)

By doing content marketing a company can lead and encourage customers to start social media conversation. (See section content marketing.)

The connection between the social media and e-commerce is acknowledged:

- Online interaction and social media have today large impact for consumers behavior and value creation
- On this account it's important to understand the value of company, service and product information (Heikkonen 2015, 8.)

WHY: To gain customer loyalty for the brand

HOW: By investing to content marketing

WHAT: Customers are talking about the e-commerce in social media by sharing content

Slide 6. Customer Engagement.



## Promotion –Promotional Mix

Advertising

Sales  
Promotion

Public  
Relations

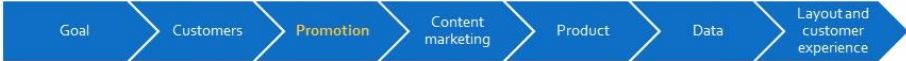
Direct  
Marketing

Selling

Why: Public relations is a way to express that you stand for the brand  
How: Direct marketing and selling are executed usually for the products and/or services: The products/services are not what differentiate from the others players in the markets. It is the brand – the why.  
What: Sales promotion and advertising are the actions done to make customers attracted to the brand. Based on facts and figures - so called reasonable side.

(Boone and Kurtz 2013,499-509.)

Slide 7. Promotion.




Some examples of promotion:


- Social media pages: create hashtags “#” for people to use when talking about your e-commerce. When launching the e-commerce store, there can be some happenings around it: for example “Black Friday” including Facebook-event, sales, real-time discussion about the online store and Q&A
- Affiliate marketing: Paid advertising in chosen online channels. Easy way to collect data about possible customers and to get a return to your marketing investment.
- Trade shows: The possibility for the customers to see the merchandise live.
- Press releases: Ads in trade papers, company's own info letters etc.
- Email: Banners sent in emails to promote the online store or new products. Direct email about offers for customers or potential customers.

Slide 8. Promotion.





# Content Marketing



Why: the content marketing is to educate and inform the customers, connect them with the company and boost credibility, visibility and salability among the customers

How: multi-platform, targeted to a specific audience, behavior-driven

What: Some examples for content marketing:

- Customer magazines and eBooks: John Deere <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rbKvoKeu4vc>
- Teaching videos and how-to guides: Röhnich running school <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1B8K6A5tets>,
- Question and Answer (Q&A) page: Coca Cola <https://www.cocacola.co.uk/legal/frequently-asked-questions/>

(Lorrie 2011, 53.)

Slide 9. Content marketing.



How to do on-going content marketing:


- First make a list of key categories and then a list of the topics
- Content should reflect company values, profits and qualities
- Decide the format: written, audio, video or pictorial
- When deciding the channel, keep in mind the audience and adjust the format to it

Example calendar:

Weekday	Category	Topic	Format	Channel
Monday	Clothes	New t-shirt	picture	Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn
Tuesday	Staffmembers	Intern Jaakko	video	LinkedIn, Facebook
Wednesday	Machines	Pile driving rig	video	Instagram, Facebook
Thursday	Offer	Father's Day	written	Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook

(Larter 2016, 81-82.)

Slide 10. Content marketing.



## Product

The value of the brand: the research showed in 2016, that interviewees are not ready to pay the planned price of the products yet. The product prices were estimated based on benchmarking. This indicates that the brand value among the online store users is not high enough yet.

Why: Take into consideration that the buyer does not justify the purchase with reason when buying brand products. They make the decision based on their feeling - their commitment to the brand.

How: The core values of responsibility and respecting the environment can be emphasized by choosing environment friendly products to the online store.

What: Here are the earlier mentioned products, which Company X is planning to offer now and some suggestions from the research respondents:

T-shirt✓	Credit card holder	Hearing protectors
Polo shirt✓	Beanie	Scale models
Hoodie✓	Coffee mug	
Cap✓	Water bottle	
Lego-set✓	Seat covers	

Slide 11. Product.



## DATA

- Collecting and understanding the data is one of the key factors in content marketing
  - content is the commodity users of digital media consume
  - It's what they look for when they search for new brands or information about products.
  - It's consumers' way to promote the brand by sharing updates. (Outside-in marketing: using big data to Guide your content marketing)
- By sorting out data you'll find out what web users are searching for when they come to your site. Tools for analyzing the data:
  - SEO
  - Google Analytics

(Mathewson and Moran 2016)

Why: For Company X to understand their current customers and to find new possible customers

How: By using big data to know how the customers are finding the brand

What: Google Analytics, SEO etc.

Slide 12. Data.



## Layout and customer experience

*"It's known that if web users won't find what they are looking for in 10 seconds, they'll leave and won't most likely come back to your website" –Jason Rich 2009*

- Layout supports the online brand and already existing website by
  - Colors
  - Fonts
  - Picture quality
- Make the online store easy to use by offering:
  - Search tools
  - Navigation
  - Simple categories
  - Language options

The core value of ensuring customer satisfaction can be emphasized by offering fast, adaptable and customer friendly service.

Why: to make the people feel more welcome to the e-commerce site  
 How: reassert the brand ideology  
 What: supporting the brand by fitting colours, fonts, pictures etc.

Slide 13. Layout and customer experience.

## Conclusion

### Top 5 things to remember

1. Start with Why
2. Content marketing: see what competitors are doing
3. Use the tools: by collecting data the company can make the most of the e-commerce site
4. Layout: keep it simple and make sure it follows the brands-guidelines
5. Keep an eye for customer group changes

Slide 14. Conclusion.

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Slide 15. References.



## APPENDIX 2: BENCHMARKING

	PONSSE	John Deere	Bauer Maschinen	Liebherr	Soilmec
Findability	Difficult to find. (Ponsse-laiset)	Difficult to find.	Takes an effort to find. (Parts&Service -> Bauer shop)	Easy to find. (Down bar-> Company-> SHOP)	Easy to find, clear link in the down bar.
Products	Wide selection of products.	Very wide selection of products. Also personalized products available.	Narrow selection of products.	Good selection of products.	Quite narrow selection of products.
Product information	Unclear. Not in whole sentences. Material information hasn't been marked in clothes.	Clear, all-encompassing product info.	Jackets name and color were presented in Germany even though selected language was English.	Clear.	No wash information or clear material information.
Categories	Unclear: for example under the category "Jackets" there is other products as well.	Clear and accurate categories.	All textiles including clothes are in the same category, but there is a separate one for children.	No option for searching or more specific categorization.	Unnecessary categories (a category for one cap).
Pricing	Clear prices, presented in even numbers.	Even numbers X,00€ or X,50€.	Clear, even numbers.	Pricing could be clearer. X,20€, X,99€, X,90€, X,00€ ?	Nice, even numbers.
Payment	Electric banking, Visa, credit card, bank transfer as advance payment. Shipping when payment is seen on shippers account.	PayPal and creditcards.	After receiving order an invoice is sent via e-mail or post. Invoice has more specific information about the payment.	Credit cards or bank transfer as advance payment.	-
Shipping-time	1 to 3 weeks unless informed otherwise.	2-5 days.	Shipped within 7 days from receiving the payment.	Depends on the product. Product availability and shipping time is informed when size is selected.	-
Delivery costs	As close to the post offices pricing as possible. Delivery costs are not included in product pricing.	Fixed Delivery costs 19,95€	Depends on the weight <5kg 6,80€, 5-10 kg 8,50€. >10 kg as well as international delivery on demand.	Germany (home-land) 5,95€. International delivery varies, 17,30€ for delivery to Finland.	-
Usability/Navigation	Easy to use.	Easy to use.	No drop-down menus (because there are so few products available?).	Easy to use	Almost too easy.
Language	Finnish, Swedish.	Several options.	English, German language.	German language, English and French.	English.
Usability on mobile phones/tablet? App?	Not mobile friendly but still works well. No app.	Not mobile friendly. No app for online store but several other apps.	Not mobile friendly. No app.	Not mobile friendly but works well with mobile phone. No app.	Not mobile friendly. No app.

Special notifications	The option to categorize the products pricewise was a nice option.	When a product is added to shopping cart there is a change to continue shopping or go straight to cashier.	Nice separate pop-up screen when a product is added to the cart. Change to continue shopping or go straight to cashier.	When products size is selected there is an information bar that appears to inform if the product is in stock and shipping time.	More a catalogue than an online store. Products can be browsed but orders must be made by calling.
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#### APPENDIX 2.1: BENCHMARKING PRICING

	PONSSE	John Deere	Bauer Maschinen	Liebherr	Soilmec	Questionnaire average
T-shirt	15,00€ - 20,00€	32,00€ on average	5,50€	12,80€ - 22,60€	10,00€	10,00€ - 30,00€
Polo shirt	23,00€	42,00€ on average	22,00€	35,00€	-	10,00€ - 30,00€
Hoodie	60,00€	83,00€	-	60,00€	40,00€	10,00€ - 30,00€
Cap	10,00€ - 15,00€	12,99€ - 18,00€	5,00€	7,90€ - 9,90€	8,00€	Less than 10,00€

## APPENDIX 3: PRINTED SURVEY

1. Kuulutko Yritys X Oy:n henkilökuntaan?

Kyllä          En

Jos et kuulu henkilökuntaan, mikä on roolisi suhteessa Yritys X:ään?

---

2. Ostaisitko tämän tuotteen Yritys X:n verkkokaupasta? Tuotteissa on Yritys X:n logo. Voit valita useamman vaihtoehdon.

T-paita          Kyllä          En

Pikeepaita      Kyllä          En

Huppari          Kyllä          En

Lippis            Kyllä          En

Lego              Kyllä          En

3. Olisitko kiinnostunut ostamaan jotakin muita tuotteita?

Kyllä          En

Jos olisit, mitä? (Esimerkiksi kahvikuppi, luottokorttikotelo, vesipullo tai pipo?)

---

4. Paljonko olisit valmis maksamaan kyseisistä tuotteista:

T-paita	alle 10€	10-30€	30-50€	50-100€	
Pikeepaita	alle 10€	10-30€	30-50€	50-100€	
Huppari	alle 10€	10-30€	30-50€	50-100€	
Lippis	alle 10€	10-30€	30-50€	50-100€	
Lego	alle 10€	10-30€	30-50€	50-100€	yli 100€

5. Mikä olisi sinulle mieluisin toimitustapa?

Nouto          Kotiinkuljetus

Joku muu, mikä?

---

6. Nähtyäsi tuotteet ja hinnat oletko kiinnostunut asioimaan Yritys X:n verkkokaupassa?

Kyllä          En

7. Miksi ostaisit Yritys X:n brändituotteita? Esimerkiksi tunnetko itsesi sitoutuneemmaksi yritykseen? Ostatko ne lahjoiksi? Joku muu syy, mikä?

8. Jätä tähän yhteystietosi, mikäli haluat osallistua arvontaan, jossa palkintona on lego.

Nimi:

Puhelinnumero:

Sähköpostiosoite:

## APPENDIX 4: WEBROPOL SURVEY

1. Do you work at Company X?

Yes                      No

If you are not a Company X staff member, what is your connection to Company X?

---

2. Would you buy this product from Company X's online store? The products have Company X's logo on them. You can choose more than one product.

a T-shirt	Yes	No
a Hoodie	Yes	No
a Hat	Yes	No
a Lego Set	Yes	No
a Polo Shirt	Yes	No

3. Would you be interested in buying other kind of products? What kind of products? (For example a coffee mug, a credit card holder, a water bottle or a beanie?)

Yes                      No

Please write your suggestion here:

---

4. How much would you pay for products that were mentioned above?

T-shirt	less than 10€	10-30€	over 30€
Polo shirt	less than 10€	10-30€	over 30€
Hoodie	less than 50€	50-100€	over 100€
Cap	less than 10€	10-30€	over 30€
Lego Set	less than 50€	50-100€	over 100€

5. Which kind of delivery would you prefer? For example, UPS, FedEx or TNT.

---

6. Now that you have seen some suggestions about the products, would you be interested in shopping in Company X's online store?

Yes                      No

7. What is the reason you want to purchase Company X's products? For example, does it make you feel more connected to the company? Do you purchase them as gifts etc.?

8. Please fill in here your name and phone number if you would like to win a Lego.

Name:

Phonenumber:

Email address:

## APPENDIX 5: SURVEY'S ANSWERS

1. Please select language.

	<b>Suomi (N=47)</b>	<b>English (N=38)</b>
Suomi	100 %	0 %
English	0 %	100 %

2. Do you work at Company X?

	<b>Suomi (N=47)</b>	<b>English (N=38)</b>
Yes	87 %	18 %
No	13 %	82 %

3. What is your connection to Company X? (If does not work at Company X)

<b>Suomi</b>
Kumppani
yhteistyökumppani
Kuulun ammattilehdistöön ja lisäksi henkilökohtainen kiinnostus koneisiin.
Paalutuskoneen kuljettajana olin aikaisemmin. Yritys X:n koneilla.
Ajan pmx22 n.1653
Sopimushuolto
<b>English</b>
Working at a dealer
Dealer for ED
I operate pm16 and pm23 in Canada
We have one in our company
Gerbrandy heibedrijf
Driving pm20
Drive Company X's machinery
Supervisor and engineer on Company X
working with a Company X pm20lc pile driver
Company X operator
I photograph Company X equipment with their workers on the job.
Working as mechanic in a company who owner a pm20
Machine operator
Former customer
Operator of pm 16, 20, 25, and 26.
I own a PM16 and s PM20
Journalist and marketing consultant in the construction/infrastructure sector.
I am journalist for construction equipment magazine and did lot of good articles about Company X.
I worked for one of your dealers
Distributor
Mopycsa is a Dealer of Company X
Customer
I am an operator/supervisor for Northstar energy in Alberta and we have several Company X's machinery that I run.
Company X is our Hydraulic hammer supplier.
Compnay X PMx22 operator, Arkil Denmark
Operator and mechanic Northstar energy services.
We are the INDIA delar for Company X. Delar Name Gmmco. I looking for After Sales.

I operate a Company X's machinery with a pile driving company in North America
operator in nyc local 14 usa...underpinning foundation skanska
I operate a PMX22
Work with Company X in Holland

4. Would you buy this product from Company X's online store? The products have company's logo on them.

YES	Suomi (N=47)	English (N=38)
T-shirt	64 %	84 %
Polo shirt	38 %	76 %
Hoodie	68 %	79 %
Cap	34 %	66 %
Lego-set	57 %	84 %

5. What kind of products would you be interested in purchasing? For example, a coffee mug, a credit card holder, a water bottle or a beanie?

Suomi	English
Viinipullo	Candies
Pyyhe	Coffee mug, scale model
Kahvimuki, reppu	All your example
Yritys X tuulipuku	A model in metal. Maby scala 1:50
Autoon ja koneen penkkiin käyvä istuins. on ihan ehdoton juttu. Penkinp. on käyt. kaikissa h.aut.jne	Water bottle
luottokorttikotelo	Coffe mug
Langattomat kuulosuojaimet radiolla. Kelpaisi myös kentälle kuskin ja paalupojan kommunikointiin.	Stickers.sweaters
Pyyhe, muki, kuksa, asiakirjasalkku	Yes Legomodels, modell of Company X's machinery
Luottokorttikotelo	Models jacket sweater
Fleece/softsel takki.	a scale model of Company x's cranes
Pipo, kahvikuppi, Lompakko, muistitikku, kuulosuojaimet yms.	Miniature Company X machines.
pijoja	Cup, keychain
Kahvikuppi, avaimenperä, auton istuimen suoja...	all keind of products
Pipo ainakin	Water bottle, card holder
vesipullo, pipo, vauvan potkuhousut	Rig model
käytännöllisiä tyylikkäitä	Beanie, yeti tumbler, and key chain.
Hydrauliikka komponentin tai terästä	Coffee mugs
Teräksinen kahvimuki, saapas-sukat	Model
Avaimen perä, Kahvikuppi, luottokorttikotelo/lompakko	A scale model of a Company X's Piling rig.
Juuri näitä erikoisempia tuotteita, kahvikuppi esim.	Models - beanie. shawl
Pipo, muistilehtiö, pienoismalli, bookazine, usb-varavirtalähde...	Company X's Ice Hockey Jersey
Pipo, kahvipullo	Coffe mug, frisbee, sun protection for windshield,
xxxxx	coffee mug, credit card holder, water bottle, belt
luottokorttikotelo, vesipullo	Beer or shoes
pipon	PPE Workwear, bags, mugs, coasters, small models of the machines made out of metal for the customers display cabinets.
luottokorttikotelo, pipo, putkihuivi (buff)	Sunglass

pipo, karvahattu, putkikassi, reppu jokin kesäpelit? mölkky?	Card holder that sticks to phone cases, anything golf, I have and have passed out very many hats. Business card holders, scarf. You name it. credit card holder
	Miniature models
	Coffee mug. Travel mug, lunch bag. License plate frame for vehicle
	Lunch box, mobile phone cover, small scale models for children, hard hats, coveralls, belt buckle and of course a neck tie
	what ever is available
	A die cast model
	Jacket sticker sunglasses

## 6. How much would you pay for products mentioned?

<b>T-shirt</b>	<b>Suomi (N=48)</b>	<b>English (N=41)</b>
less than 10€	54%	32%
10-30€	46%	68%
30-50€	0%	0%
50-100€	0%	0%
more than 100€	0%	0%

<b>Polo shirt</b>	<b>Suomi (N=47)</b>	<b>English (N=40)</b>
less than 10€	23%	23%
10-30€	77%	68%
30-50€	0%	10%
50-100€	0%	0%
more than 100€	0%	0%

<b>Hoodie</b>	<b>Suomi (N=47)</b>	<b>English (N=41)</b>
less than 10€	13%	24%
10-30€	43%	41%
30-50€	45%	32%
50-100€	0%	2%
more than 100€	0%	0%

<b>Cap</b>	<b>Suomi (N=47)</b>	<b>English (N=40)</b>
less than 10€	77%	65%
10-30€	23%	35%
30-50€	0%	0%
50-100€	0%	0%
more than 100€	0%	0%
<b>Lego-set</b>	<b>Suomi (N=47)</b>	<b>English (N=41)</b>
less than 10€	23%	22%
10-30€	28%	32%
30-50€	34%	22%
50-100€	11%	22%
more than 100€	4%	2%

7. Which kind of delivery would you prefer? For example, UPS, FedEx or TNT? Please notice that product prices will not include shipping costs.

<b>Suomi</b>	<b>English</b>
Helikopteri drone	Postal service
Postitus/matkahuolto	Doesn't matter
Nouto	A delivery service that don't "kill" the price of ordered item in total.
Toimisto	Ups
Nouto toimistolta	Ups
Nouto ja posti. Ne kaupoissa olevat noutolaatikot.	Tnt
Nouto	Dont nov and Dont care
Postitus, mikäli en olisi työntekijä	Ups
Postitse	Ups
Postin lähellä paketti	Ups
Postin pakettiautomaatti.	tnt
Postitus	Tnt
Nouto tiskiltä, jotta näen, mitä olen ostamassa.	Ups
Nouto toimistolta	Least expensive. Speed of delivery secondary
Nouto toimistolta.	ups
Nouto	UPS or DHL
nouto toimistolta	UPS
Nouto	Tnt
Nouto ja postitus.	Ups or fedex
Nouto ja posti	Ups
posti	Normal post
nouto toimistolta	TNT
Nouto	TNT
yhtiössä työskentelevänä toimipaikastani, mutta jos olisin ulkopuolinen niin postitse.	UPS
Nouto toimistolta	TNT
Respa	UPS
postitus	Fedex
nouto toimistolta tai no nouto omasta postilokerosta	UPS
Nouto toimistolta.	Fedex
nouto	Any type of delivery works.
nouto toimistolta	UPS
Postitus	UPS
Nouto toimistolta	Ups or fed ex
Postitus olisi helpointa, pois lukien henkilökunta, jolla varmasti nouto toimipisteestä.	FedEx
Nouto, postitus itsepalveluautomaattiin.	UPS
Postitus	ups
Lahjoitus	Ups
nouto	Ups
kotiinkuljetus	
nouto	
kotiinkuljetus	
kotiinkuljetus	
nouto toimistolta jos ilmaiseksi saa	
nouto	
nouto/kotiinkuljetus	
kotiinkuljetus	
Postitus	



8. Now that you have seen some suggestions about the products, would you be interested in shopping in Company X's online store?

	<b>Suomi (N=47)</b>	<b>English (N=38)</b>
Yes	37	36
No	10	2

9. What is the reason you want to purchase Company X's products? For example, does it make you feel more connected to the company? Do you purchase them as gifts etc.?

<b>Suomi</b>	<b>English</b>
Mikäli tuotteet olisivat laadukkaita, voisin ostaa niitä lahjoiksi tai Kuopion/Suomen tulijaisiksi	happiness
Sitoutuminen	Connection for employees and customers
Sitoutuneemmaksi yritykseen	Like the firm
Sitoutumisesta yritykseen	Both of them
Ostan muuten vaan. Sopii lahjaksi vain harvoin.	Hobby
lahjaksi	its good to work with clothes connected to the machine
Lego olisi spesiaali lahjana.	Company X miniature machines
Lahjaksi	Simply because I run Company X' machinery
Osittain lahjoiksi, osittain omaan käyttöön erikoisuuden vuoksi. Olen ylpeä työstäni Yritys X:ssä.	Like the name and what it represents
Lahjoiksi	as gift
Itselleni hyvää ja kotimaista koska arvostan suuresti kotimaisia tuotteita.	More connection, and fun to have some articles from A machine that we operate every-day
lahjoiksi	As a gift
Lahja ja firman näkyvyys	Gifts
itselle ja lahjaksi	I like representing my favorite machine to run!!
Lahjoiksi + itsellekin	Gifts
Jos tuote on laadukas, mieluisa ja hintasuhde sopivaa niin en näe estettä ostaa vaikka on yrityksen logolla. En tunne itseäni enemmän sitoutuneeksi yritykseen, jos ostan sen logolla olevia tuotteita. Eri asia on onko brändituotteet niin mieluisia että niitä ostaa.	Gifts
Lahja	A scale model 1:50 of a Company X Piling rig. And with a price of maximum 200 euro.
Yrityksen brandi näkyisi henkilökunnan kantaessa ylpeänä firman lahjoittamaa kollege takkia ymv. Vapaa aikana, joskaan eihän se maailmalle näy jos se on se tarkoitus.	I collect stuff of companies I worked with
edistää omalta osalta Pohjois-Savon ja Yritys X:n brändiä ja osaamista	As a gift or to represent the company and show off where I work
Omaan käyttöön	Good to wear when visiting customers. Also for gifts.
omaa tarpeeseen	The most important to me is I feel that I do my best for the Company
Ei tarvis aamusella miettiä, minkä paidan päälle laittaa. Hiustyyliin sopii lippalakki.	presents
Sitoutuneisuus, brändin levittäminen tuttavapiiriin	It would make it easier to find the products and while you are looking at a particular item, you might see something else to purchase
Kotimaisen ja laadukkaan brändin tuominen esille.	Brand
Koska olen paalutus alan ihminen ja todennut yritys x:n hyväksi. Lisäksi mainostaa Savolaista osaamista. Koska itsekin olen savolainen.	Love having my own stuff as well I'm always givin out Company X's swag to all our clients.

lahjoiksi	i can purchase them as a gift
lahjaksi	I love the brand. And I work with your machines everyday.
xxxxx	Connections and gifts
omakäyttö/lahja	i proud to purchase Company X's products. Because of Company X's Hammer performance.
lahjoiksi	Gifts, but mainly to show people what I do for a living ( conversation starter) I take pride in my job and in the equipment I operate so I would like to show it of plan and simple
Ehkä ne lisäävät tunnetta työyhteisöön kuulumisesta	gifts and also show support for company on jobsites
	Gifts
	Gifts en foto's myself