

Olugbenga Banjo

## **B2B MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS IN EMERGING MARKETS**

Content marketing in digital channels: A case study of the United Arab Emirates

# **B2B MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS IN EMERGING MARKETS**

Content marketing in digital channels: A case study of the United Arab Emirates

Olugbenga Banjo  
Bachelor's thesis  
Autumn 2013  
Degree in International Business  
Oulu University of Applied Sciences

## ABSTRACT

Oulu University of Applied Sciences

Degree Programme in International Business

---

Author(s): Olugbenga Banjo

Title of Bachelor's thesis: B2B marketing communications in emerging markets: content marketing in digital channels.

Supervisor: Helena Ahola

Term and year of completion: Autumn 2013

Number of pages: 48

---

With the ever increasing online community and opportunities, digital marketing is fast becoming the mainstream in the field of marketing. At the same time marketers have to be up-to-date with the current digital trends in order to be able to improve themselves and make valuable contributions to their organisations. The significance of digital marketing thus should make any thoughtful organisation want to plan for, perform, evaluate and improve its digital marketing endeavours where necessary, in order to take advantage of the opportunities available. This importance therefore necessitated this research.

This thesis was commissioned by Koodiviidakko Oy, a Finnish company producing digital marketing software. The focus of this research is on business to business digital marketing in a digitally emerging market, with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as the case study. A broad literature review of the concept of business to business (B2B) was performed, touching on aspects such as organisational buying behaviour, decision making unit and relationship marketing. Also discussed was B2B marketing communications from two dimensions; channel and relationship. Furthermore, the report examined the concepts of content marketing, digital marketing and digital marketing channels which are important concepts relevant to the thesis subject matter. The research was both qualitative and quantitative with analytical tools used to gather statistical data on the commissioner's digital marketing channels. The results gathered from the research showed that the commissioner's digital marketing efforts in the UAE are on the right track but more needs to be done especially in the areas of customer acquisition, customer conversion and measuring return on investments. Finally, based on the findings, recommendations were made, that the commissioner could employ in order to improve its digital marketing.

---

business-to-business marketing, digital marketing, content marketing, relationship marketing

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

First of all I would like to thank God for the successful completion of another chapter of my life. Furthermore I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my family for their endless love and support.

Likewise, I would like to thank my supervisor for her guidance and advice throughout the course of this thesis.

I would also like to thank the management and staff of Koodiviidakko Oy for the opportunity and assistance given to me in making this thesis. Particularly, I would like to thank the head of the marketing team for her patience and time.

I am highly indebted to my teachers not just for their teaching but also for their support and guidance. My gratitude also goes to other non academic staff particularly at the international planning office for their support.

And to my colleagues too numerous to mention I appreciate your pieces of advice, cooperation, friendship and the challenge you have brought to the programme which have spurred me on. Thank you all.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

BRICS = Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa

B2B = Business to business

B2C = Business to consumer

CMI = Content marketing Institute

CTR = Click through rate

DMU = Decision making unit

EMEA = Europe, Middle East and Africa

HTML = Hyper text markup language: the main markup language for creating web pages

OBB = Organisational buying behaviour

Opt-in = Option to be put in mailing list

OR = Open rate

PPC = Pay per click

PR = Public relations

RM = Relationship marketing

ROI = Return on Investment

SEM = Search engine marketing

SEO = Search engine optimization

SERP = Search engine results page

UAE = United Arab Emirates

URL = Uniform resource locator

<b>Contents</b>	
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1 Research Purpose and scope	7
1.2 Research Questions	8
1.3 Research Methods	8
<b>2 LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 B2B Marketing	9
2.2 Relationship Marketing	16
2.3 B2B marketing communications	18
2.4 Content Marketing	20
2.5 Digital Marketing	22
2.6 Digital Marketing Channels	23
2.7 The United Arab Emirates (UAE)	26
<b>3 RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS</b>	<b>28</b>
3.1 Methodology	28
3.2 Data gathering method	28
3.3 Data Analysis and Results	31
<b>4 CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>39</b>
4.1 Recommendations	41
4.2 Research questions restated	42
<b>5 DISCUSSION</b>	<b>44</b>
5.1 Suggested further research	44
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>46</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's business world, the need to perform and measure the effectiveness of digital marketing in an organisation has never been more imperative. More than ever before, the digital community is continually increasing. Staggering statistics such as: the over one billion Facebook registered users, the over 5 billion average daily searches on Google worldwide and the ever growing number of people who use digital devices either fixed or mobile, are numbers that cannot simply be ignored by marketers. Additionally, the significance of information and communication technology to business and industry should spur any serious organisation to engage in digital marketing.

The term digital marketing has been defined as the use of internet and digital devices by marketers, to help them reach a host of potential customers globally. This aspect of marketing holds many new opportunities. It has opened customers to a broader selection of products, services and prices from different sellers and has completely transformed the way marketing is being delivered.

However, digital marketing has also become more challenging with the continuous introduction of new technologies. New tools and marketing channels are continually emerging. Consequently, organisations and marketers need to keep up not just with the latest, but also the most efficient marketing tools and channels. This is why the need to monitor the effectiveness of an organisation's digital marketing efforts and to seek new methods if necessary is vital.

The commissioner for this research is Koodiviidakko Oy, a medium sized Finnish company based primarily in Oulu, Finland, but with operations in Scandinavia, Russia, the Baltic region and the Middle East. The organisation's marketing communications are basically business-to-business. In addition, digital marketing channels serve as the primary marketing channel for the organisation. Apart from the significance of digital marketing to businesses, making digital marketing channels the primary channel is understandable, since the organisation's products are software to be utilized for marketing communications, which are predominantly online. The organisation's digital marketing activities are not a standalone as they do relate to some other aspects of marketing. These other aspects include relationship marketing, business-to-business (B2B) Marketing and Content Marketing. Attempt will be made to explore these other areas of marketing. Most notably the nature and dynamics of B2B marketing, features of a good content, marketing communica-

tions and categories of relationship marketing will be examined. Furthermore, digital marketing channels such as online advertising, search engine marketing, social media marketing, email marketing, online public relations, affiliate marketing and blogs will be explored. The issues in cross-cultural marketing will also be highlighted particularly in reference to the market of the case study to be examined.

There will be need to familiarize oneself with the marketing activities of the commissioner in order to obtain firsthand information for the research work. Books, blogs, internet articles, previous research conducted in the area of digital marketing and industry releases are among other sources of information that will be perused. Furthermore, quantitative and qualitative data on the marketing efforts of the organisation will be made available for analysis. Finally, the organisation's current digital marketing channels and activities will be evaluated and recommendations made on ways of improvement.

### **1.1 Research Purpose and scope**

The purpose of this research is to examine the effectiveness of business to business digital marketing channels in a digitally emerging market, with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as the case study. The research is being executed to help the commissioner in its marketing efforts in emerging markets particularly in the United Arab Emirates. It will attempt to provide useful information in the use of digital marketing channels in an emerging market and how it compares to a more developed market like Finland. The research will also attempt to enhance the marketing communications of the organization. The recommendations that will be made after the evaluation of both used and unused digital marketing channels could help improve and serve as a guide when investing in the most effective marketing channels and tools. In addition, it is hoped that the study can be used as a reference point when considering which digital marketing channel to use in a technologically emerging market.

The scope of this thesis is limited to online marketing and marketing that is done using digital technology to reach customers through the internet. Even though the organisation utilizes other marketing channels like personal selling using the phone, direct sales, participation in fairs and some other offline channels, the research did not cover all of these other channels. Another aspect not covered also is market entry research, the commissioner had earlier decided on the market which serves as the case study for this research and had also started its marketing and sales operations in the market. Consequently, market entry strategies and theories of internatio-



nalisation will not be examined in this research. Since the commissioner is a B2B company, the focus is on B2B marketing, although a B2C organisation may find some of the information in the research relevant and useful.

Furthermore, when emerging markets are generally mentioned, the belief is that the economically emerging markets of the BRICS nations are being referred to. For the purpose of this thesis, emerging markets refer to digitally emerging markets. Consequently this does not only refer to some or all of the BRICS nations but also some other nations of which the UAE could be said to be part of.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

This research attempts to answer a number of questions, however, the main research question that is to be answered is how effective or productive is the organisation's B2B marketing communication in digital channels in the United Arab Emirate (UAE). Other notable questions in relation to the study are as follows:

What are the returns on investment for the digital channels in use?

Should some current channels be discontinued?

If some current channels are to be discontinued, which ones should they be and why?

Should the organisation use additional digital channels?

If new channels are to be used, which ones should they be and why?

## **1.3 Research Methods**

The method that will be used for information sourcing will be mainly books, both hardcopy and electronic formats and internet sources, with a large part of the internet sources coming from blogs and articles written by specialists in this field. The choice of internet sources was ideal because of the up to datedness nature of the information that can be obtained on the internet and particularly such sources of the internet as stated above. Interviews with the marketing executives and acquaintance with the digital marketing procedure of the commissioner will provided the foundation of information about the commissioner's marketing activities, past, present and future.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 B2B Marketing

B2B Marketing is the practice of an organisation identifying and satisfying the needs of its business customers. There are various reasons for which organisations may buy goods and services from one another. Some of these reasons may be for internal use in the production process, to help to create own products or to sell as finished products to consumers. However, the fundamental reason of any business transaction by an organisation whether their products and services are offered to consumers or other organisations is to create value. The market in which these organisations buy and sell goods and services from one another is termed B2B market and this market has been identified to be significantly larger than that of the consumer market commonly referred to as Business to Consumer (B2C) market. (Fill and Fill, 2005)

#### **Differences between B2B and B2C markets**

According to Fill and Fill (2005), the major difference between B2B markets and consumer markets is that the buyers in B2B markets do not consume the products they buy themselves while in consumer markets, consumptions of products are made by the individuals who make the purchases. Similarly, Van Weele (2010) stated that the buying objective for a B2B market is to enable production, while for consumer market it is to satisfy personal need. In addition, Fill and Fill (2005), identified a number of characteristics of a B2B market such as derived and inelastic demands, high risks and nurtured relationships. They also added that the two main characteristics differentiating the two markets and guiding marketing strategies are first, the intended customer; which happens to be an Organisation in the case of B2B and individuals for a B2C and second, the anticipated use of the product to create value and achieve organisational goals for a B2B buyer as against personal usage for a B2C buyer. Van Weele (2010) was of the same opinion as he also identified these characteristics as well as those of: large product and market knowledge and rather inelastic price.

Van Weele (2010, 23) went further to state a number of main differences between Industrial (business to business) markets and consumer markets especially with regards to purchasing.

Table 1: Differences between Industrial markets and consumer markets

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Industrial market</b>	<b>Consumer market</b>
Buying objective	Enable production	Personal need satisfaction
Buying motive	Mainly rational	Also emotional
Purchasing function	Professional buying	Consumers
Decision making	Many persons involved, much discussion	Often impulsive, without consulting others
Characteristics	Negotiations, intense interaction	Often without negotiation, little interaction
Product and market knowledge	Large	Limited
Order size	Often large	Mostly small
Demand	Derived demand, may fluctuate strongly	Autonomous, relatively stable
Price elasticity	Rather inelastic	Rather elastic
Number of customers	Mostly limited	Very large
Spread of customers	Sometimes large geographic concentration	Large geographical spread

Source: *Purchasing and Supply chain management* (Van Weele A. J., 2010, 23)

### **Organisational buying behaviour (OBB)**

According to Webster and Wind (1972), Organizational buying, is “*the decision making process by which formal organizations establish the need for purchased products and services and identify, evaluate and choose among alternative brands and suppliers*”. (cited in Fill & Fill 2005, 113)

Organisational buying behaviour is the process involving all the stages or phases of how organisations procure products and services. Some of these stages often require key decision making. Organisational buying behaviour does not only involve the buying of goods and services but also

includes the management and development of interorganisational relationships. It is a vital part of external relationships which an organisation develops. Organisations buy products and services from one another on a continuous basis and as such the handling of the resulting relationships is an integral part of the organisational buying process. (Fill & Fill, 2005, 113)

Similarly, organisational buying behaviour can also be seen as a collection of internal and external variables and model that describe how organisations reach purchase decisions. The buying processes or the stages by which organisations procure products and services has been identified to include purchasing needs determination, supplier selection, appropriate price determination, terms and conditions specification, contract or order issuance and expediting to ensure on time delivery and payment. (Van Weele, 2010)

### **Decision Making Unit**

In a formal organisation, a purchase decision is not made by a person but by a group of people who seek to identify the importance of the task, and try to arrive at a decision that is in the best interest of the organisation. This group is referred to as the decision making unit (DMU).

According to Van Weele (2010), the decision making Unit are all those individuals and groups who partake in the purchasing decision-making process, and who share common goals and are jointly liable for the risks arising from the decisions made. Likewise, Fill & Fill (2005) pointed out that contrary to how it sometimes appears to be, organisational buyers are not the only individuals involved in the purchase decision process. Van Weele (2010, 28) had identified five members of the decision making unit namely: Users, Influencers, Buyers, Decision makers and Gatekeepers. Fill & Fill (2005, 115-116) discussed the same five decision making unit members but also added a sixth member namely Initiators.

The **initiators** are the group of individuals who request for the purchase of an item and set the purchase decision process in motion. This group could also be another member of the decision making unit or any other group in the organisation.

The **users** are the people who will use or work with the product once it is procured. The role of the users is a continuous one and their opinions are important in the product specification and selection process. The users may sometimes be the initiators.

Another group identified is that of the **Influencers**. This group usually helps set the technical specifications and also assist in the evaluation of alternatives and selection processes. They are able to affect the outcome of the purchasing process through solicited or unsolicited advice.

However, the **buyers** as the name suggests are the purchasing managers. They are the individuals responsible for negotiating prices and deals as well as placing the orders with the suppliers.

Another important buying group identified is the **decision makers**. This is the group of people who make the actual purchase decisions. They are the ones who actually determine the supplier to be selected. It might be difficult to identify the decision makers in an organisation as there might not be any formal authority to make a purchase decisions. Decision makers could vary according to a number of factors like the buying situation or the amount involved. The decision making roles for products of high value or with strategic importance are usually left for top management, while a the decision making power for a product of straight rebuy or routine buying might be left the purchasing manager.

The **gatekeepers** constitute the sixth group that has been identified and they are composed of the people who have control over the type and flow of information to and from other members of the decision making unit and the suppliers.

It is possible to have multiple influencers in a particular purchase decision process who might need to be marketed to, even though they are not part of the actual decision makers. Van Weele (2010, 28) attests to this observation by rightly pointing out that influencers have effects on all the purchase decision making stages from identification of need to supplier selection.

In Addition to the members of the decision making unit, Van Weele, (2010, 282-283) has also identified three levels of purchasing decision in organisational buying: the strategic level, the tactical level and operational level. He stated that:

The Strategic level covers purchase decisions that impact the market share or market position of the organisation in the long run. And decisions in this situation reside primarily with the top management.

The Tactical level covers activities pertaining to purchasing function which affects products, process and selection of supplier.

The Operational level involves all activities associated with ordering, expediting and monitoring and evaluation of suppliers.

### **The Decision Making Process**

It has been pointed out by Fill and Fill (2005), that buying decisions vary in terms of a number of factors, namely the value of purchases, type of relationship with the supplier or seller, strategic impact and the nature of the product or service. However, for a seller organisation or supplier,

marketing planning is easier when the decision making habits and the requirements of the customers are identified. Hence, there might be need for a seller organisation in a B2B market to create different marketing campaigns according to customers buying situations.

Van Weele, (2010, 31) has specified three types of purchasing situations. The first is a **new task situation** in which a completely new product is being purchased by an organisation for the first time from a seller that has been previously unknown to the buyer. A major characteristic of this situation is the high uncertainty regarding the outcome of the transaction. The second situation which is termed **modified rebuy is** when an organisation purchases a new product from a known seller or it purchases an existing product from a new seller. In any case, either the product or the seller was not previously known before the transaction. The degree of uncertainty here is moderate with regards to the outcome of the transaction. The third purchasing situation identified is **straight rebuy**, in which case both the seller and the product are known. Fill & Fill (2005) also noted these buying situations and further stated the information requirements and alternative solutions associated with each situation. In the new buy situation it was pointed out that a lot of information is required and there are no past experiences to rely on whereas in the modified rebuy situation, more information is required but past experience is useful, while little or no information is needed for the straight rebuy situation. Perhaps the level of risk involved in each of these three situations clarifies the distribution of the amount of information needed in each of these situations. It was further explained that for the new buy situation, alternative solutions are unknown because they do not exist; buying decision requires new solutions for a modified rebuy and alternative solutions are not required for a straight rebuy situation.

The concept of decision making process can also be viewed from customer information sourcing point of view. This approach suggests that the purchase information that buyers are researching changes as they go through the buying process. A 3-step decision map showing 3 decision stages of B2B customers based on information needs gives a different dimension in the understanding of the decision making process.

Stage 1: What is the problem: Customers are sourcing for suppliers and information on a broad level. Customers may or may not have an idea of what the solution to their problem will be.

Stage 2: How to Fix the problem: Customers are evaluating available options that might meet their requirements. There might be a shortlist of viable alternatives.

Stage 3: is the Supplier Right: There is a solid understanding of how the available options measure up and the decision maker is committing to one option. Questions are being managed and relationships are being created and managed with various stakeholders.

Armstrong, S. (2011). B2B Buyer decision map: Understanding decision stages. Retrieved 28.06.2013 from <http://www.brainrider.com/better-content-blog/b2b-buyer-decision-map/>

If your customer is asking:	What's my problem?	How do I fix my problem?	Are you right for me?
They want:	Education & Thought Leadership	Solutions & Product Suitability	Credentials & Decision Support
What to share with them:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trends</li> <li>• Benchmarks</li> <li>• Analyst coverage</li> <li>• 101 Education</li> <li>• How to guides</li> <li>• How other people are solving this?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the solution &amp; how does it work?</li> <li>• Solution comparisons</li> <li>• Pitfall analysis</li> <li>• Readiness &amp; suitability assessments</li> <li>• How do I choose a vendor?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pricing</li> <li>• Bench strength demonstration</li> <li>• Case studies</li> <li>• ROI/TCO</li> <li>• How to buy</li> <li>• Working with us</li> </ul>

Figure 1: What B2B customers want to know

Source: Armstrong, S. (2011). B2B Buyer decision map: Understanding decision stages. Retrieved 28.06.2013

This approach seemed to have compressed the entire purchase process into 3 stages and may appear to have oversimplified the purchasing process. This could result in the loss of relevant information at some point. However, the benefit of this approach in understanding B2B decision making in organisational buying behaviour, is that it could easily help content marketers to develop and tailor contents for customers at each decision making stage. Since the customers' needs can easily be identified and understood based on the stage, the creation and sharing of the

specific information needed by the customers will boost customer conversion and be ultimately beneficial for an organisation.

As a result of the usually complex decision making process in a B2B market involving several individuals, who are also well-informed, it is important for B2B marketers to display a high level of know-how in his or her interactions with the customers.

### **Influences on OBB**

Four major influences on organizational buying behaviour had been identified as follows:

**Internal influences:** This relates to issues such as centralization or decentralization of purchase structure, purchasing policies internal restructuring or change in ownership. Fill & Fill (2005, 125-128)

**External influences:** The key external factors that influence organisational buying behaviour are identified as political, economic social and technological. These factors arise from the organisation's external environment but may impact the kind of decisions reached in the stages of the buying process within an organisation. Fill & Fill (2005, 125-128)

**Individual Influences:** This relates to the individuals making up the membership of the decision making unit. Their individual perceptions and sometimes personal relationships with some suppliers contribute to the decision making and buying processes. Furthermore, the dispersion of power within the unit can determine the kind of decisions that are made. Some individuals will be more powerful than others and there may be undue influence within the unit. Fill & Fill (2005, 125-128)

**Relationship influences:** organisations often develop relationships in the course of buying and selling. The nature of such transactional relationships and the communication style will influence buying decisions. The behaviour of a decision making unit maybe be observed to be constructive and cooperative if the existing relationship is trusting, mutually supportive and the perspective is long term (a relational structure). Conversely, a decision making unit's purchase behaviour may be viewed as courteous yet distant if the relationship is formal, unsupportive and short-term based (a market structured-based relationship). Fill & Fill (2005, 125-128)



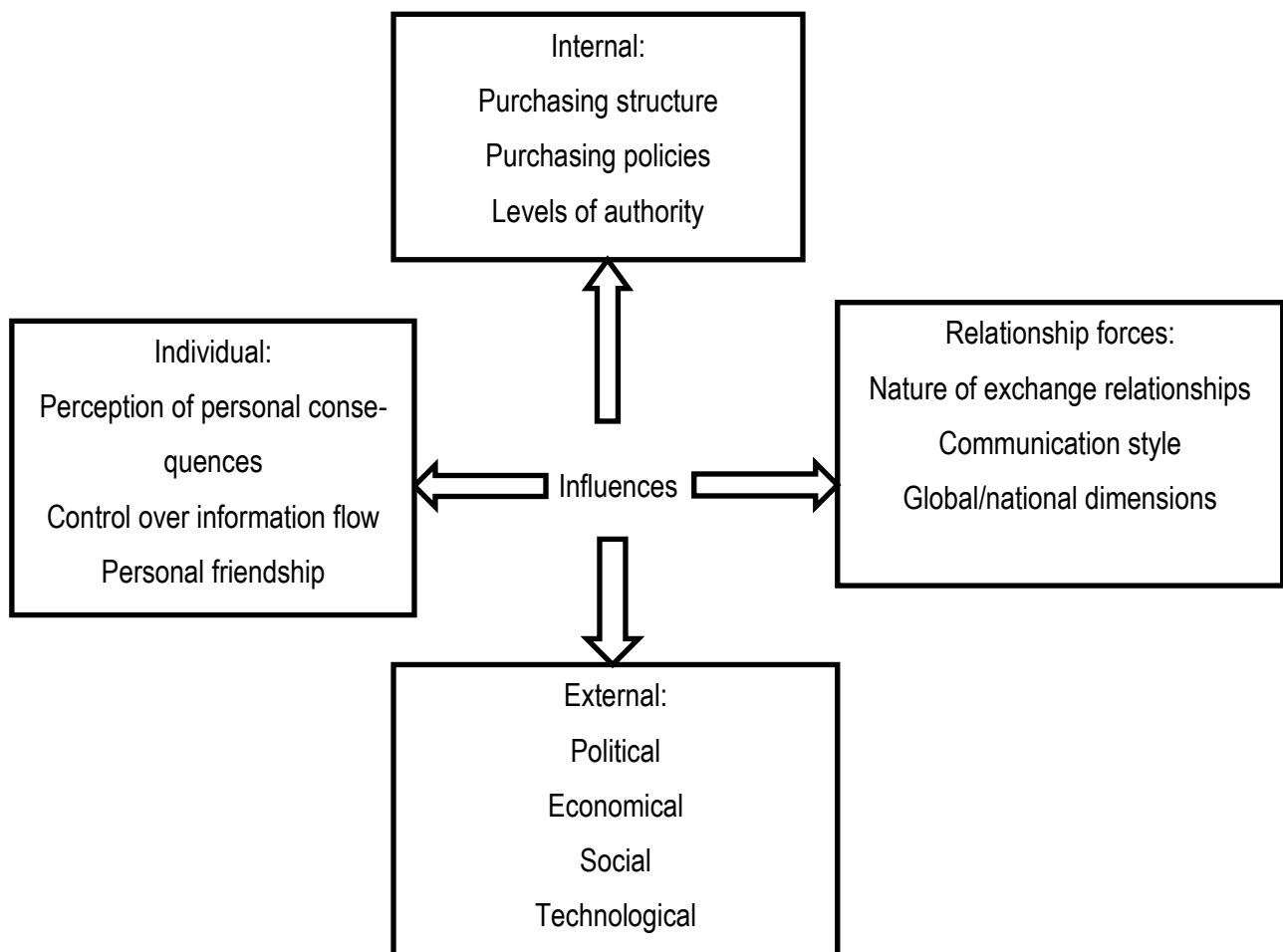


Figure 2: Major influences on organizational buying behavior

Source: *Business to Business marketing: relationships, systems and communications*. (Fill & Fill, 2005, 126)

## 2.2 Relationship Marketing

One important feature distinguishing B2B markets from B2C is the creation of personal relationships. It is not uncommon for B2B organisations to have customers or suppliers that have been committed and loyal for several years. Creating personal relationships is even more significant in emerging markets where the concept of branding is still emerging, little free information culture and quality problems exists. (Harrison, Hague and Hague, 2013)

Earlier theories on organisational buying behaviour had stated that buyers are passive and seller active. This earlier theories were founded in the stimulus-organism model which assumes that the buyers which are passive only react to what the seller has to offer and more so in a submissive and unquestioning way. This notion had however been successfully challenged and supplanted by a counter notion that business buyers are active problem solvers seeking effective and efficient solutions. This was the result of shifting the attention of B2B marketing away from products or transactions and to the collection of linked events and its characteristics - relationships. (Fill & Fill 2005, 145-147)

Based on the kind of relationship, two main marketing perspectives have been identified: *transactional marketing* and *relational marketing*.

**Transactional marketing** places products at the centre of transactions and price is the main means of completing the exchange. This viewpoint sees no previous history of exchange existing between parties and no future exchange is anticipated. Organisations see each other as adversaries and competition is imminent. This approach is largely associated with the 4Ps of marketing.

**Relational marketing** is centered on the idea that there is a history of exchanges and an anticipation of future exchanges. It is seen to be long term and a form of bond envisaged to exist between the buyer and the seller. Also, both the buyer and seller seek each of their goals in a mutually rewarding way. Relationship marketing is based on this approach.

(Fill & Fill 2005, 143)

Egan (2004) had pointed out that RM is a relatively new but important topic among marketing practitioners and academicians. He further noted that despite the substantial interest, it has not been easy to come up with a single generally accepted definition for RM.

One of the first definitions of RM was given by Berry (1983) as “*attracting, maintaining and...enhancing customer relationships*”. (Cited in Egan 2004, 22)

Grönroos (1994) also indicated in his definition that one of the objectives of relationship marketing is not only to create and cultivate customer relationships but also to terminate them when necessary in a manner rewarding to all stakeholders. His definition has been lauded by some writes as the most complete and concise definition. In his definition, he stated that the objectives of RM are to: “*identify and establish, maintain and enhance and, when necessary, terminate relationships*”

*with customers and other stakeholders, at a profit so that the objectives of all parties involved are met...*" (Cited in Egan 2004, 24)

### **Categories of Relationship**

Organisational relationships have been divided into four groups namely classic, special, mega and nano relationships. These four groups can be classified into two broad categories namely, **Market and Non-market relationships**. Market relationships are the relationships that exist between customers, competitors, suppliers and all other groups or aspects that directly contribute to a market's operations. On the other hand, non-market relationships encompass all other organisations that do not directly influence market relationships. (Gummesson, 2002)

Egan (2004, 35-38) took a different approach in his categorization of relationships. He identified four categories based on the parties involved, the knowledge base, the amount of motivational investments committed and the level of the relationship. The four relationship levels identified are: **Organisational, Learning, Motivational investments and Higher-level relationships**.

### **2.3 B2B marketing communications**

One of the main objectives of business organisations is to make profit through sales to customers. To make the sales, an organisation needs to be able to fulfill its marketing objective of identifying and satisfying customers' needs effectively and for this to happen, there needs to be a communication link between the organisation and its customers. This has made marketing communication an important concept in both B2B and B2C markets. Furthermore, Fill & Fill (2005) also pointed out that the need to establish and maintain suitable relationships and the duty to inform customers of their products and services are valid reasons why organisations need effective communication. Hence, B2B marketing communication provides a means by which an organisation communicates with other organisations in relation to itself, its products, services and brand, with the intention to create dialogues and develop relationships. (Fill & Fill 2005, 268-269)

### **Channel-based marketing communications**

Fill and Fill (2005, 288-289) had stated that a combination of four aspects of communication gave rise to a channel-based communication strategy. These four aspects are frequency, direction, modality and content.

### **Frequency**

Too much information in terms of recurrence or total volume can burden the audience and have a negative effect on them, however too little or erratic information dissemination can also damage the prospects for favourable results. Consequently, it is important for management to assess and decide on the desired levels of communication.

### **Direction**

This refers to the path of communication in a communication network. This could be unidirectional a largely one way communication (usually where one organisation is much more powerful than the other) or bidirectional where the communication flow is a two process (equally powerful organisations).

### **Modality**

This refers to the method used to disseminate information. This can be either formal and regulated or planned examples being meetings and written information or informal and spontaneous.

### **Content**

This signifies the actual message or what is being said. This can be in various forms but it needs to be relevant and valuable to the receiver in order to achieve any desired objective.

### **Relationship-based marketing communications**

As relationship evolves into different stages, marketing communications can perform different yet important roles at each stage. These roles could be to differentiate, reinforce, inform or persuade. (Fill & Fill, 2005, 293)

Table 2: Relationship roles of marketing communications

<b>Relationship stage</b>	<b>Role of marketing communications</b>
Acquisition	Differentiation to establish position Information about product features and organisational credentials Persuasion to stimulate behavioural action
Development	Organisation becomes more open Differentiation and information provision Boundaries of relationship become more established.

Retention	Knowledge provision and information sharing becomes more regularised and a common part of the relationship. Reinforcement messages based on reinforcing and reminding are used to provide trust and commitment and support relationships.
Decline	Discrete relationships resort to persuasion in order to extract the remaining value from relationship.

Source: *Business to Business marketing: relationships, systems and communications* (Fill & Fill, 2005, 293)

## 2.4 Content Marketing

According to the Content Marketing Institute (CMI), “Content marketing is a marketing technique of creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action”. (Content marketing institute, <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/what-is-content-marketing/> retrieved 14.06.2013)

Content marketing is an ongoing process with the intention of enhancing or changing consumer behaviour. The main idea of content strategy is that when organisations give consistent and valuable information to customers, they (the organisations) will eventually be rewarded in turn with the customers’ loyalty and business. (Content Marketing institute, retrieved 14.06.2013)

Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2012) shared a similar view to the above definition of content marketing pointing out that its aim is to engage and then encourage customer interaction or action. The features below can be garnered from their definition of content marketing:

Content marketing can be in plain text, rich media, audio or video formats;

Its aim is to engage customers and prospects;

It can be channeled through different platforms;

It is not only static but also dynamic thereby encouraging interaction.

(Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2012, 44)

## **Features of a good Content**

### Compelling message

For any online or digital marketing endeavour to succeed, the content has to be compelling. Compelling content creates results. In fact to buttress the importance of content in digital marketing, Frick, (2010) stated that “*compelling content is at the heart of any online strategy*”. The captions of the messages for example email newsletters should draw attention and interest and not be too long. Compelling messages help drive traffic to websites. Frick (2010, 5)

### Context

With the array of digital devices now available to consumers, it is important for content creators to know the platform on which the messages they create will be delivered. This is a way in which content creators can write for people while keeping the machine in mind. The specifications for the channel or platform of delivery be it mobile, or web should be considered. Uniform resource locator (URL) structure that is friendly to search engines should be created. The right file format should be selected as well as the right way to encode the message for maximum user experience. All the peculiarities or distinctive features of each platform should be maximized to full advantage. Messages with tiny text on mobile phones no matter how appealing they appear can be a frustrating experience to the users they are being delivered to as against a message with more legible texts. Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2012, 43-56)

### Relevant

A beautifully well-crafted message or content will be worthless if it is not directed at or received by the customers to whom it is useful and relevant. It is simply tantamount to a waste of resources by the organization creating the content, as the return will be none. This situation can be avoided by listening and understanding to the users for whom the messages are meant. A simple market research or listening to the online community, for example ones customers, competitors customers and blogs then responding to them by creating contents they want to see or hear. Frick (2010, 6-7)

### Consistent

The effectiveness of contents should be consistent and convey a sense of professionalism. It is not enough to write an inspiring and useful content at the beginning only to allow it become lack-luster and with different voices much later. Users are always looking for the right content online

either for entertainment or education and they will stay with the ones they deemed best for only as long as they thought it to be so. Frick (2010, 9)

#### Creative

Contents just like a product or an organization must constantly and continually evolve in order to remain relevant. Regular updates with fresh contents are necessary for driving traffic. Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2012, 57-75)

#### Actionable

The goal of creating contents is not just to make the target audience simply consume the content, but to also ensure that they (the audience) are engaged and they take action. The particular action which a content seek from its audience should be one that fits into the main objective or goal of an organisation for performing marketing and creating the content. The goal could be to make more sales, to create and maintain customer relationships or to create awareness.

The particular action required of the audience could be to share the content, to download a file or request for more information about an organisation or its products or services. Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2012, 57-90)

#### Nature

Are contents only text or do they have videos, images, PDF or Flash. A long winding text might not be so appealing to most users especially decision makers to whom time is of great value. There is the need to be brief. The nature of the content created would improve its reception by users. Images and videos could be put to effective use for the purpose of brevity. A picture it is said is worth a thousand words. Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2012, 43-44)

## **2.5 Digital Marketing**

Digital Marketing is the use of the Internet and other digital devices for marketing purposes. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, (2012, 10) had defined it as *“the application of the internet and related digital technologies in conjunction with traditional communications to achieve marketing objectives”*. Computers (both laptops and desktops), tablets and mobile phones are examples of digital technologies. Digital marketing encompass a wide area of marketing that uses technology in one way or the other and it comprises Web or online Advertising, Mobile Advertising, social media marketing, managing company online presence, e-mail marketing and partnering with other web-

sites. In digital Marketing, communications with customers are aided by interactive services and content. These communications are realized via different digital technology platforms. Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2012, 12-13)

Additionally, Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2012) identified 3 main types of media channels that marketers need to pay attention to in the formulation of digital marketing strategy and influencing potential customers' online. These three types of media are: **owned**, **earned** and **paid** media. According to them, Owned media is media owned by the organisation's brand and it includes: websites, Blogs and social presence; earned media comprise of publisher editorial, influencer outreach and word-of-mouth, while the paid media covers paid search, display advertisements and affiliate marketing.

## 2.6 Digital Marketing Channels

### Search Engine Marketing

Search Engine Marketing is the promotion of an organisation or brand in search engines through the attainment of a high position in search engine results pages (SERPs). This is achieved by ensuring that the organization or brand is ranked high on the SERPs when a range of relevant keywords are searched for by users and encouraging them to click through to a destination site. The aim of search engine marketing (SEM) is to increase the visibility of an organization or brand in the search engine results pages (SERPs) and encourage click through. The two key techniques of search Engine marketing are **search engine optimization** (SEO) which is done to improve results from the natural or organic listings i.e. the main search result section on a search engine and **paid-search marketing**, which uses pay-per-click (PPC) to deliver results from the sponsored listings within search engines. Paid searches are paid for by the organization making the advertisements based on the number of clicks the advertisement gathers, while for the search engine optimization; there are no charges for clicks generated from the search engine. It is not uncommon that when customers either businesses or individuals seek a product or service, they turn to the computer to search. Thus, it is not surprising if organisations devote a lot of resources to search engine marketing to enhance their online presence and visibility.

### Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is the process of attracting website traffic or attention via social media sites. The aim is to reach and engage current and potential customers. Its focus is usually on the creation of contents that appeals to readers and encourages them to share it with others in their



networks. Therefore, social media marketing is a form of marketing driven by word-of-mouth and resulting in earned media and not paid media. It can also be used as a medium for traditional broadcast where organisations send out messages to its customers. There are currently a lot of social media networks with some having generic focus while others have specific focus or communities. Some of the notable social media networks are Facebook, Foursquare, LinkedIn, Orkut, Tumblr and Twitter, with Facebook being the most common social media marketing channel today.

#### Online Public Relations

This is the management of the awareness, understanding and reputation of an organisation or brand, primarily achieved through influencing exposure in the media. Online public relations have the capability to facilitate faster and more effective PR by driving online visibility of press release to various websites and blogs. It involves maximizing of positive comments of an organization as well as responding swiftly to the negative comments. Online public relations generate favourable mentions of an organisation, its products, brand or website on third-party websites that are presumed to be visited by its targeted audience. By so doing, online PR will be used to raise the awareness of a brand, product or organisation and generate backlinks important to a company's Search Engine Optimization (SEO) effort. Dave Chaffey (2008, 305) had identified that online PR consists of four areas namely: attracting visitors through search, engaging and dialoguing with the visitors, building campaign buzz and coming up with defensive/crisis responses.

#### Online Advertising and interactive displays

Display advertisements are paid advert placements using graphical or rich media as units within a web page to achieve goals of delivering brand awareness, familiarity, favourability and purchase intent. Many advertisements encourage interaction through prompting the viewer to interact or rollover to play videos, complete an online form or to view more details by clicking through to a site. Interactive displays in online advertising can be in the form of banner ads, sponsorships or pop-ups.

#### Email Marketing

Email marketing is simply the sharing of marketing content over email. Email marketing can be used to strengthen the relationship between an organisation and its current customers as well as reach and acquire new customers. The emails sent are usually used to advertise, solicit sales,

build customer loyalty or brand awareness. Professional email marketing should have the following characteristics:

- Be written with immense attention, professionalism and checked for errors;
- Be requested by the recipients or consented to receiving it (opt-in);
- There should be an option for the recipients to decline further emails if the need arises (opt-out);
- Conform to regulations and requirements (note that there could be regional or country specific requirements especially if the business seeks to attract customers internationally).

The most distinguishing feature of professional email marketing from spam could be said to be opt-in. Perhaps the problems associated with spamming especially the frustration and dissatisfaction of customers have been one of the main reasons why organisations needed to create opt-in email marketing. The problems related with spamming have given rise to new regulations on data protection with opt-in requirement. The major regulation in this category is the 2002/58 Directive on Privacy and Electronic Communications of the European Union. Although this law serves as a complement to the data protection Directive existing before it and has since been amended by Directive 2009/136.

(Liana technologies, <http://www.lianatech.com/news/liana-technologies-blog/article/the-era-of-spam-is-over.html>, retrieved 17.06.2013)

### Online partnership

Online partnership is a symbiotic arrangement that consists of affiliate marketing, online sponsorships, co-branding and link-building. It proclaims that parties (mainly organisations) perform marketing tasks in common for mutual benefits. In link building for example, an organisation can ask partners (suppliers or customers) to place the link to its website on their websites while it also do the same for such organisations in return. This would help the organisation in link building.

### Affiliate Marketing

Affiliate Marketing is a commission based arrangement where referring sites (publishers) receive a commission on sales or leads. It is a performance-based marketing in which an organisation ("merchant" or "retailer") signs up individuals or companies ("publishers" or "affiliates") who market the company's brand or products for a commission. Good affiliate options open to an organisation could be bloggers, review sites, and other field experts. Affiliate marketing is usually used

to promote websites whereby the referrer (affiliate) will be rewarded for visitors, subscribers or customers acquired through its efforts. If effectively executed, affiliate marketing is a useful tool for customer acquisition.

#### Blogs and other Online Publications

Online publications are publications, which are formatted and generated in an electronic environment. They can come in various forms such as HTML or PDF formats. One of the advantages of this type of marketing channel is that the publications are available nearly any time to the users and there are no printing or mailing costs. Another name for this channel is electronic publications. A Blog is an example of online publication but with few distinctive feature of its own. A blog can be defined as "*A frequent, chronological publication of personal thoughts and Web links*". (Marketing terms.com, retrieved, 17.05.2013) It can also be simply a journal or diary that is made available on the web. It can be created and maintained by one or several persons or an organisation. Some organisations usually create regular blogs mainly on their websites on particular subjects or topics they feel will be of interest to potential customers. They use this medium to attract target customers and sometimes advertise their company's product to them.

### **2.7 The United Arab Emirates (UAE)**

With a population of about 8 million (2010 estimate) and a culturally diverse society with expatriates from diverse backgrounds and languages making up more than 50% of the population, the UAE stands out as the most welcoming nation to foreigners in the Middle East. Unlike most countries in the Middle East, the UAE is not just a tourist destination, but could also be a religious or business destination. In the UAE, even though Arabic is the official language, English is however considered the language of business and it is widely spoken. Modesty in dressing is expected as well as patience in doing business or negotiating deals in the UAE. Generally, the subject matter of business deals is rarely discussed at first meetings, as these meetings are usually spent on small talks. The first couple of meetings are used in establishing relationships and gaining the trust of the Emirati. All year round, there are an astounding number of conferences, tradeshows and exhibitions in the UAE. As a matter of fact, the UAE's share of exhibitions in the whole gulf cooperation council is more than half and these events cut across various industries.

(Morrison T. & Conaway W., 2011, 231-234)

Also, noteworthy of Emiratis is the identified main expectations of Arab audiences during presentations stated to be personal touch, rhetoric, liveliness and eloquence with welcomed interruptions. This is in contrast to the expectations of Finish audiences who will be looking out for modernity, quality, technical information and modesty. (Lewis, 1999, 105) However, despite these differences, Lewis (1999) noted that Arabs would still welcome associates who are without the perceived arrogance of western nations.

### **Digital Marketing in the UAE**

In the UAE as well as in other Arab countries, online advertising is very low and most advertising still go through traditional marketing channels. This is partly due to the fact that broadband penetration is still low when compared to the western world and the majority of the online community is made up of the youth. This is not to say that the rate of broadband penetration is not improving in fact it is growing quite well. In fact, the UAE has one of the highest broadband growth rates in the Middle East. And as broadband penetration increases both in the region and the country, it is expected to in turn cause strong increase in internet usage development. Also, the benefits of search have not been fully taken advantage of, as it is not yet developed largely due to lack of awareness of its value. (Arab media outlook 2009-2013, 67-69)

### **3 RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS**

This chapter will attempt to present to the reader the methods used for collecting the required data used in conducting this research as well as analyzing them.

#### **3.1 Methodology**

The research is both quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative aspect focuses on using pre-designed analytical tools to measure and generate statistical details about the effectiveness of the organisation's present marketing channels. On the other hand, the qualitative part seeks to explore and identify why some channels might be more suitable than others and address such areas that may not have been captured or omitted by the quantitative research. This is especially with regard to the marketing channels not currently or marginally in use by the organisation.

The commissioner's digital marketing channels examined are as follows; twitter, email newsletters, and search engine marketing. These channels are the ones currently in use by the organisation for its marketing activities. The tools used in examining these channels are Google Analytics, Bitly, keyword searches and LianaMailer.

#### **3.2 Data gathering method**

The articles used in the quantitative researches were created between the months of April and June 2013. The email newsletters and tweets are also from the same time period as well. Hence, in the data analysis part of this research, the month of April represents the first month or period; May represents the second month while the third month is represented by June. The author had taken part in the creation of these articles which also always form the basis of the email newsletters. The reason for using the articles created in this period was because the themes for these articles were specifically agreed upon earlier by the marketing team as the current direction to take for this particular market being research.

Five articles, five email newsletters and ten tweets were examined and analysed for the purpose of this research. The articles and tweets used were selected on a simple random basis.

#### **Primary data**

The commissioner currently uses various tools in measuring its marketing activities. Some of these tools measure parameters that are unique to a marketing channel. These tools will be used

for measuring and analysing the marketing channels. Also, interviews were conducted with a few digital marketing practitioners.

#### Secondary data

Furthermore, desktop research was conducted in order to corroborate the quantitative data gathered. The interviews and desktop research help expatiate further on some aspects of consumer behaviour of the target market.

#### Twitter

In online marketing as well as in twitter, “clicks” is an important metric measured. This is because it suggests how many of the targeted audience really have an interest in the content posted. Hence, clicks are a major component in the analysis of the commissioner's marketing activities in twitter. But mere clicks are not enough; therefore, further analysis was made to determine the origins of the clicks as well as observing variations if any, over the period under survey. Also, a comparative study and analysis was done between tweets in Finnish, targeted at audiences in the Finnish market, where the commissioner's business is already established and tweets in English which was targeted at English speaking audiences including that of the Emirati Market. Also noteworthy is the fact that the tweets are only those tweets for contents generated internally within the commissioner's organisation and do not include retweets that takes the audience to other websites.

Another data briefly examined was the “saves”. The saves represent how many users have saved, as a bitmark, the long URL of the webpage which the commissioner wants the audience to read by clicking on a link (the shortened version of the URL) in twitter, possibly for onward sharing to others via a social network or file for personal usage. A bitmark is a URL that is saved like a smart bookmark and filed in a bitly profile, with attached data such as clicks, saves and shares. Buck, S. (2012). Retrieved 25.06.2013 from <http://mashable.com/2012/05/30/new-bitly-how-to/>

#### Email Newsletters

In email newsletters, the important metrics measured are Bounce Rate, Unsubscribe Rate, Open Rate, Click through Rate and Conversion Rate. Perhaps the most important metric of all is Click through rate. Monitoring email Click through rate is at the centre of email marketing analytics,

because it shows the relevance of the message sent and how convincing any offer or call to action is.

While the Open rate of a newsletter might be important for revealing the interest in the sender and subject lines of the email, there are some flaws associated with it that can make it an unreliable metric when it comes to measuring recipient's real interest in an organisation's email marketing campaign. This error is as a result of the way in which the number of opened emails is tracked which is via the download of a certain pixel of an image embedded in the email sent. Therefore, when the pixel that the software counts fails to download from the web into a recipient's email reader, even if the recipient have opened and read the email, it will not count as opened. This would usually occur if recipients' mail systems block images or the messages are opened on mobile devices that use text formats by default, as this does not download the images in emails.

Volpe, M. (2008) <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/4214/Email-Open-Rate-Metrics-Why-Falling-Why-Unreliable.aspx> Assessed 25.06.2013

#### Google analytics

Google analytics is a free tool for analyzing web traffic. It can help an organisation to identify which pages are most important to their clients and prospective clients. It shows an organisation what drives the most traffic and makes the most money for the organisation. It can reveal among other things the visitors' information for example location and new or returning visitor as well as source of traffic e.g. search engines, emails or from other websites. It can also disclose the kind of content or information people looked at on the organisation's webpage i.e. what pages on an organisation's website are looked at, the ones with the highest views and ones with highest bounce rates.

There are four main traffic sources in Google analytics and they are: Search traffic, referral traffic, direct traffic, and campaigns.

Search traffic is traffic from search engines. They are the traffic resulting from visitors clicking on an organisation's link from search engine results. Search traffic could originate from two sources; organic or paid.

Referral traffic is a traffic originating from a link from another site.

Direct traffic results from someone typing an organisation's URL into a browser. It could also come from a bookmark.

Campaign traffic can come from various sources like social media share, banner ads, emails newsletters etc or any other source designated as such. In the case of the commissioner, the email newsletters have been designated as campaigns.

<http://www.bluecloudsolutions.com/blog/google-analytics-explained/> Assessed 25.06.2013.

### 3.3 Data Analysis and Results

#### Total number of tweets

The total numbers of tweets in English for the three periods examined were 4, 7, and 4 respectively. This represents 27, 46 and 27% of the total tweets respectively. While the figures for tweets in Finnish were 6, 3 and 6 representing 40, 20 and 40 respectively for the same periods (Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3: Total number of Tweets (English)

Period	N	%
1	4	27
2	7	46
3	4	27
Total	15	100

Table 4: Total number of Tweets (Finnish)

Period	n	%
1	6	40
2	3	20
3	6	40
Total	15	100

Note that the figures for both tables 1 and 2 represent only the tweets for contents generated internally within the commissioner's organisation.

#### Total number of clicks

The total numbers of clicks for tweets in English for the three periods examined were 10, 35, and 7 respectively. This represents 19, 67 and 14% of the total clicks for tweets respectively. While for the same periods, the figures for the clicks of tweets in Finnish were 93, 89 and 148 representing 28, 27 and 45 respectively (Tables 5 and 6).



Table 5: Total number of Clicks (English)

Period	N	%
1	10	19
2	35	67
3	7	14
Total	52	100

Table 6: Total number of Clicks (Finnish)

Period	n	%
1	93	28
2	89	27
3	148	45
Total	330	100

#### Click Tweet ratio

The total average click per tweet ratio for tweets in English is 3.4:1 while that of the tweets in Finnish is 22:1 (Table 7).

Table 7: Click Tweet ratio

Period	English	Finnish
1	5:2	31:2
2	5:1	89:3
3	7:4	74:3
Average Ratio	3,4:1	22:1

#### Most popular tweets by Period

In the first period examined for posts in twitter, it was found that the most popular tweet gathered 5 clicks and 1 save for tweets in English, while the most popular Finnish tweet gathered 34 clicks and 2 saves. The topic that was most popular among readers in English was about pictures in Newsletters. The second period posted a better result for the English tweets with the most popular tweet gathering 9 clicks and 1 saves among the audience. The result also reveals that there were tweets with 8, 5 and 3 clicks with 2, 1 and 3 corresponding saves respectively posted in English for the second period. Whereas the most popular Finnish tweet collected 37 clicks and 2 saves and it also appeared in the second period. The most popular topic for the English readers was about Email spam while other similarly popular topics include how to grow an email list, an

ecommerce post about reasons for “shopping cart abandonment” and a career as a Chief Marketing Technology Officer.

In the third period, the English tweet with the highest number of clicks was about ways to compose and send newsletters boasting 3 clicks and 2 saves while the Finnish tweet with the highest number of clicks accumulated 29 clicks and 2 saves (Tables 8 & 9).

Table 8: Most popular tweets by Period (tweets in English)

Period	Topic	n	%
1	Pictures in newsletters	5	29
2	Email spam	9	53
3	Composing & sending a newsletter	3	18
Total		17	100

Table 9: Popular tweets by Period (Finnish)

Period	Topic	n	%
1	Advertising and high quality content	34	34
2	E-commerce	37	37
3	E-commerce measurement	29	29
Total		100	100

#### Geographic distribution of clicks for tweets in English

With regards to the geographical origin of clicks of the tweets in English it was found that the most number for a single location which is 7 (13%) came from Finland followed by that of the UAE which is 5 representing 10%. Other nationalities like the UK, USA, Italy, the Netherlands and Denmark make up a combined total of 10 clicks representing 19%. The remaining clicks make up an invalid figure of 30 clicks an example of this are clicks from the commissioner’s office (Table 10).

Table 10: Geographic distribution of clicks for tweets in English

Location	N	%
Finland	7	13
UAE	5	10
Others	10	19

Email newsletters:

#### Delivery rate

The total mailing recipient list for the Emirati Market shows 168, 252 and 951 for the first, second and third periods respectively. Of these newsletters mailed, 159, 236 and 922 were successfully delivered representing 95%, 94% and 97% of the total sent respectively. Therefore the bounce rates are 5%, 6% and 3% respectively for the three periods (Table 11).

Table 11: Email Newsletter delivery rate

Period	N	%
1	159	95
2	236	94
3	922	97
Total	1317	

#### Open rate (OR)

When the number of recipients who opened the newsletters sent was observed, it revealed that 27 recipients representing 17% of successful deliveries opened the newsletters in the first period, 55 recipients representing 23% opened them in the second period while 194 recipients representing 21% did the same in the third period. Comparing with a mailing list of similar size, in the Finnish market, for the same periods, show open rates of 24, 24 and 23 percent (Table 12).

Table 12: Open rate

Period	N	OR (%)	Finnish Market OR (%)
1	27	17	24
2	55	23	24
3	194	21	23
Total	276		

#### Click through rate (CTR)

With regards to the click through rate, showing how many of the recipients actually clicked on the links in the newsletters, 6 recipients (4%) clicked on links in the first period, 16 (7%) clicked in the second period while 40 (4%) acted similarly in the third period. The clicks referred to here is the number of unique clicks only and does not include multiple clicks by the same recipient. When

compared to mailing lists of a similar size, in the Finnish market, for the same periods, the click through rate for the Finnish Market list shows a corresponding 2, 2 and 10 percent (Table 13). This result revealed that the average CTR for the UAE market which is 5% for the three periods under consideration is slightly higher than that of the average CTR for the Finnish market with 4.67%. Note that the Finnish market has a similar mailing list size and the results considered are for the same periods.

Table 13: Click through rate

Period	N	CTR (%)	Finnish Market CTR (%)
1	6	4	2
2	16	7	2
3	40	4	10
Total	62		

Google Analytics:

#### Overall Traffic Source

In all, 3472 visits to the organisation's website were recorded for the entire period under consideration and the overall traffic source shows that 33% of all traffic originated from Search Traffic while 32% representing 1121 people originated from Referral Traffic. The figure for Direct Traffic was 1060 people signifying 30% of all traffic and 160 people representing 5% of all traffic came from Campaigns (Table 14).

Table 14: Total traffic source

Traffic source	N	%
Search Traffic	1131	33
Referral Traffic	1121	32
Direct Traffic	1060	30
Campaigns	160	5
Total	3472	100

This shows that more people are visiting the company website and knowing about its services online, through the search boxes of search engine pages than they are doing through referrals from other sites or by searching through typing URLs directly into the search bar of browsers.

#### Traffic source by period

A further breakdown of the traffic sources by period revealed that 38% of all traffic sources were from referral Traffic, 31% were from Search traffic and 31% from direct traffic sources for the first period. There were 440, 382 and 414 searches for Referral Traffic, Search Traffic and Direct Traffic sources respectively for the second period while the third period indicated that the most traffic source was Search traffic with 40% followed by Direct Traffic with 29% and Referral Traffic with 22% (Table 15, 16 & 17).

Table 15: Traffic source by period: period 1

Traffic source	N	%
Search Traffic	402	31
Referral Traffic	487	38
Direct Traffic	392	31
Campaigns	0	0
Total	1281	100

Table 16: Traffic source by period: period 2

Traffic source	N	%
Search Traffic	382	29
Referral Traffic	440	33
Direct Traffic	414	31
Campaigns	89	7
Total	1325	100

Table 17: Traffic source by period: period 3

Traffic source	N	%
Search Traffic	347	40
Referral Traffic	194	22
Direct Traffic	254	29
Campaigns	71	8
Total	866	100

### Search traffic source (organic and paid)

A further breakdown of the search traffic source reveals that of the total search traffic figure of 1131, 101 visits representing 9% of total search traffic are from paid sources while 1030 are from organic search sources (Table 18).

Table 18: Breakdown of search traffic source

Search traffic	N	%
Organic	1030	91
Paid	101	9
Total	1131	100

### Geographical distribution of source of traffic

A detailed look at the visitors to the organisation's pages revealed that 1422 visitors representing 41% of the total visitors came from Finland, 869 representing 25% came from the UAE while 210 representing 6% visited from the China (Table 19).

Table 19: Traffic source Location (Top 5 only)

Location	Visits (n)	%
Finland	1422	41
UAE	869	25
China	210	6
UK	187	5
USA	163	4

The table above shows some degree of popularity and interest from the market considering the population of the UAE (less than 10million). The UAE was able to beat China; another country in which the organization operates into securing second place, despite the latter's teeming population and market size.

### Page visits

The average number of pages visited or viewed by visitors from the UAE was 3.86 per visits, while the 1422 visitors from Finland visited an average of 4.95 pages each. It was also observed that the Finish visitors stayed longer on the web pages than visitors from other countries. The average time spent on the organisation's page by visitors from Finland was 5 minutes and 45 seconds, while that of the visitors from the UAE was 2 minutes and 17 seconds (Table 20).

Table 20: Location and Page visits

Location	Pages/visits (n)	New visits (%)	Average visit duration (min: sec)
Finland	4.95	33	05:45
UAE	3.86	79	02:17
China	3.79	60	02:32
UK	3.11	73	02:17
USA	2.82	75	02:07

#### Page content Information

Of the over 14,600 page views, 11,000 are unique page views, while Information about the organisation's products and information about the company are at the top of the search pages viewed the most.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

The research shows that twitter is a very important marketing tool in the UAE and the organisation will do well by ensuring more original content are produced in this channel. However, there are challenges to be to be faced and overcome; like the dynamic nature of this tool which needs to be carefully monitored, analyzed and taken advantage of. It should be remembered that a great number of tweets are produced each second of each day and as such the organisation needs to be able to identify the right time and day to send its tweets to reap maximum benefits.

The organisation's top priority with regards to marketing is to make sales. If the commissioner is to ensure that marketing euros spent are bringing in returns in form of sales, there should be a way to directly link sales to specific marketing efforts. This will help to show how rewarding certain online marketing campaigns and channels are. It can also reveal interesting data such as showing the gap between the clients that became "hot leads" and eventual sales made from such leads over a certain period of time.

Like in most developing markets where trust and competence is of greater concern, relationship marketing is key for this market and as such should form a major part of the commissioner's marketing strategy. Also, one of the findings identified is the lack of awareness of the marketing practitioners in the market that they will need to use some digital marketing tools. Therefore for the commissioner to achieve its main marketing objectives, it will need to tailor some of its marketing efforts towards educating the market.

The results gathered from the source of traffic to the organisation's website had shown that there are more visitors to the website from search engine page searches. This search source is independent of the organisation's searches originating from newsletter campaigns which have been categorized under the heading "campaigns". Likewise, searches or visits originating from other websites which are collectively referred to as "Referral Traffic" could be said to be independent of the Search traffic source to some extent. Both these traffic sources (Campaigns and Referral) are not only online traffic sources but also major ones for the organisation. Therefore it could be inferred that a lot of the search traffic are resulting from traditional offline marketing campaigns like tradeshows, word of mouth or advertisement in print or electronic media which are serving as catalyst or support for search engine traffic sources independent of other online sources. Another



search source similar to search traffic in terms of being mostly independent of other online sources and relating to offline sources is direct traffic and constitute 63% of all searches for the data observed. Of course some of this traffic could as well be as a result of campaigns seen from newsletters or in other websites, but they were not resulting from a direct link clicked on from these other online channels. This probably demonstrates that traditional marketing activities are offering some form of support for the digital marketing operation of the organisation.

The organisation currently collects data on current keyword searches in the case market but needs to do more when it comes to using the data especially using such keywords in the contents it produces. There is need to integrate the keyword results more into the marketing strategy in order for it to yield more returns. For instance, email marketing contents generated should make more use of identified top keywords in email marketing. Likewise, same should be done for other areas of the organisation's product or content category. Also, keywords can be combined with other keywords to form new keywords which can be used to gain higher ranking in searches. Furthermore, the commissioner can do a research into keyword searches (Keyword Research) of the UAE to know more about what people are searching for. Pandora, Google's adwords search and yahoo's keyword selection tool are examples of software that can be used.

Content timing is important especially in the case of tweets and newsletters sent out. If not well timed they could easily get lost in the crowd of thousands of information that the audience receive every day. Finally but equally important is that there might be the need to produce content in the native language of Arabic for all the channels being used or proposed for use in the market. From the research by Arab media it was observed that there is a yearning for Arab content in the country. Nevertheless, decision makers of foreign owned organisations operating in the country especially western nations would still prefer English language. In view of this, there would still be a need to continue to target this market with contents in English.

Also, the research had shown that paid search proved to be a fairly productive marketing avenue for the organisation, as it was observed to form 29% of search traffic source for the third period and 9% of total search traffic examined. It was also very visible in the top category for most online marketing search terms in the UAE. But while the organisation features prominently in the Paid search category for much of the search terms observed; it was conspicuously missing from the

first pages of organic searches. There is clearly more work to be done to improve the visibility of the organisation in this area.

#### **4.1 Recommendations**

##### Email Newsletter Marketing

With regards to the email newsletter marketing channel, it will be beneficial to be able to make some ROI measurements in future. These ROI measurements could be:

Conversion per sales rate:  $\text{Conversions or clients gained} / \text{Number of sales made}$

Sales per email sent:  $\text{No of sales made from newsletter sent} / \text{No of mails sent and delivered}$

Average Customer Conversion period: Average time it takes clients from receiving a newsletter to subscribing and becoming a customer

Total return on Digital marketing investment:  $\text{Profit made on sales} / \text{Digital Marketing cost}$

Although, it was observed that it is difficult to measure the ROI for newsletters, especially sales per mail sent OR business relationship started/generated per mail sent because the feedback channels are varied and not all can be captured via the measurement software. A client, who became interested in a product as a result of reading a newsletter, could simply pick up the phone and make a call to any of the phone numbers made available on the organisation's website or send an email for inquiries or fill the feedback form available at the end of the newsletter.

##### Webinar

Webinar is a service that makes web event or conference simultaneously available to people in different locations. Webinars can be used to engage current customers as well as subscribers to the webinar. Interesting webinar topics coupled with a good presenter will not only engage during the web conference but also help create awareness about the organisation and the webinar events. Questions asked or issues raised by participants at a particular webinar could serve as topics of discussion for future webinars. This way, participants will contribute to the organisations future marketing messages as well as the creation of products and services they would like to see in the future.

##### Wikipedia

Due to the popularity and high ranking of Wikipedia on search sites, it can be used to increase inbound links to the commissioner's website. Although it may be difficult to create a Wikipedia page that directly talks about the commissioner's organisation, this could still be achieved indi-

rectly. An example is creating a Wikipedia page on "Email marketing in Finland" or "Digital marketing in Finland", while the name and brief information about the organisation can be mentioned under a subsection in the article with the link to the company's website provided.

#### **4.2 Research questions restated**

In the beginning of this research, based on the purpose and scope, some questions were identified that the research attempt to answer. These questions are restated below:

How effective or productive is the organisation's B2B marketing communication in digital channels in the United Arab Emirate (UAE)?

What are the returns on investment for the digital channels in use?

Should some current channels be discontinued?

If some current channels are to be discontinued, which ones should they be and why?

Should the organisation use additional digital channels?

If new channels are to be used, which ones should they be and why?

With regards to the first and main research question, the results gathered from the research showed that the commissioner's digital marketing efforts in the UAE are productive but need improvement in certain areas. Consequently, suggestions are made for additional ROI measurements for email newsletters, better use of keyword searches, timing of tweets and general content timing to help improve the effectiveness of the commissioner's B2B marketing communication in the UAE.

Through the clicks in the tweets, the open and click through rates for newsletters sent and the traffic sources, breakdown of search traffic source and location of traffic source in Google analytics, the data gathered and analysed for the digital channels revealed some information about the return on investments for the channels examined and thereby answered the question on returns on investment.

The next two questions about if a marketing channel be discontinued, which ones and why if any was answered by the fact that the results also show a sustained level of (and in some cases increase) in the parameters mentioned as measured above and some others, therefore, it was not advised that these channels be discontinued even though they are not perfect yet.

However, it was suggested that the commissioner use additional channels and some of the suggested channels are Webinar and Wikipedia. These channels are selected based on their merits and believed compatibility as explained with the commissioner's line of business. This answers the last two questions.

## 5 DISCUSSION

The balance of power in marketing has been altered by digital technology. Now than ever before, there is a lot more control resting with the customers. They are increasingly managing the purchasing process, deciding on the marketing messages they see and even contribute to the development of products they would like to see in the future. Additionally, CMI had pointed out that the effectiveness of traditional marketing means is dwindling. This is because consumers have become adept at shutting off advertisements through traditional marketing be it online or offline. Nevertheless, offline marketing activities have been seen to be important to some aspects of online marketing particularly search traffic and as such, their contributions should not be ignored especially in the UAE where trade events are abound and relationships are highly valued.

Due to the ever-changing nature of the Information Technology, the internet and societies as well, the relevance of this research may not last long. However, the facts identified and put forward in this research should ensure that similar results are produced given the conditions that existed in the market examined, coupled with the current level of development and usage of digital channels and technology, and thus make this research useful.

In the course of the research, the author had been introduced to a whole new world of marketing which to him is virtually not in existence while still within the four walls of the classroom. He had experienced first-hand how digital marketing is being performed and became familiar with some of the challenges (both technological and otherwise) faced by the practitioners. Lessons had been learnt particularly with regards to content creation, content format and analytical tools. Additionally, the author is now conversant with the rise of a new role for marketers in organisation; this role is termed chief marketing technology officer (CMTO). This is a role for a new breed of marketing professionals whose responsibilities are partly that of traditional marketing and partly IT. These new marketing practitioners do have a better understand of technology than the traditional marketers and then use their expertise in technology and analytics to analyse and present market data from various channels in order to enhanced their organisation's advantage in responding to customer needs.

### 5.1 Suggested further research

This research had studied the UAE market only. It might be appealing to extend the research to other markets other than the one examined; perhaps another digitally emerging market.

Additionally, in the course of this thesis, it was discovered that for the market examined, offline marketing activities like trade shows and Exhibitions, Public Relations and an ongoing relationship could be key to achieving a successful digital marketing. In view of this, it will be interesting to study and know how, and to what extent offline marketing activities support online or digital marketing.

## REFERENCES

Alaraasakka M., & Rantahalvari I. (2011). Development Recommendations for Online B2B Marketing. (Bachelor's Thesis). Retrieved from Theseus database.

Armstrong, S. (2011). B2B Buyer decision map: Understanding decision stages. Retrieved 28.06.2013 from <http://www.brainrider.com/better-content-blog/b2b-buyer-decision-map/>

Baer, J. (n.d.). 5 Reasons Why Digital Marketing Will Thrive in the Recession. Retrieved 15.05.2013 from <http://www.convinceandconvert.com/internet-advertising/5-reasons-why-digital-marketing-will-thrive-in-the-recession/>

Berry, L. (1983). Relationship Marketing. In Berry, L. L., Shostack G. L., & Upah, G. D. (Eds.). *Emerging Perspectives on Services Marketing*. Utah: American Marketing Association.

Böringer, J., Divol, R., & Spillecke, D. (2003). ROI analytics for digital marketing. McKinsey & Company. Retrieved 15.05.2013 from [http://www.mckinsey.com/client\\_service/marketing\\_and\\_sales/latest\\_thinking/roi\\_analytics\\_for\\_digital\\_marketing](http://www.mckinsey.com/client_service/marketing_and_sales/latest_thinking/roi_analytics_for_digital_marketing)

Buck, S. (2012). How to get the most out of the new bitly. Retrieved 25.06.2013 from <http://mashable.com/2012/05/30/new-bitly-how-to/>

Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick F. (2012). *Digital Marketing: Strategy, Implementation and Practice* (5th Ed.). Essex, Pearson Education.

Chaffey, D. & Smith, P. (2008). *eMarketing eXcellence : planning and optimizing your digital marketing*. London: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Content Marketing Institute (n.d.). What is content marketing. Retrieved 14.06.2013 from <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/what-is-content-marketing/>

Dubai press club (2010). *Arab media outlook 2009-2013*. Dubai, Dubai press club.

Egan J. (2004). *Relationship Marketing: Exploring relational strategies in marketing*. (2ed). Essex, Pearson Education.

Facebook (n.d.). Company info. Retrieved 13.05.2013 from <http://newsroom.fb.com/Key-Facts>

Fill, C., & Fill, K. (2005). *Business to Business Marketing: relationships, systems and communications*. Essex, Pearson Education.

Frick T., (2010). *Return on Engagement: Content, Strategy and Design Techniques for Digital Marketing*. Oxford, Focal Press.

Garner R. (2013). *Search and Social: The Definitive Guide to Real-Time Content Marketing*. New Jersey, Wiley.

Gillin P. and Schwartzman E. (2011). *Social Marketing to the Business Customer: Listen to Your B2B Market, Generate Major Account Leads, and Build Client Relationships*. New Jersey, Wiley.

Grönroos, C. (1994a), "From marketing mix to Relationship Marketing: Towards a Paradigm Shift in Marketing". *Asia-Australia Marketing Journal*, 2

Gummesson, E. (2002). *Total Relationship Marketing: Rethinking Marketing Management: From 4Ps to 30Rs*. Oxford, Butterworth-Heinemann.

Hague P., Hague N., & Harrison M. (2009). *B2B Marketing: What Makes It Special?* B2B International. Retrieved 15. 05.2013 from <http://www.b2binternational.com/publications/b2b-marketing/>

Leake W., Vaccarello L. and Ginty M. (2012). *Complete B2B Online Marketing*. New Jersey, John Wiley & Sons.

Lewis R. D. (1999). *When Cultures collide: Leading across cultures*. London, Nicholas brealey.



Liana Technologies (2013). (Various pages). Retrieved 17.05.2013 from <http://www.lianatech.com/>

Marketing Terms (n.d.). Internet marketing glossary: Blog. Retrieved 17.05.2013 from <http://www.marketingterms.com/dictionary/blog/>

Morrison T. & Conaway W., (2011). Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands: Sales and Marketing. New York, McGraw-Hill.

Moth, D. (2003). More than half of businesses achieve 10% of sales through email marketing. Retrieved from <http://econsultancy.com/uk/blog/62716-more-than-half-of-businesses-achieve-10-of-sales-through-email-marketing>.

Statistic brain (2003). Google Annual Search Statistics. Retrieved 15. 05.2013 from <http://www.statisticbrain.com/google-searches/>

Thomas, C. (n.d.). Google Analytics Explained. Retrieved 25.06.2013 from <http://www.bluecloudsolutions.com/blog/google-analytics-explained/>

Van Weele A. (2010, 5ed) Purchasing and Supply Chain Management: Analysis, Strategy, Planning and Practice. Hampshire, Cengage learning.

Volpe, M. (2008). Email Open Rate Metrics - Why Falling? Why Unreliable? Retrieved 25.06.2013 from <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/4214/Email-Open-Rate-Metrics-Why-Falling-Why-Unreliable.aspx>

Webster, F. & Wind. Y (1972). Organisational buying behaviour. New Jersey, Prentice Hall.

Wikipedia (n.d.). Business marketing. Retrieved 15.06.2013 from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business\\_marketing#Business\\_to\\_business.28B2B.29\\_Marketing\\_Strategies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_marketing#Business_to_business.28B2B.29_Marketing_Strategies).