

A B2B Digital Marketing Plan for a Micro Design Company
Case Company: 2.Elämä Design

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<p>This product-based thesis was made for a Finnish micro design company – 2.Elämä Design. The objective of the thesis is to create a strategic B2B digital marketing plan for 2.Elämä Design in order to help its business expansion in Finland and globally. The final product of the thesis is a handbook of B2B digital marketing 2.Elämä Design could put into use in 2015.</p> <p>The author set up five project tasks in order to accomplish the thesis project. Firstly a thorough literature review on B2B digital marketing was made for a theoretical foundation for the project, as well as an up-to-date B2B digital marketing trends. Secondly, a status analysis of the case company in the current business environment was carried out, especially in a digital context. Then the author conducted primary research and benchmarking, which include qualitative interviews with B2B design companies, retailers, and digital marketing experts. The benchmarking was done mainly via desk research by studying the digital marketing activities of similar companies. The fourth task was to produce a handbook based on the key findings of research and benchmarking. Finally the author presented the handbook to the case company, made final recommendations and drew up a conclusion according to the case company's feedback.</p> <p>The thesis project was carried out from May to December 2014. Throughout the period, the author was working closely with the case company as its part-time digital marketer. The experience offered an opportunity for the author to understand the case company's situation and needs, as to observe how theories and advices of experts applied to the real case.</p> <p>The final product – a B2B digital marketing handbook was tailor-made for the case company. Practicality was the main concern. A multi-functional website, along with a social media mix are included in the initial plan recommended to the case company. The author also listed some further development ideas for the case company to consider in the future.</p>	
<p>Keywords B2B digital marketing, digital marketing strategy, digital marketing objectives, digital marketing tools, content marketing, online value proposition, web persona</p>	

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1 Introduction

This chapter is an introductory section to outline the objective and tasks to be done for this product-based thesis, as well as the background of the case company – 2.Elämä Design. The scope of the thesis and the key concepts will be explained. Meanwhile, the international aspect and anticipated benefits of the thesis will be depicted.

1.1 Background

2.Elämä Design is a Finnish micro company which designs and produces eco-friendly jewelry, accessories and home decoration made with recycled materials. Since the company's launch in 2011, products of 2.Elämä Design have earned praise in the design field in Finland. Especially the series of jewelry and accessories made of recycled rubber of bicycle and car tires became quite popular in the company's retail stores.

While Finland's GDP has been decreasing since 2012, the private consumption has dropped in 2013 and 2014 (Suomen Pankki2014a). The retail business was hit, several of 2.Elämä Design's retailers shut down their stores, the sales of 2.Elämä Design declined one third in 2014 compared to the previous year (De Vizcaya, J. September – December 2014.).The company has never had any marketing strategy, it has only relied on the retailers to promote the products. Now the owner realized that it is time to change the traditional way to sell. Meanwhile, a realistic B2B marketing plan is needed urgently in order to expand the business in Finland, and hopefully, in some other European countries.

Due to the limited budget and human resources of 2.Elämä Design, the company owner decided to use digital marketing as a starter to reach out to B2B potential clients in Finland and around the world. Digital marketing has been taken into a much more careful consideration in B2B sector in recent years (McLaren 2012). There is much debate on the effectiveness of digital marketing for B2B purposes, especially through some channels such as social media. The author and the case company are willing to study the topic and develop a practical plan.

This project was initiated by the author during her marketing specialization work placement at 2.Elämä Design.

1.2 Project Objective and Tasks

The objective of this thesis is to create a B2B digital marketing handbook for the case company in order to help it to establish their brand, reach out to potential B2B clients in Finland and in the international markets. A B2B digital marketing handbook, as the final product of the thesis, serves as a guideline on managing digital marketing tools for the case company. Below is the description of project tasks (PTs), followed by Table 1 showing allocation of tasks in the thesis.

PT1: Literature review on B2B digital marketing (chapter 2). This task is to examine the textbooks, journals and internet for the theories, studies and surveys on B2B digital marketing. It covers the classic marketing theories, as well as the latest trends on the digital marketing. The result of PT1 is to have a clear definition and objectives of B2B digital marketing, thus give a solid theoretical foundation for the project.

PT2: Case company status analysis in digital context (chapter 3). This task is to analyze the case company's current situation in the business environment, particularly in digital context, such as digital-specific SWOT analysis, segmentation and positioning, and online value proposition. The result of PT2 is to set up digital marketing objectives and goals for the case company.

PT3: Qualitative research and benchmarking on B2B digital marketing (chapter 4). This task is to conduct qualitative interviews with business owners and marketing professionals. In the meantime, some companies will be analyzed for benchmarking for their usage of digital marketing tools respectively. The result of PT3 is to have a holistic and realistic view on B2B digital marketing in today's business environment. The findings are the basis for the strategic B2B digital marketing plan for the case company.

PT4: B2B digital marketing handbook (attachment 1). This task is to draw an explicit and feasible digital marketing plan for the case company to use in 2015. The result of PT4 is a step-by-step manual which is easy to use.

PT5: Presentation and Feedback (chapter 5). This task is to present the handbook to the case company for feedback and discussion. The result of PT5 is to make the final recommendations and conclusion on the thesis topic according to the case company's evaluation on the handbook.

Table 1. Overlay matrix for project objective and tasks

Project objective	Project tasks	Subtasks	Output	Chapter
B2B digital marketing handbook	PT1. Literature review on B2B digital marketing		Theoretical foundation for B2B digital marketing	2
	PT2. Case company status analysis in digital context	1.1 Industrial trend watch 1.2 SWOT analysis 1.3 B2B segmentation 1.4 Value proposition	B2B digital marketing objectives and goals	3
	PT3. Qualitative research and benchmarking	2.1 Qualitative interviews 2.2 Benchmarking	Findings: Strategic B2B digital marketing plan and tools	4
	PT4. B2B digital marketing handbook		Product: Explicit and feasible plan	Attachment 1
	PT5. Presentation & feedback		Discussion & conclusion: Final recommendations and conclusion based on the case company's feedback	5

1.3 Project Design

In order to make a B2B digital marketing handbook for the case company – the final product of the thesis, the author chose to accomplish the thesis project by conducting primary research and secondary research, including benchmarking. Digital marketing is still a relatively new area of marketing, it develops quickly and constantly. Therefore it is important to include the latest information and practical real life cases in the thesis research apart from theoretical knowledge. The logic of PTs' order is to first clarify the situation of the case company, then to set up the plan according to the findings of re- search and benchmarking. Table 2 shows where and how data was collected to provide the answers for four PTs.

Table 2. Data collection for PTs

Project objective	Project tasks	Primary Data	Secondary Data
	PT1. Literature review on B2B digital marketing		books journals articles internet
B2B digital marketing handbook	PT2. Case company status analysis in digital context	Interviews with 2.Elämä Design	books journals articles internet
	PT3. Qualitative research and benchmarking	Interviews with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 2.Elämä Design – B2B sellers/designers 	books journals articles internet
	PT4. B2B digital marketing handbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – B2B buyers/retailers – digital marketing professionals 	
	PT5. Presentation & feedback	Feedback from 2.Elämä Design	

1.4 Demarcation

The scope of the thesis is a B2B digital marketing handbook tailor-made for the case company. The author and the case company agreed that a digital marketing plan is the most efficient and urgent marketing method needed in order to establish the company's brand and a B2B client network in Finland and globally. Meanwhile, upon the request of the case company, the author focussed on "not-paid for" B2B digital marketing in this thesis.

The thesis will focus on analyzing the concept and current trends of B2B digital marketing communication. Integrated marketing communication (IMC) and other important B2B marketing tools will be mentioned just briefly to emphasize why and how a B2B digital marketing plan could serve for the B2B marketing mix. The SWOT analysis, B2B segmentation and positioning will also be analyzed in digital context.

The final result of the thesis is a B2B digital marketing handbook for the case company. It includes the selected digital marketing tools and instruction on how to use them. The actual implementation will be excluded from the thesis.

1.5 International Aspect

2.Elämä Design was born in Finland. The company makes sure that the raw materials of their products are recycled and sourced locally, and the production is operated locally. In the meantime, 2.Elämä Design has a vision to expand its business internationally. Nordic countries are its prior target markets because they share similar values in ecological design and sustainable lifestyle. Other European countries such as Germany and the UK are on the top list of target markets as well, due to their leading roles in fashion industry and design business. However there will not be a country-specific marketing strategy discussed in this thesis. 2.Elämä Design's products are universal, they are designed for contemporary metropolitan life for city dwellers globally.

Digital marketing is the most efficient and feasible way for micro companies and entrepreneurial designers to market themselves. Technology could help them to reach

their potential clients all over the world without going anywhere physically. Being visible digitally is a crucial step for 2.Elämä Design to establish the brand internationally.

1.6 Anticipated Benefits

The final product of the thesis – a B2B digital marketing handbook will be a feasible and easy-to-follow guideline for the case company to implement. It will be a great start for 2.Elämä Design to try out some efficient digital marketing tools within its budget and capabilities, especially it would be the first time for it to have such a comprehensive digital marketing plan. Hopefully the case company could find more B2B clients in Finland and around the world with the help of this handbook, also gradually learns to adjust the marketing strategy during the process. The author hopes that other micro design companies and entrepreneurial designers could also benefit from this thesis to realize their digital marketing plans. This project gives the author a great opportunity to do research on B2B digital marketing and work with the case company. Hopefully the final result could demonstrate the author's capability in order to pursue further study or career in the related field.

1.7 Key Concepts

Digital marketing strategy is a plan that applies digital technology platforms for supporting marketing and business objectives (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2012, 190).

B2B digital marketing is to apply digital marketing platforms for B2B business transaction. The platforms are for e-commerce transaction, brand, services and relationship building in order to attract and retain customers. They are designed according to B2B organisational marketing and trading environment (Chaffey et al. 2012, 624-626).

Digital marketing objectives are the goals marketers shall achieve via various digital marketing tactics, which are generating brand awareness, shaping brand image and attitudes, then attracting new customers and creating loyalty (Pelsmacker, Geuens & Van Den Bergh 2013, 487).

Digital marketing tools are a number of various digital communication tools used for marketing. Almost each of them is a variation of certain traditional marketing communication tool. They work as a part of digital communication mix (Pelsmacker et al. 2013, 487-507).

Content marketing is to create and distribute relevant and valuable content consistently to attract and acquire target audience in order to pursue profit (Content Marketing Institute 2014a).

Online value proposition (OVP) is the unique selling proposition online, which connects to brand positioning. It shows web visitors what kind of company it is, what kind of products or services it offers, and how different it is from other products and services. (Smart Insights2014).

Web persona is a summary of the characteristics, needs, motivations and environment of a key type of web site user. (Chaffey 2012).

1.8 Case Company Introduction

2.Elämä Design is a Finnish company promoting ecological lifestyle through its design and products solely made of recycled materials. The products include jewelry and accessories made of rubber originating from used tires of bicycles and vehicles, home decoration made of used computer parts and fair carpets (figure 1).



Figure 1. 2.Elämä Design's jewelry made of recycled rubber

All products of 2.Elämä Design are handcrafted in the greater Helsinki area of Finland. According to the company, the innovative design starts from finding the beauty of the materials themselves, trying to utilize the materials' own characters to create new formation. There are no extra adhesives and heavy machinery used in the process of production. All products could be easily recycled again.

2.Elämä Design believes that individual consuming habit could affect environment tremendously. By producing high quality goods with the waste, the company wants to share its philosophy of sustainable lifestyle with worldwide consumers. The mission of 2.Elämä Design is to advocate innovative and sustainable design with contemporary aesthetics and social responsibility.

2.Elämä Design was founded by Jaime De Vizcaya and Yuan Long. The artistic couple holds Master of Arts degrees from Aalto University. Their Mexican and Chinese cultural backgrounds combined with Finnish design education and work experience have inspired them in the making of 2.Elämä Design products.

Since the establishment of 2.Elämä Design in 2011, the company has launched more

than twenty collections of jewelry and accessories. The retailers are high-standard and the most popular design shops in main cities in Finland, such as Design Museum shop, Paloni and Studio EM in Helsinki and Mainoa Design in Rovaniemi. 2.Elämä Design has also participated in some important design events and fairs, such as Lahti Biennale 2011, World Design Capital 2012, Trash Design in Habitare (2011-2014), Ethical Fashion Show Fair 2013 in Berlin and Ecostyle Fair 2014 in Frankfurt. In the summer of 2012, the company was selected as one of fourteen out of hundreds applicants by the committee of World Design Capital 2012 to hold a stand at the Finnish Design Market in downtown Helsinki. 2.Elämä Design has been reported about by various Finnish media outlet – Yle TV, Suuri Käsityö, Divaani, Me Naiset, New Look, and Costume. German magazines Julie and Schmuck also published stories about the company’s design (2.Elämä Design 2014a).

2 Literature Review

This chapter depicts secondary research the author conducted on B2B digital marketing. The sources include books and journals on marketing in recent years. Due to the rapid speed of the digital marketing evolution, the author took in the latest articles written by professionals working in the field, as well as reports and surveys published by marketing agencies and institutes in the internet. These sources offer opportunities to explore the current status of B2B digital marketing.

2.1 Theoretical Overview

Throughout the thesis project, the author applied various classical marketing theories and models, as well as some newly-developed and –updated digital-specific marketing concepts to justify research and findings. Figure 2 below illustrates a comprehensive theoretical framework supporting the thesis writing and project operation.

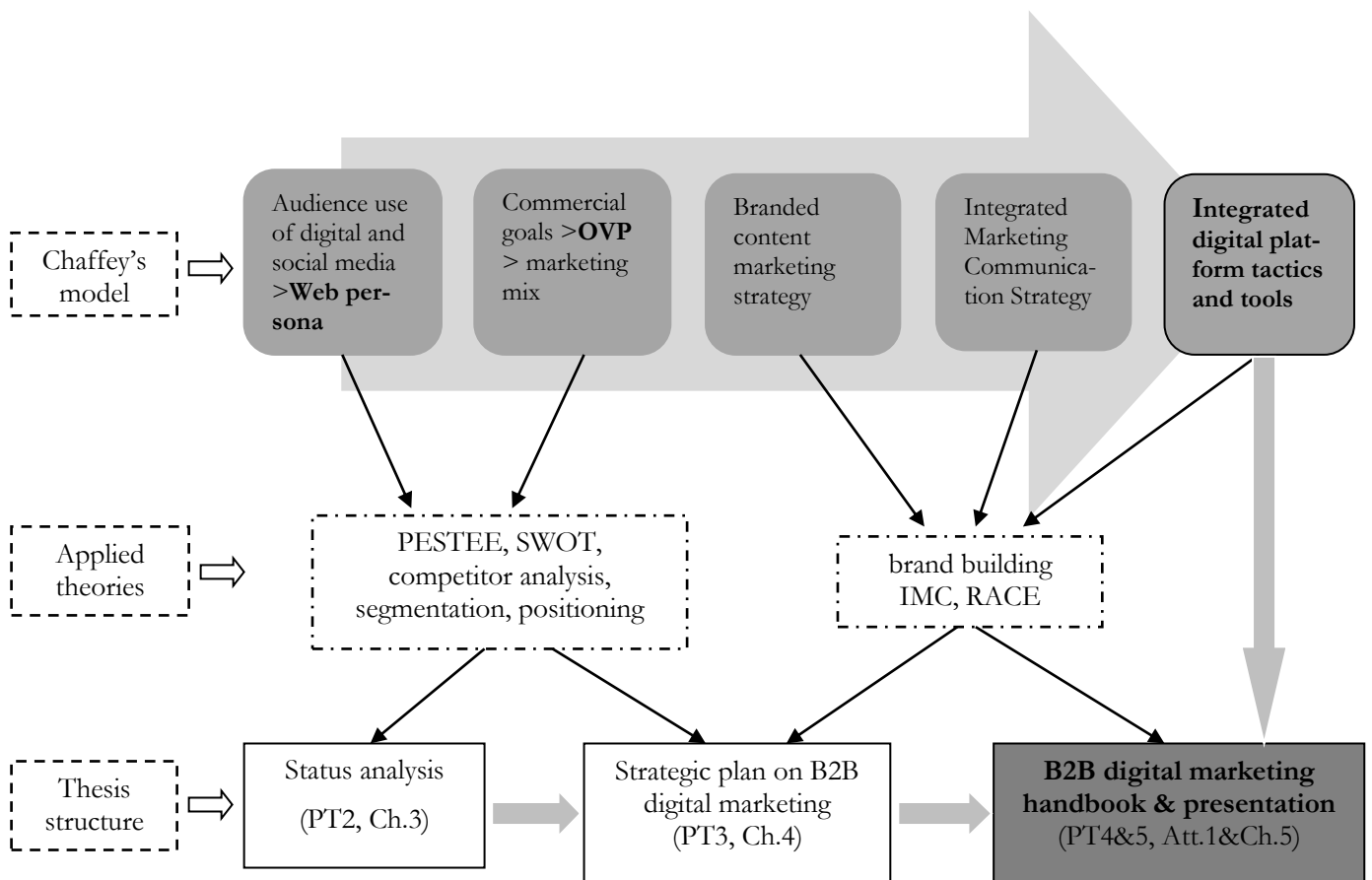


Figure 2. Theoretical framework modified by author, based on Chaffey's model (Chaffey 2013a)

Chaffey's digital marketing planning model (Chaffey 2013a) is the major theoretical guide on which the thesis structure is based on. The order of PTs is designed according to Chaffey's planning procedure. At each stage, various classic models and theories are used for analysis, such as PESTEE, SWOT, B2B segmentation and positioning, integrated marketing communication (IMC) and brand building. The classics are the foundation of newly-evolved digital marketing concepts. For instance, Web persona is based on B2B segmentation. It is to analyze the needs and motivations of target customers according to their online behaviour (Chaffey 2012). OVP (Online value proposition) is the unique selling proposition online, which connects to brand positioning. It shows web visitors what kind of company it is, what kind of products or services it offers, and how different it is from other products and services. (Smart Insights2014).

Though the focus of this thesis is on digital marketing, it is crucial to consider digital marketing as a part of IMC. According to Ellis, B2B IMC is more complex for industrial network; it pursues the maximal impact of investment, and integrates all business functions (Ellis 2011, 298). However Ellis points out that it is easier for smaller companies to adopt IMC strategies and maintain its consistency, because small companies have less bureaucracy and hierarchies. Meanwhile, digital marketing shall not only promote but also collaborate with brand building. The four elements of brand building according to Wheeler are identity, meaning, response and relationship (Wheeler 2003, 4). In the latest version, Wheeler interpreted four elements with four questions: "Who are you? Who needs to know? How will they find out? Why should they care?" (Wheeler 2014). Digital platform is especially helpful for getting response and construct relationship in order to serve brand building.

At the stage of making the actual handbook, the author selected the suitable digital tools for the case company based on RACE model developed by Smart Insights (2010). RACE is a practical framework for companies to develop their digital marketing plan; it refers to four steps of planning: Reach, Act (Interact), Convert and Engage (Chaffey et al. 2012, 28). Tools at each step could be different for various marketing purposes.

2.2 Definitions and Objectives

The concept of B2B digital marketing could be simply understood as digital marketing in B2B sector. Many marketing experts interpret the concept by explaining the various components of B2B digital marketing, instead of giving a simple definition. According to Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, B2B digital marketing could be summarized as applying digital marketing platforms for B2B business transaction. The platforms are for e-commerce transaction, brand, services and relationship building in order to attract and retain customers. They are designed according to B2B organisational marketing and trading environment (Chaffey et al. 2012, 624-626).

For e-commerce centered companies and organizations, the ultimate objective of B2B marketing is to complete the online transaction. It includes e-procurement for trading as well. B2B e-marketplace is also viewed as one kind of B2B digital marketing by Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (Chaffey et al. 2012, 624-626).

Many B2B companies do not involve e-commerce, their digital marketing is commonly known as an inbound marketing or content marketing. The objective is to support customer acquisition, conversion and retention via lead-generation. This genre of B2B digital marketing is the one most relevant to the case company and the topic of this thesis.

2.3 The Current Trends

Since the rise of digital marketing, B2B marketers seem to be always slower than B2C marketers in terms of using the latest technology. This probably is due to the complicated organizational buying behaviour in B2B sector. Word-of-mouth and referrals are still the two most important aspects for B2B marketing (McLaren 2012). However the situation has been constantly changing in the past few years. The continuous and fast launching of new technology influences digital users' behaviour dramatically and quickly. Thus it affects the decision making process on both sides of buyers and marketers in B2B business circle. Digitalization of B2B marketing is no longer an option, B2B marketers must either "go digital or go home" (Goodall 2014).

A study by Pardot (2013) shows that 72% of B2B buyers start their research on business-related products on Google, and 16% of them rely on personal networks (Brown 2013). This is evidence that internet has clearly become an important research tool for B2B buyers. Business buyers are much more multichanneled than business sellers nowadays. Apart from attending events, conferences and fairs, they receive and access information through various channels on different electronic devices. The buyer's journey is no longer like a funnel; instead, it looks like a French horn (Wizdo 2012).

It is already widely accepted that behind the B2B business buying decisions, there are people too. Marketers have adopted a more human approach to B2B marketing communication throughout the years. Some even created a new term B2i, which refers to a connection between buyers and sellers as "business to individual", instead of traditional B2B and B2C (Edmond, 2014). Noticing that marketing is getting more and more personal, marketing professionals and experts have discovered some trends on digital marketing based on research and surveys. Some might argue that the prediction is just a limited speculation, because the change in technology is so rapid that the powerful digital tools might lose their aura quickly. However the following topics are considered as key elements in B2B digital marketing in 2013 – 2015. They are the important aspects B2B marketers shall contemplate for their digital marketing plans in the near future.

2.3.1 Content Marketing

"Content is the only marketing left." Seth Godin's famous statement years ago has been quoted by so many content marketing advocates. Content marketing prevails and is predicted to grow even bigger by many experts (DeMers 2014). One kind of definition of content marketing nowadays is to create and distribute relevant and valuable content consistently to attract and acquire target audience in order to pursue profit (Content Marketing Institute 2014a). While Chaffey's definition of content marketing is about realizing business goals via publishing and managing text and multimedia content (Chaffey et al. 2012, 653), Content Marketing Institute's definition highlights the quality of content and profit.

Perhaps, the most persuasive evidence that B2B marketers should focus more on content marketing is from B2B buyers. According to Demand Gen Report's latest surveys on B2B buyers' behaviour and content preferences, for almost two-thirds of buyers, content, especially the winning vendors', influenced significantly on their buying decision. 68% of respondents were using more sources for research and evaluation than during the past year, and 40% of them waited longer to contact the vendors. Furthermore, 82% of senior executives claimed that content is a crucial driver of their buying decisions (Demand Gen Report 2014a; Demand Gen Report 2014b).

Various experts think the concept of content marketing changed the dynamic of B2B marketing, which requires a "sharing is caring" attitude instead of just "broadcasting". The key of content is story-telling, that educates or entertains audience, then engages them to get involved in brand building. The point of content is helping, instead of selling (HubSpot 2014a; Holliman & Rowley 2014, 4). People like stories that help them to find meanings and fortify their self-images. The term "Story Branding" created by Jim Signorelli sets forth the power of story-telling in branded content marketing. People will only associate themselves with the brand when the story inspires them. If a story is just to sell something obviously, or just to be told what to do, it would be difficult to be appreciated or shared (Signorelli 2014, 5). Among numerous tips of successful content creation, the young and popular YouTube and Vine video artist Zach King's 3CS is straightforward and especially useful for digital marketers. His 3CS guidelines are Curiosity, Clean and Contagious. To explain it briefly, Curiosity means to create something to invoke a sense of wonder; Clean means the content does not include anything causing censorship problems; and Contagious is to make the content cool enough for people to share. Like many other much senior experts, King also stresses the importance of brand awareness in content production and believes that "awareness is the only game in town" (Ogilvydo.com 2014).

As a matter of fact, brand awareness has been the most important goal for B2B content marketing in the last five years according to the report *B2B content marketing 2015: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends – North America*, followed by lead generation and engagement (Content Marketing Institute 2014c). Creating more engaging and high-

quality content tops number one among 28 marketing initiatives that B2B marketers are working on. The other figures that show the rising importance of content marketing for B2B marketers are: 70% of respondents said they are creating more content than during the previous year, and 55% of them said they would increase their expenditure on content marketing in the next 12 months, even including half of those who evaluated their content marketing the least effective. However, two are interesting results – compared to last year, smaller percentage of B2B marketers are using content marketing (from 94% to 86%), and smaller percentage of them rate their content marketing effective (from 42% to 38%). There could be various reasons, one could be the change of content marketing definition described in the survey. It emphasizes a more profit-driven goal instead of just creating and sharing content (Content Marketing Institute 2014c). Also, the data shows that 60% of respondents who have a documented marketing strategy rate highly on effectiveness, while only 32% of those who have a non-documented strategy. Organizations that have a dedicated content marketing group and set engagement as the most important goal are among the ones that rate their content marketing highly effective.

This could reflect a cruel fact that content marketers are facing a highly competitive situation. The audiences are just wanting more and better, and content marketing is getting more difficult. Monica Bussolati, a content design expert recently wrote a blog entry with an exaggerating title: “2014: The year that content marketing will die”. What she actually meant is that if marketers are not doing it right, it will not work. Bussolati urges content creators to analyze their target audience’s personas, set up a content strategy, create and repurpose more content, and take advantage of latest technologies (Bussolati 2014). Producing engaging content consistently with variety, measuring content effectiveness and lack of budget are B2B marketers’ biggest challenges. Content Strategy, especially the documented strategy is vital for the effectiveness. The design, selection and objectives of content creation play important roles in the final marketing result as well (Content Marketing Institute 2014c).

For B2B marketers who are still struggling with content creation, or even doubting the power of content marketing, customer strategy experts Dr. Peppers and Dr. Rogers

might offer some inspiration. They stress that non-opportunistic behaviour is a key element of content marketing strategy, apart from shared values, mutual values and quality communication (Peppers & Rogers 2011). The truly valuable content that engages the audience to share and co-create is rarely about selling products. Many B2B brands still need catch up with this approach and work harder on their content selection on different platforms.

2.3.2 Social Media

For quite a while, people used to think B2B online marketing is mainly about company website, e-commerce, or newsletter. They are still very useful tools indeed. However, according to the latest report on B2B digital marketing - *What Works Where 2014* by the British business agency Omobono, B2B digital marketing has shifted from broadcast media toward social media (Omobono 2014, 4). The similar conclusion could be found in the report *2014 B2B Small Business Content Marketing Trends, North America* by Content Marketing Institute. It shows that more and more small businesses were using social media as marketing communication tools and they did so more frequently in 2014, compared to the previous year. The biggest leap was recorded in the use of Instagram (9% - 23%). LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook were the top 3 platforms used most often by surveyed B2B small business marketers (Content Marketing Institute 2014b, 11).

B2B marketers have a much stronger preference towards using LinkedIn (33%) than Facebook (31%), Blogging and Twitter are also more important compared to their B2C peers (Stelzner 2014, 28). Only 34% of B2B marketers think their Facebook marketing is effective (Stelzner 2014, 11). The perplexity for many B2B marketers is that Facebook does not appear to be a professional place, therefore they probably should not spend too much time on it. Furthermore, the result of conventional ROI (Return on Investment) calculation, which is crucial for B2B sales, may not match the performance of Facebook marketing entirely.

To respond to such doubts, some social media advocates stressed that it is eventually the people who make the buying decisions, even for a longer and more complicated B2B buying cycle. Facebook offers an opportunity for business to have a social pres-

ence and show the personality of the business, and nurture the relationship with decision-makers, who is also a Facebooker. What really matters in Facebook marketing is “staying top-of-mind” of potential and existing customers, not selling (Miller 2012).

However, other experts believe LinkedIn should still be the focus of B2B social marketing due to its business-focused network. The B2B lead conversion on LinkedIn is three times the size of that on Facebook and Twitter, according to HubSpot research. The same research also shows that blogging is the best way for companies to boost customer acquisition (Devaney & Stein 2013). In the latest research published by Content Institute Research in October 2014, 94% of B2B marketers rate LinkedIn as the most often-used and effective social media platform (Content Marketing Institute 2014c).

For B2B buyers, web search, vendor web site and peer referrals still dominate as the sources for initial research. However, they do turn to social media for continuous research, based on *The 2014 B2B Buyer Behavior Survey*. 72% of the respondents used social media during the research process. LinkedIn is the number one choice for senior executives, while non-executives choose blogs first (Demand Gen Report 2014a). It is worth mentioning that the amount of respondents who connected directly to potential vendors via social media grew by more than 57% compared to the previous year.

Nevertheless, the growing importance of social media does not mean it fits all B2B marketers. Micro companies with limited resources should think carefully how they allocate their time and energy on social media (Bodnar & Cohen 2012, 6-7). That does not mean they should quit social media totally. Instead, they shall use their resources wisely, utilize social media to assist some more prioritized marketing activities, such as trade fairs.

Since social media turned word-of-mouth to “world of mouth” (Qualman 2011), there is no reason to not to believe that social media is beneficial for B2B marketing communication as a virtual network. In real world, people choose different venues for business meetings and gatherings. In cyber space, it is also a good idea to select one

social media channel as the main marketing platform according to the business and type of target audience. Being present on several major channels is recommended, because it helps to raise online visibility of the business. The content of various social media platforms could be slightly different without contradicting one another. One key issue of social media management is consistency. For B2B marketers, being everywhere all the time on social media is not the point, it is more important to keep the content flow in a predictable and steady pace.

Furthermore, in-person events are still rated as the most effective B2B tactic (Content Marketing Institute 2104c), social media should be integrated with traditional marketing as a part of IMC strategy. With the interactive communicating function of social media, B2B marketers could promote their physical marketing events online, gather feedback and follow up on their progress. According to Forrester research, B2B companies spend nearly 20% of their marketing budget on in-person events, such as trade fairs, conferences and seminars. It is the biggest expense of all marketing activities (Kantrowitz 2014). Therefore, it is important for B2B marketers to understand how to maximize these in-person events' marketing goals via social media.

Social media's ROI is still an ongoing debate. No matter how social media is increasingly popular in B2B sector, the question of effectiveness always lingers. While some B2B companies assess the effectiveness of their social media activities via cost per lead or customer acquisitions, some experts, such as David Dubois, suggests that a sentiment analysis and relational metrics are crucial for marketers to build for social media measurement. Dubois believes that the nature of social media made it different from other marketing channels. The comments, engagement, interaction and social sentiment generated in the online community are more vital to record and analyze than just numbers of reaches or quantity of posts. Social media's true added value will only be reflected and measured by measuring via positional and relational metrics (Dubois 2014).

2.3.3 Video Marketing

B2B video marketing is on the rise, according to the recent report *B2B Video Marketing: B2B Benchmarks & Best Practices* published by Demand Metric. 70% of B2B marketers are using video marketing, and 82% of them acknowledge the success, two third of surveyed B2B companies are investing more on video marketing (Demand Metric 2014). Content Marketing Institute's latest survey not only revealed a similar result, but also showed that video is listed as the second most effective content marketing tool, behind only in-person events (Content Marketing Institute 2014c).

Furthermore, video on a landing page could enhance customer conversion by 80% (Demand Metric 2014). Interestingly, only 19% of survey respondents view video marketing as a tool to increase conversion rate, even less (15%) of them do it for direct sales growth. On the contrary, 52% of survey participants set the most important video marketing objective as increasing brand awareness. The second and third most important objectives are increasing lead generation and online engagement, respectively.

According to Cisco, 69% of consumer internet traffic will be video by 2017 (Cisco 2014). Watching online videos has become the key way for people to learn and entertain themselves. The percentage of B2B buyers using video to do product research had a dramatic increase (8% - 58%) compared to the previous year (Demand Gen Report 2014). Youtube tops in several studies as the most effective video distribution platform (Demand Metric 2014; Content Marketing Institute 2014c). Youtube reaches more than 1 billion unique visitors each month (Youtube 2014). Back in 2009, Dr. James McQuivey of Forrester Research already said in his report that if a picture is worth 1,000 words, a one-minute video is worth 1.8 million words (TechJournal.org 2014). With the new technology and popular usage of mobile devices, the popularity of video is predicted to grow even bigger and quicker.

It is easy to understand that busy B2B decision-makers turn to video as a reference due to its brevity. However B2B video must be informative and short, meanwhile be specific enough to draw buyers' attention. The first 20 seconds are crucial. Successful video marketers use video to deliver concise business messages with more personal and

emotional touch (eMarketer Inc. 2014). One common misunderstanding is that all B2B video should be product or service-centric. While a general introduction is needed to raise awareness, it is not enough to support B2B buyer's journey by itself. Video producers should think about the whole purchase process while they make a 30—60-second-video. Ideally they should make different videos for different buying stages. A creative way of story-telling is always recommended (McKenzie 2014). However it is not easy for B2B video marketers to satisfy all the above requirements. Lack of budget, resources and creativity are the three major challenges for video content marketing (Demand Metric 2014). Therefore, a strategy is crucial for marketers to evaluate their essential video message to solve target customers' problems. It is not realistic to expect a B2B video going viral easily, and view clicks is not necessarily the goal B2B marketers need reach (Davidson 2014). For most of B2B companies, especially the micro ones and SMEs, it is more important to spend more time producing creative and original videos just for their target audience.

In terms of video distribution, Youtube is the 4th most effective social media channel for content marketing (72%), following LinkedIn (94%), Twitter (88%) and Facebook (84%) as the top 3 in the latest report *B2B content marketing 2015: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends – North America* (Content Marketing Institute 2014c). However there is no analysis in this report on how B2B marketers choose various platforms in order to increase customer conversion via video, such as email, company website, or other social media channels. Evidently Youtube is a very powerful tool and it is still suggested that having a video published on a company website is important for lead generation and conversion (Lessard 2014). According to Demand Metric, 81% of the respondents said the company website is their most used channel for video distribution, followed by video sharing websites (e.g. Youtube) (73%) and email or e-newsletter (66%) (Demand Metric 2014). Since it is rare to produce a viral video, Demand Metric suggests that companies should just publish videos on video sharing websites for the sake of publishing them. Meanwhile, outbound channels such as email and e-newsletters are still important for reaching potential and existing customers for B2B companies.

2.3.4 Email & E-newsletter

One of the oldest e-communication tools – email (or eNewsletter), is making a comeback. eNewsletter is the second most used B2B content marketing tool among B2B marketers, right after social media content (Content Marketing Institute 2014c). While people prefer “reading” pictures and videos more and more, it is not surprising that two-thirds of the respondents prefer image-based emails in the survey report *Science of Email 2014*. Meanwhile, on average 47% of all emails were opened on mobile devices, which exceeded desktop and webmail throughout the survey period (HubSpot 2014b). Different from the old school email, .email marketing nowadays has twined together with content marketing, combined with video, and collaborated with other social media tools.

35% of the respondents in the HubSpot’s survey said that they “never” bought a product or service based on an email they received. In 2011, 25% of the respondents said so. However the advice from marketing experts is that all marketers should still keep sending emails. According to McKinsey, emails are 40 times more efficient at acquiring new customers than Facebook and Twitter. The key of email marketing is relevant content (McKinsey&Company 2014). This applies to B2B email production as well. Successful B2B eNewsletters all have great content, communicate with their audience on a deeper level, and are easy to engage with (Yates 2014).

Many B2B marketers and marketing experts consider email and eNewsletter undoubtedly an important element of digital content marketing. Email budget is the second biggest (12%) allocated budget right behind trade shows (15%) in the next 12 months for B2B marketers in the UK according to the latest *The B2B Barometer Report* (Circle Research 2014)

One more important trend for B2B email marketing is automation. Automation technology is essential for emails to develop more personal messages, integrate multiple channels, and engage with content. However not many B2B marketers have fully integrated automation into their marketing, even though they do realize its value. The latest survey by Regalix showed that up to 89% of respondents worldwide expect their

email marketing to adopt automation features. What is worth mentioning is that B2B marketers want to have “sophisticated systems to manage cross-channel campaigns and deliver more personalized, targeted experiences to customers” instead of just “simple mechanism” (eMarketer Inc. 2014b).

2.3.5 Mobile Optimization

At least in the US, the number of people owning a smart phone has surpassed the number of people with a desktop computer – 58% vs. 42% (Pew Research Center 2014). B2B buyers are using mobile devices to read marketing content more often as well (Demand Gen Report 2014b). While using mobile devices becomes a daily habit for more and more people, it is not surprising that B2B buyers, just as other mobile users, are opening potential vendors’ websites and emails from their smart phones or tablets.

Due to the fact that global web traffic is increasing, Google Webmaster Tools has added a new feature called Mobile Usability. Their studies show that mobile-friendly sites are more likely to convert users into customers, and non-mobile friendly site could harm a company’s reputation (Google 2014; Fisch 2012). It is very possible that a bad mobile experience could influence the company’s ranking on Google search in the near future (Schwartz 2014).

Different from B2C consumers who shop via mobile devices, B2B buyers rarely do such a purchase. One reason for this is that B2B marketers are slower on mobile than B2C marketers. However, the purpose of B2B mobile marketing is not having B2B buyers to click and buy on their smart phones instantly. It is about how to present the content in a more accessible and interactive way, therefore buyers could do their pre-purchasing research more conveniently and to become more willing to engage with potential vendors. B2B marketers can not just assume that their customers will only find them on computers. Not only a B2B website should have a mobile version, but also the content (files, images and videos) should be compatible on mobile devices. Furthermore, it is important to make the content social-friendly, so that people could easily comment, log in, and share it via their mobile devices (Newman 2014). Personal-

ized engagement is a very strong competitive advantage for B2B marketing according to several marketing experts (Fuhriman 2014; Sarrow 2014). This, for sure, is about the customer experience on various devices throughout the lengthy B2B buying process.

Apparently some B2B companies have realized the power of mobility. B2B mobile marketing budgets have increased by 36% according to a report by VentureBeat. The two biggest challenges for them are all technology-related. The first one is the lack of technological support and integration; the second one is that many marketing professionals do not understand mobile marketing. Lack of budget is another key issue. The advice from HubSpot to most B2B marketers is to prioritize mobile web experience instead of investing in expensive apps (Koetsier 2014).

By 2017, 87% of internet-connected devices will be smart phones and tablets. Among them, 71% are smart phones (IDC 2014). This trend will force many businesses, including B2Bs, to have mobile as part of their digital marketing effort. Whether it is mobile advertisement, responsive website, mobile social media, or even mobile transaction, B2B marketers need speed up their work on the most suitable mobile marketing tools according to their business types.

2.3.6 New SEO Tactics

Every business, including B2B, wants to have a high visibility online. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a process of making one's website more accessible to search engines. Nowadays, creating and sharing great content are the key components of SEO ranking (Traupel 2014). In September 2014, Google updated its Panda algorithm, which could recognize poor content more accurately and improve the ranking of high-quality SME sites (Far 2014). This change is especially relevant to B2B content marketing, and is good news for micro and small businesses that create good digital content with limited budgets.

There is a reason why content marketing and social media is called the new SEO (DeMers 2014; Puetz 2014; Traupel 2014), and it is and still will be a crucial part of B2B digital marketing. However, it is the integrated online marketing mix – social me-

dia, video, mobile and content strategy which drives the SEO ranking. Different from a few years ago, new SEO is no longer just a technical mechanism creating keywords and links, and it is not separated from other digital marketing tactics. To attain a successful SEO result, B2B marketers should not get too obsessed with their rankings in a short term. Ultimately, it is the unique, relevant, valuable and helpful content, and the content with great user experience, that will gradually build trust and popularity among target audiences (Fishkin 2014).

According to a survey by CMO Council, professional associations and online communities, industry organizations and groups are the most valuable sources of B2B content to shape purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, “blatantly promotional and self-serving” content is among the most disliked B2B content (CMO Council 2013). Therefore, instead of building more content to gain SEO, better, trusty and relevant quality is much more important. The other equally important thing is to have the content published and shared in the right places online. As the CMO survey suggests, B2B buyers value the information from peers or on the reliable business sites and in notable media outlets. Apart from credibility, the “shareability” matters more than “searchability” (Puetz 2014). In order to spread the word and engage people to share on social media, B2B marketers need work harder on creating relevant and engaging content. In conclusion, a new SEO strategy will heavily rely on an online relationship and network building, which benefits B2B marketing in a long run and sustainable way (Fishkin 2014).

Like many other modern technologies, search engines are evolving due to people’s searching habits, such as putting more questions instead of keywords in the search box. All of these made search engine understand more about intent and context. If B2B marketers could create their digital content concerning these consumer trends, the SEO result of their websites will be rewarding.

3 Case Company Status Analysis

This chapter describes 2.Elämä Design's situation in the current business environment with the digital-specific SWOT (Chaffey 2012) analysis. The case company's current digital marketing is presented as well. The purpose of status analysis is to draw a big picture of 2.Elämä Design's market situation, therefore to determine the digital marketing objectives and goals.

3.1 Industrial Trend Watch

72% of the 30,000 survey (Accenture & Havas Media 2014) respondents said businesses fail to take care of the planet and society, according to *October 2014 Trend Briefing* by treadwatching.com. This is an alarming public call for more sustainable business. More and more consumers would like to make guilt-free purchase and have a socially responsible lifestyle. Sustainable design has been increasingly adopted by universities as a new program to educate the younger generation of designers. The concept has been met with great acceptance in the design field, and has become a must-have feature among more and more environmentally concerned designers and design companies.

To make a qualified sustainable design product or service, designers or design business owners shall realize its sustainable goals through environmental, economic and social aspects (Eco Design Fair Shanghai 2009). 2.Elämä Design fits this criterion of sustainable design. Their products and working processes are meant to have the minimal impact on environment. Their company addresses the environmental issues with their design, which creates marketable consumer products with great financial potential. 2.Elämä Design's current business goal is to increase its revenue. Therefore the company could better sustain itself economically in order to spread its sustainable design ideology and inspire more people.

With a celebrated past and great masters in the world's history of design, Finnish design is undergoing a transition toward global markets. One of the most significant characters of current Finnish design is interaction and social dimension. At the same time, a new kind of design business culture has been forming: more and more startup

companies and entrepreneurs are doing international business combined design with technology (Jokinen 2014). Educated and influenced by the classic and contemporary Finnish design culture, the founders of 2.Elämä Design transformed pure trash (abandoned old tires of bicycles and cars) into something functional (jewelry and accessories). Its innovative design made the company a forerunner in using recycled rubber material in the design field. The company has been praised by consumers, design professionals, experts and media. It has a great potential for the market, as well as for further research and development in other recycled materials.

The business of 2.Elämä Design evolved quickly since its establishment. The products went into several important design stores and boutiques in Helsinki, including the shops at Design Museum and Design Forum, the prestigious entities promoting Finnish design. However the sales went down in 2014, most possibly due to the sluggish Finnish economy. Quite a few of their retailers had to shut down their businesses. The recent *Statistics Finland's Consumer Survey* shows that people's expectations of the country's economy rose slightly since September 2014, but people are still cautious about their own financial situation in the near future (Statistics Finland 2014). As a consequence of the 2008 global financial crisis, the country's GDP has grown weakly since 2013, and OECD predicted that the recovery of Finnish economy would be slow (OECD 2014).

Under such a challenging situation, 2.Elämä Design needs to look for more retailers, clients, and partners in Finnish and international markets. European markets are on the top list, starting from some countries having more mature attitude towards sustainable design, such as Sweden and Germany. The economy of Northern and Western Europe is expected to grow (IMF 2014, 53-57), there might be more business opportunities for 2.Elämä Design to develop in these areas.

The good news for 2.Elämä Design is that both Finland and the European Union support green business and entrepreneurship with government policies and the business ecosystem. European Commission just adopted a Green Action Plan (GAP) for SMEs in July 2014, which encourages SMEs to explore more business opportunities contrib-

uting to green economy (European Commission 2014). In OECD’s latest economic surveys on Finland, the organization recommends support to innovation and green growth as a key component to boost the country’s economy (OECD 2014, 3).

3.2 Current Digital Marketing Activities

2.Elämä Design is in the process of establishing its new official website. The old site is no longer accessible due to technical problems. The only main digital marketing platform 2.Elämä Design uses right now is its Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/2ElamaDesign>). The number of fans has been increasing since the end of August 2014 due to the company’s promotion of its latest collection. The total page likes are over 300 at the moment. 2.Elämä Design has not paid anything for marketing its page and posts. Therefore all the activities on Facebook are created organically so far. Figure 3 shows the changes of post reach in August – October 2014. During the promotion period for the new collection in August, there was a peak of post reach – 2,192. Soon after it went back to its normal traffic, which was from only several to around two hundred reaches.

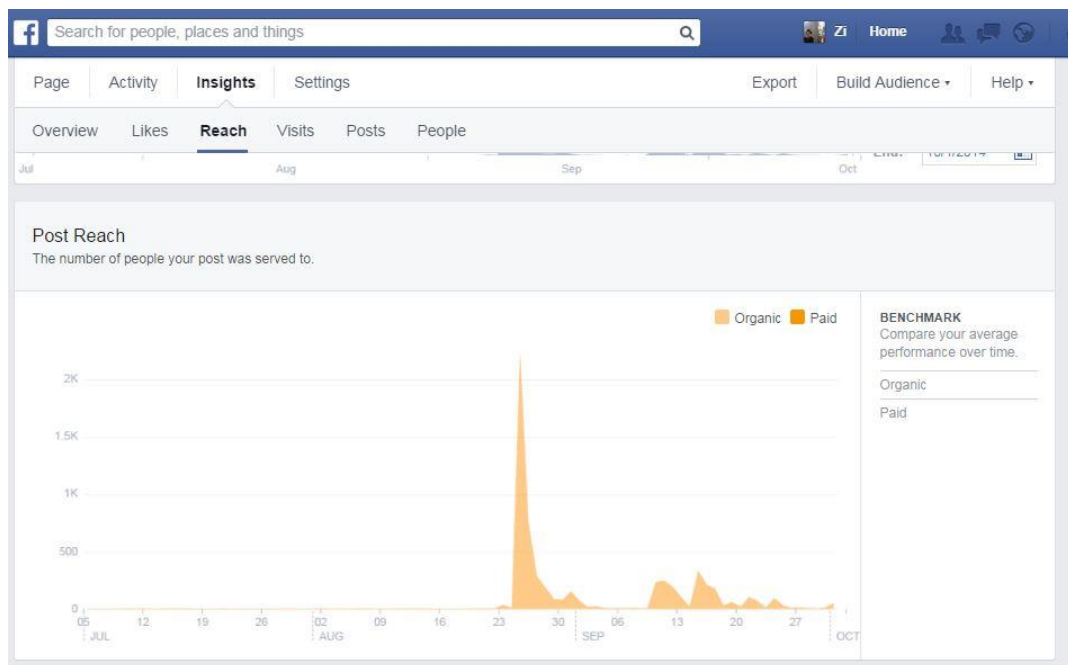


Figure 3. The post reach of 2.Elämä Design’s Facebook page August – October 2014 (2.Elämä Design 2014b)

2.Elämä Design's Facebook page was not active for a long time. The company started to improve its Facebook performance by organizing images of products and posting information on sales promotion since August 2014. The company has not had any strategic content creation plan yet, therefore the posts on Facebook page are nothing but 2.Elämä Design's sales events and new products. The page is still managed in quite a casual and inconsistent way.

2.Elämä Design also set up a Pinterest page recently. It was done in order to show some products images to the potential customers while the owner went to attend Ecostyle Fair 2014 in Frankfurt in August 2014. However there are no activities on Pinterest after the fair. The case company has not figured out how to use Pinterest for the marketing purposes, the owner is also not sure if Pinterest is the right marketing tool.

3.3 Digital-specific SWOT Analysis

In terms of the innovative usage of recycled rubber, 2.Elämä Design could be considered a forerunner globally. There are very few direct competitors in the field. However the competition is still fierce because there are abundant jewelry and accessories made with recycled materials on the market, and consumers prefer to buy these kinds of goods with more varieties.

SWOT analysis would help 2.Elämä Design to examine itself among competitors on the ecological design market. In order to serve the purpose of this thesis – digital marketing plan, the case company shall specifically check the external opportunities and threats and its own strength and weakness in the internet marketing environment. The digital channel-specific SWOT analysis table developed by Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2012, 210) lays out most of aspects of digital-specific SWOT analytic components. The author made 2.Elämä Design's digital SWOT analysis (table 4), based on Chaffey Ellis-Chadwick's table.

Table 3. Digital SWOT Analysis of 2.Elämä Design, modified from Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick's table (2012, 210)

<p>2.Elämä Design</p>	<p><u>Strength – S</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Acknowledged green brand in Finnish market – Unique material and design – Facebook page view increasing – Connected with some retailers on Facebook 	<p><u>Weakness – W</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lack of digital marketing skills – Limited Digital presence: Facebook & Pinterest – Not widely connected with business partners, designers and retailers online
<p><u>Opportunities – O</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Connect and cross-sell with other designers/retailers/partners online and offline – Co-brand with business partners/designers – Products and ideas could be easily promoted via video marketing platforms – Develop social media promotion – New design and products – Potential clients in Finland and Europe 	<p><u>SO strategies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the product uniqueness and company news via marketing (website, blog, social media) • Partnerships with clients/designers • Spread thoughts and inspiration on sustainable design online (blog, social media) 	<p><u>WO strategies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search potential customers/partners online • Contact potential and existing customers/partners via emails and calls • Connect and network with people offline • Be active to attend design events and activities
<p><u>Threats – T</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – More and more green jewelry and accessories – Competitors' digital marketing is active – Not sufficient budget and human resource for digital marketing 	<p><u>ST strategies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create competitive pricing strategy • Use digital visual advantages to emphasize the design • Partnership with other brands • Create own social network/reviews 	<p><u>WT strategies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on key channels • Engage customers via social media • build reputation via digital PR

3.4 B2B Segmentation and Web Persona

Segmentation is the first step a growing company needs to do in order to analyze its customer needs. It provides the vital information for developing the marketing strategy to satisfy the target customers (Hutt & Speh 2010, 125). Finland is still 2.Elämä Design's most important market. In parallel, the company wishes to develop its B2B customer base in nearby European countries such as Sweden and Germany. Naturally, the clients 2.Elämä Design is aiming at are the retailers, companies, and organizations that share the same sustainable design values. Thus, on the macrolevel bases of segmentation (Hutt et al. 2010, 128), 2.Elämä Design selects its B2B clients according to their geographical locations, business characters and product application. Furthermore, several microlevel segments (Hutt et al. 2010, 131) are necessary to draw out in order to help the company to stay on the right course. The key criteria would be the ethical reputation of clients, which is environmentally-friendly, socially responsible and high-quality design emphasized. 2.Elämä Design is also eagerly looking for open-minded partners who could innovate new products or services and create extra value in cooperation.

Table 4 shows the main B2B customers 2.Elämä Design is targeting at the moment. The most important customers are retailers. Companies and organizations are increasingly important because their orders could be large, and the cooperation would offer 2.Elämä Design a bigger stage to advocate its sustainable design concept to a broader audience. However, in terms of the markets outside Finland, 2.Elämä Design would only focus on retailers right now. This is due to the company's limited budget and human resources.

Table 4. B2B customers of 2.Elämä Design

2.Elämä Design B2B segment	Finland	EU countries (Sweden & Germany)
Retailers (online & of- fline): design boutiques, muse- um stores	resell products	resell products
Companies	design and produce tailor- made company souvenirs	
Organizations: NPO, NGO	design and produce tailor- made souvenirs and products	
Government	design and produce tailor- made souvenirs and products	
Partners: designers	co-design, co-produce and cross-sell	co-design and cross-sell

Chaffey points out that it is crucial to segment online customers while making a digital marketing plan, he created the term “web persona”, which refers to a summary of the characteristics, needs, motivations and environment of a key type of web site user. (Chaffey 2012). The concept was initially used to study B2C online clients; however Chaffey stated that it works in B2B online segmentation as well.

The main purpose of making web persona segmentation is to communicate with various customers, studying their needs and business motivations according to their online activities. Right now, 2.Elämä Design is not widely connected with its existing B2B customers online. Very few of its retailers are digitally active. Therefore it is rather difficult to analyze the web persona of 2.Elämä Design’s current customers at this stage. However, this does not necessarily mean the company should underestimate its customers’ online activities, especially the potential customers. The situation might be clearer when 2.Elämä Design increases its own online activities and starts to observe the digital behaviour of its existing and potential customers closely.

3.5 Online Value Proposition

The core brand value of 2.Elämä Design is a sustainable and unique design via socially and environmentally responsible consuming. The company offers its B2B and B2C buyers an opportunity to protect nature and support green economy. Meanwhile consumers are able to enjoy the innovative design with contemporary Nordic aesthetics.

2.Elämä Design has addressed its value proposition obviously through products and services, as well as in various marketing activities. However since the company has not been active in online marketing, the brand value has not been highlighted in digital context. According to Chaffey, online value proposition (OVP) is crucial to communicate with web users about differentiation and advantage of products (Chaffey et al. 2012, 232). Particularly, the online benefits by clicking and sharing the content have to be emphasized. 2.Elämä Design has no plan to develop its own e-commerce platform, therefore one kind of OVP – online pricing benefit will not be applied in this project.

The most important OVP 2.Elämä Design should present online is the company's sustainable design concept. According to the definition of OVP by Smart Insights (2014), 2.Elämä Design has showed "what kind of products or services it offers" and "how different it is from other products and services" on its Facebook page and website. But since the company has not had a content strategy, thus the web users have not fully understood "what kind of company it is". This requires 2.Elämä Design to create inspiring and educational content, which encourages web users to share and engage in co-building the brand.

3.6 Main Assumptions

Though the economic situation in Finland and Europe is not ideal at the moment, the business environment is still quite encouraging towards ecological design business and SMEs. 2.Elämä Design's current business goal is to increase its revenue by expanding its business in Finland and in some European countries, such as Sweden and Germany. The challenge is to compete with the other sustainable design companies that produce and sell similar products.

2.Elämä Design's digital marketing activities are very few and limited at this moment. Not only has it not created its brand image online, but also it has not fully used the advantages of social media to promote its offline marketing events. The company has decided to develop its digital marketing, and a comprehensive guideline on know-how is very much needed.

The mission of 2.Elämä Design is to produce and advocate innovative and sustainable design with contemporary aesthetics and social responsibility. In order to accomplish such a mission, 2.Elämä Design needs to realize its economic sustainability so that it could promote its design concept to a broader audience. A digital marketing plan supposes to assist and serve the mission.

The objectives of digital marketing are to support the mission of 2.Elämä Design via presenting the products and services, as well as promoting the sustainable design concept online.

The goals of digital marketing are:

- Reach out to the potential B2B clients.
- Retain the relationship with existing B2B clients.
- Collaborate with the company's offline marketing activities.
- Engage people by sharing inspiring thoughts on sustainable design and responsible consumption in online communities.

4 Qualitative Research and Benchmarking

This chapter includes the most important task of this thesis – PT3: qualitative interviews and benchmarking. Here the author explains the methods and presents the key results drawn from the interviews and benchmarking.

Qualitative research is referred as “soft approach” of marketing research, but it has a high value in interpreting deeper meaning of consumer behaviour (Burns & Bush 2014, 146). There are two main reasons why the author decided to use qualitative research method for the thesis project. Firstly, the case company is a micro company running an eco-design business which has some specific marketing expectation and business mission. The company emphasizes the uniqueness, creativity and green ideology in its products. Therefore it is critical to fully understand the company’s owner and designer’s thoughts. Secondly, not only is it not realistic for the author and the case company to run a large-scale quantitative survey, but also such a survey result might not bring rich insights on the exact topics. Instead, it is more valuable for the case company to have some specific suggestions from professionals with the similar business background in B2B design sector and comments from marketing experts who know both Finnish and international business culture.

One definition of digital benchmarking is “a structured analysis of online services” (Chaffey et al. 2012, 652). According to Chaffey, it is important for businesses to do regular benchmarking and check how they are doing, where they are, compared to competitors (Chaffey 2014). A thorough benchmarking practice at corporate level requires a lot of effort, time and money. Luckily benchmarking digital content marketing could be much easier and cheaper (Drickhamer 2012). However, digital benchmarking should not just be based on the obvious features of websites, but it should also include the companies’ financial performance and market position (Chaffey et al. 2012, 390). Furthermore, digital benchmarking looks into competitor performance and customer satisfaction, and measures the effectiveness by analytics. The internal digital capabilities should be benchmarked as well (Chaffey 2014).

Due to the limited resources, the benchmarking of this project is not as advanced and complete as suggested by Chaffey. It was mainly done via secondary research. The priority of the case company is to get an easy and quick start with digital marketing. Therefore the benchmarking cases were picked due to their compelling strategy and implementation, yet they are not too complicated and costly, which is possible for the case company to imitate.

4.1 Qualitative Research Method

In-depth interview (IDI) is the main technique selected for qualitative research in this project. Most of them were conducted face-to-face. Some were done via Skype, telephone and emailing.

The interviews contain a set of questions on the topic. Except one email interview, all other interviews were set as “casual conversation”. The interviewees were given sufficient time to tell their stories and opinions, the author was able to ask probing questions to understand the context, situation and thoughts of interviewees better.

Nonprobability sampling methods – purposive sampling and referral sampling were used to choose interviewees. Key interviewees were recruited by the author through personal connection and school’s social network. They are marketing professionals, entrepreneurial designers, B2B sellers and retailers. Apart from marketing professionals and experts, all other interviewees are working in the similar business field as the case company. Some of them are the case company’s indirect competitors. The requirement for interviewees is that they must have certain knowledge or experience on B2B digital marketing. Table 5 below shows the profiles of the key interviewees.

Table 5. Key interviewees for qualitative research

	Interviewee	Job title	Company	Location
2.Elämä Design	Jaime De Vizcaya	CEO	2.Elämä Design	Helsinki
	Yuan Long	Designer	2.Elämä Design	Helsinki
B2B sellers/ designers	Minna Kaartinen	Designer	Vietto	Helsinki
	Yiying Lu	Artist/designer	Yiying Lu	Sydney
	Rebekka Kohtala	Sales & marketing assistant	Touchpoint Oy	Helsinki
	Anders Bengs	Founder/designer	Costo	Helsinki
B2B buyers/ retailers	Minna Särelä	Retailer	Paloni	Helsinki
Digital marketing professionals	Lasse Rouhiainen	Social media consultant	Lasse Rouhiainen	Alicante
	Simone Bocedi	Social media marketing producer/ project manager	Dingle	Helsinki

4.2 Qualitative Research Results

2.Elämä Design is eager to know how digital marketing could help the company to expand its business. The owner is certain that the company would develop digital marketing, but he has no clue how he should do it and what to focus on. Furthermore, the owner is deeply concerned if he could afford enough time, energy and budget for digital marketing with such a small team. The purpose of qualitative interview is to find the answers of these core questions from people who are actually working in the exact business field. This is essential for accomplishing PT3 – to have a better picture of how B2B digital marketing is executed in the design business. Opinions of digital marketing professionals are also given as an advice. Interviewees' opinions based on their own knowledge and experience are very valuable for 2.Elämä Design.

The author designed four interview guides for 2.Elämä Design, designers/B2B sellers, retailers/B2B buyers, and digital marketing professionals, respectively. These questions are meant to help accomplishing PTs in order to find out the best strategic digital plan for the case company. Table 6 below shows some key questions and their relationship with PTs and related theories. The questions are coded in different colours: maroon-coded questions are for 2.Elämä Design, blue-coded questions are for B2B buy-

ers/designers, green-coded questions are for B2B sellers/retailers, orange-coded questions are for digital marketing professionals. Some same questions were asked to all interviewees, which are not all differentiated in table 6. The complete versions of four interview guides could be found in Attachment 3 – 6.

Table 6. Interview questions according to PTs and theories

Purpose of PTs	Chaffey's model with related theories	Key interview questions
PT2 Digital marketing objectives	Web persona (segmentation)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do you usually find your B2B clients? 2. Do you think your digital marketing is helpful for you to find your B2B clients? (If yes, how?) 3. How do you find your suppliers (designers) usually?
PT3 Strategic digital marketing plan and tools	OVP (SWOT, positioning)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What 2.Elämä Design wants to present and achieve via digital marketing? 2. What are the objectives and goals of digital marketing? 3. Is it important to you that designers have a nice website? 4. Does the performance of designers' digital marketing influence your buying decision?
PT4 Handbook (final product)	Branded content marketing strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What kind of video does 2.Elämä Design want to produce? Why? 2. What kind of content do you (want to) publish on your digital marketing platforms? 3. Is video marketing an important tool in B2B sector? Why?
	IMC Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you have a digital marketing strategy? How does it collaborate with your marketing strategy in general? 2. Do you use digital tools to assist your offline marketing activities? (If yes, how? If no, why?) 3. What is your advice for a micro company to start their B2B digital marketing? 4. Is social media influencing B2B buying process? Why?

Continued on the following page

PTs	Chaffey's model with related theories	Key interview questions
<p>PT2 Digital marketing objectives</p> <p>PT3 Strategic digital marketing plan and tools</p> <p>PT4 Handbook (final product)</p>	<p>RACE model & Integrated Digital platform tactics and tools</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do you agree and disagree with the B2B digital marketing plan? Why? 2. What kinds of digital platforms do you use and the purposes of each of them? 3. How much money and time do (will) you spend on digital marketing? 4. Do you manage your digital marketing yourself? 5. Is your digital marketing efficient in your opinion? 6. Do you measure the efficiency of your digital marketing? 7. How to manage social media efficiently? 8. For a micro company with very limited budget and resources, do they have to be on every social media outlet? And do they have to be active all the time? 9. How much money should a micro company spend on their digital marketing? 10. What kinds of videos are the most effective? 11. What kinds of videos people like to watch online nowadays?

4.2.1 Marketing Digitalization vs. Offline Activities

All interviewees agree that marketing digitalization is a must for any business nowadays, including B2B business. They acknowledge the importance of being visible online, however not all of them or their businesses are actively involved in digital marketing. 2.Elämä Design has been upgrading its malfunctioned website for more than half a year. Before the new website was finally launched at the end of November 2014, it was hard to explain the potential customers how to find more information about 2.Elämä Design.

Touchpoint Oy, an indirect competitor of 2.Elämä Design, realized that it desperately needs to develop its digital marketing on a higher level for global expansion. Especially one of its biggest direct competitors – Lindström Oy is very advanced in digital marketing. Rebekka Kohtala, the sales and marketing assistant of Touchpoint explained

that Touchpoint is planning to get into the Swedish market, which gives a motivation to the company to do better marketing in the digital world.

We do plan to develop our digital marketing. Our goal is to make Touchpoint more known to people, also outside Finland...when people type 'workwear/ecological/PR-gifts' on Google, our company would be one of the first names popping up.(Kohtala, R. 20 October 2014.)

At the moment, Touchpoint has only tried some Facebook advertisement with small amount of money. The company outsourced its website and eNewsletter management, with which it might not be too satisfied. Kohtala pointed out that Touchpoint gets to reach its potential clients primarily through referrals, trade fairs and web search. Face-to-face meetings, phone calls and emails are still the main forms of communication between the company and its clients. She emphasized that digital marketing development is on its agenda, because the company has realized that it is not doing it as actively as its competitors. However there is no concrete plan and strategy yet.

As 2.Elämä Design's retailer, Minna Särelä said she found most of her suppliers online. Her online boutique Paloni sells independent designers' clothing and accessories. Right now she has about 45 designers in her shop, most of them from Finland. Interestingly, even though she relies on internet for pre-purchasing research, designers' online activities do not matter too much to her.

Their design is the most important thing. It is good if they do digital marketing, but it is ok if they do not do. Because I will do... it is also not that crucial to me if their website is good or not. (Särelä, M. 9 October 2014.)

Särelä does not expect her designers to do digital marketing. Going to trade fairs and travelling around to meet people are also her ways of finding suppliers.

Apparently, word-of-mouth and referrals are still crucial for B2B buyers and sellers to meet up. However as Särelä and Touchpoint, other interviewees also use web searching as a first step to start their research. Then the next step is to email or call, eventually sit

down together in real life. For designer Minna Kaartinen, who is quite a digitally savvy and active person doing marketing all by herself, the effectiveness and efficiency of digital marketing is still a puzzle.

Very similar to 2.Elämä Design, Kaartinen runs an independent eco fashion label Vietto by using recycled fabrics only. She sells her products through retailers and online marketplaces such as Etsy. Her digital marketing started since the establishment of Vietto in 2007, including website, blog, Facebook, Twitter, and rare eNewsletter. Recently she started to use Instagram for the brand visibility. However Kaartinen is still not quite sure if her digital marketing is actually working.

It should be helpful to build relationship. Retailers could check new collections via digital channels. But I am not sure if it is effective. I try to use Google Analytics, then still I do not know how to measure the effectiveness. (Kaartinen, M. 21 October 2014.)

Kaartinen is also doubtful if digital communication is efficient for her to find B2B clients, as her emails do not always get replied to. Therefore Kaartinen decided not to spend too much money on digital marketing. So far she only spends about 50 US dollars on Facebook annually (Kaartinen, M. 21 October 2014.).

Among all the interviewees and companies in this research, Costo is the one investing most in digital marketing. As a company designing and producing clothing and accessories of recycled fabrics, not only has it an art director who is in charge of all digital design and production, but it also hires a freelance social media marketer to manage the company's Facebook campaigns. But the founder Anders Bengs claims that the big portion of their marketing budget goes to trade fairs. Every year, Costo spends around 10,000 euros for attending international trade fairs. Its current digital marketing budget policy is to spend every penny it earns from its webstore back to online marketing. It is a small portion of the whole marketing budget, according to Bengs, since its webstore revenue is so far quite low (Bengs, A. 11 November 2014.). Having global retailers in Nordic countries and in some Asian countries, Bengs stressed that most certainly the company will invest more on digital marketing, because "this is the future".

4.2.2 Social Media for B2B Marketing

B2B marketing is shifting from broadcast media to social media according to recent survey (Omobono 2014, 4). Simone Bocedi, a social media producer and project manager at a Finnish social media marketing agency Dingo, can totally agree with such a statement.

Firstly, social media is the only place you can get people all the time. TV and newspaper can not do that. Secondly, you can target interests, like ‘I want to target all moms in Helsinki’. Thirdly, it is much cheaper to do social media campaign. (Bocedi, S. 4 November 2014.)

Bocedi pointed out that there is much evidence showing that social media networking is also influencing B2B purchasing decisions.

You go to check his Twitter, to see if he has more followers, and you will decide if you want to give money to this kind of person. (Bocedi, S. 4 November 2014.)

While helping other people to market their businesses, Bocedi himself also needs to connect with his own B2B clients. He acknowledged that he actually spent much more time on meeting clients in real life than online. His company also has sales people to constantly making phone calls. But, “you start the conversation on Twitter, then around the table”, he said.

According to Bocedi, advertisement on social media is much cheaper than advertising in the traditional media, yet it could be more effective for certain kinds of businesses. One of his clients had much bigger sales one year due to active social media campaigns, compared to the previous year during which the client had only invested in TV commercials. But Bocedi warned that social media campaigns should not last too long. “In digital world, you die sooner,” he said, “21days is good”.

Costo’s Facebook page has nearly 15,000 fans, which is an incredible number to De Vizcaya. This probably attributes to their Facebook campaigns, and Facebook is also the only online platform Costo invests money on. However, Bengs himself is involved

in the company's social media very much. Before the interview started, he was just busy with taking a photo of their new product and uploading it on Instagram. When asked if Costo's Facebook success really brings any benefit to find and bond with B2B clients, Bengs gave a very positive answer without any hesitation.

For sure! In the end it is the persons behind (business) who are making decisions. Imagine if you show our products to your employees, and they say, 'Hey! I have been a fan!?' Once I contacted someone who is a potential buyer, then I saw her Facebook profile photo showing her wearing our hat. So I knew (I could make the deal). (Bengs, A. 11 November 2014.)

Costo sells its products solely through retailers, its own webstore and occasional popup stores. B2B is a crucial part of the business. Same as Touchpoint and 2.Elämä Design, Costo makes company gifts for various corporate clients, such as Rovio and F-Secure. Bengs emphasized that trade fairs are still the most important marketing activities for Costo. That is why most of its marketing budget goes to those activities. Referrals and word-of-mouth also play an important role for the company to reach the potential clients, especially in Finland. Surprisingly, Costo does not have a company profile on the highly-rated B2B social network LinkedIn, though Bengs himself is on it. He seems to rank Facebook higher for B2B online socializing. When asked if there are any Facebook friends being converted into his B2B client, "Many", Bengs answered promptly.

Obviously, 2.Elämä Design will not have such financial and human resources to do digital marketing such as Costo. For many entrepreneurs operating alone or with a small team, time management is also a challenge. Sydney-based graphic designer Yiyang Lu is very skeptical that designers should spend too much time mingling around in the social media. Lu created the famous "fail whale" screen image for Twitter when the Twitter server was down. She believes that her success is based on her design, which should be the most important thing for an independent designer.

Social media is just an amplifier. But the core issue is still good design. You only have this much time and energy, you should spend more (of them) on design. (Lu, Y.13 September 2014.)

Lu told the author over Skype that she is on almost every social media outlet, but she is not that active. De Vizcaya is also worried if 2.Elämä Design could handle every social media platform by itself. Hiring someone is not possible by now. But he thinks one or several posts per week might be doable (De Vizcaya, J. September - December 2014.).

Unlike Bengs, Bocedi was not sure about Facebook's effectiveness on B2B. LinkedIn seems to make more sense to him. For brand like 2.Elämä Design, he thinks blogging and Instagram probably work well. He continued to share his tips on how to utilize social media for B2B marketing.

It is about person. For example, you can reach the right person on LinkedIn, you can check his experience...And you need to check back with the people who like you. (Bocedi, S. 4 November 2014.)

4.2.3 Video Marketing is the Trend

None of the entrepreneurs and business owners interviewed are currently using video marketing. So the praises for video marketing come from the marketing professionals. The most powerful statement to stress the uniqueness of video marketing was from Lasse Rouhiainen, the author of Amazon's best-selling book *101 Video Marketing Tips & Strategies for Small Businesses* – “No one can copy a video!” (Rouhiainen, L. 30 September 2014.)

As an enthusiastic promoter of video marketing, Rouhiainen often underlines some advantages of video marketing which many people are not aware of or ignore.

When you type the video title and description on YouTube, the text automatically becomes Google search word, because it is the same company. And when you search on Google, video always comes out as one of the first results. (Rouhiainen, L. 30 September 2014.)

Bocedi echoed Rouhiainen on this topic. He pointed out that YouTube has become a very powerful search engine, because people are constantly looking for answers by typing “how to...” on YouTube. He reminded some marketers to take an advantage of

video “subtitle” function by writing a title such as “how to...”. Bocedi picked up his iPhone to make a point that video production is increasingly cheaper, “You can even use this to make a video”, he said.

Rouhianen also pointed out that people normally do not realize how cheap it is to promote a video on YouTube. In his point of view, video marketing works effectively for B2B business. His 3-step video marketing strategy categorizes different kinds of videos for three stages – awareness (leads), consideration (prospects), and close (customers). However, his advices also include some key and classic elements. According to Rouhianen, a video that sells should contain answers and benefits for customers. And once the video is distributed, follow-up calls are needed for sales or marketing action.

Yuan Long, the designer of 2.Elämä Design showed strong interests in making videos. She thinks video is a very suitable format to present her design and works.

I want to make that kind of video to teach people how to create simple accessories or jewelry with recycled materials by themselves...Videos showing how we make our products would be also great. Because we do everything by hands, and it is important to let our clients see how we make it. (Long, Y. September – December 2014.)

Such kinds of videos are called “How-to tutorials” and “Explainer videos” by Rouhianen. In his 3-step video marketing plan, they are usually used for drawing awareness. Gaining online awareness is exactly the very first step what 2.Elämä Design needs to do for its digital marketing.

Rouhiainen shares many layman’s tips on making good videos with simple equipment and low budget. But the most crucial characters for successful video marketing according to him is – “short and storytelling”.

4.3 Benchmarking Method

The author selected the following four cases for benchmarking (table 7).

Table 7. Benchmarking cases

Company name	Company type	Location	Benchmarking reason
Costo	Ecological fashion	Helsinki	Social media marketing
Globe Hope	Ecological fashion	Helsinki	Content marketing
Ivana Helsinki	Women's fashion	Helsinki	Email marketing
Wendy's Lookbook	Fashion and stylist blogger	San Francisco	Video marketing

Three Finnish companies (Costo, Globe Hope and Ivana Helsinki) share the following common characteristics with the case company:

- Helsinki based small fashion design company founded and run by designer(s).
- Ecologically concerned and socially responsible business (except Ivana Helsinki does not use recycled materials).
- B2B and B2C.
- Born local, going global.
- Active on one or several digital marketing platforms.

All of these three companies started their business on a micro scale like the case company, and then managed to develop themselves to a higher level. They are suitable examples for the case company to learn from in many business aspects. However for this project, the benchmarking only focuses on digital marketing part.

Ivana Helsinki is the only one among the three companies producing videos for marketing. However its video style and video marketing strategy does not fit the case company. Wendy's Lookbook is a very popular fashion channel on YouTube. The case company has a plan to make video tutorials on its products. There are a lot of inspiration and techniques 2.Elämä Design could borrow from Wendy's Lookbook.

The author analyzes the digital marketing activities of benchmarking cases on various platforms. The variables to measure their marketing strength are:

- Website design, function and usability.
- The quality and quantity of content.
- Social media popularity and shareability.
- Digital marketing mix.
- Collaboration with offline marketing activities.

Apart from the face-to-face interview with Costo, the rest of the analysis was done through secondary research. The author was not able to acquire the financial information and web traffic data of these companies, thus could not make data analysis to measure the exact effectiveness of their digital marketing. However the assumption is that all of their digital marketing is quite successful based on the interview and secondary research.

4.4 Benchmarking Results

The results of benchmarking are broken down case by case as follows.

4.4.1 Benchmarking Case 1: Costo

Costo has the same business model as the case company: it only sells its products through retailers, popup stores, promotional events and trade fairs. However Costo does not sell jewelry, also has no products made of recycled rubber. Costo is the indirect competitor of the case company.

Costo's digital marketing strength is social media. Its Facebook likes have been increasing steadily and quickly since launching. By now it has reached around 15,000 likes which is the biggest number of Facebook fans among similar businesses in Finland. Costo attributes the success in its Facebook campaigns to a freelance digital marketer the company hired. Facebook is also the only digital platform Costo spent money on. Whenever Costo have some promotional activities, they invest some, but not much, money on Facebook to boost the posts and draw attention (Bengs, A. 11 November 2014.). The result is certainly rewarding. The usual posts Costo upload are mostly about their products and events, the content is quite plain, nothing extraordinary.

However they manage to keep it flow in a steady pace on daily basis or in every 2 – 3 days. There are not much fans engagement (likes and shares) happening for most of the posts, but there is always a surge of fans and likes from now and then due to various campaigns. During the last two months of the thesis writing period, their fans have grown by more than 2,000.

Recently Costo has realized the popularity of Instagram, especially for fashion accessories business. They launched Instagram account “costoaccessories”, which allows them to upload more photos of products easier and quicker. Costo linked Instagram feed and Pinterest on the Facebook page (figure 4), the Instagram photos are also shown simultaneously on Facebook posts.

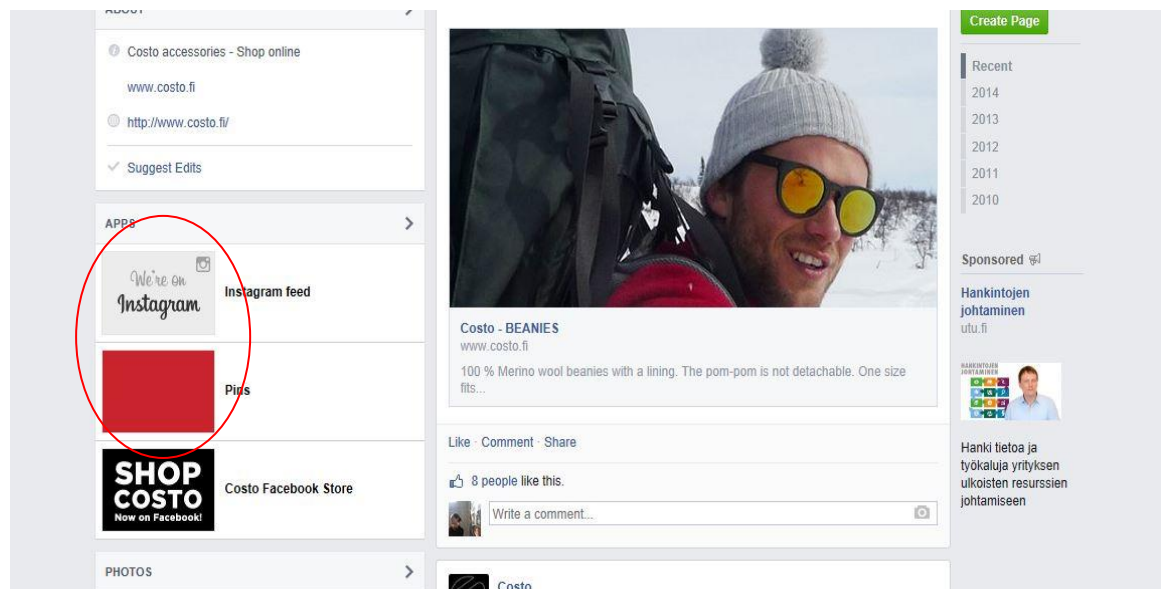


Figure 4. Costo connects Instagram and Pinterest on their Facebook page (Costo 2014a)

What 2.Elämä Design could learn from Costo’s social media marketing is its simple and straightforward strategy – focusing on Facebook for B2B and B2C clients networking. Costo maximizes the effectiveness of social media by:

- Spending some money to promote sales and marketing campaigns, including offline activities.
- Creating easy and quick content (text and images) which do not require too much time and energy to produce.

- Linking several social media platforms together.
- Using hashtags in every social media feed.

Costo's website is worth mentioning as well. It demonstrates how to present the brand and the OVP clearly and immediately when viewers click the website. The screen shot of Costo's front page below (figure 5) shows viewers could easily spot the most crucial information close to each other (the parts highlighted with red circles) with a quick glance.

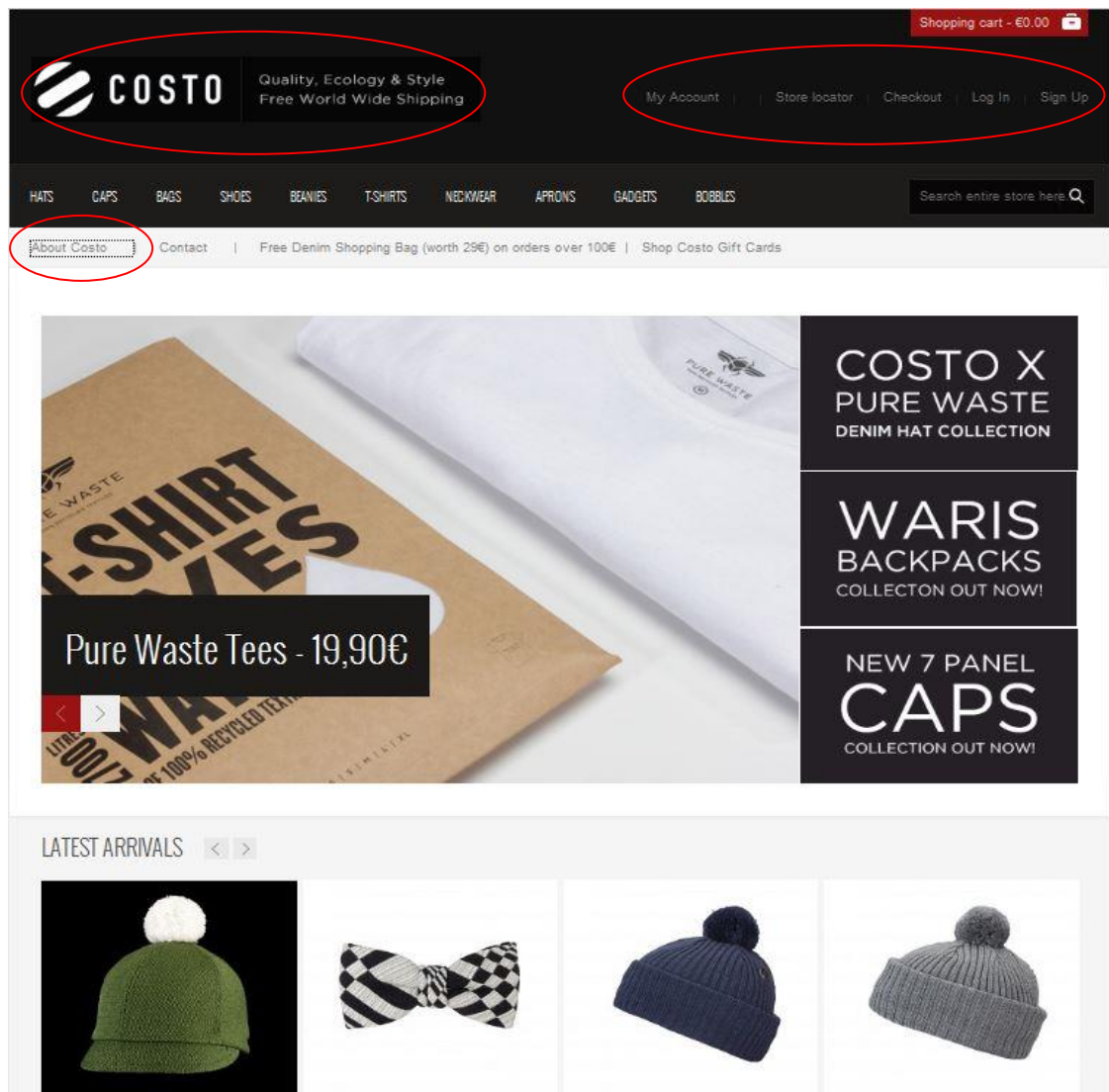


Figure 5. The front page of Costo website (Costo 2014b)

Here are the main elements of Costo's website 2.Elämä Design could learn from:

- The key messages are in the first sight on the top of the website: Costo logo, brand mission and OVP (free world wide shipping).
- Physical store locator and online shopping access are obvious.
- Product category is laid out clearly.
- “About us” and “contact” buttons could be found below logo, instead of at the bottom of the page.
- Facebook and Instagram icons are shown at the bottom of the page. The number of Facebook fans is highlighted.
- High quality of product images and detailed description of product. Pinterest button available on each product page.
- English only, which is more efficient to manage for global business (Bengs, A. 11 November 2014.).

4.4.2 Benchmarking Case 2: Globe Hope

Globe Hope is Finland’s biggest player in the ecological fashion industry. Its wide range of products include jewelry and accessories. Globe Hope has its own stores and retailers in Finland, Germany, and several other European countries. B2B sector is an important part of Globe Hope’s business, which includes production of office supplies and company gifts. Globe Hope only uses recycled raw materials for its products, it is 2.Elämä Design’s indirect competitor.

The Facebook page of Globe Hope has nearly 4,000 fans. Even though Globe Hope is the biggest company among benchmarking cases and it has expanded its business globally much more than the other two, their Facebook posts are mainly in Finnish. It indicates that Global Hope’s social media is only targeting the customers in Finland. The posts are uploaded on a daily basis, and most of them are about sales promotion. Globe Hope also has a Twitter account, which only has 16 Tweets in total since the account was set up half a year ago.

However, Globe Hope’s website is designed and created in a comprehensive way to meet both B2B and B2C clients’ needs internationally. The company is doing quite a

good job on storytelling, including writing a blog in Finnish, English and German. The screen shot below (figure 6) shows the front page of Globe Hope’s website. The most interesting stories behind the brand are presented clearly in the most obvious position. “Materials” section is singled out because this is the core value of the brand – recycled raw materials. By clicking “materials”, viewers could read very detailed information on different materials Globe Hope uses, including the supply chain and production process.

The other outstanding character of Globe Hope’s website is *multi-functionality*. Retailers could get access to online inventory database with password, which is a great advantage and convenience for global B2B clients. There is also an open media bank for press to download newsletters and images. These two key functions are shown side by side on the top right corner of the website. Furthermore, Globe Hope offers a web-store to their B2C customers.

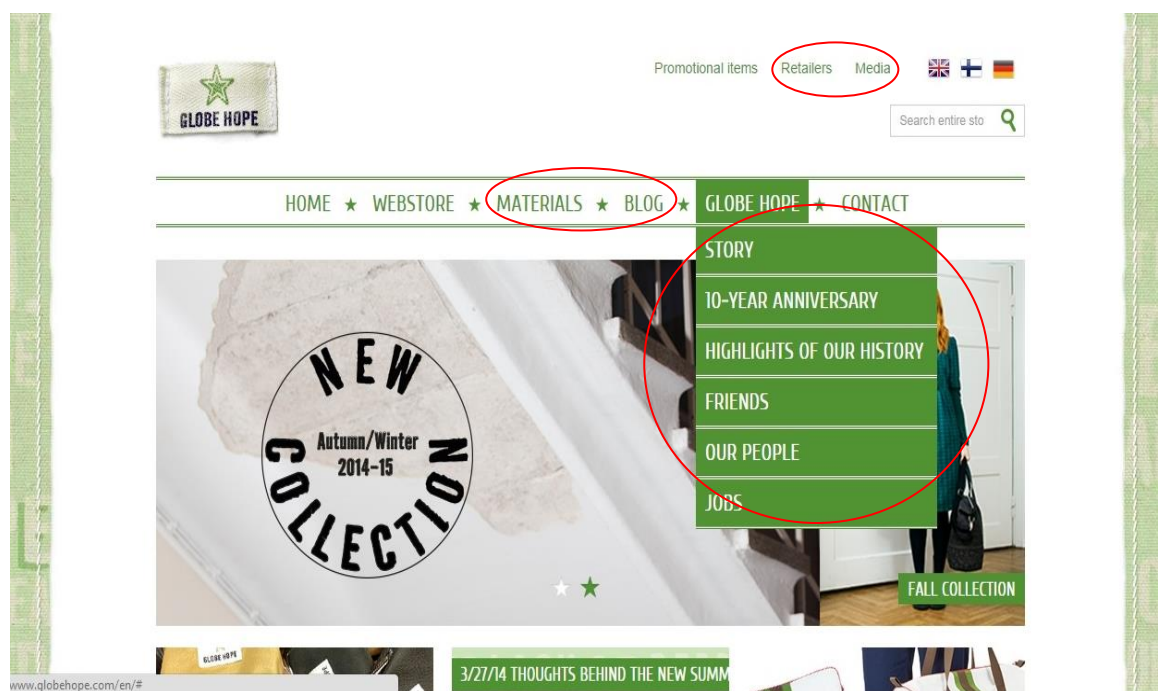


Figure 6. Globe Hope’s website emphasizes the brand storytelling and multi-functionality (Globe Hope 2014)

Here is a list of ideas 2.Elämä Design could borrow from Globe Hope’s website:

- Tell and highlight interesting and rich stories behind the brand. They could be about design inspiration, production process, and the designers.
- Online inventories access for retailers.
- Set up media bank for press to download information of the company and the products.
- Connect all useful and important links as many as possible on the front page.

4.4.3 Benchmarking Case 3: Ivana Helsinki

Ivana Helsinki does not use recycled materials to produce their women's fashion series, though social responsibility is one of their business values. This international brand has been a rising star in the fashion industry, and their marketing strategy has always been quite peculiar and creative. Because the designer Paola Suhonen is also a filmmaker, Ivana Helsinki promotes their clothes via Suhonen's channel on YouTube and Vimeo. However there are less than a hundred followers on both channels.

Ivana Helsinki's website was designed more artistically than the other two benchmarking cases. It highlights the beauty of art and fashion photography in a minimalistic approach. Facebook and Instagram are their main social media platforms, but they are not linked together. Most of the posts are written in English, and they are for sales promotions.

Apparently email (eNewsletter) is quite an important digital communication tool for Ivana Helsinki to keep contact with the customers. The strategy is to only send the emails (eNewsletter) for crucial sales promotions and marketing campaigns. The interface of email keeps Ivana Helsinki's minimalistic style with striking images. As showed below (figure 7), it catches the eyes of the email readers by clean visual design, and it shows perfectly on smartphones as well. More importantly, all of Ivana Helsinki's social media links are distinctly put in line at the bottom of every email.

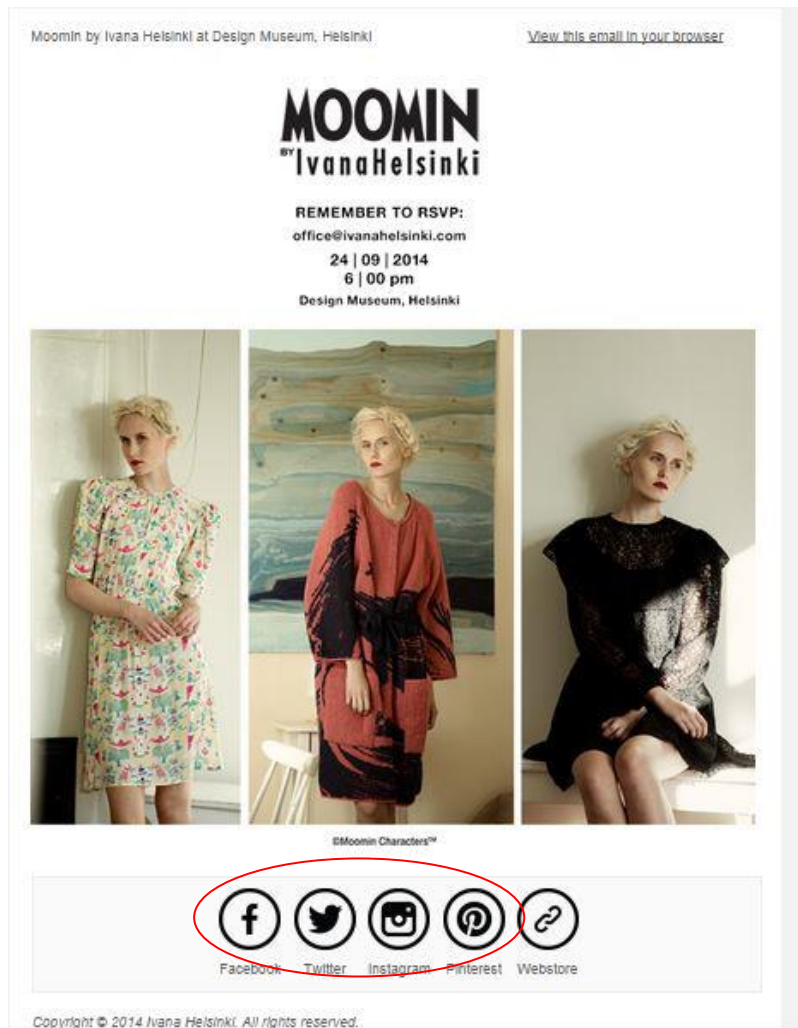


Figure 7. Social media links are blended in Ivana Helsinki's emails (eNewsletter) (Ivana Helsinki 2014)

What 2.Elämä Design could learn from Ivana Helsinki's email marketing:

- Set up email (eNewsletter) correspondence with B2B clients, partners and media.
- Have a good email strategy to convey core messages without spamming receivers' inbox.
- Use clear and short text, visual language (one image) as the main content of email.
- Link social media platforms in the email.
- Make sure the email image is easy and quick to download; it opens automatically, and shows well on smart phones.

4.4.4 Benchmarking Case 4: Wendy’s Lookbook

Wendy’ Lookbook on YouTube is run by an American fashion blogger Wendy. When the video “25 Ways to Wear a Scarf in 4.5 Minutes!” (figure 8) went viral online, she became a popular and famous internet fashion icon in just three months. Nowadays, the video has more than 25 million views, and the channel has nearly 600 thousand subscribers.

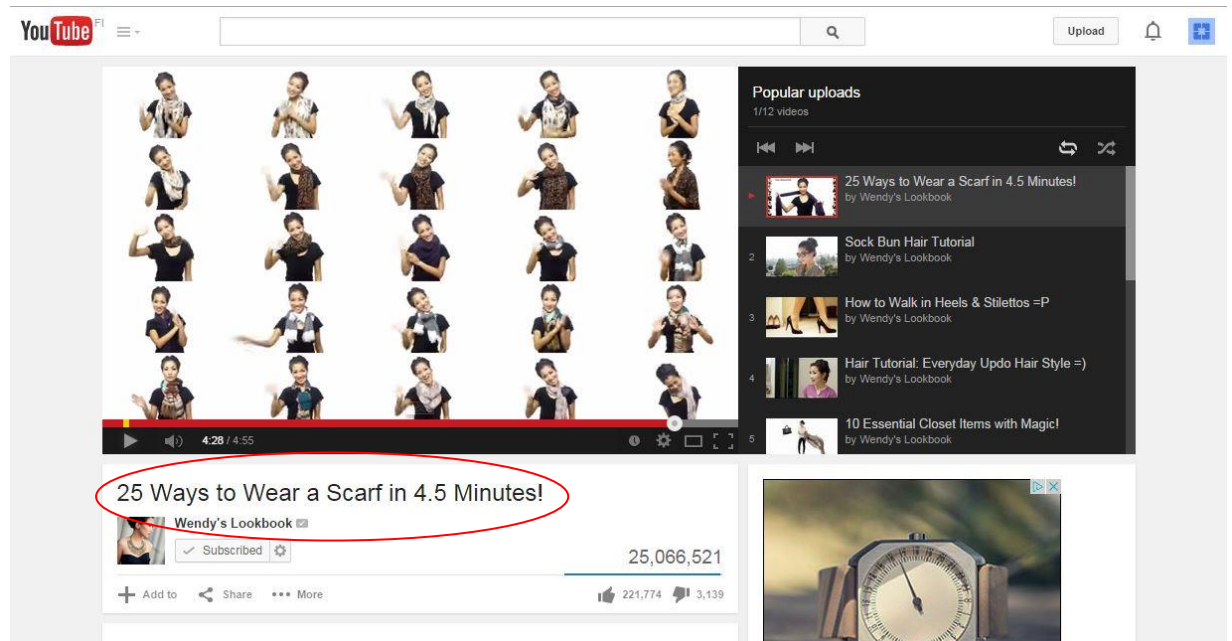


Figure 8. The viral video “25 Ways to Wear a Scarf in 4.5 minutes!” on Wendy’s Lookbook channel on YouTube (Wendy’s Lookbook 2014)

Although Wendy’s digital marketing is about herself as a brand, and producing viral video should not be the sole purpose of video marketing, there are still many things 2.Elämä Design could learn from Wendy’s Lookbook. The most obvious reason is her outstanding tutorials on how to select and match seasonal dress, jewelry and accessories. This part of content creation is closely related to 2.Elämä Design’s video marketing plan in the future. Wendy also makes videos on trend watching and lifestyle, which gives her more credibility as an updated stylist.

It takes time and skill to produce professional videos as Wendy’s Lookbook, and most of her videos tend to be too long for brand marketing (around ten minutes). However,

Wendy still offers a lot of inspiration for designers who consider video marketing. For instance, she is very good at pulling all kinds of resources together to create a good, sometimes fictional video story. The cooperation with designers, brands and stores brings her marketing and financial benefits.

What 2.Elämä Design could borrow from Wendy's Lookbook:

- Create simple and short video tutorials on how to wear 2.Elämä Design's jewelry and accessories for different occasions.
- Make video stories on the design and production process of 2.Elämä Design.
- Categorize the video ideas, such as sales promotion, tutorials, behind the scene, company story, topics on eco-design, etc.
- Cooperate with other designers to make interesting videos to promote seasonal sales (and share the cost).
- Publish videos on various digital platforms, and link with social media.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the key findings based on literature review, qualitative research and benchmarking. The author gave the recommendations and handbook (attachment 1) to 2.Elämä Design, while the owner and the designer of the company gave their valuable feedback. The assessment on the project and handbook, and self-evaluation are included here, as well as some further ideas for development.

5.1 Key Findings

According to Miller (2012, 7), there are two reasons all B2B marketers should put digital marketing into the marketing mix: their competitors are doing it, and customers are expecting it. The prevalence of B2B digital marketing is evident in various surveys and reports based on the literature review of this thesis. All interviewees in the qualitative research acknowledged the importance of digital visibility, mostly due to the two reasons given by Miller. Hoping to obtain a bigger market share, 2.Elämä Design is facing a competitive business environment, especially under a sluggish economy. The expense of digital marketing is much lower than advertising in the traditional media and other conventional marketing activities, yet it might bring a rewarding effect both in a short and long term.

The evidences from several surveys and reports by prominent marketing institutes and agencies show that B2B buyers are increasingly using internet to do pre-purchase research, and content plays a more and more important role in B2B buying process (Demand Gen Report 2014a; Demand Gen Report 2014b). Nevertheless, there is a significant gap between suggested and realized content marketing practices among the interviewed companies of this project. Most of interviewees are mainly publishing content related to sales promotion and products, which is quite far away from inspiring and engaging content creation advised by various marketing experts (Hubspot 2014a; Signorelli 2014, 5).

Meanwhile, social media has become a much more valued digital platform for B2B marketers to connect with buyers, due to its interactive and engaging functions

(Omobono 2014). Some interviewees, especially the ones having successful social media campaigns, agree with the notion that marketing is getting more and more personal. Therefore B2B buyers are just like normal people, who are participating, engaging and influenced in social media. However for smaller companies, managing social media could be challenging. Selective platforms and prioritized tasks are strongly recommended by experts (Bodnar & Cohen 2012, 6-7) to avoid unnecessary efforts. The main function of social media is “staying top-of-mind” of people (Miller 2012), and amplifying the other offline marketing activities.

It is clear that trade fairs, word-of-mouth, and referrals are still the major marketing methods to reach buyers in B2B sector. Not only the literature review, but also the qualitative interviews of this project demonstrate that B2B sellers rely heavily on these offline activities to market their products and services. Other more conventional communication tools such as phone calls and Email (eNewsletter), are also frequently used. Digital marketing, as a part of IMC, is to collaborate with other marketing activities and events in order to maximize the marketing effectiveness.

The biggest gaps between the digital marketing trends in literature review and real cases in qualitative research are probably all due to the lack of competences and resources. Mobile and SEO marketing, the two tactics claimed by experts to be vital for B2B digital marketing, were not discussed much with the interviewees. The interviewees are somehow familiar with the concepts, and have been working on these two issues at certain level. However these are not the priorities of digital marketing for them at this moment yet, though they all acknowledge the importance of doing these two things right. Video marketing, a highly-rated B2B digital marketing tactic by experts and marketers, is not widely used by any interviewee either. Nevertheless the case company has a strong interest in video marketing, and it has already begun in the process of making its first video.

Through the literature review and qualitative research, two biggest challenges of B2B digital marketing, especially for micro companies and entrepreneurs, could be spotted. The first challenge is how to create valuable and interesting content and tell a good and

inspiring story, instead of just promoting sales. It requires marketers to have a storytelling and journalistic skills, which many of them do not have. The second one is how to measure the effectiveness of digital marketing. The ROI of social media is especially subtle. For smaller companies that do not have technological skills or big budgets, the measurement is still a mystery.

The key concept of B2B digital marketing is the new SEO tactic, which integrates content marketing and social media (DeMers 2014; Puetz 2014; Traupel 2014). For companies such as 2.Elämä Design, it is crucial to have a focused content creation plan and efficient social media management. 2.Elämä Design should have realistic expectations about its digital marketing, which is mostly supporting the company's offline marketing activities and gradually building up its brand image online, at least in the beginning. It is still important to closely follow the latest studies on digital marketing and observe the online activities of peer companies, in order to catch up with useful knowledge and tips. However it is more important to stick with one's own digital marketing objectives, remember what the company is able to do with its resources and if they are worth doing. The author outlines some more detailed recommendations on digital marketing plan for 2.Elämä Design in the next subchapter.

5.2 Recommendations

The first step the author suggests 2.Elämä Design to take is to use Chaffey's digital marketing planning model (figure 9) as a guidance to construct its strategic digital marketing plan.

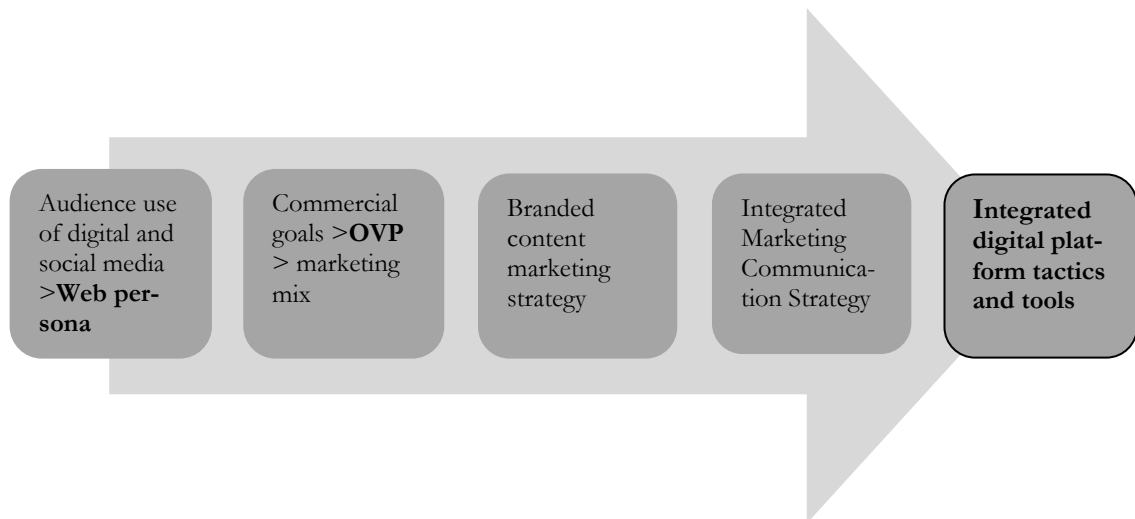


Figure 9. Chaffey's digital marketing planning model (Chaffey 2013a)

Based on Chaffey's model, in order to create a branded content marketing strategy and blend the digital marketing into IMC strategy, 2.Elämä Design should first analyze the web persona of its target customers, meanwhile setting up its OVP clearly. The author proposes the following acts to fulfill these two tasks.

Analyzing web persona of related persons and companies:

- Read the official websites of target customers (companies and organizations); subscribe and follow their official social media accounts; observe their online activities; try to study and analyze their needs, preferences and decisions.
- Link (or follow) the personal social media accounts of key persons (of target customers) if possible; observe their online behavior, socialize accordingly and respond to related topics timely.
- Join the industrial groups of related business field on social media platforms. Observe the potential partners and customers' online activities.
- Pay attention to people who like, share and engage in the posts of 2.Elämä Design online. Check out who they are and link them if needed.

Setting up OVP:

- Establish the digital marketing objectives and goals, which support the business mission and financial goals.

- Define the core brand value. Then determine the OVP, which should reflect and corroborate the value proposition of 2.Elämä Design.
- Make sure the OVP also corresponds with the objectives of the marketing mix.

Subsequently, 2.Elämä Design should make a plan on content creation with a prudent consideration. No matter if the content is text, image or video, its purpose is to construct the brand value and image online, and ideally, to inspire and nurture the target audience with the company's philosophy. Meanwhile, a distinct IMC strategy should be laid out, so that the design of digital marketing could collaborate with the goals of IMC.

Finally, 2.Elämä Design could employ the RACE model by Smart Insights (2010) to make a detailed digital marketing plan. Chaffey claims that RACE as a simple planning model, could help marketers to Reach the potential customers, Act (and Interact) with them, Convert them to customers, and Engage with them (Chaffey 2013b). The model was developed into a comprehensive framework and several infographics and charts in order to illustrate its functions and measurement. The author combined various analytical graphs of RACE, and modified it to an even simpler version (figure 10), which fits the case company's situation.

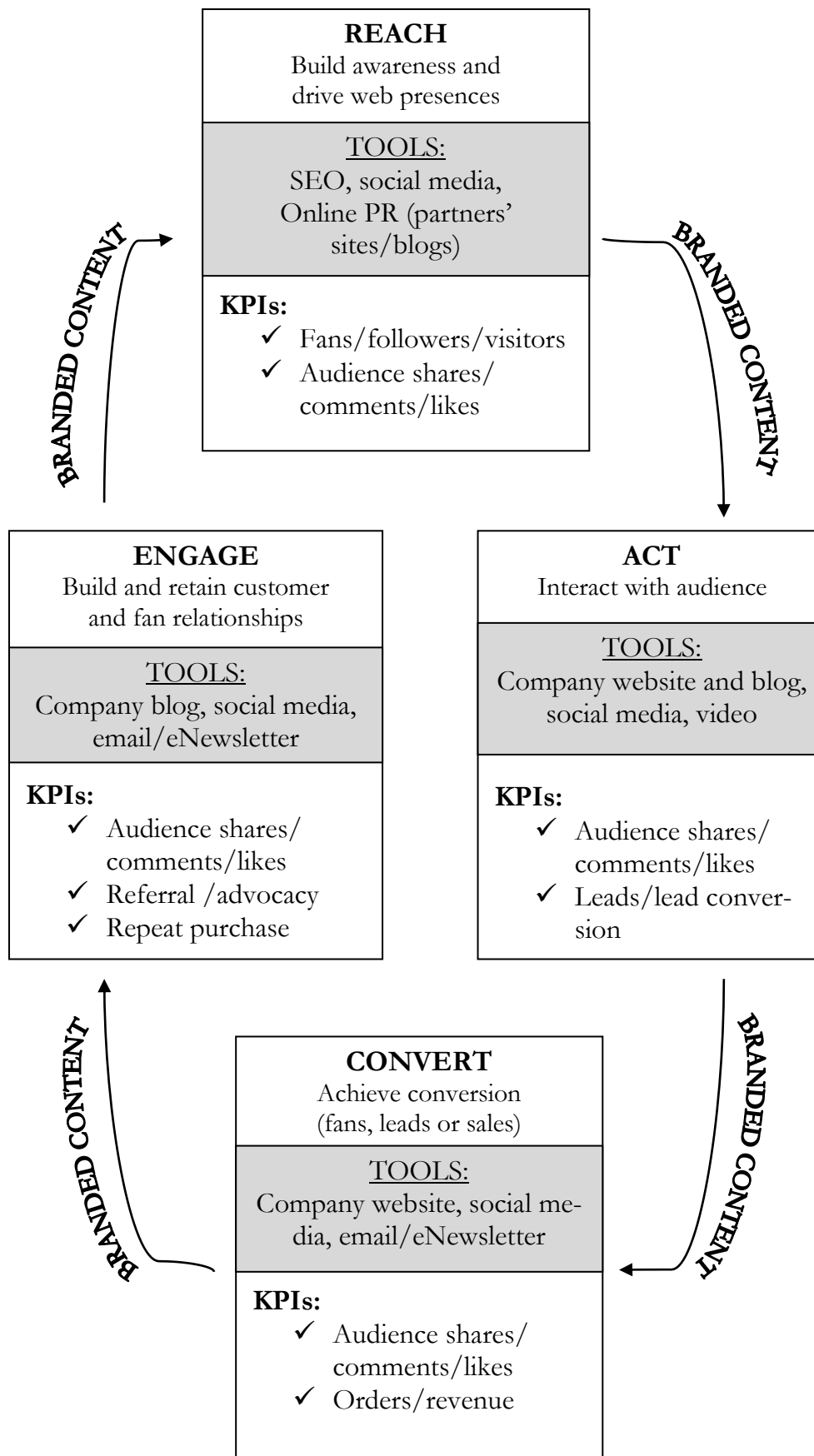


Figure 10. RACE digital marketing planning for 2.Elämä Design, modified from graphs by Chaffey (2013b)

Figure 10 shows how RACE model could be utilized by 2.Elämä Design at different stages of digital marketing. Branded content marketing is the crucial concept, and social media is the vital tool in every step. It is important to view RACE as an integrated framework. It works best when online channels interact with each other, and combine with traditional offline channels. Meanwhile, the ultimate function of RACE planning is to support the IMC strategy.

The author speculated that 2.Elämä Design might work mainly on Reach and Act stages mostly in the beginning, which is understandable and reasonable, since the company will be at the early stage of digital marketing experiment. The priority job should be increase online presence and reach out to more audiences. However 2.Elämä Design should remember that social media also plays an important role at Convert and Engage stages. Therefore the author suggests that 2.Elämä Design focuses on managing its social media platforms with quality content, since it is the essential tool working for all four stages. Social media is also the best tool to interact and engage with all audiences at the same time, which serves the purpose of nurturing online communities. Meanwhile, 2.Elämä Design should have a careful content creation strategy, instead of publishing posts indiscreetly and inconsistently. As shown in RACE frame, it is the branded content, as the key message, that circulates around four stages.

More detailed planning instructions and specific digital platforms, including tips, could be found in the 90-day B2B digital marketing handbook (attachment 1).

5.3 Product Feedback

2.Elämä Design has been cooperative with this thesis project, and very much involved throughout the process. The company is excited about the digital marketing plan, willing to try most of the recommendations by the author. However, there is a gap between what 2.Elämä Design could do and prefer to do. The handbook is merely a start of 2.Elämä Design's digital marketing. The owner agrees that the company needs to observe carefully while implementing the strategy, and adjust the plan accordingly.

2.Elämä Design started to rebuild its website in October 2014. The author suggested setting up an online inventory for retailers and a list of retailers and partners, but instead, the owner planned to set up his own web store, which was not discussed in the early stages of this thesis project. The latest development is that the web store will not launch in the near future due to some technical issues. The owner had some concerns about publishing the list of retailers and the partners because he was worried that the retailers' information will contradict the future web store sales, and he was not too satisfied with the quality and quantity of their partners.

The owner fully agrees with the social media plan laid out in this thesis. As a matter of fact, the company has been much more active on Facebook in the recent months. The owner thinks he should experiment with the "post boosting" and "page boosting" functions on Facebook, otherwise he would never know how paid Facebook campaigns work and if they are effective. When the author explained him the price range that Facebook charges, he expressed that he could afford to try some packages. He also thinks it is a good idea to open an Instagram account.

The biggest disagreement on the plan is about content creation. The author suggested that 2.Elämä Design should consider creating inspiring and educational content by writing blogs on sustainable design and environmental issues. Very few of its competitors are making this kind of quality content and therefore, if 2.Elämä Design does so, it could make the company stand out. Both the owner and the designer consent to the idea that engaging content should not be just about sales, but the philosophy of the brand's core value. However both of them expressed the pity that they neither have time nor capability to write such blogs. They also would have difficulties to create such posts on Facebook. Most likely, their posts would be focused on sales and promotions, just like it is with the majority of their competitors.

Nevertheless, the company has worked on a video production as the author suggested, which is an alternative form of blogging. The very first video they are making right now is a company story on 2.Elämä Design, including the process of recycling and production.

Overall 2.Elämä Design is satisfied with the handbook. The owner understands that it requires self-discipline for implementation and monitoring the plan, and the size of budget could bring different results. Nevertheless, the author understands and respects the owner's decision that not set a certain amount of budget in the beginning. Instead, the owner will have a low-cost principle; invest on a few necessary social media campaigns and video view boosting. The author agreed to help 2.Elämä Design to measure the effectiveness after three months.

5.4 Project and Product Assessment

This thesis project was initiated by the author while she was doing specialization work placement at 2.Elämä Design. Originally, the idea was just to upgrade the website and add more posts on Facebook, because at that time the website was in a poor shape and the company's Facebook activity was close to zero. With the literature review on B2B digital marketing, the author gradually developed some more specific ideas. Due to the smooth communication between the author and the case company, the project evolved quite efficiently.

The author intentionally selected most of the interviewees from eco-design field in Helsinki, according to the case company's requirement. The owner of 2.Elämä Design emphasized that he wanted to know how his Finnish peers think about and deal with digital marketing. As an immigrant entrepreneur, he has been worried that he does not understand the Finnish business culture well enough.

The case company is very satisfied with the results of the qualitative interviews and the final product. In spite of some disagreements on content creation, the owner and the designer think the project has fulfilled its initial purpose – creating a B2B digital marketing plan to increase online visibility. They understand that it will take time to engage the target audience and convert some of them into customers. A 3-month plan would be a good start for them to learn about and experiment on digital marketing.

The author has done extensive literature review on B2B digital marketing, however there is quite a gap between reality and literature, especially in terms of content market-

ing. The qualitative interviewees and benchmarking cases might be perfect examples for 2.Elämä Design to study as a reference, but they are not the best examples of B2B digital marketing in micro and small companies.

The limitation of this thesis project is that the qualitative interviews and benchmarking cases mainly just covered the B2B digital marketing of several entrepreneurial designers and small eco-design businesses in Helsinki. However due to the specific requirement of the case company, these interviewees and benchmarking cases are representative up to a point. Their marketing activities are most relevant to the case company. Therefore this limitation could be considered as a special scope of this project, which might be useful for other entrepreneurs running similar business.

The author does think the final product realized the objective of the thesis project. The handbook outlined a 3-month digital marketing plan, which is a basic foundation for 2.Elämä Design to start its digital experiment. The plan focuses on website building, social media and video marketing, which the case company could do by itself with its limited resources.

There are two aspects of digital marketing the author failed to discuss on a deeper level in this thesis. One is the measurement of digital marketing effectiveness which is important, though it is not the focus of the project. The main reason is that none of the interviewees were able to provide detailed information on the topic. Most of the designers and business owners expressed frankly that they did not know how to measure precisely. The other is the proper budget for digital marketing. Most of the interviewees said they do not have a fixed budget for digital marketing, and they still spend most of their marketing budget on trade fairs, which they value most.

5.5 Further Development Ideas

It is still unclear if the author will actually participate in the case company's digital marketing implementation. However the author is interested in digging deeper into this topic by interviewing more entrepreneurial designers and B2B design products buyers. Meanwhile, the author will monitor and do follow-up research on how 2.Elämä Design

implements the digital marketing plan, especially if the plan actually works in various aspects.

The author still thinks that it is important for 2.Elämä Design to consider quality content creation after they have stabilized the basic foundation of digital marketing. Indeed, it is challenging to convey inspiring, educative, and yet entertaining content. Both the owner and the designer of 2.Elämä Design showed worries that they are not able to do so. Most of 2.Elämä Design's competitors are not doing this part of content creation, and some of them have a bigger team and better resources than 2.Elämä Design. However, it is not impossible for a small team to create great content. The key is a good idea and a feasible plan.

It will depend on the situation after the 90-day digital marketing trial if 2.Elämä Design could seriously consider a strategic content creation plan. The author would be willing to help the company to develop it, because it would be a great opportunity to experience some challenging and creative work.

5.6 Self-evaluation

Being able to work with 2.Elämä Design and creating a B2B digital marketing plan gave the author a great opportunity to explore the topic. The author has learnt a great deal through the process. Even though the project research was quite general, the results were rather rewarding. Through the comparison between theories and practices, the author apprehended the complexity of B2B marketing, especially in the world of micro businesses. However during the research process, the author realized that B2B digital marketing is still an up-to-date phenomenon, and a topic covering enormous amount of knowledge and information related to various specific fields. Had the author understood this earlier, the thesis topic would have been narrowed down to one or two components of B2B digital marketing. Therefore the author could have done a more thorough and deeper research. Nevertheless the experience strongly encouraged the author to pursue further study and career on marketing communication in the future.

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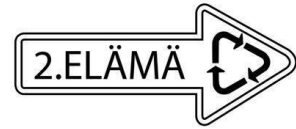
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Attachments

Attachment 1. B2B Digital Marketing Handbook for 2.Elämä Design



B2B Digital Marketing Handbook for 2.ELÄMÄ DESIGN

Version 1.0

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Company Mission

- **Produce and advocate innovative and sustainable design** with contemporary aesthetics and social responsibility.

Digital Marketing Objectives

- **Support the mission of 2.Elämä Design** via presenting the products and services; promoting the sustainable design concept online.

Digital Marketing Goals

- **Reach** out to potential B2B clients.
- **Retain** the relationship with existing B2B clients.
- **Collaborate** with the company's offline marketing activities.
- **Engage** people by sharing inspiring thoughts on sustainable design and responsible consumption in online communities.

Handbook Executive Period

- **90 days** (January – March 2015).

PLAN

- **Status Review**

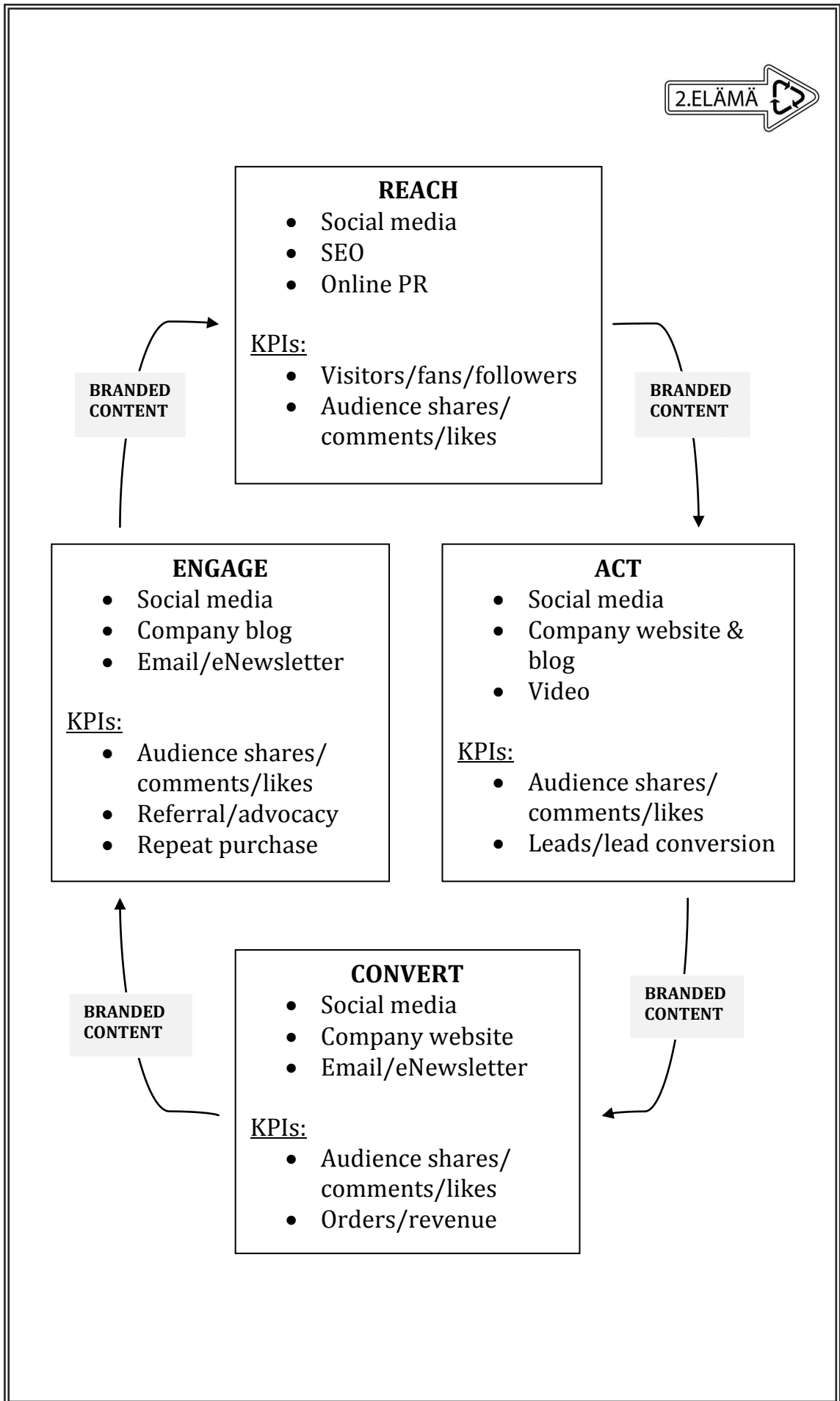
- Set up the mission and objectives of the business.
- Go through PESTEE and digital-SWOT analysis.
- Examine the customer base and buying process.
- Benchmark competitors' digital marketing activities.
- Summarize the company's current digital marketing situation.

- **Strategy Creation**

- Define target customers' web persona.
- Define OVP, including the brand value and positioning.
- Make digital content creation plan.
- Review marketing mix and IMC; integrate digital channels with traditional channels and offline marketing activities.

- **Implementation (RACE)**

- Reach: Build awareness and drive online presence.
- Act: Use content marketing to interact with audience.
- Convert: Gain more fans, leads and sales.
- Engage: Retain customer loyalty and fan relationship.



Tips on the Key Social Media Platforms

- **Facebook**

- Content:
 - new products and sales promotion
 - company news and background stories
 - inspirational thoughts on sustainable design
- Post at least 3 times per week in a consistent pace
- Connect with pages of retailers, B2B clients and partners
- Link with company website, blog & Instagram
- Paid campaigns for offline marketing activities
(Page promotion: €4 -€16/day for 3 -46 likes/day;
Post boosting: €4: 170 -190 people reached)

- **Instagram**

- Post images of jewelry and accessories, especially for various occasions & festivals
- Post dress tips via partnering with other designers
- Use hashtags and keywords in the comment
- Link to Facebook

- **Pinterest**

- Post product images and introduction
- Link to Facebook

- **LinkedIn**

- Sign in with personal identity
- Post company news
- Connect with partners, customers and related people
- Join sustainable design and related groups
- Follow industrial leaders and media outlets

Suggestions on Video Production & Marketing

- **Video Style**

- Short (15 seconds to 3 minutes)
- Colour
- Narrative & story-telling

- **Video Types**

- Company story
- Stories on recycling, production and design
- Sales promotion
- Tutorials on dressing tips of jewelry and accessories partnering with other designers
- Tutorials on DIY jewelry and accessories with recycled materials

- **Publishing Channels**

- Youtube & Vimeo
- Instagram (only for 15-second video)

- **Publishing Tips**

- Input embedded keyword phrases and sentences in the title, description and caption sections on YouTube
- Add the company's website link in the annotation
- Link the video on every social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, Twitter) and the company website/blog

What a Multi-functional Website should have:

- Online inventory for retailers and B2B clients
- Company blog section
- Media bank for press
- List of retailers
- Links to existing B2B clients and partners
- Links to social media platforms
- Responsive design for mobile devices

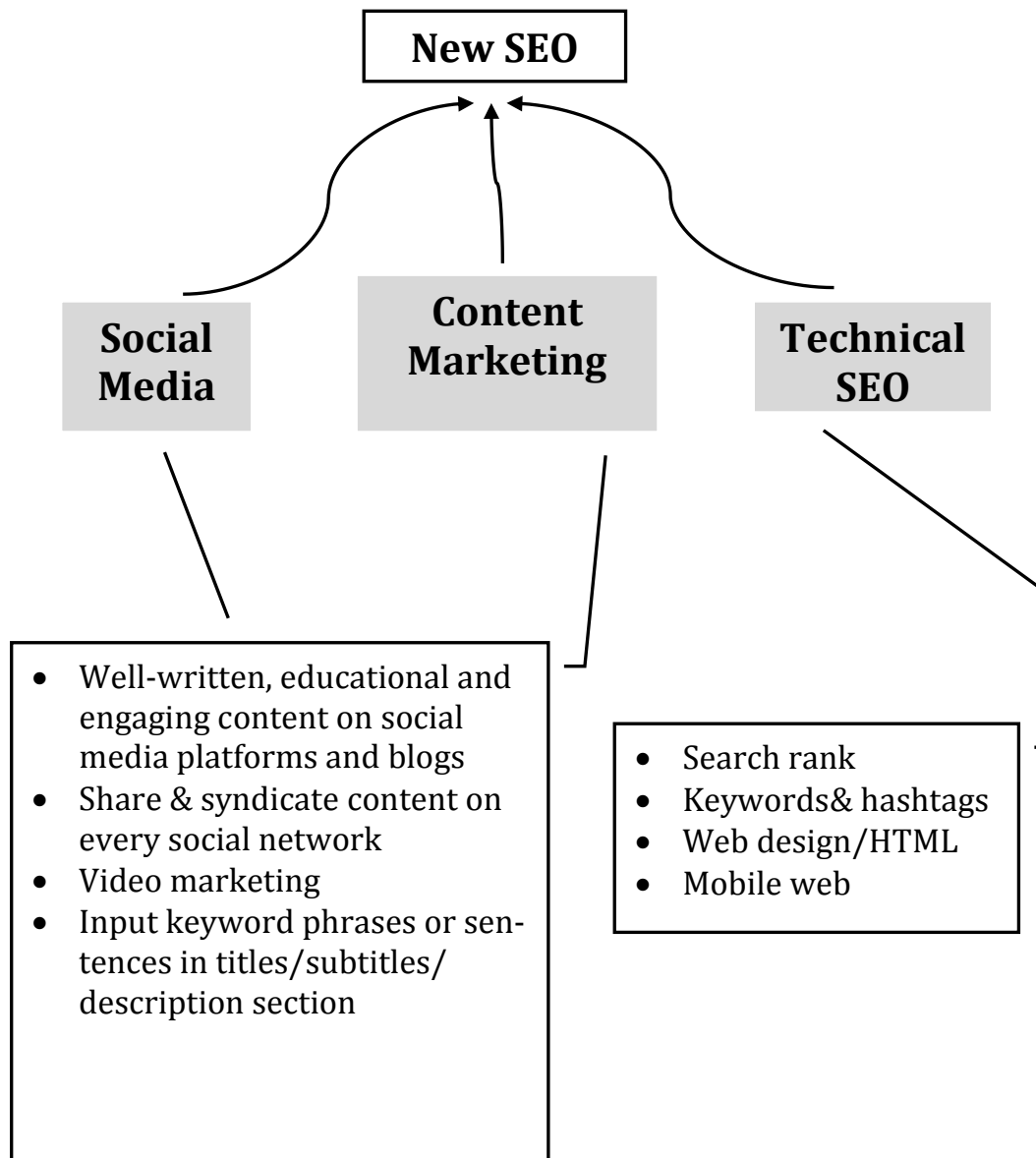
What to Write in the blog:

- Use first-person narration to tell a good story
- Inspirational thoughts on sustainable design concept and industrial trends
- Behind-the-scene stories on the design or manufacturing process of the products
- Tutorial pieces on how to recycle daily goods into something useful and fun
- Connect with the company's social media platforms

How to use Email (eNewsletter):

- Crucial messages only to existing partners and customers
- Seasonal promotion and events invitation to related people
- Surveys to existing partners and customers
- Clean layout highlighting images or video
- Obvious icons connecting with the company's social media platforms
- Easy to open and quick to download from smart phones

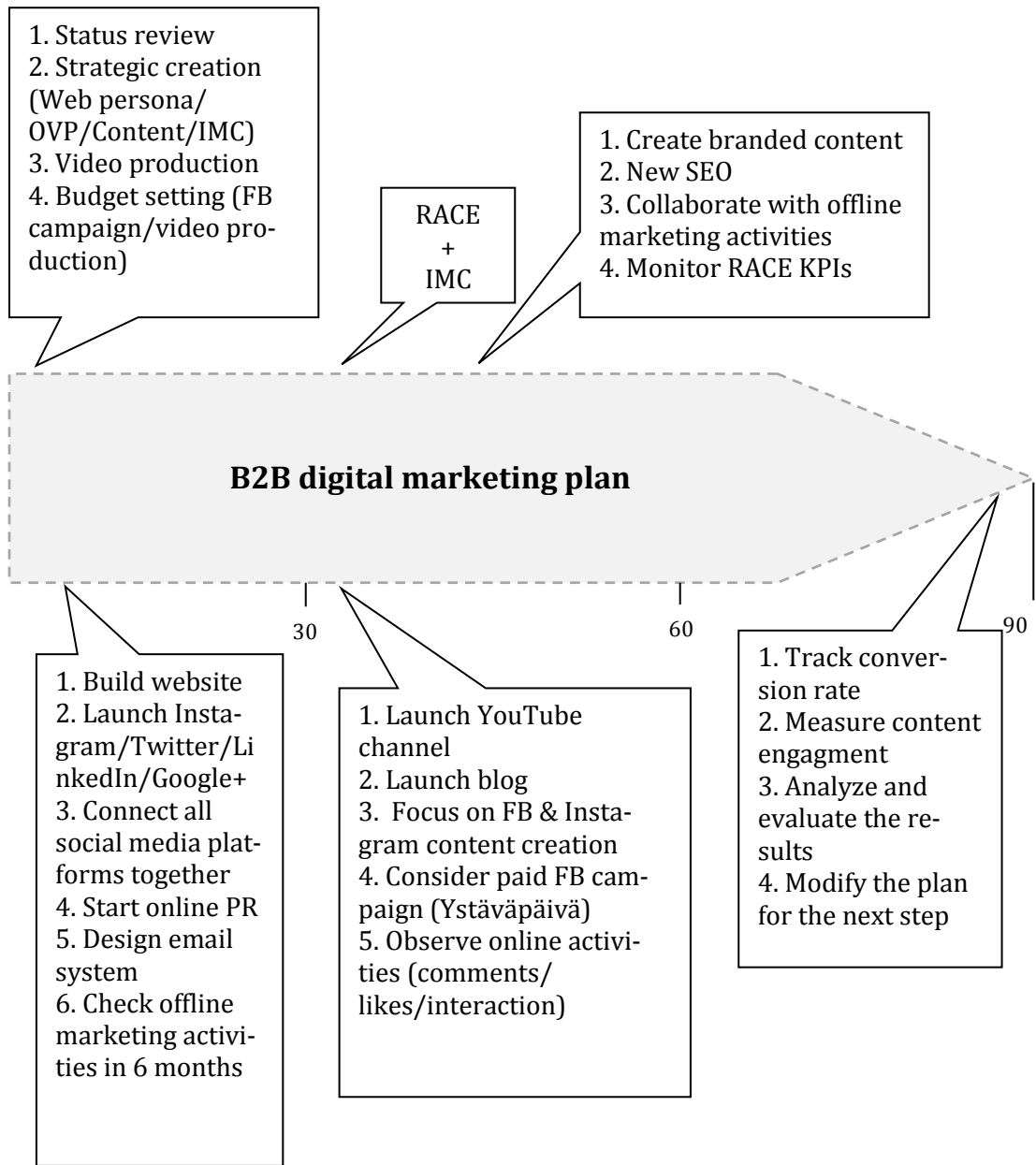
How Does New SEO work?



TIPS for now:

- Focus on quality content and keyword creation
- Make sure content publishes on all social media platforms
- Make sure the company website design is responsive
- Build online PR by exchanging links with partners and customers
- Consider investing on content boosting when necessary

The Big Picture



Resources & Inspirations

- **Digital Media:**

- HubSpot (<http://www.hubspot.com>)
- Smart Insights (<http://www.smartinsights.com>)
- Content Marketing Institute
(<http://www.contentmarketinginstitute.com>)
- Search Engine Land (<http://www.searchengineland.com>)

- **Social Media:**

- Social Media Examiner
(<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com>)
- Social Media B2B (<http://www.socialmediab2b.com>)

- **Video Marketing:**

- Lasse Rouhiainen: 101 Video Marketing Tips & Strategies for Small Businesses (<http://www.lasserouhiainen.com>)
- Vidyard (<http://www.vidyard.com>)

- **Tools:**

- Google Analytics (<http://google.com/analytics>)
- Google Alerts (<http://google.com/alerts>)
- Hootsuite (<http://www.hootsuite.com>)

<p><u>Political</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU supports sustainable design business and SMEs with directives and funding. ✓ EU Ecodesign Directive (2009/125/EC) (European Commission 2014a) ✓ EU Green Action Plan for SMEs (GAP) (European Commission 2014b) • Environmental advocacy and activities are supported in Finland and EU. • Finland develops its national competence by emphasizing green economy. 	<p><u>Economic</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finnish economy will remain weak in the long term (Suomen Pankki 2014b). • All EU countries will have a positive economic growth in 2015 and 2016 (European Commission 2014c). • Finnish consumers had slightly more confidence in the country's economy, but were still cautious about their own financial situation in near future, according to the survey result in September 2014 (Statistics Finland 2014).
<p><u>Social</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More and more social concerns on responsible consumption in Finland and EU countries. • Recycling is widely practiced in Finland, and considered “common sense”. • Consumers in Europe are familiar with products made of recycling materials. 	<p><u>Technological</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technologies for recycling and up-cycling industrial waste is improving. • Finland, Sweden and Norway are forerunners in developing tyre recycling (Suomen Rengaskierrätys Oy 2014).
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Environmental

- Finland's Ministry of the Environment promotes sustainable development to prevent environmental damage (Environmental Administration 2014).
- Finland has been a good reputation in environmental protection.

Ethical

- The concept of ethical business is more and more emphasized in Finland and EU.
- More and more consumers care if the business take care of environmental issues (Accenture & Havas Media 2014).
- An ethical business gives a better brand image to consumers.

Attachment 3. Interview Questions for 2.Elämä Design

1. What kinds of marketing strategies and activities have you had?
2. What kinds of digital marketing activities have you had?
3. How do you normally find your B2B clients?
4. How much time do you spend on social media and internet daily?
5. How do you think digital marketing could help your business?
6. What marketing objectives and goals do you have for digital marketing?
7. What 2.Elämä Design wants to present and achieve through digital marketing?
8. Have you already had some specific plans for digital marketing?
9. Are there any good websites or social media pages you would like to benchmark? And why?
10. How much money and time would you like to spend on digital marketing?
11. What do you agree and disagree about this B2B digital marketing plan? Why?

Attachment 4. Interview Questions for B2B Sellers/Designers

1. Do you have a digital marketing strategy? How does it collaborate with your marketing strategy in general?
2. When did you start digital marketing for your business?
3. What are the objectives and goals of your digital marketing?
4. What kinds of digital platforms do you use and the purposes of each of them?
5. What kind of content do you publish on your digital marketing platforms?
6. How much time and budget do you spend on your digital marketing?
7. Do you think your digital marketing is helpful for you to find your B2B clients?
If yes, how?
8. How do you usually find your B2B clients?
9. Do you think your digital marketing is helpful for you to retain the relationship with your B2B clients? If yes, how?
10. How do you usually retain the relationship with your B2B clients?
11. What are your offline marketing activities?
12. Do you use digital tools to assist your offline marketing activities? If yes, how?
If no, why?
13. Do you do your digital marketing by yourself?
14. In general, do you think your digital marketing is effective? Do you measure the effectiveness? If yes, how? If no, why?
15. What digital marketing plans do you have in near future?

Attachment 5. Interview Questions for B2B Buyers/Retailers

1. How do you usually find your suppliers (designers)?
2. Is it important to you that they have a nice website?
3. Does the performance of the designers' online activities influence your buying decisions?
4. Do you expect your suppliers do digital marketing for their design products?
5. Do you do digital marketing yourself? How?
6. Do you think it is important for your suppliers to do digital marketing?

Attachment 6. Interview Questions for Digital Marketing Professionals

1. What are the main characteristics of B2B digital marketing nowadays?
2. What would be your advice for a micro company starting its digital marketing?
3. How to manage social media efficiently?
4. Is social media influencing B2B buying processes? How?
5. For a micro company with very limited budget and resources, do they have to be on every social media outlet? And do they have to be active all the time?
6. How much money should a micro company spend on their digital marketing?
7. Is video marketing an important tool in B2B sector? Why?
8. What kinds of videos are the most effective?
9. What kinds of videos do people like to watch online nowadays?
10. What are the soft skills and minimal equipment one should prepare in order to do video marketing?