

Saimaa University of Applied Sciences
Faculty of Business Administration Lappeenranta
Degree Programme in International Business

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Marketing plan for Keratam Oy

Thesis 2017

Abstract

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Instructors: Senior lecturer Anu Kurvinen, Saimaa University of Applied Sciences

Managing Director: Hannu Mutikainen, Keratam Oy.

The aim of this thesis was to create a marketing plan for Keratam Oy. Keratam Oy is a construction company and they do not have an existing marketing plan. The commissioner wants their marketing to be developed to gain new customers and maintain existing customer relationships. The thesis work was commissioned by the CEO of Keratam Oy, Hannu Mutikainen.

The research method used in this thesis was secondary market research. Competitors' web pages and marketing tools were studied. The data for this thesis was searched from online, professional literature, and from documents received from Keratam Oy. The empirical part of this thesis consists of marketing planning, and tangible marketing elements.

The result of this thesis is a marketing plan for Keratam Oy. In this work there is included company background, market analysis, company analysis, customer analysis, industry analysis, market research, marketing mix, market analysis, competitor analysis, budget, positioning strategy, pricing strategy, unique selling proposition, online marketing strategy, marketing communications, conversion strategy, retention strategy, branding, and marketing timeline.

In this thesis there are 3 parts. The first is about the purpose and commissioner, the second about methods and material and the third about results and recommendations

The results can be applied in company's daily operations and the marketing can be developed through the result.

Keywords: marketing strategy, marketing plan, b2b, marketing, business-to-business

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1 Introduction

The objective of this thesis is to make Keratam Oy's marketing more efficient and services available to customers easily by creating a marketing plan that the company can follow. The case company does not have a marketing plan and their marketing is not as effective as the CEO wants it to be. This thesis will help the case company to gain their marketing towards wanted level. Through implementing the marketing plan the aim is to gain more customers, suppliers, and maintain existing customer relationships. Company's brand, and value is to be created and developed through the marketing plan. The case company's CEO Hannu Mutikainen wants the marketing to be modern, but not forget the traditional methods. The right seasons and times for marketing will be examined.

1.1 Research and tools

The main research method is secondary market research, and it will be implemented through examining competitors' annual reports and marketing plans. This thesis consists of theoretical framework. Theoretical data was collected from reading material such as books, online sources, and interviews conducted by the thesis author. The interviews were informal, and were done between the case company CEO Hannu Mutikainen and the thesis author Tiia Mutikainen. In the references part of the thesis are presented the literature and online sources used in the thesis. Used data is presented by referring to source material from websites, books, scientific articles, and other forms of data and information.

There will be included analysis of the present, past, and future situation of the case company's marketing and goals. There will be information about the target customers, and about customers that are not included in the target customers. Marketing materials will be determined. Marketing communications will be determined and with what methods the marketing will be implemented.

There will be a study about the present business situation, vision, mission, marketing goals, and marketing budget. The present business situation will be analysed as widely as possible to gain an idea about the issues that need to be done in marketing. The current situation will be analysed through microenvi-

ronment, consumer analysis, internal analysis, and market analysis. Vision and mission will be developed with the company's CEO to help the marketing strategies in the future. Marketing goals will be set to support the marketing plan, and strategy. Budget will be set to know how much resources there is available for marketing.

Market research will be conducted and there will be information about the market where the case company operates. There will be analysis of the industry, its future, present, and past situation. Competition will be studied in the marketing plan, and there will be shown how the company can separate itself from the competitors, with unique selling proposition to gain more customers. Creating value for the customers through company's services will be examined through literature, and scientific articles. There will be information about the market plan strategies which include the strategies that the company will use in the future.

PESTEL-analysis will be conducted to review the company's operational environment. In the PESTEL-analysis there will be examined the political, economic, social, technological, ecological, and legal factors that have effect on the company's operational macroenvironment. In the political section, there is examined the political stability or instability, tax policies, environmental laws, and labour laws. The reason why the political view is examined is that the political environment has a big impact on every company's operating environment. If for example the tax policies are going to be changed the company needs to rethink their pricing policies. Economic factors are that will be examined are economic growth, inflation, and interest rates. Economic factors are important to examine since the construction companies make big investments in machines, and other work tools that are needed for the company for being able to work. Social factors will be examined through age, attitudes, and beliefs towards the industry. Social factors determine the understanding between customer and the company. Technological factors are examined through technological development, and impact on the market. With technological research can be determined if there will be new ways of producing, and distributing, services in the field. With technological research the company will keep up with the newest ways of providing the services. Environmental factors will be examined through sustainability of

the company, and carbon footprint of the company. Sustainability and green production is becoming more and more important, companies and customers have more knowledge of environment, and they want to be more sustainable. Legal factors are analysed through what is legal in the field and what is not. Safety issues are increasingly more and more important in the field as well as product safety.

SWOT-analysis is an important part of the marketing plan. SWOT-analysis was created by Albert Humphrey in 1960-1970. In SWOT-analysis the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats will be analyzed. Strengths will be determined through questions: what is the company best at, what intellectual property does the company have, what skills do the employees have that can help to achieve the objective, what financial resources does the company have to reach the target, what connections does the company have, and what is the company's bargaining power with suppliers? Opportunities will be determined by the following questions: what changes in the external environment can the company make use of, what weaknesses do the competitors have and how the case company can learn from them, is there any new technology that the company can use, and what kind of new markets are opening for the company? Weaknesses can be determined with questions: what is the company worst at doing, is the company's knowledge outdated, does the employees need training, is the financial position weak or strong, and what new connections could the company have but don't now have them? Threats can be examined through questions: what the competitors of the company could do to effect on the case company badly, is there any new legislation that could damage the company, is there any social changes that could threaten the company, and how the economic cycle will effect on the case company?

There will be done an online marketing strategy to support the modern development of the company. In the online marketing strategy, there will be identified the key words optimized for the website, is the web design effective, search engine optimization, paid online advertising, could there be done a blog about the company's work, and social media marketing strategy.

There will be done a pricing and positioning strategy to develop the brand of the company. In pricing and positioning strategy the company will place themselves in the position of a high-end brand, low end brand or something in between. Case company will determine if they want to be known as a high price and high quality brand or something else. In the positioning strategy there will be done a chart to help visualise the company's position in the market.

Conversion strategy will be developed to turn potential customers to actual paying customers. Conversion strategy will define how the customers will be gained for paying customers, what will be done, how, and what kind of strategies will be used.

There will be done a retention strategy to ensure the existing customers will come back and ask for an offer. In the field of construction, the customers are often large companies or public sectors that have many construction sites continuously. In retention strategy a way how to gain long lasting customer relationships will be figured. The main concepts of this thesis are presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1. The main concepts of this thesis of Keratam Oy's marketing plan

1.2 Structure of the thesis

The thesis begins with presenting the case company overview which contains basic information about the company's background, market position, target market, company analysis, customer analysis, and industry analysis. After the company overview there is the strategic planning process which contains analysis of marketing, and the company. In final chapters, there is presented the marketing plan for the company.

The text follows Saimaa University of Applied Sciences (SUAS) guidelines and the thesis instructions provided. Referencing, headings, text formatting, and other factors regarding the text are set in the thesis guidelines. The reference system used in the thesis is the Harvard system of referencing.

1.3 Research questions

The aim of this thesis was to create a marketing plan for Keratam Oy, which is a construction company and the research questions were developed to support this context. The author wished to know answers to the main research question: What kind of marketing plan supports Keratam's marketing strategy? The sub questions were: What is included in a marketing plan? What are the best marketing tools for this case company? How to create value for a company in the field of construction? How to gain new customer relationships and maintain existing customer relationships? How to attract the case company's desired customer groups?

2 Company overview

The case company operates in the field of construction and mainly with business to business customers. Keratam Oy has some customers that are smaller private field customers, but these customers are not the targeted group. The main target group is public sector and housing firms. The field is highly competitive and there are new businesses entering the market.

2.1 Company background

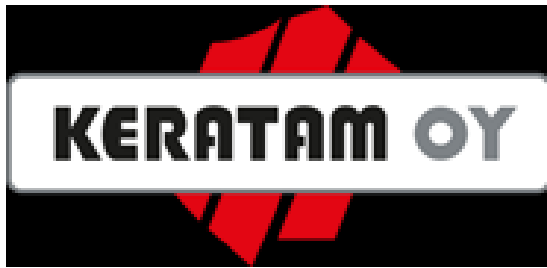


Figure 2. The case company's logo

Company Keratam Oy was founded in 1985 in Kesälahti, Finland. The base of the company is in Savonlinna, Finland. The company was registered in March of 1998. The founder is Hannu Mutikainen, who still runs the company with his wife Minna Mutikainen. Their main operating districts are Eastern and Southern Finland, but they have operated outside this area and are willing to operate all over Finland and Russia. They have had construction sites in Russia, Finland, and Sweden. The company cooperates with the company Puhallus kaksikko, which operates in the same field but mainly in South Karelia district.

The company operates mainly with bigger construction sites in the public sector, but they also implement smaller private owned construction sites if they are suitable. The case company strives to have most of their customers from B2B base. Their range of work is wide and they have a numerous different technologies to use in the projects. Keratam Oy's services are plastering, planning, and floor screed pumping.

The company has a wide history in the field, with co-operation for example We-bern Saint-Gobain which is a supplier of plaster's and other dry mixes. Keratam Oy cooperates with Fescon Oy which produces the dry mixes used in their work.

Keratam Oy is part of trade register, prepayment register, employee register, and reliable partner register. The company's turnover in 2014 was 384 000€ and profit 124 000€ which had grown from previous year 29,40%. The company has 4 employees.

2.2 Market analysis

Market analysis contains information about demographics and segmentation, target market, market need, competition, regulation and barriers to entry. In this thesis the market analysis is conducted by market research which is included in the thesis.

The construction market is very competitive, and the amount of projects is growing in Finland therefore, that there is a need for more professionals.

2.3 Company analysis

The company's present customer amount at the time is average. There has been an average amount of job quotations. During autumn and winter, the job opportunities slow down because summer is the high season in this field.

The company's vision is to be productive and grow in the future. Through good marketing and business plans the company strives to gain more revenue, customers, and professional staff. Through those factors the company's CEO sees that Keratam Oy will gain their vision to be true in the future.

The company's mission is to train their staff to be as qualified as possible and produce good quality services.

McKinsey (2000, p. 53) defined the value proposition, on the basis of the paper by Lanning and Michaels (1988), as follows:

“A clear, simple statement of the benefits, both tangible and intangible, that the company will provide, along with the approximate price it will charge each customer”

The value proposition should be visible on the company's website when possible customers visit the pages. The case company's services will provide a long time or even a life time relief to the customers' problem regarding the construction project. The case company wants to brand themselves as a service provid-

er that has been operating for 34 years and provides quality services for customers need. The short value proposition which could be seen in the company's web pages will be: "Finnish quality with over 30 years of experience".

2.4 Customer analysis

The main customer group of the case company are large businesses, public sector, and housing firms that offer bigger projects. The case company does carry out some smaller projects, but their main target is to carry out bigger projects, such as schools or hospitals. The customers that are not included in this marketing plan are very small private customer projects.

Keratam Oy's customers have a budget that needs to be followed and the customers seek for the best value for their money from the contractor. Customers send service quotes for many companies to find the company that gives the best value in terms of money and service. The customer chooses couple of companies which gave the best offers and the customer will have a meeting with them usually separately and after a face to face meeting they will choose the service provider.

Harbour (2015) discusses about construction buying habits in an online article as follows:

"One thing is clearer now more than ever: clients and, more importantly, the end user, are becoming more concerned about spending their money wisely. Again, I'm not suggesting that they're happy to pay over the odds for materials, but they are now taking into account the issues they confront when buying a cheaper/sub-standard product."

Lake (2017) describes differences between business to business and business to customer buying behaviour in an online article as follows:

"When you market to a B2B you will realize that businesses work hard to streamline the buying process in order to save time and money. This often explains why

a B2B purchase is based more on logic and why a consumer's purchase is based more on emotion.”

Hague and Harrison (2017) define B2B segmentation in an online article as follows:

“A common approach in business-to-business markets is to apply a market segmentation based on company size. The consumption levels of business-to-business customers are so widely different that this often makes sense due to large companies usually thinking and acting differently to small ones. A further sophistication may be to classify customers into those who are identified as strategic to the future of the business, those who are important and therefore key and those who are smaller and can be considered more of a transactional typology.”

The case company’s customers will be segmented by firmographs, demographic qualities, needs, revenue, and customer relationship.

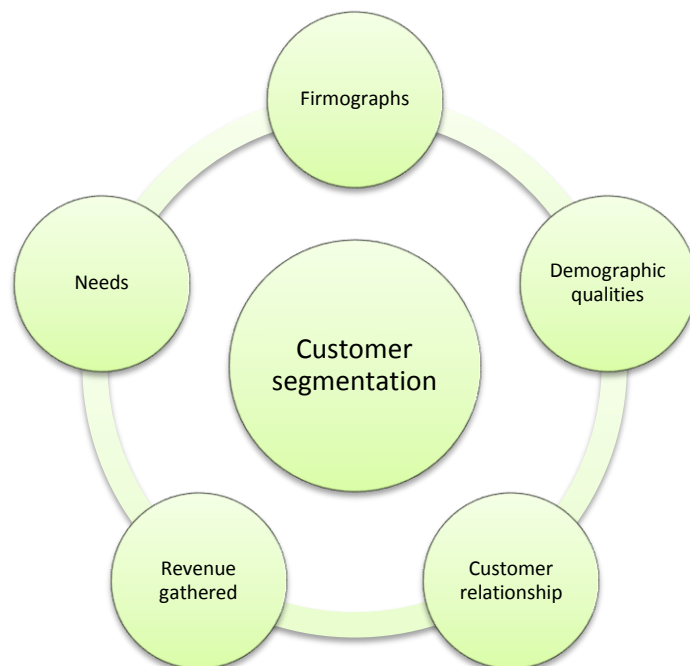


Figure 3 Keratam Oy's customer segmentation groups

2.5 Industry development and analysis of the current state

In 1905 Rakennusliitto magazine was published the first time, the magazine has information about events of Finnish construction industry. In 1972 The building Information Foundation RTS sr was established. From 1993 to 1998 the building information expanded to Estonia, Russia, and Latvia. In 1996 there were created tools that were supporting the sustainable development. In 2009 there was published the General Property Management Quality Specification System, and organization structure was renewed.

According to the case company's CEO in the late 80's and early 90's the growth of Finnish construction industry was fast, and many new companies were established, but also old companies were growing rapidly. In Finland, the construction was increasing so that the demand of professionals grew fast. From early 1990' to early 2000' there was the great recession that took power from the industry and companies. After 2005 the recession ended and the economy started growing. During 2000 hiring employees from abroad grew so, that most of the people working in construction in Helsinki area were from abroad. The recession in construction field did not completely end during 2005, it continued until 2015. Construction slowed down during 2012 and 2013. After 2015 the field in Finland started growing, so did the need for professionals.

The present situation in the field is highly competitive. Using employees from abroad is slowly decreasing which will be good for the Finnish companies. The demand of construction has been growing over the few years. Using subcontractors in construction has been growing.

It can be assumed that in the future globalisation will increase in Finnish construction field as in other fields. Competition will be growing in the future since in global markets there are more companies with different expertise. There are many new techniques and tools developed in the field in the future. Companies need to be constantly training their staff to meet the renewing standards of the field. Sustainable development will be changing and the companies will have to adjust their working habits to meet future standards of sustainable development.

3 Supporting theories

There are several theories that support marketing and implementing marketing plan. In these following chapters the most useful marketing theories for this case company are presented.

3.1 What is marketing?

Marketing defined by Dr. Philip Kotler in an article published by KotlerMarketing.com is “the science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. Marketing identifies unfulfilled needs and desires. It defines, measures and quantifies the size of the identified market and the profit potential. It pinpoints which segments the company is capable of serving best and it designs and promotes the appropriate products and services.” (Kotler marketing grup 2001-2016)

Marketing is very important to every company that wants to succeed. The company needs to get themselves into customer knowledge in some way, to get paying customers. Without marketing, any company will most likely fail gaining revenue, and customers. Marketing is not just getting new customer relationships it is also about maintaining the customer relationships that the company already has.

3.2 Market research

The aim of the market research is to study the company’s operating market and how customers will receive the marketed services. In this thesis, there was used the secondary market research method which uses existing data, information and studies to gather information about the topic.

Market research can be divided into four different groups which is called the 4P’s. In 4P’s model there is examined the product, price, placement, and promotion.

B2B, and particularly its industrial segments, requires an entirely different approach to market research because of the importance of both performing and interpreting research in the business context. Sophisticated research tech-

niques, while valuable, are less important than understanding technical product applications or complex business models. As a B2B market research professional you need to get the data right, but you need also to be a strategist and approach each research project as a business case analysis. (Towey 2015.)

3.2.1 Marketing mix 4P's



Figure 4. Marketing mix 4p's

Organizations often wish to use the marketing mix in order to deploy their marketing strategy as effectively as possible. In the 1960s, the American marketer, E. Jerome McCarthy, provided a framework by means of the marketing mix: the 4 P's. The 4P 's include Price, Promotion, Product and Place. According to McCarthy, marketers can draw up a good marketing plan and improve operating results visibly by using the right combination and variables. The 4 P's are also known as the basic marketing mix. (Vilet 2013.)



Figure 5. Keratam Oy's plastering project picture

3.2.2 Product

The products of Keratam Oy are construction services: plastering, planning, and floor screed pumping. The services have been created to produce a betted façade image for the customer. The services need to be high quality and produced by the right techniques to meet the clients' needs and expectations. The agreements and specifications determined with the client have to be followed. The services provided by Keratam Oy are different than same services provided by competitors, because the case company has more than 30 years of experience in the field and the latest training and technology used in projects. The gathered experience that Keratam Oy has will give the company advantages because they know the customers' needs, technologies, and materials used. The case company also has good knowledge and skills in project management and execution due to their long experience in the field.

3.2.3 Price

The price for plastering is approximately 40€ per square meter, floor screed pumping is approximately 8€ per square meter, and the service planning is included in the prices. The price of products used in the work will be calculated separately with the prices of products that the client chooses to be used in the

project. Case company's prices are average compared to competitors' prices for same services.

3.2.4 Promotion

Promotion of the services is not as wide as it could be. The case company promotes their services with search engine marketing and with their web pages. They do not have any social media marketing, email marketing, video marketing, direct marketing or advertising in magazines. The promotion will be developed to be more effective and customer friendly. In the new marketing plan some new promoting channels and ways will be determined. Online marketing strategy will include web pages, E-mail marketing, social media marketing, and search engine marketing. Some advertisements in construction field magazines will be designed to boost the case company's marketing promotion.

3.2.5 Place

Placing of the services provided by the case company is not so easy to determine since the buying process happens online and face to face. The potential customer asks for a quotation of the project from the case company, the case company counts the prices and answers to the quotation, in some cases the deal is closed after that online, but some cases the deal will be closed after the case company's representative visits at the construction site personally.

3.3 Market and competitor analysis

The market analysis in this thesis will be done by conducting a PESTEL- and SWOT-analysis.

Competitor analysis starts with identifying the main competitors. In this thesis that is handling Keratam Oy's marketing, will be identified two major competitors. When doing market and competitor analysis there has to be analysed the competitors by looking at them from many point of views. First point of view could be the way customers see them and another to look at them from their own point of view.

The first major competitor is Itäpinta Oy which operates in the same field and region as the case company. The second major competitor is ISRA Oy which also operates in the same field and region as the case company.

Itäpinta Oy is seen through customers as a modern and flexible company. The competitor has strengths, for example, their web site is modern and customer friendly. Compared to Keratam Oy the competitor has very little experience in the field and that is a weakness. The way Itäpinta Oy sees themselves is as a professional, flexible, and customer oriented company.

When ISRA Oy is observed from customers' point of view there can be seen that they have strengths such as a trustworthy partner sign in their web site, they have a value proposition in their website and it can be seen first when entering the website. Their website is professional, customer friendly and clean. They do have a weakness compared to Keratam Oy, they do not have as much experience as the case company. The case company has been operating over 30 years and the competitor 20 years. Then the competitor has to be looked through their own point of view, how does ISRA Oy see themselves. The competitor sees themselves as an experienced company which does the job according to the customers' profit. The competitor refers themselves as a company which uses the latest technology and techniques to achieve the best results.

The reason why these competitors were analysed through their web pages is to see their main marketing method. The main marketing method possible could be identified as their web pages. The web pages gave enough information about the company as a whole and their operating methods. From their web pages there were gathered enough information to analyse the competitors.

3.3.1 PESTLE-analysis

All organizations need to identify external factors within their environment that could have an impact on their operations. Many of these will be factors that the organization has no control over, but the implications of which need to be understood. A popular tool for identifying these external factors is the PESTLE Analysis, which can be used to help you consider Political, Economic, Technological, Legal, and Environmental issues. (Team FME 2013, p. 6-7.)

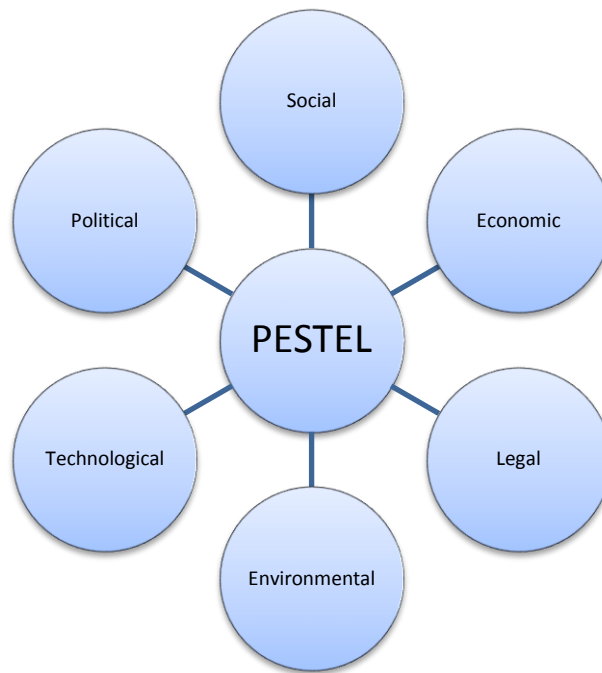


Figure 6. PESTEL-analysis

Regarding to the case company Keratam Oy political factors affecting their business environment are the new possible laws that affect the construction industry. Political factor is also the amount of public sector funding that is stated for construction work, for example, new hospitals and schools since the case company's main projects are public sector's work. During 2017 the taxation of entrepreneurs has been reduced which helps the company to gain revenue. Deduction of household expenses has been raised from 45 percent to 50 percent if the job is bought from a company or from a company and this renewing will most likely to increase the amount of products and services that households will buy from companies. The amount of vehicle tax and fuel tax will be increased and that will have an effect on the company's vehicle expenses, since the case company needs vehicles to move their employees and work equipment. The case company has to move their vehicles, employees and machinery around the operating area and the increase of taxation will gain more costs to the company.

According to eurotalous.fi the economic factors that affect the case company are that Finnish economy is in a growth phase, but during the end of 2019 the growth will be slowing down. The customers' level of income is rising and it is

likely to be rising slowly during the next few years, and that will most likely to have a positive affect on the case company's market as well as companies revenue will be increasing over the years. The unemployment rate will most likely to be reducing over the next few years. Consumers and businesses have easy access to credit and that will be good for the case company's business situation since the company operates in the construction industry where customers might need a loan to buy the services.

Social factors that effect on the company's business environment are that the growth rate of Finnish population is rising and the amount of elderly people is rising according to Tilastokeskus. This will have a positive effect on the company's business environment since there will be more buyers. Social mobility of people will effect on the company's business environment since people are moving more towards Helsinki area, and there is going to be more construction in the area to provide accommodation to people moving there. People usually have an attitude towards the construction field that there are lots of foreign people doing the jobs and that leads to the factor that customers don't trust to foreign employees as much as Finnish firms. This will help the case company to market themselves as Finnish company and customers will most likely notice that with a positive image.

Technological factors that will most likely to effect on Keratam Oy's business environment are that many modelling components have been developed that will help to design and budget the construction work. One of them is a new detailed 3D building information modelling that will have an effect on the design process, which will help to produce results faster, create better plans, and stay in budget more easily. A cost and schedule modelling with 5D macro-bim has been developed, which links building information modelling with time- and cost information so that the customer can view the info on real time. With the tool can be viewed how material and other changes will effect on the projects budget, timeline and other related factors.

Environmental factors that will have an effect on the case company's business environment are that global warming affects the business environment in a way that in the field is developed new less contaminating products to use in con-

struction to avoid environment risks. The industry will be developed to be more environmentally friendly. The company's carbon footprint is not as small as it could be and, therefore they could develop themselves in that factor. The case company's field will be having more innovations regarding to sustainability and ecological technologies and the case company has to start using them. Using the ecological machinery and working ways will increase the company's value in the eyes of the customers. In the future value can be brought to the customers when more sustainable methods are in use. This will be an important sales argument in the future.

Legal factors are the taxation changes mentioned before in the economic section. The amount of employees coming from abroad will be reducing which will bring more work for the domestic companies and employees.

3.3.2 SWOT-analysis

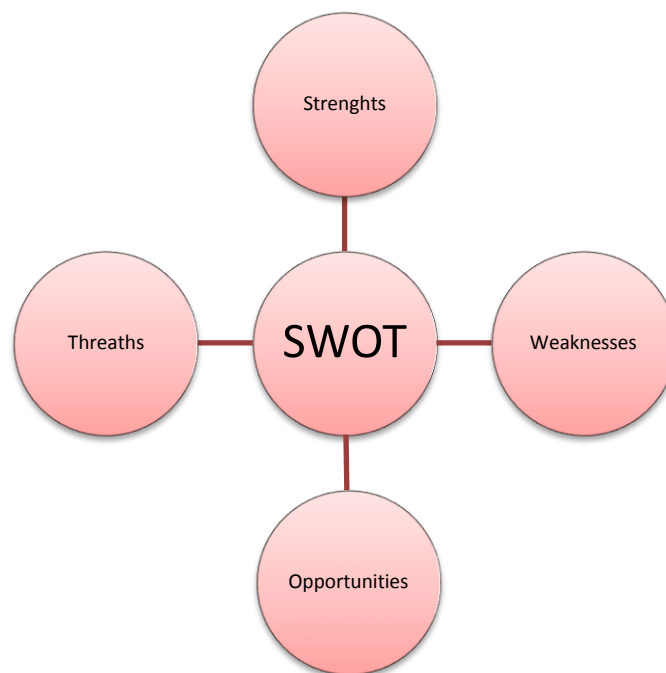


Figure 7. SWOT-analysis

SWOT-analysis is used to determine the company's internal strengths, internal weaknesses, external opportunities, and threats. The model will help to develop the internal business image better, and determine any factors that could slow down the company. The external factors are covered in the model as well as

internal factors. The model helps to make weaknesses into strengths and threats into opportunities. The SWOT-analysis will help the case company to determine how to take advantage of the weaknesses and threats and how to use the strengths and opportunities even better.

The case company's strengths are the long experience in the field and connections gained through the years. The gained connections will help the company to get competitive offers for products and services, through that they will gain revenue. The quality of services is another strength as well as new technology used in work. The quality of services comes from training the staff and monitoring the work regularly.

Weaknesses of the company are the lack of proper marketing and marketing planning. The case company has not had enough resources for sufficient marketing. More employees to make the marketing work have to be hired. One weakness is also the dissatisfaction with the external marketing firm that is currently working for the company's marketing. The case company and the service provider have had some communication problems and from there misunderstandings between each other. The marketing service provider has not taken into account the feedback that Keratam Oy has given to them and for that reason the case company is not satisfied. The marketing company has not fully filled the case company's needs and wants, so the case company has to work on their communication between one another or hire a new service provider. All in all this thesis could be one answer to eliminate the weaknesses. Some of the company's employees' lack of motivation during working is a big weakness which should be developed into good motivation. The employees lack of motivation could be, because their long working hours and the workload. The work is very heavy and their hours can stretch. These factors could be eliminated by taking care of wellbeing at work. The case company could give the employees some benefits such as massage gift cards, exercise gift cards, and they could set a meeting with work psychologist and physiotherapist to ensure the employees' health and wellbeing.

The opportunities of the case company are growing construction industry, the reducing amount of employees coming from abroad, and reducing of taxation in

certain areas. Growing demand for expertise in construction industry adds opportunities for the case company to gain projects. When the amount of employees coming from abroad reduces, the job opportunities for domestic companies grow. When the taxation amount is reduced the customers will have more buying power and motivation. One opportunity is the Google marketing campaign which has been gaining new customers. The case company has had a Google marketing campaign for several years and it has been useful.

Threats are that the market size is vast, price wars with competitors, competitors use different techniques and technology, and certain taxation changes. Size of the market is growing and it is big even if it does not grow, so the competition is vast in the industry which makes price wars difficult. Liikanen (2017) discussed about the threat of recession in Finnish markets in a Yle's April 1st Yökkösaamu programme as follows:

“The recession is officially over, but there is still much work to do to improve Finland's competitiveness on world markets.”

In the field there are many techniques and technologies available, therefore some of the competitors use different kind of techniques and technologies which might be more suitable for the possible customer. There will be taxation changes that will effect on the company and its usage of vehicles.

4 Case: Keratam Oy

4.1 Marketing goals

The marketing goals of the case company will support the overall business goals of Keratam Oy. Marketing goal is not a specific number of more revenue gained through the marketing plan, Keratam Oy sets goal that will boost their revenue but no specific number will be set.

Marketing goals of the company are to gain new customer relationships and maintain the existing customer relationships. There is not a specific amount of new customers the company wants to gain. The customer amount will be seen

next summer since almost all of this year projects has been sold. The most busy season for construction business is summer, therefore during winter the customers start seeking for the service provider.

The budget set by Keratam Oy's CEO is 5000 euros for implementing the marketing plan and reaching the goals. This budget will be enough since the case company will focus mainly on online marketing. There will be a need for some sales support material such as Power Point presentations. These materials are not included in the budget since they will be done by the company's CEO.



Figure 8. Marketing goals

4.2 Target groups



Figure 9. Target groups

The main target groups are public sector and other businesses. Especially housing companies are the main target group for this case company. The public sector projects are usually big constructions such as schools and hospitals which are the main projects for the case company. Public sector projects are a safe way of doing work since the public sector is a trustworthy buyer. Public sector projects will have more hard bidding competition from competitors since the customer has more resources to compare different service providers and pick the best ones for them. Public sector usually has more work force in the project, therefore they will have more powerful section of people to make sure the best offer is given.

Housing companies could be the most promising target group. These companies have large projects and they will mostly make their decision within a smaller group of people than a public sector. The bidding might not be so vast with the housing companies' projects since they do not have as much work force in the project and their time is very limited. Urban renewal construction in this case may have the most efficient business forecast. The case company's customers are mostly housing companies, therefore the main focus will be on this group.

Other companies that need services from the case company are one target group. Companies that have large construction projects and need workforce and specialities of another company.

Individual people are one of the target groups, but it is the smallest target group for the case company. Usually, individual customers have smaller projects that will not attract the case company as much as bigger projects.

4.3 Positioning strategy

The case company positions themselves as high quality service providers with competitive pricing. The case company's customers usually do not have a common personal denominator when purchasing these kinds of services, therefore the case company cannot position themselves as, for example, made locally.

Wide product range	High price Narrow product range
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keratam Oy 	

	Low price
--	-----------

Figure 10. Keratam Oy market positioning.

Keratam Oy has medium product range compared to the main competitors in the field and their pricing is not high, but it is not low either. The main positioning of the company is to provide high quality services with many years of experience to the customers. The case company also states that their pricing is competitive and it will build around the products that the customers wants to be used in the project.

The case company does not position themselves as the highest price or offering widest product range in the market. Keratam Oy does not position themselves as luxury service provider in the field. The case company stands for offering good quality services with competitive pricing. It can be assumed that the price and product range are the most important factors in the eyes of the customers.

4.4 Pricing strategy

The pricing strategy of case company is that they have the basic price for job per square meter and after the basic price there will be added an additional cost for the products used. The price will be determined through various factors in the project. During a project, there might be some changes that will affect on the last price. The final pricing includes, working hours, products used in the project, job designing, and more. The pricing strategy is contribution margin-based pricing since the profit is striven to be the maximum after a project.

4.5 Unique selling proposition

Unique selling proposition, which defines your company's unique position in the marketplace, is often overlooked but very important element of creating a business that customers like. A strong unique selling proposition lets you to stand

apart from competitors and actively focus your energy on creating things that cater to your ideal group of customers. (Ciotti 2013.)

If the potential customers have troubles of deciding which company's services to purchase, the customer usually sees the unique selling proposition as an advantage of the company and therefore, they might choose that company instead the another that does not have a unique selling proposition.

In the field of construction and especially with plastering, planning, and floor screed pumping the customers who have no experience in the field might not be able to know the separating factors of one competitor to another. The unique selling proposition will separate the competitors from each other regarding to the customers view point.

The case company Keratam Oy could use a phrase as their unique selling proposition. The phrase should have some appealing information for the customer and some outstanding wording regarding to the services provided by the company.

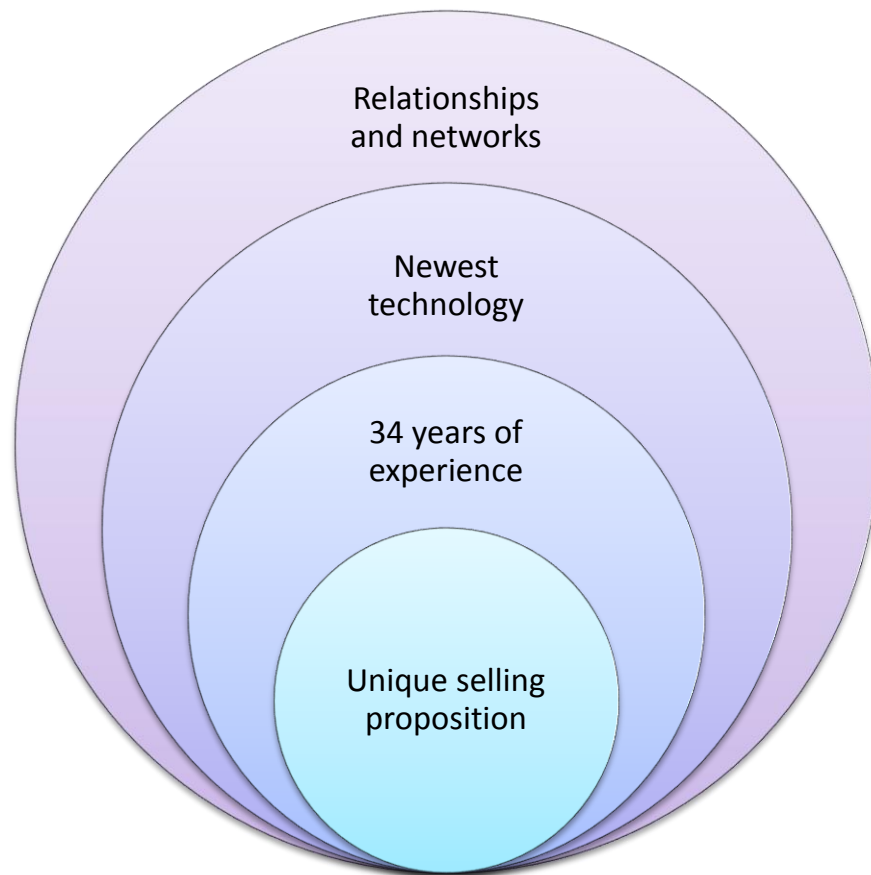


Figure 11. Unique selling proposition (adapted from Patel 2017.)

The main question is what do you have that competitors do not have? The case company has many years of experience in the services that most of the operating competitors do not have. The case company has the newest technology that most of the competitors do not have and they have many very useful relationships and networks in the field that most of the companies competing with Keratam Oy do not have. The benefits of using the newest technology are that the services are able to be produced precisely and with better quality results. The relationships will benefit the customer, because the case company will get offers from the products that there is needed to complete the project and that will save money from the customer.

The unique selling proposition of the case company Keratam Oy is: The fields' newest technology infused with 34 years of experience and widest networks will only not bring you the best prices, but also the best quality.

4.6 Online marketing strategy

Online marketing is very important in this technology growing world. Most of the customers seek information from online rather than reading about it in the newspaper or some other form on advertising. With online marketing the case company will have more potential customers visiting their web pages and browsing through their services, some of those potential customers will most likely to become paying customers.

To successfully gain paying customers the company needs to have an efficient marketing strategy. The company can develop their online marketing strategy to attract only the particular customer group that they need. For marketing to be successful, the right channels of online marketing need to be chosen.

The factors regarding online marketing that the case company has to take into account is firstly that they have the right web design. The web design has to be easy to read and navigate so that the customer will not have to spend time searching for their need. The website has to be up-to-date and mobile friendly. Keratam Oy's web pages were updated 2016 by Tiia Mutikainen and other group members in a group project for a course implementing practical projects done with Saimaa University of Applied Sciences. From the figures 12. and 13. there is seen that the case company's web pages are clean, easy to read, up-to-date, and mobile friendly.



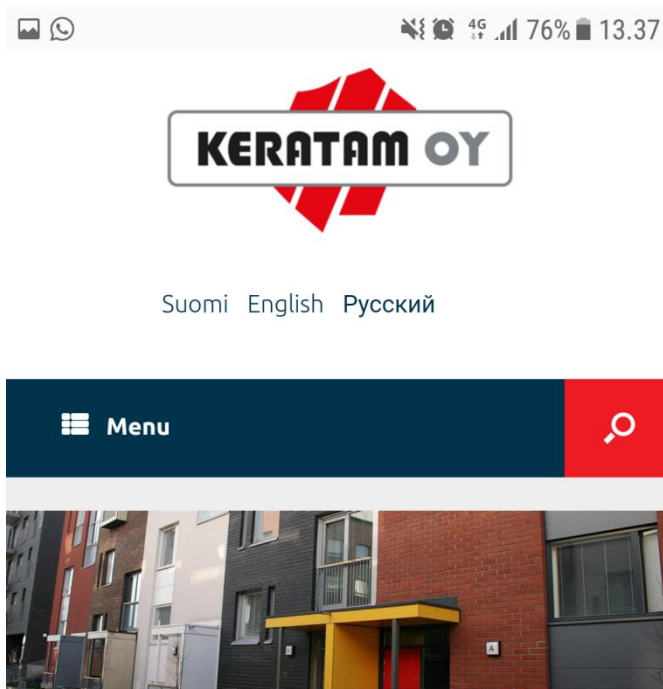
COMPANY

Keratam Oy has been offering a wide range of plastering and concrete construction services since 1985. We operate in Eastern and Southern Finland. We provide professional solutions for plastering, floor screed pumping, and wet sandblasting. We use our field's latest and finest methods and machinery – more information can be found on the [Services](#)-section of the website. Our portfolio contains everything from privately owned detached houses, to large construction projects for the public sector. We work efficiently and always follow the agreed schedule.

Our expertise combined with the newest materials, machinery and skilled professionals will guarantee the best results. We have solutions for all construction needs – private, public, and industrial.

Please contact us and we will get back to you with an ideal service quote.

Figure 12. Keratam Oy web pages



COMPANY

Keratam Oy has been offering a wide range of plastering and concrete construction services since 1985. We operate in Eastern and Southern Finland. We provide professional solutions for plastering, floor screed pumping, and wet sandblasting. We use our field's latest and finest methods and machinery – more information can be found on the [Services](#)-section of the website. Our portfolio contains everything from privately

Figure 13. Keratam Oy web pages mobile

As seen from the figures above the case company's web pages do not need any adjustment to be customer friendly or up-to-date. The case company does not need to use time or resources to develop their web pages and that will leave more time for the other factors that need to be developed regarding to marketing.

Social media marketing is growing to be increasingly important in every field to gain new customers. There is created a Facebook page for the company. In the Facebook page there should be all the additional information about the company and their services. The introduction in case company's Facebook page

should have a straight link to their web pages and contact sheet. In the page there should be updated pictures, and videos of their work. There is shared relevant articles and innovations regarding their field. Through the Facebook page customers could see the company in action and contact Keratam Oy easily through the Facebook channel. The Facebook page could be used at the same time with their blog that people could follow.

E-mail marketing should be developed with the case company's CEO to meet the needs of their marketing goals. Firstly, there will be done a customer e-mail list which would be the housing companies. The contact information could be asked from Suomen Isännöintiliitto. The rough estimate is 150 receivers.

E-mail marketing could be done so that every month there would be sent an e-mail regarding to the case company's work and where the customer can find Keratam Oy's projects. The message could have information about the case company's values, as well as about the future projects and where they are located. The potential customers could see the work and employees in person, and that could effect on their buying decision. The e-mail could have information about the new trends and technologies that are coming to the construction field, so that the customers could design their needs. The case company could add an offer of their services especially during the slow selling periods. This way of marketing does require recourses and time. If directed to the right audience this could be a sufficient way of marketing especially for the main target group, housing companies.

Search engine marketing is being used by the case company at the time and it has been effective according to the company's CEO. Search engine marketing is very important, because most likely the potential customers will search with the keyword of the service they need from some search engines and that way find their service provider. During the high selling periods the case company should increase their search engine marketing so that even more people will see their advertisement.

4.7 Marketing communications



Figure 14. Marketing communications model

In marketing communications, there are determined the ways that a company wants to use, and how they use them in marketing their service or product. The case company Keratam Oy could use all the forms of marketing mix when implementing the marketing plan.

Advertising will be done by a company or an individual employee that the case company has chosen to implement this step. Advertising is done through buying advertisement space in the construction field magazines, creating posters and catalogues which will be sent by mail to companies in the areas that the case company wants to operate. There could be bought advertisement space from newsletter of Isännöintiliitto, therefore that the main target group will be reached. There are no recourses to purchase many advertisement spaces form different medias, so there will be only focused on the main target group. Sending posters and catalogues through mail to companies would be an effective way of marketing the company since the need of service provided by the case company usually is processed by housing companies a long time and the com-

panies compare service providers in their meetings. When the case company sends something concrete the potential customer will most likely take them into account when choosing a service provider for their project.

Personal selling is when the case company's representative meets with potential clients and discusses the potential project. Usually, these meetings take place after the case company has given the potential customer their offer of the project and the customer will have some kind of a meeting with other potential service providers. In the meeting there is defined the last steps of the project and after the meeting has taken place the potential customer will inform if they accept the case company's offer.

Online marketing is done by search engine marketing, Facebook, e-mail, and web site marketing. The case company could set an offer for customers to encourage the buying during some slow selling periods and these are the sales promotions of the company.

Winston (2017) states public relations in an online article as follows:

“public relations is seen as a vital part of maintaining the organization's image and of communicating its message to its customers, investors and the general public. A positive perception of a company or non-profit can increase its sales and improve its bottom line”.

The case company has to build a positive brand to have positive public relations. If there are negative rumours or stories going around with people the company has to handle them and prove them wrong if they are faulty. The case company can handle the public relations through social media, and other services. They can post some positive information and posts through the services and that way boost their public relations towards better.

4.8 Conversion strategy

David Kirkpatrick (2012) describes conversion in an online article as:

“simply getting someone to respond to your call-to-action.”

The case company needs about four customers per year to meet their needs. The case company does not need to do a mass marketing. Conversion action plans to concentrate on turning “lookers” into paying customers. (Lohrey 2017.)

The case company has to measure the amount of potential customers by, for example, counting the amount of visitors in their web pages and compare that amount to the amount of paying customers they have gained through the period of time. The case company could set a conversion target and follow if the target is filled or not and try to understand why with the customer feedback. In the web pages should be easy access to contact information and in Keratam Oy’s web pages the contact information page is easily found.

The case company should offer their services to only qualified prospects that are most likely to buy the services. They should not use time to counting offers to the customer group that they know are unqualified for some reason. They could see the potential from their offer inquiries or after talking to them in person if they are potential customers or not.

The case company should make an offer for their service with lower prices even if the offer is just small it will usually attract potential customer for becoming paying customers more easily. The company should also provide as much information as they can about the services they are selling so that the customers can find out facts about the services. The case company Keratam Oy has a good amount of information in their web pages regarding to their services and methods used.

Meetings with the potential customers should be planned well and the case company should show that they have given time and effort to the meeting and potential project. The CEO should make a Power Point template which he could update according to the project and meeting needs. There should be clarified the presentation material needs and those needs should be met to successfully carry out the meeting. This will create a positive impact on the potential customer. The case company’s CEO could participate in some meeting strategy

courses to support his meeting skills. When executing these steps the case company will show up more professional image of themselves so that the potential customer will most likely to choose them over some other company which has done their meeting otherwise.

The quote that the case company sends to the potential customer about their service should be strong from every aspect. The quote should be comprehensive and professional. The case company should write quotes to make their potential buyers to understand the value of the services by explaining how it will solve their major concerns, explain what will happen in each step on the way, and how it will benefit the customer.

The case company should develop their telephone discussion skills to be able to appeal a potential customer as effectively as they could. Because telephone is the quickest way of communicating between customer and service provider most of the customers will likely to call the company first and after that send e-mail. The follow ups are very important for the case company's sales. There should be followed sales and other factors, for example, the amount of visitors in their web pages that effect on the company.

4.9 Retention strategy

Retention in the field of construction is not easy or fast due to the fact that usually customers do not need construction services often. It can be assumed that regarding to B2B sales the retention strategy is very important, because usually the B2B customers have more than one construction project over the many years, therefore if they have a good service and end product they will remember the company for their next construction project.

In retention strategy first step is to research what the customers need most. In this case the customers need most a service they can trust by quality, because construction is made to last years, for example it is not like buying a blouse, because you are most likely to afford a new blouse when the old one gets broken in a few years or months. When it comes to construction work and, for example, plastering is supposed to last many years ahead and it is expensive

compared to other needs. Therefore the customers need the service to be good quality.

The reason why customers are leaving and not coming back for the company for their service needs has to be understood. After every project the company should send a survey to the customer asking about the satisfaction of the customer, if the customer would have changed something, what would they have changed and how, would the customer consider the company to be their service provider the next time they have a need to similar services, if they would why, and if they would not, why not. In the survey are questions about some general feedback and development ideas. All the surveys would be very useful to understand if the customer does not plan on coming back to the company and why not. The survey will be implemented by the chosen employee or service provider of the case company.

After receiving feedback from customers the case company should develop their services, web site, and offers regarding to the feedback. The customer feedback will give very good development ideas. The case company could also publish success stories about their projects so that the possible customers can see the outcomes.

4.10 Branding

Williams (2017) defines branding in an online article as follows:

“Branding is one of the most important aspects of any business, large or small, retail or B2B. An effective brand strategy gives you a major edge in increasingly competitive markets.

Simply put, your brand is your promise to your customer. It tells them what they can expect from your products and services, and it differentiates your offering from your competitors'. Your brand is derived from who

you are, who you want to be and who people perceive you to be.

Are you the innovative maverick in your industry? Or the experienced, reliable one? Is your product the high-cost, high-quality option, or the low-cost, high-value option? You cannot be both, and you cannot be all things to all people. Who you are should be based to some extent on who your target customers want and need you to be.”

The case company’s brand strategy will be built on the questions what, how, when and to whom the company delivers their brand messages and what is communicated visually and verbally. Where the company is advertised and distribution channels of the company are a part of the branding strategy.

Battman (2017) discusses about strong brands in an online article as follows:

“Fundamentally, we believe that powerful, meaningful and engaging brands help businesses sell more product/service. They are sold to more people, more often and probably at a higher price. Get the brand right and opportunities follow!”

To define Keratam Oy’s brand, certain questions have to be answered. What is the company’s mission, what are the benefits and features of the services provided, what do customers and prospects already think about the company, and what qualities the CEO wants customers and prospects to associate with Keratam Oy? The brand should be brought to every employee’s knowledge, and employees should be aware of key message that the company wants customers to have about the company.

The case company wants the customers to know their company as a Finnish high quality service provider with many years of experience. The case company can differentiate themselves from the competitor with their working experience and quality. The case company is one of the few companies in the field that has

more than 30 years of experience. The experience of the field is highly appreciated asset.

The branding process contains all the steps that have been gone through in this thesis. Branding occurs when market research, market and competitor analysis, goals, target groups positioning, pricing, unique selling proposition, conversion and retention strategy are determined.

4.11 Marketing timeline

This marketing timeline is designed to provide good base for the case company to begin executing the marketing plan. Since the marketing plan is already done in this thesis, one step of the marketing timeline is dropped out and that will save time on executing the marketing plan.

Marketing timeline has five steps that need to be executed. First step is the planning process which contains research, target market, media and other planning factors.

Second step is to develop and create which contains development and creating. During this step the company has to create the marketing factors such as Facebook profile, and e-mail marketing base should be created during this step.

Third step is implementing. The case company will either choose an external service provider or hire an internal marketing employee who will work for the case company only to implement the marketing plan. During this step the case company has to start implementing the marketing such as posting videos, and other publications on the Facebook page, implementing the e-mail marketing and inviting customers to the company's construction sites to have a look at the work in action, search engine marketing, marketing for the different customers such as housing companies by sending catalogues by post, and all the other marketing steps.

Fourth step is to measure the marketing that has been done. The company has to measure the results of implementing the marketing plan. How many likes, comments or views did they get on their social media posts and ads? How

many people came to the construction sites, how many people accepted their e-mail offer, and compare them to the marketing plan.

The last step is to improve the marketing and self-evaluation. What worked well in the marketing, what did not work so well, what went wrong and why, what should be improved, what should stay, and what should be removed. After the last step the marketing timeline has to be repeated to be able to gain the best results of marketing. The marketing timeline can be seen below.

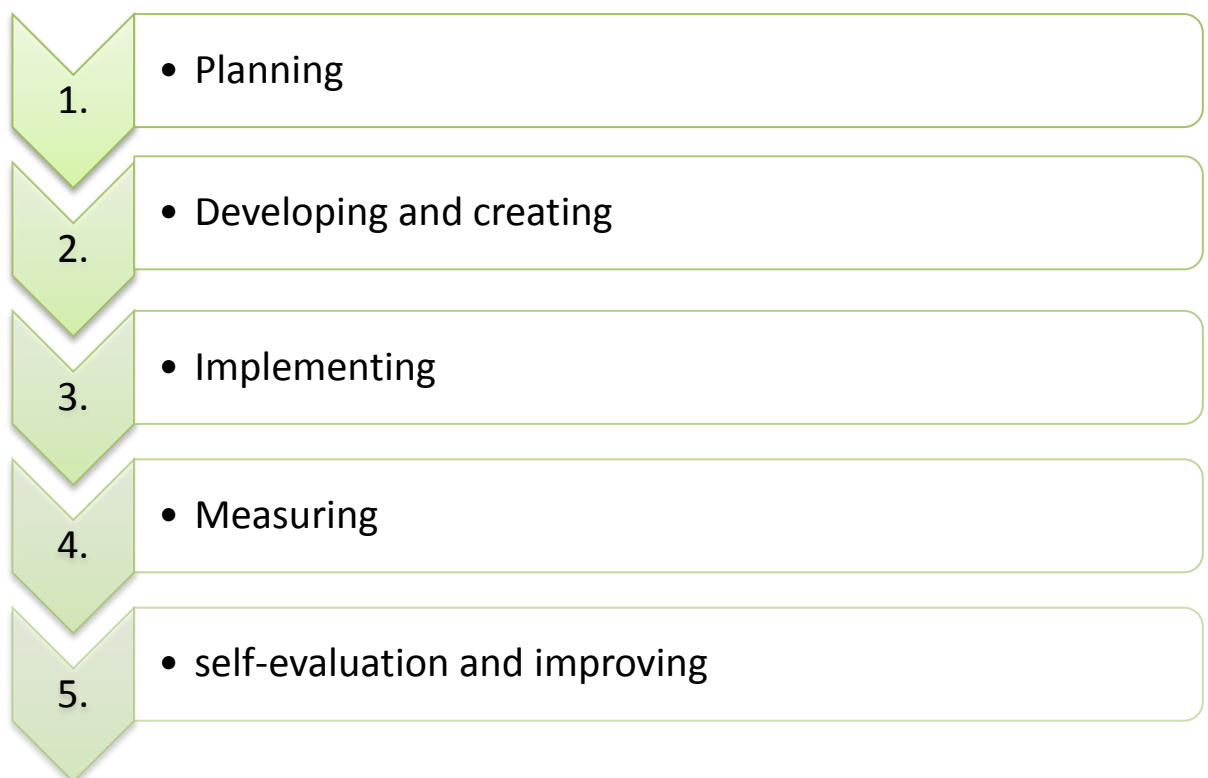


Figure 15. Marketing timeline

5 Summary

As a conclusion the marketing plan needs research that has to be done about the company, field, customers and other relevant factors regarding marketing the case company. The case company has been operating in the field for several of years and they target their marketing to B2B sales.

The case company's market is very competitive and the customers buying behaviour is rational and based on facts. The construction industry is growing

since the economic situation in Finland is growing and companies' purchasing power is increasing along with the economy. As stated before marketing is very important for a company that wants to succeed. Marketing is the actions that are done for the company to make themselves known for customers.

The case company's marketing mix includes services to meet the customers' needs such as: plastering, planning, and floor screed pumping. The placing of case company's products for the the buying process occurs online and face to face. The price is that plastering is approximately 40€ per square meter, floor screed pumping 8€ per square meter, and the planning service is included in the prices. Before the marketing plan the promotion of the case company was done by search engine marketing and web pages.

The competitor analysis was done with looking at two main competitors and their strengths and weaknesses. Both of the main competitors did not have as much experience as the case company and that factor was considered as a weakness. The main competitors are Itäpinta Oy and Isra Oy which both operate at the same field and area.

The market analysis was done by PESTEL- and SWOT-analysis. PESTEL-analysis contains information about the case company's business environment. The case company's political factors affecting on their business environment are the new possible laws regarding the field, public sector funding, and taxation changes. Economic factors are the growing economy, increasing customer's level of income, decreasing unemployment rate and the easy access to credit by consumers and businesses. Social factors that are affecting Keratam Oy's business environment are that the growth rate of Finnish population is decreasing so that most of the Finnish population are elderly people and that will have a negative effect on the case company's business environment. Social mobility of people will effect on the case company since people are moving towards Helsinki area and there will be a need for construction which decreases the construction need in the company's main operating area. The people's attitudes towards Finnish construction companies will increase the company's business, since most of Finnish customers rely more on Finnish construction companies than in foreign companies and employees. Technological factors

affecting on the company's business environment are the many new developed modelling components that will make construction work and design simple. Environmental factors are global warming, sustainability development of the field, and reduction of the carbon footprint. Legal issues affecting on the case company are the taxation changes as mentioned before, and the amount of employees from abroad.

One way of analysing the company and their business environment is SWOT-analysis. In SWOT-analysis of the case company it was found that Keratam Oy's strengths are the many years of experience that most of the competitors do not have, the connections that the case company has gained through the years, and quality of services provided. Weaknesses are lack of proper marketing and marketing planning, the case company is not satisfied with the used external marketing company, and some of the case company's employees lack of motivation. Opportunities are the growing industry, the amount of foreign employees is reducing, and taxation is reduced in certain areas. Threats affecting on the company are big size of the market, price wars, competitors use different technology and materials, and taxation changes.

Marketing goals of the case company are to gain new customers relationships, maintain existing customer relationships, gain new suppliers and attract new employees. The case company's target groups are businesses, public sector, and small amount of consumers. The budget was set for 5000 euros. Positioning and pricing strategy of Keratam Oy is to position themselves as a company offering good quality services with years of experience for competitive pricing. Unique selling proposition developed for the company is: The fields' newest technology infused with 34 years of experience and widest networks will only not bring you the best prices, but also the best quality.

The online marketing strategy contains web design which is good at the moment and there is no need to change it, social media marketing which will be done by creating a Facebook page for the company, e-mail marketing, and search engine marketing. Marketing communications are advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations, direct marketing, and internet marketing. Advertising is done by the company that Keratam Oy has chosen to the

job, sales promotion is that the case company will place some offers to customers, personal selling is done during the meetings with potential customers who have requested an inquiry of the services, public relations will realise when the company builds their brand, direct marketing is done by sending flyers and post to potential and existing customers, and Internet marketing is done through Facebook, e-mail, web site, and search engine marketing.

Conversion strategy will be executed by measuring the amount of potential customers observing the amount of visitors in the web pages. There is to be set a conversion target and it has to be followed. The case company should do quotes to only qualified prospects, and make an offer campaign. Quotes sent to potential customers should be professional and accurate. The meetings with potential customers should be executed professionally and by customer-focused mindset. The case company should develop their telephone communication skills and do sales follow ups every year.

Retention strategy will be executed by researching the customers' needs, understanding why customers do not rebuy the services provided, and the services should be developed according to customer feedback.

Branding the case company wants to build a brand so that customers know Keratam Oy as a Finnish quality service provider with many years of experience.

Marketing timeline is in five steps. First step is the planning process which contains research, target market, media and other planning factors. Second step is to develop and create, which contains development and creating the marketing. Third step is implementing. Fourth step is to measure the marketing that has been done. The last step is to improve the marketing and self-evaluation.

6 Conclusions

In this thesis the research questions were answered extensively. Information was found about what is included in a marketing plan and all the main aspects were included in this thesis. Also information about what are the best marketing

tools for this case company was found. The best marketing tools for small businesses in construction field are included in this thesis. The e-mailing list possibility was investigated in this thesis, but it will be time and recourse consuming. It will be left to the company's CEO to decide if this possibility will be executed. The question on how to create value in the field of construction was answered in this thesis. Gaining new customer relationships and maintaining existing ones are included in this thesis and information is provided about what are the best ways for this specific company to do so. The ways of attracting case company's target customer groups are provided in this thesis for the case company. All the research questions were answered.

The case company should pay more attention in their marketing and in the providers of their marketing services. If the company is not satisfied for their marketing they should hire the right firm or a person to do it. The case company could hire a professional internally who will focus on marketing only. This person could carry out the marketing plan and maintain the case company's marketing so that the CEO of the company will not have to do any extra work regarding marketing. Hiring internal employee for executing the marketing plan would be more suitable than hiring external service provider for the job. The employee of Keratam Oy would be working in the case company and only focus on the company's needs and wants, therefore they would be more dedicated for the job. Internal marketing employee is more expensive for the case company than hiring external service provider.

If the case company decides on external marketing company, they should make sure that the service provider fully understands the company's marketing needs and wants. The CEO of Keratam Oy should make sure that the communication between them and the service provider is working so that there is no chance of misunderstandings. This option is more cost efficient in the short run but in long run the internal employee could bring more revenue to the case company.

This thesis does give the case company an effective base to start implementing their marketing into a more effective direction. This thesis did meet the authors' goals regarding to the contents. The research method did provide enough information regarding to the topic and there were no need for primary research.

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