Effective Digital Marketing Channels

CASE: Aryan Technologies

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to understand what kind of digital marketing must be made by the case company in order to obtain B2B customers. The study attempts to answer the question: which marketing channel is the most cost-effective channel for the case company. The study is based on the idea that the case company Aryan Technologies obtains new customers in a new market environment and location in Toronto, Canada. The following research aims at containing useful insights to deliver not only effective channels but solutions for delivering a strong value proposition for a small IT company.

In the theoretical part of the thesis the following areas will be discussed: digital marketing channels, content marketing and search engine optimization. The information was gathered from literature and e-journals related to the field of the study as well as from the author's data findings and own experiences during the time of the internship in Toronto in the spring of 2017.

In the empirical section of the study a qualitative approach was adapted. Data was collected by an e-mail questionnaire that was sent to a company similar to the case company. The former was interviewed before any data collection was conducted to see if the company's profile was fit to the related study. The purpose was to obtain useful data for the research. In addition, there were ten more participants taking part in the survey by answering the same questionnaire and this formed the second part of the data collection.

The results show that e-mails are the most cost effective marketing tool in the B2B field. According to the study result website optimization and quality content plays a crucial part in digital marketing. The results can also be used to implement an effective strategy for B2B marketing. They indicate that it is important to focus on establishing trust and to show tangible results in order to obtain new leads for the business. Due to constant change and evolvement of digital marketing, further study is needed if and as soon as new marketing tools or channels are coming up in the future.

Keywords: Digital marketing, search engine optimization, value proposition, e-mail marketing

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1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background

The business environment and marketing strategies have gone through big changes due to digitalization. As for digital marketing, it is an essential tool for any business. It has a promising future for many companies and many B2B companies have started to adapt their movement towards digital marketing. As for small and medium-sized IT companies, it can be said that digital marketing plays an important role in marketing. After all, IT companies are already working in the technology industry. The new trends are set by bigger IT companies, for example, Google, LinkedIn, Facebook and Amazon. (Baltes & Loredana 2016, 4.)

According to Kotler & Armstrong (2010, 56), the 4P model (a model which helps to reach and find marketing goals) can be used as an indicator for better marketing. It can be implemented in digital marketing although it needs some customization, meaning that place must be reconsidered as a digital channel because there is no physical place for digital marketing. The 4P model will work as a base for this study so to find the most cost-effective digital marketing method. Figure 1 below shows the 4P model.
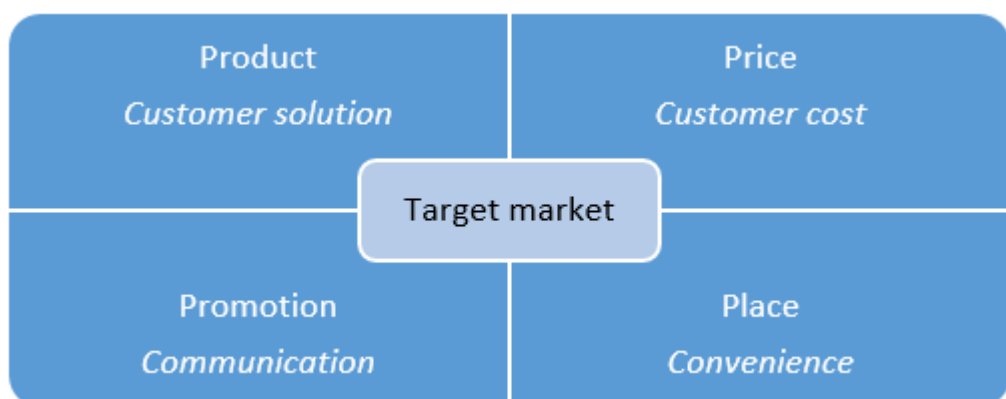

FIGURE 1. 4P model (Kotler & Armstrong 2010,56)

The 4P model above indicates the most important pieces when delivering a strong service or product to a target customer. Product, promotion, price and place must be strategically considered in order to succeed. As the figure above shows on the left corner, *product,* it can be considered in IT companies as a service because the package is not always delivered as a physical product.

This also means that the branding and positioning play an important role in digital marketing. Even if there is high competition in specific IT services, digital marketing can still be very benefical. Products such as software do not have to be perfectly ready when they are sold to the customers. New updates can be done remotely for the customers or customization is possible, even if the service Is already sold. Another advantage is that you can easily do research about your competitors via online and you can attract customers with better service. This leads to better customer satisfaction. (Baltes & Loredana 2016, 5.)

The price point on the right corner of Figure 1 indicates what we usually think affects the price of a physical product: manufacturing costs and location for instance. As for digital products competition plays a crucial part in pricing a digital product as well as all the working hours devoted to the digital product. Another crucial point is that customers can do their research regarding digital services and that makes pressure for the companies and competitors to attract new customers (Baltes & Loredana 2016, 5).

As for digital distribution, it gives new opportunities in giving customers cost-efficient services compared to traditional services. And for the digital products, it makes it possible to be available internationally for every customer. As for promotion, digital marketing plays an important part in the strategy. Online gives endless opportunities and ways to share content and attract new customers. Communication plays a crucial part in online strategy. The messages must be sent and targeted properly to attract the

customers. As for promotion, you can obtain cost-efficiency, accessibility and information so that the customers can be analyzed and the strategy can be targeted efficiently. (Baltes & Loredana 2016, 6.)

The digital marketing era imposes new challenges as well as offers opportunities in B2B marketing. It is easy to collect leads, but it is also important to maintain your brand ethically. The thesis is to research what is the most effective online marketing channel for B2B companies and what kind of content one has to create to collect new customers. Furthermore, the aim of the study is to investigate what the customer expectations globally are in IT services.

Some background to the case company Aryan technologies: the company has a history of co-operation with the US army in Afghanistan. Aryan Technologies was involved in multiple IT projects helping US Army and the government of Afghanistan to achieve their goals. With the help of these co-operations, the company got an opportunity to move to the United States. At present, Aryan Technologies offers customized IT solutions and services worldwide. They have three locations where they operate: in Canada, the USA, and Afghanistan. Aryan Technologies' new target is to get leads in the new location of Toronto, Canada. This research is tailor-made for the case company and it aims to find the most cost-effective strategies in digital marketing.

1.2   Objectives of the research and research questions

The research questions in the thesis are carefully selected. The chapters are created to study the research questions. The study aims to get a deeper understanding of the topic and to compare the end-results which are all targeted to the research questions. Sub-questions are made for defining and helping to reach the goal of the thesis. Determining research questions is important when planning a research. The purpose of the

research questions is to provide a clear understanding of what the research is aiming for as well as defining what the researcher is trying to find answers to. In this study the main research question is:

- What are the most cost-effective marketing channels for an IT company to gain more customers?

As the research question is usually difficult to answer with an accurate answer at once, subquestions are made to support the main research question:

- What kind of digital marketing works in B2B?

- What kind of value proposition must be made to attract customers online?

Research limitations

There are always limitations which need to be taken into consideration in research. The thesis is designed for a small IT company in a North American market. The research is specifically focused on the case company. It may not be applicable for other companies working in a different field. Especially if the company has a physical product or works in B2C field. The research is specifically targeted to a company which has a service. Limitations can apply to some IT companies as well if they have different services and background. The markets in question have different competition and market, therefore the research is limited to Canadian markets only.

1.3   Theoretical framework

The aim of this study is to understand what kind of content must be produced online to obtain new customers. The research is narrowed to understand the main concepts and targets in the B2B field. The theoretical framework follows a three-step process as seen in Figure 2 Overview of the Process: marketing theory, strategy, implementation.

1.Marketing theory   **2.Strategy**

1.SEO 2.Website Content 3.E-mail marketing	Social media channels: 1.facebook 2.LinkedIn 3.Twitter	Value proposition strategy	Building Aryan tech online Strategy

3.Implementation
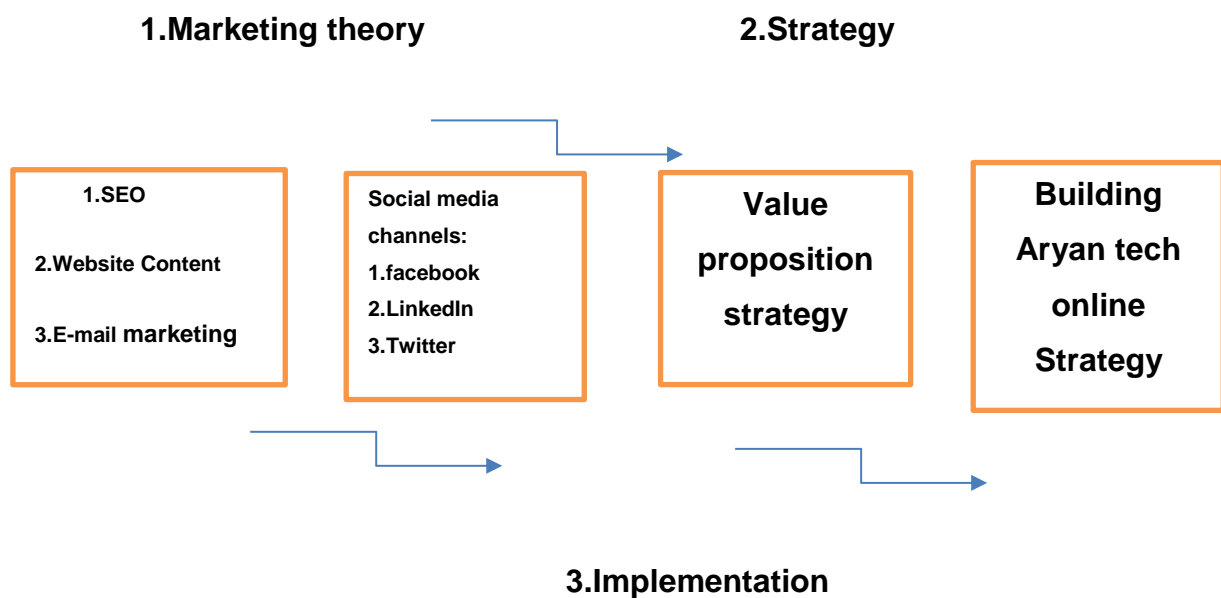
FIGURE 2. Overview of the process

The first step is to analyze the relevant key concepts of digital marketing which are reviewed, and this forms the ground for this study. To gain success in the last stage of the process, the theory part works as a basic tool to work with. This research shows the benefits of using the tools which theory has given. In the second step, digital marketing strategies and choices are in the focus area as well as qualitative data. The second step

is to help analyze which channels and what kind of value proposition must be implemented. The third step is the implementation when the right strategy is found; then it is time to start using it in practice and overview the results of implementation.

1.4   Research methodology and data collection

As soon as the idea of the research is clear, it is time to define what is the best method to collect data and what kind of methodology needs to be used. The methodology and data collection must be carefully selected to achieve the goals of the research. The different methods and approaches that will be used in the research is presented in Figure 3 below.

FIGURE 3. Research overview

This research uses a deductive approach. The deductive approach means that the research starts by general knowledge then narrows to smaller details of the topic. It has a logical storyline where it first starts off with theory and from there moves to practice. To use a deductive approach, the theory needs to be true to make the conclusion part true (Schechter 2013, 6).

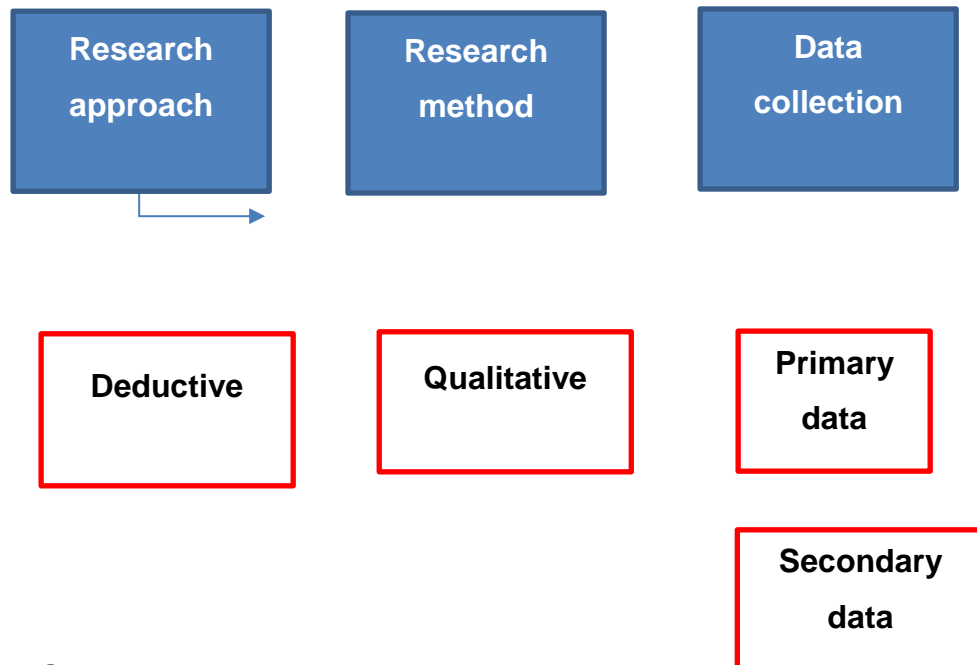As for the research method, this study uses a qualitative method. The qualitative method is more about defining human behavior and studying a specific group. The qualitative method also defines how things could be done differently and find more detailed answers to a specific topic. This means a more in-depth understanding of the concepts in practice without numeric data. In other words, collected data will be interpreted instead of quantified. (Schechter 2013, 7.)

This study used the interview method to collect data for the study. The data collection process was made in two parts. The first data was collected in April 2017 when a CEO of a small IT company in Toronto, Canada and similar to the case company, was interviewed face-to-face. After the meeting, seven key questions concerning B2B digital marketing via e-mail were sent to the CEO. The purpose of the face-to-face meeting before sending the questions by e-mail was to find out if the IT company was similar to the case company as well as to establish a connection so that quality data could be gathered for the case company.

As for the second part, the data collection process then continued in the autumn of 2017 as new data was collected by an e-mail survey. This included the very same seven key questions. Thirty small business owners in Ontario area, Canada were contacted through LinkedIn and Facebook. There were ten participants involved in all. The goal was to get more data on how companies use their digital marketing. Also, the purpose was to see what channels were utilized and what kind of content was being used or considered effective.

The interview was held with semi-structured questions. E-mail survey contained seven key questions for their digital marketing strategy as well as a face-to-face meeting. The interview was made with a similar company to the case company. The purpose of this was to find similarities with the case company Aryan tech as well as to get new ideas of the marketing concepts and how it can help to approach customers online. Even more interesting was to find out if the company interviewed had succeeded in digital marketing and what kind of content must be produced in order to get future customers. The interview was to help further investigations, what needs to be done as well as what things need to be considered in the final marketing strategy.

1.5   The structure of the study

This research structure combines both a theoretical and empirical part. Each part is divided into different chapters and give a logical purpose for this study. The chapters can be seen in Figure 4 as follows:

| Introduction | Online Marketing | Empirical Study & Analysis |
| Digital Strategy for Case Company | Conclusion and Suggestions | Summary |
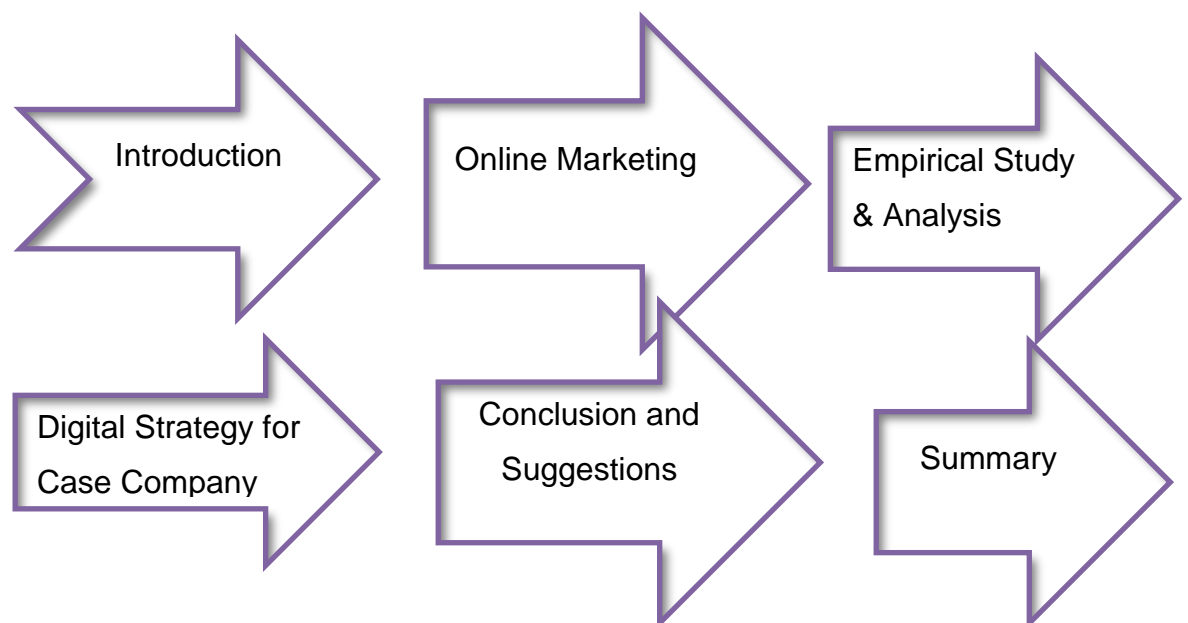
FIGURE 4. The structure of the study

The thesis contains six parts which start with a detailed introduction to the research questions and the purpose of the study. The key idea in the introduction part is to give a general background information as well as goals for this thesis. The second chapter contains online marketing theory and concepts which give the basic tools to use in this research. The key idea is that theory gives the ground for the case study and concepts for the implementations.

The fourth chapter contains empirical analysis which gives insights of the case company´s current markets and follow ups. The fourth chapter consists of the empirical part where data and interviews are collected and interpreted. The fifth chapter gives the conclusion of the study and some further suggestions for the case company to further develop digital marketing. The sixth part is a summary of the research which gives a shortly detailed explanation of the study. The last chapter includes implementations and ideas to improve and develop Aryan Technologies online marketing. The main purpose is to put into practice the findings of the collected data for the benefit of the case company.

2. DIGITAL MARKETING

This chapter is about the theory of digital marketing. The key idea is to give basic tools and ideas for digital marketing. The goal is to present a theoretical framework as well as present different aspects to consider when building a marketing strategy for the case company. Digital marketing became popular because of the e-commerce, in other words, online shops. The main reason why digital marketing is being used in businesses is the lower cost and reachability compared to traditional marketing. For example, to reach 2,000 customers by newspaper or direct mailing the budget is around 200-900 dollars but with digital marketing the cost of advertisement is around 50-75 dollars (Bhargava 2015, 7).

In Figure 5 below, the marketing budgets used for different channels are presented. This chart shows how marketing spending has shifted from direct marketing to digital marketing in North America.
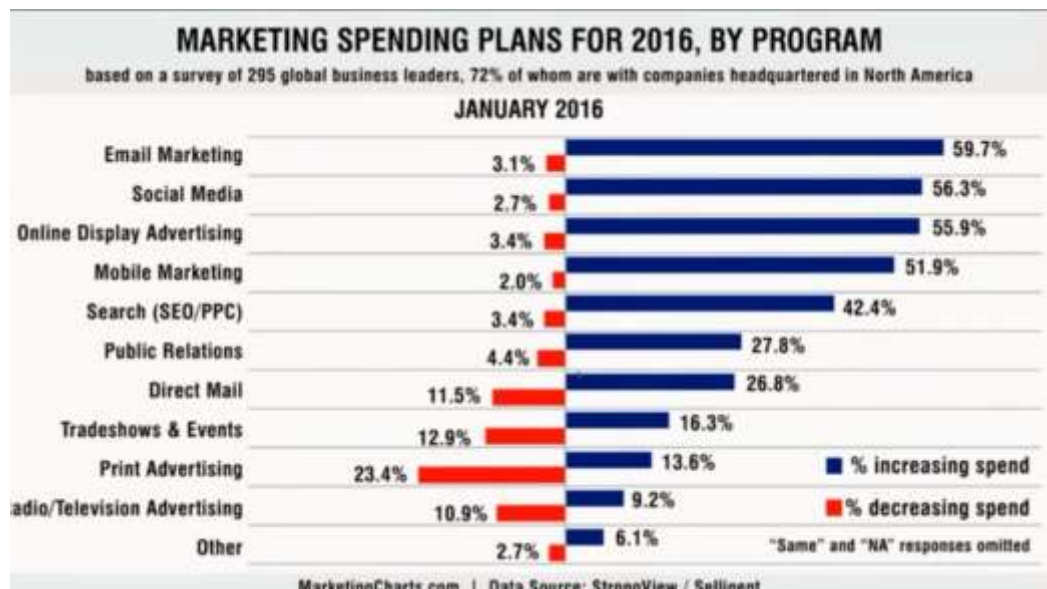

FIGURE 4. Marketing spending plans for 2016 (MarketingCharts 2017)

In the above Figure the blue color defines how many percentages the channel's marketing budget has been increasing. The red color shows how much the spending has been decreased for the channel. The figure indicates that email and social media marketing spending has increased by over 50 percent. Print advertising and direct mails have decreased by over 10 percent. (MarketingCharts 2017.)

FIGURE 5 also works as a good example of showing the importance of digital marketing, even though the competition and the cost of digital marketing is rising year after year. A thing that makes digital marketing very lucrative is that it is easy to enter without starting costs compared to a newspaper advertising or a TV ad on a daily basis. As for a small local business, you can start by establishing new business pages on social media for free. Another key thing is that people are using mobile phones and computers daily. So, that is why companies are reaching customers through digital marketing. (Bharghava 2015, 6.)

The term digital marketing comes from using an electronic device (smartphones, computer, tablets, game consoles) to reach customers. In other words, digital marketing means using one or more digital channels to promote a product or a brand. There are a lot of benefits using digital marketing. For example, it is simple to measure and scale with data analytics. It reduces the costs of marketing, and it can increase your brand awareness. (Bharghava 2015, 8.)

The disadvantage of digital marketing is that if it is not done right, it can easily lose the reputation of the company. People may not get a special bond to the companies online. Negative feedback can do real damage for the online presence of a company. Most importantly, digital marketing is dependent on technology and e.g. errors can be found and a company's landing page can break down. For digital marketers, it is important to minimize the errors and make a company's online presence professional. (Bhargava 2015, 8.)

2.1 What is SEO?

SEO comes from the words Search Engine Optimization. This means search engines (Google, Yahoo, and Bing) need to be optimized for the webpage so it can be seen on the Internet. There are millions of webpages. Therefore, to find a company's landing page it needs SEO. SEO is the basics of internet marketing, and the main idea is to get a good rank when the customer is searching for a specific search term for services or products. SEO can drive more traffic. In this way it can increase a company's revenue. (Zhang & Cabage 2017, 2) This chapter will be divided into three parts: content, link building and social sharing.

There are two types of SEO: organic and paid advertisement. As new websites spring up every day, it makes the internet crowded with information. This makes new webpages land lower in the search ranks. Therefore, it is a challenge for the companies to get traffic and prospects to land on their webpage. The algorithms of the search engine are constantly changing, and that is the reason why SEO is an important part of successful online business. Search engines' algorithms have changed from the past. Before the Internet became crowded, it only took relevant information out of the webpage, and it gave a good rank. Nowadays algorithms are looking for user experience, design and quality of the webpage. (Zhang & Cabage 2017, 6.)

Nowadays SEO is a long term investment. It is almost impossible to get good results with a new and fresh website. There are a few key elements which need to be done now and in the future in order to rank higher: First of all, webpage needs high-quality content. Secondly, it needs a proficient user experience. Webpage must be user-friendly and informative. Thirdly, it needs a good brand in social networks. (Alexa 2016.)

There are some sites which measure how well a website ranks in search engines. There are still not many studies about which is the most effective method to rank faster. According to Crestodina (2015), on-page optimization is still the most important factor to rank higher and faster by

utilizing the right keywords and making quality content. Most business owners are looking for shortcuts by paying for a third party to make ranks higher. With this method, there is a risk that search engines are going to penalize the webpage if they get caught.

The study results indicate that on-page experience and quality is an important part of SEO. The research will go more in-depth about on-page content in the next sub-chapter.

2.1.1 On-page content

There are many different methods to combine to increase your rank in search engines. The content for search engines need to be informative and useful, but it also needs engagement and share ability to reach the best potential. An interesting content will increase its rank in Google but the competition is very high, and sometimes it needs to be pushed in the right direction to rank up higher. In other words, it needs the right timing and momentum to reach the potential rank. (Zhang & Cabage 2017, 7.)

There are a few key things which make Google ranking better. The first thing is to make the website well-structured which means effective navigation, keywords and URL name. This can make a huge impact on SEO. Another thing is to make HTML and XML indicate and navigate the search engine. Secondly, keywords are an important part in making proficient SEO. There must be a good indication and precise keywords in titles, tags and images to make search engine find relevant content. (Zhang & Cabage 2017, 7.)

Nowadays there are good tools to make your site more responsive. For example, Google Webmaster which helps on website structure and identifies errors. Not only that Google Webmaster identifies which tags to

use, but it helps to find correct keywords to improve search ranking.
(Zhang & Cabage 2017, 8.)

The key factor is to find and identify errors on the site which makes search
ranking lower and makes the websites content more relevant and useful
for the search engines algorithms. Below you can see in Figure 6, a
summary of the on-page optimization.

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┌──────────────────────┐
│     On-page          │
│   optimization       │
└──────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────┐
│ Quality and     │        │                 │
│ useful          │        │  On-page SEO    │
│ content         │        │                 │
└─────────────────┘        └─────────────────┘

        ┌─────────────────┐
        │                 │
        │  Site structure │
        │                 │
        └─────────────────┘
```
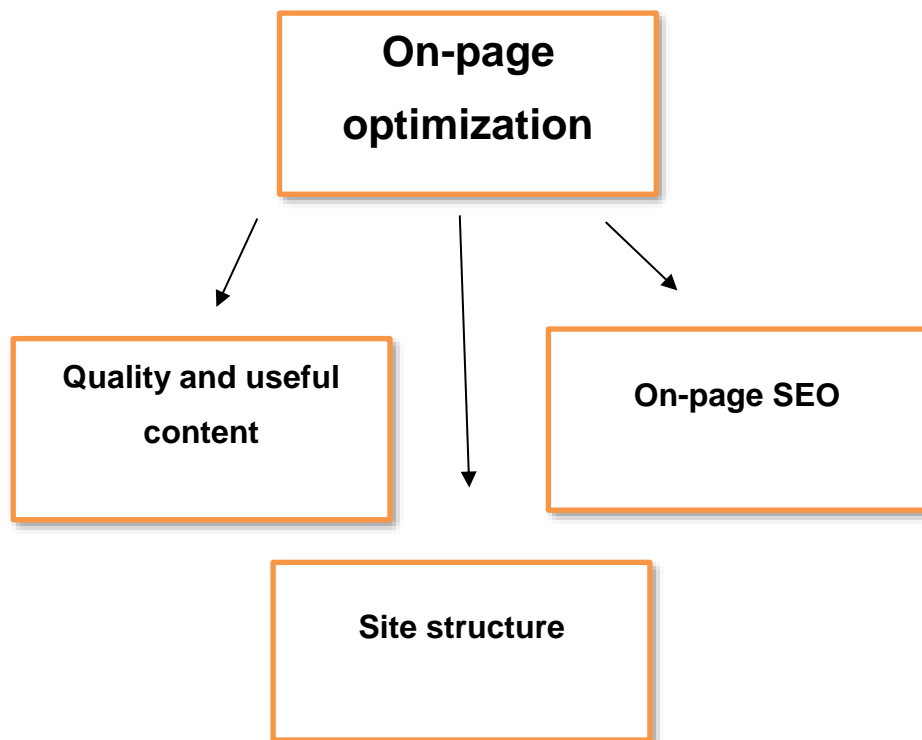
FIGURE 5. On-page optimization for SEO (Zhang & Cabage 2017, 8)

As Figure 6 above shows there are three key factors that must be made
for on-page content. The content on the webpage must be useful and
informative for the customer and the site structure must be user friendly.
On-page SEO means that there are meta-tags and headings which inform
about the upcoming content.

According to Crestodina (2015), however, Google gets smarter and wants to find more quality content rather than too optimized website. The designs and structure can become irrelevant. The focus should be on unique and quality content which engages the reader. Google wants to find out, how the customer feels about the page and webpage becomes a part of customer journey, rather than overly optimized for the search engine. Now this information could be against the former ideas which stated that all kinds of site optimization should be done for the SEO. But, on the other hand, all sources are supporting the fact that on-page content and optimization should be taken seriously into consideration. This means that companies should focus on delivering high quality information and easy-to-use site structure. The research will give a more in-depth overview of on-page optimization in Chapter 4.

2.1.2. Link building

Nowadays link building is a very crucial part of SEO. It has become harder from the early days of Google. As for link building, the essential part is to build backlinks. It means that other websites share the relevant information of the company and hyperlinks the company's website. Backlinks help Google's algorithm to know if the website will be informative and popular enough. Google also searches if the quality is good from those websites which share links to the company's website. All this to see if the backlink is trustworthy or just spam to get better results. If the quality is good, the search engine can rank the page up organically. (Zhang & Cabage 2017, 9.)

As for link building, the best strategy is to get all kinds of backlinks from local directories, profiles or links to forum discussions. A trusted partner can work for link building, for example, Yahoo directories. Another way is to be involved in a blog post with another popular website. As for link

building, there is a possibility to use micro blogs and use it as a traffic flow for the primary webpage. Most important is the quality of the backlink, for example, an article from a trusted newspaper with a link on it can make a huge impact on getting a better organic rank. (Zhang & Cabage 2017, 9.) You can find the summary of link building below in Figure 7.

Link Building

Directories and listing

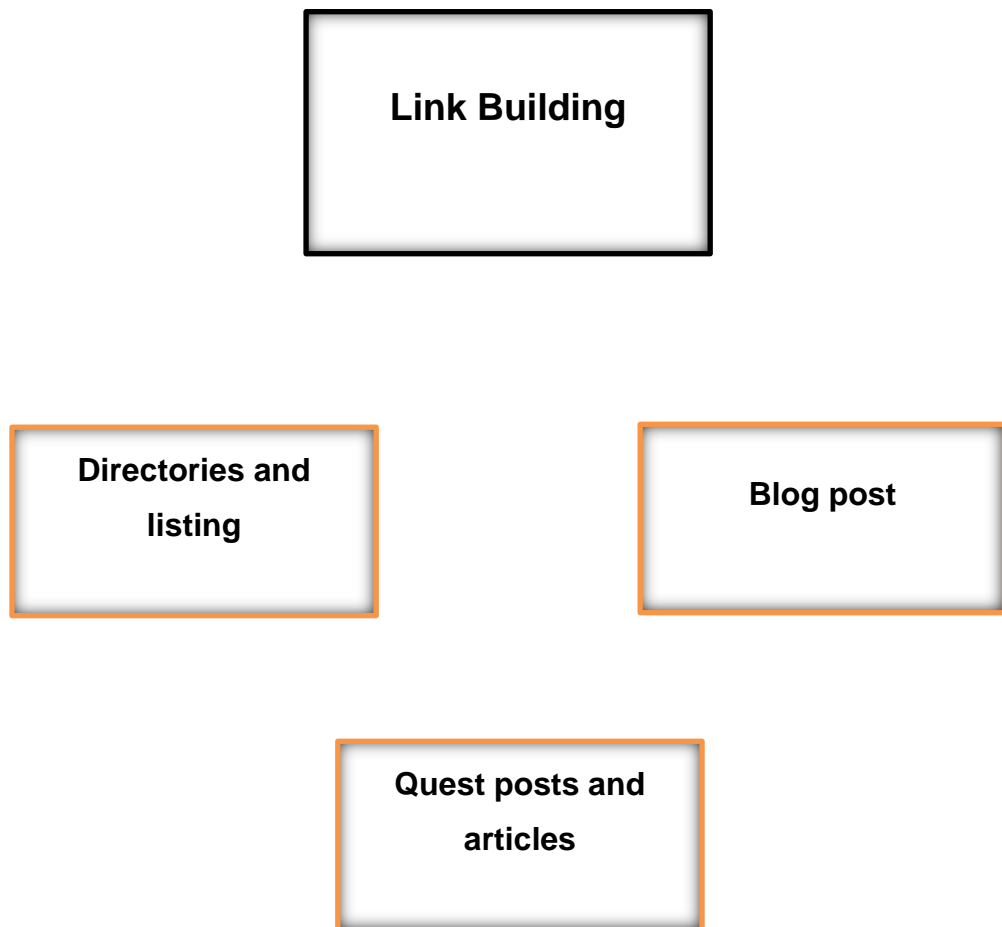Blog post

Quest posts and articles

FIGURE 6. Link Building (Zhang & Cabage 2017, 9)

Figure 7 shows three ways to get high quality backlinks. Backlinks have nowadays become a business opportunity for many digital agencies. A lot of agencies claim that link building is the fastest way to get better rank on

Google. There are a lot of digital agencies providing link building services so this could mean that link building should be taken into consideration. (Hoth 2017.)

2.1.3 Social sharing

As for SEO, there is a third way to increase your page ranking in search engines. Social sharing means using social platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn) and making content which goes viral or gets very popular. This way it can generate good quality backlink and increase the website´s traffic without using any manipulation to search engines' algorithms. The good thing about social sharing is that you can see the results must faster than in backlink strategy (Zhang & Cabage 2017, 10).

The results of social sharing are not as long lasting as backlinks. Search engines are still detecting all the engagement and the quality from social platforms. As for social sharing, it needs content which stands from competitors' content, and after that, it can experience a temporary burst in website traffic. (Zhang & Cabage 2017, 10.)

There are three ways to make social sharing work for better rankings. The first is *click bait* which means that there is interesting content and people want to click the link. It also means that the content must be something that makes the users want to share to their community or friends, usually something very informative or funny. Another way is a *social presence*. This means, for example, that a company´s Facebook page needs to have fresh news posted actively. The third way is to promote your product or company via campaigns which have some shareable content that raises people's engagement, e.g. a competition with a price. (Zhang & Cabbage 2017, 10.) In Figure 8 below you can see the summary of social sharing.
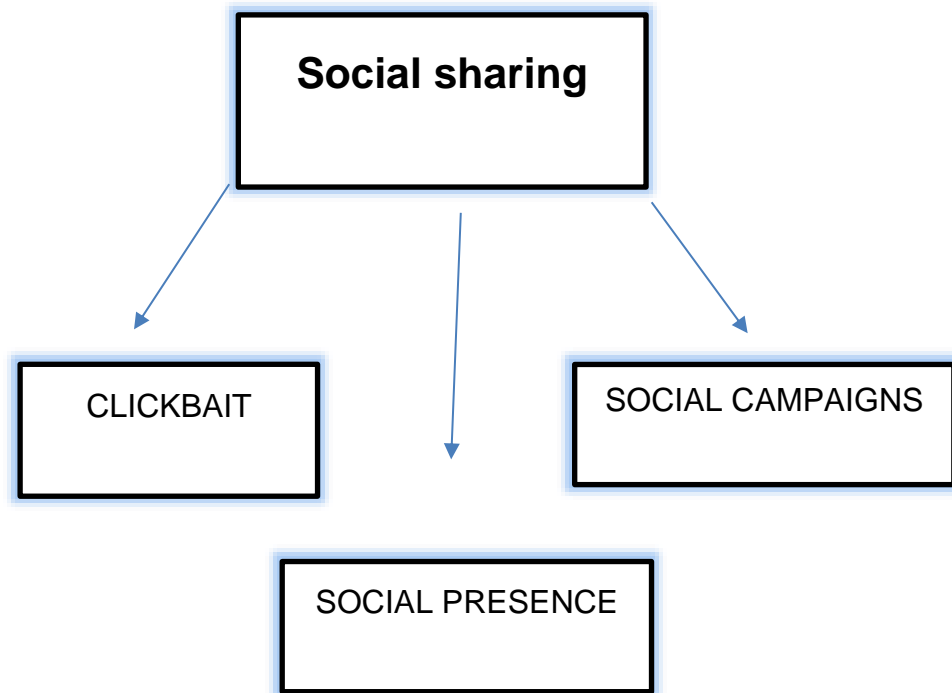
FIGURE 7. Social sharing (Zhang & Cabage 2017,11)

Figure 8 shows ways to use social sharing as a way to rank higher. Interestingly enough, there are no limitations for sharing and posting content on social media.

According to Cardone (2016, 86), the more quality content you post, the better. Yet, some marketing experts claim that posting too much can affect the customer satisfaction and SEO results. Being active on social media can be a good way to get impact and a higher rank on the search engines.

2.2 Content marketing

This sub-chapter is devoted to content marketing. Nowadays marketers know that to obtain customers online value needs to be given upfront. Every day customers research companies and their competitors. Nowadays customers can easily find information and compare services and providers online. With good content, customers can appreciate the value given in upfront. The most important thing is to have an informative and detailed content which customers are searching for. This can even make differentiation from competitors and build a better brand for the business. (Gattis 2014.)

Content marketing is not trying to push aggressive sales. The key idea is to help customers understand issues and give helpful information about the services they could choose. It is a way to collect leads without losing your customers' interest. Sometimes content marketing can be something which is given free upfront for customers. Content marketing, in other words, is collecting leads in a way so that customers can seek and get in contact by themselves. (Gattis 2014, 4.)

A lot of businesses are giving ,for example, free consultations and guidelines to help the customer in buying process. This technique is often seen by digital agencies when they try to establish a connection to a customer by being more like a friend than an aggressive salesperson. This information was supported by Dipiazza (2017,100) who states that genuine connections and helping people is one of the key factors in marketing and business. Content marketing can work as a tool for establishing real connections with the customers.

Content marketing is usually done by social media channels or blog posts. Most importantly, content marketing is finding solutions for a customer´s needs. Content marketing takes a lot of time and effort to make it work properly. Many companies are seeking full-time writers to make content to their webpages or social media channels. Content marketing also takes a lot of work to produce leads for the company. (Gattis 2014, 5.)

According to Gattis (2014, 6) there are three essential things to make successful content:

- An editor which follows up that there are no errors in the content and everything works properly;
- Content writers who create the blog posts, videos or pictures;
- An analyst who measures the effectiveness of the content.

Content can be created via blog posts or social media posts. It can have videos, images text or even downloadable information. It is essential to have a plan for content marketing. The purpose is to give value to the customers and find out what the customers are looking for. The majority of social media platforms offer insights and tools to measure the effectiveness of the post engagement. (Gattis, 2014, 7.)

In the next chapter content marketing strategy will be discussed. With a good strategy, content marketing can be successful. It is important to have a strategy planned long before the implementation. This way it is time-saving and focuses on the target.

2.2.1 Content marketing strategy

As for strategy, there is a lot of studies and information that should be done before implementing a successful content. Marketers can make a mistake by producing content which they think is valuable. There has to be a lot of rich data from the customers and you must understand the customer´s needs before starting content marketing. Content becomes more popular than ever before because people do not want to see nor hear any ads on the Internet. Adblock has become more popular than

ever. It blocks all the pop-up ads and cuts all the ads from videos. There are over ten million people using Adblock nowadays. (McDougall, 2013.)

Now the hardest part is how to make a content marketing that changes people´s mind about the service or product without making them block your advertisement.

According to Johnson & Sparks (2013, 5) there are few key elements which should be taken into consideration when implementing content marketing:

- Create a clear and specific person who you are trying to reach;
- Speak the same language as the target customer;
- Use content with company´s main object;
- Tell an inspiring story which makes the audience feel powerful;
- Has the next step planned for the call to action;
- Give something unique and take risks.

As for strategy, it is important to think about the company's main mission: What is the purpose of the service and how is this going to help the customer? The content should also wrap up the main idea, for example, Coca-Cola´s making the world a better place. (Johnson & Sparks 2013, 5.)

The same thought was found from Fog, Budtz, Munch & Blanchette (2010) who state that a clear defined message must be developed for a strategical purpose, otherwise there is no reason to tell a story to customers. A company's message must reflect a company's brand and content should only have one message per post otherwise it can become unclear to the reader.

When the target is determined, it is time to make a calendar-based plan which concludes all the posts. The content does not have to be originally made by the company, it can use a third party: articles and news which have the same message from the company's point of view. After posting, it

is time to monitor, report and make adjustments. Nowadays there are many tools to help analyze the quality and quantity of engagement, so it is easy to make a follow-up for your content marketing. The most important thing is to make quality content that builds the company´s trust, credibility and online presence which helps the customer join the company's sales funnel (the journey of a customer in a sales process). (Johnson & Sparks 2013, 5.)

2.2.2 Value proposition

Value proposition plays an important role in marketing. Value proposition means that you have a clear statement for the customers concerning what they are going to get if they buy the product or service. The key in digital marketing is to have a strong value proposition. It attracts customers and differentiates from competitors. (Konrath 2006.)

Strong value proposition means that you are showing tangible and measurable end-results for a customer. It is not a sales pitch or an elevator speech. Value proposition tries to show real value for a customer so that a company can increase their credibility. (Konrath 2006.) The research will go more in-depth on value proposition in Chapter 5.

2.4 Email marketing

Email is one of the oldest but still one of the most effective tools in digital marketing. One of the reasons why emails are still leading in digital marketing is that the message can be personalized and the message goes to the "mailbox" where the prospect can access to read it whenever s/he wants. Another thing is that an email is considered important because it is

a personal digital storage for the mails. The message can be used to deliver quotes or newsletters specifically targeted to a prospect. Usually, email marketing can be quite challenging but rewarding if implemented correctly. Communicating your message correctly plays a crucial part in email marketing. There are many steps that can be improved and many mistakes to avoid. (Taylor 2015.)

Emails are at the top of the list when considered in B2B marketing. According to Taylor (2015), a survey for B2B marketers was conducted and the answer was: email was the most important channel for marketing. Eighty-six percent of the people answered emails as the most important tool in marketing. On the other hand, there are surveys conducted that show that social media and content marketing are the most effective.

Holiday (2017) states that e-mail marketing has been a successful tool to marketize but it needs to have a specific group of targeted people. Usually the way to filter the audience is to make subscription model that converts people into an email list.

Nowadays emails can be highly targeted and delivered with an automation tool which means that it can be sent to multiple leads at the same time, yet still having a specific and personalized message. Collecting data online has given more opportunities and effectiveness in email marketing. While automation tools and e-commerce business have grown, the message behind emails must be personalized, and the content must be well planned for the audience in order to get results in email marketing. (Taylor 2015.)

There are some cornerstones which should be considered for successful email marketing. This, in other words, means a higher and open response rate as well as an increased revenue. Firstly, subject line plays an important role as it works as a "first impression". The subject line should have a specific and informative phrase about the content which attracts the lead to open the whole email. Secondly, the marketer should pay attention to. what kind of address the marketer is about to leave. In other

words, the "from" is crucial because most of the emails can be considered as fraud or spam. Thirdly, leads wants to feel that the message was custom-made only for him/her. The message should include his/her´s name. The fourth step should consist a variety which means that there should be different ways to deliver value and quality content and see which one works the best. Good examples could be newsletters, articles, events and personalized messages. (Merret 2012, 53.)

Sending multiple emails with different approaches and styles are recommended. According to Konrath (2012, 100) messages should be sent in a personalized way and you should send multiple messages from articles that interest the customer to custom offers.

After implementation it is important to remember that quality is more important than quantity and feedback from the prospects should be noticed. After well-planned strategy and implementation, it is important to test different ways to deliver highest possible value for the leads. (Merret 2012, 53.)

Nowadays new tools to measure data are being introduced to digital marketers. According to Liebowitz (2014, 208) basic tools for example, Excel and Google Analytics are great ways to measure data as well as get a clear defined goal and strategy. Tracking data becomes an essential tool to measure the quality and ROI (Return on Investment).

According to Mogos & Acatrinei (2015, 28-30) study, the most important part of the email is subject line and the first paragraph which should grab the reader's attention. Many people also want to have a company logo or a representative's photo on the email. Little details as quality and informative content of the products/services are important, but the message should be described shortly and grabbing the attention of the reader. Email should have a personal approach in the beginning as well as in the ending. Short content with a call to action or URL link should be included in the ending.

Little details make huge impact. Bowdery (2008) introduces a concept called AIDA which stands for: Grab *attention*, deliver *information*, promote *desire* and call to *action*. This can be utilized in effective e-mail marketing and shows that these four elements should be included in good email marketing.

Email marketing offers a cost-effective way to deliver a message to a bigger audience, but at the same time, it offers an opportunity to get a private conversation started with a client. Another benefit is that e-mails can be sent in bulk, but it still can be customized depending on the client. Emails are a great way to increase your network without leaving an office and a great way to stay in touch and stay in the prospect's mind. (Soliz 2017.)

The important thing is to keep in mind that email marketing needs to have value for the customer. Aggressive selling of the product or service must be covered by solving a customer´s problem. Emails, as a marketing purpose, should always have permission before starting to send emails for the leads. Many businesses start to over-deliver emails and newsletters aggressively. This can lead to losing a prospect´s interest. Emails should always be easy to read and short. The number one goal in email marketing is to get awareness and engagement with the prospects. It is also important to invite people to your landing page, into signing up to your newsletters without hiding all your content from the broader audience. (Holzmann 2016, 23.)

Another strategy that could be used in email marketing is to always send a backlink to your website after a shorter message of blog content. In other words, email works as a catalysator for the website content, and this can lead to a higher interest to look for more information about company. Another way to do effective e-mail marketing is to use services like mailchimp.com which helps to structure and automate email marketing without spamming the leads. (Holzmann 2016, 24.)

Emails have been one of the first networking tools online, but still, it is one of the most popular tools in B2B marketing. Nowadays there are millions of businesses utilizing the same strategy, so the crucial point is to make emails strong but short. There are multiple ways to utilize email marketing. One way is to use it as a custom-made message which means that the whole email is specifically targeted to a customer. Another way is to use it as a company's newsletter. The hardest part is to make valuable content and an attractive message, but on the other hand, emails are one of the most cost-effective methods of online marketing. Another interesting thing is how to get prospects interested in signing up to a newsletter. It needs a lot of work especially if there is no advertising money available. The research will go more in depth of email marketing in Chapter 4 and 5.

2.5 LinkedIn marketing

LinkedIn is a social media channel for businesses. Advertising done in LinkedIn is tailor-made for businesses which differentiate from Facebook. LinkedIn provides information about companies and employers. LinkedIn is a popular site for those who are trying to find a job or who are establishing new business relationships in a new career. LinkedIn does not have as large user base as Facebook but offers a social media channel for those who are willing to network in a business environment. (Gehman 2011, 33.)

According to Gehman's (2011, 34) survey, B2B marketers claimed in a survey that LinkedIn is the most important social media channel by 26%, followed by Facebook 20%, and blogging 1,9%. Respondents claimed that LinkedIn worked for lead generation as Facebook worked for promoting new services and products.

LinkedIn should be used for creating awareness and creating credibility for the company. The company profile is a crucial part to increase traffic and

awareness. It is important to update all the information of the company. The number of employees and products services must be present as well as a company logo. The content in LinkedIn is as important part as in any digital channel. Company´s website URL must be attached and location. One tool that can be utilized in LinkedIn is forming a group or participating in a specific field where the company should actively participate. This way a person can establish awareness and credibility among potential customers. (Towsley 2014, 40.)

As for networking, in LinkedIn joining a group is a good way to establish a new connection in company´s target market. It is important to remember that posting blindly and advertising your company or products may not lead to marketing success. Sharing relevant information and posting valuable content for the target customer will lead to better results. Another way to marketize your skills and knowledge is to start your discussion group on a topic. Many prospects appreciate the value brought to the table and will connect with the company later when they are looking for a service. (Gehman 2011, 35.)

Posting relevant blog content or sharing articles is a good way to raise awareness. It can also have a positive impact on the SEO of the company´s website. Another way is to do sponsored ads if the target is to get more lead generations outside of the company´s network circle. As for content marketing, it is important to keep in mind that it takes time and a lot of effort before some benefits can be seen. (Zhang & Cabage 2017, 10.)

After establishing a company profile, it is a proficient way to update your profile and all the others who are employees of the company. Many prospects are interested in the company´s culture and people and by updating your profiles with a story about the company can deliver credibility and trust among the new prospects. (Gehman 2011, 36.)

Thus, LinkedIn offers a good platform for B2B marketers who are willing to participate in groups actively and give relevant information. It is good to

remember that LinkedIn serves as a professional network channel, so it is important to remember to behave as a professional when posting in groups or articles. All the digital channels have different ways and tools to deliver trust and credibility as well as generating new leads. The key is to find a right way to tackle target customers and be consistent as LinkedIn marketing takes the time to build and maintain.

2.6 Twitter marketing

Twitter is a popular social media platform where people can "tweet" in short words their thoughts and share content. Relationships are made by following like-minded people and getting followers to follow your content. From the early days of Twitter, things have changed dramatically. Nowadays Twitter is being used for marketizing a brand. Twitter invented the hashtag, and it is now being used in other social media platforms. The main idea of the hashtag is that it works as a keynote that finds relevant posts to that subject. Twitter marketing could be used for increasing leads, awareness and sales. (Bullas 2014, 88.)

According to Bullas (2014, 88-89), there are eleven rules as follows to be successful in Twitter marketing:

- Perfecting Twitter profile, it works as an elevator pitch about your company for the prospects;
- Backlinks to your website, prospects want to check the credibility;
- Headlines are important to get attention;
- Visualizing the tweets with photos and videos;
- Using automation tool is helpful to deliver the tweet;
- Growing your community by being active and delivering competitive content;
- Define and target your audience;

- Engage with people, in other words, make conversations;
- Grow your followers with a long term strategy.

According to Liebowitz (2014, 207) comments on Twitter are the most important way to measure engagement. Tweets and retweets are worth monitoring on Twitter. It is important also to have a clear defined goal for what is the company's purpose of using Twitter marketing. For example, utilizing Twitter to make customers take action.

As for B2B marketing, Twitter needs a lot of attention before you get any ROI (Return On Investment). Twitter marketing takes a lot of effort for making effective strategy and creating a brand. Especially if the audience is trying to grow organically. According to different sources, Twitter marketing needs a lot of active content which engages the target audience. As for a marketer, every social platform has a different approach and ways to succeed in marketing efforts. Twitter needs to be treated as a mini blog or using it as an accelerator for a landing page. It takes time and practice to start delivering traffic and results for the company. (Bullas 2014, 88-89.)

2.7 Facebook marketing

Facebook is allowing businesses to connect existing customer relationships as well as creating new ones. Social networking is coming more and more popular, and Facebook adopts new trends fast. Facebook works well as a marketing tool because customer´s interests and behavior are easy to collect. (Fowdar 2013, 3.)

According to Fowdar (2013, 4), there are six marketing tools to use on Facebook:

- Facebook profile for business with clear mission and objectives.
- Facebook groups to attract your customers with a community.
- Business fan page with informative content for customers.
- Sharing event page advertises their upcoming events more focused.
- Facebook campaigns which can be easily targeted to the customers.
- Facebook messages to make tailor-made messages for the individual.

Facebook allows customers to reconnect with their favorite brand and most importantly it makes it possible for the company to interact with their customers. Nowadays the most important focus is to create and manage meaningful content which leads to customer engagement. The content varies a lot depending on the company or products, and due to this, it is hard to compare which kind of content creates the most customer driven message. Therefore there is not much knowledge or studies about which type of content creates the most impact on customers. (Spiller, Kim & Hettche 2015, 5.)

Social media allows start-ups and companies which are trying to reduce the costs to stay on the market. Meanwhile, Facebook advertising, in other words, paid campaigns, have increased. Facebook can be worked as an alternative for telemarketing because companies can give an immediate response via Facebook and answer a customer´s problem. Nowadays customers are becoming an audience and playing an important role which means they can lead where the company is going to be positioned. This can based on positive or negative comments which customers can easily make. Another thing which can occur in Facebook is word-of-mouth which means that friends and family members can see comments, likes and reviews. (Spiller et al. 2015, 5.)

2.7.1 Facebook campaigns

This sub-chapter contains guidelines for making efficient Facebook campaigns,in other words, paid to advertise. Facebook ads can work as a marketing tool for products or services. Sometimes ads can be a good way to marketize a company`s brand. However, according to Fowdar's (2013, 3) studies, only 48% of the consumers joined Facebook page where a company´s new promotions and offers can be seen, and from that percent, only 19% checked the ad and 39% did not check it all. The company must interact with customers to get sales. The benefits of social media are that it can be cost-efficient and allow positive word of mouth referrals. To get a positive end-result, Facebook ad needs to come closer to the customers by being friendly and trustworthy. If the Facebook campaign is very aggressive, customers will not be willing to click the ad. (Fowdar, 2013, 3.)

On the other hand, Cardone (2016, 102), who has been successful in digital marketing, states that social media must be used aggressively to promote your brand and business; without overthinking and use it as an effective tool and not as an opponent.

According to studies carried out by Spiller et al. (2015, 6), video content, contests or ads with a targeted question for the audience produced more engagement than an offer with a picture. However, these studies also revealed that B2B companies advertising a brand made more positive influence than B2C companies trying to marketize their offers or products directly.

Campaigns must be focused on and targeted to the customers who are looking for informative and helpful content. Sometimes a picture with a good content made better results on engagement than video content. As for Facebook, marketing customers do not want their newsfeed to be too

time-consuming. It is more important to tell stories and to post informative posts without too many aggressive offers. (Spiller et al. 2015, 6.)

According to Bowdery (2008, 85), ads should be made creative by using language and images that grab and hold reader's attention. Sometimes if an ad is made with clever copy and playful approach, it can work as well.

Also the most important means are to produce customer orientated ads which must be analyzed in different metrics. There are many tools which help to find insights into which kind of posts make the most conversions. It is important to understand which kind of content must be produced in different social media platforms. Facebook works better for pictures, and video content works for YouTube. In order to make efficient Facebook campaigns, it is important to identify customer's motives and make posts which interact with the customer more than self-orientated posts. (Spiller et al. 2015, 7.)

According to Liebowitz (2014, 218), utilizing Facebook Insights (Facebook's own tool) you can measure effectivity if used properly. Facebook ´likes´ provide very little information and focus should be on the reach and impressions, which allows you to see the page views and unique visitors.

3. CASE STUDY: ARYAN TECHNOLOGIES

This chapter will contain a detailed introduction about Aryan Technologies. Aryan Technologies is a small IT company specializing in IT hardware and internet connections. Their new target is to get more customers in the Toronto, area in Canada. In this chapter more information about their services as well as their new projects are discussed. Also a SWOT analysis of the company is presented in order to acquire more in-depth information of the case. This will help to understand the company's limitations and targets while aiming to achieve a tailor-made marketing strategy. (Farooqi 2017.)

3.1 The overview of the company

Aryan Technologies was established in 2011 to provide IT consultancy and other corporate solutions in different fields: telecommunication, IT hardware and cybersecurity. One of the most remarkable projects for Aryan Technologies was when they were involved in a project for the US military base in Kabul, Afghanistan. After that Aryan Technologies started to get a reputation as an IT professional and they began focusing on different projects internationally as an internet service provider. Aryan Technologies was completing B2B projects for embassies. And sometimes, they had B2C customers who were looking for household internet and WIFI solutions in Afghanistan. (Farooqi 2017.)

Today, Aryan Technologies is looking towards expanding overseas. There is one office located in Kabul, Afghanistan which handles all the customers in India and Middle-East. Furthermore they have one location in West Palm Beach, Florida, USA where they are trying to get their brand and company on the market. One of the newest locations is in Toronto,

Canada where Aryan Technologies is operating on a daily basis. (Farooqi 2017.)

3.2 Services

Aryan Technologies call themselves a "one-stop shop for all your IT needs". Their main service is in hardware & software. This means customers get everything installed and ready to use with a professional consultation. This then means that customers do not have to deal with vendors or research themselves which hardware or software they need. Service is always tailor-made to suit the customer's IT budget. For the customer, the value behind Aryan Technologies is in:

- Ready to use IT Infrastructure and hardware purchase done by trusted partners

- Reducing administration costs from one-time purchases and installation

- Saving time without hassles from a third party.

The second service is wireless network for enterprises. Aryan Technologies sets-up and installs all the wires and cables needed so that a company gets a reliable and stable wireless connection. Aryan Technologies provides security and repairs different wireless network projects.

The third service, security for IT infrastructure: Security for customer´s business data is getting even more crucial and even more so in the future. Aryan Technologies provides consultation and solutions to company's IT security services which include:

- Vulnerability test
- Risk assessment

- Summary of findings and recommendations

Aryan Technologies' newest service is VOIP solution which means voice over Internet protocol. This service is going to be provided by Aryan Technologies subsidiary company OneMTel which will be overviewed in Sub-chapter 3.1.5.

3.3. The objectives of the company

The most important objective is to get the company name and brand out in Canada. The mission is to make informative content in digital marketing and get new leads in North America. In Figure 8 below there are more insights into the company's missions and objectives. (Farooqi, 2017.)

MISSION	VISION
Provide quality IT solutions internationally	Be the top IT provider in North America

OBJECTIVES

Get growth internationally and launch a subsidiary company: OneMTel

FIGURE 8. Aryan Technologies objectives (Farooqi 2017)

Aryan Technologies main objective is to obtain international growth. The company has just launched their services in North America and is trying to get into new markets. The start is always the hardest part, and it takes time and effort to create and get potential clients as well as creating a well-known brand in the new continent. The CEO of Aryan Technologies acknowledges that they lack online presence mostly because of the lack of time and effort. Creating a marketing plan or creating content and campaigns takes a lot of time before it starts to work for the company. The most important part, especially in B2B, is building trust between businesses.

3.4 Current state of marketing

According to the CEO of Aryan Technologies (Farooqi 2017), the projects which are still maintained and built in Kabul, Afghanistan take most of their time and effort. Brand building and B2B marketing are essential for filling their sales pipeline. Digital marketing needs be targeted to North American customers. The easiest way to obtain leads is to get customers from the company's location Toronto, Canada. Toronto is a multicultural city with high potential for foreign companies to integrate into the new market. Furthermore Aryan Technologies needs to start with a clean slate and make their online presence more efficient and be present. According to the CEO, there are few key steps to master the Aryan technologies objectives:

- Launch a new website and optimize it
- Creating content which attracts new customers
- Word of mouth technique by participating in business events
- Cold calls and quotes for the new prospects
- Creating a new strategy for B2B markets in North America

- Editing the packages and services for new customers
- Find associates and business partners

3.5 SWOT analysis of Aryan Technologies

This sub-chapter uses a SWOT analysis as a tool to get in-depth information about Aryan Technologies in order to find cornerstones for an appropriate marketing strategy. The SWOT analysis is used to describe a company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Strengths and weaknesses are described as a company's internal factors which a company can easily adjust on its own. Threats and opportunities are a company's external factors. The company cannot change these factors but it can learn about them and deal with them. (Kottler & Armstrong 2014, 78.)

Strengths

- Experience and knowledge of IT industry
- One stop shop for all IT needs for the customers
- Customer support and services; long term relations

Weaknesses

- New market environment
- Brand building needs to be done
- Budget for marketing

Opportunities

- International brand and network
- High-end customers
- Launching a subsidiary company

Threats

- International management

- Hard market entry

- Legislation

Aryan Technologies (Farooqi 2017) strengths are in high-quality customer service. It is an advantage of a small firm. Small companies can manage their customers better and they want to establish long-term relations due to competition. A good customer experience comes from high-end services with solutions and installations included. The main purpose is that customers do not need to hire another company for the work or the installations. Aryan Technologies' motto is:"One stop shop for all your IT needs". The knowledge of ten years in IT industry applied with updated research and services are the cornerstones of Aryan Technologies. From 2008 to 2017 the company has been involved in and made progressive improvements so that customers can have projects done fast and reliably. Their main market area in the Middle-East and India has been a success for the company. According to the CEO of Aryan Technologies they were at the right place at the right time. This has given them a huge advantage in the IT industry.

On the weakness part, there are both internal and external weaknesses which can easily accumulate in the new market area. Aryan tech is a newcomer in a new market environment. It takes time to build trust and awareness among the customers. In addition, there is a lack of employees. Aryan Technologies wants to focus on expansion and adapt to the new market area. Their target is to have a good brand and reputation first before launching any bigger projects.

Opportunities for launching and adapting into a new market can have tremendous benefits for Aryan Technologies. Internationalization makes endless possibilities for having new customers and networks. The digital

era is helping a lot of companies to go global, and this is what Aryan Technologies is aiming for: having a strategically implemented digital marketing plan which hits multiple targets. As for an IT company adopting a new market, the area can be much easier than in many other industries. The main reason is that IT companies are already using products or services which can be implemented to customers globally. As for opportunities, growing and finding new partners and customers can be hard work, but it has great potential to have more projects and progressive growth of the company. (Farooqi 2017)

As for threats, there are many obstacles and points to be noticed. First of all, legislation and licensing must be done correctly. Second of all, thorough research must be carried out about the new country and a lot of research must be done in the new country. And third of all, research must be done correctly international marketing management can take a lot of effort. Especially as there are customers in a totally different continent. (Farooqi 2017.)

3.6 Launching a subsidiary company OneMTel

One of the newest projects of Aryan Technologies is in the telecom industry. The subsidiary company is called OneMTel which is a calling company. The main service is to provide VOIP services and wholesale termination. VOIP means voice over internet protocol. The target is to provide routing for international calls. Aryan Technologies is currently establishing direct routes in different locations which can be used for providing affordable calls internationally (Farooqi 2017.)

OneMTel services are:

B2C: Allows customers to make low-cost international calls using smartphone apps or landlines. A mobile app is in progress.

B2B: Provide a low-cost long distance calling with quality. Call center solutions and data backup services.

 OneMTel is in a launching stage. OneMTel needs to have permissions and a license before it can start to operate but designs, research and infrastructure are currently in work. (Farooqi 2017.)

4. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter introduces the empirical part of the thesis. The aim was to find answers to the main research question: *What are the most cost-effective marketing channels for an IT company to gain more customers*? The chapter starts by describing the data collection method. After that the data is analyzed and results are presented.

4.1 Data collection

The data collection process started in April 2017. For the first part of the data collection process, a CEO of a small IT company, in Toronto, Canada and similar to the case company, was interviewed face-to-face. After the meeting, seven key questions concerning B2B digital marketing via e-mail were sent to the CEO. The purpose of the face-to-face meeting before sending the questions by e-mail was to find out if the IT company was similar to the case company as well as to establish a connection so that quality data could be gathered for the case company.

The data collection process then continued in autumn 2017 as new data was collected by an e-mail survey. This included the very same seven key questions. The questions were sent to small business owners in the Ontario area, Canada. With a response rate being one third, there were ten participants involved in all. The participants were contacted through Facebook and LinkedIn**.** The goal was to get more data on how companies use their digital marketing. Also, what channels were utilized and what kind of content was being used or considered effective.

4.2 A semi-structured interview

The base of every research study is to know about the topic before implementing any interview question on paper; the importance of making a well-structured plan for an interview builds more trust between the researcher and the person being interviewed. Before heading to questions the person doing the interview must think, after reading literature, for the topic whether there were any gaps or something that needs more explanation. The purpose of the main research question is that it works as an indicator for all the questions made during the interviews and all the question should circul the main research question. (Galletta 2012.)

A semi-structured interview method was chosen which gaves a great opportunity to stick to the topic yet, gives time to the person to consider the answers. (Galletta 2012.) This research contains an interview with a similar IT Company to the case company. The interviewed person was the company's CEO. There were seven main questions in the interview itself which were carried out through the email. In addition, the interviewed was met face-to-face in order to get more information about the company in order to find out if the company met the criteria for the research.

The main data collection was done by email. The purpose of the interview was to find similar factors and key strategies as well as new methods given for the digital marketing. The purpose of data collection was to see differences as well as similarities to find which work the best for the case company. Proven methods were analyzed and implemented to the case company.

In this research the survey was conducted in the company's location Toronto, Canada. The approach was made in three steps: gaining knowledge on the topic and researching multiple ways to improve digital marketing. Secondly, interviewing a similar IT company from the same location as Aryan Technologies. And the final stage was to find similar

patterns and proven methods which could be implemented into the final digital marketing plan.

4.3 A semi-structured interview analysis

The interviewed company was CFG Technologies which had similar projects and services as the case company. CFG Technologies work in Toronto, Canada as a small-sized IT company and has already been involved in Canada´s markets for a longer period of time having multiple projects and customers. A semi-structured interview was held by email with the founder of CFG Technologies, Mr Soliz. (APPENDIX 1).

The first question was about **how marketing has changed in IT industry during the last couple of years?**

The main purpose of this question was to find answers to how an IT provider should manoeuvre and integrate into current Canadian markets. Marketing in the IT industry has been moving more into cyber space, compared to other traditional industries. Soliz' (2017) answer to this question was that IT industry has changed to digitalization which means that most of the marketing is done by e-mail, web pages and Google (search engines) from traditional marketing methods.

The three elements of digital marketing have thus been mentioned (emails, webpage and SEO) which could be analyzed to be the cornerstones of B2B digital marketing. These are the main channels which Aryan Technologies has been using with a minor difference: search engine optimization has not regularly been implemented in Aryan Technologies.

The second question was **what kind of digital marketing is a potential customer interested in before their purchase decision?**

The type of marketing where a customer gets more information in the first touch. In traditional marketing, seven touches need to be done before a customer buys something. But in digital marketing, the first touch is the most important. (Soliz, 2017.)

Soliz' (2017) answer is that first-hand information and content are important. The first impressions were mentioned as being an important factor. Content must have something which attracts and solves the customer´s problem, and it has to be quickly delivered which in other words means that the customer´s attention does not last long. Also customer touch points were mentioned with an emphasize in the first touchpoint. These touchpoints could be in three categories before, during and after the purchase. The first touchpoint online for the customer could be through the search engine or an online ad. This means the landing page or any introduction of the content must draw the customer's attention.

Aryan Technologies agrees that content must be excellent to obtain customer's attention. The most important factor that Aryan Technologies highlighted was understanding the customer's behavior online and establishing trust between customers. (Farooqi 2017.)

The third question was **what kind of digital marketing goals do you have?** The main purpose was to find targets and focus points which should be checked before implementing the company's strategy.

Soliz (2017) states that "My digital marketing goals are to create an awareness of my services and how reliable my company is."

This could be described as building a good reputation and awareness being the most important goals. Building trust and reliability seems to be a trendy topic in B2B marketing. Aryan Technologies' strategy is to build trust and reputation in a new market location and to find new business partners to work closely with. Both companies agreed that it is a lot of hard work and time-consuming to build trust. (Farooqi 2017.)

The fourth question was **how do you measure the performance of digital marketing?** Soliz (2017) states that "Not at the moment, since most of my customers are acquired via word of mouth or in personal meetings." They do not measure at the moment because most of their customers already come up with word of mouth or face-to-face meetings.

Aryan Technologies has not used any measuring, and they are aware of the fact that they should implement and be more present online. The benefits of digital marketing are that all the data is easily measured, but it may leave important key components of the purchase decisions or customer behavior if not analyzed by experienced professionals. (Farooqi 2017.)

The fifth question was **which channels do you utilize in digital marketing?** Soliz (2017) states that "Mostly email, when I get a referral from a former customer." There were only emails mentioned and utilizing references through the emails. In B2B marketing it is most important to use channels where you can message privately. Aryan Technologies states that e-mails and phone calls are still the right way to establish new business relations.

The sixth question was **would you describe how you have noticed that an online lead becomes prospect?** Soliz (2017) states that "By interacting with the potential prospect (phone or in person) and asking questions."

This means that the focus on digital marketing especially in B2B markets should be utilized by making very personal and private messages for the prospects. Focus should be on delivering a service for the actual need that the customer has.

The seventh question was **what kind of content attracts more customers/prospects?** Soliz (2017) states that "Content that provides all the information in a short paragraph since the attention span of an individual is just 3.5 seconds when reading emails or websites."

Grabbing the attention of the prospect must be done quickly as customer's attention gets distracted in just a few seconds. Information should be delivered vastly with short paragraphs in e-mails and websites. The most important part is to write strong value propositions and effective copy which are straight-forward and informative.(Soliz 2017.)

4.4 Email survey

The email survey contained seven questions concerning B2B marketing. The survey questions can be found in APPENDIX 1. The goal was to gather data with open-end questions so that participants could answer the questions with their own words without restrictions. Also, the open-end questions goal were to find out if there was something new to the subject. The open questions needed more time and effort from the participants but the idea was to gather informative data so that participants would give real answers to the questions

The participants were chosen by the researcher's LinkedIn connections. The survey was sent to company owners or employers working in a small company in the Ontario area, Canada. Seven out of ten participants were working in the digital marketing field. The focus was on finding participants close to the case company's market area.

4.4.1 Content and channels

A few questions were aimed at finding what channels and what kind of content work was needed to get customers online. Most participants regarded e-mail as the most effective channel. Also, Facebook and LinkedIn were mentioned but the majority that mentioned social media channels also mentioned e-mail marketing first. Even though video content was a very popular answer among the participants, Youtube was only mentioned by one participant. Also, interestingly enough search engine

marketing and website were only mentioned by two of the participants. Only a few of the respondents used paid advertising. The main channel for paid advertising was Facebook. E-mails were considered the most cost-effective channel and all the participants were utilizing e-mails to marketize their services as well as sending personalized proposals to the customers. A minority of the respondents also mentioned that they have gained a few good clients via LinkedIn. Below in Figure 10 are presented the answers concerning the most popular marketing channel.
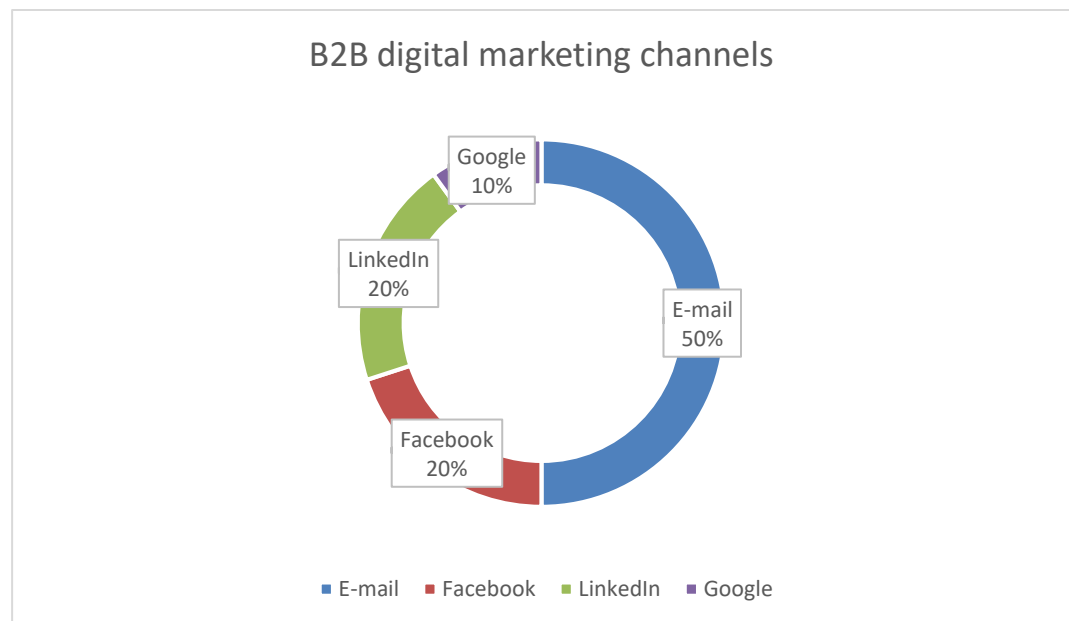
FIGURE 10. B2B Digital marketing channels

FIGURE 10 shows that email was considered the most efficient marketing channel. Five out of ten participants answered email marketing and two out of ten answered Facebook or LinkedIn to be the most effective channel. Only 1 out of 10 answered Google.

The majority of the participants named video content as the best way to attract customers. Also, it could be noticed from the answers that free

content was an important way for establishing trust among customers. As an example, some participants mentioned free consultation, e-books and videos in different forms. A vast majority of the participants linked engaging content as a way to build trust among customers. A few participants mentioned shortness of the content since the attention level of a customer online is short. Grabbing the attention was the main theme in all the answers. All the participants supported the fact that quality content and value should be given upfront in order to gain the attention of the customer. A few participants also mentioned informational content, as for example, case studies were used for attracting customers. Articles and newsletters, on the other hand, were only mentioned by one participant. The answers also indicated that digital marketing was used as a tool to get in touch face-to-face or via phone rather than closing the sale online. Below in Table 1 are the answers to what kind of content attracts customers.

TABLE 1. What kind of content attracts customers?

(1) short topical videos, case studies
(2) video format, lead magnets, compelling copy, good followup
(3) high value, well produced and/or engaging
(4) I use ebooks, reports, FB live or other video training. The idea is to give massive value for free. Give them implementable solutions to their pain and struggle so they learn to know, like and trust you and will give their email so you can then continue building the relationship via email marketing. This is where most sales take place.
(5) Quality with special offer
(6) Whiteboard videos, Animations and Motion Graphics.
(7) Images, videos, emails (have to be smart about it) and targeted informational content.
(8) Offer/Discount

Table 1 shows the answers to what kind of content attracts more customers. The questions were open-end questions so that participants could give their own thoughts and ideas for effective B2B marketing.

4.4.2 Goals and performance

A few questions were aimed at finding out how people measure their digital marketing performance as well as what goals they have in digital marketing. Some participants were not using any measurement tools or they believed that digital marketing efforts would show up as an increase in sales. Most participants answered that their main goal in digital marketing was to get more conversions and grab the attention of the customers. Also, a few respondents mentioned to get more trust and credibility for the company. Digital marketing has evolved into a more interactive stage. This was visible in the survey as how participants answered that customers want to see the real people behind the product or service and this was the reason why video content was also a popular answer among the participants.

Almost all the participants measured their digital marketing performance by using Google Analytics and a few had not used any metrics at all to measure their digital marketing performance. All the participants agreed that digital marketing efforts takes time in the process to make a customer fully converted. The majority of the participants talked about sales funnel. Most participants measured their marketing effectiveness by how far the lead had come in the sales funnel. There were a lot of different answers to how marketing has changed. All the participants shared the opinion that digital marketing has taken over traditional marketing. Many participants also said that digital marketing has changed to a more personalized and targeted level in the last years.

4.5 Summary

The one email survey and open discussion meeting with the CEO gave more in-depth thoughts as to what needs to be done to find new leads in B2B markets. Most importantly, the company which was interviewed was working in the same field and with similar services as the case company. It could be said that the company which was interviewed was a competitor to the case company. This was an informative research with positive results on how things should be marketed in the case company. The things that most importantly came from the interview were that B2B digital marketing should be informative, straight-forward and personalized to establish a relationship with the customer. Utilizing social media channels or making massive campaigns were not the most important factors. Prospects should be targeted with personal messages and building a trust digitally will never replace a face-to-face meeting in the B2B field.

Only a few channels should be utilized. There are big corporations which could use social media as a brand building tool, but the target in a small IT company is to make more sales and get more leads which means that marketing should work for this purpose: driving more sales. There are a few key components which should be used in the case company, Aryan Technologies:

- Using E-mails as a number one priority to deliver strong value propositions for the prospects.

- Optimizing website and making the content on the website highly informative and attractive without forgetting customer´s attention span.

- SEO (search engine optimization) for the website to increase the website traffic.

- Delivering private messages for the target customers and build trust by meeting face-to-face with the buyer.

The email survey that had ten participants answers the main key point that content needs to be of quality and valuable to the customers. Video marketing was the most used method. Many participants mentioned that personalized messages are an important part of their marketing efforts. Therefore, e-mail marketing was the most utilized channel. Also, trust and credibility played an important role before customer's purchase decision. Most participants used Google Analytics to track their digital marketing performance. Participants' goal was to get more conversions by using digital marketing. To summarize, here are a few main points gathered from the answers:

- Digital marketing has changed into a more personalized and interactive stage.
- The most important channel is e-mail.
- LinkedIn and Facebook are also popular channels.
- Video content is the best way to attract leads.
- Trust and credibility are mentioned many times.
- All the participants believe in free and quality content.
- Few participants mentioned SEO.

5. DEVELOPING DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY

5.1 Targeting- selecting future customers

Before implementing the digital strategy, it is important to get a deep knowledge of the customers which would be the best fit for Aryan Technologies.

According to Konrath (2006, 42) selecting your customers is essential due to the high competition, especially, if the target customer is a large company. Most of the large companies get so many inquiries and sales pitches that they want to make quick decisions and work effectively with people who understand their business.

The more targeted digital marketing company has, the more it can understand about customer's thoughts and actions. For example, what kind of problems they are looking to solve or what kind of events they are possibly attending.

The ideal customer for Aryan Technologies would be:

- Global firm
- Multiple locations
- Strong sales/customer support (offices in need with IT network)
- Financial firms or governmental offices
- B2C customers
- Committed to their own customers
- Looking for cutting costs
- Location near where Aryan Technologies operate.

As for the target customer, the focus is on large companies. Narrowing down to a niche can be beneficial for the case company's sales and profit

even though closing a deal can take much more time and effort if compared to a small or mid-sized company.

According to Konrath (2006, 48), another way to determine the company to work with is to think closely about what kind of challenges or problems company services can solve and what kind of things customers are struggling with?

In Figure 11 below there are two examples of Aryan Technologies' new customer targets which meet the analysis and criteria made above. These examples can help to determine which kind of prospects should Aryan Technologies aim for.

BMO – Bank of Montreal

-Large company in financial field

-Many offices located in the Toronto area

-Possible future projects in need of IT services

Scotiabank

-Large company in financial field

-Many offices located in Toronto area

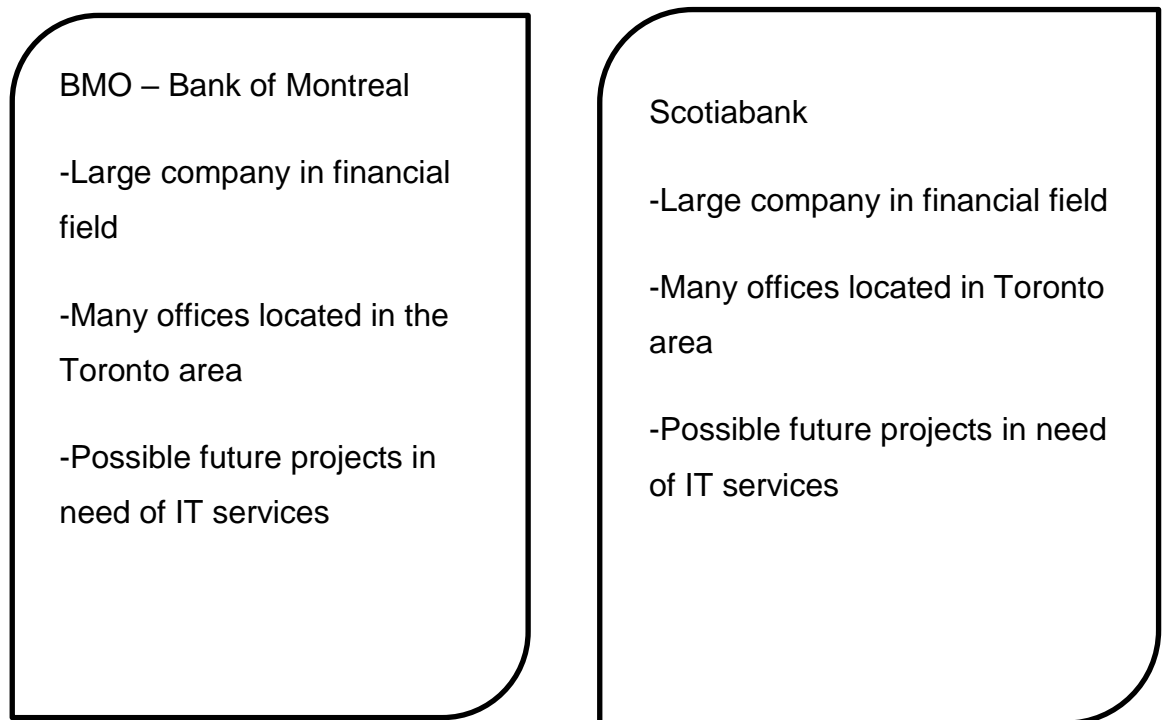-Possible future projects in need of IT services

FiGURE 11. Customer targets

BMO (Bank of Montreal) is one of the largest owners of multiple banks in Canada. They also have banks and other financial services outside Canada. (BMO 2017.)

Scotia Bank is similarly a large financial service provider with multiple banks in the Canada area as well as outside Canada (Scotiabank 2017).

5.2 Delivering a strong value proposition

As for successful digital marketing, a strong value proposition is essential. The value proposition should focus on the outcomes and results that the target company is trying to accomplish. Many businesses fail especially in this part because a strong value proposition is missing in all marketing channels. Most businesses fail at communicating and delivering the right message to their customers. One factor is that companies focus too much on telling about their story and their services when the focus should be on stressing how the service helps to solve the number one problem which the customer is looking for.

A strong value proposition should be delivered in every digital channel reminding the customer and making it as attractive as possible. Most of the businesses have quality services, but the right content for the target customer is missing. A strong message is usually forgotten for example, when the company is setting up a new website. The focus goes easily to not so important things as a value proposition. Good examples would be that the focus goes to optimizing logo, webpage templates or choosing the right picture to the ad campaigns while the real value is missing.

According to Konrath (2006), the more specific a value proposition is, the more likely it will attract decision makers on the target company. The two

most essential things in value propositions are tangible and measurable results which are highly valued and desirable for the prospects.

A strong value proposition contains a business term which delivers attractive end-results. Good examples for Aryan Technologies value proposition could be: decreased costs or minimized risk. Marketing should be rounded only about the end results for the large companies. Especially when taking into consideration what was discussed in the previous chapter with the company which was interviewed: the most important thing is to get the customer´s attention quickly. Target customers, in this case, large companies are not interested in the speed of the service or in what kind of methodology is going to be used. They want the end-result that is about to be offered. Large companies' decision makers have no interest in the tools which are going to be used. The only thing that matters is what kind of value it will bring for the company in the end.

One way to make Aryan Technologies' value proposition stronger is to use specific details which could contain numbers, referrals and tangible results. Here are some examples of how this could look (adapted from Konrath 2006):

> We are helping large companies reduce costs and improve operational efficiency.
>
> One of our client´s results were measured by using our IT hardware service. The costs were reduced by 4%, and productivity went up by 16%.
>
> We help large companies reduce costs by managing IT hardware. With the growing digitalization, this is a critical issue. One of our clients saved over 100,000 $ in 6 months without cutting any other services.
>
> After working with our firm, the client has moved 25% faster on the market and lowered cyber-security risks by 100%.

> By our help managing your IT, you can save up to 200 000 $
> and use the money for operational efficiency or enhance
> customer loyalty.

Using references and using end-results has a huge difference compared
to the traditional way of marketing the company where many companies
are only trying to convince why clients should use their services.
Understanding the real business value which the case company delivers
can increase the sales and confidence for all staff members.

Having many different scripts of value proposition helps in choosing the
right words depending on the prospect to maximize the attraction and
impact. Figure 12 below shows the summary of the value proposition in
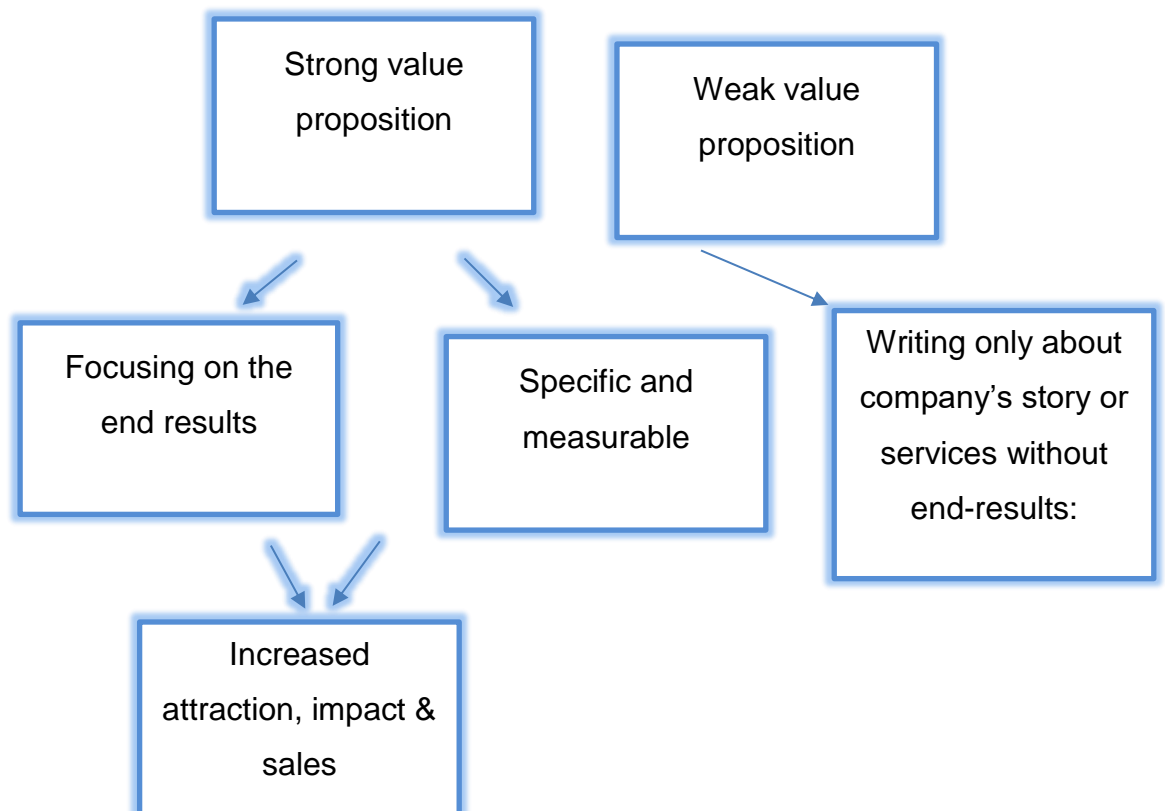digital marketing.

FIGURE 12. Summary of value proposition in digital marketing

The Figure above shows that strong value proposition brings value by showing tangible and measurable end-results for a customer.

5.3 Digital channel decision

As for Aryan Technologies, the budget for a small IT business is limited. Making a digital marketing plan must be cost-efficient but still involve promising results. Therefore, channel decision is a crucial part of deciding which one works the best for Aryan Technologies.

As for digital channels, Aryan Technologies should focus on four channels:

-Website

-E-mails

-LinkedIn profile

-Meetup

The key concept behind all this is that focusing on a few channels gives more time on focusing on the quality of the content, not on the quantity. There are mainly two reasons why cutting the channels would be more beneficial for Aryan Technologies. Firstly, many social media channels take a lot of time and financial efforts before it all starts to work. Secondly, focusing on making private messages for B2B industry is proven to be much more efficient.

Channels have been decided due to efficiency on getting more done in a shorter time. The website is an important part to show presence because it offers credibility and trust among clients. If the SEO is done correctly, it can offer a good amount of traffic on the first pages done by the search

engines when clients are searching for services related to Aryan Technologies. The website works as a business card but in a digital form.

E-mails are a highly effective way to marketize and get in touch with companies. Therefore, a private e-mail for the company can lead to a sale more efficiently than an advertising banner or a Facebook campaign.

LinkedIn offers a great way to show your business to increase credibility and raise awareness in a professional network. Upgrading to a LinkedIn premium account can be a good way to leverage staying in touch and networking with other businesses.

Meetup is an online social networking portal which connects people by their interests and location. Aryan Technologies started utilizing meetups as a networking tool. Suggestion for using meetups was made by the company interviewed in this research. It has been a good way to marketize and create awareness among businesses in Toronto, Canada. One of the strategies is to create your group in meetups and develop an effective way to keep the members active in the group by making interesting and informative events for those who are interested in IT services in Toronto, Canada.

5.4 Developing a website

As for the website, Aryan Technologies needs a new strategy to keep the customer's attention and to build a strong brand as an IT professional. A website is a crucial way to get customer's attention, but the informative and interesting content is usually neglected among small businesses. A new rising trend is to give a lot of free informative content mostly because competition has increased and digitalization has made it possible for customers to do research by themselves. Even if the lead does not become a customer, most customers appreciate the value that is brought

to the table and choose to do business with those companies which give the most valuable information for free beforehand.

Aryan Technologies' website plan will consist of the following contents:

- Relevant articles which need to be interesting from the prospect´s perspective;
- Invitations to the Meetup seminars;
- Newsletters with useful information and with a professional touch; Must be done actively to keep prospect´s awareness;
- Free download for a pdf document which contains useful information about IT hardware and the benefits of cutting costs with Aryan Technologies IT services;
- Success Stories/Testimonials important way to convert leads into customers;
- Contact us page which must be simple and effective so that prospects can easily fill it up.

So that the webpage can be found, it needs to be optimized especially in the Toronto, Canada area where Aryan Technologies operates. As for SEO Aryan Technologies' website needs to have the following:

- Sharing articles from LinkedIn;
- Local business directories (yellowpages.ca and 411.ca);
- Backlinks from trusted pages (Wikipedia);
- On-Page optimization: meta tags, title tags and keywords;
- Responsive design for the webpage;
- Guest posts with quality partners.

5.5 E-mail Strategy

Before sending propositions and marketing via e-mail, it is important to do proper research of the target customer. In other words finding the problems which the target company is struggling with. Research can be done by finding articles from their industry and actively visiting company's website. Company´s website can offer valuable information for example in their news feed or blog posts.

The next thing is to analyze properly what is the end-result that customers want to achieve and how Aryan Technologies IT services can help them accomplish their goals. It is important to see the big picture and find outcomes which could deliver value for the target company.

Every e-mail must be personalized and customized depending on who the receiver is. The goal is to get customer´s attention by sending valuable information and sharing your knowledge about the company's situation.

To accomplish Aryan Technologies´ e-mail strategy, it is important to position Aryan Technologies as a valuable source for the customer's solution. Another thing is to deliver a message which speaks directly to the decision maker/e-mail receiver.

According to Konrath (2006), there are five steps in making an efficient e-mail:

- The message must always be personalized which means you could reference something specific about their business
- Focusing on their business
- Short and straight to the point
- It starts as a conversation
- Readable from the preview window

It is important to remember that e-mails are not usually even opened or they can be considered as spam if there is no groundwork done. Before or after implementing an e-mail, a good way is to make a call to the prospect and get the attention right away from the very beginning.

According to Konrath (2006), there are three steps to create a message which will get the attention of the prospect:

1. Establishing credibility which means by referencing a testimonial, event which was to the prospect´s interests or research which have been researched specifically for the prospect´s point of view.
2. Getting attention by giving a value proposition and referencing results or asking a question.
3. The closing part consist a friendly request.

The subject line is a crucial part of a successful e-mail strategy. The more crafted and perzonalized subject the e-mail holds, the better chances it has to grab the attention of the reader. (Konrath 20016, 88.) Here, below, in IMAGE 1, is an example of Aryan Technologies' e-mail strategy:

Subject: John Malone suggested I give you a call - reducing costs by 22% with IT service

Bob,

As I noticed from LinkedIn a new BMO office is going to be established in Toronto, we know how hard is to manage everything from the start.

Working with our customers, we typically reduce costs by a minimum of 22% installing and buying new IT hardware. I have an idea how we can reduce and get all setup so you can start operating a new office efficiently.

If you would like to learn more, let me know. Let´s set up a time to talk.

Sincerely

IMAGE 1. Aryan Technologies e-mail example

As for the e-mail letter above, the introduction part needs to grab the attention of the receiver or recipient. This example presents an advantage: the subject line refers to a person that the imaginary e-mail receiver knows. This arouses trust in the reader and makes the reader open the e-mail. After that the subject line delivers in one sentence information about the rest of the content of the email. (Model adapted from Konrath 2006.)

The introduction tells the reader that they have done their homework, they know what is happening in their organization. Showing private knowledge builds trust and connection with the prospect. The next section promises tangible results by showing numbers and using referrals and the last part needs to be short, in other words calls for action.

5.6 LinkedIn Marketing

As for LinkedIn, Aryan Technologies should focus perfecting the business profile as well as maintaining a good reputation and content with all the personal profiles. The reason why LinkedIn was chosen from all of the social media platforms was for these three reasons:

1. Aryan Technologies' website needs a social platform to share the content delivered from the website to increase the rank from search engines.
2. LinkedIn provides a professional platform where B2C customers are being cut out, and B2B networking is more obvious for everybody involved in LinkedIn.
3. LinkedIn provides forming groups, messaging privately and building Aryan Technologies reputation.

As for Aryan Technologies, where employers are in small numbers, the marketing must be cost effective and kept simple before starting to expand. Being involved in every social media channel makes it harder to manage, and the quality of the content starts to decrease. Most importantly is to find the right patterns and ways in LinkedIn because every social media channel has its own tools and ways to master marketing. Focusing on one channel makes all the marketing efforts measurable and the quality of the content better.

5.7 Meetup

Meetup was a chosen channel for Aryan technologies' marketing plan. The reason is that networking is done by face-to-face which increases the potential of getting new clients. There are many workshops and events in Meetup where Aryan Technologies has been involved, and the methods are being proved. In the B2B world, people are still making business with people and credibility increases when there is a representative with whom to connect and engage with.

Meetup platform is easy to manage when events are being posted in a mobile-app and reminders are sent to the e-mail to all the participants. Another way to do marketing in Meetup is not to only participate but to establish own event with a subject of IT workshop where troubleshooting and tips are given live.

6. CONCLUSION

This chapter is devoted to the conclusions of the research as well as the reliability and validity of this thesis. This chapter also gives thoughts and ideas for further development and research for Aryan Technologies digital strategy.

6.1 Answers to research question

The main research question:

What are the most cost-effective marketing channels for an IT company to gain more customers?

As for the main question, and considering small IT companies, the most effective channel is e-mail. In the research e-mails were discussed in the theory part as well as in the empirical part. E-mail is still one of the most powerful assets in digital marketing. Not only does it give possibilities to make automated messages to multiple leads; it gives opportunities to send specific and targeted introduction letters to target companies. When considering the costs, e-mail is a free tool to be used but the crucial point is the content of the email. Another benefit of using emails as a marketing tool is that it is easily measured and tangible. E-mails are a good way to establish and keep a connection to a client. Selecting the right digital channel is important, especially in small companies where time management and employees are in short.

The research shows that, e-mails should be utilized in B2B marketing and you should learn how to make effective copy. The effectiveness of the copy was overviewed in the fourth chapter, where the case company's strategy for digital marketing was discussed.

The empirical part and interview show that the most issue is to get the reader's attention and to keep emails informative with a focus on

customized messages. The key point was to use tangible results by utilizing testimonials, referrals and numbers.

Other cost-effective channels were LinkedIn and Meetups which were discussed in the second and fourth chapter. The key take away is to form connections and build trust. LinkedIn marketing needs profile set ups and private messaging as well as forming a group. Meetups work for establishing new connections by joining the events or forming a new event. Meetups give possibilities to broaden your network and form workshops for professionals.

Another important part is to establish a website which needs to be well optimized in order to attract traffic. SEO strategies and the importance of SEO was discussed in the second chapter. It is a basic tool which is almost essential for digital marketing. The only cost can be setting up hosting and a domain for the website and the content can be made free. On the other hand, it takes time to build a reputation for search engines in order to rank higher on the page. Most of the cost-efficient marketing channels are free to use. The thing is that they are probably more time-consuming rather than expensive in order to be efficient tools for digital marketing.

Subquestions:

What kind of digital marketing works in the B2B field?

As for the subquestion, the content is getting more and more important nowadays due to high competition. The study shows (see the second chapter) that customers appreciate high-quality content which is specifically targeted and solves a customer's problem. You must get customer's attention immediately, otherwise the message will not get the wanted results. E-mails must work as an elevator speech and focus on the solution for the customer. The key takeaway is that private messages work in the B2B field with a follow up call by phone. It takes time to build a trustworthy connection in the B2B industry. In order to make it work, a lot

of useful information needs to be given beforehand and needs targeted messages which are custom-made for the specific customer.

Another key takeaway is to build trust among customers. A great way is to focus on a specific niche rather than focusing on a broader audience. A good way to get more customers is by utilizing referrals and using testimonials. Most importantly, word-of mouth effect is something that every small business should aim at. The company should have information online, even if a customer from a word of mouth comes in. Most likely they will still search out more information about the company from the Internet. Online presence will raise credibility for the B2B company if used correctly.

What kind of value proposition would work for the online leads?

The value proposition plays an important role in implementation. The importance of the value proposition in digital marketing was overviewed in the second and fifth chapter. Value proposition must have a strong message which focuses on solving the customer's problem. The value proposition should be circled around the end-result and not about trying to convince the prospect about the quality of the company or the service. Value proposition needs to have tangible ways to measure the effectiveness of the service offered. Value proposition is an important part in B2B marketing in order to create trust and credibility. A great value proposition uses referrals and testimonials to support the value proposition.

6.2 Validity and reliability

The theoretical part of the study was obtained from e-journals, books and articles related to the topic. Sources were collected from trusted sites and authors. There is a slight scarcity in researches done on digital marketing, and digital marketing constantly has new updates and ways to improve. This makes it hard to access but the overall theoretical part has the basics of the digital marketing strategy which should be implemented, therefore it is considered valid.

The interview was held with semi-structured questions. It contained seven key questions for the digital marketing strategy used in the companies. The research method used in this study was a qualitative one. The qualitative method is more about defining human behavior and studying specific group. Open-end questions were used in the research and the aim was to find more detailed answers to a specific topic. As discussed in Chapter 1.4., a more in-depth understanding of the concepts in practice was sought (see Schechter 2013, 7). The main purpose was to put into use the collected data and the findings into practice.

The empirical part of the study was very useful for the research as the company that was interviewed had a lot of similarities to the case company including industry, services, location and size. The interview was held face-to-face together with the emails that were involved. All in all, with the empirical part useful information was gathered for the case, to the extent that the given context offered.

Also, an email survey was conducted with ten participants. The same seven questions were used with open-end questions which gave more in-depth information about digital marketing channels and content.

6.3 Suggestion for further research

The research contains the basics for Aryan Technologies' digital marketing strategy. For further purposes, there could be a study which focuses more on traditional marketing. For example, it could be compared which one is more effective, traditional marketing or digital marketing. Digital marketing improves every day and new trends are coming up all the time. For instance, video content and live videos are now trending in 2017. There could be new strategies for the future. All in all, the thesis creates ideas and makes suggestions on how to improve digital marketing for the case

company. Also, there could be a study which focuses more on Meetups channel. Meetups was mentioned in this research by the CEO of CGF Technologies who was interviewed.

7. SUMMARY

The research contains a theoretical and an empirical part for improving Aryan Technologies` digital marketing strategy. The study was conducted by a deductive approach and with a qualitative method. In the introduction the mission of the case company was presented and it was followed by the theory and empirical studies. The tools were used for finding a new strategy for the case company.

The second chapter contains the theoretical part where journals, books and articles from trusted sources were researched. The theoretical part of the research covers up the basics of digital marketing. The research gave a lot of helpful and tangible methods to use in practice as well as guidelines to the next chapters.

Aryan Technologies was overviewed before implementing the strategies conducted from the theoretical and empirical studies. The case company´s targets and vision were given. Before implementation a short analysis was made, in Chapter 3, to have a more in-depth view of the challenges and opportunities in a new market area for the case company.

The empirical part, which was conducted in Chapter 4, included an interview with an IT company which was made to analyze and improve Aryan Technologies' strategy. The company that was interviewed was chosen for the similarities to the case company which delivered a high value for Aryan Technologies' marketing strategy. In addition, there were ten more participants taking part in the survey by answering the same questionnaire and this formed the second part of the data collection.

The marketing strategy was drawn from theory and empirical studies which gave the tools for proven methods and ideas to improve and implement. The strategy was carefully planned and researched, giving insights and methods to increase the leads and sales in Chapter 5. In conclusion, this research gave multiple ways to improve digital marketing

strategy with simple and effective ways to implement. The channels and value proposition were carefully chosen to improve the overall look of the company. The final part of the thesis offers answers to the main research question and sub-questions. Validity and reliability were discussed in a restricted manner as well as ideas for further research. The research attempts to accomplish its mission in this given subject.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: E-mail Questionnaire

1.How has marketing changed in IT industry during the last couple of years?

2.What kind of digital marketing is a potential customer interested in before his/her purchase decision?

3.What kind of digital marketing goals do you have?

4.How do you measure the performance of digital marketing?

5. Which channels do you utilize in digital marketing?

6.Would you describe how you have noticed how a lead becomes a prospect?

7.What kind of content attracts more prospects/leads?