DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY FOR CONSULTANT BUSINESS

Case: Tres Hombres Consulting Group Oy

Abstract

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Abstract

Digital marketing is more cost-effective, agile and easier to monitor than traditional marketing methods, and it enhances the enterprises competitive advantage. The competition to attract prospects online has increased and enterprises invest more on digital marketing tactics to reach the right audience and converting them from awareness stage to purchase. In order to successfully execute digital marketing actions a digital marketing strategy is required.

The objective of this development project was to develop consultant business digital marketing in Business-to-Business environment and create a digital marketing strategy to increase customer awareness, brand visibility, attract new potential customers and eventually increase sales. The main research question was how to create a digital marketing strategy for the Case Firm that enhances competitive advantage?

In total of six marketing professionals were interviewed with semi-structured and open-ended interview to gain insight on the future of digital marketing, how to create a successful digital marketing strategy and how to find the right channels to reach the right audience. The interviews results were that digital marketing is a strategic decision, knowing the enterprises customer is the key step on creating digital marketing strategy and by monitoring and measuring digital marketing can be lead with data-driven decisions and present the results with numbers. In near future video will be growing format for content and artificial intelligence (AI) will enable more personalized marketing. Based on the theory part and the interviews results a digital marketing strategy was created by following SOSTAC Planning framework. The advantages of the findings are that the results can be generalized and applied in various organizations in different fields for creating digital marketing strategy.

CONTENTS

VOCABULARY

A/B testing = From the same webpage or landing page has been created two different version and the amount of visitors and conversions are monitored. The better converting webpage are chosen for utilization.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) = an area of computer science concerned with designing smart computer systems. AI systems exhibit the characteristics generally associated with intelligence in human learning, reasoning, and solving problems.

Augmented Reality (AR) = Also called as added reality. Virtual reality connected to real world. It's an interactive experience of real environment that has augmented computer-generated perceptual information, such as images, voices, video, text and gps – information.

Big Data = Refers to large, continuously increasing and uncategorized data that are stored, shared, searched, analyzed and presented. It is often too complex or large for traditional data-processing application softwares to process.

Call-to-Action (CTA) = A desired action a company wants customer to make on a webpage. E.g. download a free ebook, sign up for newsletter or suggestion "try now".

CPC = Cost per click. Is the price the advertiser pay for each click on the marketing campaign. See PPC.

Display advertising = Also know as banner advertising. Marketing material that is placed in website and it can be in various formats that contain text, images, movement, video, and audio.

Email marketing = Marketing via email. Author sends email to one or more recipients across the Internet with marketing purpose.

Inbound marketing = Attracting customers to organizations webpage with content marketing, social media marketing and search engine optimization. Customer is voluntarily seeking information online and the organization provides it to support the customer journey.

KPI = Key performance indicator is a marketing metric that measures how well the organizations business objectives are reached.

Marketing automation = Softwares and technologies that are developed for marketing departments to more effectively market online and automate repetitive tasks.

Mobile marketing =Advertising that happens in mobile devices. Includes apps, messaging, mCommerce and CRM on all mobile devices including smart phones and tablets.

Offline marketing = Traditional marketing methods outside Internet, such as TV, radio, printed media, brochures, flyers, banners and events.

Online marketing = Digital marketing that utilizes digital platforms and technology for marketing in Internet e.g. Social media, websites, email marketing, SEO, content marketing, blogs, vlogs etc.

PPC = Pay per click. Also known as cost per click. Advertising pricing model according to which the advertisers pay for agencies or media companies.

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) = Form of Internet marketing where webpages increase their visibility online with paid advertising. SEM may incorporate search engine optimization.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) = Tactics that aims to improve visibility and higher ranking in search results pages in one or more search engines by utilizing proper keywords, content, code and links.

SERP = Search engine results page. It is the webpage users see after searching with a keyword or key phrase and it is sorted by the relevance of the content.

SME = Small and medium sized enterprise.

Social media marketing = Marketing tactics that are implemented in social media channels, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn, according to the organizations marketing strategy.

Virtual Reality (VR) = Computer-generated experience in simulated environment including auditory and visual effects and some other types of sensory feedback.

(Concluded by combining AMA Dictionary & IAB Finland dictionary)

1   INTRODUCTION

The development of digital media interactions and technology are developing rapidly. Various organizations utilize digital marketing tactics to gain competitive advantage and the competition online increases. Enterprises invest more on digital marketing tactics to reach the right audience, attracting prospects to website and in interaction, and then converting them from awareness stage to purchase. In order to successfully execute digital marketing actions a digital marketing strategy is required. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, preface.) The development project's purpose was to create digital marketing strategy and achieve concrete advices and tools for executing the strategy.

Knowing the customer and identifying customer journey are critical parts of digital marketing strategy. Customer behavior has evolved towards more independent decision making and according studies estimate 70 % of customers make a buying decision before contacting the sales organization. According to Google mobile is the first device people turn to while searching for information. Organizations need to change the mindset towards more customer-oriented focus, provide information with inbound marketing methods, be continuously present online and serve the customers with relevant content also with mobile responsive pages. The customer controls and decides what he wants, when he wants, where he wants and how the interaction is implemented. (Davis 2018; Google 2017; Filenius 2015, 80; Talonen 2018 b.)

In the Case Firm a special need was identified inside the organization for developing digital marketing. Previously there were no marketing strategy and due to this marketing actions were irregular, unplanned and spontaneously executed with no monitoring. The purpose was to develop digital marketing and create a digital marketing strategy in order to attain competitive advantage and enable agile digital marketing with data-driven decisions. The digital marketing strategy's objective was to increase customer awareness, brand visibility, attract new potential customers and eventually increase sales. This development project was one of main strategic initiatives in the Case Firm in 2018.

The development project focuses on developing digital marketing in small and medium sized enterprise that operates mainly in Finland. Due to the characteristics of the Case Firm the key concepts are growth searching small and medium sized enterprise, digital marketing, business-to-business (B-to-B) and digital marketing strategy. Traditional marketing methods are left outside and the focus is on digital marketing methods.

The main research question was how to create a digital marketing strategy for the Case Firm that enhances competitive advantage? The extra research questions were: How to

develop Case Firms digital marketing during the next three years? How will digital marketing change in the near future according to marketing professionals? What recommendations there are for creating successful digital marketing strategy and how to find the right channels to reach the potential and existing customers?

In the theory part are utilized both recent and older research material as digital marketing evolves rapidly. Also six semi-structured and open-ended interviews were conducted to gain insight from marketing professionals on the future of digital marketing, how to create a successful digital marketing strategy and how to find the right channels to reach the right audience. The methods used in the work are SOSTAC Planning framework while creating the digital marketing strategy, semi-structure interview and qualitative data analysis when executing the interviews and SMART goal setting, when choosing objectives for the digital marketing strategy. Based on the theory part and results received from the marketing professional's interviews a digital marketing strategy was created for the Case Firm and it can be used as example while creating digital marketing strategy for organizations in similar situations.

2 DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

This development project was made for Tres Hombres Consulting Group Oy during the summer and autumn 2018. There was a specific need for developing digital marketing and creating digital marketing strategy for the company. Before the development project the company's digital marketing tactics were irregular Adwords campaigns, company's Facebook page and LinkedIn page which were not regularly updated. The company has been operating about 15 months and a digital marketing plan is required for purposeful marketing and revenue growth.

In this thesis the focus will be on digital marketing and traditional offline marketing methods, such as affairs, printed media and events, and other marketing methods has been left outside. The main focus will be on digital marketing and social media, and how to utilize these advertising channels in business-to-business marketing. The work addresses how marketing has changed towards mobile consuming, big data, personalized marketing and empowered clientele with higher expectations. The development project includes semi-structured interviews with marketing professionals and based on the results a digital marketing strategy has been created for the Case Firm. Strategy implementation and utilizing found tactical marketing methods will be dependent on the Case Firm after the development project.

2.1 Introduction and objectives

The main objective of the development project is to develop the Case Firms digital marketing in Business-to-Business sector and create a digital marketing strategy for small growth searching company. In order to create up-to-date digital marketing strategy semi-structured interviews of marketing professionals were included into the work. The purpose was to receive experts view on the future trends on digital marketing and best practices for creating digital marketing strategy.

In this development project empirical data concentrates on Case Firms digital marketing and according to this the focus is on small and medium sized enterprises as bigger organizations have more resources for digital marketing execution. Geographically the focus is in finnish markets due to the company's current situation and market area. Though, in the future the company might go international and then a new updated digital marketing strategy should be developed.

The topic was suggested by the Case Firm and it was based on the need identified inside the organization. The objective was to give concrete advices and tools for the Case Firm

to develop their digital marketing and possibly also for other small and medium sized business-to-business enterprises in the same situation. Only few of the Case Firms main competitors utilized digital marketing strategy and for this reason the strategy can provide an edge over the competitors.

2.2   Purpose and research questions

Originally the purpose of the developing project was to attract new potential customers, engage current customers and ultimately increase sales and revenue streams. The Case Firms vision was to find out-of-the-box approach to digital marketing and do something unusual in their field. With new digital marketing strategy the company aims to choose correct tools and methods for digital marketing, creating engaging content and attracting new potential customers.

The main research question was:

- How to create a digital marketing strategy for the Case Firm that enhances competitive advantage?

Extra questions:

- How to develop Case firms digital marketing during next three years?
- How will digital marketing change in the near future according to marketing professionals?
- What recommendations there are for creating successful digital marketing strategy?
- How to find the right channels to reach organizations potential and existing customers?

One of the purposes was to be able to identify the profile of new potential customers, but also to describe the current customer's profile. Based on the customer profiles right marketing channels and methods could be chosen.

2.3   Methods

During the development project two main methods were used: SOSTAC Planning framework and semi-structured interviews with qualitative data analysis. In addition SMART Goal setting was utilized while determining the objectives for the digital marketing strategy.

2.3.1   SOSTAC Planning framework

SOSTAC Planning framework was used while creating the Case Firms digital marketing strategy and it was chosen, because it is widely used with professional to produce various plans, such as business plans, marketing plans, advertising plans, human resources health and safety plans etc. SOSTAC comes from words Situation analysis, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action and Control (see picture 1 below) and it can be used while creating various plans, such as marketing plans, corporation plans, advertising plans etc. Notable is that there is some overlap with each planning step and hence to this, previous stages might need to be revisited and refined while proceeding according the plan. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 3.)
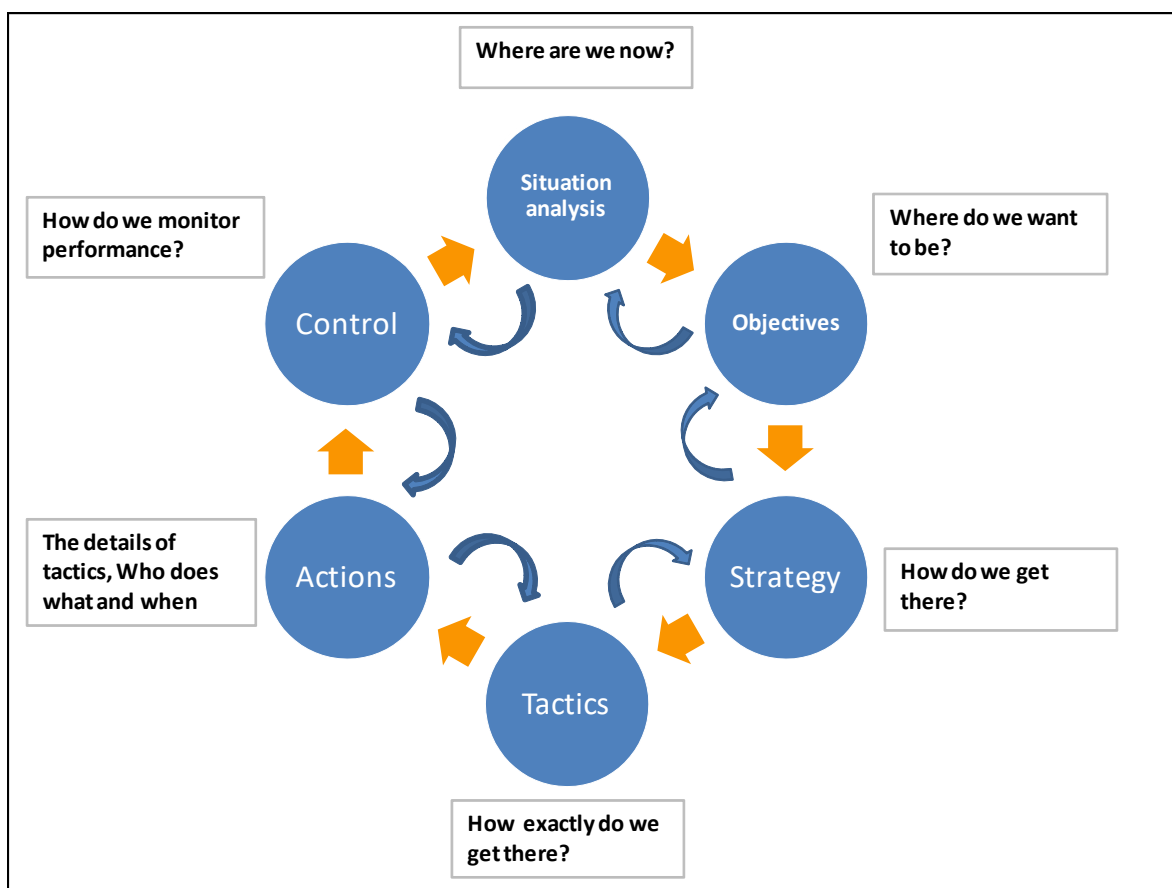
Picture 1. SOSTAC Planning framework according to Chaffey & Smith 2017, 3.

The planning framework starts with situation analysis which covers the question "Where are we now?" and after fully understanding the prevailing situation objectives can be set,

which defines the direction where the organization is heading. Key performance indicators (KPI's) can be integrated with objectives, which make the goals more measurable. Also strict timescale should be included into the objectives.

The next phase after objectives is strategy that answers the question "How do we get there?" and it describes how the objectives will be fulfilled. The strategy gives direction to the subsequent tactics that are the next step. Tactics reveals the details of the strategy and explains how the strategy will be implemented. Action part describes who does what, when and how. It is also the most challenging part of SOSTAC planning framework as often managers forget to reserve enough time and resources for explaining to employees and motivating them to execution. Tactics are series of actions which require management and actions are key steps that are allocated to specific person with a timescale. The final step is control which identifies what is measured, when and how the information will be utilized. The key online metrics are e.g. duration of the visit, number of visitors, enquiries, sales and conversion rates. The responsible persons and frequency of reporting are included into the final step. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 3 & 559- 610.)

In this thesis the SOSTAC Planning framework has been followed and all the steps have been written down for years 2019 -2021, but the actual implementation stage is depended on the Case Firm.

2.3.2 Semi-structured interview and qualitative data analysis

In total of six professionals were interviewed to receive relevant information on the current state of digital marketing and the possible future changes on the field. The information received from the qualitative research has been used while developing the Case Firms digital marketing strategy.

Qualitative research is describing and understanding phenomena rather than trying to make statistics that can be generalized. Qualitative research aims to understanding different actions or theoretically explaining phenomena. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, 98.) In this qualitative research data was collected from marketing professionals with semi-structured open-ended interview that enabled more flexible approach on the questions and the order of questions, but at the same time provided beforehand identified themes that needed to be covered during the interviews. With semi-structured interview the purpose is to gather as much information as possible from the phenomena by interviewing people that have the most relevant information or experience on the subject (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, 85 & 98.)

Interviewed marketing professionals were chosen with purposeful sampling: expert sampling and partly with snowball sampling where more potential experts were received from the recommendations of the first interviewed persons. Expert sampling consist of professionals that has the most information on the researched subject and in snowball sampling the first key persons recommends another person for the interview (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, 99). Expert sampling was chosen as

> "experts tend to agree about the vast majority of their subject area, and also provide virtually the whole explanation of the variability in expert views (they know each other's agreements and disagreements) this provides an in depth investigation of a topic that is qualitatively valid, reliable, and culturally generalizable" (Trotter 2012).

The interviewed experts were chosen with different professional backgrounds in order to receive comprehensive understanding on the matter. Qualitative data analysis was conducted from the emerged data and different themes were identified while coding the data. Research analysis and results are covered on chapter five with overall description on the interviews.

2.3.3 SMART Goal setting

SMART goal setting was originally introduced for business leaders to determine management goals and objectives. SMART comes from the words: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely. The objective needs to be described specifically, be measurable with numbers, be realistically attainable, be relevant for the business and be timely planned with deadlines. SMART Goal setting was chosen to this development work in order to ensure enough specific, measurable, relevant and timely objectives for the digital marketing strategy. (Doran 1981, 35- 36; Niemelä & Salo 2017.)

Specific objectives means that it has been clearly defined and there are answers to questions what, who, where, when and why. Objectives need to be measurable and the results should be presented either in number of pieces (pcs) or percentages (%). The objectives should be realistically attainable or otherwise the process can become overwhelming. Relevant objectives require identifying matters that are most relevant for the business and focusing the processes to the most important sectors. Time schedule will ensure that objectives are met in timely manner and the objectives and time schedule is wise to divide into monthly and daily objectives. With premises objectives it is easier to monitor and control the overall process with metrics. (Kananen 2018, 38- 39.)

In this thesis SMART goal setting method has been used while creating objectives for the Case Firms digital marketing strategy. Chosen objectives and implementation of the method is described in chapter 6.2.

3   LITERATURE REVIEW AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

Theory part discusses on topics in general level and the focus is not in any specific pro-
fessional field or industry. Due to the rapidly changing nature of digital marketing new re-
search material have been included into the theory part. At the same time older research
results and theories have been utilized as a basis for the theory, but those have not been
described in detail.

3.1   Key concepts

In this academic document there are four key concepts related to the concept: digital mar-
keting, business-to-business marketing, marketing strategy and small and medium sized
enterprises (SME's). All of these are part of the final outcome of the academic paper
which is digital marketing strategy for an SME –sized enterprise.

3.1.1   Digital marketing

According to Chaffey & Smith (2017, 13- 14) digital marketing has been described as:

> *"getting closer to customers and understanding them better, adding value to prod-
> ucts, widening distribution channels and boosting sales through running digital mar-
> keting campaigns using digital media channels such as search marketing, online
> advertising and afflitiate marketing" and "It also includes using the web site to facili-
> tate customer leads, sales and managing after-sales services".*

The concept of digital marketing is wide and it covers also different digital channels, such
as websites, online ads, opt-in emails, mobile apps and emerging platforms. Social media
has added several other marketing channels and it has made the interaction between or-
ganizations and customers as dynamic dialogue and constant flow of communication.
Traditionally organizations created the content online, but now also the customers partici-
pate in the brand building, give feedback and express their opinions online. Characteristic
for digital marketing is that it changes rapidly and marketers need to monitor the changes
in core digital platforms in order to maintain competitive advantage. (Chaffey & Smith
2017, preface & 13; Kananen 2018, 26- 29.)

Compared to traditional marketing methods digital marketing has advantages. Digital mar-
keting is more cost-effective, targeting and reaching the right audiences are easier and
there is real time feedback if the marketing tactics are functioning as desired. With right
metrics it is possible to measure how the digital marketing strategy is performing, receive
the statistic while the campaigns are running and make appropriate changes according to

the analytics and received data, which is faster than in traditional methods where the data will be received after the campaigns. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 39 & 606; Giannetto 2014, 41- 43.)

3.1.2   Business-to-Business (B-to-B) marketing

American Marketing Association has defined Business-to-Business (B-to-B or B2B) marketing as an area of advertising and sales of products, services and goods for businesses that either resell them, use them in their own production or to support their own operations (American Marketing Association 2018; Miller & Washington 2016, 15). B-to-B marketing focuses on increasing the customer awareness, sales and supporting customer journey in business environment.

Business-to-Business marketing differentiates from Business-to-Customer (B-to-C). In Business-to-Customer the product or service is intended to ultimate consumer that either will consume the service or product, or it can also mean the buyer or ultimate decision maker on the customer journey (American Marketing Association 2018). The comparison between B-to-B marketing and B-to-C marketing is that very often in B-to-B the supplier-customer relationships last longer and more individuals participate in the decision making process in the organizations (Jussila 2015, 8). In this development project the Case Firm operates in Business-to-Business sector and this needs to be taken into account while creating the digital marketing strategy.

3.1.3   Digital marketing strategy

Digital marketing strategy is the digital marketing plan that describes what will be done, to whom will it be done, why it will be done, how will it be done, when will it be done and what will be left out. Strategy will define how the set objectives will be reached and what kind of tactics are required. Ultimately it will answer to question "How do we get there?". Strategic planning gives organizations direction, sense of being in control, ability to measure the progress and it reduces stress. (Chaffey & Smith 2018, 556- 561; Kananen 2018, 31- 33.)

Digital marketing and social media marketing are part of the overall marketing strategy of the company and the marketing strategy should be in line with the company's business strategy. Organizations business plan guides whole business and marketing strategy should be synchronized with the business strategy. (Kananen 2018, 31- 33.) The same principle has been introduced by Chaffey & Smith (2017, 557):

> *"Although the digital marketing plan addresses customer acquisition and retention using digital tools, the digital plan must support the overall goals and direction given by the overall marketing plan, which in turn, must support the goals and direction given by the overall business plan (which can include plans for growth including business acquisitions, product extensions, product withdrawals, etc.)".*

The most effective digital marketing plans are integrated with offline marketing methods and online channels should support the entire customer journey and buying process with continuous development (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 557.)

3.1.4 Growth searching small and medium sized enterprise

According to The Federation of Finnish Enterprises and Official Statistics of Finland there were 283 563 enterprises in Finland in 2016. Approximately 93,3 % of the enterprises were small with less than 10 employees. Official definitions are that enterprises with less than 10 employees are micro companies, with less than 50 employees are small enterprises and with 50 - 249 employees are medium sized enterprises (The Federation of Finnish Enterprises 2018 b.)

These definitions do not include the future growth objectives of the companies, rather only the current situation. OECD has a recommendation for high-growth enterprises:

> *"All enterprises with average annualized growth greater than 20% per annum, over a three year period should be considered as high-growth enterprises. Growth can be measured by the number of employees or by turnover "* (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development 2018).

In this thesis the Case Firm is small growth searching enterprise. It has not existed for three year period, but otherwise it meets the criteria of high-growth enterprise.

The business management in small and medium sized enterprises (SME's) differentiates from larger and global corporations. Typically in small companies there are entrepreneur and some employees, which results that there are less management layers and there are less communication problems and change resistance on new initiatives. Also SME's advantages are flexibility, adaptability and speed in responding to the changing environment (Pekkola, Saunila & Rantanen 2015).

Small and medium sized enterprises usually have great ability to renewal and answer the changing needs and evolving requirements of customers.

"In turbulent environments, time is lacking; organizations that survive and thrive are those that have mastered the ability to make rapid and effective decisions in the absence of complete information. SMEs, especially, operate in a highly dynamic and turbulent environment. Hence, SMEs have to be innovative and constantly review their processes and practices in order to survive in the market." (Pekkola et al. 2015.)

These characteristics are typical for small and medium sized enterprises.

3.2   Evolving marketing

3.2.1   Marketing history from 4 P's to 4 E's

In 1960's Jerome McCarthy introduced the 4P's of marketing: Product, Price, Place and Promotion and this marketing mix has been widely used, but it has also received criticism. It has been argued that 4P's is suitable only for products, but not for services and for this reason new marketing mixes were created. One commonly known is 7P's where the additional three P's stand for People, Processes and Physical evidence, and all these should be met in order to achieve customer satisfaction. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 54- 55.)

In 2008 Rothery developed the 4E's framework that also covers the aspects of digital world. The 4E's stands for 1) Experience including the experience in online world, 2) Every place meaning that the delivery should be where the customer wants it to be, 3) Exchange with money or credit card for in exchange for product or service and 4) Evangelism meaning that promotion becomes evangelism. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 55.)

Doctor of Technology Päivi Talonen has illustrated the evolvement of marketing from the traditional 4P's of marketing from the 1960's (see picture 2). First in 1990's marketing evolved to 4C's meaning customer need, cost to satisfy, convenience to buy and communication. Currently 4E's are affecting the marketing scene: experience, exchange, every place and evangelism. (Talonen 2018 b). Companies need to understand that customer experience and interaction with customers are essential and it doesn't just happen in the store, but rather everywhere when people are communicating more online and mobiles accompany people everywhere.
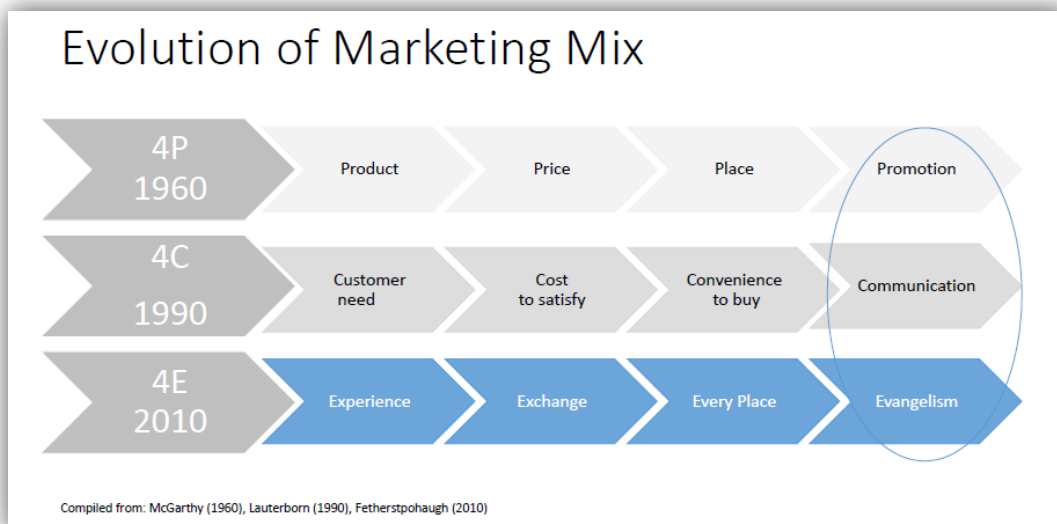
Picture 2. Evolution of marketing mix according to Doctor of Technology Päivi Talonen.

The same changes that affect the business life are also changing the marketing:

> "Companies must invest tremendous amounts of time and energy trying to control how products and services are positioned, sold, and delivered across new channels and new territories" (Giannetto 2014, 18).

3.2.2 Towards human-digital balance

The change in marketing is not only in digital form, but also in the way marketing will be perceived in the future. Some marketing experts say that marketing will no longer be categorized as Business-to-Customer (B-to-C) or Business-to Business (B-to-B) as it all will transform to Human-to-Human (H-to-H) or Person-to-Person (P-to-P) marketing. Individual experience and personalized marketing will become as a center of marketing. (Kramer 2014; Talonen 2018 b.)

Marketing will evolve in more human centric approach by understanding that behind all companies are people. Technology has made marketing less personal with spam emails and robo-calls and by focusing on human approach and with personalized advertisement marketing can become more effective. Aim with human-to-human marketing is to avoid:

> "the wrong message, being sent to the wrong person, through the wrong channel, in the wrong tone and at the wrong time" (Axcell, 2017.)

According to the co-founder and CEO of SingularityU Nordic Laila Pawlak the more technology based we become to more human we need to become (Pawlak L. 2018). In technology surrounded world the customers are longing more human approach in the sales

and customer experiences and for organizations this can be a competitive advantage, also in the Business-to-Business environment. A survey made by McKinsey with Business-to-Business customers demonstrates that customers most desire great digital interactions and a great human experience. There should be a human-digital balance with speed, transparency and expertise. (Angevine, Lun Plotkin & Stanley 2018). This does apply to both digital marketing and digital customer experiences.

Another research made in 2016 studied the influence of emotions in entrepreneur's decision making and according to the results entrepreneurs are significantly affected by feelings and emotions, though there were some differences with male and female emphasis on different feelings (Franco & Sanches 2016). So the affects of emotions and personal feelings can't be dismissed in the business world, even though people are representing companies. Attached is a picture of emotions influencing business-to-business buying and it demonstrates how personal value is more important to B-to-B buyer than pure organizational value that is often emphasized (Picture 3) (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 173).

HOW EMOTION INFLUENCES B2B BUYING

Business Value vs Personal Value

48% of B2B customers say they have wanted to buy a new solution but haven't spoken up for fear of risks

74% of B2B buyers see a business value

But just **14%** of B2B buyers perceive a real difference in B2B supplier offerings

Only **31%** of prospective customers think B2B brands provide a personal value

2x Personal value has 2X as much impact as business value does

68% of buyers who see a personal value will pay a higher price for a service

Only **8.5%** of buyers who see NO personal value will pay a higher price for a product

71% of buyers who see personal value will purchase a product

In B2B buying, emotions matter even more than logic and reason.

Picture 3. How emotions influence B-to-B buying (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 173).

In enterprises there are most likely several people that the advertisement campaign should reach and all these people may prefer different marketing channels. It will become more difficult to recognize the touch points in customer journey and effectively reach all the right decisions makers. Also clarifying where, how and by whom decisions are made is critical for successful marketing and selling. By sending the marketing message to right person at the right time can result to better sales. (Talonen 2018 b.)

According to McKinseys research:

> "50-80% of new customers are acquired through personalized marketing messages" (Buck, Cvetanovski, Harper & Timelin 2017).

These personalized marketing messages are possible to achieve with new digital analytic tools and effective use of data. Advanced analytics systems can help manage the complex personalization process for tailored marketing material and even predict the customer's future demands.

> "Getting personalization right and scaling it across the organization can reduce acquisition costs by as much as 50 percent, lift revenues by 5 to 15 percent, and increase the efficiency of marketing spend by 10 to 30 percent" (Buck et al. 2017).

3.3 Digital marketing

3.3.1 Digital marketing in Finland in 2018

Statista (statistics, market research and business intelligence portal) publish global figures on social media networks and user amounts. According to the latest publication on July 2018 the most common social media platforms worldwide are Facebook, Youtube and Whatsapp (picture 4). (Statista 2018.)

In Finland the popularity of the social media networks are similar to global figures, Facebook being the ultimate leader with 2,3 million active daily users. Increase in the amount of smart phone users affects also to the number of Facebook mobile users in Finland: most of the Finnish Facebook users visit Facebook with mobile as there are 2,6 million active mobile user in a month and 2,1 million active daily users. (Valtari 2018.)

Most popular social networks worldwide as of July 2018, ranked by number of active users (in millions)

Network	Users (millions)
Facebook	2 196
YouTube	1 900
WhatsApp	1 500
Facebook Messenger	1 300
WeChat	1 040
Instagram	1 000
QQ	806
QZone	563
Doujin / Tik Tok	500
Sina Weibo	411
Twitter	336
Reddit	330
Baidu Tieba*	300
Skype*	300
LinkedIn**	294
Viber*	260
Snapchat**	255
LINE	203
Pinterest	200
Telegram*	200

Number of active users in millions

Sources
We Are Social; Kepios; SimilarWeb; TechCrunch; Worldwide; We Are Social; SimilarWeb; TechCrunch; Apptopia; Apptopia; Fortune
© Statista 2018

Additional Information:
Worldwide; We Are Social; SimilarWeb; TechCrunch; Apptopia; Fortune; Fortune; as of July 18, 2018; social networks and messenger/chat app/voip included

statista

Picture 4. Social media users worldwide in July 2018 (Statista 2018).

Research agency Kantar TNS has combined its own and IAB Finland's research results and presents that on the second quarterly of year 2018 295 million euros were used for marketing purposes, which is 3 % more than in year 2017 at the same time. The increase focuses on digital marketing methods while at the same time investments in traditional printed media decreased. Compared to previous year 2017, social media marketing increased 52 % and search engine advertising increased 24 % (Kantar TNS 2018).

Finnish enterprises are starting to take advantage on the cost-effective digital marketing that covers wider audiences and enables more personalized advertising for prospects.

While at the same time another study made by OMD Finland and ToinenPHD indicates that Finnish B-to-B enterprises are interested on developing digital marketing, but lack of competence, organizational structures and operational working methods hinders the marketing development in organizations and it doesn't meet the speed needed in global competition. The study also presented that Finnish enterprises focus mostly to the end of the customer journey by measuring sales and customer satisfaction, but dismiss the importance of analytical monitoring of marketing tactics in the beginning of customer journey and how these marketing tactics can affect the customers buying decision. (OMD Finland & ToinenPHD 2018).

3.3.2 Digital customer experience

Online environment has given more control and empowerment to the customers:

> *"Instead of a handful of powerful marketers recommending, and often determining, what is in and what is out – there is now a mobilized customer, generating their own particular recommendations and creating many smaller nice demands."* (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 163.)

Digital customers have higher expectations in terms of service, convenience, speed of delivery, competitive prices and choices. Online customers demand and expect being in charge, safe and secure. They expect fast service and delivery or otherwise they quickly abandon the website and search the service elsewhere. The problem with high expectations are that even if the service takes the same time as in retail store it might not be enough, when online customers expectations are higher e.g. in terms of price offers and wider choices. (Chaffey &Smith 2017, 178.)

Typical online customer does not like to wait: they expect immediate information and fast page downloads. According to study made by Akamai (2017):

> *"53 percent of mobile site visitors will leave a page that takes longer than three seconds to load"* and *"A 100-millisecond delay in website load time can hurt conversion rates by 7 percent".*

Also the same study presented that two-second delay in web page load time increased the bounce (leave quickly) rates by 103 percent and the bounce rates were highest for mobile phone shoppers. Half of the consumers prefer to browse products and services with their mobile phones, but only one in five completed the purchase with their smart phones. (Chaffey &Smith 2017, 178; Akamai 2017.)

Previous study identified that 79 % of customers who were dissatisfied with the website won't return to the site to buy again. There was correlation also with online and offline experience:

> "27 percent are less likely to buy from the same site's physical store, suggesting that the impact of a bad online experience will reach beyond the web and can result in lost store sales". (Akamai 2009.)

By optimizing webpage load times and performance organizations can directly affect to customer experience and increase conversion rates, sales and revenue.

> "For some companies, this increase in conversion rates is the difference between survival and failure" (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 178).

Talonen also represents that 70 % of customer are making the decision to buy before they even meet the sales person (Talonen 2018 b). The same results are shown in Forrester's report where 60 % of Business-to-Business customers do not wish to interact with sales representatives as primary information source and 62 % say they can create a selection criteria or a vendor list based only on digital sources (Davis 2018). Andersen, Archacki, De Bellefonds and Ratajczak from Boston Consulting Group are representing same approach in their article: In many cases customers do not want to deal with salespersons until it is time to purchase the product. These customers instead:

> "rely on digital resources - such as suppliers' and third-party websites, videos, buyer reviews, blogs, and social media. And they increasingly use mobile phones to get that information, particularly through search and social media. Half of all customers today expect a supplier's website to be a helpful channel, and more than one-third expect the site to be their most helpful channel." (Andersen, Archacki, De Bellefonds and Ratajczak 2017.)

This will encourage also small and medium sized businesses to focus more on their digital marketing and make their content more customer-oriented. In general the customer journey has developed from linear process to omni-channel interactions between the buyer and the business. The customer is searching information in multiple and multidimensional channels often simultaneously and in real time, and this enforces the businesses to rapidly develop online and offline sales channels that deliver seamless brand and shopping experience. In omni-channel environment the customer utilizes different channels (online, mobile devices and physical store) simultaneously and the customer sees this as seamless service of a brand instead of performance of different channels. As conclusion the organizations need to invest on the holistic customer experience in all the channels in

order to support the customer in their buying process. (Kaczorowska- Spychalska 2017, 96- 97 & 104- 105.)

3.3.3   Online presence and mobiles

Due to the digitalization people have access to enormous amount of data and for businesses it comes increasingly difficult to differentiate and stand out from the extent amount of information overflow. Customer experience is becoming one of the easiest ways to increase competitiveness and differentiation among several similar business providers. (Filenius 2015, 17).

According to Filenius one of the most typical problems with multichannel digital marketing is to be easily found. In the beginning customer searches for business providers and information from the Internet, and if the company doesn't appear on the first search engines result page, they most likely will not be found by the customer (Filenius 2015, 52 & 85). Customers use several different platforms while searching information and comparing products and services before being convinced and contacting the service provider (Keronen & Tanni, 2017). If the company is not found online it basically means that it does not exist for the customers and if the customer does not know about the service there will be no sales.

In 2016 there were 30 million searches made daily in Finland and most of these searches were made with Google (Karismo 2016; Juvonen 2016; Fonecta 2018). Another globally important search engine is Youtube with videos. By the year 2021 approximately 82 % of all consumer Internet traffic will be video content. People adapt quickly to the change, but for organizations the change is slower. (Cisco 2017; Van Roest, Perry & Järvinen 2018). In order to guarantee online visibility organizations should consider providing video content next to text and images, and follow the trends how customers search for information. Also according to research and advisory company Gartner's study voice and visual search will increase and companies that redesign their websites to support these new search methods will increase their digital commerce revenue by 30 % by 2021. Voice-driven search queries will increase due to the increased number of smart phones and the consumer's interest to use voice search as dominant search mode with mobiles. (Pemberton 2018.)

Google has made "Consumer Barometer Study 2017 – The Year of the Mobility Majority" –research wish indicates that mobile is the first option consumer's use for searching information. People are rather using their easily accessible mobiles instead of desktop computers.

"In all markets people turn to mobile to access knowledge, social interaction and en-tertainment, in that order - global phenomena, albeit with local nuances." (Google 2017).

For organization it is critical to be easily found from the Internet and make sure their webpages function efficiently with mobiles. Also Google is preferring websites that serve mobile users according their mobile-first indexing that aims to help their mobile users easier to find information they are looking for. (Google 2018 b.)

According to Official Statistic Finland's research 88 % of 16 – 89 year old Finnish people used Internet in 2017 and the most popular way to connect online is through smart phone that is owned by 77 % of Finnish population. The amount of Finnish people using smart phone for Internet use has increased to 68 % in 2017 and according to the study people use Internet a lot and multiple times during the day. (Official Statistic Finland 2017 a.)

This is so called "digital transformation" that changes the business world. It means that more business are transferring to Internet and customer's are searching information, buying products independently online and evaluating the customer service through the digital channels they connect with the organization. (Hannula 2016, 164.) This has been noticed in the enterprises as according to Official Statistics Finland 2017 study: Finnish enterprises use social media extensively and it has increased from 38 % in 2013 to 63 % in 2017. Social media has been used mainly as recruitment channel, to improve the enterprise's image or to market products (Official Statistic Finland 2017 b.) Webpage presence may not be enough for enterprises and the focus has shifted on social media channels in order to keep up in the competitive markets.

3.4   Measuring digital marketing

Measuring digital marketing requires valid and reliable indicators that are in line with the digital marketing strategy. Digital marketing strategy's objectives determine the right metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) that are needed to measure the effectiveness of digital marketing. Without proper and clear objectives it is difficult to measure the return or effectiveness of marketing actions. (Florès 2014, 2 & 8.)

The chosen measurements should be decided in advance before the marketing campaigns begin and it is important that the chosen measures are suitable for the purpose. Measuring itself is not the reason for having KPI's, but rather that the KPI's define and give feedback on the organizations own processes and the ability alter, improve and optimize these processes. This requires analyzing the data and executing changes according to the data. Example with right metrics it is possible identify the right channels that gener-

ate most warm leads that eventually turn to paying customers and increases the revenue streams.

Measuring requires also monitoring and discipline to success, and you cannot manage what you cannot measure. With right metrics the organization receives data in real time if the marketing tactics are effective and generates leads or if changes and development is needed. With continuous testing and monitoring it is possible to ensure that the marketing tactics are not done for nothing and without actual effect on revenue growth. (Florès 2014, 8- 9 & 51.)

In general measuring in digital environment has been understood to be easy, but in fact it is complex, difficult to implement and often imperfect. It is challenging to allocate received marketing and sales leads to one exact marketing action and the results from marketing tactics can be visible after several months or even years. It is easy to count in online surrounding, but it is not equivalent to measuring. (Florès 2014, 14- 15; Miller 2013.) It is easy to count e.g. the number of visitors and visits, time spent, the number of impressions etc, but it is much harder to measure, which means:

> *"establishing clear marketing objectives, identifying the most appropriate metrics, assessing the achievement of these objectives, and setting up the most pertinent measurement system" (Florès 2014, 14- 15; Miller 2013).*

It requires measuring, analyzing and making changes according the data in order to increase the effectiveness of the marketing campaign. Though, the measuring might be challenging, but even an estimation of the results can help to direct the actions. (Florès 2014, 14- 15; Miller 2013.)

3.4.1 Quantitative and qualitative metrics

There are two kinds of metrics: quantitative and qualitative metrics. Quantitative metrics count e.g. the total audience of the campaign, number of clicks generated or number of products sold. Qualitative metrics in the other hand are more complex to measure, such as changing the perception of brand image or indirect measurements effects of the campaign. (Florès 2014, 47- 49.)

One of the most common marketing metrics is marketing ROI (marketing return on investment), which means how much capital has been invested to marketing and how much profit is received. MROI describes the marketing actions efficiency in percentages. (Powermarkkinointi Oy 2018 b.)

Typical KPI's for web analytics, such as Google Analytics, are number of unique visitors, number of visits, number of page views, number of visitors, share of first and repeat visitors, average duration of visit, number of visits per visitor, average number of page views per visit, most visited pages, bounce rate, click-through-rate and conversion rate(s). With media and advertising there are also number of impressions, coverage and affinity and interaction indicators, such as clicks and click-through-rate. Qualitative KPI's can be for example advertising memory, advertising recognition, attribution, message association, purchasing intent and approval rate of the advertisement. Notable is that the various metrics allow to evaluate the effectiveness of digital marketing, but the ideal measurement standards are still to be defined and the data received from KPI's should be handled with small caution as different measurement tools can give different numbers. (Florès 2014, 55- 87.)

3.4.2   Key performance indicator pyramid

Attached is picture of the KPI Pyramid (picture 5) where the return on investment ROI is at the top with other KPIs for primary objectives. The secondary objectives provide material for managerial reports and in the lowest are the user objectives with their distinctive KPIs. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 575.)
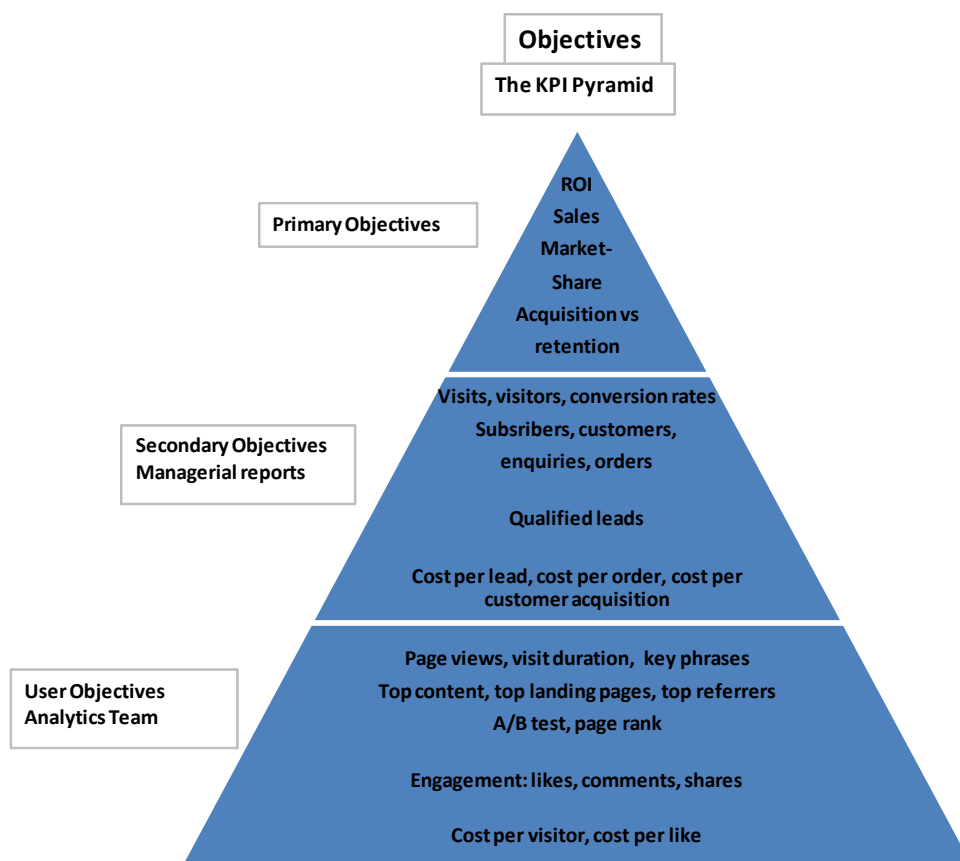
Picture 5. The KPI Pyramid by Pulizzi and Smith (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 575).

When the KPI Pyramid is turned upside down it will create a sales funnel. The sales funnel demonstrates what it requires to measure in the first level e.g. site visits and number of visitors, after it is possible to see the engagement rate of the customer e.g. with bounce rates and shares, and finally closer to end of sales funnel are the actual requests and sales (see picture 6). (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 576.)
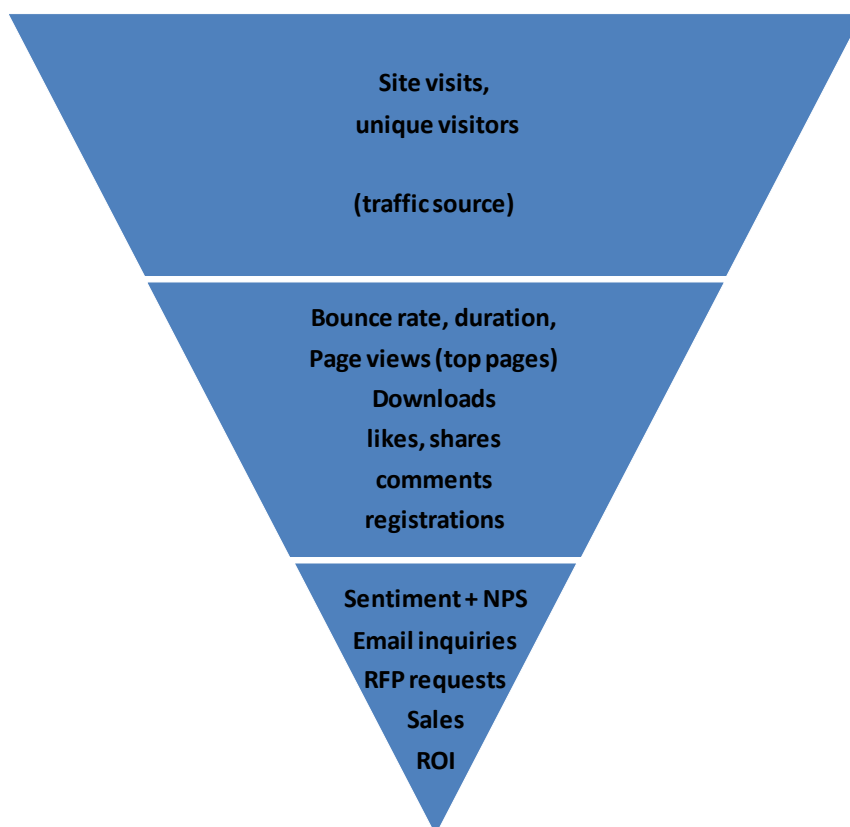
Picture 6. The KPI Pyramid turned over as sales funnel (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 576).

With right metrics it is possible to monitor how the marketing campaigns are working and follow how the customers are proceeding in the sales funnel. Though, leading marketing with data has also challenges. The data received is based on the already done marketing actions and it is effective while observing and optimizing existing marketing tactics. The ability to utilize data turns to challenging, if the organization wishes to do something completely new and if the markets and customer journeys change and develop. Gathered data does not encourage to innovation and that is something that organizations should keep in mind. By combining both, leading with data and being creative can ultimately lead to best marketing tactics. (Mero 2018.)

4   DIGITAL MARKETING METHODS

In this chapter are presented the most commonly used digital marketing methods and ways to increase customer awareness, brand visibility and attracting prospects. There is a short description of each marketing action in order to create a basic understanding of each marketing method.

4.1   Website

For customer acquisition online presence is one of the most important channels. Customers seek information online and make buying decisions based on the information available in different digital channels. Website is the center of digital marketing tactics and the other channels, such as social media channels, should direct the customer to the website for more information. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 368.)

Google, The Federation of Finnish Enterprises and Vainu.io has made a research how enterprises utilize websites on customer acquisition. According to a research one third of the Finnish enterprises didn't have a website and that an interactive website has direct impact on the enterprise growth. The study presents that Finnish small and medium sized enterprises that have website and advertise online or utilize interactive services, grew 8 % faster than enterprises that didn't have a website. (The Federation of Finnish Enterprises 2018 a.) Interactive website has a significant impact on the success and growth of small and medium sized enterprises. With example search engine optimization, page design and by improving user experience an organization can multiply the effectiveness and usefulness of their website (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 333- 336).

4.2   Search engine optimization (SEO)

Search engine optimization (SEO) is a process to increase the websites online visibility and build traffic to the website.

> SEO *"involves achieving the highest position or ranking practical in the natural or organic listings on the search engine results pages after a specific combination of keywords (or keyphrases) has been typed in". (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 369.)*

Usually the organic search results appear after the paid advertisement in the results pages. The more frequently a website or webpage appears in the search results, the more visitors it attracts and the visitors can then be converted as paying customers. Competition to appear on the first space in the search engine results page (SERP) is high. Major search engines, such as Google, Bing and Yahoo, have wide range of own algorithms and

quality factors that rank webpages and their visibility on the search results pages is based on how relevant the information is for the user. Marketers prefer SEO as there is less need to invest on paid advertisements and it provides real-time insight about customer behavior and results, which in traditional marketing methods are time-consuming and less agile. SEO should be understood as continuous improvement process as the ranking algorithms and quality factors change and evolve. Also the landing pages, website user experience and converting effectiveness should be included into the development process as there is no point to attract traffic to a website that is not converting visitors as customers. (Bhandari & Bansal 2018, 23- 36; Chaffey & Smith 2017, 368- 369.)

4.3   Search engine marketing (SEM)

Search engine marketing (SEM) are the advertisements that appear first on the search result page and depending on the search engine there are own bid management services available to increase the visibility of the advertisement. With adverts the organization buys traffic to their website with specific keywords and leads the visitor to a landing page which has actions that the visitors are guided to perform. Google is one of the dominant search engines in Finland and the name of the advertising program is Google Ads. There is also special Google's Key word planner tool to help the users to find right customers with right keywords. (Google 2018 a; Chaffey & Smith 2017, 384).

According to Google's support the adverts that appear on the first page or in the first research results receive the most clicks than adverts that appear on the other research pages. Customers rarely click to the second or further research pages, so for this reason it is important for organizations to appear on the first page and be easily and conveniently findable for the customers. (Google 2018 a.)

4.4   Social media advertising

> *"Social media marketing is a form of internet marketing that involves creating and sharing content on social media networks in order to achieve your marketing and branding goals" (WordStream 2018).*

The content can be text, images, videos and other kind of content that attracts audience's attention and encourages engagement and reactions. Company's content can be either organic, which is more difficult to receive, or paid social media advertising. (WordStream 2018.)

Social media advertising utilizes social media networks, such as Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn, for marketing purposes. By monitoring, facilitating and encouraging social inter-

actions, participation and sharing in digital channels an advertiser aims to enhance customer awareness and positive engagement to attain sales and commercial value. Characteristic for social media advertising is to encourage audience participation and user-generated content. (American Marketing Association 2018; Chaffey & Smith 2017, 16 & 644.)

At the same time social media marketing has created a new work position inside the companies: Social customer care that responds to customer's posts and reactions in timely manner. Social media marketing can be used for achieving marketing objectives, but it can be also understood as social customer relationship management. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 225- 226)

Social media marketing has created different way to reach potential customers and this is equally important for bigger and smaller companies. In fact, it offers valuable way for smaller companies to affordably advertise their products and increase customer awareness of the company. With social media channels, company is able to affordably increase customer awareness, share information on products, services and offers and find new potential customers. (Leino 2012, 10).

4.5   Email marketing

Email marketing is marketing through email and a way to deliver targeted marketing messages to potential or existing customers. Email marketing is a marketing tactic that is commonly used as a prospect conversion and customer retention tool. The marketing emails are send to prospects and customers that have given permission and effective email campaigns require strategy for content and sending frequency. (American Marketing Association 2018; Chaffey & Smith 2017, 16 & 484.)

The benefits of email marketing are relatively low cost, direct response medium encourages immediate action, faster campaign deployment, ease of personalization, options for testing and integration possibilities. Though, excellent email marketing program requires effective outbound email campaigns and managing inbound emails to ensure customer satisfaction, and in this marketing automation systems can be helpful. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 484.)

4.6   Display advertising

Paid advertising, also known as display advertising, consist of any type of paid-for ads, such as banner ads, Pay Per Click ads, search ads, promoted posts and promoted tweets. Display advertising is similar to conventional ads. There are texts and images with

a link to the organizations webpage and the visitor will see the advertisement after typing a specific search phrase to a search engine. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 384).

There are two characteristics with pay per clicks (PPC): 1) the advertiser pays only when the customer clicks the advertisement and is directed to the advertiser's website and 2) pay per click advertising is highly targeted. The advertisement is shown to the visitor only when a specific key word phrase is typed and then the user is already interested on the topic and searching for more information. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 384).

4.7 Inbound marketing

The objective of inbound marketing is to create, distribute and promote right kind of content that attracts the right people at the right time. In order to success in inbound marketing the advertiser needs to create content that is relevant and helpful to their customers, attract them to the organizations website and convert the visitors as paying customers. Inbound is also a cost effective marketing method as the distribution channels are free. (Hawlk 2018.)

In order to understand the concept of inbound marketing there needs to be comprehension on the differences of inbound and outbound marketing. Traditional marketing methods, such as cold calling, direct mail, paid advertisement, TV, radio, magazines and trade shows, are so called outbound marketing methods. In outbound marketing, also called as push media, the organization delivers advertisements to the prospects in channels they are expected to be and the customer is not able to avoid the marketing. The advertisement is interrupting someone to gain their attention. Usually there is little interaction with the customers and today's consumers do not wish to be the "victims" of one-way advertising. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 35: Kananen 2018, 17.)

In inbound marketing, also called as pull marketing, the customer is voluntarily seeking for information and is willing to receive more details on the product or service. For organizations it is important to be present online and have a good visibility in search engines as it is where the customer first seeks the information. Advertisement is delivered to the customer when it is most meaningful in the customer journey and the compelling content is answering to the customer's questions and needs. Inbound marketing methods are e.g. webpages, search engines, other social media platforms, forums, webinars and blogs. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 35: Kananen 2018, 17.)

The challenge in inbound marketing is that the organization does not have as much control over the marketing process as what they would have in traditional communication. The new interaction based customer-oriented environment is a challenge for organizations,

because it is available for everyone, it functions in real time, it is uncontrollable and un-predictable, and it includes anonymous audience. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 35: Kananen 2018, 17.) Outbound and inbound marketing both have their pros and cons, and best marketing strategies are able to combine both methods in a way that serves the organiza-tion and its marketing purposes best.

4.8   Customer reference marketing

In customer reference marketing enterprise utilize existing or previous customer relation-ship as reference to attract new customers. With customer reference marketing an organi-zation can affect to customer acquisition, reputation building and value creation potential by providing evidence on organizations ability to deliver estimated value. (Terho & Jalkala 2017, 2- 3 & 6.)

An active deployment of customer reference marketing is important especially when sell-ing complex services and higher-value offerings in contexts of high uncertainty. Reference marketing can add credibility and concreteness to complex offerings and demonstrate the functionality of new technologies. Customer reference marketing tactics in marketing and sales enhance the enterprises competitiveness and increases selling performance. (Terho & Jalkala 2017, 5 & 31- 35.)

4.9   Mobile advertising

Mobile marketing is rapidly growing marketing channel that offers a new way to approach customers.

> *"Mobile marketing means using interactive wireless media to provide clients with personal information with precise profiling using geo-location, time, and often asso-ciated with their interests, sex or other attributes, promoting goods, services and ideas, thus, also generating added value for all the process participants"* (Lukowski 2017, 136 & 152).

There is wide range of marketing tactics that can be performed with mobile marketing, such as text messages, quick response codes, mobile applications, mobile sites, mobile site and application advertising, location based advertising, social network-based advertis-ing and CRM. The concept mobile includes all mobile devices from smart phones to tab-lets. (American Marketing Association 2018; Chaffey & Smith 2017, 353.)

4.10 Marketing automation

Marketing automation is the use of software that enables to execute marketing activities more efficiently and automate marketing processes. With marketing automation organizations are able to streamline, automate and measure marketing tactics to more efficient workflow and revenue growth. These marketing processes, such as customer segmentation and customer data integration, would otherwise have been done manually, but with marketing automation the processes are performed more efficiently and time and human resources are saved. (Todor 2016; Marketo 2018.)

Marketing automation systems provides tools for increasing visitor amounts, generating leads, nurturing leads and overall managing marketing. More prospects and visitors are attracted with inbound marketing methods for which the marketing automation systems provide tools, such as blog platform, search engine optimization and social media sharing and monitoring tool. For lead generation there are usually call to action –buttons, ability create landing pages and fill in –forms. Leads are nurtured with lead management that enables integrated contact database, creating segmented lists and score leads for sales people to contact the most qualified leads. With marketing automation organization is able to build targeted lists, automate email campaigns and enhance customer database. For management the marketing automation systems provide comprehensive analytics and campaign monitoring for gaining insight which marketing assets are performing best. (Hubspot 2018; Powermarkkinointi 2018 a.)

The marketing automations objective is to provide relevant information for customers on the right moment of the customer journey in order to lead the prospect from awareness to purchase. First the customer is attracted to the website and make hoped actions, which are called as conversion, and at the same time are gathered example contact details from the customer. With remarketing the customer is lead back to the website and these visitors are then converted as potential customers. When the customer has made the hoped conversions it will be marked as warm lead according company's own lead scoring criteria and a sales person is notified when the prospect is warm enough for contacting. At this point the customer has expressed interest towards certain products and services and the selling process is shorter than example in cold calls. With marketing automation software it is possible to see all these customer contact points on one page in chronological order. (Hubspot 2018.)

There are various service providers for marketing automation with different features and pricing. The advantages for utilizing marketing automation are decreased time spend for selling by sales department, attaining revenue plan, improved customer experience, in-

crease on lead generation, increase on conversions, more targeted marketing messages and measurable objectives. (Marketo 2018; Koodiviidakko 2017.)

5   EXPERTS INTERVIEWS ON DIGITAL MARKETING

In order to receive coherent, relevant and timely information on rapidly changing digital marketing and the near future of the field in total of six marketing experts were interviewed with semi-structured and open-ended interview. The purpose of the thesis was to develop the Case Firms digital marketing and the CEO of the Case Firm requested to have professional's opinions as part of the development process. The aim of the qualitative research was to receive relevant information to guide the digital marketing development project with future oriented perspective.

The qualitative research aim was to receive answers for the extra research questions of the thesis and give a foundation for the development of the Case Firms digital marketing. The extra research questions were:

- How will digital marketing change in the near future according to marketing professionals?
- What recommendations there are for creating successful digital marketing strategy?
- How to find the right channels to reach organizations potential and existing customers?

5.1   Description of the marketing professionals

The professionals were chosen with expert sampling and partly with snowball sampling. The experts chosen as primary data source were selected based on their professional expertise, experience on digital marketing and successfulness as marketing pioneers in Finland and abroad.

The chosen professionals have long working history in marketing varying from 10 years to over 30 years of experience, and they were chosen with various backgrounds in order to receive comprehensive understanding on digital marketing. The interviewed experts were Riikka-Maria Lemminki Managing Director of the Association of Finnish Advertisers and a Member of the Executive Committee of World Federation of Advertiser, Samuli Hokkanen Strategy Director of Crasman Oy, Tomi Kaitarinne Managing Director of Kuuki Marketing Lab Oy, Pasi Lankinen Director of Partnership Strategy of City Football Marketing and former Head of Business Intelligence in FC Barcelona, Päivi Talonen Doctor of Technology and Minna Komulainen Marketing Manager, Doctor of Technology and author, who has published a book about digital marketing (see table 1). All of the interviewed marketing professionals gave permission to be mentioned in the thesis work.

Table 1. Interviewed marketing professionals.

Interviewed marketing professionals		
Name	**Title**	**Organisation**
Riikka-Maria Lemminki	Managing director, Member of Executive	Association of Finnish Advertisers, World Federation of Advertisers
Samuli Hokkanen	Strategy Director	Crasman Oy
Tomi Kaitarinne	Managing Director	Kuuki Marketing Lab Oy
Pasi Lankinen	Director of Partnership Strategy	City Football Marketing
Minna Komulainen	Marketing Manager, Doctor of Technology	Mainostoimisto Kaista Design
Päivi Talonen	Doctor of Technology	Previous: Kemppi Oy

In the following chapters the interviewed marketing professionals has been presented in anonymous form. The interviewed professionals were given random numbers and the numbers are not in chronological order. This method was chosen as some of the interviewed professionals are possible to identify based on their work title. Also by naming the interviewed professionals has been affected to the research validity: the chosen interviewed professionals have been carefully chosen and they have proven long careers in digital marketing.

5.2   Data gathering and implementation

Questions for the semi-structured interviews were made during June 2018 after discussions with the Case Firms representatives. Draft of the questions was approved by the CEO of the Case Firm before first interview. The lists of the questions were both in Finnish and in English and these can be found as appendice in the end of this thesis (Appendix 1 and 2).

The questions had themes and pre-made questions and the interviews were not strictly tight to the questions, but they rather covered all the themes in all the interviews. The themes were background questions about the interviewed professional, digital marketing in business-to-business environment, recommendations while creating digital marketing strategy and trends and changes in the near future of digital marketing (see table 2).

Table 2. Questions themes.

Themes
1) Background questions
2) Digital marketing in B-to-B environment
3) Recommendations for creating dig. marketing strategy
4) Trends and changes in dig. marketing in near future

Background questions of the interviewed professionals aimed to gather and represent the interviewed persons proficiency and experience in the field of marketing. Theme about digital marketing in business-to-business environment aimed to gather characteristics of digital marketing in business environment and distinguish if there were differences to business-to-customer environment. The purpose in theme on recommendations for creating digital marketing strategy aimed to gather insight on where to start building a digital marketing strategy, what are important factors that need be considered and what recommendations there are in general for marketing strategy formation. With the theme of trends and future changes in digital marketing the purpose was to identify and predict new formats for content and what will affect digital marketing in near future that should be taken into consideration while creating digital marketing strategy for several years.

Interviews were conducted with semi-structured expert interviews during July 2018 - October 2018. The first key professionals were contacted in the end of June and first interview was held in July 2018. There were in total of six interviews that were conducted face-to-face or through Skype call and each interview took 1 hour to 1 hour 30 minutes to complete. All the interviews were recorded and notes were taken to guarantee better coding. Recordings were coded after the interviews to ensure that all the significant answers were stored and analyzed. Depending on the interviews there were 7 – 13 pages of coded text from the interviews. The interviewed professionals answered openly to all the pre-made questions and also for the extra questions that emerged during the interview, and they openly provided their expertise and knowledge for the use of the thesis.

5.3 Data analysis

Data analysis method was chosen to be qualitative data analysis. The purpose of qualitative data analysis is to separate, identify similarities and differences and conduct data into understandable form. The aim is to clarify the emerged data and make findings applicable from texts or other material transformed to written form, example in this case the interviews. With qualitative data analysis the researcher capsulate description of the phenomena and connects it with previous research material and literature. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, 104.)

After data collection the interview transcripts, recordings and self-made notes were gathered together for coding. Every interview was separately studied and the answers were organized to similar categories in one document. These categories were then labeled as themes and analyzed in order to identify patterns and similarities. The emerged data provided similarities, but also various different aspects for digital marketing, which was pre-

dictable as the interviewed experts had their own expertise in different areas of digital marketing.

5.4   Results

5.4.1   Digital marketing is a strategic decision

The semi-structured interviews reinforced the fact that digital marketing has rapidly changing nature. In several answers the respondents identified digital marketing changing quickly and suddenly, printed material being quickly out-of-date and digital marketing strategy should be revisited and updated in every three months. Marketing is requiring more continuous presence on the digital channels and being present there, where the customers naturally spend their time.

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<u>Digital marketing is a strategic decision</u>

- The sector develops rapidly
  - ➔ Digital marketing strategy should be revisited every 3 months
- Marketing is not a separate function
  - ➔ Sales and marketing should be combined
- Leadership commitment is crucial

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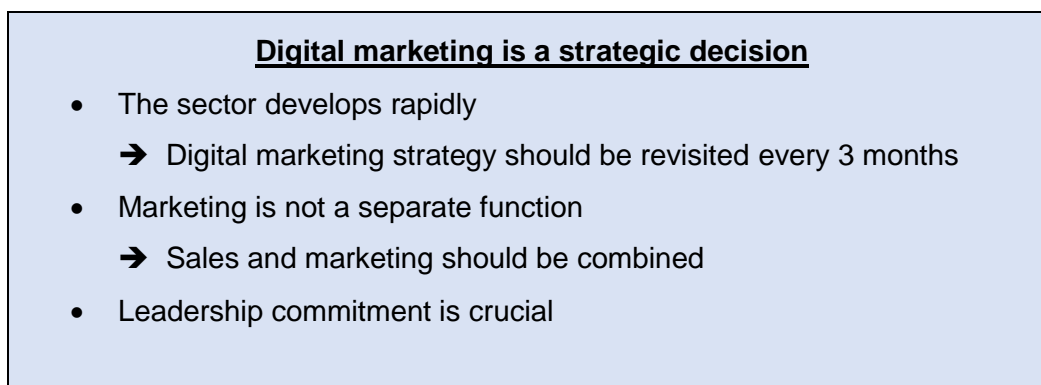
Picture 7. Digital marketing is a strategic decision that requires leadership involvement according to marketing professionals.

According to the respondents marketing is no longer a separate function in the organization and it requires involvement of the management. Marketing affects several layers and departments in organization, such as sales, product development, product management and IT department. This creates new kind of demand for the organization to reorganize the functions and that is achieved with change in the mindsets. Marketing should be seen as part of the whole business and as part of the digital customer experience, and these should be taken into consideration while creating business strategy.

Three of the respondents recommended that sales and marketing should be united as close to each other as possible and there should be shared objectives. The motive behind combining sales and marketing can be explained with data that is received from the programs and how the work of sales department can be made easier by utilizing marketing methods. According to respondent four this can be seen example by receiving more warm
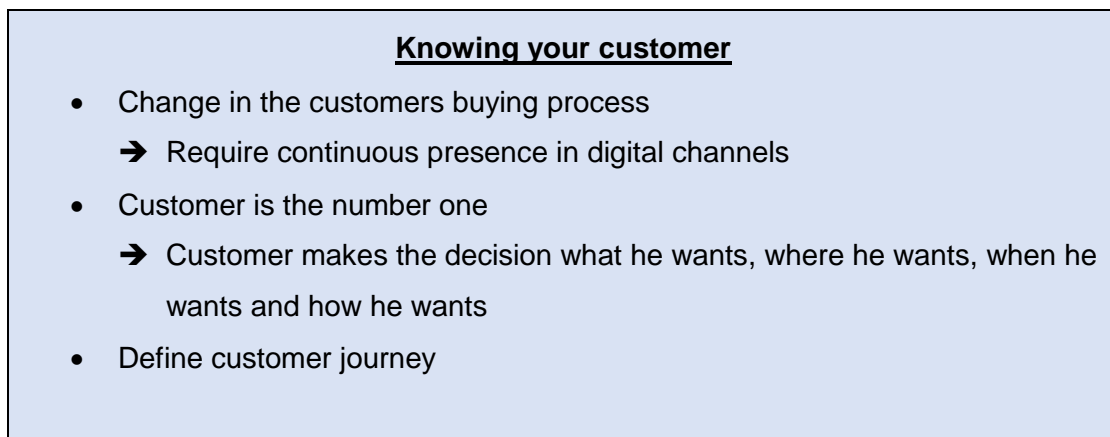
leads and after successful marketing there is less need for cold calls. Respondent one has similar view that with marketing automation the sales funnel can be shortened and the sales person's success rate increases when they are directly connected to right prospects that are already interested on the products or services. According to respondent two marketing results should also be measured with sales figures as sales and marketing functions are close to each other and there may be need to consider how much of the customer support and sales can be done online and will it decrease or change the need of employees.

Next to marketing being as a strategic decision an emphasis was on leadership commitment and participation. Marketing is not only for marketing department, but the experts, CEO's and executive team's participation is required, example while creating thought leadership for a company in their specialized field. Respondent one referred to study results of Edelman Trust Barometer which identifies that 42 % of the respondents have lost trust in businesses. Instead more than 60 % of people trust on technical and academic experts and 54 % trust on people like me (Edelman 2018.) These aspects will give guidance who is the right person to talk about the service or product in the digital channels such as in Facebook and in LinkedIn.

5.4.2 Know your customer

Identifying and knowing the organizations customers were the primary step that all the respondents represented while starting to create a marketing strategy. According to the respondents defining customer journey and identifying key customer profiles dictates to right marketing channels, style of content and engaging marketing messages. There is no one and identical solution that would fit to all organizations, but rather the right marketing tactics can be found by understanding organizations clientele; who they are and what online channels they prefer.

According to respondent one, four and six there is a change in the customer behavior and customer journey: customers search information individually online without the help of the sales people. Respondent six expressed that customer's search more information before buying decision and organizations need to be present and easily findable online or the competitor will attract the customers. Interviewee number four presented that continuous presence in digital channels is necessity in digital era and the organization should be present in channels where the customers naturally spend their time. Respondent one verified this aspect by demonstrating that over 90 % consumers will do the buying decision before contacting the sales organization or sales person.

> **Knowing your customer**
> - Change in the customers buying process
>   - ➔ Require continuous presence in digital channels
> - Customer is the number one
>   - ➔ Customer makes the decision what he wants, where he wants, when he wants and how he wants
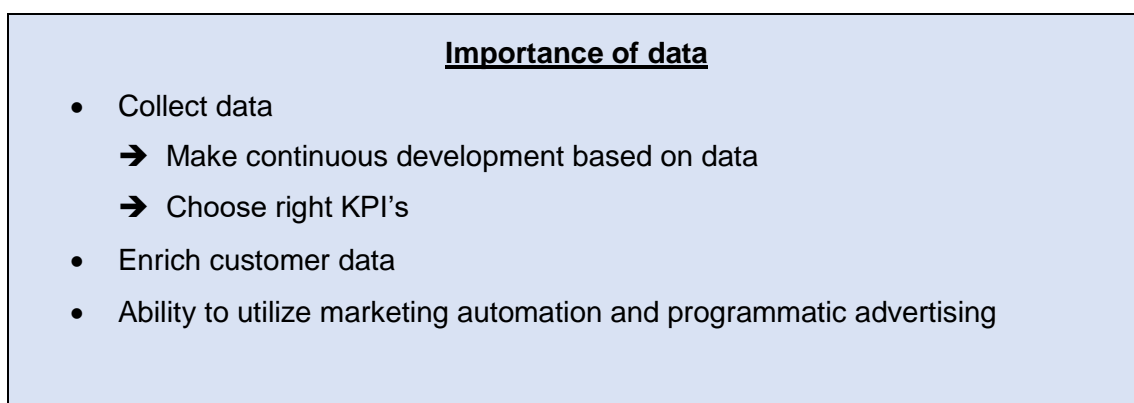> - Define customer journey

Picture 8. Knowing your customer is one of the first steps while creating marketing strategy.

In digital era the customer has the decision making power. The respondent one described that the online customer decides what he wants, where he wants, when he wants and how he wants. The challenge according to respondent one is to change organizational mindset to real customer focus and understanding that organization can not anymore exclusively decide the marketing channels and tactics, but it is rather the customer who makes these decisions.

5.4.3 Focus on data

Collecting data appeared as important factor in the marketing professional's interviews. Five of the six interviewed marketing professionals identified collecting data and utilizing the received data in marketing and decision making as significant factor. The sixth respondent said that there was not enough personal experience on big data to give a comment.

> **Importance of data**
> - Collect data
>   - ➔ Make continuous development based on data
>   - ➔ Choose right KPI's
> - Enrich customer data
> - Ability to utilize marketing automation and programmatic advertising

Picture 9. Data is important part of decision making in organizations.

Among the five respondents collecting data from marketing tactics, enriching customer data and ensuring that it is valid and up to date were seen as valid option to better marketing, marketing automation and personalized marketing. Three of the respondents identified that there are several ways to collect and enrich data, such as website analytics, social media analytics, logistics systems data and third party –data. According four of the respondent's data will enable retargeting and personalized marketing which will make it easier to reach the right audience. Respondent number four saw strong future possibilities with personalized marketing as there is already data, machine learning algorithms and possibilities to build systems, and the development is more focused on the implementation phase and that the organizations would more strongly start to execute this kind of marketing.

Three of the respondents mentioned measuring, monitoring and analyzing the data as important sector. According to respondent four it is important to have continuous business and marketing development and the initiatives should be data driven. Respondent one said that with data there is the ability to prove with facts and numbers the effects of marketing and respondent five supported this idea while emphasizing that there also needs to be the ability and courage do changes according to data.

One of the respondents also presented programmatic advertising with data management platform as important aspect as there the algorithms effectively utilize customer data and defines the targets for display advertisements.

5.4.4 Recommendations for digital marketing strategy

One of the research questions in this thesis was to find recommendations for creating successful digital marketing strategy and all the interviewed marketing professionals answered based on their individual expertise. Knowing the organizations customer was the ultimate answer while asking recommendations for digital marketing strategy. Next to it there were three visible similarities in the answers: combine online and offline marketing, take human-to-human -approach and well functioning webpage is critical for organizations to stay in the competition.

Tips for digital marketing
- Webpage is place for facts & references
  - ➔ Other channels evoke feelings
- Human-to-Human -approach
- Combine offline and online marketing methods

Picture 10. Advices for digital marketing.

All the respondents identified well-functioning webpage as important factor in organizations digital marketing. With webpage that has example taken user experience in notice, SEO has been done well, it provides engaging content and the customer journey has been thought through and supported in the webpage navigation, the organization will be able to rank higher in the search engine results page and be more easily findable by the customers. The respondent six represented that even though it feels that having a webpage is basic information, but still in Finland there are several companies that do not have existing webpage and it is the first step that should be repaired. According to respondent one webpage is the home base with facts and the sales funnels should be built so that other channels, example social media channels, evoke feelings and lead potential customers to organizations webpage, where is also references clearly displayed.
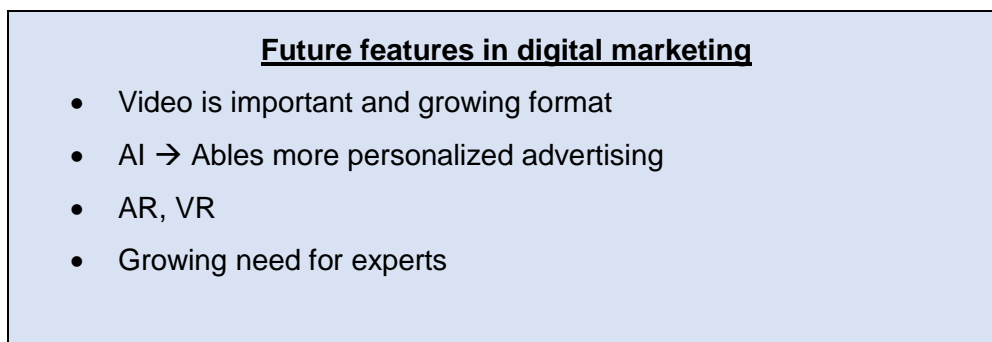
Two of the respondents demonstrated that human-to-human approach will increase competitive advantage in digital marketing as people are searching for more personalized services with human touch. According to respondent one human-to-human approach should be utilized both in online and offline marketing channels and individual's role will become stronger and organizations role will diminish. Customer wish to have more one-to-one service with human touch and according to respondent one and four this same principle applies with business-to-business world. The decision makers in organizations are people and behind all the organizations are people that make decisions in the same way as they would make as private consumers.

Three of the interviewed marketing professionals recommended to combine online and offline marketing to ensure successful organizational marketing. According to respondent four optimal marketing mix integrates online and offline marketing tactics in a way that they are in line with the business strategy and sector where the organization operates. Respondent three identified that by combining online and offline marketing there is ability to create "wow" effects for customers in offline world that utilizes the information received from the digital world.

5.4.5 Future features

One objective of the semi-structured interviews was to receive answer from the marketing professionals on how the digital marketing will change in the future. Four of the respondents identified videos as important and growing format in the future. Another formats that marketing might be utilizing in the future according to the respondents are audio in different formats, artificial intelligence while implementing personalized advertising and the new possibilities that augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) will enable. According to respondent number one real time and authentic marketing methods will increase as those

are more reliable and customers trust less on the online content with fake news and in general on material the organizations provide.

> **Future features in digital marketing**
> - Video is important and growing format
> - AI → Ables more personalized advertising
> - AR, VR
> - Growing need for experts

Picture 11. Future trends according to marketing professionals.

Three of the respondents identified that in future there will be growing need for marketing experts that have business mindset with IT skills. This will be one challenge that organizations will encounter in digital marketing as the digital environment and technology will rapidly evolve and more experts are required. According to the respondent one and five there will be specific need for marketing professionals that know all the digital marketing channels and the ability to estimate which channels are the best and target the marketing actions to right audience. Respondents one and two identified that less expert services are bought from agencies and more experts are hired inside the organizations, digital marketing will be done the organizations by themselves and the marketing professionals inside the organization will have continuous education on the developing digital marketing.

5.4.6   Challenges in digital marketing

While considering the future aspects of digital marketing the respondents emphasized few marketing risks and challenges. Three of the respondents identified GDPR and E-privacy as a challenge in digital marketing as it limits the possibilities marketing departments can utilize and the organizations should make sure the customer's data is gathered, stored and used according to the EU regulation. According to respondent two the challenge with the directive is that there are no exact guidelines or protocols yet and for example there is discussion how third party data can be utilized.

Marketing risks
• GDPR & E-privacy
• AdFraud
• Brand safety
• Transparency
• Choosing right partners
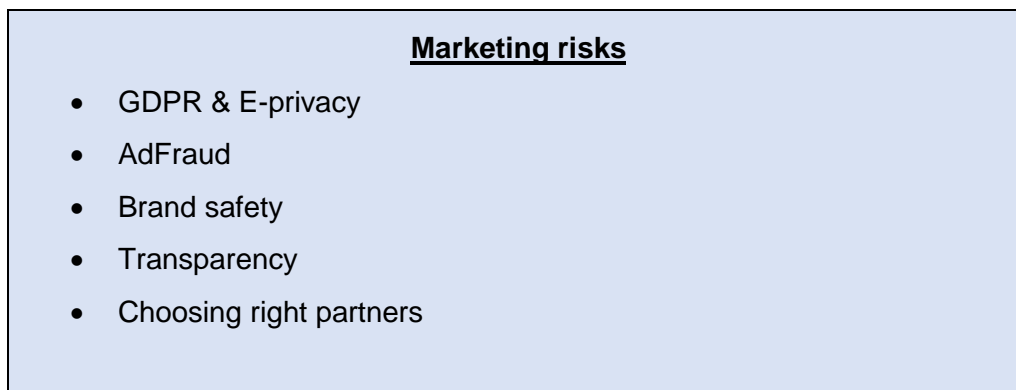
Picture 12. Risks in digital marketing

Other challenges that should be taken into account according to the interviewed marketing professionals are AdFraud, brand safety, transparency and choosing the right partners. According to respondent two in AdFrauds the advertiser is fooled to pay for actions that are not useful, in brand safety the advertisement is represented next to an inappropriate content and the transparency is connected to waterfall marketing, where the marketing is inflexible and has rigid structure where only small percentage of the advertisers invested money ends up in the media. Respondent five identified transparency in all business actions important as people have access to larger amounts of data and it is easy to get caught from actions that are not transparent and honest. Three of the respondents also emphasized that choosing the right partners to deliver marketing actions is critical as it can save extra costs and help in situations that are unfamiliar to the organization.

5.5 Evaluation of experts interviews

Validity indicates the ability of the research method to measure and answer to the research question and what has been promised to research. Validity of a qualitative research includes bullet points that should be covered and these points need to be also connected to each other. In this research the bullet points were the themes which all were connected to digital marketing. Validity of a research should cover issues such as research target and purpose, how the researchers own views affected the results, how the data was collected and analyzed, how long did the research take and what makes the research findings valid and reliable (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, 163-164; Vilkka 2015.)

In this research the purpose of the qualitative research was to receive new information and professionals view on the future direction and changes in digital marketing as well as points that should be taken into consideration while creating Case Firms digital marketing strategy. The reliability of the research was reached by interviewing professionals with

long careers in digital marketing with proven expertise and high position in the business world. Respondents were able to provide relevant answers on the current state of digital marketing and also on which aspects should be taken into consideration while creating digital marketing strategy. Also notable is that the research strategy has been chosen according to the nature of digital marketing. Digital marketing develops rapidly and the literature and research material from the field can be old and unusable when they are finally published. The marketing professionals were able to provide the latest information and trends from the field.

The key informants were primarily contacted by email and exact one-to-one interview dates were agreed. There were some challenges to find time for the interviews and some of the interviews were held by Skype due to tight time schedules and distance. Skype with video call provided good alternative way to conduct the interviews, but at the same time the communication was not as fluent as in face-to-face interaction.

In total of six professionals were interviewed as the main focus in the thesis was to improve the digital marketing and create a digital marketing strategy for the Case Firm. In order to receive more throughout perspective on the changes and trends in digital marketing more professionals could have been interviewed and the research itself could have been the thesis work. Now, limited number of experts served as primary data source.

All the answers were recorded and coded after the one-on-one –sessions. Interviews gave a lot of useful information, but the research questions could have been focused more on the future aspect. Now the questions were rather large spectrum of questions covering recommendations for creating a digital marketing strategy as well as the future of digital marketing. The questionnaire could have been narrowed and more focused.

The interviewed experts provided good insight for trends in digital marketing and valuable information and a base on which the Case Firms digital marketing strategy were build. The results were concluded from the professionals answers and it was studied how many similar answers there were between the key informants. There was clear data saturation in few of the questions as there were repetitive answers from the interviewees. Recurrence answers concerned about digital marketing being a strategic decision and the key for creating successful digital marketing is to know the organizations customers as well as that video will be growing format in the future. Overall it is a challenge to capture and predict future changes in a field that evolves and changes rapidly.

Reliability of the research indicates how accurate the research results are. One of the reliability indicators are the repeatability or consistency of the research measures. (Vilkka 2015.) The interviews can be repeated, but most likely the interviewee's answers will vary

depending on the interviewed person, time of the interview and environmental conditions/ variables. This is due to the rapidly changing nature of digital marketing, new digital marketing actions coming to the market and the changes in environment that make it impossible to interview the individual exactly the same way. In order to decrease the possibility of human error in the research all the interviews were recorded and notes were taken to ensure more precise coding. There were also clear consistency in the interviewed marketing professional's answers and in some interview questions a good saturation level was achieved.

In qualitative research important evaluation aspects are also truthfulness and objectivity (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018). The purpose with marketing professional's interviews was to make it as objective as possible, but as the interviews were conducted face-to-face there are the effects of non-verbal communication and body language that could have unconsciously affected the way the interviewees responded. Though, the respondents openly shared their knowledge and trusted the interviewer. All the interviews results has been truthfully presented and the research results has not been dependent on if the answers has been favorable or not for the Case Firm to whose digital marketing strategy they give a foundation.

5.6   Interviews summary and recommendations

Semi-structured and open-ended interviews were conducted for six marketing professionals in order to gain up-to-date insight on the rapidly developing digital marketing. The objective was to receive coherent, relevant and timely information to guide the process of creating digital marketing strategy for the Case Firm.

The qualitative research purpose was to receive answers for the extra research questions that were:

- How will digital marketing change in the near future according to marketing professionals?
- What recommendations there are for creating successful digital marketing strategy?
- How to find the right channels to reach the Case Firms potential and existing customers?

The professionals were chosen with expert sampling and partly with snowball sampling. All of the marketing professionals had long career varying from 10 years to 30 years in marketing and business environment. The interviews were held between July 2018 - Sep-

tember 2018 with one-on-one session either face-to-face or through Skype. Qualitative data analysis was chosen as data analysis and the interview recordings were coded.

Attached is table 3 that represents the findings from the marketing professional's interviews. There were five main themes that emerged from the respondent's answers: 1) digital marketing is a strategic decision, 2) knowing your customer, 3) importance of data, 4) future features and 5) challenges and risks.

Table 3. Summary of the results with conclusions.

Summary of results	Answers	Conclusion
Digital marketing is a stretegic decision	Sector develops rapidly and digital marketing strategy should be revisited every 3 months	Digital marketing strategy requires continuous updating and marketing and sales should be combined as close to each other as possible in organizations. Leaders need to be engaged with executing digital marketing strategy.
	Marketing is not a separate function	
	Leadership commitment	
Know your customer	Customers buying process has evolved	Customers have more power to decide how they wish to receive marketing messages. Online presence is critical and by defining customer journey the organization is able to find the right channels for their audience.
	Customer makes the decisions what, where, when and how.	
	Define customer journey.	
Importance of data	Collect data and make decision based on KPI's	By collecting data the organization is able to make agile digital marketing that is based on facts. Customer data enables personalized marketing and marketing automation releases resources for other tasks.
	Enrich customer data	
	Utilize marketing automation and programmatic advertising	
Recommendations for D.M. Strategy	Website is a place for facts and references	Ensure online visibility also in mobile format. Remembering that behind organizations are people. By combining offline and online marketing actions can be received best marketing results.
	Human-to-Human approach	
	Combine offline and online marketing methods	
Future features	Video is growing format	Marketing messages should include video. AI combined with customer data will enable personalized marketing. Sector develops and more experts will be needed and digital marketing offers new vacancies.
	AI will enable more personalized marketing. Possibilities of AR & VR.	
	Growing need for experts	
Challenges and risks	GDPR & E-privacy	Applying GDPR and E-privacy is an obligation. Advertiser should be aware on the risks, seek for information and be prepared for risks. Choosing right partners is cost-effective.
	AdFraud, Brand safety and transparency	
	Finding right partners	

Knowing your customer received most repetitive answers as all the respondents identified knowing the customer as main primary step when creating a digital marketing strategy. The saturation was high as all interviewed professionals provided similar answers. The answers demonstrate that online customers have power to determine when, where, how and what kind of marketing content they wish to receive and advertisers need to adapt to this and provide content that is engaging for their audience. Customers buying process is changing and by defining the customer journey an organization is able to identify their customer's problems, needs and marketing channels they prefer. Also continuous online presence is critical for customer acquisition.

Next to most similar answers received the conclusion that digital marketing is a strategic decision. All of the respondents identified digital marketing evolving rapidly and digital marketing strategy should be revisited and adapted accordingly. Three of the respondents recommended to combine marketing and sales as close to each other as possible. According to responded four successful marketing can lead to more warm leads and less need for cold calls. Respondent one saw an advantage with marketing automation as the sales funnel can be shortened and sales people's success rate increased. Also leadership engagement was emphasized among the respondents in order to execute the strategy successfully. Conclusion made from the answers was that digital marketing strategy needs to be revisited systematically and continuous development and testing are required. Also the execution of the strategy is not only responsibility of the employees, but also management and leadership involvement are essential and required.

The importance of data also received high saturation among the respondent's answers. Five of the six interviewed marketing professionals acknowledged data gathering and utilizing data in decision making as significant factor. In order to gain relevant data an organization needs to choose right KPI's and monitor and analyze the gathered data. With measuring an organization is able to monitor numerically the marketing actions and lead with data. According to respondent one with data it is possible to prove with facts and numbers the effects of marketing actions and respondent five had similar opinions, but at the same time the respondent five emphasized the ability and courage do changes according to data. Enriched customer data will enable personalized marketing tactics and the marketing will become more targeted and the marketing message will be delivered to right person at the right time through a right marketing channel. Also by utilizing marketing automation an organization is able to execute marketing processes more efficiently and save time and human resources. This means that the employees will have more time for innovation and more creative tasks, when the routine assignments are done with marketing automation.

High saturation also received the importance of webpage and taking care of online visibility. These were the main recommendations for creating successful digital marketing strategy. All of the respondents identified online visibility as important factor that should be principle in the digital marketing strategy. According to respondent six there are still several enterprises in Finland that do not have existing webpages and it is the first action that should be repaired in their digital marketing. Other recommendations were taking human-to-human approach on the marketing and sales content as well as combining both online and offline marketing methods in the strategy. As a conclusion an organization is important to focus on different ways to increase online visibility and understand the importance of well-functioning and converting webpages with value adding information that is written in human-to-human approach. Successful digital marketing strategy should also be combined with offline marketing actions to reach the customer in various ways that is most natural for the customer.

There was correlation also with the marketing professional's answers on the future trends. Four of the six respondents identified video being the future format for content and three of the interviewees predicted that in future there will be growing need for digital marketing experts. Also artificial intelligence was seen as a great opportunity for more personalized marketing among the respondents. Respondent one presented that real time and authentic marketing methods increase as customers seek for more reliable information sources. As a conclusion according to the answers advertisers should add video on their content and provide value adding information in video format. Organizations could already start preparing for artificial intelligence and marketing automation by gathering enough data as the new technology needs massive amount of data to work and direct the functions efficiently. Organizations could also prepare for the growing need of marketing experts by training their own employees for digital marketing purposes. This way the organizations would also keep up in the fast evolving industry and be able to react to changes in the field.

The final theme was the risks and challenges in digital marketing that should be taken into account. GDPR and E-privacy will affect on how much customers private information can be gathered and the marketers should pay attention on how the directive will be implemented and how it affects to marketing actions. Other risks identified were brand safety, AdFraud, transparency and choosing the right partners. According to respondent two brand safety can be lost when the advertisement is represented next to an inappropriate content and the respondent five identified transparency in all business actions important as people have access to large amount of data. Organizations can avoid most of the risks by learning about them and how they can be avoided, what can be done when the risk

happens and what are the matters that good partners should fulfill. Also in this case the training and familiarizing employees with digital marketing plays a great role.

In general the semi-structured interviews with marketing professionals provided answers for all the extra research questions. There were clear answers that digital marketing evolves quickly and what formats should be applied. Recommendations for creating successful digital marketing strategy were that digital marketing is a strategic decision and with continuous online presence, human-to-human approach and combining offline and online marketing methods can ensure effective marketing strategy. The last question was about finding the right channels to reach the organizations customers and the received answer was by knowing the customer, identifying how their customer journey progresses and what channels they prefer.

6 DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY FOR THE CASE FIRM

The previous chapters have been focusing on theory and current state of digital marketing with expert's interviews on the future of digital marketing and recommendations for creating a digital marketing strategy. In this chapter this previous information will be utilized while creating digital marketing strategy for the Case Firm.

SOSTAC framework has been used as a foundation to the strategy planning. SOSTAC framework comes from words: Situation analysis, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Actions and Control, and these are applied in this specific order. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 3.)

6.1 Situation analysis

6.1.1 Introduction to Case Firm

Tres Hombres Consulting Group Oy is growth-searching Finnish company that provides several consulting services for enterprises. The company was founded in spring 2017 and it is located in Lahti. Tres Hombres Consulting Group Oy operates around Finland and in 2018 there were in total of six people working in the company, some in the home country and some abroad as remote workers.

The company has divided consultancy services they provide into two categories: 1) Management Systems and 2) Responsible Business. The management systems includes ISO 9001 quality management, ISO 14001 environmental management, ISO 45001 occupational health and safety management, ISO 22000 food safety management, ISO 26000 social responsibility, ISO 27001 information security management, ISO 31000 risks management, ISO 50001 energy management, FPC manuals and GAP analysis. The responsible business includes CE-marking, risks management, occupational safety, chemical safety and environmental safety.

Tres Hombres Consulting Group Oy has defined both internal and external values for the operation. Internal values are 1) openness, 2) appreciation and 3) willingness to be active. External values are 1) customer satisfaction, 2) customer profitability and 3) customer loyalty. Tres Hombres Consulting Group Oy's objective is to create a corporate image that strongly combines reliability, expertise, pioneering in the field, humanity as well as relaxed way of working. The company is searching for strong growth by increasing sales, widening subcontractor's network and with future acquisitions.

6.1.2   Customers and customers customer

The Case Firm has data on the existing customers and also on the social media channels the customers prefer to use. According to the Case Firms CRM customers are most often male, middle aged around 40-years and they are either the owner or in managerial position in a small or medium sized enterprise. The enterprises are located around Finland and usually there is only one or two persons making the buying decision.

Customer's customer are very often consumers and retail is one of the most important customer's customer section with the Case Firm, and this is example with food safety management. Some of the Case Firms customers serve other small or medium sized enterprises or they themselves are SME sized company that provides services or products for bigger enterprises. Broadly defined customer's customers can be all the companies that have business identity code and all the consumers, depending on the company that request services from the Case Firm.

The customer problems and needs that the Case Firm is solving are for example legal issues and regulations, which guarantee for the person in charge that everything is done according to laws and regulations. The Case Firm helps the customers with necessary official papers, provides them in timely manner and with needed requirements. Customers save time and can focus on their main processes.

During the development project customer journey inside the company processes was identified. Originally there were customer journey for sales process and now the marketing process was included into the customer journey. Attached is the Case Firms vision on the whole customer journey in company's processes (see picture 13).
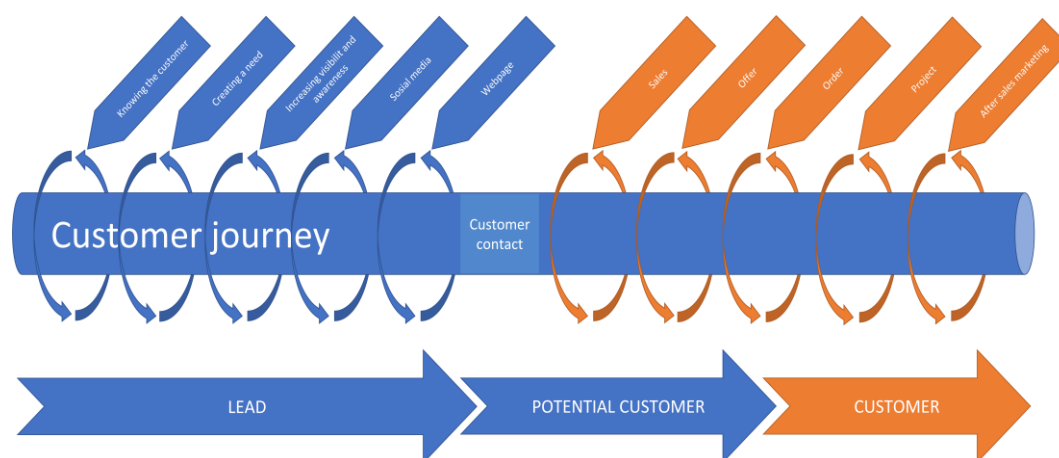
Picture 13. Case Firms customer journey.

The customer journey from company's side starts by knowing and identifying the customer, then creating a need and a solution, adding company's visibility and social media presence and after that directing the customer to the company's webpage. At customer contact point the sales team contacts the customer, makes proposal and in won cases makes an order which follows the actual working process and finally there is after-sales marketing. These layers overlap each other and during the marketing process there can be several visits on visibility, social media and webpage's before the contract is signed.

Important step is the customer contact where either the customer himself/herself contacts the company or someone in the Case Firm contacts the customer. Before the contact customers are called as leads, after contact as potential customers and after a contract as customers.

In picture 14 is defined the same customer journey, but by focusing on the steps the customer makes during the process. In the picture the process is described until the buying decision and after that there are actual serving processes and after sales marketing that are left out from this process description. The customer journey starts when the customer notices the need for service, followed by customer voluntarily searching for information, comparing options and finally making the decision and purchase. This process was created during the development project based on the recommendations received from the marketing professionals.

Customer journey

Picture 14. Case Firms description on the basic customer journey

In future there will be a shift in the customers as older owners and other people in the management layer will retire and new generation proceeds to management positions. This will change the customer description and customer journey as younger generation will have different kind of methods and habits for searching information. This is a matter that should be taken into consideration while revisiting the digital marketing strategy and adjusting the digital marketing methods accordingly.

6.1.3   Competitors and their digital marketing analysis

The Case Firms leaders have made a competitor's analysis and categories for competitors according to their relevance to the Case Firm. There were five consultancy companies that were considered as strong competitors for the current state of the Case Firm, and these five competitors digital marketing was analyzed more closely. The names of the competitors are left out and replaced with A,B,C,D & E –letters for identification. The business figures have been gathered from finder.fi, the competitors own webpages and their social media channels.

Competitor A has been founded in 2010 and there were 446 employees. In 2017 turnover was 47,8 million € and from which the operating profit were 10,4 %. There were in total of 11 offices around Finland. Competitor A has presence in several digital marketing channels: own webpage, Facebook (1140 likes, 1160 follows), LinkedIn (3143 followers, 98 updates), Instagram (98 followers, 3 posts & 140 hashtags), Twitter (970 followers, 1183 twiits) and Youtube (27 subscribers, 3 videos). Focus is mainly on Facebook, LinkedIn and in Twitter. Competitor A is actively looking for new talents and the recruitment process is clearly visible in the website where on the front-page there are two mentions for extra information for new candidates. In social media the recruitment, employee's development possibilities and employee's work place satisfaction has been emphasized. Otherwise the company values and Finland as a home country has been clearly described.

Competitor B was founded in 2001. In 2014 there were 166 employees, but in 2017 there were decrease to 52 workers. This change is explainable with the turnover that were 16,7 million euros in 2014, but in 2017 there were decrease to 4,6 million euros and the operating profit were negative -1 %. Though, in their webpage the Competitor B reveals that there have been four company acquisitions during the year 2018 and the latest company bought was an architect office. Competitor B has developed the marketing, communication and HR in the company by appointing new marketing & communications manager and HR manager. According to their own webpage Competitor B has a marketing strategy that aims to brand development and increasing brand awareness and sales with events and inbound marketing. Competitor B is the most active competitor on the digital channels

and they have the strongest presence in Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube on the amount of posts and updates, and also with the amount of likers and followers. The same brand image and colors can be found in all the company's digital channels. Also Competitor B is strongly focusing on recruitment in social media and creating positive employer image.

Competitor C has been founded in 2004 and there were 14 employees in 2017. Turnover was 1,3 million euros in 2017 and the operating profit was 9,9 %. Competitor C has digital media presence in Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. There is no official page for the company in Instagram, but there are 8 hahstags about the company. Content on social media channels are professional and facts based about the sector. There are regular posts on Facebook and Twitter, but less updates in LinkedIn.

Competitor D was founded in 2013 and there were three employees in 2017. The turnover has been positively growing since the establishment and the company has made its best turnover 430 000 euros in 2017. In the same year operating profit was 20,5 %. There are some marketing tactics, such as utilizing Google Analytics, call-to-action buttons on webpage and inbound marketing, but example the blog is not regularly updated and the latest post is 10 months old. In social media the Competitor D has presence only in Facebook with irregular posting. There is no company page in LinkedIn, but at the homepage the employees have been introduced with LinkedIn profiles. In Youtube there are three subscribes for the company's channel and there were four educational videos in Spanish about ISO 9001 certificate.

Competitor E has been founded in 2013 and there were four employees in 2017. The turnover has been positively growing for all the existing years and in 2017 it was 293 000 euros. The operating profit was 10,5 % in year 2017. Competitor E does not have digital marketing strategy and there is no presence in any of the digital marketing channels. There is one introduction video on Youtube on the company, but there is no Youtube channel for the company and it has been privately posted by the company's CEO.

In table 3 there are competitor's social media activity and it presents that competitors A & B, which have the highest turnover rate also are the most active in digital marketing channels. Competitor B has digital marketing strategy and it correlates with the amount of likes, followers and posts. Competitor E has no social media presence, but there are mentions in Facebook made by others and it is uncontrollable by the company. Same situation has been with Competitor C with Instagram: there is no official Instagram page, but the company has been unofficially mentioned with hashtags.

Table 4. Competitor's social media activity. X indicates that there is no presence or activity in the channel.

21.10.2018	Facebook			LinkedIn		Twitter	
Competitor	Likes	Followers	Posts	Followers	Updates	Followers	Twiits
A	1140	1160	regular	3143	98	970	1183
B	2440	2427	frequent	2358	500	1141	2732
C	217	217	regular	168	37	168	270
D	160	160	unregular	X	X	X	X
E	X	X	by others	X	X	X	X

Competitor	Instagram			Youtube	
	Followers	Posts	Hashtags	Subscribe	Videos
A	98	3	140	27	3
B	691	1220	182	7	10
C	X	X	8	X	X
D	X	X	X	3	4
E	X	X	X	X	1

There are significant differences with competitor's digital marketing. Two of the competitors actively utilize digital marketing, while two of them are less active and one of them has only webpage with no other digital marketing channels.

In the competitor's digital marketing SWOT are described strength, weaknesses, possibilities and threats of all the competitors. The SWOT analyses are divided into two by the size of the company and the resources the companies are able to invest into digital marketing (see picture 15 & 16). In picture 15 are competitors A and B, and in picture 16 is included competitors C, D and E.

STRENGTHS	**WEAKNESSES**
• Digital marketing strategy • Continuous brand building • Informative and professional webpages • Inbound marketing methods • Blog/ News • Describing values and taking responsibility e.g. on environmental issues • Co-working with students • Marketing & communication expertise	• Irregular posting • Disengaging content • Unattractive/ unclear webpage • How to stand out from the competitors
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• More visibility and brand awareness • Strenghtening employer image • Attracting high-potential employees • Supporting sales with digital marketing • Possibility to identify potential customers	• Competition in the sector • Limited resources available • Reputation risks • Brand safety

Picture 15. SWOT analysis from bigger competitor's digital marketing (Competitors A & B).

The strengths for bigger competitors are clear digital marketing strategies, continuous brand building, professional and informative webpage's with values and several inbound marketing methods. Weaknesses are irregular posting, disengaging content, unattractive webpages and challenges to differentiate from the other competitors in the consultancy sector. Weaknesses for the smaller competitors can also be limited amount of resources available and not defining and utilizing digital marketing strategy.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
- Some kind of presence in digital environment - Mobile app.	- No digital marketing strategy - Irregular posting - Disengaging content - No company pages in SoMe - Limited resources available - Unattractive webpage - How to stand out from the competitors
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
- More visibility and brand awareness - Strengthening employer image - Supporting sales with digital marketing - Possibility to identify potential customers	- Some do not utilize digital marketing - Uncontrolled mentioning in SoMe - Competition in the sector - Limited resources available

Picture 16. SWOT analysis from smaller competitor's digital marketing (Competitors C, D & E).

Opportunities for all the competitors are increased brand awareness and visibility, supporting sales with digital marketing, strengthening of employer image and attracting high-potential employees. Threats for the smaller competitors are the uncontrolled mentioning in social media channels, limited resources available for digital marketing and competition in the sector.

By creating and executing digital marketing strategy the Case Firm can receive competitive advantage from the competitors that do not utilize digital marketing strategically. Though, the introduced competitors operate in the consulting sector, but as the globalization and digitalization increases the Case Firm should consider other businesses in various fields as their competitors. All the companies with webpage's enter a borderless market with competitors around the world and these various business sectors compete on the

customer focus, visibility online and findability on search engines. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 567.)

6.1.4 Partners

The Case Firm has two kinds of partners: 1) Partners that complete the knowhow in the company and 2) partners that are subcontractors to the Case Firm.

Partners that complete the knowhow in the Case Firm are focused for example on IT development and webpage development. Due to a resource management issues some of the workflow has been made in co-operation with subcontractors. The Case Firm has most interest on developing the latter partnership and increasing co-operation with new subcontractors under the Case Firms brand name.

In the beginning of the development project there were no link partners with webpages that would increase the Case Firms SEO. There are also no partners that would have been sharing content in digital channels.

6.1.5 Case Firms competence

The Case Companies competitive advantage comes from two main aspects: 1) knowhow and 2) the services provided. The key persons in the company have long working experience on the field and knowhow on the services provided. Also the services are wide covering quality and management systems, safety issues and product management – all services that individual customer could require and receive from same service provider. In Lahti region there is no other consultancy company that is able to provide all these services.

The small size of the Case Firm also increases competitive advantage as it enables being flexible, quality focused and effective. If required there can be fast delivery and according to the company's values the company's objective is to deliver what customer expects and requires.

In digital marketing the Case Firm was in the starting point, but the strength was that the management was realizing the importance of online advertising and continuous presence in digital channels. Strength was also agile customer database that could be modified according to the Case Firms needs (see picture 17).

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Company values are defined • Interest to utilize and learn from digital marketing • Strong expertise on management processes • Welcoming the new technologies and changes • Agile CRM system	• None or irregular posting • Limited resources available • How to identify customers and customer journey • Unattractive webpage • How to stand out from the competitors • No gathered data or KPI's • Content writing • Website optimization
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
• More visibility and brand awareness • Supporting & increasing sales • Possibility to identify potential customers • Digital marketing strategy • New webpage and attracting more traffic to the site • Inbound marketing methods • Strenghtening employer image • Describing values and making positive change in the world → earned media • Coworking with students	• Competition in the sector • Limited resources available • No dig. marketing expertise

Picture 17. Case Firms digital marketing SWOT analysis.

The weaknesses with digital marketing in the Case Firm were the lack of experience on digital marketing, content writing and creating engaging advertisement and website optimization. Another critical weakness was the website that was not serving the company's

needs and attracting new potential customers. There were also no gathered data and key performance indicators (KPI's) were not utilized. Due to this there were no previous data on which the initiatives could have been based.

The Case Firms opportunities with digital marketing were gaining more visibility and customer awareness and this way attracting and possibly identifying new potential customers. Supporting and increasing sales were an opportunity as well as ordering new webpages, increasing the website traffic and customer awareness of the Case Firm. Opportunities that were not yet utilized were example inbound marketing methods, strengthening employer image through social media channels and utilizing student co-operation.

The biggest threats were competition in the sector and limited amount of resources such as personnel, time and money. Also the Case Firm had no person with digital marketing expertise inside the company which resulted that the marketing actions and tactics were done next to other tasks when there was time.

6.1.6   Previous marketing actions

In general, marketing in the Case Firm before the development project has been very basic and not much resources has been put on marketing initiatives. There were no marketing strategy before the development project and due to this marketing actions were irregular, unplanned and spontaneously executed. Marketing actions didn't generate proven leads, increase customer awareness or create satisfactory thought leadership and professional image of the enterprise. There were a specific need for developing digital marketing and creating digital marketing strategy for the Case Firm.

The Case Firm had self-made webpage that provided basic information and contact details, but there were no other marketing methods, such as inbound marketing or links utilized. Google Adwords had been utilized irregularly and without continuous follow up and development. The Case Firm had also Facebook and LinkedIn profiles, but there were only few updates and posting was irregular. In Facebook there were 22 likes and 23 followers, and in the Case Firms LinkedIn there were 4 followers and only few updates. No key performance indicators or webpage optimization were used. The Case Firm had not identified their customers, considered which would be the best digital channels to reach the customers, what content is engaging for the customers and how the customer journey unfolds.

According to the CEO this development project was one of the key strategic points for the Case Firm in 2018 and the digital marketing strategy will steer the marketing actions in the future. The digital marketing strategy aimed to meet the values defined in business strate-

gy that were customer satisfaction and customer loyalty and define the actions required in digital marketing in order to execute these values. According to the CEO the digital marketing strategy will actually be the overall marketing strategy for the organization as other than digital marketing actions will not be applied.

6.1.7 Current situation in the market and trends

According to Official Statistics of Finland the management consultancy services were clearly growing in 2017. The industry of business and management consultancy grew noticeably and enterprises producing information technology services, architectural and engineering design services, legal services and accounting, bookkeeping and auditing services also had good growth. (Official Statistic Finland 2017 c.)

The Swedish Federation of Consulting Engineers and Architects has made a sector review report in December 2017. The report includes five current trends in the sector and one of them introduces that company building will evolve and more resources will be put on HR, accounts, marketing and communications as the companies grow. (Sector Review 2017.)

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has affected the marketing in general since it was enforced in May 2018. EU laws and GDPR needs to be taken into account while creating digital marketing actions that require collecting and storing customer data. (Office of the Data Protection Ombudsman 2018.)

6.2 Objectives

While creating the digital marketing strategy SMART goal setting was used. SMART comes from the words: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely. This goal-setting tool ensured that the objectives are realistic and attainable as well as measurable in some way in certain time period. (Doran 1981, 35- 36; Niemelä & Salo 2017.)

The Case Firms business strategy defines that the organization is searching for over 30 % annual growth by increasing sales, widening subcontractor's network and with future acquisitions. The digital marketing objective is to increase customer awareness, brand visibility, attract new potential customers and eventually increase sales. The objective of digital marketing strategy is based and in line with the Case Firms business strategy, like mentioned in the theory part by Chaffey & Smith which reminded that digital marketing should be in line with marketing strategy and the marketing strategy should be based in the organizations business strategy (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 557). The Case Firms digital

marketing objective is to also monitor the progress, gather data and make future development initiatives based on data.

Attached is a table 5 that defines the Case Firms digital marketing objectives until 2021 and it has been made together with the Case Firms CEO. Critical sales numbers has been left out from the table as well as the amount of projects for each year.

Table 5. Case Firms digital marketing objectives until 2021.

Objectives	2018	2019	2020	2021
Annual turnover	XXX €	XXX €	XXX €	XXX €
- Framework customers		XXX €	XXX €	XXX €
- Existing customers		XXX €	XXX €	XXX €
- New customers		XXX €	XXX €	XXX €
Amount of projects	xx	xx	xx	xx
Amount of personnel	3	4-5	8-10	12-15
Amount of proposals		50	120	200
Amount of client contacts		250	575	1000
- Phone calls		80	160	320
- New customer calls us		15	30	60
- Email for new customer		100	200	400
- Customer makes inquiry by email		15	30	60
- Contact request from web		20	40	80

In the table 5 is defined the sales revenues for each year and from sales revenue has been concluded the amount of needed framework customers, existing customers and new customers. From these details has been defined the amount of needed projects, personnel, client contacts as well as amount of customer contacts through different channels. There is no direct online sales option and all the customers will eventually be in contact with sales person either by phone, email or face-to-face, so that the sales person is able

to understand the customers unique need and make an offer. In the table there is no mention on the customer satisfaction, which will be monitored through customer satisfaction questionnaires.

There is no previous data on the amount of website visitors, unique visitors, bounce rate, conversion rates and duration of visits on website, but the Case Firm will monitor these in the future and define objectives for these during the first year.

6.3 Digital marketing strategy

Digital marketing strategy should be future oriented, but due to the fact that there were no digital marketing in the organization before the development project some implementation of the tactics and actions started even before the digital strategy was finalized in December 2018. These digital marketing strategy decisions have been written down under the year 2018 in the table 6 and these action and tactics were executed during the development project. Digital marketing decisions for year 2018 were creating the actual digital marketing strategy, renewing the website, adding Google Analytics program in order to receive important data, learning to know the customer by using CRM and deciding the needed KPI's in the digital marketing strategy and installing programs if needed.

Table 6. Case Firms digital marketing strategy until 2021.

Digital marketing strategy			
2018	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**
Dig. Marketing strategy	Increase visibility & customer awareness	Include AI to marketing	Utilize AR/ VR
Presence in online world	Email automation	Personalized marketing	Utilize latest search engine methods
Knowing our customer	Inbound marketing	Increase visibility & customer awareness	Include AI to marketing
KPI's and follow up	Reference marketing	Email automation	Personalized marketing
	Data gathering/ enrich customer data	Inbound marketing	Increase visibility & customer awareness
	Utilize SoMe channels	Reference marketing	Email automation
	Combine marketing and sales	Data gathering/ enrich customer data	Inbound marketing
	Survey customer satisfaction	Utilize SoMe channels	Reference marketing
	Make data driven decisions/ changes	Build Though-leadership	Data gathering/ enrich customer data
		Survey customer satisfaction	Utilize SoMe channels
		Make data driven decisions/ changes	Strength Though-leadership
			Survey customer satisfaction
			Make data driven decisions/ changes

In year 2019 there are several digital marketing objectives that will need to be executed. The large amount of actions is due to the fact that there were no previous digital marketing in the company. The digital marketing objectives for year 2019 are increasing visibility and customer awareness of the company, utilizing email automation and inbound marketing methods, paying attention to search engine optimization, gathering data, enriching customer data, combining marketing and sales closer to each other, revoking social media channels, adding reference marketing to website, surveying customer satisfaction and developing the marketing processes according to data received.

The years 2020 and 2021 are preliminary strategic decisions as due to the interviewed marketing professionals the digital marketing strategy should be revisited every three months and changed annually if needed, and the development decisions should be based on gathered data. The 2019 implemented strategic decisions will be applied also in 2020 and 2021 if there is no other reason to leave them out. In 2020 more reference marketing should be added to website and include AI in the business and marketing, if the platforms and data gathered allows it. In 2021 there is additionally new online searching methods, such as vertical, image and voice searches that should be taken into consideration while developing the website and creating content in the website and social media channels. Also continuously developing augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) could be option in future that could be utilized and executed together in co-operation with existing partner.

6.4   Tactics

According to SOSTAC planning framework after defining the long term and more enduring strategy and objectives the digital marketing strategy requires defining the tactics. Tactics are details and series of actions that are defined in order to execute digital marketing strategy and obtain the objectives. Tactics are often more short term and flexible, and describes the tactical tools and marketing channels utilized with specific budget. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 597.)

Table 7. Case Firms chosen tactics and budget for 2018 – 2021.

Tactics			
2018	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**
Budget: 6 % of annual revenue	**Budget: 8 % of annual revenue**	**Budget: 10 % of annual revenue**	**Budget: 10 % of annual revenue**
Webpage	SEO	SEO	SEO
Google Analytics	SEM (Google Ads)	SEM (Google Ads)	SEM (Google Ads)
Keyword strategy	Inbound marketing	Inbound marketing	Inbound marketing
	Reference marketing	Reference marketing with videos	Reference marketing with videos
	Social Media channels	Social Media channels	Social Media channels
	Enriching customer data	Marketing automation	Marketing automation
	Webpage user experience/ AB testing	Enriching customer data	Enriching customer data
	Marketing automation	Display marketing	Display marketing
	Keyword bidding strategy	Targeted/ personalized marketing	Targeted/ personalized marketing
	Customer feedback/ questionnaire	Webpage user experience/ AB testing	Customer recognition with AI
		Customer recognition with AI	Webpage user experience/ AB testing
		Keyword bidding strategy	Voice, image and vertical search
		Customer feedback/ questionnaire	Keyword bidding strategy
			Customer feedback/ questionnaire

1) Must

2) Second

3) do if there are resources

In the table 7 are described the Case Firms tactics for the next three years with annual marketing budgets. In 2018 the marketing budget was 6 % of annual revenue and according to the strategy the budget increases to 10 % by the year 2020. Simultaneously the amount of marketing tactics increase.

In the next subchapters are introduced and explained the chosen tactics for the Case Firms digital marketing strategy for the year 2019. In the table 6 are listed digital marketing tactics until the year 2021, but as according to the interviewed marketing professionals digital marketing strategy should be revisited every three months the tactics for year 2020 and 2021 are not closely described in the subchapters. These tactics will most likely evolve as the sector develops and the Case Firm will have more marketing data available on which to base the decisions.

6.4.1 Webpage

Case Firms webpage is self made with Google Sites –program and it is simple and provides basic information on the company and the services. According to the interviewed marketing professionals the company's webpage should be the home base for tactical

information and other social media channels should be provoking feelings and redirecting customers to the homepage.

The Case Firms homepage was not offering added value to the customer, there were no contacting possibility through website, no links were used, customer's user experience were not been taken into account and the page was not supporting the customer to navigate towards the expected converting and sales. There were not enough engaging content in the webpage that would have driven organic traffic to the site.

The consumer behavior is changing and, like mentioned earlier in chapter 3.3.2., 70 % of customer are making the decision to buy before they even meet the sales person (Talonen 2018 b). The same results were shown in Forrester's report where 60 % of Business-to-Business customers do not wish to interact with sales representatives as primary information source (Davis 2018). This demonstrates the importance of online presence.

Also the increasing amount of Finnish mobile users, 77 % of Finnish population, enforces the Case Firm to embrace scalable website that answers the different needs of website visitors either with desktop computer, laptop, smart phone or by tablet. According to Google, smart phones are also the most popular way to connect online and search for information. (Google 2017: Official Statistic Finland 2017 a.)

Case Firm understood the importance of online presence and website in the early stages of the development project and the process of purchasing new website were implemented in the half way of creating the digital marketing strategy. This was due to the answers received from the marketing professional's interviews which were then reported to the management of the Case Firm.

There are several requirements that affects to the functionality and user experience of the website, example customer expectation to access immediate information, fast page downloads, scalability and consumers demand and expectation of being in charge, safe and secure (Akamai 2017; Chaffey &Smith 2017, 178.) In order to fulfill these requirements the Case Firm asked offers and chose a partner with whom to create the new website.

In 2019 the Case Firm will have the new website and they should monitor the webpage's user experience and develop the webpages and content accordingly. One method that could be utilized is A/B testing, where two different versions of page or page element are tested and the one that converts most leads and sales will be chosen as permanent version. The objective is to increase page or site effectiveness and make the user experience as good as possible (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 526 & 537).

6.4.2   Search engine optimization (SEO)

Previously there was no search engine optimization (SEO) on the Case Firms webpage that would have been driven traffic to the website. With continuous SEO the Case Firm can increase their ranking with search engines results page and be easily findable by customers.

Earlier it was not reasonable to invest on SEO as the website didn't have call to action – buttons and it was not converting to sales. In 2019 the website will be remade and it is justified to be among the first search results and drive traffic to the renewed website. SEO needs to be taken into consideration while creating inbound marketing content to the website and optimize the content for right key words in order to gain traffic, reach the potential customers and possible affect the customer buying criteria with informative content.

In the theory part 3.3.2. and 3.3.3. were described how customer journey has shifted to online environment with strict demand how the website should serve as primary information source, be safe and be available with quick downloads and scalability to different appliances. Also that 70 % of customers make the buying decision before contacting the sales person or organization. For customers an organization that is not online does not exist and for this reason search engine optimization is one of the most important parts of the digital marketing strategy.

6.4.3   Search engine marketing (SEM)

Earlier the Case Firm had utilized irregularly Google Ads for paid advertising. There were no premade plan when the search engine marketing (SEM) were used, with which amount and for what kind of campaigns. With premade plan the Case Firm is able to utilize more fully the Google Ads services, predict the best times to advertise and find the best key words to use.

Search engine marketing is another way to increase online visibility, rank among the top research page results and increase traffic to the website. As described in the theory part and which also were shown in the marketing professional's answers is that marketing requires continuous presence in digital channels and visibility on search engines result pages is one way to receive it. With right and specific keywords it is possible to direct visitors to the Case Firms renewed website.

If there are resources in 2019 the Case Firm should also utilize keyword bidding strategy to optimize the amount of clicks possible for the advertisements with the given budget.

6.4.4 Reference marketing

The Case Firm had slightly utilized reference marketing in their old webpage. There were mentions on the industries in general where their customers operate, but there were no company names or logos visible. The reference marketing was not fully utilized and there were not enough information so that the potential customers could have identified themselves as similar customers with similar needs.

According to interviewed marketing professionals people tend to trust "people like me" instead of relying on organizations. Also the Edelman Trust Barometer represents that people trust most on technical and academic experts and people like me (Edelman 2018). Based on these facts reference marketing will be more fully utilized in the new webpages and represented also in the social media channels. The tactic for 2019 is to include reference marketing with company names, company presenter names and with logos in the Case Firms webpage. Additionally in 2020 the tactic is to make reference videos that can be added to webpage and shared in social media, when the amount of followers has been increased and there are more customers to ask as references.

6.4.5 Inbound marketing methods

There were no inbound marketing methods utilized before the development project in the Case Firm. In future the focus will be on offering additional information for the customer even before the customer has noticed a specific need, where they would need the organizations services. The objective is to create engaging content and drive organic traffic to the website, and identify potential new customers, which was one of the digital marketing objectives.

As inbound marketing tactics were chosen search engine optimization, blog posts, newsletters and white papers as well as call to action –buttons in the webpage. According to the interviewed marketing professionals video will be future format for engaging content and the Case Firm should utilize this information for example with blog posts, if the resources enable it. In general, in the content marketing keywords will be utilized and the content will be shared in social media channels. As mentioned earlier in the marketing professional's answers, according to Edelman Trust Barometer more than 60 % of people trust on technical and academic experts and due to this the professionals in the Case Firm will need to be engaged in the content creation and sharing, example in LinkedIn.

While considering the customer journey there are different inbound methods the Case Firm could provide for different customers in different phase of the customer journey. In

awareness phase the Case Firm should invest on SEO, SEM, blogs, social media and video content. In consideration phase the customer most likely needs guides, tips, events and webinars to convince the buying decision is beneficial. In the actual buying phase prices, references, service descriptions, case examples and videos are important inbound methods. An advantage in inbound marketing is that the distribution channels are free and it makes the method a cost effective marketing tactic.

6.4.6   Social media channels

In the semi-structured interview the marketing professionals emphasized that the right marketing channels can be chosen by knowing the customers and finding which social media channels they prefer. While completing the situation analysis it was identified that the Case Firms customers are most often male and around 40 years or older.

In 2017 there were 1,3 million Finnish Facebook users that were over 40 years old and another popular social media channel among over 40 years old Finnish people were LinkedIn. Among all Finnish LinkedIn users there were 40 % between the age 35 – 54 years old and 6,9 % were older than 55 years. By combining these two categories almost half of the Finnish LinkedIn users were older than 35 years old. (Laine T. 2017; Pönkä H. 2017.)

Based on these facts and the Case Firms CRM data, Facebook and LinkedIn were chosen to be the two main social media channels for the Case Firm. Facebooks objective will be to increase the brand and customer awareness as well as build an employer image among potential new employees. Another objective is to utilize Facebook as remarketing channel and leading the potential customers again to the Case Firms webpage. LinkedIn's objective is to create though leadership, increase customer awareness and possible also serve as paid advertising channel and recruitment channel. It is recommended that separate content strategies will be created for both of the chosen marketing channels, where is more closely defined what kind of content, how often and by whom is posted. These social media channels will be utilized when sharing the inbound marketing content, but with a human touch.

6.4.7   Enriching customer data

Case Firm had collected basic information on the customers with contact details and company names. The Case Firm utilizes CRM software that can be customized and developed according customer's needs.

According to the marketing professionals one important factor is to collect data and base the future initiatives on data. Next to the renewed webpage there will be installed Google Analytics as web analytics. From Google Analytics the Case Firm will have more information and insight on their customers and increase the information they already have on the existing customers. When there is enough data on the customers the Case Firm can utilize personalized marketing tactics and generate more sales.

In theory part 3.2.2. were mentioned McKinsey's research that stated:

> "50-80% of new customers are acquired through personalized marketing messages" (Buck, Cvetanovski, Harper & Timelin 2017).

These personalized marketing messages are possible to create with new digital analytic tools and effective use of data, but in order to fully function there needs to be enough data on which the marketing tactics can be based on. With personalized marketing the Case Firm can reduce the acquisition costs, lift revenues and increase the efficiency of marketing spend (Buck et al. 2017).

6.4.8 Marketing automation

Each of the employees of the Case Firm had their own email addresses, but there were no shared automated email system in the organization. Each of the employees handled their customers privately and no marketing emails were regularly send. There had been one group marketing email, but that was also separately send to all of the participants.

With marketing automation softwares, such as Hubspot or Marketo that provide a platform for inbound marketing, sales and service, the Case Firm can capture qualified leads and nurture them from awareness to purchase. These automation programs offer different amount of features that help the organization to attract, capture, track and close qualified leads with inbound marketing. With marketing automation the Case Firm can automate emails for specific leads in different parts of the customer journey with relevant content to nurture them forward in the buying process and at the same release labor capacity for other tasks in the organization. With good marketing automation there is ability to create blog platform, landing pages, call to action –buttons, automated email marketing, scale lead qualification with lead scoring and receive comprehensive analytics and monitoring on the campaigns. Though, there are several service providers and the Case Firm should familiarize with their specific features and select the one that best meets their criteria and budget.

The interviewed marketing professionals emphasized that marketing and sales department should be brought as close to each other as possible and by applying good marketing automation system this is possible. With marketing automation the marketing provides warm leads to sales personnel and nurtures the customer also after the buying decision with after sales marketing in order to generate more sales.

6.4.9 Customer feedback questionnaire

Previously in the Case Firm there has not been applied any customer questionnaire to measure the customer satisfaction. There were no recorded data on how the customers found the level of service and were there something the customers needed or hoped during the customer journey.

According to the interviewed marketing professionals the key for creating successful digital marketing strategy is to know the organizations customers. By identifying the key customer groups and segments it is easier to target and personalize the marketing tactics, create engaging content and find the right marketing channels. By utilizing customer satisfaction questionnaires and performing after-sales marketing the Case Firm can increase the customer satisfaction, customer retention and inspire for re-purchasing.

The marketing professionals also predicted that artificial intelligence (AI) will transfer the digital marketing and enable more personalized marketing. The more the Case Firm has data about their customers the more engaging and personalized content they are able to provide for the customers, but at the same time it is important to keep in mind the challenges GDPR has brought for collecting and storing personal data.

6.5 Actions

As mentioned in the theory part 2.3.1. the SOSTAC framework's action phase has been identified as one of most challenging part of the framework. It is dependent on the management involvement and guidance with good communication, training and employee motivation in order to attain excellent strategy execution. In action part it is described what is the tactic, who is the responsible person, when it should be done and how it should be implemented. (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 600.)

Attached is example on the actions in 2019 (see table 8), where the tactics have been described with processes including time-scale, responsible persons and budgets. Each of the tactics for year 2019 has been put separately in the table and the processes indicates the key steps that it requires, when it should be done and by whom.

Table 8. Example on the digital marketing actions and processes for year 2019.

Actions 2019/ Example				
Tactic	**Process**	**When**	**Responsible person**	**Budget**
SEO	Check Google recommendations, learn more, customer search phrases, key words, SERP optimation, links, content, follow up	January -->	x	x
SEM (Google Ads)	Create adds & content, test, follow, enrich customer data	January, March, August, November	x	x
Inbound marketing	Create content for newsletter, guide etc. Create campaigns, create content, implement, monitor. Add 'call to actions' on webpage.	January -->	x	x
Reference marketing	Contact customers, logo to website, small introduction text.	January (continuous)	x	x
Social Media channels	Create yearly content calendar, consider customer journey stages and buying personas, create engaging content and monitor the analytics. Increase the amount of followers.	January (continuous)	x	x
Enriching customer data	Utilize web analytics, third party data, sales people	continuous	x	x
Webpage user experience	A/B testing, user experience tool	March	x	x
Marketing automation	Choose platform, install, learn to use, create lists, write content	March -->	x	x
Keyword bidding strategy	Search program, learn to use, utilize	January, September	x	x
Customer feedback/ questionnaire	Create questions, create customer list, post, analyze answers	May, December (continuous?)	x	x

The table 8 is an example as the Case Firms CEO wish to decide the responsible persons and budgets for each tactic. So the execution of the digital strategy is dependent on the management of the Case Firm and this chapter works as an example how the execution could be planned. If required the management could also include more precise processes, procedures and checklist to ensure complete execution of the strategy.

The same tactics have also been introduced with quarters for year 2019 (see picture 18). In the Case Firm it is typical to present information with quarterly and introducing the digital marketing actions quarterly could be an easy and familiar way to communicate the digital marketing strategy to the employees.
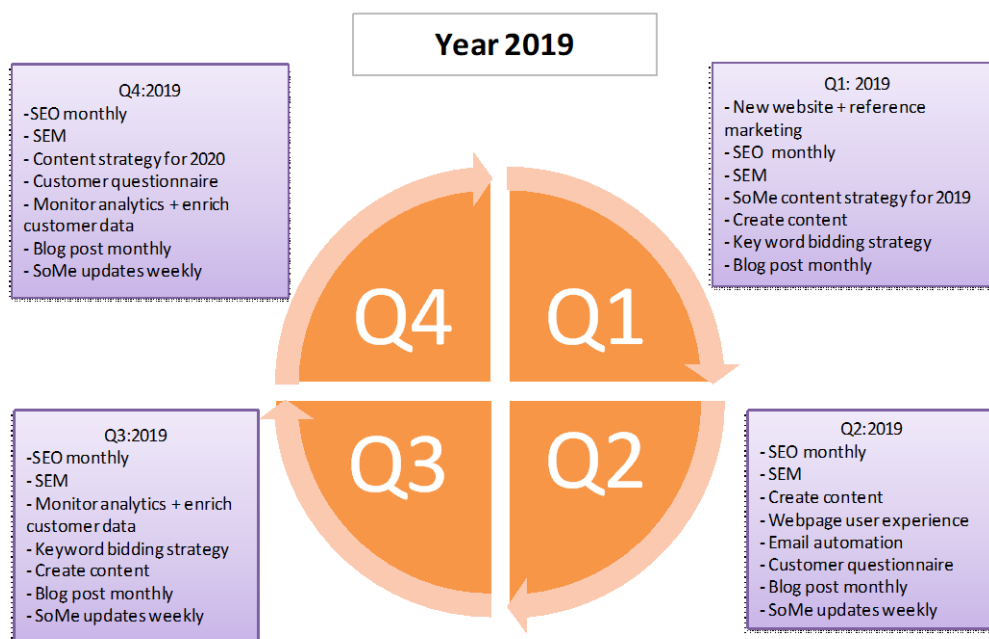
Picture 18. Digital marketing actions for year 2019 presented quarterly.

Important with the actions is to identify the competences of the employees and check if the tools are up-to-date and serving the purpose. If required training should be provided for the employees in order to successfully execute the digital marketing strategy. The implementation phase will require:

> "project management, schedules, meeting deadlines, meetings" and "careful preparation, constant checking and attention to vast volume of details and internal marketing". (Chaffey & Smith 2017, 599.)

Risks management and contingency planning were left out from the actions part as the Case Firm were preparing their own rules and manual for communication. The plan also included the risks management for communication in digital channels.

6.6   Control

By monitoring the key performance indicators the Case Firm can identify what channels bring the most leads, has the quality of leads been good for the sales people and has the customers progressed along the sales funnel from awareness stage as buying customers. When more data has been collected it is easier to identify which channels generate best leads and it is easier to focus the marketing tactics to these channels. It will also assist to

estimate more precisely how much should be invested example on Google Ads, email campaigns or social media channels in order to receive qualified leads to meet the revenue objective. Numbers, such as amount of visitors or clicks, represent only partly of the outcome and the person responsible on the analytics should be able to recognize the right channels that brings quality leads which transforms to revenue.

According to the interviewed marketing professionals measuring, monitoring and leading with data are important factors that provide numeral facts on which to base the development initiatives. By continuously monitoring the indicators it's possible to react to insufficient marketing tactics and it enables agile digital marketing. The advantage in digital marketing compared to traditional marketing is that the analytics and data are real time and quickly available, so that agile marketing is possible.

6.6.1   KPI's for the Case Firm

The key performance indicators were chosen to the Case Firm based on the information they provide. In the theory part 3.4. it was discussed that the chosen indicators need to be valid, reliable and in line with the digital marketing strategy.

The digital marketing strategy's objective was to increase customer awareness, brand visibility, attract new potential customers and eventually increase sales as well as gather data and make future development initiatives based on data. The most important KPI's that were chosen for the Case Firm were the amount of new leads and how qualified the leads are for the sales people. With new qualified leads the Case Firm can nurture the potential customers and eventually lead them from awareness to purchase, but it is important that the sales personnel do find the leads qualified. If the leads are not qualified then there needs to be done adjustments on which kind of content is created and does it reach the right audience. With qualified leads the Case Firm can increase sales and revenue.

Other objectives were increasing customer awareness and brand visibility. New website was planned and it is important to check does it attract visitors, so the amount of unique and returning visitors should be monitored as well as do they make the hoped conversions while navigating in the website. The conversion rate indicates the percentage of visitors that have completed a desired goal out of the total number of visitors. The desired conversion can be example subscribing a newsletter, leaving a contact request or filling out a form to become lead. The conversion rate also indicates if the landing page is efficient and easy to use or if the promoted offer is not valuable enough for the audience. The conversion rate also helps to understand how customers use the website, improves the cus-

tomer satisfaction with better user experience and develops customer understanding and customer journey.

With web analytics it is also possible to monitor on which channel the traffic is coming, and by observing the page visits and visit duration the Case Firm can form an understanding on what kind of content is engaging for their audience and how long they spend time example with an article or blog post. The bounce rate on the other hand is also important metric as it reveals if the tactics with SEO and SEM are functioning as hoped and directing the right kind of visitors to the website. If the bounce rate is high, then then SEO and SEM are directing wrong kind of visitors to the website and the marketing actions should be adjusted.

With search engine marketing and social media the metrics are number of impressions, coverage and interaction indicators, such as clicks, click-through-rate, likes, comments and shares. These metrics indicate if the marketing actions increase the brand visibility, customer awareness and do they encourage to conversions. Mentioned metrics are easy to monitor as they come automatically from web analytics program, in Case Firms it is Google Analytics, and from the statistic provided by the social media channels, so they do not require extra investments.

Monitoring customer awareness, satisfaction and attitudes are important offline measures that should be remembered next to the online metrics. Example in customer feedback questionnaire there could be some questions concerning the marketing tactics, so that the important information is received both from online and offline methods.

6.6.2   Responsible persons and reporting frequency

Attached are example tables for the KPI reporting frequencies for the Case Firm with time scale, responsible person and to whom the reporting should be done (see table 9 and 10). The difference with the tables are that the amount of leads and amount of qualified leads need to be done manually by gathering data and the rest of the key metrics can be collected automatically from the analytics and be send directly to responsible persons email automatically.

Table 9. Example on KPI reporting frequency made by collecting data.

KPI Control				
KPI metric	How often?	Method?	Responsible person	Whom to report
Amount of leads	Weekly	Manually	x	x
Qualified leads	Quaterly	Manually	x	x

In table 10 there are identified different metrics that needs to be monitored daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly. Customer journeys, customer behavior and digital marketing evolves quickly, so it is important to monitor certain metrics daily and weekly in order to direct the digital marketing actions and execute agile digital marketing. By testing, learning and evolving the right and most effective marketing actions can be identified.

Table 10. Example on KPI reporting frequency gathered automatically.

KPI Control				
KPI metric	**How often?**	**Method?**	**Responsible person**	**Whom to report**
Conversion rate(s)	Daily	Automatically	x	x
Bounce rate	Daily	Automatically	x	x
CTA (Call to action -buttons)	Weekly	Automatically	x	x
SEM: impressions	Weekly	Automatically	x	x
Pages visited	Weekly	Automatically	x	x
Visit duration	Weekly	Automatically	x	x
Amount of unique visitors	Monthly	Automatically	x	x
Amount of returning visitors	Monthly	Automatically	x	x
Channel of traffic	Monthly	Automatically	x	x
SoMe: Page likes	Quaterly	Automatically	x	x
SoMe: followers	Quaterly	Automatically	x	x

By deciding the monitoring person and to who the reporting should be done there will be clear responsibilities and the monitoring becomes as one of the work routines. The person to whom the reporting will be done is responsible to initiate development actions if need-ed. Summary of the daily and weekly indicators will be presented in weekly meetings and the summary of monthly and quarterly figures will be presented in monthly meetings. At the same time there should be monitoring on the used amount of budget and how much there is resources for new initiatives. This way the budget will not be exceeded as it is monitored along the marketing tactics.

7   SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The development project's main purpose was to develop small consultancy enterprise digital marketing and create a digital marketing strategy that will increase competitive advantage and enable agile digital marketing with data-driven decisions. With the development project the Case Firm expected to receive concrete recommendations and tools on what efficient digital marketing strategy requires. The need for developing digital marketing was identified inside the organization as there was no previous marketing strategy and due to this, marketing actions were irregular, unplanned and spontaneously executed with no monitoring.

Utilized methods were SOSTAC Planning framework, SMART Goal setting method and semi-structured interviews with qualitative data analysis, which were introduced in chapter 2.3. SOSTAC Planning framework was utilized while creating the digital marketing strategy for the Case Firm and SMART Goal setting was used when determining the objectives for the digital marketing strategy. The Case Firms digital marketing strategy's objectives were to increase customer awareness, brand visibility, attract new potential customers and eventually increase sales. Semi-structured interviews and qualitative data analysis were implemented while collecting up-to-date information from marketing professionals and the interviews results were then utilized while creating the digital marketing strategy. The chosen methods proved to be suitable for creating digital marketing strategy and receiving timely and relevant information from the marketing professionals.

The main research question was how to create a digital marketing strategy for the Case Firm that enhances competitive advantage? The framing questions were how to develop Case Firms digital marketing during the next three years and how digital marketing will change in the near future according to marketing professionals? Also what recommendations there are for creating successful digital marketing strategy and how to find the right channels to reach the organizations potential and existing customers?

Answers for the framing questions were gathered mostly from the marketing professional's semi-structured interviews and their experience based answers. All the interviewed marketing experts identified knowing the customer as primary step while creating a digital marketing strategy and also the only way to identify the right marketing channels for reaching the customers. The other recommendations for creating a successful digital marketing strategy were that digital marketing is a strategic decision, sales and marketing should be combined as close to each other as possible, ensuring continuous online visibility, remembering human-to-human approach in content and leading with data-driven decisions. According to marketing professionals the future trends are video format in content,

growing need of digital marketing experts and the opportunities artificial intelligence will provide for more personalized marketing. Answers for all the framing questions were achieved.

Based on theory part and marketing professional's interviews it was identified four main principles while developing digital marketing and creating a digital marketing strategy in 2018: 1) focus on online visibility with mobile first, 2) know your customers, 3) continuously develop digital marketing actions with data-driven decisions and 4) remember human-to-human approach and video in the content production. By focusing on these principles the digital marketing tactics and strategy were chosen for the Case Firm. The emphasis was on online visibility with new scalable website, search engine optimization and search engine marketing as well as reference marketing, inbound marketing tactics, social media presence and data gathering as marketing actions. In order to gain relevant and timely data from the marketing actions several key performance indicators were chosen. By monitoring the key metrics an organization is able to identify best marketing channels for lead generation, recognize marketing actions that are not efficiently functioning and alter, improve and optimize the marketing actions in agile way.

In the beginning the Case Firms vision was to find out-of-the-box approach to digital marketing. Unfortunately this vision was not achieved as the basic fundamentals, like properly functioning website, needed first to be organized. After the fundamentals of digital marketing actions are implemented there could be time for innovation and finding new ways to execute digital marketing in their field.

The Case Firm had only one competitor that utilized digital marketing strategy in their marketing actions. For this reason creating and executing digital marketing strategy the Case Firm creates competitive advantage over the competitors that do not utilize digital marketing strategically and due to this, the main research questions objective about competitive advantage was achieved. According to the Case Firms CEO this development project was one of main strategic initiatives in the Case Firm in 2018.

7.1 Evaluation

The advantage with the findings received from the theory part and the marketing professional's answers were that the findings can be generalized and applied in various organizations in different fields. As long as there is interest to utilize digital marketing as business initiative and the ability to see the possibilities digital marketing can deliver for sales department and revenue growth. The recommendations received from the marketing pro-

fessionals for creating digital marketing strategy can be utilized in both smaller and bigger enterprises.

Repeatability of creating digital marketing strategy is high and by utilizing the SOSTAC planning framework various organizations can create similar digital marketing strategy that contains the same main principles as in the development project. Also similar kind of enterprises with the same size and operation area providing services in the business-to-business environment could choose similar digital marketing actions as there has now been chosen for the Case Firm. SOSTAC Planning framework offered a good foundation for which the digital marketing strategy was easy to create and there were clear steps which made the process easy to follow. While collecting the information on the business field and the organization itself, the Case Firms CEO Kari-Matti Sahala was in a significant role and provided generously his time and knowledge in order to achieve the most applicable digital marketing strategy for their organization.

The validity of the development project was good as it provided accurate representation of the current state of digital marketing in 2018 and answered for all the research questions. The Case Firm received up-to-date information on digital marketing, its trends and recommendations on how to make efficient digital marketing strategy. The Case Firm also got a ready-made digital marketing strategy that they can execute. Though, the Case Firm can see after the implementation of the digital strategy does the strategy enhance their competitive advantage. The choices made in the digital marketing strategy have been made according to the Case Firms needs, size and resources, and there was clear development actions for the Case Firms digital marketing for the next three years.

The developer's knowledge-base on different digital marketing tactics and KPI's has affected to chosen digital marketing actions and the objectivity of the development project. Some other developer with different knowledge-base could have emphasized different aspects on the digital marketing strategy, but in this work the focus has been mainly on the marketing professionals recommendations. One's personal experiences affect also to the interpretation of the marketing professionals answers even though it has tried to be done the most objective way.

Compared to the discussion presented in the theory part about online visibility, customers making the buying decision before contacting the sales people and mobile being the first method for information search the developed digital marketing strategy aims to respond to all of these needs. With new scalable webpages and by utilizing SEO & SEM the Case Firm can provide required information online and be easily findable also with mobile friendly site. Though, the Case Firm should pay close attention to the content they pro-

duce so that right kind of visitors will be attracted to the webpages and the website responds to the algorithms required by the search engines. The interviewed marketing professionals emphasized the importance of video format in content production and this should be taken more into account when creating content, even though it is not the most preferable form for the content producers in the Case Firm.

The Case Firm has a good understanding on how digital marketing can assist to achieve the organizations growth objectives and these can be attained when the digital marketing tactics are applied. For the execution of the created digital marketing strategy the size of the organization might bring challenges in form of resources, such as personnel, time and investment resources. For personnel resources the Case Firm can consider outsourcing, hiring own part-time marketing expert or dividing the marketing tactics and content creation with several people. The advantage with utilizing inbound marketing tactics is that the inbound distribution channels are free and it makes the inbound marketing methods more cost-effective than example traditional offline marketing methods. Due to the cost-effective nature of digital marketing and ability to monitor the development in real time, the Case Firm decided to make the created digital marketing strategy as their main marketing strategy.

The Case Firms CEO has trust on the created digital marketing strategy and the Case Firm has even started to execute some of the digital marketing actions already during the development project. The development project has had real impact on the business and it will affect how the marketing actions will be implemented in the near future in the organization.

7.2   Recommendations

For future research it would be interesting to know how the artificial intelligence will affect the marketing in future and what will be the marketing tactics that it will enable. Another important future research topic in digital marketing would be how GDPR and E-privacy has affected in organizations marketing and what effects there will most likely be in future.

Recommendation for future marketing actions in the Case Firm is to familiarize with all the different marketing automation systems, survey these platforms advantages and disadvantages and compare which marketing automation system would best meet the needs of the organization and which one will be possible to connect to the existing CRM system. Another recommendation is to increase the knowledge on their main customer segments, gather data from the key performance indicators and utilize this information to better serve and reach the right audience. With the new website it would also be recommendable to

monitor the user experience, how the webpages convert and possibly utilize A/B testing with the pages.

If the Case Firms marketing budget increases according to the digital marketing strategy they could also consider utilizing paid advertisement example in LinkedIn, where it is possible to target the marketing messages to enterprises management layer. It could be a good way to increase online visibility and reach the right audience in their market.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire in English

Back ground questions:

- How long have you worked with (digital) marketing?
- What is your education?
- What is your profession (title)?
  Workplace?
- Will you give permission to mention your name in the thesis?

Questions:

- What is currently the most effective marketing method in digital marketing? (example text, video, image etc)?
- And in the future?
- How does digital B-to-B marketing differ from B-to-C (business-to-customer) marketing?
- What digital marketing channels are valuable in B-to-B (business-to-business) marketing?
- What kind of content is most effective in digital B-to-B marketing?
- What are the best tools for digital B-to-B marketing?
- What digital marketing tools would you recommend to small and medium sized growth searching enterprises?
- What practical recommendations there are for organization that wishes to develop their digital B-to-B marketing?
- Where do you search/ find up-to-date information on digital marketing and its development?
- What are at the moment the new trends in digital B-to-B marketing?
- What are the weak signals in digital marketing now?
- How will digital marketing develop during the next three years?
- What kind of effect will this have?
- How would you utilize this?
- What kind of digital marketing will be the most effective in future? And why?
- What will decrease/ diminish from digital marketing in the future?
- Who or which sectors are the pioneers in digital marketing in your home country?
- What about internationally?

- How can automation be utilized in marketing?
- Can B-to-B marketing utilize Big Data?
- What resources there are?
- How effective do you find marketing that is based on Big Data?
- What are the advantages of Big Data and marketing automation?
- What are disadvantages of Bid Data and marketing automation?
- What are risks/ challenges in digital marketing?

- Who marketing professional would you recommend to interview next?

Appendix 2: Questionnaire in Finnish

Taustakysymykset:

- Miten pitkään olet työskennellyt (digitaalisen) markkinoinnin parissa?
- Mikä olet koulutukseltasi?
- Ammatti (titteli)?
  Työpaikka?
- Saako tarvittaessa nimesi ja tittelisi mainita YAMK -opinnäytetyössä?

Aihekysymykset:

- Mikä on tehokkain markkinointiviestinnän muoto digitaalisessa markkinoinnissa nyt (esim. teksti, video, kuva jne.)?
- Entä tulevaisuudessa?
- Miten digitaalinen B-to-B markkinointi eroaa B-to-C (Business-to-Customer) markkinoinnista?
- Mitkä digitaaliset kanavat ovat hyödyllisiä B-to-B (Business-to-Business) markkinoinnissa?
- Millainen sisältö on tehokkainta digitaalisessa B-to-B –markkinoinnissa?
- Mitkä ovat parhaimpia työkaluja digitaalisessa B-to-B markkinoinnissa?
- Mitä digitaalisia markkinoinnin työkaluja suosittelisit pienille ja keskisuurille kasvuhaluisille yrityksille?
- Millaisia käytännön vinkkejä antaisit digitaalista B-to-B –markkinointia kehittävälle yritykselle?
- Mistä etsit/ löydät ajantasaista tietoa digitaalisesta markkinoinnista ja sen kehityksestä?
- Mitkä ovat tämän hetken uudet trendit digitaalisessa B-to-B markkinoinnissa?
- Mitä heikkoja signaaleja digitaalisessa markkinoinnissa on havaittavissa?
- Miten digitaalinen markkinointi tulee muuttumaan seuraavan kolmen vuoden sisään?
- Millaisia vaikutuksia luulet tällä olevan?
- Miten hyödyntäisit tätä?
- Millaisen digitaalisen markkinoinnin ajattelet olevan tehokkainta tulevaisuudessa? ja miksi?
- Mikä digitaalisessa markkinoinnissa tulee vähenemään/ häviämään tulevaisuudessa?

- Ketkä ja mitkä toimialat ovat digitaalisen markkinoinnin edelläkävijöitä kotimaassasi?
- Entä kansainvälisesti?
- Millä tavoin automaatiota voidaan hyödyntää markkinoinnissa?
- Miten B-to-B markkinoinnissa voidaan hyödyntää Big Dataa?
- Mitä datalähteitä on käytettävissä?
- Miten tehokkaana pidät Big Dataan perustavaa markkinointia?
- Mitkä ovat Big Datan ja markkinointi automaation hyvät puolet?
- Mitkä ovat Big Datan ja markkinointi automaation huonot puolet?
- Millaisia haasteita/ riskejä digitaalisessa markkinoinnissa on?

- Ketä markkinoinnin ammattilaista suosittelisit seuraavaksi haastateltavaksi tähän kyselyyn?