

Developing an effective email marketing strategy through a newsletter for the case company

Jalofoods

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Abstract

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Abstract <p>Covid-19 pandemic has shut down the whole world and affected businesses. Communicating with customers has become more important than ever. Email is still one of the best marketing tools to communicate and engage with customers. This research's main objective is to understand email marketing today and create an email marketing strategy for the case company on that basis.</p> <p>This thesis has deductive approach and both quantitative and qualitative research methods are used. The primary data was collected through an online survey made for the ideal customers and from an interview with the case company's marketing chief. The secondary data for this research was collected using internet and literature.</p> <p>In this thesis, the theory of digital marketing is presented. To be able to create email marketing strategy, theory of email marketing strategy is also presented. After theory, empirical research and data analysis will be carried out.</p> <p>Findings from this research introduced an email marketing plan for the case company. The results showed that ideal customer are interested to receive cooking recipes via email.</p>		
Keywords email marketing, email newsletter, digital marketing, marketing strategy		

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1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Living in a pandemic has affected a lot of businesses in a bad way. Covid-19 pandemic dominated the year 2020 and tight restrictions were made around the world to prevent the virus to spread. Everything got shut down and people were not allowed to live their normal life and meeting other people. This has brought troubles with communicating with each other. Most of the communication had and still has to happen online. It has affected everyone's personal life as well as different types of business.

Companies have been forced to come up with new ideas to keep the business going. Continuing to communicate with the customers even when everything is closed, is necessary for companies to survive. Digital marketing has become more and more valuable for businesses. Using only one digital communication channel is often not enough and other strategies have to be made. According to Hanna, Swain and Smith (2016, 2) email is still the most effective tool to use when communicating directly to a specified individual. It allows businesses to have one-to-one communication with customers. Email marketing as a part of digital marketing strategy helps companies to engage with customers and build brand awareness (Jenkins, 2008. 2).

The case company for this research is a Finnish food company called Jalofoods. Since 1989 Jalofoods has been producing organic and sustainable tofu in Tammisaari. Jalofoods is a domestic pioneer of plant-based protein. Jalofoods operates in Finland their products can be found in many supermarkets, eco stores and on the menus of many restaurants and cafes (Jalofoods, 2020b).

Currently, Jalofoods focuses its digital marketing on social media channels and its website. Communication with the customers and building brand awareness is an important part of their business. Covid-19 pandemic has inspired them to create an email marketing strategy as an addition to their digital marketing strategy. The purpose of this research is to create an effective email marketing strategy for the case company Jalofoods to help them to engage with the customers more.

1.2 Thesis Objectives, Research Questions and Limitations

This chapter introduces the thesis objectives, the purpose of the thesis, research questions and limitations. It starts with thesis objectives and ends with the research questions.

The research objectives are explaining to the reader what the purpose of the thesis is and what it is trying to accomplish. Research objectives are showing how research questions are answered. (Saunders et al. 2015, 45-46.)

The main objective of this thesis is to understand what kind of newsletter potential customers for Jalofoods are interested in. Jalofoods does not have a newsletter for their existing customers who could be interested in getting news regularly by email. Jalofoods want to improve their interaction and relationship with the customer. The goal is to guide the customers forward in the buying process.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze today's email marketing trends and on that basis to create an effective email marketing strategy for Jalofoods. This requires a strong understanding of email marketing in general. The thesis will go through the basics of email marketing and newsletter campaigns step by step.

The main research question of this thesis is:

- How to develop an effective email marketing strategy for case company Jalofoods?

The sub-questions of this thesis are:

- What is email marketing?
- What kind of email newsletter the ideal customers are hoping for?

1.3 Theoretical Framework

Literature is an important part of the thesis and it is used many times in this thesis. The first time literature has a part in the research is when the writer produces research ideas. The second time literature is reviewed for the understanding of the research topic. The third time when literature plays a role is at the part when research findings are discussed and linked to the theoretical framework in the development plan. (Saunders et al. 2015, 70-71.)

In this thesis, theory comes before research to explain important concepts of email marketing to the reader. This helps the reader to understand the topic before the empirical research. (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2010, 59-60.)

The goal of this thesis is to help the case company to use email marketing, especially email newsletters as a part of its digital marketing plan to interact more with customers. The theory of email marketing is needed to achieve this goal. To understand what email marketing is, it is necessary to explain the concept of digital marketing. The SOSTAC model is used in this part to introduce the basics of digital marketing. Defining the concept of an email newsletter is the last part of the theoretical chapters.

1.4 Research Methodology and Data Collection

In this subchapter, the research methodology and data collection are explained. There are different ways how to collect data and to use it in research. The process starts from choosing a research approach. There are three different research approaches that are deductive, inductive and abductive. approach. In the deductive approach the research starts with a theory that is later tested in the research. Inductive research works the other way around. It starts with collecting data and building a theory based on that. The last one is an abductive approach which means moving back and forth from theory to data. (Saunders et al. 2015, 145-148.)

The next step to think about is a suitable research methodology. The two main research methods are quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method often refers to data that can be analyzed with numbers. An example of a quantitative method is a questionnaire. The qualitative method refers to non-numerical data. An example of this method is an interview. Mixing both quantitative and qualitative methods is common. (Saunders et al. 2015, 165.) In this thesis, both quantitative and qualitative methods are used. The figure below summarises the research approach, research methodology and data collection.



Figure 1. Research methodology and data collection

1.5 Thesis Structure

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the thesis. It is divided into 6 sub-chapters that are: research background, thesis objectives, research questions and limitations, case company introduction, theoretical framework, research methodology and data collection and thesis structure.

Chapter 2 introduces the case company Jalofoods to the reader. Since this thesis is being done for a case company, information about the case company is needed. This chapter provides information of the products of the case company and its current marketing methods.

Chapter 3 is the theory chapter for this thesis. This chapter focuses on explaining what digital marketing is, how email marketing is a part of it and what email marketing means in general. It includes the theory of email marketing strategy and introduces different types of marketing emails.

Chapter 4 is all about empirical research. It shows the whole research process and includes all the data collected for the research. Research results are analyzed in this chapter.

Chapter 5 introduces an email marketing strategy for the case company. The plan is based on the theoretical research that was introduced in chapter 3 and finished with the data collected for this thesis that was shown in chapter 4.

Chapter 6 is the conclusion chapter that summarizes the whole thesis. It includes 3 sub-chapters that are answers to research questions, validity and reliability and suggestions for further research.

The structure of the thesis is presented below in figure 2.



Figure 2. Thesis structure

2 Case Company Jalofoods

Jalofoods is a Finnish company making organic plant protein since the beginning of 1989. The company is a pioneer in the Finnish plant protein business. They are producing organic tofu and tempeh in Tammisaari. Products are made using organic soybeans and domestic legumes (Jalotofu, 2020a). The case company Jalofoods commercial name is Jalotofu which can be seen in their logo, products, website, social media pages. Image below presents Jalofoods logo.



Image 1. Jalofoods logo (Jalotofu, 2020a)

When Jalofoods started operating 30 years ago, most of the Finnish people have not even heard about tofu before. Since the beginning, they have believed in their vision of the importance of plant-based food. Jalofoods goal is to create and offer products that can be a part of people's everyday life. (Jalotofu, 2020b).

Jalofoods offers products for every taste and need that include 7 tofu products and 3 tempeh products in the market. The newest addition to the market is Roasted Serie tofu that has two versions: natural and spiced (Jalotofu, 2020c). Jalofoods products can be found in many grocery stores, eco stores and on the menus of many restaurants and cafeterias (Jalotofu, 2020b). The images below are introducing Jalofoods Roasted Serie tofu packages.



Images 2 and 3. Roasted tofu (Jalotofu, 2020c)

Jalofoods are sharing many different recipes for every product they have to make cooking easy. Recipes are inspiring and making the products easily approachable even for people with suspicions. Everyone can find a recipe that suits their taste and cooking habits. Recipes can be found on Jalofoods' website and from its social media channels.

2.1 Marketing at the Case Company

At the moment Jalofoods is being active on its social media channels Instagram and Facebook. On Instagram, Jalofoods is posting approximately 2-3 times per week. They are also active on Instagram stories and re-posting a lot of their posts there. A big part of their marketing is collaborating with other companies and social media influencers. Another important marketing channel is their website. The website includes a blog corner that is made to inspire customers with recipes, cooking techniques, taste pairs, people, responsibility and good vibes. (Jalotofu, 2020d).

3 Email Marketing as a Part of Digital Marketing

3.1 Definition of Email Marketing

Internet and electronic devices are a big part of today's world. Communication with others happens online and messages are sent in a digital form. Email is one of the most used communication tools by almost everyone. People are using it on a daily basis and it can be argued that email addiction may exist. Because of the huge number of email users, email is an important tool for marketers as well (Hanna, Swain, Smith, 2016. 3-4.)

Email marketing is a marketing process that happens through email. It is a way to communicate with customers and delivering wanted information to them (Dodson, 2016. 121.)

Email marketing helps with building and strengthening customer relationships, creating trust and loyalty and improves awareness between the company and the customer. It is a popular tool among all marketers and it has been proved to be successful. The reason why it is so popular is that it collects a lot of data, lets you personalize the messages and is cheap to use (Jenkins, 2008.) Email marketing makes beneficial the fact that it is highly measurable (Hanna, Swain, Smith, 2016, 41).

3.2 Digital Marketing

To understand what email marketing means it is necessary to first understand the concept of digital marketing. Digital marketing includes all the marketing actions that happen in the digital world. Digital marketing strategy often includes email marketing actions. When talking about digital marketing strategy, the SOSTAC model often comes up. The name SOSTAC comes from the following words: situation analysis, objectives, strategy, tactics, actions and control. The model's purpose is to help create different kinds of plans. Many marketers are using the model to create digital marketing plans and marketing plans in general (Chaffey, Smith, 2017 3-4.) This sub-chapter tells shortly how the SOSTAC model is used.



Image 4. SOSTAC Model (Antevenio, 2020)

The figure above shows how the SOSTAC model works. It gives an overview of where the process starts and which way the planning process is going.

Situation analysis - Where are we now?

The first part of digital marketing or any other plan is situation analysis. This part answers the question “Where are we now?”. The situation analysis should include the following fundamental analyses: customers, competitors, partners, competencies, performance and market trends (Chaffey, Smith, 2017.)

Everything starts with deep customer analysis. It is important to analyze the customers and get all the possible information out of them. After that competitors and partners need to be analyzed to understand who they are. Finally, competencies, performance and different market trends analyses are made to finish the situation analysis. Fundamental analyses at this part of the digital marketing plan are helping a lot in upcoming parts (Chaffey, Smith, 2017.)

Objectives - Where do we want to be?

Objectives are specifying the way where the company wants to be. In this part, it is essential to specify concrete goals for the company. There are several approaches to how the objectives can be defined. Different approaches and models are helping to define the concrete objectives. The approaches show what are the usual objectives but the specification is left for the marketing department. The company can decide which approach to use and specify the objectives based on the specific approach (Chaffey, Smith, 2017.)

Approaches that can be used are called:

- The KPI Pyramid
- The Big 4: Revenue, Margin, Satisfaction and Brand value
- The 5s Objectives
- The RACE Approach

Strategy - How do we get there?

Strategy answers the question “How do we get there?”. This part reasons how the objectives are achieved. A marketer can create several different strategies and then compare the strategies and choose the best one. Other people like to define tactics first and then create the strategy based on the tactics. That is called retrospective strategy building. In digital marketing, the strategy is about how much resources are used on different channels. A clear strategy has to be made on how to use digital channels (Chaffey, Smith, 2017.) In this report, the digital channel is email and the strategy is made for that.

Tactics - Which tactical tools do we use to implement strategy?

Tactics are supporting the big digital marketing strategy. By answering the question “Which tactical tools do we use to implement strategy?” the tactics are created. Digital tactical tools are the key in this part of the plan. Different tools work better for certain tasks. The tactical matrix chart can be made to help to define the tactical tools. Tactics and strategy are often mixed-up together but it is essential to know the difference and implement both separately in the digital marketing plan (Chaffey, Smith, 2017.)

Action - Which action plans are required to implement strategy?

This part answers the question “Which action plans are required to implement strategy?”. Actions are all about carrying out the work that has to be done. Every tactic should contain several actions. Actions need to be defined and after that carried out to keep the business running. By motivating, training and communicating with the staff, actions are more likely carried out in a wanted way. Even the best marketing strategy plan can fail if the actions are not clear and detailed (Chaffey, Smith, 2017.) One action can be for example changing the product price.

Control – How do we manage the strategy process?

After actions, control is needed to see how the digital marketing plan is working. Without control, the plan may fail and it is too late to realize it when the campaign is over. Measuring the selected data daily puts the marketer in control of how the marketing plan is going. Control is all about specifying the data that needs to be measured, how often it is done and who does it. If something is not working the way it wanted, changing tactics and actions can save the marketing campaign (Chaffey, Smith, 2017.)

3.3 Email Marketing Strategy

Email marketing is effective part of a bigger marketing plan. It works well as a part of a digital marketing strategy (Gunelius, 2018. 24). This sub-chapter focuses on the steps that are needed to create an email marketing strategy.

The first step of email marketing strategy is to define who are you targeting and why. It is important to think about the purpose of starting an email strategy. Setting up defined objectives for the plan is necessary to get started. Objectives for email marketing strategy can be for example to increase sales, build a relationship with the customers or build brand awareness. A business can set up several different objectives for a strategy. (Damian, 2017. 163.)

The next essential steps can be divided into four categories that are data, design, delivery and discovery. These four steps keep in inside more defined steps that help you create an effective email marketing strategy. Let's take a look at the data first. (Dodson, 2016. 122-123.) Figure 3 below demonstrates the email marketing process.

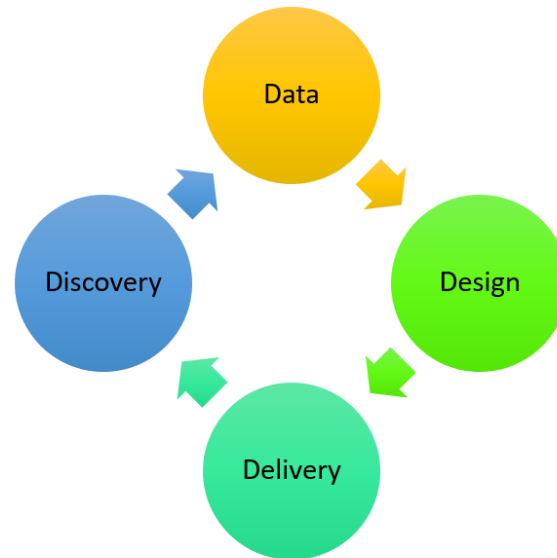


Figure 3. Email marketing process

Data – Subscriber management

This step starts with collecting email addresses for your subscriber list. There needs to be a subscriber list to perform an email marketing strategy. With subscriber lists, quality is more important than quantity. When creating a list of subscribers the end goal should be to build a list of subscribers that you can interact with and build a relationship with. There are different channels from where to collect a list of subscribers. Subscribers can be collected either offline or online. Offline methods can be for example sharing printed material, collecting subscribers in events and in stores when serving a customer. Typical online methods for collecting subscribers are for example through the company's website with sign-up forms, through social media channels with draws and linking sign-up forms or with pop-up sign-up forms when a customer is in the buying process. (Dodson, 2016. 127-128.)

The next step with subscriber management is to create different customer segments. Segmentation allows the company to provide personalized emails to subscribers. Customer segments can be made for example based on demographics, geography and history. (Dodson, 2016. 132). Another way to build customer segments is based on demographic and psychographic features or behavioral features (Gunelius, 2018. 139-142). Demographical features can be gender, age, culture and education. Geographical features are based on the location of a subscriber. History as a customer segment feature tells what kind of history the subscriber has as a customer with the company. (Dodson, 2016. 132.) For companies that have an online webstore where customers can be signed in when making a purchase,

it is possible to create customer segments based on their behavior. Behavioral features can be for example clicks, purchases, the amount spent, buyer loyalty and pages visited on the company's website (Gunelius, 2018. 141).

Design and content

When the subscriber list is collected and segmented, it is time to think about the design of an email. The goal at this stage is to design the email in a way that the subscriber wants to engage with it. At this stage, it is important to understand what kind of content would interest the subscribers. (Dodson, 2016. 135). There are several email service providers online, that are helping with the email marketing process. A part of what the email service providers offer are different email templates to use when designing an email. One popular email service provider is Mailchimp which is a professional email tool for businesses (Mailchimp, 2021b).

Aspects that need to be taking into consideration when designing an email are (Dodson, 2016. 138-141):

- **Relevancy of the content:** This means sending the right content to the right customer group. Not all marketing emails are relevant to everyone on the subscriber list.
- **Structure of the email:** Using clear headings and subheadings is the first step when creating a structure. Catch the reader's attention immediately to encourage them to read further. Email can be divided into several paragraphs to make it lighter to read.
- **Call to action:** The purpose of a call to action is to produce click-throughs to your email.
- **Imagery:** Adding images to emails is another way to make them lighter to read. Images should be relevant to the content of the email.
- **Suitable for all devices:** When designing an email it is important that the email works properly on all devices.

Delivery schedule

Timing is everything to succeed in an email marketing strategy. Defining a delivery schedule is the next step of the email marketing strategy. There is a difference with timing in business-

to-consumer and business-to-business email marketing strategies. If the company is targeting consumers, normal 9 to 5 working hours might not be the best time when to send a marketing email. Consumers are more likely to check their personal email in the morning before going to work or in the evening after work. For business-to-business marketing, the optimal time when to send an email is either between 10 am to 12 pm or 2 pm to 4 pm. (Dodson, 2016. 134).

The next step is to think about how often to send marketing emails. There is no clear rule on how often new marketing emails should be sent. To help to define the regularity of marketing emails, testing is often needed. But testing different delivery schedule also acquires analyzing (Damian, 2017. 166). This leads us to the final step of the email marketing strategy which is discovery.

Discovery

The final step of the email marketing strategy is discovery. This measuring and analyzing the email marketing campaigns. To succeed in email marketing it is necessary to analyze how the email marketing campaigns are performing (Dodson, 2016. 143). There are several different metrics to use when analyzing email marketing campaigns. Important email marketing metrics are (Damian 2017. 164. and Dodson, 2016. 144-145.):

- Open rate: This shows the percentage of subscribers that opened your email
- Click-through rate: This shows the percentage of subscribers that opened your email and clicked a link on that email
- Unique click-through rate: This is the total number of unique subscribers who clicked a link on that email
- Total opens: This shows the total numbers when subscribers opened your email
- Unique opens: This shows the total number of subscribers who opened your email
- Unsubscribes: This shows the total number of subscribers who have unsubscribed from your email marketing list
- Bounce rate: This shows the percentage of emails that were not delivered to the subscribers.

The purpose of these metrics is to help a company to analyze its email marketing campaigns and make correct changes if necessary.

3.4 Different Types of Marketing Emails

When thinking about email marketing, newsletters often come up to mind. But email marketing is much more than just email newsletters. For this research, it is necessary to know that newsletters are just a part of email marketing strategies. (Bernius, 2017)

There are as many different ways to categorize marketing emails as there are different types of marketing emails. An easy way to understand different types of emails is to divide them into three main categories. The main email marketing categories are relational emails, promotional emails and transactional emails. All categories have several different types of marketing emails inside of them (Bermejo, 2019.) Sending newsletters is not enough for an email marketing strategy. An effective email marketing strategy should include different types of emails.

Relational emails

Relational email's purpose is to deliver new information for the subscribers. These emails are not selling anything directly and the main idea is to build a relationship between the company and the subscribers. Relational emails can be for example newsletters, company updates, content announcements, blog articles or surveys. (Bermejo, 2019.)

Newsletters are informative emails that are sent regularly to subscribers (Bernius, 2017). The purpose of a newsletter is to build brand awareness and share new interesting information with the subscribers (BigCommerce, 2021).

Company update emails include information about the changes in a company. The content of these emails can be for example related to new employees, partnerships or new features (Bermejo, 2019).

Promotional emails

Promotional emails are usually offering a promotion for the subscribers. The purpose of these emails is to sell a product or a service. These emails are driving subscribers to the website and because of that they often have a higher click-through-rate. Promotional emails

include special offers, product launches, event invitations and campaign emails. (Bermejo, 2019.)

Special offers

Discounts, coupons and any other special offers that are offered via email are called special offer emails. The meaning of these emails is to create sales and improve the marketing ROI (Return on Investment). In these emails, it is important to tell the subscriber that they are exclusive and the special offer is only for the subscribers or they are getting the offer before others (Bermejo, 2019.)

Seasonal campaigns

Seasonal campaign emails are sent to the subscribers for a special holiday or an event. The emails can be sent to the subscribers before the holiday, during it or even after it (Bermejo, 2019.)

Transactional emails

Transactional emails are sent to the customers because of an action they have made. These emails are often sent automatically. Examples of these emails are order confirmations, receipts, welcome emails, feedbacks and security check emails. (Bermejo, 2019.)

Welcome emails

These emails are sent to customers when they become a subscriber. It is a great opportunity to tell the new subscriber important information about the business and how everything works. This needs to be welcoming for the customer to not scare them away (Bermejo, 2019.)

Feedback

The key to a successful business is to get feedback from the customers. Sending email right after purchase or other transaction is an easy way to get feedback about the buying

process, product or service. These emails are strictly asking for feedback and usually include a call to action (Bermejo, 2019.)

4 Empirical Research and Data Analysis

This chapter introduces the reader to how the empirical research was done for this thesis. Part of this is to show how and what data was collected for the research and analyzing the data. First, empirical research is introduced to the reader and then data collection and data analysis. Empirical research consists of a survey shared with the potential customers and an interview with Jalofood's marketing chief. The questions of the survey can be found in the Appendices (Appendix 1). Also, the questions used in the interview can be found in the Appendices (Appendix 2).

4.1 Empirical Research

As mentioned in chapter 1.5 Research methodology and data collection, there are two main methods that can be used in the research. These methods are qualitative and quantitative research. In this research, both qualitative and quantitative methods are used. The quantitative method is often referred to as numerical data such as surveys, graphics and statistics. The qualitative method refers to non-numerical data such as interviews and video clips. (Saunders et al. 2015, 165.) Both of these methods are used in this research.

The primary data for this empirical research was collected via an online survey and an interview. The survey was shared in a vegetarian food-related Facebook group to reach ideal customers for Jalofoods company. The survey was also shared through my contacts who are interested in vegetarian and vegan food. The purpose of the survey was to find out what kind of a newsletter would be interesting for potential customers. Another purpose was to find out what ideal customers are thinking about newsletters in general and how often they would hope to receive new ones. The survey takes from 2-4minutes to answer and it includes 11 multiple choice and open-ended questions. The survey was done in Finnish as the ideal customers are native Finns.

The purpose of this research is to build a deeper relationship with the customer by creating an email marketing plan through a newsletter for Jalofood. To create an email marketing plan, an interview with Jalofood's marketing chief was needed to gain knowledge about Jalofood's goals and objectives. Part of the interview was also to find out what is Jalofood's marketing strategy at the moment and how email marketing could be a part of it. The interview was done by handing out the questions beforehand and having the actual interview in a video call.

Secondary data in this research was used in the literature review and comparing competitor's email marketing. Comparing was done by taking a look at what ways competitors are using to collect subscriptions and subscribing to see how the email marketing is done.

4.2 Data Collection

This sub-chapter introduces all steps of the data collection. The figure below shows the reader the different steps of the data collection process.

Time	Action
December 2020 - March 2021	The theoretical part of the research
December 2020 - February 2021	Collecting survey answers
January - May 2021	Collecting and analyzing competitor's newsletters
February 2021	Interview with the case company Jalofood's marketing chief
March - May 2021	Analysis of the survey results

Figure 4. Data collection

The writing process of the thesis started in November 2020 after finding the case company and narrowing down the subject of the thesis. The first step after narrowing down the subject was to formulate the research questions. After this, the thesis plan report which was the base of the introduction chapter was made. The next step for this research was to collect existing data about email marketing and email newsletter for the literature review. At the same time, the survey was formulated and shared with the ideal customers. The draft of the interview questions was shared with the case company's marketing chief on 4th of February 2021 and the actual interview has held 10th of February 2021. The information of the competitor's email marketing and email newsletters was collected as secondary data via online during spring 2021.

The survey was made with Google Forms and it was first shared in a vegan food-based Facebook group size of 6000 members in December 2020. To gather more responses, a 50€ gift card to K-Group was drawn among all respondents. The survey was open for two weeks and after that more results were needed and the survey was also shared with my contacts and contacts of my contacts who belonged to the ideal customer's segment. After all 40 responses were gathered which was a bit under the goal of 50 responses.

The interview with the marketing chief of the case company was held over Google Meets video call. The interview was structured the same way as the draft of interview questions shared beforehand.

4.3 Data Analysis

This sub-chapter analyses the data that was collected from the empirical research. The data includes analyses of the results of the survey and results of the interview.

4.3.1 Survey

The survey was made with Google forms and it had 11 questions. To get more respondents a 50€ gift card to the K-Group was drawn among all the respondents who wanted to participate in the draw. The last question of the survey collected the email addresses of the people who wanted to participate in the draw. Only 10 first questions of the survey are analyzed in this chapter. The survey questions are in Finnish because the ideal customers are native Finns. The survey got 40 responses in total.

The first seven questions were about email newsletters. The purpose of those questions was to find out what ideal customers think about email newsletters and what they would hope from a newsletter if they subscribe to one. Questions 8 and 9 asked about the age and gender of the respondents and question 10 asked if the respondents want to participate in the draw.

The first question was about if the respondents are subscribing to any vegetarian-related email newsletter. The figure below shows that 90% of the 40 respondents are not subscribing to any vegetarian-related email newsletter. In numbers that means that 36 of the respondents does not subscribe to any email newsletter yet. The answers can mean that there are not many newsletters available for vegetarians or the respondents are not familiar with available newsletters or respondents are not interested to receive newsletters via email.

1. Tilaatko tällä hetkellä mitään kasvisruokaan liittyvää uutiskirjettä?

40 responses

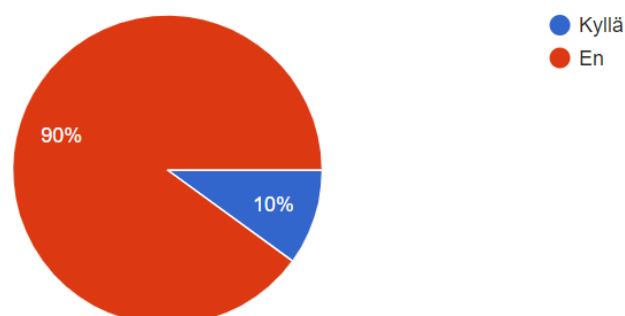


Figure 5. Question 1. Are you currently subscribing to any vegetarian food based newsletter?

The second question was only for the respondents who answered yes in the first question. The question's purpose was to figure out what vegetarian-related newsletters there are and respondents are subscribing to. The figure below shows that it got 3 responses and all the respondents are subscribing to the Vegaanihaaste newsletter. Another newsletter that the respondent is subscribing to is Ruohonjuuri's newsletter.

2. Jos tilaat, niin minkä yrityksen?

3 responses



Figure 6. Question 2. If yes, then which one?

The survey question in the figure below is about if the respondents are interested to receive any newsletters via email. The results show that 62.5% of the respondents would be interested to receive vegetarian-related newsletters via email. That means 25 out of the 40 respondents are interested. The answers show that not all people hope to get newsletters in email. There can be different reasons for that answer. Email newsletters have their own stigma and some people consider them as junk mail. But the results show that over half of the respondents are still interested and that can prove that most of the people are willing to news and information about the topics they are interested in.

3. Oletko kiinnostunut saamaan kasvisruokaan liittyviä uutiskirjeitä sähköpostin kautta?

40 responses

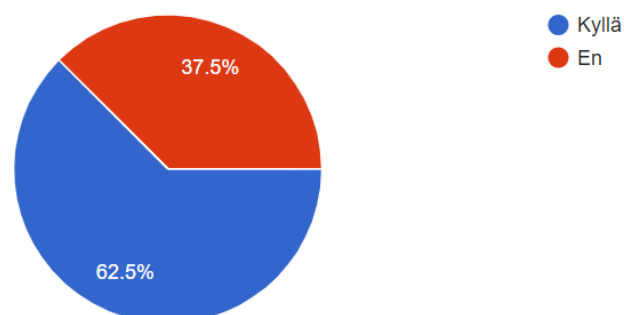


Figure 7. Question 3. Are you interested in receiving vegetarian food based newsletters via email?

The purpose of survey question 4 was to figure out what kind of content would be interesting for the ideal customers. In this question, it was possible to choose multiple different content topics. The figure below shows that recipes are the most interesting content among the respondents, with 34 respondents answering that. That means 85% of the respondents are interested to receive recipes and in this case to vegetarian recipes. The interest order for other content topics going from highest to lowest is tips (17 answers), new trends (15 answers), cooking technique (11 answers) and news (9 answers).

4. Minkälainen uutiskirjeen sisältö sinua kiinnostaa eniten?

40 responses

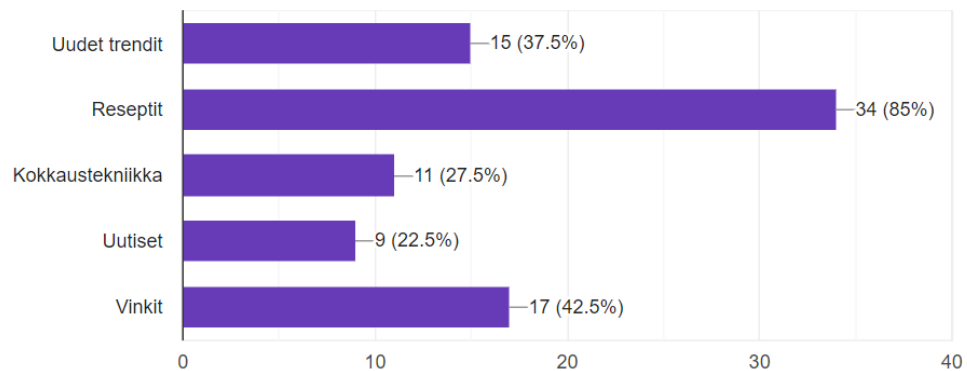


Figure 8. Question 4. What kind of newsletter content interests you the most?

Survey question 5 was about the change of content style in newsletters. The figure below shows that 90% of the respondents would hope that content style would change when subscribing to a newsletter. It proves that most of the respondents would hope to receive different styles of newsletter when subscribing to one.

5. Toivotko uutiskirjeen sisällön tyylin vaihtelevan?

40 responses

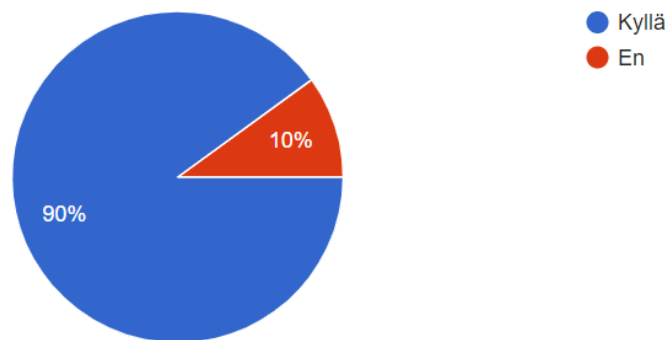


Figure 9. Question 5. Do you wish the style of newsletter's content to vary?

The purpose of question 6 was to figure out often the respondents would like to receive a new newsletter when subscribing to one. The most answers got the choice ones in a month with 45% and 18 answers in total among the 40 respondents. 12 respondents (30%) of the total respondents would hope to receive a newsletter once in two weeks and 8 respondents (20%) would hope once a week. The least answers got the choice once in two months with only 2 responses (5%) among all the responses.

6. Kuinka usein toivot saavasi uuden uutiskirjeen?

40 responses

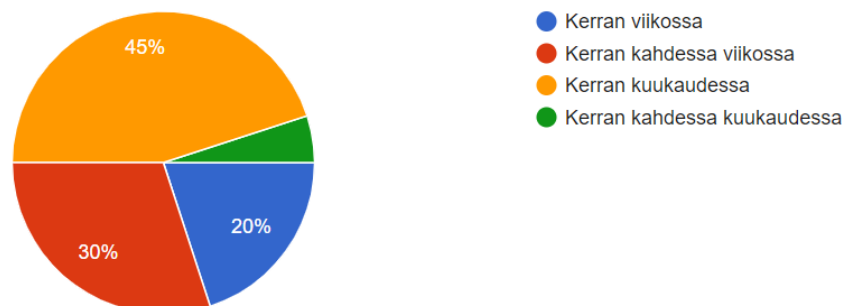


Figure 10. Question 6. How often do you wish to receive a new newsletter?

The purpose of question 7 was to figure out if the ideal customers would hope the newsletter to be personalized for example with their name on it. The figure below shows that 24 (60%) out of the respondents would like the newsletter to be personalized for the subscriber for example with their name on it.

7. Toivotko että uutiskirje olisi personoitu esimerkiksi tilaajan nimellä?

40 responses

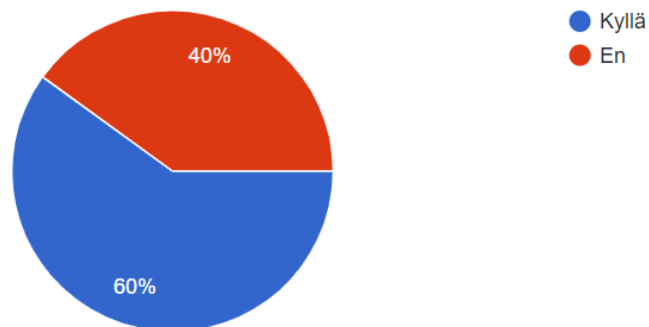


Figure 11. Question 7. Do you wish the newsletter to be personalized, for example with the subscriber's name?

Survey question 8 was about the gender of the respondents. The figure shows that 30 (75%) of the respondents identify themselves as a woman and 10 (25%) of them identify as a man. No one of the respondents identified themselves as "other".

Sukupuoli

40 responses

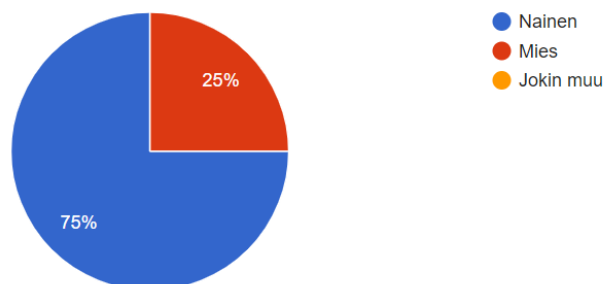


Figure 12. Question 8. Gender

Survey question 9 was about the age of the respondents. The figure below shows that there were respondents between the ages of 15 and 60. The biggest group of the respondents were between 20 and 22 with 21 responses in total among all 40 responses. The other respondents spread evenly between 15 and 60. That results can be read in several ways are that people between the ages of 20 and 30 are more interested in email newsletters, more people in that age eat vegetarian food compared to other age groups, or respondents in that age are more willing to spent few minutes answering a survey made for study research.

Ikä

40 responses

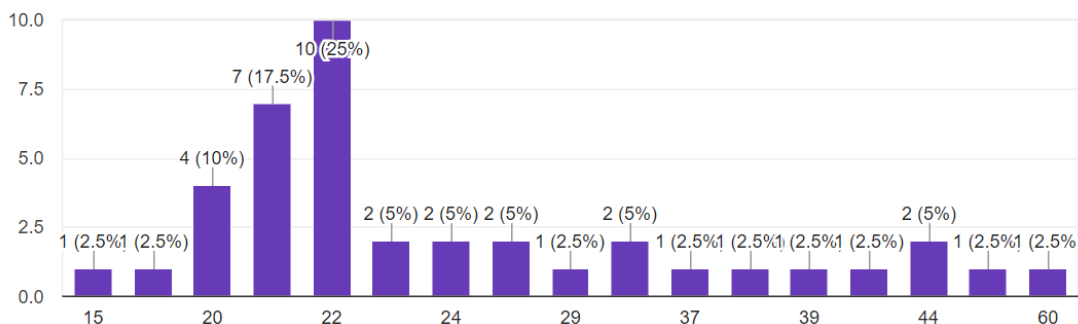


Figure 13. Question 9. Age

The last survey question that is analyzed here was about the gift card draw. The question was if the respondents want to participate in a draw where the price is a 50€ gift card to K-Group. The figure below shows that among all the respondents 33 (82.5%) respondents wanted to participate in the draw.

10. Haluatko osallistua arvontaan jossa palkintona 50€ arvoinen K-ryhmän lahjakortti?

40 responses

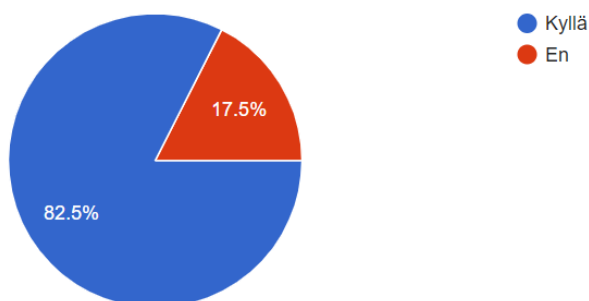


Figure 14. Question 10. Do you want to participate in a draw where the price is a 50€ gifcard for K-Group?

Survey question 11 was for collecting the email addresses of the respondents who wanted to participate in the draw. The email addresses were only used for making the draw and contacting and sending the gift card to the winner.

4.3.2 Interview

The interview with case company Jalofood's marketing chief was held on the 10th of February 2021. The interview questions were sent beforehand and the actual interview made via video call followed the same structure. The purpose of the interview was to find out what is Jalofood's digital marketing strategy at the moment and what are the goals and objectives when starting an email marketing campaign. The most important insights of the interview are referred here below this.

The interview started with finding out what kind of digital marketing the case company Jalofoods is right now doing and in which digital marketing channels. According to the marketing chief of Jalofoods, their most important and also biggest marketing channels are Instagram and Facebook. Other smaller channels they are using are YouTube, Twitter and Pinterest. Another part of the digital marketing strategy is also their website and blog. The website has all the information for the customer journey and it is the most conducive digital channel to improve sales. The last essential part of the digital marketing strategy is Search Engine Marketing (SEM) that includes both Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and keyword advertising with Google Ads. Keyword advertising together with social media marketing is one of their most effective digital marketing tools.

The next thing was to find out what Jalofoods wants to achieve with email newsletters and what is the role of email marketing in their digital marketing strategy. According to the marketing chief, newsletters are desired to provide useful information for the subscribers. The purpose of the newsletter is not only to promote products but to build a community spirit with the subscribers. A newsletter is communication and brand-building tool which goal is to wake up old and new customer's interest. The role of email marketing in a digital marketing strategy for Jalofoods is to support, develop expand their current digital marketing.

The last part of the interview was to find out if there is a plan for the collection of the subscribers. According to Jalofoods marketing chief, the plan to collect subscribers is from social media and from the website. Collecting from social media can happen through draws, adverts and other activations. Collecting the subscribers from the website is through a link and form that is placed on the website and can also pop up when scrolling.

5 Email Marketing Strategy for Jalofoods

This chapter introduces an email marketing strategy through a newsletter for the case company. Now when the literature review about email marketing and newsletters, survey and interview are done it is possible to build an email marketing plan. The first sub-chapter is a SWOT analysis of the case company and the second sub-chapter is an email marketing strategy.

5.1 SWOT-Analysis

SWOT analysis is a strategy tool used by companies to help them identify their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It is widely used in business and in higher education. SWOT analysis is simple to use and understand with the 4-box diagram. In SWOT analysis strengths and weaknesses are the internal factors of the diagram. Opportunities and threats are the external factors of the diagram that can either be helpful or harmful. SWOT analysis is a useful tool for companies if it is understood and analyzed well. (Sarsby, 2016, 1-10.)

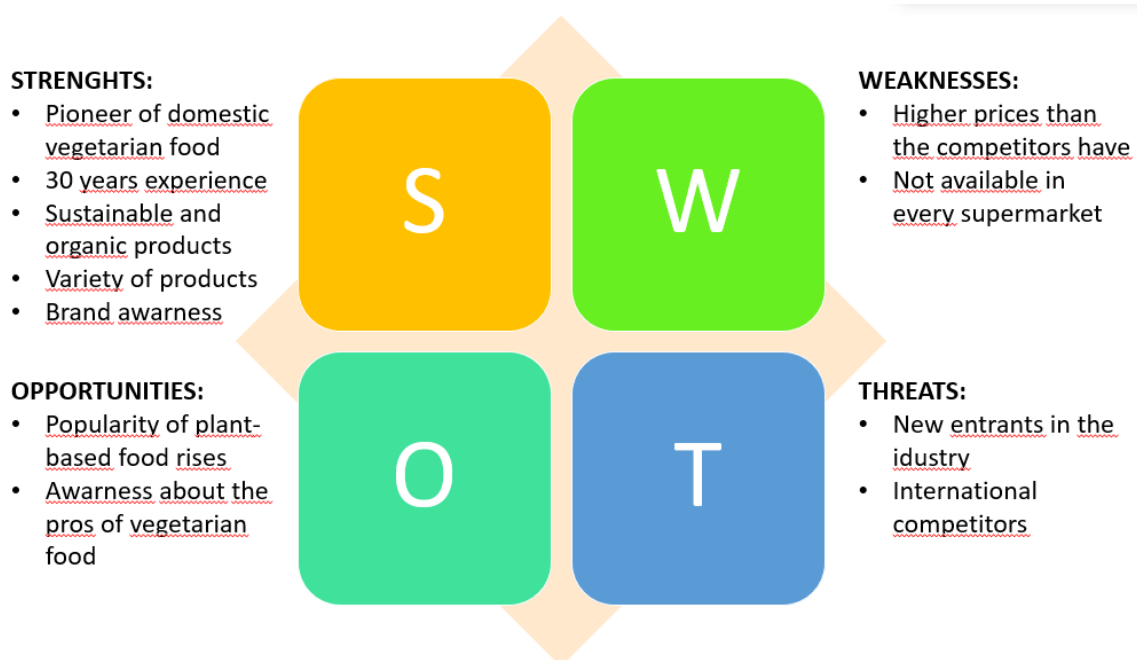


Figure 15. SWOT-Analysis

The Figure above is an organized SWOT analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the case company Jalofoods. The analysis is based on the theoretical

part of this research and comparing the case company with its competitors. When analyzing opportunities and threats as external factors of the analysis, some new information was also collected through news and following current discussions about the topic.

The strengths of the case company are organized into 5 main strengths. Almost 30 years of experience in the industry is Jalofoods biggest strength. It is a pioneer in the domestic vegetarian food industry which makes its brand well known in the community. Jalofoods main product is tofu which is made from soybeans that are organic and farmed in Europe. That makes their products both organic and sustainable. Another strength of Jalofoods is the variety of products they have. As mentioned before in chapter 1, Jalofoods has in total 10 products.

There are also few weaknesses that the case company has. Their prices for the products compared to some of the competitor's prices for similar products are usually a bit higher. The reason why Jalofoods product prices are a bit high is because of the quality of the ingredients and production. Organic and sustainable products normally cost a little bit more than regular ones. Because of the price differences in vegetarian products, some people only pay attention to the price and choose the cheapest product. Another weakness of Jalofoods can be that Lidl does not have its products in its stores to sell. Lidl has its own brands and it can be harder to get the products in Lidl stores. People who have Lidl as their closest supermarket or prefer Lidl as a supermarket for other reasons are not that likely to use Jalofoods product in their daily life.

The biggest opportunities for the case company are linked with the rise of vegetarians and vegans. People are more and more aware of the effects when favoring vegetarian food products compared to animal-based food products. In the media, there are a lot of discussions and reasoning why to favor vegetarian eating habits. Researches have shown that vegetarian and vegan eating habits are normally more sustainable and healthy than mixed eaters' eating habits. Awareness of the pros of vegetarian and vegan food have raised the popularity of vegetarian eating habits. When the popularity of vegetarian eating habits keeps growing, it brings opportunities to Jalofoods to grow their market.

When the popularity of vegetarian eating habits is growing, there is also a possibility for new entrants in the industry. This is one of the case company's biggest threats. Another threat is large international competitors entering and taking over the Finnish markets.

5.2 Action Plan

The main question of the research was "How to develop an effective email marketing strategy for Jalofoods company?". To answer that question an action plan for the case company is needed. The purpose of the action plan is to provide recommendations for the case company on how to build an effective email marketing strategy. The action plan is build based on the theoretical part of this thesis, survey results and interview with the case company's marketing chief. Also, the SWOT analysis introduced before is used as a tool to create the action plan for Jalofoods.

Building a list of subscribers

The first step of any email marketing strategy should be to create a list of subscribers. A subscriber list is a list of all the email addresses that the company has collected through different channels. Email addresses for the subscriber list can be collected through different channels. Segmentation of the subscribers is highly recommended to share the right information with the right subscriber segments (Dodson, 2016. 122-127). There are several different methods for Jalofoods to collect email addresses. The main and probably the most efficient way for Jalofoods to collect email addresses is through their website. On the first page of the website, contact page and about us page there should be a call to action for signing up for a newsletter and a place below where to input your email address. There could also be a pop-up box for signing up for the newsletter when entering the website.

Another way to collect subscribers is through their social media pages. As Jalofoods being active on Instagram and having over 10 000 subscribers there, it would be efficient to add a link for the subscription on their Instagram bio. One post about starting the email newsletters should be posted on Instagram. When sharing recipes on Instagram stories a swipe-up link to subscribing to a newsletter can be shared.

In the future when fairs, festivals and other events are allowed again, Jalofoods can join the events and have their own stand. At the stand, email subscribers can be collected.

After the collection of email subscribers, segmentation is needed to personalize the email communication. For Jalofoods different segmentation features could be demographics, geographics and history. Demographical features can be for example age and gender. The geography feature is based on the location of the subscriber. Jalofoods email subscribers should also be segmented based on their history with the company.

Designing the content

The next part to take into consideration when creating an email marketing strategy is designing the content of a newsletter. Results of the survey made for this research showed that recipes are the most interesting content for potential customers. After that came tips, new trends, cooking techniques and news. 90% of the respondents would wish the content of a newsletter to change. Based on the results of the survey Jalofoods should provide different types of content for the email subscribers considering previous newsletters sent. The focus should still be on sharing topical recipes where Jalofoods products are used.

Another feature of designing the content is the images used in the newsletter. For Jalofoods images are an important part of the newsletters. When taking a look at competitor's newsletters, every competitor has at least one image in their newsletters. Images should have great quality and they should be related to the content. Especially when sharing recipes with the subscribers, images have a huge part in the newsletter. There should be at least one image of each recipe shared and as an addition, an image of the products used can be added to the newsletter.

Every newsletter from Jalofoods should also contain a heading and clear paragraphs. Sub-headings should also be added to a newsletter to create a clear structure. Another important part that should be added to the newsletter is at least one call to action. At the end of every newsletter, there should be a footer that includes contact information, social media accounts and a link where to unsubscribe from the email list.

Newsletters should be designed in a way that the newsletter looks the same on mobile devices and on computers. A good tool for Jalofoods to use in designing its newsletters is Mailchimp. Mailchimp provides email marketing templates that are easy to use and work on every device. Mailchimp also offers the possibility to code your own email template. It is a useful tool for Jalofoods in every step of email marketing. (Mailchimp, 2021.)

Personalization

As referred earlier in this chapter, subscribers should be organized in different segmentations. For different segments, it is possible to share more personalized content for the subscribers. Not all content is relevant for everyone. Based on the results of the survey 60% of the respondents wish the email newsletter to be personalized for example with their name on it. That leaves 40% of the respondents not wishing to receive personalized newsletters

with their name on it. Personalization with subscriber name should not be added to every newsletter if in any. Welcome newsletters and newsletters based on the history of the subscriber are the ones that could be personalized with the subscriber's name.

Defining the delivery schedule

As mentioned earlier in chapter 3, people are often checking their personal email in the mornings before going to work or in the evening after work. When defining a delivery time normal 9 am to 5 pm office hours are out of consideration. When Jalofoods starts its email marketing, different delivery times can be tried out. As a suggestion, they could try sending newsletters between 6 to 9 am.

Another feature to think about with delivery is the regularity of sending new newsletters. Based on the survey results almost half of the respondents are hoping to receive a new newsletter once in a month. When sending a newsletter once in a month, subscribers are not spammed with the same information continually. Once in a month strategy gives a chance to come up with new content every time.

Defining one weekday when to send newsletters is another suggestion for Jalofoods. When subscribers are receiving a newsletter on the same day of the week every month, they can see the regularity. It also gives a chance for them to plan their meals for the week and for example they can decide one weekday when to try out different cooking recipes. Having one day in a month to try out new cooking recipes can become a habit for the subscribers.

Analyzing campaign success

When email newsletters are sent it is important to analyze how the newsletters are succeeding. One way to do this is to send a feedback email to subscribers to ask their thoughts about the received newsletters. Analyzing the email marketing campaigns regularly is necessary to succeed and keeping the subscribers pleased with their subscription. In order to measure how the email marketing campaigns are going, the company's goals need to be defined (Dodson, 2016. 144). The following email marketing metrics Jalofoods should use when analyzing their campaigns:

- Open rate: This shows the percentage of subscribers that opened your email
- Click-through rate: This shows the percentage of subscribers that opened your email and clicked a link on that email

- Total opens: This shows the total numbers when subscribers opened your email
- Unsubscribes: This shows the total number of subscribers who have unsubscribed from your email marketing list

A table of suggestions and actions presented for the case company above can be seen below.

Suggestion	Action
Building a list of subscribers	Collecting email addresses through website and Instagram
Creating subscriber segments	Segmenting subscribers based on their age, gender, location and history
Defining the content	Sending different type of content than previous newsletters
Adding images to each newsletter	One image of recipes shared and additional images of products used
Following a clear structure	Using Mailchimp's templates for newsletters
Personalizing what to send for each subscriber	Utilizing different subscriber segments to personalize newsletters
Defining the delivery time	Sending newsletters between 6 and 8 am in a specific weekday
Defining the regularity of sending new newsletters	Sending newsletters to subscribers once in a moth
Getting feedback	Sending a feedback email to subscribers
Measuring email marketing campaigns	Metrics to use: open rate, click-through rate, total opens, unsubscribes

Figure 16. List of suggestions and actions for the case company

6 Conclusion

This chapter concludes the thesis and presents answers to the research questions. Both sub-questions and the main question are answered. Collected information during the thesis is also presented. After answering research questions, validity and reliability are analyzed. At the end suggestions for further research are expressed.

6.1 Answers to Research Questions

This study aimed to create an effective email marketing strategy through a newsletter for the case company Jalofoods. The purpose for Jalofoods why they wanted to start email marketing was to interact more with the customers and engage with them. The main research question “How to develop an effective email marketing strategy for case company Jalofoods?” is answered later in this sub-chapter after answering the sub-questions first.

What is email marketing?

Email marketing is a structured marketing process to communicate with customers and delivering wanted information for them. The main purpose of email marketing is to communicate with customers online. Email marketing happens through email and it is part of the digital marketing process. Email marketing needs other digital marketing tools around it to be effective. It is often misunderstood communication tool that is related to spam. Email marketing is done in some way by almost all businesses. Businesses can be either providing email marketing or receiving email marketing.

What kind of email newsletter the ideal customers are hoping for?

The ideal customers who answered the survey made for this research were mainly hoping for a newsletter that includes cooking recipes. Another content type that the respondents of the survey wished for was tips and new trends. The ideal customers are hoping to receive a new newsletter once in a month and they hope that the content of the newsletter is different than in previous ones.

Sub-questions of this research are now answered and it is time to move on to the main research question which was:

How to develop an effective email marketing strategy for the case company Jalofoods?

Email marketing strategy is not yet part of the case company Jalofoods digital marketing strategy. As mentioned earlier in chapters 3 and 5 of this thesis, email marketing strategy starts with defining what are the objectives for this strategy. The process continues with

collecting email addresses through the case company's website and social media channels for the subscriber list. The next step is to create different customer segments to provide the right information with the right subscribers. After this, the case company can decide to use an email service provider to help them with the email marketing process. When the email service provider is chosen it is time to define the design of the newsletter. A template can be used to design the newsletter. The design should include heading and sub-headings, at least one call to action, clear paragraphs, relevant images to the content and a footer. After defining the design, delivery time can be decided. A new newsletter should be sent to the subscribers once in a month. The delivery of a newsletter should be regular and structured. Deciding a specific delivery date and time range is an important part when creating the email marketing strategy for the case company Jalofoods. The last step of an effective email marketing strategy for Jalofoods is to follow defined email marketing metrics and analyze them to succeed.

6.2 Validity and Reliability

The aim of this thesis was to find answers to the research questions. Answers to the main research question and sub-questions were discovered. Information for the research was collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected by creating a survey for the case company's ideal customers and carrying out the interview with the marketing chief of Jalofoods. Secondary data was gathered from the literature.

The survey was made to find out what the ideal customers are hoping from a newsletter. 40 persons answered the survey which was a bit under the goal of 50 respondents.

The purpose of the interview with Jalofoods' marketing chief was to gather information about Jalofoods' marketing strategy at the moment and what is their aim when starting an email marketing strategy.

The interview with Jalofoods' marketing chief demonstrates that the research is valid and reliable. The survey results can be used as directional information for the thesis.

6.3 Suggestions for Further Research

As mentioned earlier in the thesis, this research is only focused on a company operating in Finland and the ideal customers are native Finns. The recommendation for further research is to do research about email marketing for a food-based case company in other locations than Finland.

Because Jalofoods not having an email marketing strategy at the moment, this research needs to be tested in practise.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Survey

Uutiskirjekysely

Kysely on tehty opinnäytetyötäni varten LAB ammattikorkeakoulussa, kansainvälisen liiketalouden linjalla. Opinnäytetyön toimeksiantajana on suomalainen kasvisruoka Yritys X ja opinnäytetyön aiheena sähköpostimarkkinointisuunnitelman kehittäminen uutiskirjeen avulla. Kyselyyn osallistujien kesken arvotaan 50€ arvoinen lahjakortti K-ryhmään.

*Required

1. Tilaatko tällä hetkellä mitään kasvisruokaan liittyvää uutiskirjetä? *

Kyllä

En

2. Jos tilaat, niin minkä yrityksen?

Your answer _____

3. Oletko kiinnostunut saamaan kasvisruokaan liittyviä uutiskirjeitä sähköpostin kautta? *

Kyllä

En

4. Minkälainen uutiskirjeen sisältö sinua kiinnostaa eniten? *

Uudet trendit

Reseptit

Kokkaustekniikka

Uutiset

Vinkit

Other: _____

5. Toivotko uutiskirjeen sisällön tyylin vaihtelevan? *

Kyllä

En

6. Kuinka usein toivot saavasi uuden uutiskirjeen? *

Kerran viikossa

Kerran kahdessa viikossa

Kerran kuukaudessa

Kerran kahdessa kuukaudessa

7. Toivotko että uutiskirje olisi personoitu esimerkiksi tilaajan nimellä? *

Kyllä

En

Sukupuoli *

- Nainen
- Mies
- Jokin muu

Ikä *

Your answer _____

10. Haluatko osallistua arvontaan jossa palkintona 50€ arvoinen K-ryhmän lahjakortti? *

- Kyllä
- En

11. Jos vastasit kyllä, mikä on sähköpostiosoitteesi (Käytämme sähköposteja ainoastaan palkintojen lähettämiseen ja osoitteet poistetaan rekisteristä heti kyselyn päättyttyä)?

Your answer _____

Appendix 2. Interview

1. In which channels is your marketing currently taking space?
2. What style of marketing are you currently doing?
3. What is your most productive marketing channel right now?
4. What do you want to achieve with email marketing?
5. What is the role of email marketing in your digital marketing strategy?
6. What is the target group or are there more?
7. What tools will be used in your email marketing strategy?
8. Is it intended to collect newsletter subscribers through the website?

