

Karelia University of Applied Sciences Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)

# **Export Business Plan – Case LashLovers OY**

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Title

Export Business Plan – Case LashLovers OY Commissioned by: LashLovers Oy

### Abstract

This thesis is a case study for LashLovers Oy. The aim is to explore ways and channels for internationalising and entering the British market. The research is qualitative and uses mainly secondary data. The theoretical background focuses on two models of internationalisation that are suitable for small and medium size enterprises. Additionally, the thesis presents the globalisation process from a strategic, tactical, and operative decision-making point of view. The impacts of e-commerce on internationalisation and online sales channels are also covered briefly in the review. At the end of the theoretical part, there are examples of Finnish international cosmetic companies.

In addition to the theory, the main research includes a target market analysis, which is conducted with a help of a business environment analysis and a competitor analysis. The COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit have brought uncertainty to the industry, but consumer confidence and the increased use of e-commerce are providing opportunities for growth. Furthermore, the analysis gives information on the UK consumers and regulatory changes after Brexit. The competitor analysis is done with the use of Porter's five forces tool and a competitor analysis template with three selected direct competitors. The international marketing plan is focused on an entry strategy through an importer/distributor and a brief marketing mix, which can be complemented in the future with information from importer negotiations and contract information.

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**Keywords** 

internationalisation, market research, international marketing

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### 1 Introduction

This thesis is a case study on internationalisation of a small Finnish cosmetics company. The introduction chapter includes an introduction of the commissioner, the goals and purpose of the study, its methodology, and the thesis outline.

### Introduction of the commissioner

LashLovers Oy is a leading Finnish eyelash extension brand offering high quality products since 2011 with a focus on producing, importing and selling lash extension products for cosmetic care professionals. The company trains lash extension professionals in Finland and endorses and invests in in-house product development. LashLovers co-operates with long-term contract suppliers/manufacturers and has a consumer webshop called "Beyond" in Finland. (Company representative 2021.)

The company operates mainly in Finland and engages in international marketing with importing from the United Kingdom and the United States. Products are manufactured in Finland, the European Union, and Asia. For this project, decisions about the target market country and products for export are made before starting the research. The company has chosen exports as a market entry strategy. (Company representative 2021.) This strategy is commonly used by small- and medium-sized enterprises.

The target market chosen for this project is the United Kingdom. This decision is made based on language and the size of the market (Company representative 2021). LashLovers is establishing itself to be a global brand and has chosen to focus on geographical and cultural clusters such as the EU and countries that

have similar cultural values and language (e.g. Anglo countries: the US, the UK, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada).

This research focuses on consumer resale products. The following products are highlighted and used as examples in the research: KICK Lash & Brow Nutrition, Beauty Splash Essence, and Beauty Wash cleansing foam. Pictures of resale products can be found in Appendix 8. A target customer profile is a 20-40 year old female. (Company representative 2021.)

### Goals and purpose

The main objective is to construct an export business plan exploring ways and channels for entering the UK market and obtaining new purchasing power for resale products for LashLovers Oy. The sub-objectives include describing the process of internationalisation and exporting in the digital era, analysing business environment and competitive situation, presenting market opportunities and challenges, recommending market entry strategy and marketing strategies. The study is meaningful for growth of a local company.

### Methodological choices, methods and credibility

This study is conducted with the use of qualitative research. It is mainly a desk research with a use of secondary data (information from articles, reports, websites, etc.). Additionally, during the process I had an opportunity to consult a com-

pany supervisor. The consultation was conducted as one-on-one open-ended interview. Furthermore, I utilized previous information from an internship done in autumn 2020.

Some of the secondary sources can be uncertain or debatable. More research and cross-referencing would need to be done in order to increase the credibility on certain topics. All of the used sources are referenced and the information selected is as relevant as possible. Additionally, the study uses benchmarking and the analysis of documents concisely.

#### **Outline**

The thesis starts with a theoretical background on the internationalisation of a small company in the digital era. Furthermore, benchmarking is used with providing examples of international Finnish cosmetic companies. A target market is analysed with a business environment analysis and a competitor analysis. These create the market research part of the thesis. At the end of the chapter, there is a summary on the possible opportunities and challenges of the market. The last part of the thesis is composed of an international marketing plan that includes a market entry strategy and a brief marketing plan.

### 2 Internationalisation of a small company in the digital era

The theoretical background of this study focuses on two models on international-isation. Based on these models a globalisation process is compiled with the help of literature. The process is viewed through strategic, tactical, and operational decision making. The second part of this review focuses on internationalisation through online sales channels, and the last sub-chapter presents an example of an international Finnish company.

The main themes and concepts are the internationalisation of small and medium sized companies, managerial decision-making, international marketing, exporting, and e-commerce. The concepts of globalisation and internationalisation are used interchangeably in this review. The sources of this review are different text-books, studies, and commercial sources. The theoretical background supports the research question: how do small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) internationalise?

In an international business field, there are many theories and models. One way of classifying them is dividing them into process models (based on behavioural sciences) and models based on resource and network viewpoints. These theories and models complete each other and many of them can be applied right away. Small and medium sized businesses often use the process model. Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul, and Johanson and Vahlne have developed gradual internationalisation models in 1975 and 1977. These models are based on learning, which is a long winded development process. The aforementioned Swedish researchers have formed a model called the Uppsala Internationalisation Model, in which knowledge increases the engagement and investment of resources in internationalisation. It has five stages, and in the first stage a company does not export. In the second stage exporting is occasional, and in the third stage it is more systematic. In the fourth stage the company has a subsidiary, and in the final stage a production facility abroad. In the Uppsala Model companies internationalise to psychologically/culturally close markets first. The benefits of this model include increased knowledge, learning, and experience. (Vahvaselkä 2009, 21, 23–24.)

Another model often used by SMEs is called a network model. Lack of resources, knowledge, and experience are the main drivers for the usage of this model, because with a network it is possible to grow these. Moreover, with these a company has the chance to better position itself in the target market. The resources can be

one's own or owned by a partner and can be used directly or indirectly. (Vahvaselkä 2009, 26.)

### 2.1 Globalisation process of SMEs

Many small- and medium-sized businesses engage in international business around the world. Nowadays, a world-wide perspective is needed in many industries (Albaum, Duerr & Josiassen 2016, 226). Globalisation is beneficial, since it can provide increased opportunities and competitive advantages. In a favourable scenario a company would find large size niches in the country it is planning to expand to. At the beginning of the process it is necessary to set goals and research the target market. (Albaum et al. 2016, 16–17, 26.)

Picture 1 portrays a globalisation process from the point of view of international business management. There are strategic decisions to be made regarding market selection, choice of entry mode, and market research, to name a view. When a project moves forward to an international marketing plan, the management decisions are more tactical.



Picture 1. Internationalisation process. Made based on "International Marketing and Export Management" (Albaum et al. 2016, 16–273).

Small- and medium-sized businesses that operate on a national level are in most cases already global. This is due to the fact that competing with foreign companies makes the company a part of an international market. (Albaum et al. 2016, 127.) When it comes to internationalising further, decision making becomes a crucial part of the process. Decision making can be categorized into strategic and tactical. Strategic decisions can include choice of country, target segment, mode of operation, and timing of market entry. Tactical decisions can include for example product positioning, product adaptation, advertising copy adaptation, media selection, promotion, pricing, and distribution. (Albaum et al. 2016, 28.)

The subchapters of this description of process are divided based on a level of decision. They are split into strategic, tactical, and operational decisions. In this thesis, tactical and operational decisions are considered as overlaying topics. The information in the sub-topic of operational decisions is focused on a period of post market penetration.

### 2.1.1 Strategic Decisions in the Planning Process

This chapter includes information on readiness to enter and how a company could be approaching internationalisation. These affect strategic decisions about market expansion strategies and segmentation. After selecting a country, additional strategic decisions include market entry strategy and possibly the level of exporting. At the end of this sub-chapter, there is information typically included in a market research. Market research helps the company to make strategic decisions on a target country.

Before expanding a company needs to evaluate the readiness to enter a foreign market. For this, it is useful to map out a company's strengths and weaknesses. These can include competitiveness, motivation and commitment towards export, product readiness, skill/knowledge and resources for the venture, and experience/training available. (Albaum et al. 2016, 28.) Some of the subjective barriers

for a company can be scarce communication, lack of market information, excessive documentation requirements, arrangement of transportation, providing of services, perceived risks, and financing sales. Some ways to break the subjective barriers are, attending industry trade shows, focusing on customer quality, growth management, the use of letters of credit, choosing partners carefully, and being patient (Albaum et al. 2016, 30, 34–35). Additionally, market commitment has an effect on perceived opportunities and risks (Eduardsen 2018, 162).

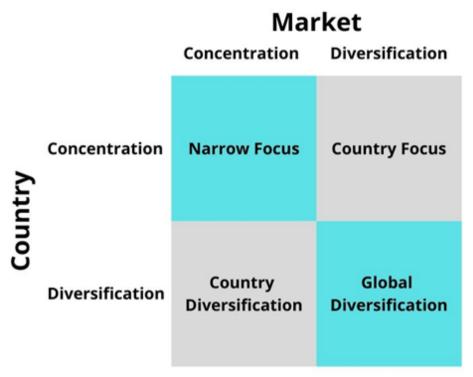
Companies can use both reactive and proactive approaches when international-ising. A reactive approach is unplanned, and a company waits for the initiative for internationalising to come from the outside. One benefit of this approach is short-term profit from unsolicited orders. The proactive approach is marketing oriented, systematic, and a formalized process. It involves market research and is often more costly than the reactive approach. The proactive approach is usually used for primary markets and reactive for secondary markets. SMEs with little or no experience in exporting often use a reactive approach. Factors affecting market selection and decisions are the familiarity of the target market country and intuition. (Albaum et al. 2016, 207.)

Familiarity can stir companies to expand to neighbouring countries. This type of action is called an experience-based market selection. Selection methods can be divided into expansive and contractible, and the experience-based selection usually belongs to the expansive method. Exporting to a similar country to the home market requires minimal adaptation. (Albaum et al. 2016, 210.)

When expanding the company's market, there are options for different strategies, for example, a market concentration strategy and a market spreading strategy. Furthermore, companies can use something in between these two strategies (Picture 2). The degree and type of risk affects strategic decisions. A market concentration strategy gives an opportunity to improve in export learning and gain

experience, as efforts are focused on a small group of markets. (Albaum et al. 2016, 220.)

# **Market Expansion Strategies**



Picture 2. Market expansion strategies (McDowell 2016). Modified by the author.

One factor affecting decision between market concentration strategy and market spreading strategy is management risk-consciousness. Low risk-consciousness can benefit from market concentration, and high risk-consciousness is better for market spreading strategy. Some of the market factors that affect decisions on strategy are, e.g. market stability and similarity to home market. Similar markets are good for the spreading strategy. A stable market provides a good ground for market concentration. Furthermore, a market concentration strategy requires the ability to pick the "best" markets. (Albaum et al. 2016, 222.)

Additionally, factors that affect leaning towards the concentration strategy are repeat-purchase products, the requirement of adaptation of marketing communication and/or product, and buyer ethnocentrism. Moreover, high costs of communication, order handling, and physical distribution require more investments, which would possibly be riskier with the market spreading strategy. (Albaum et al. 2016, 222–223.)

In order to achieve success in the long run, segmentation is important. This means setting segment preferences and evaluating demand and supply patterns, and company strengths. In a target segment it is good to measure size, purchasing power, and response to marketing efforts. (Albaum et al. 2016, 201–202, 216.) In addition, market definition should not only be limited to a served market. There is potential in an unserved market (meaning the segment to which the marketing efforts are not targeted to) in the future. (Albaum et al. 2016, 201.)

There are many forms of market entry strategies, and the strategy can be divided into entry mode and marketing plan. The entry modes are for example, exporting, establishing a sales subsidiary, licensing, and establishing a production subsidiary. This is a country based decision, and a marketing plan is a market-based decision. (Albaum et al. 2016, 21, 271.)

When selecting the entry mode, matters to take into consideration are the flow of transactions and the flow of physical product. The flow of transactions can be understood as the flow of ownership, and the flow of physical product as movements and storage points. Ownership carries both risk and control, which can affect the decision of flow of transactions. Physical flow is as important as transaction flow, because it can impact transaction flow. The impact is in the involvement of organisations such as banks, transportation companies, and advertising agencies. (Albaum et al. 2016, 272–273.)

Exporting is the most used market entry mode. It is important to foresee advantages and disadvantages of exporting. A carefully planned market research can help in the process. One of the objectives is to see whether people in the target market are similar to people in domestic market, or different? In international marketing an essential mindset is "think globally, act locally". This means that alongside the bigger picture, it is good to adapt to the needs and wants of target market segment. (Albaum et al. 2016, 16, 20–21.)

Furthermore, exporting can be divided into four levels: export surplus, export marketing, overseas market development, and technology development (Albaum et al. 2016, 94). Motives for exporting can be divided into internal and external, and furthermore into proactive and reactive. Examples of internal and proactive motives can include economies of scale, unique product competence, and marketing advantage. An example of an internal and reactive motive can be excess capacity of resources. Foreign market opportunities represent an external and proactive motive, and a small home market can be external and reactive motive for a company. Reactive motives serve as push factors, and proactive motives can act as pull factors. The motives affect the nature of an export decision. (Albaum et al. 2016, 85–86.) SMEs often rely on exporting, since it requires low resource commitment. Resource commitments in this case can be tangible (production plants, subsidiaries' offices, transportation etc.) and intangible (personnel education, advertisement actions, manager's meetings, etc.). (Eduardsen 2018, 162.)

An exporting company needs to retrieve information on potential customers and agents, export opportunities, payments, transport and distribution, and market reports (Albaum et al. 2016, 246). Moreover, important matters for evaluation are cultural, socio-political, legal, and marketing environments. Furthermore, consumer needs and wants, economic levels and structures, market structures and

channels available, ways of doing business, and laws and regulations are included in a market research. Understanding differences between the domestic market and the foreign market helps with the possible challenges during the globalisation process. Some of the market requirements can be formulations, names, and packaging. Before exporting, a company needs to evaluate market requirements and the ability to respond to them. (Albaum et al. 2016, 16–21, 195.)

A business environment entails societal expectations, which can express concerns about global warming, pollution, wasting of natural resources and residual waste. Different countries and cultures have diverse ethics, values, and customs. Social responsibility for a company has the objective of "conforming to the ethical values of both the host and home nation". (Albaum et al. 2016, 100, 102, 105.)

In addition to the business environment, the following topics are covered in a proper plan: the size of the market, customer behaviour, national and international competition, and costs. A preparation for different demand stages within a country is also good to take into account. The aim of the plan is to provide an understanding of the market and what kind of operational effort is required for exporting. (Albaum et al. 2016, 28, 33–34.)

Internationalisation also requires cultural empathy, and acculturation can bring success to a company. Additionally, culture can impact attitudes towards competition, which needs to be evaluated in a business environment analysis (Albaum et al. 2016, 26, 86, 128). In addition to the culture of a target market, another aspect in an external business analysis is language. It is good to check how a brand name and product names translate to the language of a target market. Furthermore, culture is important in data collection. It is recommended to use a target country's native language in surveys. (Albaum et al. 2016, 198, 252.)

After assessing the readiness to enter a market and the business environment, a planning process can start. Products may need to be tailor-made and tailor-marketed for the new market. (Albaum et al. 2016, 29, 150.) The choice of a market is affected by how developed the economy is, how much market information is available, government attitude, geocultural/political similarity, and market attractiveness. Additionally, marketing channels and the business customs of a country can affect market selection. (Albaum et al. 2016, 197, 217.)

### 2.1.2 Tactical Decisions in the Planning Process

The tactical decisions are focused on information included in an international marketing plan. Additionally, this sub-chapter discusses how the internet affects the internationalisation process, and what is the impact of e-commerce on internationalisation. The following business activities need attention during international marketing: the analysis of the market, the planning and the development of the products, distribution, promotion, price strategy, customer support, and rethinking of organisation structure (Albaum et al. 2016, 19). One combination of marketing methods or tools that is commonly used is the marketing mix. This includes decisions about market entry, products, promotion, channels of distribution, and price. (Albaum et al. 2016, 22–23.)

Nowadays, because of the internet, it is easier and more low-cost to contact customers abroad. For a market driven marketing strategy this opens new possibilities for finding consumer interests and needs regarding products. For a company to be market driven, there is the benefit of being able to adapt quickly. Online marketplaces have made it possible for anyone to join an international market. (Albaum et al. 2016, 22–23, 39.) Additionally, the internet is useful in building business relationships (Albaum et al. 2016, 95).

Relationship marketing is commonly used during the export process. These business relationships form a network. A company can be a part of an industrial network as well. (Albaum et al. 2016, 94.) A company needs to define what the desired characteristics of a market are. Partnering opportunities with a local industry can be of ultimate importance in market selection. (Albaum et al. 2016, 206.)

A study called "Internationalisation Through Digitalisation: the Impact of E-Commerce Usage on Internationalisation in Small- and Medium-Sized Firms" is based on a survey in EU countries. E-commerce includes the buying, selling, and marketing of products. The writer applies the Uppsala Internationalization process model, the IP model. (Eduardsen 2018, 159, 164, 167.) The IP model focuses on taking different levels on internationalization, and according to Eduardsen's article, taking small steps keeps risk taking at a low level. Moreover, the IP model favors experimental learning along with internationalization. However, companies can also gain knowledge through indirect experience, external search, and internal information. Additionally, e-intermediaries can solve the problem of limited knowledge and experience in a target market. (Eduardsen 2018, 162–163, 179.)

The use of the internet for informational and/or transactional purposes was segregated in the study. Based on the study, informational e-commerce usage has a higher impact on internationalisation. Online presence gives opportunities, and the study encourages businesses to have an online presence as a part of its internationalisation strategy. (Eduardsen 2018, 168, 176–177.)

However, if a manager finds internationalisation difficult, an online presence has a weaker impact on internationalisation. In case of a number of perceived barriers, management tends to not respond to opportunities regarding internationalisation. An unexpected finding from the study is that there is no strong positive association between transactional e-commerce and internationalisation (Eduardsen 2018, 173, 180). Another takeaway from the study is that it is not good for

SMEs to expand to too many countries at once, because the business' performance may suffer (Eduardsen 2018, 178).

### 2.1.3 Operative Decisions During Internationalisation

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter tactical and operational are not purely separated sub-topics. This sub-chapter presents information typically examined after entering a market. The information includes the subject of retaining a competitive advantage in the target country and marketing resource allocation.

After establishing a competitive advantage in the new target market, another focus is on retaining it. This can be done with the development of brand recognition, the economies of scale, wide coverage, and the consistency of quality in service and products. (Albaum et al. 2016, 45.) Additionally, auditing marketing knowhow and capabilities needs attention during the whole venture, as well as the adaptation of deliberate and emergent strategies (Albaum et al. 2016, 86, 93).

When operating in multiple countries, companies need to think about marketing resource allocation. Some of the strategies regarding this issue are: uniform strategy, support-the-strong strategy, and support-the-weak strategy. Companies often use variations of these strategies. Sometimes the decision depends on how responsive a market is to marketing efforts. (Albaum et al. 2016, 219.) For an SME the decision about resource allocation is important, because of limited market resources.

Successes and failures of other companies in a target country and industry can help with market research. If the other company has been successful, would it be possible to emulate the actions and increase chances for success? If the other company has failed in an export venture, would it be possible to learn something from them in order to not make the same mistakes? (Albaum et al. 2016, 198.) In Chapter 2.3 there are some examples of Finnish companies that have succeeded in exporting their products to multiple countries.

### 2.2 Online Sales Channels as a Part of Internationalisation Process

This chapter focuses on a digital market place and online sales channels. The topics are examined with keeping in mind a possible digital business partnership and consumer behaviour towards e-commerce. Online sales channels are a part of a digital market place, and businesses include them in a market development strategy. Customer segments affect the digital marketplace. The segments can be divided e.g. demographically, behaviorally, and psychographically (based on characteristics, these answer a question "why your customer buys?"). (Chaffey, Hemphill & Edmundson-Bird 2019, 45, 133, 223.) Picture 3 presents market segmentation options.

# **Market Segmentation**







# Demographics Psychographics

Behavioral

Age
Income
Education
Social Status
Family
Life Stage
Occupation

Life Style
AIO: Activity, Interest, Opinion
Concerns
Personality
Values
Attitudes
Knowledge
Response

Benefits Sought
Purchase
Usage
Intent
Occasion
Buyer Stage
User Status
Life Cycle Stage
Engagement

Picture 3. Market Segmentation (ebcg 2021). Modified by the author with Canva.

The analysis of customer behavior can focus on search methods (generic search, product-specific search, and brand search). A search intermediary (e.g. search engine) impacts results. Another way for customers to find products or a brand is through niche media sites, social networks, aggregators (price comparison sites), super-affiliates, small-affiliates, and blogs. The aforementioned intermediaries would in a preferable case direct a customer to a company and/or destination site. (Chaffeyet al. 2019, 45.)

A digital business strategy can be a part of general marketing strategy. The selective adoption of online channels, which is also called "right-channeling", which means finding the right customer, channel, message, and time for the target market, is a part of the strategy. (Chaffey et al. 2019, 190.) The internet enables companies to find new intermediaries or bypass some of the channel partners. Furthermore, because of the internet, a real-time information exchange with intermediaries is easier. Information exchange can include orders, agreements, performance monitoring, and logistics. Distributors are a part of a downstream supply chain and can add value to a business. (Chaffey et al. 2019, 50–51, 268–269, 279.)

International sales usually require new channel structures. As previously mentioned, the place of purchase can be organized through an intermediary. The following matters are important for a customer abroad: the cost and time of international fulfillment, trust, and the availability of support. (Chaffey et al. 2019, 352.) Additionally, brand familiarity, site design, type of content, accreditation, and recommendations by other customers are important. In regards to trust, some external sources, including social media and friends, can help to build it. (Chaffey et al. 2019, 380.)

Privacy, security and order fulfillment drive trust in online purchasing for customers. In order to feel secure, disclosures, reputation, and guarantees are important. Reviews can also affect a customer's opinion. These can be ratings and comments on a company website, or independent ratings, for example on a forum. In an ideal scenario, a consumer response would evolve from trust to engagement and then purchase, which would follow with loyalty to a brand, and lastly advocacy. Based on information from Statista, in the UK in 2014, the most trusted sources for products were family/friends (60%) and customer reviews (60%). Independent product experts got 43% of the respondents to say they trusted them, and a retailer website got 16%. (Chaffey et al. 2019, 381.)

From a management point of view, key activities in B2B business are outbound logistics and fulfillment. When choosing partnerships, one matter to evaluate is the extent of control (Chaffey et al. 2019, 274, 279). Moreover, when establishing a new online sales channel, some of the needed calculations are revenue from the site, costs from the site, and costs from supporting it. In addition, it is good to set online contribution targets for the venture. This can be a certain percentage per year. (Chaffey et al. 2019, 569, 594.) If a company has multiple channels in the same market, there is a risk of channel conflict unless different channels serve different customers (Chaffey et al. 2019, 341).

### 2.3 Examples of successful international Finnish cosmetic companies

At the end of this review, it is valuable to set benchmark examples of other Finnish companies. This chapter focuses briefly on Lumene's internationalisation journey. Additionally, there are mentions of other Finnish skincare companies at the end of this chapter. Lumene is a Finnish company specialised in skincare, make-up, and haircare. The company's main markets are Finland, the United Kingdom, Russia, the United States of America, Scandinavia, and China (Barner-Rasmussen 2021). Lumene expanded to Russia and the USA through affiliate companies. Moreover, Lumene uses strategic partners such as Ulta cosmetics in the USA,

L'etoile and Sephora in Russia, Lindex in Sweden and Norway, and Fasa in Chile. (Vahvaselkä 2009, 95.)

Forty percent of Lumene's sales come from exports. The company started its internationalisation from Sweden, and their target customers were Finnish expats. Lumene made strategic investments in distribution, branding, and marketing. In the Swedish market local influencers have an important role. An influencer promotes Lumene in his/her own channels and additionally helps the company to recognise trends and interpret signals coming from consumers. The right kind of influencer appreciates the brand they are working with and are real. (Barner-Rasmussen 2021.) When choosing an influencer, it is important to define style, diversity, sentiments, values etc. (Levin 2019).

Lumene's distribution strategy is more selective compared to the beginning of the internationalisation process. The company pays attention to quality more than quantity, and it has shown results even in the USA and the UK. Online sales channels have proven to be important, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. One of Lumene's main partners is a London-based company called Spring. In the UK, Lumene's products are available in John Lewis department stores, and from Autumn 2021 in Marks & Spencer stores. (Barner-Rasmussen 2021.) Lumene's products can also be found on Amazon.

Lumene's target customers are 25–55-year-old women whose values include sustainability, well-being, trendiness, and traditionality. The company finds that word of mouth has a big impact on sales. Influencers are included in this marketing strategy. In beauty events, Lumene has invited influencers to test their products and post content on Lumene's Instagram. The company has different Instagram accounts in different languages. (Ahmed, Ojama, Ratamaa, Stenman & Tikki 2017, 4, 6, 12.)

Supermood, Sophie la girafe Baby, and Mia Höytö are Finnish brands that have also used strategic partnerships in internationalising. A good partner shares the same values and represents the products abroad in a quality manner. Supermood was contacted by the Selfridges department store chain from the UK, and in the US they have an agent who finds new resalers for the products. (Salmi 2017.)

### 3 Target market

This section discusses the target market and it is covered in three parts, which are the business environment of the cosmetic market in the UK, an analysis of the competitive situation, and market opportunities for the case company. The last part summarises the findings of the first two parts.

### 3.1 Business environment of the cosmetic market in the UK

The UK has been a member of the World Trade Organization since 1 January 1995 and was a member of the European Union until 31 January 2020 (World Trade Organization 2021). The business environment of the cosmetics market in the UK is analyzed with PESTEL-analysis.

### 3.1.1 Political factors

In this case study, the political business environment includes political stability, foreign trade policy, and tax policy. The United Kingdom has fairly strong political stability based on the political stability index. TheGlobalEconomy.com describes political stability as an absence of politically-motivated violence and terrorism. (TheGlobalEconomy.com 2021.)

The biggest factor influencing trade between Finland and the UK is Brexit (British exit). The UK leaving the EU means new border requirements, changed responsibility agreements between trading partners, new paperwork, and changes in regulation of product standards. (Webb 2020.) There is a zero tariff between the

UK and the EU. The matters that are affected because of Brexit are custom processes and import VAT (value added tax). If the goods in a parcel are worth over £135, the import VAT is paid by the buyer. If the worth is less than £135 the case company would pay the VAT (GOV.UK 2020.) The standard UK VAT rate is 20%, which is applicable on cosmetic goods (Expatica 2021).

Moreover, Brexit affects intellectual property rights, and in the case of this research, more specifically trademarks (GOV.UKa 2021). For a UK national trademark, the registration process takes around four months if there is no opposition. The trademark lasts in registration for ten years. (GOV.UKb 2021.)

### 3.1.2 Economy

The economic business environment includes economic growth, exchange rates, inflation, real wages, the disposable income of consumers, and retail sales volumes in the UK. Additionally, there are forecasts of GDP and inflation. This chapter provides a general overview of the economic environment in the United Kingdom.

The UK experienced the largest annual fall in GDP in 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit have affected the UK's GDP. Additionally, pandemic restrictions have an impact on household consumption. Furthermore, in 2020 imports rose more than exports, which has affected the country's GDP negatively. (Trading Economicsa 2021.) This might be due to Brexit. After 2021 the GDP is forecasted not to drop as drastically as in 2020 (Statistaa 2021).

In September 2021 retail sales volumes were 4.2% higher than levels in February 2020 (pre-coronavirus pandemic) (Office for National Statisticsb 2021). In 2020 the trade value of the cosmetics and personal care sector in regard to import dropped back to levels comparable with 2016 (CTPAa, 2021). The consumption value of cosmetics and personal care products in the UK in 2019 was around 10.6 billion euros, and in 2020 the worth of UK's cosmetic market was 8,712 million pounds at retail sales price (Statistad 2020; CTPAb 2021). The compound annual growth rate of the UK cosmetics products market is projected to be 3.89%

during 2020-2025 (Mordor Intelligence 2021). The UK is the third largest market for cosmetics in Europe and had 582 cosmetics-based SMEs in 2020 (CTPAb 2021).

The pound's exchange rate was 1 GBP = 1.14 EUR on 12 February 2021 (Exchange Rates UKa 2021). The value of the pound has declined (Exchange Rates UKb 2021). If the euro's value rises, it might affect B2B customer's willingness to buy from the EU countries, since it can be more expensive for them.

The inflation rate was 0.6% in December 2020. Corona restrictions have affected the inflation. All the effects of Brexit are yet to be discovered. Inflation can affect the purchasing power of households. (Trading Economicsb 2021.) The inflation rate is forecasted to rise to 2% in 2025 (Statistab 2021).

Real wages have increased in 2020. However, the number is lower than at the beginning of the year 2008. (Office for National Statistics 2020.) The third quarter of 2020 was good regarding disposable personal income despite the Covid-19 pandemic (Trading Economics 2021). The median weekly earnings of women (full-time employees, age group 22-49) was 565.4 pounds on average (Statistac 2020).

British people spend on average 400 pounds (466.73 € on 7 November 2021) on beauty products yearly (Read 2020). The amount spent on make-up is on average 95.94 £ (111,94€ on 7 Nov. 2021) annually (Fashion Network 2017). Thirty-eight percent of the respondents of a survey conducted by Picodi said they purchase discounted products. Thirty-five percent said that they only purchase when they run out of a product, and 27% buy more impulsively. When listing reasons for selecting a specific product, the order of importance is price (74%), brand name (56%), ingredients (34%), own preferences (28%), influencer recommendations (23%), specialist's tips (23%), and friends' opinions (16%). (Read 2020.) The category of eye-makeup has increased its share to 25% of total prestige make-up sales. Mascara, eye shadow and brow products have been contributing to the growth of sales. (Premium Beauty News 2020.)

### 3.1.3 Social factors

The social business environment of the cosmetics market includes demographical information about customers, customer buying trends and values, consumer confidence, and common consumer types in the UK. The population of the United Kingdom is steadily growing, and the current population estimated at 68,189,661 people (worldometer 2021; Office for National Statisticsa 2021).

In inner London, there are a lot of people between ages of 30-34 and 25-29 (Trust for London 2021). In mid-2020, the median age of inhabitants in London was 35.8 years (Office for National Statisticsc 2020). This can give a potential segment for the geographical segmentation of possible customers. Customers expect functional performance from cosmetics as advertised, a sensorial "wow" factor, and ethical satisfaction (Cosmetics Business 2021).

According to Kantar, Gen Z (9 to 24-year-olds) has been the only generation to drive growth in beauty sales in the UK during 2020. Additionally, the data from Klarna presents that Gen Z spends more on skincare than any other age group. (Allen 2021.) This could indicate that the target market segment for LashLovers could be potentially divided into three groups based on generation, which are Gen Z (born after 1996), Millennials (24 to 39-year-olds), and Gen X (40 to 55-year-olds).

Seventy percent of Gen Z beauty shoppers are referred to as 'beauty enthusiasts'. It is described that these shoppers are constantly searching for the next best beauty products and brands. Moreover, 40% of Gen Z consumers say that diversity and inclusion is most important to them when it comes to brand values. (Allen 2021.)

Based on "UK Consumer Trends Report", in 2015 people were spending on bargain products and spontaneous purchases. Additionally, green buying is driving consumer spending. (Crimson Hexagon 2015.) UK consumers have adapted to online shopping habit quickly during the pandemic (Deloittea 2021).

Considering consumer confidence, in May 2020 the general economic outlook as well as the outlook for personal finances dropped significantly (Oakley & Arrowsmith 2020). However, signs of recovery are present, and consumer confidence is approximately at the same level as before COVID-19 pandemic (Trading Economicsd 2021). In the UK consumers are optimistic about quick economic recovery based on a survey conducted in February 2021. The UK is the most optimistic of the European countries surveyed, and it is predicted that people will prioritize shopping out of home when restrictions ease. (Gill, Günday & Moulton 2021.)

Consumers intend to spend significantly on wellness after Covid-19. The personal care category is predicted to have an increased spike in online purchases post Covid-19. During the pandemic almost three-quarters of consumers have tried a new shopping behaviour. These behaviours include different retailer/store/website, different brands, and new digital shopping methods. The majority intend to continue trying new shopping behaviours. Convenience and value are the main drivers of decisions to change stores shopped. After that comes purpose-driven reasons such as buying local. (Gill, Günday & Moulton 2021.) In the UK 36% of the total retail sales were from e-commerce, and 87% of shoppers have made online purchases in 2020 (Aashind 2021).

Over 50% of Gen Z think that they will move to solely online shopping within the next decade (Stevens 2021). In the UK millennials are more impulsive shoppers compared to other generations (Firstinsight 2019). They also tend to use more subscription box services and spend more money online (Jezerc 2019). Eighty percent of millennials are employed, and 86% search for products online before going to a store to purchase (Bertisen 2019).

One of the current trends is so-called "cleaner living", which is related to climate change anxiety among consumers. These consumers find ethical products important. (Trend-Monitora 2019.) Social and environmental goodw affect the buying decision of one-third of consumers (Trend-Monitorc 2018). Moreover, a study of Siegel and Gale discovered that simplicity is an ultimate driver of brand loyalty.

Based on this study 61% of consumers would recommend a brand because of its simplicity. (Trend-Monitord 2017.)

Another ongoing trend is influencer marketing. Micro-influencers and authenticity are gaining traction (Trend-Monitorb 2019). Six out of ten users of Instagram have bought a product because of the platform. Buyers are more often women than men. Twenty-seven percent of British people have purchased a product endorsed by a celebrity or influencer, and 44% say they would not give attention to a post that is sponsored. (Waldersee 2019.) Marketing to online peer networks has proven to be effective. Ninety percent of people trust the opinions of people they know, and 70% of people trust the opinions of virtual strangers online. (Trend-Monitore 2016.) Additionally, videos have a bigger impact on consumers than photos (Abbas 2021).

Both online and offline marketplaces for cosmetics are used, since half of the growth comes from online sales. Brick and mortars provide the benefit of trying out products before purchasing them. Social media brings benefit and complexity, since it provides great exposure. If the reviews are negative, the product sales can suffer. (Display Mode 2021.) From the UK's population aged 16 to 74, 87% shopped online in 2019. The trend of shopping online continues to grow. (Eurostat 2020.) The large variety of products and low prices are the main reasons for online shopping (Aashind 2021).

When conducting a Google Trends search with the words 'lash extensions', the results fluctuate. The highest point has been at the end of summer 2021, and currently there is a downward trend (October 2021). There are upward trends with the words 'lash serum' and 'lash cleanser'. With 'hyaluronic acid' there are not as much fluctuation as with the other search words.

Based on an Euromonitor white paper, it is useful to group customers beyond demographics. The paper presents ten global level consumer types. For this analysis three consumer types that are common in the UK are chosen for closer review. These are "Impulsive spender", "Undaunted striver", and "Balanced optimist". (Shridhar 2021.)

**The impulsive spender** keeps up with the latest trends, values discounts and bargains and likes to try new products. This consumer type actively uses social media, values experiences more than materialistic possessions, enjoys browsing both online and offline and values convenience.

The undaunted striver is a trendy consumer, who values status and likes to be distinct from others. They want the best products and are willing to spend more money to save time. Furthermore, they want to engage with brands, and pay attention to digital, social media and celebrity endorsements. Their lifestyle includes impulsive purchases, and they also like to experiment with products. Both online and offline platforms are important to them. (Shridhar 2021.)

The balanced optimists are looking for simplifying their lives and like to find bargains. They make small impulsive purchases and value well-being and self-care. Just like with the other two types described earlier in the text, the balanced optimists give significance to an omnichannel shopping experience, which is a blend of all channels and platforms. Dividing customers by consumer type can provide important understanding of their values and lifestyles. (Shridhar 2021.)

### 3.1.4 Technological environment

The technological business environment in the UK includes online shopping behaviour and communication with the target market. Britain has the biggest e-commerce market in Europe. For half of the online consumers, the usage of a phone or tablet is common for searching products, and then the usage of a computer is typical for placing orders. In 2017, 59% of online shoppers bought products via smartphones. (Export Entreprises SA 2021.)

Sixty-seven percent of the UK population uses social media actively. Out of the 45 million social media users, 43 million use Facebook. Forty-three percent of Facebook users considered leaving the platform in 2020. In the UK the majority of Facebook users are between 25 to 34-years old (11.2 million users). (Zivkovic

2021.) Nowadays, it is possible to shop on Facebook, Instagram, and recently also on TikTok without leaving the app (Abbas 2021).

Facebook groups are being used for gathering consumer insights. The groups provide a quick way of getting feedback and applying it to marketing and product development. Facebook has tools such as flash polling, which can be a good way of gathering opinions from customers. A company called Beauty Pie established a Facebook group alongside an official Facebook page. The reasoning behind this was that the group could house consumer-to-consumer conversations and community. A company called Glossier has also a Slack channel and an independently managed subreddit for its most dedicated fans. In the groups there are codes of conducts that prohibit hate speech, bullying and self-promotion from members. (Morosini 2020.) An example of couple of the British Facebook-groups are "The British Beauty Line" (run by magazine called Byrdie) and "Korean Beauty & Skincare" (Bowen 2018).

Nearly 41% of the UK population uses Instagram. Most users are aged 25 to 34. Among 20 to 24-year olds TikTok is a popular platform, and in the UK it is expected to reach 12.5 million users by 2024. The UK's biggest TikTok influencer is Holly H, who has over 16.6 million followers on the platform. In addition to the aforementioned platforms, people in the UK also use a communication app called Snapchat. There were more than 10 million active users of the app in May 2020. A target customer group reached through Snapchat and TikTok would be aged between 20 and 24. (Zivkovic 2021.)

### 3.1.5 Environmental factors

The environmental business environment is examined mainly through consumer attitudes towards the environment in this analysis. One of main consumer types in the UK is the empowered activist. These consumers are concerned with global issues such as environmental concerns, and they try to make a positive impact on the environment through their decisions. This consumer type is looking for products with green and sustainability features or claims. (Shridhar 2021.)

Consumers find waste reduction and sustainable packaging important. About half of consumers want information on recycling the packaging, and 46% want clarity about the sourcing of the products. British consumers take into account sustainability in personal care products. Based on a survey responded to by 2000 UK adults, 32% of consumers are adopting more sustainable lifestyles. Gen Z is active with this trend. (Deloitteb 2021.) Sales of organic and natural beauty markets grew 23% in 2019 (Tandon Copp 2020). In the beauty industry many brands are using glass and cardboard packaging instead of single use packaging (Brown 2021).

Based on a 2011 study on environmental management in SMEs in the UK, larger sized firms are more engaged when it comes to environmental issues (Williams & Schaefer 2012). There is a narrow amount of information available freely online on how engaged the UK businesses are in terms of sustainability. However, there is a government incentive that encourages businesses to take into account the environmental issues. Protection of the environment is one of the social impacts that is considered in awarding a government contract for businesses in the UK (Kaur Grewal 2019).

### 3.1.6 Legal framework

Legal factors in the business environment are matters concerning product labeling and product safety. Since the UK is no longer a part of the EU single market, a distributor in the UK becomes an importer, and there are some changes for placing goods on the Great Britain and Northern Ireland markets (Withey & Jones 2020). One of the requirements of exporting is to include a product information file (PIF) in English. The file should include the following information:

- The description of the cosmetic product
- The cosmetic product safety report
- The method of manufacture and GMP

- The nature and proof of the effect of the product
- Data on any animal testing. (Office for Product Safety & Standardsa 2021, 14.)

Animal testing is prohibited in the UK (Business Companion 2021). Furthermore, in the regulations there is no mandatory text size for the labelling apart from net content; however, the text must be indelible, legible, and visible. The marking of content has a minimum height for the figures, and a table presenting the height depending on net contents can be found in the appendices (Appendix 2.). (CTPAc 2021.) The product labelling requirements are:

- The name and address of the Responsible Person
- The country of origin for imported products
- The nominal quantity of contents
- The date of minimum durability ("Best Before" date)
- Or where the minimum durability is more than 30 months) a "Period After Opening" (PAO)
- The warning statements and precautionary information
- The batch number or lot code
- Product function, when not obvious from its packaging/presentation
- The list of ingredients

The UK supports the use of the INCI system (labelling names). (Office for Product Safety & Standardsa 2021, 20, 25.) A SCPN (UK Submit Product Notification) service is replacing the EU's Cosmetics Products Notification Portal (CPNP) from

1st of January 2021. The UK responsible persons (e.g. importer or agent) will need do the notification. (Office for Product Safety & Standardsa 2021, 15.)

Additionally, the responsible person is liable for ensuring the cosmetic product's safety assessment (Office for Product Safety & Standardsa 2021, 13). Northern Ireland uses the EU regulations for cosmetic products (Office for Product Safety & Standardsb 2021, 4). Having a responsible person in the UK is controlled in a way that if the products are for the Northern Ireland market, the responsible person cannot be based in Great Britain. However, if the products are in Great Britain, it is possible to have the responsible person in Northern Ireland. (Office for Product Safety & Standardsc 2021.)

### 3.2 Analysis of the competitive situation

The competitive analysis of the field is analysed with Porter's five forces tool, and later in the text with a focus on three direct competitors. The Porter's five forces analysis includes the threat of substitute products, the bargaining power of buyers and suppliers, the threat of new entry, and the intensity of rivalry (UKEssays 2018). In the cosmetics industry some of the customers might opt out for simple and natural home remedies for beauty. One of lash serum's substitutes is castor oil (Jay 2019). The price of castor oil on Amazon is between 6 to 10 £. This makes the substitute product cheaper, but further study would need to be made in order to find out how likely customers opt out for castor oil over lash serums.

The bargaining power of buyers is high in the cosmetics industry. This is in terms of price changes but can also be measured in terms of quality. High bargaining power usually means unpredictable demand patterns. Customers have a large variety of options available to them internationally. (UKEssays 2018.) Additionally, there is a low switching cost for customers of retail cosmetic products. The effort and time of changing a brand or shop is minor, and a monetary switching cost tends to be also low because of the affordability of products. On the contrary to the bargaining power of buyers, the bargaining power of suppliers is low in the industry. This is also due to the high competition. (UKEssays 2018.)

On a large scale, the cosmetics industry is very competitive with big global companies such as Avon, Revlon, Clinique, Estee Lauder, and others (UKEssays 2018). There are smaller companies in the lash extension industry. A list of the UK competitors can be found in the appendices (Appendix 1.). Customer preference of national brands in clothing and footwear is around 22%. Seventy-five percent are indifferent about whether the brand is from UK or international. (Statistae 2019.) These percentages could be comparable to cosmetics, because both clothing and cosmetics belong to an appearance care spending category.

The threat of new entry can be managed with establishing customer loyalty and providing unique products. However, in the industry as a whole, there is a low threat of new entrants. This is because of the costs of entry and current competition in the industry. (UKEssays 2018.)

In the cosmetics field there is a lot of competition on both the national and international levels. There are around eight direct competitors in the UK (Appendix 1.). However, there is one that has folded during the COVID-19 pandemic. For this analysis three competitors are chosen for a closer review. These are Studio-LASH, London Lash, and Lashbase. StudioLASH is chosen because it represents international competition, which has entered the UK market. The other two companies are chosen based on their size. The competitive analysis matrix (Table 1.) displays a view of product scope compared to LashLovers' products.

	Lash cleanser	Lash serum	Hyalyronic acid	Mascara
StudioLASH				X
London Lash	x			
Lashbase	x	X		
LashLovers	x	Х	x	X

Table 1. Competitive analysis matrix.

Furthermore, competitor analysis is conducted with the help of a competitive analysis template (Tables 2 and 3) from Someka. Information in the templates is mostly taken from competitors' company websites and social media pages. As seen in the competitive analysis matrix (Table 1.) LashLovers has a good variety

of retail products compared to the competitors. Additionally, the price is competitive. The advantages of the competitors include the fact that they are global and well rooted in the UK market. Additionally, London Lash has a strong local image connected to the capital of the UK. The target market of these companies is estimated based on statistics gathered on lash salon customers by a lash manufacturing company in China. It represents one way of grouping customers (Dolvlashes 2021).

Moreover, other interesting information includes the estimated revenue of companies, which can indicate the size of the firms. London Lash is the largest company in this grouping. The template shows also communication channels and the number of Instagram followers. The products and services provided by all these companies are similar; however, StudioLASH and London Lash seem to focus mainly on professional lash products and training. Pricing among all four companies is difficult to compare because there is a lack of one common product within all companies. The price of the London Lash "lash shampoo" may be a reseller price, and that is why it is lower than that of LashLovers.

LashLovers		StudioLASH	
Company Profile	Founded in 2011	Founded in 2011	
Key Competitive Advantage	Quality, wide selection, price	Global	
Target Market	18 to 55 year-old women	18 to 55 year-old women	
Revenue	708 000 €	3,2 million*	
Communication channels	Facebook, Instagram, TikTok	Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, Magazines	
Amount of Instagram followers	2 421	1 057	
Product & Services	Professional products, retail, training	Mainly professional products, training	
Pricing (retail)	Mascara 19.9€, foam cleanser 32€, serum 32€	Mascara 49.95 Australian dollars (31.8€)	
Distribution Channels	Professionals, online store, brick and mortar	Professionals, online store	
Warranty	14 days return period	7 days notice period for defective products	
Strenghts	Variety of products	Cultural similarity	
Weaknesses		Small selection of retail products	
Opportunities	New in the market		
Threats	Competitors	Competitors	

Table 2. Competitive analysis template 1. \*the exchange rate of pound was checked on 11. Nov. 2021.

There is no mention of brick and mortar distribution channels for the competitors' products. London Lash and Lashbase have products in more than one online store. Based on the information from companies' websites the competitive advantage of LashLovers could be the variety of resale products. The strengths of StudioLASH and London Lash are that they are international, and in case of London Lash even global. London Lash has free EU shipping for its products. The strength of Lashbase is the long experience in the UK market.

Exposure on social media and networking in the UK provide opportunities for London Lash and Lashbase. For LashLovers, entering a market as a new brand could be considered an opportunity, because of attracting customers who like to try new products and are searching the next best beauty products. One of the main threats in the market is extensive competition in the beauty product industry.

	London Lash	Lashbase
Company Profile	Founded in 2014	Founded in 2009
Key Competitive Advantage	Community, image, price	Product quality, cutomer service, price
Target Market	18 to 55 year-old women	18 to 55 year-old women
Revenue	6,9 million €*	4,3 million €*
Communication channels	Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Pinterest	Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, TikTok, Linkedin, Pinterest, Twitter, tv
Amount of Instagram followers	221 000	97 100
Product & Services	Mainly professional products, nails, training	Professional products, retail products, training
Pricing (retail)	Lash shampoo 16,95€	Lash treatment serum 35€*
Distribution Channels	Professionals, online stores	Professionals, online stores
Warranty	14 days return period	14 days return period
Strenghts	International (204 countries)	Experience in the market and PR
Weaknesses		
Opportunities	Exposure, networking	Exposure, networking
Threats	Competitors	Competitors

Table 3. Competitive analysis template 2. \*the exchange rate was checked on 11. Nov. 2021.

In relation to the communication channels, StudioLASH has the biggest number of views on Youtube (Appendix 3.). All of these companies have a below average Instagram engagement rate (Appendix 3.). The British companies have some activity on Pinterest. StudioLASH has eight followers, London Lash 4,200 followers, and Lashbase 411 on the platform.

## 3.3 Market opportunities and challenges for case company Lash-Lovers Oy

The overview of market opportunities and challenges is analysed based on the information in the PESTEL-analysis and competitor analysis. In the UK market, there are couple unknown factors affecting the business environment. One of them is the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and the other one is Brexit. These make estimates of economic consequences hard to predict. Despite these factors, the UK market provides many opportunities.

The size of the market is enticing, as is the growing popularity of eye-makeup. London has a large number of target customers; however, one of the biggest competitors is also based there. Gen Z is an active group of potential customers especially for skincare products.

In a country comparison within Europe, the UK is the most optimistic about economic recovery and has the biggest e-commerce market. Other opportunity creating factors include consumers' openness to new retailers, stores, and websites. Furthermore, the upward trend of search words, "lash serum" and "lash cleanser" strengthen the prediction of growing demand. Some of the customer types that are good for targeting, are the "impulsive spender" and the "undaunted striver", since they are most likely to try new products. The "balanced optimist" is also a good choice, since they value self-care.

The active use of social media also creates opportunities for a new company. Moreover, there is no strong ethnocentrism towards appearance enhancing products, and the direct competitors do not have a big variety of resale products. Based on the business environment, it can be justified to claim that the UK has a trend conscious consumer society, which uses both brick and mortar and online stores.

The market challenges include the Brexit related regulatory changes, high competition (both indirect and direct), the threat of substitute products, and the unpredictable demand patterns in the industry. Additionally, entering the British market can bring along some cultural barriers with the people coming across as reserved and distant at first. It is described that in an ideal situation, business introductions are started through a connected third party. This is particularly true with older companies; however, the newer companies are more open-minded. (TMF Group 2021.)

### 4 Market entry and export marketing mix

This chapter includes a recommended market entry strategy and a brief marketing plan based on a marketing mix tool.

### 4.1 Market entry strategy

Based on market requirements and the typical internationalisation strategy of SMEs, a network of distributors is a recommended export channel option for the UK market. A list of potential distributors can be found in Appendix 4 and list of distributor websites in Appendix 5. Moreover, after contacting distributors the process of negotiation and contract drafting can start. Some of the matters for discussion are services, requirements for business relationship, territory, commercial terms, training, customer service standards, and a marketing plan (Linton 2021). The most common distributor agreements are exclusive distributorship, sole distributorship, non-exclusive distributorship, and selective distributorship (Rogers 2017).

## 4.2 Export marketing mix

The export marketing mix includes product, price, place, and promotion. The products in this marketing plan are the same ones as mentioned in the introduction. Resale products such as KICK Lash & Brow Nutrition and Beauty Wash cleansing foam are compatible with eyelash extensions, although they can be used with or without the extensions. Beauty wash has a gel version of the product.

Compared to Lahsbase's and StudioLASH's resale products, LashLovers positions itself in a slightly lower price range. In terms of place, the identification of key intermediaries and the determination of the length and the complexity of distribution channels is important. In this plan the distribution channels would include a distributor and a retailer.

For a marketing strategy direct e-mail and personal selling would be convenient in case of distributor contact. Additionally, internet marketing and social media are important for end user contact. Other promotional activities could include exposure on magazines, e.g. editor's favourites (list of magazines in the Appendix 6) and subscription boxes, e.g. Birchbox, where customers can try new products.

### 5 Conclusion

The study explored ways of internationalisation of SMEs in the digital era. Additionally, it gave a brief look into how other Finnish cosmetic companies have internationalised. The business environment analysis provides a look into the cosmetics market of the UK. The competition is very high in the industry, and there are some unknown factors in regards to the economy. These are due to Brexit and post COVID-19 pandemic effects. However, the UK is still a growing market, and this study provides only a small fraction of a more extensive overview of finding a suitable importer/distributor. The study was conducted with use of secondary data, and the information was mainly limited to the sources that are freely available online.

A further study could be interesting if it compared e.g. Amazon as a channel and distributor option. Other topics for studying could include brand appeal analysis, influencer marketing and financial projections for the venture. Another area that will need more attention in the future is the marketing plan and negotiations with the possible future distributor. A preliminary schedule for implementation can be found in Appendix 7. Additionally, conducting a survey from possible customers could have added some insight on customer needs and wants, and defining key performance indicators could help with further definition of milestones during the internationalisation process.

The process taught me about academic study, and analytical thinking. I am grateful for the possibility to have had an active correspondence with supervisors from both the case company and the university. I hope the report will help with strategic decisions regarding the company's globalisation.

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## **Appendices**

# Appendix 1. List of competitors in the UK.

Name	Website	Revenue	In€	Notes
London Lash	https://londonlash.eu/?glCountry=FI	\$8 million	6,9 million*	
Studio Lash	https://studiolash.co.uk/			Australian
Lashbase	https://lashbase.co.uk/	\$5 million	4,3 million*	
Lash Perfect	https://lashperfect.co.uk/			
<b>Hollywood Lashes</b>	http://www.hollywoodlashes.co.uk/	under £2 million	2,3 million*	
Lash Heaven	https://lashheaven.co.uk/	\$5 million	4,3 million*	
QBS	https://qualitybeautystore.com/			
Flutter	https://www.fluttereyes.co.uk/			No longer operating
<b>Eyelash Emporium</b>	https://eyelashemporium.com/	\$934,969	807,687 thousand*	
*8.11.2021				

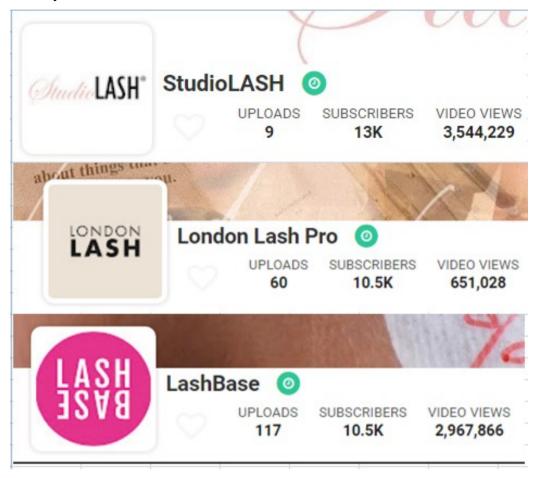
# Appendix 2. Minimum height for the figures used when declaring content on pack, depending on the net contents.

Contents	Minimum height of figures	
Not exceeding 50g/ml	2mm	
Exceeding 50g/ml but not exceeding 200g/m	3mm	
Exceeding 200g/ml but not exceeding 1kg/l	4mm	
Exceeding 1kg/l	6mm	

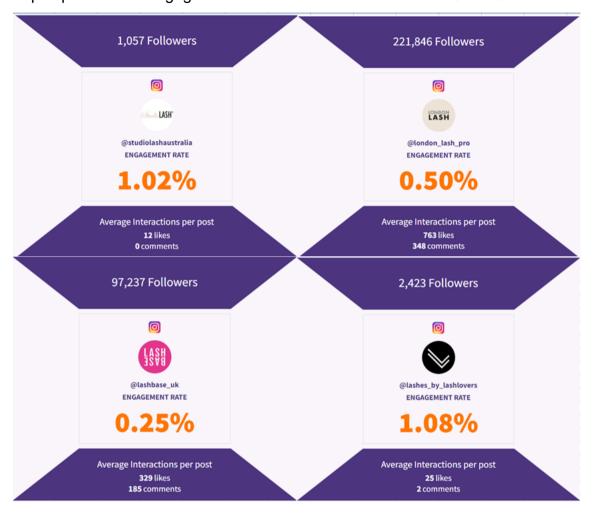
Picture taken from CTPA website. Specified by the UK Weights and Measures (Packaged Goods) Regulations 2006.

## Appendix 3. Social media activity

Activity on Youtube.



Activity on Instagram (Engagement rate). Link to the claculator website: https://phlanx.com/engagement-calculator. Rate checked on 20.11.2021.



## **Appendix 4. List of Distributors**

Company	Website	Revenue in dollars
FDD International	https://www.fddinternational.co.uk/	\$6M
Aspects Beauty	https://www.aspectsbeauty.net/	\$20M
Albert Roger Ltd.	https://www.albertroger.com/	\$8M
Rainbow cosmetics	http://www.rainbowcosmetics.co.uk/	\$42M
Magnum beauty	https://www.magnumbeauty.com/	\$35,295
Calla Retail	https://www.calladistribution.co.uk/	< \$5M
3sacompany	https://3sacompany.com/	
Denbond prestige	https://www.denbondprestige.co.uk/index.php	< \$5M
HD cosmetics B.V.	https://www.hdcosmeticsbv.com/	
Global beauty brands	https://globalbeautybrands.com/	< \$5M
Kent cosmetics	https://www.kentcosmetics.co.uk/	< \$5M
L'Origine	http://www.lorigine.co.uk/index.php	\$5M
SwissCell	https://swisscell.co.uk/	\$747,598
Avec	https://www.aveccorporation.co.uk/	\$734,113
Murrays	https://www.murrayshealthandbeauty.com/	\$36,760,000
Ellisons	https://www.ellisons.co.uk/	< \$5M
Exquisite cosmetics	https://www.exquisitecosmetics.co.uk/	\$46,169
Mass beauty products	https://massbeautyproducts.com/	
HAZ beauty	https://www.hazbeauty.com/	< \$5M
Amber house	https://amberhouseltd.co.uk/	< \$5M
Phoenix beauty	https://www.phoenixbeauty.co.uk/	
Glorious Brands	http://www.gloriousbrands.com/	< \$5M
EuroBeauty	https://www.eurobeauty.co.uk/	
Synergy	https://www.synergysalonsupplies.com/	< \$5M
MDV	https://www.mdveurope.com/	\$1,490,000
Beautynet	https://www.beautyneteurope.com/	< \$5M

## **Appendix 5. Distribution websites**

Website name	Website
Europages	https://www.europages.co.uk/companies/United%20Kingdom/cosmetics%20distributor.html
BeauteTrade	https://www.beautetrade.com/
esources	https://www.esources.co.uk/wholesale-suppliers/689/

## Appendix 6. List of magazines

Company	Website link	Email contact
Women's Health	https://www.womenshealthmag.com/uk/	hearstmagazines.co.uk/contact-us
Cosmopolitan	https://www.cosmopolitan.com/uk/	victoria.jowett@hearst.co.uk
ELLE	https://www.elle.com/uk/	george.driver@elleuk.com
Harper's Bazaar	https://www.harpersbazaar.com/uk/	hearstmagazines.co.uk/contact-us
Grazia	https://graziadaily.co.uk/	ali.reeves@bauermedia.co.uk.
Prima	https://www.prima.co.uk/	alice.howarth@hearst.co.uk
Allure	https://www.allure.com/	https://www.allure.com/contact

# Appendix 7. Schedule for implementation

Timing and tasks	Milestones	
<ul> <li>January 2022:</li> <li>Contact distributors</li> <li>Prepare for negotiations</li> <li>Send samples</li> <li>Make distributor contracts</li> </ul>	Establishing a contract	
Developing marketing strategies for distributor's territory and preparing for training	Establishing sales goals for distributor territory	

## Appendix 8. Pictures of resale products



Beauty Wash Facial Cleansing Foam



Beauty Splash Hyaluronic Acid Essence



Kick Lash + Brow Nutrition