

Tomi Saari

MARKETING PLAN FOR A NEW PRODUCT

A study for a case company

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Tomi Saari
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ABSTRACT

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Author: Tomi Saari

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This Bachelor's thesis was conducted as a commission for a case company operating in the electrotechnical manufacturing and wholesale industry. The purpose of this thesis is to provide the case company some new marketing insights in order to penetrate a market with a new product faster.

The theoretical framework aims at analyzing the case company's macro environment through a PESTEL analysis, as well as the internal and external factors for success with the company SWOT analysis. The product itself and its features are further dissembled with an F.A.B. analysis to reveal the product's advantages and benefits to the customer. The competitive scheme of the industry is depicted by using Porter's five forces model and the customer analysis is an application of a theory about recognizing roles in an organisation's purchasing process.

The empirical part of the research was conducted as a qualitative e-mail interview with a few selected representatives from each market segment defined. The aim of the research was to learn about the sales process of the products in the case company's industry from the interviewees' point of view as well as marketing channels they use to receive information about new products.

The information and theoretical foundation has been acquired by using marketing-related literature, materials online such as internet articles and latest news concerning developments in the industry, also information received from the case company and its affiliate through discussion and e-mail exchange has been utilized. In addition to the integral replies received from the research targets through the empirical research, the author's working experience in the field was also established as being of good use in gathering the information.

Main findings made about marketing channels in the industry were that marketing in person is still an effective way of delivering information and creating trust as well as maintaining relationships and that instant availability of product information especially online is becoming more important to customers. By targeting the right people with ads, direct marketing and personal selling and maintaining more frequent and multifaceted communication and public relations with the market through a social network channel should help reaching the desired target market more effectively and enabling the product's faster gain of a market share.

Keywords: B2B, SWOT, PESTEL, Porter's five forces, FAB analysis, Marketing mix, Promotion mix

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Case company

The commissioner (referred to as case company due to confidentiality issues restricting competitors' access to the information presented in the thesis) is a Finnish electrotechnical component manufacturer and supplier, which has been doing business for about five years. Currently operating with less than 10 employees the area of business covers Finland entirely. The case company supplies some of Finland's largest electrics wholesalers with its own brands and also products of both domestic and foreign suppliers. Their product portfolio consists of cable ladders, lighting trunkings, office trunkings, outlet poles and floor boxes among many others.

With a combined experience in the field of several decades by a few professionals but also with successful co-operation with two of the industry's top manufacturers in Northern Europe and a top logistics company in Finland, the case company operated on a 5 million turnover in a matter of few years. After another year with 2 million growth in revenue the current projection for the fiscal year 2015 is over 8 million. (CEO 2015, e-mail message 8.4.2015.)

The author has been commissioned by the case company to come up with a new kind of marketing plan for an office trunking system they are planning to launch in the final third of this year to the Finnish market, supplied by a Scandinavian affiliate. Even though the case company has initial plans on how to market the new product, it was considered that the author's current studies with international business could offer a new perspective on the company's marketing activities and provide value to both parties in terms of additional revenue and experience.

1.2 Research problem & objectives

The purpose of making this thesis is firstly to conduct a market research in terms of mapping marketing channels through which the case company can reach existing and prospective customers more effectively than before. The main purpose however is to conduct a marketing plan for a new product that is being launched later this year by utilizing the most up-to-date know-how in marketing communications and the findings made in the market research.

The research problem can be summarized in the following question:

- *What new ways can be found to market a new product more effectively to customers?*

And supportive questions:

- *What new channels can we find to reach old customers faster?*
- *What new channels can we find to reach entirely new customers?*

The objectives of the marketing strategy will be to enable the new product's entry to the market more efficiently, gaining a market share with old and new customers faster than with the case company's conventional marketing activities, and creating a positive brand image for the product in question.

1.3 Thesis process

The process of constructing the work consists of theoretical, practical and applied stages. During the theoretical stage first-hand information, literature and internet sources will be utilized for gathering background and theory concerning the industry and the topic. After compiling enough theoretical base a set of detailed and descriptive e-mail interviews will be composed and ultimately carried out with specifically chosen professionals in the field of the case company's target market as a qualitative research method. The interviews are followed by actions that combine the gathered theoretical information and research results together and analyse them with a result of coming up with an effective marketing plan for a new product. Eventually the marketing plan will be analysed, findings drawn into a conclusion and the process itself reviewed and discussed furthermore.

2 MARKETING PLAN

2.1 Business review

The business review aims at giving a better understanding of the case company's scope of business and current situation (Cooper & Hiebing 1997, xxix) with analyses on the product, marketplace and the competitive situation. The review is presented through both primary and secondary research, meaning information received from the company and reviewing records and data from other sources.

The case company has managed to build a solid trust with their customers through their service and product quality in a rather short period of time. This has e.g. enabled them to develop their own brand of products besides just supplying brands from top-quality domestic suppliers and a Scandinavian affiliate. They have also acquired rights to one brand, a product family of lighting trunking and cable ladders, from a Finnish partner who is still one of the leading suppliers of cable tracks in Europe and for whom the case company supplies these particular products in the Finnish market.

The case company supplies four large Finnish electrics wholesale businesses, who are all wholesale members of the Finnish Electrotechnical Trade Association (STK 2008a, cited 14.4.2015). Most of the logistics are handled from their warehouse managed by a top Finnish logistics company omitting some products that are manufactured in their own production and warehouse facilities and if the case company is low on stock at the moment of order, then the goods can be delivered directly from a supplier's facilities.

The proven quality of the suppliers' products and brands by lengthy careers in the industry and with customers all across Europe as well as the current distribution channels pave the way for launching a new product as its available immediately for the entire current clientele after its presentation. As a growing business their aspiration to become the biggest in the industry drives them to find new ways to market their products starting with the soon-to-be-launched plastic office trunking system. The new technically superior product can be used as a good reference point whether this renewed marketing strategy is efficient as the case company already has an

aluminium-made trunking system in their product catalogue, a material that can be used in all installation targets whereas plastic is not suitable for all spaces. Competitors in the industry have been offering similar types of products made from the same material before the case company's product launch.

The industry's distribution channels i.e. wholesalers are many and stocked with versatile products from several suppliers. To succeed in the competitive situation requires differentiation and sustaining good business relationships because the customers place orders based on pull strategies. The suppliers can't make their customers create projects but only be ready to supply them and it's of paramount importance to have the customer know about your quality option for sale and to know how to get the information of that option to as many people affecting the purchase decision as possible. Once an agreement is made, carrying out the delivery in the right quantity, quality and time may just become the deciding factor over price in a following order from the same customer choosing between suppliers.

2.1.1 PESTEL Analysis

The PESTEL Analysis is used as a marketing tool for examining key macro level factors in the business environment that may have an impact on the business and its activities (Jurevicius 2013a, cited 23.2.2015). The results are further used in making the SWOT analysis by identifying what sorts of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats the product will have in this business environment (Professional Academy 2015b, cited 23.2.2015).

The aim of this analysis is to understand the overall picture of the current external factors affecting the business, after which to identify the factors that may potentially change in the future and to take advantage of that information better than any competitor would (Jurevicius 2013a, cited 23.2.2015).

Political factors

Factors that predict to what extent the government intervenes in the economy. The means include political stability, foreign trade policy, tax policy, labour and environmental laws, trade restrictions etc. The political factors may affect organisations' ways to do business because they

must be able to adapt to the current and anticipated changes in legislation, and e.g. adjust their marketing practices accordingly. (Professional Academy 2015b, cited 23.2.2015.)

Finland is part of the European Union which is a free trade area between its members. Trade between companies both from EU nations has been made easier and more reliable with common rules and regulations. There are no customs between EU countries and the Incoterms are easily applied for trade inside the EU and international quality standards as CE-markings assure the buyer that the control at the site of production has been made accordingly and reliably. The freedom of trade enables the case company to supply products from abroad with ease disregarding longer delivery times during stock shortage and market them to the Finnish market just as they would with their own products.

Finland held new parliament elections in the spring of 2015. The following government will be deciding on law proposals and aspiring to bring more jobs, tax revenue and creating savings to cover the nation's debt. The Finnish government's experience and stability was questioned during the last term, where only five out of nineteen ministers stayed at their posts until the end and many had no remarkable previous experience from the field of their ministry (Kokko 2014, cited 29.3.2015). Some of the main topics discussed going into the elections were taxation and revival versus cuts as well as energy policy (Turkki 2014, cited 29.3.2015) and it remains to be seen how the stability of the new government and the impact of their actions will have on the industry. The union STK actively follows the development of legislation concerning the electrotechnical industry and is committed to react to it according the industry's needs (STK 2008c, cited 30.3.2015).

New amendments during the new parliamentary term may involve corporate or inheritance taxation, import taxes and e.g. tax on motor vehicles. The current inheritance tax model threatens to drive more family businesses to register their businesses abroad because of heavy taxation when a business passes to the next generation, but the previous minister of finance demanded something to be done to keep the businesses in Finland (Pohjanpalo 2014, cited 26.3.2015). Some of the case company's competitors in the industry are family businesses and could experience a knock to their public image for moving "away" from Finland or other difficulties in doing business with Finnish customers i.e. wholesalers if the government decides to create some bureaucratic barriers for such businesses, but there can also be incentives to discourage them from registering in another country in the first place. If motor vehicle taxation is decided to be changed one way, it could affect the profitability of truck transportation from a customer-first

approach where there are twice-a-week scheduled shipments to wholesalers' warehouses regardless of the size of shipment, into a system where exaggeratedly the transportation is so costly that the case company would have to wait until it gets enough orders to use a truck's full capacity before ordering one to deliver the goods and this could in a mean insecure delivery times and belated, even lost, deals with contractors.

One of the issues previous to the elections was if small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) should receive incentives or reliefs to hire more employees, which wouldn't therefore be so expensive, would add to the work force and intangible assets of the company and accelerate growth. (Sihto, cited 30.4.2015)

Economic factors

Factors explaining in what ways the economy affect profitability and doing business. Factors such as a country's economic growth, interest and exchange rates, inflation and disposable income of consumers and businesses will affect profitability in any industry. Government's interest rate control, taxation policy and expenditure actions are examples of mechanisms that affect management of demand in any economy on macro level. (Professional Academy 2015b, cited 23.2.2015.)

Despite the Finnish GDP growth the numbers are among the lowest in Europe, as they have been for the last three years. According to history, it was expected that after a steeper fall than most other countries' economy the rise would be even steeper in comparison. Lowered oil price, weakening euro and the ECB's revival actions supporting longer-term interest rates and investments by companies in the Euro zone were supposed to be signs of better for Finland but the trust for the economy has remained clearly below average. The Finnish economy is in a difficult position due to the reflecting impact from Russia's hardships and export to Russia may diminish to only half. On the other hand the drop in oil's price and strengthened exporting possibilities elsewhere may well compensate for the deficit caused by the lack of export across the eastern border. (Wessman 2015, cited 29.3.2015.)

As Kyllönen (2015, 5) analyses in his editorial for Sähköala magazine, the construction industry is a slow trend one, even more so when talking about electrification, compared to most of the main economic sectors. The published forecasts and expectations according to questionnaires

regarding the year 2015 had been quite pessimistic. Close to none believed in growth of the markets and over two thirds expect them to fall even more. But growth in the United States, Southern European crisis states Spain and Portugal and slowly growing orders for the Finnish export industry along with the increase of long-term interest rates in Europe according to Kyllönen indicate the revival of Finnish economy during the year. He expects construction to vitalize in the second half of the year knowing several constructors have targets in stock waiting for the good-to-go signal. Based on first-hand information the orders for electrification in construction should nevertheless pick up notably right after summer.

Socio-cultural factors

Analysing how the shared attitudes of the population affect marketers and how they understand customers and what drives them. Cultural characteristics as in career attitudes etc. are variables of particular interest from a marketing perspective. (Professional Academy 2015b, cited 23.2.2015)

According to a recent study, the majority of Finnish people are content with Finnish construction saying it is of rather good quality (Arola 2015, cited 26.3.2015). Therefore having domestic construction companies as customers using the case company's products can be seen as somewhat of an assurance of quality from the case company's position. The research also brought up that despite the satisfaction for the quality there is room for improvement in the construction process and the degree of responsibility the constructor takes from their action (ibid.). This matter calls for easily installable and durable good quality components - those the case company has to offer - from the supplier for the constructor to vouch for.

"Domesticity is a selling point" – if not in every purchase decision, at least on a mental image level, according to a report by Kuningaskuluttaja (2014, cited 1.4.2015). Granting the story was about groceries, the author feels it can be generally applied to other industries bringing up and concentrating on the cultural attitudes behind the preferences. According to Suomalaisen Työn Liitto many feel domesticity is one of the more important guarantees of quality. Consumers are interested in knowing where their groceries come from and what sorts of effects purchasing local products have in a bigger picture (Makuja.fi 2015, cited 1.4.2015). Where over 70% said to prefer a Finnish product when available, 25% named price as the most important criteria of selection (ibid.). On the other hand, where the Finnish electronics consumer would prefer buying from

domestic web stores because of a distinct advantage in delivery time, and the similar quality products being available on foreign web stores, the final decision often is determined by the cheaper price (Hämäläinen 2015, cited 1.4.2015). Within some industries, in a welfare society of high taxation and healthy margins especially in the current economic stagnation, the overall price/quality ratio can easily overthrow the otherwise important attitudes of favouring Finnish, at least in a profit-driven business-to-business setting.

Technological factors

There are three distinct ways technological factors affect a company's marketing management; new means of producing goods and services, new ways of distributing goods and services and also new media of communicating with target markets. (Professional Academy 2015b, cited 23.2.2015.)

The development of technology has enabled more features be fit into smaller spaces. New compact products replace old ones by serving the same purpose and innovations concerning products limited to certain size are basically structural. Functional upgrades make them compete with quality more than raw material or size. Structure and design can give a product the feel and look that could previously be gotten only from a costlier raw material, although the place of use and prevalent conditions may require the use of a certain material or technology.

Any product's supply chain is becoming more transparent year by year. From a customer's point of view this is realized especially in the transportation process. The bigger logistics handlers enable tracking shipments every step of the way with a code inserted to their website. Handling pick-ups for goods has been made easier so that the supplier can insert all the relevant information about the shipment beforehand and even print out the freight documents and stickers thus eliminating worthless and hindering stages in the delivery process. Next-day deliveries, even same-day and 24-hour deliveries are empowered by the level of technology in logistics handling. Real time order handling by computer programs integrated with warehousing systems have already made possible delivering limited size orders to a construction site within hours during the day (Sähköala 2015a, cited 30.3.2015) and pick-up services operating 24/7 (Sähköala 2015b, cited 30.3.2015). Forecasting sales and having a preparedness to answer a wholesaler's stock order at all times becomes more important with such delivery techniques since they are used at

times of haste from the contractor's perspective and can cost also future orders if the desired product is not available at some point.

New forms of electric communication with new innovative ways to reach consumers emerge rather frequently in today's mobile era. It is only a matter of time when business-to-business marketers in industrial fields also can take the same advantage out of social networks as B2C businesses, consulting firms and several kinds of service providers.

Environmental factors

Factors raised to significant importance not earlier than the beginning of this millennium urge forward ethical and sustainable sourcing and distribution chains. Aside the growing demand from consumers that new products should be produced ethically and promote sustainability facing global scarcity of raw materials, carbon footprint and pollution targets set by governments are issues businesses and marketers must consider with this factor (Professional Academy 2015b, cited 23.2.2015).

Green processes are trending globally, no matter which industry. Consumers are more aware of the effects on the environment occurred from the production processes of certain products and manufacturers in all industries are increasing their level of transparency though the supply chain of their products. Even governments and e.g. the EU have set regulations restricting harmful emissions, use of unrenewable resources and energy during production processes.

Construction is becoming more material efficient which means using long-lasting and convertible products that are easy to disassemble, sort and recycle. Reducing material loss with as pre-produced and exact measured materials also speeds up the process and improves the quality. The goal is to capitalize the harnessed natural resources as efficiently as possible and construct durable, quality and long-life buildings. (Ympäristösaava.fi 2015, cited 31.3.2015; Ympäristöhallinto 2013, cited 31.3.2015.) Having four seasons in a year, changes in climate have a great effect in construction. E.g. the raw materials used in different parts of buildings need to be able to endure changes in temperature, humidity and possibly chemicals year round depending on the building's purpose of use. So the importance of raw materials' sustainability, durability and at least recyclability as a minimum will be growing in importance in future construction trends and should be taken into consideration.

Nowadays more attention is paid to ecological design of construction and buildings because an increasing number of organisations are taking the entire life-cycle of buildings and their environmental effects into consideration while ordering designs for new premises. The topic of energy efficiency also in electrification design is growing in importance all the time (Sähköala 2013, 16).

Legal factors

In order to trade successfully companies need to be aware of what is legal and what is not. Advertising standards, consumer rights and laws, product labelling and safety are included in the legal factors and they must be always considered individually according to the rules and regulations of the country where the customer operates in. (Professional Academy 2015b, cited 23.2.2015.)

International trade applies a general principle called freedom of contract. The two Nordic parties, case company and its affiliate, can basically choose the country, whose law is applied in making the trade contract. It can be one of the two or a third country mutually agreed upon, if applying the national laws of the other party would result in unreasonable advantage for them. Nevertheless, the freedom of contract is not entirely unlimited. E.g. the importing country's competition, product safety and consumer protection regulations are usually coercive. The choice of law practically becomes an issue if the parties run into an unnegotiable conflict. Anticipation in the signing stage and maintaining good communicative relations with each other can save the parties a tremendous amount of time and money in not going to court. (Kärkäs 2015, cited 12.5.2015.)

When importing a technically new product by structure from another EU country and introducing it to the Finnish market, the industrial design of the product is protected by law to prevent competitors from stealing the design (EUR-Lex 2011, cited 27.3.2015). Keeping in mind that Finland is a market with high technological infrastructure, it is possible for competitors to copy the design in such way that enough changes are made to elude infringement accusations and produce a product "made in Finland" with similar technology with lower transportation and warehousing costs.

2.1.2 Market segmentation

Generally, segmentation is about identifying common characteristics within a mass market and dividing customers into smaller segments based on different needs that customers in different groups possess. The task then is to select the segments that appear to represent the strongest marketing opportunities within the resources available in the organisation. Taking into consideration the simple Pareto principle where 80 percent of profits come from just 20 percent of customers, there is a justified need to segment markets and create specifically tailored marketing programmes. Instead of trying to reach the entire market as a whole, selecting sub-markets where to concentrate different activities should improve profitability. This approach is more customer-orientated and competitor aware and leads to better targeting and positioning programmes. (Fill & Fill 2005, 50-51.)

A segmentation approach that considers a target market consists of businesses or customers that are different and tries to identify groups with similarities, is referred to as the build-up approach (ibid., 51). In this case the market can be seen to consist of four segments. When the market affecting the case company's product demand consists of construction companies and independent electricity contractors realizing electrification plans drawn by electricity engineers i.e. designers and supplied by wholesalers, there are essentially different types of organisations to be considered in order to be able to form an all-encompassing marketing strategy. The segments differ from each other in ways that wholesalers and designers don't use the products themselves but contribute to the selection of certain brands, wholesalers being limited to their own supply but designers theoretically being able to use any brand in the market there is. Where construction companies install electrification and trunkings as one of dozens of different steps in constructing an office building as 'bulk' work, contractors may work solely on a certain city's small and medium-sized businesses' electrification projects or renovations and be more concerned about the quality of their work instead of quantity or cheapest price in order to receive other commissions in the future, so the motives for using certain brands and materials can be different to all segments even though all work with the same products in their own way.

It is suggested that the build-up approach is more applicable when relationship marketing issues are essential to a business resulting from the fact that details and customer focus are cornerstones for relationship marketing (ibid., 53). Relationship and image marketing becomes crucial when some of the target segments do not actually even purchase the products but just

support the actual buyer to choose the case company's option. In a case like this with essentially different kinds of target segments the most effective way is to design different separate offers for each segment is called differentiated marketing (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 179).

2.1.3 Customer analysis

The population who are considered as potential customers for a new product launched by the case company and to whom the product is to be marketed vary significantly in organisational size and also in the field of business. The B2B purchasing process with this type of product offered by the case company includes different roles on many stages in the process and can easily overlap depending on the customer.

TABLE 1. Roles influencing a B2B purchasing process between organisations (Ojasalo & Ojasalo 2010, 36).

Role	Action in the purchasing process
Initiator	Experiences a problem or a need that requires purchasing a new product and initiates the purchasing process. Initiator can be at any organisational level.
User	Who actually uses or works with the product that needs to be purchased.
Influencer	Gives information that is needed when evaluating different product and supplier options. Important role while defining specifications and criteria for the purchasing decision. Influencer is often a technical expert.
Gatekeeper	Controls information flow between people in the purchasing process and affects how much information the people participating in the decision-making process receive. Gatekeeper can be for example a procurement agent who filters information concerning different supplier options and therefore decides what data the rest of the purchasing group will possess.
Buyer	Contacts the supplier and places the order. Buyer has a case-by-case authority to negotiate the purchase and often has the formal responsibility to draw the purchase orders.
Decision-maker	Uses final authority in making the purchasing decision. Buyer sometimes has final authority but often in an organisation the purchase is permitted by a higher position.
Controller	Draws a budget for the purchase and monitors it.

As Ojasalo & Ojasalo (2010, 37) remark, the same person can function in multiple roles. One person can be e.g. the initiator, user and influencer. On the other hand one role can be possessed by multiple people; there can also be three actors who want to suggest a certain brand to be used in the target. The people involved in the purchasing are active in different stages of the process. Therefore for the case company it would be important to recognize the people in different roles affecting the decision and to know whom to be in contact with.

Although the theory on the roles is originally based on them all working within the same organisation, in the author's opinion it can be adapted to reflect roles played by all the people from different organisations involved in the buying process of a product supplied by the case company. The amount of people making the purchasing decision is probably small when the buyer is a small business or when the product or service is simple (ibid., 37). This is something that depends on the buying organisation and thus size of the project. It becomes of great importance to find out what kinds of differences the marketed message needs to have comparing bigger and smaller customers or targets. Also essential is who plays which role in the buying process in these circumstances, so the right message can be delivered also to the right people.

In one theoretical situation the end customer is an IT-business that needs to move into a bigger office and do some electricity renovation in the premises. The company commissions an electricity contractor to go to a wholesaler to order a series of components for an office trunking system from a salesperson to be delivered on site in a week. The contractor has been hired to realize a plan drawn by a designer from whom the IT-company has ordered a trunking plan for the new office. In this situation the people in roles who can be targeted by marketing are the contractor (buyer), salesperson (influencer, gatekeeper), designer (influencer) and even the commissioning business (initiator, user, decision-maker and controller).

An example of a purchasing process in a bigger scale could go as following: a construction corporation is to build commercial premises in a city for one of the two leading consumer cooperatives in Finland. The electricity installation supervisor places an order to a wholesaler of system components to be delivered to the site in two weeks. The quantities are based on the drawings of an engineer planning the electrification. The wholesaler salesperson makes an inquiry to a sales manager from the case company trying to get a discount for an order from the case company's stock. The supervisor who placed the order has a disposable budget set by his organisation and can try to bargain also the wholesaler's price if it's initially too high or try to get a

cheaper option approved by the organisation within the technical requirements of the electrification design. Here the key roles that can be influenced through marketing are the designer (influencer), inquiring salesperson (influencer, gatekeeper), and by him the supervisor (buyer) and therefore even the construction company's procurement organisation (decision-maker, controller).

Roles in the purchasing process from different types of customers and targets can be easiest identified from familiar customers and their organisational habits. The case company needs to update the status of the essential roles affecting the purchasing decision because they can change during time and between different orders (Ojasalo & Ojasalo 2010, 37). Therefore it's important not to only know the people affecting the decision at the time but the position they occupy in the long term to stay up-to-date with whom to communicate marketing-wise.

2.1.4 Marketing channel analysis

So far the case company has managed to operate with rather few marketing activities. According to a discussion with the chief executive officer of the company (26.1.2015), the marketing has consisted of the company's website, a newsletter type customer magazine and the work done by the sales managers directly with customers in addition to ads on wholesalers' stores.

Positively enhancing the magnitude of the marketing's effect have been the reputation and relationships of the CEO while founding the business, established supplier partners and high-quality products to start with as well as effective distribution channels and also the experience and expertise of the sales managers with product knowledge working with new customers.

Advertisement in the industry's magazines and increasing visibility and its diversity online as well as in the wholesalers' marketing channels could raise awareness of the case company' products and frequency of coming across the company name. Also direct marketing in terms of reaching possible influencers on more levels during a purchasing process could be a stone to be turned in future activities.

2.1.5 Distribution channel analysis

The case company has been able to use multiple channels to deliver desired goods to their end points juggling with several different systems and points of departure. Depending on the type of use, brand, manufacturer or stock situation of a product a different mean or provider of transport has been used.

There have been twice-a-weekly transportations from a third-party logistics manager's warehouse of the case company's products making the rounds to several wholesalers' warehouses during the same day and direct deliveries to other addresses by their own delivery trucks as well as parcels and even couriers while facing a tight schedule. Naturally pick-ups are also possible according to the customers' wishes. Transportations have been made from a Finnish client's factory directly to wholesalers or even construction sites, stock and site deliveries also from a foreign client's factory twice a week via ship with an international logistics manager.

Along with new production and warehousing facilities the case company has also trialled another transportation company seeking for improvement in delivery reliability and user interface when ordering transportations and been able to compare different systems and proceed with the best overall solution in order to optimize the logistics process.

2.1.6 Competition analysis

In order to understand the functioning of competitive systems, the following points need to be assessed: "the relevant definition of the market, the appreciation of the forces involved and the dynamics of their evolution, and the evaluation of competitors' positions and the identification of their strategies". (Michel, Naudé, Salle & Valla 2003, 137.)

Michel, Naudé, Salle & Valla (2003, 139) refer to the theory of five forces within an industry developed by M.E. Porter where the attraction of an industry relies on competitive intensity which is the feature created by pressure coming from five sources. The five forces affecting the profitability of an industry are the rivalry between direct competitors, threats of potential new entrants and substitutive technologies, and the bargaining power of both buyers and suppliers. The aim of such structural analysis model for an industry is to comprehend the potential attraction

of a competitive system and a company's related difficulties to establish, maintain or develop a desired position within the industry.

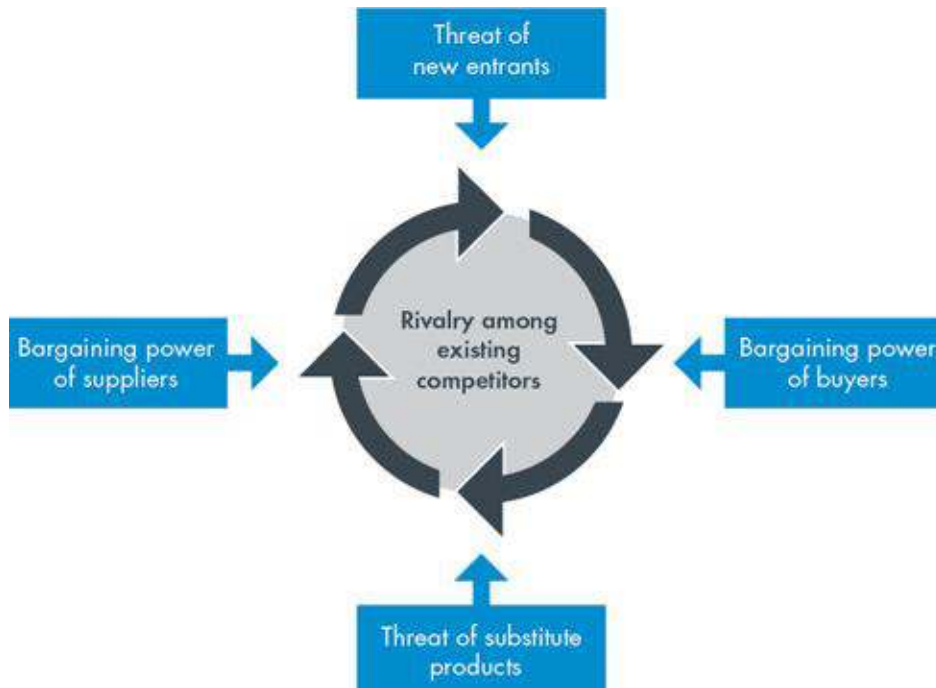


FIGURE 1. Porter's five forces of competition (digitalmarketingstrategymg329 2015; Saari 2015)

Threat of new entrants: low

This force depicts the degree of ease or difficulty to enter a certain industry. If the industry is expected to be profitable and the barriers to enter are low, rivalry is likely to increase. It is important for existing organisations to uphold high entry barriers to the industry or more competitors will be sharing the market and diminishing the profitability. (Jurevicius 2013b, cited 19.3.2015.)

In the electrotechnical trade industry there are no significant barriers for starting a business. The substantial number of members in the trade association STK and consideration of the criteria for membership, requiring generally stabilized and vast business operations during at least two years and a revenue of at least 2 million (STK 2008b, cited 14.4.2015), reveals that there are competitive opportunities for businesses in this field. Upon further review many of the members are companies that have operated in the industry for several decades and seem to have a hold of

the market restricting the threat of new entrants at least from becoming a serious threat within a short period of time.

Today the threat must be bigger compared to the situation from even 6 or 7 years ago due to improved communication technologies and lowered costs when working with e.g. a foreign supplier aiming to create a competitive advantage through products created by foreign engineering and lower production costs. According to Yritystele.fi website (cited 14.4.2015) there are 551 businesses operating in the same industry category as the case company. Of course it must be pointed out that a great deal in this category aren't competitors but operate in the field of automation technology or lighting products e.g. but the number of direct competitors among all types of products the case company sells can still be counted by the dozens. To conclude, and ignoring the exception that the case company itself has managed to become a competitor for big market shares, the threat of new entrants in this long-standing and family run business dominated industry is generally *low*.

Bargaining power of suppliers: medium

Strong bargaining power enables suppliers to sell high priced products or ones produced from low quality raw materials (Jurevicius 2013b, cited 19.3.2015). There are many established wholesalers in the industry, a few national-sized ones and many local-area businesses around Finland. The case company's focus as a distribution channel lies with the four large wholesalers who have stores all around Finland.

The bargaining power of a supplier like the case company is complemented by the demand from the buyers. The plenty of supplier options i.e. wholesalers for contractors has led the competitive situation between the wholesalers into one where they have to have on offer many of the same products that the store next door has because of strong leading brands on the market and the threat of losing customers if you don't have them as well. Meaning it's important for the supplier to have their products on as many wholesaler's shelf as possible as it is for a wholesaler to have the same suppliers' products on their shelf as their competitors do, which makes the bargaining power of suppliers in this competitive situation *medium*.

Bargaining power of buyers: medium

A situation where the buyer has the power to negotiate a lower price or a better quality product due to a market where only few buyers exist and suppliers must make concessions in order to maintain its customers by selling with a lower price or producing from higher quality raw materials with higher costs. (Jurevicius 2013b, cited 19.3.2015.) The types and sizes of customers are versatile and some are considered more important than others. If a customer who is expected to return in the future, some concessions can be made considering the prices.

Small orders from familiar clients might even be offered at almost zero margin to ensure their return with a bigger project in hand. Especially in big construction projects the buyers tend to negotiate discounts because the order amounts are huge and it's a reasonable point of negotiation not only for the sake of retaining their loyalty but for the possibility of compensating the lowered prices through economies of scale in production amounts following a big order. Considering that there are more and less important customers and their bargaining power is determined by their status as a potential long-term customer, the bargaining power of buyers is *medium*.

Threat of substitute products: high

Scenario, where buyers have a selection of better quality products or more attractive prices and the change of supplier can be made with low or no cost at all (Jurevicius 2013b, cited 19.3.2015). There are similar products available in most distribution channels i.e. wholesalers. The sites of installation vary greatly considering the technical requirements from the trunking systems and the possibility of substitution is likely with customers whose needs are minimal and the choice is purely based on the cheapest price or whose need of trunking systems' qualities must respond to difficult e.g. factory or warehouse building conditions basically requiring a different raw material.

All wholesalers are offering different quality products made from different materials to hold the cost of changing the product as zero by eliminating the need to go to another wholesaler to purchase a certain supplier's product. That's why even all the same brands are in the repertory of almost every major wholesaler; to diminish the threat of substitutes from another wholesaler. To conclude, despite that most of the major wholesalers sell similar quality products of more than one popular brand with the ideal price-quality ratios, and considering wholesaler-sensitive

omissions and additions of smaller brands and entirely new innovative brands such as the case company's, the threat of substitutes concerning a product that has so many different quality options for different purposes is *high*.

Rivalry among existing competitors: high

The degree of competitiveness and profitability of an industry is mainly determined by rivalry between existing competitors. A competitive industry makes companies compete aggressively for a market share. (Jurevicius 2013b, cited 19.3.2015.) Considering the relatively steady and competitive market where the case company operates, experiencing only few per cent fluctuation quarterly or annually in the matter of growth in recent years (STK 2014, cited 20.3.2015; STK 2015, cited 20.3.2015), the competition for market share can be expected to happen between existing competitors rather than with a new player.

The expected increase in level of new construction towards the end of the year on the other hand creates an opportunity to capture an additional piece of the share from existing rivals. Suppliers offering office trunking systems are many and most use the same distribution channels. The level of differentiation between the products is quite limited because of the rather generic nature of the product. Higher quality and durability may have been earlier associated only with aluminium-made products but new structural solutions engineered from a cheaper material can become an invaluable competitive advantage in a competition where the buyer wants tough quality for a competitive price. This is the point where marketing activities need to get the job done to affirm the buyers that instead of settling for the same old 'safe' products there is a new but affordable and technically superior product available, and from a familiar good-quality supplier; invoking customer loyalty and yet the replenishment of procurement strategies. Although to secure the upcoming construction and other smaller projects, probably all the established competitors in the industry will be doing the same and some will have bigger marketing budgets to spare. That is why the level of rivalry among existing competition is *high*.

2.2 Market research

The aim of the research is to get more familiar with the sales and marketing process of similar products as the one in this case and especially from the point-of-view of the projected target market's actors involved in the purchasing process. Four sets of questions were comprised to be carried out as an e-mail interview due to the short nature of the interview. Asking for the answers in written form was done also in order to ensure that they are documented in a way where the interviewee has had time to think about the way to express them as accurately as possible and been able to add details afterwards before delivering the answers to the interviewer.

The research is carried out as a qualitative research, meaning that the population of the study is very limited and based on considered selection of recipients whose expertise and role in the industry can have an impact on the discoveries of the research what comes to finding new marketing channels and factors affecting incorporation of new products to business operations more effectively. The population includes current business partners of the case company.

The format of the interview questionnaires was applied to each target market segment defined in this research.. Four recipients' contact information from each segment were searched online from respective organisations' websites and contacted accordingly first by sending them a carefully prepared e-mail with an introduction about the aim of research and researcher's academic background and finally the actual research questions finalized by the question content analysis proposed by Proctor (2000, 160). A follow-up phone call is made to the recipient during the following week if no response occurs by that.

2.2.1 E-mail interviews

Sets of interview questions were sent to representatives from the following groups: wholesaler salespeople, construction company managers, electrification designers and electricity contractors. The questions can be found in appendix 1 on page 54 at the end of the report. The aim of the interview is to learn about the process of choosing a brand of product for a project and about the channels through which new product information is procured and received.

2.2.2 Results

Wholesaler salespeople

It was found out that quite often it is well-known brands that are first offered to customers because it's easier since every side has a certain idea about the product. With choosing new products the threshold is in not knowing about the quality, durability or installability. Marketing of new products is practised by offering them as replacement for another product, presumably out of stock, by giving an offer on them or by personally introducing them to a customer. Also training of new product lines is organized in co-operation with suppliers where regular customers attend. Offering a certain option to customers requires knowing them and their needs well but even a new customer can be affected with solid argumentation. What is taken into consideration while offering any product to a customer is that it's available at the moment and in the future, meaning it doesn't take long to deliver from order or e.g. isn't going out of production. It is important that products are quickly and easily available.

New product information is received from suppliers coming to present their new releases, but also by e-mail. There are also cases where the notion of a new product comes from the customer and is then searched for online. Often the forum for new product information is trade fairs. Still the preferred way for salespeople is a representative of a supplier coming to the spot to present the products so it can be physically examined and a better image is given compared to an e-mail ad. Pointed out is that availability is often a factor affecting the purchase decision since usually the products are needed immediately or by the next day at the latest.

Designers

The practice is that no brand is defined by the designer to be used but a brand with suitable characteristics is used as a model example and it's up to the customer and contractor if they want it to be changed to a cheaper but as qualified option from a wholesaler. Usually the customer doesn't have demands on the brand of product to be included in the design, but the designer introduces the products and gets approval from the customer. Although in some cases, e.g. if a certain brand has been used by the same customer before they can propose it themselves beforehand. Brands are presented by the designers according to their previous experience taking into consideration the ease of installation and its variability of components; corner pieces,

extensions, end pieces, covers, wall support pieces, mounting boxes. The system needs to be sturdy, easily sawed and workable as well as good-looking. In bigger quantities price becomes a factor but still the availability from a wholesaler must be good. Usually the most practical way is to use a well-known product that has been proven good before but extremely important is that there's a good deal of information about the product online and that there is enough product available.

Word about new products has come from wholesaler or supplier presentations. In times of need for a certain type of product, new brands are searched from the internet and by even calling salespeople from suppliers and wholesalers. Brand information would like to be received by personal presentations at their premises or by e-mail advertisement. Old school engineers still appreciate actual flyers and catalogues but nowadays it's expected that all needed information can be found from the supplier's webpages, from parts to the ease of installation etc. If all the data isn't there and the price is high compared to familiar brands, customers are reluctant to experiment and experiences about the product are an important aspect in future projects. Pointed out is that there should be information packages published meant for engineers and designers instead of traditional advertisements where the release is merely praised and not presented in depth. All data should be accessible on the supplier's website.

Construction company managers

On industrial sites in normal competitive contract work usually the designer in co-operation with the commissioning customer organisation decides on the product brand. The contractor can usually contribute to the decision and it also has an impact if a certain brand has been used at the same site before. There can also be contract works where the contractor has overall charge on the choices of product. If the choice is with the contractor, the most affordable option considering quality, availability and installability is sought for. In some cases considering the effect of the environment and usage conditions, the bearing capacity and corrosion protection are the decisive factors. On normal sites such as offices and real estates the designers choose the best affordable product based on their experience and briefing received concerning the site and how well the salespeople have been able to convince them on the best suitability of a certain brand for the site. Sometimes contractors may try to get an approval from the customer to change the brand to a more affordable option.

New product information is acquired from trade fairs and the internet as well as paper flyers from the suppliers. Also companies' procurement organisations provide the decision-makers with information about new releases. The interviewed organisations were content with their current information channels, especially trade fairs, when looking for new product information. Reluctance to switch to new products comes usually from customers' suspicion and will to stick with a familiar option but also price and installability. Projects are difficult to start as the end-customer and designers may not know the product and ordering components is difficult for having to learn a new system structure and backup options. What is pointed out is that delivery readiness with all components of new product brands regardless of quantity should be maximum 1 to 2 weeks from order. The availability information and delivery dates need to be reliable especially with trunking systems because projects often begin with their installation and they are among the first products delivered to the site. In the metropolitan area deliveries should be able to be made daily as the construction goes forward since there is always a shortage of storage room in city construction sites.

Contractors

None of the interviewees from the contacted population of this target segment were willing to take part in the research. Through followed consideration of the results from interviewed representatives of other segments, the role of a single contractor in affecting the choice of a product brand seems fairly driven by the cheapest price. Due to this reason and lack of time, further representatives of the field of profession were not contacted regarding the interview.

2.3 Marketing strategy

The case company's main task is to supply an existing market in a new or superior way (Brady, Goodman, Hansen, Keller & Kotler 2012, 111.) In order to create an effective marketing mix, it needs to support the company's positioning strategy and communicate the company's desired position to its target market, which aims at being the biggest in the industry in Finland.

2.3.1 Product F.A.B. analysis

Examining the value a product possesses and the elements that it consists of will shed light to the benefits of the product that will affect the decision from a buyer's perspective. The perception of business products and their value also affects the customer's evaluation of a supplier's competitive standpoint. (Fill & Fill 2005, 77.) Therefore it's of significant meaning to identify a product's features, advantages and benefits to be able to capitalize all possible aspects of its value to customers.

Features

Features are the physical properties of a product. They can be further divided into two categories: core properties and augmented properties. The core elements introduce the functional capability of the product, so called primary features that are generic to all competing products in the market (Fill & Fill 2005, 77). In the case of an office trunking system the generic features are that it has a screw-mounting system to be installable along the walls of a room. The body has slots for electricity and data outlets and provides cover for the electricity and data cables running inside.

Augmented properties are ones that differentiate the product and offers additional customer benefits (ibid., 77). The stylized trunking pieces have double-sided walls with a 'honeycomb' type support structure between them. Both sides of the wall also include rails for a divider and extension pieces and most of the accessories used in its installations are compatible with another, aluminium-made office trunking system sold by the case company. The raw material that the product is made of is PVC plastic. (Marketing manager 2015, e-mail discussion 9.4.2015.) The body of the office trunking system will be sold in default lengths and large batch sizes (CEO 2015, discussion 26.1.2015).

Advantages

The advantages are the product's features that come to good use in practice. The mounting system gives the contractor free hands for installing the system and can be done by contractors regardless the size of the business and amount of installers. The amount and placement of electricity and data outlets can be optimized according to the space and need of the end-user. The double-sided 'honeycomb' structured walls increase firmness and stability of the body

compared to other plastic models. The design of the appearance should enable using the product in more spaces.

As a material, PVC plastic is very resistant towards oxidation, multiple chemicals and even fire due to its high concentration of chlorine (PVC 2015, cited 13.4.2015). The material also makes the body modifiable in length by sawing pieces short at the site of installation and is not bound to the default length. The compatibility of the same accessories as the other trunking system can lower the threshold of trialling the product and make installation easier because of the familiar accessories used.

Benefits

Value of the product's features and their benefit communicated to the customers. The freedom in mounting the system enables taking into consideration the wishes of the end customer and possible wishes for interior design or furnishing and requirements of the amount and type of outlets from the theoretical aspect of the designers and practical implementation of the contractors. With the extension rails and possibility of truncation the plastic body can be customized to enable different positions adapting to the corners of any space. Handling the installation of the product and learning about the components takes less time because of familiar functioning accessories and increases efficiency in designing, wholesalers' marketing to contractors and installing itself reducing risk of wrong use of accessories.

The smooth design and strong structure is supposed to make it suitable for higher-profile targets on behalf of its appearance and hit-resistance improving its lifetime, not having to worry about constantly repairing damaged parts of the body and extra costs and being able to offer a high-quality product for a lower-than-usual price. The default lengths of the product and batch sizes enable faster delivery, standard packaging to ease ordering, transportation and unpacking as well as the price for the customer through the exploitation of economies of scale in the production phase.

Due to the resistant qualities of the already inexpensive material of PVC plastic, the product will endure conditions where it's exposed to oxidation and chemicals and therefore can be used in many kinds of spaces and projects, making bulk orders favourable and thus less expensive for wholesalers. From the end-customer's safety standpoint, PVC plastic's chlorine concentration can

hinder the spreading of fires caused by e.g. electrical cable malfunctions inside the trunking system.

2.3.2 SWOT analysis

The overall analysis of a company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is a way of observing its internal and external marketing environment. The monitoring of prevalent macroeconomic forces and microeconomic actors affect a company's capability to earn profits as they enable recognizing trends and important developments in the industry. (Brady, Goodman, Hansen, Keller & Kotler 2012, 111.)

"Good marketing is the art of finding, developing and profiting from these opportunities." (ibid.)



FIGURE 2. Elements of a SWOT analysis summarized in a two-by-two matrix (Wikipedia 2015).

Strengths

The case company is small by size so the level of bureaucracy is low so basic operations as well as issues can be handled directly and quickly. The personnel have a combined experience of over a century and true expertise in the field. They own product brands that are renowned across Finland and even some parts of the world and have a loyal customer base. The annually growing

revenue has allowed making big investments possible. Co-operation with four major wholesalers i.e. distribution channels and the nation's top logistics company and a fellow renowned Nordic manufacturer as well as other top suppliers of components and raw-materials enable making top-class products available in a nation-covering market area.

Weaknesses

Because of the small size and number of decision-makers in the company some issues may take time to be addressed during busy weeks. Needing to be in contact with several affiliates and managing more than one system during the transactional stages of handling orders often with haste increases the possibility of human error in business transactions.

Opportunities

As the amount of new construction projects is expected to rise towards the end of the year, it provides an opportunity for marketing activities aimed at that time window to be able to pick the profits from the industry's ascent by supplying for the demand. Also as the trends of instant deliveries within hours from the order directly to the site and exploitation of other technologies such as 24/7 self-service warehouses become more important, the suppliers who are able to keep their customers' stocks filled and thus responding to instant deliveries can rely on future orders to come. When the sizes of orders increase the case company will be able to compete for contractors with smaller local competitors through pricing by offering discounts on large quantities or freight costs. New co-operation with third-party manufacturers in Central Europe by the case company's Nordic affiliate will enable new technologies used in engineering familiar products and brought to the Finnish market. New markets in terms of end-customer demand could make a difference through exploitation of today's trend of social media marketing, a card rarely used in the case company's field of business. There has also been speculation about the new incentive policies with the new government that businesses' costs could be eased and hiring new employees made more profitable for SMEs.

Threats

The biggest competitor in the field has immense financial resources and can pose a threat with overpowering marketing activities compared to any of its competitors. Also certain types of

marketing practices and messages could be fined according to a precedent between two competitors in the industry. Social changes can reduce the popularity of foreign-made products at some point if the efforts of the new government to raise the Finnish economy out from its slump form the industry people's attitudes regarding favouring domestic products instead of cheaper ones produced abroad or through more drastic, but unlikely, changes to e.g. taxation of foreign products. Also, despite the projection of slight economic growth and increase in construction towards the end of the year might turn out smaller than expected and thus have a negative effect on projected sales figures.

2.3.3 Marketing mix

The marketing mix is a tool to help determine a product or brand's offering (Professional Academy 2015a, cited 29.4.2015). The tool guides a marketer to create a marketing plan that puts the product in the right place at the right time and at the right price also taking into consideration the service aspects of the business (Marketing Mix 2015, cited 29.4.2015). Theory about the different aspects of the marketing mix will be shortly introduced, after which concrete considerations from the case company's viewpoint will be presented regarding the actual marketing plan. The considerations will further on be analysed and limited to reach the most profitable prospects and concluded in the implementation chapter.



FIGURE 3. The 7 P's of the marketing mix (Professional Academy 2015a; Saari 2015)

Because every product has an individual life cycle including the introduction, growth, maturity and decline phases, it's important to reinvent products to stimulate more demand once the sales reach the decline or even a stagnant phase. New products should also be released to diversify and expand the depth of a product line, also called creating the right product mix. (Marketing Mix 2015, cited 29.4.2015) The product purchased should be what the customers are expecting to get (Professional Academy 2015a, cited 29.4.2015), and even more. There are properties that customers perceive to surround a product, aspects like service and support as well as the reputation and perceived status of the selling company. These aspects are especially important whilst defining the relative value between competing products since nowadays they can be copied so much faster, therefore service becomes the primary tool for differentiation between suppliers. (Fill & Fill 2005, 77.)

Adjusting the price of a product also shapes the whole marketing strategy and affects the sales and demand of the product. Pricing forms the perception of a new product in a customer's eyes. A low price is associated with an inferior good by material or some other meter comparing it to a competitor where high prices can make the costs outweigh the benefits gained. (Marketing Mix 2015, cited 29.4.2015) This can be seen to be the case especially with new products comparing them to familiar ones. The product should be seen as representing good value for money, but customers are usually happy to pay a little more for something that works really well for them (Professional Academy 2015a, cited 29.4.2015).

Placement is an important part of marketing for any product. The position and distribution must be handled in a way that the product is accessible to potential buyers where they find it easiest to shop and have it delivered and enabling this requires full understanding of the market. (Marketing Mix 2015, cited 29.4.2015; Professional Academy 2015a, cited 29.4.2015.)

A company's marketing communications i.e. promotion mix consists of a particular blend of advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing and personal selling. These tools are used to persuasively communicate a product's value to a customer and build customer relationships (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 363). When trying to choose the right channel to reach the right audience it needs to be taken into consideration how to deliver the message in a manner they would most like to receive it. Advertising in general seems to be shifting in focus from traditional paid channels like printed media into the online world. Public relations consist of

obtaining favourable publicity and good corporate image and can easily be maintained online. Meeting customers for personal selling and thus creating or maintaining relationships in sales presentations, trade shows, press releases and events attract and reach people involved and interested in the contents. Experiences with the sales staff and with the product inevitably creates positive or negative promotion by word of mouth and can therefore be perceived more reliable and unbiased to another consumer since it comes from ordinary customers instead of paid spokespeople. Nowadays word of mouth can be harnessed effectively as one of the more valuable promotional assets if there is a possibility to get it circulating online, on a social media channel for instance. (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 363; Marketing Mix 2015, cited 29.4.2015; Professional Academy 2015a, cited 29.4.2015.)

The employees of a business are vital in marketing activities because it's eventually them who deliver the service and service can be perceived as important an offering as the company's products. Therefore it's important to hire and train the right people in order to deliver excellent service to the clients. Employees who sincerely believe in the company's products or services more likely perform the best they can and are more open to honest feedback about the business and contribute through their own thoughts and passion to the development and growth of the business. The people can become an internal competitive advantage over competitors if the products or services otherwise are of equal quality. (Marketing Mix 2015, cited 29.4.2015; Professional Academy 2015a, cited 29.4.2015)

The system and processes in the organisation need to be tailored to fit the employees' needs in order to optimize the result of the service in a way that it's as quick, reliable and risk-free as possible to minimize costs and make the experience pleasant from the customer's point of view because it's the service they're paying for. (ibid.)

Physical evidence in addition to the actual product itself are e.g. documents of the order and its delivery as well as somehow presenting the company's presence and establishment. Branding can be exercised with physical evidence to increase the company name's presence with the operators in the market and affecting the market's perception of the product and its supplier with supportive marketing activities. (ibid.)

Product

The case company's new trunking system is manufactured with a new kind of 'honeycomb' structure that is to improve its hit resistance by making the body sturdier and more stable overall. It should be considered a competitive advantage for projects where the body will be exposed to bumps and hits, e.g. schools. Attention has also been paid to the design of the body and can be considered for higher-profile targets, banks etc., on behalf of its appearance. The material PVC plastic is affordable and has e.g. fire hindering qualities and is very common as a raw material in any industry so it should also be familiar to any electrician contractor. A notable advantage for the deployment of this new product is that most of the accessories needed to complete the installation are common with another well-known brand also supplied by the case company, which can lower the threshold of trialling this new system among customers by having components of a familiar easily installable system integrated into this new system.

Price

Due to lower production costs because it's manufactured in Central Europe and from an inferior material which cannot be used in all spaces the initial price should be set lower than with the case company's current aluminium-made trunking system brand. Competitors' prices for plastic-made systems should be examined and the range taken into consideration. Compared to the competitors, the price for the case company's product should be set a bit higher for higher-quality brand image purposes, and it can be argued by the product's new superior structure and its compatibility with another popular system's accessories, making installing and learning the new system's components quicker and easier.

When introducing the product for ordering, a market penetrating price should be calculated for a certain period of time for orders made. In this situation a lower price is set to a level that attracts a large number of buyers quickly to win a market share (Armstrong & Kotler 2006, 275) during a pre-determined period of time. After the new product has achieved a position on the market, the price can be gradually hauled to its desired margin level. After introducing the product with a common market penetration price to all major clients, the price can be negotiated separately for each customer as a part of a segmented pricing strategy and a certain functional discount for initial large stock orders (ibid., 279) shortly after reaching pricing agreements could work as an incentive for immediate large order quantities regardless of the product's novelty.

Place

It's of paramount importance to have any amount of products available at the latest within a fortnight. Contractors value and can require fast and before all punctual deliveries on site and the stock situation of a product can often be a decisive factor between two competitors at the end of the day. As the case company should do itself, the main distribution channels i.e. wholesalers should be encouraged to hold a high stock level of products that are expected to receive large or otherwise frequent orders and hold a safe order penetration point.

As found out, influencers and decision-makers in a purchasing process often look for product information online so it becomes vital to have all the information different operators might need to come to a decision for the case company's option available and easily found. As professional and social networks become a larger part of the operations of any business, versatile online presence will inevitably increase visibility, possibility of producing multifaceted content and hits on pages and more importantly include more related results on search engines, even on searches not made about the case company or its products but ones about their competitors', what can be influenced through search engine optimization.

Promotion

Advertising in the traditional media channels would mostly go to waste because normally those messages are paid to reach consumers directly and the case company operates in a business-to-business industry. Although through the right channels people in the target market can be reached e.g. by placing product advertisement on industry publications. With this product, it would be important to also include the logo of the better-known brand of trunking system and inform they have common accessories to associate this new brand with the same supplier. A newsletter with articles and information about the business and its new products can be distributed in co-operation with some industry publication. Product catalogues could also reach small business contractors at stands in wholesalers' stores.

Sales promotion in form of pricing incentives to encourage early purchases was addressed in the *price* consideration of the marketing mix.

Handling the corporate image as public relations can be done firstly by maintaining the case company's website by adding content like news and other posts from time to time and especially new product information as comprehensively and detailed as possible, as well as removing outdated information. Social media channels are also an effective way to maintain them in addition to other advantages; LinkedIn is a professional social network that focuses on working life related social interaction and can act as a forum for sharing and communication between the case company and its clients.

Facebook is more business-to-consumer oriented with its company page features but more people still have a Facebook account instead of a LinkedIn account (Lintulahti 2014, cited 4.5.2015) and it could be used as a tool to present the products from an end-customer's point of view to have conscious consumers want for the case company's brand for their upcoming business' construction project. Commenting on products with Facebook would enable for instance wholesaler salespeople or designers who are searching for information to ask specifying questions or give feedback to new products after a purchase under their own name, creating public word of mouth marketing.

Personal selling can be the most convincing and shows more dedication to the sales work on the supplier's behalf. Appointments with main clients showing and discussing the product as well as presenting it on an industry trade fair will provide valuable experiences for the client with the product and the representative of the case company. Product release presentations as sales promotion could be also organized in co-operation with wholesalers where they invite their most important customers to see a presentation of a new product held by a representative from the case company, to predict interest and boost sales early on in order to benefit from the bulk order discounts.

Direct marketing should be targeted towards the engineers who make electrification designs for construction companies and small contractors. They operate from their office and don't necessarily come across new products because of the security and effectiveness of using familiar brands as models in their work. It would be convenient for them to receive a physical catalogue, flyer or a PDF version of new products and their relevant technical information that has to be taken into account in drawing designs. This way they would have more quality and price options to offer their customers depending on the target.

People

The staff should always bear in mind that they are representing the case company with their actions. It is very important what comes to hiring, that new employees are motivated and willing to better the company with their effort. Motivation and before all enthusiasm reflect to customer service and should be continuously maintained with current employees. The quality of service is one aspect of marketing a business, the staff should exchange what they think could be useful information about clients and products with each other in order to make customer service seem well informed about several aspects of the business operations. Some customers value better service over a cheaper price and to ensure an all-encompassing service experience, after sales support by e.g. asking new customers how the product or services eventually worked out for them can add important value to the case company's offer over its competitors.

As Findlay (2015, 25-26) argues in her thesis work, effective communication is considered a key construct in successful partnerships. The key aspects are listed as communication quality, information sharing and participation. The quantity of critical information shared between partners enables them to act more independently increasing satisfaction and being a pivotal role in partnership success. The expectations of a partnership can be reached by planning and setting goals mutually and participating in the process.

Process

It should be a continuous endeavour to try to improve customer service processes. Things should be handled with as short a delay as possible and especially issues should be communicated to the counter party before they're discovered some other way. By always having so to say black on white, e.g. confirming telephone conversations in an e-mail message is a good way of keeping actions recorded and revisable. Multiple people operating multiple systems simultaneously needs good organizing and holding on to common ground rules. Trying to keep everything simple and straightforward can diminish the amount of human error and makes it easier to correct them. The easier the system, the fewer mistakes will occur and overall costs will be lower.

Physical evidence

As physical evidence order confirmations documenting all basic and special information like delivery instructions etc. is a clear reviewable evidence of a business transaction. The information should be accurate and not have room for interpretation. New products could be advertised as appendices for confirmation e-mails as the order-placing person is directly a target customer and might want to receive information about new releases. It should also be monitored that freight documents and cover letters for deliveries are handled correctly and recorded to a database for review. Keeping in touch and acknowledging who your customers are by seeing the trouble to send out e.g. Christmas cards yearly and even business presents can generate a great deal of customer retention and loyalty, as car salesman Joe Girardi's story of sending monthly greeting cards saying 'I like you!' to his customers and becoming a legend in the history of salespeople (Lagina 2012, cited 6.5.2015).

2.3.4 Implementation

To conclude the considerations of the marketing mix it has to be taken into account, who are the customers generating the most profits. By applying the Pareto's principle that suggests 80 percent of profits come from 20 percent of customers and vice versa, the customers who purchase the case company's products from the distribution channels i.e. construction companies and contractors (who can be considered as SMEs) can be divided based on their number so that big construction companies account for 20 percent and SME contractors represent 80 percent of the population. It's found out that the designers have the best position for initial influence on the product choice in purchasing processes for different size organisations and whether the contracting company wants to try changing it to another brand, the salespeople at the distribution channels will have a chance to influence the decision by recommending a substitute product. Targeting people in influencer and decision-maker roles in the purchasing process as well as acknowledging that the marketing budget will be quite limited, the most suitable marketing activities will be chosen and presented as follows.

As the product will be introduced for delivery in October, the marketing activities should be started at the end of summer, when the more quiet season and summer vacations have reached their end. The regional sales managers of the case company should begin contacting wholesalers'

stores and making appointments for personal product presentations with the staff where they can familiarize the salespeople with the installation and qualities of the trunking system. There can further be a special product presentation event organized for key customers invited by the wholesaler. Also engineer offices that provide electrification designs should be contacted to agree on a presentation of the product's features and components or alternatively about providing them with a product brochure with information they need to be able to present them to customers as models in their designs.

In the author's opinion all marketing messages, whether they're delivered through ads or presentations, concerning the product's characteristics it should be mentioned that despite the material being PVC plastic, the new kind of structure makes the product stable and tough as well as good-looking, and that most of the accessories for the trunking system are common with the accessories used with the case company's other aluminium-made trunking system that might already be familiar to the customer.

Negotiations about the price should be undergone with every wholesaler separately, giving them the feeling they're getting a good deal. Large initial stock orders for the product should be granted a discount for about a month's period of time to deepen the penetration of the market and more quickly to get to test its reception in the market. The price could be gradually elevated to its normal negotiated levels in a way that for another short period of time, returning customers that have ordered already during the first offer will get another smaller discount as a thank you for helping the new system gain a market share.

Service aspects that are appreciated by customers sometimes above price and quality are stock availability and delivery time. It should be taken care of that if the case company's distributors i.e. wholesalers do not have an abundant amount of the product in stock, the case company does. This means safe order penetration points, and that customers are e.g. suggested to round up partial package sizes in orders. But also keeping track of as well as taking part in the latest advances in warehousing technology, e.g. ensuring that a supplier that offers 24-hour open warehousing for its customers has the trunking system on a shelf available.

Availability of information is also a decisive factor for designers and salespeople as often product data is searched for online. As the internet is accessible everywhere and most of service work is done on a computer, presence in networks, both professional and social become a big part of a

business' visibility and creating the case company accounts on LinkedIn and even Facebook are places where they can connect and share information with other companies they are in co-operation with and so forth with people who are involved in the industry.

A profile on LinkedIn features information about the company and can be used as a platform to publish interesting news about the company itself, like and share news about the industry and ones published by Connections such as the wholesalers' profiles for instance. It can serve as a display window for new products with Showcase Pages including pictures, videos, discussion about the product etc. LinkedIn is a professional social network, where people and businesses connect by seeing connections others have added or even viewed thus creating networks with other professionals in the industry and increasing a company's presence and moulding its public image (Appendix 3). It is also the perfect forum for posting open job positions sure to reach educated applicants with their professional backgrounds i.e. CVs visible on the network making the recruitment process more interactive.

A Facebook company page doesn't have all the same professional features (appendix 3) as LinkedIn, but still has a lot more users (Lintulahti 2014, cited 4.5.2015). It might be more convenient for business-to-consumer marketing and can wound up costing a lot if consumers were targeted, but can still be used as an information exchange channel and it must be remembered that organisations are run by people and people use social media sites also for searching information and creating an image about organisations based on the information available about them online (Samu 2013, cited 4.5.2015). Facebook can apply e.g. an embedded comment box on the product pages would give customers a forum to give feedback on the functionality of the products or service of the case company under their own name. On the other hand not every company e.g. allows using Facebook during working hours and some may not even want to associate their account with work so a customized comment box for the products could serve the purpose. A public profile could display pictures of finished sites where the case company's products have been used, named with suitable headlines that could pop up on for instance Google search for someone looking for information about trunking systems before setting up an office for a growing IT business, which could realize in end-customer demand of their products from a contractor or designer. More presence online, especially by having more links on other sites directed to the case company's sites, leads also to more search results on Google making visits to the case company's pages more likely (Wikipedia 2015, cited 4.5.2015). This kind of purposeful versatile online presence is called search engine optimization.

Advertisement reaching most of the target market should be placed at the wholesalers' stores as posters and product catalogues in stands. Ads should be included in industry publications such as Sähköala or Sähkömaailma. A promotional infomercial video could be made utilizing footage that has been shot in co-operation with an electricity contractor as he installs and demonstrates the ease of the process on camera. The video can be published on the case company's website from where it should be shared on the LinkedIn and Facebook profiles, but also on monitors in the wholesalers' stores. The video should also be included with a reference to the home website, LinkedIn and Facebook sites to attract visitors who yet haven't known about the pages. All advertising material should be viewable online in electronic form.

Industry trade fairs attract people interested in new innovations in products and services and the largest annual trade fair SähköTeleValoAV is arranged in Jyväskylä in February of 2016 and the application period for a presentation space ends in October of 2015 (Jyväskylän Messut 2015, cited 6.5.2015). The fair would make a great forum for interaction with new and old customers and creating relationships while giving visibility to the new trunking system and possibly creating word of mouth marketing based on positive experiences of the product and the company representative.

3 CONCLUSIONS

The objective of the thesis work was to provide the case company with new, fresh marketing ideas that could contribute to their marketing strategy in a positive fashion. Naturally a business that has operated for half a decade with growth and annual multi-million turnover already possesses established marketing channels, but the commissioner saw nothing short of an opportunity in employing the newest information and practices taught for future's professionals provided by Oulu University of Applied Sciences in the form of a marketing plan as a student's thesis work.

The research problem to reach the desired goal was defined as follows: *What new ways can be found to market a new product more effectively to customers?* Supportive questions to address were: *What new channels can we find to reach old customers faster?* & *What new channels can we find to reach entirely new customers?*

After initial discussion with the CEO of the case company it was agreed that the research would focus of four market segments and the consideration of the research questions would stay within these limits not to make the subject too broad. The segments were defined and confirmed also through further research as wholesaler salespeople, electrification designers, construction companies and contractors. One goal is to get the salespeople to offer the case company's products to construction companies and contractors who order their components for construction and renovation projects from a wholesaler. Another aim is to get electrification designers at engineer offices to use the case company's product as a model in their plans. On behalf of the construction companies and contractors, they are wanted to either agree on the product choice made in co-operation with a designer or within possibilities to change another product brand to the case company's option after consulting a salesperson at the wholesaler.

As the thesis topic was chosen to be presented as a tool for the case company's marketing planning and the company in question is full of professionals and experts in the industry, any detailed definitions of theory such as marketing as a concept was decided to be left out as a separate section and bind all theory and practice in the same context to serve as coherent units.

The PESTEL analysis was chosen to summarize the key macro level factors affecting the case company's industry. The key findings were the case company's benefit in the constant of operating in the European Union's free trade area and on the contrary our nation's prevalent political situation as it's in a culmination point because of the formation of a new government, considering future possibly easing regulations regarding SME expense of new employment for example. Domesticity as a selling point was applied as a threatening cultural factor from researches in other fields. A poll revealing that Finnish people are content with the quality of Finnish construction overall noting that domestic construction companies using the case company's supplied products can be considered an assurance of quality according to the study result. Development of technology in warehousing and logistics and taking part in it as a current topic of interest to the case company was pointed out. As another current topic, green practices concerning raw materials and life cycles of products are becoming a more important issue for suppliers from a sustainable procurement point of view to consider every year to come. Also that common European immaterial property rights can help a supplier truly benefit from a new innovation in a product some time if it's able to gain a market share in the first place.

The customer analysis aims at highlighting the importance of recognizing roles of different people and positions in a purchasing process. If the roles of different companies and their employees can be identified, it will be easier to target the right messages to the right people who can affect the final purchasing decision.

The few current marketing channels of the case company were reviewed as reference for comparison for the eventual marketing plan. The distribution channels and logistics from the case company's production and stock destinations to the wholesalers' warehouses were analysed and established as versatile and sufficient for the case company's purposes.

Porter's five forces model was applied for analysing the competitive situation of the market due to its established reputation to suit the purpose. The analyses are based on secondary internet sources as well as first-hand knowledge of the industry. The threat of new entrants was defined as *low* after examining the union's web pages and corporate registers under the same 'branch of industry' and noticing a pattern of long-lasting and even family-run businesses prevailing in the industry, making the conclusion that flourishing as a new business is difficult. Bargaining power of both suppliers and buyers were defined as *medium* because there are some brands in the field that have established a leading position and therefore is important for all suppliers i.e.

wholesalers to possess, and because suppliers in the same position as the case company may have to negotiate discounts with bigger clients on large orders in order to persuade them to return next time. Developing technology and new manufacturers enable releases of competing products to the market in a similar way as the case company's new product, making the threat of substitutes *high*. Rivalry among existing competitors who have operated in the industry for a longer time and have more extensive marketing resources and activities will be tough for an extra piece of the market share if construction is about to pick up towards the end of the year.

The market research was conducted by e-mail with a 6 to 8 question qualitative interview, depending on the recipient, and was sent to wholesaler salespeople, designers, construction company managers and contractors. The key findings regarding the research's objective to find out more about the sales and marketing process of these kinds of products were the following: in the wholesalers' case it is usually the well-known brands that are suggested to customers, because they don't know enough about the product's qualities, durability or installability. What on the other hand is still considered if these characteristics meet the requirements and some other product is out of stock is the new product's availability and delivery times. Designers usually choose and introduce a certain brand to its customer based on their experience considering the ease of installation and its components, sometimes price. Then they get the customer's approval on it to be used in the design. Most often it's a familiar well-known brand but the choice can be affected by how much information is available on competing products. In industrial sites construction companies usually use the brands chosen by the designer in co-operation with the designer. Contractors among construction companies usually have a say on the choice of brand and usually a more affordable option is applied for. A conclusion based on the findings can be made that there needs to be enough information available online or directly brought to attention about a new product's qualities and that the price has to be inexpensive to become an option of interest for the target market's segments over familiar brands.

The product's beneficial attributes were considered in an F.A.B. analysis as accommodating to the end-customers' interior design and furnishing wishes as well as need for different types and amount of outlets as the body can be customized to enable different positions and lengths to adapt to corners for instance. The applicability with the case company's aluminium trunking system's accessories should work as encouragement for trialling and learning the installation due to familiar parts. Good looks and life cycle prolonging hit resistance will increase the scope of spaces the system will be suitable for.

The internal and external marketing environment of the case company is assessed with a SWOT analysis. The company's strengths are found from the lack of bureaucracy in a small business among experienced professionals in their field. The possession of strong product brands as it maintains some type of loyal customer base and has allowed further investments made for the future. Also co-operation with quality suppliers as well as market-covering distribution channels are a vital strong point in the industry. Weaknesses can be sought from the same point of being a small company, where tasks pile up and overlap increasing hurry and possibility of mistakes. Opportunities arise in projected growth in the industry and developments in logistics handling technologies with certain distribution channels. Internal growth can be enabled by the speculated changes with SME incentives for the profitability of new employment. Increasing social media visibility could increase even end-customer awareness of the case company's products in today's networking business environment.

An implementation plan from the ideas in the marketing mix was concluded to be carried out with the following activities: As the new trunking system will not be available for distribution before October, marketing should be started just in time that even the last of the people in the industry have returned from their summer vacations, when the pace is just starting to pick up. Direct marketing by calling through wholesalers to agree on presentations towards October for sales personnel and also their most important customers i.e. construction companies and contractors should be done. Arranging presentations also with engineers' offices should increase orders, because it is the most interactive and memorable way to familiarize someone to a new product and maintain or even create business relationships.

At launch there should be bulk discounts granted for early large stock orders to attract orders and thus the distribution and availability of the product, because availability and short delivery times are appreciated services from customers' point of view. Making the product available in the new 24-hour stocks and for the hour-by-hour deliveries in the metropolitan area can win over last minute orders and give a positive image of the delivery-readiness of the company for future projects. Traditional advertisement should be placed in industry magazines as well as in the wholesalers' stores as posters, catalogues and even infomercials on screens. By renting a display space on the industry's largest trade fair in Jyväskylä on February of 2016 would display the product on a forum where interested professionals come to find out about new products and innovations and allow valuable interaction with representatives from all around the target market.

What is suggested as a radical new marketing channel, enabling more versatile visibility and handling public relations in a generalising environment is a social network for companies, such as LinkedIn and Facebook. Both provide a platform for a business to connect with other businesses, their employees and depending on the situation, even consumers. Networking is enabled by seeing who and what companies other connections have added, liked or even viewed. The profiles can be used as a forum for publishing and sharing industry and company related news and articles, announcements and other public communication, such as advertisement in electronic form. They can work as a display window for products with customised pages including pictures, videos and discussion etc.

As the final conclusion, the research questions will be answered. As *new ways to market a new product more effectively to customers*, establishing social media visibility in channels like LinkedIn and Facebook will enable new ways of communicating and sharing marketing messages. Sales presentations to key customers in co-operation with wholesalers can help *reach old customers faster*, and *entirely new customers could be reached* by directly marketing engineer offices and employing them to use this product in office electrification designs with new clients by showing it, sharing information about it and being eager to provide product support if necessary.

4 DISCUSSION

The beginning of the thesis was somewhat challenging in terms of schedule and information flow issues. There was an agreement reached between the case company and the author in December of 2014 on the subject of a thesis project to be a marketing plan for a new product, yet at the moment very little was known about the product. Anyway the opening seminar for the thesis work was arranged at the final week of January, meaning to have enough time before the seminar to have another meeting with the case company's CEO but due to a tight business schedule, the meeting was postponed until after the seminar which resulted it being held with very few plans regarding details of the thesis process. At the meeting there was a bit more information about the product available and we agreed on the empirical research method and initial target markets for the plan, as well as confidentiality issues since the case company naturally doesn't want this possibly valuable new information to be easily accessible by competitors.

The working process itself was on one hand highly ascending towards the end but on the other hand a necessary correction to a slow start, mostly affected by a daily scheduled sports hobby of the author's. Also delayed responses, due to actual hurry and other priorities, to e-mails sent to the case company and its affiliate sometimes made continuing writing a bit difficult, yet forcing the author to perform positively educational independent research and rearranging i.e. prioritizing writing tasks.

The empirical market research was conducted as personalized sets of interview questions sent to four people in each four target market segment. The plan was to make a follow-up phone call to the recipients to ensure a better response rate, but yet it remained too low compared to initial goals set. One response came right after sending the first e-mail on a Friday which gave confidence that people will reply to it. After waiting over the weekend and a couple more days when just no time seemed to be left for calling the recipients (from writing theory at the campus and engaging with hobbies in the afternoons), a reminder was sent. A couple days after that the follow-up calls were made and indeed resulted in instant replies. One reply that was promised to be made was eventually never made despite a follow-up of the initial follow-up call. One market segment, the contractors, all refused to take part in the interview pleading to hurry or no interest toward partaking, but the decision was made that no further interview candidates would be

contacted due to not having enough time and references made by the other segments toward the contractors' role in the purchasing process. Calling the recipients the same day as the interview was sent, might have inspired more responses and left more time to contact more people to get enough replies. On a positive note, the format and contents of the interviews were well constructed in a way that they provided needed answers to fill in the blanks in the author's perception of the different stages in the entire purchasing process as they were intended to.

Despite difficulties that every thesis author probably experiences along the way, the writing process has been interesting and of course motivating because it is being done for an actual commissioner. With the author having some working experience in the field gave the considerations some insight but was yet mostly examined with fresh eyes from outside the industry. A lot of marketing tools were utilized in analysis of the subject and composition of the plan, which is a result of the case studies practiced in most of the marketing courses in our international business degree programme. The international business aspect is achieved as the product in question is produced in Eastern Europe and supplied to the case company by another North European company.

At the end of the day, a very feasible marketing plan was constructed for the case company. It is up to them to consider whether there are elements in the thesis they see allocating resources could be profitable and whether it has indeed potential contribute to faster acquisition of a market share with the new product. A lot of deeply analyzed numeric data and other specific information were omitted from the research due to the market information the case company already possesses. The thesis is very practical of nature to the pursued benefit of the case company and all presented research results are specifically chosen to theoretically back up the marketing plan. I hope the plan will be of good use to the company as it is or by giving further ideas to develop their current marketing activities and ones in future product launches.

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Hello,

I'm an international business student at Oulu University of Applied Sciences and I'm conducting a marketing plan as my thesis for a commissioner company in the electrotechnical wholesale industry. As a part of it I'm conducting a market research about marketing channels. My goal is to learn more about the sales process and functions between a service provider such as your company and different kinds of customers as well as the marketing channels used in acquiring information about new products and brands. If You can find about 10 minutes for replying to the short interview below, it would help a great deal in my research allowing me to finalize my marketing plan and graduate in May. The questions are open-ended so please use as elaborate and descriptive answers as you can to help me in analysing them. All information will be handled anonymously and no company names, neither yours or the customer's won't be used in the report.

Thank You in advance for your co-operation.

Best regards,

Tomi Saari

DIB1SN

School of Business and Information Management

Oulu University of Applied Sciences

Wholesaler salespeople

1. How much do you market certain products to customers?
2. How do you market certain products to customers?
3. With which kinds of customers can you affect the brand of a product they come to purchase?
4. Based on what do you recommend certain products to customers?
5. How do you get information about new products?
6. Where and how would you like to get information about new products?
7. Are there any barriers in recommending new products to customers?
8. Anything else you would like to point out regarding the reception of information and marketing of new products to customers?

Construction company managers

1. Who makes the decision on which brand of products to use in e.g. trunking installation?
2. Based on what is a certain brand of products chosen for a project?
3. If you use a sub-contractor, how much can he affect the brand of products used?
4. How do you get information about new product brands?
5. Where and how would you like to get information about new product brands?
6. Are there any barriers in using new products in projects?
7. Anything else you would like to point out regarding the reception of information and use of new products in projects?

Electrification designers

1. How much do you plan e.g. trunkings to be installed with a certain brand of system?
2. Which kinds of customers have already chosen brands of products they want to be used in the design?
3. Are there customers that do not choose brands beforehand?
4. Based on what do you choose a certain brand in your designs?
5. How do you get information about new product brands?
6. Where and how would you like to get information about new product brands?
7. Anything else you would like to point out regarding the reception of information and inclusion of new products in designs?

Contractors

1. How often can you affect the decision on which brand of products to use in e.g. trunking installation?
2. Based on what is a certain brand of products chosen for a project?
3. How do you get information about new product brands?
4. Where and how would you like to get information about new product brands?
5. Are there any barriers in using new products in projects?
6. Anything else you would like to point out regarding the reception of information and use of new products in projects?

Tukkumyyjät

1. Kuinka paljon markkinoit tiettyjä tuotemerkkejä asiakkaille?

Kohtalaisen paljon tulee tarjottua tiettyjen tunnettujen brandien tuotteita asiakkaille. Tunnettuja tuotteita on helpompi tarjota asiakkaalle, koska kaikilla osapuolilla on jo olemassa tietty näkemys tuotteista. Tuntemattomien tuotteiden kohdalla herättää yleensä epäilystä laatu, kestävyys, asennettavuus...

2. Miten markkinoit tiettyjä tuotemerkkejä asiakkaille?

Käyttämällä tarjouksissa tiettyjä tuotteita, korvaamalla jotain tuotteita toisilla, esittelemällä asiakkaalle henkilökohtaisesti. Joskus järjestetään tavarantoimittajan kanssa koulutustilaisuuksia heidän tuotteistaan.

3. Millaisten asiakkaiden kanssa pystyt vaikuttamaan heidän haluamansa tuotetyypin tuotemerkkiin?

Asiakas pitää tuntea hyvin, jotta tietää asiakkaan tarpeet ja osaa tarjota niihin sopivia vaihtoehtoja. Myös hyvin perustelemalla voi vaikuttaa uudenkin asiakkaan ostopäätökseen.

4. Millä perusteella suosittelet tiettyjä tuotemerkkejä asiakkaille?

Kun tarjoan asiakkaalle tuotteita, pitää varmistaa että tuotetta saa nyt ja vielä tulevaisuudessa. Myös hinnan pitää olla kohtuullinen. Ei ole järkevää ohjata asiakasta käyttämään tuotteita, joiden valmistus esim. loppuu tai joiden hankkimiseen kuluu liian paljon aikaa. Tuotteet pitää olla nopeasti ja helposti saatavilla.

5. Miten saat tietoa uusista tuotemerkeistä?

Meillä käy tavarantoimittajien edustajia esittelemässä meille uutuuksia. Myös sähköpostiin tulee tietoa uutuuksista. Joskus tiedon jostain uudesta tuotteesta saa asiakkaalta ja sen jälkeen etsitään kyseinen tuote esim. internetistä. Messuilta myös saa usein tietoa uusista tuotteista.

6. Mistä ja miten haluaisit saada tietoa uusista tuotemerkeistä?

Paras tapa on kun edustaja käy esittelemässä tuotteen paikanpäällä. Silloin tuotetta voi fyysisesti tutkia ja saa paremman kuvan tuotteesta, kun sähköpostiin tulevasta viestistä.

7. Onko uusien tuotemerkkien markkinoinnissa asiakkaille jotain esteitä?

Ei ole mitään esteitä. Kaikkia uusia voidaan tarjota asiakkaalle. Ainoastaan tuotteen saatavuus rajoittaa asiakkaan ostopäätöksiä usein. Kaikkia uusia tuotteita ei varastoida tukkureiden varastoissa. Asiakkaat tarvitsevat yleensä tuotteet heti tai seuraavaksi päiväksi.

Sähkösuunnittelijat

1. Kuinka paljon suunnittelet esim. johtokanavia asennettavaksi tietyillä tuotemerkeillä?

Johtokanavia olen suunnitellut lähinnä mallilla "X". Joskus aikoinaan olen suunnitellut muistaakseni vastaavaa EK-kanavana, nykyisin taitaa olla "X2:n" tuote. Tiedän, että on olemassa vastaavaa "X3:lla" myös, mutta en ole suunnitellut sitä. En suunnittele mielellään muovisia, kuten "X4". Olen myös suunnitellut "X5:n" alumiinisia minijohtokanavia kalusteisiin.

2. Millaisilla asiakkaila on valittuna tuotemerkit, mitä haluavat suunniteltavan asennettavaksi?

Yhdellä asiakkaalla on ollut tuotemerkki valmiina ja se on perustunut aikaisemman kohteen kokemukseen. Johtokanava on sopinut listakalusteiden kanssa ja muistaakseni se oli Ductel mini eloksoitu. Yleensä joko asiakas tai arkkitehti hyväksyy mallin.

3. Onko asiakkaita, jotka eivät valitse tuotemerkkejä etukäteen?

On pääsääntönä, että eivät valitse itse, vaan esittelen tuotteen ja hyväksyvät sen mukaan mahdollisesti.

4. Millä perusteella valitset tietyjä tuotemerkkejä suunnitelmiin?

Kokemuksen perusteella, sillä ennen urakoin pääsääntöisesti suunnitelmien lomassa. Asennuksen helppous; kulmakappaleet, jatkot, päädyt, kannet, seinäkannatuskappaleet, kojerasia. Tuotteen on oltava tukeva, suojattu muovilla ja helposti sahattavissa ja työstettävissä. Ulkoasu on oltava siisti. Hintakin hieman voi vaikuttaa, jos määrät ovat suurempia. Saatavuus tukusta on oltava hyvä. Joskus koko ratkaisee, kun ei ole tilaa. Minikouruissa voi tulla kytkimien ja pistorasioiden osalta ongelmia. Kaiken on sovittava kotimaan vaatimuksiin. On minikouruihin kytkimiä ja pistorasioita, mitkä eivät täytä kaksoiseristysvaatimusta. Siis ei ole kojerasiaa, vaan johto liitetään suoraan kytkimeen tai pistorasiaan.

5. Miten saat tietoa uusista tuotemerkeistä?

Tuotteiden tuotetietous tulee yleensä tukkurin esittelyistä. En käy messuilla yleensä. Hyvin harvoin.

6. Mistä ja miten haluaisit saada tietoa uusista tuotemerkeistä?

Tuotemerkkitietoutta tai johtokanavamallien muutoksista olisi hyvä saada joko mainoslehtisenä tai sähköpostitse mainos. Jos tulee jokin kohde työn alle ja etsin tuotteita, niin lähinnä käyn tukkurin esitehyllyssä ja netissä.

7. Onko uusien tuotemerkkien käyttämisessä suunnitelmassa jotain esteitä?

Ei ole mitään esteitä. Kokemus tuotteesta on yleensä merkittävä päätöstä tehdessä. Myös hintataso ratkaisee. Varon suunnittelema mitään liian kallista. Hinta/laatu ratkaisee.

8. Onko mitään muuta, mitä haluaisit mainita uusien tuotemerkkien markkinoinnista ja käytöstä suunnitelmissa?

Jos johtokanava määrä on sellainen, että hinta saattaa ratkaista, voi olla, että en määrittele johtokanavaa vaan määrittelen jonkun ja vastaava käy jos tilaaja hyväksyy. Kaikki tuotemerkkitietous on hyvästä. Kannattaisi esitellä osat ja niiden asennuksen helppous yms.

1. Kuinka paljon suunnittelet esim. johtokanavia asennettavaksi tietyillä tuotemerkeillä?

Paljon, tosin suunnitelmaan ei sinänsä saa tyypittää mitään ehdotonta tuotemerkkiä, vaan yleensä käytämme jotain tuotetta esimerkkinä. Eli suunnitelmaan tulee Esim. "X" (urakoitsija sitten käyttää tätä tai vastaavaa tuotetta, jos esim. saa tukusta halvemmalla toisenlaista yhtä laadukasta tuotetta, niin se on ok.)

2. Millaisilla asiakkailla on valittuna tuotemerkit, mitä haluavat suunniteltavan asennettavaksi?

Meidän asiakkaat eivät ota tuotemerkittäin kantaa asennettaviin tuotteisiin, korkeintaan väriin saatetaan asiakkaan puolelta ottaa kantaa.

3. Onko asiakkaita, jotka eivät valitse tuotemerkkejä etukäteen?

On. Kaikki. Jos puhutaan kaapeliteistä. Eli johtokanavista, kaapelihyllyistä, asennuskanavista yms.

4. Millä perusteella valitset tiettyjä tuotemerkkejä suunnitelmiin?

Johtoteidän osalta, lähinnä jakaantuu "X2:n" ja "X:n" välille, joskus "X6" esim. lattiakanavien osalta. Lähinnä netistä selaamalla ja vertaamalla kenellä on paras tuote, nykyisin aika vakiintunut käytäntö käyttää tiettyjä hyväksi havaittuja tuotteita, joten en joka välissä selaa tuotteita uusiksi vaan käytän sitä mitä ennenkin käyttänyt. Tärkeää on, että tuote toimii ja siitä löytyy hyvin tietoa netistä ja sitä on oikeasti saatavilla.

5. Miten saat tietoa uusista tuotemerkeistä?

Toimistolla käy silloin tällöin kaupustelijoita kertomassa uusista tuotteistaan. Joskus tulee tarve saada tietynlainen tuote, niin silloin sitä etsitään netistä ja soittelemalla tuottajille/myyjille.

6. Mistä ja miten haluaisit saada tietoa uusista tuotemerkeistä?

Käynti toimistolla on paras, koska silloin tuote tulee esiteltyä parhaiten. Mutta sitten tämän lisäksi nettiin mahd. kattavat infot tuotteesta, mistä voi varmistella myöhemmin, että minkälainen tuote olikaan. Vanhat suunnittelijat tykkää katalogeista, mihin sitten osa valmistajista lähettää täydennyslehtisiä uusista tuotteista.

7. Onko uusien tuotemerkkien käyttämisessä suunnitelmassa jotain esteitä?

Jos tuotteesta ei tiedä tarpeeksi, niin ei uskalla käyttää. Joskus hinta on suurempi kuin vanhoissa tuotteissa. Jos tuotetta ei ole oikeasti tukkureilla tai muilla saatavilla nopeasti ja helposti, ei kukaan tule sitä sitten käyttämään oikeasti.

8. Onko mitään muuta, mitä haluaisit mainita uusien tuotemerkkien markkinoinnista ja käytöstä suunnitelmissa?

Tuotteista olisi hyvä julkaista insinööreille ja suunnittelijoille tarkoitettuja tietopaketteja, eikä vain sellaisia perinteisiä mainoläpyskötä, missä kehuaan tuotetta eikä oikeasti kerrota siitä tuotteesta mitään. Kaikki tämä tieto olisi hyvä olla valmistajan sivuilla mahdollisimman kattavasti, yksityiskohtaisesti ja helposti saatavilla.

Rakennusyrietykset

1. Kuka tekee päätöksen, mitä tuotemerkkiä käytetään esim. johtokanavien asennuksessa?

- *Teollisuuskohteissa suunnittelija ja asiakas yleensä päättävät kaapelitievalmistajan/tuotteen.*

- *Urakoitsija voi yleensä vaikuttaa päätökseen ja esittää omaa vaihtoehtoaan.*

- *kun kohteessa on aiemmin käytetty tiettyä tuotemerkkiä se vaikuttaa.*

2. Millä perusteella tietty tuotemerkki valitaan käytettäväksi kohteessa?

- *Jos tuotemerkki on meidän valittavissa, etsimme edullisimman vaihtoehdon laatu, saatavuus ja asennettavuus huomioiden.*

- *Hyllytyypin valinnassa tärkeimmät valintaan vaikuttavat ominaisuudet ovat mielestäni; hyllyn kantavuus ja korroosion suojauksen taso.*

3. Jos käytätte aliurakoitsijaa, kuinka paljon hän voi vaikuttaa käytettävän tuotemerkin valintaan?

- *Johtoteiden asennusaliurakoitsijat eivät voi vaikuttaa tuotemerkin valintaan.*

4. Miten saat tietoa uusista tuotemerkeistä?

- *Lähinnä messut, netti.*

5. Mistä ja miten haluaisit saada tietoa uusista tuotemerkeistä?

- *messut on hyvä.*

- *uusista tuotemerkkeistä tulee hyvin harvoin !*

6. Onko uusien tuotemerkkien käyttämisessä jotain esteitä?

- *Yleensä alku on hankalaa, loppuasiakkaat ja suunnittelijat eivät tunne tuotetta.*

- *osien tilaaminen on hankalaa kun pitää ensin opetella uuden järjestelmän rakenne ja vaihtoehdot , jotta osaa tilata oikeat osat.*

7. Onko mitään muuta, mitä haluaisit mainita uusien tuotemerkkien markkinoinnista ja käytöstä kohteissa?

- Projektit alkavat yleensä johtoteiden asennuksilla, joten ne hankitaan ensimmäiseksi työmaalle.
- Uusien tuotteiden myyjän pitää huolehtia siitä että kaikki järjestelmän edellyttävät osat on saatavilla maksimissaan 1-2 viikon toimitusajalla.
- Pääkaupunkiseudulla työmailla ei ole tilaa varastoida , jolloin toimituksia pitää pystyä tekemään päivittäin sitä mukaa kun työmaa edistyy.

1. Kuka tekee päätöksen, mitä tuotemerkkiä käytetään esim. johtokanavien asennuksessa?

Normaalissa kilpailu-urakoinnissa jossa suunnitelmat teettää urakkalaskentaa varten tilaajaorganisaatio, on johtotiet tyypitetty suunnittelijan toimesta. KVR-urakoinnissa (kokonaisvastuu-urakka) johtotietyyppit voi tarjoaja (urakoitsija) itse valita.

2. Millä perusteella tietty tuotemerkki valitaan käytettäväksi kohteessa?

Johtotiet on useimmiten valittu käyttöolosuhteiden mukaan huomioiden ympäristön ja käyttöolosuhteiden materiaaleille aiheuttamat rasitukset ja kuormitukset. Normaaleissa toimisto/kiinteistökohteissa tilaajan suunnittelija on valinnut johtotietyyppit kokemuksensa ja saamansa priiffauksen perusteella, johtokanavissa esim. alumiinin/muovin välillä ja kaapelihyllyissä alumiinin/teräksen välillä. Suunnittelijan tuotevalintaan siis vaikuttaa suurelta osin kuinka hyvin myyjät ovat saaneet suunnittelijan vakuuttuneeksi oman tuotteensa paremmuudesta. Urakoitsija voi kuitenkin ennen hankintaa yrittää vaihtaa tuotemerkkiä itselleen edullisempaan hyväksyttämällä vaihto tilaajalla, joskus onnistuu ja joskus ei. KVR-urakoinnissa valintaan vaikuttaa eniten hinta ja asennettavuus ja urakoitsija valitsee näiden perusteella käytettävän tuotteen.

3. Jos käytätte aliurakoitsijaa, kuinka paljon hän voi vaikuttaa käytettävän tuotemerkin valintaan?

Aliurakoitsija ei voi juurikaan vaikuttaa materiaalivalintaan.

4. Miten saat tietoa uusista tuotemerkeistä?

Uusista tuotemerkeistä tietoa tulee netin kautta ja lisäksi paperisina esitteinä sekä lisäksi yrityksen hankintaorganisaation kautta.

5. Mistä ja miten haluaisit saada tietoa uusista tuotemerkeistä?

Nykykäytäntö riittää, kts. kohta 4.

6. Onko uusien tuotemerkkien käyttämisessä jotain esteitä?

Uusien tuotemerkkien käytön esteenä on useimmiten tilaajapuolen epäluulo ja halu pidättäytyä tutuissa tuotemerkeissä.

7. Onko mitään muuta, mitä haluaisit mainita uusien tuotemerkkien markkinoinnista ja käytöstä kohteissa?

Eniten vaikuttaa jo aiemmin mainittu tilaajien/suunnittelijoiden epäluulo uusia tuotteita kohtaan ja tietysti tuotteen hinta ja asennettavuus.

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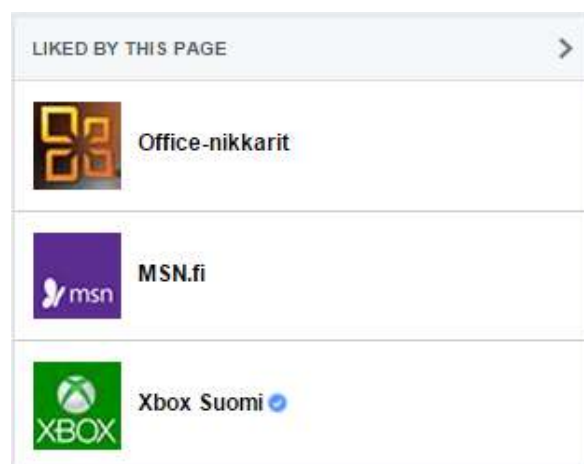




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