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**DEVELOPING BUSINESS TO BUSINESS PRODUCT LAUNCHES  
CORRESPONDING TO THE CUSTOMER ACQUISITION JOURNEY**

**Evaluation of the process in a case company context**

Master's Thesis in  
Industrial Management

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABM	Account-based marketing
B2B	Business-to-business
B2C	Business-to-customer
B2H	Business-to-humans
CRM	Customer relationship management
CTA	Call-to-action
DIM	Digital inbound marketing
DMU	Decision making unit
SQL	Sales qualified lead
MQL	Marketing qualified lead
SEM	Search engine marketing
SEO	Search engine optimization

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**ABSTRACT**

The marketing environment has changed drastically causing B2B customers to evaluate, compare alternatives and seek more and more information by themselves in the digital environment without traditional intrusive marketing. Marketing has become more data-driven and measurable making it is easier to follow statistics and identify prospective customers better and lead them to the sales funnel. The importance of digitalisation and data has been understood as a means to improve the hit-rate and the quality of content and not only should companies digitalise the products but also the way products are being sold. The objective of this study is to evaluate how the case company can develop its product launches to correspond to the requirements of the digitalised marketing of today and to launch and control products and solutions more efficiently.

The theoretical framework was based on literature and academic publications regarding B2B product marketing and inbound marketing practices which were combined to create a holistic perspective creating a successful product launch plan. To reach the research objective, a qualitative study was conducted to collect relevant data through interviews within the case company and combined with the data from the viewpoint of external customers.

It is not possible to predict the future without data the thereby this matter needs to be comprehended more profoundly in B2B companies to adapt to the change in marketing and to better correspond to the digitalised needs. The findings of the study suggested that the internal roles need to be defined clearer, cooperation between internal stakeholders need to be strengthened, launch and campaign planning needs to be more efficient and clear measurement metrics need to be created for planning and executing product launches to flow more efficiently.

**KEYWORDS:** B2B, product marketing, product launches, inbound marketing

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

An overview of existing literature concerning B2B product launches, the changing digitalised marketing environment and inbound marketing tactics are firstly provided. Then, data is collected both internally in the case company and externally with its customers and analysed with qualitative methods.

### 1.1 Background

This thesis is conducted as an assignment for a case company operating in the technology industry, having the need to develop its processes into the direction of the digitalised marketing environment and respond to its requirements more efficiently. The aim of the thesis is to provide insights and further actions for the case company to launch products more efficiently and systematically and be able to plan and manage the product launches more effectively.

Even though the level of product launches has improved in the company over the past few years, there is room for improvement. Processes and tools for product launches already exist in the company but there is a strong need to update them to correspond to the needs of the digitalised marketing environment of today.

### 1.2 Research objectives and -questions

The purpose of this thesis is to gain a deeper knowledge of successful product launches within the viewpoint of B2B aftersales markets in the technology industry operating in the digitalised, constantly changing marketing environment. The objective of this thesis is to examine the current state of the product launches and to create a product launch framework for the case company to correspond to this change.

To reach the objective given, literature regarding the topic needs to be examined and the current situation and future potential within the case company needs to be evaluated. The aim of this thesis is to answer and focus on these key concerns presented below:

- *How to launch products effectively in B2B aftersales market of today?*
- *What are the key problems having a negative effect on product launches currently?*
- *How to get the B2B customers attention? What new tools can we apply and how?*

### 1.3 Key concepts and focus area

The theoretical framework in this thesis consists of topics regarding B2B product launches and product marketing activities regarding the launches, the changes in the marketing environment of today and how to respond to the change with inbound marketing tactics in the B2B context. The sources for these topics are found mainly in recent articles discussing the topics, from both recently published literature as well as literature published slightly years back and from internal material from the company including sources such as material received from other marketing teams within the company, annual reports and earlier made research.

As inbound marketing tactics and the exploitation of them in a B2B context is a quite contemporary matter, the theory contains information also gathered from various web pages of inbound marketing agencies using also inbound marketing tactics in their own web content for example in forms of articles, webinars and other infographics. There can be seen a constant change in the area of product marketing due to rapid development of digitalisation and therefore inbound marketing tactics are a matter to be strongly considered within B2B companies. However, traditional outbound marketing tactics should not be forgotten as they are proven to function in certain aspects of product marketing and thus are also presented in the theoretical part of the thesis.

The idea of the theoretical part is to present all the relevant topics including all major aspects and necessary information and to combine them in such manner that the author is able to create a functional product launch framework for the benefit of the case company.

#### 1.4 Delimitations

In order to conduct an in-depth analysis for the case company the study was narrowed down to focus only on the B2B area of the technology industry. As for the various tools encompassed by inbound marketing, the author has chosen to limit the tools examined in order to better fit the purpose of this study. Consequently, the core tools that will be included in this study are social networks and -media, SEO, SEM, email- and content marketing. The sample chosen was limited to participants who were relevant in terms of their expertise area regarding the topic.

#### 1.5 Structure of the study

This chapter presents the structure for this thesis. The study is roughly divided into two parts, the theoretical and empirical part and each part is further divided into chapters and subchapters. The first chapter introduces the topic, the background of the research including the objectives and research questions of the study. Furthermore, the key concepts, the focus area and the delimitations of the study are introduced. The second and third chapters consist of three main topics providing the theoretical part for the study. These chapters present the important concepts around the topic of B2B product marketing and product launches including an overview of the change in the marketing environment and digitalisation. The theoretical part aims to analyse and apply the literature to give a deeper understanding of how the case company can adapt to the change in marketing by introducing a background review of the elements needed to be considered such as the benefits and challenges in adopting inbound marketing tactics.

Chapters four and five form the empirical part of the study. Chapter four provides an overview of the case company, a description of its offering and the requirements for the research. The current product development and -launch process is reviewed including a description of the current process of product launches and its stages. Chapter four introduces the research approach, data collection and -analysis method and it presents detailed information about the interviewees. Finally, chapter four gives insight of the data coding and classification methods and an evaluation of the research reliability and validity.

Chapter five presents the empirical findings and results of the interviews and provides a product launch framework created based on both theoretical and empirical findings. Moreover, recommendations for the future of the case company are given and the limitations and implications for future research are presented. Finally, chapter six provides the conclusion for the study by answering to the research questions presented in the first chapter. Figure 1. presents how the study has been divided.

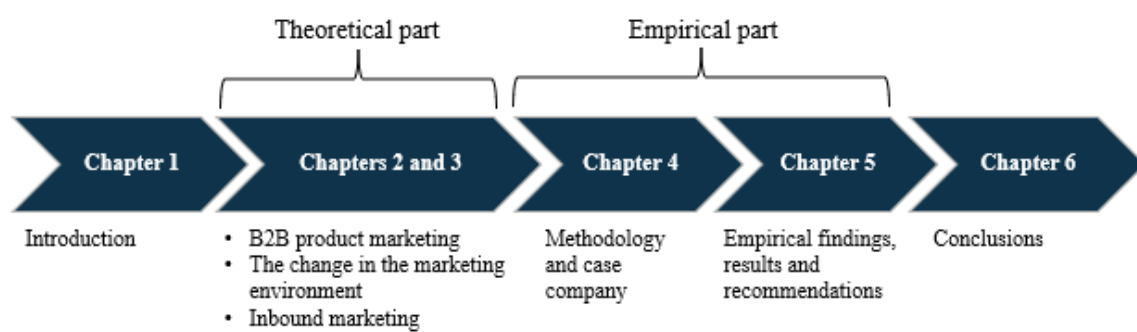


Figure 1. Structure of the study

## 2 B2B PRODUCT MARKETING

### 2.1 B2B- and B2C marketing

B2C represents business-to-consumers in which businesses deal with consumers directly. In B2C the focus is to sell to individuals through a website, at an event or completely in person. B2B represents businesses done between companies and it equals double the size of the B2C market today growing yearly at 19 percent. (Pena 2016: 32-33.) B2B includes multiple audiences which needs to be considered within a single customer's organisation and it is important to consider the product messaging for each of these audiences. The audiences, or in other words the B2B segments include buyers such as the economic buyer (who cares about the business benefits), the end-user buyer (who is going to use the product) and the technical buyer (who wants the technical information and details of the product). In B2C side the user is usually also the buyer and therefore the product messaging is targeted directly to the user and the B2C audiences or in other words B2C segments are therefore only the user or in some cases also the buyer, if the buyer is not the user himself. (Product Focus Ltd 2018d: 8-9.)

B2C is typically based on market research and marketing communications, direct connection with consumers occurs rarely and products and marketing messages are carried out to consumers within a multipart distribution channel. In B2B, the Product Manager together with Sales and Development build solutions to complex problems of their customers. (Parantainen 2013: 21.) In both B2C-, and B2B marketing the company must be familiar with its customers and acknowledge their needs and desires thoroughly and to be able to communicate the marketing message on how the solution in question differs from its rivals. (Parantainen 2013: 21-22.)

Although B2B and B2C differ on their target markets, B2B marketing should adopt some elements from B2C way of marketing to stay competent in the field of marketing today,

as B2B buyers are also B2C consumers. They want to be served also at odd hours and get answers to their questions immediately and like B2C consumers, B2B consumers want to be able to compare prices online. B2B companies should personalise and customise their web pages to respond to their customer's buying habits. B2B companies need to readjust their selling platforms into interactive product catalogues, rather than having just a digitalised version of print content. It is also important to develop the website search capabilities which will more easily reveal for example obscure material that is not visible enough for prospective customers with the use of simple keywords. (Del Rowe 2017b: 16.)

## 2.2 The role of B2B product marketing

It is relatively difficult to define Product Marketing exactly as the role of it is diverse in different companies and for example in smaller companies it might not exist at all. The Product Marketing team might be a separate function or a part of Marketing, Sales or Product Management. The purpose of Product Management is to get the products on-the-shelf or in other words build the products, and the purpose of Product Marketing is to get these products off-the-shelf and help to sell them by creating marketing and sales messages and materials. Product Management has the knowledge of the product itself and knows what needs to be said to the customer and Product Marketing has the knowledge on how to say it, how to communicate this message to the market and by what means. Centralised Marketing focuses on promoting the reputation and the brand of a company while Product Marketing focuses on specific products and the marketing activities around them. (Product Focus Ltd 2018d: 4-5.)

The role of Product Marketing is to define the positioning and the messaging of products but also to plan, design and perform product launches which all require communication as a key element to obtain the best possible results both internally and externally. To perform these tasks successfully, information needs to be gathered and all information

not relevant needs to be filtered out. Information can be collected inside the organisation such as reaching out to Sales, Developers or externally from direct customers. The key is to keep up with constantly evolving trends and developments in the industry. (Weber 2017: 2, 6-8.)

Product Marketing needs to work closely with Product Management and Development to obtain a deep understanding of the product and its functions and then needs to be able to convey this information in a human-understandable manner to Marketing and Sales which ultimately has the fundamental goal to create and cherish leads and in conclusion win deals. Product developers, Managers and for example Sales think, work and speak dissimilarly so Product Marketing can be the ultimate link in between all of these to form an integrated and commonly understood message within all the stakeholders in the organisation. (Weber 2017: 20-23.) What comes to spreading the information to customers the role of Product Marketing is for example to write blogs, do public speaking in trade shows, update inner counterparts with the latest information and current plans and to spread the product messaging to audiences at a correct time and in a right place. Product Managers have the attention on the product itself, its features and usability and Product Marketing needs to put this product information into practice by bringing into question the sales and customer benefits. Thus, verbal and written storytelling executed successfully, working closely together with Product Management are vital elements to succeed in Product Marketing. (Weber 2017: 10-12.)

It is crucial to prioritise the marketing activities including how the marketing budget is divided between products and how the available resources are balanced between products. To get this right Product Marketing needs to have a real insight of the target audience and the company products, but this requires also close working with Product Management and Sales. Organisations not valuing Product Marketing are businesses that do not perform well. These kinds of organisations might involve Product Marketing too late with product related activities, they might provide inadequate briefings for them or even treat Product Marketing as a non-important function. (Product Focus Ltd 2018d: 22.)

Product Management, including Product Marketing, is facing five big issues which according to Product Focus Ltd (2018d: 6-9) has kept coming up repeatedly in companies in Europe they have been working with during the past ten years. The lack of market understanding in companies meaning that companies have too little emphasis on understanding how the market is changing, what competitors are doing and what customers and prospects want in the first place is the first noticeable issue. The second issue stated is that Product Managers are too busy to lead meaning that they focus too much time and effort on dealing with problems rather than preventing them. Poor data and decision-making are seen as the third major issue meaning that Product Managers do not really know how their products are doing on the market and decision making is based on gut feel rather than facts. There might also be confusion about the roles meaning that as Product Management is set up differently in distinct companies, the role of the function is strongly influenced by the overall bias in the company or by the director to which the function reports to. Thereby, Product Management becomes the support role for the primary goal of the department being it for example Sales, Marketing, Finance or Development. The last issue stated is the uncertainty of how to get the work done meaning that there is a lack of experience or training within the company for people working in Product Management. (Product Focus Ltd (2018c: 6-9.)

### 2.3 Common bottlenecks in B2B product marketing

The Finnish B2B marketing agency PowerMarkkinointi Oy and its sales representative and marketing consultant Samuli Kivirinne held a webinar (2019) regarding the most common bottlenecks in B2B marketing. According to his previous experience within various companies Kivirinne claims that there are five distinct bottlenecks which occur most frequently in B2B companies; resource shortage in marketing, lack of a well-defined marketing plan, lack of marketing action measurability, poor cooperation between Product Marketing and Sales and lastly, weak lead generation.

Kivirinne (2019) states that the lack of resources in marketing is visible in companies when there is either no time, no money or enough personnel in relation to the workload needed to be executed. Usually it is well recognised what could be done better but prioritisation of these actions is hard. Marketing actions are performed sporadically for various products simultaneously and there are no clear objectives or targets for the workload. He states that this can be solved by creating a clear target for the whole organisation and based on that, create a concrete marketing plan including the factors on how to achieve the targets and goals given. By creating a marketing plan the company can concentrate on performing the correct marketing actions. Companies need to identify their core competencies and if necessary, outsource all functions they are not having expertise in. It is typical in B2B marketing to outsource single functions to various external partners rather than having one external partner assisting in everything. Kivirinne (2019) states that the ultimate goal is to seek for consultants from various subject areas and utilise them in areas where the company does not have expertise in.

According to Kivirinne (2019) the second bottleneck in B2B marketing is the lack of a clear marketing plan. This denotes that the company has no mutual goal on where they want to strive for or typically there might be a plan but no motivation in implementing it. He says that most typically a plan is made forcibly and is not made based on the goals set for business targets and thus acts only as a to-do-list which expands all the time. To overcome this obstacle the company needs to create a clear objective and a plan while considering the current state of where the company stands now, goals for the future, actions and processes required to achieve the goals while at the same time keeping in mind the given budget. The third bottleneck is the lack of measurability of the marketing actions which means that either nothing is measured, there are no processes or technology which would enable measurement, or the measurement takes place only on the upper level such as the overall picture of the company and therefore does not measure based on the targets. Kivirinne (2019) concludes that business-critical factors such as lead generation or customer acquisition prices are factors which should be measured to report how marketing has been involved in the whole business growth.

The fourth bottleneck is the weak cooperation between Product Marketing and Sales meaning that both functions might not know anything what the others are doing although clearly, they are striving towards the same goal which is ultimately seeking for profit through lead generation. The lack of a mutual goal causes the shortage of communication and collaboration between these two functions and the cooperation does not occur in a mutually beneficial way. The building of the mutual goal should begin by thinking what the goal for both functions is and what these functions expect from each other. Thereafter, they will need to establish rules of what the share of Product Marketing and the contribution of Sales is in accomplishing this goal as a target to operate in a mutually beneficial way. (Kivirinne 2019.) Weber (2017: 78) states that is essential for Sales to inform Product Marketing of what kind of marketing material they have used and what materials customers or prospects have viewed in order to give Product Marketing the knowledge on what material has been successful and what needs to be updated.

The final and fifth bottleneck according to Kivirinne (2019) is lead generation meaning that either no leads are generated, Sales does not give feedback of the generated leads to Product Marketing, or the problem lies on the digital side of the operations meaning that the company webpages do not support lead generation. To drive traffic to the company's landing pages the company in question should be able to identify target groups and their behaviour. If the leads are seeking for information rather than technical data, the landing pages should support this by having information such as guidebooks or webinars which would generate value for this kind of customer and guide the customer inside the landing page forward through links and other useful content. Companies should think about distinct buyer personas and ideal customers they have and how they behave and thereafter choose the marketing channels where to create goal-oriented content to catch these leads. It is important to have different kind of content aimed for leads in distinct phases in their buying process and this can be achieved by analysing the content of the landing pages, the customers buying process, its repetition and finally create content for leads to support and give value to each of them within these various phases. (Kivirinne 2019.)

## 2.4 B2B product launches in the technology industry

The most visible and vital element within the product's lifecycle is the launch phase of a product. This phase has one object which is to get the product successfully into the market in a way that revenue will start to flow into to company as rapidly as possible (Haines 2009: 445, 448). B2B product launches are rarely launched as impressively and for a such wide audience as in B2C launches and launches need to be designed in addition on the single product level but also according to product families (Simula, Lehtimäki, Salo & Malinen. 2009: 72).

The product launch process includes series of activities concluding to the final release of a product to the market. A product launch is not a single event occurring only once as the activities related are performed over a period of time before the final release. Thus, a product launch is a prolonged activity which starts already at the product planning phase and slowly progresses towards a successful launch made on schedule and based on preparedness of various systems and elements. (Haines 2009: 445.) A product launch can be seen as a process which includes certain elements such as specific doers and assignments, information flow, inputs and outputs which all are structured according to the design phase, to the actual operating phase and to the post-evaluation phase. The whole product launch process can be seen as a process coordinated by Product Marketing, which has interfaces to almost all the main processes in a company. (Simula et al. 2009: 72.)

The definition of steps regarding product launches are a valuable way to ensure that all required responsibilities and tasks are clear to all stakeholders involved for a successful launch. Some companies define separate launch plans for different types or sizes of launches. For example, there might be four types of launches, such as: Priority1 (P1), P2, P3 and P4. The first one contains more steps and actions as the following one and so on as the P1 is considered as a far bigger launch than its followers having a greater impact on customers and the market and therefore requires also more resources, deliverables and

more work in its promotion from the company when comparing for a smaller release such as the P4. However, a P4 launch should not be mistaken and seen as unimportant as it is crucial to inform customers also on minor level of what changes has been made so that they do not miss new and useful functionality. (Weber 2017: 51.)

A separate launch plan for each of the launch types could involve a list of how many weeks there are left until the launch and by every week include a list of required actions, who is the responsible person and what is the status of each (Weber 2017: 52). Table 1 below shows an example of a P2 launch plan in which PM stands for Product Management and PMM for Product Marketing Manager.

Table 1. Example of a Priority 2 product launch plan (Weber 2017: 52).

Weeks to launch	Responsible person	Actions	Product status
8	PM	Invite a few customers to test the new product	Beta
6	PM	Inform the intended launch date to PMM. Provide the PMM with a list of Beta customers which would make good customer success stories	Beta
6	PMM	Reach out to the chosen customer and begin creating the success story	Beta
4	PM + PMM	Develop a training package for all relevant business units	Release candidate
4	PMM	Work with Marketing to update relevant sales & marketing materials (product sheets, website update, customer success stories, blogs, videos etc.	Release candidate
3	PM	Update all relevant Technical Support material (Support articles, User manuals)	Release candidate
2	PM + PMM	Deliver training to all relevant business units	Ready for launch
2	PM	Deliver the internal Changelog to the PMM	Ready for launch

2	PMM	Use the Changelog to create the messaging used to market the launch (In-product message, email to customers)	Ready for launch
0	PM + PMM	Launch	Launch

The definition of variables required by each stage of the launch plan is an excellent way to preserve consistency and a high-level outline of what is expected. An example of deliverables can be in-product messaging, email to customers or website update (Weber 2017: 54)

It is crucial to follow the product launch plan accordingly so that each stakeholder involved, such as development, sales and marketing teams, are aligned for each release in a way that the new product and its sales collateral and messaging are made and available on the given launch date for a steady delivery. However, overlapping launches or projects might hold back the intended launch date and although the product might technically be ready for launch but without decent training for Sales or sales collateral Sales cannot start to sell the product and meet their own increasing sales targets. Some organisations deal with this issue by bringing the product available to the customer base but begin the advertising and promoting only after the marketing team and the launch are fully ready.

To avoid marketing a launch that has been delayed due to unforeseen resource- or technical problems a buffer could be created to the launch plan meaning that a certain amount of time is scheduled and outlined in the product roadmap after the intended launch so that if a delay occurs, there will be automatically a buffer accounted for in the launch process. (Weber 2017: 55.)

## 2.5 What makes a successful launch?

A successful launch needs to be a planned project which requires committed resources including dedicated effort, excellent product development methodology, a launch process and a Project Manager (Product Focus Ltd 2018a: 4). A successful launch demands the alignment of many internal departments, key suppliers and target customers which all need to be engaged to fundamentally understand their roles in the launch process while being truly interested in the success of the launch. A successful launch is a thoroughly planned project which includes committed resources from all stakeholders involved having the dedicated effort to succeed. The following subchapters will present some vital elements to improve B2B product launches and its elements; the product launch timing, buyer persona mapping including account-based marketing and the customer acquisition journey.

### 2.5.1 The decision of product launch timing

The most common challenge in product launches is the ability to define the correct timing for the actual launch. The company should be able to balance the risks of taking new products to market of either premature or too late timing. (Product Focus Ltd 2018a: 11.) A company entering first to the market usually gathers the biggest profits but also usually faces bigger risks of failing than companies entering the market later. The company's strategy is the major factor behind timing decisions but there are also several perspectives that need to be taken into consideration. A fundamental strategic decision for a company in terms of a product launch is whether they want to be forerunners or followers in terms of the competition and therefore timing of the launch needs to be considered in terms of the competitor's actions and product releases. Within the inner perspective the company needs to consider its long-term launch plans and the lifecycle stage of its corresponding products. A premature launch for a compensatory product might in the worst-case

scenario freeze the sales of the already existing product if customers are waiting for the new and fresh product. (Simula et al. 2009: 88.)

The timing of the launch depends also whether information of the product is wanted to be given before the launch as a goal to raise interest and build an image of the product beforehand or whether the release is wanted to be made globally simultaneously or stepwise. The major problem in launch timing is that usually the beforehand declared launch date is never the exact one decided which takes away the credibility both inside the company but also in the market. (Simula et al. 2009: 88-89.) According to a survey made in 2007 by Product Focus Ltd (2018a: 11) only 42 per cent of product launch projects are delivered on time. By setting an expected time for the launch is critical for the launch project to succeed, to ensure it will hit the market at a correct time and that its delivery is truly feasible (Product Focus Ltd 2018a: 11).

Usually a strong brand protects the company from the dramatic effects of late launches as when customers have a strong relationship with the brand they will rather wait for the delayed product than change the provider. In that case the product launches do not require to represent the latest trends in the industry for example technically as a customer engaged with the brand will embrace new features according to the pace of this strong brand presenting new products. Therefore, a company first entering a market with a new product or feature might not gain place within the customers minds. (Simula et al. 2009: 88-89.)

The most common reason behind launching late is the delay of the product development scheduling which also increases costs. Because of this Product Marketing needs to stay up to date on the progress of the product development- and launch process and the information exchanged between the two parties about the schedule needs to be realistic. If a realistic estimate is not made, the uncertainty will migrate to all other product launch projects inside the company as it is difficult to estimate the availability of resources and therefore one late launch will easily postpone also other scheduled product launches.

(Simula et al. 2009: 90.) Table 2. presents the subareas of a product launch and lists the success factors and challenges regarding each one.

*Table 2. Typical success factors and challenges of a product launch (Simula et al. 2009: 96).*

<b>Subareas</b>	<b>Success factors</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
<b>Product</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engineering skills</li> <li>- Innovative product</li> <li>- Broad product offering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Command of the product portfolio</li> <li>- Command of product families and generations</li> </ul>
<b>Market</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Launching to already existing markets</li> <li>- Launch of industrial products to niche-markets with a small number of competitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Global leadership of product launches</li> </ul>
<b>Timing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Early launch in relation to markets, but does not necessarily apply to technology market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Timing of the launch in relation to the state of completion of the product and the actions of competitors</li> <li>- Sticking with the launch date</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Specific goals for entering the market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of a clear strategy</li> </ul>
<b>Execution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Professionally executed launch</li> <li>- Skilled sales personnel</li> <li>- Successful product introduction to Sales</li> <li>- Market research skills</li> <li>- Clear and integrated marketing communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unclear launch process</li> <li>- Leadership of sales personnel</li> <li>- Internal and external communication during the launch</li> </ul>

After a product has been launched it is difficult to stop, and especially for companies to admit a product was not ready to be launched. Advertising, system updates and communication within the company are all activities having long lead times and to freeze a launch within the last weeks is usually impossible. Thereby, it is important to have a

contingency plan for the worst-case scenario to limit the risk by having for example a soft launch for a small audience or to decide to launch only through a particular channel which limits the exposure to delays if they occur. (Product Focus Ltd 2018a: 11.)

Customers want to know about a product before they make the purchasing decision and usually this information is produced through materials made by Product Marketing. Avoiding the last-minute rush is crucial and thereby it is important to be clear of what is the current workload, how long different types of marketing materials take time to deliver and what is the information needed in order to be able to produce what is requested. One way is to build a template which includes the materials which can be produced, what are necessary, including the number of weeks that each material will take to be made and it should be clearly determined what is the input and support required to be able to review and finalise the material before the set launch date. Companies might have long lists of possible marketing materials and activities, but this does not mean that every launch needs a full set and thereby prioritisation is the key to succeed. (Product Focus Ltd 2018d: 14-15.)

### 2.5.2 Defining buyer personas

If there is more than one target customer meaning the company is selling to various buyer personas, it might be beneficial to define and align them (Weber 2017: 98). Buyer personas aid both marketers and sellers to outline better the customers' challenges and ways of purchasing. Buyer personas have been utilised since 1990's but have gained strongly attention during recent years due to the rise of popularity in content marketing as it requires the company to speak to customers in a correct way and describe their typical situations and problems as accurately as possible. (Juslen 2009: 139.)

When creating customer-oriented content, the best way to start is by creating motive-based buyer personas. The reason behind this is that the same product or solution the company is providing is bought with divergent motives within different customers.

(Keronen & Tanni 2017: 167.) Buyer personas aid companies in receiving the knowledge of what kind of actions move customers in between the stages in the customer acquisition journey within the various stages and why in the first place they would be interested in the know-how of your company or buy or not buy your products or solutions (Keronen & Tanni 2017: 153).

Buyer personas are assorted groups consisting of the most typical customers of a company. They narrate what kinds of persons the prospective consumers of your company are, how they behave in a purchasing situation when looking for product related information but also what kind of matters are important exactly for them. (Juslen 2009: 138.) A buyer persona can be anyone a company is seeking, such as a prospective or existing customer of the company, a supplier, an investor and so on. When starting to construct buyer personas out of the various people the company is dealing with, it could generate a chaos as the company can have various large and small customers and hundreds of products it is selling. (Keronen & Tanni 2017: 153.) Well-constructed buyer personas include usually definitions and descriptions of the buyer's demographic factors, range of responsibilities, what sources of information they trust in, challenges, concerns, decision-making criterions and preferences (Juslen 2009: 139).

When selling a product, the company should acknowledge who is in the buying group (also known as DMU, Decision Making Unit) and what are the elements they want to see from the offer and therefore it is important to understand the profiles of each different customer audiences. Some examples of various audiences in B2B are for example the economic buyers, technical buyers, procurement, legal departments or even final users or in other words the end-users of the product. Therefore, the proposition of a single product and messaging needs to be adjusted according to these groups as it is crucial for companies to have the knowledge of what content and material each customer group cares about, how do they buy and who makes the purchasing decisions? (Product Focus Ltd 2018b: 9-10.) Whether the person making the purchasing decision in the company buying from your company is a technical buyer or for example a non-technical manager, the

development team needs to take that into consideration when designing the product and the product marketing team will need to evaluate what types of marketing material and what methods of communicating to use when marketing the product message for the target audience. A technical buyer is probably accustomed working with technical functionality while the non-technical manager requires to have a much simpler approach and focusing probably more on the cost-saving aspect of the product. (Weber 2017: 98.)

When starting to define these personas it is important to consult internally in the company with different teams and to reach an agreement upon a common set of personas the company is selling to and spread out this information to all stakeholders involved in the product launch process so that when someone for example in the development team inside the company is referring to one of the personas, their counterpart in Product Marketing will recognise to whom they are referring. Product Marketing will know how to communicate with this specific persona while the development team will identify the persona on how he/she interacts with the product. Likewise, to internal consulting the company can speak and interview both its customers and prospects, use and listen to social media, review profiles on professional networking sites, send surveys but also speak internally to Sales and support teams to get a better understanding of the daily problems and desires of its customers and prospects. (Weber 2017: 99.)

According to Weber (2017: 99) the outcome of the definition should be a one-page information package of a persona which is sufficient enough to convey the most vital facts and the length is also optimal in terms of increasing the opportunities of your colleagues to actually read it. The paper should include topics such as the profile of the persona, initial reasons and drive to search for a new solution, the expected results from your product, perceived barriers and finally their criteria for decision-making. The four key elements when building a buyer persona include elements such as the demographics of who the prospective buyers are and where they come from. In B2B context the roles of the buyer are usually the ones you are targeting such as General Manager, CEO, IT Administrator etc. Thereafter it is crucial to build out their identities and motivational

factors to examine what elements drive them to search and purchase a product. In B2B context the company could examine factors such as: is the person a decision-maker in their organisation? Do they have a budget? Or do they have other motivational factors such as will the person seem more appealing in the eyes of their boss if he/she will detect and propose an ideal product.

The third element is to identify the pain points signifying what problem the specific persona is currently facing which your product will solve. Finally, the question is how to reach these different personas. Do some of them read long reports while others browse more rapidly through social media channels? Do some of them tend to download technical white papers while others just want to have a direct contact with your salesperson? The amount of details in product content, the tone of voice and the chosen method for communication used to speak to various personas determine whether they will understand the wanted message clearly enough or whether they even want to hear your message at all. (Weber 2017: 99-100.)

Another practice in addition to the one-page information package is to build a so-called persona empathy map. The map is divided into four quadrants of what the persona says, thinks, does and feels and the persona is set in the middle. The aim of the map is to brainstorm useful insights and build a map of a person or it can reflect a sum of multiple similar users. (Product Focus Ltd 2018d: 17.) After the personas are created and complete, it is important to identify which ones are the most relevant for example at the beginning of a meeting so that everyone involved has the exact knowledge to whom the product in question is targeted (Weber 2017: 99-100). Figure 2 below gives a real-world example of the empathy map and it can be adjusted to the needs of different companies.

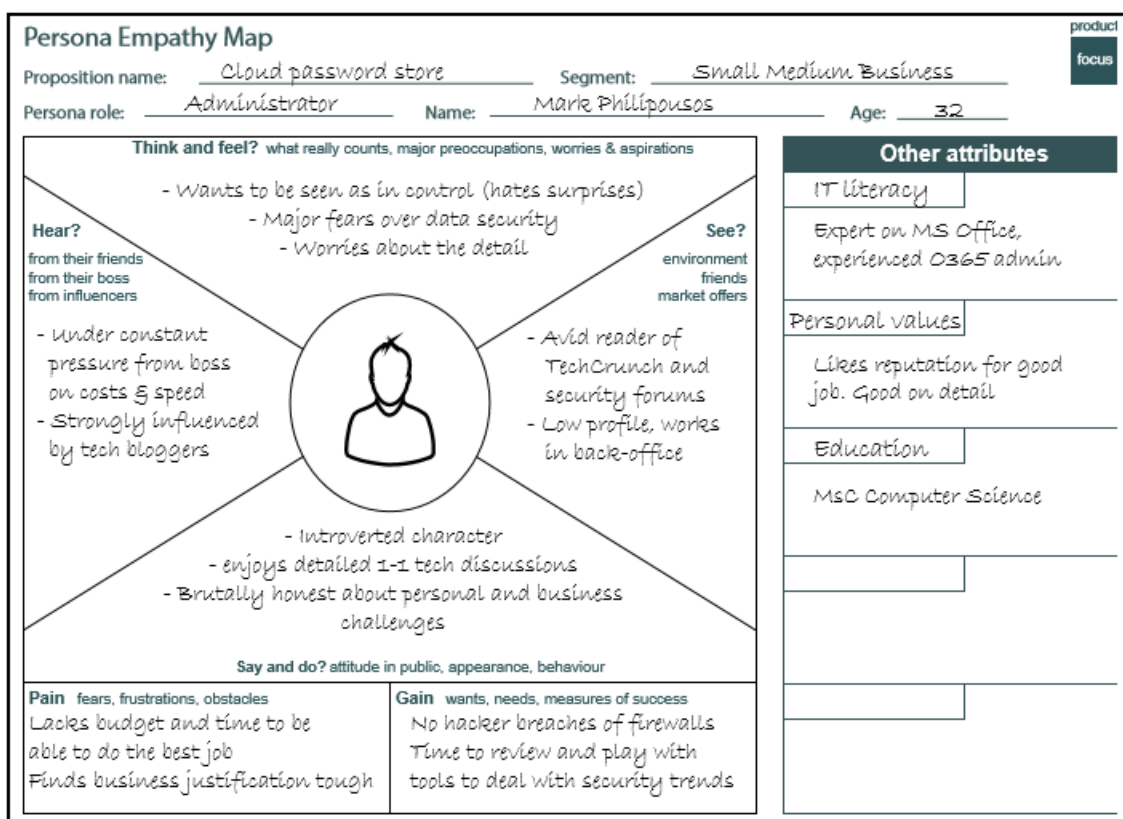


Figure 2. Persona empathy map (Product Focus Ltd 2018d: 17).

It is important to have a structured way of communicating the personas across the company so that all relevant stakeholders can understand the use of them. One way to share the information is to have a notice board in a public area of employees or a standard shared presentation available for all in an effortless manner. To sum up, buyer personas are a useful tool at various stages of a product lifecycle but also when considering the various stages in a customer acquisition journey regarding what marketing materials to use for different personas in distinct phases of their purchasing journey. (Product Focus Ltd 2018d: 16.) The following chapter will give insight on how to utilise the persona-based marketing technique in a B2B manner by targeting it to specific and most valuable stakeholders of the company, also known as account-based marketing.

### 2.5.3 Account based marketing

Account based marketing (ABM) has risen in recent years having an increased status especially in America and in larger markets in Europe although it is quite unknown still in Finland. To succeed in B2B markets where customer buying behaviour is changing faster than ever it requires seamless collaboration between Sales and Marketing. ABM was developed at the end of 1990's and it is proven to offer B2B companies a means to sell and market more efficiently. According to a survey made by Alterra Group, 97 percent of companies exploiting ABM reported receiving much higher ROI than other means of marketing. ABM is a means to develop and create extremely targeted marketing activities for certain wanted customers and it focuses to market to one specifically chosen person in the customers end, who is sufficiently valuable and potential enough. The core of ABM is the same as in content marketing: to create value for customers through quality content and the goal is to redeem the position as a trustworthy partner making the customer willing to invest their time for the sales person of the company. Especially sales directors experience that marketing has differentiated too far from Sales and the collaboration between the two functions is low. (Kurvinen & Seppä 2016: 234-235.)

In ABM one company is handled as one market and the most important people who are part in making the purchasing decisions are targets of the marketing activities. In practice this means that for every ABM target customer their own marketing plan is created. The euro-denominated potential for each ABM customer is considerable and thereby requires specifically targeted and buyer specific content created either dedicating a person internally from the company or outsourcing the service to an external partner. The target customers in ABM are usually the largest and most potential customers and approximately companies have five to ten pieces of these kinds of customers. The target customers can also be industry- or segment-based customers which is most feasible to exploit if the company's offering is strong in specific industries. Even though many ABM tactics are outbound in nature they differentiate compared to traditional B2B marketing in a manner that the tactics are focused to target company- and decision-making levels

and a personal dimension is involved as the target of marketing is usually people. (Kurvinen & Seppä 2016: 236-237.)

B2B customers are usually extremely interested in how other organisations in the same industry are operating and how they see different trends. Thereby industry analyses and benchmark reports are valuable for them to perceive how their own company is operating compared to their rivals. One of the best working content of this kind has proved to be analyses which concern how the customers industry will appear after for example ten years. Top management is usually interested in future visions and the effects of various trends in their business. In the initial stages, companies exploiting ABM usually offer either paid or free analyses in which the current state of the customers organisation is examined. Customer specific and personified web content has been far too less exploited although it is a pre-eminent means in effectivity as through it the customer can be offered company- and buyer specific content. This kind of web content requires naturally the technology which enables to create personified content to web platforms. (Kurvinen & Seppä 2016: 238-239.)

Other ABM tactics worth mentioning are CEO-2-CEO campaigns, buyer specific automatized direct emails, customised programs, 1-2-1 sparring sessions between customers and specialists, industry specific references and events. The goal of CEO-2-CEO is to get the same level people to deliberate of a certain challenge together to broaden the understanding of the challenge field and strategies in connection with larger sales to ensure the matter is high enough in the company's priorities. Direct emailing starts by having the permission from the company and thereafter full-length email programs are sent to customers to get their company understand their relevant challenge in a means the selling organisation has desired. 1-2-1 sparring sessions are in the customer point of view an interesting and luring means for them to discuss with an expert of a certain area and sometimes customers are possibly even willing to pay for the session. Industry specific reference cases and case studies are simple to produce and thereby an effective manner as they increase the customer's trust towards the company's expertise and reduce the

feeling of uncertainty. In B2B organisations events have always been in great popularity but when the events are linked to ABM-programs providing an opportunity to discuss the subject matter in the counterbalance of entertainment, the success has been great. The event does not necessary require to be an enormous business festival, such as the technology company Salesforce has for example organised successfully but can rather be an evening event prior to an event or fair the customer is attending for example the next day. (Kurvinen & Seppä 2016: 240-241.)

The most significant aspect of ABM is that it has the propensity to escort Sales and Marketing together so that both functions will operate in accordance with shared targets and through ABM both functions will move closer to each other inherently and cooperation will thereby improve. Nevertheless, it should be noticed that ABM is not an interconnection automaton for Sales and Marketing and whether the cooperation is structurally impossible, AMB will not in itself fix it. (Kurvinen & Seppä 2016: 242-243.)

#### 2.5.4 The customer acquisition journey

The B2B buying process varies a lot from the B2C process as the products and services being sold are usually far more expensive and thereby several key decision-makers are involved with the final purchasing decision. The sales process is more complex and includes multiple touchpoints and barriers to entry and thereby the whole process can take months or even years. (Ginty & Vaccarello 2012: 62.)

When buying a product, the B2B customer typically goes through a standardised set of stages. The early stages rarely require any proactive involvement from the company the customer is interested in as the customer usually seeks for information on his own, and thus it is important to provide access to the information online and to ensure the product information is up to date. The customer buying cycle includes six stages: unawareness, awareness and need recognition, informed and solution search, interested and comparison of the alternatives, purchase decision and finally the behaviour after the purchase (Product

Focus Ltd 2018d: 9) and these stages can be divided even more shortly to awareness, consideration and decision phase which are the three main stages a customer intending to buy needs to go through before the final purchase decision (Hubspot, Inc 2018).

The awareness stage includes the identification of the need for the product, searching for alternatives and setting criteria for the usage and the final purchase. The consideration stage includes the evaluation of different options, setting the budget for the purchase and having negotiations with potential suppliers. The final decision phase means the actual purchase and the implementation of the purchased product. (Weber 2017: 101.) The purpose during the two first stages or shortly the purpose of the awareness stage is to let the customer know the company in question is a player in their problem area. After that it is crucial to be able to explain and inform why the customer needs the solution to their problem. When the customer is interested, the company needs to explain how they can solve the problem the customer is facing. The purpose of the last two stages meaning the decision-making phase is to narrate to the customer what products they will need to buy to solve the problem. (Product Focus Ltd 2018d: 9-10.) Figure 3 below demonstrates the B2B customer acquisition journey in a visual manner.

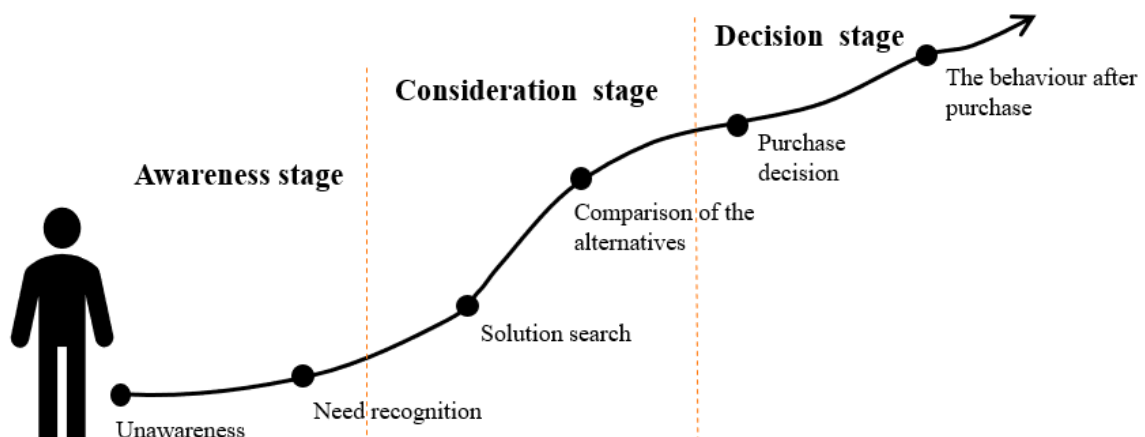


Figure 3. The B2B customer acquisition journey (Product Focus Ltd 2018d: 9).

The customer acquisition journey describes the materials and what kind of support is needed in the typical stages involved in acquiring a new B2B customer. It portrays the customers buying cycle but also gives a description from the perspective of the seller. (Product Focus Ltd 2018d: 10.) The stages can include different material for different buyer personas due to their different motivational factors for making a purchase (Weber 2017: 101).

Figure 4 lists the typical marketing activities, tools and materials required at various stages during the customers journey and acts as a worthy guideline for companies to exploit. The activities listed need to be considered and adjusted based on the company and its operations for ones that are most suitable to engage with prospects at various times in the specific company. (Product Focus Ltd 2018d: 10.)


 TYPICAL STAGES	WHAT MATERIAL / SUPPORT IS NEEDED
<b>Leverage new customers</b>	– Win / loss analysis – Build as future reference – Invite to user group – Cross-sell & up-sell
<b>Close opportunity</b>	– Detailed technical presentation – Technical specs – Demos – References
<b>Develop opportunities</b>	– Sales presentation – Sales support tools – Competitive analysis – Use cases
<b>Lead generation</b>	– Email campaigns – Webinars – Telesales – Customer roadshow – White paper – Solution data sheet – Case studies – Website analysis
<b>Raise awareness</b>	– Build brand – Press releases – Exhibitions – Speaking at conferences – Analyst briefings – Social media (Blogs, LinkedIn, website messaging) – Industry & standards bodies

Figure 4. Typical stages in accordance with materials and support (Product Focus Ltd 2018d: 10).

The ideal goal is to build a product marketing machine which will take the prospective customers through a journey starting from the point when they are unaware of your company and what you do to the point when they will purchase your products while aiming to continually improve the effectiveness of the entire process and its elements (Product Focus Ltd 2018d: 11). A comprehensive table including all product marketing

materials and activities that the Product Management Journal (2018) has seen to be used in companies they have been working with can be found in Appendix 1. The list can be used as a checklist for companies to aid in making decisions for what to do for their products. Hubspot, Inc 2018 recommends creating educational-, diagnostic- and thought leadership content on the awareness stage, case studies, white papers, videos, comparison sheets and evaluation guides on the consideration stage and demos and product or pricing brochures on the decision stage. Kelley (2014) in turn lists analyst reports, e-books and whitepapers on the awareness stage, webinars, videos, guides and comparison whitepapers on the considerations stage and case studies and vendor comparisons on the decision stage.

It is crucial for B2B companies to be aware of the sales funnel as it is impossible to convince a prospective customer to buy your product with one interaction as it requires several touches to get an organisation and its purchasing decision makers from awareness to the purchase decision (Ginty & Vaccarello 2012: 21). The buyer's journey is a process in which the prospective buyer moves from one stage to another through the awareness, consideration and final decision-making stages. The process can further be qualified as an active research process a customer goes through and from the business marketing view the process can be used to help the company empathise with the prospective buyer and to aid creating suitable content for each stage. (Hubspot, Inc 2018.)

Figure 5. by Hubspot, Inc 2018 presents the B2B inbound buyer's journey in conjunction with the sales funnel, and each section roughly corresponds with two stages in the sales funnel.

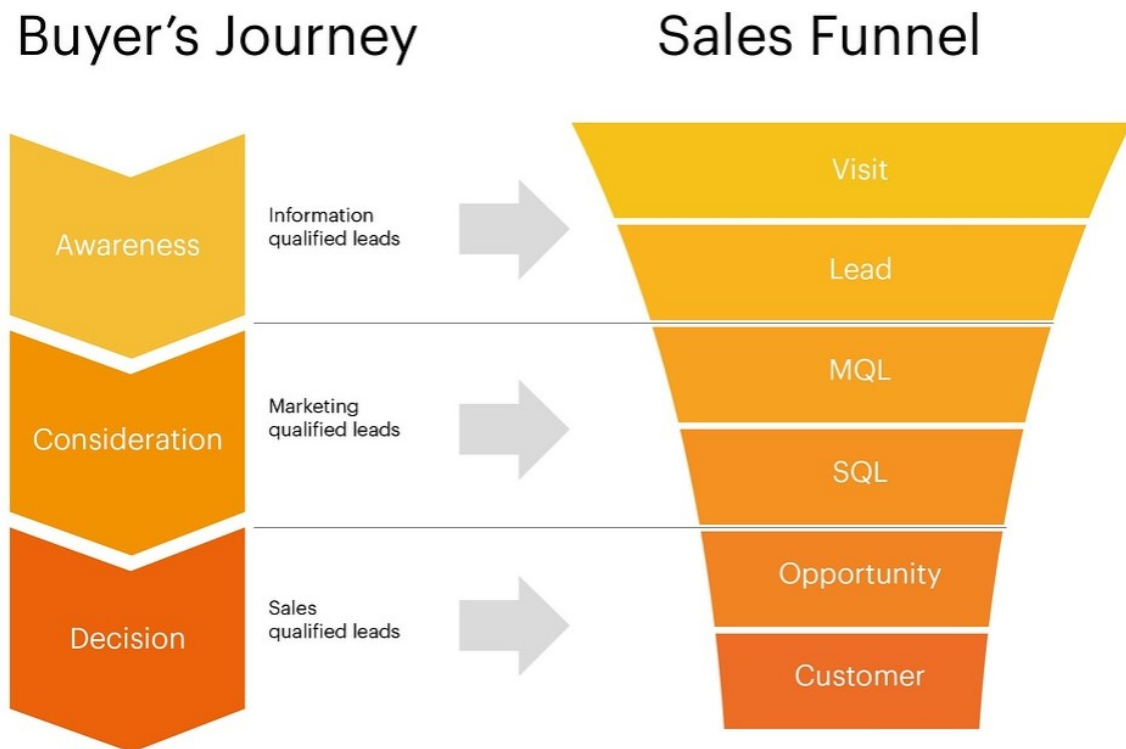


Figure 5. The inbound buyer's journey in conjunction with the sales funnel (Hubspot, Inc 2018).

The sales funnel is a useful means to track the progress of prospective customers at different selling stages and by bringing the buyer's journey and the sales funnel in conjunction it can better be determined how a prospect behaves along this whole experience (Hubspot, Inc 2018). The first half of the funnel might be totally invisible to Product Marketing as the prospective customers form their own prejudices on what problems the product or service will solve, and the job of Product Marketing is to pick these people up at any point in the process not using general jargon but rather the customer's points of reference (Ginty & Vaccarello 2012: 13-14).

MQL stands for marketing qualified lead and represents a prospect whose lead score goes over a certain threshold and is thereby ready to be led over to Sales. After Sales has examined the MQL they can turn the prospect into an SQL, standing for a sales qualified

lead, representing a prospect which Sales considers having high potential to purchase a product or solution. The lead scoring is a method of ranking leads based on the prospect sales-readiness agreed by both Sales and Product Marketing. The lead scoring can be built in the marketing automation system the company is utilising and metrics can be built either on demographic-, firmographic-, asset-, behaviour- or interest scoring. (Marketo 2016.)

### 3 THE CONSTANTLY EVOLVING MARKETING ENVIRONMENT

#### 3.1 Background, basis and the current state of marketing today

The world today has evolved more into the direction of digitalisation and a constant change has become the new standard. The constantly changing environment cannot be led any longer with old fashion metrics or strategies. Five different powers can be seen to influence this new world of change; rapidity, readjustment, proximity, scalability and measurability. (Kurvinen & Seppä 2016: 19.) The changes in consumers' media behaviour makes it even harder to reach out to potential leads relying on traditional, interruption-based outbound marketing tactics like advertising (Juslen 2009: 41).

We can get contact with nearly anyone around the world instantly. The problem is how to keep operations together when we must react to everything coming up every day. Customer expectations are rising and requiring constant readjustment. Distance has lost meaning and competitors are always waiting on the other tab of the customers web browser despite of their actual geographical location. (Kurvinen & Seppä 2016: 20.)

Online marketing has faced a drastic transformation and to stay competent organisations cannot rely on traditional, intrusive outbound marketing tactics anymore. Consumers have changed their ways of interaction with companies and ways on purchasing products and services. Internet has developed the traditional way of marketing and new ways of marketing have aroused to respond to the changing consumer behaviour, namely digital inbound marketing (DIM). (Opreana & Vinerean 2015: 29.) This new way of marketing strives to engage attention of the potential customers by producing search-friendly and high-quality content such as videos, images or stories which will attract the prospects either based on emotional criteria or the usefulness of the content (Opreana & Vinerean 2015: 30).

Internet has changed ways of working in many different industries and made online sales possible. Internet is of nature a multidirectional and real time instrument and it enables communication and use of content based on need within desired time and a desired amount (Juslen 2009: 36). Internet equalises the size differences of companies and small companies have better chances to compete against bigger companies than ever, as internet constructs a platform in which a smaller actor can create as impressive customer experiences as a bigger actor. Internet has in hand a set of marketing tools, which cost level is so low that any kind of company can afford to utilise them. With internet it is also rational to specialise to a smaller niche-market, as it makes possible to reach out directly to customers without expensive intermediaries within a geographically almost unlimited area. (Juslen 2009: 32-34.)

Through internet anyone can open a conversation of anything and get their message to the awareness of millions of people nearly instantly. Consumers produce even greater part of information affecting purchase decisions and they have embraced new means of searching information. (Juslen 2009: 34-35.) According to Kurvinen and Seppä (2016: 22) digitalisation is seen as the change cutting cross the operating environment and modes of operation in the whole company. Earlier the seller could control the access to information for customers but today consumers have better access to information and therefore know more than ever. In the world today, it is possible to reach out to one person as well as to millions of people. The problem lies on whether you have something meaningful to say. It is possible to lead a company with knowledge and predict the upcoming with new practices. We can follow the costs, loyalty and the lifecycle of acquisition of new customers in real time. Nowadays successful companies try continually something new within their objectives cherishing what works and learning from mistakes. The best indicator measuring this is whether the company makes new mistakes or whether it keeps repeating the old ones. (Kurvinen & Seppä 2016: 20.)

The lifespan of successful companies keeps decreasing constantly. Fifty years ago, the average lifespan of the world's biggest companies was 75 years, when nowadays it is only

15 years and decreasing even more every year. Customers seek even more digital ways to do their shopping. Digitalisation requires companies to continually exceed customer expectations and it demands new ways of thinking and getting rid of the process-like selling. Customers expect user-friendly and clear user interfaces, imperceptible authentication, customised personal service, around the clock availability and real time information globally without any mistakes. Digitalisation requires companies to consider the value of customers in every situation and thereby improve processes significantly. This requires new kinds of management systems, lowered hierarchy and the leadership of competencies. Companies cannot survive through digitalisation with the automation of current processes, but they will need to design everything again with the eyes of the customer and remove all components not adding value. (Kurvinen & Seppä 2016: 21-23.)

All changes include suspicions and resistance but at some point, the change will arouse curiosity – what this change could mean to me and my business? (Juslen 2009: 83). Old and accustomed habits expire slowly. Especially in large organisations there is a certain degree of reluctance to change and slowness. Large organisations have established supplier relationships, contracts and operating models and to break free from these is troublesome already on the account of the complexity in decision making. (Juslen 2009: 90-91.)

Internet as a marketing environment is genuinely multidirectional and a real-time environment for communication where everyone can communicate to each other. Internet weakens the meaning of intermediaries and allows the communication to move directly to the potential customers. Marketing in the internet operates continually regardless of campaigns and you can never estimate beforehand to which extent your operations will reach eventually. It is more important for companies to be genuine than to have a formal authority when the goal is to reach appreciation and trust from B2B customers. (Juslen 2009: 57-62.)

### 3.2 Outbound marketing

Outbound marketing is seen as one-way marketing tactic based on interruptions and forcing in which companies push the information and advertisements towards the customer. The product is the basis of marketing and advertising has an essential role in creating the brand. The marketer has the need to control all kinds of communication regarding the product and advertising and the responsibility is usually given to professionals rather than the company itself. The value of the brand is measured with public awareness and visions and the market is segmented based on demography factors. (Juslen 2009: 43-47, 131.)

Outbound marketing is traditional way of marketing which many organisations still count on today. It includes means such as direct mailing to customers, cold calling, -emailing or -messaging, trade shows, seminars, paid advertisements or paid publicity, advertising in newspapers, TV-, radio or in the internet in which all of these mentioned usually have a strict budget behind them. Traditional outbound marketing seeks to interrupt potential customers just to get their attention and it causes direct, concrete expenses when enticing and possibly finding new customers. (Hawl 2018: 30, Juslen 2009: 131.)

Outbound marketing is about getting the marketing message heard in an intrusive manner by interrupting the prospective customer by pushing the product towards the person forcibly (Opreana & Vinerean 2015: 29). This works in a way that forces the target audience to receive the marketing message by placing the advertising in places which predisposes the audience to these messages. Outbound marketing is based always on interruption as people do not for example watch television or read magazines to see advertisements, rather to receive other kind of content which is beneficial or entertaining. (Juslen 2009: 132.) The abundant amount of mass medias today and the marketing focus of pushing the marketing messages towards the customer has led to the formation of a large amount of marketing messages in the living environment of people. This has caused a rising problem on the fact that people refuse to be a target for this kind of forcing

advertising. This problem has made it even harder and more expensive for companies to stand out from the crowd and getting the message delivered to their potential customers. (Juslen 2009: 41, 132.)

The power of outbound marketing is decreasing as the costs compared to the benefits gained are rising. Consumers are constantly altering their media behaviours and dodge more efficiently advertisements targeted to them. The rising amount of marketing messages makes it even harder for companies to stand out and the marketing communications between customers themselves is experienced more reliable than advertising conducted by the company itself. (Juslen 2009: 132-133.) The enormous amount of marketing messages in traditional marketing tactics like newspapers, tv- and outdoor advertising drowns consumers in marketing messages daily in an interruptive manner. It is unsustainable to do business today with this old manner of outbound marketing as consumers today can choose where and how they want to interact with companies. (Opreana and Vinerean 2015: 29-30.) According Hawlk (2018: 30) there are some cases in which exploiting outbound marketing and its tactics will be more appropriate and suitable in organisations comparing to inbound marketing tactics. She claims it is impossible to decide in between these two without the knowledge of the differences between inbound and outbound marketing and sometimes the most feasible manner is to exploit both abreast.

### 3.3 New tools for modern B2B-marketing

The world has changed into the direction of a network community through an omnipresent global digitalisation. Thus, customers are incorporated with the organisations operations and are considered as partners or co-creators of value in marketing along with the professional marketers of organisations. (Lusch & Vargo 2009: 6.) Traditional outbound marketing is no longer a competitive means in marketing today because advertising has become more of a mess and clutter of adverts and consumers pay even less attention on

their surroundings and they are even capable of blocking unwanted marketing messages using various methods (Opreana & Vinerean 2015: 30). Internet is a virtual environment for operating, communicating and interacting and it requires suitable tools for organisations to be part of this interactive operating environment. A correctly implemented web page is the electric operating environment which can be compared in the physical environment to a store or an office. (Juslen 2009: 103.)

The new digital environment requires companies to evolve their marketing into a more personalised setting as B2B marketing needs a human-focused approach to stay competitive. Brian Halligan (2016), the co-founder of Hubspot Inc., which is a comprehensive inbound marketing automation system platform helping companies enhance their sales and marketing, calls this as the era of B2H marketing, which stands for business-to-humans. B2H emphasises connecting consumers in a personalised way while at the same time maintaining a human touch. In this new era of B2H, social media is an inevitable tool that companies must master, and the social media sites must be created in a personalised nature. The consumption of video and audio content has also risen and are means which should be invested in to get the target audience also enjoy the content. (Del Rowe 2017a: 18). Halligan from Hubspot Inc. (2016) states that 50 percent of the content in year 2017 should be video, not text. He instructs companies to seek for videographers instead of bloggers. He also states that automating the buying process is essential as consumers today are so accustomed to the use of electronics in their everyday actions and thus prospective buyers want a self-service experience with the company.

New tools for marketing and digitalisation together have changed the traditional way of marketing and its rules (Juslen 2009: 71). The new way of marketing in the digital world focuses on getting the attention from either prospective, existing or target customers by producing useful, high quality content and earn the attraction of customers who voluntarily choose to interact with the organisation (Opreana & Vinerean 2015: 29). B2B buyers use social- and other medias diligently and it is thereby clear that marketers should react to this trend by digitalising their products, services and brands. This requires a

systematic, strategic and operational use of digital marketing activities and to design, execute and evaluate the utilisation of them. (Simula et al. 2009: 113.) The following chapter will introduce inbound marketing as a means to respond to the digitalised marketing requirements of today.

### 3.4 Inbound marketing in B2B surroundings

Marketing has become more about the customer rather than the product. Marketing has become a lot more than advertising. Content is the most valuable tool and the control of communication is shifted from the marketer to customers. Product marketing is based on approval, not forcing. The value of brand is now measured by the ability to create interaction and commitment, rather than awareness. The point of marketing is that the customer will find you, not to push forcibly the marketing message towards them. Marketing and communication is now combined through internet and the targets for these are derived from the organisation's overall targets. (Juslen 2009: 71-81.)

Digital marketing includes mainly trust and loyalty building with the customer and inbound marketing is seen as the main standpoint of the digital marketing regardless of the industry, size or country of origin of the organisation. Inbound marketing demands circumspect targeting of prospective customers and customised communication made for each of them through specified, high quality content. It is a strategy of creating content useful in the eyes of the prospective customer and which will make them want to connect voluntarily to the organisation. (Patruti-Baltes 2016: 62.) With inbound marketing organisations can create open and smart communication with its customers and develop a relationship which is personalised by advertising content modified to the exact needs of each prospect. (Patruti-Baltes 2016: 61).

Inbound marketing can be defined as targeted content creation to customer needs and the distribution of it. Inbound marketing is lifecycle marketing, as the future promoters first

start as regular customers of the company and develop into promoters when feeling satisfied of the product or service. Transformation of these strangers developing into customers and finally into promoters can be boosted by specific marketing actions and tools. (Patruti-Baltes 2016: 62.) According to Huify (2017), an inbound marketing agency, *“inbound is focused on attracting people online, turning them into customers and ultimately promoters and evangelists for your business.”*

Personalisation is a key in inbound marketing as the content should be adjusted to the desires and needs of each customer who are viewing the marketing message. Inbound marketing approaches prospective customers in channels they are in and in which they specifically want to communicate with an organisation. The key is to produce accurate content in a correct place and at the right time. (Patruti-Baltes 2016: 63.) Inbound marketing is a remarkable possibility for organisations including many advantages such as improvement of financial performance and marketing programs but also customers and other stakeholders can be served more efficiently with higher performance (Lusch & Vargo 2009: 6). In brief, inbound marketing is not about your company, it is all about your customers, both current and prospective (Caragher 2013: 9).

According to Brian Halligan (2016) from Hubspot Inc., inbound marketing is a strategy for business growth exploited by marketers having the desire to enhance brand awareness and intention to lure and guide customers towards the organisation and its business by themselves. Halligan also states that inbound marketing pulled ahead of other marketing methods already in 2006 and since then is seen as the most effective marketing method for companies doing business online. The basis of traditional outbound marketing is interruption and it focuses entirely on finding customers by targeting big audiences while digital inbound marketing is based on an organic way of marketing focused on getting found by prospective, existing and desired consumers while aiming to create long lasting relationships with them by targeting only the interested prospects (Opreana & Vinerean 2015: 30). The main differences between traditional outbound marketing and digital inbound marketing are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Differences between outbound- and digital inbound marketing (Netstripes 2018).

<b>OUTBOUND MARKETING</b>	<b>VS</b>	<b>INBOUND MARKETING</b>
Pushes message to wide audience, despite having interest		Pulls interested readers with relevant and interesting content
Interruption based		Permission based
Inert, one way communication		Interactive, two way communication
Business seeks customers		Customers seek business
Costly		Cost effective
Quick but achieves short term leads		Takes time yet achieves long term leads: builds relationships and trust
Marketers provide little or no added value		Marketers provide value
Traditional methods: Billboards, TV, radio, magazines, newspapers, trade shows, events		Digital methods: Direct (opt-in) email, Social media, Search Engine Optimization, blogs, videos, content creation, viral marketing, press releases, books and other publications
Digital methods: Google Ads / Pay-Per-Click, Retargeting, Social media advertising, email marketing		
<b>ADVANTAGES</b>		
Achieve wide reach, increase customers and revenue (only if strategized correctly). This is not guaranteed to happen all the time		Cost effective and achieves high ROI
Controls what, who and when the audience sees the advertisement		Easy to track ROI
		Reach targeted customers more efficiently
Retargeting is an effective tool to remind and bring back customers who have left your website		Increases brand awareness
		Builds relationships; trust and credibility
<b>DISADVANTAGES</b>		
Difficult to track ROI		Requires skills, time and patience
Paid advertising may not always achieve optimal results		Needs a functional and quality website to effectively achieve results and this may be costly
Pushy and invasive nature will repel customer away. Also an ineffective way to build trust and credibility		Takes time to achieve results. However sometimes conversions may not always happen
Email marketing can result in spam reporting and blacklisting of brand's email address		

In outbound marketing products are pushed to the customer while inbound marketing pulls the customer towards the organisation by winning the potential customers interest. Outbound marketing promotes products and services directly to the customer while inbound marketing aims to promote these indirectly. The vital key in inbound marketing is to identify potential target groups and target customers and specify the marketing message to their specific needs and desires rather than marketing a universal message for all prospects. (Patruti-Baltes 2016: 66.)

Inbound marketing sets always the customer interests first. The key of inbound marketing is to construct the marketing in a way that customers are capable to find the marketer from the internet exactly when they need information to support their purchase decision. (Juslen 2009: 133.) Inbound marketing is about creating high-quality content which draws customers towards the company and its products and services by adapting the content to the needs of each customer (Patruti-Baltes 2016: 62). Inbound marketing strives to approach and connect to potential customers through useful and informatic content within the customer opinion rather than imposing the potential customers with for example posters and TV advertisements (Caragher 2013: 9). This mode of operation sets the power with the prospective buyer instead of the seller (Rojas 2018). There is no right or wrong answer as exploiting these depends completely on the organisations business, goals, strengths and services. Instead of deciding in between inbound- and outbound marketing, organisations should try to evaluate that in which order would it be most profitable to layer on both marketing tactics. (Hawl Kali 2018: 31.)

### 3.5 The process of inbound marketing

Inbound marketing is considered as an organic aspect of marketing meaning that an organisation has close relationships with its prospective, current and desired customers, who have voluntarily displayed interest in the company's products or services and involved through subscriptions to newsletters, blogs or other social networks consisting

of high-quality content marketing (Patruti-Baltes 2016:61). Inbound marketing is an inducement which has the purpose to lure consumers towards the company. It consists of valuable, high-quality content such as gratuitous purchasing guide books, awareness raising fact sheets, maintenance guides, test results, articles made by experts in the field area or other useful publications for consumers. The landing pages for these kinds of publications can be the website or blog of the company, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or other corresponding platforms favoured by search engines. The key is to catch the contact information of the consumers interested in the topic the company is marketing and store it to the CRM-system, where sales can obtain these leads and then follow up whether a sale has been made with the prospective customer. (Parantainen 2013: 165.)

The effectiveness of inbound marketing is especially visible when contemplating the fact that with inbound marketing, B2B companies can obtain their goals in marketing far more rapidly but also in a more efficient way than with their previous ways of working (Rojas 2018). Inbound marketing works most optimally when an organisation considers customers as partners and co-creators of value and involves them in the marketing process (Lusch & Vargo 2009: 9). Inbound marketing is roughly content creation which is done either written, visual or by audio. Social media, public relations, supporting events, public speaking, word of mouth or search engine optimisation are also a list of means of inbound marketing (Hawlk Kali 2018: 31).

Interactivity and engagement are the two significant components of digital inbound marketing which allow organisations to foster and improve relationships by having continuous conversations with consumers who are interested in the products or services of the company (Opreana & Vinerean 2015: 30). The overall goal of inbound marketing is to engage customers which are ideal for the business and attract them with appealing content specified for their needs which will make the customers return to the company also later (Caragher 2013: 9). With inbound marketing you don't interrupt or force the prospective customers attention, but you rather earn it by making decisions by which the customer will voluntarily come to you (Hawlk 2018: 30).

The tendency of inbound marketing is that the customer will end up in touch with the content provided by the marketer when the customer is searching for information at their own will. Earlier marketing was just advertising or promoting in accordance with Kotler's known 4P-model, but today inbound marketing is based on building trust of the proven expertise and know-how of organisations. (Kurvinen & Seppä 2016: 187.) Inbound marketing is a systematic process, which strives to correspond to every stage of the customer's life cycle. The marketing tasks of inbound marketing are divided into four phases, all of which have their own objectives. The four stages of inbound marketing are attracting, converting, closing and delighting (Kurvinen & Seppä 2016: 187) and these are presented in Figure 6. below.

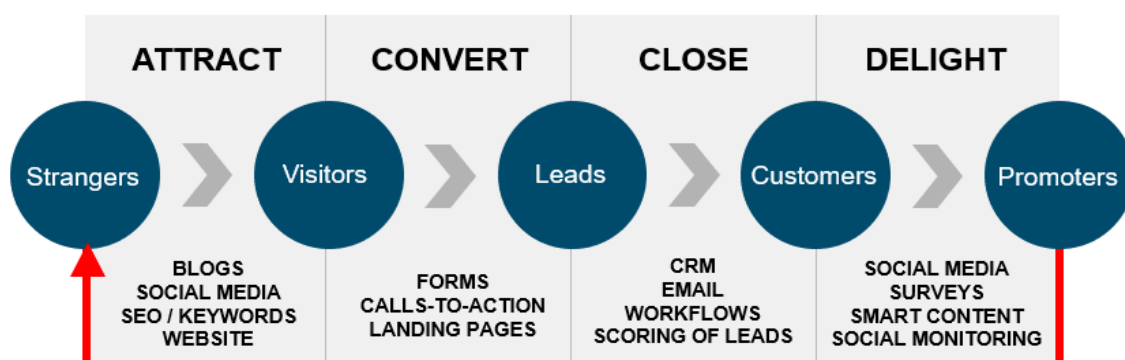


Figure 6. Inbound marketing process (Kurvinen & Seppä 2016: 187).

As stated in a research done by Google & Compete in October 2011, 71 percent of information obtained by B2B buyers originates from the internet. Therefore, inbound methodologies are an excellent way to aid your prospective customers find your company when searching for information related to their needs. (Caragher 2013: 9.)

The following chapters will give a deeper insight to chosen marketing activities out of the ones presented above in the inbound marketing process. The chosen marketing activities

are presented based on which could be the most beneficial in the case company's customer acquisition journey and to give a deeper insight and information of how to exploit them successfully.

### 3.6 Core inbound marketing tactics

#### **Social networks and -media**

An active social media attendance allows companies to promote content for their current customers but also aid in producing new leads. Social media marketing can be either paid or organic meaning free tools provided by each social network or the marketing can be a combination of both. Social media marketing can include purchasing of social media advertisements, advertising relevant content in the company's own channels or constructing relations with influencers of the same industry. (Rojas 2018). Creating and sharing content through social media makes the content appear more authentic and it will offer a possibility for organisations to get more known to the extent they manage to get the content seen within an audience (Opreana & Vinerean 2015: 30.)

A survey conducted by Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs (Murton Beets & Handley 2018) presenting the data gathered from the responses of 771 B2B marketers in North America, indicates that the three most commonly used technologies by B2B marketers in assisting the management of their content marketing in 2018 were social media publishing/analytics (84 percent), email marketing software (81 percent) and analytics tools (77 percent). The top three social media platforms used for content marketing intentions were repeatedly LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook and the top three means of B2B content marketing formats were email, social media platforms and blogs. A report conducted by FleishmanHillard (2012) states that the majority of consumers (79 percent) follow different organisations and brands on social media to obtain more information regarding an organisation itself but also its products and services.

Murton Beets and Handley (2018) from Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs conducted also a research on the use of social media on companies, which have used social media as a platform for content marketing for at least a year. The results indicate that the use of social media for content marketing intentions has increased by 61 per cent compared to year 2017. 70 percent of companies used paid content on social media being the top paid method used after search engine marketing (pay-per-click) with 64 percent. The most popular reason for paying for the marketing was to engage attention on prospective customers and new audiences by 80 percent. The second reason with 65 percent was to produce traffic to the organisations page when the organic search did not generate enough pleasing results. With 52 percent the intention was to reach a niche audience.

### **SEO - Search engine optimisation**

To provide high-quality content for users, search engines like Google gather massive amounts of information into their database continually without interruptions from millions and millions of various internet pages (Juslin 2009: 108). Search engine optimisation (SEO) stands for the process of making your content more visible in the online search results through keywords used by prospective customers (Caragher 2013: 9). The higher a webpage is listed in Google, the higher amount of clicks it will receive as according to Patrutiu-Baltes (2016: 64) 80 percent of consumers access only the links on Google listed on the first page when looking for information.

In practice this occurs through automatized programs and search engines are capable to find new internet pages automatically without any actions from the owners (Juslin 2009: 108-109). When consumers use search engines they do not need to know the brand or the company name, rather they will search with keywords based on their problems. This is the part where SEO comes in and is exploited. (Juslin 2009: 111.) SEO consists of using the most used keywords by consumers in a search engine and these keywords are identified with Google Analytics tool (Patrutiu-Baltes 2016: 64). Thereby it is critical to

understand that if a company wants to be found through a search engine by a word important for their business, the company needs to have a landing page which focuses on that specific subject area (Kurvinen & Seppä 2016: 209).

When potential customers inquire information and search online in accordance to their interests, SEO aids companies to bring their online content more visible and easier for the customer to detect during their information search. SEO exploits keywords and links as a tactic to rank the content higher and more visible in the search results making it relevant according to the potential customer's search. Thereby it is necessary for companies to perform a keyword analysis to succeed in SEO. (Rojas 2018.)

SEO is one of the key elements in digital inbound marketing along with content marketing which aids the content online be found more easily by increasing its discoverability and visibility (Opreana & Vinerean 2015: 31). Properly and rationally chosen keywords and separate internet pages built around the keywords are an unlimited possibility of getting the content to the reach of new and even smaller target groups (Juslen 2009: 138-139). Brian Halligan from Hubspot Inc. (2016) states that a company must master HEO to win at SEO, in which HEO stands for human enjoyment optimisation meaning that companies need to solve problems for humans rather than for the search engines. Companies can be found through a search engine with the company's name, but the major question is that will the company be found as an answer for prospective customer's needs and problems. It is typically hard to have success only through product- and service pages unless the customer is able to search for the exact product. Thereby to broaden the SEO visibility it is important to offer the prospective customer various content along the way on their buying process. (Kurvinen & Seppä 2016: 210.)

### **SEM – Search engine marketing**

While SEO aims to increase the amount of website visitors through better visibility in search engine results, SEM (search engine marketing) is considered as internet marketing

which increases website visibility through organic search engines results and advertising and SEM includes SEO. SEM is internet marketing which involves promotion of websites by increasing their visibility in search engine result pages by optimising and advertising. (Hubspot, Inc 2014.) SEM is an act of bidding keywords on search engines such as Google having the aim of your advertisement appearing and then driving traffic to your website. SEM is a means for a brand to appear whenever a prospective customer is searching for your product and thereby it is an “always-on” strategy (Ginty & Vaccarello 2012: 58). SEM includes the usage of paid search such as pay-per-click listings and advertisements and according to Hubspot Inc (2014) the best SEM tools to use are SEMRush, Google Trends, Keywordtool.Io and Google Ads Keyword Planner.

SEO is seen as the best approach as SEM cannot succeed without the use of organic SEO. Although organic SEO will take more time to generate results, it is a far more cheaper means compared to SEM, in which search credibility might never be established (Hubspot, Inc 2014).

### **Email marketing**

Although email marketing is seen to be related to traditional outbound marketing, a carefully designed and implemented marketing email might draw potential leads (Rojas 2018). The most effective way of email marketing is to send the marketing message from a real person’s email working in the organisation rather than from an automatic “no-reply” address, as customers rather open mails sent by actual people and this also allows the customer a possibility to leave direct feedback (Patruti-Baltes 2016: 63).

The title of the email must raise interest and the possible link in the email leading to information must be useful for the prospect to maintain trust towards the company in having the ability to realise and fulfil the requirements he/she has or otherwise the person will unsubscribe from the newsletter (Patruti-Baltes 2016: 63). An integral part of email marketing is that the message should include valuable content relevant to the potential

customer and it should not be mistaken as spam. The correct email with relevant content might open a two-way communication across other channels and might draw a potential lead further along the B2B marketing channel. (Rojas 2018.) According to Parantainen (2013: 175) an email sent to consumers was considered important if it “responds to the mail the consumer had sent” with 4,3 points out of five. Another crucial factor following was that the email and its message was personally targeted only for the recipient and sent from a known address, instead of unknown source or an automatic email address.

For email marketing to succeed, the target audience should be homogenous and carefully set up and the content must be specifically adjusted for them. For example, when considering a target group consisting of a technical background-based people, the marketing message should emphasise the technical aspects of the solution while for a target group of managers or leaders the focus needs to be primarily on money, results and outcomes while a financial department would be interested in cash flow and expenses. The target audiences personal and private motives should not be forgotten as these have a bigger influence on the purchasing behaviour rather than public, official and occupational motives only. Percentages and technical facts are only rational facts which do not take into consideration personal motives. (Parantainen 2013: 175-176.) Thus, companies need to realise that different kind of audiences having dissimilar needs and desires and should receive a tailored marketing message customised specifically for them and this is particularly the point in which buyer persona mapping and account-based marketing comes in (Patruti-Baltes 2016: 63).

### **Content marketing**

*“It’s just a smart business decision to invest in inbound marketing, which of course, content marketing is a part of”* (Hawlk 2018: 30). Internet has evolved into a huge platform of information and implementation of content marketing is a means worth implementing to gain competitive advantage (Brafton 2012). Content marketing consists of high-quality, non-promotional content which is an excellent mode to promote products

or services and instruct potential customers. This kind of content ranks well in search engines and thereby lures desirable and potential customers. High quality content can be incorporated through blogs, news articles, videos or for example descriptions while concurrently optimising keyword phrases within low SEO competition. (Rojas 2018.)

Content marketing is a modern marketing tool in which gaining the customer trust is vital as with trust the people come voluntarily to your company and are willing to do business with an organisation (Hawlk 2018: 30). Content is the basis of digital inbound marketing and implementing content as an online marketing strategy allows organisations to attract prospective customers while at the same time maintain existing ones and convert desired customers into leads through different forms of valuable content (Opreana & Vinerean 2015: 31). The idea of content marketing is to change the marketing into a good service for current and prospective customers. It simply means that by creating and distributing valuable, interesting and relevant content to the target group, it is possible to find new customers more easily, engage the existing customers and get customers to market alongside by sharing the value forward. The aim of content marketing is the desire to earn the customers attention, not force it. This customer attraction can be gained by creating, publishing, distributing and promoting the right kind of content for the right kind of customers with the correct message at the exact and perfect time. (Kurvinen & Seppä 2016: 181.)

Organisations can enhance their image and competitiveness across prospective customers by publishing high quality articles in for example blogs. The quality of the published content will either draw or lose leads depending whether it is of interest of them. Content made with quality will build confidence and loyalty towards an organisation whereas inappropriate content not effective enough will make the whole organisation seem as unprofessional and effect negatively on its image. Thus, organisations must construct the content in a way which follows the interests and demands of the target public and is based on SEO analyses. (Patruti-Baltes 2016: 63.)

According to a Digital Influence Index report from Fleishman-Hillard (2012), a marketing agency founded in America, 89 percent of customers looking for information on products or services use search engines such as Google before making a purchase decision. The report also reveals that content aimed to give the specific customer or B2B buyer information without the use of outbound marketing way of forced and aggressive sales language will aid organisations to be more appealing in the eyes of potential buyers.

To succeed in content marketing, it is crucial to embrace the new way of thinking in online marketing. It is important to understand that the customer has his own problems while the products and services are entirely the organisation's problems. The customer is completely interested only in his own problems which is why content marketing is an excellent mode of helping the customers to solve their problems. (Kurvinen & Seppä 2016: 181.) Successful content marketing requires interesting offers, attractive landing pages and calls-to-actions to lure them even deeper in the sales funnel. It is simply not enough to lead the prospects to the webpages with for example SEO but then leave the landing page unfinished, sloppy and not offering the prospective customer any tempting content leaving the person a poor image of the company. (Caragher 2013: 9.)

Free E-Book downloads, webinars and other premium content offered through an organisation's webpage are linked to so called call-to-action buttons. When a prospective customer is willing to download this kind of content, they will need to register using their email address and other information to obtain the content. When done so, a lead is generated but it does not necessarily mean that the person is ready to buy your products or services yet. Thus, it is crucial that the company keeps cherishing these kinds of leads and keeps providing interesting content and offers so that at some point the lead might generate into a customer and potentially later into a promoter of the products and services of the organisation. (Caragher 2013: 10.)

Digitalisation allows customers to find different kind of information more easily and thus they will turn away from organisations whose content seems to be imprecise, offending

or completely one-sided. Customers are more likely to learn from fellow customers of the market offering rather than from advertisements so therefore a transparent and truthful communication is essential in marketing today. (Lusch & Vargo 2009: 10.)

Content marketing offers many benefits both for customers and organisations. When valuable content is offered to customers, the organisation will appear as the best option for the customer as it indicates that the organisation is able to understand the customer's problems, challenges and objectives in the best manner. Content marketing can help customers by talking about their problems instead of your own. Companies can tear down the barriers preventing possible purchases by offering suitable information in each phase of the whole purchasing process while differentiating their expertise to suit each customer in a visible way. Content marketing supports the whole customer relationship with added value throughout the whole lifecycle. (Kurvinen & Seppä 2016: 182.) When useful content is created, there is no need to sell it or force it to anyone. Through the right kind of content, companies can expand their dimensions to range to a bigger audience, enhance their leverage, engage interest in prospective customers and leads and most significantly build trust in between the company and the customers it wishes to serve. (Hawlk 2018: 31.)

### 3.7 Cost-effectiveness of inbound marketing

Inbound marketing is not about the magnitude of the marketing budget but rather of the ability to network efficiently in the internet and offer customers a wide range of opportunities to find interesting content relevant to their needs while at the same time increasing sales (Rojas 2018). The economic efficiency of inbound marketing is based on three factors: free or budget-friendly marketing tools are used, marketing can be targeted accurately to correct customers and it is an investment which generates profits over a long period of time (Juslen 2009: 138). Implementing digital inbound marketing tactics is the

most easy and uncomplicated way to reach out to prospective consumers when having a low marketing budget (Opreana & Vinerean 2015: 30).

The cost level of inbound marketing is far less costly compared to traditional outbound marketing as assets can be focused on producing high-quality content and therefore costs deriving from the use of advertising agencies and mass media can almost entirely be avoided (Juslen 2009: 138). In inbound marketing the marketer approaches only the customers which have already given their approval to do so. Compared to mass audience broadcasting of outbound marketing, the marketing content in inbound marketing is targeted to a specified audience and then anticipated for that group to lure a bigger audience to receive the marketing message. This kind of word-of-mouth tactic is free advertising for the company. (Rojas Nick 2018.)

The efficiency of inbound marketing is high and the effect on the company's balance is prominent. Inbound marketing produces only little short-time expenses. When a marketing campaign or paid keyword advertising ends, the effect on sales and customer relationships will subside. Yet, if a company has versatile and useful content in its landing page, it will positively influence the natural search results in the long run without any paid advertisements or campaigns. Publishing new content does not reduce the value of previously published content but rather widens the link capital in search engines and thereby grows the number of customers which are reached. (Juslen 2009: 138-139.)

Return on investment (ROI) is an essential metric for B2B marketers when structuring and verifying budgets but also when estimating the success of marketing campaigns (Rojas 2018). According to research done by Hubspot Inc. (2014), 46% of marketers who exploit inbound marketing in their everyday businesses reported having a higher ROI. Rojas (2018) expands this by stating that inbound techniques have an increased effect on lead generation, higher traffic but also causing an increase in capital gain.

### 3.8 Measuring inbound marketing

You get what you measure, and what you measure will increase but the essential part is that you measure the correct things. Metrics for measurement need to be set before setting the targets for the business. It is easy to measure when having the exact knowledge on what is the desired outcome and by what means. A clear measuring metric imparts to everyone involved of what is important and what to measure and why and thereby responsibilities and objectives are easier to communicate throughout the company. (Kurvinen & Seppä 2016: 57.)

The success of online marketing actions clarifies usually after they have been realised. There are various tools which can be exploited to solve relatively accurately for example why a marketing action has been successful, where it springs from but also to solve why a marketing action has failed. Gathering marketing information formed in the internet is one of the best opportunities for companies to use in developing target marketing based on customer behaviour, trying the functionality of different actions but it gives also the opportunity to optimise the efficiency of marketing in the internet surroundings of the company. (Juslen 2009: 343, 345.)

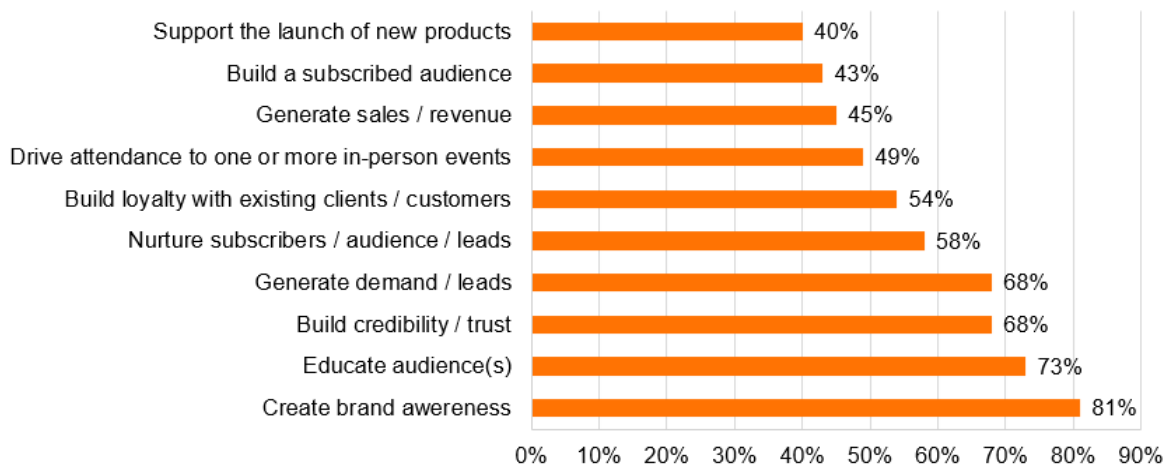
A wide variety of measurement techniques and metrics are available for measuring the success of marketing, but it is important to identify the ones which will generate the most substantial insights based on the specific goals (Murton Beets & Handley 2018: 38). The amount of how much is invested in inbound marketing and the results of how many targets have finally been obtained due to this way of marketing are things which should be taken into consideration when thinking of the exact metrics measuring the actions (Rojas 2018).

To succeed in measuring, it is important to make the measuring as simple as possible. It is not enough to be aware of what needs to be measured if obtaining and monitoring this information is too difficult and complicated for an organisation. The measuring needs to be simplified through cause and effect relationship so that organisations can understand

it in their everyday actions. In the worst-case scenario, an organisation will use valuable resources to measure a little bit here and there and the collected data is not exploited, or its quality is not even monitored. (Kurvinen & Seppä 2016: 57.)

Murton Beets & Handley (2018) from Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs indicated a survey during 2018 on the goals which B2B marketers have achieved with the successful exploitation of content marketing. Multiple responses were permitted. Brand awareness was the largest goal to increase with 81 percent following with audience education (73 percent), credibility and trust building (68 percent) and generating demand and leads (68 percent). Only 4 percent of the respondents responded to none of the above. The results of the survey are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. *Achieved goals of B2B Marketers (CMI and MarketingProfs 2018).*



According to Opreana & Vinerean (2015: 31) there are various things which can be measured of an inbound marketing campaign to determine the efficiency of it. Website activity can be measured by counting the webpage views done either by visitors or repeating visitors. Another element which can be measured is the source of traffic or in other words channel specific traffic meaning the evaluation of how many prospects visit

an organisations webpage directly, how many through links from other sites, how many found the webpage through a search engine with the use of keywords or for example the number of visitors originating from a social media platform.

The nature of web activity can also be measured by following for example the consumers average time per webpage, what links they click and for example how quickly they return to the website. The outcome of the website can be measured by the number of downloads done by prospects of different content such as e-books, requests for additional information, orders, the reach of social media and for example the number of subscribers. (Opreana & Vinerean 2015: 33.)

### 3.9 Disadvantages and future

Inbound marketing creates a direct and lasting relationship with customers and through it organisations can more rapidly determine different buyer personas. With inbound marketing organisations can achieve improved results regarding the benefits gained compared to the costs of marketing. Inbound marketing is an advanced shape of marketing which is based entirely on creating high quality content and exporting it to a target audience. (Patruti-Baltes 2016: 65.)

Inbound marketing is a more complicated means of marketing compared to traditional outbound marketing and it requires more effort from the organisation exploiting it. People who do not have access or do not want to use the internet cannot be reached and inbound marketing does not allow universal communication, rather a segmented one specifically made for each distinct target audience. (Patruti-Baltes 2016: 65-66.) FleishmanHillard (2018) released a report based on a survey on one billion technology focused consumer conversations in Twitter in between the years 2017 and 2018 in the technology industry. The report predicts that in 2019 companies who exploit Artificial Intelligence (AI) will gain a competitive advantage. The report reveals that 80 percent of consumers classify

digital security and data protection as very important factors and thus these will also continue as major trend factors in the upcoming years.

Outbound marketing will become less effective in the future as the marketing field has become more and more of a dynamic online environment which relies more on customised target marketing rather than delivering a universal marketing message to all kinds of audiences. Thus, the non-forcing way of inbound marketing including high quality content carefully and specifically made for different buyer personas will become the preferable and successful means of marketing in the future. (Patruti-Baltes 2016: 67.)

According to the survey made by Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs (Murton Beets & Handley 2018) the top issues in B2B content marketing in terms of organisations were changes to SEO and search algorithms by 61 percent and changes to social media algorithms by 45 percent. Other issues cited were content marketing as a revenue centre (41 percent), data privacy and regulations (34 percent) and staffing and human resources (33 percent) but also issues like content security including encryption and ID theft and the public's trust issues with media were stated.

## 4 METHODOLOGY AND CASE COMPANY

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research methodology applied in this thesis. While the first chapter of the thesis introduces the research objectives, limitations and research questions, this chapter will provide a deeper description on how the empirical part is conducted. To examine specifically the current state of the product launches, the possibilities they might have regarding internal potential and externally how value has been perceived and what kind of value is expected, an exploratory and qualitative research method was chosen.

In the first section of this chapter the case company is introduced including a description of its business area and offering. The background of the motives on why this research is conducted in the first place are given and the environment for the research is explained in detail including the explanation of the process how product launches are currently being executed in the case company. In the following chapters the chosen research approach, data collection and analysis methods are introduced, and data collection methods will be evaluated and analysed. The last section of this chapter will disclose insight on how the research has prepared for the reliability and validity of the results and how these factors are observed in the research.

### 4.1 Case company and offering description

The case company is globally a major player providing advanced technologies and lifecycle services. The company is divided into two businesses; business A and business B supporting its customers with an integrated portfolio of services, systems, and products that cover customer needs across the full lifecycle. This study will focus on after sales, or in other words services, period of the installation's total lifecycle of approximately 30 years. The offering developed for service stage ranges from spare parts and basic support to full operations and maintenance services. The company also provides offerings

optimising installations through upgrades, modernisations, conversions and safety solutions. The services business accounts for approximately 45% of the case company's annual revenue.

This thesis will focus on developing and launching new upgrade solutions in the service lifecycle stage. An upgrade solution is typically an equipment upgrade, retrofit or modification such as an engine upgrade. It can be for example an improvement that changes the equipment design or specification and it often combines hardware and/or software with engineering and installation work. According to the annual report of the case company (2018) this offering represents approximately 15-25% of all service activities. Other service activities are functions such as product- or technical support, field service operations and optimisation- or advisory services. For the installation owner and/or operator upgrades can provide value such as safety, reliability, fuel efficiency, performance optimisation, obsolescence prevention or environmental compliance.

The function in charge of developing majority of upgrades is Product Management. The case company describes the purpose of Product Management as planning, forecasting, developing and marketing products at all stages of the installation lifecycle while integrating people, data, processes and business systems across various teams of different areas of expertise. Developing and launching new upgrades offering is done by following an offering development and launch process which is a gate process following a waterfall model with a sequential, linear process of project management. The process includes both technical and commercial productization and go-to-market strategies developed together with the relevant stakeholders.

There are totally five distinct stages in the process starting from idea screening and business case creation, through planning and development to the sales release, launch and lifecycle management stage. In addition of having a structural approach to manage product development projects, the purpose of the gate process is also to control which products are taken under development via the gate approach.



*Figure 7. The product development and -launch process of the case company*

The commercial development and launch are executed with the help of a dedicated Product Marketing function within Product Management. The purpose of Product Marketing in the case company is to support Product Management in product commercialisation by defining the target market and understanding the potential customer and the product, its features and market potential, and developing product positioning by answering the questions such as: Who is this product for? What problem does this product solve? Why is this product different than an alternative? Product Marketing is also in charge of creating and managing go-to-market strategies and launch plans that outline in detail how products will be brought and communicated to the target markets.

Execution of both internal and external launches including defining messaging and driving demand are part of the Product Marketing tasks. In the past, launch execution was managed by the centralised Marketing Communications function but in connection to the recent structural changes in the case company organisation the responsibility of launch execution was transferred to Product Marketing.

Product commercialisation and launch planning starts in the stage 2 according to the offering development and launch process. This is done by filling in a planning template which acts as a base in every product launch to determine answers to questions related to the commercialisation of the product and to list the planned marketing actions for each product. In the template there is collected information such as the positioning of the product in terms of market potential and competition, to whom and what markets to target with the product, the plan for the marketing communications content and the plan for the marketing activities for the launch.

The launch part of the template includes a list of possible marketing and communication actions to be executed as a part of product launch internally and externally and it lists separately the actions that are recommended to be done for every launch and the actions to be considered based on the marketing plan, type of the product, scope of the launch or based on the available resources. The plan is validated in the stage 3 when the actual development occurs, and piloting is also performed during this stage. During also the third stage messaging and content is developed, and basic sales material is created before the sales release which occurs after the gate 3 approval.

After the gate 3 approval starts the official go-to-market phase or in other words the launch phase, which is coordinated by Product Marketing including both internal and external launch activities validated in the launch plan during stage 3. During stage 4, sales teams are trained, and all documentation is cleaned up and stored to the internal CRM-system. Gate 4 is the approval to close the project and it acts as a handover for the final stage of the launch process which includes the analysis of the commercial success and profitability of the launched product, product follow-up and improvements and at this stage a possible re-launch is made based on requirements.

The planning template has been proven useful with regards to single product launch. The challenge has been managing the various product launches simultaneously. When considering the limited resources and the vast number of products to be launched, supporting each product launch equally has not been possible. There is a need to further prioritise strategic product launches and allocate resources accordingly. In addition, launches should be executed utilising the digitalised marketing environment of today and considering the customer buying cycle to generate sufficient marketing profit.

The goal of the empirical part is to study how to improve the current product launches in the case company and to create a product launch framework to support planning, executing and leading product launches more efficiency while corresponding to the desires of the changing marketing environment of today. The aim is to provide

suggestions how to market products more efficiently while at the same time creating value and supporting Sales instead of just producing and releasing marketing materials for promotional purposes. The ultimate goal is to build a tool to guide the case company in planning and resourcing more effectively product launches and plan them either in a yearly, quarterly or monthly basis. The intent is to include certain elements in the framework, such as sorting the marketing activities according to launch size. The intention is to sort the marketing activities also according to target groups meaning that the actions will be divided into external and internal activities and furthermore be divided into outbound and inbound marketing tactics. The optimal framework would give insight for the case company that in what point of the customers purchasing process including the phases awareness, consideration and decision, should each marketing activity be put into practice, through which kind of marketing channels and with what kind of marketing material.

#### 4.2 Research approach

With all the background information given it is relevant to elaborate the current functions when executing product launches in the case company and develop them according to the needs which are sorted out by interviewing various functions internally within the company and conducting an interview with its external customers. A qualitative research method is chosen, as the method is mainly suitable for a research based on small samples and it focuses on gathering non-numeric data which in this case means data gathered internally within the case company. A qualitative research method will offer a new way of understanding the phenomenon as it strives to gain as much information as possible from single observation units meaning that the research is handled thoroughly in an in-depth direction (Kananen 2017: 36) but this method will also aid in discovering deeper insights into why things occur based on interviews and observation (Product Focus Ltd 2018b: 14).

A qualitative research method allows a wide and rich perspective of the problem area exploring it as close as reality as possible in a real-life context. The qualitative research approach is interested in meanings; how people experience and see the real world, and the goal of the researcher is to filter the collected data and analyse it into final research results. The research method chosen is descriptive, meaning that it is interested in processes, meanings and the ability to understand the phenomenon through text and pictures and the logic conducting this is inductive, meaning that the researcher will proceed from single observations to results. (Kananen 2017: 36.) Thus, semi-structured interviews with open-end questions will be built as these are a more flexible way compared to completely structured interviews giving also the possibility for in-depth, rich and long responses (Kananen 2017: 41, 89).

#### 4.3 Data collection and analysis process

Two distinct methods are utilised for data collection in this research. Primary data is collected through semi-structured interviews between internal stakeholders and external customers. Primary data requires direct contact with people in question through techniques such as focus groups, interviews and observations and this kind of data allows getting fresh and unique insights about the research but on the contrary requires time to organise (Product Focus Ltd 2018b: 14).

In addition to primary data, secondary data is obtained from both public, including annual reports and web pages of the case company but also from internal sources not publicly available such as CRM data including reports, process charts and sales data. Secondary data designates for information that can be for example existing material from the internet, market research reports and in-house material within the company (Product Focus Ltd 2018b: 14). Figure 8. Presents the structure of the study.



Figure 8. Structure of the research.

Firstly, internal material already existing within the company made in other marketing functions in businesses A and B are reviewed in terms of whether some material could be either directly or indirectly exploited. Thereafter target groups for interviews are created and interviews with various business units within the company internally and externally with its customers are conducted.

The selected sample required to gather the data are external customers and three distinct functions internally within the case company. The population chosen for the sample are

each somehow involved in the product launch process or have parallel expertise on how to possibly develop the process. Interviews conducted internally are aimed to gather information of the current state and the misused potential of executing product launches and to search for possibilities of digital marketing as a product marketing tactic. External customers are interviewed in terms of defining how they have perceived value from the product launches so far and how they would like to perceive it in the future.

Three people from Sales are interviewed based on how they feel the product launches so far have succeeded and how the process should be developed in order to better support their operations. The goal is also to clarify how the product launches meet currently with the customers buying cycle and to figure out the possible upcoming trends and desires of purchasing today in the B2B technology sector. Two persons responsible for the digital marketing channels having a broad expertise in the digital marketing area within the case company are interviewed as a goal to gather information of the opportunities and misused potential the case company has in digital marketing and its channels. Two people from the Product Marketing function are also interviewed with the objective of gathering detailed information about the current state of product launches and how they are currently being carried out but also to gather information on how they would like to develop the process in the future.

Lastly, interviews with external customers of the case company are conducted in terms of clarifying on a customer level the experiences they have perceived of the actual launch of a product they have purchased. The goal is to obtain information of their experiences on what activities in product launches have functioned successfully and what elements are inoperative. The following Table 5. presents the detailed information regarding the interviews conducted in this study.

Table 5. Information regarding the conducted interviews.

#	Position	Participant Area	Business	Code	Date	Duration	Format
1	Product Marketing Manager	Product Marketing	A + B	PM1	22.03.2019	90 min	Skype meeting
2	General Manager, Product Marketing	Product Marketing	A + B	PM2	09.04.2019 16.04.2019	50 min 40 min	Face-to-face
3	Area Manager, Sales	Sales	A	ST1	27.03.2019	60 min	Face-to-face
4	General Manager, Product Sales & Sales support	Sales	B	ST2	04.04.2019	90 min	Skype meeting
5	Senior Account Manager	Sales	A	AM1	17.04.2019	70 min	Skype-meeting
6	Digital Marketing Manager	Digital marketing	A	DM1	11.04.2019	70 min	Skype meeting
7	Digital Marketing Manager	Digital marketing	A	DM2	15.04.2019	60 min	Skype meeting
8	Customer	External customer	A	EC1	13.05.2019	25 min	Skype meeting
9	Customer	External customer	A	EC2	16.05.2019	25 min	Skype meeting

All the respondents received an email prior the interview including the topics and themes which were to be discussed during the interview. The purpose was to give an idea beforehand in which direction the interview would be aimed to go and thus this gave the respondent an idea of the contents of the interview for them to prepare. All interviews were recorded with a voice recorder so that the interviewer could focus entirely on the interview itself rather than making notes simultaneously. Recording the interviews made the data more reliable as it is impossible to make notes of everything said but also to

remember afterwards the content consistently. Also relying on memories might become non-truthful after a while as memories tend to vaporise. Nearly all interviews were held in Finnish as this was mostly the native language of the respondents. In addition, nearly all interviews were held through a Skype meeting as the interviewees physical location was distinct from the whereabouts of the author.

Each interview group was asked a customised set of semi-structured questions related to their expertise area within the case company. The interview question sets are presented in appendixes 7, 8, 9 and 10. In this manner the author was able to get different perspectives for the research problem as the interview groups inside the case company operated in distinct areas and thus had the knowledge to only reply to questions related to their everyday working areas rather than to only make assumptions on matters they were not dealing with in their daily work. Therefore, by customising the set of interview questions for each interview group separately gave the research a wider perspective for the problem being examined.

After each interview was conducted the recording was listened through as soon as possible to recapture the feelings of the interview and then converted into text format. Firstly, the interview was transcript verbatim in spoken language and thereafter converted into written language including only the core message of each sentence excluding the full expression of the respondent such as tone of voice, expressions and spoken language vocabulary.

#### 4.4 Data coding and classification

The interviews were compressed by coding the content manually by giving each sentence or context a short description of its content. Thereafter the codes were classified, and similar structures, regularity, themes and models were sought, and the raw text was categorised based on these to a build a reasonable structure for presenting the empirical

part of the thesis. The goal of data classification was to find connecting factors and similar pieces of data and to combine the data under one concept forming a logical entity. The aim for the author was to find a logic for processes, similarities and dissimilarities of the data and explanations for the phenomenon and its components. The classification was done based on theoretical segmenting meaning that concepts and categories created by theory were used to examine the data as a basis for the classification. In theoretical segmenting the data is screened with the help of concepts in theory which explain the phenomenon (Kananen 2017: 142). When the data was set under various concepts forming a reasonable entity, the text was finally translated into English and the text was condensed.

#### 4.5 Evaluation of research methods and data

Reliability and validity measure the credibility and quality of a study and they narrate whether all phases in the study are conducted in a correct manner. A qualitative study differs from a quantitative study by not having unambiguous instructions to determine and assess the reliability of the study and thereby the author must rely on a basis of an estimate and evidence. (Kananen 2017: 173-174). To ensure the validity and reliability in this study the theoretical part consists of only valid academic books and journals which are widely known. Articles used are gathered from noted and appraised publications which are relevant in the field of business and B2B marketing.

There are three various manners to ensure the reliability of a qualitative study, which are standardised interview protocols, the study constructs of well-defined and grounded in extant literature while providing an audit-trail by providing access to data (Beverland & Lindgreen 2010). This study aims to follow these three key points although due to confidentiality reasons providing access to data is limited and details of the case company and full interviews are not presented.

The use of structured interviews would enhance the reliability and repeatability of this study but rather semi-structured interview model with open-end questions was utilised as it suited this study better as the interviewees could speak more openly about their views and insights about the questions being discussed and this kind of interview setting provided a deeper level for the responses about the case company. As this is a single study made for this specific case company and its processes, it would be beneficial to determine and test the results gained in the future to determine whether this kind of study and its findings would be applicable in other similar companies. The findings cannot be directly generalised as different companies operate in various manners and the processes are rarely identical. Thereby the findings can be used as a guideline to determine the optimal way of working but not directly put into practise in other companies than the case company in question in this study. Table 6. summarises the methods applied in this study.

*Table 6. Summary of methods applied.*

<b>Key methodology aspects</b>	<b>Method adopted</b>
<b>Research method</b>	Qualitative study
<b>Research approach</b>	Descriptive and inductive
<b>Data collection</b>	Semi-structured interviews. Sample size 9.
<b>Reliability</b>	The findings of the interviews are presented as transparent as possible, interviews were recorded and transcript immediately in a verbatim manner
<b>Validity</b>	Valid academic material from trustworthy sources related to the research subject were utilised and only experienced participants were interviewed
<b>Analysis methods</b>	Content analysis of primary and secondary data compared to the theoretical framework and interview results

One way to measure and solve the adequacy of the data in the study is saturation. Saturation refers for a situation in which the data starts to repeat itself and new informants will not produce any new information in terms of the research problem. This means that when the data gathered starts to repeat itself it can be generalised. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018: 62.)

Due to shortage of time it was not possible to get more interviewees, but the author felt that obtaining at least two persons internally from each interview group would be sufficient to get the perspective and main insights of each interview group. The number of external interviewees could have been wider to get the data more saturated as customers are very different, from various backgrounds operating in different areas but due to the schedule of the study and especially summer holiday season it was not possible to acquaint more external participants. Thereby, external interview insights do not necessarily saturate but yet gives the study valuable insights from also the external customer point of view.

## 5 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Two people from Product Marketing were interviewed. The first interviewee was PM1 who has extensive experience within B2B product marketing and recently joined the case company having three main working functions; to plan product marketing- and launch campaigns, to control the process and to finally launch products. The second interviewee was PM2 who was interviewed face-to-face two times to gain sufficiently information especially of the current state of the product launch process and the needs and desires for the future. The main function of PM2 is to lead the whole Product Marketing team.

Three people from Sales were interviewed. ST1 operates as an Area Sales Manager and has total of 25-year experience working in the case company. ST2 has been working since the start of 2019 as a General Manager in Sales within the business B but he has been working in the case company since 2007. The main functions of ST2 is to make opportunity-based sales strategies, maintain customer satisfaction, troubleshooting and training in his respective area. AM1 operates as a Senior Account Manager in the business A and has been working in the case company for ten years. The main functions of AM1 is to be in contact with customers, to sell them products and to lead and coordinate a team in which service coordinators and sales support operate together to create a shared understanding of the customer needs throughout the organisation.

Two people working in Digital Marketing were interviewed through Skype. DM1 has been in his current position for under a year but has broad experience within digital marketing in other B2B companies. The main functions of DM1 are to digitalise operations such as to develop the web pages and the marketing automation system including SEO in the case company. The second person interviewed, DM2, has been in his current position for a few months but has prior experience in business B managing global marketing automation and sales processes.

Two external customers were interviewed both of which operate in business A. EC1 is a customer for the case company regularly purchasing aftersales products such as spare parts and maintenance services. The person interviewed was their Technical Superintendent having three years of experience working in his current position. His responsibilities include maintenance monitoring and coordination of larger projects. EC2 is a customer for the case company operating installations having spare parts and maintenance services purchased from the case company. The person interviewed was their Superintendent having altogether over 20 years of experience working in similar positions. His responsibilities include technical maintenance and budget responsibility.

### 5.1 Digitalisation and inbound marketing

According to DM2, in general, marketing has changed less than what it has in the case company, in which there has been a rapid transitioning from sharing promotional pencils in affairs to this day when the case company has started to build a marketing automation system through which it is possible to scale the dimensions of marketing and overall be able to measure the operations. He says that marketing is no more solely opinions, concepts and messages but rather data and the effect of it is strongly associated. He comments that before, marketing was only seen as a cost centre but today it is possible to distinguish through data, how much the case company has been able to sell more through marketing.

*Marketing has transitioned from an art to science. Things can be measured and tested, and experiments can be replicated, and we don't need to rely on opinions as we can rely on facts. It has become clearer that people make mistakes, they get things wrong and they lie, but data does not lie. – DM2*

The case company has not been able to respond to digitalisation well enough. Sales has the responsibility of driving the customers into the digital environment, but Product

Marketing is left with the responsibility of providing a correct input for the customer meaning interesting content which is not too provocative as in the B2B world excessive cookies and the acceptance of them with the outcome of marketing banners and advertisements can be in some extent annoying. (ST2.) According to DM1 the case company has been able to respond to digitalisation well but digitalisation itself is a drastic change which requires additional resources. DM2 says that a company can never answer well enough to digitalisation or otherwise they will conform too much and get slow. He says that marketing in the case company has traditionally been quite analogue and not digital and reactive. According to DM1 digitalisation requires the support of the whole organisation and the Digital Marketing team cannot simply do every operation independently themselves.

The goal of inbound marketing is to be found by the customer independently and once the company is found, the content needs to be relevant for the customer. Through inbound marketing companies strive to get customers follow them by themselves with free will in channels they operate in. (DM1.) By bringing inbound marketing tactics on top of outbound tactics has made marketing more comprehensive and holistic and it has clearly generated better results (DM2) and the case company has been able to reach out to a larger customer base (DM1). Inbound marketing is an important part of marketing today and it helps companies understand better the opportunities which exist, but which companies are not able to currently detect (DM2).

Boundaries of starting to exploit inbound marketing more comprehensively might be time, resources and lack of expertise and planning (PM2). Money could form as a problem in inbound marketing as measuring requires a budget, but it has been proven that inbound marketing is clearly more cost-efficient compared to events and fairs and through inbound marketing it has been possible to decrease the costs of marketing significantly. Another barrier might be the internal willingness to change when people are used to operate in certain ways. Most inbound tactics and channels were originally created for B2C business and for their short and easy buying processes. The buying process in the B2B side varies

as it is longer, and it is not possible to get immediate data of whether an inbound tactic has increased sales or not, which on the contrary works on the B2C business in which it is possible to see quicker if a marketing campaign performs well. B2B business requires more tools and support to exploit inbound marketing more efficiently. (DM2.)

PM1 states that the case company should start by easy tactics and gradually move towards others once learned. PM2 says that certain expertise would help in the starting phase of inbound and this could be fostered through the support from the Digital Marketing team. To succeed in inbound all teams internally should strive towards the same targets and commit to a shared story behind the products. The case company should determine the most potential products for which inbound tactics are used as if every product is invested in the operation will be too fragmented. The most potential products will have a more fundamental analysis made and other smaller product will be supported more lightly. The case company should have clear raw pieces of stories of how they want to segment. In this manner when a new product is produced it is easy to see into which segment this product in question belongs to and then start to build material around it together. (DM1.)

#### 5.1.1 The change in B2B marketing and sales

Marketing has taken a giant leap towards digitalisation culminating in the increase of consumers searching progressively for information online (PM1). DM1 states that digitalisation is also visible in what kind of expertise employees are seeking for today and know-how in the digitalised area is at the core. DM2 and PM2 both agree that marketing has become more data-driven, measurable and digitalisation has decreased the physical workload. They also agree that marketing has been given tools and metrics through which teams are able to follow statistics better and thereby identify prospective customers and lead them to the sales funnel better.

Marketing channels have changed, but the content not so much except that every message is not pushed towards the customer but rather considered more profoundly in what things

the customers are truly interested in. So far, the content in the marketing materials has been outbound-oriented. (PM1, ST2.) ST1 feels that the importance of inner product launches have been noted as a means to firstly sell products internally and share the product knowledge before entering the external markets and digitalisation has made material easier to find internally straight from the digital systems.

The case company has been able to get Sales more strongly on board in marketing as the importance of digitalisation has been understood as a means to support Sales in the discoverability (AM1). DM1 says the case company has understood how data can aid to improve the hit-rate and the quality of content in which the things made in digital marketing do not go past the prospects. He says that the case company has hired more competence having a strong desire to digitalise the processes and marketing as the case company has finally realised that not only they should digitalise their products and services but also the way they sell them. A clear dichotomy can be seen in companies today; others want to minimise the size of their marketing team and externalise the digital processes to partners, while others want to create a marketing agency internally from the existing employees. The case company wants the marketing to be explicitly in-house so that they can be more agile as DM1 sees that external partners never know the case company so well, that they do themselves. The case company is currently on the development stage on moving the know-how to existing employees and through an inner marketing agency their back- and front-end developers evolve the website, the CRM system, the marketing automation systems and produce videos themselves (DM1).

Sales has become more flexible in the case company; the processes flow faster and communication between customers has notably improved. Sales offers have transitioned from bland and technical pieces of content into a graphical direction and the case company has become more critical and selective in what products or services they offer and the amount of money which is invested in them. Earlier companies were blind to their own products and thought the products were adequate enough to sell themselves, but

today more time is focused on preparation and products not adding value to the customer are not sold. (ST2.)

### 5.1.2 The change in B2B buying behaviour

According to DM1 the buying behaviour has changed into the direction in which customers seek information themselves, evaluate and compare alternatives to an increasing extent in the digital environment. He says that usually even 95 percent of the background research has been done prior the person will make a contact. Thereby he states that it is crucial for the case company to stand out and be found in the digital environment. The case company is required to have a high search engine ranking and once the prospect ends up on the company's webpage the most relevant information needs to be presented firstly to be able to lead the prospect forward in the buying process towards the purchasing decision as fast as possible.

B2B buying behaviour has transitioned into more critical, careful, selective and demanding when making investments or acquisitions and cost caring has clearly raised its significance. Buying behaviour today is far more complicated and prospects tend to jump between channels and stages in the buying process without the case company even noticing it. (ST2.)

*We still tend to think like we did twenty years ago, and we do not understand thoroughly the extent of change that has entered our everyday working operations. The diversity in the professional world has increased in a way that we have far more women, people with different backgrounds, languages and countries behaving in different ways buying products from us but still we tend to think that they are all the same. – DM2*

Companies still tend to think that people behave linearly but this is only a simplification and an assumption as it simply is not possible to know how people will behave without

having data. The case company can look at their operations backwards on matters such as how long has it taken to transition a prospect into a customer, but it is not possible to predict the future without data. (DM2.) PM1 states that the target audience is quite conservative and ST1 continues by saying the decisionmaker in the customer's side unlikely uses social media for other purposes than leisure. The case company cannot act or do something that is not the correct way for their business just because someone thinks they should do something but rather it is needed to figure out how their target audience behaves and operates. A lot of potential is in what the case company could do for their target customers but that itself also undergoes changes constantly and thereby Product Marketing needs to adapt to this change. (PM1.)

### 5.1.3 How the product launches are found?

Through digitalisation prospective customers find alternatives and competitive products more easily which is why companies need to strive being more discoverable and to get more visibility for their products (ST2). Companies cannot trust any more on the fact that customers will physically ask, if they want something as customers search more and more information online and are themselves in contact with potential suppliers at the same time assuming that enough product information is easily available (PM2). DM1 and DM2 both agree that the entry point for a customer is that they seek information themselves online and enter the case company's webpages to examine products and ask for an offer or alternatively the case company gets in touch with the customer through email marketing in which the customer is attempted to react in by clicking a link and then entering the company's webpage. PM2 states that Product Marketing has practically made only social media- and email-campaigns and hardly tried to lure prospects to the sales funnel through their website as the focus has been on creating more interesting content.

ST2 feels that the sales people are the main messengers who export product information to customers by introducing what the case company has to offer in face-to-face meetings and thus information is being shared through traditional communication. ST2 and AM1

both state that there is also a reactive side to this matter meaning that if a customer is facing a problem, they will directly contact Sales or send a tech-request to the technical services team who will advise the customer to contact Sales and either way a Sales will provide a solution to the problem. AM1 tells that customers today know better what they want having strong in-house expertise and thus can ask directly the case company whether they would have something specific to offer. ST1 doubts the customer would independently go to Google or the case company's website to search and compare for alternatives. He thinks that prospective customers do not search for information themselves actively, if their installation is working flawlessly. If a clear problem would occur, they might search for a solution digitally. He says that customers get the information of the products proactively meaning that the case company's product marketing is not currently quite interactive or digital and selling a product requires Sales to influence the prospect with sales presentations and other marketing materials narrating why the specific product is suitable for a prospect and reasons why they should invest in it.

EC2 tells that sometimes the information of the case company's products does not reach them but when it does, it usually goes either by the Account Manager contacting them and telling what kind of products there currently is to offer for their installation or if a problem occurs, they will contact directly the Account Manager or some other technical person responsible. EC2 always needs a personal contact when doing business and he does not perceive internet as a contact but yet states that it hard to find correct people who to contact in the case company and he finds this problem annoying and time-consuming.

EC1 states that roughly 80 percent of information about new products is received through a direct contact personally either through the Account Manager, Contract Manager or technical services and about 20 percent of information is received through the case company's website and email marketing. Sometimes the information might reach EC1 through a digital channel signifying LinkedIn or Facebook but usually that also results with a personal contact with Sales. EC1 also states that specifically in larger projects the

communication is faster and fluent through traditional channels meaning a personal contact.

#### 5.1.4 The key elements of successful sales

PM2 states that direct sales perform best if the target audience and its quantity is precisely defined. ST1 continues by stating that successful B2B selling is personal, face-to-face occurring and done among people. It is interactive, planned, tailored and includes targets per customer which are implemented in cooperation with Sales and Product Marketing. He says the goal is to go hand in hand with the customer focusing on building a relationship rather than practicing a transactional business in which the goal is to maximise the benefits and sales volume of individual sales. When trust of a customer is earned, it is easier to sell products. The case company should serve customers in a way which makes them feel like their problems are also the case company's problems. Thereby consultative sales in which the customer is identified throughout functions best. The risks and challenges of certain customers are recognised and diverted as an advantage for the case company to offer the customer added value and to assure their operations run as trouble-free as possible. (AM1.)

EC1 states, that the Account Manager is aware of their needs and it is natural to be in contact exactly with him through a phone or a face-to-face meeting. EC2 states that their need is what drives the operations the most and when they are having a certain need, a response from the case company is required. EC2 says that there always needs to be a person who can help, and it also requires stability for the affairs to function. He says that a big problem before has been the sales people turnover meaning that once the customer relationship has been personified, the sales person from the case company gets a promotion and the customer ends up with a new person and must start building the relationship once again from start. Thus, EC2 hopes for more permanence and stability and that a key actor would always be available having enough power to make decisions independently not having their hands tied behind a large organisation.

## 5.2 B2B product launches and internal weaknesses

Several product launches are made yearly and they currently follow a product development and launch process similar to a gate process following a waterfall model presented on page 65. Product Marketing is usually informed of a new launch after gate 1 but PM1 confirms that this is not always the case although she says that the process itself has been decent. Product Marketing has faced drastic changes internally and PM2 states that currently there are enough resources and new tools available through which projects, campaigns and product launches can be followed better but also planned and controlled better. However, it is impossible to invest in every product launch as resources are limited.

Expertise in the case company is on a decent level and the importance of the value proposition is implemented and taken into consideration well and business development functions have been established to support operations (PM1). PM2 continues by telling that the case company has clear brand guidelines and shared manners of creating and publishing marketing materials and content which aids keeping the content throughout the company looking the same and sticking within the brand. PM2 states that Product Marketing has good relationships with certain marketing agencies with who Product Marketing is used to work with. She says that cooperation with Product Development has also developed and the flow of information has improved when Product Marketing was moved through the organisational change to operate inside Product Management.

Through the organisational change the control of product launches was moved from centralised Marketing to Product Marketing and PM2 states that now it is their responsibility to update the product launches to respond to the requirements of today and be braver and daring. Product Marketing is now more clearly the owner of the campaigns and can coordinate the content themselves. It is impossible to invest in every launch, so prioritisation is the key and they should find the correct ways to operate and not proceed the way they have done in recent years. (PM2)

According to PM2 the major issues in product launches are the cooperation and unclear roles between Sales and Product Marketing, lack of efficient planning and lack of metrics and measurability. She says that lack of resources is no more seen as an issue as resources have increased. DM2 states that one target for development is the inner competence and the case company should clarify where the money invested has gone and how much sales has each euro brought to understand which channels and what kind of content has worked better over others. ST2 states that the case company should be able to monetise everything so that they could divert the benefits of a product into money and to illustrate it to the customer as cost savings.

#### 5.2.1 Unclear roles

According to PM2, Product Marketing is a co-partner for the Product Manager, who owns and develops the product, and together with him and other functions internally new products are developed and launched. PM2 continues by telling that the main goal of Product Marketing is to assure that commercial expertise is strongly involved already in the developing phase of a product. Product Marketing administers the product launches which includes internal and external launch but also the project management of them. Marketing materials are produced and payed self by the team, but joint digital channels are used to publish content and done together with centralised Marketing. (PM1) ST1 feels that the main function of Product Marketing is to be involved in the commercialisation process, in which the definitions for questions like for who the product is made for, how is it positioned to the market, what are the customer benefits and with what message is it being marketed through are made and they need to determine the size and customer segment for the launch. ST2's opinion is that the main function of Product Marketing is to make high quality marketing materials into a general form from which Sales can easily customise them according to each customer.

According to PM2 the leading responsibility of product launches varies according to launches but in outline the main responsibilities and roles of the Product Manager and

Product Marketing Manager have been defined but in PM1's opinion the projects are quite product manager-driven and a clear project manager is missing and therefore the Product Manager will also handle the project management side. This causes a problem that which Product Managers consider Product Marketing as a significant part of product launches and thereby is systematic and remembers to inform Product Marketing in time. PM2 states that this has been a major issue and when information has not been shared on time about a new launch, the marketing material has been deficient and made with a rush.

Luckily, according to PM2 it has been finally acknowledged internally that Product Marketing is a lot more than an assistant to other functions creating only sales enablement material and the role of Product Marketing has strengthened clearly over the years. Both PM1 and PM2 agree that the role of Product Marketing is at times a bit slight and that they should clearly take more role, create their own ways of working and to especially challenge the Product Manager more. PM1 states that Product Marketing should move away from creating not only sales enablement material but to also make the way for Sales. Product Marketing should get out externally with the marketing message before Sales approaches a customer and they should take more into consideration the customer's buying process and determine in which order each marketing activity should be performed (PM2).

When considering how to get the prospective customer to make a purchase, Product Marketing should be able to cooperate better with Sales and have shared means on how to transform prospective customers into leads and finally customers (PM1). According to ST2 and AM1 Sales was before responsible only for sales releases and was not involved in the product launch process, but today is involved already in the productization phase in which Sales opinion is considered in sales potential evaluation, determining the value proposition and in the content of marketing materials.

ST2 tells that a sales representative is involved in the product development and launch process especially when a bigger launch is at stake. Sales aims to keep in touch with the

Product Manager to see what products are going to be launched per installation type and considers for which customer segments the product fits and in the draft-phase of the process Sales aids Product Marketing with marketing materials although ST1 says that Sales is not necessarily always involved in the draft-phase although they definitely should. PM2 continues that in inner launches the Product Manager holds a training session for Sales to give a deeper understanding of the product to ease Sales in selling the product externally. Sales is typically involved in gate meetings but usually only one person participates and is left with the responsibility of sharing the information onward to other people in the sales organisation and according to PM2 this usually is not carried out as well as it should.

#### 5.2.2 Cooperation between Product Marketing and Sales

PM2 states that the Product Manager is strongly involved in the product development and launch process, but Sales is needed along more strongly although Sales is a natural partner, but the cooperation should be stronger. Both PM1 and PM2 agree that Product Marketing is not a partner with Sales and the cooperation between the two functions is far from enough. They see Sales as an unconnected component functioning separately and that should be developed. PM1 thinks it is unconventional that Sales does not have a strong presence and an overall picture to marketing related operations but also, they are lacking a strong role in gate meetings. She thinks it is preposterous and strange to market products without Sales and it has an impact on the outcome. PM1 feels there are deficiencies in both cooperation and communication, but she thinks this is not caused of Sales not wanting to cooperate but is more depending on the whole organisation. She also says that it is even unclear what are the objectives and goals for Sales and PM2 continues by stating that the goals might be similar on the upper level but on product level not anymore. PM2 thinks that Product Marketing is in a sense between two sales organisations as it serves both A and B businesses which both are organised in different ways meaning that the organisations cannot be served in similar manners which also makes the cooperation difficult.

PM1 says that there are a lot of sales people who Product Marketing is working with, but the sales organisation is quite fragmented and individual operators do not have a global product role or a big picture of all products. She thinks that through the organisational change it has been difficult to find correct players from Sales with who to build relationships with and who are interested in cooperation and willing to export the message to others in the sales organisation. She tells that Product Marketing currently has established relationships with some people in Sales with who the cooperation functions well, but Product Marketing cannot depend on that anymore as they need to start building new relationships. The lack of communication is visible in the product development and launch process in a way that often the person from Sales has not taken the role of representing the whole sales organisation and thereby the information is not shared evenly. Although communication would improve between Sales and Product Marketing that does not guarantee that people in sales will discuss together. PM2 thinks that a clear process is lacking through which information could be shared all the way through to everyone in the sales organisation. Product Marketing should consider Sales as one of their marketing channels and make the cooperation tighter so that Product Marketing could engage Sales more involved in marketing campaigns and Product Marketing could in that way gain more visibility for their campaigns. (PM2). PM1 and ST1 both agree that Product Marketing should identify people from Sales having the motivation and willingness to lead the message to other people in the sales organisation.

The opinion of Sales varies a bit from the one of Product Marketing. ST2 thinks the cooperation on his side has been dense and gone better through time. He says that in the business B the opinions of Sales are listened, and cooperation has been good, but which might be because they are proactive as a team. ST1 feels that Sales and Product Marketing operate partly together and partly separately, and the cooperation should be denser as both functions should support each other. AM1 says that the information should be far more clearly visible and cooperation with Product Marketing denser so that they can inform in time what products are going to be launched soon. AM1 sees Product Marketing and Sales as separate functions having a clear gap in between. He says that Sales receives

usually either late or not at all information of what products are currently going to testing or going to be launched although Sales is the function being every day in touch with the customer. He says that thanks to great internal networks he gets the information of upcoming launches and marketing materials related but sees that not necessarily new employees in the sales department get this information as easily as him especially in foreign countries.

AM1 feels that Product Marketing is missing technical expertise and they should far more accurately discover which product fits which installation before they start marketing the product. Sometimes products have been launched, the customer has raised interest and then it becomes evident that the product does not even fit the customers installation and therefore Product Marketing should cooperate deeper with Sales to avoid this from happening. The cooperation begins from Sales not assuming that Product Marketing will do everything for them as there are a lot of matters which Product Marketing simply cannot know, such as what the business is like for the customer and who for example pays for the fuel in the customers end and Sales has a good understanding of these background details. (AM1). The cooperation would improve visibility for Product Marketing to see what Sales is currently working on with and Product Marketing could utilise this information to help Sales better (PM1).

ST1 states that Sales should give Product Marketing more input of the feedback of marketing materials and channels and how the customers overall wish to get information of the products. ST2 says that Sales should be better involved in the launch phase and take a consultative role of the sales potential and product material and quality. He also feels that Sales should be more strongly involved in the business case phase meaning gate zero, so that Sales will know on time what products are coming and they could be more involved in developing and affecting the upcoming product.

*Sales could give Product Marketing a deeper understanding of whether the product has potential as we should not launch products only for the sake of launching without them even being sellable solutions. – PM1*

According to PM1, Sales yet has the ultimate strong viewpoint of what are the key benefits and the value proposition for each customer area and Product Marketing could take these outlooks into consideration when producing marketing materials. AM1 states that Sales should be strongly involved in the product development phase so that information would flow more evenly on matters such as are the workshops and spare parts available and has the technical services been trained appropriately before starting to sell externally. If these are not yet available, Sales can tell the customer that this kind of product is coming up later rather than sell something half-finished and let the customer down by not having these matters in order. (AM1).

*The better the productization of a product has been done, the easier it is to create marketing material for it and to sell it externally to the customer. – ST1*

ST2 mentions that Sales could be loaded more in gate one in which the product is firstly sold internally, and motivation and interest of the product is built making it easier for Sales to sell the product externally. When Sales has the knowledge of upcoming products they can inform in customer meetings whether the case company would have a solution later coming up and overall bring feedback of what products the case company should and should not produce. Every large product should have a question and answer sheet so that Sales could even better acquaint themselves with the products and the common issues around it. (ST2).

DM2 mentions that Product Marketing should start by illustrating how their operations aid the Sales organisation and their performance with less effort resulting in an even more pleased customer. Product Marketing should find a few people from Sales who are particularly receptive in this manner and work with them. Once better results are reached,

and the Sales person has been able to sell better, and the customer has been more satisfied, others in Sales will recognise the advantage gained and take it as an example. If this does not function, Sales Management should demand Sales to sell certain amounts of specific products rather than sell only the most easily sellable products. (DM2).

According to AM1 a quick kick-off meaning regular meetings should be developed in which Product Marketing would narrate to Sales what products are going to be launched soon. Another idea is to insert a “Product Marketing News” page into case company intranet so that everyone in Sales could have an even access to see what products are soon going to be launched and marketed. PM2 agrees that Product Marketing and Sales should have shared channels through which information could be shared and regular meetings arranged especially at the time when the following year is being planned. Thereby the targets for Product Marketing could better be aligned with the plans of Sales and that would create a better feeling of cooperation when having shared targets and goals. ST1 says that communication could be improved through feedback sessions in which Sales would share information of the feedback received from already launched products and Product Marketing could share insight on how the message could be developed further towards the customer. PM2 tells that currently the case company has held skype-sessions in which product offering and product related messaging and values are introduced but these sessions are not alone sufficient enough.

PM1 and ST1 agree that cooperation could be improved by having sessions at regular intervals such as having by-monthly-calls or monthly emails between Product Marketing and Sales in which information is shared of what is going on in both organisations currently. They both concur that common events should be arranged for example quarterly to improve cooperation and people in both organisations could simultaneously get acquainted with each other better. ST2 would not add any monthly mail but rather import the information to either the CRM-system or into the intranet of the case company.

### 5.2.3 Lack of efficient planning, metrics and measurability

DM1 describes that earlier a list of customers have been created from the case company's CRM-system and an email campaign has been built in which three emails are sent, the topic is deepened gradually and it is estimated that if a customer for example has opened all three emails, clicked on a link or watched for example a video, the person is a potential prospect which should be taken forward for Sales to evaluate. DM1 feels that this is a very weak basis to lead a prospective customer forward. ST2 also thinks that if a customer clicks a link open it does not automatically mean the person is interested in the product. DM1 says the content of articles are not also built in terms of what the prospect for real wants to hear or read but rather what the case company has assumed. AM1 gives this statement a real-life example of telling that sometimes when a prospect has clicked a link on an email campaign, Sales gets a notification to contact this customer and when the person in Sales takes a deeper look into the customer it becomes clear that the product being marketed does not even fit the customers installation. He says that Product Marketing should clearly define the target audience for a product and sort out whether the product fits the installation of the audience in the first place.

Product launches are usually quite global and ST1 says that the case company should already in the productization phase decide whether the product should be global from the start or should it be built gradually in phases. He states that the weaknesses in product launches are directly visible in the company profits and the case company should better increase the offering awareness towards customers stating that the biggest gap is that customers do not have the knowledge of the overall offering. PM1 agrees that customers do not necessarily find their way towards the marketing materials.

*A great deal of marketing material has been made at a fast pace and the outcome makes the rush particularly visible. Quantity does not compensate on quality, and we should focus on reducing the work load of basic assignments and lead the focus*

*on larger and potential launches. We should have more thought and less material and content. – PM1*

According to PM1 the case company's social media channels have something going on all the time but the content is not necessarily as smart and excellent as the competitors. PM1 and PM2 both agree that although plenty of material has been made the work is not necessarily visible anywhere as the materials are only sales leaflets or presentations which take a lot of time to produce and which do not generate a wow effect. This could be improved widely, but it requires larger product releases and marketing campaigns. The lack of efficient planning is also visible in a case presented by AM1 of when a product has been sold in a quick pace without having spare parts and tools available or technical services not trained to repair problems, the customer will be unsatisfied and purchase from the competitor next time. ST1 agrees that the largest problems occur when a product is being sold and someone purchases it. Either the problem is that the product does not fit the customer's installation or either the customer has a question which Sales cannot answer due to lack of product expertise and inner training. Productization has been unplanned and Sales has only a general picture of the product and lacking the detailed information.

DM2 states that Product Marketing should sort out what kind of products and solutions the customer already has so that they could offer products in a more segmented and personalised way and cover a greater amount of marketing channels. He says that through marketing automation and Google optimisation Product Marketing could understand better which channels, what kind of content and by what publishing interval perform in the best manner for each target audience.

### **Lack of metrics and measurability**

PM1 reveals that Product Marketing does not have currently any data of what has worked and what has not and that is a matter which should be developed further. She says that Product Marketing should build their own metrics which in their standards narrate

whether a campaign has succeeded or not. PM2 agrees that so far Product Marketing has not been able to measure things efficiently. Digital campaigns bought from external marketing agencies have provided numbers in forms or reports but these reports have not been handled and Product Marketing has not gained anything concrete out of these. She tells that Product Marketing has tried to develop metrics to measure matters such as how many inner product launches are in progress and how many sales persons have been trained, but the measuring has not been systematic and although Product Marketing has received numbers through the measuring, the team does not know to what to compare these numbers to and what conclusions they should make. She tells that Product Marketing can distinguish in email campaigns how many persons opened the email, clicked a link and how many leads they have been able to form, but the visibility ends there. She comments that this might be the result of not having a clear lead handling process and not actual people processing them although this matter is currently being under development. PM1 states that the product launches should be way more data-driven so that the case company could follow in real-time how the campaigns have performed.

PM2 says that although digital marketing campaigns have been seemingly successful, no actual data has been received of the campaign return on investment (ROI). ST1 says that the case company should be able to measure how actively each customer segment follows the case company in social media channels and how they receive and pursue information of the products there. Through better cooperation between Product Marketing and Sales the case company could better influence what is the ROI of marketing meaning how big of a budget is given to marketing products and through cooperation the case company could have a better understanding of the things they should be doing more actively which bring them money (PM2).

According to DM1 the current challenge in many B2B companies is data accumulation and analysis and to get all stakeholders internally along. Before it was not necessary to measure things and to prove whether some action was working but today things have drastically changed (DM2). EC2 tells that sometimes it has happened that they have

received an automatic upgrade request from the case company and when they have sent technical services to their installation, they have noticed that no actions are actually required. Thereby EC2 insists that the data should be updated and on track in the case company's end so that they know in reality what is going on in the customers installation and EC1 continues that the case company should be aware what installations he has currently meaning that the customer data should be up to date and marketing should happen based on that data.

#### 5.2.4 Internal competence

*Content-orientation is usually forgotten in digital marketing and people who work daily with digital marketing are usually very technical and the performance is thought through technology and it is forgotten that technology only enables things and it is of no use, if the content is not relevant for a specific target audience. – DMI*

One clear deficit the case company has faced is associated with competence and marketing profiles. Three distinct types of competence the case company should hire should be explored; communication-, tool and concrete product competence. Communication competence includes the knowhow of marketing and communications and tool competence includes the knowhow of marketing automation, data analysis and expertise of the CRM-system. The concrete product competence helps understanding the products and services being sold more thoroughly and to understand how they add value to the customer while being able to indicate this value quantitatively. Traditionally the case company has focused on hiring people having the communication competence who do not necessarily understand or have the desire to understand how the products work or have insufficient expertise in digital tools. By hiring this same profile persons and not giving support or training for them ends up these people to frustrate and make extra effort to succeed in their everyday duties. The case company should improve the tool competence and hire people, who have the expertise of data analysis, can navigate through

the CRM-system efficiently and who understand marketing automation and the company's products and solutions through a possible technical background. (DM2).

#### 5.2.5 Competitors

Depending on the competitor PM2 feels that the case company is behindhand regarding digital marketing although she says that a lot of the competitors are smaller businesses which in that sense do not have similar opportunities to market products globally and have a similar and strong global presence. AM1 and ST1 say that it is hard to evaluate at what stage the case company is compared to competitors but generally think the digital operations are on a decent level but could be improved a lot. The opinion of DM2 is that the case company is at the forefront in digital marketing and really advanced compared to competitors. According to EC2 the case company is not doing any worse than competitors but could do better. He says that regarding the marketing materials the material is really similar to the ones of major competitors and it is hard to spot any differences. He says that a lot of material is pushed towards him in various channels. EC1 says that competitors are clearly in the forefront with price but in the marketing perspective it is hard to tell in concrete which things the competitors are doing better. EC1 tells that breakthroughs in media have been in some cases better from the competitor's side and the competitor has received better external visibility than the case company when they have released a similar product.

ST1 states that the competition is greatest in areas where cost savings are the main need and in that area the competitors are a bit more flexible regards what products they can offer. ST2 feels that especially on the business B side the case company is far more conservative, and sales people do not want to promise anything they might not keep as if they would be more optimistic and braver, more problems could occur and disappointments for the customer. Thereby the case company has tried to keep the business as honest and careful as possible to keep the business repeat-like making the customer want to buy from the case company again in the future. PM2 thinks that the case

company has been too careful and has not wanted to reveal any numbers or equivalent. She says that the case company should have a better visibility to competitors to see better what they are doing and how.

PM1 states that a large competitor has better understood the significance of visuality and the building of a marketing brief. According to PM1 the same large competitor is doing way better on serving the company needs on a digital level by having a clear digital team who is responsible for sharing reports and following metrics while in the case company the responsibility is on the hands of Product Marketing entirely. She says that resources should be allocated there so that Product Marketing could improve for example Google visibility.

According to AM1 the events and fairs the case company has attended are allowed to have nothing extra than people and i-pads on the stand. He feels this is very strange as customers would enjoy better if they had something concrete to observe at such as a 3D miniature. The events currently do not have anything concrete to rely on but rather giving the customer an i-pad to browse through. DM1 says that events are weakly linked to product campaigns. He says that the case company only promotes that they are present in the events and thereby the events are not integrated, and they do not lead the customer into the digital environment, such as a webinar, according to the content marketing principle in which the customer could be far better convinced.

### 5.3 How to develop the product launches digitally?

A successful launch fulfils targets which have been set in the viewpoint of metrics, the launch has been done on time and the marketing message has worked. A launch can be successful also when Product Marketing has been able to create a new way of operating and it has gained good feedback. (PM1.) A launch is successful when it is sufficiently planned, commercialisation questions are thought deeply, the target audience is

identified, and content targeted by determining the value proposition including what challenges the target customer is facing and how the company can correspond to the challenge with their product.

The marketing situation should be better examined and also to clarify what kind of message operates best for the target audience. The product launch should have a clear key message which is the same throughout the whole launch and campaign and a visual concept which is recognisable and gains attention both internally and externally. All this should occur simultaneously while considering the customers buying process of what marketing activities should be done in which order for the whole process to be cost-effective and feasible as a goal to get the prospective customers attention and aid the person to move in the sales funnel towards the decision phase. (PM2.) Overall, product launches should be made together with all stakeholders involved having a shared big picture of the product itself, its value propositions and to which customer segment the product is most feasible to sell (ST1).

### 5.3.1 The customers buying process

PM1 feels that she is missing the understanding of how the B2B buying process goes in the service business, when products are sold to already existing customers. She does not have an exact understanding on how the customer gets the information of the case company's products and she feels that this is a matter which should be determined together with Sales. She thinks that understanding especially on the awareness stage should be developed to comprehend which marketing activities must be firstly carried out. She thinks that it should be examined what kind of material the customer needs to make a comparison between alternatives and to support their purchase decision.

AM1 finds it easy to recognise at what stage the customer is on the buying process as he has previous personal experience working in the customer end, but he admits that it is now always clear to see in which stage the customer is currently. According to ST1 the

customer is typically in the awareness stage when he contacts and depending on the product the customer either gets along in the buying process or not. ST2 finds the need recognition and solution search phases as the ones which require most work from Sales needing to be reactive rather than promote proactively. AM1 says that it is especially recognisable if the case company is late meaning that the company should be in the correct place contacting the customer sufficiently enough so that the customer will not escape to the competitor. He also finds the awareness stage as the most important one in which it is crucial to listen to the customer and observe and provide a solution for the problem rather than just proactively describe about a specific product. AM1 and DM2 both agree that sometimes the stages in the purchasing process go by the book but sometimes vice versa but through experience it is possible to learn how customers behave and how to response. DM2 notes that the unawareness stage can sometimes be very long in which the case company strives to increase awareness and narrate to the customer why they should invest exactly to the case company's product and what are the risks if they do not. In this phase it is crucial to promote on various levels and navigate in the customers organisation to find the correct persons for who the need is the most genuine.

PM1 feels that Product Marketing could aid Sales already at the awareness stage by doing groundwork and thereby have an impact on the customers decision phase through for example webinars which in the ST2's opinion is a great idea and he says the webinars could be made for certain customer segments owning a similar installation. PM2 agrees and reveals that customer webinars have hardly been made before and it might be a brilliant idea which could aid in getting the customer along in the sales funnel and turned a prospect into a lead. ST1 says that short, customer-specific webinars could be made for major customers in which the case company narrates what they have to offer and what value would it bring to the customer and they could immediately recognise which persons from the customers side are attending and thereby are most likely the decisionmakers. PM2 says that the case company could hold webinars into which the customer would need to register with their contact information and in such manner the activity of the customer

could be measured more precisely, and the case company could send targeted content and nurturing email after.

Customer-specific webinars could be recorded so that the customer could watch it whenever. The title should be clear so that it will raise interest and the content needs to be targeted for a specific customer segment rather than having general product knowledge. ST1 thinks that Sales should be involved when making the decision for which customer to direct the webinar and who to invite from the customer's organisation. EC2 finds customer webinars as a good idea in principle but notes that the moment it is held should fit his schedule. In that regard he thinks a recorded webinar would be an answer yet states that he would unlikely watch it. Thereby the content of the webinar should be interesting enough to raise interest in the customer's end.

### 5.3.2 Marketing materials and channels

There is no official statistics on what basis could be justified which marketing tactics have functioned better over others although various marketing methods and channels cannot be set against each other as they support each other (DM1). DM2 agrees that it is hard to determine which channels have functioned in the best manner as the team has not been careful and capable enough to measure and they have only recently begun measuring. Marketing is a sum of multiple things and it depends entirely of which person is behind the customer to tell which materials and channels are correct or wrong (ST1).

DM2 tells that they usually use two or three channels out of which one is paid social media, a few are organic social media and finally email marketing including gated content from the case company website. He says that opening rates for emails that are triggered because of a prospect action is very high compared to an average benchmark. Outbound campaigns in which the case company has told what products have been launched instead of telling something the specific customer is interested in and outbound campaigns lacking a clear key message having low value for the customer have worked most poorly.

Empirically every marketing activity which has focus on the customer and is produced from the customer's point of view have worked far better compared to just narrating what the case company does and what products and services it has to offer. (DM2.)

The marketing materials should narrate better what is the customers need and value and target this material to the correct customer segment. The case company should strive to pay attention to overall packages of products and product families rather than market only single ones. The case company should market larger entities through which the customer could get the most value for his installation such as reduce emissions or add safety depending on in which environment the customer is operating on. ST1 says that usually there is one product that is being marketed but the case company should link it to all the opportunities it has in a big picture to offer for the customer's installation and combine in this manner various product combinations. According to ST2 the demonstration of the value proposition is weak meaning that the case company's arguments in marketing are missing.

*The key messages and slogans in the marketing materials have been our weak spot as they should hold on to a common thread throughout the campaign or a product launch. – PMI*

*Our products are usually more expensive compared to our rivals and this is the main reason why we should be able to demonstrate why the customer should buy specifically from us. The margins in spare parts are high which is the main reason why we should cherish them and be able to justify the customer why he should make a rational choice and not buy the cheaper equivalent product from our competitor. – ST2*

EC2 experiences the most interesting marketing material being carefully produced which clearly indicates the key message and he says that price is a factor he always wants to know immediately. He says that marketing materials should always include contact

information for who he could contact and ask how this specific product is related to his installation. EC2 feels that too much marketing material is currently being sent and he feels that there is too much information available and thereby finds it hard to find the specific piece of information, which concerns him and is relevant specifically for him. EC2 feels that most of the information currently available is general, nice-to-know facts which is not concrete and interesting in his opinion, but he mentions that it depends who in the customer organisation is reading and what kind of information he finds useful in his needs.

According to EC1 the marketing materials in general have been interesting for that extent for which of the products would fit their installation. He says their company receives information also of new products which do not resonate with their current installation but finds these marketing messages also interesting regarding the future. EC1 wishes for more visuality and pictures for the marketing materials especially in the early stages and not until later when they are interested in the product. EC1 desires more technical details and text and he states that if the content in the marketing materials is interesting it does not matter in which form they are in.

### **Internal activities**

In internal product launches stakeholders have tried to make Sales aware of what product is being launched and how they should sell it and to which customer segment. Regarding this internal product trainings and skype meetings have been held and these have functioned very well. (PM1.) ST1 tells that internally the case company has a catalogue of all products which is globally accessible to everyone internally and it has been a great channel in sharing product information and marketing material. He says that the catalogue gives a good overall picture of the products, but it does not tell whether the specific product is available for a certain installation or whether another sales person has sold it before. He says that there is another system from which Sales can see on a detailed level

whether the product fits a specific installation, but this system does not show the benefits and the value propositions for a product.

### **Face-to-face**

According to ST1 the most viable way to sell is to meet a customer face-to-face and narrate what opportunities the case company has to offer them. EC2 said that he would like to receive information regularly about the case company's products particularly through the Account Manager or corresponding. ST2 states that another thing that has been efficient within the viewpoint of Sales, has been that they have strived to bring customers together. This means that if some customer has the case company's installation running efficiently, the case company should take a customer not yet having this installation to meet this kind of customer and see how they are operating and how the case company's installation runs in practice. ST2 states that the case company has been a bit too conservative regarding this and they should more bravely unite customers and drive them to discuss among themselves. However, it should be carefully chosen which customers are brought together as it is not profitable to bring together customers if the other has going on for example a problem with their operations or on the installation itself. (ST2.)

### **Webpages, reference cases and videos**

The case company's webpages are an important sales channel and especially the reference cases in there, according to ST2. PM1 says that articles are an easy and low-cost means to market products and they can also be exploited in digital channels. PM1 agrees that the reference cases are especially a great sales tool for Sales which they can exploit in personal and direct sales and a lot of positive feedback has been gained out of them. ST2 states that reference cases help smaller organisations understand better how a product being promoted has brought some other larger organisation added value for their

installation. The amount of reference cases should be increased, and it is also on the responsibility of Sales (ST1).

EC1 likes to see reference cases as they are examples of the concrete use of a product in a real-life environment yet EC2 states that reference cases have been too hype. He says that the reference cases are usually quite new and exotic and if their core product is ten years old, the reference is usually out of context and reality.

The marketing videos made have been successful and the case company should focus on producing more video content as they allow larger visibility externally as the case company can exploit video content in their webpages, social media and in email marketing and it is easy to measure the reception and the number of views (PM1). DM1 agrees that the number of video content and webinars should be added, and he tells that Facebook lives and videos in general in social media have functioned well. According to EC1 video content and animations clarify products and they give a better picture of the product itself and thereby this kind of content should be added. However, EC2 states that although a picture tells more than a thousand words, the videos have usually been full of nice-to-know information equipped with the case company logo not giving any relevant information and content.

### **Social media**

The value of social media has been understood in the regard of it being an element strengthening and building the case company brand, but it not necessarily will get directly customers driven to the sales funnel (DM1). PM1 agrees on social media being a brand booster and notes that one of the case company's biggest rivals uses for example Instagram very successfully although the target audience does not necessarily operate there.

LinkedIn is also a great channel but rarely products are marketed on a product level as the case company products on the service level are not bulk products and need to be case by case verified whether it fits the customer's installation (ST2). He also thinks that LinkedIn probably functions better on the business A side as he feels the business B side is a bit more conservative. AM1 agrees that LinkedIn is a channel where customers can see a little this and that but not necessarily anything on the product level.

EC2 notes that he definitely does not use social media to follow the case company and states that maybe social media channels fit some other people, but he does not have time to browse through them. He says that his job is mainly practicality, ensuring their core product operates and money is made and thereby he has no time to be needlessly on the computer. EC2 states that the case company should have a stable product, the product history and support network should be stable, the installation needs to run flawlessly, and spare parts should always be available and everything happening in the digital channels such as social media is extra and secondary. EC1 says he have used all other digital marketing channels of the case company except Twitter or Youtube.

### **Email campaigns**

Email campaigning is an important marketing channel as it raises interest and makes customers take contact and ask for offers (ST1) and the amount of them should be added (ST2). Compared to every other marketing channel, email marketing brings eventually the best conversions as through email it is possible to create long-term customer lists which have been brought from the case company's CRM-system and thereby it is possible to target the messages to correct audiences. Multi-channel marketing is the most efficient means of marketing as when a customer first receives and email, he might consider what the message means and then when the customer goes around social media the same messaging is repeated either by payed or organic messaging or if making a google search the display advertising repeats the message and through this kind of marketing operation the customer is more easily brought to the sales funnel. (DM1.) Triggered email has

worked best of all marketing options as it is an outbound tactic but triggered with inbound (DM2).

EC2 states that in principle he gets wrong information through email marketing meaning advertisements of products which do not even fit his installation and sometimes he does not receive any information of new upgrade products. He thinks that email marketing should be used if it is done less but with far more relevant content. He does not feel that he receives too much marketing from the case company but thinks that it should be highlighted far more that which part of this newly received information is differs compared to the old. He says there is no point that he needs to lop off himself 99 percent of the old information just to be able to find one new thing from the marketing material. EC2 says he receives hundreds of emails daily and if he sees a mail is secondary he will delete it. Thereby email marketing that he receives should be valuable enough that he will use his time to open it and read it in the first place.

EC1 does not feel he receives too much marketing from the case company and he would like to receive information regularly of new products being launched through for example a weekly mail or corresponding. He says the information of new products would be nice to receive through email, but the headline should be short and clear so that he will immediately know whether the email is about and if it fits his installation or not. Although new product launches might not fit EC1's installation he says it is nice to receive marketing from them regarding the future and states that if he is not interested he can always simply delete the email. EC2 states that email marketing should be far more targeted because he is not interested in nice-to-know information which is not relevant for him and which does not improve the operation of his installation.

### **Sales leaflets**

Sales leaflets are usually shared to customers when Sales has a face-to-face meeting in which they have discussed about the product in question and the leaflet summarises the

discussion (ST1, AM1). Leaflets are also shared in seminars and sent through emails after a face-to-face meeting with the customer as the leaflet is a short brief of the discussion held (AM1). ST1 states that the sales leaflet raises interest but does not alone sell the product. AM1 tells that he rarely gives a leaflet to a customer unless the customer has asked something about a specific product and he strongly thinks that the case company should not share sales leaflets just for the sake of giving something for the customer without giving previous introduction of general information of the product. PM1 thinks the sales leaflets are old fashioned and do not give a wow-effect for anyone and thereby it does not motivate producing them and she even feels it is not necessary to create them for every launch. The sales leaflets should include less text and more pictures, tests and results which the case company has yielded from testing the product. Target customers are usually quite technical and practical and do not usually read if too much text is included and in that case an infographic could be a great idea for replacing or taken beside the sales leaflet. (AM1.) PM1 agrees that an infographic could be a better option and it gives more creative freedom for Product Marketing. She also says that Product Marketing has done whitepapers to some extent and that kind of material is also valuable for the customer and should be added. EC2 says he does not remember what kind of sales leaflets or presentations the case company has which means in his opinion that they have not been interesting enough.

### **Sales presentations**

ST1 tells that sales presentations are used daily and are a great sales tool and AM2 continues by telling that presentations are used more than sales leaflets. PM1 feels that a good salesman only needs a sales presentation to sell successfully. According to ST2 the customisation of the presentations is left for Sales to tailor them according to the customer and Sales needs to look at the presentation critically within the viewpoint of the customer. This matter raises the question of whether Sales is able to customise the presentations according to the brand guidelines. ST1 continues by telling that the presentations are customised per customer by eliminating all irrelevant details and adding for example the

customer's core product as a picture on the title page. He says that sales presentations are an important tool for adding basic product knowledge, but it is a bit unclear how much information customers can fully absorb and what is their opinion about them.

### **Online portal**

Online portal is a cloud platform utilized by the case company making the customer experience more digital and smarter. The online portal gives customers for example access to the technical information, they can view prices, place orders and get support through the platform. According to ST2, online portal does not draw much customers and ST1 feels that online portal requires a lot of development to get the information shared concretely to the customer of what the case company can offer as now it is quite unclear where the information is being dismantled in the customers organisation. ST2 says also that it is difficult to tell what customers really see out of the case company's products and if they go to the online portal, do they get straight away an answer to their problem. ST1 does not believe that the customer can see clearly even on the title level all the things that the case company could offer for their installation and this matter should be developed so that the message and awareness of products, solutions and opportunities would increase. Advertising in the online portal could and should also be increased (ST2).

EC1 describes that he uses online portal every now and then and especially if they have a larger project going on. He says that online portal functions well currently for his needs as he can find drawings and spare part lists quite easily, but he feels the system should yet be developed further but cannot narrate how. EC2 relates to EC1 by telling that online portal functions in that regard well that he can read his own core products crosswise and integrate sister core products based on the historical data and he can see what has been previously ordered and maintenance manuals and -reports are also available there. EC2 states that although reports are almost always available in the online portal he would wish to receive the reports directly as he feels the portal will turn against its primary purpose if the customer is forced to go there and see a report and thus this action does not occur

through his own will. He says that sometimes it is hard to find reports from the portal and it is frustrating to search for it.

*Online portal should be seen as a backup function for the primary operation of the case company and not as an ultimate answer for everything. – EC2*

EC1 thinks that online portal should not be used as a marketing tool because the primary operation of the portal will in his opinion suffer. EC2 states that marketing could be included in the portal by having separate pages for upgrade products and he could directly see from there all the products the case company could offer his installation. He continues by revealing that they have access to online portal on their operating location for everyone so in that regard if all the opportunities would be listed there, it would gain a lot more eyes to see them and the Chiefs would better know what is going on in the installation currently and what are the opportunities. EC2 tells that marketing of trainings has been low and he suggests incorporating trainings into online portal as a separate section in which the case company could tell what kind of trainings are available and how many places are available. EC2 tells they currently customise trainings themselves and their availability is poor at times and he would thereby wish to have trainings easily available as a service.

### 5.3.3 Proportioning the activities into the customers buying process

EC1 tells that usually the message of the case company's products has reached him but usually it is a coincidence if they receive marketing of a product at that very moment they would need it. He says that the case company should invest in the knowledge of relevant people such as the Account Managers to have the knowledge of what is the customer's need currently and when a suitable product for the customer emerges, they would immediately arrange a face-to-face meeting or give the customer a call. The case company should determine the top, middle and bottom funnels and marketing activities and content can be a bit different in each but should maintain a common thread. It is pointless to focus

entirely on the awareness stage and tell the customer what the case company is going to do and launch but not thereafter continue that message by any means the customer will not move forward in the buying process towards the purchasing decision phase for which all background work and awareness of the values has been already been presented on the awareness stage. Thereby the customer will start to compare alternatives from competitors. (DM2.)

*It is pointless to just make noise on the awareness level, never intending to follow up on that and provide the customer value. – DM2*

The case company should exploit similar channels but with different content for each stage. The idea is that the case company should be able to create long enough journeys that move a customer from unawareness to a purchase decision all the way instead of firefighting with problems. Longer, more orchestrated and less time sensitive campaigns should be created in which at any point a prospect can join automatically and be grabbed by the hand from unawareness to a purchase decision. It is not that strict which marketing tactics should be used but SEO pays very nicely of on comparing alternatives, but it also brings a lot of awareness to the case company's website which allows to use cookies and track the customers. (DM2.) Webinars should be held sooner than in the purchase decision phase as in that phase almost everything has been done and only the customer's purchase decision is left. Email campaigning should occur in the early stages also. (AM1.) ST2 agrees that webinars, podcasts and email campaigns should be organised in the early phases. Reference cases should be brought out more in the solutions search- and comparison of alternatives phase but they should also be repeated in the purchase decision phase (AM1).

DM1 and DM2 both tell that they have scored every interaction a customer has with their measurable marketing. Every time a customer enters the case company's website, opens an email or clicks a link the customer is assigned a certain score assigned to a specific scoring category based on which product family products the customer is viewing. This

occurs by a customer having a consented cookie session open and the case company can thereby follow what the person is doing in various digital channels. The digital team is thereby able to see every page where the customer has visited, what kind of content the customer has watched, which files they have downloaded and when have they entered and exited a webpage. The person is scored based on these matters with different amount of points and the case company strives to drive this person through a lead generation process to Sales.

The increasing score should correlate to the customer's progress on the buying process journey. Normally, the first scores occur when a customer is on the solution search stage and they tend to go over the predefined score threshold when a customer is comparing alternatives or looking for a supplier. At that point the case company knows based on the customer behaviour that the customer is looking at the case company's products and that they are showing interest in one product family. At this point the customer is passed over and marketed as an MQL, they are synced to the CRM system and passed over to Sales who will call or get in touch with the customer and verify whether they have a budget, authority, a need and a timeline for the product interested in. (DM2.) This process is extremely important through which leads are not pushed to Sales on a low threshold for evaluation and thereby disturb their core job functions. The most essential insertion in this process has been that certain people internally are inserted to qualify these formed leads and filter them and drop only the strongest and potential leads to Sales. (DM1.)

#### 5.3.4 Concrete actions

Digitality to processes should be added and the case company should start to think how to exploit cookies to get more capacity out of customers internet behaviour and thereby get customer search inquiries better in control. Cookies are an inexpensive means through which it is easy to clarify what things the customer has clicked on, on which pages they have spent time on and what keywords have they used when searching for solutions in search engines. (ST2.) PM2 states that before they used to think that the use of cookies

would be useless and annoying, but she sees that there is clear potential taking them into better use. AM1 indicates that SEO should be optimised better as customers usually begin their solutions search online and thereby it is important that the case company's websites are easily found. The PM1 reveals that Product Marketing has hardly done SEM and she feels that the next step is to optimise the search engine visibility and pay for it. She says that so far payed advertising has been done only in the social media channels, but this should be added to the search engines also.

ST2 expresses that it is important to get the customers into the digital environment. The case company's website should be clarified, optimised and the visibility enhanced as customers have often said that it has been hard to find an exact thing from the website they have originally tried to look for (PM2, DM1). Thereby the content should better be linked to keywords (DM1) and SEO and SEM should be developed further quickly (PM1). Firstly, it needs to be evaluated what kind of content the customer wants to read, the content is optimised to search engines and a keywords analysis is made so that the case company knows what words to use on the headline level. The headline and intro text shown on search engines should narrate to the customer immediately that the case company understands the problem they are having, and the case company needs to convince the customers simultaneously that they have a solution. The case company needs to create strong digital presence and optimise their website visibility and when the customer finds the website, the case company needs to be prominent and create content exactly for the people who are viewing the website. (DM1.)

With little effort the case company could move more towards inbound tactics by increasing the amount of SEM and SEO which are simple things to implement rather than starting by creating massive guides or e-books (PM1). PM2 agrees and states that the case company should better be able to link the customers into the sales funnel. PM1 reveals that no gated content has been made which would be a substantive matter to get customers themselves to the content and give their contact information in return for quality content and thereby the case company should produce content for which the customers are willing

to pay for with their contact information. Currently all material is freely available but in the future the case company could require the customer's contact information under certain material and in that manner these customers could be taken along to marketing campaigns as marketing qualified leads. (PM2).

Marketing campaigns should have one clear guiding principle which is transferred through the whole campaign in a way that makes the marketing material coherent in every touchpoint (PM1). According to PM2 the concept and key message behind the marketing material should be clearly thought before utilising the material in the digital channels, which should especially be exploited as they are really cost-effect compared on producing multiple various sales leaflets or other heavy marketing materials. PM1 states that it is important to build a marketing brief for larger launches. This means that the case company should build a guideline for each larger launch and for the marketing materials related. This brief should be built together with the Product Manager and Sales and together with Product Marketing they should build cases in which all aspects of the product launch are taken into consideration such as the target customers, market situation and trends and customer value propositions and a concrete launch plan are created. (PM1.)

The case company should be bolder with their marketing communications and take better advantage of the various digital channels that are possible to use as up to this point the case company has been too cautious. The goal is to create iterative campaigning which would not be designed too far beforehand but rather the case company should follow and conform campaigns done before, see how they have realised and make the required changes for the new campaign. When a campaign has a clear key message, it can be easily exploited in other publications also by chopping up the story into multiple publications and thereby do marketing in a more planned and cost-effective way. Videos and infographics are materials which could in this manner be chopped up into sets and marketed in separately created social media posts. (PM2.) PM1 agrees that with less effort the case company could do more impressive campaigns. Videos and animations are being watched more and more today as it is an easy and quick way to obtain information.

Product Marketing has hardly done any product demos but there is great potential also for them. (PM2.)

*The concept and the story behind the product should be thought through and thereafter start to produce material which is same kind with a similar message under the same product family. – PM1*

The case company should create higher profile material and especially add visuality through great pictures. Product Marketing should sharpen up what is their visual language under the case company's brand, but they cannot do anything that does not fit the brand. (PM1.) PM1 continues by stating that the case company should think campaign-specifically how each campaigns material should display and what kind of visual expressions are wanted to use. She says that the case company should create powerful stories and interesting content which matches the customers underlying need. PM2 indicates that marketing agencies should be exploited especially in larger product launches to get a professional touch in the visuality and key messages rather than produce them independently. PM1 agrees that marketing agencies should be taken along more strongly as they have the expertise in creating interesting content which is appealing in the eyes of the customer. DM1 reveals that in the Digital Marketing team they have hired their own copywriter who produces content for their needs.

The case company should create more targeted campaigning which speaks to the customer and is directed to that person's problems instead of only narrating what kind of products the case company has to offer (PM1). ST1 indicates that customer awareness should be raised by customising the material towards the correct target audience and make customer specific material from which the customer gets the feeling that this product is made exactly for him and his needs. ST2 states that everything should be monetarised meaning that products making cost savings should be demonstrated by calculating the actual savings and show this to the customer. If the customer is now willing to share private information, Sales can give the calculation formula to the customer and they can

count themselves how much savings the product could generate in concrete. ST1 agrees that depending on the product, benefit calculators should exist so that the case company can prove how the product in question will benefit the customer.

DM1 points out that the case company should strive in accordance to the case company's strategy to create common and shared content streams in which all teams and units internally could create content and campaigns which digitality supports and when enough content and consistent messaging is generated, it can be used for digital marketing purposes. This requires that the whole organisation is behind this kind of nurturing channel rather than having own separate channels for their own purposes. He says it is useless if no content and campaigns are produced for a common process build by the digital team and it is too scattered. This kind of fragmentation causes that the marketing message does not meet the customer and it decreases the marketing hit rate. (DM1.)

### **Buyer personas and account-based marketing**

ST1 tells that Sales has thought a lot about buyer personas and creating them depends a who is the decision makes in the customer's organisation and depending on the customer, every person making the purchasing decision has their own limits in which they need to operate in. ST2 says that with buyer personas Sales can figure on which level they should go towards the customer meaning that they need to evaluate which person in the case company is suitable for each person making the purchasing decisions in the customer's organisation. Regarding this, Sales exploits a plan which they have created in which they can directly see the correct person from their organisation corresponding to the one in the customers level. AM1 states that usually every sales person knows who to approach in the customer's organisation through experience and he thinks it is important to understand how the person being approached behaves and which elements are important for him. He says it is useless to go and promote a product for a person who has no authority to make purchasing related decisions.

DM2 tells that the Digital Marketing team has created buyer personas based on how they assume that various personas operate and behave, and it has functioned well so far. These personas are typically divided based on demographic factors or based on the level of the person in the customer's organisation. As an example, they might have one person from the top level such as a financial person or a person from the bottom level operating as a maintenance person or an operation manager and they have pushed diverse content for each of these personas and it has worked decently and pursued them to produce even more material from different perspectives. AM1 states that usually the top management wants to see the big picture and thereby it is useless to market them in a technical manner. Thereby the case company should figure out what kind of company is targeted and who are the people operating there that should be contacted (AM1).

DM1 indicates that personalisation is very important and that the case company can identify what kind of content each buyer persona wants to read. He says that as an example, they made three different personas for a campaign and built three distinct messages for the case company's webpage personalised for these buyer personas and based on the IP-address of the person, the system was able to recognise which persona is at issue and the person was displayed the specific content he was supposed to see.

PM1 and PM2 both agree that Product Marketing should create buyer personas so that they could more easily reach out to the correct customers. PM1 states that Product Marketing should understand the target audience's challenges better and if webinars are held and content created, Product Marketing should better be aware that for who these are made for. PM1 feels that it is not possible to find generic buyer personas but rather personas which vary depending on the product line meaning that the buyer persona mapping needs to be done each time again when a new product line is established. The personas vary depending on the product and whether the customer is operating on the A or B business side. Product Marketing should discover a clear way to create the personas in a way that eases the creation of them in the future and eliminates the need of having to create them from the beginning each time. (PM1.)

Marketing messages should be personified, as the better the message is customised to a certain customer segment the easier it is to sell the product (ST1). Product Marketing cannot create the personas themselves and Sales should be involved having for example a workshop held together (PM1). ST2 agrees that a workshop would be a good way to start building these personas and together both teams could later contemplate the sales offerings for each persona in a way that they are not too technical but rather greatly illustrated for the specific persona's needs. He says the goal is to get the customer's attention with the first pages and later move on to more technical and detailed information.

PM2 thinks that buyer personas should be created in cooperation with Sales and the people controlling the shared marketing channels and when digital campaigns are made these personas should be exploited and the message should be customised to fit each wanted persona. Sales should be included when doing the persona mapping as they have a deeper knowledge of the customers as they work closed to them compared to Product Marketing (PM2). ST1 agrees as he feels that especially Account Managers have the best knowledge of who to approach and in which manner from the customer's organisation.

Product Marketing should start by looking at data and sort out what kind of customer groupings can be distinguished and how these groups appear similar rather than assuming that all maintenance people want to hear this kind of messaging. Product Marketing should watch how specific groups of customers determined behave and approach them in a corresponding manner. (DM2.)

*When creating buyer personas, you should assume less and analyse more. Product Marketing should not start by taking the Sales opinions and views into consideration but rather go firstly data-driven. – DM2*

DM2 states that Product Marketing should start by exploring data and determine what are the aspects which are already known of the customers and which of these dimensions

explain most of the data and thereafter group the customers into diverse categories based on which elements cause variation in the data. DM1 continues that defining buyer personas is the same kind of targeting which can be perfectly incorporated into account-based marketing (ABM). DM1 states that he would start implementing inbound marketing in the Product Marketing team in accordance with ABM in which personification can be determined through segments. This means that buyer personas can be created according to segments and the case company could include for example four to five personas per segment. Too many personas should not be created as content needs to be customised for every segment needs and Product Marketing should identify in which channels these specific segments operate usually and the content should be inserted into this environment.

When it is recognised in which channels each customer segment usually operates it is easy and effective to allocate display marketing in them. AMB strives to allocate the limited resources which Product Marketing has and target the marketing by producing content for specific and pre-defined account segments through which the hit-rate could increase significantly when the target customers receive content made exactly for their needs. ABM works most efficiently when people from product development, sales, marketing and other support functions are brought together to assess what is the need and strategy of a specific customer account and customise the message carefully based on that information. It is not possible to do this for all products as the case company has a lot of customers and thereby ABM is worthwhile only for the most potential products. (DM1.)

### 5.3.5 Future of B2B and the potential for the case company

B2B sales will go more and more towards consumerisation as customers already search actively product related information digitally and earlier people thought that Sales will take care of the selling, but this mind-set does not apply today anymore (PM2). Through the organisational change in the case company Product Marketing has been better recognised better and has now great potential to do something meaningful which will

affect the whole organisations profitability (PM2) as Product Marketing is open-minded to try new and different marketing tactics (PM1).

The largest potential is unused data which is generated continually in the case company and they should better be able to exploit it in marketing. The ultimate goal would be to have a 360-degree profile of the customer all the way from which products they own, how their installation runs, when is their installation on, what is slowing their installation down from there to what activities the customer is showing interest in digitally and how the customer is reacting with the marketing. Based on this the case company could build better owner experiences by triggering marketing or content based on signals from their equipment.

For example, when the case company notices that the customer's installation is approaching a scheduled maintenance, Product Marketing could send a message to the customer telling that their maintenance is approaching and could simultaneously market components and products which could be replaced or added to the customers installation during the maintenance and if the customer agrees to make a purchase, they could receive for example an x percent discount. (DM2.)

AM1 believes that sales in the B2B sector will transform more project-natured meaning that the customers are sold bigger entities of products. He believes that projects cannot be sold in the internet but purchasing of spare parts might be going toward online selling in which the customer can click and buy parts independently while technical support will help virtually. AM1 yet believes that the case company's customers are quite conservative still today and they favour personal selling which means that it is not possible to move everything to the internet except for example support functions.

ST1 believes that purchase orders will be more automatized, and the customer needs should be fulfilled in the future without having a physical contact. ST2 states that in the future due to climate change and safety travelling will be reduced and more meetings will

be held virtually and in the future the case company needs to exploit more 3D-printing, modelling, miniatures and simulations. ST2 says that miniatures and 3D-models are something that should be developed especially for events and fairs as they are interesting within the viewpoint of customers and they show the product in concrete. AM1 states that the case company does a lot of testing on their products and he feels that the customer should be taken physically incorporated as customer like it and through this the case company can get an indirectly better contact with the customer.

PM1 believes that for too long in B2B sales people have avoided risks, been too careful and not taken a stance on anything and due to these matters, only dull material has been created. Today companies have better understood that B2B buyers are also people and thereby material should be produced above all to people, not for companies and she does not see a reason why the case company could not start to build more emotive campaigns. The case company should keep in mind that B2B customers do not act and behave in the same manner as B2C customers. (PM1.) PM2 feels that marketing is going towards automatization and the sales cycles will become faster which means that Product Marketing needs to produce materials and campaigns in a quicker pace. She believes that the customers trust of having Sales as the only trustworthy information channel will decrease and Product Marketing will produce more messaging directly for the customer.

DM1 tells that the case company's customers are quite traditional and prefer to read concrete brochures and leaflets rather than browse in a digital environment product catalogues of webpages. DM1 yet states that this kind of traditional customer base offers the case company a great opportunity as the competitors do not necessarily in a similar way offer digital opportunities as they assume that the customers will behave in a similar approach also in the future. He yet thinks that the customer purchasing behaviour will digitalise constantly and in that sense the case company has a great opportunity to go past competitors by being aware of this already today.

As an example, he tells that Digital Marketing has started to implement QR-codes (abbreviated from Quick Response Code) which are machine readable optical labels and when reading the code through a mobile device it will point the user to a website or an application containing data. Through the QR-codes Digital Marketing has strived to decrease the amount of printable materials although the QR-code can be attached to print material and by scanning the code the customer can download the same document as a PDF-file or alternatively the code will take the customer to some competition. Although the case company's customers might not be that interested in the QR-codes yet, the industry is in a constant change and new generations are entering companies which is why the case company should show an example of how they strive to serve their customers in many distinct ways. (DM1.)

After traditional marketing emerged inbound marketing and thereafter people started to talk more about native marketing. In native marketing companies strive to bring display advertisements into environments in which the customer is already reading about the similar subject and thereby the advertisement will not disturb but rather will serve the customer by offering a solution. Native marketing is clearly targeted and customised by customer segments and even if a company would reach a customer, but it occurs in a wrong environment it is of no use and will not serve the current need of the customer. Today especially in the B2B sector growth hacking has gained a lot of interest. In growth hacking companies try in accordance with the start-up world to build with a small budget extremely targeted and catchy marketing by inventing a very effective and clever way to get to the customer in a quick cycle and fasten the customers buying process. In growth hacking split-models are created meaning that by breaking the organisational borders people from Product Development, Sales and Product Marketing are brought together into one team to assess the customer's needs and based on that create a new, very effective means to market to that specific customer. This kind of mindset and way of thinking should be brought into the case company. He tells that the case company has a lot of expertise internally, but teams work towards their own targets and the case company

should operate more together and get rid of the stiff organisation towards a more agile way of working. (DM1.)

The case company's website has a huge number of visits and thereby the data should be better put to account by assessing how the content there is used and how specific segments operate there. By doing so, the case company can take content producing to this same process when people producing content have the knowledge up to date on what kind of content and campaigns should be built for each content stream. This is fully data-driven and is based entirely on what kind of content customers in reality consume and thereby the case company can target these customer segments in a correct way to the content. This is an ideal set-up to which the case company should strive towards. (DM1.)

Product launches should reproduce the digital marketing team's way of working by bringing sales data from the CRM system to the case company's websites so that it is easy to evaluate what kind of content the customers, who are currently being sold to and who are in the CRM system, are consuming in the website. According to this data heat-maps can be built on how the people behave in the website and for example which articles and diagrams they read. According to this data Product Marketing can build stubble diagrams of how these segments travel between materials in the website. With the help of these it is better recognisable what kind of content should be produced for each segment based on what kind of content they mostly read, and in which matters they show most interest in. In addition, CRM allows to trigger display advertisements for distinct segments according to their IP-addresses. Through this tracking Digital Marketing has been able to see what kind of content the person in question has read and based on that a corresponding product can be advertised or taken along into a campaign in which email marketing is sent based on the similar product. (DM1.) Account-based display advertising has operated very well, and the digital marketing team has inserted specific display advertisements for the range of IP-addresses coming from certain areas into for example their local newspapers or similar in the internet. The case company's advertisement will appear on the page and narrate the exact message of the value case for that one specific company

meaning that the message is customised for the exact customer segment based on their IP-address (DM2).

DM1 tells that potential customers can be taken into the digital environment through an app to which Sales can insert pictures of their business trips, from different situations in events or fairs or pictures of customers business cards and thereby take the person as a sales lead into the CRM-system and continue to promote in that environment. When the customer has been driven to this environment successfully he can be offered for example webinars or the person can be taken along into an email campaign. When the customer has then for example read every email sent and asks for an offer, the case company can assess that the event or fair investment was worthwhile as the customer begun his buying journey there and finally ended up buying a product.

Thereby it is important to create webinars and face-to-face contacts from which Sales can lead the customers forward towards the digital path. These people are usually valid leads as they have moved onward the digital path towards the purchasing decision. It is important to get customers into this environment so that they can be better evaluated, and their operations observed. Another way would be to create a content masterpiece such as a significant and large whitepaper towards which customers are being driven to and when the person downloads the content, the case company can identify the person either by the IP-address or their contact information and the person can be taken along on the nurturing path. (DM1.)

*We don't use apps or push notifications, we don't have SMS and let's say an established programmatic display that runs on a continuous basis. – DM2*

ST2 feels that field- and technical services should be developed as the reports coming from them should be more selling and should include recommendations for them to generate more leads. He states that as they visit actively sites and make observations, the case company should better be able to pick up leads for sales opportunities.

The main issue is that the person has made an observation and taken it forward to Sales, he does not get the information backwards whether a deal was later made with this specific customer. This does not motivate the people working at sites to observe and thereby a feedback loop and this kind of a culture should definitely be created. The major challenge in this is to figure out the incentives which are motivating enough. (ST2.)

According to ST2, the case company should strive towards when customer meetings are held, and opportunities gone through face-to-face, a specified person should be taken along to listen to the conversation and simultaneously code and simulate the customer's wishes and at the end of the meeting that person could demonstrate a clear vision of the potential product for the customer. If the case company has a large and complex product which can be customised, the finest thing to do is to show the customer at the end of the meeting how the product being sold will appear in the customer's installation in reality. If the products being promoted in the meeting could be simulated to the customers installation and finally demonstrated and the result visualised including related parameters which have improved thanks to the product added which has been promoted this would be an engrossing means to give the customer a wow-feeling of the product being promoted. (ST2.)

#### 5.4 Key findings and results

In the product launches so far, a draft of a process has been exploited through which Product Marketing has been able to see which marketing activities and which channels should be used in different launches, but the process requires a lot of development. Currently the draft includes only a list of all possible activities and the listing is not guiding and does not aid Product Marketing sufficiently enough in launching products. The launches have concentrated more on internal launches and not enough on the external ones. Product Marketing has not been able to get enough visibility externally from the

product launches and the marketing channels have not been utilised well enough. Product Marketing has also wasted resources by focusing too much on smaller launches.

Product launches have been performed by creating one material at a time in proportion of how much time Product Marketing has had and it has not been systematic. A lot of opportunities in digital marketing have now been taken advantage of and campaign-depth has been low meaning that a creative plan has been missing entirely. The lack of efficient planning is especially visible in the fact that there has been no systematic thought in the marketing campaigns of what marketing activities should be executed first, by which message and through which channels. The control of campaigns has been inadequate, and the campaigns are carried out one single activity at a time without even thinking of the customers buying process. The know-how of digital campaigns and the opportunities which digitalisation might bring has been weak but due to the increase in the resources the starting point is now better, and Product Marketing has better acknowledged what activities are required to improve the whole process.

The goal of the renewed framework is to list the basic marketing materials drained down towards materials which are used more rarely and present the marketing channels in an order that they should be utilised according to the customer's buying process. PM2 agrees that a directive listing should be created of what activities needs to be done for a product launch and in which order. According to PM1 the marketing materials and channels should be divided with for example distinct colours and webinars, SEO and SEM should definitely be added. She also thinks that the launch sizes should be better thought through and set under different headers, internal and external material should be introduced separately, and more digital packages should be created, and the framework should be more structured containing more opportunities. Product Marketing should determine which marketing activities are most efficient if wanting to create firstly awareness and what are the activities which aid Sales to close a deal. The correct timing of publishing marketing material and overall launching a product cannot be determined by assuming but rather needs to be tested first. (DM2.)

The goal is to improve the current product launch plan to a modern level and to create a framework to correspond to the digitalised marketing environment of today. The goal is to aid the case company to market products more efficiently while at the same time creating value and supporting Sales instead of just producing and releasing marketing materials without any reasonable planning. The aim is to be able to plan, lead and execute product launches more efficiently while corresponding to the desires of the changing marketing environment of today.

According to the results, the launch sizes were standardised into four sizes, which are Bulletin launch, Catalogue launch, Campaign launch and Mega launch. The Bulletin launch is suitable for small scale component developments and small releases and does not include any marketing activities other than the announcement to the customer and thereby framework for this launch was not created. The Catalogue launch is considered as a minor launch including some marketing actions which are not separately promoted and is suitable for medium sized projects. The Campaign launch is almost the same as the latter launch, but it includes more marketing activities such as e-mail marketing- and social media campaigns. This launch is also considered suitable for medium sized projects and it has a longer release cycle. The last launch size is the Mega launch which is considered as a large-scale launch which will span for one or more years. The Mega launch includes extensive internal and external marketing actions and the resources of the company are expected to be capable to produce up to maximum of two Mega launches per year. This launch size standardisation will aid in scheduling and communicating product launches between people involved and to plan the amount of launches able to be executed per quarter.

The product launch frameworks created for the three launch sizes are presented in the Appendixes. The product launch framework for the Mega launch is presented in appendix 2, framework for Campaign launch in appendix 3 and finally the framework for Catalogue launch in appendix 4.

## 5.5 Recommendations

Recommendations for the case company are presented in Appendix 5. The list includes the definition of the problem area, description of the problem occurring in that specific area and finally a suggestion of how the case company should tackle the problem including a concrete “how” section. Appendix 6 presents a table of potential ideas which the case company could exploit in the future, but which are not indispensable to be considered immediately as the most basic and fundamental matters presented in Appendix 5 need to be considered and handled first.

## 5.6 Limitations and implications for future research

As all empirical studies, this study includes several limitations which reduce the generalisability of the results. The research was conducted explicitly in a single case company having their own processes and ways of working meaning that the results cannot be generalised directly to other even similarly operating companies. Due to time resources and the timing of the study which occurred during the summer holidays, the number of participants was likely less than what it could have been at a different time point.

The insights and viewpoints in this study are mainly from a managerial point of view as all the internal interviewees were in a managerial position. More interviews could be conducted in the future to obtain an even more saturated data collection as many of the potential interviewees were reluctant to participate especially from the external interviewee side who did not either have time or will to participate and share their insights. Thereby, a larger amount of interviewee data could have given a wider result and possibly even more divergent insights.

The results obtained from the internal interviews concerning matters such as the cooperation, information sharing, and performance might have been influenced by factors

such internal conditions meaning some interviewees having fewer personal connections internally with other departments in the company but also factors such as the ongoing organisational changes which might have had a negative impact on the responses.

Even though the two customers interviewed both operated in business A area and were of similar size and from the same geographical area, there yet exists differences which need to be taken into consideration when drawing conclusions from this study. The customers interviewed in this study form only a fraction of the whole customer base of the case company and thereby the responses cannot be generalised to represent the opinion of the whole customer base as customers have differently formed organisations and different ownership bases which have a direct effect on how the customer operates and is in contact with the case company. Due to the vast product portfolio of the case company, customers rarely have similar products and thereby this might also influence customers' perceptions.

Based the areas covered in this research, future research could be set to examine even more profoundly single areas such as growth hacking as a means to break the organisational borders to make marketing more efficient. Inbound tactics such as SEO, SEM, display marketing and content marketing could also be examined more profoundly to get a deeper insight on how to exactly apply them in a successful manner precisely in a specific company. Future research in the case company should be applied on the product launch framework created in this thesis to measure its success and to examine whether the marketing activities and channels are fully in accordance with the customer acquisition journey as the framework was created based on theory, interviews and assumptions and it was not possible to measure the outcome without having a long enough time horizon of the framework in concrete operation. Thereby, future research should focus on data measuring and final adjustments should be carried out based on actual data.

Digital inbound marketing has faced a lot of research in the academic literature especially in the B2C side in recent years but there is yet a gap in literature regarding B2B products

and solutions with longer lifecycles in the technology industry in which the success cannot be measured instantly. Thereby further longitudinal research should be conducted to better examine and gather data to fully understand the needs and requirements of marketing today.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

This study was conducted to determine a combined understanding of the needs, possibilities and potential for successful product launches including the possible exploitation of inbound marketing tactics and alignment of the product marketing tactics and channels accordingly to the customer acquisition journey. Customer and Sales insights were examined while also the possible internal benchmarking opportunities were explored. The goal was to also determine and examine the internal and external problems, development areas and develop suggestions for future improvement.

Paving the way for these research areas were examined in the theoretical part of the thesis by providing theory for the most crucial elements in product marketing and -launches, giving insights on how marketing has changed and how will it possible continue to change in the future and presenting inbound marketing tactics as a means to answer to the marketing requirements of today. The research questions are presented below with a brief answer.

### 1. How to launch products effectively in B2B aftersales market of today?

Marketing channels have faced a drastic change but the content itself not, although product messaging has transitioned more from outbound to inbound and content has gone more into a graphical direction. When product marketing is not interactive and digital enough, proactive selling is required meaning a personal contact from sales. Even if the customer reaches information through a digital channel, it usually ends up with a personal contact with sales. Although customers today have strong in-house expertise and they know what they want and can ask the case company directly whether they have a specific solution to offer, it cannot be relied on and a strong focus needs to be set on the digital environment as marketing is changing constantly.

Effective product launching requires the creation of a clear product launch process accordingly so that each stakeholder involved are aligned for each release and a launch date needs to be set. The marketing materials, sales collateral and messaging need to be made in accordance with the buyer persona mapping and available on the given launch date. The customer acquisition journey needs to be taken into consideration when launching a product to produce marketing materials in correct channels at the correct stage of the customers buying process to produce a higher amount of leads and profit.

## 2. What are the key problems having a negative effect on product launches currently?

Major concerns regarding the problem areas in the execution of product launches were determined through the interviews. Internal interviews disclosed similar problems that were also introduced as major problems in the theoretical part of the thesis. The cooperation between Sales and Product Marketing was found insufficient including deficient information sharing between both parties and unclearly determined roles in planning and executing product launches. The content of current marketing materials was found inadequate in terms of not having gated content, not enough customer-based customisation, content has been roughly created based on assumptions and not reality and the lack of visuality and a story behind a marketing campaign. The visibility of data has been limited causing it hard to process leads and follow and measure them. Also, a clear visibility towards competitors has not been clear enough.

Marketing channels and materials also had various deficiencies such as the webpages being too confusing, amount of materials produced not sufficient or having enough quality, content sent to wrong customers and content not targeted. The creation of marketing materials was time consuming, the materials itself were found old fashioned and not visual enough compared to rivals. The usage of marketing channels was not supportive to each other and content has not chopped into pieces forming a consistent story behind a product campaign.

### 3. How to get the B2B customers attention? What new tools can we apply and how?

Obtaining the B2B customers attention today requires the utilisation of inbound marketing tactics above existing traditional outbound marketing tactics. The goal is to get the customer interested about the product himself without forcibly marketing a certain product towards them. Customisation of marketing materials and targeted marketing is the key and companies should narrate in the customer point of view what can the product in question do for the customer and what problems can it solve and how in specifically their installation. It is not beneficial anymore to just narrate about the technical features of a product but rather take a customer focused approach in marketing.

Multi-channel marketing is required, and marketing materials need more visuality and a clear story behind the campaign which a customer can follow systematically but even is possible to jump on board at any point of the journey. Thereby longer and less time-sensitive campaigns need to be created with a clear visual concept. Buyer persona mapping is essential in order to determine the various personas the company is dealing with and this should be followed with possible account-based marketing for the largest and most potential customers.

Prospects should be more profoundly followed in the digital environment by the use of cookies and IP-addresses and the information could better be used for target marketing and display advertising. SEO and SEM should be exploited in search engines to bring more visibility for the landing pages, which themselves need to be clear, gated and possibly even showing targeted content based on the customer's IP-address. Overall, content needs to be customer specific for correct audiences rather than producing only general messaging for everyone.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1. Checklist of product marketing materials and activities

Analyst briefings	Setting up a meeting with an industry analyst, e.g. Gartner, IDC, and preparing briefing notes for a Subject Matter Expert (SME) such as the product manager.
Brochure	Typically, a printed or downloadable description of the product and why customers should buy, e.g. an A4 PDF document 2–8 pages long
Build as future reference	Setting expectations with the customer that once everything is successful they will provide a reference, e.g. a quote, short video, detailed case study.
Build brand	Activities such as advertising, sponsorship, Public Relations (PR) to build awareness or preference for the company brand or of a sub-brand linked to a particular product or product range.
Case studies	Detailed descriptions of how specific customers are using and benefiting from the product. The format could be a white paper, section on the website or short video. Ideally customers are named but sometimes their approval can be difficult to get.
Competitive analysis	A presentation for the sales channels explaining who the competition is, how we compare and how to compete.
Conferences	Looking for speaker slots or sponsorship opportunities at relevant conferences.
Cross-sell and up-sell presentation	A presentation for the sales channels that identifies opportunities to sell other things from the portfolio or to sell add-ons to the product initially sold.
Customer roadshow	A roadshow of presentations in different cities to various groups of customers.
Demos	A scripted demonstration of the product for the sales teams to use. Sometimes known as demo-in-a-box where everything is provided in an easy to use kit that can be taken to the customer's site.
Detailed technical presentation	Detailed presentation of how the product works and how it can be integrated into the customer environment. Aimed at the technical buyer of the potential customer.
Elevator pitch	Short 30-second explanation of your product and why customers should buy it.
Email campaigns	Series of targeted emails aimed at prospects to generate leads. CRM (Customer Relationship Management) and email marketing IT systems are needed to support this
Exhibitions	Developing infrastructure and messaging for exhibitions, organising Subject Matter Experts to attend and arranging customer meetings.
Industry and standards bodies	Attending to meet potential customers but also to help understand and shape trends in the industry. Being visible and active in these forums can be excellent PR.
Infographic	Graphical representation of key data. Often used to promote thought leadership.

Press releases	Usually 'put out' when a product is first launched or there is a major new release. Often timed to coincide with major industry events to maximise publicity.
References	Pre-canned references that can be used to close a sale or influence an analyst. Or a process for the sales channels to link pre-vetted existing customers with prospects.
Sales presentation	Standard presentation used by sales channels to help sell the product. These are often created in a standard format and stored online in a central repository.
Sales training presentation	Presentation for the sales channel to train them on how best to sell the product. Often includes how to identify prospects, key messages, case studies and more.
Sales support tools	Tools such as a sales crib sheet (the key selling points vs the competition) or value positioning statement. Another, (ROI) spreadsheet, allows Sales to sit with a prospect and calculate their potential ROI from buying a product.
Social media	Using social media to promote the product or a thought leadership programme e.g. working with LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Pay-per-click (PPC) advertising.
Solution data sheet	Concise description of how the product provides a solution to specific problems.
Teaser video	Short video to generate interest in the product.
Technical spec	Detailed technical specification of the product aimed at the technical buyer.
Telesales	An internal team or agency who contacts prospects directly by phone to sell the product or set-up a sales meeting.
Thought leadership PR	Public Relations (PR) activities to position the company as a thought leader in the industry and attract prospective customers. This could be arranging for SMEs to comment in industry publications, publishing thought-leadership pieces online, establishing a niche blog or running a LinkedIn group focused on a particular area.
Use cases	Descriptions of how customers could use the product and the benefits they would get (note that this is distinct from the Use Case format used to write requirements).
User group	Running a User Group to get regular opportunities to meet with customers. Helps understand their perspective on your plans and get insight into future trends.
Website messaging	The 'copy' on the website that describes the product and proposition. Often this is based around personas in the customer.
Webinars	Online presentations on topics to which interested prospects and customers are invited. Setting up the infrastructure so a Subject Matter Expert can present.
Website analysis	Gathering and interpreting information on website usage to score prospects for follow-up and to understand the effectiveness of each part of the website.
White paper	Detailed exploration of a particular topic relevant to prospects and the product. Typically, 4–10 A4 pages long.
Win/loss analysis	A meeting with the customer following the win or loss of a major deal. Helps gain insight on why their business was won or lost. Provides excellent feedback for proposition development. Also run as an internal meeting that the customer does not attend.

APPENDIX 2. Product launch framework for Mega launch

MEGA LAUNCH For large scale (class A) projects that span for 1 or more years. Requires detailed planning with many and varied marketing actions. Long release cycle. Extensive internal and external launch actions and multichannel approach.

BUYING CYCLE STAGE	AWARENESS STAGE			CONSIDERATION STAGE			DECISION STAGE	
	UNAWAWARENESS	NEED RECOGNITION	SOLUTION SEARCH	COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES	PURCHASE DECISION	AFTER PURCHASING		
OUR GOAL	Engage internally	Reach and get attention, generate leads	Provide information, generate leads	Convince, make the choice easier	Help Sales to close the deal	Leverage new customers, cross-sell & up-sell		
TYPE OF CONTENT	Educational, informative presenting the value proposition, key selling points.	Inspiring, raising ideas, questioning, even challenging, empathising, interactive. Topics related to the customer's business.	Content that helps customer search for solutions, not aiming to sell yet.	Product evaluations, case studies, tests and trials, comparisons, product guides, benefit calculators, demos.	Technical details, product specifications, how to take into use/integrate, terms & conditions	Reward loyalty, celebrate referrals, testimonials, incentives upsells & cross-sells and renewals		
CHANNELS	Generate awareness	SOME, search engines, web, e-mail, webinar, media, events	E-mail, search engines, web, SOME, webinar, direct sales	E-mail, web, search engines, webinar, direct sales	Direct sales	E-mail, F2F, PR		
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical bulletin</li> <li>Web page content</li> <li>Pictures &amp; images</li> <li>Info graph</li> <li>Teaser video / animation</li> <li>Advertisement &amp; banner</li> <li>Web questionnaire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Web page content</li> <li>Business white papers</li> <li>Case studies</li> <li>Video / animation</li> <li>Advertisements &amp; banners</li> <li>Web questionnaire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Web page content</li> <li>Case studies</li> <li>Reference cases</li> <li>Articles</li> <li>Product white papers</li> <li>Sales leaflet</li> <li>Sales presentation</li> <li>Video / animation / demo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Web page content</li> <li>Case studies</li> <li>Reference cases</li> <li>Articles</li> <li>Sales leaflet</li> <li>Sales presentation</li> <li>Technical presentation / guide</li> <li>Benefit calculator</li> <li>External product specification</li> <li>SEO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Web page content</li> <li>Sales presentation</li> <li>Technical presentation</li> <li>Reference case</li> <li>Testimonials</li> <li>Benefit calculator &amp; other sales tools</li> <li>How to use – videos</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build as future reference and testimonials</li> <li>Cross-sell &amp; up-sell presentation / promotional material</li> </ul>		
COMMUNICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online Portal announcement</li> <li>SOME campaign</li> <li>Press release / press meet</li> <li>Web news</li> <li>Exhibitions &amp; seminars</li> <li>SEO</li> <li>SEM</li> <li>Display advertisement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E-mail campaign</li> <li>External webinar / Facebook live / Podcast</li> <li>SOME campaign</li> <li>Exhibitions &amp; seminars</li> <li>SEO</li> <li>SEM</li> <li>Display advertisement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E-mail campaign</li> <li>External webinar / Facebook live / Podcast</li> <li>Article release</li> <li>SEO</li> <li>SEM</li> <li>Display advertisement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Article release</li> <li>SEO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How to use – webinars</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback discussion (e.g. win-loss analysis)</li> <li>Press release of the done deal</li> <li>Reference case / testimonial release</li> <li>User clubs</li> </ul>		

APPENDIX 3. Product launch framework for Campaign launch

**CAMPAIGN LAUNCH** For medium sized / class B projects with a dedicated solution in the Services Offering Catalogue. Includes digital marketing and lead generation.

	INTERNAL LAUNCH	AWARENESS STAGE	CONSIDERATION STAGE	DECISION STAGE
<b>BUYING CYCLE STAGE</b>				
<b>OUR GOAL</b>	Engage internally	Generate awareness, get attention, generate leads	Provide information, convince, make the choice easier	Help Sales to close the deal, cross-sell & up-sell
<b>TYPE OF CONTENT</b>	Educational, informative presenting the value proposition, key selling points.	Concise, inspiring, raising ideas, visual, interactive, sharp. Topics related to the customer's environment, opportunities & threats.	Content that helps customer to frame the problem and search for solution, product guides, case studies, benefit calculators, content that helps Sales.	Technical details, product specifications, how to use / integrate, incentives upsells & cross-sells and renewals, reference cases, testimonials.
<b>CHANNELS</b>	Offering Catalogue, Case company intranet, e-mail, skype, F2F	SOME, search engines, web, Online Portal, e-mail	E-mail, search engines, web, direct sales	Direct sales, web, PR
<b>MATERIALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal product specification</li> <li>Internal solution guidelines including                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Target customers</li> <li>Customer challenge</li> <li>Market &amp; competition review</li> </ul> </li> <li>Product value proposition, elevator pitch</li> <li>Product features, Q&amp;A</li> <li>Offer to delivery process</li> <li>Cross-sell and up-sell opportunities</li> <li>Proposal example / questionnaire</li> <li>Reference list for int. use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical bulletin</li> <li>Web page content</li> <li>Pictures &amp; images</li> <li>Info graph</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Web page content</li> <li>Product specification</li> <li>Sales leaflet</li> <li>Sales presentation</li> <li>Article</li> <li>Reference case</li> <li>Benefit calculator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Web page content</li> <li>Sales presentation</li> <li>Technical presentation</li> <li>Reference case</li> <li>Testimonials</li> <li>Benefit calculator</li> <li>Build as future reference and testimonials</li> <li>Cross-sell &amp; up-sell presentation / promotional material</li> </ul>
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal announcements</li> <li>Internal product training / webinar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online Portal announcement</li> <li>SOME campaign</li> <li>E-mail campaign</li> <li>SEO</li> <li>SEM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E-mail campaign</li> <li>Article release</li> <li>SEO</li> <li>SEM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback discussion (e.g. win-loss analysis)</li> <li>Press release of the done deal</li> <li>Reference case / testimonial release</li> </ul>

APPENDIX 4. Product launch framework for Catalogue launch

**CATALOGUE LAUNCH**

For medium sized / class B (not strategic) projects with a dedicated solution in the Services Offering Catalogue. External marketing material is prepared, but not separately promoted e.g. via e-mail marketing.

	INTERNAL LAUNCH	AWARENESS STAGE	CONSIDERATION STAGE	DECISION STAGE
BUYING CYCLE STAGE				
OUR GOAL	Engage internally	Generate awareness, get attention, generate leads	Provide information, convince, make the choice easier	Help Sales to close the deal, cross-sell & up-sell
TYPE OF CONTENT	Educational, informative presenting the value proposition, key selling points.	Concise, inspiring, raising ideas, visual, interactive, sharp. Topics related to the customer's environment, opportunities & threats.	Content that helps customer to frame the problem and search for solution, product guides, case studies, benefit calculators, content that helps Sales.	Technical details, product specifications, how to use / integrate, incentives upsells & cross-sells and renewals, reference cases, testimonials.
CHANNELS	Services Offering Catalogue, Case company intranet, e-mail, skype, F2F	Web, Online Portal	E-mail, search engines, web, direct sales	Direct sales, web, PR
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal product specification</li> <li>Internal solution guidelines including                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Target customers</li> <li>Customer challenge</li> <li>Product value proposition</li> <li>Product features, Q&amp;A</li> <li>Offer to delivery process</li> <li>Cross-sell and up-sell opportunities</li> <li>Proposal example / questionnaire</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical bulletin</li> <li>Web page content</li> <li>Online Portal announcement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Product specification</li> <li>Sales leaflet</li> <li>Sales presentation</li> <li>Reference case</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical presentation</li> <li>Reference case</li> <li>Testimonials</li> <li>Build as future reference and testimonials</li> </ul>
COMMUNICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal announcements</li> <li>Internal product training / webinar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online Portal announcement</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback discussion (e.g. win-loss analysis)</li> <li>Reference case / testimonial release</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 5. Suggestions for future improvement

<b>Problem area</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>How</b>
Cooperation between Sales and Product Marketing	Cooperation between the two functions is far from enough	Strengthening the cooperation by getting people from both organisations acquainted with each other	Arrange common events for example quarterly
Unclear roles in the product launch process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information about upcoming product launches not shared on time</li> <li>- Targets are not shared</li> <li>- Roles not strictly aligned</li> <li>- Sales is an unconnected component functioning separately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a systematic way for Product Managers to remind and share information for Product Marketing of upcoming launches on time</li> <li>- Require Sales to take a stronger role and presence in gate meetings</li> <li>- Broaden the overall picture of marketing related operations and products for Sales</li> <li>- Create and align shared targets and goals with Sales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Define a clear project manager for each product launch</li> <li>- Regular meetings or feedback sessions between Sales and Product Marketing</li> <li>- Insert a "Product Marketing News" to the case company intranet</li> <li>- Import information also to the CRM system</li> <li>- By-monthly-calls or monthly emails sharing the information of what is going on in both organisations</li> </ul>
Role of Product Marketing	Moving Product Marketing away from creating only sales enablement material	Discuss with Sales on how to aid with the product by getting the marketing message out before Sales even approaches the customer	Creating customer webinars for certain customer segments already in the awareness stage together with Sales
Information sharing	Usually only one person from Sales is involved in gate processes and it is unclear whether information is shared across the whole Sales organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Involve Sales better already in the product development phase in a consultative role of the product sales potential and marketing material quality</li> <li>- Involve Sales better in gate one to build motivation and interest of the product going to be sold</li> <li>- Get Sales more involved to gain more visibility for marketing campaigns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a clear process and shared channels for information sharing</li> <li>- Identify people in Sales having the motivation and willingness to distribute the message forward</li> <li>- Consider Sales as one marketing channel</li> </ul>
	Feedback not received from already launched products	Sales needs to give more input for Product Marketing of the feedback of marketing materials and channels of products which are already launched	
Lack of efficient planning	Productization done too rapidly causing problems after the launch phase	- Ensure spare parts and workshops are available and Sales and technical services trained appropriately before the external launch	Internal monitoring prior to a product launch

		- Involve Sales more strongly to get technical expertise and background details of customers	
	Customers do not have the knowledge of the overall offering	- Online portal and webpages need to be clearer and the CRM up to date - Pay attention to market overall packages which suit the customers installation rather than promoting only one single product	- Focus on developing the online portal and webpages - Market larger entities through which the customer could get the most value for their installation
	Key message behind the marketing campaigns are not clearly thought through	- Reduce quantity, content and heavy materials and focus on quality - More priority to the visuality of content - Better utilisation of digital channels as they are more cost-effective than producing multiple heavy print materials	- More visuality and focus on quality - Reduce heavy print materials which are not necessary - Create a marketing brief including a clear guiding principle throughout the marketing campaign
	Transformation of sales cycles	Sales cycles will become faster in the future requiring producing marketing materials and campaigns in a quicker pace	- Create a clear visual concept and a key message for each launch
Content of marketing materials	Content created based on assumptions what prospects want to read, not reality	- Create content based on data gathered from their digital behaviour of what the prospects are really interested in - Content needs to be more personalised and segmented and should cover a greater amount of marketing channels	- Buyer persona mapping or account-based marketing: start with data and later a workshop together with Sales and other relevant stakeholders - Create customer specific content based on customer needs and values and target this content to a correct customer segment to create value - Less general nice-to-know facts and more targeted information concerning specific customers installation - Build clear raw pieces of stories of how segmentation is wanted to be made and when a new product is launched, decide to which segment it belongs to and start building material around it
	Customisation of content	- Create more targeted campaigning which is directed to the customer's problem area instead of narrating what the company has to offer overall - Give the customer a feeling that the product being marketed is made just for them and their needs - Customise content based on buyer personas. Identify in which channels these	- Customise marketing materials based on the target audience and their needs - Use Parrot to track through cookie sessions in which product families the customer segment is interested in and take into use the scoring system - Track digital behaviour and where each persona daily operates

		specific customer segments usually operate and insert the content to this environment - Utilise buyer personas and ABM only for the most potential products	through their IP address and allocate display marketing to appear in these environments
	Native marketing as a next step in inbound marketing	Bring display advertisements into environments in which the customer is already reading a similar subject and thereby the ad will not disturb but rather serve the customer by offering a solution to the area in question	- Define the opportunities of the utilisation of native marketing - Requires IP address follow-up and determination of correct environments
	All materials are free, and content not gated	Longer, more orchestrated and less time sensitive campaigns need to be created so that customers can join the buying process at any point	- Create gated content - Create such quality content a prospect is willing to pay for it with their contact information
	- Adjusting campaigns to meet requirements - Similarity of content - Lack of visuality and a story behind the campaign	- Create more iterative campaigning which is not designed too far beforehand but rather which follow successful campaigns done before, utilise the things that have worked and make the required changes for the new campaign - Have a clear key message for each larger campaign so that it can easily be exploited by chopping up the story into multiple publications making the campaign more planned and cost-effective	- Key message for each larger campaign - Chop up materials into sets such as videos and infographics and market them in separately created social media posts - More impressive campaigns and higher profile material: visuality, more powerful stories and content matching the customers underlying need - Possible creation of product demos - Utilisation of marketing agencies more strongly
	Proof of product benefits	Monetarise everything by demonstrating the actual cost savings by a benefit calculation or giving the calculation formula for the customer	Strive to always create a benefit calculator depending on the product to prove the product benefits
Content streams	Fragmentation: separate channels for own purposes causing the marketing message not meeting the customer and decrease of marketing hit rate	- Strive in accordance to the case company's strategy to create shared content streams and campaigns and when enough content and consistent messaging is created, it can be used for digital marketing purposes - Require the whole organisation behind this kind of nurturing channel rather than having own separate channels for own purposes of various teams	- Create common and shared content streams - Create a way to get the whole organisation involved and willing to start working in a new manner
Lead generation	- Weak basis to lead prospects forward in the sales funnel	- Leading prospects to Sales based on content opening rates, clicks or video views are weak as these matters do not automatically mean a person is interested in the product being marketed for real	- Create systematic lead processing process / instructions - Take into use the scoring system and assign internally certain people qualifying and filtering the

	- Visibility of data is limited, and a clear lead handling process is missing	- Leads should not be pushed to Sales for evaluation on a low threshold but rather people should be transferred internally to process marketing qualified leads	leads generated who will push forward to Sales only the most potential and strong leads
Measurement	- Lack of systematic metrics and measurability - Lack of knowledge on how to exploit the data received	- Build systematic metrics which correspond whether a marketing campaign has been successful or not - Reports received from external marketing agencies should be reviewed and handled - Start creating a database of the information so that in the future measurements received can be compared to statistical data gathered - Product launches need to be more data-driven	- Create a database of marketing data - Review reports received and insert the data into the database - Compare new data to previously gathered data - Build metrics and make conclusions of the data received - Follow in real-time how campaigns are performing (ROI) - Allocate resources to create a digital team responsible for sharing reports and following metrics if own resources are not sufficient enough
Internal competence	Content orientation usually forgotten, and competence hired on a too narrow scale	- Increase internal competence in various aspects instead of focusing only on marketing and communications expertise - Focus on hiring distinct types of competence including default marketing and communication knowhow but also employees having expertise in marketing automation, data analysis and an understanding of technical products	Broaden the expected supposition of expertise when hiring personnel and focus on future requirements
Competitors	Visibility not clear enough	A better visibility needs to be created to see how competitors are operating and where	Competitor tracking, data gathering and benchmarking
Events	- Nothing concrete to present - Events weakly linked to product campaigns	- Customers need to have something concrete to look at rather than a plain i-pad to browse through - Events need to be more integrated and able to lead the customer into the digital environment	- Have a 3D print miniature of the actual product available - Include a means to direct the customer into the digital environment from physical events (QR-codes, application used by Sales or similar) - Promote a content masterpiece such as a webinar or whitepaper
Webinars	Customer webinars have been hardly made before and have huge potential	- Identify correct audiences either by targeting only a specific customer introducing what they could be offered or target certain major customers with similar buyer personas or similar installations - Make use of contact information received for future nurturing through email marketing with targeted content	- Create customer specific webinars - Possibility of utilising the GoToWebinar tool to host webinars - Create webinars to which prospects can enrol with their contact information

			- Create recordings available in the .com page available through contact information given
CRM-system	Information scattered around various locations	Clarify information so that it is easy to see in one location for which installations the product in question is suitable for and what are its benefits and the value propositions	Merge relevant data of a certain product in the CRM-system for the information to be found more effortlessly in one location
Web pages	Web pages are confusing and not clear enough	- Web pages need to be more easily found and customer activity needs to be tracked better in order to pursue targeted marketing better - Content needs to be better linked with keywords used in search engines	- SEO (possibly even paid) - Usage of cookies - Keyword analysis and content linking based on that
	Customisation of content	- When different personas are created for a campaign, based on the customer's IP address the system should be able to recognise the person and specific content will be displayed on the webpage	- Utilisation of buyer personas also on the webpage view based on customer's IP address - Bring sales data from the CRM to the website to track customer behaviour - Build heat-maps based on what kind of content is read by which customer segment
Reference cases	The amount is not sufficient enough	Reference cases aid smaller organisations understand better how a product has brought added value to some other larger organisation and the amount of them should thereby be added	Build more reference cases
Social media	Content not sufficient enough compared to rivals	Content should be smarter and more visual, usage of own pictures should be increased	- Add more visual video content and animations - Chop content into sets of social media posts - Include the campaign key message as a base for posts
Email marketing	Emails sent to customers to whose installation the product does not even fit	A clear and correct list of customers who should be contacted needs to be created, for whose installation the product being marketing actually fits and who do not own the product in question yet	- Data of customers and their installations need to be up-to-date and on track - Keep information about customers updated in the CRM-system
	The amount not sufficient	The amount of email marketing should be added as it brings the best conversions compared to other marketing tactics and it allow to create long-term customer lists	Increase the amount and target the message to correct audiences instead of sending general messaging
	Wrong content which is not targeted	- It should be highlighted more what part of the information received differs compared to the earlier received email - The amount of nice-to-know information needs to be reduced	- Less but with more valuable content - Headline needs to be short and clear so that the email will be

			noticed, and the customer is interested and will open it
Marketing channels	Usage of the channels need to be strengthened as a means to support each other	The customer should receive email marketing as a means to raise interest and when the customer browses through the internet the same message needs to reappear in social media either by organic or paid messaging and display advertising should be created in the search engines to repeat the identical key message	Multi-channel marketing
Sales leaflets	Time consuming to create, old fashioned and not visual enough	Sales leaflets should include less text, more pictures, tests and results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create infographics aside sales leaflets or as a replacement</li> <li>- Consider increasing the number of whitepapers</li> </ul>
Sales presentations	General presentation customised by Sales	Product Marketing should monitor whether changes made are according to brand guidelines as it is not clear whether Sales has the complete knowledge	Supervision of changes made
Online portal	Requires development in various aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customers do not necessarily find straight away an answer for their problem when they enter the portal and it thereby requires an effort to make the search</li> <li>- It should be more demonstrated on a title level which all products could be offered for the customer</li> <li>- Possibility of adding trainings to online portal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set online portal as a development project</li> <li>- Increase the messaging and awareness of products, solutions and opportunities</li> <li>- Insert a separate page for listing all possible products based on customer's installation</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 6. Potential ideas for the future

<b>Bring customers together</b>	Customers not having a certain product yet should be brought together with a customer to who the product has already been sold to and whose installation is running efficiently
<b>Instagram</b>	Although target customers do not necessarily use Instagram, the platform can be used as a great tool to boost the case company's brand cost-effectively
<b>Content</b>	Hire an own copywriter to create professional content
<b>360- degree customer profile</b>	The goal is to have a 360-degree view of the customer and based on the data better owner experiences can be built by triggering marketing and content based on signals of the customer's installation such as a signal that the installation is approaching a scheduled maintenance and this information could be better utilised by offering the customer products and services with for example a discount
<b>QR-codes</b>	The traditional customer base offers a great opportunity as competitors do not necessarily offer digital opportunities and since customer buying behaviour will keep changing and digitalising, the whole industry is in a constant change. The case company needs to be aware of the opportunities already today. QR-codes reduce printable materials and direct customers to the digital environment.
<b>Chatbot</b>	Build a chatbot to the company's website to aid customers find more easily what they are looking for by linking common keywords directing to content or even have a real person internally chatting with customers if a bot is not sufficient enough to direct customers to the correct content.
<b>Growth hacking</b>	Build marketing with a small budget by breaking organisational to assess customer needs. Create a new, very effective and clever way to market to a specific, extremely targeted customer by inventing an innovative way in a start-up atmosphere to get the customer's attention.
<b>Mobile application</b>	Potential customers can be taken into the digital environment through an app and promoting can be continued there through taking the customer along to an email marketing campaign, offering a webinar or guiding them to a content masterpiece. Potential customers can be better evaluated, and their operations observed in the digital environment.
<b>Feedback loop</b>	Field- and technical services should be developed so that reporting would generate more leads. Motivation needs to be created through a feedback loop to narrate the original lead producer whether the lead was transitioned into a customer and incentives motivating enough should be created.
<b>Simulation of face-to-face meetings</b>	A person should be taken along to customer meetings to listen to the conversation and simultaneously code and simulate customer's wishes. At the end of the meeting a clear vision of the potential product based on the discussion could be demonstrated.
<b>Configurator</b>	Ease the customer's purchasing decision by giving the customer only the most relevant information by sorting out the customer's need through a configurator.

## APPENDIX 7. List of interview questions: Product Marketing

### **Background:**

1. Background of the person being interviewed

### **Current state of product launches:**

2. How are the product launches currently carried out? How have they operated?
3. What are your main functions in the launches?
4. Who is part of the launches, how and what are everyone's roles?
5. Problems and development areas in product launches

### **Cooperation between Product Marketing and Sales:**

6. Define the overall state of current cooperation
7. Deficiencies?
8. How to develop the cooperation?
9. How to develop the product launches to support Sales better?

### **The change in marketing / digitalisation:**

10. How has marketing changes overall and in the case company?
11. In which areas should the case company invest in
12. How developed is the case company compared to competitors?
13. What kind of potential is unexploited?

### **Inbound marketing:**

14. How has inbound marketing tactics been exploited in the case company?
15. Which tactics have operated best, and have they been effective?
16. Which tactics have not been successful?
17. Which tactics should be added / removed?
18. What are the barriers in exploiting inbound marketing / which matters further the success of the tactics?

### **Future of product launches:**

19. Should buyer personas be created, and content personified? How?
20. Which marketing activities should be exploited for different launch sizes?
21. In which order should the marketing activities be exploited with regards to the customers buying process?
22. How is B2B sales and marketing potentially changing in the future?
23. How could B2B customers be better lured into the case company's sales funnel?
24. How to develop the process overall?
25. Which elements a successful product launch includes?

## APPENDIX 8. List of interview questions: Sales

### **Background:**

1. Background of the person being interviewed

### **Sales:**

2. What kind of customers are products and solutions currently being sold to?
3. Are you able to classify the customers? How?
4. How and where do prospective customers get the information of products?
5. What are the most effective marketing channels for the case company?
6. What is the key marketing material for Sales?

### **Cooperation between Product Marketing and Sales:**

7. How closely do you work with Product Marketing?
8. How does the cooperation operate currently?
9. What are the deficiencies? What are the reasons behind them? How to develop them?

### **Product launches:**

10. How do product launches appear to Sales? Have they been planned efficiently?
11. What problems have you faced internally and externally?
12. How to develop the product launch process to correspond better to the needs of Sales?

### **Customers buying process and buyer personas:**

13. How does the customers buying process operate currently? Are the different stages visible?
14. When you contact a prospective customer, at what stage are they typically on?
15. Can the buying process be tracked?
16. Are correct marketing activities currently being operated at correct stages?
17. How could B2B customers be better lured into the case company's sales funnel?
18. Has Sales created buyer personas? How could this be exploited in Product Marketing?

### **The change in marketing / digitalisation:**

19. How has marketing changed during recent years and has the case company been able to respond sufficiently enough? How have they responded?
20. How developed is the case company compared to competitors?
21. What kind of potential is unexploited?

### **The change in sales and future:**

22. How has Sales changed in recent years and what kind of sales operates best? Which elements does it include?
23. How has customers buying behaviour changed and how will it change in the future?
24. Do you feel you have all required marketing materials available to sell efficiently?
25. How will B2B sales change in the future and how could it be further developed?

## APPENDIX 9. List of interview questions: Digital Marketing

### **Background:**

1. Background of the person being interviewed
2. Background of cooperation with Product Marketing

### **The current state of marketing:**

3. How would you say that marketing has changed during recent years? How this change is visible and has the case company been able to respond sufficiently enough?
4. How has B2B buying behaviour changed during recent years?

### **Inbound marketing:**

5. How has the case company exploited inbound marketing tactics?
6. Which marketing tactics have worked best? Which have not?
7. Has the case company been able to reach to more prospective customers through inbound marketing?
8. What are the major obstacles in exploiting inbound marketing?
9. Is inbound marketing cost effective? What are the negative aspects?
10. Do you think that inbound marketing is the answer for B2B companies to succeed today? Or is there some other potential? Future?

### **Marketing channels and content:**

11. How and what different marketing channels has the case company used?
12. What kind of channels the case company does not use but possibly should?
13. What kind of content has been published and how frequently? Has it been enough?

### **Competitors and future:**

14. How developed is the case company compared to its competitors in digital marketing?
15. Which things should be improved or given more attention to?

### **Product marketing in aftersales products:**

16. What is missing from the case company's after sales product launches?
17. What kind of potential is unused?
18. How could we improve the cooperation between Product Marketing and Sales?
19. When is the correct time to launch a product / take it to the markets?

### **Customers buying process and buyer personas:**

20. How do prospective customers get the information of the case company's products?
21. Can the customer buying process and its stages be identified clearly in the case company?
22. What kind of marketing activities should be exploited in each stage?
23. Have you created buyer personas? How?
24. How should Product Marketing start to do buyer persona mapping?

## APPENDIX 10. List of interview questions: external customers

### **Background:**

1. Background of the person being interviewed
2. Define which products/aftersales the customer owns

### **Marketing channels and product launches:**

3. Through which channels have you received information of the case company's aftersales products?
4. Do you get the information of the products mainly through personal sales?
5. What about digital channels? (email, online portal, social media, webpages)
6. When a new product or service has launched, has the message reached you as a customer and at the correct time?
7. What things would you change and how?
8. Would you like to receive information regularly of the products and services? How often? Through which channels?
9. Which of the case company's marketing channels have you used?
10. Which of them are the most beneficial?
11. What channels should be added/removed?
12. Do you feel that you receive too much marketing?

### **Marketing materials:**

13. What kind of material have you received and what has been the most beneficial/interesting?
14. What kind of material you would not like to receive/you are not interested in?

### **Content:**

15. Has the content been interesting?
16. What kind of content would you like to receive more?
17. Overall, what kind of marketing would you like to receive from the case company?

### **Competitors and future:**

18. Would you say that the case company is on the forefront in product marketing compared to competitors? In what areas competitors are doing better?
19. How would you compare the case company to other organisations regarding marketing and messaging of aftersales product launches?
20. How would you develop the case company's product launches and marketing activities?