Digital marketing plan to promote embedded PC's to
machine builders servicing the food machinery companies in France

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Preface

My name is Osama Mohammed; I was born in Sudan in the Middle of Africa. I came to the Netherland in 2009. Currently, I'm studying International Business and Management Studies at Fontys Applied Science. To have my study completed, I have to write thesis report that would contribute to solving the management problem for a company, or an organization. This thesis has been written within for 17 weeks at Advantech Europe BV in Son en Breugel; this was an excellent opportunity to apply my theoretical studies in a real task and learning more about the organizational responsibilities.

Undoubtedly, this report would not have been done without valuable advice and assistance from many people. Among all those people, I express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor at the school Mr.Szanto, who has guided me during this period and provided me with the worthy recommendations, I also would like to thanks, all IBMS staff at Fontys.

Besides that, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all Advantech employees for the collaboration and supports, during the internship period. Particularly, my company supervisor Tineke Bergen who offered me a golden opportunity and allowed me to work close to her and she oversaw the internship project by herself.

Finally, I wish to thank my family, classmates, and everyone who has provided any support and encouragement to complete this endeavor successfully, with special appreciation to my partner Lamia who played a significant role in providing moral support.

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Executive summary

This report has been written to contribute to solving the management problem which started one and half years ago. The report provided a clear digital marketing strategy explains how the company would increase their profitability by improving the digital marketing performance.

The report consists of five chapters, each chapter dedicated to discussing a specific section. Chapter one is a short introduction includes the company background and provides in-depth information about the management problem, which related to the marketing department. The problem reveled one and half year ago when the regional manager and the HQ found that there is no clear digital marketing strategy in the EU region. Chapter two describes some marketing theories in the traditional and the digital market and shows the main difference between these approaches; moreover, this section gives a short overview of the current use of the digital marketing tools by the company. Chapter three illustrates the research methodology used to conduct this study, which is a mixed study quantitative & qualitative). The sampling technique used in this study is the probability also the non-probability method, and the data has been gathered from respondents by using the questionnaire and interviews as instruments. Chapter four demonstrates the results and findings of the study; these conclusions formulated based on the data from the gathered from multiple sources (existing and potential customers, internal interview, and external interviews). The last chapter is the conclusion part which provides some suggestions to the management explain how the problem will be solved; and also this section describes what the organizational and the financial consequences associated with this suggestions.

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Company and problem background

Advantech is a Taiwanese company founded in 1983 by KC Liu, the head-quarter located in Taipei, Taiwan. The company specialized in producing Electrical equipment particularly the PCs which enable corporations automating the manufacturing process. The company has manufacturing plants in Taiwan and China; moreover, Advantech has eight CTOS locations (Customize to order services) in three continents, these areas used to manufacture, assembling, and repairing products. Also, the company has sales offices in 21 countries, and 71 cities and more than 8000 employees are working at Advantech. The company mission is 'enabling intelligent planet' by focusing on offering four product categories Embedded Computing, Industrial Automation (IA), Intelligent Systems, and Intelligent Healthcare. Each division encompasses a group of products which use to implement a high technology in the related industry. The main products offered for these categories are comprehensive systems integration hardware, software customer-centric design services, embedded system, automation products, and global logistic support. Recently Advantech became a market leader in industrial PCs market where their market share achieved 27% followed by Siemens (Berryman, 2012), this is the main strength point of the company. The main competitors for Advantech are Beckhoff Automation GmbH, Rockwell Automation, Inc. and Siemens AG and the main customers are   AT&T, Comcast, BAe Systems, JMP Engineering, B&B Engineering, and Seagate Technology. Advantech products have multiple features differentiated, such as an open platform system, reliability, and durability these features have distinguished the company products from competitor's products. In contrast, the main weakness point of the company is producing more than 450 product types, and this prevents the company from excel in one product. In 2016 the company revenue has increased slightly to 30,173,747 TWD in comparison to 2015 where was accounted for 28,673,906 TWD (Advantech Co., 2016). Advantech is specialized in the industry 4.0; this is a new technology trend helps in automating the manufacturing and the data exchange. The company products use worldwide in multiple industries such as machine automation, machine monitoring, equipment monitoring and optimization, MES integration and product traceability, factory environmental mentoring, and factory energy management system. Due to realities like the quick development in industry 4.0 in Europe mainly in Germany and France (statista, 2017) and the encouragement from the European Parliament to the manufacturers to oriented towards new technology in the production. For example, France has dedicated 1€ billion as a loan for the SMEs to assist them automating their manufacturing process (Erupean parliament, 2015). All these factors plus saving the labor cost from the automation process have created an excellent opportunity for IoT companies such Advantech to increase their profitability in this countries by developing the right product for this market.

To get this opportunity, Advantech has developed some high-tech PCs panels tailored for the food and beverage sector. The primary features of these display, firstly are enabling customers from visualizing the manufacturing process in another word these screens would enable users to track the machine performance and make the decision based on the real-time data provided on the screen (vision products). Secondly, the screen designed to be cleaned with water to meet the food safety regulations; finally, the stainless steel parts are corrosion resistant which helps to prevent cross-contamination. See the image in figure 1 below.

Figure 1 ip69k waterproof and stainless steel monitor

1.2   Problem statement, objective and deliverable.

Problem statement.

Digital marketing became a useful tool in business to customers or business to business, since 30% customers are internet users (tactic, 2012). Digital marketing defined as the way of how businesses promote their products or service through the digital channels (Financial times, 2015). Digital marketing serves as an umbrella which includes an online marketing such as social media, searching engines optimization, pay per click or email marketing; also, consists of the offline marketing like banners, video marketing, games advertising, Television, Radio, magazine, and SMS marketing (S & RUNGTA, 2016) (Dave, Fiona, Richard, & Kevin, 2009) (Alan, 2009).

Advantech is one of the businesses who would like to increase their profitability by using the digital marketing tactic to catch up the opportunity in the France market and raise their market share by selling industrial automation products; such as, display panels to the food and beverage machinery builders. To

achieve this objective, Advantech has created an online campaign to target this segment in the France market; this campaign includes four type products related to the Food and beverage machine builders industry. The company has a sales office in France to sell the company products there, and this means Advantech has a precedent experience about the customers and their behavior and this could help the company to better promoting their monitors in this market According to (Svend, 2014), decreasing the psychic distance is a significant key success factor in the promoting a product in the market which means the company must understand some factors before start marketing their product such as the language, culture and political system. Finding the right strategy to promote this type of products in France will contribute positively to increase the company profits in this market. The majority of Advantech's employees' marketing department in Eindhoven are agreeing that targeting the France market will offer an excellent opportunity for the company for some reasons like the lack of the intensive competition, and the company has a precedent experience in this market and the government facilities.

To ensure that this e-campaign will be implemented successfully, the management hired an intern to sketch the landscape of the iFactory market in French region to investigate whether the Advantech current marketing approach is suitable for this market or it should create a new templet to achieve better results and rolling out this in other European countries. The management problem can be summarized in the following question:

What is the appropriate digital marketing strategy to promote Advantech's dedicated products to the food processing machinery builders in France successfully?

<u>Objective.</u>

Usually, the research objective should be defined by the organization management (Zikmund, Barry J, Jon C, & Mitch, Business research methods , 2009), it should identify clearly what goal would like to achieve from this project and what deliverables are expected. In order to achieve the objectives, the company has set a SMART target to be reached by the end of the project period.

- To find out the most effective online marketing and communication plan that Advantech could get more customers and sales and to execute the select target program (Promoting a specific market content to the food and beverage machinery builders in France) as made by the head-quarter during the internship period. Deliverables of this project are:
- A marketing plan to enter and develop the iFactory market for 10% Leads growth in the Food and Beverage market.

<u>Deliverables.</u>

The deliverable of this assignment will be in the form of the report includes some recommendations to the company explaining what is/ are the proper digital marketing strategy the company should use to marketing their products. The report will be written based on the results of the campaign, questionnaires, literature, and the interviews. The report will explain what/why/How the selected strategy is suitable for the company. The final report will be submitted to the company supervisor and will be attached to the thesis report to be reviewed by Fonty's supervisor as well. In addition to the written report, a presentation slides will be submitted to explain the campaign's performance and the results briefly.

1.3   The research objective and main research questions

The results of this study will contribute to solving the management problem because of the variety of perspectives will involve in the research. The final report would have a significant impact on adopting the right marketing strategy to increase the number of customers which is ultimate would lead to growing the company profitability.

Since the research will provide a clear description for the iFactory for food and beverage market in French also will describe the online behavior of the customers in this market. Then a descriptive research will be most suitable for this study because will allow us to define and characterize a particular group of customers and their behavior (Zikmund, Barry J, Jon C, & Mitch, Business research methods , 2009). To come up with the right solution for the management problem the following research questions have been formulated and need to be answered carefully.

Research questions:

Main question

What is the appropriate digital marketing strategy to promote Advantech's dedicated products to the food processing machinery builders in France successfully?

Sub-questions

What are the top three marketing tools the B2B marketers often used to target their audience?

What are the common obstacles usually faced by marketers during the implementation of these tools?

How B2B marketers can overcome these obstacles?

How should the B2B marketers distribute the limited budget between multiple channels?

1.4   Demarcation

This study will be delimited to the marketing and sales department in Advantech; therefore, the other corporate offices will be excluded from this study. Furthermore, the study will focus on investigating the customer's perspectives with regards to their online behavior and their purchasing journey again the study will be delimited to the current and prospect customers. Finally, to come up with the proper marketing strategy, some experts will be interviewed. The survey will be sent to the existing customers in France and will be posted on some online social media groups related to this topic by focusing more on French groups and media, and this means the study will include the prospect's customers as well. Customers from other countries will be excluded from this study. To sum up, the primary data sources will be, the marketing employees at Advantech, current and prospect customers, experts, and literature.

1.5   Definition of terms

Table 1 Definition of terms

Term	Definition	Chapter	Source
AESC	Advantech Eindhoven Service Center	Cover page	The company
IIoT Industrial Internet of things	The process of applying the internet of thing in the manufacturing process	Overused	https://inductiveautomation.com/what-is-iiot
IA industrial automation	Using the new technology in the manufacturing process instead of the human being	Chapter 1	http://www.surecontrols.com/what-is-industrial-automation/
TA Target audience	A group of people or consumers within specific market identified In advance as a target to receive an advertisement or message	Chapters 2,4,5	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Target_audience
SEO Searching engines Optimization	A tool helps to increase the website visibility on the searching engines	Chapter 2,3,4,5	http://www.queromedia.be/en/our-services/search-engine-marketing/difference-seo-sea/
SEA Searching engines advertisement	A tool help to increase the traffic to your webpage through the digital ads	Chapter 5	http://www.queromedia.be/en/our-services/search-engine-marketing/difference-seo-sea/

GDN Google display Network	A large group of websites, video's and applications where the marketers can place their AdWords advertisements	Chapter 4	https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/117120?hl=en
IDM Integrated digital marketing	the term means adopting various digital channels to promote the product service	Chapter 2	http://s3-euw1-ap-pe-ws4-cws-documents.ri-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/9780415716758/Digital-Marketing-Instructors-Guide%20final%208-29-14.pdf
EDM Electronic direct mail	The process of sending a market content to the existing or the potential customers through an email to build brand loyalty or convert sales	Chapter 2	https://www.digitalthing.com.au/what-are-edms-and-email-marketing-campaigns/
4Ps traditional Marketing strategy includes Product, Place, Price, Promotion	the term defined the marketing as a mix of four components Price, product, place, and promotion	Chapter 2	http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ijms/article/view/97/1552
CTOS Customize to order services	Customize to order services	Chapter 1	Company
Industry 4.0	The process off automation the manufacturing process and using the internet data in the process	Chapter 1,4	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Industry_4.0
MarCom Market communication	Marketers who are responsible from deploying company advertisements on the media and communicate o the market	Chapter4,5	https://www.marsdd.com/mars-library/what-is-marketing-communication-marcom/

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   Theoretical approach: theories and concepts.

Nowadays we are living in the tech era where the technology has influenced our life in different aspects, of course, the marketing sector has been affected by this technology as well. The communication method, market segmentation, understanding the customer behavior, managing sales, managing campaign, promotions, etcetera all these factors have been optimized due to technology and became more accurate (Sultan & Christian, 2014).

Digital Marketing theory and concept

There are different standpoints regarding digital marketing theory. While some people believe that digital marketing should not have an own theory because the digital concept already exists in the marketing theory, on the other hand, some people argue that the new development in technology and the social media have re-shaped the marketing concept (Michael & Michael, 2016, p.340).

According to (Bird, 2007, p.153), there is no precise definition for the digital marketing, but the author thinks that the concept of digital marketing means merely sending a marketing message through digital channels such as TV, Radio, social media, electronic email or any other digital tool. Some people are going too far and considered all the marketing are digital, and every business has a digital strategy for survival (Palanisamy, 2015). Those people have over-confidence about the technological progress, and they neglected small companies and the companies from developing countries, which still use the traditional marketing tactic.

To better understand the digital marketing, below is a quick comparison of some differences between the traditional marketing and the new digital marketing.

Traditional marketing

The traditional marketing is an integrated process between different components; this market requires the geographical place where the buyer and seller meet each other, requested price related to the product and the promotion which usually limited to a specific location (Yoram & Vijay, 2001, p.130). Traditional marketing tactic focuses more on product functionality; therefore, product in this market is distinguished by superiority, and unique characteristics, the customer's experiences limited only to these features and neglected the product category (Schmitt, 2011. p,62). The most common term for the traditional marketing

is the marketing mix which identified by Professor Neil Borden in early 1965 (Chai, 2009), this definition defined the marketing as a mix of four components Price, product, place, and promotion (4Ps).

<u>Digital marketing and traditional marketing (Differences)</u>

The principal difference between the traditional and digital marketing is that the new digital marketing is more accurate where the marketers easily can identify the exact number of the TA, send the specific message to the right audience, tracking the ad performance, measure the interaction between customers and business etcetera. In contrast, the traditional marketing also the old digital marketing channels (Radio and TV) are less accurate, advertisement needed to appeal to the masses and to interrupt people to get their attention (Meerman, 2015). Moreover, new digital marketing allows to the advertiser to communicate directly with the TA and communicate them individually or collectively also the audience can interact with business by Like, subscribe, comment etcetera, all these features aren't possible in traditional marketing (Cliff, 2011). In term of 4Ps strategy, the difference between traditional and digital marketing is quite remarkable. Although the product in both markets is tangible, in the digital marketing it's quite hard to check the product quality, in contrast, the customers can better engage with the product in the traditional market. Usually, the costs are lower in the digital marketing in comparison to the cost in traditional marketing where the vendor has to pay extra invoices related to the inventory, services, transportations, and etcetera which it would lead to increase the product price ultimately. The place in traditional marketing is a geographical place which required investing money to make it more attractive, while in the digital marketing usually, the place is the company website which requires fewer investments. The last factor is the product promotion process which varies between these two markets particularly the communication process. In The traditional marketing, the communication usually is face to face excepting some channels such as TV, Radio, Email, etcetera. While in the new digital marketing the connection happens through the internet often which enables the promoter to reach a massive number of potential customers and interact with them (Alfa & Mona, 2008).

Digital marketing strategies

Usually, the active digital marketing strategy encompasses multiple digital channels to promote the product or service successfully which known as IDM (Integrated digital marketing) the term means adopting various digital channels to promote the product service (Ira & Chris, 2015). To have a concrete IDM plan, the marketers should identify the proper digital channels from the alternatives which enable them to send the right message to the right personas. Besides selecting the right channels, marketers need to create the

suitable marketing content as well (Jim, 2015). Below are some digital marketing channels that commonly used in B2C and B2C.

Searching engines (SE)

A searching engine is a software designed to help internet users to search information, the results from search engines are relevant to the searching words which used by the internet user. Searching engines have a variety of features; such as provide users with the most related websites to their research. To achieve better ranking results in SE, marketers should select the right keywords that match with the researcher's words and this will result in increased traffic to the company websites (Nursel & Utku, 2010). The process of repositioning your website in the searching engines called search engines optimization (SEO). Which required some steps need to be done; for instance, optimizing the keywords to match the web user's keywords, optimizing the quality of website content, and using the right anchor text backlinks (the words that used in the link text). Ultimately, all these processes will help marketers to show their website in the top results of SE (Rob, 2017). Although the B2B companies try to develop a simple and reachable websites name to be found by web users directly, search engines remained the most crucial source for searching information about B2B and undoubtedly it contributes in to increase the traffic. Although some B2B websites are much known, some customers are still using the SE to access to these sites (Jennifer, 2011. p,22).

Social media marketing

Business –to- business marketing strategy is undergoing significant changes because of the technical progress that we see today. The way of how companies are promoting their products or services also has been impacted by the new digital tools where the marketing report became measurable and accurate by collecting data and analyzing it (Järvinen, Töllinen, Heikki, & Chanaka, 2012, p.102). Unquestionably, social media plays a significant role in the marketing process and has enabled the businesses to contact and target the right audience and measure the promotion performance then make the right decision based on collected data. The efficient use of social media will enable the company to build an intimate relationship with the existing customers where the mutual trust between the buyers and the sellers will be high also a high level of engagement will be achieved (Sashi, 2012). Regarding the potential customers, the social media can be used to increase the brand awareness and to present the company to this segment. In the simple definition, social media define as online platforms that enable their users to communicate, collaborate, interact, and share content. The most common explanation for social media stated by M. Kaplan and Michael Haenlein "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological

foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan & Michael, 2012). The relationship between Social media and the marketing can be represented by content marketing performance. Which defined by content marketing institute as " A strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a defined audience — and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action." (content marketing institute, 2017). According to research done by Omobono Business agency, B2B marketers can benefit more from social media, and it could be the most effective channel to promote products or services (Ombono, 2014). From all these statements we can conclude that, besides the general use of the social media to increase the awareness, the social media can use in the B2B companies as a principal tool to promote products and services. Below are the most common social media platforms and more relevant to the marketing.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn considers as the most effective social media marketing tool for B2B, according to (Micheal & Alvin.lee, 2017), 94% Of B2B businesses have confirmed that LinkedIn is an essential tool for this type business. A few weeks ago, LinkedIn updated the sales navigator tool to be more efficient and to include multiple options, and marketers can select the proper one. For instance, Looklike the option which allows to marketers to target new audiences who look similar to their existing customers, another option is the activities in sales navigator can be linked to the company CRM. Furthermore, the LinkedIn administration keeps developing the sales navigator tool to be more accurate, at the beginning of 2018 the company will add LinkedIn data validation to the sales navigator which allows the user to update the contact data in the CRM system automatically (Aja, 2017).

Facebook

Facebook is one of the known social media networks that use in marketing to increase the brand awareness, meet the B2B partner, promoting the product and more other functions. As an advertisement tool, Facebook comes in the second place after Google, where the advertisement's revenues increased by +48.6 percent in 2015 higher than Google revenue growth +13.0 percent (Guest, 2016). According to research done by Smart insights, Facebook and Instagram were the most popular platforms in social media network where their points accounted for 8 and 6 points respectively out of 10 in an average number of accesses per day (Smart insights, 2016).

<u>YouTube</u>

YouTube is the second favorite visited website in the world and the number one video site in the world (Alexa, 2017). The high popularity of the YouTube has encouraged marketers to use the YouTube as the primary tool to promote their products or services. According to (Chien, 2014), YouTube as a social media platform prefers to use to increase the brand awareness and publishing video's that enable customers to engage with the business. Currently, Advantech's YouTube channel used to improve the brand awareness which is OK, but the company can get more benefits from YouTube marketing videos to promote products.

2.2 Advantech and Social media

This section will explain the company methodology of using the social media, this analysis between the external and the internal perspective will help us to identify the gap between the two standpoints.

The current of use of the social media in Advantech in Eindhoven is very limited. For instance, the company use only the conventional three social media Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn in the way similar to the way of the individual user or as the usage of small businesses. For example, the company uses Facebook as content related and less product oriented, by meaning the company Facebook page shows posts of the company events, movies, or pictures more than promoting content (no marketing campaign). Advantech Twitter page is more product-oriented which shows new products, new research, and events, but also no marketing campaigns to promote the company products to creating advertisements. The company page on LinkedIn is a business-oriented page where most of the posts are representing the collaboration with partners, participation in events. Also, the page shows the new products as well which means the page function serves as a mix of the contents of Facebook and Twitter. But again LinkedIn can be used as marketing tool to increase the traffic on the company page by using the sales navigator tool which specialized in the marketing purpose (Russell, 2017). The Fact that, the company uses the social media platforms as a tool to increase the brand awareness which is very limited usage. The social media platforms have many capabilities can be utilized to create a solid marketing campaign, which enables the company target a right audience at the correct location with the right marketing content instead of targeting everyone with posts (the current usage). Advantech YouTube channel is also used to increase the brand awareness, show videos of a new product or show product features. Again this is a limited usage of YouTube which has different types of advertisements video's the marketers can get benefit from it and select the one that is suitable to the campaign from the alternatives (Google, 2017).

Advantech Advertisements Types

Electronic direct mail (eDM) & google AdWords

The company relies heavily on the Google AdWords to create the Display Networks only campaign by focusing more on the responsive ads, images ads and some videos ads. But the Google AdWords has multiple types of campaigns includes different kinds of advertisements, and each ad has specific features, the company can select the right campaign and the right ads based on the campaign goal (S M. C., 2017). The Google AdWords is merely a tool which available to everyone, but the ultimate success depends on the marketing content and the message the advertiser uses to the right TA. Besides the Google AdWords, the company use email direct marketing intensively (eDM) where send weekly to the existing customers. The EDM could help the company to increase their sales to the current customers but has no significant contribution in attracting new customers unless the company bought the data from the third party to avoid the violation of privacy.

Social media

As it mentioned earlier that, the company has a limited use of the social media platforms, even in the current campaign the social media will not be used as a marketing tool for some considerations.

E-Newsletters (Banners in the local media)

Advantech has a contract with a local media agency in France which plays an intermediary role between Advantech and online media magazines in France, also helps them with translation to the French. The collaboration is useful, but still, the company should not rely only on one agency, and they should have different options to ensure the bargaining power or to communicate to these media directly.

2.3 Food processing machinery market overview in France

This section will give a short overview of the food processing machinery market in Europe and France mainly.

According to FoodDrink Europe association, food and drink industry is an integral part of the Europe economic where more than 285,000 SMEs employing approximately 4.25 million employees are active in this market; moreover, the annual turnover of food and beverage industry estimated by €1 trillion in 2016 (FoodDrink, 2016). Although the turnover of food production industry in France is decreased approximately 4 billion in 2015 in comparison to 2014, still this sector plays a significant role in the France economy

(statista, 2017). The value return from the food processing sector in France estimated by € 189 billion (Journo, 2016). According to the (Europages, 2017), there are 175 food processing machine builders in France, these companies supply the market by different types of machinery such as packaging machinery, bakery and confectionery machine, bottling machine, etc.

As the demand for food safety and the healthy food has increased recently, this sector is undergoing ongoing development where the technology has become an integral part of this industry to ensure a clean food (Journo, 2016). Demand for food safety has legalized and supported by the European Commission which binds food and beverage manufacturers to produce products in compliance with these regulations (European Commission, 2017). All these factors have created an excellent opportunity for the technology companies such as Advantech to exploit their creativity and to produce the right product for this market. Because of the fierce competition in the technology market in Europe, the competitors should differentiate themselves by delivering a unique product. To differentiate themselves, Advantech has introduced a waterproof and stainless steel panels which easy to clean and ultimately will help users to provide hygienic food. Although there is an opportunity for companies to enter this market, they should take into consideration that won't be easy to compete in this market.

2.3   Summary and implications for the research.

Due to the facts like the new trend towards the industrial automation, the fierce competition in the European market and the product abundance which offers by the competitors, the companies should have a valid digital marketing strategy and content marketing that would enable them to attract customers and maintain them. Currently, the B2B landscape undergoing significant changes because of the progress of the development; therefore, companies should adapt their marketing strategies continually by implementing new marketing channels to stay competitive. Also, tracking the channel's performance by analyzing the collected data from different channels to create a successful campaign; furthermore, using multiple channels instead of relying only on a single channel. It is quite hard to have one standard digital marketing strategy or to use one channel and neglecting the rest because this only means you lose your potential customers on the other channels. Also, it is quite hard to use all channels in one company because of the cost associated and the level of knowledge required. Therefore, identify the most proper channels and categorize them based on the results and the performance will be the perfect option. The SEO, Social media, Google AdWords, Electronic Direct Mail, and eNewsletter banner are the most common tools at this moment, and marketers should focus on understanding and implementing this tools in the right way to achieve better results.

CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   Mixed method

The primary goal of this study is to come up with the proper digital marketing strategy which contributes to solving the management problem. Therefore, a significant point needs to be taken into consideration while conducting the mixing study researcher must avoid personal bias which could affect the validity of data collected from participants and ultimately will result in changing the outcomes. To be more specific the study will conduct the sequential explanatory methodology, according to (JOHN & SHELDON, 2006), the researcher in such study has to prioritize the studies based on the study weight and identify which study will be conducted first. In our study, the quantitative research represents the principal study because of the enormous data gathered, and it's dedicated to the customers. The few data generated from the qualitative research used to support or reject the main findings from the quantitative study (William, John, Vicki, Kelly, & David, 2005). The main reasons behind conducting the quantitative research are the difficulty to reach and interview the participants because of the high cost needed to reach them in their locations. Also the willingness of the researcher to have different opinions being involved in this study. Taking all these points into consideration a survey research has been conducted in this study, and the self-administrated survey has been selected as the primary tool to collect the data (Grey, 2014). According to (Zikmund W. G., 2009, p. 57), a survey research is more suitable for descriptive studies because it allows the researcher to describe a particular group and their characteristics and this will be much proper to analyze the questionnaire's data. This methodology has cons and pros as well. On the one hand, the survey research allows the researcher to gather a variety of information from many people at lower costs and this would assist in generalizing results because of the consistency in asking the same questions to all participants. On the other hand, this methodology prevents the researcher from getting deeper in interacting with the respondents to understand them better and reveal motivations behind their selected answers (Amy, 2012). Another drawback point in survey research method is that the respondents might deliberate to give fake answers or not take the survey seriously (Zikmund, Barry J, Jon C, & Mitch, Business research methods, 2009). Despite the difficulty to reveal those respondents, there are some overlapped questions in the questionnaire which require almost the same answers this technique could help on exposing respondents who provided fake answers. The inquiry is related to answer the central question which stated previously. The sub-questions will be answered through data gathered from marketers in the company and the external experts. The second study has been done qualitatively, by conducting face to face interviews with some digital marketing experts internally and externally. Cons and pros of this research has been explained under the research instrument section 3.5.1

3.2   Research objective and research questions

The ultimate goal of this study is to come up with a valuable report that would contribute to tackling the management problem. The story will be in the form of plan illustrates what the right marketing strategy the company should adopt to achieve their goals. The final deliverables will be extracted from the survey results, interviews results plus the findings from the literature. Of course, all these outcomes will contribute significantly in answering the main question and the Sub-questions, which stated previously in chapter one.

The central question is related directly to the management problem, but to answer this question we have to answer the sub-questions which support the main question.

3.3   Research approach

The researcher in this study believes that if the company want to have a good digital marketing strategy, then they should use multiple tools and keep observing the gathered data. Analyzing this data will allow to the company marketers to rank tools based on the results achieved, these tools will be selected based on the company capabilities. The proper paradigm, in this case, will be post-positivist where the observation represents an inherent part of the research and the truth can only be approximate (Grey, 2014, p. 59). The inductive approach will be the appropriate one to this paradigm. The process in this approach start by gathering and observing the data from the questionnaire and the interviews, and ending with formulating the theory ,in this case, will be digital marketing strategy (Soiferman, 2010) (Grey, 2014, p. 726).

3.4   Research strategy and design.

The researcher believes that to answer research questions correctly, different standpoints should be investigated by conducting various research methods in this study. Probably, mixed study (quantitative & qualitative) will be suitable for this study because it helps the researcher answering the research questions using different research strategies instead of relying only on one strategy (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2013).

Mixed study approach has multiple definitions, but here I would like to use John Creswell definition, the author defined the combined study approach as the usage of the combination approach (quantitative and qualitative) in one study. According to the author, this method is becoming more popular because allows to the researcher uses the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative study (JOHN & CRESWELL, 2009). Although the mixed study allows for the research uses the strengths points from both studies, there are some disadvantages associated with conducting this study. For instance, it's time-consuming, requires more effort mainly if only one researcher conduct the study, expensive, and requires researcher knowledge about both studies (R. Burke & Anthony J., 2013).

About this study, the quantitative research has been executed by conducting the questionnaire to collect much data from respondents (current and prospect customers) in France, and this study is relevant more to answer the main research question. The quantitative study will be appropriate to collect the required data because it allows to the researcher to gather the numerical data from and make the conclusion based on numbers (James, 2007); also, these respondents are difficult to be reached and interviewed. In contrast, the qualitative study will be executed through the face-to-face interviews with marketing employees at the company and some experts from outside to evaluate and compare the different standpoints. The qualitative study will allow the researcher to in-deeply engage with the interviewees and understanding their viewpoints better also new questions will be generated during the interview. (Grey, 2014); Moreover, this interviews will conduct with a few people, the study aims to answer the sub-questions. Here the researcher will interview with some experts to better understand the top three digital channels currently used by B2B leaders and have a high success. Furthermore, an internal analysis will be conducted by interviewing Advantech marketing employees and compare their results to the findings from experts interviews; this method will allow us to understand the gap between the current marketing strategy of the company and what it should be. The interview as an instrument to collect the data from people has advantages and drawbacks same as any other instrument. The main advantage of an interview it allows to the interviewer to interact deeply with the interviewees and asking new questions to understand the interviewee standpoint and observing the body language then make a judgment whether the interviewee has answered the questions honestly or not (Amy, 2012). According to (Hamza, Interviewing as a Data Collection Method: A Critical Review , 2014), the main drawbacks of this tool are that the interviewee's answers vulnerable to be affected by the interviewer interaction. Moreover, the potential inconsistencies in the questions asked by the researcher particularly unplanned questions, and this makes generalizability of the results a bit difficult.

Table 2 explains the strategies and research designs set up to answer the main question and the sub-questions as well:

Table 2 explains the process of answering research questions.

Question	*Strategy/design*
What is the appropriate digital marketing strategy to promote Advantech's dedicated products to the food processing machinery builders in France successfully?	Quantitative + qualitative: desk research + questionnaire + filed research (interviews)
What are the top three marketing tools the B2B marketers often used to target their audience?	Qualitative: field research (interview)
What are the common obstacles usually face the marketers during the implementation of these tools?	Qualitative: desk research + field research (interview)
How can B2B marketers overcome these obstacles?	Qualitative: desk research + filed research (interview)
How should the B2B marketers distribute the limited budget between multiple channels?	Qualitative: desk research + filed research (interview)

3.5   Population and sample

Population refers to everyone able to provide the information that helps in solving the management problem and answering the research questions.

3.5.1   Quantitative study Population

The quantitative study population has encompassed the current and potential customers of Advantech in France. The goal of investigating the existing customers is to understand their online behavior and compare it to the current digital marketing strategy used by the company, on the other hand, examining the prospects customer's perspectives will enable us to understand new aspects. Both will help in capturing an overall

picture of the B2B online behavior which helps in selecting the proper strategy to achieve the pre-set objective. The management has provided 75 email address which can be considered as a part of the population; the rest of the population represented by the prospect customers which include all food processing machinery companies in France. According to the (Europages, 2017), there are 175 food processing machinery companies in France. Because it's quite hard to reach those prospects and urge them to participate in the survey, the researcher has posted the survey link in a dedicated group on LinkedIn called Food processing Equipment this group includes people who have interesting in machine builder industry (our TA). Undoubtedly the LinkedIn group contains members from different countries, to avoid receiving answers from unrelated participants, e.g. people from other countries or other industry the researcher mentioned in the post title that this survey designed for b2b companies in France. Also, the survey has been posted on one group on Viadeo, the first social media platform in France. To sum up, the total population of this study includes 75 existing customers plus 175 prospects customers which equal 250.

Figure 2 below shows the population of the quantitative study
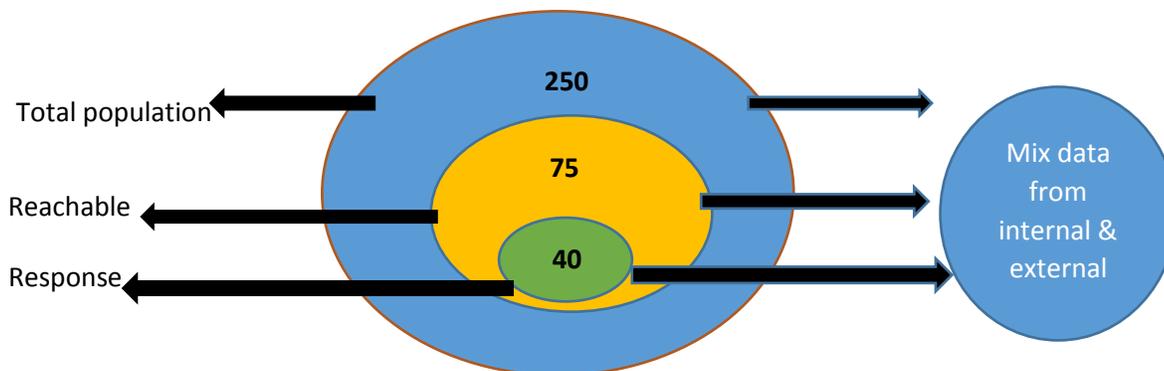
Figure 2 quantitative study population

3.5.2 **Quantitative study Sample and sampling method**

This study is targeting a large number of participants which include current and potential customers of the company. Since the researcher knows the total number of targeted participants and every participant in this population has an equal opportunity to find and fill in the survey, then a probability sampling and random technique will be the most proper. According to (Zikmund W. G., 2009, p. 395) (Grey, 2014, p. 254), in probability sampling technique all members of the population have the same probability to be chosen, and this method is most suitable for targeting a large community which ultimately would help in generalizing the findings. The survey has been sent to the current customers where their contact details exist in the

company database, also has posted on the several social media platforms on the internet where the target respondents are usually active. The study has applied the random sampling tactic.

3.5.3   **Qualitative study Population**

Study two will concern in understanding some opinions from some experts inside and outside the company; therefore, qualitative research has been conducted which allows to the researcher to interact and understand what behind an interviewee's stories. The idea behind this interviews is to find the gap between the internal and the external strategy which helps to identify what thing should be done to find an optimal method. The study sample will include a small number of those experts (internal & external), five people have been interviewed in the study two from the company and three from outside. Because the population in this study could include many people from different sectors, the researcher has only focused on the Brabant region in the Netherland. The study delimited to everyone has an academic background or work experience in the digital marketing arena, and since it's quite hard to get the exact number of the total population, the research has focused only on the reachable and the available candidates. Figure 3 below illustrates the study population for qualitative study
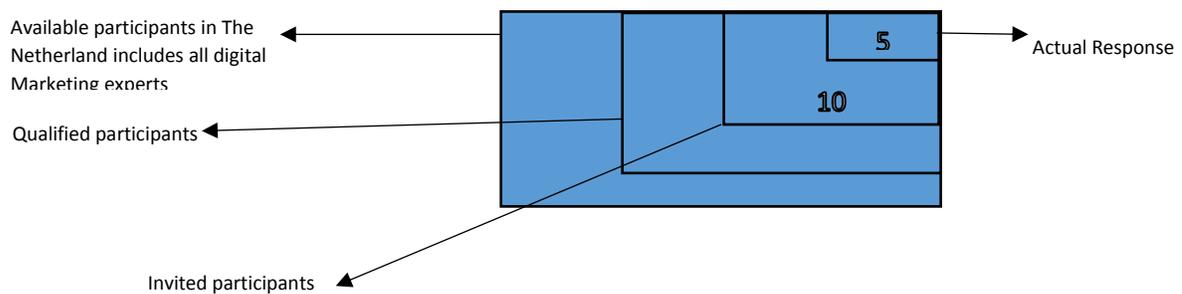
Figure 3 qualitative study population

3.5.4   **Qualitative study Sample and sampling method**

External data

The most appropriate sampling method for such study will be a non-probability sampling technique. Because the researcher can select the participants based on a personal judgment or pre-set criteria, such as the most easily accessible and available participants (Grey, 2014, p. 271) (Zikmund, Barry J, Jon C, & Mitch, Business research methods, 2009). Five people have been selected (internally & externally) to be interviewed; those people have been selected based on some criteria set by the researcher in advance which is mentioned in the section above. To find the right digital marketing strategy, the researcher tried to consult

and involve different opinions from different sectors like digital marketing agencies employees, and work experience perspective. Table 3 below shows the people who questioned and their positions.

Internal data

This interview has been conducted with the head of marketing department in Eindhoven to understand the internal marketing strategy the company use and if there are some personal remarks on this plan. The interview discussed the same points which discussed with the external interviewees to identify the gap between internal and external plans. Table 3 below shows the participants and their position in the company.

Table 3 Interview paticipants

Description	Number sampled
Online Social advertising consultant at iProspect Digital Performance Marketing Agency (external)	1
SEO & CM executive at iProspect Digital Performance Marketing Agency (external)	1
IIoT Marketing manager EU (internal)	1
IIoT Marketing Specialist (internal)	1
Field marketing manager EMEA at Fluke (external)	1

3.6   The research instrument

Quantitative study instrument

Questionnaire

The study has utilized two tools to collect the required data. For the quantitative study, a questionnaire has been conducted to obtain the needed data from the respondents. According to (David & Peter, 2003,P.11), the questionnaire is a useful tool to collect a quantitative data from a large number of respondents. Although the self-administrated questionnaire allows to the researcher to gather a large number of responses, reduce interviewer bias, this survey needs to be prepared very well means the questions have to be formulated in a precise context where the respondent can answer them simply (Medanth, 2017). In contrast to these features, there are some limitations associated with utilizing the questionnaire as an instrument to collect the required data. For instance response rate can be low, difficult to ensure data validation, and doesn't give room to the respondents to explain what reason behind their opinion (Nigel, Nick, & Amanda, 2009). The questionnaire in this study starts with friendly introduction

includes the survey title which shows the survey topic, and few sentences explain the importance of responses to the researcher, (see appendix 2). The goal of this opening statement is to rest assured participants that their answers and details will be treated confidentially and it will be used only for the thesis report. Furthermore, the introduction shows the researcher contact details if someone has an inquiry related to the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 20 questions divided into two types of questions either multiple choice questions, where the respondent has limited options of answers s/he can select one or more answers from the alternatives. (David & Peter, 2003,P.11). The second type of questions is open questions where the respondent needs to write short answer related to the question. The 20 questions organized based on discussing several points, each group of questions dedicated to investigating a certain point. Table 4 below demonstrates how the questions distributed relative to particular issues. For more details about the questionnaire, (appendix 1 click on the link please).

Table 4 questionnaire questions and the discussed areas

Questions numbers	Area of discussion
1-4	Organization and personal info
5-6-7	Online buying behavior and channels
8-9	Communication method
10-11-12-13	Purchasing decision
14-15	Preferred vendor
16-17-18	Preferred media
19	Obstacles
20	Close question for comment or remarks

Qualitative study research instrument (Unstructured interview)

Unstructured interview

Because of the small number of the participant in this study and the ability to reach them also to understand better the story, an in-depth interview which knowns also as unstructured interview has been conducted in this study to collect the required data from interviewees. This type of conversation characterize by flexibility and the reciprocity in discussion the issue during the meeting, and this allows for the interviewer to get the in-depth in interaction with an interviewee (Ritchie, Peter, & Palmer, 2005). Moreover, the topic has been covered in the form of checklist discussed between the interviewer and the interviewees; the list was prepared in the way of protocol interview which includes six main questions dedicated to addressing the issue and other unplanned questions generated during the meeting. As a tool to create the data, an

unstructured interview has some advantages and disadvantages as well. The main benefits are the interaction with interviewees which enables the interviewer to observe some general factors such as interviewee's attitude, feeling, body language, all these elements would help the researcher better analyzing and make his/her judgment whether the collected data is trusted or not. In contrast to these advantages, an interview has some disadvantages; for instance, the intense interaction with interviewee could result in influencing their answers which ultimately will affect the outcomes (Communication, 2017).

Interview Protocol (for personal use)

Most of the interview questions are open questions where the interviewees can explain the reasons behind their opinions also the researcher has room to generate new questions from the interviewee story. The interview protocol consists of short introduction starts by thanking the participants for accepting an invitation for participation, then explains an interview topic and finally illustrates how the data will be processed. Table 5 below describes how questions are tailored to discuss the Sub-questions. For more details about the interview questions, see the interview protocol (appendix 4 please).

Table 5 categorization of interview questions to answer the Sun-questions

Questions numbers	Area of discussion
1-4	Personal questions
5-6-7	Sub-question 1
8 – 9	Sub-question 2+3
10-11	Sub-question 4
12	Close question

3.6   **Validity and reliability (Quantitative)**

Questionnaire validity

According to (Grey, 2014), the validity of the research concerning with the research instrument used in the study to collect the data. In our quantitative analysis in this study, the matter related to the questionnaire which used to gather data from respondents. The author mentioned different aspects can affect the questionnaire validity; for instance, the words used in the questions, questions sequences or the questionnaire design and layout. Al these factors could change the participant behavior regarding the answering of the questionnaire; moreover, the length of the survey and overlapped questions may influence the inquiry negatively. To avoid all these factors and ensure the questionnaire validity in this study, the

research questions have been checked carefully to ensure the correct formulation. The questionnaire consists of 20 questions can be answered in 5 to 7 minutes maximum according to (Henning, 2013) Some researchers believe that an optimal length time of a survey should be 7-8 minutes suitable for 15-30 questions. The types of questions used in this study are multiple choice, open, checkbox, and short questions; these questions do not require much time to be answered, also not much effort because it designed simply. The questions intended to cover all issues related to the research question as you can see in Table 4, also you can see the questionnaire in (appendix 1 click on the link).

Questionnaire Reliability

The reliability has to do with the results consistency which means getting the same results when replicating the study again in different time and of course, this will simplify the process of generalization (Grey, 2014) (Joop, 2000). In this case, the reliability will depend on the replication time in case the study replicated after short-time then the chance of getting the same results is higher means higher reliability, but if the study is replicated after five years or more, it is possible to get different results. The acceleration in technological progress will make it a bit hard to ensure that the results will be exact from the participants because of the probability of emerging new tools.

Validity and reliability (qualitative)

Interview validity and reliability

According to (Kuzmanić, 2009), the interview validity is associated with the truth which is a very complicated issue in qualitative research, because of the expected impact of an interviewer on the interviewee answers particularly in the case of an unstructured interview. In this case, the researcher tried to reduce influencing an interviewee's opinions as much as he can by avoiding pushing them to give specific answers. Since the reliability means results consistency, in the unstructured interview is quite hard to have reliable results because of unplanned questions which generated during the meeting, which it varies from someone to another (Hamza, Interviewing as a Data Collection Method: A Critical Review, 2014). To ensure some reliability in this study, the researcher tried to ensure the similarity in the unplanned questions has been asked.

Chapter 4 – RESULTS and Findings

This section will show an overview of essential findings from these study which include the results of the quantitative research also the qualitative research.

4.1.1 Findings

Quantitative study

There are different facts have been reveled from the quantitative study which it's applied by the questionnaire. First of all the findings of the survey shows that respondents of the inquiry have a variety positions and this reflected different standpoints which would help the researcher to make a definite conclusion. 42% of the respondents argue the purchasing/ buying department is involved in the buying decision see appendix 1, please. An essential finding of this study is that the searching engines is the significant tool used by the customers when they start searching a product, where 28 out of 31 respondents agree on that, followed by the vendor website. See Figure 4 question 5 from the questonnaire shows the popularity of the SEO below.

5. When searching for information, what are the top three resources on or off line you turn to?

31 responses

I- Social media/...	16 (51.6%)
II- Searching en...	28 (90.3%)
III- Vendor website	17 (54.8%)
IV- Industry exp...	11 (35.5%)
V- Press/ magaz...	5 (16.1%)
VI- Exhibitions a...	4 (12.9%)
VII- Technical fo...	4 (12.9%)
VIII- Electronic d...	6 (19.4%)

II: SEO   IV: experts   V: magazines VI: and trade shows VII: forums   VIII: direct email
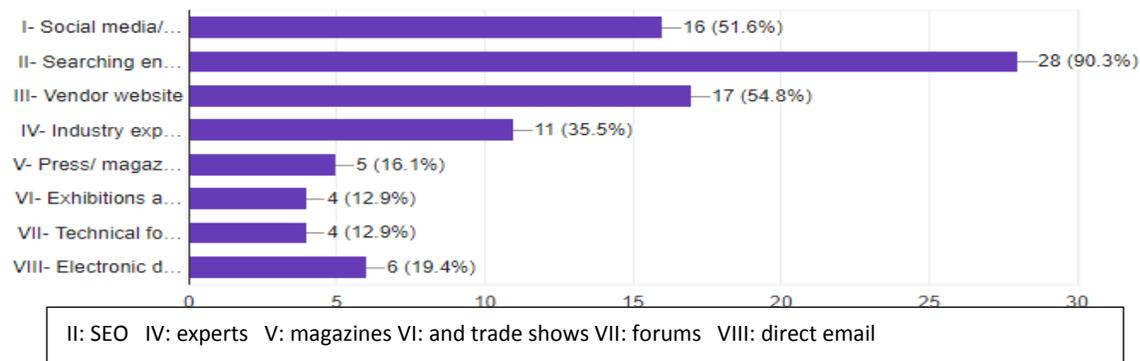
Figure 4 question 5 from the questonnaire shows the popularity of the SEO

Regarding social media usage as we see from literature previously, for B2B social media usually used to increase the brand awareness. But the findings from questionnaire show that the social media can be used to educate the customers and prospects by providing them with some articles and points to discuss in the form of forums or group discussion. Apparently, we can see from the below question from the questionnaire that 54.8% of the respondents regarding this questions prefer to use the social media to post their questions. Therefore, posting white paper, case study, or an article related a product on the relevant websites, technology forums or technology blogs would be more efficient in targeting the right people.

6. Have you used social media as a resource to research products/services you require?

31 responses

I- Not at all	8 (25.8%)
II- Used group d...	17 (54.8%)
III- Communicat...	6 (19.4%)
IV- Posted quest...	10 (32.3%)

II: discussion of forums   III: communicate to the vendor IV: post questions
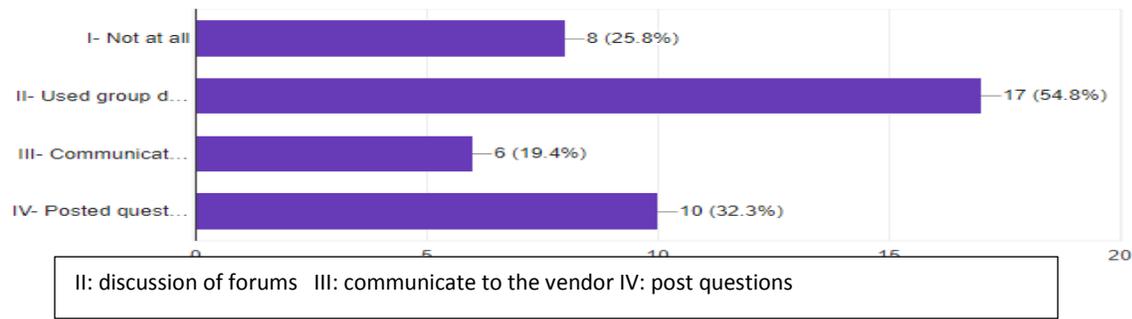
Figure 5 question 6 from the questionnaire shows the usage of social media

According to the research findings, after respondents decide on the selection of the right vendor, they are willing to contacting this vendor through an email, the percentage accounted for 63.3% of the total respondents to this question. See Figure 6 below.

8. How do you prefer to contact vendors?

30 responses

- I- E-mail
- II- Company site
- III- Social media
- IV- phone call

63.3%
20%
16.7%
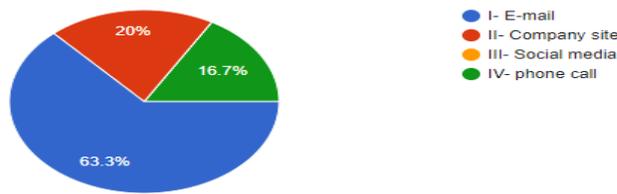
Figure 6 question 8 from the questionnaire shows the preferred communication tools

Another fact has been found from the questionnaire that the international media (associations, events, and eNewletters) are more attractive to the respondents than the local ones mean in France. This fact can be seen in the answers of questions 18 and 19, where the global media such as ANIA, GEPPIA, interpack, Embedded world, Hannover Industry 4.0, toFairs, ppmashow, are mentioned more than the local media see appendix 1, please.

One more critical finding from this study is that the company website plays a significant role in attracting customers to contact the company, where the majority of respondents 71% said they would like to interact with vendors by visiting their websites initially. See figure 7 below.

10 . What type of initial interaction do you prefer with vendors before contacting them directly?

31 responses

- I- Visiting their website
- II- Email communication
- III- Visiting their Trade shows
- IV- Attending webinar

Figure 7 questions 10 from the questionnaire shows the most prefer tool for initial contact.

Price and quality are essential items during searching for the solution, the majority of the respondents agree with this statement. This means company marketers should focus on mentioning these elements in a clear way in their ads. Please see the answer to the question 13 in Figure 8 below.

13. What are the most important considerations in your purchasing decision?

30 responses

I: purpose II: quality & specification III: company reviews V: vendor sustainability VII: vendors
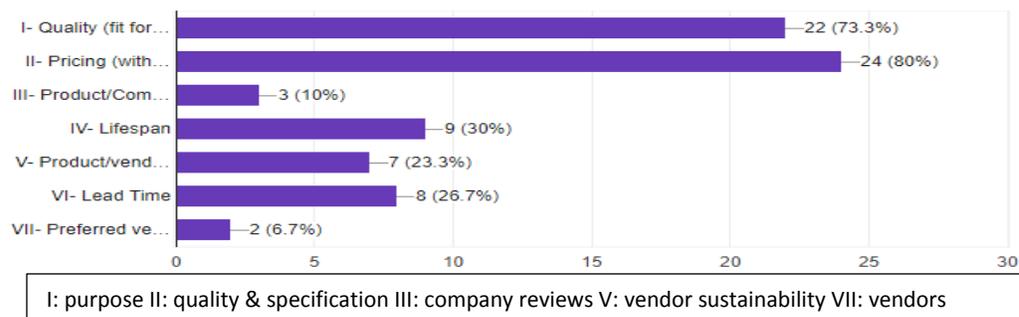
Figure 8 question 13 from the questionnaire shows most critical elements related to the product.

4.1.2   Results

The section gives a short overview of the quantitative research findings these findings are in a sequential order without any bias from the researcher. Obviously, the findings from the previous section indicate to the most important digital marketing tools the company can use to promote their products and communicate with those customers correctly. As a result, the following components have to be taken into the consideration of the company digital marketing strategy because of their significance on the buying journey.

- Searching engines,
- Company website
- E-mail

- Social media
- Market content quality and Price

4.1.3 Finding from qualitative study

<u>Internal findings</u>

These findings have been generated from the internal interview which conducted with the head of the marketing department of the company in Europe. The primary purpose of this meeting is to understand the digital marketing strategy used by the company and compare this strategy to the findings from external interviews and the findings from the quantitative study as well. The goal is to find the gap between the two perspectives if any.

<u>Company marketing strategy</u>: According to the marketing manager in Europe, the company does not have top-down marketing strategy because the company has worldwide marketing teams and much product; therefore, setting a standard marketing strategy by the HQ would not be useful to the company. Another reason explains why the top-down strategy would not be helpful in the global level is that most of the products are manufactured in China and Taiwan, and probably would not be to fit the other regions around the world. To promote this product in the different areas, some adjustments should be made based on the customer's needs in each region. But at the regional level, the company does have a marketing strategy which defined by the heads of IIoT sector. Briefly, this strategy is very flexible, where the senior management in Eindhoven office ask each marketing office in Europe to provide five activities they would like to implement during the year like (trade show, exhibitions, social media, Google display, etc.) and explanation of why these actions precisely. This activities plan will be discussed by the top management to give the approval or the rejection. About the digital marketing strategy in the regional level specifically Europe the company is working on improving this section by hiring a digital marketing expert to oversee on the process in this area; furthermore, the company strives to provide a digital marketing training to the existing employees.

<u>Digital marketing Channels</u>: Not all marketers have the capabilities and the familiarity to utilize the different digital marketing channels, for that reason the company does not has a list of preferred channels regularly used in each campaign, and this automatically would turn us to the budget distribution issue.

Main obstacles

Number of stakeholders: According to the top management that there are many stakeholders participate in implementing campaigns; usually, those stakeholders have different opinions not in align with the pre-set strategy. As a result of these various views from stakeholders in the campaign, a conflict will have occurred which affect the overall performance of the campaign.

Advantech Marketers: The majority of the company marketers in the EU region can be divided into two categories based on their educational background. The first group people who have a marketing background MarCom (marketing and communication), the second group are non-marketers, this includes employees who have another education background than marketing, but they are working in the marketing department for a long time. Both segments do not have sufficient knowledge to set a digital marketing strategy. Although the MarCom employees have a marketing background, this background confined to market communication tasks, where the primary functions are placing advertisements on media, or Google AdWords and communicate with the market (MaRS, 2013).

Budget distribution: As it mentioned previously, the top marketing manager ask his team members in different countries around Europe to provide their annual activities they would like to implement, the budget will be allocated based on this actions.

4.1.4   External findings

These findings have been drawn from an interview data which conducted with some experts outside the company, the respondents have an experience in the digital marketing, and they represent multiple fields see Table 3 in chapter 3. Because the study conducts mixed methodology precisely a sequential explanatory, the researcher focuses only on the similar or the conflicting answers from the respondents and compare them to the findings from the quantitative research.

Search engines optimization: The majority of the interviewees agree that the searching engines are the most critical tool to the B2B to promote their product, and the company should improve their searching engines advertisement (SEA) to enhance their ranking in the searching engines optimization (SEO). Another fact the IIoT websites should be organized in a friendly way like optimizing the website content.

**Social media and third website:** The focus point of those experts was the LinkedIn, websites and blogs that dedicated to the machinery builders. The concentration on these tools will enable the company to communicate a large number of the target audience.

**LinkedIn:** Another fact that in B2B social media can be used in the top of the funnel to increase the brand awareness about the company, and mainly the LinkedIn because you can filter people based on their position in the company also you can target the decision maker in the company. From the experts perspective, the LinkedIn can be used to target a specific audience and bring them to the company website which it should include another social media bar to keep tracking that audience on the other social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

**Google display Network (GDN):** In addition to the LinkedIn and the other social media platforms, the participants have mentioned the Google display advertisements as a significant tool to publish ads on the relevant websites. Furthermore using related blogs and forums to post white paper or case study will result in increasing the awareness to the existing customers and prospects customers as well. Table 6 below shows the significant findings from the external.

Table 6 findings from the qualitative study

Participants	Searching engines	Social media/ relevant sites	LinkedIn	Company website	GDN	Obstacles
Marketing agency	HR	HR	HR	HR	HR	Trust/cost/competition
Marketing Agency	HR	HR	HR	HR	HR	Trust/cost/competition
Work experience	HR	HR	HR	R	HR	Cost/trust/privacy regulation/competition

HR= high recommended   **R**= recommended

**Ensure the effectiveness:** To ensure the effectiveness of these tools, marketers should set a proper strategy which shows precisely the goal the company want to achieve from this campaign, identify the TA, determine the primary tools, budget, and the time-bound; furthermore, marketers should be able to analyze data and make the right decision based on this analysis.

Obstacles: Getting trust on the new tools, for instance, using LinkedIn campaign or sales navigator tool is very costly, and marketers are not sure whether they will get a good ROI or not. Although these tools are a bit expensive, B2B should try to use these tools because getting one client in B2B means high profit mainly if this customer become a partner. Other obstacles have been mentioned is an intense competition where competitors can create a competitive website and achieve better ranking on the SEO. One more significant barrier discussed only by the work experience is the privacy regulations and this point is related to the outbound emails which is considered as a useful tool in the B2B

Budget distribution: In the beginning, marketers should make a forecast and based on the initial results the budget can be allocated, besides this idea, there was a consensus on the investment on the searching engines as the most important tool, and the majority of the budget should invest to optimize the SEO and to get better ranking. Table 7 below explains the optimal distribution of the budget based on the expert opinions.

Table 7 budget distribution.

Budget in percentage	Area of invest
70%	invest on the known tools
20%	invest on what marketers think it would work
10%	invest on the new tools

4.1.5   Results

It's obvious, the findings from the quantitative study have been supported by the qualitative findings as we can see there are some common points between the two studies. Searching engines represent an essential tool for such business, LinkedIn is the most important social media platform. Besides the common points, the qualitative research has mentioned other significant aspects such as GDN which is more relevant to the company website, and this tool is mentioned in the quantitative findings.

4.2   Analysis

This study uses descriptive statistics to analyze the findings from both studies. According to (Zikmund, Barry J, Jon C, & Mitch, Business research methods, 2009, p. 413), "descriptive statistics is used to summarize and describe the data in simple and understandable manner". From this simple definition, we use our gathered data from both studies to describe the suitable digital marketing strategy to solve the

management problem. Since the main question has been broken into small sub-questions, therefore; we need to answer these questions to be able answering the central question correctly.

Sub-questions

Q1. What are the top three marketing tools the B2B marketers often used to target their audience?

Apparently, the question has delimited the answer to the best three marketing tools, but because most of the tools are interrelated and essential to create a successful marketing strategy, the researcher gives more room to the interviewees to mention the most important ones. Most of the answers from the quantitative and the qualitative studies indicated that the best marketing tools that would assist the company to promote their product in these markets are:

- Searching engines
- Social media particularly the LinkedIn
- Company website
- Google display Network
- Third party websites and the dedicated groups and forums

Q2. What are the common obstacles usually faced by marketers during the implementation of these tools?

The answer to this question was obvious as we can see in Table 6, that the most common obstacles faced marketers while implementing the mentioned tools is the trust and the cost. By the trust, the experts mean whether these tools will come up with the desired results or not and the cost is related to the return on the investment (ROI) mainly in case of using the social media tools like the LinkedIn which is very costly. Furthermore, the intense competition mostly in the SEO where the competitors have a good online presence.

How Can B2B marketers overcome these obstacles?

To overcome these obstacles, the experts advised the company's marketers to try to use these tools for a specific period and measure the results. Regarding the competition, the company needs to improve their ranking on the SEO by optimizing the SEA. Privacy regulations particularly for the EU customers because the strict privacy regulations. To overcome this obstacle, the company should hire or consult a legal team also they can pick up the most difficult regulations and applied to all customers.

How should the B2B marketers distribute the limited budget between multiple channels?

The answer to this question stated clearly in Table 7 Where all external participants agreed on one budget plan to allocate the limited budget. Marketers should invest the majority 70% of the budget on the tools that are familiar with and have trusted results, 20 % of the budget can be spent on things that marketers they think maybe it would work, and the 10% should be invested in the idea that entirely new for the team.

What is the appropriate digital marketing strategy to promote Advantech's dedicated products to the food processing machinery builders in France successfully?

By taking a look at the questionnaire answers, simply, we can identify which market plan needed to promote IIoT product in the French market successfully. The strategy is divided into two parts to simplifying the implementation process:

External part

Communication

This part is concerning more on how the company can communicate to the current and the prospect's customers in the French market.

Language: Marketers should keep using the English language to communicate with the market instead of translating the market content and the ads to the French language. This fact has been concluded from the survey findings were more than 65% of the respondents prefer to use the English in communication instead of the French see question 9 in appendix 1, please. Another finding supported this statement is the performance of the English ads in comparison to the French ones, where the English page has generated much traffic in contrast to the French page see appendix 3, please. One more thing related to the translation issue, unless the content translated by a technical person, probably the message's meaning will be changed. *Email:* One of the most effective tools in the marketing, the survey results revealed that more 63% of the respondents prefer to communicate vendor through an email see question 8 in appendix 1. Although the company use this tool, still need to excel in it and improve the performance, there are some valuable points mentioned in the recommendation sector explaining how marketers could develop this tool.

Website visibility: The question's answer in figure 4 shows that the customer's journey starts with the SEO, this requires improvements in the SEA-related to the IIoT websites to achieve better ranking in the SEO. The recommendation in section 5.2 shows how the company can improve the online presence.

Social media and third party websites: Question 6 in Appendix 1 explains how existing/potential customers are using the social media; this tool would enable the company to narrow down their target audience and targeting them directly because most of the members in these groups, forums or blogs are interested in the products that similar to what the company promote. This answer gives an indicator to the IIoT marketers on how they can use these tools efficiently. Section 5.2 of the recommendation explains how this tool can be used optimally. Another fact from the qualitative study where the external experts have agreed on the LinkedIn tool as the most suitable platform for the company to target the right people and this tool was highly recommended by all participants.

Internal part

This section is related to the IIoT marketer's daily activities in the company which is relevant to the findings from the quantitative study.

IIOT website: The findings from the quantitative study have confirmed that company website is the most significant tool because it's representing the first real communication with the company. After the web user writes the keyword on the searching engines will get an initial connection with the company through the website see Figure 7. More feedback and recommendations regarding the improvements can be found in section 5.2.

Google display Network: This tool is more related to the searching engines, where the company will post their advertisement. According to the answers in 8, price and quality represent significant points to the customers; therefore, these points should be visible in the ads. Advantech has many strong points that differentiate them from the competitors such as product customization; these features have to be mentioned explicitly in the ads. Although the majority of the respondents are international companies, still they have price sensitive.

Purchase process: Usually, the B2B companies have a long and complicated sales journey, but here we think about the products, not projects. Therefore, the length of the purchase process for the majority of those customers is between 2 to 4 weeks, and this would easiest the tracking process to the marketers

To sum up, the food machinery builder companies in France only are 175, IIoT marketers can categorize these businesses based on some characteristics. For example, the food processing industry includes many sectors (packaging, Bakery and confectionery, Bottle, etc.), other merits could be the company size or the length of the purchasing process. Next step will be brand awareness based on the customer's position; if the customer already exists in the company database, the brand awareness process requires an update, in case of the new customer, marketers should start brand awareness from scratch. Next step will be selecting the right marketing tools for the brand awareness, based on the survey, social media, forums, and blogs can be used to educate those customers, mainly the LinkedIn campaign which is highly recommended. In social media, blogs, or forums there should be Links to guide those customers to the IIoT websites which should be organized well otherwise the visitors will leave the page immediately. When those visitors go the IIoT pages the GDN advertisements particularly the remarketing ads should be ready to post on the third party websites where those customers are visiting it usually. The antepenultimate step will be sending the customized electronic direct mail (eDM) to those customers, and the privacy issue should be taken into consideration in this action. The penultimate stage is to finalize the sales process through the sales team. Ultimately, marketers should keep following up those customers by checking their satisfaction and provide after sales services if any.

CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   Conclusion

To sum up, this study was aiming to provide a proper digital marketing plan which enables the company to promote their product to the food and beverage machinery builders in the France market. The study conducts mixed methodology by applying the specifically the Sequential Explanatory tactic. The primary research was the quantitative and the data had been gathered from the literature and the questionnaire respondents. These data was served as the backbone of the whole study. The second study was a qualitative research, where the data has been gathered from respondents representing two different fields (Work experience, and marketing agencies Specialists). An unstructured interview tactic has been used as an instrument to collect the required data from interviewees; these data served as the secondary data to support or reject the findings from the quantitative study.

Based on the results and the findings from the desk research and the field research (internal and external), the conclusion of the study can be divided into two parts, an internal conclusion based on internal interviews which is summarized in the following points:

- There is a common marketing strategy in the company, but there is no clear digital marketing strategy.
- The majority of the marketers in the company aren't qualifying enough to set up a digital marketing strategy because of their academic background which doesn't fit the tasks.
- The shortage of knowledge regarding the digital marketing strategies area particularly the social media has led to the lack of using this tool optimally.
- The involvement of many stakeholders in the processes of identifying the right market content, finding a specific TA, and the proper marketing channels obstruct the process of setting up an appropriate digital marketing strategy to promote the product successfully.

The second conclusion has been extracted from the external data which gathered from the existing and the potential customers also interview's data which has collected from the experts. The below points summarized the second conclusion:

- Searching engines are the most significant tool in the digital marketing because it considered as the first step in the customers buying journey also it has been highly recommended by the experts.

- Social media play a significant role in the promotion process which enables marketers to identify the right TA and send them the relevant content; furthermore, it can be used to increase the awareness regarding the brand and the products.
- The company's website represents the interface of the company where the initial communication between the company and the customers occur.
- The email is the preferred tool to the customers for communicating with the company.
- Google display network which includes multiple types of advertisements strategies considered as the main gate to achieve a real online presence also it works alongside the SEO.
- Besides the LinkedIn as a useful tool to access to the TA quickly, publishing an article, case study or white paper on the third party websites or in dedicated online groups, blogs and forums also help in reaching those audiences quickly.

As we can see the data from different studies in the analysis section have provided a clear description of how the customers start their journey and what communication tools they prefer to use and the way of using the social media. Also, the rest of the results have explained how the company can efficiently reach those customers. Regarding answering the main question in the analysis part, the provided strategy represents the right solutions to achieve better results. The findings from the different studies and multiple sources have formulated a useful mixed strategy. This mixed plan includes the internal and the external perspective which would contribute significantly in tackling the management problem because it covered the most significant points and this has enabled the researcher to achieve the research objective by answering the main research question and come up with the most proper strategy.

5.2 Recommendations

In this section, the concentration will be on the project objective, management problem, and the deliverables. Therefore, the recommendations will be divided into two categories, the first category has been formulated based on the study data which gathered by questionnaire, interview, and the literature and the second recommendation has been drawn based on the campaign performance and results (appendixes 3). The main objective of this project is to find the most efficient online marketing communication plan where the company can get more customers and sales and execute the select topic which provided by the top management in Taiwan. The select program is called Process Visualization for Food and Beverage; this program consists of landing page includes all the products related to the food and beverage which manufactured by the company. Furthermore, the program contains all marketing materials needed to implement a successful campaign, and the company gave the trainee an access to all platforms and systems such as:

(Google Analytics, Googe Adwords, Hotjar,UNICA,CMS,eCampaing,Siebel,WordPress), these materials have been used during the campaign time.

Recommendation from the Study data:

Based on the existing data which is collected from multiple sources the following recommendations have been formulated.

Online presence (SEO): Since the SEO represent the start points to the customers, marketers should enhance the online presence to the IIoT products and make the IIoT websites more visible and accessible; this will lead to achieving a better positioning in the organic search results. There are many tactics to improve the SEO, but here we would like to focus on the below points because are very crucial and associated with the daily activities in the marketing department.

- Optimize the SEA which it would lead to optimizing the SEO and achieving the better ranking. The focus points here will be the advertisements (paid/unpaid), the results from campaigns of the select topic show that more than 97% of the page views come from the paid Ads see appendix7, please. Because of the high significance of this type of ads the marketer should pay extra attention to maximize the benefit from this ads. According to (Cabaniss, 31) the following points should be taken into considerations of the company marketers before creating the ads:
- Understand customer's intent and their searching phases, and whether they are at the start or in the decision phase then based on these stages, marketers can prepare their advertisements.
- Keep tracking the keywords performance.
- Use the successful keywords in multiple ads channels means you are providing free assistance to your competitors, and this will push you to raise the cost per conversion. In another word, the successful keywords should be used in specific channels.
- The re-marketing video ads is an efficient tool also the campaign's results proved this fact, please see appendix 3.This ad can be used as the reminder for those who visited the IIoT websites, in case of the long buying journey the ads can be extended for an extended period.
- Drop the main keywords in the main titles (Title tag) and the first paragraph, because these titles are related directly to the searching engines. Moreover, decrease the texts and use the images, infographics, gifs, and videos which explain better to the visitors and would decrease the bounce rate in the web page (bwired, bwired, 2017). Regularly, keep tracking the keyword performance on the Google Analytics where you can see which keyword generate high or low traffic to the page.

Email (communication): Since the majority of the sales in the company come through the email marketing, and the majority of customer prefer to contact the company through the email, this indicates to the importance of this tool in the marketing process. This tool should be used optimally, for instance, the company can categorize customers based on some characteristics (locations, gender, and age), and the best customization will be based on the customer's needs because what is fit for food machinery probably wouldn't fit for beverage machinery. According to (campaignmonitor, 2017) an email with personalization subject is 26% more likely to be opened than impersonalized email.

Figure 9 importance of personalizing email

Social media (LinkedIn and Facebook: The social media platforms should be the focal point for the marketing department in this company because this tool would enable the marketers to specify their TA also the tool used by customers to get more information see Figure 5. As it mentioned in chapter 2, the current use of the social media by the company marketers is insufficient, and the reason is the lack of knowledge regarding this tool and the costs associated. To achieve better results from this tool, you should be able to identify the appropriate platform from the alternative. LinkedIn and Facebook are the most suitable tools for the B2B mainly the LinkedIn platform which is highly recommended by experts Table 6 , the findings from the (The B2B buyer's survey report, 2016) strongly support this standpoint where the survey shows the LinkedIn as the most powerful social media platform for the B2B. Based on this fact the social media platforms especially the LinkedIn should be used as a principal tool while implementing campaigns. The LinkedIn campaign and Sales Navigator consider as the most effective marketing tools it's highly recommended to the B2B (Aja, 2017); therefore, the company should reconsider using these tools albeit for a short trial period and measure the performance Setting a social media campaigns is not a complicated issue, but the problem is how to set up an effective one and take a decision based on the analyzed data.

Company website: The Company should start improving their SEO performance with their website and make it friendly and navigable mainly the home page which represents the start point in visitor journey within the IIoT websites. These sites should state the company solutions and products features, and what thing differentiate Advantech product/ solution from competitor's products, in this case, the customization will be the most suitable feature (bwired, bwired, 2017).

Customize the IIoT website contents to the customers' needs. This process requires collecting many data to identify the customer's pain points, according to the (The B2B buyer's survey report, 2016), "69 percent of B2B buyers say the most influential aspect of a company's website is content that speaks directly to their needs".

Third party websites and the dedicated groups and forums: These platforms can be used to increase the opportunity of reaching more customers and usually are dedicated to a specific industry in this case the company has to focus on the websites that devoted to machinery builders mainly the food and beverage machinery. Another recommendation in this area is joining food processing machinery groups on the social media mainly the LinkedIn, for instance, this group (Food Processing Equipment), or M2M (MACHINE TO MACHINE) on Viadeo the number one social media platform in France. According to the findings from the quantitative study the international associations and organizations such as (geppia, interpack,CFIA, toFairs, ppmashow, drinktec, All4pack) have been mentioned more than the local ones, as a recommendation, the company can sponsor some events which are held by one of these organizations.

19. Can you identify two important (local or European) trade shows that are associated to your industry?

19 responses
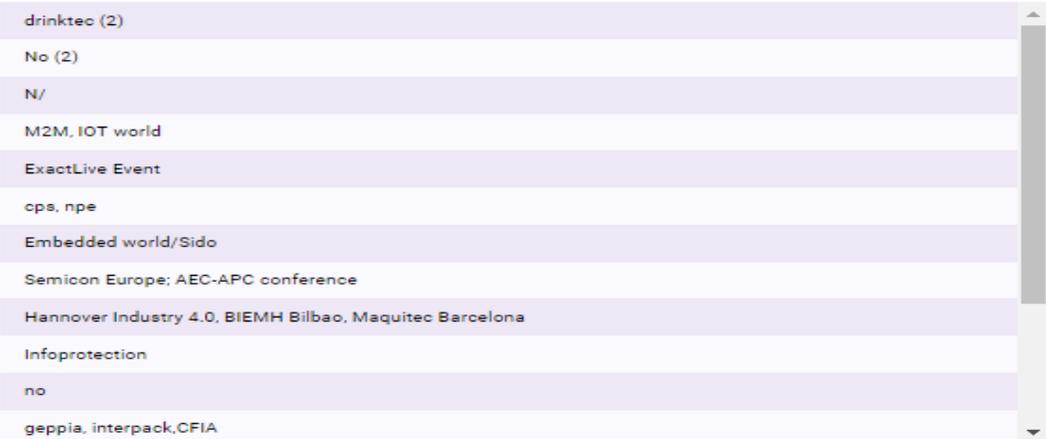
drinktec (2)
No (2)
N/
M2M, IOT world
ExactLive Event
cps, npe
Embedded world/Sido
Semicon Europe; AEC-APC conference
Hannover Industry 4.0, BIEMH Bilbao, Maquitec Barcelona
Infoprotection
no
geppia, interpack,CFIA

Figure 10 importance of global associations

5.3 Organizational and Financial consequences

This section will focus on the company capability to implementing the mentioned recommendations, the organization capability indicates to the readiness of the company, and the financial will mean the investment and the implementation costs.

Organizational consequences

SEO, SEA, IIoT Websites: The good news in this arena is that the majority of regional marketers have a MarCom background, which means they know how to place or post advertisements on the channels. But the issue is a bit bigger than putting an ad on a channel, and it is related to data analysis, tracking the performance and taking action based on the data. And therefore the top management maybe need to send a regular reminder to the marketers and inducing them to enhance the performance of advertisements. The company now in a transition phase from the products to the solutions, therefore, the market contents and the ad's messages on the IIoT websites should be updated to align the company strategy.

Social media: As we have seen in the previous chapters the significance of this tool for marketers, the existing marketers in the IIoT department in EU are unqualified to use this tool in their campaign. Therefore, the IIoT marketing manager can postpone the implementation of this tool till training the existing marketers or hiring specialists. Another option the company can consult an expert digital marketing agency to manage the social media campaigns. Some of these agencies provide some guarantee to the company that the campaign goal will be achieved in the given time. Although the using the social media particularly the LinkedIn and Facebook needs for a considerable investment to ensure the successful, the company has the financial capability to utilize this tool. The results from the select topic show that the massive investment in the local media in France (eNewsletter banner) has generated low results relative to the amount invested (almost €4000 created 27 unique page views). Another evidence that confirms the ineffectiveness of this local media is the results of the quantitative study which shown to

41

what extent customers are interested in the global media, not the local ones. See

17. What e-newsletters are you subscribed to?
16 responses

none (2)
Sourcing journal
industry
Food navigator
Advantech
NA
Linkedin, Prevention forum, SICK, Keyence, Advantech.
s
goldpeg,
profoodworld
no

SIAL,ALL4pack
M2M,
N/A
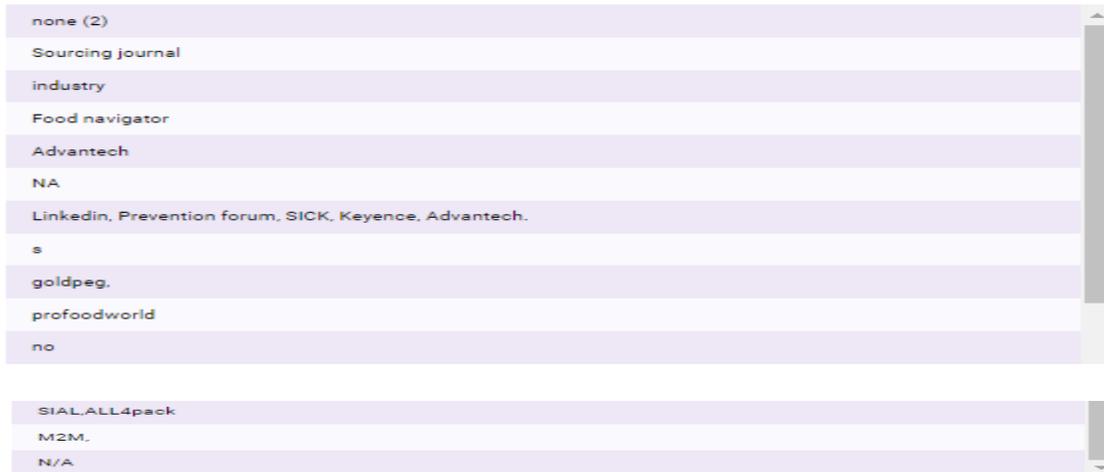
Figure 11 importance of international eNewsletter

<u>*Third party websites and the dedicated groups and forums:*</u> The company has an excellent reputation can enable them to approach some dedicated blogs to allow them to publish a regular (monthly) articles in this blogs mainly the blogs owned by individuals (influencers). Beside the exist LinkedIn page for IIoT, the process visualization sector can create their group and invite the people who are interested in this topic. Of course, the company can create such group because they already have the materials (articles, white papers, case studies, and specialists), creating such group doesn't need for financial investment.

5.4   Final remarks

As it mentioned in the summary of chapter 2, the B2B marketing arena undergoing significant development because of the growth of the technology and new marketing tools continue to emerge. The marketing department should stay updated and able to apply the new tools and the improvement in the existing ones. The above recommendations have been formulated based on the current situation; therefore, the implementation of these suggestions should be started immediately. To prevent the ongoing problem occurs in the future, the top marketing manager has to take some action such as hiring qualified marketers or educate the existing ones. This study has been limited to a specific period which is17 weeks and this time-bound is short to understand the customer's behavior, especially for B2B. The study findings and recommendations represent a good foundation for the future studies. The future studies should focus on gathering more data mainly from customers to draw a clear online journey map which it will facilitate the promotion process in the future.

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7. Critical reflection

Researching digital marketing arena, was a great chance to learn more about the new digital marketing tools and to elaborate my knowledge regarding the existing tools. During this research, I have expanded my experience in this area by studying more literature and following online blogs and joining dedicated groups on the many social media platforms.

One of my dreams was finding a multinational company where I can do my graduation internship, and finally, this dream is becoming true. Advantech has provided me with an excellent opportunity to apply my theoretical studies in a real task and allowed me to work close to the company experts, and that was one of my pleasure. During this period I have learned many things related to the organisational work also the personal skills. First of all, the company gave me an access to many marketing platforms and systems that only used by big companies such as IBM, also supported me with free training on how to use these tools. Another critical benefit I have got it from the company is the discipline at work.

On the personal level, I have remarked that many aspects have been improved in my personality and I have gained essential competencies I will mention here the most significant ones:

- The most important skill I learned during this period, taking the responsibilities where the company offers me all tools and budget needed and allows me to execute my ideas and this was challenging for me.
- To be able to take the responsibility you should have sufficient knowledge, which requires a stating questions, this pushed me to communicate with multiple employees who have multi-cultural backgrounds. As a result, my communication skills (written/oral) have been improved significantly.
- Data analysis and making a reasonable conclusion, one of the valuable skills I have learned during this period since I was responsible for tracking and analyzing the data gathered from varies platforms.

Of course, all these skills and the new marketing tools which I learned during this project will contribute positively to finding my future job in the digital marketing area.

In contrast to all these positive points mentioned above, I have remarks some negative points from this experience such as: Advantech is a multinational company and they have many priorities important than the internship program; therefore, the employees have many things to do, and this makes obtaining the information from some of them seem to be difficult.

- Work under stress. At the begin of this internship, my orientation plan was scheduled for at least three meeting daily beside the usual task also the school assignment, but I have adapted myself after a while, and it was a great experience

- The company has a very complicated management system, and many stakeholders are involved in the process which sometimes results in delaying the decision making process.

- Due to constructions in the company, the marketing department was included eight employees who make the concentration a bit difficult particularly in the online meeting, but recently, we have moved to a comfortable office.

8. Appendixes

Appendix 1: Questionnaire responses Link

Digital marketing questionnaire
40 responses

1. Your company/organisation
25 responses

Undisclosed

Sphinx France

Kibo

Cheetah

Unstoppable Global Consultants

INTEGRAL SYSTEM

Equine Sublime

ST Microelectronics / Manufacturing deprtment

DEIMA INGENIEROS, SA

Haymarket Media

T3R

Grolleau

dsad

SDTN SARL

Department store

Sidel

FACTORY SYSTEMES

Southern Airlines

ACTINI Group

SNC ROBOT COUPE TECHNOLOGIES

Prefer not to say

PDC Europe

Pepperl und Fuchs

Self-employed

2. In What industry does your company/organization operate?

29 responses

3. What are your job tasks/responsibilities?

25 responses
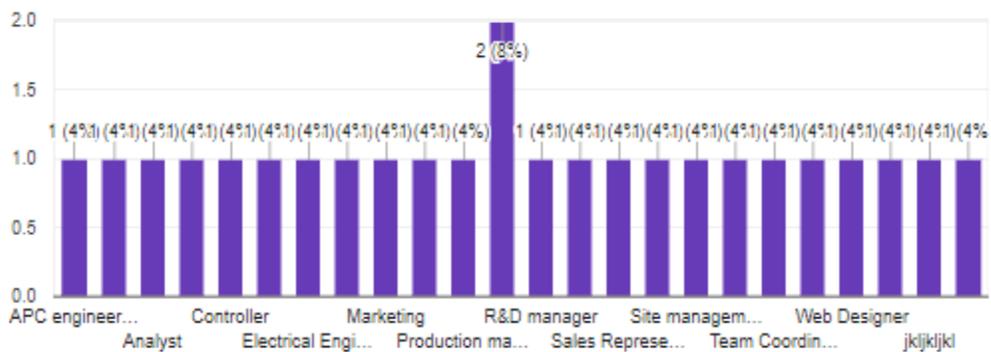
4. How many people are employed directly by your company/organization?

31 responses
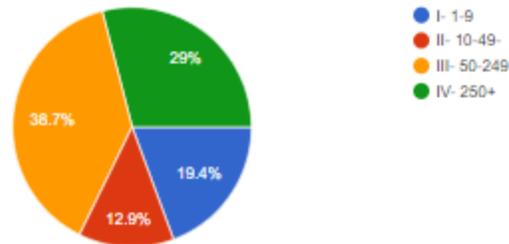
- I- 1-9
- II- 10-49-
- III- 50-249
- IV- 250+

29%
38.7%
19.4%
12.9%

5. When searching for information, what are the top three resources on or off line you turn to?

31 responses

Resource	Count
I- Social media/...	16 (51.6%)
II- Searching en...	28 (90.3%)
III- Vendor website	17 (54.8%)
IV- Industry exp...	11 (35.5%)
V- Press/ magaz...	5 (16.1%)
VI- Exhibitions a...	4 (12.9%)
VII- Technical fo...	4 (12.9%)
VIII- Electronic d...	6 (19.4%)

6. Have you used social media as a resource to research products/services you require?

31 responses

Category	Value
I- Not at all	8 (25.8%)
II- Used group d...	17 (54.8%)
III- Communicat...	6 (19.4%)
IV- Posted quest...	10 (32.3%)
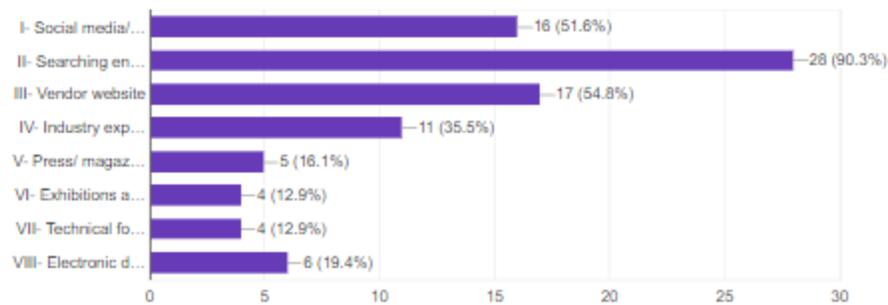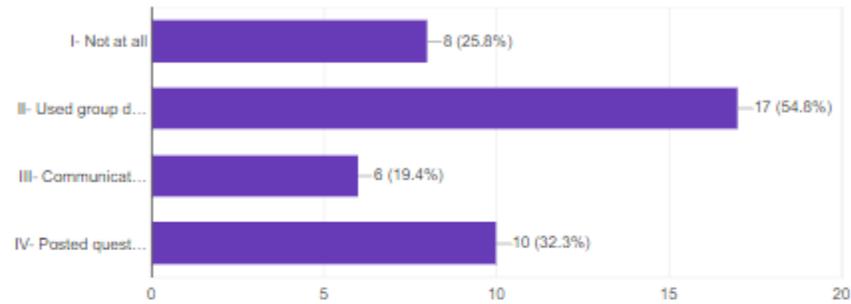
7. Do you use local media as a search resource? If yes, which do you use

20 responses

8. How do you prefer to contact vendors?

30 responses

- I- E-mail
- II- Company site
- III- Social media
- IV- phone call

20%
16.7%
63.3%
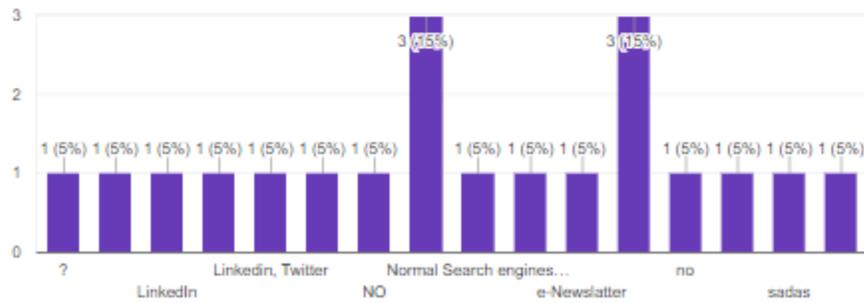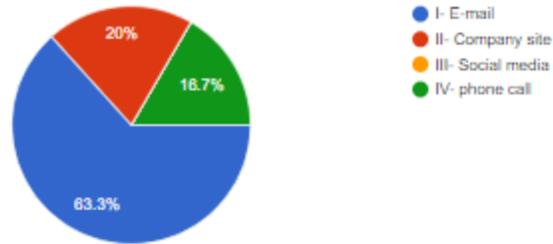
9. What language do you prefer to communicate with Vendors?

29 responses
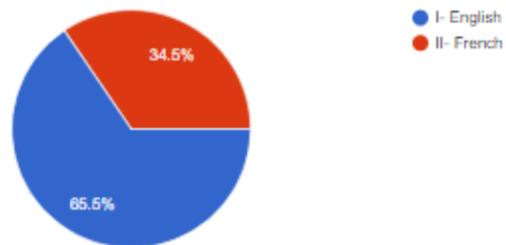
- I- English
- II- French

34.5%
65.5%

10 . What type of initial interaction do you prefer with vendors before contacting them directly?

31 responses

- I- Visiting their website
- II- Email communication
- III- Visiting their Trade shows
- IV- Attending webinar

71%

22.6%
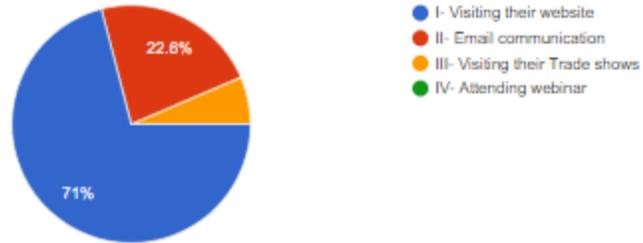
11. On average, how long is the purchase process (for individual products, not projects)?

31 responses

- I- 0-2 weeks
- II- 2-4 week
- III- 1-3 months
- IV- 3-6 months
- V- More than 6 months

19.4%

9.7%

35.5%

32.3%
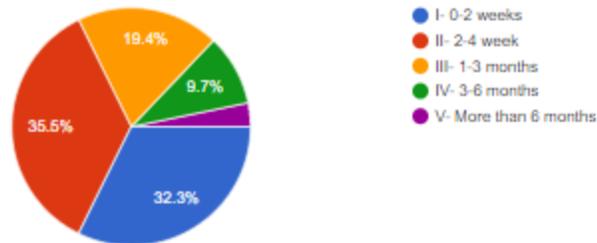
12. What other departments/individuals are involved in the purchasing process?

26 responses

purchasing department (2)
Buying
financial and administrative department
Assistant
It
sales
Sales department
None
purchase department
Purchasing and Logistics Dept
the whole department
Secretary

buying department
s
buying department
purchasing, Finance,Sales, product
no
Supply Chain, Technology, Operations
supply chain, purchasing department,finance department
supply chain, purchasing, finance
Mainly another department, my department not involved
many departments involve
none
finance

13. What are the most important considerations in your purchasing decision?

30 responses

I- Quality (fit for...	22 (73.3%)
II- Pricing (with...	24 (80%)
III- Product/Com...	3 (10%)
IV- Lifespan	9 (30%)
V- Product/vend...	7 (23.3%)
VI- Lead Time	8 (26.7%)
VIII- Preferred ve...	2 (6.7%)
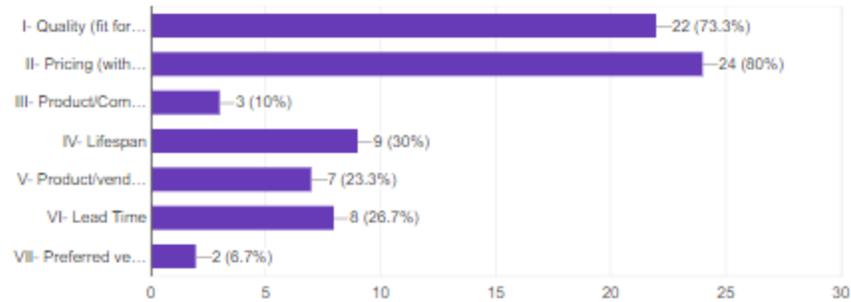
14. What is your preference when choosing where to buy a product?

30 responses

- I- Any vendor
- II- solution provider
- III- Catalogue House
- IV- one-stop buying (special vendor)

46.7%
36.7%
10%
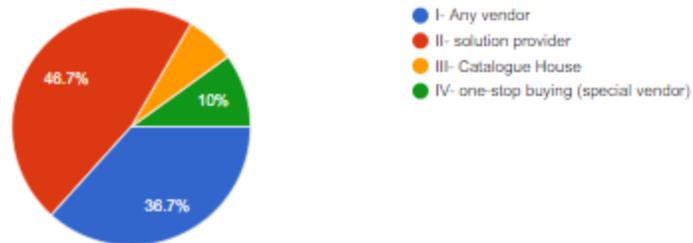
15. Do you have a preferred vendor list?

30 responses

Yes	17 (56.7%)
NO	14 (46.7%)
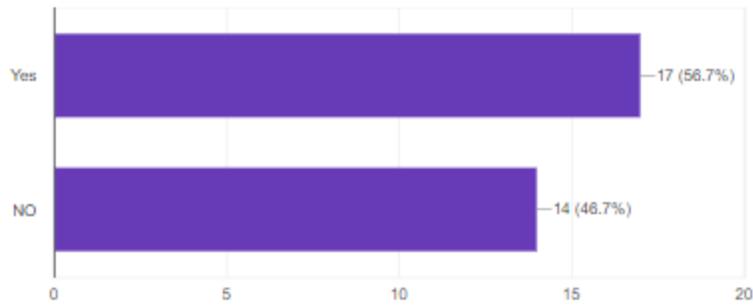
16. If yes, what criteria was used to add vendor to this list?

15 responses

Spend and ethical audit status

Responsiveness

performance

sustainability, fair trade, accountability

Prices

products already used in the company , customer statisfied

Usually needs

ethical issues, fair trade

Capability to Supply the Right product

Performance, Vendor relationship with support, product innovation and. Ustomuzation

collaboration, sustainability,performance,solution provider

Trustworthy, solutions provider,

Not sure, was not involved personally

Certification

people who have given a good quote

17. What e-newsletters are you subscribed to?

17 responses

none (2)
Sourcing journal
industry
Food navigator
Advantech
NA
Linkedin, Prevention forum, SICK, Keyence, Advantech.
s
goldpeg,
profoodworld
no
Aviation and government

SIAL,ALL4pack
M2M,
N/A
None

18. Can you identify two important member organisations/associations that are associated to your industry?

17 responses

no (3)
N/a
ANIA
Magento
rvia, osha
GEPPIA, ANIA,
GIMELEC/ROBOTS TIMES CONNECT
SEMI organization
Magna, SMP
ICAO
CECIMO
Prefer not to say

interpack, ECPA,

esomar, mrs

No

19. Can you identify two important (local or European) trade shows that are associated to your industry?

21 responses

drinktec (2)

No (2)

N/

M2M, IOT world

ExactLive Event

cps, npe

Embedded world/Sido

Semicon Europe; AEC-APC conference

Hannover Industry 4.0, BIEMH Bilbao, Maquitec Barcelona

Infoprotection

no

geppia, interpack,CFIA

interpack, Sepem, toFairs, ppmashow

Smart industries - France and InMachine + OnProcess - France

IATA

ppmashow, All4pack,CFIA,SEPAG

SYMOP

CFIA,PACKINNOVE EUROPE,SEPAG

No

20. What is/ are the common obstacles that facing you during your buying journey?

19 responses

Price, quality
selection from alternatives
cost, pricing, quality, supply chain
Direct sales from the Partner Advantech/No information from Advantech about the evolution of the prices/Fierce competition on the prices in France
Finding a trusting vendor, especially in Asia, because you're not just going there to assess the product, but try to buy online.
Purchase approval process (big company) ; supliers internal referencement
Lead time
Find the good product
lack of information regarding a certain product
no
identify the right product, product reliability

to much choice
No obstacles
Timeframe with legal
NP
no obstacles
Not sure, as my department is not involved in the process
NO obstacles
Negotiating prices

21. Do you have any suggestion or remarks?

11 responses

no (6)
No (2)
NO (2)
N/A

Appendix 2: Questionnaire form <u>Link</u>

Digital marketing questionnaire

Hi There,
Thank you for taking the time to fill in my questionnaire. All your answers will be used solely for the purpose of my thesis, and will be kept in the strictest of confidence. Your opinion is very much appreciated. If you do have any concerns about the information you are providing, or the survey itself, please don't hesitate to contact me.

o.osamamohammedahmed@student.fontys.nl

Thanks in advance.
Osama Mohammed
Digital marketing Trainee at Advantech in Eindhoven

Advantech Corp.

Appendix 3: budget sheet and the AdWords campaign performance

IA_display_AUK_OM_Food&Beverage	Search Network with Display Select	1 Text	eliegible	2 5 Oct - 8 Nov	23803	39	32.52 €		Medium
Total					23676	33		€ 32.52	
iA_display_FR_EN_Food&Beverage_OM	Display Network only	1 Lightbox	paused	1 31 Oct - 1 Nov	11,412	2	€ 19.53		Ineffective
		2 Responsive	eligible	3 26 Oct - 8 Nov	10222	172	€ 10.00		Effective
		2 Display	eligible	1 26 Oct - 8 Nov	72,332	5,250	€ 570.00		Effective
Total					93,966	5424		€ 599.53	
iA_display_AFR_OM_Food and Beverage	Display Network only	3 Responsive	Eligible	3 26 Oct - 8 Nov	1044	28	1.29 €		Ineffective
		3 Display ad	Eligible	1 26 Oct- 8 Nov	69,191	5,140	586.08 €		Effective
		1 Lightbox ad	Paused	1 31 Oct- 1 Nov	9,147	0	21.63 €		ineffective
Total					79382	5168		609.00 €	
IA_display_AFR_OM_Food&Beverage	Search Network with Display	1 Text ad	eligible	2 9 Oct - 5 Nov	0	0			
Total					0	0	0.00 €		
IA_display_RE_OM_FR	Display Network only - Drive action	1 Remarketing	eligible	1 3 Nov - 5 Nov	6	0	0.00 €		Ineffective
Total					4	0		0.00 €	
IA-display-RE-OM-EN	Display Network only - Drive action	1 Remarketing	eligible	1 3 Nov - 5 Nov	20,396	285	9.50 €		Effecetive
Total								4.20 €	
Total								1,926.06 €	

Appendix 4: Interview protocol

Interview protocol

Study: digital marketing strategy

This protocol conduced to gather information from digital marketing experts to understand what is the most effective digital marketing strategy for Advantech to promote their product in the France market?

	Introduction
	Script: thanks for agreeing to be a part of this interview, you are one participant of this study sample, and we are striving to obtain valuable information from you by asking you specific questions. The study is about understanding the most effective digital marketing strategy the

	company can execute to increase their profitability in the France market. The Target audience for this study is the machine builders companies in this country.
	The goal of the study: The study aims to find the right digital strategy from alternatives and how the company can execute this strategy and what are the common obstacles hinder the implementation of the selected strategy.
	In this study, we will interview some expertise from the different organization located in the Brabant region.
	After data been gathered it will be analyzed, and the findings will be presented to the company and the school supervisor as well, and finally, a conclusion will be drawn based on data gathered from multiple sources.
Do you have any comment on the study goal? If No then we will start the interview questions.	Notes:
Interview questions	Answers
Background questions	
Q1.What is your name?	
Q3.What is your current position?	
For how long are you working in this organization?	
Q4.Tell me more about your experience in the digital marketing arena?	
Q5. What are the top three marketing tools the B2B marketers often used to target their audience?	
Q6. Why these tools are recommended for B2B?	

Q7. What thing should be done to ensure the effectiveness of these tools?	
Q8. What are the common obstacles usually face the B2B marketers during the implementation of these tools?	
Q9. How ca B2B marketers overcome these obstacles?	
Q10. How should the B2B marketers distribute the limited budget between multiple channels?	
Q11. Are any ways to decrease the cost of these tools?	
Q12. For which marketing purpose the social media can be used in the B2B?	
Q12. Hove you any comment or remarks?	

Conclusion

Thanks for accepting to be part of the study sample and if you have any remarks or something you need to add to your answers you can contact me at:

o.osamamohammedahmed@student.fontys.nl

Appendix 5: Interviews summary

Management Interview summary

Name interviewee: Tineke Bergen

Position: IIoT marketing manager Europe

Location: Advantech Eindhoven

Date: 24 November 2017

Q1 . Have you a specific marketing strategy form the HQ? If you have then What?

T. Top-down marketing strategy is quite difficult for the company because the company have a worldwide marketing team. The common process is that the HQ create and push the product into

---

the regional markets, and the regional marketers are responsible from making their adjustment of the market contents based on the customers in a regional market.

Q2 On the regional level you as a manager have you a specific marketing strategy, or assigning some marketing tools to your team member?

T. Yes, I have a marketing strategy, and I collaborate more with my teams because the majority of them have a MarCom background and they don't have sufficient knowledge on how to make a marketing strategy. Usually, I'm asking them to identify five marketing activities they would like to implement during a year. Then this activity will be discussed by the top marketing management to give the approval or rejection.

Q3. Is this an effective way to let your marketers select the activities by themselves?

T. Yes, because they are specialist in their market, mainly on the media side.And know we are in the test and trying.

Q4. What the top three marketing channels your department heavily used to conduct marketing campaigns?

T. No we haven't used the LinkedIn for some capabilities issues, I general we on not have a specific digital marketing channels, but we are working on improving this sector by hiring some expertise in the digital marketing.

Q5. What are the common obstacles usually faced your marketers during implementing campaigns?

The number of Stakeholders and different opinions the contradiction of this views usually hinder the process and ultimately would affect the overall performance of the campaign.

Q6. How do you solve that problem?

I bring everybody and tell them what I am going to do because I am top of that and this is my main responsibilities, as you can see how I always conflict with the other stakeholders. Unfortunately, the employee's mindset needs to be changed Currently, most of the marketers have a limited thinking. They think marketing is just placing an advertisement or banner and done; they don't think about the communication hierarchy or the media strategy to communicate a different type of customers. Unfortunately, this old marketing mind still existing in this company and I m striving to change this mindset.

Q7. Are all your marketers have an academic marketing background?

Not all of them. The majority have a marketing and communication background, and other have another background than the marketing, but they have been work in the marketing for a long

time. Unfortunately, the profile of the people doesn't fit the functionality, since we are looking for a strategic people.

Q8. How the budget distributed regarding the campaigns?

The marketing budget for the whole marketing department represent 1% of the total sales; this budget should be allocated to 4 sectors and five countries. So regarding the campaigns, the budget will be distributed based on the activities provided by those marketers.

Q9.Why the social media dos not used in your campaigns?

Because of company capabilities.

Digital marketing agency interview summary

Name interviewee: Liselotte Cramer

Position: Online Social Advertising Consultant

Company: iProspec marketing agency

Company phone: 088 118 9300

Location: Amsterdam

Date: 29 November 2017

Q1.what is your current position?

I am media planner and responsible for all online media and work as a spider , social display, influencers, and now I switch to social only.

Q2. How is your experience in the B2B?

I did many projects for many projects for example milk company. Currently, I am working on a B2B project in Schiphol.

Q3. What kind of strategy or tool are you recommended to the company such Advantech?

I think the SEO is the most important to such company so if your SEA is good you SEO ranking automatically will be okay. Regarding the Social media, I recommend the LinkedIn to such company although is expensive but is an efficient tool which enables you to identify and target your audience by filtering them based on their position but you will be able to target the right audience. Dedicated Blogs/websites and forums are highly recommended for the technology business.

Also, you can look to the GND particularly the third party websites where you can find you find many people interested in your product. The first steps are to get your specific audience then latter you can spread later. Finally, you should have an organized friendly website.

Q4. What do you mean by LinkedIn is costly?

I mean the CPM price on Facebook is 5 euro while in the LinkedIn is 25 euro but you can target a specific people you need.

Q5 What is the success rate for such campaign LinkedIn campaign I mean?

This depends on what you are going to advertise if you have a pdf can get with sign un or download, this probably will generate high conversion rate than only the thing you want to show up.

Q6. What thing should be done to ensure the effectiveness of the tools you have mentioned?

You need to set up a proper strategy before you start, also you have to be able to check, and analyses data and finally make the right decision based on the data you have

Q7. What are the common obstacles that face the marketers during implementing these tools

Getting trust and the high cost associated with implementing this tools in the campaign.

Q8. How can B2B marketers overcome these obstacles?

Just try if you are not sure you can just try to use these tools for a trail period and based on the results you can decide whether to go head or to stop.

Q9. How the limited budget can be allocated between these tools?

First of all, you have to set up your forecasts and based on that you can allocate your budget.

 In our campaigns, we allocate 70 % put in what you know it will work, 20% where you think it would work and 10 % for trying new things something completely different.

Q10. Are any to decrease the cost?

 I think one way is to consider an agency because sometimes these agencies offer some discounts.

Another thing you need to hire specialist mainly data-driven people.

Q11. What is the main purpose of the social media use in the B2B marketing?

I think you need to use it on the top of the funnel awareness and consideration because I don't think you will get an actual conversion from them.

Even the LinkedIn campaign used for the mentioned purpose?

Yes. I think the focus should be on showing them what you have and make a call to action like download this paper.

Q12.Have you some comments or recommendation?

Yeah, if you need money you should invest money.

Digital marketing agency interview summary

Name interviewee: Rens van gelderen

Position: SEO and CM executive

Company: iProspec marketing agency

Company phone: 088 118 9300

Location: Amsterdam

Date: 29 November 2017

Q1. Your position/

SEO and content marketing positioning executive.

What is your background?

I have graduated from the University of Amsterdam applied science, commercial and economics studies. I have been work in the B2B marketing since 2014.

What kind of strategy or tool are you recommended to the company such Advantech?

Digital marketing is very broad, from my perspective and based on my experience in the EEO and the content marketing. From the marketing perspective, you need to use most of the digital marketing tools. But I can see the focus on the SEO mainly the website which called SEO friendly.

Secondly, the content on the website should be optimized entirely where the people can understand what you are the sale. Finally, do the outreach to get more authority to use the website.

Q2. Why are you recommend these tools specifically?

Because these tools are the requirement unless you have not focused on these tools, you will not be likely to get any traffic.

Q3 what thing should be done to ensure the effectiveness of these tools?

Communication, the more is what the target goal is, the more you can get how you can get your audience.

Q4 what do you mean by the communication?

I mean you need to make sure you understand what the company client needs

Q5 .What are the common obstacles faced the marketers during the implementation of this tools?

Tough competition mainly many websites are performing better, trust and the cost of the implementation.

Q6. What thing should be done by the marketers to overcome these obstacles?

Technique and the content I mentioned previously would help in decreasing the cost.

Q7. How can marketers allocate the budget?

It is a bit hard to say, but you have to ensure that the high budget should be invested on the thing that you already know and the small part of the budget should be invested on the new tools.

Q8. Are any ways to decrease the cost?

If you want your decrease your investment and get better results within a short time then you should focus on the SEA, and maybe google display. Because this will give you the quick results in comparison to the SEO which requires much time and work.

Q9. For what marketing purpose the social media can be used in the B2B marketing?

My experience is more about the CEO, but I think the better way is to use the social media in he top of the funnel mostly for the brand awareness

Q10. What is the most recommended social media channel to the B2B?

I will say LinkedIn quickly, because the quality of the people you find them, in compare to the Facebook maybe you can find everyone, but in the LinkedIn, you can find your specific target. But you have to know that the LinkedIn cost is higher four times than the Facebook.

Q11. DO you have any comments or recommendation?

No

Work experience interview summary

Name interviewee: Mark van de laak

Position: Field marketing manager EMEA

Company: Fluke

Company phone: 040 267 5200

Location: Son en Breugel

Date: 1 December 2017

Q1. Your position

Marketing manager Europe Middle East and Africa

Q2 Since when are you working in the digital marketing?

Since 2007. Ten years at different companies

Q3. What digital marketing strategy recommended to the company such Advantech?

I think it is a balance between the inbound strategy relevant to the market content and company website ranking on the SEO and the second thing is an advertising strategy on digital channels, publishing the advertisement on the blogs and relevant websites. Try to find specific blogs websites.

Q4. What are the best three digital marketing tools can be used in the B2B to promote their content successfully?

SEO 99% is google search, Social media.

Q5.How do you use the social media in the marketing?

We use it to increase the brand awareness. Usually, we are using the display ad in our company strategy which is one of the SEO strategies. Usually, we use the social media on the top of the marketing funnel

Q6. Why are these tools recommended to the B2B?

The SEO because you can get more volume and you can control your budget yourself.

Q7.What should things be done to ensure the effectiveness of the mentioned tool SEO and social media?

Data, it is all about data, looking at the data daily.

Q8. What are the common obstacles faced the marketers during the implementation of these tools?

Cost means available budget and how to allocate this budget, also privacy regulation, trust on these tools.

Q9 What thing should be done to solve these problems?

Data is number one priority, so we try to make sure that everything will be measured, and we keep trying new tools to understand how it works.

Q10 how the budget can be allocated to the campaign?

The philosophy we have that we spend 70% of the budget on the things that we already know it will work, 20% for things we think maybe it works, and we reserve 10 % for brand new ideas.

So in our case, 70% go to PPC, 20 % to the social media and the 10 %, used to experience new ideas.

Q11 Are any way to decrease these costs?

Only trying 100% is experimentation, try to make your camping very specific.

Q12 For what marketing purpose the social media can be used in the B2B?

We used for demand generation for generating leads; the second use is about brand/ community management taking to the people and increase our brand awareness.

Q13 What is the most suitable Social media recommended to the B2B?

I will say LinkedIn, more serious and you can find very innovative people relevant to your industry also the relevant blogs and websites.

Have you any recommendation or comments?

No

Appendix 6: findings from the qualitative research

Participants	Searching engines	Social media/ relevant sites	LinkedIn	Company website	GDN	Obstacles
Marketing agency	HR	HR	HR	HR	HR	Trust/cost/competition
Marketing Agency	HR	HR	HR	HR	HR	Trust/cost/competition
Work experience	HR	HR	HR	R	HR	Cost/trust/privacy regulation/competition

Appendix 7: paid ad significance according to Google Analytics results

	Page	Traffic Type	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Entrances	Bounce Rate	% Exit	Page Value
			5,919 % of Total: 0.14% (4,236,561)	5,304 % of Total: 0.17% (3,193,114)	00:01:36 Avg for View: 00:01:21 (18.81%)	5,289 % of Total: 0.33% (1,581,315)	91.09% Avg for View: 41.77% (118.10%)	89.20% Avg for View: 37.33% (138.99%)	$0.00 % of Total: 0.00% ($2.09)
1.	select.advantech.com/machine-visio n/food-and-beverage/en/	paid	5,767 (97.43%)	5,187 (97.79%)	00:01:10	5,187 (98.07%)	91.42%	89.82%	$0.00 (0.00%)
2.	select.advantech.com/machine-visio n/food-and-beverage/en/	direct	49 (0.83%)	46 (0.87%)	00:16:36	46 (0.87%)	93.48%	93.88%	$0.00 (0.00%)
3.	select.advantech.com/machine-visio n/food-and-beverage/en/	referral	40 (0.68%)	26 (0.49%)	00:03:57	20 (0.38%)	50.00%	40.00%	$0.00 (0.00%)
4.	select.advantech.com/machine-visio n/food-and-beverage/en/	eNewslettere banner	33 (0.56%)	23 (0.43%)	00:00:40	23 (0.43%)	69.57%	69.70%	$0.00 (0.00%)
5.	select.advantech.com/machine-visio n/food-and-beverage/en/	eDM	7 (0.12%)	3 (0.06%)	00:22:32	3 (0.06%)	0.00%	42.86%	$0.00 (0.00%)
6.	select.advantech.com/machine-visio n/food-and-beverage/en/	organic	7 (0.12%)	7 (0.13%)	00:00:00	7 (0.13%)	100.00%	100.00%	$0.00 (0.00%)
	select.advantech.com/machine-visio								