Final Project

Assignment Provider: Sensecommerce

Supervisor: Mr. van Dam

Is it possible for Sensecommerce, an online wedding shop, to enter the French market with a reasonable chance of success?

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Executive summary:

Sensecommerce, a successful online wedding shop in Holland, wants to expand to France. Since 2005, Sensecommerce has been operating as an online wedding shop in the wedding accessory market. Over the years they have made a substantial revenue growth. The range of products is expanding rapidly. Sensecommerce sells approximately 1100 items, excluding wedding gowns. The possibility for Sensecommerce to enter the French market with a reasonable chance of success has been researched.

This research gives a clear view on the chances and opportunities to enter the French market, but also the risks and possible failures. Field research, such as an interview with Karin van den Berg and questionnaires has been used. Furthermore, desk research such as internet and several marketing models, like the five forces of Porter, a SWOT analysis and a marketing tool analysis have all been used.

Internal and external analysis made show that there are several obstacles while entering the French Market. Some obstacles will be the language, the shipping costs, a longer delivery time and of course the competition. Since e-commerce is a transparent market it is easy for customers to switch companies. The advantages of Sensecommerce are the website, it is clear and professional looking, their assortment of quality products is wider and bigger than the competition, and the fact that they are already a successful company in Holland, shows they use the right formula. The outcomes of the internal and external analysis have been processed in a SWOT analysis.

The outcomes of a SWOT analysis and Confrontation Matrix have shown different strategies for Sensecommerce. They should create brand awareness by using Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Sensecommerce should use the fact that they have a bigger and wider assortment to compensate for the longer delivery time. Furthermore Sensecommerce should stay ahead of their competitors by using social media to promote and communicate with their customers, which will also lead to more brand awareness. Sensecommerce should use email marketing to keep their customers satisfied and to also gain new customers. Again this will also lead brand awareness by 'pushing' your audience to visit the website.

It can be concluded that it is possible for Sensecommerce to enter the French market with a reasonable chance of success. Brand awareness is a recurring topic. The best strategy to create brand awareness is by using Search Engine Optimization, Social Media and Email Marketing. SEO means more targeted visitors looking for your product or service. Social media channels are easily searchable and relatively objective, since they are generated by a wide group of people, and email

2

marketing is cheap and allows the Sensecommerce to 'push' its message to its audience instead of waiting for customers to visit their website.

It is recommended that Sensecommerce adds 'dragees' to their assortment. This candy can be found on almost every wedding in France therefore Sensecommerce should undoubtedly add it to their assortment. Furthermore, decoration is the fastest growing in the budget of newlyweds, therefore Sensecommerce should focus on that. It is also very important to keep monitoring the competition; it is crucial to know the prices, products and services the competition offers.

Table of Contents

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1. Introduction:

1.1 Research questions

The following questions are used to research the possibilities to enter the French market with an online web shop specialized in wedding accessories.

Main question:

- Is it possible for Sensecommerce to enter the French market with a reasonable chance of success?

Sub questions:

- Is there room for a new player in the French e-commerce market?

- How strong is the competition in France?

- In what ways can Sensecommerce make a difference in France?

- What cultural differences are there between the French and Dutch markets?

1.2 Main goal

The main goal of this Dutch online wedding company is to become the best online wedding shop in Europe, within three years. This report will cover the possibilities in entering the French market. The objectives are:

- To give an understanding of the possibilities in entering the French market

- To give an understanding of the chances and opportunities, but also the risks and possible failures.

- To give advice about the possible entry in the French market

1.3 Relevance of the research

This research is relevant for Sensecommerce because the company wants to expand throughout Europe. This research should give a clear view on the chances and opportunities to enter the French market. Not only are the chances and possibilities pointed out, but also risks and possible failures. On the basis of this report, it should be clear whether it is possible to enter the French market with a reasonable chance of success.

1.4 Structure

As seen in the contents table this report contains an executive summary, which outlines the entire report, and the research methods can be found. The research methods consists of which methods are used and why, an explanation of the questionnaire and the process of analyzing the results. Later in the report, an internal and external analysis can be found. The outcomes of the internal and external analysis are processed in the confrontation matrix. After the marketing mix the answer to the sub questions can be found, with the answer to the main question in the conclusion. My advice is found under recommendations. The last part of this report is sources.

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          ┌─────────────────────┐
          │  Company Profile    │
          └─────────────────────┘
    ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
    │ Internal analysis│  │ External analysis│
    └──────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘
          ┌─────────────────────┐
          │   SWOT analysis     │
          └─────────────────────┘
          ┌─────────────────────┐
          │   Confrontation     │
          │      Matrix         │
          └─────────────────────┘
          ┌─────────────────────┐
          │   Marketing Mix     │
          └─────────────────────┘
          ┌─────────────────────┐
          │   Conclusion &      │
          │  Recommendation     │
          └─────────────────────┘
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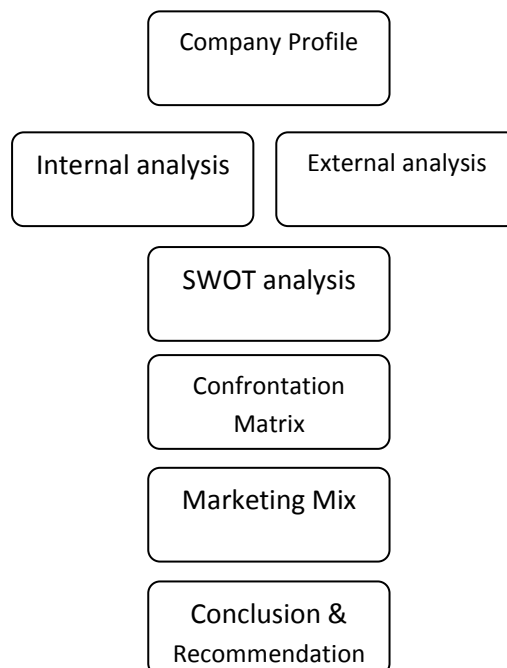
2. Research Methods

2.1 Which methods are used and why?

The following methods are used to research the main and sub questions: desk and field research. For the field research I contacted Karin van den Berg, who is a wedding planner in France. She knows a lot about French weddings. Also I contacted several owners of wedding locations to fill in a questionnaire. For the desk research magazines and internet sites have been used. The five forces of Porter are used to examine the competition within a market and therefore the attractiveness to enter this market. A DESTEP analysis and a marketing tool analysis have been made to determine the external analysis. Those outcomes are analyzed in a confrontation matrix, to get an overview of the internal strengths and weaknesses, and the external opportunities and threats. This model is used to make decisions and to create an image of the position, rate and strategy of a company. Furthermore the analysis is used for planning, marketing, competitors and product development.

2.2 The questionnaire

A questionnaire was made to research the main and sub questions. The questionnaire was made in Google docs, with the questions being about the frequency of weddings, French customs, financial aspects, etc. However the results were not used to answer the main and sub questions. Due to a lack of responses it was not relevant to process the outcomes.

2.3 The interview

Karin van den Berg, a wedding planner in France, was interviewed. She is Dutch, but she emmigrated to France in 2008. She has a company called 'Our wedding in France' (Onze bruiloft in Frankrijk) and she organizes weddings in France. Throughout the years she has built a network of caterers, owners of locations throughout France, wedding registrars etc. the work Karin arranges for the clients differs per wedding. One couple may only want a location organized, others may want the whole package, but Karin can adhere to any requirement. Questions were asked, based on several of the research questions. Karin van den Berg was interviewed by phone as I live in Holland and she lives in France. The outcomes helped with the research, and the answers contained relevant information which is used for this research.

2.4 How data is processed and analyzed

Google docs. was used for the questionnaire. This program is very easy to use. It also displays the outcomes of the questionnaires in tables and charts. The tables and charts give a clear view and understanding of the outcomes. The final document was made in Microsoft Office Word.

3. The company:

Since 2005 Sensecommerce have been operating as an online wedding shop in the market for wedding accessories. Through the years they have made a substantial revenue growth. The range of products is expanding rapidly with different accessories for weddings. Sensecommerce sells approximately 1100 items, excluding wedding gowns. Sensecommerce supplies mostly to consumers (95%) and to businesses (5%) including hotels, confectioners and theater groups. The mission of Sensecommerce is to become, within 3 years, the largest online wedding shop in Europe. The company has already expanded to Germany, the web site launched a while ago. One of the next countries will be France, if there is a market for an online wedding shop. In this report you can see whether it is possible to enter this market, the chances and opportunities, but also the risks and possible failures.

France, the country of love and romance, left the world some of the most well known wedding traditions. The white wedding gown, flowers and even the wedding cake are all French customs. The most recent figures revealed by INSEE (Institute National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques) show that 256.000 marriages took place in France in 2009, a decrease of 3.5% in 2008. (France 2, 2011, "Fin de l'avantage fiscal aux maries" section, para. 8)
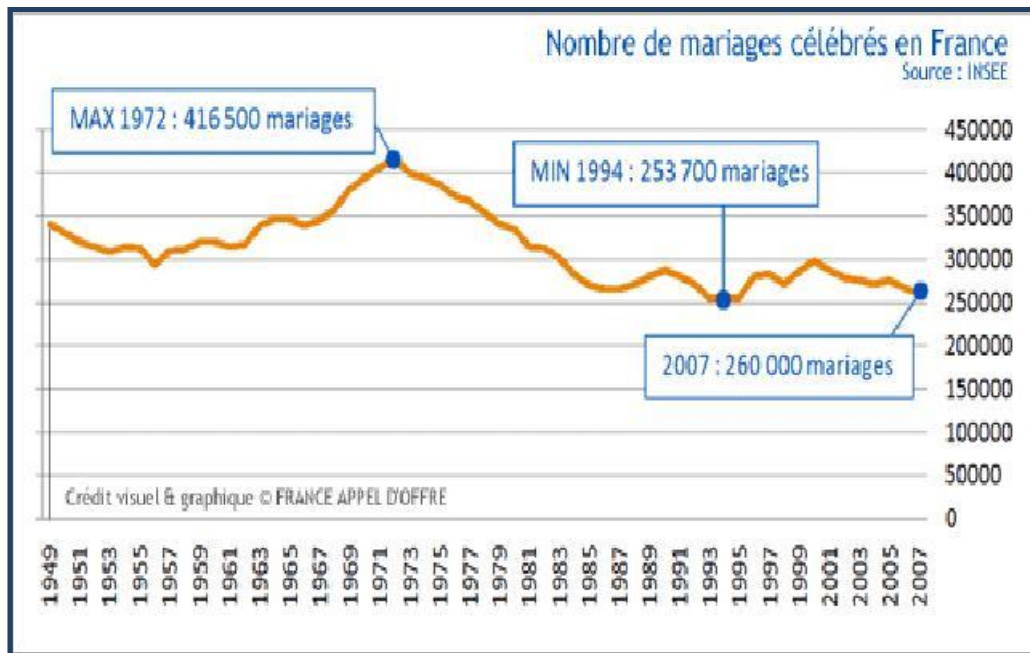
Figure 1 Number of Marriages' in France (FAO, 2011, "Nombre de mariage celebres en France" section, para. 1)

In 2009 there was a decrease, possible because there exists another popular way of commitment to your partner, signing a PACS (Pacte civil de solidarité). In English this is a civil pact of solidarity. This is a form of civil union between two adults to commit to their life together. It is a 'contract' signed by two adults and approved by a court. Couples who sign a PACS can choose to have a formal ceremony at a City Hall, just like a marriage. There was an increase of 20% with 175.000 signed PACS in 2009. (Pacte civil de Solidarité, 2011, "statistique" section, para. 1)

Aside from this information, the French wedding market is not well known to Sensecommerce. The expectation is that there is a good chance of success in entering the French market with an online wedding shop.

4. Internal analysis

The internal analysis is part of the strategic marketing. The organization, marketing and financial situation are analyzed. The outcomes of this analysis are processed in a SWOT analysis. The internal analysis provides strengths and weaknesses of a company. (Interne Analyse, 2009, "wat is de Interne analyse" section, para. 1)

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4.1 Sensecommerce:

The Company Profile informs you that Sensecommerce operates as an online wedding shop in the market for wedding accessories since 2005. Through the years there has been a substantial growth in revenue. The range of products is expanding rapidly with different accessories for weddings with over 1100 items.

4.1.1 The website:

The website is one of the most important things as Sensecommerce is an e-commerce business. The website has to appeal to the customers. If the website is not clear or user friendly, customers will simply go to another site. Sensecommerce's website, www.trouwartikelen.nl, is attractive to women, which is important as women usually play a key role in planning a wedding. The website gives a clear overview with a list of products on the left and pictures. One clear problem is that the website is only available in Dutch, therefore if they expand to France the website obviously would need to be available in French, and an added bonus would be an English option too.

4.1.2 Customer service:

The customer service is well organized. A clear explanation is given about ordering, delivery, shipping costs, payment, refunds and privacy policy. Customers trusting the website is very important, otherwise they may be put off buying from you online, therefore it is essential the Payment type and procedure is secure and trustworthy. Sensecommerce offers IDEAL, Maestro, PayPal, Credit Card and bank transfer, all of which are safe ways to pay. It does not limit customers to those only with a Credit Card. (Klantenservice, 2011, "Betalen" section, para. 1)

4.1.3 Webhosting:

Webhosting is important for e-commerce companies. The website needs to be available and charge quickly. This is a strength of Sensecommerce as they are available 24/7, and of course security is essential. It is important that customers know their data are safe; customer data is stored in accordance with Dutch Privacy Legislation. They will not provide data to third parties that can affect your privacy. (Klantenservice, 2011, "Privacy" section, para. 1)

4.1.4 Online interaction:

In terms of usability and accessibility, the Sensecommerce website is easy to access and use. Everything a customer needs to know can be found on the website. The website also gives a clear overview of the services and products they offer, and that payments are secure and not time consuming. Sensecommerce offers different secure ways to pay. Customers can trust all the

payment methods. The possibility to pay with Credit Card or Debit Cart or even PayPal makes it possible for anyone to make a transaction (Klantenservice, 2011, "Betalen" section, para. 1). Personalization promotes customer loyalty, for example personalized pages, search results and e-mails. Not only this aspect, but also the fact that customers have can leave feedback, with forums or customer reviews. On the Sensecommerce website it is possible to make your own account which enables the customers to have a view on their wish list or change/add a shipping address. Furthermore product information and/or pictures need to be extensive, as unlike stores, customers cannot ask the staff for some more information. Every product on the website contains a description of the product, the price and the delivery time. (Trouwartikelen, 2011, p. 1)

4.1.5 Offline interaction:

Customers expect a fast online fulfillment of online actions. They want to receive a respond in a matter of hours, not days. Even an automatic confirmation will satisfy. As mentioned, e-commerce is a very transparent market, therefore it is very easy for customers to switch companies. Sensecommerce should ensure customers receive a respond in matter of hours. After sale service is also important. E-commerce has to give guarantees of customer satisfaction with the option to return products, just like in a physical store.

Word of mouth is an important way of promotion. When customers are satisfied with the products and the services Sensecommerce offers, they will tell their friends and family. Furthermore the website should be easy to find for customers. There are different ways to accomplish that:

- 'Spontaneous traffic', for example people who know the brand or product and the name of the domain name matches the brand or product.
- Results of web search engines.
- By advertisements and/or hyperlinks on other web sites.
- By advertisement on offline media, for example papers, radio, television, mailings or billboards.
- E-marketing. (Electronic Commerce, 2011, "Succesfactoren" section)

4.1.6 Social Media:

Sensecommerce has accounts on several social media websites like Facebook and Twitter. They also use a blog on their website to communicate with the customers. It is beneficial that Sensecommerce uses social media to reach their audience, however they are not particularly active on Facebook. As can be read in the External Analysis under Marketing Tool Analysis, social media is an important marketing tool, which they should take full advantage of.

4.1.7 Place:

The Sensecommerce head office is situated in Capelle aan den Ijsel in Holland. The company orders products which are then sent to their distribution centre in Heerhugowaard, also in Holland. Only three fulltime employers work there. This is a strength as each of them know everything about the company, therefore saving money. Only one office is needed. Sensecommerce is a successful company in Holland, however when they expand to France things will change. Sensecommerce wants to keep their head office in Capelle aan den Ijsel and as well as their distribution centre in Heerhugowaard, meaning Sensecommerce will not be able to deliver within 24 hours and the shipping costs will increase.

4.2 Internal analysis conclusion:

4.2.1 Strengths:

One of Sensecommerces strengths is management. They purchase quality products for Sensecommerce. The Sensecommerce website, www.trouwartikelen.nl, is easy to use and access and it also looks attractive for women, which is important as women play a key role in planning a wedding. The website gives a clear overview with a list of the products on the left, whilst showing the picture of the selected product. Customer service is well organized and available every day. They also offer a reliable website and form of payment, which makes it easier for customers to trust them, therefore the data of Sensecommerce customers is safe.

Another strength is the fact that Sensecommerce uses social media to communicate with their audience. Furthermore they offer a wide assortment of products. Sensecommerce is a successful company in Holland. That means they know what they are doing, they know which products to purchase and how to work in the e-commerce business.

4.2.2 Weaknesses

There are, as with any business, weaknesses. Because the distribution centre of Sensecommerce is located in Holland it will not be possible to deliver within 24 hours because of the shipping costs. They have not developed their brand name in France yet. Therefore it is important for Sensecommerce to create and strengthen a brand name. Another weakness is the language, the website will have to be in French of course. All the correspondence has to be in French, so someone will have to be able to do that.

5. External analysis:

This is an analysis of the external environment and it provides insight into the opportunities and threats of a company. The internal and external factors are processed in a SWOT analysis on which the final strategy of a company is based. This allows the company to respond to the needs of the customer. To determine the external analysis, a DESTEP analysis, the five forces of Porter and a marketing tool analysis, have been used. (Externe analyse, 2009, "Wat is de externe analyse?" section, para. 1)

5.1 DESTEP

To determine the external factors, the opportunities and threats, a DESTEP analysis is made. DESTEP is an abbreviation for demographic, economic, social/cultural, technological, environmental and political/legal factors. It is an analysis which determines the external (macro) environment in which an organization operates. Understanding the external environment of an organization is important to make effective use of the opportunities and threats caused by the landscape in which a company operates. Aligning the strategic policy based on the findings of a DESTEP analysis enables Sensecommerce to operate successfully in its environment. (Externe analyse, 2009, "Wat is de externe analyse?" section, para. 1)

5.1.1 Economic:

Shipping costs:

 A threat of Sensecommerce will be the shipping costs. Within the Netherlands Sensecommerce charges €4,95 when an amount of €99,00 is bought. When the amount is higher than €99,00 there are no shipping costs. Of course this will be different when Sensecommerce expands to France. However there are simple and uniform procedures for sending your packages up to 30 kg in Europe, thanks to a logistics infrastructure which takes into account the specific arrangements in different countries. (Klantenservice, 2011, "Verzendkosten" section, para. 1)

TNT is able to deliver letters and packages within 2 to 3 work days with priority. Without priority this will be 4 to 6 work days. A package of 0 to 2 kg will cost €8,69, a package of 2 to 5 kg will cost €19,50 and a package of 5 to 10 kg will cost €25,00.

A service of TNT called International Package Basic sends packages easily and quickly abroad. All Sensecommerce will need to do is to address the package and to provide the sender information. For shipments within the European Union no more measures are necessary. This services is available for international mailing up to 2 kg with a maximum size of 8 x 26,5 x 2 cm. If the package is bigger there is another service TNT offers; International Package Plus. This is also a fast and safe way to send packages abroad. With loss or damage of the package you are, in most cases, entitled to compensation. (Tarievenwijzen, 2011, "pakketten" section, p. 1)

5.1.2 Social-cultural:

PAC's:

As can be read in the company profile, there was a decrease of the number of weddings in 2009, this is possibly because there is another popular way of commitment to your partner. That other way is signing a PACS (Pacte civil de solidarité). In English this is a civil pact of solidarity. This is a form of civil union between two adults to commit to their life together. It is a 'contract' signed by two adults, which is approved by court. Couples who sign a PACS can choose to have a formal ceremony at City Hall, just like a marriage. There was an increase of 20% with 175.000 signed PACS in 2009. (Pacte civil de Solidarité, 2011, "statistique" section, para. 1)

Decoration:

An interview was held with Karin van den Berg, who is a wedding planner in France. She is Dutch, but emmigrated to France in 2008. She has a company called 'Our wedding in France' (Onze bruiloft in Frankrijk) and she organizes weddings in France. Throughout the years she built a network of caterers, owners of locations throughout France, wedding officials etc.

The following question was asked: The average budget for a wedding in France is 11.800 euro. What are the expenditure items that tend to increase and which ones fall?

« The caterer and the location are always the biggest expense of a wedding. The decoration is the fastest growing in the budget of newlyweds. The newlyweds are investing more and more for a visually memorable wedding. »

Language:

A cultural characteristic is that the customers in France speak French. This does not have to be a threat but it should be taken into account. The communication between customers and Sensecommerce should of course be in French.

French traditions:

One of the traditions of a French wedding is "Dragees". A dragee is a candy with a coating. The coating consists of sugar and dye. It is an old tradition descended from the Crusades. The coating was used to preserve tablets, medicines. An apothecary in Verdun came with the idea to use a coating of sugar and honey for the transport of almonds. Verdun became the "Dragee capital". The dragees where sold to pregnant women. The dragee represents healing powers and fertility and that is why the dragee has an important place between table decorations. This product should definitely be in the assortment of Sensecommerce when they decide to expand to France. (Traditions et Symboles, 2011, "les dragees" section, para. 1)

Another French tradition is the wedding cake. This cake is called "Croquembouche". Literally this mean crispy in the mouth. It is a high cone of profiteroles filled with cream or cream mixed with caramel. Usually this cake is decorated with threads of caramel, sugar almonds, chocolate, flowers or ribbons. The filling of the cake can also be candid which explains the name "Croquembouche". (Croquembouche, 2011, para. 1)

Symbols:

There are also several symbols which stand for marriage, for example daisies and roses. In medieval times it was common for young women to wear a crown of daisies when they were considering the proposal, or a crown of roses when the women had accepted the proposal from her future husband. Another symbol is doves, they symbolize monogamy. There are also colors which stand for different things, e.g. white symbolizes virginity, blue symbolizes loyalty, grey symbolizes far travels, green symbolizes modesty, black symbolizes the rejection of marriage and yellow symbolizes adultery. (Traditions et symboles, 2011, "Quelques Symboles" section, para. 1)

Usage of internet

Of all Europeans, the Dutch use the internet most intensively according to figures from Eurostat (The Statistical Office of the European Union). According to Eurostat, 90% of the Dutch households have internet access, 73% of the people surf on the internet on a daily bases. That percentage is even higher regarding young people with the age of 24 or younger (90%). The French however stay behind in the use of internet. (Cijfers, 2009, "Internetgebruik Frankrijk: Fransen houden van vermaak" section, para. 5)

Research of Eurostat has shown that France is lagging in the use of internet. On the internet, the French are mainly interested in the search engines (14,7% of all Web Site visits), social networks

(12,9%) and entertainment (12,1%). Compared to the British for example, the French are considerably more active in these categories. However news and actuality do not get much attention from the French (33%) in comparison with the British (62%). Online shopping in France accounted for 8,4% of Web Site visits. All these rates are based on surveys of Hitwise and ComScore. However the internet usage of the French is increasing as can be seen in the table below. (Cijfers, 2009, "Internetgebruik Frankrijk: Fransen houden van vermaak" section, para. 4)

YEAR	Users	Population	% Pop.	Usage Source
2000	8,500,000	58,879,000	14.4 %	ITU
2004	24,848,009	60,293,927	41.2 %	Nielsen Net//ratings
2006	30,837,595	61,350,009	50.3 %	Nielsen Net//ratings
2007	32,925,953	61,350,009	53.7 %	Nielsen Net//ratings
2008	36,153,327	62,177,676	58.1 %	Nielsen Net//ratings
2010	44,625,300	64,768,389	68.9 %	ITU

Figure 2 General Internet Usage (France, 2010, "Internet Usage and Population Statisctics" section, para. 1, 2010)

More and more customers are seeking to navigate the internet via search engines, general portals, blogs and community sites. Per month nearly 9 out of 10 internet users (36,684,000) use online engines, 8 out of 10 (35,516,000) visit the general portals and more than 3 out of 4 (31,337,000) surf on blogs/community sites. 5 years ago Search Engines, Portals and blogs/community sites gathered a little over 18 million 18,425,000) users per month. This is less than its daily audience of today, which is almost 21 million users daily.

Social networks have become another way to surf the web and the progress continues unperturbed. The biggest change was measured between February 2009 and February 2010. In two years these sites have more than 8 million additional internet uses. That is a growth of more than a third. Internet users will spend a lot of time on community sites as they already spend almost a fifth of their time on the internet. (Actualité et Résultats, 2011, "Internet" section, para. 1)

European Social Networking Reach by Country Total Europe, Age 15+ - Home & Work Locations* December 2008 Source: comScore World Metrix		
Country	Total Unique Visitors (000) to Social Networking Category	% Reach of Country's Total Internet Audience
Europe	210,950	74.6
United Kingdom	29,263	79.8
Spain	13,185	73.7
Portugal	2,705	72.9
Denmark	2,390	69.7
Italy	14,408	69.3
Belgium	3,668	68.2
Germany	24,901	67.3
Ireland	1,131	66.9
Finland	2,061	66.2
Sweden	3,733	65.4
Switzerland	2,804	64.7
France	21,745	63.9
Russia	18,427	63.5
Netherlands	7,438	63.0
Norway	1,732	58.9
Austria	2,120	49.7

Figure 3 Social network 2008 (Social Networking France, 2009, "European Social Networking" section, para. 1)

Despite the low penetration rate of 63,9%, France has nearly 22 million unique visitors to social networks. The most popular social network is Facebook. Visits to Facebook increased in France in one year with 443%, to 12 million visitors. (Marketingfacts, 2009, "75% online Europeanen op social networks" section, p. 2)

A Selection of Leading Social Networking Sites Ranked by Total French Unique Visitors (000)* Total France, Age 15+ - Home & Work Locations December 2008 vs. December 2007 Source: comScore World Metrix			
Property	Dec-2007	Dec-2008	% Change
Total French Internet Audience	28,729	34,010	18%
Social Networking	14,984	21,745	45%
Facebook.com	2,211	11,996	443%
Skyrock	10,221	11,042	8%
Linternaute Copains d Avant	2,709	5,753	112%
MySpace Sites	2,597	2,994	15%
Flickr.com	824	1,809	120%
Trombi.com	1,144	1,456	27%
Hi5.com	528	980	86%
Netlog.com	738	920	25%
Viadeo	334	904	171%
Badoo.com	563	733	30%

Figure 4 Social Media in France 2007 (Marketingfacts, 2009, "75% online Europeanen op social networks" section, p. 2)

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5.1.3 Technological:

E-commerce:

Technological factors are characteristics of the development of E-commerce. The fact that the number and quality of communication tools are increasing is an opportunity. The use of internet and especially social media is growing. Sensecommerce should definitely use this to promote their company, especially because they are new on the French market. They need to create brand awareness.

However, a possible threat is that within the e-commerce market, the customers are less loyal as there is no personal contact. That makes it easier for the customer to switch and buy from a competitor. Added to that, the fact that this is a transparent market makes it easier for customers to make the decision to buy from the competition.

5.1.4 Political:

Political factors are characteristics of public decisions. There are hardly any political factors that would influence Sensecommerce; they have the capacity to expand to France, the fact it is within Europe makes it only easier.

5.1.5 Conclusion DESTEP:

The threats determined by the DESTEP analyses are:

- The shipping costs
- The PAC's
- The fact that e-commerce is a transparent market which makes it easy to compare prices
- The language
- France is lagging in the use of internet.

The opportunities determined by the DESTEP analyses are:

- Decoration is the fastest growing in the budget of newlyweds
- The number of communication tools are increasing
- Visits to Facebook increased in France in one year with 443%, to 12 million visitors.

- There is a growth of more than a third in internet users. They will spend a lot of time on community sites as they already spend almost a fifth of their time on the internet. (Cijfers, 2009, "Internetgebruik Frankrijk: Fransen houden van vermaak" section, para. 5)

5.2 Five forces of Porter

5.2.1 Why Porter?

To measure the competition within this market in France the five forces of Porter are used. They give a good indication of the relative attractiveness of an industry. (Porter vijfkrachtenmodel, 2011, "Waarom het vijfkrachtenmodel van Porter?" section, para. 1)

The Five Forces of Porter are being used to examine the competition within a market. This is a strategic model based on five forces that determine the attractiveness of a market. By using this model an estimate can be made about the relative attractiveness, and also the competition, of an industry. A strategy can be determined on the basis of the outcomes of this model. The five forces of Porter are often used when writing a competition analysis. A competition analysis consists of two parts: the competitor analysis and the degree of competition within the industry in question. According to Porter, the five forces that determine the level of competition are the following:

1. The bargaining power of suppliers
2. The bargaining power of customers
3. The threat of substitute products or services
4. The intensity of competitive rivalry
5. The threat of the entry of new competitors (Porter vijfkrachtenmodel, 2011, "Hoe ziet het vijfkrachtenmodel van Porter eruit?" section, para. 1)

Porters fives forces give a good indication of the relative attractiveness of an industry. It is a strategic marketing model which enables the entrepreneur to determine a strategy which adapts to the market. Also this can be an important part of the marketing plan. Therefore this model is very useful for Sensecommerce, as they need to know the attractiveness of the wedding market in France before they expand and will need to know their competition as it will be important to outstand. (Porter vijfkrachtenmodel, 2011, "Waarom het vijfkrachtenmodel van Porter?" section, para. 1)

5.2.2 The bargaining power of suppliers

These are factors that affect the bargaining position of an organization. The bargaining between the company and the supplier has a significant contribution to the attractiveness of the industry. It affects the pricing, quality and continuity of the organization. However this force of Porter has no big

effect on Sensecommerce since the products they sell are ordered from several different countries. If the company only has one supplier, the supplier is able to negotiate on prices or other conditions. However this is not the case for Sensecommerce. The company orders products which are then sent to their distribution centre in Holland. When they expand to France, the products will be sent from the Dutch distribution centre. From that distribution centre the products will be sent to the customers, in this case, in France. However, Sensecommerce is not able to produce their own products so they will always be dependent on suppliers. (Porter vijfkrachtenmodel, 2011, "Macht van leveranciers" section, para. 1)

5.2.3 The bargaining power of customers

These are factors that influence the bargaining position of a customer. The bargaining power between a company and the customer also has a significant contribution to the attractiveness of an industry. Like the bargaining power of suppliers, this can affect the pricing, quality and continuity of an organization as well. Creating value is important for customers. The market on the internet is much more transparent, making it is easy to compare products and prices. Therefore, the competition on price and quality can be much stronger than in the offline world. It is essential to make a clear overview of prices and costs. However a wedding is personal and important for people, when the customers like the products they will buy it faster, because the products are important to them. (Porter vijfkrachtenmodel, 2011, "Macht van afnemers" section, para. 1)

5.2.4 The threat of substitute products or services

Are there many or few alternative or substitute products available? According to Porter this is especially threatening when they substitute a clear price/product improvement. In this case a threat can be the PACS. As stated before in 2009 there was a decrease of weddings, possibly because there is another popular way of commitment to your partner. There was an increase of 20% with 175.000 signed PACS in 2009 (Wikipedia, 2011). However according to Karin van den Berg, a French wedding planner, this does not have to be a threat. She often sees people sign a PAC before they get marry, for financial reasons. The PACs and marriage are rather complementary then a substitute. (Porter vijfkrachtenmodel, 2011, "Substituten en complementaire goederen" section, para. 3)

5.2.5 The intensity of competitive rivalry

Is there a fierce competition battle or is there no competition in the form of a monopoly? The degree of competition is an important indicator of the attractiveness of a market. After examining the five forces of Porter it is possible to conclude a number of important opportunities and threats. These are included in the SWOT analysis. (Porter vijfkrachtenmodel, 2011, "Interne concurrentie op de markt" section, para. 1)

www.decomariage.com is considered as the biggest competition for Sensecommerce. This is also online wedding shop specialized in wedding accessories. Obviously there are more online wedding shop that are threats, however Decomariage is the most similar to Sensecommerce when it comes to products, prices and web site. Of course there is more competition for Sensecommerce from: http://www.le-mariage.com/livreor.htm and http://www.mariage-promo.fr/. The other websites are more specialized in only decorations. They have a lot of similar products but Sensecommerce has a bigger and wider assortment.

There are also several websites where they sell accessories for all kind of events including weddings like http://www.prestanim-decoration.com. It is important for Sensecommerce to stand out in some way as it will be difficult to be the cheapest due to shipping costs. As mentioned before, they also have a longer delivery time then the French companies. That is why Sensecommerce has to stand out with their products and their web site. They also have to gain brand name by using social media. A way in which Sensecommerce can stand out is with their website. www.Decomariage.com looks good, but a lot of the other web sites look very chaotic. They use different kind of fonts, colors and sizes which makes it unreadable.

Positioning is an important marketing concept which tries to deliberately create a certain image of a product or service. This involves a perception compared to the competitor. This technique seeks to create an image or identity in the head of the target group. This image is often based on a defensible competitive advantage.   Positioning is a way to distinguish you from competitors, to make a difference. By choosing the right positioning Sensecommerce can distinguish themselves from the competitors, because the correct positioning is the best way to communicate the added value to a product or service. By stating the right positioning, the following questions are being asked:

- Who is Sensecommerce?
- What does Sensecommerce sell?
- Who is Sensecommerces ideal customer?
- What does the ideal customer need?
- What is different about Sensecommerce?
- Which unique advantages have Sensecommerce got to offer? (Positioning, 2011, para. 4)

5.2.6 The threat of the entry of new competition

The entry of new competitors can increase the level of competition, which automatically reduces the attractiveness of the market. How easy or difficult it is to enter a new market depends on the

barriers, like those stated above. It is not hard to enter this market. To what extent is it possible to enter a market? This is influenced by the following factors:

- Government
- Requirements for capital or investments
- Economies of scale
- Accessibility to distribution channels (Porter vijfkrachtenmodel, 2011, "Dreiging van nieuwe toetreders" section, para. 4)

5.2.7 Five forces of Porter conclusion:

The threats determined by the five forces of Porter are:

- Sensecommerce is not able to produce their own products so they will always be dependent on suppliers
- The competition in price and quality can be much stronger than in the offline world.
- The PAC's
- Competition, especially Decomariage

The opportunities determined by the five forces of Porter are:

- A wedding is personal and very important for people. When the customers like the products they will buy it there and then because the products are important for the customers
- The competitors are more specialized in only decorations. They have a lot of similar products but Sensecommerce has a bigger and wider assortment.
- By choosing the right positioning, Sensecommerce can distinguish themselves from the competitors.

5.3 Marketing tool analysis

A Marketing Tool analysis has been made. This shows which marketing tools Sensecommerce should use to penetrate the French market.

5.3.1 Social Media:

Social media is a very important tool for Sensecommerce. Using social media will provide Sensecommerce with a view on the needs and opinions of the consumers. With insight into those facts, Sensecommerce can respond to those needs. The impact of social media is increasing rapidly.

Social media plays an important role in marketing and internet strategy. People have 5 social basic needs, which are defined in a pyramid by a well known sociologist/marketer Maslow. Marketers are always fulfilling these basic needs of the human being. Social media gives the consumer the opportunity to easily fulfill needs like social behavior, recognition and self development and companies can make use of that. For the first time in history it is possible to start a dialogue with large groups of consumers, without requiring a big budget. With social media, companies and brands can become part of the 'network of peers', which makes them faster and more trusted. Social media marketing is playing an increasingly important role in the relationship between business and Public Relations. (Social Media, 2011, "De rol van social medie in marketing & internstrategie" section, para. 1)
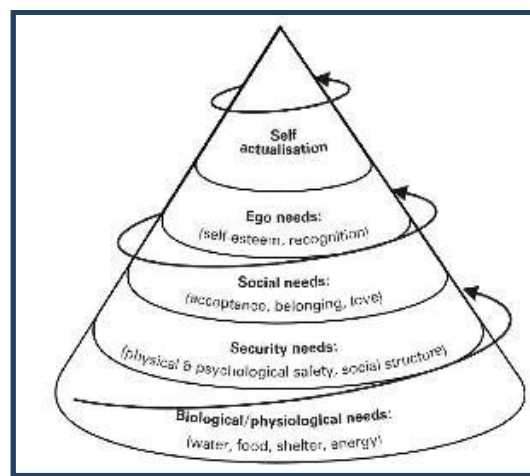

Figure 5 (Bottom of the Pyramid, 2009, "Maslow's hierarchy of needs" section, para. 1)

Opportunities:

The content of social media websites is almost always divisible and easily disseminated within a network. This means a viral effect or buzz can take place very fast. Also social media is easily searchable and relatively objective, since it is generated by a wide group of people. This is also known as 'the wisdom of the crowd'. Social media allows consumers to fulfill their basic needs of Maslow, unlike traditional media. Another factor is that social media scores very well in search engines like Google, because of the relatively objective and reliable character.

Threats:

Social media also has a down side. For example consumers and employees can say anything about your business on social media sites. This can cause a lot of positive but also negative publicity, even if it is not justified. To counteract these difficulties many companies make social media guidelines for their employees. Social media is not as reliable as people think it is. A lot of messages for example

The Hague University of Applied Sciences

on twitter are rumors, which are strengthened by the crowed. (Social Media, 2011, "De rol van social medie in marketing & internstrategie" section, para. 1)

5.3.2 Affiliate marketing:

You give others the opportunity to sell your products and you pay afterwards for the revenue they have generated. This form of marketing has become popular with the advent of the Internet.

Opportunities

It is not easy to gain customers via the internet with your product, because there are thousands of websites all trying to get everybody's attention. However, with affiliate marketing, Sensecommerce can be seen on hundreds of websites. The probability that a consumer sees your product/company is much higher. (Affiliate marketing, 2011, "Affiliate.." section, para.1)

Threats:

For businesses, there are no or few disadvantages related to affiliate marketing. After all, companies pay only commission when someone makes a purchase. (De voor -en nadelen van Affiliate marketing, 2008, "Nadelen van Affiliate marketing" section, para. 1)

5.3.3 Search Engines optimization:

Search engines optimization (SEO) is part of search engine marketing and can be defined as a set of activities designed for a webpage to score high on search results in 'natural' or unpaid search engines. SEO is not advertising, but making your website easier to find for search engines. For example, set the website up so that a search engine knows exactly what the website is about, so it reaches a high position on the desired subject in the natural search results. (SEO Advies, 2011, "Kosteneffectief" section, para. 1)

Opportunities:

- SEO provides a higher ROI (Return on Investment) than any other form of marketing. The investment costs are relatively low compared to the traditional forms of marketing. (SEO Advies, 2011, "Hoge ROI" section, para. 1)
- Search engine optimization means more targeted visitors looking for your product or service.
- SEO creates brand awareness. (SEO Advies, 2011, "Vergroten naamsbekendheid" section, para. 1)

Threats:

There are no or few disadvantages of SEO. Some companies think they only need this to attract more visitors to their website, but SEO is not the same as conversion, because the website also has to be user-friendly. Just attracting visitors is simply not enough. However the website of Sensecommerce is user-friendly, they give a clear overview of the products, prices and all there is to know, and therefore this will not be a threat for Sensecommerce. (Nadelen van SEO, 2010, "een bezoeker is niet hetzelfde als conversie" section, para. 1)

5.3.4 Email marketing

Email marketing is a form of direct marketing that uses email for commercial or fundraising messages to an audience. In the broadest sense, every email that is sent to a potential or current customer is considered as email marketing. (E-mailmarketing, 2011, para.1)

Opportunities:

- It is extremely cheap compared to direct mail or printed newsletters; the costs are negligible, since the advertiser does not pay for production, paper, printing or shipping.
- It is immediately in the hands of the customer, unlike advertisements sent by letter, an email arrives in a few seconds.
- It allows the advertiser to 'push' to their audience their message, instead of waiting for customers to visit their website. (Emailmarketing, 2011, "Voordelen" section, para. 1)

Threats:

- Many companies use email marketing to communicate with existing customers, but many other companies send unsolicited commercial email, also known as spam.

5.4 External analysis conclusion:

The opportunities and threats are part of the external factors of Sensecommerce. A great opportunity for Sensecommerce is the fact that decoration is the fastest growing in the budget of newlyweds. Another opportunity is that the use of social media is growing. Social media will play a key role in promoting Sensecommerce. Some threats of Sensecommerce are that the number of PACS has increased which means the number of weddings have and will decrease. The competition is a threat as well, as e-commerce is a transparent market, it is easy for customers to make to decision to buy from the competition. The competition in price and quality can also be much stronger than in the offline world. However the competitors are more specialized in only

decorations. They have a lot of similar products, but Sensecommerce has a bigger and wider assortment. With e-commerce, the customers are less loyal as there is no personal contact. Therefore it is crucial for Sensecommerce to offer great services. Sensecommerce is not able to produce their own products so they will always be dependent on suppliers.

Another threat can be the PAC's, more and more people choose to sign a PAC. However a wedding is also considered personal and very important to people. When the customers like the products they will buy it faster because the products are important to them.

6. SWOT analysis

A SWOT analysis is a model that measures the internal strengths and weaknesses, and the external chances and threats. Based on a SWOT analysis, a strategy is determined. SWOT is an abbreviation of **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats. Sometimes SWOT is expanded to SWOTI, I stands for Issues. The issues form an important part of the model, since the issues are the connection between the internal and external analysis. This model is also used to make decisions and to create an image of the position, the rate and the strategy of a company. Furthermore the analysis is used for planning, marketing, competition, product development and teambuilding. (Sterkte-zwakteanalyse, 2011, para. 1)

By making a strength-weakness analysis several steps are taken. Based on the outcomes, an insight can be seen on the future of the company. These are the steps to be followed:

1. Strengths and Weaknesses: Internal factors
2. Opportunities and Threats: External factors
3. Confrontation matrix: in this matrix the intern and external factors face each other.
4. Strategies: the most important issues are being converted in strategic questions.

Critics:

The criticism of this analysis is that it does not have a theoretical character. That means that the analysis is impressionistic and it is not systematically directed from a certain view, as for instance in marketing or the industrial organization theory. The SWOT analysis is a model that does not describe any further action needed to be taken. Different interpretations are not taken into account with this model. For example one manager can see competition as an opportunity where another manager sees it as a threat. (Sterkte-zwakteanalyse, 2011, "Kanttekeningen" section, para 1)

6.1 Strengths

- S1 Involved management.
- S2 accessibility and usability of the website.
- S3 Well organized customer service.
- S4 Reliable website with safe forms of payment.
- S5 use of social media.
- S6 Wide assortment of products.
- S7 Experience.

6.2 Weaknesses

- W1 Delivery time.
- W2 No brand name in France.
- W3 website is only available in Dutch.
- W4 Distribution centre is situated in Holland.
- W5 Language.

6.3 Threats

- T1 Sensecommerce is not able to produce their own products so they will always be dependent on suppliers.
- T2 Competition on price and quality can be much stronger than in the offline world.
- T3 PAC's.
- T4 Competition, especially Decomariage.
- T5 Shipping costs.
- T6 The fact that e-commerce is a transparent market which makes it easy to compare prices.
- T7 France is lagging in the use of internet.
- T8 Social media: negative publicity.

6.4 Opportunities

- O1 A wedding is personal and of great importance to people. When customers like the products they will buy it faster because the products are important for the customers. –
- O2 The competition is more specialized in only decorations. They have a lot of similar products but they are less exclusive than Sensecommerce. Their assortment is smaller and less wide.
- O3 By choosing the right positioning Sensecommerce can get to distinguish them from the competitors.
- O4 Decoration is the fastest growing in the budget of newlyweds.
- O5 The number of communication tools are increasing.
- O6 Visits to Facebook increased in France in one year with 443%, to 12 million visitors.

- O7 There is a growth of more than a third. Internet users will spend a lot of time on community sites as they already spend almost a fifth of their time on the internet.
- O8 With affiliate marketing Sensecommerce can be shown on hundreds of websites.
- O9 SEO creates brand awareness.
- O10 Email marketing is extremely cheap compared to other forms of marketing.

7. Confrontation Matrix

After the most important external factors (opportunities and threats) and internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) are chosen, a so-called confrontation matrix has been made, in which the challenges will result. (Confrontation Matrix, 2011. para. 1)

	Opportunities	Threats
	O1 SEO creates brand awareness. O2 Email marketing is extremely cheap. O3 Visits to Facebook increased in France. O4 Decoration is the fastest growing in the budget. O5 The assortment of competitors is less exclusive.	T1 The shipping costs. T2 France is lagging in the use of internet. T3 stronger competition on price and quality in the online world. T4 transparent market which makes it easy to compare prices. T5 Sensecommerce will always depend on suppliers.
Strengths S1 The accessibility and usability of the website. S2 Well organized customer service. S3 The use of social media. S4 Wide assortment of products. S5 Experience.	S1/O1 Gain visitors S2/O2 keep your customers satisfied S3/O3 Use Facebook S4/O4 emphasis on decoration material	S2/T1 Arrange the lowest shipping costs with the shortest delivery time S3/T2 Use the fact the competitors are also lagging S4/T3 Stay ahead of your competitors S5/T4 Use the same formula
Weaknesses W1 Delivery time. W2 No brand name in France. W3 Distribution centre is situated in Holland.	W1/O5 Be more exclusive with a bigger and wider assortment W2/O1 Create brand awareness	W1/T1 Cheapest shipping costs possible W2/T4 Create brand awareness W3/T5 Purchase via France

8. Strategy

8.1 Strategies:

The confrontation matrix shows an insight on how a company should 'behave' within a market and with its products and services. These are the most important strategies which came out of the confrontation matrix.

Strategy 1: As can be seen in the confrontation matrix, creating brand awareness is very important. The best way to create brand awareness is using Search Engine Optimization (SEO). SEO provides a higher ROI (Return on Investment) than any other form of marketing. The investment costs are relatively low compared to the traditional forms of marketing. Search engine optimization means more targeted visitors looking for your product or service.

Strategy 2: Delivery time is another point that dominates in the confrontation matrix. Due to shipping costs, it is not possible to deliver within 24 hours, unlike the competitors. Sensecommerce should not try to deliver within 24 hours, this is too expensive and it will mean the products will go up in price. Therefore Sensecommerce should use the fact that they have a bigger and wider assortment, when Sensecommerce is more exclusive then their competitors and offer good prices the customers will not mind a longer delivery time.

Strategy 3: As can be seen in the confrontation matrix, France is lagging in use of internet compared to other countries. This also means the competition is lagging in internet usage. However the Facebook hits are increasing. Sensecommerce could stay ahead of their competition by using social media to promote and communicate with their customers since more and more people are starting to use social media channels like Facebook. The use of social media will lead to more brand awareness as well. By dealing properly with social media, companies and brands become part of the 'network' and of the 'peers', which makes them faster and more trusted. Social media marketing is playing an increasingly important role in the relationship between businesses and Public Relations.

Strategy 4: Sensecommerce has a well organized customer service setup. When buying online products, there is no personal contact as in an offline shop, however it is also important for e-commerce companies to keep the customers satisfied also after the purchase. Sensecommerce should use email marketing to keep their customers satisfied and to gain new customers as well. Email marketing is cheap and allows Sensecommerce to 'push' to their audience their message

instead of waiting for customers to visit their website. Again this will also lead to brand awareness by 'pushing' your audience to visit the website.

Conclusion: As the strategies above show, creating brand awareness is very important for Sensecommerce since they are entering an existing market. There are already several online shops specializing in wedding articles which can offer better delivery conditions. The people need to 'get to know' Sensecommerce. They also need to know where they stand for, that Sensecommerce has a bigger and wider assortment then the competition and that they are more exclusive. Sensecommerce can create this brand awareness by using Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Social media and Email marketing. SEO means more targeted visitors looking for your product or service. Social media is easily searchable and relatively objective, since it is generated by a wide group of people. Email marketing is cheap and allows Sensecommerce to 'push' to their audience their message instead of waiting for customers to visit their website.

8.2   Marketing Mix

The marketing mix is the combination of tools that an organization can use to fill in its marketing strategy. Originally the marketing mix consists of Product, Price, Place and Promotion. With the right combination of the four (or more) P's marketers can improve the effectiveness and business results. (Marketingmix, 2011, para. 1)

8.2.1 Product
The range of products is expanding rapidly with different accessories for weddings. Sensecommerce sells approximately 1100 items, excluding wedding dresses. Sensecommerce supplies mostly to consumers (95%) and to businesses (5%) including hotels, confectioners and theater groups. As can be seen in the Confrontation Matrix, Sensecommerce should use the fact that they have a wider and bigger assortment than their competitors. Also, decoration is the fastest growing in the budget of newlyweds, Sensecommerce should obviously make use of that. When Sensecommerce sells more, and, especially, different products, the customers probably will not mind the fact that Sensecommerce cannot deliver as fast as the competitors.

8.2.2 Competition
There are several competitors. It is important for Sensecommerce to stay ahead of them. As stated before, Sensecommerce already has a bigger and wider assortment. But not only do they need to stand out with their products, but also with their promotion and website. As can be seen in the External analysis, France is lagging when it comes to usage of internet, however, the number is

increasing. Sensecommerce should use the fact that the competition is probably also lagging when it comes internet marketing, such as social media and email marketing.

8.2.3 Place

As mentioned previously, Sensecommerce's head office is situated in Capelle aan den Ijsel in Holland. The company orders products which are then sent to their distribution centre in Heerhugowaard, also in Holland. Sensecommerce stated that they want to keep both their head office in Capelle aan den Ijsel and their distribution centre in Heerhugowaard, when they will expand to France. This means Sensecommerce will not be able to deliver within 24 hours and the shipping costs will increase. They should, therefore, make a difference with their products, services and promotion.

8.2.4 Promotion

Sensecommerce uses Social Media to communicate and promote their company. Sensecommerce uses Facebook and Twitter. On Facebook they are not particularly active, which is a waste, as the usage of Social media is growing. Sensecommerce should use Search Engine Optimization and email marketing to gain visitors to their website and create brand awareness. Sensecommerce is a successful company in Holland, they could use 'the wisdom of the crowd' since the trust in 'peers' is increasing, which means we dedicate more value to the opinion of our network than organizations or brands.

9   Sub questions:

9.1 Is there room for a new player in the French e-commerce market?

As read in the External Analysis research of Eurostat, it is shown that France is lagging in the use of internet. On the internet, the French are mainly interested in the search engines (14,7% of all Web Site visits), social networks (12,9%) and entertainment (12,1%). Compared to the British for example, the French are considerably more active in these categories. However news and actuality do not get much attention of the French (33%) in comparison with the British (62%). Online shopping in France accounted 8,4% of Web Site visits. All these rates are based on surveys of Hitwise and ComScore. However the internet usage of the French is increasing. (Marketingfacts, 2009, "75% online Europeanen op social networks" section, p. 2)

As mentioned, there are already several web shops specializing in wedding accessories. It seems the competition is strong but it is not impossible to enter the market, as long as Sensecommerce

distinguish themselves. In the Netherlands there are also several competitors but Sensecommerce is successful.

Sensecommerce cannot be the cheapest because of shipping costs and delivery time, as discussed. Also Sensecommerce is still unknown in this market. For this reason, positioning is important. After choosing the right positioning a communication strategy can be determined. This is because the correct positioning is the best way to communicate the added value to a product or service, which is important to distinguish them from the competitors.

Conclusion:

There is room for a new player on the French market. The usage of internet is increasing. You should always be aware of what and how your competitors are doing, and, because the e-commerce market is a transparent market, this should be easy. Sensecommerce should take advantage of this. They should also take advantage of the fact that the usage of social media is growing. Whether Sensecommerce will succeed on entering the French market depends on how Sensecommerce distinguish themselves. There are already several web shops specializing in wedding accessories. Sensecommerce has to stand out. It is very important to use the advantages of social media. (Cijfers, 2009, "Internetgebruik Frankrijk: Fransen houden van vermaak" section, para. 5)

9.2 How strong is the competition in France?

Porters fives forces give a good indication of the relative attractiveness of an industry. It is a strategic marketing model which enables the entrepreneur to determine a strategy which adapts to the market. This can also be an important part of the marketing plan, therefore this model is very useful for Sensecommerce since they need to know the attractiveness of the wedding market in France before they expand. They also need to know their competition as it will be important to stand out.

Conclusion:

As stated before under Strategy, there are several competitors. It is important for Sensecommerce to stay ahead of them. Not only do they need to stand out with their products, but also with their promotion and website. As can be seen in the External analysis, France is lagging when it comes to usage of internet, however the number is increasing. Sensecommerce should use the fact that the

competition is probably also lagging when it comes internet marketing, such as affiliate marketing, social media and email marketing.

9.3 In what ways can Sensecommerce make a difference in France?

As also stated before under Strategy, Sensecommerce can make a difference by using the fact that they have a wider and bigger assortment than their competitors. They should also use the fact that the competition is probably also lagging when it comes to internet marketing, such as affiliate marketing, social media and email marketing. On Facebook they are not particularly active, which is a waste, as the usage of Social media is growing. Sensecommerce could also use affiliate marketing and Search Engine Optimization to gain visitors to their website and create brand awareness. Sensecommerce is a successful company in Holland, they could use 'the wisdom of the crowd' since the trust in 'peers' is increasing, which means we dedicate more value to the opinion of our network than organizations or brands.

9.4 What cultural differences are there between the French and the Dutch market?

As can be read in the DESTEP analysis under "Cultural" there are several cultural differences between the French and Dutch market.

1. Young people want to get married, but a wedding is expensive, so lately more and more people choose to sign a PAC. The number of PACs increased which means the number of weddings will decrease. This can be a threat for Sensecommerce.
2. The decoration is the fastest growing in the budget of newlyweds.
3. Language.
4. One of the traditions of a French wedding is "Dragees", the candy.
5. Another French tradition is the wedding cake. This cake is called "Croquembouche"
6. Symbols
7. The usage of internet.

10 Conclusion and recommendations:

10.1 Is it possible for Sensecommerce to enter the French market with a reasonable chance of success?

Within this report one main question is being answered. This question is; is it possible for Sensecommerce to enter the French market with a reasonable chance of success? Extensive research shows it can be concluded that, yes, Sensecommerce can enter the French market with a reasonable chance of success.

Internal and external analyses have been made. The internal analysis provides strengths and weaknesses of a company. An external analysis provides insight into the opportunities and threats of a company. To determine the external analysis, a DESTEP analysis, the five forces of Porter and a marketing tool analysis have all been used. The internal and external analyses are processed in a SWOT analysis on which the final strategy of a company is based. This allows the company to respond to the needs of the customer.

The outcomes of the internal analysis show that the website of Sensecommerce functions well, it also looks attractive for women, it gives a clear overview and it is easy to use and access. Customer service is well organized, they are available every day and they also offer a reliable website and form of payment. Furthermore they use social media to communicate with their audience, they offer a wide assortment of products and Sensecommerce is a successful company in Holland as they have made a substantial revenue growth. However, because the distribution centre of Sensecommerce is located in Holland it will not be possible to deliver within 24 hours because of the shipping costs. They also have not developed their brand name in France yet.

The outcomes of the external analysis show that that decoration is the fastest growing in the budget of newlyweds and that the use of social media is growing. However, the number of PACS increased which means the number of weddings will decrease. E-commerce is a transparent market, it is easy for customers to make a decision to buy from the competition, therefore the competition on price and quality can also be much stronger than in the offline world. Despite this, Sensecommerce has a bigger and wider assortment then the competition, they should use the fact that they are more exclusive to their advantage. The external analysis also shows that Social media, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and email marketing are the best marketing tool for Sensecommerce to use.

The outcomes of a SWOT analysis and Confrontation Matrix have shown that there are different strategies for Sensecommerce. Creating brand awareness is very important. The best way to create brand awareness is using Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Another strategy to compensate for the longer delivery time is that Sensecommerce should use the fact that they have a bigger and wider assortment. When Sensecommerce is more exclusive then their competitors and offer good prices the customers will not mind a longer delivery time. Furthermore, Sensecommerce could stay ahead of their competitors by using social media to promote and communicate with their customers since more and more people are starting to use social media like Facebook, which will also lead to more brand awareness. Added to that, Sensecommerce should use email marketing to keep their customers satisfied and to gain new customers as well. Email marketing is cheap and it allows the Sensecommerce to 'push' to their audience their message instead of waiting for customers to visit their website. And again this will also lead brand awareness by 'pushing' your audience to visit the website.

As can be seen, creating brand awareness is a recurring topic. The best strategy for Sensecommerce is to create brand awareness by using Search Engine Optimization, Social Media and Email Marketing. SEO means more targeted visitors looking for your product or service. Social media is easily searchable and relatively objective, since it is generated by a wide group of people.

With all of this taken into consideration, it can be concluded Sensecommerce has a reasonable chance in succeeding to enter the French market, however there will have to be several adjustments as can be read below under 'recommendations'.

10.2   Recommendations:

The extensive desk and field research has shown that is possible for Sensecommerce to enter the French Market with a reasonable chance of success. However there are some things that need to be reviewed.

First, Sensecommerce will have to use Social Media to create brand awareness. As can be seen in figure 4 and 5 the usage of Social Media in France is increasing. It is recommended to use Facebook to promote Sensecommerce since the number of visitors of Facebook is increasing. The progress of Sensecommerce in France, reactions of former customers and special offers can be shown on the Facebook page. Furthermore Sensecommerce should use marketing tools as affiliate marketing, SEO and email marketing.

Another recommendation is that Sensecommerce should add the 'dragees' to their assortment. 'Dragees' are candy that has an important place between table decorations at French weddings. This candy can be found on almost every wedding in France therefore Sensecommerce should definitely add it to their assortment. Furthermore, decoration is the fastest growing in the budget of newlyweds, therefore Sensecommerce should focus on that.

It is also very important to keep monitoring the competition. As stated before, e-commerce is a transparent market, therefore it is very easy for customers to choose another company. It needs to know the prices, products and services the competition offers. As Sensecommerce has to deal with shipping costs they will not be able to deliver within 24 hours in comparison with the competition. Therefore Sensecommerce should stand out with their products and other services.

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