



Digital Marketing Plan for Soni Paras Autovälitys

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Bachelor's Thesis

2022

Abstract

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Degree

Bachelor of Business Administration

Report/thesis title

Digital Marketing Plan for Soni Paras Autovälitys.

Number of pages and appendix pages

23+2

This project based thesis study development of digital marketing plan for Soni Paras Autovälitys. The company has 3 employees for selling used cars. The main purpose of this thesis is to create a well-defined digital marketing plan which will benefit the commissioning company to increase sales, reach prospect customers, retain existing customers and increase brand awareness.

In this project-based thesis, main concept in relation to digital marketing has been introduced in the theoretical concept manner. This theoretical framework includes, social media marketing, search engine optimization and content marketing. In the project management stage, SWOT analysis were used in order to define internal and external market analysis. In addition, SOSTAC model was also applied to determine the marketing model. Based on these, digital marketing plan and guidelines were written with possible suggestion.

This thesis took place in Espoo, Finland and took 5,5 months. The completed digital marketing plan was presented to the commissioning company.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Search Engine Optimization

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1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the background of the thesis, basic objectives, benefits, project scope and risks.

1.1 Background

Digital marketing is becoming a powerful tool that should be applied by all companies. It is a very good cost-effective approach to promote a firm across digital platforms. Digital marketing focuses on managing different forms of online company presence, such as company websites, mobile apps and social media company pages, integrated with online communications techniques introduced later in this chapter, including search engine marketing, social media marketing, online advertising, email marketing and partnership arrangements with other websites (Chaffe 2019, Page 10). Digital marketing is advertising and content distribution via a variety of digital channels. Digital marketing includes online channels such as search engines, social media, email, applications, websites, and any new digital channels that might arise with the possibility of advertisement. It also includes offline channels that include digital media as well. The growth of digital media and digital platforms has made digital marketing the most potent form of marketing. Even traditional channels are changing to fit more digital media into them, and that emphasizes its importance in a modern-day marketing strategy (Engaidigital 2021). It is with great motivation that the author has started to do this thesis specializing on digital marketing, thus, the result would benefit the case company for the development and implementation of digital marketing.

1.2 Objective

The goal of this thesis is to develop a digital marketing plan for the Sony Paras Autovälitys, to increase sales, to promote the company, and to reach many more customers. To attain these objectives, the author has listed out different project tasks presented below.

Table 1. Overlay Matrix

Project Task	Theoretical framework	Project Methods	Project output
Task1: Digital Marketing Theory	Social Media Marketing, Content Marketing, PPC, SEO, Mobile Marketing and Email Marketing	Desktop research/digital marketing theory books	Digital marketing theoretical framework
Task 2: Company current situation analysis	Information provided by the company	Desktop research/Digital marketing theory books	Company current state
Task 3: Collecting data required for the digital marketing plan	Digital marketing theory books	Desktop research, personal observation	Digital marketing model
Task 4: Digital marketing plan	Information obtained from Tasks 1,2,3	Desktop research/Digital marketing theory books	Digital marketing plan suitable for the company
Task 5: Evaluation and feedback from the company	Company feedback	Desktop research/Digital marketing theory books	Corrections and changes

1.3 Project Benefit

The commissioning company for this project is Soni Paras Autovälityt. It is small sized company engaged in car dealership and exporting business. Its main sales target destination is east Africa- Ethiopia and also some other countries in the nation like Ghana and Nigeria. The demand for cars and the ease of shipping routes, makes the organization to be successful. However, the commissioning company doesn't apply any digital marketing tools at the moment. Thus, this project will benefit the organization by recognizing and guiding them on how to effectively use digital sources for business purposes. Moreover, the goal of this thesis is to aid the organization in gaining a

competitive advantage by digital applications. The main outcomes are expected to increase in sales and reaching more prospect customers.

In addition, this project will also benefit the author as he is very much interested in digital marketing applications and the passion to know more about export procedures. Therefore, this project is a good opportunity to gain practical knowledge about the field.

1.4 International Aspect

The case company Sony Paras Autovälitys is based in Finland and operate for international market. Even though the largest market share is in east Africa, the company involves in European market as well. Implementing digital marketing for this company has a great deal of benefit as it increases its market destination and reaching out many prospect customers.

1.5 Scope

In this digital marketing plan, different digital marketing platform theories will be included. These are: Social Media Marketing, Content Marketing, Pay Per Click (PPC), Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Mobile Marketing and Email Marketing. And later on, the author's action plan recommendation will be followed. Since the commissioning company doesn't apply any digital marketing tools, this project can be used as a guideline for future implementation. This implementation plan can be taken in to action if the company assign or hire marketing professionals.

1.6 Risk Analysis

The author is full time worker and a family man. The main risk associated with this project is time management. To overcome this possible risk, the author will strictly follow the timetable crated before the start of this project. Considering the effectiveness of the application and use of timetable, day off requests and use of extra hours from work will be arranged.

1.7 Key Concepts

Digital Marketing: "Achieving marketing objectives through applying digital technologies and media" (Chaffey 2019, Page 9).

Search Engine optimization: SEO is the process of improving your site to increase its visibility when people search for products or services related to your business in Google,

Bing, and other search engines. The better visibility your pages have in search results, the more likely you are to garner attention and attract prospective and existing customers to your business. (Search engine land 2021)

Social Media Marketing: Social media marketing is a way of leveraging social media channels, to market your business and build relationships with prospects and current customers (Linda, 2017 page 4).

2 Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is concentrating on administrating a company's online appearance and performance (Chaffey 2019). It is very important to know that today's business is influenced by the daily digital activities which are highly interrelated with human activities. Businesses engaged in any type of field must moderate their marketing activities with this dynamically changing environment.

Digital advertising on platforms such as Google, Facebook and Alibaba is set this year to overtake spending on traditional media for the first time, a historic shift in market share that has been accelerated by the coronavirus pandemic. Excluding online ads sold by old media outlets such as news publishers or broadcasters, digital marketing is predicted to account for more than half the \$530bn global advertising industry in 2020, according to GroupM, the media buying agency owned by WPP. Separate forecasts released last week by Magna, part of IPG Mediabrands, also expect 2020 to be the year traditional media is upstaged (Financial times 2021).

2.1 Social media Marketing

Today, in our digital world, the social media users have been increasing along with the emergence of different social media platforms. Users of different demography are using social media for different purposes based on their interest. Since the emergence of Facebook, many other social media platforms are becoming more popular. For example: Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok are few among many. Therefore, using social media marketing for reaching our prospect customers is a good opportunity for companies. By using the website channels, more and more people will get to know that your business or brand exists. Do a great job at getting people talking and sharing, and you'll find others will happily follow their lead, also known as their social influence (Coles, 2014, page 2). The case company, Sony Paras Autovälitys are not using any social media platform to reach out customers, and they are missing the opportunity to reach out many prospects.

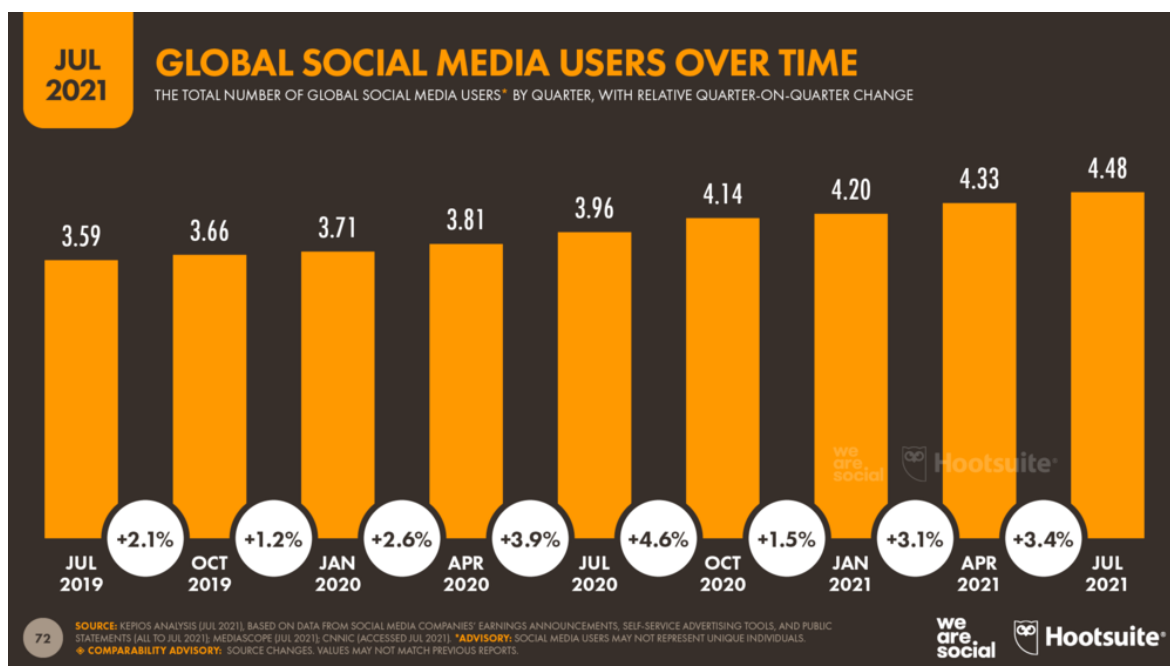


Figure 1 Social media users report (Statshot Report 2021)

2.2 Content Marketing

Traditional marketing is becoming less and less effective by the minute; as a forward-thinking marketer, you know there has to be a better way. Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience (content marketing institute 2021). Content marketing can be in the form of text, videos, or any other media and aims to engage with customers. Each company should create specific content that is relevant to their brand for a greater chance to attract potential customers and generate sales (Chaffey 2019).

2.3 Pay Per Click (Pay Per Click)

Pay per click (PPC) is an online advertising model in which an advertiser pays a publisher every time an advertisement link is "clicked" on. Alternatively, PPC is known as the cost-per-click (CPC) model. The pay per click model is offered primarily by search engines (e.g. Google) and social networks (e.g. Facebook). Google Ads, Facebook Ads, and Twitter Ads are the most popular platforms for PPC advertising (Corporate finance institute 2021).

In paid per click model, it applies a method to driver traffic to websites, the web owner pays the averter (E.g. Google) when the advert is clicked. This model is very economical especially for companies with limited funds allocated for advert and promotion expenses.

2.4 Search Engine optimization (SEO)

SEO is the process of improving your site to increase its visibility when people search for products or services related to your business in Google, Bing, and other search engines. The better visibility your pages have in search results, the more likely you are to garner attention and attract prospective and existing customers to your business. (Search engine land 2021). the main purpose of having a website is to be reached put to many customers when they search for a product or service. The commissioning company doesn't have a web site and the author suggests having and use one and to consider different criteria for visibility during search.

2.5 Mobile Marketing

Mobile marketing is any advertising activity that promotes products and services via mobile devices, such as tablets and smartphones. It makes use of features of modern mobile technology, including location services, to tailor marketing campaigns based on individual's location. Mobile marketing is also extremely cost-effective. There are variety of options to choose from for any budget and the impact it can have when compared to the cost is significant. In a common comparison, social media ads are much cheaper than purchasing ad space for radio or television. Customers can also be reached in real-time with mobile marketing no matter where they are. Radio or television marketing only works when a customer is in front of a television or has the radio on (Investopedia 2021).

2.6 Email Marketing

Email marketing is a powerful marketing channel, a form of direct marketing as well as digital marketing, that uses email to promote your business's products or services. It can help make your customers aware of your latest items or offers by integrating it into your marketing automation efforts. It can also play a pivotal role on your marketing strategy with lead generation, brand awareness, building relationships or keeping customers engaged between purchases through different types of marketing emails. The use of

email within your marketing efforts to promote a business's products and services as well as incentivize customer loyalty. Email marketing is a form of marketing that make the customers in your email list aware of new products, discounts, and other services. It can also be softer sell to educate your audience on the value of your brand or keep them between purchases.

3 Project Management

The author has chosen two data sources for the project: Primary data and secondary data collection sources. During a school internship practical work, the author has gained practical experience and information about the daily company activities, plans, events like auctions, and general company culture. For secondary data sources, desktop study has been chosen to develop an understanding of the concept of digital marketing and based on this to design a viable digital marketing plan for the case company. Desktop study includes different academic writings, digital marketing theories and statistics, website articles and online library databases. Below explains the whole project tasks. Thus, the author uses qualitative research approach for the project. Qualitative research is a form of exploratory research that's designed to uncover the perceptions, motivations, and attitudes that drive consumer habits. Overall, qualitative research guides the creation of hypotheses, which can then be proved or disproved through quantitative approach (HubSpot 2021).

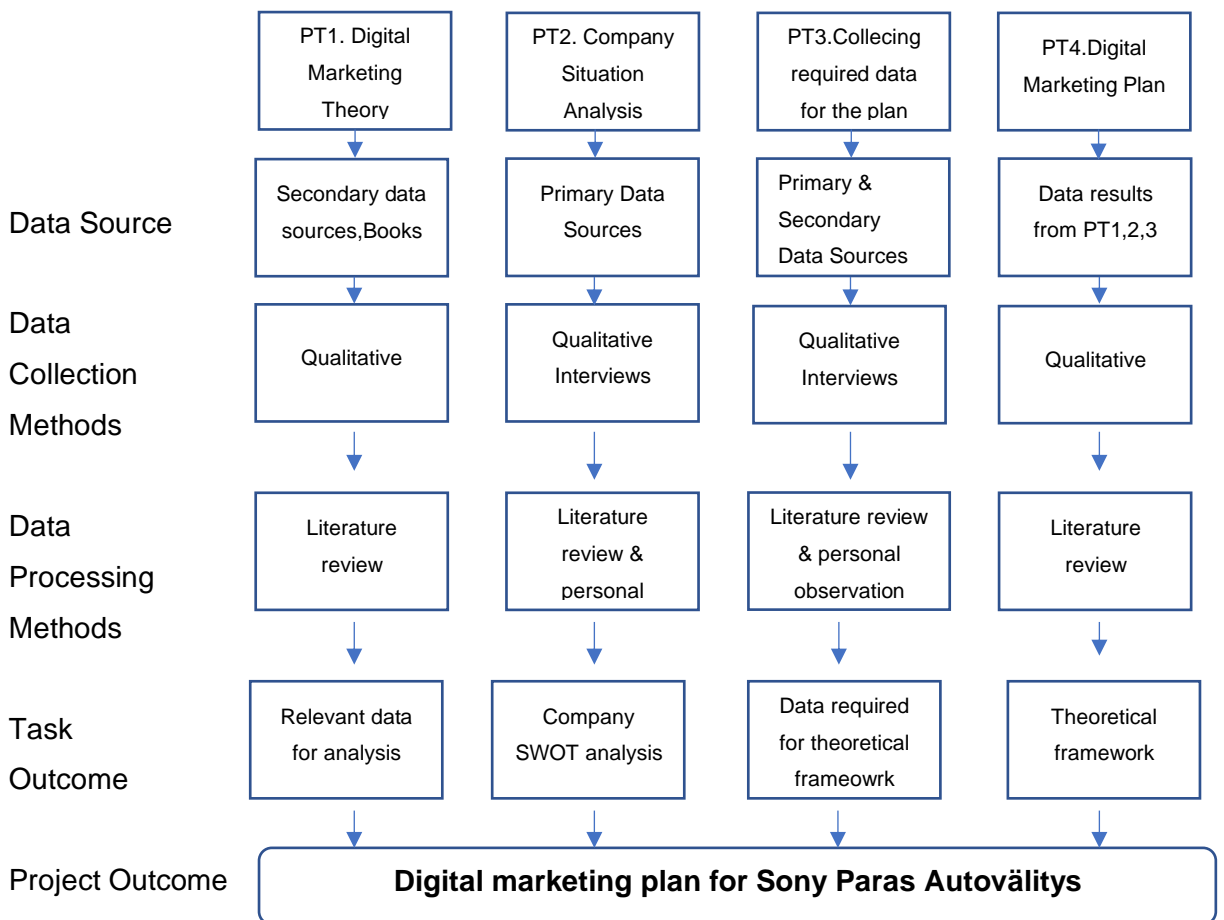


Table 2. Project management plan

3.1 Market Research

Digital marketing employs a variety of market study techniques. Since the commissioning company is a small firm with few complicated business relationships with other comparable firms or competitors, the author chose SWOT analysis for marketing growth plan. SWOT analysis is designed to facilitate a realistic, fact-based, data-driven look at the strengths and weaknesses of an organization, initiatives, or within its industry. The organization needs to keep the analysis accurate by avoiding pre-conceived beliefs or gray areas and instead focusing on real-life contexts. Companies should use it as a guide and not necessarily as a prescription (Investopedia 2022).

3.2 Current Situation and Analysis of Company product

In order to analyze the current situation of the commissioning company, the author has implemented SWOT analysis and internal interviews in order to assess the company product.

3.2.1 SWOT Analysis

SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis is a framework used to evaluate a company's competitive position and to develop strategic planning. SWOT analysis assesses internal and external factors, as well as current and future potential (Investopedia 2021). When assessing the SWOT analysis, the author has found out that the commissioning company need to implement technological applications in order to increase competitiveness. Even though, the company has loyal customers and good product as a strength, improving what is lacking is an advisable option.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Market Experience in Europe▪ Loyal customers (Existing customers)▪ Good product that satisfies customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Limited marketing resources▪ Limited budget▪ Online presence▪ Digital marketing knowledge
Opportunities	Threats

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Marketing • Existing network • Product proximity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Entrants • Developing technologies threats • Countries Regulations
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Table 3. SWOT Analysis Soni Paras Autovälitys

3.2.2 Product Analysis and Internal Interview

Product analysis involves analyzing different features of a product, including price, quality, appearance, availability, and other features. The commissioning main product is used cars for sale, and in order to analyze the product, the author has conducted internal interviews that involves 3 participants, including the company manager and 2 other coworkers. There were 5 questions regarding the product and suppliers. The first two questions were what the employees think about the company product and if they think that the company need to sell additional products. The author has learned that the company have good products that satisfy customers, but it needs to sell other related products like spare parts. The next questions were about the what additional services would customers request and how the company is choosing the suppliers. The interview participants believe customers would like to get extra item for free as a compulsory to the sale of each car, for example, car perfume and dashboard wiping wax. The participants have also suggested to choose suppliers based on product quality and price also suppliers with better quality product with relatively chapter products would increase competitiveness.

4 Marketing Planning Model

The goal of this chapter is to help the case company develop a digital marketing communication plan and further to discuss the current state of the example company as well as its future goals. Once this plan is implemented in to action, the digital marketing responsibility and tasks can be done by one or shared between two individuals.

The author has chosen SOSTAC marketing planning model, in order to conduct a marketing growth plan. This model was originally created by UK based marketer PR Smith. The most popular model for setting out your Digital Marketing Plan is the SOSTAC model, developed by PR Smith in the 1990s and later formalised in his 2004 book, Strategic Marketing Communications. It is an acronym for Smith's six fundamental facets of marketing: situation, objectives, strategy, tactics, action and control. (IMM graduate school 2022). SOSTAC is a strategy that examines where you are now before attempting to set acceptable goals that you want to reach through specific actions. Its name corresponds to the acronym in English of:

- **Situation:** Where is your business right now?
- **Objectives:** Where would you like to go? What objectives would you like to achieve?
- **Strategy:** How will you get there?
- **Tactics:** What tactics will you use to achieve it?
- **Action:** What actions will you carry out?
- **Control.** Measuring the results.



Figure 2 SOSTAC model (Antevenio 2022)

4.1 Situation Analysis

In order to bring the situation analysis into life, the author has identified from the internal interview conducted in chapter 3.2.2, that it is important to define the company's digital customers. The company's digital customers represent different demographic groups ranging from young individual customers to that of aged company owners or representatives. The author has learned that the commissioning company's digital customers are young customers buying cars for personal use and other customers who buy cars for commercial purpose. The second important point to consider at this stage is that, to compare the company's situation. For this purpose, the author has used the SWOT analysis used in chapter 3. The author was able to identify and detect the competitive analysis of the company and has learned that many of the company's competitors' customers digital usage.

Digital Channels	Used	NOT in use
Website		X
Social Media channels (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok)		X
Google ad		X

Table 4. Analysis Soni Paras Autovälitys Landscape of digital channels

4.2 Objectives

The second step in SOSTAC methodology is to define objectives. For this purpose, the author had chosen the method called SMART. SMART is an acronym that stands for **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imely. Therefore, a SMART goal incorporates all of these criteria to help focus your efforts and increase the chances of achieving your goal. (Corporate finance institute 2022). The author has listed out the main objectives of the commissioning company's digital marketing objectives using this method.

- **Goal 1.** Reaching out to 50% of the existing customers by January 2023

The author believes that increased presence in digital marketing would boost reaching out customers easily. In implementing SOSTAC model, the author's suggested objective to the commissioning company is to reaching half of its customers online and create opportunities to attract new customers.

- **Goal 2.** Increasing brand visibility by using Google Analytics by January 2023

The second objective that should be taken in to account is that to increase brand visibility online. The performance measurement of this objective can be measured by Google Analytics.

- **Goal 3.** Increasing email frequency to be measured in a weekly basis.

The last objective is to measure the frequency of email interactions with customers. this includes offers and sales deals. In order to keep track of the performance, the authors suggests to measure the frequency weekly.

4.3 Strategy

Strategy enables to follow the path until the established objectives are achieved. In Soni Paras Autovälity's case, the strategy provides powerful results like: attract potential customers, engage digital presence, create inbound marketing, retain loyal customers, etc.

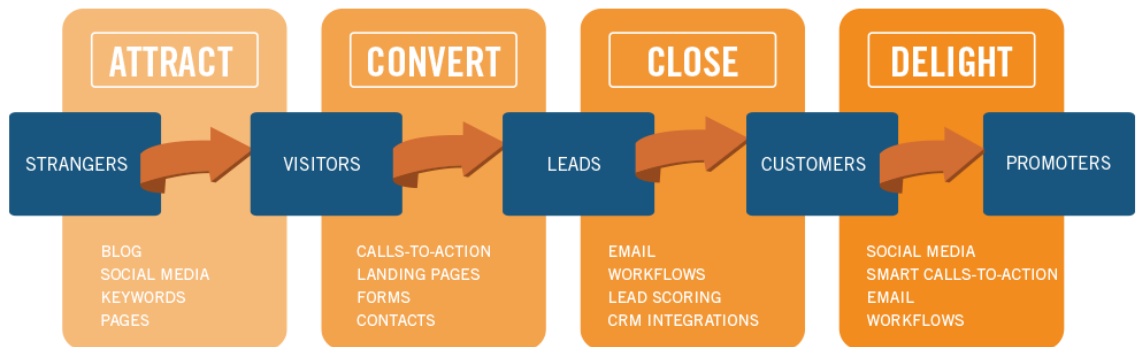


Figure 3. Example of SOSTAC – Strategy (Antevenio 2022)

4.4 Tactics

In SOSTAC method the next step is Tactics. It is important to define specific tools of the digital mix that we plan to use in order to reach the objective of the marketing plan. The author recommended some lists to be included in the digital marketing plan: Website, Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok), and google ad. These specific tactics are chosen considering the commissioning company's nature of business, company size, and target audiences.

4.5 Action

The next step in SOSTAC method is action. This enables to bring the plan in to implementation. At this point it is important to work hard and follow. For the successful implementation of the plan, it is the action must address the 5W's (Who? What? Where? When? How?) and determine proper execution the digital marketing plan. Thus for Soni Paras Autovälity's must determine its target and purpose of the execution platform.

4.6 Control

At this point, it is time to focus on analysis of key performance indicators (KPI). The author has listed out some KPI's to consider once the digital marketing plan is implemented in to action.

	Leading indicator	KPI 1	KPI 2	KPI 3
Social media	Followers	Engagement	Page visits	Conversions
Website	Content visits	Bounce rates	Traffic leads	Conversions
Google ad	Content visits	Clicks / traffic	Conversions	Revenue
Email	Delivery rate	Open rate	Click through	Conversion rate

Table 5. Analysis Soni Paras Autovälitys KPI analysis

5 Digital Marketing Plan

This thesis serves as a foundation for the commissioning company's digital marketing activities. Therefore, it focuses on how to get started and how to use current social media channels. The final product contains information on the most significant aspects of digital marketing, although it does not exhaustively cover all of them. The author suggests that using all suitable digital marketing would boost the company's growth in all manners. The case company should begin using the strategy and make possible adjustment as needed in the future to meet the changing needs of the business.

The previous sections defined the company's overall analysis, objectives, strategy, and methods. A more thorough action plan for the website, social media platforms, and search engine optimization may now be explained. Complex analysis and suggestions for each company's web platform will be offered in the sections below. There will also be examples of suggested website developed by the author.

5.1 Social Media

These days, car buyers and consumers spend hours on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Pinterest in order to find their desired product. Soni Paras Autovälitys is missing out on a terrific chance to interact with a target audience because it is not taking advantage of how easy and affordable it is to market through these platforms. Soni Paras Autovälitys have no presence in the social media platform and it is the author's advice to use these platforms immediately. The author suggests the commissioning company to engage in these platforms mentioned above and make sure to have a business page or account for each of the major social media networks. After this the company must share information with its customers and prospects and also a direct link to the main website. This increases traffic to the website and maintain high visibility and thus results in acquiring more customers and revenue.

	Facebook	Instagram	TikTok
Time/day	1hr +	1hr +	2hr +
Posts/day	2	2	2
Content	Daily posts/engagement	Updates and available products	Videos

Goals	Increase page followers by 10% every month	Increase page followers by 10% every month	Increase page followers by 10% every month
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Table 6. Analysis Soni Paras Autovälitys Social media interaction time plan

The author has now presented possible suggestion in administering the above social media platforms:

- Keep regular posts

Posting on social media on a frequent basis is important not only to present the company to customers but also to attract prospects. Posts may include regular updates about the products, present customer favorite products in the form of pictures and videos, and update any changes on the products.

- Be interactive with audience

Interacting with customers is one way of creating healthy relation with customers and it is also a means to keep online customer's attention. This can be implemented by allowing customers for feedback, creating opinion polls on products, and share company's products in another platforms.

- Study and make audience analysis

The basic of any audience analysis is to know more about the online audience (customers in our case), specifically the number of online customers, preference of their search, favorite products and the timing of their online presence. Audience analysis can be performed by audience analytics dashboard. The author suggests Mailchimp platform for this purpose. It is a digital marketing platform that always help companies manage and interact with their customers. Example for audience analytics dashboard is presented below.

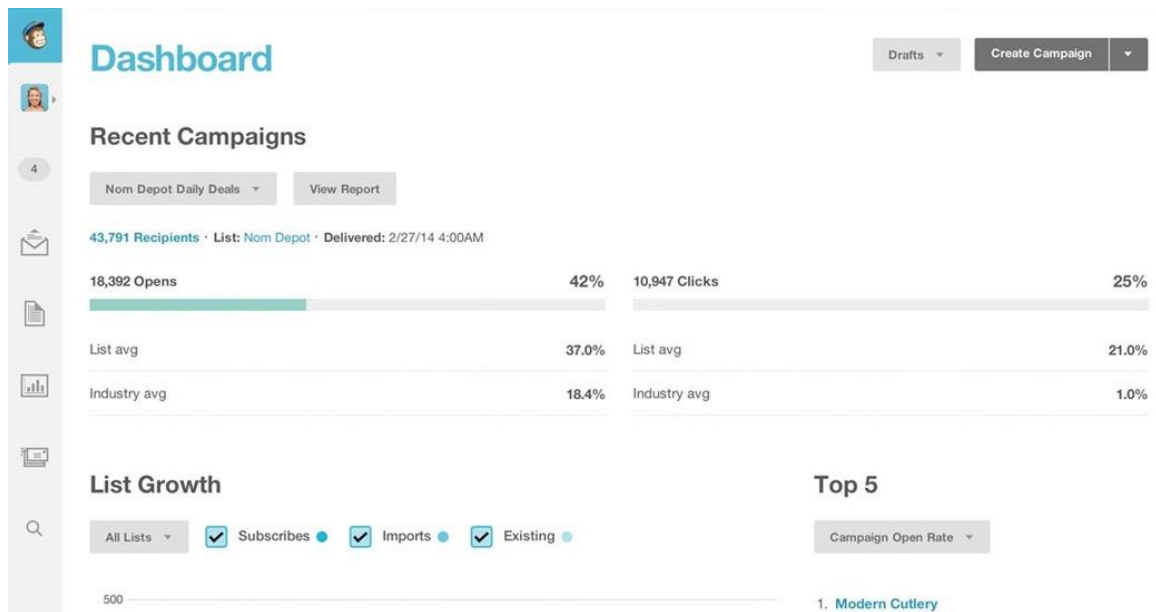


Figure 4. Screenshot example of Mailchimp: Audience analytics Dashboard (Mailchimp 2022)

- Use consistent brand image

When interacting with online customers, it is always important to keep the brand image consistent. Even though there is always updates in the company logo or brand image, keeping the same theme is vital, so that customers will have the awareness of the company when looking at the brand image.

- Monitor results

After analyzing the online customer online presence and related interaction information using the above suggested analytics platform (Mailchimp), it is important to monitor the results and take necessary action.

5.2 Website

Analysis Soni Paras Autovälitys doesn't have any web site. The author suggests the development of a website as quickly as possible. Nearly 70% of small business owners polled stated that marketplaces like Amazon and eBay have helped them increase sales, while about 30% believe they have had a negative impact. Most small businesses (81%) believe that online sales are critical to their company's success, but most rely on their own websites as an e-commerce channel. Sixty-six percent of small businesses sell products through their own websites, 24% sell on Amazon, and 22% sell on eBay (business insider 2022). The author suggests the commissioning company to have a website with a characteristic of:

- Smooth navigation

When creating a website, it is important to keep it simple for the visitors in order to navigate through the pages, and also keep in mind customers when designing the website. For example: the company's home page should always include all option regarding products, contact information, search bar, and help tab. This makes the user to easily access the pages without hustle.

- Interactive

Designing the website is means to interact with customers and to provide valuable information regarding the company's products and services. When creating website for Soni Paras Autovälitys, the author suggests to include interactive options. For example: include help tab, answers for frequently asked questions (FAQ) and feedback/ ratings option.

- Simplified design

Any website with a simplified look but all-inclusive option for the customers is always preferable by users. When we are developing new website specially for the purpose of reaching out customers, the author suggests to make it very simple and easy for customers to use. The author has presented his demo website for Soni Paras Autovälitys below after this section.

- Very good browser compatibility

Customers uses different devices to browse the internet and thus, when developing a website for Soni Paras Autovälitys, the author suggest to consider different compatability

options. For example: the website must be not only accessible on safari and chrome browsers mainly, but also mobile compatible for iPhone and android devices.

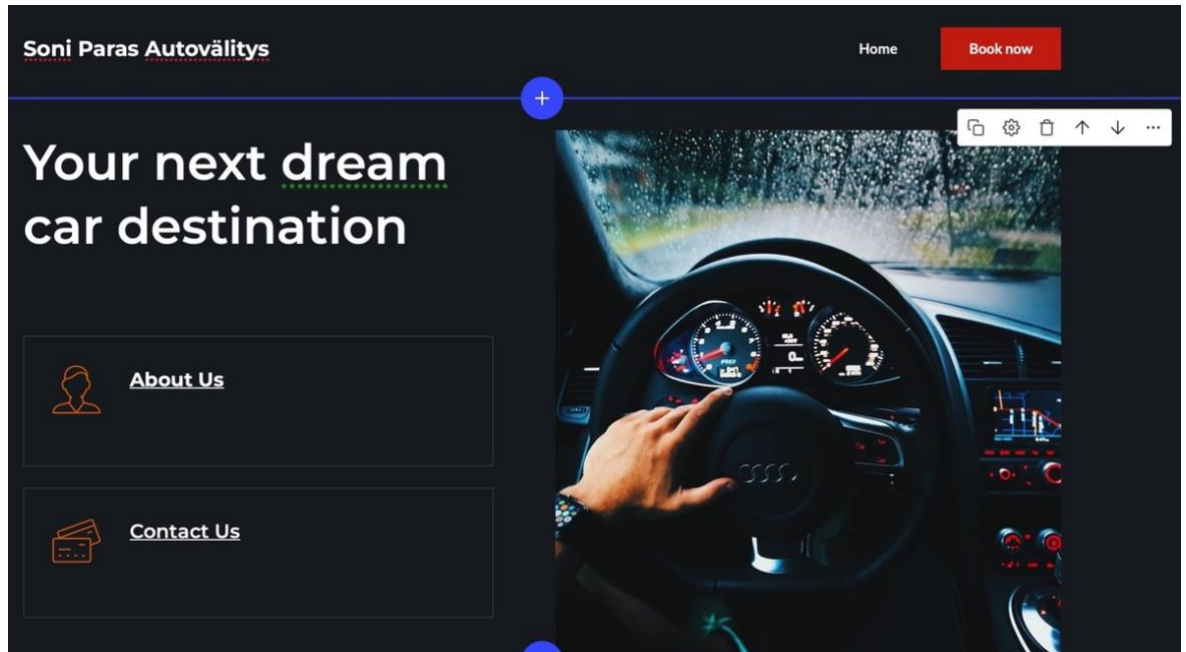


Figure 5. A sample website designed by the author %

5.3 Search Engine optimization

Having a good website is important to interact with prospects and customers. In order to be visible for prospect customers, the implementation of SEO (Search Engine Optimization), is wise to apply. Once Soni Paras Autovälitys have the website available, it needs to consider the visibility when being searched by customers. When doing so, the following points should be taken into account.

- Use longtail key words

When making the search engine optimization for Soni Paras Autovälitys, the author suggests to consider to use longtail key words. This can be done by using google suggestion and using more different key words. For Example: Used cars in Finland/Europe, Used Toyota cars for sale in Europe.

- Choose perfect keywords

Soni Paras Autovälitys, may have to choose the right key words to be visible when the customer searches for related website. Good keywords increase the chance of visibility

and appear on search results. For example: “car dealership in Europe”, “cars for sales Finland”, Etc

- Submit the site to search engines (Eg. Google)

In order to submit the site to search engine, the author has learned that the following steps must be taken.

Step 1: Create an XML sitemap. XML (Extensible Markup Language) is a plain text file that helps the search engines to list the websites when searched using key words.

Step 2. Submit the sitemap to search engines (Example: Google)

Step 3. Keep the sitemap always updated.

- Integrate social media in the search

Visibility always increases when we enable the search in different platform always active. Therefore, the author suggests Soni Paras Autovälitys to integrate the search in different social media platforms.

6 Conclusion and Recommendations

The main objective of this project was to create a solid and implementable digital marketing plan for Soni Paras Autovälitys which will benefit to increase sales, maintain brand awareness and to increase prospects and retain customers. To achieve this work, the author has used the skill and knowledge he obtained during his studies at Haaga-Helia university of applied sciences. The author has been working in the commissioning company as internship worker. Thus, the author has gained a very good understanding and knowledge of the marketing activities in the absence of digital marketing applications. This digital marketing plan covers, all important aspects of the commissioning company marketing features. The author has presented this plan to the commissioning company. The plan outlines specific techniques and actions that will help the organization achieve its goals. If the commissioning company implement this plan successfully, it will significantly improve their business and result in a satisfying outcome.

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Appendences

