

First Year Digital Marketing Plan

Case: Arctos

Reetta Järvelin



Author Reetta Järvelin	
Degree programme GloBBA	
Report/thesis title A strategic digital marketing plan for the first growth steps of a start-up. Case: Arctos	Number of pages and appendix pages 37 + 22
<p>Digital marketing is becoming increasingly important, as communication through digital channels develops and some aspects of traditional marketing become irrelevant. Digital marketing focuses on current and relevant methods of reaching audiences, making it a valuable marketing asset for businesses.</p> <p>This thesis is a study into the field of digital marketing, including common tools and best practices. The thesis is a project-based thesis, which aims to create a complete digital marketing plan executed for a commissioning company operating in the travel and tourism sector.</p> <p>The basis for the project is a theoretical collection of digital marketing models and channels. The theoretical framework is gathered from current digital marketing literature and web resources.</p> <p>The project goal is to utilize the theoretical framework to create a first year digital marketing plan for the commissioning company to support its current marketing actions. The purpose of the final product is to provide clear guidelines for digital marketing. The implementation of the plan is not included in the project.</p> <p>The outcome of the project is a finished product which utilizes the theoretical framework and is customized for the needs and preferences of the case company. The plan includes clear guidelines and brief instructions on how to implement digital marketing actions to reach digital marketing objectives.</p>	
Keywords Digital marketing, inbound marketing, media mix, organic reach, conversion.	

Table of contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Thesis Topic and Tasks	1
1.2	Project Objectives and Scope	2
1.3	Stakeholder Benefits	4
1.4	Case Company Introduction.....	4
2	Theoretical Approach to Digital Marketing.....	6
2.1	Inbound Marketing Methodology	6
2.2	Content Marketing	8
2.3	Platforms for B-to-C Digital Marketing.....	10
2.3.1	Social Media.....	10
2.3.2	Blogs	14
2.3.3	Search Engine Marketing (SEM).....	15
2.4	Search Engine Optimization (SEO).....	16
2.4.1	Basic Principles of SEO	16
2.4.2	SEO Ranking Factors	16
2.4.3	SEO Future Trends	17
2.5	Summary	18
3	Project Management Methods.....	20
3.1	Target of Research.....	20
3.2	Digital Marketing Plan Development Process	20
3.3	Digital Marketing Planning Steps	21
4	Platform for First-year Plan.....	23
4.1	Mission Statement.....	23
4.2	Situation Analysis	23
4.2.1	Company First Year Objectives	23
4.2.2	SWOT Analysis	24
4.2.3	Competitor Analysis	26
4.2.4	Positioning Analysis	26
4.3	Digital Marketing Objectives.....	27
4.4	Target Market.....	28
4.5	Growth Opportunities	29
4.6	Digital Marketing Strategy	30
4.6.1	Digital Media Mix.....	30
4.6.2	Digital Marketing Strategy Integration	31
5	Conclusions and Recommendations	32
5.1	Product Assessment	32

5.2 Process Assessment.....	32
5.3 Recommendations for Further Research	32
References	33
Appendix 1. Company Interview	38
Appendix 2. Arctos First Year Digital Marketing Plan.....	38

1 Introduction

This thesis is a study of the field of digital marketing, including significant theories and models, common tools and best practises. The thesis is conducted as a project for a case company to provide the company with general guidelines for digital marketing.

This chapter introduces the thesis topic and thesis process in detail as well as covers related keywords and key benefits of this project.

1.1 Thesis Topic and Tasks

The topic of this project thesis is a digital marketing plan for a start-up. The purpose of the plan is to provide the company with a good platform for their digital marketing efforts and to give instructions on how to achieve set digital marketing objectives.

This digital marketing plan will help the company recognize relevant marketing actions and to allocate its marketing resources in a strategic way. The plan will also help the company recognize differentiating factors and show how to use them in digital marketing to create competitive advantage.

Being a start-up, the commissioning company Arctos is currently lacking a comprehensive digital marketing strategy. In addition, the founders of the company come from non-marketing backgrounds which means that the company is currently in need of marketing guidelines. Therefore this project will serve as a general set of guidelines for future reference in addition to being a first year plan. The plan is based on the company's marketing and sales goals, to support the company's operation as a whole.

From the beginning Arctos has designed its service to be suitable for several different markets internationally. During the launch and first year of service, the company will only operate in the Finnish market, but the goal is to launch the service internationally in the future. This project has a strong international aspect in the sense that the company is looking to target tourists and travelers, no matter which market is in question.

The risks for this project include typical risks associated with working with start-up companies. Examples of possible risks are lack of information from the company contact person, lack of information from stakeholders, lack of resources to execute marketing plan and possibly the company going out of business during the project. According to the risk assessment, the stated risks are unlikely to interrupt the completion of the thesis.

The following is a list of keywords relevant to the thesis.

Digital Marketing refers to “the communication and interaction between a company or brand and its customers using digital channels.” (Kotler et al. 2008, 124.)

Inbound Marketing is a marketing strategy, which aims to attract customers by creating strategic content. (Halligan, B. Shah, D. 2010,10-15.)

Media Mix refers to the combination of digital marketing channels used to meet marketing or campaign objectives. (Business Dictionary 2016.)

Organic Reach is the number of people who have seen your unpaid digital content on social media. Organic reach is often used as an indicator of the success of unpaid social media marketing. (Digital Marketing Institute 2016.)

Conversion or **conversion rate** refers to the proportion of online visitors who complete a desired action. Conversion can refer to a purchase or other action such as opening an e-mail, depending on the marketing or campaign objectives. (Marketing Terms 2016.)

Chapter 1.2 describes in more detail the project objectives and scope of this project.

1.2 Project Objectives and Scope

The project objective describes the overall goal of the project. The project tasks break down the steps needed to fulfil the project objective. Project tasks and related information are shown in the overlay matrix in table 1.

The project objective is to develop a first year digital marketing plan for a start-up company.

Project task one is to conduct background research on the company’s current situation and goals for the future. A comprehensive understanding of the current situation helps to determine possible theories and tactics for the plan.

Project task two is to research current and effective digital marketing channels and strategies. A broad theory knowledge base enables the best possible selection of theory and tools for use in the project.

Project task three is to analyze how the theory can be applied to a digital marketing plan for the company. Theory knowledge base is used to distinguish best tactics and how to use them.

Project task four is to establish a digital marketing plan for the company. The plan is the product or final outcome of the thesis and can be used by the company to develop marketing practices.

Project task five is evaluation of the project. Evaluation includes analysis of the final outcome and suggestions for further research.

Table 1. Overlay Matrix

Project Task	Theoretical Framework	Project Management Methods	Outcomes
1. Conduct background research on the company's current situation and goals for the future	Writing the theoretical framework	Interview, desktop study	Theoretical framework
2. To research current and effective digital marketing channels and strategies.	Writing the theoretical framework	Desktop study	Theoretical framework
3. To analyze how the theory can be applied to a marketing plan.	Utilization of theoretical framework	Desktop study	Suggestion for digital marketing mix and strategy
4. To establish a digital marketing plan for the company.	Utilization of theoretical framework	Desktop study, case studies	Digital marketing plan
5. To evaluate the project.		Gather feedback from company	Improvement suggestions

This digital marketing plan focuses on the first growth steps of the start-up company. The main goal of the plan is to show how to gain brand recognition and attract the attention of ideal customers. The project does not include actual implementation of the marketing plan.

The plan focuses on digital marketing practices and does not include traditional marketing practices, although these areas do intersect to some degree. Digital channels are more

suitable for the nature of the company, since the service they are providing is in a digital format. Also, digital channels are likely to be more effective in reaching the company's ideal customers.

Chapter 1.3 introduces the benefits of this project to involved stakeholders.

1.3 Stakeholder Benefits

This chapter includes a detailed explanation of the benefits of this project to stakeholders.

The benefit of the thesis for the case company is that they will be provided a digital marketing plan for the launch phase of their operations. The plan will help the company determine which marketing efforts to focus on and how to reach potential customers online. Ideally this will lead to increased brand recognition and customer acquisition.

One of the goals of this project is to draw attention to the company's service and to make the service as clear as possible for the customer. Therefore this project will also benefit customers because the project will help the company optimize the customer journey.

This project will benefit my personal goal of building a career in digital marketing. During this project I will apply my current knowledge and skills in this field and gain new insight through related research.

This project benefits the field of digital marketing by showing analysis and integration of current digital marketing practices. The project explains strategic digital marketing practices and offers a theory base to justify chosen models.

Chapter 1.4 introduces background information about the case company.

1.4 Case Company Introduction

Arctos is a start-up company with a mission of bringing nature close to people. The company aims to offer people the opportunity easily to experience adventures and meaningful experiences. The company's mission is carried out through an online platform where people can book nature experiences, try and buy outdoor gear and plan their adventures. The company was established in 2015 by three Aalto University students, who share a passion for adventure and the outdoors.

Arctos' product is an online booking service, which allows customers to book a complete nature experience, including route instructions, gear rental and tips for a successful experience. Arctos has partnered with nature centers such as Haltia and adventure gear suppliers such as Tenttis to enable customized and easy service packages. Gear suppliers provide gear for rental purposes (with a possibility to buy) while nature centers provide information about nature routes and a location to store gear for easy pick-up and drop-off.

The service will be officially launched in Spring/Summer 2016, since summer is expected to be the best season for kick-off. Fall and winter packages will be added to the selection later on.

This digital marketing plan is scheduled to start at the launch of the service, and it will carry on for the first year. The main goal of this project is to provide Arctos clear digital marketing guidelines to follow, so that they can gain as much recognition and as many customers as possible during the first year of service.

2 Theoretical Approach to Digital Marketing

This chapter covers key theory used for this project. The theory provides a basis for the sections, which will be included in the digital marketing plan.

The field of marketing is currently going through significant changes. These changes are driven mostly by digitalization and rising opportunities. Digitalization is changing the field of marketing, leading to a variety of opportunities, but also to a decline in the efficiency of some traditional marketing strategies.

To create a relevant and effective digital marketing plan, it is essential to study currently used marketing channels and strategies. Therefore the theoretical framework consists mostly of recently resurfaced findings and digital marketing strategies. The studied theory covers topics such as digital marketing planning and strategy, inbound marketing, content marketing, search engine marketing and optimization, social media marketing and consumer behavior.

2.1 Inbound Marketing Methodology

The theoretical framework for this digital marketing plan is largely based on the theory of Inbound Marketing (Halligan, B Shah, D. 2010). Inbound Marketing is a marketing theory based on the concept of attracting potential customers to the company by publishing interesting and relevant content to strategically selected channels. The theory was established as a contrary view to traditional, outbound marketing methods such as telemarketing, TV advertising, e-mail blasts and other forms of mass marketing. The theory relies heavily on content marketing principles to deliver value to potential customers in order to gain and retain their interest.

The continuously increasing effect of inbound marketing is largely due to a shift in the modern business environment and changes in consumer behavior. Advances in technology have changed the way people live their lives and therefore also consumers' relationship to brands and their buying behavior has changed. For example TiVo, Netflix and other services have largely replaced the need for traditional TV, meaning that TV advertising is losing its audience. In the modern world people are also busier and more distracted than ever before, which means that they are not likely to pay attention to advertising that is not interesting or relevant to them. (Halligan, B. Shah, D. 2010,10-15.)

According to Halligan and Shah (2010), the first step in developing a successful inbound marketing strategy is to create a community or “hub” of interesting content and interaction. The platform for this hub can be a website or webstore, and the content is typically in the form of blog posts and articles. The hub extends to the company’s other digital marketing channels such as social media sites. The point of all of this is for the company to be easily found on the web, to attract the right people, to get people to return to the site and to initiate interaction with potential customers. The people who have been attracted to the company site by content are valuable leads, who are more likely to be converted into customers (compared to leads generated by mass marketing). This process refers to the attract phase of figure 1.

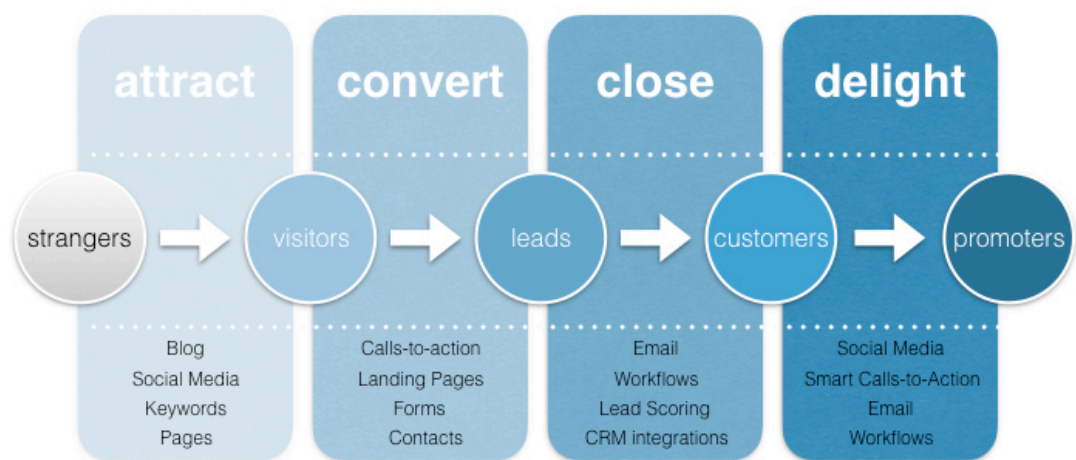


Figure 1. Inbound Marketing Methodology (Reproduced from HubSpot 2015)

The second phase of the Inbound Marketing Methodology is conversion. Conversion happens when visitors further engage with the business. Converting can be done for example by encouraging visitors to subscribe to a newsletter, fill out a form or add your site to an RSS reader. The idea here is to provide several different channels and methods for customers to engage. Not everyone is ready to immediately make a purchase, because people may be at different stages of the sales cycle. (Halligan, B & Shah, D. 2010, 20-22.)

Converted visitors are people who are somehow engaged with the company, they could for example be subscribed to a newsletter or blog or they may follow one or more of the company’s social media channels. It is important to keep converted visitors engaged, so that when the time comes for them to make a purchase decision, it is as easy as possible for them (close phase in figure 1). As in the previous stages, content is also used here to retain the interest of these potential customers or leads. If these leads do not convert into

customers, chances are that the generated content has attracted the wrong kind of traffic, and the content needs to be more targeted. (Halligan, B. & Shah, D. 2010, 20-22.)

Once a lead has been converted into a customer, it is time to focus on keeping them engaged with the community. Happy customers will return and even actively promote the product within their network, generating more buzz and traffic to the site. (Halligan, B & Shah, D. 2010, 20-24.)

The Inbound Marketing Methodology requires the company to transform their marketing efforts and adapt to the modern environment. This may require resources, but the end result is that the company will have a flow of good quality leads, more customers and better customer retention. Inbound Marketing minimizes the need for outdated and ineffective sales efforts by focusing on strategic content marketing. Chapter 2.2 covers content marketing theory and best practices. (Halligan, B & Shah, D. 2010, 15-25.)

2.2 Content Marketing

As mentioned in chapter 2.1, Inbound Marketing relies on content to attract and engage potential customers. This chapter includes information on common content marketing tools and practices.

Content marketing is a strategy used to attract people to a company's digital channels such as a website or social media profile. This is done by creating and publishing interesting and relevant content to targeted audiences. Content can be published for example in the form of blog posts, social media posts, web articles and videos. The purpose of content marketing is to engage people with your brand and ultimately to generate sales. (Lieb, R. 2012, 2-4.)

The popularity and success of content marketing is based on the fact that it is more effective and less costly compared to traditional marketing. According to Demand Metric (2016) content marketing costs 62% less than traditional marketing and yet it generates about three times more leads. Even though content marketing is gaining popularity, it is seen as a relatively new marketing strategy. Demand Metric (2016) states that 78% of CMO's believe that custom content is the future of marketing.

A successful content marketing strategy starts with setting clear goals. Goals should be very specific and they are commonly stated as a percentage improvement, sales figure or click-through rate. Goals should also be well reasoned, because it is important to recognize exactly how meeting the goals will benefit the company. (Patel, N. & Aragon, K. 2016.)

During the content marketing planning phase it is essential to determine how the content marketing plan can be integrated into the company's overall digital marketing plan. To be more specific, this means that content distribution channels should be chosen to best suit the content marketing objectives and the nature of the content should be planned so that it reflects the brand identity. (Patel, N. & Aragon, K. 2016.)

It is helpful to conduct a competitor analysis when planning a content marketing strategy. This helps to gain insight about what kind of form content can be in, how often content is published, how well the content expresses the company's core message and what kind of content is popular or especially successful. An analysis helps to generate ideas and to find out your company's differentiating factor. The goal is not to start generating the same kind of content as competitors, but to find out what you can do differently that will set your content apart from the competition. (Patel, N. & Aragon, K. 2016.)

Creating content for a large audience may seem like a good way to gain recognition, but for marketing purposes a targeted audience leads to significantly better results. Therefore before creating content, it is essential to select a narrow audience and find topics that will be interesting to them. The group can be your ideal customer, which you have chosen for overall marketing purposes, or a more specific subgroup within your ideal customer group. The target group should be as small as possible but big enough to have potential to meet the content marketing objectives. (Patel, N. & Aragon, K. 2016.)

Both HubSpot (2015) and Lieb suggest using personas to determine a target audience. Personas are specific descriptions of an ideal customer, which are based on research. The purpose of personas is to help the company create targeted content that appeals to specific people.

The form of content should be chosen according to the company's resources and marketing strengths as well as the preferences of the target group. For example videos are a great way to appeal to younger audiences, whereas magazine or newspaper articles are more likely to reach older audiences. Most types of content can also be shared through multiple channels such as social media, e-mail and website. (Patel, N. & Aragon, K. 2016.)

Great content is relevant, interesting and it serves the chosen target group in terms of topic and distribution channel. The best way to utilize content is to integrate it into the company's overall marketing strategy, therefore contributing to the fulfillment of overall

objectives. Chapter 2.3 discusses digital marketing platforms, which among other purposes also serve as useful content distribution channels.

2.3 Platforms for B-to-C Digital Marketing

Modern marketing is focused on initiating interaction, opposed to the traditional method of pushing content to audiences. Therefore successful digital marketing relies heavily on social channels which allow and generate conversation. This chapter introduces a variety of digital channels for marketing to and communicating with consumers.

2.3.1 Social Media

Before the rise of social media during the past five years, companies reached customers through other digital channels such as websites and direct e-mail. Social media has made shopping "social," meaning that customers can be easily engaged, instead of just marketed to.

Most social media platforms operate both as desktop versions and on mobile applications or "apps."

Facebook is a social media network built to help people connect with each other and the things that matter to them. Facebook has 1.4 billion registered customer profiles, of which 900 million are active daily. Facebook lets companies create their own business profiles, and offers several options on how to engage with audiences. (Facebook 2016.)

Creating a Facebook company profile allows companies to share different types of content and engage audiences for free. Companies can share written posts, photos, videos, events and links to people who "like" their page. Sharing content on Facebook is a great way to have a dialogue with customers and potential customers, because people can react to and comment on posts. (Facebook 2016.)

So much content is being shared on Facebook, that it has become impossible for everyone to see 100% of the content that is being shared with them. Because of this, Facebook has developed an algorithm to select what types of content each person sees on their newsfeed. (Rouhiainen 2015.) For companies this means that the average organic reach of their posts is only 2.6%. (Social Times 2015.) This is why nowadays successful Facebook marketing requires paid advertising, which Facebook calls adverts. Adverts make it possible to increase the reach of Facebook posts, but they also offer other marketing benefits. Adverts allow the advertiser to also market to people who are not already engaged

with their business. The advertiser can choose the exact target group they want to market to by customizing the audience according to gender, age, geography and interests. (Rouhiainen 2015.)

Instagram is a social media community made up of over 300 million users worldwide. It is the first and perhaps most significant "born mobile" social media platform, where people share photos of their day to day lives.

Because of the simplicity and popularity of this social media platform, it is a great channel for communicating with customers and for targeting new audiences. In 2014 mobile traffic exceeded desktop traffic in the USA (Bosomworth 2015). In 2015, mobile traffic was greater than desktop traffic in 10 countries (Google 2015). Mobile applications are becoming increasingly significant in reaching customers through digital marketing, and Instagram is a pioneer in this digital transformation.

Making an Instagram profile is free and easy. Instagram profiles include a profile picture, a short introduction of the person, company or brand as well as one clickable link. Users can post photos to their Instagram feed, and these photos will be shown to people who follow the profile. Instagram has made photo editing inside the app easy and simple, which means that users can take and post photos in only a matter of minutes. (Instagram 2016.)

There are some restrictions on what can and cannot be done on Instagram. You can add a description text and hashtags to photos. Hashtags categorize photos, so that anyone searching for that topic can see your photo by searching for that hashtag. Clickable links cannot be added to photos or comments, which might make marketing more difficult, but this also keeps the platform user friendly. Instagram also does not allow you to share other users' photos. Fortunately there are a few ways to work around this. (Miles 2014, 7-9.)

Instagram has recently launched a paid marketing function for companies to use to increase visibility of their content. It functions in the same way as Facebook Adwords, you can choose a specific target market and promote a specific post to that group. (Instagram Business 2016.)

There are several significant advantages to marketing on Instagram. First of all, Instagram marketing requires less time and energy compared to other platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube. Also, it is very cost-effective, because it can be done efficiently completely free of cost. As mentioned before, Instagram's perhaps most important benefit

is that it operates flawlessly on mobile devices, since it is designed to primarily work that way. This makes it the ideal tool for targeting mobile users, a continuously growing market. Content posted to Instagram also has a longer life expectancy compared to Facebook. Facebook is designed so that content comes and goes at a fairly fast pace, Instagram photos can be easily found even after time goes by. Instagram has also made it very easy to find people with specific interests, this can be done by searching through hashtags, using the explore feed and by searching for photos taken at specific locations. (Miles 2014, 7-49.)

Pinterest is a visual bookmarking tool which lets people discover and save creative ideas (Pinterest 2016). Previously the only obvious way to save ideas from the internet was to save them as bookmarks on your browser. Pinterest solved this problem by creating a platform for a personal "virtual pinboard." Users can create their own pinboards and then categorize and save interesting ideas, also sharing them with other users. (Cario 2013, 2.)

On Pinterest, ideas are posted or "pinned" in categories called "boards." Boards help users find ideas easily, because they separate the pins by dividing them into themes. Pins are in the form of photos, for easy, visual navigation. Each pin links to its original source, a webpage where the full content can be found. (Cario 2013, 2-4.)

Pinterest was launched in 2010, and grew rapidly during its first year. By the end of 2011, the platform had over 10 million users, making it the fastest site ever to gain such a large user base. It has been estimated that Pinterest will remain a relevant social media channel also in the long term. (Cario 2013, 5-6.)

Pinterest started out as a popular social media channel among middle-aged American women, the most popular topics on the site being food and crafts. While this demographic still makes up a big portion of Pinterest's users, the site's diversity is on the rise. This opens up new opportunities for businesses looking to target a wider demographic. (Cario 2013, 5-6.)

Businesses can use Pinterest to drive traffic to their site, generate and track customer loyalty, showcase products and gain understanding of customers and potential customers. According to Cario, bloggers, retailers, big brands and small businesses can all benefit largely from including Pinterest within their digital marketing efforts. Thompson (2012) states that Pinterest has potential to be the most important social media platform for destination marketers. Most people use Pinterest to share their dreams and goals, including

those regarding travel. This aspect makes Pinterest the ideal option for businesses in the travel industry to find potential customers.

Snapchat is a mobile app designed for instant photo- and video messaging. The app lets users share photos and videos, shown for up to 10 seconds before they disappear from the screen. Recently Snapchat has also included a chat feature as well as live text and video calls between contacts. (Patel 2016.)

What makes this social media platform so significant is that it is the fastest growing social network and it has the most engaged audience. Snapchat has about 100 million daily active users who send more than 400 million snaps daily. (Social Times 2015.)

Snapchat has the youngest user base compared to other major social media channels. 45% of Snapchat users are aged 18-24, and 26% of users are aged 25-34. This makes Snapchat the ideal platform for companies looking to target younger audiences. (Business Insider UK.) According to a study conducted by Sumpto, 77% of college students use Snapchat daily, 45% of college students would open a snap from a company they know, and 73% would even open a snap from a company they don't know. The study also shows that majority of college students would add a company as a friend on Snapchat and that majority would also like to receive discounts and coupons via Snapchat. (Business Insider 2014.) Although these statistics may vary in different countries, these results can be used to show the marketing potential of Snapchat, especially for those brands targeting a young demographic.

According to Patel (2016), the most effective way for companies to use Snapchat is to develop it into a communication channel for behind the scenes content. This way customers and followers can gain access to new products and services before others, and they can get a glimpse of what the company is like from an inside perspective. Snapchat should be used to distribute fun, quick and authentic content. The design of the platform itself is not suitable for carefully planned and conducted advertising or communications.

YouTube is a video-hosting platform which also functions as a social network and a search engine asset (Miles 2014, 5). The platform has over one billion users worldwide, and hundreds of millions of hours of YouTube videos are watched every day. (YouTube 2016.)

YouTube allows people to create their own channel where they can post videos online for others to watch. Successful YouTube marketing can have many benefits for a business.

YouTube is a free video hosting service, which allows companies to post video content and to share that content online through other social media channels. Videos can also be embedded to websites and e-commerce sites. YouTube can be used to drive traffic to the company website, which is especially useful for e-commerce. A YouTube channel can act as a social media platform, since it allows people to engage by subscribing, liking and commenting. It can also be used as an advertising channel to attract new customers, advertising on YouTube is very inexpensive. YouTube videos have two different types of search engine benefits. Firstly, YouTube videos show up prominently on Google searches when someone searches for the topic or keyword of the video. Secondly, YouTube is the second most popular search engine after Google, which means that people are likely to find your content easily through YouTube searches. (Miles 2014, 10-11.)

2.3.2 Blogs

According to Wainwright (2013), business blogging is a marketing tactic which can be used to gain online visibility. Blogging is a way to share content, influence customers and drive traffic to your website.

There are several reasons why blogging is a beneficial marketing method. Including blog posts on a website helps that website get found more easily on search engines, generating more traffic to the site. More information about search engine optimization can be found in chapter 2.5. Additionally blog posts can be shared through multiple social media channels, which helps the brand keep up a social media presence and also drives traffic to the website. Depending on the type of content in the blog, blog posts can also help convert visitors to leads and customers, as shown in figure 2. (Wainwright, C. 2015.)

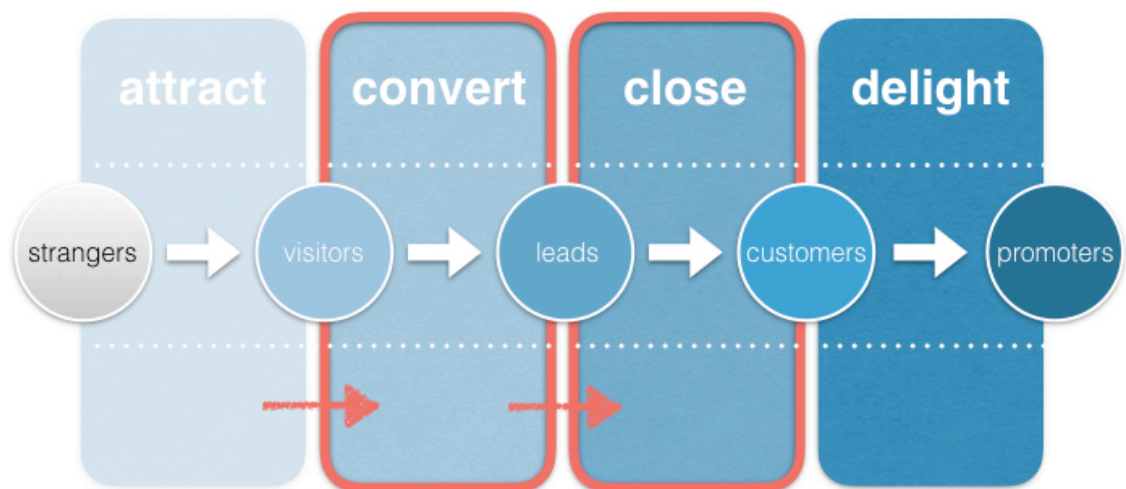


Figure 2. Content in the Inbound Marketing Methodology. (Modified from Hubspot 2015)

Wainwright (2015) also points out that blogging can help a brand establish authority in their field. Blog posts often answer common questions and act as an online source of information. By looking to your blog for answers, consumers are automatically guided into the sales cycle. Quality blog content also helps retain existing customers, because they keep coming back to your blog or business for answers to upcoming problems.

Rowett (2014) points out that the storytelling aspect makes blogging an optimal channel for tourism marketing. It is common for people to study blogs and other content prior to booking trips online. Blogs offer an outlet for communicating pictures, tips and details about travel destinations, therefore blog content can influence peoples decisions regarding their travel plans.

2.3.3 Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

Search engine marketing or SEM is a paid form of digital marketing which allows you to promote your company's web content on a search engine (Rouhiainen 2015). In this thesis I will focus only on SEM on Google AdWords, because at the moment Google is the most popular search engine in the world, and therefore has the most potential for digital marketing purposes. (Search Engine Watch 2016.)

Google AdWords works by increasing the visibility of your web content on the result list when someone searches using certain keywords. You are charged money for each customer who enters your site through that link. The price of each click is determined by the competitiveness of the keywords you have used. The more searches there are using a certain keyword the more expensive those keywords will be to advertise with. (Rouhiainen 2015.)

Using Google AdWords has many significant benefits. It allows you to reach people at the precise moment they are searching for something you offer. Attracting customers with commercial intent naturally increases the ROI (return on investment) of marketing. AdWords also allows you to have control of your budget, you can decide beforehand how much you are willing to spend on each campaign. Measurability is also an important feature of AdWords, you are provided with detailed reports of how many people have visited your site through the campaigns, and with additional tracking tools you can also see how much actual sales has been generated. (Google 2016.)

One of the most valuable benefits of AdWords is that it lets you target a very specific target group with your ads. You can choose the target group for your ads according to the

keywords they are using, their demographics and their geographic location. This means that the leads you are generating through advertising match your ideal customer profile, making them very valuable to your business. (Google 2016.)

2.4 Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Search engine optimization or SEO refers to the process of generating organic traffic to a website through search engines. While SEM is a form of paid advertising, SEO is optimization which results specifically in increased organic traffic and does not involve paid advertising. (Rouhiainen 2015.)

2.4.1 Basic Principles of SEO

The purpose of SEO is to help your website get found easily through search engines such as Google. There are certain features which can help your website rank higher on Google searches and gain more traffic to them. Therefore, well executed SEO results in increased traffic on the website and possibly also increased sales. (Rouhiainen 2015.)

Search engines use an algorithm to determine how the search results are showed. SEO needs to be in line with this algorithm in order to fulfill its purpose of generating traffic. Since Google regularly makes changes to their search engine algorithm, the effects of SEO change also from time to time. This means that the principles of SEO need to be updated often in order to remain relevant. (Rouhiainen 2015.)

2.4.2 SEO Ranking Factors

One of the most significant SEO ranking factors is the use of relevant terms and keywords. Keywords included in the domain, page titles and page content have a great influence on a website's SEO. Keywords should be related to the topic of the website or product and they should have relatively high search volumes. It helps if keywords have commercial intent and if they are long tail keywords. This means that it is beneficial to use specific keywords or phrases that someone would use when they are looking for something online. (Rouhiainen 2015.)

Another important ranking factor is user experience. The user experience score is influenced by the time people spend on the site and scrolling behavior. The more time people spend on the site the better, and if people generally scroll down to the bottom of the site, this will have a positive impact on SEO. A high bounce rate, meaning that people who enter the site click away after a very short period of time, is viewed as a negative SEO ranking factor. (Rouhiainen 2015.)

Other SEO ranking factors that should be taken into consideration are quality content and inbound links. If there is a flow of fresh content to the site, this has a positive impact on SEO. Content can also be used to express relevant keywords and it can be shared on social media channels. Shares, mentions and links on social media are beginning to have a significant impact in terms of SEO. Links to your site from other websites also improve SEO, however these links have to be of good quality and they should be connected to the same topic as your website. (Rouhiainen 2015.)

Site speed is also currently an important SEO factor. Websites that open quickly are ranked higher than websites that open slowly. This has to do with overall user experience, because expectations regarding site speed are continuously increasing, and website visitors often leave the page if it does not load fast enough. (Rouhiainen 2015.)

One quite recent ranking factor is the mobile optimization websites (Rouhiainen 2015). It is important that the website functions flawlessly on mobile devices, because overall mobile traffic has surpassed desktop traffic and mobile device traffic is still increasing (Bosomworth 2015).

As mentioned previously, SEO ranking factors are very vulnerable to changes in search engines' algorithms. This is why successful SEO requires continuous learning and updating. SEO is a great way to increase website traffic, but a company's digital marketing success should not rely solely on SEO efforts. (Rouhiainen 2015.)

2.4.3 SEO Future Trends

According to Fishkin (2015), there are some important future trends to consider when planning and executing SEO. First of all, there will be an increase of dark traffic to websites. This means traffic that seems to be direct traffic, when in fact it comes from sources such as Facebook and other applications. This affects all analysis of website traffic, because it makes it seem as if there has been a significant shift in the sources of traffic when there has not.

Fishkin (2015) also points out that even though some other ranking factors such as user experience are increasing in importance, the importance of inbound links is likely to remain at the current level. SEO ranking factors don't cancel each other out, instead they build up to create a sum of factors.

According to Fishkin (2015) the ranking factor of quality content is likely to increase and change. Due to the overflow of content on the internet, content needs to be of significant quality in order to have SEO benefits. It is likely that in the near future, visuals will become increasingly important. Quality visual content can be in the form of photos, videos and infographics. This is likely due to the fact that people perceive visuals as more trustworthy sources of information than text.

On the other hand DeMers (2015) states that social content will play a larger role in SEO. This means that content from social media can begin to act more like other web content in SEO terms, changing the definition of quality content altogether.

Both Fishkin (2015) and DeMers (2015) point out that mobile optimization is likely to become more important than desktop optimization. This is naturally due to the already rapid increase in mobile usage.

DeMers (2015) also makes an interesting statement regarding video content. He estimates that already in 2016, video content will become more significant than written content in terms of ROI for B-to-C marketing. Video will not only be an important aspect of social media marketing, but also Google is experimenting with the concept of video ads.

2.5 Summary

Not all digital marketing channels and strategies are beneficial to every company or brand. To optimize digital marketing, the company has to find out what their digital marketing objectives are and which channels and actions will best help reach them.

Successful digital marketing requires establishing and maintaining a consistent brand identity and principles throughout all marketing and communication channels. It is essential to develop a strategic plan to determine what kind of content is distributed through each channel and what for purpose each channel is used.

Figure 3 shows the integration of different digital marketing channels and strategies into the inbound marketing model. It shows which practises will be relevant to each phase of the customer journey. Some channels and practices can be used throughout the whole journey, while some are specifically tied to certain parts of the journey. This figure shows one version of an inbound digital marketing strategy, although some components may vary depending on digital marketing objectives.

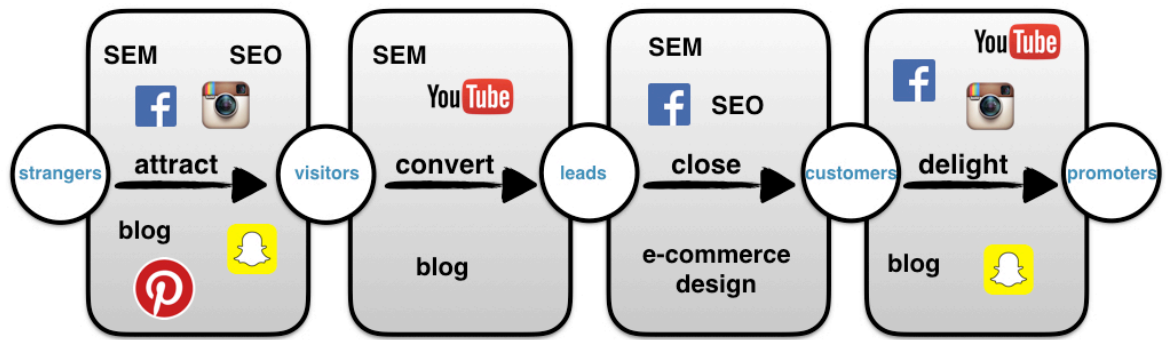


Figure 3. Inbound Marketing Model and Channels (Modified from HubSpot 2015)

3 Project Management Methods

This chapter describes the project management process and tools necessary for the completion of this project.

3.1 Target of Research

The main purpose of the research for this project is to provide a basis for the framework and suggested actions within the digital marketing plan. To make this project relevant and useful, the digital marketing plan is conducted based on extensive and thorough research in the field of digital marketing.

In addition to serving as a basis for the project, research also gives direction to certain components of the marketing plan. For example research helps determine the chosen digital marketing channels included in the digital marketing plan.

3.2 Digital Marketing Plan Development Process

This chapter describes the digital marketing planning process and the theory framework used to develop the plan. Although this digital marketing plan focuses on digital marketing channels and concepts, it follows some of the same guidelines as traditional marketing plans.

There are numerous theories regarding the steps and contents of the marketing planning process. Analysis has shown that even though the theories do not fully agree, some consistencies can be found. For example Kotler et al. (2009) and Malcolm McDonald (2008) share a similar view on marketing planning activities and the contents of a marketing plan. This digital marketing plan uses Malcolm McDonald's (2008) theory on marketing planning as a basis, but in addition it combines several digital marketing planning theories to supplement and support the scope and nature of the project. Due to the nature of the project, not all planning activities have been included in this project. Figure 4 shows the marketing planning process as it has been modified for this digital marketing plan.



Figure 4. Digital Marketing Plan Development Process. (Järvelin 2016)

Chapter 3.3 outlines research methods used in the digital marketing plan development process.

3.3 Digital Marketing Planning Steps

The objective of this project is to develop a digital marketing plan for the first steps of a start-up company. The full process for fulfilling this objective is pictured in figure 5.

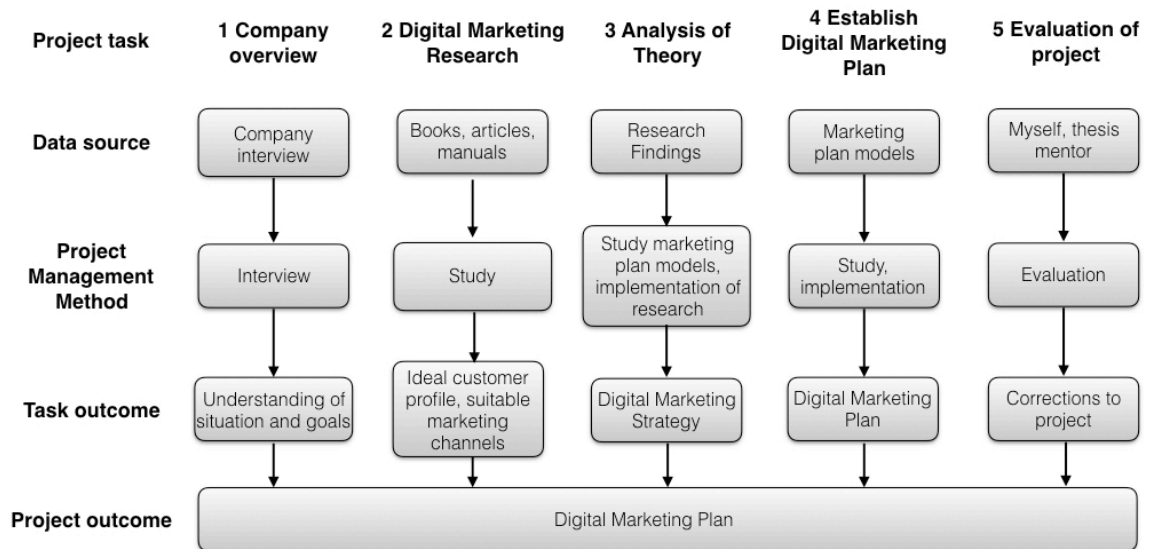


Figure 5. Research Methods. (Järvelin 2016)

The project consists of five project tasks, which form the final project outcome: a digital marketing plan.

The **first task** in developing the marketing plan is conducting a company interview to establish an understanding of the company's current situation and goals for the future. The most important aspect of this task is to determine the company's overall and digital marketing objectives. The objectives serve as a guide to determine the right digital marketing strategy.

Task two is researching current and effective digital marketing trends and strategies. At this stage, brief research is also conducted on digital marketing planning. The purpose of this is to find out what information is necessary to know about the company when starting the project. The researched theory as a whole provides a basis and helps to determine the scope of the project.

Task three involves narrowing down which digital marketing models and strategies will be chosen for this digital marketing plan. The purpose of this task is to determine how the theory will be implemented to develop the final project.

During **task four** the marketing plan is developed and conducted using the information gathered during the previous tasks. Additional marketing plan models and theories are used to put together and finalize the project.

The **fifth task** is the evaluation of the project. The project is evaluated in terms of validity, reliability and scope.

The project outcome is a digital marketing plan for Arctos. The plan is developed by utilizing digital marketing theory to create actionable steps and guidelines.

4 Platform for First-year Plan

This chapter provides important background information about the company's current situation and objectives. The chapter includes marketing-related guidelines to be used when developing the digital marketing plan.

4.1 Mission Statement

The purpose of including the mission statement is to ensure that digital marketing efforts reflect and pursue the company's core goals. (McDonald 2008, 30.)

Arctos' mission statement is defined as follows: "Arctos is a company with a mission of getting more people into nature, so that everyone can enjoy a life rich with adventures, friends and meaningful experiences. We help people discover the natural beauty of the world, and experience feelings of wonder, connection, and adventure."

4.2 Situation Analysis

The situation analysis includes objectives, SWOT analysis, competitor and positioning analysis, breakdown of the target market and digital marketing strategy. The situation analysis results in a comprehensive understanding of the company's current situation as well as guidelines to direct digital marketing efforts.

4.2.1 Company First Year Objectives

Arctos has three major objectives for their first year of business. The objectives have been set from both a financial and marketing viewpoint.

The first objective is to hold a product launch event in the second quarter. The launch event will market the launch of the online platform and serve as a first milestone.

The second objective is to gain eight local partners during the first year of business. Partners will be nature locations and gear suppliers. This objective will expand the product selection, giving customers more options for adventure travel.

The third objective is to reach a turnover of 20 000€ during the first year of business.

The objectives have been set according to extensive market research conducted by the company and assumptions regarding the functionality of the online platform and customer behavior.

4.2.2 SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis is an overall evaluation of the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The purpose of conducting a SWOT analysis is to gain understanding of the company's internal and external environments. Strengths and weaknesses give insight about the internal factors, opportunities and threats refer to external factors. (Kotler et al. 2009, 101-102)

In addition to helping to develop an overall business strategy, the SWOT is a valuable tool to use when creating a marketing strategy. The opportunities in particular can be used to produce marketing opportunities, which have potential to distinguish the company from its competition. (Kotler et al. 2009, 101-102)

As shown in figure 6, Arctos' most significant strengths are the company's customer oriented service design and storytelling concept. They pay special attention to the quality of the service throughout the customer journey. Their strong technical knowledge also makes it possible for them to adapt the service according to customer needs and preferences. In addition, the service has been developed so that it can be easily adapted for global use, which will likely be an advantage in the future. (Arctos 2016)

In terms of weaknesses (figure 6), Arctos is a new company in the field of adventure travel. This means that they do not have a previous customer and partner base and they lack previous experience. The company's technical concept is also relatively easy to copy, meaning that competitors are likely to have access to the same technology.

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Storytelling - Customer oriented approach - Quality service - Start-up network - Born global - Strong technical know-how 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New in the field - Technical concept easy to copy
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digitalization - Easy access to information - Urbanization - Rise in living standards - Rise of adventure travel 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities create competition

Figure 6. Arctos SWOT analysis. (Reproduced from Arctos 2016)

For digital marketing purposes, opportunities are the most significant part of Arctos' SWOT analysis. As shown in figure 6, Arctos sees digitalization and the information revolution as an opportunity. The company aims to create a service which is easily accessible through mobile devices, and technological evolution will help achieve this goal. Rising living standards make it possible for more people to travel, which is an opportunity for the whole travel industry. Urbanization and the rising popularity of adventure travel are trends which are likely to help Arctos establish a presence in their niche of the travel industry. (Arctos 2016)

Opportunities in the field lead to an increase in competition, which is an external threat to the success of the company (figure 6). Arctos aims to compete by focusing on customer orientation and quality of service, as mentioned in the strengths sections of the SWOT analysis (Arctos 2016.) Chapter 4.3.3 includes more information about Arctos' most significant competitors.

Components of the SWOT analysis are used in the digital marketing plan to develop the brand image and to showcase the company's differentiating factors.

4.2.3 Competitor Analysis

Competition should be examined as part of a basis for successful marketing. Arctos has several industry competitors, whose products are close substitutes for one another. The threat of substitute products should be analyzed from the viewpoint of product development as well as marketing planning.

Perhaps the most significant competitor at the moment for Arctos is a company called Retkipaikka, also operating in the Finnish market. Retkipaikka offers an online community for nature adventurers where people can share information about locations, trails, gear and other related topics. Retkipaikka has their own app, plenty of good quality content, and a strong social media presence. (Retkipaikka 2016.)

Hipcamp is a booking platform for campsites in the US. They can be considered a possible competitor, because Arctos is planning on having a global presence in the future. Hipcamp is a relevant company for analysis because their service is very similar to Arctos' and they seem to conduct successful digital marketing. (Hipcamp 2016.)

In the gear rental sector, the most significant competitor at the moment is Liizi, a company which rents adventure gear online. Liizi offers a compact variety of gear available to rent online, with both a delivery and pick up option. Liizi has a well functioning website but very little extra content available and not much of a social media presence. (Liizi 2016.)

4.2.4 Positioning Analysis

Kotler et al. (2009) describes positioning analysis as a tool for positioning the company's product or service against those of the competition. Positioning is typically conducted using quality and price as dimensions. This model is sufficient for use in crowded markets, where the product is relatively similar.

Since Arctos will be operating in a competitive space where the offered product or service can be innovative and therefore multi-dimensional, the traditional positioning map may not serve as the best indicator for positioning. Figure 7 shows a customized positioning map where the dimensions used are price and user-friendliness. User friendliness works as an indicator of product quality, since web services are often assessed by user-friendliness instead of quality.

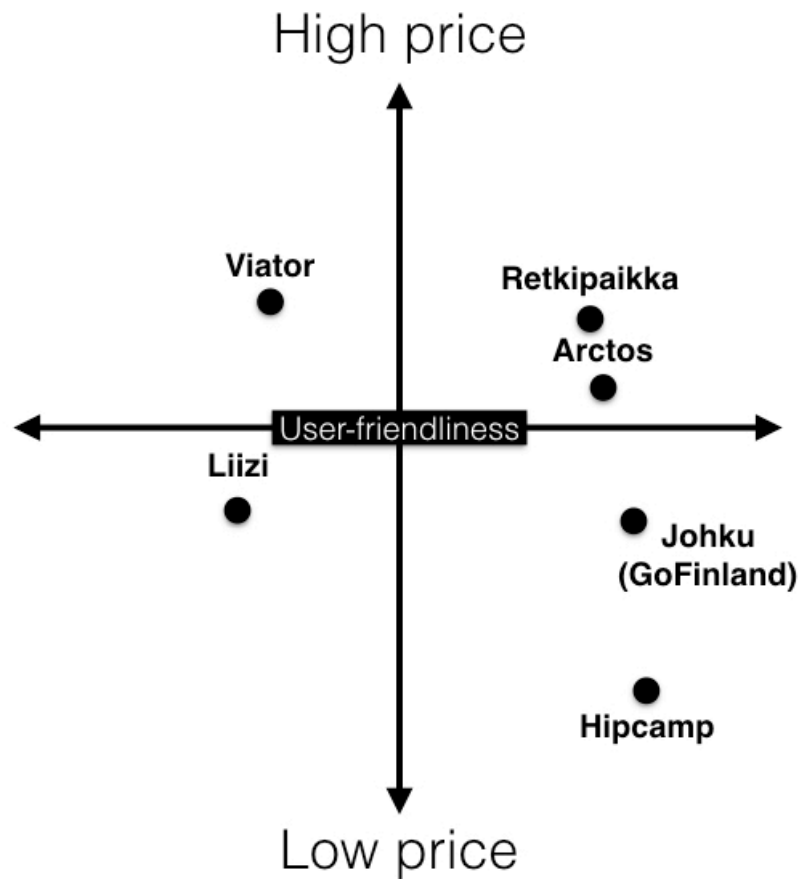


Figure 7. Positioning Map. (Järvelin 2016)

It is important to recognize that the positioning map shown in figure 7 is made based on estimates and assumptions regarding the services provided by Arctos and its competitors. The map should be updated when Arctos has launched its service, because the company's position among competitors may shift during the beginning of operations.

Note that Arctos' competitors are not necessarily direct competitors with the same kind of product. Therefore this positioning map only works as a guide to demonstrate the dynamic of the competitive environment.

4.3 Digital Marketing Objectives

Arctos' most important overall digital marketing objective for the first year is to increase brand awareness among consumers and partners. In order to establish a presence in their field the company must attract as much attention as possible from the adventure travel community both locally and within their Asian target market.

In order to produce a detailed action plan, this digital marketing plan is based on two more specific digital marketing objectives. The first objective is to generate traffic to the compa-

ny website and attract new customers. The second is to establish a strong social media presence and promote follower engagement.

The digital marketing objectives have been created to support the company's overall first year objectives.

4.4 Target Market

According to Hubspot (2015) it is essential to create a specific ideal customer profile before starting digital marketing planning. The purpose of this is to make sure that all digital marketing efforts are strategically planned to be as relevant and interesting as possible to the ideal customer. In this chapter I will describe in detail the specific target group for this digital marketing plan.

Arctos has divided their target market into two main customer groups according to geography and consuming habits. The main target group is young tourists traveling to Finland from Asia; this will be referred to as target group 1. The other target group is Finnish locals who are interested in experiencing nature; this will be referred to as target group 2.

At this point it is important to recognize that the target markets may later require alteration, depending on what can be learned from the pilot stage of the product launch. The current target markets have been developed according to information gathered from secondary research as well as assumptions based on the company's experience with previous customers and on inquiries they have received through their website.

According to Arctos, the ideal customer for target group 1 is a young, aged 20-40 Asian tourist, who is well educated, design-minded, and lives in an urban environment. This profile has been chosen as the main target group because at this stage the company has received several inquiries from Asian tourists, regardless of the lack of marketing efforts specifically targeting the Asian market.

To be more specific, Arctos has decided to use Visit Finland's definition of "The modern humanist" as an outline for the customer profile in target group 1. According to Visit Finland, the modern humanist is an open-minded and curious explorer who avoids mass-tourism and opts for an authentic Finnish experience. The modern humanist is specifically interested in Finland because Finland offers exotic and untouched nature, a unique culture, friendly English speaking people and a safe and simple environment for independent travel. According to Visit Finland this profile describes the people who are the most likely to travel to Finland. The profile is the result of an extensive study on Finnish tourism,

which was conducted to help guide businesses operating in the Finnish travel industry. (Visit Finland 2014.)

Although the previously mentioned study did not include the Asian market, it can be assumed that there is a similar target group within the Asian market. Visit Finland (2014) stated that the number of Japanese and Chinese tourists traveling to Finland is rapidly rising and that they spend more money during their travels than any other tourist group.

The customer profile for target group 2 is very similar to target group 1, with some exceptions. This ideal customer is someone who lives in the metropolitan area in Finland, is aged 20-30, who is interested in local nature and adventuring. This customer is likely to be a university student with a low income and is interested in traveling locally on a budget. They may also be located in Finland temporarily for studies or possibly an internship.

The differences and similarities of the target groups are shown in table 2. The main difference between the two target groups is geographical location, which can be easily taken into consideration in digital marketing. It is possible to efficiently target both target groups through the same marketing channels by utilizing strategic targeting.

Table 2. Target Groups for Digital Marketing Plan.

	Target group 1 - Asian tourists	Target group 2 - Local youth
Location	Asia	Finland (Metropolitan area)
Age	20-40	20-30
Interests	Travel, nature, culture, authenticity	Travel, nature, culture, authenticity
Education	Academic	Academic

4.5 Growth Opportunities

It is beneficial to recognize the growth opportunities of the company from the very beginning, in order to properly plan sustainable marketing efforts.

Arctos' proposed growth strategy is to grow by targeting new markets globally with the same product concept. This is meaningful information regarding the first year plan in the sense that digital marketing efforts should be designed for potential global use in the future. In addition this affects the brand image and long-term marketing vision.

4.6 Digital Marketing Strategy

A digital marketing strategy helps the company make informed decisions regarding chosen digital marketing channels and allocation of resources. The evolution of digital technology causes continuous changes in the market, meaning that the digital marketing strategy should be updated regularly for best results. (Ryan, D & Jones, C. 2009,19)

Chapter 4.6.1 provides brief theory on choosing the right digital media mix and shows the digital media mix chosen for this project.

4.6.1 Digital Media Mix

There are several factors which influence the formulation of the digital media mix. In this case these factors are preferences of the targeted consumers, marketing resources and the nature of the product.

Marketing must be conducted in mediums where potential customers are already present. Since Arctos is targeting a young demographic of international-minded people, the best ways to reach them is most probably by establishing a social online presence. More information on these social media statistics can be found in chapter 2.3.

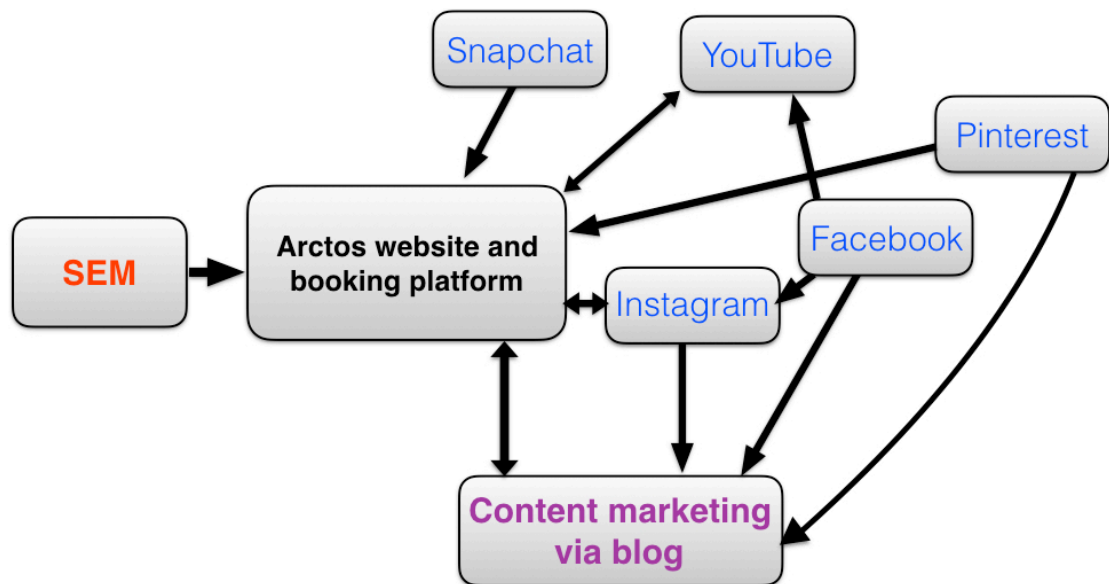
Digitalization is changing consumer behavior by causing consumers to demand more from the online services they use. They are beginning to expect companies to be as comfortable on digital mediums as they are, meaning that they demand faster service, more information and increased transparency. Consumers will no longer be patient if they are able to find a faster and easier option. (Ryan, D & Jones, C. 2009,19)

The digital media mix should be formulated so that implementation is realistic considering the available resources. At the moment Arctos does not have significant funds allocated to marketing, nor do they have enough personnel to carry out an extensive marketing execution. This lack of resources is reflected in the chosen digital media mix.

Lastly, it is necessary to make sure that the digital marketing channels are in line with the nature of the product. Since the product is a digital platform combined with an experience, the digital marketing channels should support this as well as possible.

The digital media mix chosen for Arctos is a combination of search engine marketing, content marketing and social media channels. The mix is demonstrated in figure 8. Search engine marketing will be used to gain traffic to the website and booking platform. Content

marketing will be used to engage and convert the target audience, improve search engine optimization and activate social media channels. The chosen social media channels are Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat and YouTube. The use of social media is designed to serve customers and potential customers in the best possible way and to drive traffic to the website and more specifically to the booking platform.



The arrow symbol represents the flow of online traffic.

Figure 8. Arctos' Digital Media Mix. (Järvelin 2016)

4.6.2 Digital Marketing Strategy Integration

The digital marketing strategy has been developed to be easily integrated into the company's overall sales and operational strategy. The digital media mix and digital marketing plan schedule can be modified according to the company's situational needs. The plan leaves room for gradual implementation, meaning that the implementation can take place in steps depending in the company's own preferences.

Chapter 5 includes conclusions and recommendations regarding the final digital marketing plan as well as assessment of the product and planning process.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter provides an overview of the final project outcome. The overview includes assessment of the product as well as the process of developing the product.

5.1 Product Assessment

The digital marketing plan developed during the thesis process includes a comprehensive set of guidelines for Arctos' digital marketing efforts. The theoretical framework gives ground to the chosen set of digital marketing channels and strategies, making the plan relevant and effective in reaching set digital marketing objectives.

The plan is limited due to the scope of this project thesis, and would benefit from a deeper insight into market research, marketing scheduling and analytics strategies. Despite this the plan does fulfil its purpose of proposing clear digital marketing guidelines.

5.2 Process Assessment

The digital marketing planning process followed the guidelines set in chapter 3.2. The background information on the company was readily available due to the co-operation of the company contact people. The theory base was reliant largely on secondary research on recently surfaced data and methods. Due to the modern topic of this project not all information was available for use, but enough was found to complete a valid product.

During the completion of this project I deepened my knowledge base on many aspects of digital marketing. In addition to gaining insight about the field and its current practices, I now have an understanding of the future of the field, which will help guide my career in digital marketing.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Research

The topic offers great potential for further research, because the field of digital marketing is constantly evolving. Beneficial topics for further study include new social media channels, mobile marketing, e-mail marketing and SEO trends. Businesses constantly look for new ways to communicate with customers, in order to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. This study showed a significant trend of shifting from one-way communication to actual conversation and interaction with customers. This trend of interactive marketing is sure to be present in the future of this field.

References

Arctos 2015. Homepage. URL: <http://arctosadventures.com>. Accessed 11 Dec 2015.

Bosomworth, D. 2015. Mobile Marketing Statistics compilation. URL: <http://www.smartinsights.com/mobile-marketing/mobile-marketing-analytics/mobile-marketing-statistics/>. Accessed 22 March 2016.

Business Dictionary 2016. Media Mix. URL: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/media-mix.html>. Accessed 12 May 2016.

Business Insider 2014. 77% of Surveyed College Kids Use Snapchat Every Day. URL: <http://www.businessinsider.com/how-college-kids-use-snapchat-2014-2?IR=T>. Accessed 21 April 2016.

Business Insider UK 2015. Update: A Breakdown of the Demographics for Each of the Different Social Networks. URL: <http://uk.businessinsider.com/update-a-breakdown-of-the-demographics-for-each-of-the-different-social-networks-2015-6?r=US&IR=T>. Accessed 16 April 2016.

Chaffey, D. & Ellis-Chadwick F. 2012. Digital Marketing. 5th ed. Pearson Education Ltd. Edinburgh.

Damian, R. & Jones, C. 2009. Understanding Digital Marketing. URL: <http://digitalmarketing.org.vn/files/2012/07/Understanding-Digital-Marketing.pdf>. Accessed 10 May 2016.

Demand Metric 2016. Content Marketing Infographic. URL: <http://www.demandmetric.com/content/content-marketing-infographic>. Accessed 24 April 2016.

DeMers, J. 2015. The Top 7 SEO trends That Will Dominate 2016. URL: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/jaysondemers/2015/09/30/the-top-7-seo-trends-that-will-dominate-2016/#45f3967c64f0>. Accessed 10 May 2016.

Donchev, D. 2016. 27 Mind Blowing YouTube Facts, Figures and Statistics - 2016. URL: <http://fortunelords.com/27-mind-blowing-youtube-facts-figures-and-statistics-backed-by-data/>. Accessed: 13 April 2016.

Digital Marketing Institute 2016. The Beginner's Guide to Facebook Marketing: Master Organic & Paid Reach. URL: <https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/beginners-guide-facebook-marketing-master-organic-paid-reach>. Accessed 12 May 2016.

Expanded Ramblings 2016. By the Numbers: 270 Amazing Pinterest Statistics (March 2016). URL: <http://expandedramblings.com/index.php/pinterest-stats/>. Accessed 4 May 2016.

Facebook 2016. Brand Resources. URL: <https://www.facebookbrand.com>. Accessed 10 May 2016.

Facebook 2016. Facebook for Business. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/business/products/ads/>. Accessed 19 March 2016.

Financial Times Lexicon 2015. Digital Marketing Definition. URL: <http://lexicon.ft.com/Term?term=digital-marketing>. Accessed 26 November 2015.

Fishkin, R. 2015. B2BNN 2015: Cracking the SEO Code: Rand Fishkin, Moz. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIVSDp01SA>. Accessed 13 April 2016.

Forbes 2013. What is a Start-up?. URL: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/natalierobehmed/2013/12/16/what-is-a-startup/>. Accessed 11 Dec 2015.

Google 2016. Google AdWords. URL: <https://www.google.com/intl/en/adwords/benefits/>. Accessed 13 April 2016.

Google 2015. Google Inside AdWords. URL: <http://adwords.blogspot.fi/2015/05/building-for-next-moment.html>. Accessed 6 April 2016.

Hipcamp 2016. Homepage. URL: <https://www.hipcamp.com>. Accessed 25 April 2016.

Halligan, B. & Shah, D. 2010. Inbound Marketing. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Hoboken.

HubSpot 2015. The Inbound Methodology. URL: <http://www.hubspot.com/inbound-marketing>. Accessed 26 November 2015.

Instagram Business 2016. Advertising on Instagram. URL:
<https://business.instagram.com/advertising/>. Accessed 6 April 2016.

Instagram 2016. Brand Resources. URL: <https://www.instagram-brand.com>. Accessed 10 May 2016.

Kotler, P., Keller, K., Brady, M., Goodman, M., Hansen, T. 2009. Marketing Management. Pearson Education Ltd. Edinburgh.

Liizi 2016. Homepage. URL: <http://www.liizi.fi>. Accessed 25 April.

Marketing Terms 2016. Conversion Rate. URL:
<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/media-mix.html>. Accessed 12 May 2016.

McDonald, M. 2008. Malcolm McDonald on Marketing Planning. Kogan Page. London.

McDonald, M. & Payne, A. 2006. Marketing Plans for Service Businesses, 2nd ed. Butterworth-Heinemann. Burlington.

Miles, J. 2014. Instagram Power. McGraw-Hill Education. New York.

Miles, J. 2014. YouTube Marketing Power. McGraw-Hill Education. New York.

Patel, N. & Aragon, K. 2016. The Advanced Content Marketing Guide. URL:
<https://www.quicksprout.com/the-advanced-guide-to-content-marketing/>. Accessed 25 February 2016.

Patel, S. 2016. The Quick Guide to Using Snapchat for Business in 2016. URL:
<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/270663>. Accessed April 16 2016.

Pinterest 2016. Brand Guidelines. URL: <https://business.pinterest.com/en/brand-guidelines>. Accessed 10 May 2016.

Pinterest 2016. Homepage. URL: <https://about.pinterest.com/en>. Accessed 4 May 2016.

Retkipaikka 2016. Homepage. URL: <http://retkipaikka.fi/kauppa/>. Accessed 25 April 2016.

Rouhiainen, L. 2015. Powerpoint. Search Engine Optimization.

Rouhiainen, L. 2015. Powerpoint. Content Marketing.

Rowett, P. 2014. Why All Tourism Destinations Need to be Blogging – and How to Get Started. URL: <http://tourismeschool.com/blogging-for-tourism-destinations/>. Accessed 5 May 2016.

Search Engine Watch 2016. Google Once Again Claims 67% Search Market Share. URL: <https://searchenginewatch.com/sew/study/2244472/google-once-again-claims-67-search-market-share>. Accessed 13 April 2016.

Snapchat 2016. Brand Guidelines. URL: <https://www.snapchat.com/brand-guidelines>. Accessed 10 May 2016.

Social Times 2015. Study: Facebook Posts Net 2.6% Organic Reach in March. URL: <http://www.adweek.com/socialtimes/locowise-march-2015/619104>. Accessed 21 April 2016.

Social Times 2015. Snapchat is the Fastest Growing Social Network (Infographic). URL: <http://www.adweek.com/socialtimes/snapchat-is-the-fastest-growing-social-network-infographic/624116>. Accessed 21 April 2016.

Tapp, A., Whitten, I., Housden, M. 2014. Principles of Direct, Database and Digital Marketing. 5th ed. Pearson Education, Ltd. Edinburgh.

Thompson, T. 2012. Why Pinterest Works in the Travel Industry (Especially Destinations). URL: <https://www.tnooz.com/article/why-pinterest-works-in-the-travel-industry-especially-destinations/>. Accessed 5 May 2016.

Visit Finland 2014. Aasialaisten Matkailijavirta Kasvussa. URL: <http://www.visitfinland.fi/news/aasialaisten-matkailijavirta-kasvussa/>. Accessed 12 May 2016.

Visit Finland 2014. Modernit Humanistit Työkirja. Helsinki.

Wainwright, C. 2013. What is Business Blogging? URL: <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/what-is-business-blogging-faqs-h#sm.000124n8u4ined6hy5q133yiutfu6>. Accessed 5 May 2016.

Wainwright, C. 2015. Why Blog? The Benefits of Blogging for Business and Marketing. URL: <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/the-benefits-of-business-blogging-ht#sm.000124n8u4ined6hy5q133yiutfu6>. Accessed 5 May 2016.

Wood, M B. 2013. Essential Guide to Marketing Planning. 3rd ed. Pearson Education, Inc. Edinburgh.

YouTube 2016. Brand Guidelines, Downloads. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/yt/brand/downloads.html>. Accessed 10 May 2016.

YouTube 2016. Statistics. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/yt/press/statistics.html>. Accessed 6 April 2016.

Appendix 1. Company Interview

Interview questions asked from the case company representatives Robert Nuorteva (founder) & Miki Pernu (founder) on 12 February 2016:

- What are your expectations from this project?
- Company and marketing objectives?
- Current marketing practises?
- The overall direction of the company's operations?
- The launch date of the service?
- Product/service description?
- Partners?
- Budget & marketing resources?

Appendix 2. Arctos First Year Digital Marketing Plan

ARCTOS

First Year B-to-C Digital Marketing Plan

Reetta Järvelin
May 2016



Contents

First Year Digital Marketing Goals

1. Generating traffic to arctosadventures.com

Getting found on search engines

Generating traffic through search engine marketing

Using a blog to attract new customers

2. Establishing a Social Media Presence and Promoting Follower Engagement

Facebook

Instagram

Pinterest

Snapchat

YouTube

Summary on General Digital Marketing Guidelines

First Year Digital Marketing Goals

1. ■ Increase brand awareness by generating traffic to website and attracting new customers.
2. ■ Establish social media presence and promote follower engagement.

1. Generating traffic to arctosadventures.com

Getting found on search engines – SEO

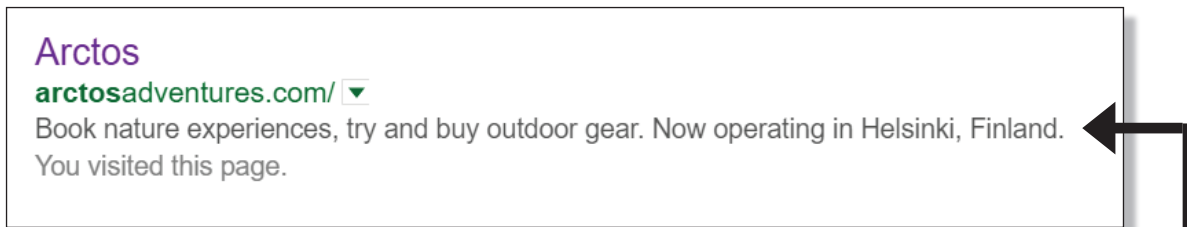
SEO is a long process of improving a website's search engine visibility. Therefore it is important to note that the aim is to gain long-term results, and the visibility of the website will improve gradually. Successful SEO long-term commitment to optimizing internal and external factors affecting the website.

Tips for optimizing arctosadventures.com website:

- Create **good content** so that visitors spend time on the site. Good content is targeted at a certain customer group, it is interesting and it contains strategic keywords for optimization.
- **Update** content regularly.
- **Maximize** the amount of **links** from other websites to arctosadventures.com. (For example partners and affiliates)
- Link to website from **social media** channels as much as possible. (Especially Pinterest and Facebook are beneficial to SEO)
- Maximize site speed and overall **user-friendliness**.
- Add an option to **rate the service** on the website and make sure the service is present in apps such as TripAdvisor.
- **Optimize** the site **for mobile**.
- Use strategic keywords. (Instructions to follow)

Tips for Keyword optimization:

- Use Google Keyword planner to find strategic keywords.
- Include keywords especially in titles and the description meta tag (see below)



Description meta tag

- Include keywords when creating content such as blog posts to the website.

Example keywords for Arctos (found using Google Keyword Planner):

- Hiking (320 searches/month)
- Nature (1600 searches/month)
- Luontoon (2400 searches/month)

The listed keywords and search data refer to searches in Finland.
The results may vary in different global locations.

It is a good idea to use specific keywords even when they are not popular search terms on Google, because they produce good quality leads which are likely to convert to customers.

Examples of specific keywords:

- Adventure Activities
- Backpacking

Generating traffic through search engine marketing – SEM

A successful Google AdWords campaign helps your website gain visibility on Google by showing your ad higher up on the search result list. Paid ads are marked with a yellow box next to them.

Ads consist of a headline, display URL (website) and two description lines:

hotel helsinki

All Maps Shopping Images News More Search tools

About 34,700,000 results (0.49 seconds)

115 Hotels in Helsinki - Best Price Guarantee - booking.com

Ad www.booking.com/Helsinki-Hotels

Book your Hotel in Helsinki online

Get Instant Confirmation · 24/7 Customer Service · Read Real Guest Reviews · No Booking Fees

Types: Hotels, Apartments, Villas, Hostels, Resorts, B&Bs

Book Now
Book for Tonight

Book for Tomorrow
Secure Booking

Ad indicator **Description lines** **Display URL** **Headline**

Tips for setting up a Google Adwords campaign:

- The headline should include a distinctive feature of the company and it's services.
- Include call-to-action in description lines.
- The ad should link directly to a specific booking site or other advertised content.
- Use keywords in the headline and description lines.

Choosing the right keywords for Google AdWords:

- Use specific keywords that describe your company or service.
- Use keywords that are popular among target group. Find these keywords by using Google Keyword Planner.
- Use a tool called SpyFu to find popular keywords among competitors.
- Use market specific keywords - by finding out which keywords are used in searches in different global locations (this can be done in Google keyword planner)

Examples of Arctos' Google AdWord campaigns:

Example 1

Headline: Helposti luontoon - reitit ja retkeilyvarusteet

Display URL: arctosadventures.com

Description lines: Bookkaa edulliset luontopakettit lähellä pääkaupunkiseutua. Vuokraa kätevästi retkeilyvarusteet.

Good to know: The keyword “retkeilyvarusteet” is used in searches 590 times/month. The keyword “luontoon” is searched for 2400 times/month (in Finland).

Example 2

Headline: Book nature travel experiences

Display URL: arctosadventures.com

Description lines: Explore nature near Helsinki, outdoor gear rental included.

Good to know: The keyword “nature” is used in searches 1600 times/month. The keyword “travel” is searched for 1000 times/month (in Finland).

Using a blog to attract new customers

Blog content has many marketing benefits, strategically implemented blog content has a great positive effect on SEO and it helps convert visitors into customers.

Tips for creating a strategic blogging strategy:

- **Direct** all blog posts to a specific customer segment.
- Use strategic **keywords** to help your blog content get found on search engines.
- **Photos and videos** are great blog content in terms of engaging customers and improving SEO.
- **Update** the blog regularly to keep visitor rates growing and to improve SEO.
- Share blog content on **social media** channels when possible.
- Give away **valuable information** for free. This gives the company authority and helps gain recognition from customers.
- **Follow** what your customers are talking about on social media to find topics for the blog.
- **Don't** make it too long or hard to follow. Infographics, photos and other visuals help make blog posts lighter.

Consider

- Including visitor posts written by partners, customers or friends.

2. Establishing a social media presence and promoting follower engagement

Social media can be used to raise brand awareness, engage followers, communicate information and drive traffic to other social media channels or to the company website.

Social Media Mix

The social media channels chosen for Arctos are Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat and YouTube.

Facebook

Facebook is likely to currently be the most popular social media channel among the target group. Because of this, it is critical to establish a presence in this channel, although it is difficult to gain visibility.

Post

- News
- Photos
- Links to interesting content
- Share partner's Facebook content

Tips

- Post 2-3 times per week
- Target separate audiences by defining demographics

Consider

Using Facebook Ads to promote content to larger audiences:

When posting to Facebook, the organic reach of each post is limited, meaning that all followers do not see all posts. Posts can easily and cost-effectively be promoted to reach more followers.

Keep in mind: Before promoting a post, make sure it is truly relevant for followers. Unnecessary and uninteresting posts may be considered spam.

Using Facebook Ads to gain new followers:

Run a Facebook Ad featuring an interesting topic such as the launch of the Arctos Adventure service, a special offer or an event. Choose a very specific target market for the ad, to gain valuable followers and potential customers.

Keep in mind: This is a good way to target the Asian tourist market, because Facebook allows you to choose the location, demographics and interests of the audience. Get better results by creating separate ads for both target groups.

Creating an Arctos community for easy communication and follower engagement:

Create a group for adventure-minded people to discuss related topics such as travel destinations and gear.

Keep in mind: The group settings should be set to “closed,” so that the group is easy to find on Facebook but Arctos can monitor the members. The purpose of this is to avoid unwanted and unrelated content. Establish guidelines for group discussion to keep conversation beneficial for Arctos.

Instagram

Instagram will work as a mass marketing channel for a majority of the target market. This channel will be used to attract and inspire audiences to get involved with nature adventures.

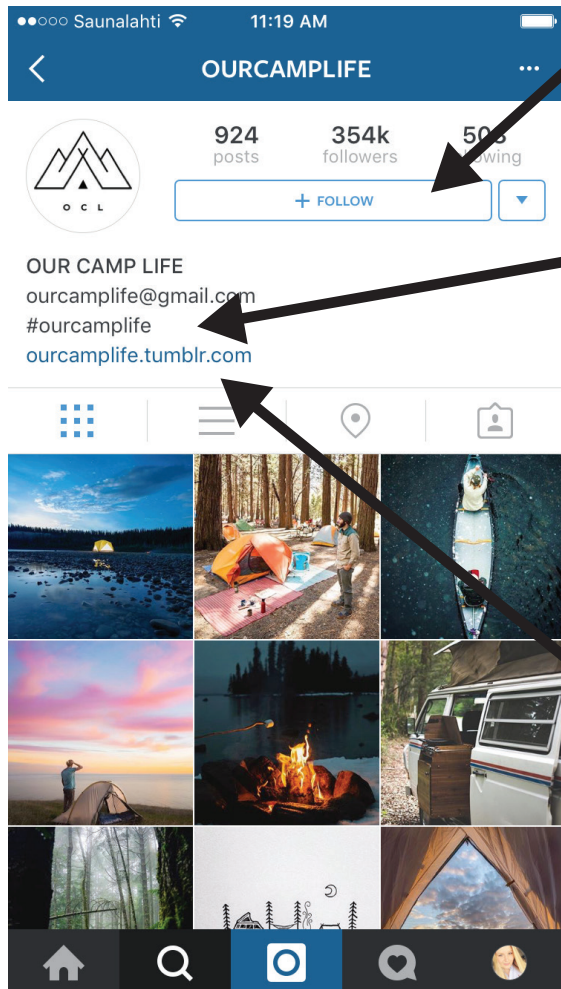
Post

- Photos of Arctos' own nature adventures
- Share partners' photos
- "Behind the scenes" content and upcoming events etc.

Tips

- Post 3-4 times per week
- Use ads to target Asian market

Tips for optimizing Arctos' Instagram profile:



1. Keep the profile public

When the goal is to gain followers, you should make following as easy as possible.

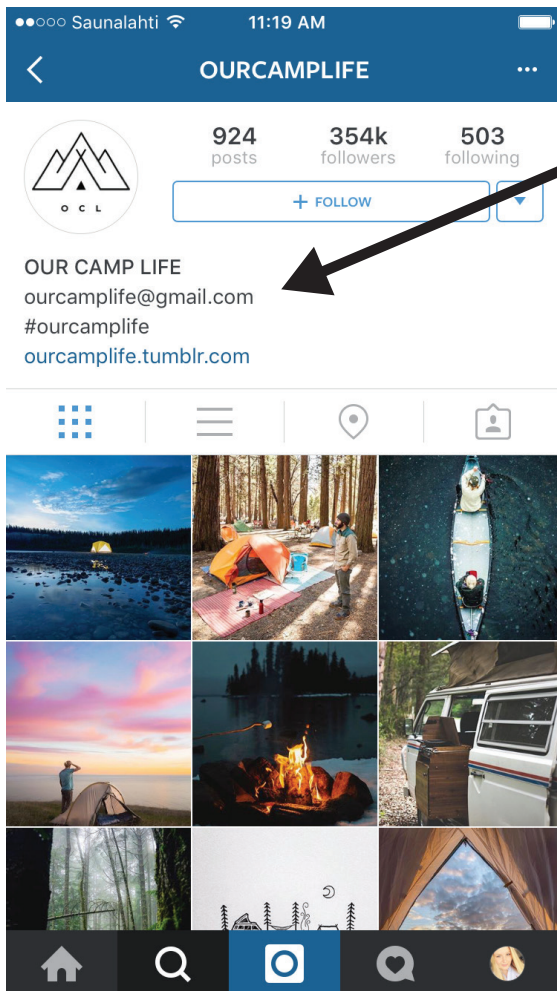
2. Create a signature hashtag

A hashtag is an easy way for your community to refer to your company in their photos, making it easy for you to find them. Hashtags can also be used to create Instagram competitions. A trending hashtag attracts new followers to the profile.

3. Link to your most relevant site

Instagram only allows one link on each profile, make sure the link is the most important one.

Good to know: You can also change the link seasonally to promote different landing pages/blogs/site pages.



4. Add contact option

Make it as easy as possible for people to contact you.

5. Have a consistent theme for all photos

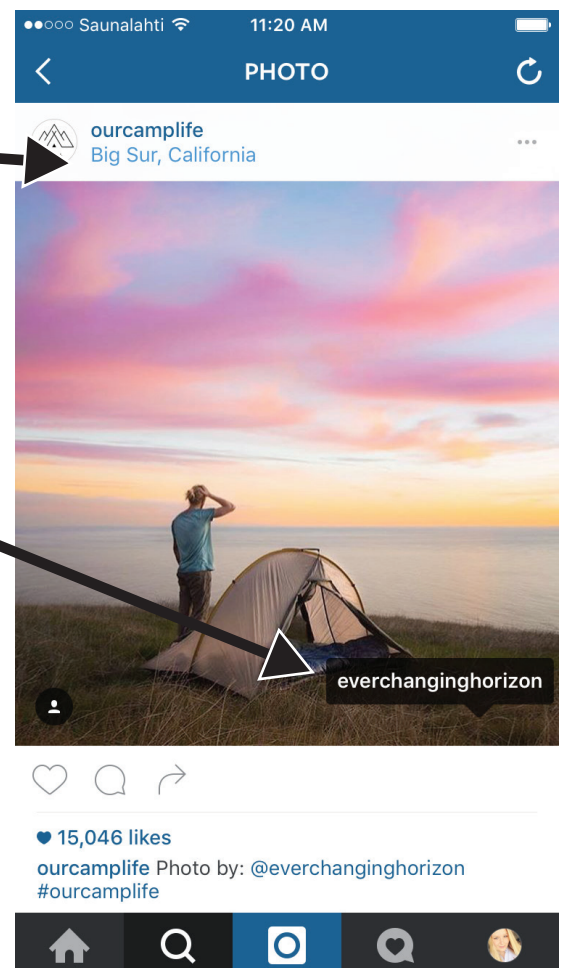
Keeping the topic of the profile consistent help establish a clear brand image and attracts the wanted follower base.

6. Add a location to photos

Especially adventurers and photographers are interested in where pictures have been taken.

7. Tag featured photographers and partners

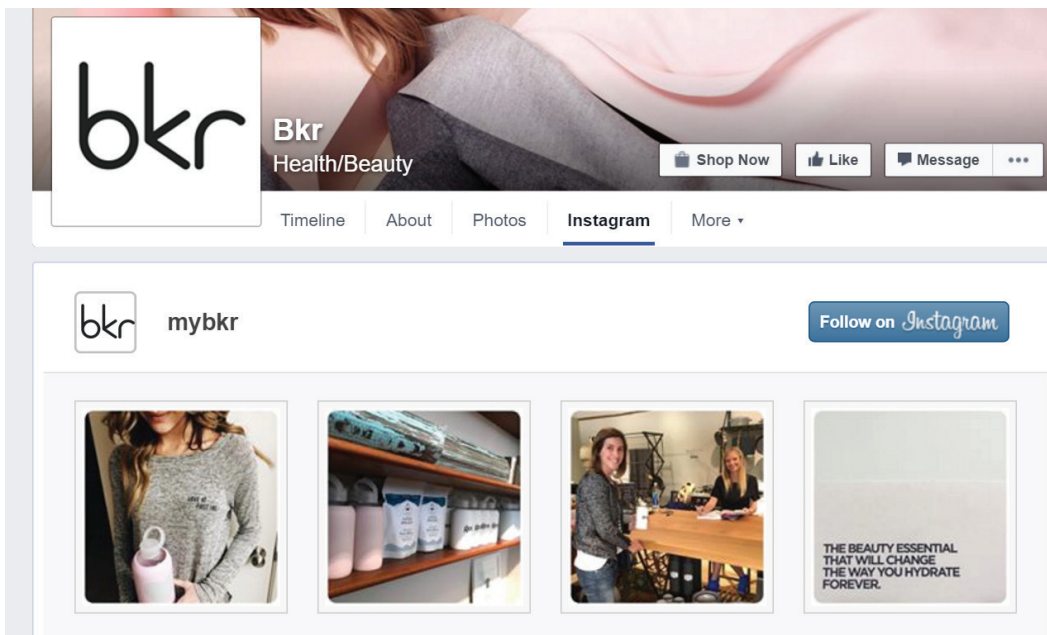
In addition to being good social media etiquette, tagging increases your profile's visibility by reaching out to a larger online community.



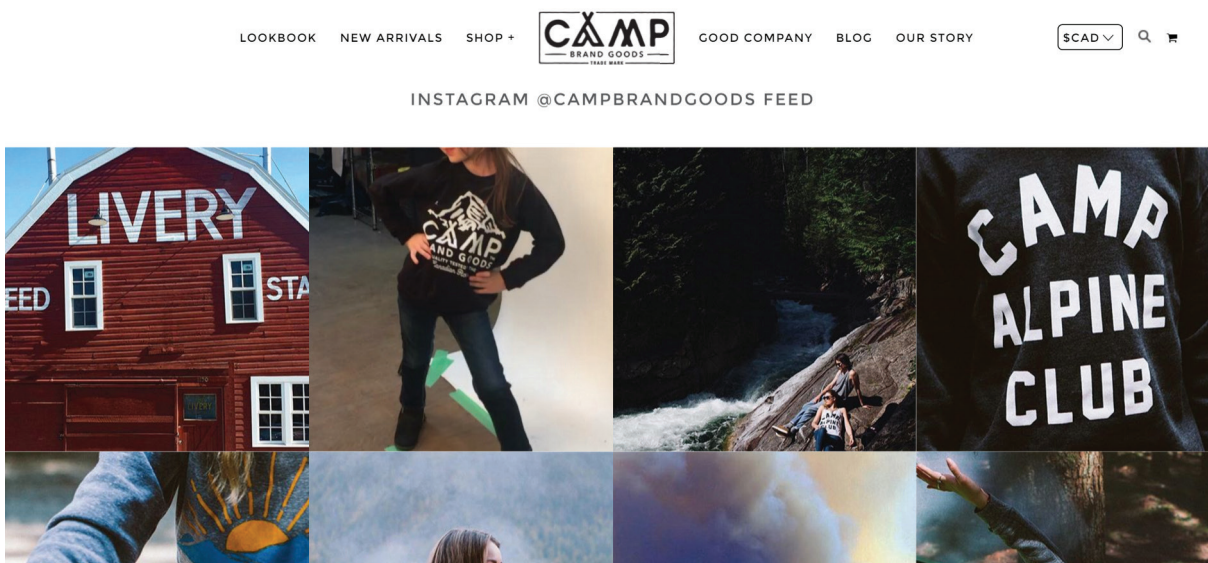
Consider

Including Instagram feed on Website and Facebook profile:

Add an Instagram widget to the company website and Facebook profile to show an authentic image of the company and it's community.



Example of Instagram widget for Facebook.



Example of Instagram widget for website.

In the beginning it will be more beneficial to use the @arctosadventures company feed, but in the future consider using the signature hashtag. Promoting the hashtag on the website and Facebook profile allows the use of user generated content, showcasing happy customers and giving the brand a sense of authority and transparency. Also photos will be updated more frequently, since the hashtag will be used by the whole Arctos community.

iconosquare.com offers free Instagram widgets for both Facebook and website.

Partner with photographers and nature adventurers to gain content for Instagram feed

Great visual content can give the Instagram profile increased visibility. Partnering also helps reach out to partners' follower network.

Utilize videos and GIFS to generate interesting content

Instagram's Boomerang lets you create GIF moving content to post on Instagram or elsewhere. Videos are especially useful on the travel industry to give the viewer a more authentic impression of different locations.

Pinterest

Pinterest's potential lies in attracting customers through appealing photo content. Pinterest attracts valuable customers because it offers people a platform to plan their future travels and outdoor adventures.

Post

- Photos that link to blog posts or other interesting content
- Interesting and inspiring adventure photos

Tips

- Post weekly if possible – Pins have a long life span, therefore it is not necessarily a must to post frequently.
- Organize boards into clear categories, for example according to destination

Consider

- Linking Blog posts to pins, so that when someone sees an interesting photo, they can easily find information and possibly instructions on how to travel to the destination.

Snapchat

Snapchat can be used especially to target younger audiences and to showcase “behind the scenes” content to customers and followers. Snapchat has potential to become a very significant marketing channel in the future.

Post

- Exclusive “behind the scenes” content
- Spontaneous content
- Photos & videos of relevant events
- Sneak peek into new gear/destination launches

Tips

- Keep in mind that the audience is young
- Post daily to weekly
- Keep it humorous/light
- Experiment with new types of content

Consider

Launching a “take over our Snapchat” campaign

- Let a customer take over the company Snapchat for the duration of their adventure
- They can post about nature, gear and anything they experience during their trip
- Offer a small discount to customers willing to snap from their trip

Benefits: Automatically generated Snapchat content, gives followers a peek into the possibilities of an Arctos nature adventure, every guest snapper invites their friends to follow = more followers for Arctos.

Risks: No control over the shared content, guest snapchatters will also snap about bad experiences like bad weather and dysfunctional gear

Discount coupon campaign:

- Snapchat some sort of a discount coupon or other commercial offer. Followers can use the coupon by taking a screenshot and showing/sending it.

YouTube

YouTube is a great channel for posting video content to followers and potential customers. As the second most popular search engine, YouTube has significant potential to attract new customers.

Post

- Adventure travel related videos
- Regularly but no need to post daily or weekly, because content has a long life span

Tips

- Lightly edit videos to make them more visually appealing
- Add music to videos to make them more interesting
- Try to keep videos relatively short, 1-5 minutes is a good length for easy viewing
- Use consideration when naming videos, because YouTube is a popular search engine, and strategic keywords work to attract new viewers to your video feed

Consider

- Posting tutorials for how to use your gear - For example how to set up a tent etc.
- Posting content shot by partners or friends
- Posting drone footage of locations
- Embedding videos to website and blog for easy content distribution

Summary on General

Digital Marketing Guidelines

This combination of strategic digital marketing channels and strategies will help Arctos achieve their two digital marketing objectives. In addition to these guidelines it is important to develop a **digital marketing schedule**, to ease the flow of marketing implementation and to optimize the allocation of resources.

Below is an example calendar month to help visualize the scheduling process:

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30	31	1 Summer destination pre-promo on Snapchat and Instagram	2	3 Facebook post	4 Instagram post	5 Make Pinterest board on favorite summer destinations
6	7 Blog post on summer destinations	8 Share blog post and special offer across social media channels	9 Run Google AdWords promoting summer destinations + gear 1-2 weeks	10 Run Facebook summer destinations campaign 1-2 weeks	11	12 Instagram post
13	14 Share summer related video tutorials + tips	15 Share video clip on Instagram	16 Pinterest board on travel tips	17	18 Instagram post	19
20	21 Instagram post	22 Blog post + share on channels	23	24	25 YouTube video post + share across channels	26
27	28 Facebook + Instagram post	29	30	31 Facebook post	1	2

Remember to always **track marketing results** by analyzing and recording results. Facebook for Business and Google AdWords offer detailed reports on all campaigns. In addition, website traffic, conversion and other related metrics can be seen from Google Analytics.